

# **Learning Together**



IN THIS ISSUE

# **Specialized Services At Your Fingertips**

### What Is Reinforcement?

Hello and welcome to the second edition of our newsletter. In this edition we will be discussing our favourite topicreinforcement!

Reinforcement is how people learn and change their behaviour. In learning what reinforcement is and how to use it, we can become better at helping our individuals improve skills in their settings.

Reinforcement is what happens just after a behaviour occurs, which strengthens it! When a behaviour is reinforced, it happens more often. For example, you praise an individual just as he finishes washing the fruit from the grocery store. If washing fruit happens more often, then you've reinforced it! Praise

Reinforcement should occur immediately after the behaviour you're trying to reinforce.

would be the reinforcer.

Example: Praising an individual for social distancing while on a walk hours later may be a nice thing to do, but it may not reinforce (i.e. increase) the social distancing. It may instead reinforce other behaviours that have happened since the walk.

Problem behaviours may also be reinforced! Johnny loves talking to staff, when Johnny gets too close (within 2 meters) to a community member on a walk, staff talk to him more than usual. Johnny may start to get into community member's space more often. Be careful how you react!

# How to Provide Reinforcement

- 1. Identify the behaviour you are trying to increase - this becomes the target
  - This should be something you can see and describe, e.g., sitting at the table with hands down on their lap
- 2. Choose reinforcers you will use
- 3. Watch for the target behaviour
- 4. Deliver reinforcer immediately upon occurrence of the target behaviour.

#### What to do

**Keep in mind:** 

**Everyone likes** 

different things -

what may be

reinforcing for one

person may not be

reinforcing for

another

Every time Julie sneezes into her elbow, we smile at her and say, "Great covering your sneeze". Over the next two weeks she goes from sneezing into her

elbow rarely to every time.

Smiling at and praising Julie is then reinforcing her sneezing into her elbow.

#### What not to do

You want Maria to wash her hands after every meal. You know that praise is particularly reinforcing for Maria. You

notice that she washes her hands after eating, but you don't say anything right away because you are busy. A few minutes later when she's leaving the kitchen, you tell her, "Thanks for washing your hands, Maria".

What went wrong here Jimmy?

Click here to see a demonstration of reforcement from our friends at The Big Bang Theory.

- What Is Reinforcement?
- How to Provide Reinforcement
- Reinforcement for Each Other
- Hand Washing 101
- Activities at Home



Many factors affect whether reinforcement works:

How quickly does the reinforcement happen? How big is the reinforcer? How long does the reinforcer last? Is the reinforcer given every time the behaviour happens or every other time? How hard is the behaviour for the individual to perform?

If a behaviour you are trying to increase decreases, then you are likely not using a real reinforcer.

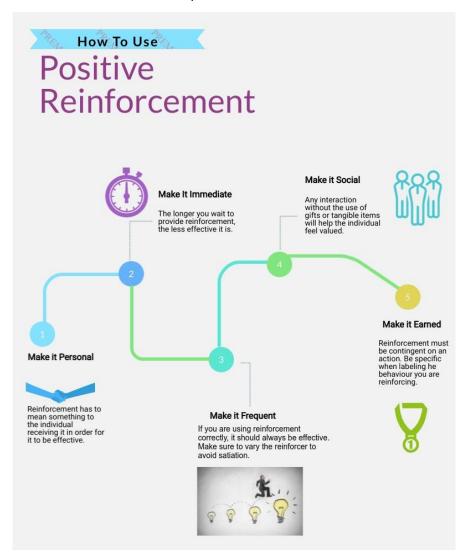






## Positive Reinforcement for Each Other

We have to remember that we all need reinforcement too! Positive reinforcement is something added to the environment that someone will work to gain again under the same circumstances. It is important to find and create reinforcers that work for each other individually.

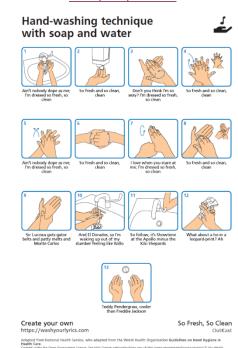


For more information and a workshops on reinforcement please visit <u>ConnectAbility.ca</u>.

# Hand Washing 101

Looking for a way to keep the task of hand washing reinforcing and fun?
Generate a personalized hand washing infographic based on your favourite song lyrics!

All you need is the song title and the artist's name. Go to washyourlyrics.com



## **Activities at Home**

Check out these links below for some great activities you can do while at home: <u>Virtual tour of Ripley's Aquarium.</u>

<u>Get cooking with these recipes appropriate for</u> all ages.

Khan academy is offering free lessons in math, science, and social studies for all ages.

<u>Practice reading anytime, anywhere with Raz-kids.</u>





20 Spadina Road, Toronto, ON, M5R 2S7 Canada Phone: 416.968.0650

Charitable registration number: 10769 4143 RR0001



