

# Research into Practice: Motivational Incentives

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# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ An extremely simple concept
- ▶ It is about using rewards to reinforce behavior.
- ▶ Incentives are used to motivate people to do certain things.

# Also Known As: Contingency Management

- ▶ *Contingency Management* is another term that has been used for utilizing motivational incentives to create behavior change.
- ▶ *Contingency*: a chance happening; possibility; an accident, break, crisis, emergency, event, exigency, incident, opportunity, predicament, probability, turning point, uncertainty, juncture
- ▶ *Management*: the act or manner of managing; handling, direction, or control

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ Who here is currently employed?
- ▶ Of those who are employed, who gets paid?
- ▶ Who would continue to do the same work if you no longer got paid?
- ▶ Money is a big incentive!! And for all of you, this incentive motivates you to work and reinforces that behavior. The possibility of getting a raise – a big incentive – also motivates you to work hard and maybe even harder.

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ Derives from the work of BF Skinner and operant conditioning.
- ▶ We can increase a particular behavior by reinforcing it with a positive reward or incentive.
- ▶ In general, people engage in behaviors because they get some kind of reinforcement.
- ▶ If a behavior results in no reinforcement, the person will not continue to do it.

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ While we may think of this as a relatively new concept and idea, using incentives has a very long history.

Eight 10-12 yr. old boys at a summer camp were studied. Teeth brushing occurred infrequently during baseline conditions with and without verbal instructions to brush their teeth. Tooth brushing behavior was maintained at a high level when the behavior was required as a prerequisite for the opportunity to swim. After 22 days the contingency arrangement was terminated and tooth brushing behavior returned to a low level.

Contingency management of tooth brushing behavior in a summer camp for children

Lattal, K. A. Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, 2(3), 1969, 195-198.

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ Determined the baseline rate of producing academic material for six 8-13 year old boys in a summer camp remedial classroom. Allowing subjects to leave the classroom and engage in favored activities was contingent upon completion of a specified amount of work. This resulted in increased rates of producing academic material as compared to baseline conditions. Using a similar experimental design, the rate of productivity of a group of 6 girls was also able to be increased.

Contingency management and rate of classroom productivity

Rickard, Henry C.; Taylor, G. E.; Libb, J. Wesley

Perceptual and Motor Skills, Vol. 36(3, Pt. 2), Jun 1973, 1267-1273.

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ Used contingency management to modify the behavior of a 3rd grade public school class. The behavior modified was the completion of written math assignments. The teacher initiated a procedure in which the students had to "earn" their morning recess by turning in a completed math assignment. This procedure was successful in producing desired changes during the math period.

Contingency management used to modify the rate of turning in completed assignments in an elementary classroom.

- ▶ Swinehar, G. SALT: School Applications of Learning Theory, Vol. 6(2), Jan 1974, 37-41.

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ In substance use disorder treatment, incentives have been used to help clients to stop using substances and achieve abstinence.
- ▶ However, has also been used and can be used to increase treatment attendance or treatment plan compliance.

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ Studies to decrease drug use:
- ▶ In some early studies, people could earn up to \$1155 in vouchers over the course of 12 weeks.
- ▶ In another study, over 9 weeks, participants could earn \$3400.
- ▶ Can your program afford that??
- ▶ So creative ways have been developed to decrease the cost and one is the fish bowl method.

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ In the fish bowl method, a range of prizes in magnitude are available: many low cost prizes, some moderate, and just a few of high magnitude. This obviously helps to reduce the cost, which is critical.
- ▶ Can also earn many small prizes and eventually put them toward a larger prize.

# Motivational Incentives

## Seven Basic Principles:

- ▶ *Target Behavior* – must be observable, measurable, and achievable, but not too easy.
- ▶ *Target Population* – all clients, new clients, those who use a certain drug, etc.
- ▶ *Incentive Used* – must be desirable and can ask clients
- ▶ *Incentive Magnitude* – how much to provide and could be different for different behaviors; also may vary based upon the client population

# Motivational Incentives

- ▶ *Frequency of Reinforcement* – how often do you give the incentive – daily, weekly, every time the behavior occurs or not, etc.
- ▶ *Timing of Reinforcement* – ideally, the incentive should be given as close as possible the target behavior, but not always possible.
- ▶ *Duration of Reinforcement* – how long do you continue to reinforce the target behavior?

# Motivational Incentives

## Other Things to Think About:

- ▶ Advertise it and let your clients know about it.
- ▶ The target behavior should be achievable, but not too easy.
- ▶ Staff must be invested and excited in using incentives. Ideally, you want a champion.
- ▶ Are there philosophical barriers?
- ▶ Talk about that it gives clients a jump-start until behavior change can be internalized.

# Motivational Incentives

## Other Things to Think About:

- ▶ It can't be too hard to implement or too expensive. Remember: Applause and recognition can go a long way and there may be other no-cost items.
- ▶ Gather pre-incentive data so you can see whether it is working
- ▶ Be consistent
- ▶ Keep it simple and start out small!

