SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

Dr. Sara White
Clinical Director
Sendan Center

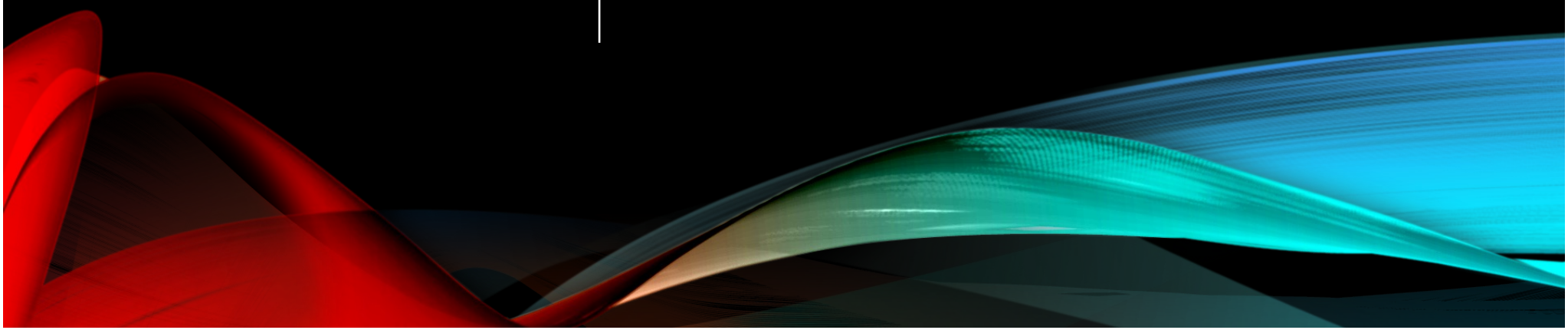
THINGS WE CAN DO ALL THE TIME TO (HOPEFULLY) PREVENT BEHAVIOR FROM HAPPENING

Lead with care & respect	Treat behavior as communication	Teach Communication to replace difficult behavior	Teach self-regulation skills
Specifically reinforce behaviors	Model tolerating hard/non-preferred/scary things	Make your internal dialogue external (in simple language)	Remain calm (or as calm as you can)

PREVENTION CONCEPTS

- Repeat back language +2 words (maximum)
- Give time to practice being a little uncomfortable
- Give time to practice being independent
- Making mistakes OK

IF BEHAVIORS PERSIST



BASICS OF BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS

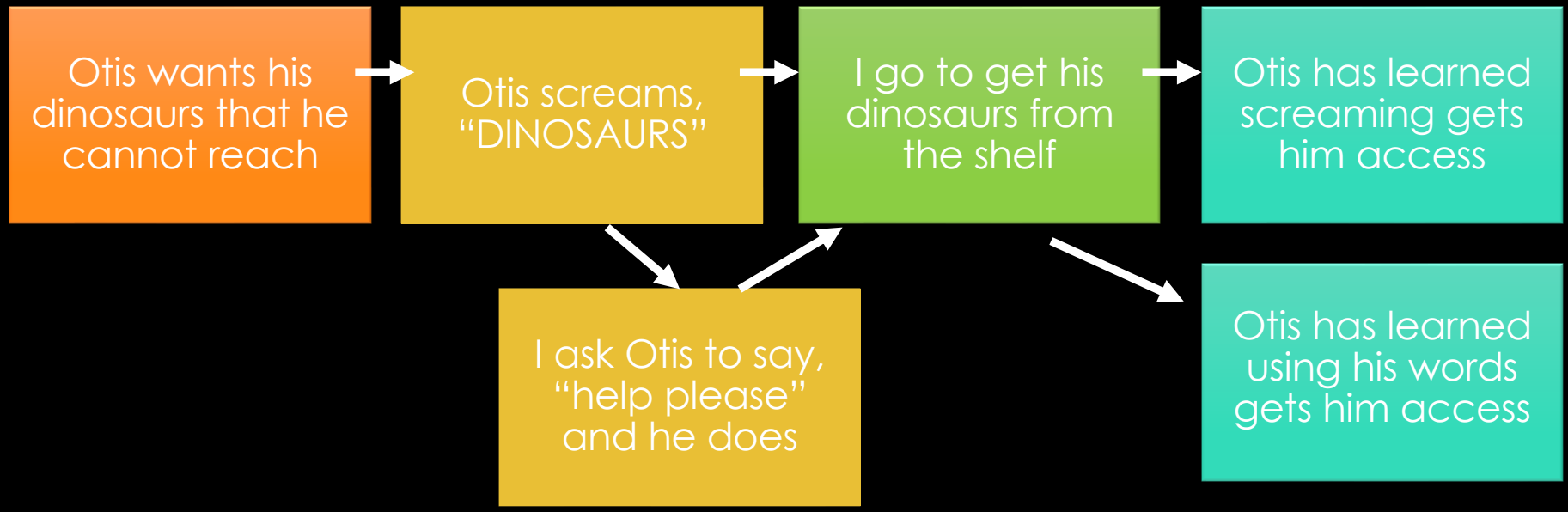
Four main functions of behavior

- Access
- Attention (Connection)
- Escape/Avoidance
- Automatic Reinforcement (Self-Stimulation and Pain Attenuation)

