



"The People Company"

Serving Persons with Special Needs Since 1998

# The Connector

Choice ~ Respect ~ Participation ~ Presence

Volume I, Issue XXIV-AZ June 2007

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## From the Program Director's Desk ~

*I often wonder what people want to read when they receive our newsletter each month. Last month when I was speaking with people at work the suggestion was made to do a feature each month on a participant in our programs or an employee. What a great idea!*

*So check out our new "Spotlight On" article this month. As always, we are looking for ideas and feedback about what people would like to see in the newsletter. Please feel free to contact any team member with comments or topics you would like to know more about or think others should know more about.*

*Enjoy the newsletter, and as always, happy June!*

**Michelle Shriver**

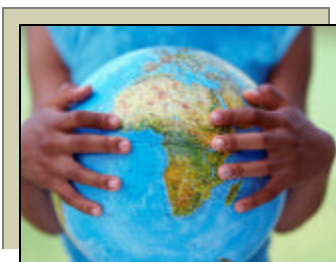
## AmeriServe International, Inc.

### Skills: Recognizing a Need

People often tell me they have a hard time telling the difference between a negative behavior and a sensory need because they both appear the same. Because of this they don't know what to do, when to respond, or how to support the person in need. It is easy to sense the frustrations these people are experiencing and I am quick to say that they are not alone. Many people are experiencing the same frustrations. That is why there are professionals who are highly trained and skilled in behavioral analysis because it is not an easy task.

If you find yourself in the same situation the first thing to know is that **you are right!** Behavioral and sensory issues often appear to be the same and

it is very difficult to distinguish between the two. This is because often times a



person will have the same **precursors** for most of their behaviors and sensory issues, which is why they look the same. So let's take a look at the definition of precursors.

Precursors- **a behavior or pattern of behaviors** that occurs as a **response** to an internal or external **event** that happens to a person before a behavioral outburst. Precursors are early indicators that something is about to happen. They are also referred to as

mini-behaviors. The **event**, internal or external, is the **cause** of the behavior.

The truth is that it is relatively easy to recognize the **precursors** to a behavior, as well as the behavior itself, because they are observable, measurable, and usually pretty evident. It is difficult, however, to recognize the **cause**. There will be times when a person can't identify the cause because they are not always apparent. This makes it extremely difficult for any person to tell the difference between a negative behavior and a sensory need. So if you don't know what you're treating, what do you do?

Here are some steps you can take to start making a [Continued on Page 2](#)

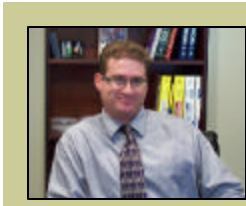
## What We Do

**Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)**

Habilitation, Respite, Attendant Care, In-home Supports

**Day Treatment**  
Adult and Child Day Treatment, After School and Summer Programs

**Residential Support**  
Supported Community Living, Specialized Living Arrangements



## Dean's Blog

Hello again, time for another addition of Dean's Blog! The AmeriServe Day Program in Wickenburg Arizona will soon be housing a new pool table made by Brunswick. The 8 foot table, owned by Ducks in a Row Foundation is being offered for use to AmeriServe, for those who participate in the Day Program, and for those interested in the self-advocacy program. With the lack of entertainment resources in the



Wickenburg area, the acquisition of a functional resource, such as the pool table, will allow people with

disabilities the opportunity to participate in its use. Currently, entertainment and functions offered by the self advocacy program have been limited to bingo once a month. With the arrival of the pool table, the opportunity broadens in the area as one more resource for people with disabilities to enjoy. When the table arrives from Brunswick, we will celebrate its arrival with an open house! :) To be continued.....

Dean Anast  
Client Service Coordinator  
Wickenburg, Arizona

## Skills: Recognizing a Need (cont'd)

**plan** to work with both behavioral and sensory issues without knowing which is the cause. Over time, as you continue to collect information and figure out which tools help the person you are working with, you may begin to determine the difference between behavioral and sensory issues. More importantly you may be able to figure out some of the **causes** and learn how to **prevent** them from occurring or becoming out of control.

1. Make a list of the Precursors you observe. This could be mumbling, pacing, rocking, getting really quiet, turning red, hand flapping, or many other things.
2. Write a description of what the out of control behavior looks like from beginning to end.
3. Make a list of activities, sensory items, or things you can say to the person that may help de-escalate them when they become frustrated and are beginning to show signs that they may need assistance in order to stay safe or in control.
4. Make a list of **possible causes** for all of the precursors and any of the

defined behaviors. This will allow you to be aware of any event that may cause a reaction, and give you an idea whether or not you have a behavioral issue or sensory need.

When you have a plan it will become easier for you to answer the questions that immediately arise in a difficult situation. This will allow you to simplify both the problem and the solution, even in times when the cause is unknown. You have a list of all the apparent information with possible solutions that you can offer as choices to assist the person in need.

