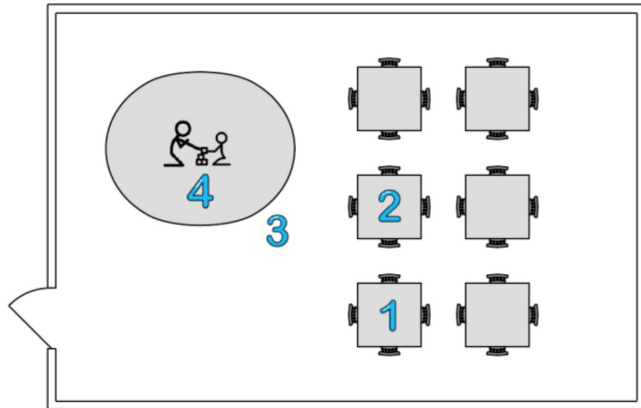


Understanding & Treating Selective Mutism (SM) in Teens

Fade-Ins



Before beginning the fade-in process:

- Set a goal and an associated reward in collaboration with teen
- Decide on warm-up activities based on the teen's interests
- Ensure the teen is able to consistently verbalize to the familiar person alone

Throughout the fade-in process:

- Use CDI and VDI strategies to facilitate verbal behavior from the teen, providing social and tangible reinforcement (e.g., labeled praises, tallies or points on their chart) in response to all verbalizations.

Steps for the unfamiliar person:

1. Enter the room and engage in a separate task (e.g., paperwork, cellphone)
2. Move closer to the teen, but continue to engage in the separate task
3. Move closer to the teen and begin to occasionally use CDI skills to reinforce the teen's behavior (e.g., "I love how I could hear your voice from over here," "You're building a very cool Lego set with your dad!")
4. Begin to engage in the activity with the teen and familiar person, while continuing to use CDI skills, and ask a forced-choice question to the teen related to his or her activity (e.g., "Is the marker you're using red or blue?")
 - Use VDI skills to facilitate a verbal response; if the teen struggles to respond, the familiar person should use shaping strategies
 - Continue to use CDI, VDI, and reinforcement strategies as the familiar person begins to fade out of the interaction (e.g., providing less attention/support), moving a bit further away from the teen, and eventually leaving the room

Shaping

To support a teen's ability to meet new and/or challenging goals, the teen should be rewarded/reinforced for **successive approximations** toward the desired behavior. A successive approximation takes place during a **series of attempts** at a goal behavior. The process of "**shaping**" the teen's behavior entails providing positive reinforcement to the teen each time his or her successive approximation comes closer to the goal behavior than previous attempts.

Examples of shaping include:

- ★ Repeatedly prompting (**and reinforcing** successful attempts from) the teen to:
 - ★ Answer a new person's questions (e.g., familiar person repeats it, directs answers to the familiar person, even when the new person asks it)
 - ★ Answer the same question as the familiar person gets increasingly closer in proximity to the new person
 - ★ Increase volume
 - ★ "Tell" answers to parts of a person's body (e.g., shoulder, chin, ear) until they make eye contact
 - ★ Saying a larger portion of a fill-in-the-blank or lead-in statement (e.g., the familiar person begins a sentence or question and pauses for the teen to complete it)