

# Chapter 3:

## *Conceptual Work Sheets for*

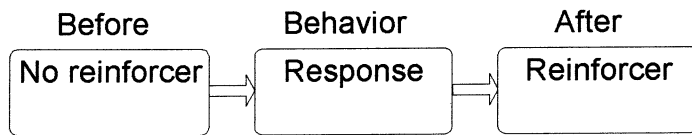
### Escape

*Definition: 1.*

**Reinforcement contingency**

- The immediate, response-contingent,
- presentation of a reinforcer
- resulting in an increased frequency of that response.

Take a look at the *generic reinforcement contingency*:

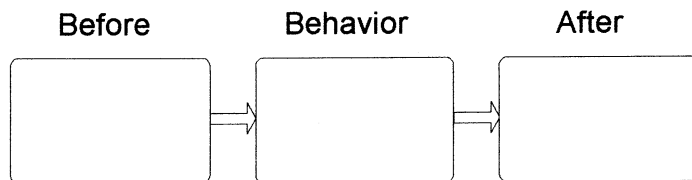


*Definition:*

**Escape contingency**

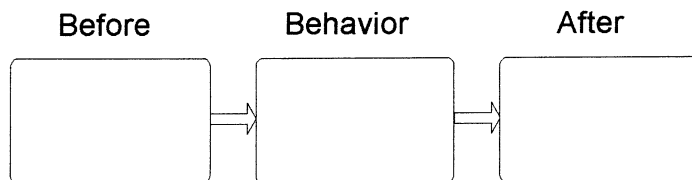
- The immediate, response-contingent
- removal of an aversive condition
- resulting in an *increased* frequency of that response.

Now diagram the *generic escape contingency*:



### In the Skinner Box

1. Please diagram this example: Each time the shock turns on, the rat presses the lever and the shock immediately turns off.



2. Is it an escape contingency?

- A. Yes
- B. No (Then revise it!)

3. What is the negative reinforcer in the Skinner box example?

- A. Shock
- B. Food
- C. Termination of shock
- D. Termination of food

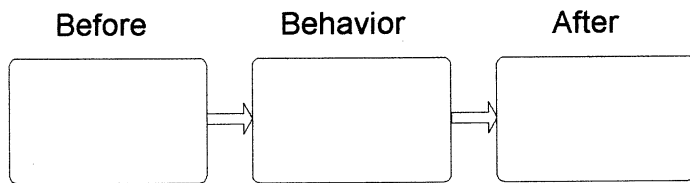
4. Please explain why this is an example of escape (refer to the definition):

### Keeping It Clean

Sally usually leaves her room a total mess months on end. One day she completely cleaned her room. While Sally was cleaning, her mom happened to walk past the bedroom and noticed that she was cleaning. Sally's mom was so pleased that she complimented Sally on how nice her room looked. In the future, Sally will clean her room more often. (Note that the reinforcer is probably not escape from a messy room; otherwise, she would have been keeping it clean all along.)

1. This homework was revised by Nathalie Witt as part of MA project during the Fall semester of 2002.

5. Diagram the contingency maintaining Sally's behavior:



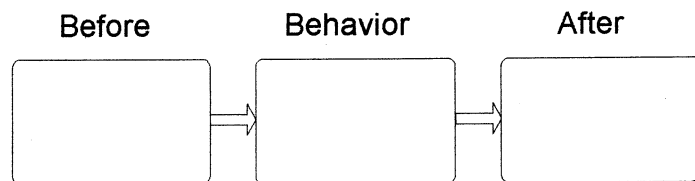
6. Is this a reinforcement contingency?

- A. Yes
- B. No (Revise!)

## The Suspicious Stomach Ache

When Johnny comes home from school he immediately has to do his homework. However, Johnny would much rather relax (who wouldn't?). One day while doing his homework, Johnny told his mother he had a stomach ache. Johnny's mom let him go lie on the couch, and put off doing his homework, until he felt better. From that point on, he complained of stomach aches much more frequently when doing his homework. (Note that having a stomach ache is not Johnny's behavior in this contingency. Instead his behavior is "complaining of a stomach ache".)

