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## **Empathic Training for Youth - by Mark Amendola**

### **The evolution of Aggression Replacement Training (ART)**

(Goldstein, Glick, Gibbs, Revised Edition 1998, Research Press) has continued into the 21st century. The understanding of the application of ART has grown not only in North America, but has gained wide popularity in Europe, especially in the Scandinavian countries.

The attraction to ART has been not only its evidence based practices, but its hands-on practical application for teachers, social workers, and counselors alike. It has been critical that ART has continued to maintain program integrity and fidelity regarding implementation of its practices.

The continued use of the Prepare Curriculum: Teaching Pro Social Skills (Goldstein, 1999, Research Press) has also provided hands on practical use of modules beyond the three original ART components of anger management, social skills building and moral reasoning. Modules, such as problem solving, situational perception training, empathy and cooperation training, have nicely augmented the competencies found in the ART curriculum.

"Prepare Curriculum is a series of coordinated psychoeducational courses explicitly designed to teach an array of prosocial psychological competencies to adolescents and younger children demonstrably deficient in such competencies. It seeks to teach interpersonal skills to aggressive, antisocial youth as well as to those who are withdrawn and socially isolated. It seeks to teach empathy to the insensitive, cooperativeness to the uncooperative, problem

solving to those with inadequate decision-making skills, negotiating skills to the acting out, anger control to the impulsive, allocentrism to the egocentric, group processes to the isolated, stress management to the anxious, social perceptiveness to the socially confused, and more. It has been an ambitious curriculum since its inception (Goldstein, 1988), yet one that now rests on a decade of demonstrated effectiveness."

One of the critical problems with children who have skill deficit is that they often view their world as a hostile

**The Prepare Curriculum broadens the scope of ART's effectiveness by adding stress reduction and prejudice reduction skills.**

place to be responded to with equal vigor. While ART works on immediate aggression reduction, the Prepare Curriculum broadens the scope of ART's

effectiveness by adding stress reduction and prejudice reduction skills. It also focuses on building internal motivations to succeed and on expanding a youth's behavioral repertoire.

Central to its documented success, however, is the Prepare Curriculum's flexibility. Its 10 course offerings may be adapted and augmented to respond to a range of youth trainee responses; to incorporate an array of transfer and maintenance-enhancing procedures; and to reach into a young person's real-world system - functions that create greater generalization of gain.

"There is nothing magical about the 10 courses areas we have selected for development," wrote Dr. Goldstein in concluding his curriculum text. "It is our hope and expectation that the Prepare Curriculum will remain perpetually in transition, being implemented, evaluated, altered, and when appropriate, expanded."

## Encouraging Study of Treatment Effects: Lasting Intervention Results After Treatment at The Oasis

**Research on intervention methods within the field of child and youth care is not extensive in Sweden.** However, most professionals seem to be in agreement on one thing - that the best results for children with behavioral problems are produced through early intervention implementation, preferably before puberty.

"This is exactly the age group that we at The Oasis are focused on," says Samuel Fransson, assistant director and head of childcare for the children's unit. "Even though we could see that our intervention methods yielded positive results, until now we were unable to describe the results systematically."



*Samuel Fransson*

During the spring of 2004, a follow-up was performed with the intention of finding out if treatment had been effective, and results lasting for students, their families and their placement authorities. "We were able to contact the social workers for 35 of the 40 children who had been placed at the children's unit from 1998-2003. The results were surprising even to us," explains Samuel Fransson.

### **Tangible, lasting results**

The follow-up shows that the intervention time at The Oasis has yielded tangible and lasting results, even several years after leaving The Oasis. The great-

est improvements were achieved regarding students' social skills and ability to function in a school environment. Improvement of social skills means, among other things, a greater ability to deal with conflicts and more adequate social behavior toward family, friends and others. Better results in students' behavior within the school environment means improved concentration capacity and more harmonious student-teacher relationships.

### **Continued development**

Fransson emphasizes that The Oasis staff is not "taking the day off" because of the positive results. Method development and education is an ongoing process at The Oasis, mainly with regard to Aggression Replacement Training (ART) and other cognitive-behavior-training methods. The Oasis' new school provides even better opportunities for integrating treatment and pedagogics.

"We not only develop treatment at The Oasis, but also try to meet the requests of placement authorities and families, providing a broad spectrum of service. This refers to, for example, various forms of follow-up plans to consolidate and reinforce achieved treatment results," says Fransson. When Fransson asked placement authorities what they thought about some form of follow-up intervention, not less than 60% were positive to the idea.

"We can tailor fit a follow-up program for each child or family. If the child doesn't come to us, we can go to the family," says Fransson. "Parents and foster parents can even be in need of tips and advice about how to manage their child in different situations. If necessary, such support can occur in a more structured form such as family ART," he concludes.

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## Reinforcing Youngsters Enhances Their Learning of ART

by Anna Maria Ferro

**Working with youngsters at Batshaw has directly exposed us to youth in crisis and a great majority of these children are placed with little or poor social skills.** This leaves us with the question of how do we manage to help youngsters carve out character traits that can help them to be the best person that they can be, long after they have left residential care?

Ah! This is where Aggression Replacement

Training (ART) comes in. We may have been using similar techniques to ART in the past, but with the formalized training we are receiving today, we have more strategies and tools to pass on to the children.

ART encompasses an array of skill building techniques that are important for developing a healthy self-esteem for the children with whom we work. It is with self-esteem that we are able to take risks and learn from them. All too often we are

faced with children who have a poor self-image and consequently, do poorly in various areas of their life - school being a big part! As educators, our role is to provide opportunities for growth while helping these children lead productive lives as members of society.

With our youngsters at Crossroads (a residential treatment facility for pre-adolescents with youth protection issues, ages 8-12), it is challenging to teach ART because the majority of the youth come from backgrounds where they struggle with self-expression, social and emotional development and have difficulties with relationship formation. The focal point then becomes how we motivate them so they want to participate in ART groups rather than having to participate. As a team, we at Crossroads provide positive feedback and gestures for a job well done, but we also provide more visible and tangible reinforcements such as charts, certificates, grab-bags and, our newest addition, the ART incentives program: "The Rewards Cabinet".

