Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Instructor:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_\_

**Chapter 3**

***Conceptual Work Sheets for***

**Escape**

*Definition:*

**Reinforcement contingency**

**□** The response contingent

**□** presentation of reinforcer

**□** resulting in an increased frequency of that response.

Take a look at the *generic reinforcement contingency:*

**Before Behavior After**

**Reinforcer**

**Behavior**

**No Reinforcer**

*Definition:*

**Escape Contingency**

**□** The response contingent

**□** removal of an aversive stimulus

**□** resulting in an increased frequency of that response.

**Here is a diagram of the basic escape contingency:**

**Before Behavior After**

**Aversive Behavior Aversive**

**Stimulus stimulus**

**is terminated**

**The Skinner Box**

1. Please diagram this example: Each time the shock turns on, the rat presses the lever and the shock immediately turns off (2).

**Before Behavior After**

2. Is it an escape contingency?

A. Yes

B. No

3. What is the negative reinforcer in the Skinner box example?

A. Shock

B. Food

C. Termination of Shock

D. Termination of Food

4. Please explain why this is an example of escape (refer to the definition):

**Keeping it Clean**

Sally usually leaves her room a total mess months on end. One day she picked up her clothes. While Sally was picking up her clothes, her mom happened to walk past the bedroom and noticed that she was cleaning. Sally’s mom was so pleased that she complimented Sally on how nice her room looked. In the future, Sally will pick up her clothes more often. (Note that the reinforcer is probably not escape from a messy room; otherwise, she would have been keeping it clean all along.)

5. Diagram the contingency maintaining Sally’s behavior (HINT: make sure her behavior passes the specific-behavior test) (2):

**Before Behavior After**

6. Is this a reinforcement contingency?

A. Yes

B. No (Revise!)

**The Suspicious Stomach Ache**

When Johnny comes home from school he immediately has to do his homework. However, Johnny would much rather relax (who wouldn’t??). One day while doing his homework, Johnny told his mother he had a stomach ache. Johnny’s mom let him go lie on the couch, and put off doing his homework, until he felt better. From that point on, he complained of stomach aches much more frequently when doing his homework. (Note that having a stomach ache is not Johnny’s behavior in this contingency. Instead his behavior is “complaining of a stomach ache”.)

7. Diagram the contingency for Johnny’s complaining (2):

**Before Behavior After**

8. Is this an escape contingency?

A. Yes

B. No

9. What is the traditional term for the aversive stimulus in the above example?

A. Aversive condition

B. Negative Reinforcement

C. Negative Reinforcer

**Pout Stealing**

Suppose your brother, Bob, pouts because life isn’t working out the way he thinks it should; and, in spite of your various efforts, he continues. Now here’s a little-known trick: You can stop Bob’s pout by stealing it; by *pouting yourself.* For some reason or another, pouting seems to be a game only one person can play at a time. If you manage to make your pout stronger than Bob’s, then Bob will stop pouting (and he may even try to console you, but that’s not the point). An analysis of why it works that way is a little complex, but often it does work out that way.

10. Please diagram the escape contingency supporting **your** pouting behavior (2).

**Before Behavior After**

Use the Contingency Diagramming Checklist to analyze this example.

11. What type of contingency is this?

A. Reinforcement

B. Escape

12. What is ***our*** term for Negative Reinforcement?

A. Reinforcement

B. Negative Reinforcer

C. Escape

By the way, your pout stealing need not have been intentional. In other words, you might have been completely unaware of the escape contingency, where your pouting stopped Bob’s pouting; you might even have been unaware you were pouting.

Scientific fact: 50% of my undergrad students said they’ve observed pout stealing previously. So why don’t you keep your eyes open for examples of pout stealing and then share them with your instructor and class. Wow, talk about fun!

**Who’s on the Line?**

Lisa usually talks to her best friend every night on the phone. When the phone rings, she immediately answers it and is able to talk to her friend. (Note: “Talking on the phone” is an action and shouldn’t be in the before and after boxes.) ***Assume that the ringing phone is not aversive for Lisa.***

13. Diagram the contingency for Lisa’s behavior (2):

**Before Behavior After**

14. What type of contingency is this?

A. Reinforcement

B. Escape

Now suppose Lisa answers the phone and hears an annoying salesperson instead of her friend. Lisa quickly makes up the excuse that she is on her way out and doesn’t have time to talk. Thus, she no longer has to listen to the annoying sales person.

