

The Technician's Role

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WHAT'S COVERED

This lesson will explore the technician's role by defining and discussing the following:

1. Getting to Know Your Patient
2. How to Build Rapport
3. Why Build Rapport?

1. Getting to Know Your Patient

So, you are working with your first patient! How do you start getting to know them?



THINK ABOUT IT

How do you introduce yourself to someone that you haven't met before? What are some things that you do to get to know someone?

Well, this is the same way that we want you to introduce yourself to your patients and get to know them. The first thing that we want you to understand is that your patients are people first! This means you should interact with them the same way you would interact with anyone else.

How should you introduce yourself?

- It is best to approach the situation as if your patient understands everything, rather than assume they have limited abilities.
- Start by saying, "Hello, how are you? What do you want to play with or talk about?"
- Get to know their levels of language and abilities by continuing your conversation and engagement.

Next, get on their level... literally! If your patient is sitting on the floor, sit on the floor with them. Join them in whatever activity they are participating in.



EXAMPLE If your patient is sitting playing the Wii, join them. If they are playing with clay, sit down and start creating with them.



HINT

Consider the patient's age when speaking with them, and adjust your tone accordingly.



THINK ABOUT IT

Would you willingly hang out with someone who placed demands on you frequently, never spoke directly “to you,” or only stared at their iPad/Phone?

We are certain that your answer is no! Imagine having just met someone and then they immediately start telling you what to do before getting to know you.



BIG IDEA

We want you to reflect on working with your patients by getting to know them and building a relationship with them so that you can have productive future sessions.

Video Transcription

Hi! [SQUEALS]

Hi, Jack Reilly.

Hey, buddy. I brought some toys to play with today.

[MUSIC PLAYS]

Is that cool?

[MUSIC PLAYS]

OK. You want to play?

You say, what is that?

Banana.

Banana, that's right. Banana. What else do you see?

"Cuh--". Carrot.

Carrots. Good talking.

2. How to Build Rapport

It is important to establish a positive relationship with your patient. In ABA, we call this “pairing,” as we are pairing ourselves with reinforcement as we build rapport with the patient.

Here are different ways to build rapport with your patient:

1. Get to know what the patient enjoys and what activities they like to engage in.

- Ask questions and observe them in their natural environment.
- Entice them with various toys or activities that are in their environment.

2. Start the session in a fun way.

- Engage in preferred activities or current activity with the patient.

➦ **EXAMPLE** If they love to talk about boy bands and music, start off your session discussing your recent music playlist or have a dance party.

Video Transcription

What do you want to play with today?

Train.

That's what I thought.

Yeah, there you go.

There's trains and tracks.

Nice.

3. Pair yourself with reinforcement.

➦ **EXAMPLE** If your patient loves superheroes, become a superhero! If your patient loves outdoor activities, do the outdoor activities with them.

4. Check in with caregivers and staff, asking them questions such as these:

- How is the patient's day going?
- What is the patient's motivation like today?
- Are they exhibiting any behavior that is out of the norm today?
- What is the patient's physical state? Have they been ill? Have they eaten? How much sleep have they gotten?

With this information, you will be able to adapt your session to your patient's wants and needs for the day.

Video Transcription

Hi! Say hi, Jessicas.

It won't be long now.

Jessicas. Daddy.

That's right. Who's this? Who's this?

Mommy.

And who is that?

Daddy.

Who is that?

No, over there. Who is that?

Susan.

Yeah!

Yeah, good!

And I totally think he's just aware of a lot of things now. People, people's names.

How has the behaviors been going with dealing with inflexibilities?

He's still a big control guy. He wants it the way he wants it.

In sessions he was very, he'd get very upset.

And he gets upset fast like for reasons that didn't used to upset him. He gets upset fast and then and then once he's upset, everything upsets him.

3. Why Build Rapport?

Why is it important to build rapport? Building rapport is one of the most critical parts of your job as a behavior technician. With a solid relationship or foundation with your patient, you'll be able to:

- help them build skills
- decrease problem behaviors
- teach them how to establish relationships

Let's put it all together with a brief summary of the basic information regarding rapport-building:

Question	Answer
Why build rapport?	It's critical!
When do I build rapport?	All of the time! Not just when you are starting with a patient, but throughout your time with them.

Where can I build rapport?	In every session and environment.
How do I build rapport?	Having conversation, engaging in activities, observing them, etc.



BIG IDEA

Most importantly, don't give up! Just like anything else, figuring someone out can be difficult, so keep trying until you get your breakthrough.



TRY IT

Try to practice rapport building skills with someone you know – your significant other, child, niece, nephew, friend, or neighbor.



SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the importance of and strategies for **getting to know your patient**. It is important that you interact with them the same way you would interact with anyone else, engaging with them on their level and participating in whatever activity they are involved in to start building a relationship with them. You also learned about several ways **to build rapport** with your patients, a critical skill you will need to cultivate to help them build skills, decrease problem behaviors, and teach them how to establish positive relationships.