Behavioral Contract Kid Section I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (the kid) and we \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (the parents) enter into the following behavioral contract in order to create order and harmony in our home. This contract will be reviewed thirty days from the date of signing, at which time it is subject to either being continued or renegotiated. By our agreeing to the terms and conditions of this behavioral contract, all parties understand and accept that they are bound by the contract and are not free to vary from the terms and conditions. I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (the kid) agree that I will perform the behaviors listed below in the manner they are set forth and described. (Insert operationally defined behaviors, such as completing homework in a timely manner, being home on time, addressing my mother and father in a respectful tone, not getting online or on the phone during the homework hours of eight to ten, etc.) I \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (the kid) agree that should I violate the contract by failing to perform the behaviors set out above that I will be choosing to suffer the following consequences. (Insert penalties or loss of privileges associated with poor performance about the specified target behaviors.) Parent Section We, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (the parents), agree that if \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (the kid) performs the behaviors as outlined above, that in addition to escaping any of the negative consequences outlined above, he/she will have earned the right to the following privileges. (Insert privilege to be earned, such as free time to watch television, use of the family car, sleepover, movie, toy, etc.) Both parties acknowledge that this contract is entered into voluntarily and that the terms and conditions will be respected. If performance is accomplished, parents agree that the child shall not be denied privileges and other consequences. Kid agrees that if he/she fails to perform that it is him/her and not his/her parents who have chosen to forfeit the consequences, and he/she will not whine, complain or rebel. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ The Parents The Child \_\_\_\_\_\_

10 hours ago

**HUS 2315 – STUDIES IN BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION**

**WRITING BEHAVIORAL CONTRACTS / PROGRAMS**

When specifying behaviors to focus on, you must get DATA first.

***Specified behaviors*** take into consideration many elements of a good news story – who, what, when, where, and how many. The ***Why***is deliberately left out: that question should have been answered, at least in part, by your ***selection***of the first behavior to work with.

Specific Questions:

1. Where does the behavior occur most often?
2. Where doesn’t it occur at all?
3. When does it occur most frequently?
4. When doesn’t it occur at all?
5. What do other people do just before it occurs?
6. What do people do just after it occurs?
7. Who is present most often when it occurs?
8. How often doe sit happen (per month, week, day or hour)?

**Putting the Contract/Program / Plan on Paper:**

The exact form of the behavioral contract/program when it is actually put on paper is almost unimportant if you include these items:

1. Date agreement begins, ends or is renegotiated
2. Behavior(s) targeted for change
3. Amount and kind of reward or reinforcer to be used
4. Schedule of reinforcer’s delivery
5. Signatures of all those involved: client, parents, yourself
6. Schedule for review of progress
7. Bonus clause for sustained or exceptional performance
8. Statement of the penalties (consequences) that will be imposed if the specified behavior is not performed

- When a contract is put on paper, it should not contain legal jargon that might be confusing.

- The contracts you write are simply agreements between people and clear statements of how those people will behavior toward one another.

- Make the working clear, brief and simple

**Troubleshooting Guide:**

The following questions may help you to spot the problems in your contracting system:

The Contract:

1. Was the target behavior clearly specified?
2. Did the contract provide for immediate reinforcement?
3. Did it ask for small approximations to the desired behavior?
4. Was reinforcement frequent and in small amounts?
5. Did the contract call for and reward accomplishment rather than obedience?
6. Was the performance rewarded after its occurrence?
7. Was the contract fair?
8. Were the terms of the contract clear?
9. Was the contract honest?
10. Was the contract positive?
11. Was contracting as a method being used systematically?
12. Was the contract mutually negotiated?
13. Was the penalty clause too punitive?

The Client:

1. Did he or she understand the contract?
2. Is he getting the reinforcer form some other source?
3. Do the reinforcers have to be reevaluated?
4. Has a new problem behavior developed that is drawing the attention away from the target behavior?

Yourself/or the “Mediator”

1. Did the mediator understand the contract?
2. Did he dispense the kind and amount of reinforcement specified in the contract?
3. Did he dispense it according to instructions, at the rate specified, and with consistency?
4. Did punishment accidentally accompany the performance being reinforced?
5. Did he or she stop mediating?
6. Do you need a new mediator?

