

Tools of Choice: Universal Strategies for Improved Relationships and Reduced Crisis Behaviors

Mike Stoutimore, Ph.D. BCBA LBA

Teresa Rodgers, Ph.D. BCBA LBA

Department of Mental Health, Division of Developmental Disabilities

ABOUT THE TOOLS OF CHOICE

✓Tools of Choice and the training method for the classes are founded on the technology from the science of applied behavior analysis. The training method is called Behavioral Skills Training and involves didactic instruction, demonstration of correct and incorrect and practice with feedback.

✓Tools were developed by behavior analysts working in child welfare, and adapted for use with others. Several Universities have been involved in the development.

✓Tools are skills with many components like the many component skills for basketball, painting, driving, surgery, etc. Like any complex skill they must be practiced well to be performed well and to get the best results.

✓Tools have been utilized in child welfare, residential treatment centers, forensic facilities, developmental disabilities since 1995 (Florida, Texas, Alabama and others).

✓Last year over 1000 persons attended Tools classes and over 150 Tools courses were held across the state.

✓When support persons or family members learn and use the Tools they often report that problem behaviors are reduced or eliminated.

CONTACT

Mike Stoutimore or Terri Rodgers
Dept of Mental Health/Division of Developmental Disabilities
Email: mike.stoutimroe@dmh.mo.gov
Teresa.rodgers@dmh.mo.gov

What does learning the Tools do for you?

✓How to “do” the philosophy and concepts from Positive Behavior Supports and Person Centered Strategies in everyday situations. Tools are “Universal Strategies” on the PBS triangle.

✓Learn to develop positive relationships with others.

✓Learn to prevent problem situations and de-escalate most behavioral crisis situations and help someone in emotional distress.

✓Learn to teach, promote and encourage desirable behaviors.

✓Understand and be able to identify what is coercive and the effects of coercion.

✓Understand that coercive interactions are a large part of the problem.

What does a Tools Training Involve?

✓Minimum of 6 classes- 18 hours, more if necessary to achieve competency

✓Three hours each class – approx 1.5 hours of presentation and discussion and 1.5 hours of demonstration and practice with feedback

✓Homework and practice between classes

✓On sight follow up, coaching with observation and feedback in addition to class hours

✓Assistance in building a system that promotes Tool use

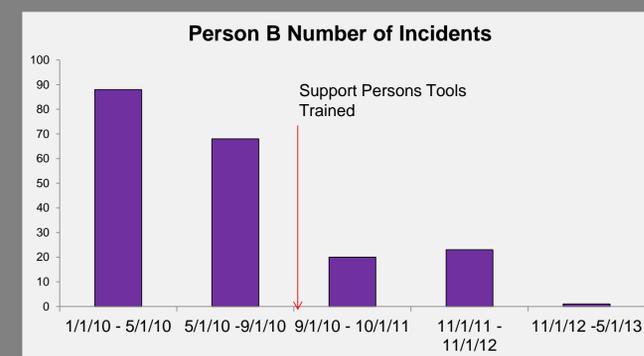
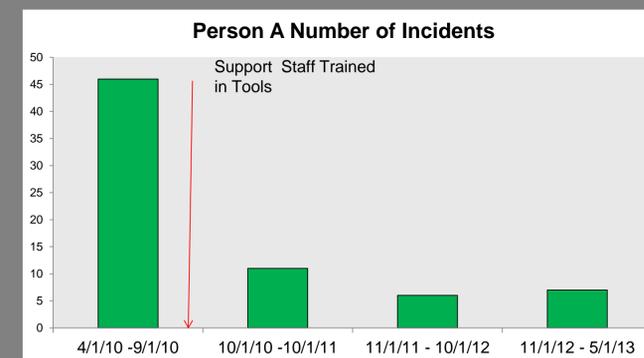
✓No cost to DD Agency or Individual receiving DD supports

✓Available to individuals and their support persons who are eligible for DD services

Table 1 The tools and When to Use Them

Name Of The Tool	When Is The Tool Used?
AVOID COERCION	All the time, in all situations
STAY CLOSE – COOL, ROUTINE AND RANDOM	Regularly, in good times and typical situations, as often as possible
STAY CLOSE – HOT	When emotions are high, something bad has happened, serious behavior may occur or has just occurred
USE REINFORCEMENT	When you want to see more of a behavior (when desirable, healthy, appropriate behavior occurs)
PIVOT	For junk behavior- (behavior that is not harmful to self, others or property- BUT is Annoying, Undesirable)
SET EXPECTATIONS	Before a problem situation, or a new situation or requirement

Do the Tools Really Work?



How do the Tools relate to the Continuum of Supports?

What are Universal Strategies?

Positive, Proactive, Preventative & Teaching based strategies that we should all use consistently and continuously. When people in our lives use these strategies we all benefit and for most people this would result in a quality life with fewer crises and behavior problems.

Example: Support professionals or families consistently use reinforcement and other Tools of Choice, such as Set Expectations and respond with Stay Close Hot when tempers or behaviors escalate.

REFERENCES

- Latham, G. (1994). Power of Positive Parenting. P&T inc.
Stoutimore, M.R., Williams, C.E., Neff, B., & Foster, M. (2008). The Florida Child Welfare Behavior Analysis Services Program. *Research on Social Work Practice* 18(5), 367-376.
Crosland, K.A., Cigales, M., Dunlap, G., Neff, B., Clark, H.B., Giddings, T. & Blanco, A. (2008). Using Staff Training to Decrease the Use of Restrictive Procedures at Two Facilities for Foster Care Children. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 18 (5)401-409.

Continuum of Support

