

## BEHAVIOR ASSESSMENT REPORT

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| <b>Client:</b> Marshall Monroe                    | <b>School:</b> Patrol High School |
| <b>DOB &amp; Age:</b> 8/03/XX; 17 years, 8 months | <b>Grade:</b> 11 <sup>th</sup>    |
| <b>Parents:</b> Devan & Katherine Monroe          | <b>Date of Report:</b> 11/06/2015 |

**Presenting Problem:** These FBA and AFLS assessments were generated by parent request to address concerns about Marshall's ability to perform appropriately in the workplace, particularly in a social context. Marshall currently displays behaviors of concern that include perseveration on a topic of conversation, interrupting and/or talking over others, and vocal self-talk. Marshall's parents are concerned that his inappropriate social interactions and communication will impede his success in the workplace setting.

**Relevant Background:** Marshall is an 11<sup>th</sup> grade student that attends an out of district placement at Patrol High School. In Marshall's current educational program, he has participated in the Community Based Training program to prepare Marshall for his transition into the workforce. Beginning this summer, Marshall will be working out in the community with a job coach as part of his educational program. To date, there have been no previous FBA's conducted, and Marshall does not have a Behavior Intervention Plan currently in place. Marshall is diagnosed with a moderate Intellectual Disability, a seizure disorder, and food allergies. His seizures are reportedly well-controlled on medication.

In his school placement, Marshall is described as very pleasant and friendly to students and staff, frequently initiating and responding to questions. According to Marshall's teachers in various career explorations, Marshall demonstrates difficulty and requires supervision for multi-step tasks; however, he enjoyed the social contact involved with delivering office materials to the appropriate locations around the school. In general labor settings, Marshall demonstrated focus on tasks, and was able to independently follow single step directions. A recent speech and language evaluation determined that articulation and fluency are within normal limits. He demonstrates a weakness in receptive and expressive language as well as pragmatics. Social pragmatics are a primary concern. Marshall has difficulty navigating the social cues that are important for a social interaction. For example, Marshall may repeatedly speak to someone who is not attending to him, will interact with unfamiliar adults, and has difficulty maintaining topic and turn taking in a conversation.

### **Target Behaviors & Operational Definitions:**

- *Perseveration of Topic:* Any instance in which Marshall repeats comments that pertain to a topic unrelated to current conversation or attempts to engage in repetitive conversation with multiple individuals in his environment.
- *Interrupting / Talking Over Others:* Any attempt to engage in conversation with another who is already engaged in conversation with someone (including Marshall, himself).
- *Self-Talk or "Chatter":* Any instance of talking to himself or talking when no communicative partner is present.

**Direct Assessments:**

*Observations.* Direct observations of Marshall's target behaviors occurred across multiple days and settings. Marshall was observed during his participation in both social and task-oriented activities at "Yard Work and More" and during vocational training in the Café at Patrol High School. The first observation took place at "Yard Work and More" during the end of dinnertime. Everyone was socializing and the environment was unstructured. When the BCBA arrived, Marshall interacted with him by saying, "I'm going home later on...Marshall's a big man!" There was no appropriate greeting emitted independently. Noticing my clipboard and notebook, Marshall then stated, "There's the papers. Where do the paper's go?" I answered Marshall's question, and he walked away. Marshall was in constant motion, approaching different people throughout the environment and making statements. Statements were primarily made to adults. Marshall did occasionally take a few minutes to interact with his peers; however, interactions were more physical in nature (interlacing hands as if to play "Mercy" and moving around together). Verbal interactions were less noticeable with peers; most peers in this setting were non-verbal. While other participants finished eating dinner, Marshall was in the living room watching Thomas the Tank on television. One of the adults began talking to Marshall, asking him about school; Marshall responded with comments related to Thomas the Tank. A few minutes later, he continued making repetitive comments related to the program that were not directed at any particular individual [*Donald's a dirty hat (5x); Donald's a dirty man (3x); Donald's a boy (3x)*]. At that point, Mrs. Munroe heard Marshall's chattering, and asked him, "What is Donald?" Marshall responded with, "Donald's a train." A few minutes later, another participant and his caregiver, Donna, entered the home. Donna said hello to Marshall two times before he emitted a greeting response. For the remainder of the social portion of the evening, Marshall was observed moving through the rooms, making statements and asking repetitive questions while no one was attending to him. After approximately two minutes of inattention, one of the adults began interacting with Marshall, and he continued to talk about Thomas the Tank. Once Marshall sat down to wait for the task-related activity to begin, Marshall began to engage another adult in conversation about "army guys." Mrs. Munroe was present to prompt Marshall through the conversation, assisting him with staying on topic and clarifying what he was talking about. Donna also began asking Marshall questions related to his discussion. Marshall then became very interested in seeking out Donna's attention as he transitioned into the task related activity. Marshall was provided with a garden book and visual cue cards that were used to identify and label items that one would see in a garden or use for gardening. This activity was designed to prepare participants for work in the community garden. Marshall worked with one-on-one assistance from an adult; he was engaging Marshall in the process of labeling and discussing things associated with the garden. Frequently, Marshall would attempt to engage Donna in conversation, making random comments that sometimes were, and sometimes were not related to the immediate activity. Each time Marshall asked Donna a question, Donna responded to Marshall with an answer. The staff member working with Marshall would immediately bring Marshall's attention back to task when he would begin to discuss things off-topic. Marshall was frequently distracted by other things that were happening around him. Although he required frequent redirection during his assigned tasks, there was a noticeable decrease in inappropriate verbal emissions during the structured task activity as compared to the social component of the evening.

