

THE ABC's of Increasing Safety and Self Protection skills During Covid-19

Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis (ONTABA)
Caregiver Webinar Series

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Autism ONTARIO
see the potential *voir le potentiel*

**ONTABA**
The Ontario Association for Behaviour Analysis, Inc.

Disclaimer

- The purpose of this presentation is to provide general strategies based on the principles of Applied Behaviour Analysis and my own professional experience. I will try to address all questions in the Q&A chat box as best I can without specific information being provided.
- As a Board Certified Behaviour Analyst it is vital for the safety of the community that I do not try to provide specific solutions to your family or child/youth's unique situation without first assessing that situation in depth.
- All examples of visuals are linked to the original content creators – these are meant as suggestions only.



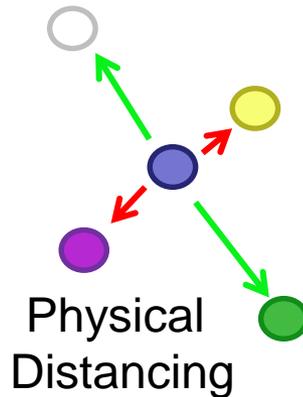
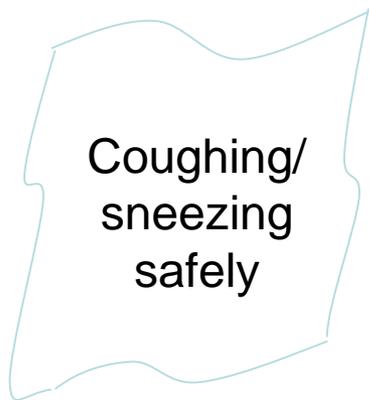
Learning Objectives

- Learn different strategies intended to strengthen your child or youths ability to engage in hand washing, physical distancing and safe sneezing/coughing to prevent the spread of COVID-19
 - A. Antecedent (Proactive) strategies to help our child/youth engage in COVID related safety skills
 - B. Teaching COVID safety skills with modeling and prompting
 - C. Positive consequences to increase the child/youths engagement in or accuracy of COVID safety skills



What Skills do we need?

- This presentation will focus on three key behaviours that have become more critical to our health as COVID has emerged



* Note that this presentation does not address wearing a mask – this is for several reasons: the various types of masks and situations that require them, inability to address possible sensory issues that might arise from wearing a mask, personal lack of knowledgeable about fitting masks to the wearer.

Health Canada does recommend wearing masks in situations where following physical distancing guidelines is not possible.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>



Antecedent (proactive) strategies

- Proactive strategies are tools we can use before we expect a skill to happen that make it more likely and successful
- We change the environment to make it more likely the child/youth will do the skills (behaviour) required

SET UP THE ENVIRONMENT

DEVELOP VISUAL SUPPORTS

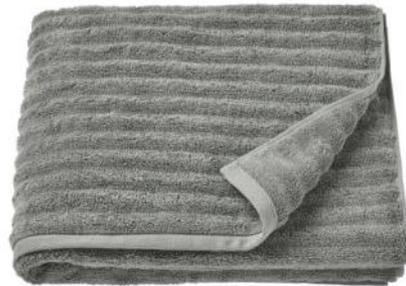
USE CLEAR INSTRUCTIONS

GIVING CHOICE AND INCLUDING PERSONAL PREFERENCES



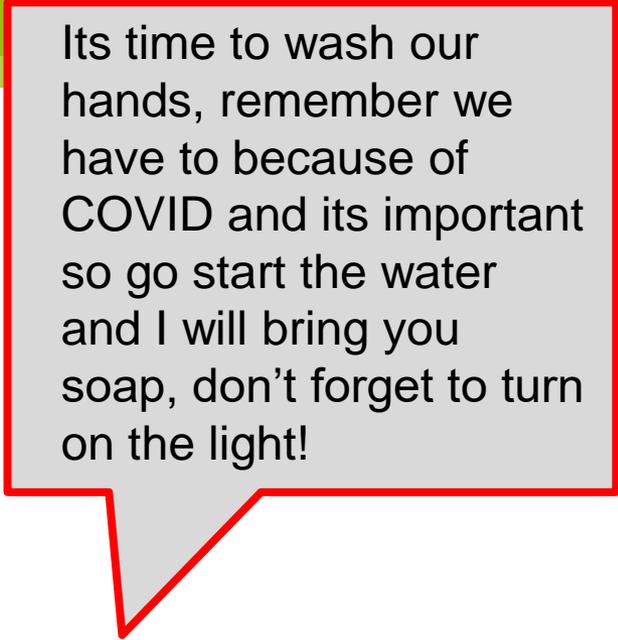
Set up the environment

Prepare all the materials you need – make it easy to access things needed to do the skills!



