BEHAVIORAL ANALYSIS

What it is:
1) In Behavior Therapy: a step-by-step assessment of a problematic behavior or target, focusing on all aspects and circumstances of the behavior, including the antecedents and consequences.

2) In DBT specifically: the first part of the general Problem Solving Strategies in DBT; most sessions in Stage One of DBT consist largely of behavioral analyses (when dealing with parasuicide, therapy interfering behaviors, quality of life interfering behaviors, etc).

(Problem Solving consists of: behavioral analysis -- insight -- didactic strategies -- solution analysis)

3) Goal: Figure out what the problem is, what is eliciting it, what is interfering with resolution of the problem, what aides are or are not available to help solve the problem.

4) Functions of behavioral analysis in therapy: provides insight into factors that elicit and maintain the behavior, elucidates places where solutions and changes can occur, punishes dysfunctional behavior (an aversive consequence, i.e., clients dislike these, feel shame, etc), functions as therapy (especially as exposure technique).

Steps in BA:
1) Define the problem.
2) Orient client.
3) Conduct chain analysis.
4) Generate hypotheses.

Things to Remember:
1) Obtain cooperation
2) Weave validation throughout
3) Elicit emotions during BA (for exposure effects)

Behavioral Analysis Steps in Detail

1st, Define the problem in terms of behavior.

1) Choose a focus (use diary cards for highest priority behavior; also pay attention for in-session, target-relevant behavior, this can provide an excellent opportunity for BA).

2) Formulate the problem in terms of behavior, i.e., feelings, thoughts, or actions (not on the situation itself).

3) Get information on the problem specifically including
   a) frequency of behavior
   b) duration of behavior
   c) intensity of behavior
   d) topography of behavior

Never assume anything, get as specific as possible (“what do you mean by that, exactly?” “how many times did that happen?” “on a scale from 1-100, how intense was the feeling?” etc).

**Orient client, explain what you’re going to do and why (e.g., I’d like to spend the bulk of this session trying to understand exactly what happened here; this behavior has GOT to stop, and the only way that will happen is if we understand why it’s occurring in the first place; so let’s start at the beginning...)**
Behavioral Analysis Steps in Detail (continued)

2nd, Conduct a chain analysis (an exhaustive step-by-step description of the chain of events leading up to and following the behavior).

1) **Where to start:** can ask client where problem began--you want to locate, in the environment, the event that precipitated the chain of behaviors

2) **What to ask about:**
   a) Get very detailed information about what was going on, both in the environment and behaviorally with the client (remember, this includes feelings, thoughts, assumptions, behaviors); again, assume nothing, be a “naive observer”
   b) Find out consequences of behavior (i.e., what happened in the environment afterwards, how client felt afterwards, what thoughts client had, etc)
   c) Find out events leading to event that started the chain; what set of prior event or current state of being made client vulnerable to prompting event; why did it have an effect at this moment and not before?

3) **What you’re looking for:**
   a) events that may automatically elicit responses (remember classical conditioning)
   b) behavioral/skill deficits
   c) things in the environment that may have strengthened problem behavior (remember reinforcement)
   d) responses of the client that may have interfered with more appropriate behavior, e.g., beliefs, fears (remember behavioral hierarchies)

4) **Possible questions:**
   a) what set that off?, what was going on at the moment the problem started?
   b) what were you feeling then? what thoughts were you having?
   c) what did you feel like doing?
   d) when did the thought/urge of (problem behavior) first come into your mind?
   e) how strong was the feeling then on a scale of 1-100?
   f) how strong was the urge afterwards?
   g) what happened next?
   h) how did you feel immediately after you problem behavior?
   i) what did your boyfriend do right after that? ETC.

![Diagram](image-url)
3rd, **Generate hypothesis** (and with the client, come up with ideas about what is eliciting and maintaining behavior).

1) Remember to use DBT and behavioral theory to guide your hypotheses (possibilities are skills deficits, contingencies in the environment, thoughts, emotions--pay particular attention to emotion dysregulation and “secondary targets” like self-invalidation, inhibited grieving, apparent competency)

2) Always be willing to modify or abandon hypotheses if they don’t fit

3) Use previous BAs to guide hypotheses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DBT Hypotheses for BPD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Ineffective behaviors are being reinforced or effective behaviors are being punished</td>
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<tr>
<td>2) Person doesn’t know what would be more effective or how to do a more effective behavior</td>
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<tr>
<td>3) Other client responses inhibit or interfere with effective behaviors, such as: emotions, such as fear, shame, guilt beliefs or assumptions that interfere with more effective behavior <strong>secondary targeted behaviors:</strong> emotionality, emotional vulnerability self-invalidation (perfectionism, self-hate, inhibiting self-initiated behaviors) crisis generating behaviors inhibited grieving, emotional avoidance (dissociation) active-passivity apparent competence</td>
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4th, **Weave solution analyses into chain analysis.**

1) Highlight other possible roads that could have been taken along the way. 

   or

2) Brain-storm solutions at each faulty link--these should be elicited from client as much as possible, but therapist is generally more active at beginning of therapy.

3) Do **quick** evaluation solutions generated. 
   a) assess client’s expectancies 
   b) assess how realistic solutions are 
   c) look for potential obstacles

4) Recommend (or agree on) a solution for next time.

5) **Go back** to chain analysis.

5th **Summarize (over and over throughout and at end) sequence of links in chain and highlight important links and patterns.**