



Side Effects and Problems with Punishment

Psychology 390

Psychology of Learning

Steven E. Meier, Ph.D.

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Emotional Reaction

- May occur in organisms but is usually of short duration.

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Aggression

- Elimination a response with punishment can cause the organism who is being punished to attack nearby individuals or persons delivering the punisher.
 - In clinics, the therapist never delivers punishing stimuli.
 - When the organism is aggressive, punish the aggressive behavior as well. Usually it does not have to be severe.

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Imitation / Modeling

- Kids imitate hitting etc.
- Usually the way punishers are passed on from one generation to the next.
 - E.g., slapping the hand of a kid for running in the street.
 - Sitting on a chair may be just as effective.
 - Smacking the mouth may be punishing but is also abusive as well.

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Doesn't Generalize Well

- Organisms discriminate between the situations
- Best way to get generalization is to punish the behavior in ALL situations and punish the behavior when it initially occurs.
 - Home, Stores, etc.

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Disrupts Social Relationships

- Is the most undesirable
- Use of punishment increases the likelihood that the individual will try to escape from the situation where the punishers were provided.
 - E.g., Spouses. One decides to use a punisher to the other for inappropriate behavior and the punished person files for a divorce.
- Way to overcome escape is to reinforce alternative behaviors.

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Better Alternative

- Reinforce alternative behaviors.
- Extinguish negative behaviors.
- Gives better results in general.