Autism Services Practitioner

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Practice Questions

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1. Which of the following is NOT a component of the four-term contingency?

A. Consequence
B. Setting event
C. Antecedent
D. Reinforcement schedule

2. What defines a respondent behavior?

A. A behavior that is intentionally performed to achieve a goal
B. A behavior that is maintained by its consequences
C. A behavior that is elicited by a stimulus that precedes it
D. A behavior that is taught through modeling

3. What is a discriminative stimulus (SD)?

A. A stimulus that serves as punishment for a behavior
B. A stimulus that signals the availability of reinforcement for a specific behavior
C. A stimulus that has no effect on behavior
D. A stimulus that causes reflexive behavior

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4. Which term describes the process where a behavior generalizes to stimuli similar to the original discriminative stimulus?

A. Stimulus generalization
B. Stimulus control
C. Stimulus discrimination
D. Stimulus delta

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5. What does the 'dead man's test' help determine?

A. Whether a functional assessment is valid
B. Whether a reinforcer is effective
C. Whether a punishment procedure is ethical
D. Whether a behavioral definition involves active responding

6. What is positive reinforcement?

A. The addition of a stimulus following a behavior that decreases the future probability of that behavior
B. The removal of an aversive stimulus following a behavior that increases the future probability of that behavior
C. The addition of a stimulus following a behavior that increases the future probability of that behavior
D. The removal of a stimulus following a behavior that decreases the future probability of that behavior

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7. What is a motivating operation of deprivation?

A. Providing excessive access to a reinforcer, which temporarily decreases its value
B. Restricting access to a reinforcer, which temporarily increases its value
C. Presenting an aversive stimulus that increases escape-motivated behaviors
D. Removing an aversive stimulus that decreases escape-motivated behaviors

8. Under which schedule of reinforcement does ratio strain most commonly occur?

A. Fixed ratio
B. Variable interval
C. Fixed interval
D. Variable ratio

9. Which of the following is an unconditioned reinforcer?

A. Praise
B. Money
C. Tokens
D. Food

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10. What is the matching law in applied behavior analysis?

A. The value of reinforcement matches the effort required to obtain it
B. The rate of responding increases as the schedule of reinforcement becomes thinner
C. The relative rate of responding matches the relative rate of reinforcement
D. The rate of responding increases when multiple reinforcers are available simultaneously

11. Which of the following verbal operants is defined as a request for something the speaker wants?

A. Tact
B. Mand
C. Echoic
D. Intraverbal

12. What distinguishes a tact from other verbal operants?

A. It is evoked by a nonverbal stimulus and maintained by generalized social reinforcement
B. It is controlled by a motivating operation and reinforced by obtaining the requested item
C. It is controlled by a verbal stimulus and has point-to-point correspondence with that stimulus
D. It is controlled by a verbal stimulus without point-to-point correspondence

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13. Which phenomenon occurs when a previously extinguished behavior temporarily increases when extinction procedures are first implemented?

A. Ratio strain
B. Spontaneous recovery
C. Resurgence
D. Extinction burst

14. What is spontaneous recovery in relation to extinction?

A. The return of a previously reinforced behavior when a new behavior is placed on extinction
B. The immediate increase in responding when extinction is first implemented
C. The reappearance of an extinguished response after a period of time without that response
D. The strengthening of a response following intermittent reinforcement

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15. Which of the following is NOT one of the seven dimensions of applied behavior analysis as defined by Baer, Wolf, and Risley?

A. Technological
B. Theoretical
C. Conceptually systematic
D. Generalizable

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16. What characterizes a variable ratio schedule of reinforcement?

A. Reinforcement is delivered after an unpredictable number of responses
B. Reinforcement is delivered after a fixed number of responses
C. Reinforcement is delivered after a fixed amount of time
D. Reinforcement is delivered after an unpredictable amount of time

17. What is resurgence in relation to extinction?

A. The decrease in responding when reinforcement is no longer available
B. The temporary increase in responding when extinction is first implemented
C. The reappearance of an extinguished response after a period of time without that response
D. The reappearance of a previously extinguished behavior when a more recently reinforced behavior is placed on extinction

18. Which of the following statements best describes stimulus delta (S-delta)?

A. A stimulus that elicits a reflexive response
B. A stimulus that signals the availability of reinforcement
C. A stimulus in the presence of which a particular behavior has not been reinforced
D. A stimulus that has been paired with an unconditioned stimulus

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19. Which of the following is a scientific understanding within applied behavior analysis?

A. Hypothesis, theory, law
B. Description, prediction, control
C. Observation, analysis, conclusion
D. Assessment, intervention, evaluation

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20. Which verbal operant is defined as a response that has point-to-point correspondence with a verbal stimulus and is maintained by generalized reinforcement?

