Who's in Charge Here? An Introduction to Behavior Management

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Disclaimer

- This presentation is intended to serve as an ***introduction*** to understanding behavior using a behavior pathway model

- This presentation seeks to highlight some basic fundamentals of behavior analysis, in an easy-to-understand format.

- This presentation is provided for educational purposes, and should not be construed as formal and/or comprehensive behavioral management training.

Behavior

- What is Behavior?
  - If it's observable, it can be considered behavior
    - Vocalizations (sounds and words)
    - Actions & Gestures
 - Most behavior is *learned*

Behavior

- Analyzing Behavior
  - Observing the responses of others
  - Attempt to predict what will trigger the behavior of interest **before** the actual behavior has occurred.
  - Understanding what happens (or what our reaction is) **after** the behavior of interest has occurred.
  - Teaching that a *better* **behavior is more effective than problem behavior**
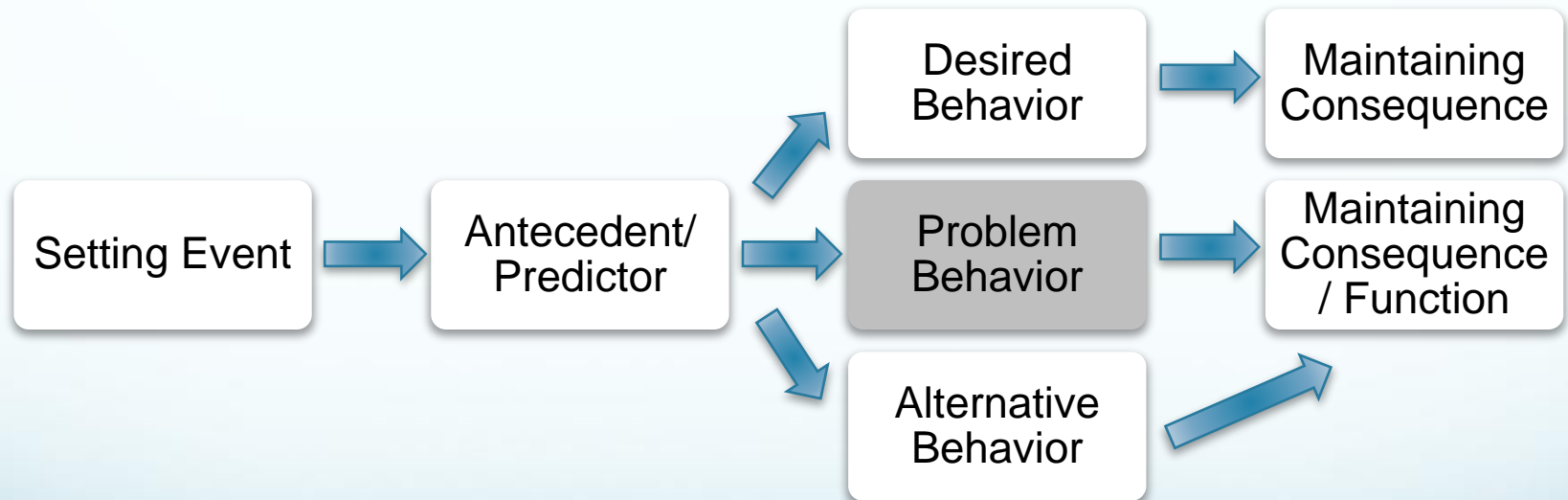
Behavior Pathway Model