Use clear instructions

- Give a direct instruction. 
- Use short clear sentences. 
- Provide a different instruction for each step if needed



Its time to wash our hands, remember we have to because of COVID and its important so go start the water and I will bring you soap, don't forget to turn on the light!



Develop visual supports

Use a tissue

Written or comprised of pictures

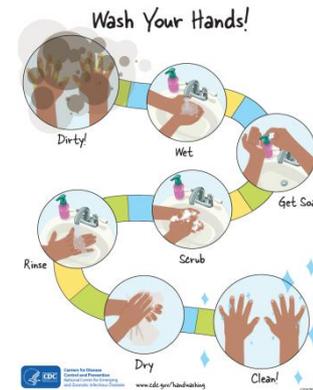


Reminders or step by step instructions



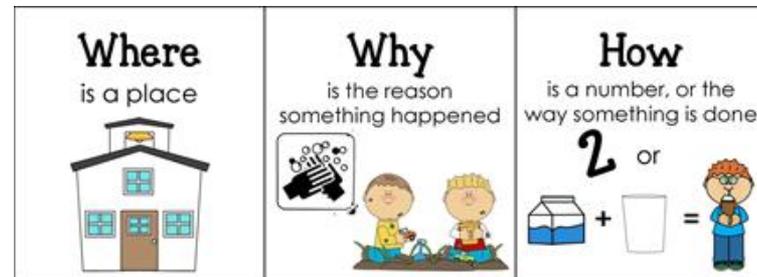
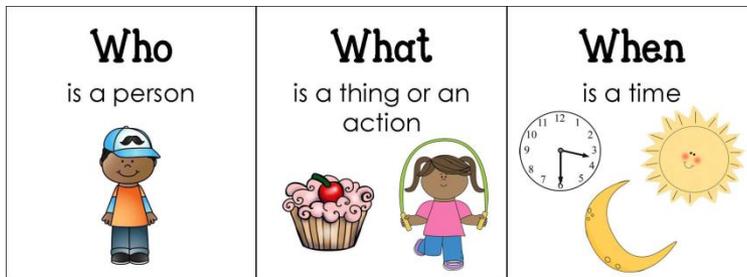
Community Signs

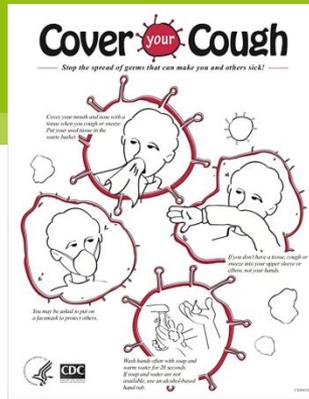
Fun and creative



Visuals can be used to explain the 5 WH's for most skills!

- ! Who – who needs to be doing the skills (in this case EVERYONE!)
- ! What – what we need to have to do the skill (supplies, prerequisite skills)
- ! Where – where do we do the skill (at home? In public? At a friends house?)
- ! When – what time do we do the skill, how often? After or before what activities?
- ! Why – why should we do this particular thing (in the form of social stories)
- ! How – how to do the skill step by step (pictures or words for each step!)





REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19. WASH YOUR HANDS.

- 1 Wet hands with warm water
- 2 Apply soap
- 3 For at least 20 seconds, make sure to wash:
- 4 Rinse well
- 5 Dry hands well with paper towel
- 6 Turn off tap using paper towel

also and back cough hand between fingers under nails thumbs

1-833-784-4397 | canada.ca/coronavirus

Public Health Agency of Canada | Canada

The CDC recommends maintaining a distance of six feet from others to slow the spread of COVID-19. Eyeballing a distance can be tricky, so here are some visual cues to help.

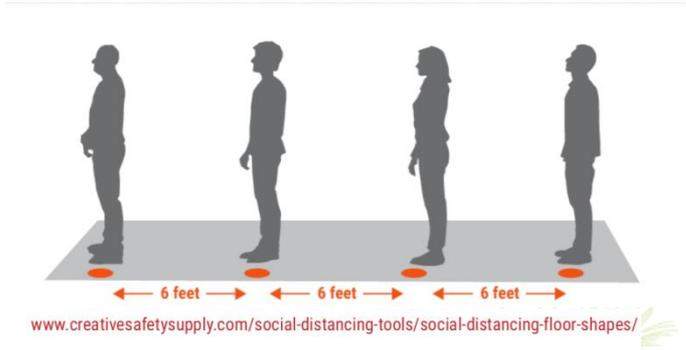


Wash Your Hands!

