

Sample Behavioral Parent Training Syllabus With Embedded Deliberate Practice Exercises

APPENDIX



This appendix provides a sample one-semester, three-unit course dedicated to teaching behavioral parent training (BPT). This course is appropriate for graduate students (master's and doctoral students) at all levels of training, including first-year students who have not yet worked with clients. If a limited BPT course is offered, or the content of BPT is integrated within another course, aspects of the syllabus and associated exercises can be adapted for use in such a course, in a practicum, in didactic training events at externships and internships, in workshops, and in a continuing education program for postgraduate therapists.

Course Title: Behavioral Parent Training: Theory, Clinical Activities, and Deliberate Practice

Course Description

This course teaches beginning practitioners the theory, principles, and core clinical skills of behavioral parent training (BPT). This course has both didactic and practical elements; it reviews the theory and research on BPT to formulate and understand client problems and employs the deliberate practice approach to guide students to acquire 12 key BPT skills.

Course Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to

1. describe the core theory and clinical skills of BPT,
2. apply the principles of deliberate practice for career-long clinical skill development in BPT,
3. demonstrate key BPT skills,
4. evaluate how practitioners can use BPT skills in their work with clients' presenting with several clinical presentations, and
5. employ BPT with clients from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds.

Date	Lecture and Discussion	Skills Lab	Readings
Week 1	Introduction to behavioral parent training (BPT): History, theory, and research	Exercise 1: Psychoeducation About Behavioral Parent Training	Eyberg et al. (2008) Forehand et al. (2014) Kaehler et al. (2016) Kaminski & Claussen (2017) Patterson (1982) Reitman & McMahon (2013) Wierson & Forehand (1994)
Week 2	Common, shared, and unique aspects of BPT; psychoeducation about functions of child behaviors for parents	Exercise 2: Psychoeducation About the Functions of Child Behaviors	Barnhill (2005) Chronis et al. (2004) Fettig & Barton (2014) Miller & Lee (2013)
Week 3	The role of emotion in BPT; introduction to principles and advantages of deliberate practice	Exercise 3: Identifying and Validating Parent Affect	Collard & O'Kelly (2011) Rathus & Miller (2015) Rousmaniere (2016) Rousmaniere et al. (2017) Rueger et al. (2011) Tracey et al. (2014)
Week 4	Teaching parents how to use praise effectively within BPT: Specificity matters!	Exercise 4: Teaching Parents How to Provide Praise	Barkley (2013) Kazdin (2005) McNeil & Hembree-Kigin (2010)
Week 5	The role of attention in BPT; teaching parents about positive and negative attention	Exercise 5: Teaching Parents to Provide Positive Attention	Barkley (2013) McNeil & Hembree-Kigin (2010)
Week 6	Why, how, and where to use extinction and planned ignoring within BPT	Exercise 6: Teaching Planned Ignoring With Positive Attention	Kazdin (2005) Kazdin (2017)
Week 7	Parent communication strategies to increase positive behavior	Exercise 7: Teaching Parents About Effective Communication	Barkley & Robin (2014) Greene & Ablon (2006) McNeil & Hembree-Kigin (2010)
Week 8	Midterm paper due Self-evaluation and skill feedback	Mock BPT sessions (beginner profiles)	Not applicable
Week 9	Incentivizing change: Changing behavior through rewards	Exercise 8: Teaching Parents How to Implement Positive Incentives to Bring About Behavioral Change	Barkley (2013) Barkley & Robin (2014)
Week 10	Teaching parents how to deliver consequential interventions when needed	Exercise 9: Teaching Parents About Consequence Interventions	Kazdin (2005) Kazdin (2008) Lieneman & McNeil (2023) Michelson et al. (2013)
Week 11	Teaching parents to manage their own thoughts, emotions, and behaviors	Exercise 10: Providing Strategies for Parent Affect Management	Hajal & Paley (2020) Leahy (2017) Morris et al. (2017) Rueger et al. (2011) Zimmer-Gembeck et al. (2022)
Week 12	Anticipating and managing challenges outside of the home	Exercise 11: Teaching Parents About Managing Behavior in Public Settings	Barkley (2013)
Week 13	Where change happens: The work between sessions	Exercise 12: Development of Homework Assignments	Chacko et al. (2009) Chacko et al. (2013) Danko et al. (2016) Nock & Kazdin (2005) Ros et al. (2017)
Week 14	Organizing the skills into a whole session	Mock BPT sessions (intermediate and advanced profiles)	Not applicable
Week 15	Final paper due Final exam Self-evaluation and skill feedback	Exam	Exercise 13: Annotated Behavioral Parent Training Practice Session Transcript

Format of Class

Classes are 3 hours long. Course time is split evenly between learning BPT theory (lecture/discussion) and acquiring and practicing BPT skills.