- Adapted from *Functional Assessment and Program Development for Problem Behavior: A Practical Handbook.*
  - Written by: O'Neill R.E, Horner, R.H. Albin, R.W. Sprague, J.R. Story, and K. Newton, J.S. (1997). Brooks / Cole Publishing Company
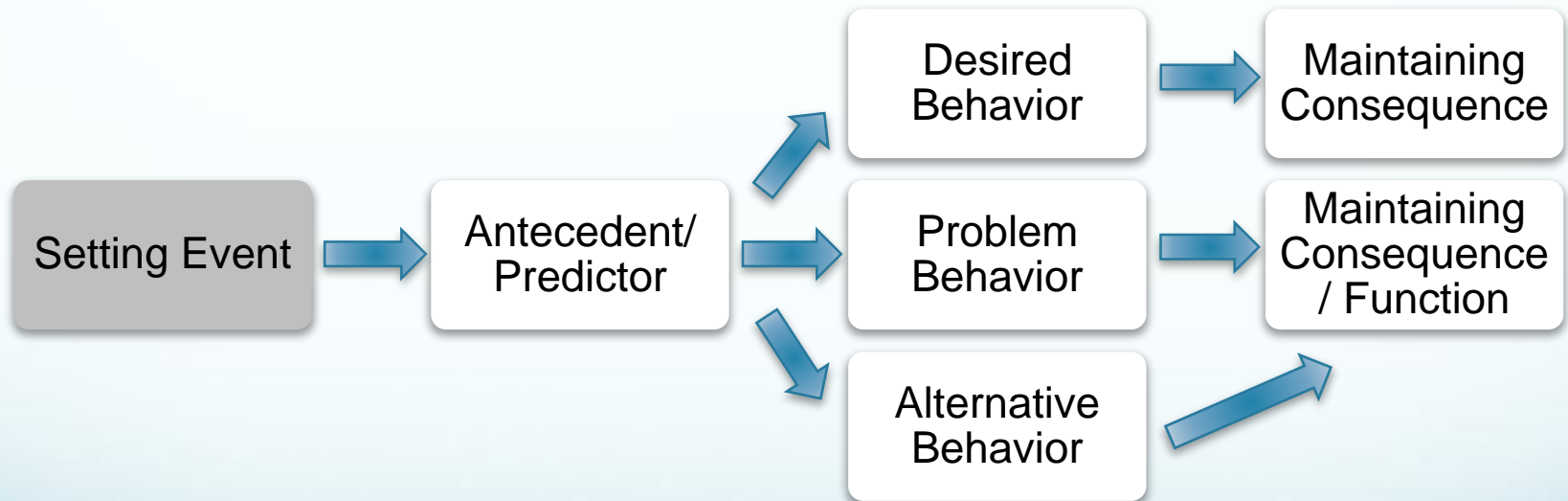
Behavior Pathway
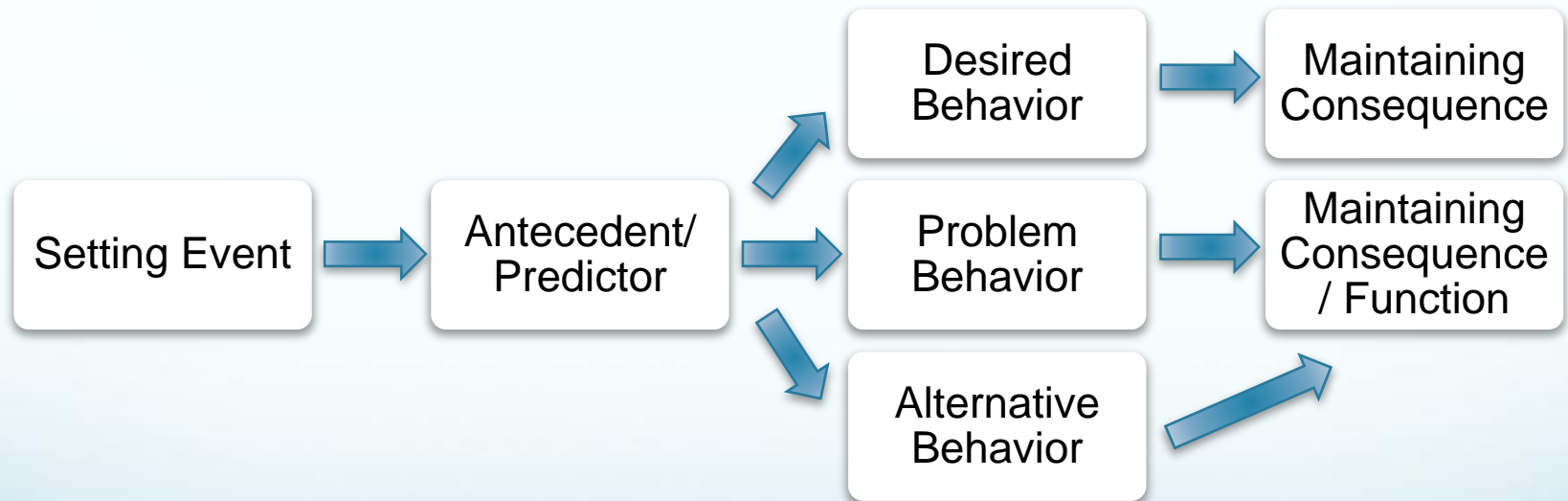
Problem Behavior