Dirty! Wet Get Soap Rinse Scrub Dry Clean!

www.cdc.gov/handwashing

Cough and sneeze? Elbow, please!



Giving Choice and Including personal preferences

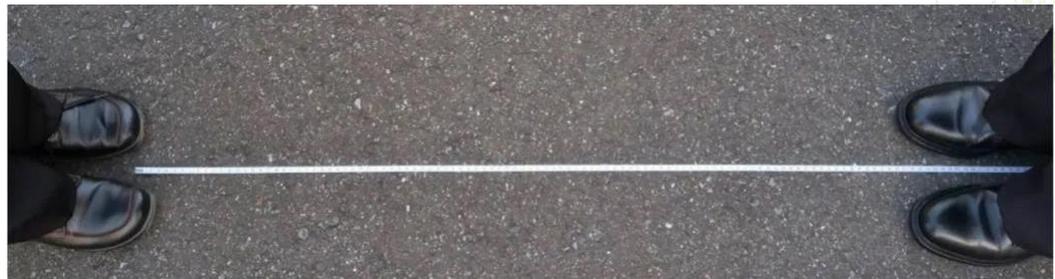
- Be creative and conscious when offering choices
- For older youth with more advanced skills you want to offer choices whenever you can. Give them as much control as possible!
- For younger children who are just starting with these skills start with a single choice and work up from there – we don't want to overwhelm them!
- Include personal preferences in the stories, videos, visuals and images you find or create for them!
- Do they love a certain song or character?
- Do they love a certain pattern or scent?



Teaching The Behaviours

MODEL THE SKILLS

- Showing your child/youth how to do the skills by doing them often and explaining throughout (or after) is a great way to teach them:
 - How to wash their hands, use physical distancing, safely cough/sneeze
 - That these are very important behaviours and you do them too
 - That everyone needs to do these things to keep themselves and others safe



Provide help if needed

Sometimes a child or youth might need a little extra help from people they trust to complete a skill thoroughly

Once you've asked them to do one of the skills you can help by:

- Standing near and providing encouragement
- Gesturing to or modeling the next step of the skill
- Light physical help if the child/youth agrees



Positive Consequences - REINFORCEMENT

Providing positive reinforcement for skills we want to see helps ensure that they will happen more often in the future.

Praise and verbal encouragement along the way let our children and youth know that they are on the right track!

Don't hesitate to praise at every step especially if you see them doing really well or trying really hard.

If you know your child/youth likes sensory input (hugs, tickles, squeezes) this can also be a good time to provide those!



Tangible Rewards

It can be a good idea to provide items (special snacks or toys) as reinforcement for the skills we've discussed – if you decide you want to use this strategy:

- Pick a couple of things that are ONLY for hand washing, using tissues, proper physical distancing
 - This can be things like a special type of snack or candy, a special type of toy
- Discuss this ahead of time and provide reminders using your “first-then”
 - “Remember today you chose to get M&M’s when you do your hand washing” (throughout the day)
 - “First wash your hands then M&M’s (immediately prior to giving the instruction)



Choosing the right rewards

- Providing reinforcement depends on providing access to praise, sensory input and/or tangible rewards that the person you are teaching wants!



- Sometimes we make the mistake of picking things *we think* the person will like – if at all possible you want their input!



Incidental Reinforcement

- Also known as “surprise” reinforcement!
- This means you don’t warn the child/youth that they will get something specifically after each time they do the skills you are working on but that sometimes you surprise them right after they complete the skills with something fun
- Works really well for skills you can’t give instructions for – like coughing or sneezing in to a tissue or your sleeve. You can’t instruct someone to do that in the moment (you don’t know when they will need to sneeze!). Having small things on hand to give in the moment along with praise can be great!



Effective reinforcement is...

- Immediate – given right after the child/youth washes their hands, coughs into a tissue or their sleeve, uses physical distancing
- Contingent – given when they washes their hands, coughs into a tissue or their sleeve, uses physical distancing not before!
- Descriptive – be specific in labeling/describing the desired behaviour (praise the specific actions)
- Frequent – in the beginning especially when learning these new skills to increase motivation



Reminder!

This presentation and
the associated
resource page are
available for download



References

- Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., & Heward, W. L. (2007). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education Inc.
- Miltenberger, R. G. (2008). *Behavior modification: Principles and procedures*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Volkmar, F. R., & Wiesner, L. A. (2009) *A Practical Guide to Autism: What every parent, family member, and teacher needs to know*. Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