Measurement:

1. Have the data been verified as accurate?
2. Did your data collector understand what he or she was supposed to count?
3. Did you rehearse the counting task with him or her?
4. Did you reinforce him/her for *his*behavior?
5. Is the data collection task too complex or too difficult?
6. Should you try to get another data collector?

**Sample Behavioral Contracts/Programs:**

**I. ANDY HARRIS**

Setting: Community Mental Health Center

Client: Andy – a 20-year-old male, chronic schizophrenic

Target Behaviors:

1. Take anti-psychotic medication as prescribed
2. Attend and actively participate in day-treatment program
3. Visit parents only on specified times and days
4. Make restitution to owners of guest home for property destroyed
5. Reduce rate of assaultive and destructive behavior.

This 20-year-old man tests the limits of community treatment. He is very active and resourceful. Attempts to work with him on an outpatient or day-treatment basis have been difficult at best. When he came to the community mental health center, his family, and the police of several towns, were about to give up on further attempts to keep him out of an institution. His behavior was unpredictable, partially because he took his prescribed medication sporadically, and partially because of the varied consequences provided by the people he came into contact with. Early in his treatment program he had assaulted a woman, striking her and knocking her down; he broke windows and other property in his residential facility, and ran down the median strip of a busy freeway, chased by a helicopter, when he became frightened at being stopped by the highway patrol.

After a year of intensive work, with contracting clear contingencies and consistent consequences as the main interventions, incidents of assault and incarceration dropped from almost once a week to one minor incident in three months. He no longer hounds his family with unreasonable demands and he takes his medication when prompted by his therapist or boardinghouse owner. He will require continuous supervision, but it has been demonstrated that systematic contracting that uses clear, fair, honest, and predominantly positive contingencies can sustain a young man with severe behavior problems.

**Family Contract 1**

Effective Dates: from June 5, 2005 to June 12, 2005

**Andy agrees to: Ed, Ginny, & Mr. and Mrs. Harris agree to:**

1. Take his medication as prescribed 1. Provide board & room at Palm Haven rest home

2. Attend the day treatment center program daily 2. Meet daily with Andy to discuss his clinic program

and problems in living

Bonus/Reward (positive consequence):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Penalty/ (negative consequence):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Review: This contract will be reviewed one week from the date of agreement.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ed, Counselor Ginny Mr. & Mrs. Harris

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Andy

**Family Contract 2**

Effective Dates: from June 13, 2005 to June 26, 2005

Family contract for Andy Harris, Mr. and Mrs. James Harris, Palm Haven owner, Ginny Ryan, therapists Ed Bryan and Gina Manchester.

**Andy’s Responsibilities Andy’s Privileges**

1. Attend clinic daily; arrive at 9:00 am and leave 1. Any will earn $4 per day, given at the

at 3:00 pm. clinic at 3:00 pm.

2. Turn in car keys to Ed or Gina each morning no later 2. Andy will earn 5 credits (tokens) in the

than 9:15 am. clinic program.

Bonus/Reward:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Penalty/Consequence:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Review: This contract will be reviewed in two (2) weeks from the date of agreement.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Andy Mr. & Mrs. Harris Ginny Ryan

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Gina Manchester Ed Bryan

**Family Contract 3**

Effective Dates: from June 27, 2005 to July 3, 2005

Family contract for Andy Harris; Mr. and Mrs. James Harris; Palm Haven owner; Ginny Ryan; therapists Ed Bryan and Gina Manchester.

**Andy’s Responsibilities Andy’s Privileges**

1. Attend clinic daily; arrive at 9:00 am and leave at 3:00 pm 1. Andy will earn $4 per day, given at clinic

at 3:00 pm.

2. Turn in car keys to Ed or Gina each morning no later 2. Andy will earn 5 credits (tokens) in the

than 9:15 am. clinic program.

3. Attend meals at Palm Haven on time (8:30am and 6:00 pm) 3. Andy may have a snack upon arrival from

and abide by house rules. clinic, if he arrives before 5:30 pm.

4. Before visiting parents, call and ask permission. 4. Andy may have phone conversations with

parents.