Problem Behavior

- Identify what the problem behavior is
    - What it usually looks like
    - How long it can last
    - What specific actions are involved (e.g., crying, screaming, falling to floor)

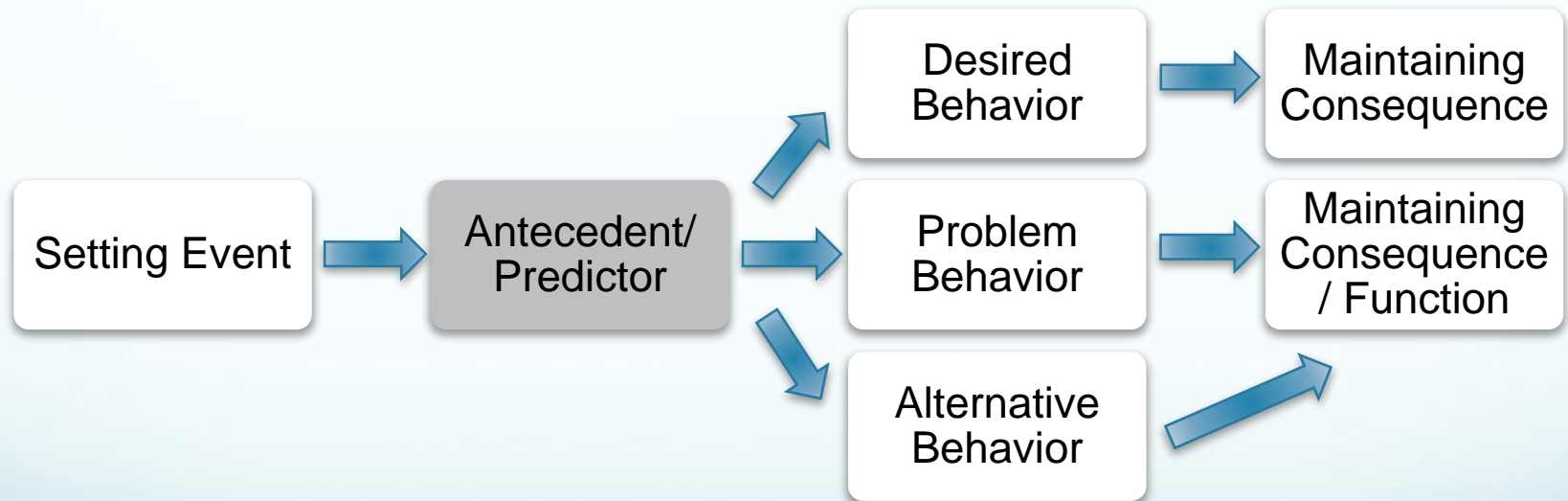- Just the action – Don't worry about when or where, we'll get to that later

Setting Events

Setting Events

- Time of Day

- Location

- Physical state (Hungry, tired). *These can affect whether or not the problem behavior occurs*

