

Functional Assessment Flowchart Explanations

1. **Information Gathering:** During this stage, information about the individual should be gathered. Sources of information can include parents, siblings, friends, school teachers, school and community mental health workers, and any other individuals that know the student. Questions about when and where the behavior is happening should be asked. Individuals can be asked as to why they think the behavior is occurring. If possible observable behavioral data should be collected during this stage, and rates of targeted behaviors are collected during this stage. Remember, some behaviors such as lying and stealing are difficult to observe. Investigators should try to observe when the behavior is occurring and when it is not so that various contexts can be analyzed. During information gathering, the investigator should also be conducting an assessment of the team functioning surrounding the student, including the direct school team as well as the level of interaction between the school, home, and community systems. Key team members missing from the information gathering stage should be identified and spoken with.
2. **Sort and Analyze:** During this stage investigator(s) sort out information and see if all pertinent individuals have been interviewed and whether enough observable behavioral data has been gathered. During this stage the beginning of an analysis can begin.
3. **Is there Enough Information?:** At this point, investigator(s) can determine if they have enough information to determine a hypothesis. If they do not have enough information they must return to the information gathering stage.
4. **Formulation of Hypothesis:** At this stage, the investigator(s) should form a hypothesis as to the function of the behavior.
5. **Verify Hypothesis:** During this stage the investigator(s) should verify (prove) the hypothesis. They may conduct reversals to see if the behavior can be produced in certain contexts and not in other contexts. Reversals must be done with caution as the investigators would not want to put the safety of the student or others at risk.
6. **Verification of Analysis:** During this stage the investigators check to see if the results of their hypothesis are socially valid. They also must check to make sure that all information collected is reliable and supports the hypothesis.
7. **Did Data Confirm Hypothesis?:** During this stage the investigators must analyze the contextual manipulations to see if they confirm their hypothesis.
8. **Statement of Function:** At this point, the investigator develops a statement of function.

9. Hypothesize Intervention Options: During this stage, investigators brainstorm possible interventions. Remember this is a free thinking stage and all possible interventions should be contemplated and not discarded.
10. Which Intervention(s) Might Work?: Investigators determine which of the brainstormed interventions have the potential to work. Resources should be considered during this stage, and discussions with the team should take place.
11. Behavior Plan: During this stage the investigators write out a formalized plan that includes observably defined target behaviors as well as the interventions. Included in the plan should be the method by which progress will be determined and evaluated.
12. Implementation: At this point, the investigators begin implementation of the intervention(s). All individuals responsible for the intervention(s) should be told about the interventions and what their responsibility will be. All resources must be aligned for the intervention.
13. Evaluation: The interventions must be evaluated for the purpose of determining if the interventions are successful.
14. Does the Intervention Work?: It should be determined if the intervention is working and if it is meeting the desired and expected outcomes.
15. Monitor and Change as Needed. During this stage the investigators can make changes to the intervention or begin the process anew if required.