# Motivational Incentives Used in an Adolescent Residential Program

## Decreasing property destruction in an adolescent residential program

- ▶ Weekly walk throughs to assess any damage/ graffiti, etc.
- ▶ If no damage for one week, all get an incentive and the group chooses things like extra phone privilege, get out of cleaning, sleep in an extra hour, etc.
- ▶ If no damage for a second week, the group chooses for a slightly bigger incentive.
- ▶ If no damage for a third consecutive week, the group chooses for a slightly bigger incentive.
- ▶ For the fourth consecutive week, a larger prize like a pizza party, or a 3-hour pass extension.
- ▶ Larger rewards continue (a visit to IMAX) until damage is seen and then it goes back to the beginning.
- ▶ Overall, property destruction has gone down tremendously and this program has continued for 2 years. However, we often do not get to week 4. Also helps to build teamwork and working together.

# Motivational Incentives Used in an Adolescent Residential Program

## Increasing overall treatment compliance

A daily point system is utilized with a maximum of being able to earn 100 points.

Points are given for room clean-up, group participation, showing up to group on time, doing chores, showing respect, etc. People never lose points.

Must earn 80 points to be eligible for incentives.

80 points: can go outside of the program for an outing

90 points: same plus can go the local YMCA vs. exercising at the program

100 points: same plus can draw from the incentive box which has small, medium and large incentives.

Small: e.g. front seat in the van, candy

Medium: e.g. sleep in for an extra half hour, no daily chore, choose what movie to watch

Large: e.g. two-hour home pass extension, Dunkin' Donuts drink

The point system is used on a weekly basis to determine who has earned the privilege to go on weekend passes for variable periods of time. Has become the foundation of the program. Program director feels this has dramatically changed the program in a positive direction.

# Motivational Incentives Used in an Adolescent Residential Program

## Increasing Educational Involvement

Many youth were not doing their homework or participating in the educational component of the program.

Daily educational tutoring takes place and Banana Bucks are earned based upon involvement in education at the program that includes participation, showing up on time, being prepared, and homework is completed.

When earn enough, can be aggregated and earn things like skipping a class, watching a movie, etc.

# Motivational Incentives Used in a Male Adult Residential Program

- ▶ Rooms were a complete mess and most rooms have 4-6 clients
- ▶ Developed an incentive program in which on a weekly basis, clients who had the three cleanest rooms would get a certificate and choice of a “day off” from groups, a day off from chores, or a run to the store.
- ▶ Has made a huge impact on the program
- ▶ Has become very competitive and some clients report that this is the first time in their lives that they have ever received an recognition for an achievement or ever received a certificate.
- ▶ Staff try to show that this is how life works: you get what you put out.
- ▶ Has also showed clients how working together with others can be beneficial.

# Motivational Incentives Used in a Male Adult Residential Program

- ▶ The program became smoke-free and decided to use motivational incentives to help clients achieve abstinence from all tobacco products.
- ▶ When clients arrive, after several days, when they blow into a smokealyzer and show no evidence of tobacco use, they get candy.
- ▶ If they continue to show no evidence of tobacco use, each week, they get a prize from the prize box and can choose various toiletries, a reading light, a notebook, or various no-cost incentives.

# Incentives in an Outpatient Program

- ▶ Wanted to increase clients' show rates or decrease no-show rates.
- ▶ Choose to incentivize clinicians who had show rates that either remained the same or increased.
- ▶ On a monthly basis, could choose tickets from basket that had a variety of incentives ranging from small to large. If there was an increase of 5% or more, they would get an additional draw.

# Incentives in an Outpatient Program

- ▶ Small incentives: key chain flashlights, hand sanitizer, \$2.50 coffee gift cards, pens, a case of water, inspirational quotes, etc.
- ▶ Medium incentives: \$10.00 gift cards, small bag of chocolate truffles, water bottles.
- ▶ Large incentives: photography lesson, \$25.00 gift card, sweatshirts, discount at a local spa, polo shirts, framed art work, a free local tour, a parking space right in front of the building, management covering a group.

# Incentives in an Outpatient Program

- ▶ Baseline of show rates was 56.5%.
- ▶ Implemented this for 3 months, and during this time, show rates increased to 62%.
- ▶ When it ended, had a focus group with clinicians about what, if anything, they were doing differently.
- ▶ After incentives stopped, tracked this over the next four months and show rates were 65%.
- ▶ Management also feels this increased morale.

# A Failed Effort

- ▶ Used incentives in a 50-bed detoxification program to decrease early discharge. Length of stay is 4–6 days.
- ▶ On a daily basis, in the evening, would have clients draw from a fish bowl to earn various prizes.
- ▶ All clients on Day 3 could draw and on Days 4, 5, and 6, would get 2, 3, or 4 draws.
- ▶ Over three weeks, staff got overwhelmed! Was simply unmanageable.

# Summary

- ▶ Review the principles of motivational incentives and get staff buy-in.
- ▶ Start off with something that is easy to manage and implement.
- ▶ Think about the cost and how to sustain.
- ▶ Have fun!

# Additional Resources

- ▶ [www.pami.nattc.org](http://www.pami.nattc.org)
- ▶ [www.motivationalincentives.org](http://www.motivationalincentives.org)
- ▶ [www.ctndisseminationlibrary.org](http://www.ctndisseminationlibrary.org)
- ▶ MI: PRESTO (Motivational Incentives: Positive Reinforcers to Enhance Successful treatment Outcomes – a free online course