The second observation took place at Marshall's school, Patrol High School. He was participating in his morning career experience in the Café. Upon my arrival, Marshall was working one on one with his job coach to prepare the café for customers. Marshall worked through the process of preparing bagels by putting cream cheese on them, wrapping them in plastic wrap, plating them, and putting them into the case. Marshall also restocked the coffee, tea, coffee cups, and lids. Each new task was presented to Marshall with a verbal direction from the coach. Each time Marshall was presented with a direction, he would repeat it. Other than an occasional verbal prompt or corrective feedback from the coach, verbal interactions were minimal. At times, Marshall would make quiet statements with regard to the task he was performing. Any time Marshall became distracted from his task, the coach directed him back to task with minimal engagement with the use of gestural prompts. Towards the end of the preparation period, a staff member and a student entered the café, and the staff member began talking to Marshall's job coach. Marshall was given a piece of cardboard to carry to the recycling container. On his way back from the recycling container, Marshall stopped and made comments to the staff member. The staff member did not attend to Marshall's comments. He repeated himself several times until the coach redirected him back to task. The staff member also stated, "Go back to work", and Marshall complied. Shortly after, students and staff began to enter the café to purchase food and drinks. As customers began to approach the counter, Marshall asked several of the adults if they were going to the banquet that night. (There was a Special Olympics Sports Banquet scheduled at the school that evening. Marshall was going to attend the banquet.) Each adult that Marshall asked provided a response. Marshall then stood back, smiling, waiting for coffee to brew. He took another coffee pod from a staff member and was redirected to complete his first task. Many adult customers that handed Marshall a coffee pod was greeted with a similar question, "Are you going to the banquet? Are you going to eat food?" Even after receiving a response, Marshall would repeat the question. It was notable that Marshall did not initiate interactions with other students during this time. When Marshall handed coffee or tea to a staff, he would say, "Coffee? Tea? Is it coffee?" Each verbalization was met with a response by the staff that confirmed which type of beverage was being served. When presenting coffee or tea to a student, Marshall would say, "Thank you, student's name".

### **Indirect Assessments:**

*Parent Interview.* Mrs. Munroe was interviewed to discuss concerns and the focus of this FBA. When asked about her concerns for Marshall, she stated that Marshall's occurrences of verbalizations increase significantly when he is experiencing anxiety. Mrs. Munroe explained that Marshall "constantly chatters", asking the same questions repeatedly, and perseverating on a single topic. He also talks to strangers without hesitation, often abiding by a specific script (i.e. asks everyone if they have a dog). When in a group setting, Marshall will often interrupt or talk over other people. He may talk more loudly when being told "No" in response to a request for a desired item or activity. Mrs. Doe reported that when Marshall listens to music, he may become over stimulated and that tends to increase his "chattiness". She requested the FBA because she wants to ensure that Marshall is supported with these behaviors that may potentially interfere with his ability to participate effectively and appropriately in the community work setting.

Mrs. Munroe reported that the frequency and intensity of Marshall's behaviors vary with regards to the environment that he is in and the people around him. For example, Marshall exhibits fair control over his talkativeness when he is working at the Marina office and while at school. He also has different intensities depending on the staff that is working with him in the home program. I asked Mrs. Munroe to discuss previous interventions that may affect Marshall's

behaviors. She said that using statements such as, “It’s not your time to talk” could reduce the behavior. Also, priming Marshall by providing clear expectations ahead of time serves to decrease the frequency and intensity of the behavior. Mrs. Munroe explained that Marshall often does not engage in the target behaviors when he is watching a movie, listening to music, or engaging in physical activity. She has used verbal prompting and reinforcement to decrease the target behaviors without success.

*Questionnaire.* The Functional Analysis Screening Tool (FAST) is designed to identify a number of factors that may influence the occurrence of problem behaviors as related to their potential functions. The FAST is administered to a team of individuals that work closely with the individual to verify likely functions of the target behavior. For this assessment, the FAST was administered to Mr. Munroe, Mrs. Munroe, Marshall’s home program staff, and his home program consultant. The results of the FAST assessment denote a very clearly identified function of

socially mediated reinforcement in the form of attention; 100% of the assessments collected identify this as the maintaining function, with a slight secondary indication of automatic reinforcement in the form of sensory stimulation. This secondary function may have a correlation with the target behavior described as “self-talk/Chatter”. Data from direct observations support these functions.

**Hypothesized Function:** Based on interviews, information obtained from the FAST, descriptive observation, and partial interval data recorded during direct observations, Marshall engages in topic perseveration and talking over other people as a function of socially mediated positive reinforcement through attention. Antecedent conditions primarily indicate a low attention condition and the presence of an adult in the environment. Self-talk or “chattering” is a function of automatic reinforcement (self-stimulatory) because of the low attention conditions that are identified as both antecedent and consequential variables.