



Sunday, August 4, 2019

Breakout Session F34 • 1:30-2:30 pm • Chantilly Ballroom East

“I Wish They Could Tell Me What They Need”: Increasing Communication Through Behavior

Dr. Kasee Stratton, Mississippi State University

Presenter Information

Dr. Kasee Stratton is an assistant professor in School Psychology at Mississippi State University, as well as a licensed psychologist and nationally certified school psychologist. Dr. Stratton has been involved with the CHARGE community and conducting research for 15 years and is the director of the Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab at Mississippi State University. Dr. Stratton’s clinical work has been with children and adolescents with a wide range of developmental disabilities and significant behavioral concerns. She is currently the Co-Director of the Autism and Developmental Disabilities Clinic at Mississippi State University where she supervises and provides services from an applied behavior analytic perspective enhancing skills (i.e. communication, social, behavioral, adaptive skills) and minimizing problem behaviors.

Presentation Abstract

How do I teach my child to communicate? Why does my child gain a few signs/words and then lose them? What do I do when my child tantrums because I don’t understand what they want? We hear you! This presentation will discuss an approach to building communication beyond speech therapy—functional communication training (FCT). FCT is a well-researched, evidenced-based approach to understanding behavior and increasing day-to-day communication, including your child’s daily wants and needs. We will include all forms of communication including vocal speech, sign language, augmentative technologies (i.e., communication device), and picture exchange, as well as videos of individuals with CHARGE participating in communication training.

Learning Objectives

- Parents will walk away with knowing how to assess where their child’s communication needs are.
- Parents will acquire skills to increase their child’s day-to-day communication (functional skills).
- Parents will receive resources of locating professionals to assist with building communication in their area.

“I wish they could tell me what they need”: Increasing Communication Through Behavior

Dr. Kasee Stratton
Associate Professor & Director
T.K. Martin Center for Technology
& Disability
School Psychology

Presentation Prepared for the 14th International CHARGE Syndrome Conference



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Thank you!



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Approaches to Communication

- **Theory**
 - Language Acquisition Device
 - Sociocultural Theory
 - Learning Theory
- **Haphazard Application**
- **Types/Systems**
 - Oral (Vocal)
 - Sign
 - Picture Exchange
 - Communication Device
 - Gestures
 - Idiosyncratic Behaviors
 - Total Communication



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Some approaches look like
behavior problems...

All behavior is a form of
communication!



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Behavioral Approach

Rooted in reinforcement



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Verbal Behavior

- “behavior reinforced through the mediation of other persons [who] must be responding in ways which have been conditioned *precisely in order to reinforce the behavior of the speaker*” (p. 225).



Functional Communication Training (FCT)

- Definition
- Functional approach based on function of behavior.
 - Gain Access, Escape
- Also functional for skills and overall development.



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

FCT

- Used to replace **interfering behaviors** (e.g., *disruptive, repetitive/stereotypical*) or subtle, less clear communicative forms (e.g., reaching, leading) with more conventional **communicative forms** (e.g., *pointing, picture exchange, signing, verbalizations*).

Franzone, E. (2009). Steps for implementation: Functional communication training. Madison, WI: The National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, Waisman Center, University of Wisconsin.



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Verbal Behavior

- **Mands:** requests
- **Tacts:** labels
- **Listener Responding:** competent listener



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Why is teaching a mand so valuable?

- Learning that talking is valuable
- Replacing problem behavior with a functional skill
- Paired with reinforcement
- May start to engage with a wider variety of toys
- **Lowers your frustration!**



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

<http://frontieraba.com/7-reasons-teach-manding/>

Why is teaching a mand so valuable?

- Mands are foundation to conversations
 - What did you do last night? (Mand for info)
 - “I went to play bingo.” (Intraverbal)
 - Where did you play bingo? (Mand for info)
 - “International CHARGE conference” (intraverbal)



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Unfortunately...

- “Most speech-language assessments in widespread use today evaluate response topographies (forms of responses) alone, without regard for a functional analysis of the causal variables” (p. 166).
- 26 of the 28 assessment programs reviewed failed to provide a measure of a student’s ability to mand (request).



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Esch, B. E., LaLonde, K. B., & Esch, J. W.
(2010). Speech and language assessment: A
verbal behavior analysis. *The Journal of
Speech-Language Pathology and Applied
Behavior Analysis*, 5, 166-191.



McKee Family



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Carter's FCT

- A parent perspective with Amanda McKee
- (Videos and data have been removed to protect confidentiality)



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Find a professional:

- Licensed Psychologist
 - With a behavioral approach
- BCBA
 - Experience with FCT
 - Willing to listen about CHARGE
 - <https://www.bacb.com/find-a-certificant/>



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University

Questions?

Mississippi State University

@Bulldog CHARGE

Facebook: facebook.com/BulldogCHARGElab

weringtrue.msstate.edu/charge

kstratton@colled.msstate.edu



Bulldog CHARGE Syndrome Research Lab
Mississippi State University