15. Diagram the contingency for Lisa’s behavior of making up an excuse (2):

**Before Behavior After**

16. What is the ***Traditional*** term for the contingency in the above example?

A. Punishment

B. Negative Reinforcement

C. Escape

17. What type of contingency is this?

A. Reinforcement

B. Escape

**Is It Reinforcement or Escape?**

In some situations it is not clear whether a reinforcement or escape contingency is responsible for a person’s behavior. This is often the case in situations involving temperature, for example. When a person is hot, he or she turns on the air conditioning. By turning on the air conditioning is the behavior being reinforced by the aversive heat or is the behavior being reinforced by the presentation of a lower temperature? Here are two possible ways this situation may be diagrammed:

As an escape contingency:

**Before Behavior After**

Hot air Turn on AC No hot air

As a reinforcement contingency:

**Before Behavior After**

No cool air Turn on AC Cool air

Now take a look at the following example:

Johnny loves watching his Saturday morning cartoons. However, he hates watching the commercials that interrupt his cartoons. Whenever a commercial comes on, he immediately takes the remote control and changes the channel to another cartoon.

18. What aversive condition is being removed?

**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

19. Now fill in the diagram (2)

**Before Behavior After**

20. Now diagram the channel changing contingency as reinforcement (2):

**Before Behavior After**

21. What is the ***Traditional*** term for this contingency?

A. Reinforcement

B. Positive Reinforcer

C. Positive Reinforcement

**POB vs Traditional Terms**

POB terms are quite different from the terms that traditional psychology uses. So let’s test your knowledge of how well you can decipher them!

22. Fill in this handy dandy table

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Traditional** | **Ours** |
| Positive Reinforcer |  |
|  | Reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer |

**Your Original Example**

Note: In the previous situation there may be more than one possible correct analysis. However, situations such as this are somewhat rare. When diagramming contingencies, don’t be too quick to assume that a situations is ambiguous. Usually there’s a specific correct answer, and we’re picky.

Now give an original example of an escape contingency. Be sure to use an example that definitely is escape, rather than an ambiguous example that could also be interpreted as reinforcement.

23. Please describe your example:

24. Please diagram your example (2):

**Before Behavior After**

Use the Contingency Diagramming Checklist to analyze this example.

25. Is it an escape contingency?

A. Yes

B. No (If not, revise!)

26. Please explain why this is an example of an escape contingency in terms of the definition

27. Now, copy the preceding diagram onto your transparency, using the relevant transparency master. But you do not need to hand this transparency in with your homework.

**The Sick Social Cycle**

Little Susie wants to be just like her older sister Megan. Susie wants to do everything Megan does, but Megan wants nothing to do with her. When Megan is getting ready to go to the movies or the mall, Susie, the perpetrator, begs and begs Megan to let her go, too. Megan, the victim, usually gets so tired of hearing Susie whine that she gives in and lets her tag along.

**Before Behavior After**

Megan does Megan tells

not tell Susie Susie whines Susie she can

she can come come

28. What is the before condition?

*(Major hint: Being told she can come would be a major reinforcer for Susie.)*

1. Absence of a reinforcer
2. Aversive condition

29. What is the after condition?

A. Presentation of a reinforcer

B. Removal of an aversive condition

30. What type of contingency is maintaining Susie’s behavior?

A. Reinforcement

B. Escape

31. Please diagram the contingency maintaining Megan, the victim’s behavior (2):

**Before Behavior After**

32. What is the before condition?

A. Absence of a reinforcer

B. Aversive condition

33. What is the after condition?

A. Presentation of a reinforcer

B. Removal of an aversive condition

34. What type of contingency is maintaining Megan’s behavior?

A. Reinforcement

B. Escape

35. Now please fill in the diagram for the whole sick social cycle (The contingency for Susie, the perpetrator, goes in the top row; and the contingency for Megan, the victim goes in the second row)[[1]](#footnote-1) (5).

**Your Sick Social Cycle (Victim’s Escape Model)**

After

After

Behavior

Behavior

Before

Before

Remember that **the first contingency** is always some sort of reinforcement contingency, either reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer or reinforcement by the removal of an aversive condition; but, in either case, the perpetrator’s inappropriate behavior is reinforced. Remember that **the second contingency** is always an escape contingency, where the victim’s inappropriate escape behavior is reinforced.

**Who’s the Master and Who’s the Mastered**

Juke’s Doberman, Spot, often comes up to the table begging for food, with a cute little growl suggesting he’s about to go for your throat. Finding this irritating, Juke

tosses the mutt a bone from his own plate to shut him up.