7. Diagram the contingency for Johnny's complaining:



8. Is this an escape contingency?

- A. Yes
- B. No (Revise)

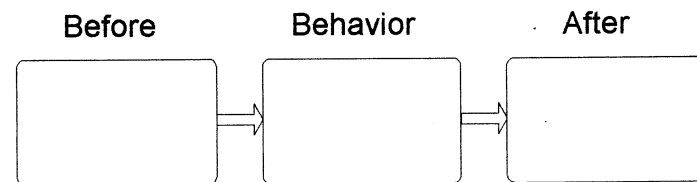
9. What is the traditional term for the aversive condition in the above example?

- A. Aversive condition
- B. Negative reinforcement
- C. Negative Reinforcer

## Pout Stealing

Suppose your brother, Bob, pouts because life isn't working out the way he thinks it should; and, in spite of your various efforts, he continues. Now here's a little-known trick: You can stop Bob's pout by stealing it; by *pouting yourself*. For some reason or another, pouting seems to be a game only one person can play at a time. If you manage to make your pout stronger than Bob's, then Bob will stop pouting (and he may even try to console you, but that's not the point). An analysis of why it works that way is a little complex, but often it does work that way!

10. Please diagram the escape contingency supporting **your** pouting behavior.



Use the Contingency Diagramming Checklist to analyze this example.

11. What type of contingency is this?

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Escape

12. What is **Our** term for Negative Reinforcement?

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Negative Reinforcer
- C. Escape

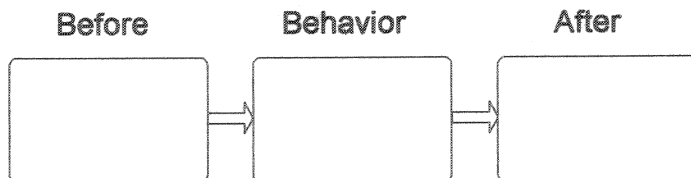
By the way, your pout stealing need not have been intentional. In other words, you might have been completely unaware of the escape contingency, where your pouting stopped Bob's pouting; you might even have been unaware that you were pouting.

Scientific fact: 50% of my undergrad students said they'd observed pout stealing previously. So why don't you keep your eyes open for examples of pout stealing and then share them with your instructor and class. Wow, talk about fun!

## Who's on the Line?

Lisa usually talks to her best friend every night on the phone. When the phone rings, she immediately answers it and gets to talk to her friend. (Note: "Talking on the phone" is an action and shouldn't be in the before and after boxes.)

13. Diagram the contingency for Lisa's behavior:

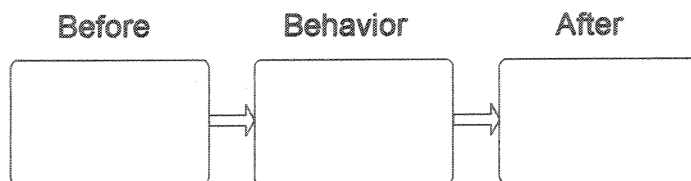


14. What type of contingency is this?

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Escape

Now suppose Lisa answers the phone and hears an annoying salesperson instead of her friend. Lisa quickly makes up the excuse that she is on her way out and doesn't have time to talk. Thus, she no longer has to listen to the annoying salesperson.

15. Diagram the contingency for Lisa's behavior of making up an excuse:



16. What is the *Traditional* term for the contingency in the above example?

- A. Punishment
- B. Negative Reinforcement
- C. Escape

17. What type of contingency is this?

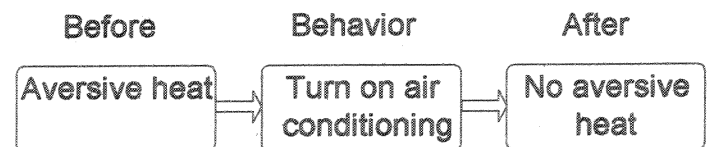
- A. Reinforcement
- B. Escape



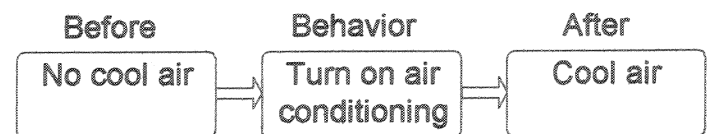
## Is It Reinforcement or Escape?