When this program was introduced to the group, it was explained to work like an Air Miles program (earned points instead of money). We first had a "special" cabinet built with plexi-glass windows, 3 shelves, and lights to illuminate the contents at all times of the day. Lighting up the interior makes the contents very enticing for the youth to look at. "The Rewards Cabinet" displays many items one can purchase varying in value. Tokens can be earned in



order for things to be exchanged for the tokens on "shopping day". To earn tokens, children must participate in our ART sessions in a positive manner, as indicated by our "happy face" chart. The definition of positive participation varies depending on the level and ability of the individual youngster. Once earned, these tokens may be spent on shopping day or saved for a later date toward a greater reward. Saving is encouraged and youth are taught different strategies on how to make saving their tokens easier. This incentive program helps to motivate children to participate in ART in a positive manner. An added benefit to this program is that it plants the seeds of skills that trainees will need in the future for money management.

This program has proven itself to be beneficial, because it provides the children with extrinsic motivators, which are valuable in teaching them to have greater self-control over their lives. These

strengths are essential in helping them to integrate into the community successfully. These extrinsic motivators can in turn create success experiences for children who have had few. These successes can then turn into the intrinsic motivators needed for the youth to truly internalize the concepts of ART and its expansions.

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## ART Reinforcement Strategies at Batshaw Youth and Family Centres - Montreal, Quebec, Canada - by Robert Calame & Kim Parker

In our ART annual review trainings at Batshaw Youth and Family Centres, we have been focusing on creating reinforcement strategies to enhance transfer of A.R.T. to our trainees' repertoire of skills. It is great to teach ART to children and to observe them understanding and trying to make changes. In reality, even when effectively taught ART, youth frequently choose not to use the skills or forget to use them. We recognize that skills need to be reinforced well to become internalized in the youth's repertoire.

We believe that the tendency for ART to be used appropriately can be significantly enhanced through the use of reinforcement strategies both inside and outside the ART training room. As a result we have been incorporating techniques from Appendix D: Transfer Coach (Goldstein et al. 1998 pps. 325-329), Dr. Goldstein's Workshop Addendum and from the innovative ideas that youth care workers, teachers and ART enthusiasts share in the ART international family. We would like to share a few of these ideas with you in the following brief article.

Firstly, we encourage all those involved in teaching ART to use the four specific techniques of Prompting, Encouraging, Reassuring, and Rewarding as found in "the Transfer Coach". What is most important in the youth's internalizing of the skills being taught, is practice.

Prompting youth how and when to use the skills outside the Skillstreaming session are excellent means to have the youth put into practice what they have learned in skill rehearsal. Coaching means prompting youth to practice and apply learned skills

Encouraging can also help the youth to choose to use the skill. Your enthusiasm for use of the skill and optimism for the likely outcome of its proper use can go a long way. Encourage youth to take the plunge and try it. Coaching is also encouraging them that by using the skill they increase the likelihood of more positive outcomes in their interpersonal relationships.

Reassuring youth tends to give trainees the needed boost they require to actually use the skill, when they know it but are wavering at the thought of trying it. A well placed "You can do it!" may just be what the youth needs to take the risk. Once the skill is successful that is the best reinforcement we can hope for. Coaching requires providing support and reassurance to the anxious youth.

Rewarding is the most potent reinforcement a coach can give to a youth trying to use the prosocial competencies of ART and the Prepare Curriculum. Finally as Dr. Goldstein explains, youth care interveners are very well-placed to be transfer coaches. Giving youth rewards for proper use of skills or positive character traits are the best reinforcers we have at our disposal.

The use of goodies, candy, trinkets or other treats have a limited short term use but can provide some motivation when first engaging youth in the curriculum.

Certain specific recognition strategies can produce strong reinforcing effects. Some are known as "Gotcha!" or "Caught ya skillin'!" type programs. In this type of strategy when teachers, youth care staff, parents, or other youth notice an ART trainee who is practicing a skill, using anger control, demonstrating empathy or a positive character trait, a reinforcement measure is applied. Means to reward the behavior should be planned and easily available for use as reinforcement. The successful youth can be given a token, voucher or written form of reward which can later be redeemed for something. Public recognition can also serve to powerfully reinforce the trainee's positive accomplishment at a youth meeting or special assembly.

The possibilities are limited only by the imagination of the transfer coach. In our agency, we have Pizza Programs, Popcorn Programs, Certificate programs, "Gotcha Assemblies", increases in allowances, the ART handshake, Individual recognition programs and Rewards programs similar to Air Miles programs etc., etc.

A potent means to reinforce the learning and application of A.R.T in a youth's life is to include the family and/or significant others to the youth's life in the process. For that reason Family ART and other ART approaches for families are being used in our agency and elsewhere in the ART international family. We would encourage ART enthusiasts around the world to adopt such a program. ICART board members around the world, including the undersigned, can help all interested to facilitate this type of Family-based initiative.

The most effective reward for the youth and families learning and applying ART techniques in their lives, is the success of the skills themselves. Multiple opportunities for practice become impor-

tant means for reinforcement. When trainees have ART practice assignments in residential care or in school settings or even at home, some tangible evidence that the skill works can quickly be transferred from experimentation by the youth/family to habitual practice of common sense interpersonal skills. Transfer coaches, be they trainers or parents, are then in a position to offer recognition and approval for youth's efforts in using ART skills by quickly pointing out positive effort and practical uses of these skills.

Another outstanding reinforcement strategy is teaching youth Empathy such as our colleague Dr. Sara Salmon outlines in her P.E.A.C.E. Curriculum. Our agency uses Dr. Salmon's Empathy program along with Dr. Goldstein's Empathy activities as outlined in the Prepare Curriculum. Finally we suggest the inclusion of service activities which allow youth to experience firsthand the plight of others at soup kitchens, homeless shelters etc. This has frequently had the effect of developing "other centeredness" in our youth when they finally understand they are not living the worst possible situation.

For ART and Prepare curriculum competencies to be internalized at the optimum rate, strategies for reinforcement are imperative to both trainer and parent as transfer coaches. Aggression Replacement Training offers a planned campaign in an effort to assist our troubled youth today. The creation of a positive culture of character is paramount in counteracting the aggression which exists in our schools and communities today. To accomplish this goal, we need to use programs such as ART which not only targets issues of anger management and social skills training, but one which also explores values and morals which are inherent in our youth.