Bonus (positive consequence): If Andy follows clause 4, above, for one week, he may spend Sunday of that week at his parents’ home, from 2:00 pm until 8:30 pm.

Penalty (negative consequence): If there are more than 10 infractions of house rules, Andy will not be allowed to live at Palm Haven.

Review: This contract will be reviewed one week from the date of agreement.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Andy Mr. and Mrs. Harris

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Ginny Ryan Ed Bryan Gina Manchester

**Family Contract 4**

Effective Dates: from July 4, 2005 to July 18, 2005

Family contract for Andy Harris; Mr. and Mrs. James Harris; Palm Haven owner; Ginny Ryan; therapists Ed Bryan and Gina Manchester.

**Andy’s Responsibilities Andy’s Privileges**

1. Attend clinic daily and participate in program. 1. Andy will earn $5 each day.

2. Present credit system card (clinic token program) for 2. Andy will earn $5 each day.

review by Ed or Gina.

3. Before visiting parents, call and ask permission. 3. Andy may have phone conversation with

parents.

4. Save and deliver $20 to District Attorney’s office before 4. Remain free (out of jail).

July 17, to pay overdue restitution.

5. Earn credits in clinic program at the rate of 5 per day. 5. Andy may watch television each night

after earning 50 credits.

Bonus (positive consequence): If Andy earns 450 credits in 10 successive days at the clinic, he may take his medication orally rather than by injection.

Penalty (negative consequence): If there are more than 10 infractions of the house rules, Andy will not be allowed to live at Palm Haven.

Review: This contract will be reviewed in two (2) weeks from the date of agreement.

**II. BRIAN**

Setting: Correctional Institution for Delinquent Boys

Client: Brian, a 13-year-old boy, committed to being “beyond the control of parent”

**Target Behaviors:**

1. Increase tolerance to taunting, teasing or other annoyances.
2. Decrease rate of assaultive, destructive, tantrum behavior.

This contract strategy was developed to assist in the counseling of those youths in a state juvenile corrections institution who find themselves at the low end of the pecking order. It was originally designed for Brian, a 13-year-old who was smaller than most of the boys in his living unit which housed 33 boys, ages 11-14.

Brian was not committed to the institution for criminal behavior, but rather for those behaviors that occur because parental supervision is lacking. To say that his home was chaotic would be a masterpiece of an understatement.

One of his major problems in the institution was his inappropriate response to teasing by other boys who were amused at his spectacular loss of temper. They called him “Mouse” because of his high-pitched voice, and they sometimes aped his actions. He would respond usually by screaming and yelling, then by throwing shoes, rocks or any objects close at hand, and less frequently by attacking his tormentors.

In this institution points were given for appropriate behavior, and were redeemable for privileges and small items of value. The date of release was also contingent upon earning a certain number of points.\* Since this was a closed setting, Brian’s assigned youth counselor was both data collector and mediator. Only the behavioral requirements of this strategy are listed below. Each contract allowed a week’s time for completion.

**Contract 1**

Effective Dates from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Brian will meet with Mr. Scott (youth counselor) to discuss things that lead him to “blow his cool.” Brian will write these down and number them in order of annoyance value. He will be precise, describing times, places and people in detail.

Reinforcer: 100 points

**Contract 2**

Effective Dates: from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Brian will meet with Mr. Scott to add further details to the list of annoyances.
2. Brian will discuss with Mr. Scott his present responses to these annoyances and write down as many alternate kinds of responses as possible.

Reinforcer: A – 50 points B – 50 points

**Contract 3**

Effective Dates: from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Brian will rehearse the least annoying situation described in Contract 1, and he will receive coaching in the different ways he can handle these situations.

Reinforcer: 100 points

**Contracts 4 – 6**

Effective Dates: from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

These contracts are similar in that they concentrate on practicing alternate styles of response to stimuli of increasing severity. The youth counselor exposes Brian repeatedly to the things that made him blow up before, and rewards him with praise and points for his participation. When all items on the list have been practiced in the sessions, the following bonus is added:

Bonus (positive consequence): Brian will receive 10 points for each day he keeps his temper and there are no incidents of throwing objects or hitting others with them.