In some situations it is not clear whether a reinforcement or escape contingency is responsible for a person's behavior. This is often the case in situations involving temperature, for example. When a person is hot, he or she turns on the air conditioning. By turning on the air conditioning is the person escaping the aversive heat or is the behavior being reinforced by the presentation of a lower temperature? Here are two possible ways this situation may be diagrammed:

As an escape contingency:



As a reinforcement contingency:



Now take a look at the following example:

Johnny loves watching his Saturday morning cartoons. However, he hates watching the commercials that interrupt his cartoons. Whenever a commercial comes on, he immedi-

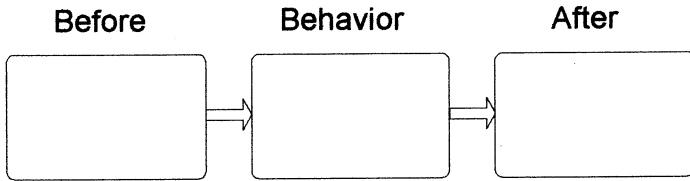
ately takes the remote control and changes the channel to another cartoon.

First let's diagram this as escape:

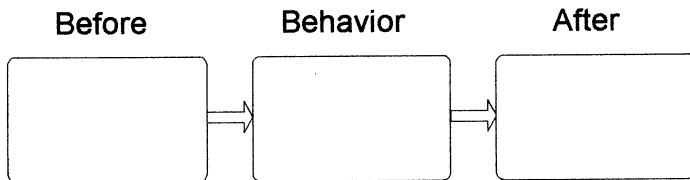
18. What aversive condition is being removed?

\_\_\_\_\_

19. Now fill in the diagram:



20. Now diagram the channel changing contingency as reinforcement:



21. What is the *Traditional* term for this contingency?

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Positive Reinforcer
- C. Positive Reinforcement

## EPB vs Traditional Terms

EPB terms are quite different from the terms that traditional psychology uses. So let's test your knowledge of how well you can decipher them by filling out this handy dandy table.

Traditional	Ours
Positive Reinforcer	
	Reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer.

## Your Original Example

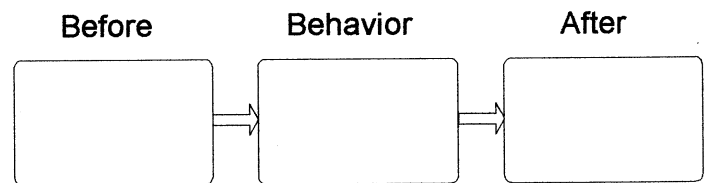
Note: In the previous situation there may be more than one possible correct analysis. However, situations such as this are somewhat rare. When diagramming contingencies, don't

be too quick to assume that a situation is ambiguous. Usually there's a specific correct answer, and we're picky.

Now give an original example of an escape contingency. Be sure to use an example that is definitely escape, rather than an ambiguous example that could also be interpreted as reinforcement.

22. Please describe your example:

23. Please diagram your example:



Use the Contingency Diagramming Checklist to analyze this example.

24. Is it an escape contingency?

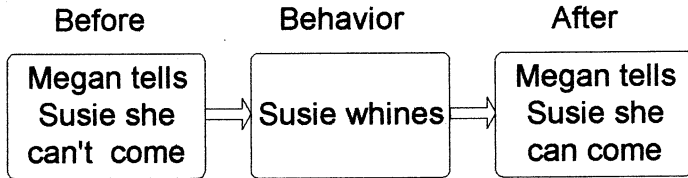
- A. Yes
- B. No (If not, revise!)

25. Please explain why this is an example of an escape contingency in terms of the definition.

26. Now, copy the preceding diagram onto your transparency, using the relevant transparency master. But you do not need to hand this transparency in with your homework.