- Other people around

- Past experience in similar situations

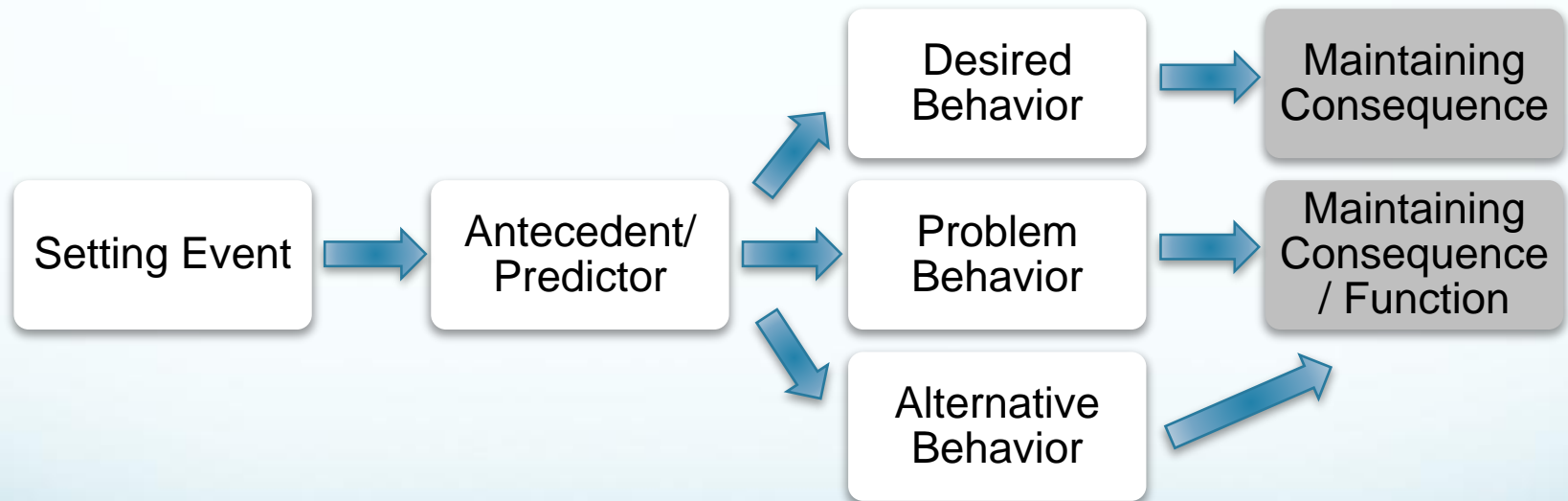- Setting events "set the stage"

Antecedent / Predictors

Antecedent / Predictors

- Observable condition that happens *immediately* before problem behavior occurs
  - Being asked to do something
  - Taking something away
  - Seeing a certain person / item
  - Being told "no", or being told something is over
  - Being asked to wait

- What "sets off" the behavior?

Maintaining Consequence

Maintaining Consequence

- A maintaining consequence will generally fall under one of four functions.

- They are….

Functions of Behavior

- Four Functions
  - Established from "evidence from decades of research" (Cooper, Heron, Howard, 2007).

- **Attention**

- **Escape / Avoidance**

- **Access**

- **Sensory (Automatic)**

Attention

- Smiles

- Compliments, praise

- Eye contact

- Surprised looks / change of facial expression

- Reprimands

- Attempts to counsel ("Don't do that, why did you do that? Why are you doing that?") when problem behavior occurs

- Attention comes in all types of forms

Escape / Avoidance

- Escape –
  - Efforts to leave an unpleasant situation that you are already in

- Avoidance –
  - Avoiding a place, person, or situation **before** the unpleasant event occurs
    - You've learned that you are probably going to have to do something, or that something unpleasant is going to happen

Access

- Doing something to get something that you want

- The behavior is requesting *access,* or obtaining *access* to something of interest

Sensory / Automatic

- Doing something because it **feels good**, or because you've learned it will make you **feel better**.

- Problem behaviors that truly fall under sensory/automatic are outside of the scope of this presentation

Reinforcement

- Loosely used, reinforcement takes place when we are granted the function of our behavior.

- The behavior usually ends once the function is met

- Correctly identifying the function is important, and can take time and effort to do so (even for professionals).