Other factors to consider

- Physiological factors
- More removed environmental factors

ACCESS


Otis wants his dinosaurs that he cannot reach
Otis screams, "DINOSAURS"
I go to get his dinosaurs from the shelf
Otis has learned screaming gets him access
I ask Otis to say, "help please" and he does
Otis has learned using his words gets him access

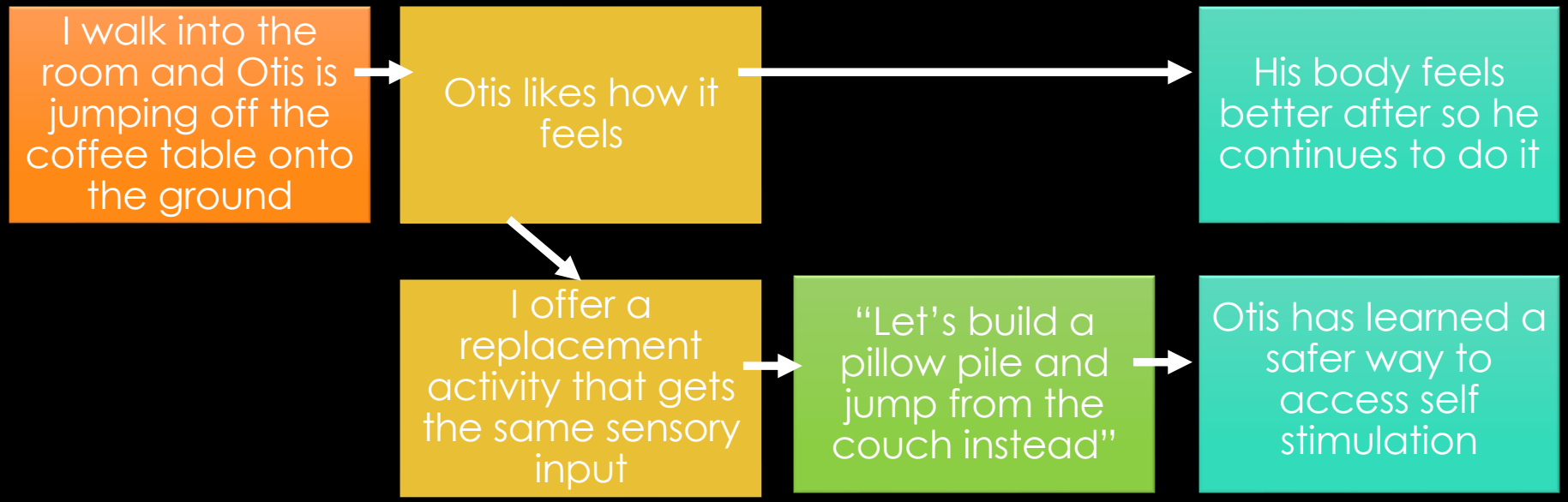
ATTENTION


Otis wants me to play with him but I am answering a work message on my phone
Otis throws a car at me
I look up and say, "don't throw that please"
Otis has learned throwing gets my attention
I ignore the throw and ask Otis to say, "play with me" and he does
I look up and say, "I would love to play with you"
Otis has learned using his words gets him my attention

ESCAPE


Otis does not want to brush his teeth
Otis runs away
I decide to skip brushing teeth
Otis has learned that running away gets him out of things
I follow calmly. I prompt Otis to ask for "more time" before brushing teeth.
Otis gets more time playing and then goes to brush his teeth
Otis has learned using his words gets him access to avoidance

SELF STIMULATION



Other strategies to use

during and right after problem behavior occurs:

- Limit non-essential demands and non-essential denials
- Provide choices when possible
- Reinforce lower levels of behavior to avoid higher levels of behavior

ADAPTED UNIVERSAL PROTOCOLS (FROM SKILLS BASED TREATMENT LITERATURE)

MAIN TAKE AWAYS …

- Determine the basic function of the behavior
- Work to use function as a reinforcer
- Teach an alternative functional communication response to get need met
- Consider giving them what they want and then working to gradually transition away from it

REFERENCE LIST

- Anything by Laura Kastner, but specifically for young kids 'Getting to Calm: Early Years'
  - https://www.laurakastnerphd.com/books/
- Most things by Ross Greene, but specifically 'The Explosive Child'
  - https://drrossgreene.com/books.htm
- Most things on RIE parenting
  - https://yourparentingmojo.com/captivate-podcast/whatisrie/
- Any resources on Parent Child Interaction Therapy
  - https://www.parentchildinteractiontherapy.com