# The Sick Social Cycle

Little Susie wants to be just like her older sister Megan. Susie wants to do everything Megan does, but Megan wants nothing to do with her. When Megan is getting ready to go to the movies or the mall, Susie, the perpetrator, begs and begs Megan to let her go, too. Megan, the victim, usually gets so tired of hearing Susie whine that she gives in and lets her tag along.



27. What is the before condition?

*(Major hint: Being told she can come would be a major reinforcer for Susie. In contexts of this sort, by aversive condition, we usually mean something physically painful, like electric shock or a bee sting, or socially painful, like some one calling you a dumb bell of flipping you the bird.)*

- A. Absence of a reinforcer
- B. Aversive condition

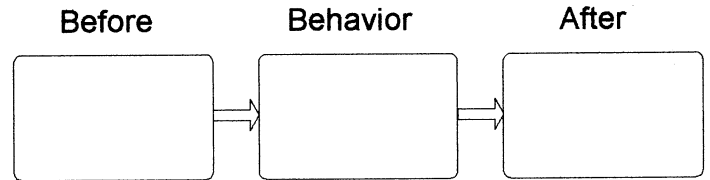
28. What is the after condition?

- A. Presentation of a reinforcer
- B. Removal of an aversive condition

29. What type of contingency is maintaining Susie's behavior?

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Escape

30. Please diagram the contingency maintaining Megan, the victim's, behavior:



31. What is the before condition?

- A. Absence of a reinforcer
- B. Aversive condition

32. What is the after condition?

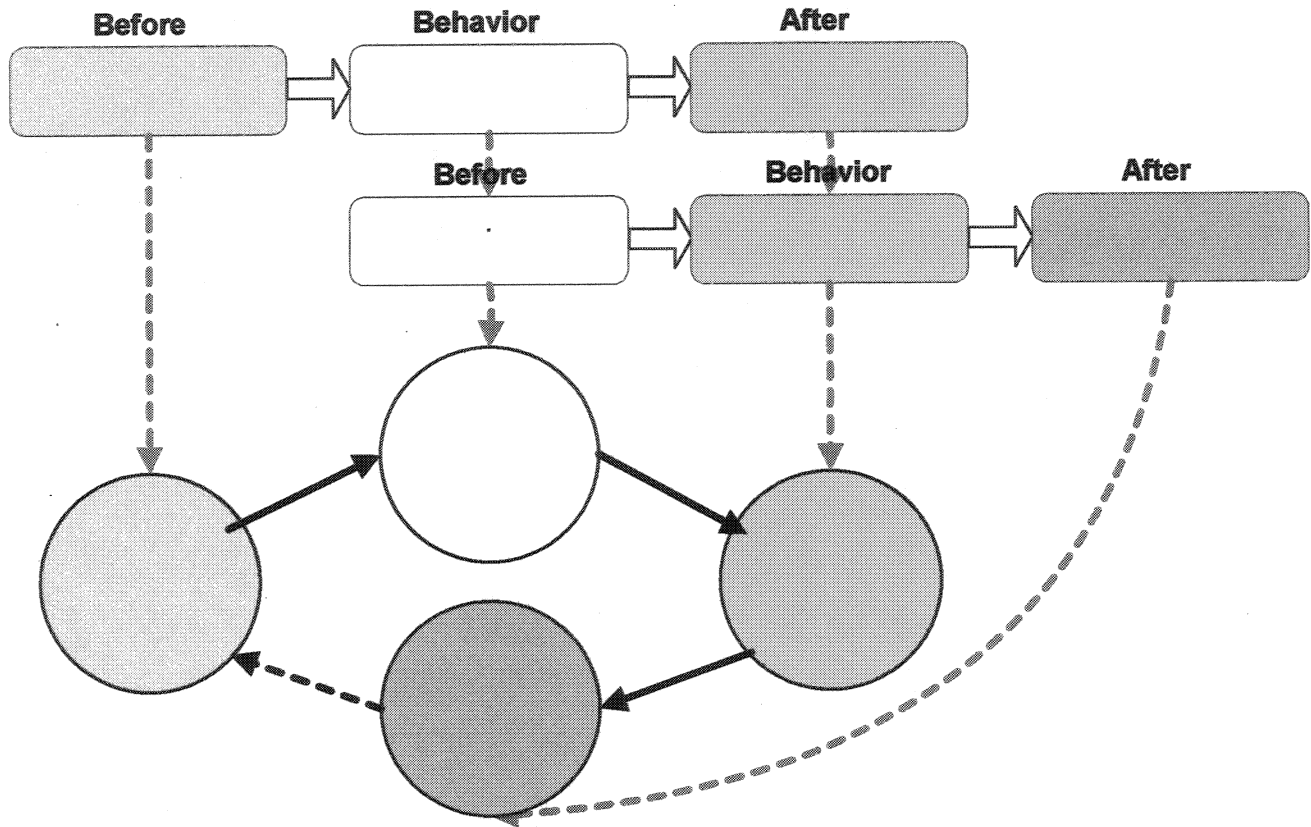
- A. Presentation of a reinforcer
- B. Removal of an aversive condition