**Contract 7**

Effective Dates: from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Brian agrees to participate with a small group of other boys assigned to Mr. Scott. He further agrees to practice with other boys who will try to make him lose his temper. He will respond in the following ways:

1. Ignoring the “agitation”
2. Walking away
3. Using verbal rebuke as well as A or B above

Reinforcer: A - 10 points, B - 10 points, C - 20 points

Bonus (positive consequence): Same as in Contract 6, above.

Penalty (negative consequence): 50-point fine for each incident of physical assault or destruction of property.

**ATTEMPTED SUICIDES**

Setting: Experimental inpatient treatment program for patients who are serious suicide risks

Clients: Adults of various ages who have volunteered for the suicide treatment program

Target Behaviors: Family-oriented behaviors such as chores, baby-sitting, telephone conversations, involvement in family conversations, paying bills, drinking, and leisure-time activities.

Contracts designed to remedy a particularly disturbing behavior very often do not even mention that behavior at all. In the section dealing with selecting behaviors for contracting, it was stated that the behavior that made counseling or therapy necessary very often is on that occurs infrequently, but is quite disturbing when it does occur, or it is one that occurs at a time or a place that makes it difficult to observe or to apply consequences.

Running away, criminal activities, and severe outbursts of emotion are all in this category. The suicide gesture or attempt also fits into this pattern. While volumes have been written on the motivation, causes and effects of this singular class of behaviors, it is sufficient to consider suicidal behaviors as an example of that more general class of disturbing behaviors that require careful selection if contracting is to be an effective toll in the counseling process.

The contracts that follow are all from actual case files of a hospital treatment program that deals exclusively with suicidal clients. Contracting and group assertion training are the major treatment elements.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**III. MARIE**

Marie is a 17-year-old girl who often behaves as if she were 13. For the past two years she has lived through a blizzard of troubles. A relative introduced her to drugs and sexual misconduct. She has been in and out of various treatment programs, including a drug treatment program in a state hospital, and a home for delinquent girls. She has run away from home and these various settings many times. Five months ago she attempted suicide by overdosing herself with sleeping pills and also by suffocation. A combination of contracting and group assertive training brought immediate behavior changes. She is now holding a job and dating boys who are non-delinquent. Her are the contracts worked out between Marie and her parents; they remained in force for approximately three months.

**Contract 1**

Effective Dates: From August 5 to August 26, 2005.

1. In exchange for the monthly privilege of receiving one decorative 1. Marie agrees to bring friends home

item for her room (paint, posters, rugs, curtains) from her parents and to get her parents’ approval

(not to be purchased from allowance money) before dating

2. In exchange for the privilege of receiving a stereo for her room 2. Marie agrees that, without argument,

after one and a half months of babysitting she will babysit with younger brothers & sisters when parents go out (shopping,

etc.) at least once weekly.

Contract 1 (continued)

3. In exchange for the privilege of having time alone with a 3. Marie agrees to keep phone calls to no more

boy or girl friend without parents or kids around (she must one-half hour; she agrees not to talk too

ask her parents for permission one day in advance) loud and only occasionally to have private

phone calls

4. In exchange for the privilege of not having her type of music 4. Marie agrees to enter into family

“put down” by her parents conversations when relatives come to visit

5. In exchange for the privilege of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. Marie agrees to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bonus (positive consequence):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Penalty (negative consequence):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Monitoring: Mr. and Mrs. Lewis agree to keep a written record of the fulfillment of Marie’s privileges and responsibilities and to furnish the completed form to Dr. Thad Beckman on Monday of each week.

Review: This contract will be reviewed in two (2) weeks from the date of agreement.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Marie Mr. and Mrs. Lewis

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Counselor

**Contract 2**

Effective Dates: from \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. In exchange for the privilege of going out to dinner 1. Mrs. Lewis agrees to stop nagging Marie about

or just being alone without kids twice monthly her past errors and Mr. Lewis agrees to take Marie

