

**Title:** Do Socially Valid Interventions Influence Treatment Integrity and Reflect Changes in Challenging Behaviors?

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**Introduction:** It is common for children diagnosed with intellectual disabilities to engage in challenging behaviors which can introduce potentially dangerous situations (Dworschak, Ratz, & Wagner, 2016; Neidert, Dozier, Iwata, & Hafen, 2010). Research has found that the use of function-based behavioral interventions in the home, with the parents implementing the plan with integrity, can effectively decrease a child's challenging behaviors (Paclawskyj, Kurtz, & O'Connor, 2004); however, limited studies have explored how the effects of applying such interventions with integrity by parents corresponds to the level of satisfaction that the parents have with the plan given to them. This study assessed the relationship between the rate of children's challenging behavior, the treatment integrity of parent-implemented plan, and social validity of the plan as reported by parents.

**Method:** Julian and Jordan were six-year-old Caucasian twin boys diagnosed with Down syndrome who lived in a home with their mom, dad, sister, and one supported community living (SCL) worker. Functional analyses were run by parents, and the results of the functional analyses informed programming developed to address the participants' challenging behaviors. Parents were trained to proficiency on the behavioral interventions. Following the parent training, monthly hour-long in-home visits (mainly in the living or dining room) were conducted and observations were videotaped. During these visits, researchers assessed treatment integrity and rate of challenging behavior. A social validity survey was administered bi-monthly.

**Results:** The relationship between treatment integrity and problem behaviors showed that in general as treatment integrity increased, rates of challenging behaviors decreased for both participants. Social validity scores ranged from 80 to 98% satisfaction showing that caregivers felt supported and were experiencing visible perceived changes in behavior from their children due to the suggestions made by the plan. However, there was an inverse relationship between social validity and rate of challenging behavior.

**Discussion:** This study's results suggest that although suggestions made in a plan are well received, parents may not implement treatment with integrity. Limitations of this work include factors that may have impacted the results such as changes in observation time and medication regimen for Julien. Future research should assess to what extent treatment integrity impacts the effectiveness of behavior interventions, and if high treatment integrity of behavior interventions impacts the use of psychotropic medication to address challenging behavior.

**References:**

- Dworschak, W., Ratz, C., & Wagner, M. (2016). Prevalence and putative risk markers of challenging behavior in students with intellectual disabilities. *Research in Developmental Disabilities, 58*, 94-103.
- Paclawskyj, T. R., Kurtz, P. F., & O'Connor, J. T. (2004). Functional Assessment of Problem Behaviors in Adults with Mental Retardation. *Behavior Modification, 28*(5), 649–667.