Lecture/Discussion Class: Each week, class focuses on one lecture/discussion topic for 1.5 hours explaining an aspect of BPT theory and intervention activities.

BPT Skills Lab: Each week there will be one BPT Skills Lab for 1.5 hours, during which students will rehearse the BPT skill being covered that week across several clinical problems typically presented by clients seeking psychotherapy. The Skills Labs primarily focus on practicing BPT skills using the exercises in this BPT deliberate practice book. The exercises use therapy simulations (role-plays), which are designed to accomplish the following goals:

1. Build trainees' skill and confidence for using BPT skills with real client problems.
2. Provide students the opportunity to engage in highly structured and repetitive deliberate practice exercises that rehearse the BPT skills.
3. Provide a safe space for experimenting with different therapeutic skills and interventions, without fear of criticism or making mistakes.
4. Provide opportunities for beginning therapists to explore different styles of therapy so that they can discover their own personal, unique therapy style.

Mock Sessions: Twice in the semester (Weeks 8 and 14), trainees will do a psychotherapy mock session using the skills taught in the BPT Skills Lab. The psychotherapy mock sessions are unstructured role-played therapy sessions. Mock sessions allow trainees to

1. practice using BPT skills accurately,
2. experiment with clinical decision making concerning which skill to employ in an unscripted context,
3. discover their personal therapeutic style, and
4. build self-efficacy for working with real clients.

Homework

Homework will be assigned each week and will include reading, 1 hour of skills practice with an assigned practice partner, and occasional writing assignments. For the skills practice homework, trainees will repeat the exercise they did for that week's BPT Skills Lab. Because the instructor will not be present to evaluate performance, trainees should complete the Deliberate Practice Reaction Form and the Deliberate Practice Diary Form as self-evaluations.

Writing Assignments

Students are to write two papers: one due at midterm and one due on the last day of class. The first paper will explore one aspect of BPT theory or the empirical literature on BPT. The second paper will involve the completion of a BPT case formulation.

Multicultural Orientation

This course is taught in a multicultural context, defined as "how the cultural world-views, values, and beliefs of the client and therapist interact and influence one another to co-create a relational experience that is in the spirit of healing" (Davis et al., 2018,

p. 3). Core features of the multicultural orientation include cultural comfort, humility, and responding to cultural opportunities (or previously missed opportunities). Throughout this course, students are encouraged to reflect on their own cultural identity and improve their ability to attune with their clients' cultural identities (Hook et al., 2017). For further guidance on this topic and deliberate practice exercises to improve multicultural skills, see the book *Deliberate Practice in Multicultural Therapy* (Harris et al., 2024).

Vulnerability, Privacy, and Boundaries

In accordance with the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (American Psychological Association, 2017), students are **not required to disclose personal information**. Because this class is about developing both interpersonal and BPT competence, following are some important points so that students are fully informed as they make choices to self-disclose:

- Students choose how much, when, and what to disclose. Students are not penalized for the choice not to share personal information.
- The learning environment is susceptible to group dynamics much like any other group space, and therefore students may be asked to share their observations and experiences of the class environment with the singular goal of fostering a more inclusive and productive learning environment.

Confidentiality

To create a safe learning environment that is respectful of client and therapist information and diversity and to foster open and vulnerable conversation in class, students are required to agree to strict confidentiality within and outside of the instruction setting.

Evaluation

Self-Evaluation: At the end of the semester (Week 15), trainees will perform a self-evaluation. This will help trainees track their progress and identify areas for further development. The Guidance for Trainees section in Chapter 3 of this book highlights potential areas of focus for self-evaluation.

Grading Criteria

Students will be evaluated on the level and quality of their performance in

- the lecture/discussion,
- the skills lab (exercises and mock sessions),
- weekly homework assignments,
- midterm and final papers, and
- a final exam.

Recommended and Required Readings

Arnold, L. E., Hodgkins, P., Kahle, J., Madhoo, M., & Kewley, G. (2020). Long-term outcomes of ADHD: academic achievement and performance. *Journal of Attention Disorders*, 24(1), 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1087054714566076>

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