(Marie must be consulted concerning babysitting) shopping once weekly

2. In exchange for the privilege of a fishing trip once 2. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis agree to allow Marie one hour

per month without the kids (Marie will not be asked of privacy per day when she will not be called or

to babysit) bothered

3. In exchange for the privilege of having Marie keep the 3. Mrs. Lewis agrees to stop going through Marie’s

kids quiet on Sunday morning once per month (drawers, etc.) and to prevent the younger children

from going through Marie’s things

4. In exchange for the privilege of having Marie keep the 4. Mr. and Mrs. Lewis agree to take Marie out with

stereo down to a reasonable level when the family is them for an evening without other children once

watching the news (6:00 to 7:00 pm daily) and during every two (2) weeks, or whenever possible

special TV programs

Contract 2 (continued)

5. In exchange for the privilege of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 5. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ agrees to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Bonus (positive consequence):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Penalty (negative consequence):\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Monitoring: Marie agrees to keep a written record of the fulfillment of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis’ privileges and responsibilities and to furnish the completed form to Dr. Thad Beckman on Monday of each week.

Review: This contract will be reviewed in two (2) weeks from the date of agreement.

Signatures: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Marie Mr. & Mrs. Lewis

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Counselor

**IV. HARRIET AND MEL**

Harriet, a 21-year-old mother of twins, fits the current description of the unhappy housewife. Her husband, Mel, expresses his feelings to her very infrequently and discourages her attempts to express herself on topics important to the family. He expects her to fill a very traditional housewife role: keep the house, raise the kids, pay the bills, enjoy his hobbies, and be gracious to his relatives. Harriet has reached the point where she had almost entirely ceased caring for herself and the family. She had also spent a few days on a psychiatric ward.

Harriet became progressively more depressed and, after her second unsuccessful suicide attempt, she volunteered to join the suicide prevention program.

The staff of the program took her through an intensive course of assertion training that helped her to express her feelings and needs and also taught her some negotiation skills. Contracting between Harriet and Mel began with the detailed contract reproduced here. The contract remained in force for a month, with each of the clients living up to its provisions to the satisfaction of the other. After one month Mel has agreed to enter into marriage counseling, and Harriet has made arrangements to go back to school. She now expresses her needs and feelings directly to her husband. While this marriage may not survive, at this point it seems hopeful that Harriet will.

Because of the circumstances of the case this contract has many faults. There are too many important behaviors to work on simultaneously. The behaviors are also of different kinds: management of free time, communication, money management, child care, and recreation. To make important and lasting changes in each of these areas by means of a single contract would take superhuman effort. In fact, this contract may have helped only the fact that this couple were able to define and to express their considerable problems as well as some possible solutions to them.

Contract 1

Effective Dates: from September 3, 2005 to September 17, 2005.

Harriet

1. In exchange for the privilege of going on a family overnight trip once each month, Harriet agrees to begin the school application process, including getting a list of courses, setting up an appointment with a counselor, arranging for a babysitter, etc. Harriet and Mel will discuss progress on Wednesday and Friday evenings.
2. In exchange for the privilege of spending one evening per week together, Harriet agrees to do 5 household tasks each day from the following list: make breakfast, do dishes at 6:30 pm, prepare supper by 5:00 pm, change beds (once each week), sweep, dust, mop, vacuum (twice each week), do laundry (once each week)
3. In exchange for the privilege of having 4 hours of “free time” to use as she chooses, during which time Mel will babysit, Harriet will refrain from smoking during mealtimes.

Mel

1. In exchange for the privilege of having 4 hours of “free time” to use as he chooses, during which time Harriet will babysit, Mel agrees to call a family financial planning meeting on every other Monday evening (between the hours of 7:00 and 9:00 pm) without prompting from Harriet.
2. In exchange for the privilege of playing golf for 2 half-days each month, Mel agrees to engage in a daily, 10-minute discussion session with Harriet during which one or more of the following topics will be covered: child care, personal habits, recreation, plans for school.
3. In exchange for the privilege of having Harriet assist him in the task of his choice once each week, Mel will express an emotion or feeling he has had during the day.

Monitoring: Mel and Harriet agree to keep daily records of each other’s performance on the Monitoring Sheet and to mail the data to the project once each week.

Review: this contract will be reviewed in two (2) weeks from the date of the agreement.