Inappropriate Behavior

- Consider how you might have *inappropriate* requests for:
  - Attention
  - Escape / Avoidance
  - Access

Desired and Alternate Behavior
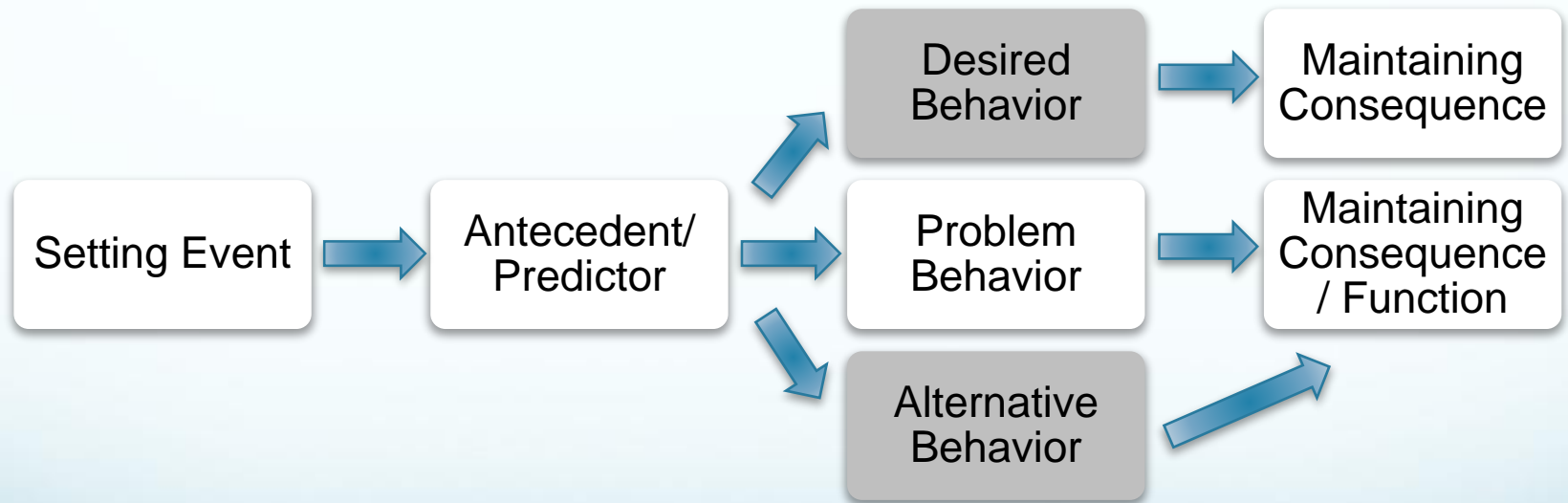
Desired Behavior

- Refer to four functions of behavior
  - What *appropriate* behavior would serve the same function
  - Examples:
    - Being able to accept "no" by moving onto another activity *without* tantrum behavior
    - Giving an item back when asked to do so
    - Waiting appropriately for a certain amount of time