A. Echoic
B. Mand
C. Tact
D. Intraverbal

21. According to the DSM-5, which of the following is NOT one of the two core domains for diagnosing Autism Spectrum Disorder?

A. Symptoms present in early developmental period
B. Deficits in social communication and social interaction
C. Restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities
D. Intellectual impairment

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22. Which change occurred in the transition from DSM-IV to DSM-5 regarding autism diagnosis?

A. Sensory issues were removed as a diagnostic criterion
B. The age of onset requirement was raised from 3 years to 5 years
C. Separate diagnostic categories were consolidated into a single Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis
D. A new separate category for Asperger's Syndrome was created

23. According to the CDC, which of the following is considered a risk factor for autism spectrum disorder?

A. Childhood vaccinations
B. Advanced parental age
C. Birth order (being firstborn)
D. Excess vitamin consumption during pregnancy

24. Which of the following represents a typical developmental milestone for an 18-month-old child?

A. Points to objects of interest
B. Engages in cooperative play with peers
C. Uses complex sentences with correct grammar
D. Demonstrates abstract reasoning skills

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25. Which of the following comorbidities has the highest prevalence rate among individuals with autism spectrum disorder?

A. Substance use disorder
B. Schizophrenia
C. Bipolar disorder
D. Intellectual disability

26. Which of the following statements accurately describes the current CDC prevalence estimate of autism spectrum disorder in children?

A. Approximately 1 in 500 children (0.2%)
B. Approximately 1 in 150 children (0.67%)
C. Approximately 1 in 36 children (2.8%)
D. Approximately 1 in 1,000 children (0.1%)

27. Which atypical developmental pattern is most concerning for possible autism spectrum disorder in a 2-year-old child?

A. Mild delay in walking independently
B. Loss of previously acquired language skills
C. Preference for playing with one specific toy
D. Occasional temper tantrums when frustrated

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28. According to the DSM-5, severity levels for autism spectrum disorder are based on which two domains?

A. Social communication and restricted, repetitive behaviors
B. Intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior
C. Language development and sensory sensitivities
D. Motor skills and social motivation

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29. Which screening tool is specifically designed for toddlers (16-30 months) to identify risk for autism spectrum disorder?

A. GARS-3 (Gilliam Autism Rating Scale, Third Edition)
B. ADI-R (Autism Diagnostic Interview-Revised)
C. CARS-2 (Childhood Autism Rating Scale, Second Edition)
D. M-CHAT-R/F (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers, Revised with Follow-Up)

30. Which statement about the gender ratio in autism spectrum disorder is most accurate based on current CDC data?

A. ASD is diagnosed approximately 2 times more often in females than males
B. ASD occurs equally among males and females
C. ASD is diagnosed approximately 4 times more often in males than females
D. ASD is diagnosed approximately 10 times more often in males than females

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Answer Key & Explanations

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1. D — Reinforcement schedule
The four-term contingency consists of the setting event (or motivating operation), antecedent, behavior, and consequence. 'Reinforcement schedule' is not part of the four-term contingency, but rather a specific way to arrange consequences.

2. C — A behavior that is elicited by a stimulus that precedes it
Respondent behaviors are elicited by stimuli that precede them and are considered involuntary. These are reflexive responses, as opposed to operant behaviors which are emitted and controlled by their consequences.

3. B — A stimulus that signals the availability of reinforcement for a specific behavior
A discriminative stimulus signals the availability of reinforcement for a specific behavior. When present, it indicates that a certain behavior is likely to be reinforced, increasing the probability of that behavior occurring.

4. A — Stimulus generalization
Stimulus generalization is the process by which a response conditioned to a specific stimulus occurs when similar stimuli are presented. This is important for ensuring skills transfer across different settings, people, or materials.

5. D — Whether a behavioral definition involves active responding
The dead man's test is used to determine if a definition of behavior is adequate. If a dead person could perform the described action, it's not a proper behavioral definition because behavior requires active responding.

6. C — The addition of a stimulus following a behavior that increases the future probability of that behavior
Positive reinforcement occurs when the addition (positive) of a stimulus following a behavior increases the future probability of that behavior. The key elements are adding something and increasing behavior.

7. B — Restricting access to a reinforcer, which temporarily increases its value
Deprivation as a motivating operation involves restricting access to a reinforcer, which temporarily increases its value and increases behaviors that have historically led to obtaining that reinforcer.

8. A — Fixed ratio
Ratio strain most commonly occurs under fixed ratio schedules, especially when the requirement increases too rapidly. When the response requirement becomes too high too quickly, the individual may stop responding altogether.

9. D — Food
Food is an unconditioned reinforcer because it naturally strengthens behavior without requiring prior learning or conditioning. It has reinforcing properties based on biological needs rather than through association with other reinforcers.

