

Introduction

Anyone who observes people's behavior in a school, home, or recreational environment will notice that inappropriate behaviors follow an identifiable event or situation. Children, like adults, often lose their ability to communicate appropriately in some situations. At home, Dave becomes angry when his mother asks him to turn off the TV and begin his homework. Michelle, his sister, cries almost every time her brother plays with her toys. In school, Kevin frequently interrupts his teacher when she is addressing the class. Marcy's temper tantrums often occur after the teacher distributes math worksheets. Danny usually talks back to the teacher when she disapproves of his inappropriate behavior. One can say that these inappropriate behaviors predictably follow certain events or circumstances. It can even be said that the preceding events are *triggers* for the child's or adolescent's inappropriate behaviors because the events reliably precede occurrence of the behaviors.

Identifying the triggers for inappropriate behaviors provides a major advantage in helping people to behave appropriately in situations that previously caused them to act improperly. This book shows how to identify the triggers for undesirable behaviors and teach people to respond properly in the presence of these triggers. Knowing how to respond in the presence of these triggers is the basis of learning *self-control*. Based on the authors' experience and that of other behavior analysts, the focus of this book is on the behavior of children in school environments. Nevertheless, the reader should not find it difficult to extend the principles and procedures of trigger analysis to the behavior of adolescents and adults in home, recreational, and work environments.

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