

Exploring a Trauma-informed Process for Assessing and Treating Dangerous Problem Behavior: The Enhanced Choice Model

Adithyan Rajaraman, Ph.D., BCBA-D, LBA

Skill-based treatments developed from practical functional assessments are capable of producing durable, socially-meaningful outcomes with respect to dangerous problem behavior. Although successful outcomes have been achieved across a variety of contexts and participant profiles, implementation of these procedures may be limited due to perceived risks associated with escalation in problem behavior, which is likely to occur when treatments rely on extinction that sometimes requires physical management. This presentation will begin with a summary of the underlying assumptions and methods unique to the practical functional assessment and skill-based treatment process. Then, an evaluation of an “enhanced choice” model for minimizing risks during treatment will be reviewed. In the evaluation, socially validated outcomes were achieved with all participants; dangerous problem behavior never occurred for three participants and rarely occurred for two participants. Findings will be connected to a recently administered survey regarding the nature, feasibility, and social acceptability of physical management procedures associated with behavior analytic service delivery. Implications of enhanced choice procedures for safe and dignifying behavior analytic practice will be reflected upon, with special consideration given to the commitments of trauma-informed care.

By the end of this presentation, attendees should be able to:

- (1) Acknowledge the gap between practitioner preferences regarding the use of physical management and lingering best-practice recommendations from the literature
- (2) Describe a set of procedures for effectively treating dangerous problem behavior that explicitly avoids physical management
- (3) Describe the distinguishing features of an “enhanced choice model” of skill-based treatment
- (4) Describe how the enhanced choice model is congruous with commitments and practices of trauma-informed care