To move our youth towards a more positive culture we must look at ART as a model which includes the critical element of Moral Reasoning. To reinforce Aggression Replacement is to work at having youth and families examining and changing their values. Dr

Goldstein's Prepare Curriculum offers expansions of ART in the form of Empathy Training and Cooperation Training (Goldstein 1999 pps 629-711) to name a few. Dr Salmon's PEACE curriculum offers expansions such as Character Education and Empathy training as well.

The most important reinforcement tools of an ART trainer are the character development components of ART and its complementary expansions. We must teach our youth not only how to behave with Skillstreaming, or how to manage their anger with Anger Control Training but we must be successful at providing opportunities for them to grow in character.

Anger control helps our youth develop skills for emotional control in highly charged situations. Skillstreaming helps our youth to develop behavioral skills for interpersonal interactions. Moral Reasoning and Character Education help our youth to develop positive values.

However, as an ART colleague of ours, Sam Barile, would say, "Our youth need Empathy development training as much as they need ART. Empathy Training helps our youth to have "heart". If we can teach our youth to have "heart" the reinforcement and internalization of ART will swiftly follow.

For questions about ART reinforcement strategies do not hesitate to contact members of the ICART advisory board, including the undersigned.

## References

- Goldstein, A.P., Glick, B., & Gibbs, J.C. (1998). *Aggression Replacement Training: A comprehensive intervention for aggressive youth (rev. ed.)*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.
- Goldstein, A.P. (1999) *The Prepare Curriculum: Teaching Prosocial Competencies (rev. ed.)*. Champaign IL: Research Press.

**ICART on the Web:**  
**[www.AggressionReplacementTraining.org](http://www.AggressionReplacementTraining.org)**

# News on ART in Swedish Prison and Probation Service

- by Ingrid Norberg

**Fourteen units in the Swedish Prison and Probation Service work with the Aggression Replacement Training (ART) program.**

We do ART program in units for:

- Young offenders in age 18-21 years old
- Adult men in high security prison
- Two units for men with psychiatric problems
- One unit for women in high security prison
- Young offenders in the probation service

The prisons are situated from the north part of Sweden (Lulea) to the most southern part of the country (Kristianstad).

Since June 2004, we have 72 educated trainees. To be a ART program leader (trainee) in our prison and probation service you have first of all to be a good member of the staff. You then receive ten days education and training in ART programmin and in Cognitive Behavior Theory (CBT). After that you have to do three programs with a group with all sessions recorded on video. When your videotapes are approved you have to do another two whole programs with a group, also recorded on video before you are able to get your certification. As an ART trainee, you get support from your trainers during all the education time. Every year the ART organization arranges a special ART day with "something new and something fun" for the trainees. It is also an opportunity for exchanging experiences.

In Swedish Prison and Probation Service we have recently adopted a program accreditation system similar to what you can find in England and

Scotland. All treatment programs must be based on evidence and be approved by the accreditation panel. In the panel, you will find eight members from different universities and three members from the Prison and Probation Service. This June, ART was one of the programs that was discussed in the accreditation panel. Later this year, in December, we will do a final application for accreditation. What we know is that we need to development the moral reasoning module. Some of the examples are not suitable for adult people.

In the prisons a lot of work is now concentrated on the environment outside the program room. We are trying to develop what we call a "transferring coach". The program leaders continued to work with the inmates after the program sessions and try to generalize the ART method in the daily life inside the prison. In this part, we feel that we are just in the beginning of a long and hard work. We have also noticed that the present ART program is not enough. We need to address more of the inmates' problem areas and are discussing the use of Dr. Goldstein's Prepare Curriculum, (which includes ART) instead.

Finally, we have to evaluate the program, but so far we have not found a good instrument. We have established a contact with the University of Lund (in the south part of Sweden) who will help us to find this evaluation instrument.

We are also happy to say that two of our ART team visited the ICART conference in Amsterdam in September 2004 and gained more knowledge about evaluation there.

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## Enhanced ART With Children & Youth With Autism Spectrum Disorder - by Luke Moynahan

**Research studying the effect of Aggression Replacement Training (ART) on children and youth with autism spectrum disorder and behavioral challenges** is being conducted at Glenne Autismesenter, Norway and the University of Ulster at Coleraine, Northern Ireland. Initial results indicate that with some modifications and enhancements the program is an appropriate strategy for improving social competence and replacement of aggressive responding in this population. Enhancement techniques are described that help tailor standard

ART to the demands of autism spectrum disordered children and youth.

The first two international ART seminars held in Malmö, Sweden revealed that ART is in use in at least 22 countries worldwide. Most applications are carried out with children and youth with, or at risk of developing, conduct disorders. At Glenne Autismesenter, part of the regional specialist habilitation service for autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in southeastern Norway, we are currently conducting research and clinical trials of both standard and

enhanced ART with children and youth with ASD (autism, atypical autism, Asperger's syndrome) in a variety of school, day care and respite care settings. The special strengths and requirements of children and youth with ASD, and especially those diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome (AS), have prompted us to undertake methodological enhancements of standard ART in order to motivate attendance and active participation in training sessions.

Asperger's syndrome (AS) is characterized first and foremost by severe problems in social interaction and communication, restricted spheres of interests and perseverant or compulsive behavior. At our clinic, all of the referrals received concerning children, youth and adults with AS between 1996 and 2002 concerned problems of aggressive behavior. This is a surprising finding given current diagnostic criteria for AS. Neither the ICD -10, used in Europe (World Health Organization, 1992), nor the DSM IV used in the Americas (American Psychiatric Association, 1994) describe problems of emotional self-regulation or aggression as being prevalent in AS.

Indeed the widespread view of clients with AS is that they are more often the victims of, rather than perpetrators of aggressive behavior (Ghaziuddin, Tsai & Ghaziuddin, 1991; Tantam, 2000). This perspective still holds despite several studies indicating a prevalence of challenging behavior warranting intervention amongst children with ASD of between 13 and 30 percent (see Horner, Carr, Strain, Todd & Reed, 2002 for review)

There is increasing evidence for comorbidity of AS and attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (AD/HD) (Bashe & Kirby, 2001; Ehlers & Gillberg, 1999). Problems of impulse control have been indicated as the central neuro-behavioral dysfunction affecting children and youth with ADHD (Barclay, 1997), thus making interventions that target development of consequential thinking, perspective taking and problem solving intuitively appealing.