And this works….for a while. See Spot, the perpetrator,

growl. See Juke, the victim, cave in.

36. Diagram the contingency maintaining Spot, the

perpetrator’s, begging (2).

**Before Behavior After**

37. What is the before condition?

A. Absence of a reinforcer

B. Aversive condition

38. What is the after condition?

A. Presentation of a reinforcer

B. Removal of an aversive condition

39. What type of contingency is maintaining Spot’s

behavior?

1. Reinforcement
2. Escape

40. Diagram the contingency maintaining Juke, the

victim’s giving Spot a bone (2):

**Before Behavior After**

41. What is the before condition?

A. Absence of a reinforcer

B. Aversive condition

42. What is the after condition?

A. Presentation of a reinforcer

B. Removal of an aversive condition

43. What type of contingency is maintaining Juke’s

behavior?

1. Reinforcement
2. Escape

44. Now please fill in the diagram for the whole sick social cycle. (The contingency for Spot, the perpetrator, goes in the top row; and the contingency for Juke, the victim, goes in the second row.)(5)

**Your Sick Social Cycle**

**(Victim’s Escape Model)**

Behavior

After

Behavior

After

Before

Before

Remember that the first contingency is always some sort of reinforcement contingency, either reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer or reinforcement by the removal of an aversive condition; but, in either case, the perpetrator’s inappropriate behavior is reinforced.

Remember that the second contingency is always an escape contingency, where the victim’s inappropriate escape behavior is reinforced.

**Your Original Example of a Sick Social Cycle**

Now give your original example of a sick social cycle.

**Here are some student examples, all of which are real, I believe:**

Amy and her husband lift a heavy object; Amy whines, so her husband escapes the whine by lifting the heavy object alone.

In the grocery store, Daddy doesn’t give autistic Joey bubble gum; Joey makes a disturbance, and you know what happens.

Ed buys the Girl Scout’s cookies, which escapes her aversive sales pitch. This may be common with charitable solicitation, because it would be even more morally aversive to say *No* to a worthy cause.

My 18 year old nephew gets money from my uncle, when he whines.

The wife refuses sex with her husband, because she fears his philandering has caused him to be HIV positive; but she relents to escape his beating her.

The screaming child in church gets a sucker from Mom, which shuts him up.

45. Please describe your example:

46. Please diagram the *reinforcement contingency* for the perpetrator in your original example (2):

**Before Behavior After**

47. Is this a type of reinforcement (either reinforcement

or escape) contingency?

1. Yes
2. No (If not, revise!)[[2]](#footnote-2)

48. Please diagram the example of the *escape contingency* for the victim in your example (2):

**Before Behavior After**

Use the Contingency Diagramming Checklist to analyze your original example.

49. Is it an escape contingency?

A. Yes

B. No (If not, revise!)

Finally, please fill out the diagram on the sick-social-cycle diagram on the next page.

50. Now please fill in the diagram for the whole sick social cycle. (The contingency for the perpetrator goes in the top row; and the contingency for the victim, goes in the second row.)(5)

**Your Sick Social Cycle**

**(Victim’s Escape Model)**

Behavior

Behavior

Before

Before

After

After

Remember that the first contingency is always some sort of reinforcement contingency, either reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer or reinforcement by the removal of an aversive condition; but, in either case, the perpetrator’s inappropriate behavior is reinforced.

-Remember that the second contingency is always an escape contingency, where the victim’s inappropriate escape behavior is reinforced.

1. 1 We make a slight change in the rules for filling out the top two diagrams of these sick social cycles, because these two contingencies describe social interactions between two people. For the top before condition, we would normally say, *Susie can’t come; but because Susie’s before condition is based on Megan’s behavior, we state that before condition in terms of Megan’s behavior—Megan tells Susie she can’t come.* That way, we can easily move the before and after conditions from the top two contingency diagrams down into the sick social cycle diagram, where each item is behavior. Also, it’s OK, for the before and after conditions to include behavior, as long as it’s not the behavior of the person in the behavior box; so in the top contingency diagram, it’s OK for the before and after condition to be Megan’s behavior, but it cannot be Susie’s behavior. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. 2 Actually, the perpetrator’s contingency could be an escape contingency too, for example, Bobby Brat, the perp., whines when he has to do his homework, and Mellow Mom, *the victim, lets him off the hook. So you can use an escape contingency for your perp. too, but be careful.* [↑](#footnote-ref-2)