Alternate Replacement Behavior
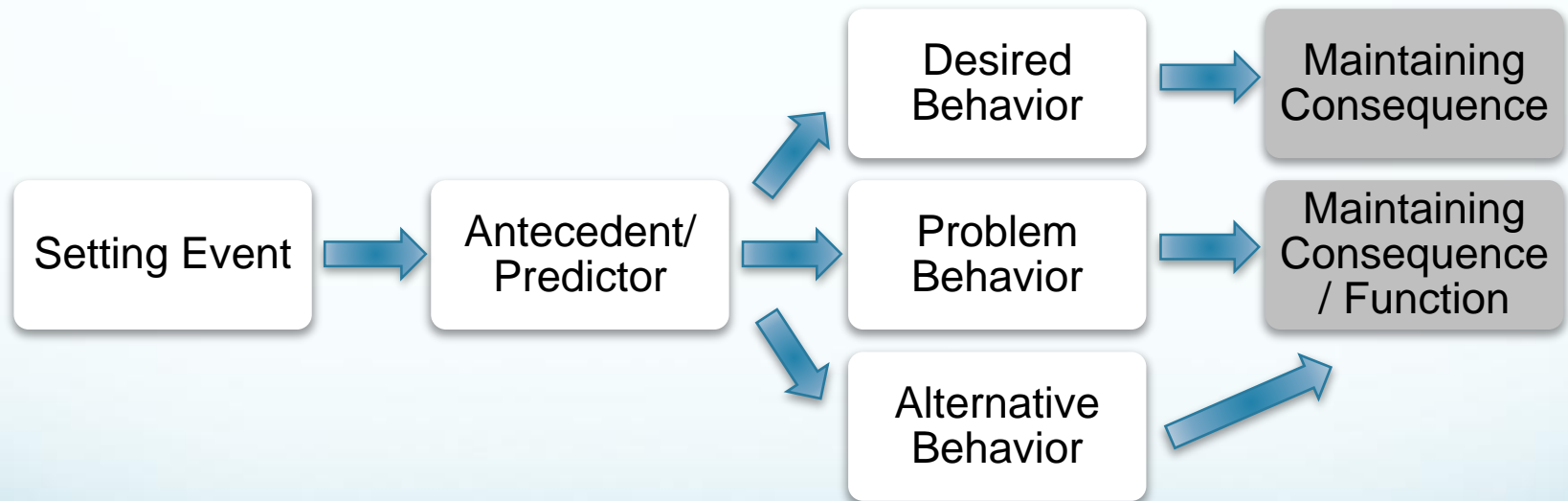
- This is *more appropriate* than the problem behavior, but not as appropriate as the *desired* behavior

- This can be a stepping stone on the path to desired behavior

  - Being able to accept "no" by moving onto another activity *without* tantrum behavior – *asking for more time before moving on*

  - Giving an item back when asked to do so – *asking for more time with item*

Functional Equivalence

- Think about the *appropriate* ways we meet our needs and wants

- Think about *inappropriate* ways we can meet our needs and wants

- Functional equivalence would plan for *appropriate* behavior to be more effective than *inappropriate* behavior **AND** satisfy the same function

- How do we "teach" this?

Maintaining Consequence: Reinforcement

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Setting Event → Antecedent/Predictor → Desired Behavior → Maintaining Consequence
                                      → Problem Behavior → Maintaining Consequence / Function
                                      → Alternative Behavior →
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Reinforcement

- Reinforcement is a term used that describes a favorable consequence as a result of our behavior
  - We repeat behaviors that are **reinforcing**

- Parents provide reinforcement for their children throughout the day

- While we can't control the behavior of others directly, we can choose what behavior to reinforce

Reinforcement

- Reinforcing desired behavior can cause it to increase

- Not reinforcing (ignoring) problem behavior can cause it to decrease

- "Good" behavior needs to be more effective for the child to use than "bad" behavior. This will build habits of using "good" behavior

Encourage Appropriate Behavior

- Consider how you are reinforcing *appropriate* requests for:
  - Attention
  - Escape / Avoidance
  - Access

Encourage Appropriate Behavior

- Plan to reinforce the alternate behavior before the challenging behavior occurs

- Reinforce attempts of *appropriate* behavior!

- The child should get a better outcome when using *appropriate* behavior versus *inappropriate* behavior

