

Teaching Young Adults with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities to Respond Appropriately to Lures from Strangers

Introduction

Individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)

- increased risk of abuse and exploitation
- at least 2x as likely to experience crimes against the person
 - physical & sexual assault, robbery, theft
- both known and unknown perpetrators

Parental concern for safety of individuals with IDD

- barrier to social opportunities
 - post-secondary education
 - working in the community
 - living independently

Parents want adults with IDD to learn self-protection skills
To address this concern

- Teach adults with IDD to appropriately respond to strangers
 - say “no” to a lure
 - walk away from the stranger
 - report the attempt to a trusted adult
- Adults with IDD must learn to never walk off with a stranger
- Walking away is an important part of the safety response
 - decrease the risk of being grabbed or persuaded

Few studies conducted to teach individuals with IDD to respond appropriately to strangers.

Methods borrowed from studies conducted with typically developing children

Skills best learned through behavior skills training (BST)

- instructions, modeling, role-playing, & feedback
- first taught in the classroom

Generalization assessed *in situ* to ensure skill acquisition

- Participant led to specified location and left alone
- Confederate stranger approaches participant and presents a lure
- Data are collected on participant’s response
- Inappropriate response followed by *in situ* training

In situ training and assessments

- necessary to promote and assess generalization
- can be contrived
 - unrealistic to experience multiple lures over several days
 - In situ* training immediately following a stranger lure puts participant at risk of thinking subsequent lures are tests and failing to respond appropriately

The Current Study

- Teach self-protection skills to young adults with IDD
- Extends the literature to include young adults with mild ID
 - Group increasingly likely to participate independently in employment and community settings
- Addresses methodological limitations of prior research
 - Emphasis on avoiding contrived situations following *in situ* assessments
- Changed performance criterion
 - Target behavior was walking away



Method

Independent Variable

- 2-phase (BST & *In Situ*) Training to teach self-protection skills

Target Behavior

- 3-step safety response
 - Refuse request, say “no, I have to go find my _____”
 - Move at least 5 steps away from stranger within 3 s
 - Report incident to trusted adult within 5 min

•Criterion for accurate performance

- Move at least 5 steps away from stranger within 3 s of delivery of lure

Design

- Multiprobe multiple baseline design across participants
- Weekly probes prior to baseline to prevent desensitization to lures

Participants

Individuals with IDD

	Gender	Age	IQ	Diagnosis
Emma	F	22	53	CP, ADD, seizure disorder
Wyatt	M	21	67	Down syndrome
Ben	M	23	68	Autism
Tim	M	20	54	Mild ID, ADD
Elliott	M	22	46	Down syndrome

Confederate Strangers

	Females	Males
Number	22	7
Age range	19-58	26-54
Mean Age	26.77	33.57
Ethnicity	21 white, 1 Hispanic,	All white

Procedure

Baseline

- In situ* probes 1x/week, more frequent during week prior to intervention
 - Community settings familiar to the participant
 - Parent took participant to location, provided reason to leave participant
 - Confederate stranger approached participant, delivered lure
 - 3 potential responses
 - agreed to go with confederate stranger = 0% criterion
 - refused to go with stranger, did not move away = 0%
 - walked away from stranger = 100%

•Participant unaware stranger lure is a simulation

Phase 1: Classroom BST

- Daily 1-hour BST sessions (3 at VKC, 2 at local library)
 - Instruction
 - PowerPoint presentation
 - What is a stranger, 4 types of lures used by strangers, appropriate response when presented with lure
 - Modeling
 - 4 examples, 2 counter-examples
 - Rehearsal
 - 5 role-play scenarios
 - Praise and corrective feedback
- Criterion for completion
 - Correct responding to at least 80% of role-play scenarios (4 of 5)
 - 3 classroom BST sessions in a row

Phase 2: *In Situ* Community Training

- 3 times per week
- 5 role-plays in community settings
- Criterion for completion
 - Correct responding to at least 80% of role-play scenarios (4 of 5)
 - 3 consecutive *in situ* sessions

Method

Generalization

- Similar to baseline, collected at least once per training phase
- Program for generalization
 - Teach 4 types of lures, multiple exemplars, multiple confederate strangers, multiple locations (away from the training site)
 - General (“Would you like to go for a walk with me?”)
 - Authority (“Your mother said for you to go with me.”)
 - Incentive (“Would you like to go get some ice cream?”)
 - Assistance (“I’ve lost my dog, will you help me look for it?”)

