Bureau of Behavioral Support
NEW MEXICO HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY – DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SUPPORTS DIVISION

Fading Considerations

Purpose:
Some interventions to address and hopefully reduce the frequency and/or severity of a concerning behavioral expression may be aversive and thus require approval from a Human Rights Committee *prior to* instigation. These types of interventions should be discontinued or adjusted and faded in a considered and data-driven manner. The purpose of this document is to provide areas for consideration as a behavior support consultant (BSC) develops, enacts, and adjusts a fade plan. Fading must not be contingent on the behavior, rather the skill building. Individuals must be given opportunities to demonstrate the skill-building.

Fading refers to: a) decreasing the level of assistance needed to complete a task or activity. When teaching a skill, the overall goal is for the individual to eventually engage in the skill independently; and/or b) reducing the intensity, duration, or placement of a restriction or supervision tactic.

Ethics:
1) It is the responsibility of the BSC to constantly engage in careful, considered, and documented efforts toward ensuring the least restrictive intervention(s) and environments for all individuals supported. This is perhaps better described as a constant endeavor to seek and create 'the most supportive environment'.
2) Should the instigation and data-driven adjustment of a plan result in:
   a. No significant change in the frequency and/or severity of the target behavior; or
   b. A worsening of frequency and/or severity of the target behavior; and/or
   c. Any repeated unintended or other side effects (e.g., secondary aggression, initiation or worsening of possible mental health symptoms),

   then the intervention should be considered ineffective and discontinued as rapidly as possible (i.e., without fading). To continue a possibly aversive intervention that evidences no, or negative change may be considered abuse and should be reported as such.

Data:
1) Data collection (e.g., frequency, severity, duration) should have begun *prior to* instigation of the restitution program.
2) Collected data should have also included but not have been limited to information about the *skill-based learning and performance* of the individual.
   a. In this case said skills may include but not be limited to: demonstration of understanding another person's reaction/possible emotions in response to the expressed behavior; use of alternate, less-harmful/less-destructive methods to express frustration/anger/jealousy/etc.; and/or, how to verbally apologize; and/or instigation of apology/repayment with reduced or absent prompt(s); and/or, expression of understanding how much an item was worth, asking for a "go-bag" at the door that includes necessary items for safety or harm-reduction if leaving; Stating intent to contact someone later in the day; Statements of destination or return; Statements indicating consent; Statements indicating understanding of consequences.
3) Continually assess the possible underlying motivation(s) for behavioral expression like:

      a. What does the person say?
      b. What do Direct Support Professionals hypothesize?
      c. What do other members of the IDT hypothesize?
      d. Ensure that there are educational opportunities for the person to learn new ways to meet these possible emotional needs;
Collect and chart data regarding his/her/their attempts to use these methods.

Initiation and Types of Fading:
If/when the collected and compiled data suggest that a restriction or supervision method has been correlated with a reduction in the frequency and/or severity of the target behavior(s) *along with* demonstration of a related self-management skill then the team may consider attempts to fade the restriction and/or supervision method.

When to Pause/Stop Fading:
1) There may be a point/points during attempts to fade when the data suggests that frequency and or severity has plateaued or is increasing back towards baseline.
      a. This may occur rapidly (i.e., at the initial attempts to fade) or at a later stage of the fade plan.
      b. It is possible that the 'least-restrictive' level has been reached *at that time* and a 'pause' in the fading is indicated.
      c. With team consensus and after consultation a pause to the fading may be enacted.
      d. A timeline for the next attempt to fade should be determined at that time. The next attempt to fade may be taken from a different tactic.

2) In other iterations, the person may begin to self-initiate skills.
      a. This should be immediately and well reinforced by the existent skill-building program.
      b. Formal structuring of the plan may be paused without need for fading in these circumstances. Seek consultation.

Seek Consultation at Every Stage:
No practitioner can remain objective enough to engage in these types of interventions without ongoing supervision/consultation. Regular and documented check-ins with an equally or higher licensed person and/or division representative are a necessary and vital part of helping to reduce the possibility for hypothesis-confirmation bias.

Examples:
The following brief examples of fading restrictions or supervision are intended to provide initial ideas for different ways to engage a fading process. None can be considered fully formed plans as each fading situation contains variables unique to the individual you support.

1) *Restriction – No Time Without Paid Supports at Residence*
      a. Initial steps may include compiling a list of skills the person needs to develop/demonstrate in order to be at the residence safely (e.g., knowledge and ability to make a phone call to staff or emergency services; knowledge of what

situations may constitute an emergency) and related plans to teach and test said skills.

    b. Once skill(s) have been demonstrated, the fading of support may begin in small steps such as:

        i. Staff leaves residence but not neighborhood for a brief period of time (e.g., 10 minutes).

           1. The team may consider having brief 'check-ins' more rapidly than the initial duration (i.e., come back in house after 5 minutes instead of 10).

       ii. This duration may then be increased as the person demonstrates success over a certain number of iterations.

    c. Engage in regular check-ins on skill/knowledge as duration of time without paid supports at the residence increases.

2) *Restriction – No Time Without Paid Supports in Community*

    a. Identify one specific activity/location where the person is familiar and has demonstrated consistent, safe success.

    b. Identify, teach, and document demonstration of skills for communication/reasons for communication with staff while without paid support.

    c. At this location/activity begin with a move to 'staff presence' which could be either moving to a farther distance from the person (but still in the vicinity/inside the location) for a short duration of time.

    d. Gradually increase the amount of time at this increased distance.

    e. Consider a move to staff being *outside of* the specific location but still 'on-site' for all or part of the duration (e.g., waiting outside of the store rather than inside).

    f. Consider a move to 'drop-off/pick-up' with clear time/location of pick up and a 'test' of the communication skill(s)/device.

        i. This step may include having the staff stay in a general proximity of the location (e.g., in the general parking area but farther away) rather than leaving the location entirely.

       ii. This step may include unannounced 'check-ins' wherein the staff member pops back into the location prior to the pick-up time.

3) *Supervision – Arm's Distance in the Community*

    a. Identify the skill(s) necessary for a person to have more distance from his/her/their paid support (e.g., emotional management; knowledge/demonstration of situations/activities to avoid).

    b. After repeated, documented demonstration of skill(s), fading of supervision proximity requirement may be considered.

    c. Identify one particular location/activity where the person and staff are familiar and/or particular risk factors are not present or determined to be minimal (e.g., no children present; considerable distance from roads or other known environmental hazards)

    d. At this location/activity begin with a move to 'twice arm's distance' OR a more individually flexible distance such as 'within 3 seconds of arm's distance'.

    e. Identify other locations/activities wherein these same steps may be tested.

    f. For some individuals, certain types of locations/activities may continue to require close proximity supervision regardless of skills demonstrated in other locations/activities.

4) *Supervision – Directly Monitor Internet Use*

a. Identify the particular concern for time spent independently on the internet.
b. Engage in education with the individual about the particular concern or associated risk. Document education and demonstration of knowledge.
c. Assess if the individual will provide consent/assent for staff or another team member to co-review internet history/cache on a certain schedule.
     i. Obtain written permission for review should the person assent.
d. Fading could begin with brief periods of moving from:
     i. Direct observation of internet use →
     ii. To being in the same room and engaging in visual checks of activity at certain or random intervals with associated history/cache checks →
     iii. To leaving the room for brief duration and returning for visual checks of activity with associated history/cache checks →
     iv. To move to independent use in private without visual checks but continuing history/cache checks →
     v. To increasing the interval between checks of history/cache.