Asperger syndrome has also been described as a fundamental disorder of empathy (Ehlers & Gillberg, 1999) indicating the appropriateness of systematic nurturance of empathy and perspective taking skills for this group. The Prepare Curriculum and ART program contain prescriptive programs that cover all the above areas (Goldstein, 1999; Goldstein, Glick & Gibbs, 1998).

The social and employment trajectories of youth with AS are exceedingly poor as compared with normal peers. Young adults with AS are severely

over represented among the under- and unemployed in Norway (Kittelsaa, 2000). Children and youth report having few friends and acquaintances. One child reported that he had 27 friends (his classmates) but that none of them liked him. Rates of depression among youth with AS are elevated compared with the normal population (Bashe & Kirby, 2001; Ghaziuddin & Greden, 1998). Problems of anger control and aggressive behavior are often seen in depression in children and youth (Barlow & Durand, 1995; Seligman, Walker & Rosenhan, 2001) with disruption to social relations occurring as a consequence.

This raises the question of whether one should treat a possible underlying depression rather than attempt to replace aggressive behavior. An alternative view is that depression in children and youth with AS follows a behavioral history of avoidance and (unsuccessful) aggressive avoidance of life stressors more akin to a learned helplessness learning history (Seligman, 1992). Our basic research stance is founded upon the latter understanding. The average age of diagnosis of autism in Norway is around three years, while the average age of diagnosis for AS is 12 + years. This alarming fact may well entail that many, if not all, families of children with AS are having to tackle serious problems involving lack of emotional self-regulation over several years, quite possibly without adequate professional assistance. This has certainly been the case with families referred to our centre.

One of the major agreements among researchers is the difficulty experienced by children and youth with ASD in understanding the perspectives of others and using this perspective in social transactions. This difficulty has been termed "lack of a theory of mind" (Leslie, 1987; 1994), "mindblindness" (Baron - Cohen, 1995), "impairment in using mental state concepts" (Wellman et al, 2002).

In an attempt to teach theory of mind using social skills training Ozonoff and Miller (1995) used the first edition of Goldstein's Prepare Curriculum (1988) but found the skills described there to be too advanced for their subjects. Much of the current research into mindblindness/theory of mind is designed to identify possible cognitive mechanisms or lack of such mechanisms that may explain autistic children's difficulty in relating empathetically in social transactions. This research is heavily based upon tests of verbal reasoning and use of pencil and paper tests in contrived experimental situations. Glenne Autismesenter is a habilitation center

devoted to practical solutions and to optimizing the quality of life of our clients and their intimate (family, friends and close relatives) and effective social networks (those in daily contact with the client - school friends, teachers, neighbours etc).

Our approach is firmly grounded in applied behavior analysis and positive behavioral support (Carr et al, 2002) and relies heavily on achieving life-style changes through skills acquisition and generalization to real life contexts. Thus we prefer enactment techniques rather than verbal and textual methods for establishing social perspective taking and empathy skills that provide our clients with multi-modal sensory experiences in realistic simulation training situations. We prefer methods that may be employed by teachers, parents and youth trainers in actual situations (i.e., the home, school and youth club) in a collaborative effort. We term this approach joint experimental cooperation (Moynahan, 2001)

### **Enhanced ART**

In our program of research we make use of a three-component model of intervention. The primary component is a standard ART program consisting of 30 sessions over 12 weeks - 12 skill-streaming (social skills) sessions, 10 anger control sessions and 8 moral reasoning sessions. Students with an Autism Spectrum Diagnosis train in mixed groups, of between 4 and 8 students, where ASD and non-ASD children and youth participate together.

We have found that using mixed groups instead of groups of children all with ASD diagnoses ensures lower fall out and higher "on task" activity within sessions. Two ART trainers, usually teachers or social educators, are responsible for delivery of the ART curriculum.

Dependent upon responses to standard ART, as measured by a battery of tests, behavioral observations and subjective evaluations by trainees, family members and teachers of usefulness and appropriateness, students may be offered a further 8-week enhanced program consisting of eight problem solving training sessions, eight social perception training sessions and eight empathy training sessions. The enhanced component is based on courses described in *The Prepare Curriculum* (Goldstein, 1999) and use of techniques developed at our centre to be detailed below.

Students who still fail to respond are offered Graded Exposure to Aggression Evoking Stimuli and Alternative Response Strengthening (GEARS).

This component requires that each trainee be helped to construct a stimulus hierarchy of aggression evoking stimuli. The student is then helped to replace aggressive responses with alternative social skills while being guided through graded exposure to analogue anger evoking stimuli. These alternative social skills must achieve the same functions as undesirable aggressive responding - that is they must help reduce the level of aversiveness of aggression evoking stimuli. They must enable the student to cope in non-aggressive ways with such stimuli. This component is in part analogue to validated exposure and response prevention treatments of Obsessive - Compulsive Disorder in children and youth (March & Mulle, 1998).

Indeed, recalcitrant problems of serious aggressive behavior in children and youth can usefully be regarded as impulsive - compulsive behavior. In our research we utilize a test battery comprising, amongst other instruments, the Child Behavior Checklist (ASEBA) (Achenbach, 1991), Social Skills Rating System (Gresham & Elliot, 1989), Stress Index for Parents of Adolescents (Sheras & Abidin, 1998), Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (Sparrow, Balla & Cicchetti, 1984). We have also begun to use the Behavioral Objective Sequence (Braaten, 1998).

