Sooner School District

Functional Behavioral Assessment

**Student:** Sam Warwick  
**Grade:** 9th grade  
**Date:** 9-25-2012  
**Building/Site:** Sooner High School

**PROBLEM STATEMENT:**
Sam is a 9th grade student who currently attends Sooner High School. Currently Sam has at least one full time assistant with him and is in a self-contained classroom. The schedule for Sam depends on his behavior. If he is compliant, he will attend the classes of his peers in the special education classroom. If he has challenging behavior, the paraprofessional will take him into a room by himself and work with him if possible. Sam started a new school in the fall at the High School, however, Sam had the same challenging behaviors at the Junior High School.

A Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) was completed to identify the function(s) of Sam’s behaviors and to assess the impact of these behaviors on his academic and social functioning. Sam is having challenging behavior in the school that includes: scratching other people, destroying classroom academic activities, and hitting himself on the head with his fist.

**TARGET BEHAVIOR:**
Based on the interviews and observation, the target behavior for the assessment will be:
- Scratching others on the forearm during academic activities
- Tearing up written academic activities at his desk

**BASELINE DATA:**

**INDIRECT ASSESSMENT**

**Record Review:**
Sam is currently on an IEP and receives: special education services, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. Sam is significantly behind academically as compared to his same age peers. Sam has good attendance, but has been sent home from school ten times since the Fall semester. He has also been suspended from school on two different occasions for one day following a challenging behavior.

**Parent Interview:**
An interview was completed with Jane Warwick, Sam’s mother, on September 1, 2012 by Tara Smith, special education teacher.

Sam is not currently taking any medications. Sam receives psychology services occasionally, but no other outside services. Mrs. Warwick stated she has difficulty getting Sam to sleep at night. He is toilet trained, but will have occasional accidents at night. Mrs. Warwick stated that she has similar concerns as the school. At home, Sam has the following challenging behavior: hitting/scratching others and destroying materials.

According to mom, Sam can communicate verbally, however, sometimes what he says does not match what he really means. He will often quote things he has heard on a movie or heard

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other people saying. Sam really enjoys playing on the computer, taking pictures, and painting. He does not have access to computer or camera at home anymore because he has broken them both on several occasions. Mrs. Warwick stated that Sam has the best behavior when he knows exactly what is coming up. They will often write a list of what they are going to do on a piece of paper and that helps him. The list will typically end with something that he wants to do. His mom stated he has the most challenging behavior when he is asked to do something new or different or when he does not know what to do (down time).

Staff Interviews:
An interview was completed with Sam’s special education teacher and paraprofessional on September 1, 2012. Sam really enjoys computer, camera, and painting at school. He has broken one computer and one camera, so they cannot use those with him at school currently. When Sam is not having challenging behavior he is fun to be around and really enjoys the presence of other students. However, because of his size and the intensity of his behaviors, if he is having any signs of aggressive behavior they take him into a room by himself. Currently, the staff uses a visual schedule showing him what his day looks like. They use food as a reinforcer when he does his work. The behaviors they are most concerned about include: scratching others, destroying materials, and hitting himself on the head.

The staff completed a routine inventory in order to help guide the observation. According to the routine inventory, he is most likely to have problem behaviors during language arts, math, daily living, and during transitions that involve waiting.

MOTIVATION ASSESSMENT SCALE
The Motivation Assessment Scale (MAS) is an instrument used to assist in determining the particular function of a child's behavior. The scale evaluates whether the child’s behavior is primarily due to sensory or internal factors, need for attention, desire to escape an activity/situations, or a wanting a tangible item or activity. Each of these functions receives a ranking of 1 to 4, with a rank of one indicating the MOST likely function of the behavior. The MAS was completed by Mrs. Warwick, Sam’s mother and his special education teacher.

According to scores on the MAS, scratching behavior in the school and home settings may primarily serve the function of escape the situation or to obtain a break. According to scores on the MAS, destroying materials in the home and school setting may primarily serve the function of obtaining help. According to scores on the MAS, hitting himself on the head in the home and school setting may primarily serve the function of obtaining a desired item.

DIRECT ASSESSMENT:
OBSERVATION
The observation was at Sam’s high school on September 2nd, 2012 from 10:15 -12:30. During the two hours, Sam was in the special education classroom by himself with his paraprofessional. His special education teacher stated that he got off the bus and went after another student, so they did not feel comfortable with him being in the classroom with his peers. Sam’s schedule was written on the dry erase board. The activities written on the door were all his activities from the beginning of the day to the end of the day. The team was working with Sam on the following activities: folding clothes, math problems, and a worksheet with survival signs. Two times when Sam was asked to do an activity, he would start to push away the activity; the para would put it back in front of him. Both times Sam
then scratched his teacher until she stopped the work with him. When the teacher presented him the worksheet, he tore up the worksheet and she changed activities. The teacher reported that both of those activities were activities that are difficult for Sam. During the observation, Sam did not hit himself on the head.

**ABC DATA**

Data was collected by staff from Sooner High School for 12 school days (September 5-September 21) on the identified behaviors. A total of 21 behavior (10 were scratching, 6 were destroying materials, and 5 were hitting himself on the head) events were recorded.

**Scratching others:**
Sam had ten instances of scratching. According to the data, he is more likely to scratch others when he needs a break from an activity. Currently, the behavior stops when the teacher/para gives him a break from the situation. Based on the data collection, scratching appears to serve the purpose of obtaining a break from academic work.

**Destroying materials:**
Sam had six instances of destroying his academic materials at his desk. He is most likely to destroy materials when he is presented with a new or difficult task. Currently, the behavior stops when he gets help with the activity or the teacher takes the activity away. Based on the data collection, destroying materials appears to serve the purpose of obtaining help.

**Hitting Self:**
Sam had five instances of hitting himself on the head. He is most likely to hit himself on the head when he has to wait in between activities. Currently, the behavior stops when he gets a structure activity or preferred activity. Based on the data collection, hitting himself on the head appears to serve the purpose of gaining a preferred or structured activity.

**ANALYSIS OF DATA:**

Based on parent and staff interviews, observations, and data collection, the behaviors (scratching others, destroying materials, and hitting himself on the head) identified by the team appear to serve the functions of escaping a difficult activity, obtaining help, or to obtain a preferred activity or structured activity.

**HYPOTHESIS:**

1. When Sam needs a break from the activity, Sam will scratch the teacher in order to escape the activity.
2. When Sam is presented with a new or difficult task, Sam will destroy the activity in order to get help with the activity.
3. When Sam has to wait, Sam will hit himself on the head in order to obtain a structured or preferred activity.