**Monitoring Sheet**

**Mel’s Responsibilities Mel’s Privileges**

(Monitored by Harriet) (Monitored by Harriet)

M T W T F S S M T W T F S S

1. Call financial planning \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. 4 hours of free time

meeting

2. Have daily 10-minute \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Playing golf for 2 half-days each month

discussion session \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

3. Express an emotion \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. Harriet assists Mel in 1 activity per week

each day to Harriet

Harriet’s Responsibilities Harriet’s Privileges

(Monitored by Mel) (Monitored by Mel)

1. Begin school application \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Go on family overnight trip once a month

process

2. Do 5 household tasks \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. Spend one evening a week alone with Mel

each day

**V. TED AND JAN**

Ted, on the verge of being divorced by his wife due to a multitude of marital problems, had decided on two separate occasions to end his life. By merest chance his last attempt failed. He volunteered for the suicide prevention program and entered into the intensive assertive training and contracting regime.

The amended contract (Contract 2) remains in effect. Both Ted and his wife, Jan, record data and report weekly to the project staff. The behaviors listed in the contracts amply describe the difficulties experienced by this couple. This contract also avoids some of the problems of Harriet’s and Mel’s contract. There are fewer behaviors to deal with, and the contract is thus shorter and easier to read and remember.

**Contract 1**

Effective Dates: from August 2, 2005 to August 19, 2005.

1. In exchange for the privilege of going out to dinner with Ted once each week (without children) and once a month (with the entire family), Jan agrees to hold a 5-minute conversation with Ted to review situations that occurred that day when he could or should have asserted himself.
2. In exchange for the privilege of being treated to a special social event (special restaurant, dancing, play, etc.), Jan agrees to go to bed on time one night each week.
3. In exchange for the privilege of 4 hours of “free time” each week without children, Ted agrees to engage in one 20-minute session each week during which he will exchange “I” messages concerning their relationship (e.g., “I liked it when…; I was very angry Tuesday because…; I really think we should…”)

Monitoring: Ted and Jan agree to keep daily records of each other’s performance on the form provided, and to mail the data to the project once each week.

Review: This contract will be reviewed in two (2) weeks from the date of the agreement.

Contract 2

Effective Dates: from August 20, 2005 to September 3, 2005

The provisions of the previous contract remain in effect. The following clauses are added, as agreed by Ted and Jan. This contract can be renegotiated at the request of either Ted or Jan, and at any time.

1. In exchange for the privilege of watching TV during supper no more than 3 of 7 nights each week, Ted agrees to inform Jan at least one hour before supper (usually 7:00 pm), and to discuss the day’s events with Jan after the news is over.
2. In exchange for the privilege of having at least 2 parties at home during the next 4 months, with Jan’s friends, Jan agrees to spend more time in activities with Ted at least once each week.

Monitoring: Ted and Jan agree to keep daily records of each other’s performance on the Monitoring Sheet provided, and to mail the data to the project once each week.

Review: This contract will be reviewed in two (2) weeks from the date of the agreement.

**(SAMPLE ) INDIVIDUALIZED BEHAVIORAL MODIFICATION PLAN**

**NAME:** Jane Smith **MEDICAID #:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**ADMISSION DATE:** xxxx **SOCIAL SECURITY #:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**TREATMENT PLAN DATE:** xxxx **BIRTHDATE:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxx

**DATE OF TREATMENT PLAN REVIEW:** xxxxxxxxx

**DESCRIPTION OF DEMONSTRATED BEHAVIORS AND SYMPTOMS:**

Jane was referred to ABC Agency by her Case Manager. Reasons for referral include oppositional and defiant behaviors, angry outbursts, physical and verbal aggression, disrespectful behaviors, demanding and manipulative behavior, lack of trust, attachment issues, history of physical and sexual abuse, multiple changes in caregivers, need for permanency. Jane has difficulty complying with rules within the home and school and displays impulsive acts and poor decision making. Jane has acted out physically by hitting and kicking her foster mother in addition to children at school.

**DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS**: Jane was born on February 10, 1997 and is presently eight years of age. She is a Caucasian female of Polish and Irish heritage. She appears to be her chronological age. There is limited information in the record regarding birth and delivery information and it is unknown as to whether the pregnancy was planned. Information on prenatal care was not available. Records indicate that the birthmother was in drug treatment until after Jane’s birth. It appears that developmental milestones were obtained at age appropriate rates but this information could not be verified. Regarding emotional development, due to early disruptions in life and the abuse, neglect and multiple changes in caregivers, it appears as if Jane’s emotional development is delayed. She continues to function at the level of trust versus mistrust and continues to work on mastering this developmental stage in counseling and with her foster parents throughout the week.