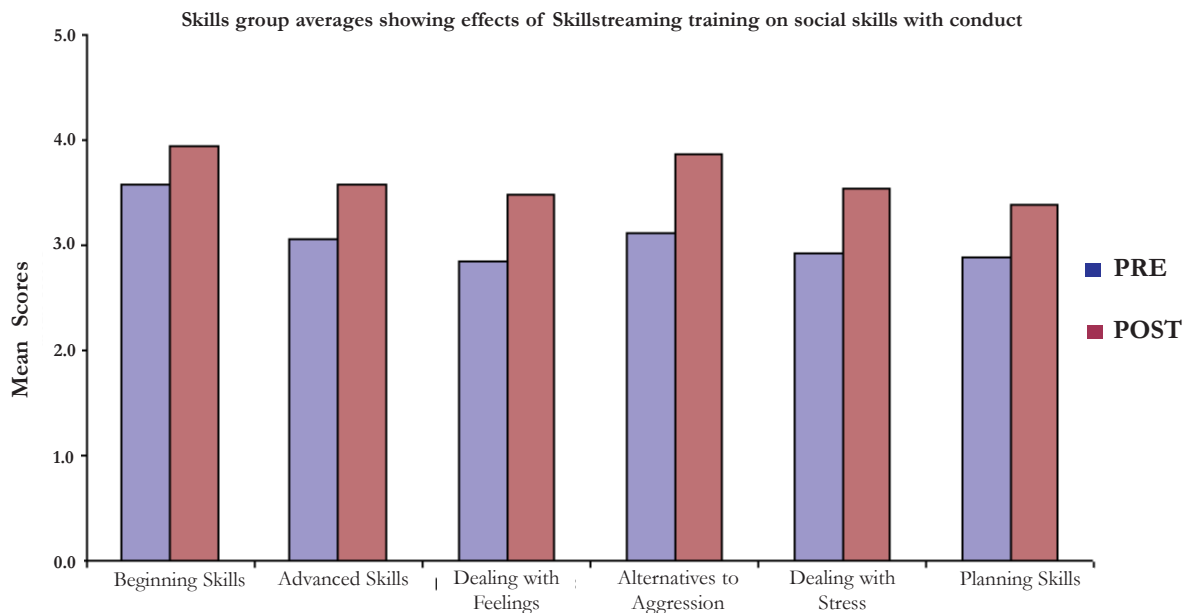
In addition to random group designs we are conducting single case experimental designs using direct behavioral measures. In our approach it is the intimate and effective social network of the child that helps the child or adolescent construct the stressor hierarchy and helps the child/youth observe and chart successful contact with stressors.

Initial pilot studies indicate that standard and enhanced ART is effective in reducing aggressive behavior and increasing the use of pro-social and anger replacement skills in children and youth with autism spectrum disorder. (Please see chart at top of next page, 9). The techniques to be described have been developed over several years in the course of applying the Prepare Curriculum and ART with children and youth with ASD.

### **Some refinements of standard ART delivery**

Trainers use a method called "bubble talk", based on the thought bubbles commonly used in cartoons to share the thoughts and feelings of cartoon characters. When a trainer is in the role of model s/he uses bubble talk to tell the group what s/he is thinking or feeling in much the same way as cartoon figures share their thoughts with the reader. Trainers and trainees click their fingers, say out loud "Bubble

## PRE and POST Social Skills



talk!" and proceed to say out loud what their goals are, how they feel and what they are thinking. When they are finished they click their fingers twice to mark the end of "bubble talk" and say "end of bubble talk" or "bubble talk finished". Observers can at any time ask the role players to perform "bubble talk" on demand in order to verify their hypotheses regarding the private thoughts and feelings of actors or simply to gain information prior to questioning. Bubble talk is in fact a form of reflexive (self-directed) observation that is very useful in gaining access to trainees' private behavior.

All training is videotaped and allows trainees to see and hear their own performances. Students are asked to provide feedback on their own performance. We call this reflexive feedback. Asking skill users to provide the group with reflexive feedback enables trainers to correct skill user's overestimation and underestimation of own performance. Trainers can thus provide feedback that is "meta" to students' own reflexive feedback. We use a simple form of self-evaluation to correct patterns of over- and underestimation of skills.

In the chart at the top of page 10, one may see that in the first evaluations the student consistently under-evaluates her own performance compared to the trainers' evaluation. She nevertheless received the given points. In the next three evaluations she over-evaluates her own performance compared to the trainers' evaluation. Again she received the points given. In the next three evaluations, her evaluation of

her own performance is in agreement with the trainer's and an agreement bonus results. We often fade out trainer evaluations and replace them with group evaluations, family member evaluations and teacher evaluations prior to, and commensurate with, generalization of skills to real life situations.

### Enhanced ART

Difficulties in perceiving the perceptions, states and goals of others is a core problem for children and youth with ASD (Cohen - Baron, 1995; Ozonoff & Miller, 1995). In order to meet this challenge, we have developed Goldstein's situational perception training course (Goldstein, 1988, 1999) and renamed it social perception training. The specific behavioral goals for the course are to enable students to identify probable motivations of differing actors in realistic and relevant social role plays that include the student themselves, identification of available choices of course of action for all actors, including themselves, and providing guidance as to the most beneficial course of action (that which is best for all concerned). We have developed new techniques for enabling multiple perspective-taking in ART with trainees with ASD.

### Enhanced Techniques - The Triple Dance

The triple dance technique may be used in the anger control and moral reasoning training components of ART, but is used most extensively in social perception training. Triple Dance is a structured

Trainee	Trainee	Trainee	Trainer Evaluation	Agreement Bonus	Sum
Excellent	Good	OK	Point(s)		Points
3 Points	2 Points	1 Point			
		X	3	0	4
		X	2	0	3
	X		3	0	5
X			2	0	5
	X		1	0	3
		X	1	10	12
	X		2	10	14
X			3	10	16

role-play technique where students first watch a demonstration of a successful social interaction or the successful resolution of an interactive problem that occurs between two or more actors. We have adapted our technique from the Neuro-linguistic Programming technique developed by Sellæg, Sætren, and Wroldsen (1993). Role-plays are usually based on the realistic use of a social skill previously trained in the skillstreaming component of ART.

Trainees are first placed in the role of observer (step one) and asked to observe the role-play and to comment upon content and flow of the role-play. Trainers make use of questions such as "What happened first?" "What happened next?" "What was the result?" "How do you think person A felt?" "How could you tell?" "How do you think person B felt when person A said ...?" "What makes you think that?"

Following this first round of descriptive or reflective questioning, the trainee is then requested to role-play the role of the skill receiver (step two). Playing the role of the skill receiver provides the trainee with multi-modal (multi-sensory) experience of the effects of the social skill and sensitizes the student to the future consequences for others of using the skill. Trainers will make use of reflexive (self-descriptive) questioning in order to amplify

positive effects of the skill for the student. "When person A said ... what did you think there and then?" "How did you feel when s/he offered to share the game with you?"

The third step in the triple dance is then to aid the student in performing the role of the skill user. Trainers focus upon fluent use of the skill training and may encourage the student to repeat specific details of the skill such as approaching, maintaining appropriate distance, intonation, gaze etc. We make use of precision teaching techniques (Binder, 1996; Lindsley, 1996) such as fluency spurts lasting no more than 10 to 20 seconds where the trainee is requested to perform as many rapid repetitions of basic component skill elements such as smiling, nodding, approaching, gaze co-ordination, non-verbal listening skills and so on as possible within the spurt time limit. In addition, trainers may "freeze" the role play in order to provide response specific feedback or request that the skill user perform "bubble talk" in order to access the student's private behavior. "When you used the skill how did it feel?" "When you said ... and you saw person A smile, how did that make you feel?"

