

A Call for Discussion on Stereotypic Behavior

- Leaf, J. B., Cihon, J. H., Javed, A., Klick, S., Ferguson, J. L., Milne, C., McEachin, J. (2022)

Abstract

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The authors challenge the traditional view of stereotypic behavior as inherently maladaptive.

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They argue for the inclusion of perspectives from individuals with ASD in shaping treatment decisions to ensure more ethical and personalized interventions.

Introduction

Stereotypic behaviors are common in individuals with ASD and may serve important functions, such as self-regulation.

The authors propose that these behaviors should be understood in context and not immediately seen as problematic.

The Debate on Stereotypic Behavior

Many behavior analysts view stereotypic behavior as a barrier to learning or socialization.

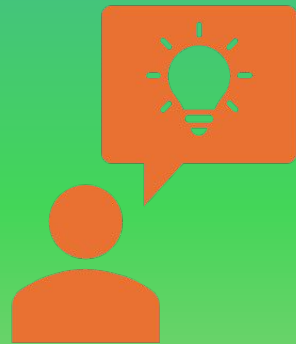
The authors challenge this assumption and suggest that reducing these behaviors might disregard the individual's need for self-regulation and comfort.

Why Removing Stereotypic Behaviors Can Be Harmful

Reducing stereotypic behavior without understanding its function can be harmful.

Interventions may result in distress or the development of new maladaptive behaviors as a response to the removal of these coping mechanisms.

Ethical Concerns



Ethical practice in behavior analysis involves considering the well-being and autonomy of individuals with ASD.



The authors argue that interventions focused solely on reducing stereotypic behaviors may overlook these ethical principles.

Recommendation 1: Engage in Ethical Practice



'Engage in Ethical Practice' encourages behavior analysts to evaluate whether their interventions are in the best interest of the individual.



The recommendation stresses that interventions should not cause harm and should respect the person's autonomy and preferences.

Recommendation 2: Continue to Listen



'Continue to Listen' emphasizes the importance of actively listening to individuals with ASD and their caregivers.



By considering their perspectives, behavior analysts can tailor interventions to be more effective and respectful of the individual's unique needs.



Consumer Input in Goal Selection

Including individuals with ASD and their families in goal selection is essential for creating person-centered interventions.

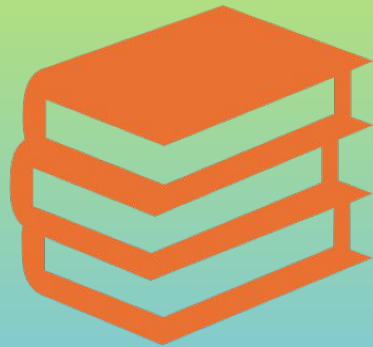
The authors highlight that this approach ensures interventions are not only effective but also socially valid and aligned with the individual's values.

Social Validity in Behavioral Interventions

Social validity refers to whether an intervention is acceptable, meaningful, and effective to the individual receiving it.

The authors argue that interventions targeting stereotypic behavior must align with the individual's values and preferences to be truly effective.

Methodology



The article presents a conceptual review rather than original empirical research.



It synthesizes existing literature and ethical perspectives on stereotypic behaviors to propose a more inclusive and ethical approach to treatment.

Results



There are no traditional empirical results, but the article critiques existing interventions and suggests ethical alternatives.



The authors emphasize that future interventions should prioritize understanding the function of stereotypic behavior and the individual's needs.

The Role of Autistic Adults in the Discussion

The authors advocate for the inclusion of autistic adults in discussions regarding stereotypic behavior.

Autistic adults' life experiences provide valuable insights that can lead to more ethical and effective interventions.

Future Directions



The authors call for more research into the functions of stereotypic behaviors and their role in the lives of individuals with ASD.



They encourage future interventions to respect individual autonomy and incorporate input from those directly affected by the behavior.

Conclusion

The authors conclude that stereotypic behaviors should not automatically be targeted for reduction.

They call for interventions that respect individual autonomy and are based on a thorough understanding of the function of these behaviors.

Reference

Leaf, J. B., Cihon, J. H., Javed, A., Klick, S., Ferguson, J. L., Milne, C., ... McEachin, J. (2022). A call for discussion on stereotypic behavior. *European Journal of Behavior Analysis*, 23(2), 156–180.
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