Lesson Guide

76. Maladaptive Behaviors: Bolting

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Maladaptive Behaviors: Bolting

Overview

<table>
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<th>Operational Definition:</th>
<th>Bolting is when a child leaves an instructed area or safe area and without permission to do so. This can take the form of running off or wandering off. This could happen inside or outside of the home. Sometimes referred to as elopement.</th>
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<td>Function:</td>
<td>The purpose of the behavior can be sensory, escape, attention, and/or tangible.</td>
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### Bolting (Inside The Home):

- a) Direct child to return to the area.
- b) If child doesn’t return upon your directive, remind child what child is working for (e.g., ‘Remember: You finish 2 more problems and you earn computer time’).
- c) If child does not return, you can follow up by asking a question such as “What do you want?” (If you suspect that child is bolting towards something) or “Want a break?” (If you suspect that child is bolting away from a task) and prompt your child to reply as needed.
- d) If child bolted from task, explain to child “First work, then (the requested item/activity,”) accompanied by a visual if needed. Ensure that child completes at least one brief portion of the task before granting the break/item. Child then will be returned to remainder of task after break/item.
- e) If child was not under demand (‘working’) prior to bolting, honor child’s request (as can be done) as soon as child returns to area bolted from and after child has appropriately requested (with prompting as needed).
- f) If child still refuses to return, you can either ‘wait out’ the child or increase prompting to help the
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You can choose to wait the child out as is safe to do so and if you have the time to do so (a ‘wait out’ can be done if the child bolts to a safe area where reinforcers are not present and where the child will quickly become bored if the child stays there. If, however, the child bolts to the TV, for example, to watch a program, then waiting out will not work as the child can now watch TV instead of work and child has escaped the task. If you choose to wait the child out, every 30 seconds or so, briefly remind child of what child will earn upon returning to area and/or task) OR, if you don’t/can’t wait the child out, assist child back to the area, using least intrusive prompting.

g) **Within no more than one minute** of child’s arriving back in the designated area and remaining there, child should receive social praise.

h) Child should be immediately directed to an activity where s/he can be successful and quickly receive reinforcement to re-establish motivation (i.e., a simple task).

i) If the child had not completed a task before the bolting, child should then finish original task.

**Bolting (Outside):**

a) Stay as physically close to child as possible if child appears to be attempting to bolt or is bolting, to prevent child from running in the street or other dangerous situations. If possible, safely alert another adult for assistance (but do not leave child and do not decrease safe surveillance of the child).

b) Attempt to gain proximity to child (‘close the gap’) in as nonthreatening and unobtrusive manner as possible so as not to inadvertently trigger further fleeing or child changing the bolting to a game of chase.

c) Direct child to return to a safe environment/situation.

d) Don’t yell or scream at child during bolting behavior as is possible, so as to not exacerbate...
the behavior further. Use a calm even tone when addressing the child as is possible to do so.

e) If child is not complying and requires further assistance, using least intrusive prompts necessary, assist child to comply with returning to a safe environment, fading prompting as soon as it is no longer needed.

f) If at any time child is in a potentially dangerous situation during bolting that you cannot control, call 911 as soon as possible, as needed.

g) When child is returned to a safe environment, practice one appropriate behavior/simple task with child to get child back on track.

h) Provide at least praise once child is back on track.

i) If the child had not completed a task before the bolting, child should then finish original task.

j) If child had bolted for access, review with child appropriate ways to request access.

k) If child had bolted for escape, review with child appropriate ways to gain escape/delay.

General Strategies:

- Steps to Social Success and role-playing strategies regarding bolting are recommended to allow child to practice what child can do instead of bolting.

- Giving the child clear expectations, including predictive notification of daily events and transitions.

- Token/point system is recommended, not just for overall appropriate behaving, but also in place during work times to display visually the child's accomplishments and what child is working for.

- Utilizing safety strategies to prevent child from being able to bolt out of the home or while out in the community.
Teach

- Child to ask for help/assistance appropriately.

- Functional communication training (vocal speech; PECs; Sign Language) to teach the child to more appropriately ask to access preferred items/activities and to appropriately request a break from a task or a delay to a task (e.g., "May I have one more minute on the computer, please?").

- Coping strategies (e.g., counting to 10; deep breathing).

- Teach child to respond to stop/go/wait commands in a fun way during structured game play (e.g., "Red Light, Green Light," "Simon Says," and "Statues").

- Teach child community safety signs and community safety rules.