Role-playing the role of the skill user provides the trainee with multi-modal sensory experiences of naturally reinforcing stimuli. The skill receiver, other

group members and trainers provide the skill user with immediate and concise performance specific feedback. This in itself helps build competence in giving and receiving praise and constructive criticism.

Asking trainees to perform all three roles, observer, skill user and skill receiver, as well as sharing their thoughts and feelings while performing all three roles, is a simple yet elegant way to build repertoires of complementary skills. Indeed such training lays the ground for acquiring socially validated pre-empathetic skills i.e., empathetic understanding and empathetic communication. We make use of modified Carkhuff scales for the measurement of empathy (Carkhuff, 1969) as pre and post measures in order to gauge the effect of this form of training and as a preparatory exercise for empathy training.

### **The Turning Point Technique**

In the turning point technique, ART trainees are asked to watch a demonstration of a problematic or unresolved social interaction between two or more actors. Situations chosen are often based upon incidents occurring at school, at home or in the local community. Students are often encouraged to keep diaries in addition to ART program "hassle logs" (Goldstein, Glick, and Gibbs, 1998) as well as recording successes and challenges that they meet in their daily lives. These data allow us to reconstruct problematic interactions in the form of realistic role-plays.

After having described the problem to the rest of the group the student watches a re-enactment of the problem as performed by other members of the group without comment or interruption. The problem is then re-played and the student is asked to stop the role play at any point where s/he can suggest an alternative behavior (a turning point) that can help the actors come to a better result or acceptable solution.

We make use of a "magic remote control apparatus" where the observing student pushes a make-believe button on a make-believe remote control and says loudly "beep". The actors immediately "freeze" and stop the role-play and listen to the suggestion given by the student. The student then pushes an imaginary rewind button and starts the role-play again. The actors then perform the suggestion(s) given by the student. The student tracks the success of (or lack of) her or his suggestion. New suggestions regarding turning points may be made.

If the suggestion(s) lead to a better result, the

student is then required to play her or his own role in a new, and more successful role-play. We make use of triple dance technique where appropriate, i.e., we may ask the trainee to play other roles than her or his own in order to provide multiple perspective experience that helps make the skill more robust. Students thoroughly enjoy both the triple dance and turning point techniques.

Making video recordings of such training enables students to track their own progress. Video recordings are also useful in generalization work. Families may borrow recordings in order to follow training and incorporate learned skills into the daily life of the family. Trainers also make use of pre-recorded role-plays so that they can challenge the whole group to identify turning points.

This variation is also useful in conducting ART with whole school classes and larger groups. Violent behavior is never demonstrated, but video challenges are very life-like up to the point where physically aggressive behavior begins. The advantage of role-play based training is that the trainers or skill coaches have a lot of behavior to work with. Using "bubble talk" enables access to thoughts and feelings (private events). The magic remote control enables trainers to give very precise response specific feedback and also has the advantage that actors have to be thoroughly in control of their own behavior - they must be able to stop, replay, slow down or speed up their behavior on demand.

### **The Four Step Technique**

A variant of the triple dance is termed the "Four Step", where each student is asked to problem solve a conflict or dispute among friends, schoolmates and acquaintances. First the student watches a demonstration of a conflict situation (step one - observer role).

Thereafter s/he is requested to play both actors' roles in order to fully grasp both perspectives on the problem (steps two and three). Here "bubble talk" is very valuable.

Finally, pupils are asked to play the role of a "neutral friend" who is required to give practical advice to both actors (step four). Advice must be made in terms of actual behaviors, both verbal and motoric that can help them resolve their differences in a non-aggressive, pro-social manner. Often the advice is whispered in the ear of each of the actors so that the suggested solution comes as a surprise to both actors and observers.

All three techniques, the triple dance, turning

point and four step techniques, may be adapted to group use where panels of students are asked to provide solutions, actors may ask observers to take over their roles on demand, observers may ask actors to relinquish their role and allow the observer to play the role, and so on.

To conclude, the use of enactment focused skills training comprises the major component in enhanced ART currently under experimental research at Glenne Autismesenter. Initial results are promising and the number of schools and clinics utilizing this approach is increasing in Norway (Moynahan & Strømgren, 2003). A symposium on ART, at the annual convention of the Norwegian Association for Behavior Analysis (NAFO), included contributions from a wide range of settings and applications with children and youth with and without pervasive developmental disorders. The techniques described above may be attempted safely by ART trainers and skills coaches in the continuing efforts to improve ART.

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# In Brief: Enhanced ART For An Individual With Multiple Behavioral Problems - by Luke Moynahan, Runa Sørli, Mari Amundsgård

The following data show the effects of enhanced Aggression Replacement Training (ART) with a 30 year old, adult man with developmental disability, serious conduct disorder and chronic aggression. Treatment began in September - October 2002 and is continuing under the clinical supervision of the author. In addition to ART the client is engaged in a structured employment and leisure programme. This program utilizes approaches based upon positive behavioural interventions and support (see Carr et al., 2002 for review) and Precision Teaching (Fabrizio & Moors, 2003).

The client whom we name Harold, along with his parents and treatment staff from Bergsmarksetra Centre for Problem Behavior in the municipality of Asker outside of Oslo, presented both the program and data at the first ART symposium at the annual convention of the Norwegian Association for Behavior Analysis, May 2003. They were met with a standing ovation by over 200 behavior analysts who were packed into the lecture hall.

Figure 1\* shows data regarding the undesirable behaviors targeted for replacement. Each behavior was subjected to a functional analysis and linked to an alternative pro-social behavior that could help Harold achieve the same behavioral function. These replacement behaviors were taken from the skill-streaming component of ART. In addition Harold undertook intensive training in Anger Control.

## Replacement targets: Anti- social and aggressive behaviours

- Group 1 : Violent escape behaviour - hitting, kicking, pushing throwing of objects at persons.
- Group 2 : Threatening avoidance behaviours : direct and indirect verbal threats etc
- Group 3 : Anti-social protest and denial behaviours: slamming of doors, destruction of property etc.
- Group 4 : Dysfunctional behaviours used to obtain social contact: Un wanted visits, unwanted touching etc.