Antecedent / Predictors
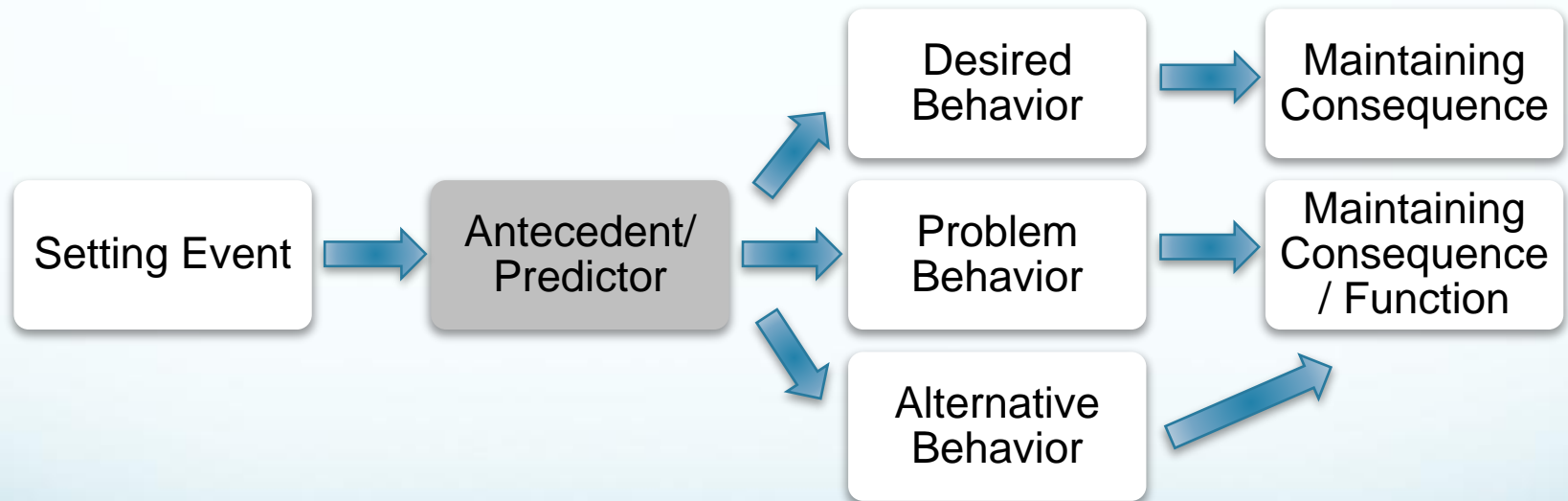
Common Antecedent Strategies

- Offer choices
  - Do you want to pick up the blue blocks or the red blocks?
  - Do you want to first color or eat?
  - Providing choices can distract a child from focusing on not getting their way

- First, then
  - First clean up the toy cars, then you can watch a video.
  - Of course you can watch a video, right after you clean up the cars

Common Antecedent Strategies

- Priming
  - Giving advance notice/warning that a transition is coming up
  - "Five minutes left, then we're going to clean up"
  - Remind as each minute winds down, timer is helpful
  - Counting down / counting up

- Visuals
  - Timers / Schedules
  - Calendars
  - Communicate the day's schedule

Common Antecedent Strategies

- Environmental arrangements
  - Furniture
  - How many toys are out (Are they readily accessible?)
  - How many food items are on child's plate at a given time (If they knock over plates)
  - Access to TV, outside area?

Additional Strategies

- Rule – Governed Behavior
  - "If, then"
  - "If you want to walk, then you must hold my hand"
  - "If you try to let go, we will wait until you hold my hand again to keep walking"
  - "If you want to go outside, then we must put your shoes on"
  - "If your shoes come off, we have to go inside, and put them back on before going back outside"
  - Teach time and place for certain behaviors (Food stays at the table).

Additional Strategies

- Following through – Be persistent if you want consistency
  - Think about the requests that you make to your child
  - Wait to make a request until you are able to ensure that you can follow through and ensure the child responds to your request
  - If you're repeating your request, consider **showing** your child what your expectation is

Considerations

Ignoring Problem Behavior

- Ignoring problem behavior will usually cause the behavior to get worse before it gets better
  - Are you in a safe place and time to wait it out?

- Ignoring problem behavior should only be considered if *BOTH* you and your child are aware of what the *appropriate* behavior is
  - Don't leave you or your child guessing

- As problem behavior lessens, it may suddenly get worse for a short time again (This is expected)

Be Consistent

- Categorize what behavior is *appropriate* and *inappropriate*

- Be consistent in responding to *appropriate* or *desired* behavior more favorably than *inappropriate* behavior

Persistence (Reinforcement History)

- Our response history to our child's problem behavior can set our child's level of persistence with problem behavior

- Attempting to ignore a behavior at first, then "giving in" when it escalates teaches a child to persist and escalate problem behavior until the desired response is obtained

- "Giving in" randomly to *appropriate* behavior can teach persistence of appropriate behavior

- Take time to reinforce the attempts of *appropriate* behavior, before a problem behavior has occurred (watch for it)

Persistence (Reinforcement History)

- Persistence is a good quality to have for some things

- Persistence in the wrong places (or wrong behaviors) can lead to many tantrum episodes

- What is your child trying to negotiate or obtain in their tantrum episode?