### What do you do?

- Recognize the **precursors** and identify the need for assistance.

### When do you respond?

- As soon as you have recognized a need for some assistance.

### How do you respond?

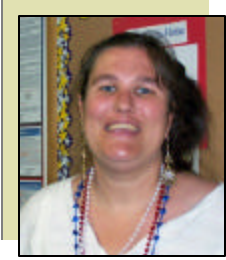
- By offering a **choice** between two activities you identified with one addressing sensory.

Finally, it is important to keep your emotions neutral and not make the problem yours. You are the support person and your body language is communicating that every one and every thing is ok, and under control. You may need to help the person choose between activities by recognizing their reaction to the two, then help them start it, and remain focused on the positive.

As you learn from each experience you will be able to refine your plan and become more successful offering assistance each time there is a need. You will be able to work towards identifying causes and knowing the responses that work for each. Most importantly, with a plan, you and the person you are serving will both have a sense of safety and control.

If you have any questions or want help making your plan, please feel free to call me at AmeriServe and I would be happy to offer support.

Joshua M. Warne  
Training Coordinator



When I asked who would like to be interviewed for

the newsletter, one of the people that suggested the "spotlight" was the first to volunteer. Valerie is a young woman who I think others should get to know. She is friendly and outgoing. She loves to help others and really cares about people. Here is what she had to share with our readers:

**Interviewer:** Hey Val!

**Valerie:** Hey!

**Interviewer:** So, I have known you for a couple of years, right?

**Valerie:** Yeah, three years? Or two?

**Interviewer:** But other people don't know you. So I am going to ask you some questions. OK?

**Valerie:** OK

## Spotlight On: Valerie

**Interviewer:** What is your favorite food?

**Valerie:** Steak! Oh, and Taco Salad.

**Interviewer:** Yum! What do you like to do in your free time?

**Valerie:** I like to watch movies on DVD and I like to talk on the phone.

**Interviewer:** What is your favorite movie?

**Valerie:** Home Alone.

**Interviewer:** Do you talk on the phone a lot?

**Valerie:** Oh yeah! When 5'o'clock comes I am on the phone. I call my family and friends.

**Interviewer:** What else do you like?

**Valerie:** Music! It is really one of my favorite things.

**Interviewer:** I noticed! Who do you like to listen to?

**Valerie:** Garth Brooks and Amy Grant.

**Interviewer:** What do you do at program?

**Valerie:** Different fun activities.

**Interviewer:** What has been your favorite activity so far?

**Valerie:** Bowling. Definitely bowling.

**Interviewer:** Have you met any people in the community that are always nice and friendly?

**Valerie:** Yeah, the security guards at the library. One is named Oscar and I forget the name of the other one. They are always nice and say "hi" when we are at the library.

**Interviewer:** Do you have any pets?

**Valerie:** Two cats. Kayla and Kuddles.

**Interviewer:** Val, what are your goals? Where do you see yourself in the future?

**Valerie:** I want to be able to live on my own with support. No roommates. I want to grocery shop for myself and go out and see my friends. I also want to learn how to spend money wisely. I am working on not getting stressed.

**Interviewer:** How?

**Valerie:** Reading, listening to music or swimming.

**Interviewer:** That's great! Anything else you want to share.

**Valerie:** I don't think so.

**Interviewer:** Okay thanks Valerie!

## Sensory Workshop

**Hosted By:** AmeriServe International & Affordable Therapy Solution

The workshop will be held on Saturday July 21, 2007.

**Where:** AmeriServe International, Inc. Located at 12600 N 113th Ave Ste B15  
In Youngtown, AZ 85363

The workshop will begin at 10:00am and will use the following agenda.

9:30am - Registration Check-In

10:00am - Presentation from Occupational Therapist Andrea Morge

11:30am - Open Forum for questions, demonstrations, and refreshments.

12:15pm - There will be a raffle to give away one Weighted Blanket, one Weighted Vest, one Pressure Vest, and one Platform Swing.

There is a non-refundable registration fee of \$10.00 a person.

To register please call: Amanda Shurrab- 623-693-3695, Joshua Warne- 623-584-3408,

Or go online to [www.affordabletherapysolutions.com](http://www.affordabletherapysolutions.com) and purchase the Sensory Workshop.

\*Space is limited and will go fast so call ASAP to register!



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### Support Options

1. In-home Support—training to increase self-help, socialization, and adaptive skills within the home and community.
2. Day Treatment— specialized sensory-motor, cognitive, communicative, social, interaction and behavioral support.
3. Residential— designed to maximize consumer successes through the use of habilitative therapies, special developmental skills, participative enhancement, and sensory-motor development in the group home or specialized living setting.

**Call for more information today!**

**AmeriServe International, Inc. 623-584-3408**



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