



Cautions for Use of Time Out as an Intervention Strategy

SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES

1. Can Time Out be used as an intervention for individuals served by the Division of Developmental Disabilities?

- Yes, but only in very limited situations.
- There must be a Behavior Support Plan.
- Seclusionary Time Out must be approved by the Chief Behavior Analyst in Central office.

2. What is Time Out?

- Temporary limiting the person's access to reinforcement contingent on an undesirable behavior.

3. There are two kinds of time out procedures: Exclusionary and Seclusionary.

a. Exclusionary – the individual is excluded from participation in the ongoing activity, but is not removed to a different location, and others in the area continue with their ongoing activities.

- This has been called “sit out” in school settings, when a child is required to sit on the sidelines for a brief time while other children play a game or continue with an activity.
- The child is still in the same area, the adults are able to observe both the child in time out and the other children, the child can still hear and see the other children.
- This type of time out sometimes occurs in planned ignoring strategies, when the person and their behavior is not responded to by others for a period of time.
- The key elements are that both the person and others stay in the situation, the person in “Time Out” merely unable to participate in the ongoing activity for a brief period of time.

b. Seclusionary – Any time the person is required to go to a different area, or stay in a particular area and not allowed to leave until authorized by someone.

- It is considered a Seclusionary Time Out if there is an element of coercion involved in the requirements and restriction of the person's freedom of movement. In other words, if the care provider is asking or telling the person to go and stay someplace has authority over, and/or control of resources, and/or some kind of power over the person who is being told to go to another location and stay there, the request to go to



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someplace to cool off should be interpreted as a limitation of the person's freedom of movement.

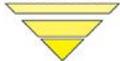
- It is considered Seclusionary Time Out if the person is not allowed to leave the area without permission of someone else. I.e. if the person decides without any element of coercion to go to the porch to "chill" after becoming upset, and the person can decide at any time, even if still upset and acting upset to leave the porch this would not be time out.
- Use of a special room is often part of the Seclusionary Time Out procedure.

4. Does Exclusionary Time Out require a Functional Assessment and Behavior Support Plan?

- Yes, It may only be used as part of a formal behavior support plan based on a Functional Behavioral Assessment and developed by a licensed professional and the care team.
- Exclusionary time out is considered a restricted intervention.
- In addition, best practice standards and evidence of effectiveness suggests this should be used sparingly as an intervention and as in any type of timeout procedure there must be a rich schedule of reinforcement for desirable behaviors, clear target behaviors for which the intervention is used and it should be consistently applied.
- It is unlikely to be effective if over used and may escalate a person's behavior.

5. Does Seclusionary Time Out require a Functional Behavioral Assessment and Behavior Support Plan (BSP)?

- Yes, a Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) is required in addition to a formal behavior support plan written by a licensed behavioral professional. The FBA must be completed and it must determine that the function of the undesirable behavior is such that a time out intervention is unlikely to function as reinforcement or escalate the behavior.
- The BSP must include specifications for reinforcement of alternative desirable behaviors, and a general level of reinforcement and enriched environment, specifications for monitoring, location, documentation, safety protocols while the person is in the time out location, duration and contingencies if the time out exceeds the upper time limit, and exit criteria and procedures are some of the elements that must be included in the BSP. In addition the BSP must be reviewed by the regional behavior support review committee and human rights committees and use of seclusion time out must be approved by the Chief Behavior Analyst in Central Office.





- Department Operating Regulation 4.145 specifies how Seclusionary Time Out can be used and the requirements for a time out location.
- In addition, best practice standards and evidence of effectiveness suggests this should be used sparingly as an intervention and as in any type of timeout procedure there must be a rich schedule of reinforcement for desirable behaviors, clear target behaviors for which the intervention is used and is should be consistently applied.

6. If I call an intervention something other than time out can I avoid these requirements?

- No, it is not what an intervention is called that is important, it is what is done. If the intervention meets the definition of time out, these requirements must be followed.

7. Can I use time out as an emergency procedure or in a crisis, without a behavior support plan?

- No, time out requires a behavior support plan.
- The person you are supporting should have a safety crisis plan that specifies a series of interventions to attempt to prevent or respond to dangerous behaviors.
- If time out is being considered the requirements previously described must be followed.

8. Do behavior support plans with time out as part of the intervention have to be reviewed by the Human Rights Committee?

- Yes, restricting someone's right to movement or be involved in the ongoing activities is considered restrictive.
- There is potential for abuse and for making the behavior worse if the procedure is used incorrectly or in the wrong circumstances.



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9. Under what circumstances might a Time Out intervention be appropriate?

All of these must be true:

- A Functional Behavioral Assessment of the target behavior has determined that time out is unlikely to reinforce the behavior or escalate the situation.
- It has been determined that implementing time out is safe, unlikely to involve unsafe physical intervention/assistance, injury to self while in time out, or problems with health like seizures, blood sugar levels, etc.
- The setting is rich in positive, engaging activities and events, there are frequent positive, nurturing, warm interactions consistently in the setting, there have been positive, clear expectations developed, taught and reinforcement is consistently available to the person for meeting these expectations.
- It is very likely that the time out intervention will be consistently and correctly implemented by all of those who are assisting/supporting the individual.
- The person is significantly disruptive in the setting when engaging in the targeted behavior and/or endangering others by remaining a part of the setting when engaging in the targeted behaviors.

10. How long should a Time Out be?

- There is no scientific evidence that long time outs are more effective.
- There is evidence that very brief periods (a few minutes or seconds in many instances) of time out can be effective in reducing problem behavior if time out is used appropriately.
- If the time out is long it removes the person from learning opportunities and is more likely to result in escalated behaviors.
- Often time out involves requiring the individual to demonstrate a brief period of calm as the criteria for ending time out
- BSPs with Seclusionary Time Out must include steps for the implementers to take if an instance of time out lasts more than an hour.
- BSP should contain specific directions to teach individual how to achieve a calm state.



11. Do these requirements apply for a child or adult living in their family home?

- Yes, IF any support from the Division of Developmental disabilities is provided to fund the implementation of the time out procedure. For example: a person whose parent is providing self- directed supports hires personal assistants who are going to implement the time out as part of their job responsibilities.
- No, if the family is implementing the procedure on their own and without funding or oversight by the Division or any of the Division’s funded or funding entities.

12. How does a support team get permission to use a Seclusionary Time Out procedure?

- The licensed behavior support professional can request the support coordinator submit the plan and supporting Functional Behavioral Assessment to the Chief Behavior Analyst for review.
- The Chief Behavior Analyst can be contacted through the Regional Office Director.
- This review can occur prior to the Human Rights Committee Review.
- The Chief Behavior Analyst will utilize the Safe Room Request Tool to evaluate the proposed Behavior Support Plan with time out procedure, the time out area/room that would be used, the current Individual Support plan and recent data supporting the need for such a restrictive procedure.