**EDUCATIONAL STATUS**: Jane is currently enrolled in the second grade, regular classes, at St. Pete Elementary School. Jane has displayed much improvement in school regarding behaviors and compliance. Her teacher indicated that she is trying and showing an effort. Jane continues to need to focus on the area of peer relationships and frustration tolerance.

**STRENGTHS:** Jane is friendly, verbal, outgoing, and a personable child. She is intelligent and is very creative. She is talented in art, dancing, reading and writing. Jane is cooperative in therapy and verbalizes an attitude of cooperation toward working on her goals.

**FOCUS AREA 1:** Oppositional, defiant and impulsive symptomology as evidenced by patterns of physical and verbal aggression, arguing, lying, disrespect, limit testing, temper tantrums and angry outbursts.

**GOAL:** Reduce the frequency of defiance and testing and improve compliance with rules and respectfully accept directions from parents, teachers, and other authority figures. Reduce the frequency of verbal aggression toward others. Jane will decrease aggressive acts and learn appropriate and positive means of expressing anger and reducing impulsive behaviors. She will learn about cause and effect and the consequences of her behaviors in order to help her think through things before acting impulsively.

Jane will replace her use of arguing and oppositional behavior with appropriate verbalizations and respectful compliance when faced with disappointment and frustrating situations. Jane will practice utilizing effective problem-solving coping strategies to deal with issues that frustrate her.

Jane will learn to trust her foster to adopt parents as adult authority figures in her life who are responsible for establishing and implementing the rules and boundaries to help her feel safe and enable her to make progress in her emotional and social development.

**Target date:** October 31, 2005.

**OBJECTIVE:** 1. Jane will increase follow through on expectations given to her by adults in charge by 75%

2. Jane will increase her ability to recognize and appropriately verbalize hurt or angry feelings in constructive ways. With verbal prompting, Jane will use an alternative method of expressing anger, frustration, etc., instead of pouting or tantrums when she does not get her way (7 out of ten times)

3. Jane will increase respectful interactions with others (by 75%) and decrease verbal and physical aggression and manipulative behavior (by 75%).

4. Jane will verbalize and identify the relationship between thoughts, feelings and behaviors

(by 50%)

5. Jane will tell the truth about her actions when confronted with issues of inappropriate behavior. She will accept the consequences given by adults in authority without using oppositional or defiant behaviors (100% of the time)

6. Jane will take prescribed medications as directed by the psychiatrist and maintain regular appointments for effective medication management. (100% of the time)

7. Jane’s family will participate in treatment and use effective reinforcement measures to sustain positive behaviors (i.e., Positive Parenting course; cooperation with Behavior Analyst, etc.)

**MEASUREMENT:**Jane’s progress will continue to be measured through self-reports, data collection, observations of her foster to adopt parents, review of checklists and behavior charts, reports from her school, and through therapeutic sessions. Weekly progress notes by the in-home therapist will document progress and reflect ongoing development in this area.

**METHOD:** Therapist and foster to adopt parents will teach Jane self-control and relaxation strategies and use other therapeutic techniques to help her express her feelings through appropriate verbalizations and healthy physical outlets. Jane will be encouraged to use responsible and positive behaviors while diminishing the occurrence of aggressive and negative behaviors.

Foster to adopt parents will develop clearly defined rules, expectations, boundaries and implement specific consequences when they are violated as well as rewards when they are respected. Parents will work closely with Behavior Analyst to implement a positive plan and approach to parenting and intervention. Parents will participate in the Positive Parenting Program provided by the Behavior Analyst program.

Parents will provide frequent praise and positive reinforcement for Jane’s positive social, school, and home interactions and utilizing impulse control and frustration tolerance techniques. Multi-modal therapeutic techniques will be utilized to assist Jane in achieving her goals.

16

DeRisi & Butz (1975). Writing Behavioral Contracts: A Case Simulation Practice Manual. Research Press Co.