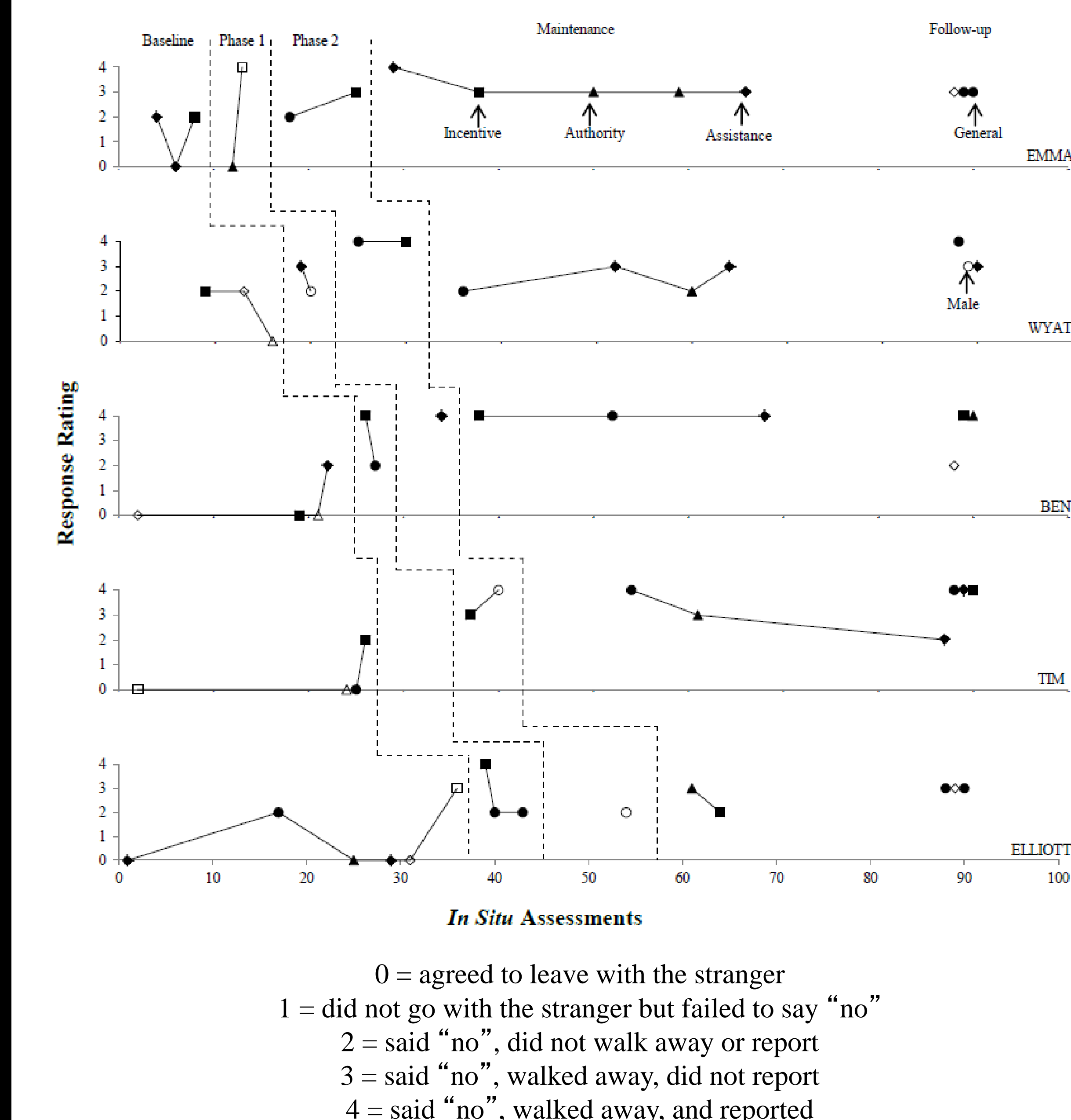
Maintenance

- Similar to baseline, collected once every two weeks until all participants completed training, then up to 3 months after training
- Booster sessions conducted if participant failed monthly probe
 - Similar to classroom BST

Results

Intervention

- Phase 1: Classroom training**
 - Completed within 3-4 days
 - 4 out of 5 participants reached criterion during role play within 3 sessions
 - Elliott reached criterion within 4 sessions
- Phase 2: *In Situ* Community Training**
 - Completed within 3 sessions
 - All participants reached criterion during role play within 3 sessions



Results

Baseline

- 4 out of 5 participants remained stable during baseline
 - Emma, Wyatt, Ben, & Tim never walked away from the stranger
 - Elliott walked away on the last probe before training

Generalization

- During Phase 1
 - Emma, Wyatt, and Ben walked away from the confederate 1 out of 2 times
 - Elliott walked away 1 out of 3 times
- During Phase 2
 - Wyatt walked away during both opportunities
 - Ben walked away during his opportunity
 - Emma and Tim walked away 1 out of 2 times
 - Elliott did not walk away

Maintenance

- Emma walked away on all 5 maintenance assessments
- Wyatt walked away 2 of 4 times
- Ben walked away all 3 times
- Tim walked away 2 of 3 times
- Elliott walked away 1 of 2 times

Follow Up

- Emma, Wyatt, Tim, and Elliott walked away at the 1, 2, and 3 month follow-ups
- Ben did not walk away on the first monthly follow-up
 - Received a booster session after that assessment
 - Walked away at months 2 and 3

Social Validity

- Participants and parents liked the training and would recommend it to others
- Parents did not report increased fear of strangers
- Participants reported feeling more comfortable being alone in community settings after training

Discussion

- Poor performance during baseline highlighted the importance of training
 - Participants did not walk away from confederate strangers following a lure
 - All participants were willing to leave with stranger at least once
- Participants quickly met criterion during classroom role-play
- Behaviors did not consistently generalize to *in situ* assessments
- To enhance generalization, Phase 2 was conducted in community settings
- The skill of walking away maintained up to 3 months after training
- Methods diverged from previous research
 - In situ* training conducted with all participants until criterion met in role-play
 - Independent of performance during *in situ* assessments
 - To avoid unrealistic training that typically follows failed *in situ* assessment
 - Performance criterion changed
- Implications for Practice
 - conducting this training and assessment in classroom settings more feasible.
- Limitations**
 - Difficult to recruit strangers of different ages /ethnicities/males
 - Logistical challenges in scheduling *in situ* assessments

This training is one way to increase the safety of adults with ID, allowing for more independence in community settings

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by :

- Grant # T32HD07226 from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development to Vanderbilt University.
- Grant # 73MC00050 from the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (LEND)
- Special Education Endowment Dissertation Funds
- Thank you to Robert Hodapp and Joseph Webby for their guidance and support

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