Figure 2\* shows reciprocal evaluations of 15-minute interaction intervals conducted throughout the day. Harold and differing staff members conducted brief retrospective evaluations of the

preceding 15 minutes' social interaction between themselves. The data shows an increasing trend towards positive social interaction. There is high inter observer agreement regarding the positive and negative quality of interaction between Harold and staff members. These recordings were initiated after eight weeks basic ART training.

This form of reciprocal evaluation allows both staff and client to monitor the use of pro-social skills outside of training. Harold's use of pro-social anger control and interactive skills is enhanced by use of fluency training procedures (see Calkin in press; Fabrizio & Moors, 2003) in order to increase both their precision and frequency.

The data presented are encouraging and demonstrate that ART can be used in individual applications with adults with developmental disability and serious problems of aggressive behaviour when combined with components based upon positive behavioural support and precision teaching methodology.



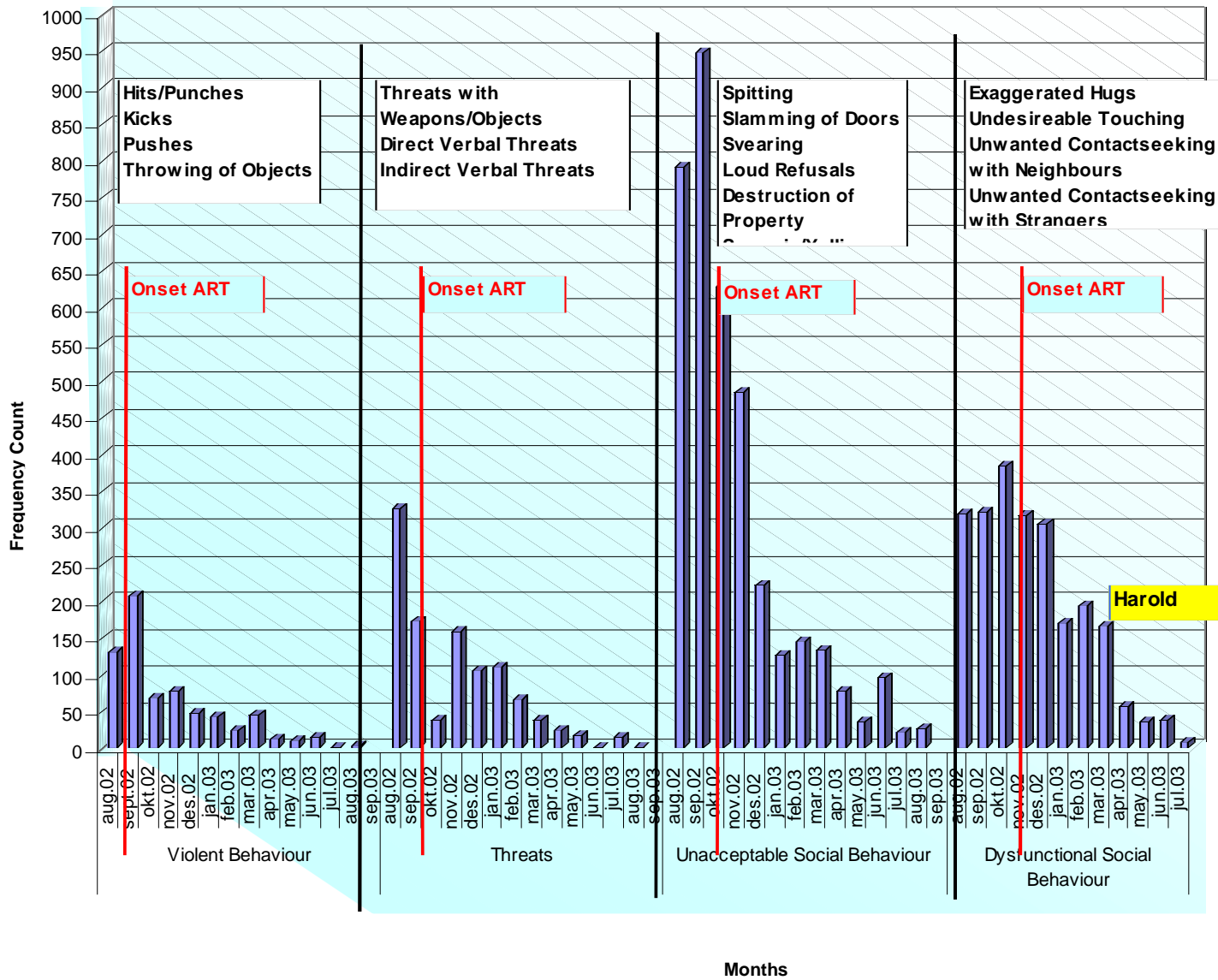
## Figure 1

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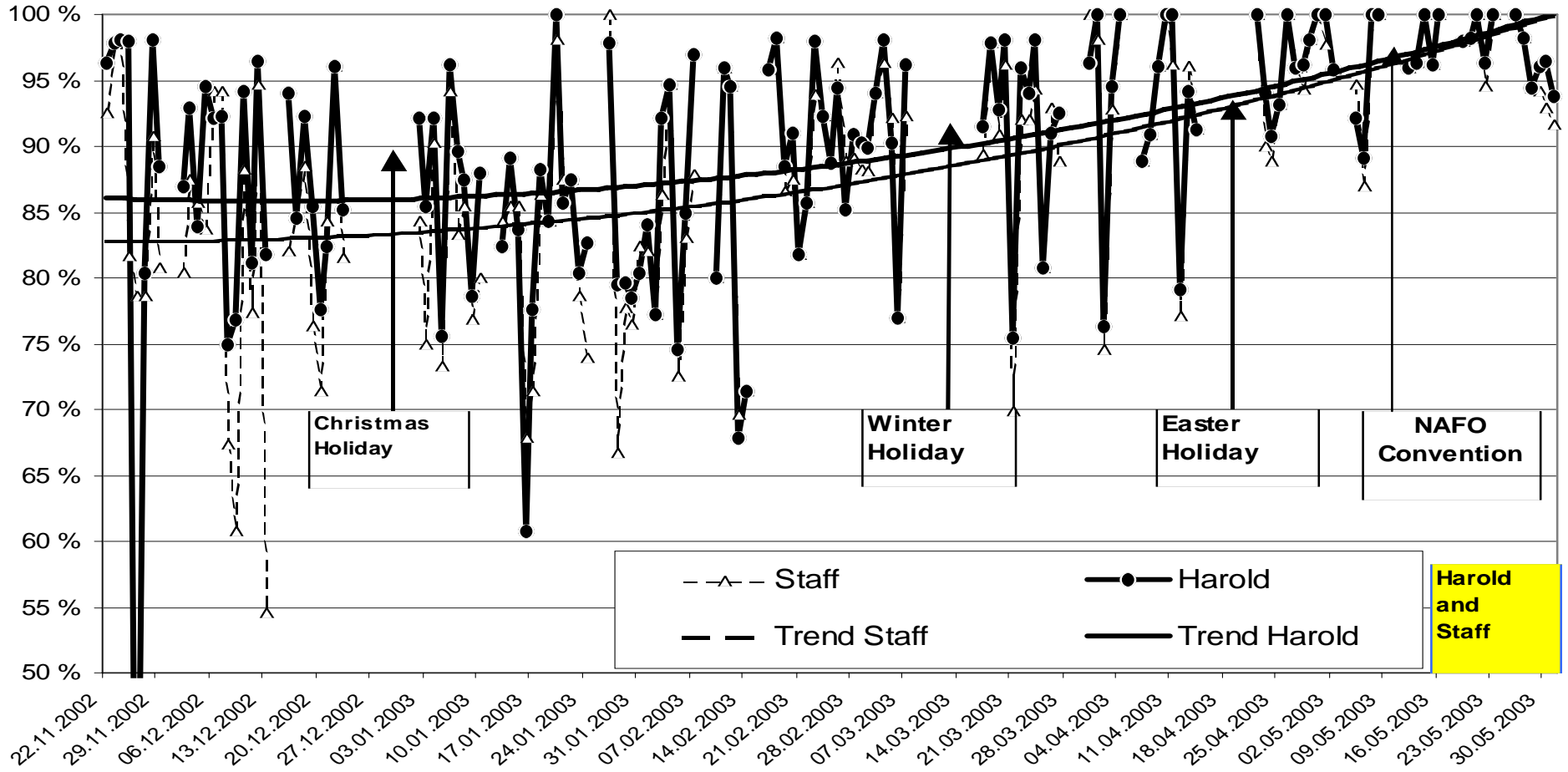
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## Figure 2

See page 15



## Positive Reciprocal Interaction 15 min. intervalls



# Celebrating the 25th Birthday of the Hassle Log

- by Eva Feindler

## What is this thing called the HASSLE LOG?

What is it for?

Following one of my presentations at the ICART Conference in Amsterdam last September, a young man approached me and indicated that he has been using the Hassle Log as part of an ART program for years. However, he never quite fully understood where it came from and exactly what its purpose was. So, since I consider myself to have "invented" the Hassle Log, I thought that the ART community might benefit from a bit of its history as well as a description of its various functions.

When I was designing my dissertation research project way back in 1978 at West Virginia University, I was struggling to find multiple sources of data collection for my single subject evaluation of a newly designed anger management treatment program for behaviorally disordered teens in a residential center. Although I did collect some staff direct observation ratings as well as some pre/post questionnaire data, the experience of anger, the hypothesized precursor of aggressive behavior, required a more internal data collection method. Hence, I created the Hassle Log as a daily self-monitoring form that would quantify a number of variables associated with both the antecedent and consequent conditions surrounding aggression.

I included a number of categories requiring a simple check off, as my adolescent clients sometimes had "limited" energy to complete anything more lengthy. I was also mindful of not giving them anything to carry around that might signal that they were in treatment. The simple four-entry Hassle Log folds and fits neatly into a back jeans pocket. The subsequent evaluations of the anger management program in residential and educational settings included this Hassle Log, though it served less often as a source of data and more as training method.