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10. C — The relative rate of responding matches the relative rate of reinforcement
The matching law states that the relative rate of responding on different alternatives matches the relative rate of reinforcement for those alternatives. This principle helps explain choice behavior and how reinforcement distribution affects response allocation.

11. B — Mand
A mand is a verbal operant that functions as a request for something the speaker wants or needs. It's controlled by motivating operations and reinforced by access to the requested item or action.

12. A — It is evoked by a nonverbal stimulus and maintained by generalized social reinforcement
A tact is a verbal operant that labels or identifies objects, actions, events, or properties. It's evoked by a nonverbal stimulus and maintained by generalized social reinforcement, unlike other verbal operants that have different controlling variables.

13. D — Extinction burst
An extinction burst is a temporary increase in the frequency, intensity, or duration of a behavior when extinction procedures are first implemented. This is a common side effect of extinction and typically subsides if the extinction procedure is consistently maintained.

14. C — The reappearance of an extinguished response after a period of time without that response
Spontaneous recovery refers to the reappearance of a previously extinguished behavior after a period of time has passed without the behavior being emitted. This occurs without any additional training or reinforcement.

15. B — Theoretical
While experimental, analytic, technological, conceptually systematic, effective, generalizable, and applied are the seven dimensions of ABA, theoretical is not one of them. The dimensions focus on practical application and measurable outcomes rather than theoretical constructs.

16. A — Reinforcement is delivered after an unpredictable number of responses
A variable ratio schedule of reinforcement provides reinforcement after an unpredictable number of responses, although the average number remains constant. This unpredictability typically leads to high, steady rates of responding that are resistant to extinction.

17. D — The reappearance of a previously extinguished behavior when a more recently reinforced behavior is placed on extinction
Resurgence is the reappearance of a previously extinguished behavior when a more recently reinforced behavior is placed on extinction. This phenomenon helps explain why old behaviors may return when new intervention strategies are not effective.

18. C — A stimulus in the presence of which a particular behavior has not been reinforced
Stimulus delta (S-delta) is a stimulus in the presence of which a particular behavior has not been reinforced. It signals that reinforcement is not available for that behavior, which decreases the likelihood of the behavior occurring.

19. B — Description, prediction, control
In applied behavior analysis, scientific understanding involves description (precisely defining and measuring behavior), prediction (identifying relationships between behavior and environmental events), and control (manipulating variables to change behavior in meaningful ways).

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20. A — Echoic
An echoic is a verbal operant that involves repeating what was heard, having point-to-point correspondence with the verbal stimulus. It's maintained by generalized reinforcement such as social approval or confirmation of accuracy.

21. D — Intellectual impairment
The DSM-5 condensed the diagnostic criteria into two core domains: (1) persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction, and (2) restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. Intellectual impairment is a potential co-occurring condition, not a core diagnostic domain.

22. C — Separate diagnostic categories were consolidated into a single Autism Spectrum Disorder diagnosis
In DSM-5, the separate diagnoses (Autistic Disorder, Asperger's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, and PDD-NOS) were consolidated under a single umbrella diagnosis called Autism Spectrum Disorder, with varying levels of severity.

23. B — Advanced parental age
Advanced parental age (both maternal and paternal) is recognized by the CDC as a risk factor for autism spectrum disorder. Having older parents increases the likelihood of genetic mutations that may contribute to autism.

24. A — Points to objects of interest
Pointing to objects of interest is a typical developmental milestone that emerges around 12-18 months. The absence of pointing behaviors by 18 months is often considered a potential red flag for autism spectrum disorder.

25. D — Intellectual disability
Intellectual disability is one of the most common comorbidities in autism spectrum disorder, affecting approximately 31-40% of individuals with ASD according to recent CDC data.

26. C — Approximately 1 in 36 children (2.8%)
According to recent CDC data, the prevalence of autism is approximately 1 in 36 children (2.8%), which represents a significant increase from earlier estimates and highlights the importance of awareness and early intervention.

27. B — Loss of previously acquired language skills
Regression or loss of previously acquired language skills is considered a significant red flag for autism spectrum disorder, typically occurring between 15-24 months of age in some children with ASD.

28. A — Social communication and restricted, repetitive behaviors
The DSM-5 specifies three severity levels (requiring support, requiring substantial support, requiring very substantial support) based on the two core domains: social communication and restricted, repetitive behaviors.

29. D — M-CHAT-R/F (Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers, Revised with Follow-Up)
The Modified Checklist for Autism in Toddlers, Revised with Follow-Up (M-CHAT-R/F) is specifically designed to screen toddlers between 16-30 months of age for autism risk and is widely used in primary care settings.

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30. C — ASD is diagnosed approximately 4 times more often in males than females
Current CDC data consistently shows that autism is diagnosed more frequently in males than females, with a ratio of approximately 4:1, though this gap may be narrowing as diagnostic practices improve for identifying autism in females.

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