- How might they obtain it *instead* of a tantrum episode (Or is obtaining It an option)?

Persistence (Reinforcement History)

- We learn to be most persistent when:
  - Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't
  - We've learned that if we persist long enough, the other person might change their mind, or offer something better
 - Some things are "negotiable"

Persistence (Reinforcement History)

- We learn to be less persistent when:
  - Something works all the time, every time.
  - Something works the first time

- If our behavior stops working, we'll give up easier because we have learned that it usually works *right away*

- E.g., light bulbs when they burn out (Do we try to "fix" a broken light bulb, or do we look for a new one?)

Reinforce, Reinforce, Reinforce…..

- Focus on reinforcing *appropriate* requests and behavior

- Minimize your responses to *inappropriate* behavior

Behavior Pathway
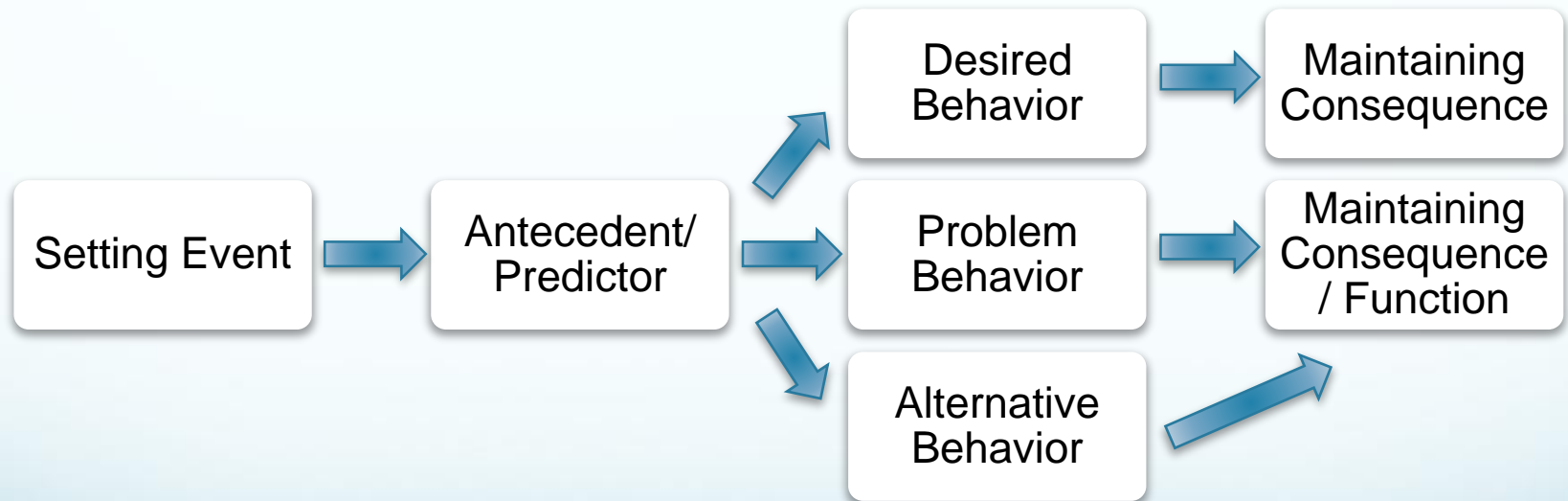
References

- O'Neill R.E, Horner, R.H. Albin, R.W. Sprague, J.R. Story, and K. Newton, J.S. (1997). *Functional Assessment and Program Development for Problem Behavior: A Practical Handbook.* Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks / Cole Publishing Company

- Cooper, J.O., Heron, T.E., and Heward, W.L. (2007). *Applied Behavioral Analysis*. Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc.

The End

- Thank you for your attendance

- Questions?