I had no expectations for the accuracy, reliability or validity of these self monitoring data, however the Hassle Log became an extremely valuable clinical and educational tool, far exceeding my initial expectations.

## Functions of the Hassle Log

*As a teaching tool:* Enables practitioner and client to determine his/her individual sequence of triggers, setting events, responses and self evaluative responses.

*Scripts for role-plays:* Each completed log can serve as a role-play scenario that reflects the clients real life anger provoking situations and serves as the context for the practice of newly learned aggression replacement skills.

*Alternative response to trigger:* At times, clients will respond to a trigger by turning to the Hassle Log to record thoughts and feelings, thus diverting their attention away from the trigger.

*Teaching about self observation and reflection:* The written task prompts the client to reflect on the variables and the sequence of the anger provocation and prompts a self rating of anger experienced and an evaluation of outcome.

*Compliance probe early in therapy:* Since skills training programs rely heavily on the practice of skills outside of the training environment, homework assignments are often given at the end of the session. The Hassle Log completion in the first sessions allows the practitioner to assess the client's level of pre-treatment compliance. If the client is unwilling to simply fill out a Hassle Log, there may be little chance that other homework assignments will be complete. This will severely limit the generalization of behavior change outside the training environment. If compliance is an issue, it will be detected early and targeted for change.

*Portable reminder:* A generalization strategy in that it brings the ART into the natural context and across environments. The data sheet itself is a visual reminder of the training program and anger management skills learned.

*Prompts self-reinforcement for alternative responses to provocation.*

*Visual- motor exercise in contrast to the auditory memory prompts of most instructions.*

*Individualized instrument:* Categories can be changed to adapt to either the client population or the environment. The Hassle Log is easily converted to reflect a particular client population or treatment setting, thus individualizing it as an assessment and training device.

*Analysis of inconsistencies between perceived events and self-evaluation of responses and self-rating of affect.* Often, a client who is angry and aggressive will overrate the positive outcome of an anger provocation and under report the experience of anger. Completed Hassle Logs enable the practitioner to determine inconsistencies early on and track self ratings changes.

Since its inception, the Hassle Log has undergone multiple transformations for youth and adult clients in treatment for problems with anger and aggression. A low cost aspect of any intervention program, the Hassle Log serves many purposes in a user friendly fashion. Although any data collected via

self monitoring is subject to inaccuracies and biases, these data can still be collected and graphed, thus providing a visual reinforcement process for the clients. After all of these years, the Hassle Log continues to be an invaluable tool for ART trainers and clients.

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