

Behavior Problems (10-26-01)

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Guidelines for Completing the ICAP/SIB-R Problem Behavior Scale (Updated October, 2001)

Gayle 334-5722

A. Does the client have this type of behavior problem?

- o The ICAP/SIB-R has eight categories of problem behavior, with examples listed within each category. The examples listed for this and for other categories are only to explain what the categories mean, not to suggest that they are a problem for a particular individual. Many behaviors, even if listed as examples, may not be problems if they are mild, infrequent, or age appropriate.
- o Inability to learn, or simple lack of adaptive behavior, should not be considered to be a behavior problem. Nor do behavior problems include behaviors that are chronologically age appropriate, such as a baby who cries or a toddler who repeatedly says "no" or who digs in the cupboards.
- o Behaviors that typically occur together or within a few minutes of each other should be considered to be a single problem and categorized as a single type. For example, kicking, shouting, and being uncooperative as part of a tantrum should be listed under *either* hurts others *or* disruptive *or* uncooperative. Do not list what is essentially one problem under more than one category. Use the single category that is most descriptive.
- o If an individual has more than one type of problem behavior within a single category, specify the one type of behavior that causes the biggest problem, and rate this behavior for frequency and severity.

B. How often does this behavior usually occur?

- o Count the actual number of occurrences, not potential occurrences.
- o Count episodes of a behavior as a single occurrence.
- o Count episodes as separate occurrences if they happen more than an 10 minutes apart.
- o Count the total episodes of the behavior during waking hours in all environments.
- o Rate the behavior's frequency based on its frequency during the most recent month. If it didn't occur every day, rate it as 1-6 times a week; if not every week, rate it as 1-3 times a month; if not this month (but it is documented as still a problem), rate it as less than once a month.
- o If the behavior occurs at least once every day (including weekends) but the frequency varies from day to day, rate the frequency on the majority of the days in the week.
- o If the behavior occurs daily, but the frequency varies from hour to hour, rate the behavior as "hourly" if it occurs during more than half the hours in the waking day; otherwise rate it as "daily."

C. How serious is the problem usually caused by this behavior?

- 0 - Not serious, not a problem
 - Odd, eccentric, peculiar.
 - Not everyone considers it to be a problem.
- 1 - Slightly serious, a mild problem
 - Annoying, embarrassing, worrisome.
 - Considered to be a problem, but not necessarily in all environments.
 - Can usually be managed by common sense and a structured environment.
 - Does not seriously limit activities.

- 2 - Moderately serious, a moderate problem
 - Objectionable, unacceptable.
 - A problem in all environments.
 - Addressed by an individualized objective, with written procedures.
 - Limits some activities.

- 3 - Very serious, a severe problem
 - Frightening, repulsive, dangerous.
 - #1 ranked individualized objective, with written procedures.
 - Frequency reduced only with constant vigilance and a highly structured environment.
 - Difficult or impossible for a single staff person to control when it occurs.
 - Precludes some activities/environments that can't be structured.

- 4 - Extremely serious, a critical problem
 - May be life-threatening.
 - Individualized objective and written record of every occurrence of the behavior.
 - Frequency difficult to reduce.
 - Consequences difficult to minimize.

Questions About Completing Problem Behavior Items

How can a behavior such as "biting nails" be compared to a much more serious one such as hurting other people?

- o *Biting nails* is listed as an example of behavior that is *Hurtful to Self*. The question asks "Does [name] injure his/her own body -- for example by ..." The examples listed for this and for other categories are only to explain what the categories mean, not to suggest that they are a problem for a particular individual. Many behaviors, even if listed as examples, may not be problems if they are mild, infrequent, or age appropriate.
- o The General Maladaptive Index weights different categories of behavior differently. In scoring, *Hurtful to Others* is weighted more heavily than *Hurtful to Self*, for example.

What about the seriousness of behaviors that differ in different environments, in daytime versus residential settings for example?

- o Consistent with the guidelines above, a behavior considered to be a problem, but not in all environments, should probably be rated as *Slightly serious, a mild problem*.
- o A behavior considered to be a problem in all environments, or a behavior that is more than a mild problem in a setting in which the individual regularly spends a significant proportion of time, should probably be rated *Moderately serious, a moderate problem* if it limits some activities and, at least in the most problematical setting, is addressed by a written objective or procedure to reduce or manage it.
- o The rating for seriousness in the most problematical setting should not exceed its rating in the less problematical setting by more than one point.

What about cyclical behaviors, such as with some mental illnesses, that come and go?

- o Rate a behavior's frequency based on its frequency during the most recent month. If it didn't occur every day, rate it as 1-6 times a week; if not every week, rate it as 1-3 times a

month; if not this month, rate it as less than once a month, provided that it is still documented to be a problem.

- o If the last month is atypical of year-round behavior, as might be the case for certain mental health problems that currently are/are not in remission, intensity of supervision should vary throughout the year to match the behavior. Complete the maladaptive behavior scale based on the current month's behavior, or rate it as *less than once a month*, and if necessary, handle staff intensity on an exception basis that varies throughout the year.

What about behaviors so serious that they are never allowed to occur, such as sexually aberrant behavior, theft, or arson?

- o These behaviors would probably be rated as quite serious, but less than once a month, provided that they are still documented to be a problem. Rate actual frequency of occurrence.
- o Implications for supervision or staffing would probably be that the individual would require 24-hour supervision by one or two adults, but not on a one-to-one basis. A staff person (two if necessary for intervention) could work with a number of clients while keeping an eye on this one, intervening only when necessary to prevent the behavior. If the individual's adaptive behavior limitations necessitate 24-hour supervision anyway, it might not be necessary to handle staffing/funding on an exception basis.

Questions or comments? E-mail them to Brad Hill at bhill@isd.net

ICAP homepage

SIB-R homepage

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