33. What type of contingency is maintaining Megan's behavior?

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Escape

34. Now please fill in the diagram for the whole sick social cycle. (The contingency for Susie, the perpetrator, goes in the top row; and the contingency for Megan, the victim, goes in the second row.) 2.

## Your Sick Social Cycle (Victim's Escape Model)



Remember that the first contingency is always some sort of reinforcement contingency, either reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer or reinforcement by the removal of an aversive condition; but, in either case, the perpetrator's inappropriate behavior is reinforced.

Remember that the second contingency is always an escape contingency, where the victim's inappropriate escape behavior is reinforced.

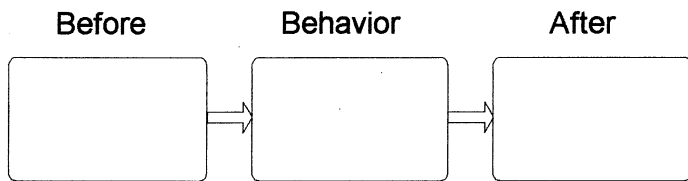
---

2. We make a slight change in the rules for filling out the top two diagrams of these sick social cycles, because these two contingencies describe social interactions between two people. For the top before condition, we would normally say, *Susie can't come*; but because *Susie's* before condition is based on *Megan's* behavior, we state that before condition in terms of *Megan's* behavior--*Megan tells Susie she can't come*. That way, we can easily move the before and after conditions from the top two contingency diagrams down into the sick social cycle diagram, where each item is behavior. Also, it's OK, for the before and after conditions to include behavior, as long as it's not the behavior of the person in the behavior box; so in the top contingency diagram, it's OK for the before and after condition to be *Megan's* behavior, but it cannot be *Susie's* behavior.

## Who's the Master and Who's the Mastered

Juke's Doberman, Spot, often comes up to the table begging for food, with a cute little growl suggesting he's about to go for your throat. Finding this irritating, Juke tosses the mutt a bone from his own plate to shut him up. And this works . . . for a while. See Spot, the perpetrator, growl. See Juke, the victim, cave in.

12. Diagram the contingency maintaining Spot, the perpetrator's, begging.

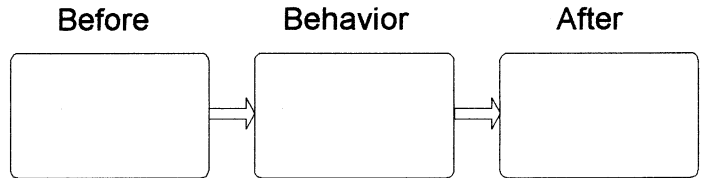


13. What is the before condition?
- A. Absence of a reinforcer
  - B. Aversive condition
14. What is the after condition?
- A. Presentation of a reinforcer
  - B. Removal of an aversive condition

15. What type of contingency is maintaining Spot's behavior?

- A. Reinforcement
- B. Escape

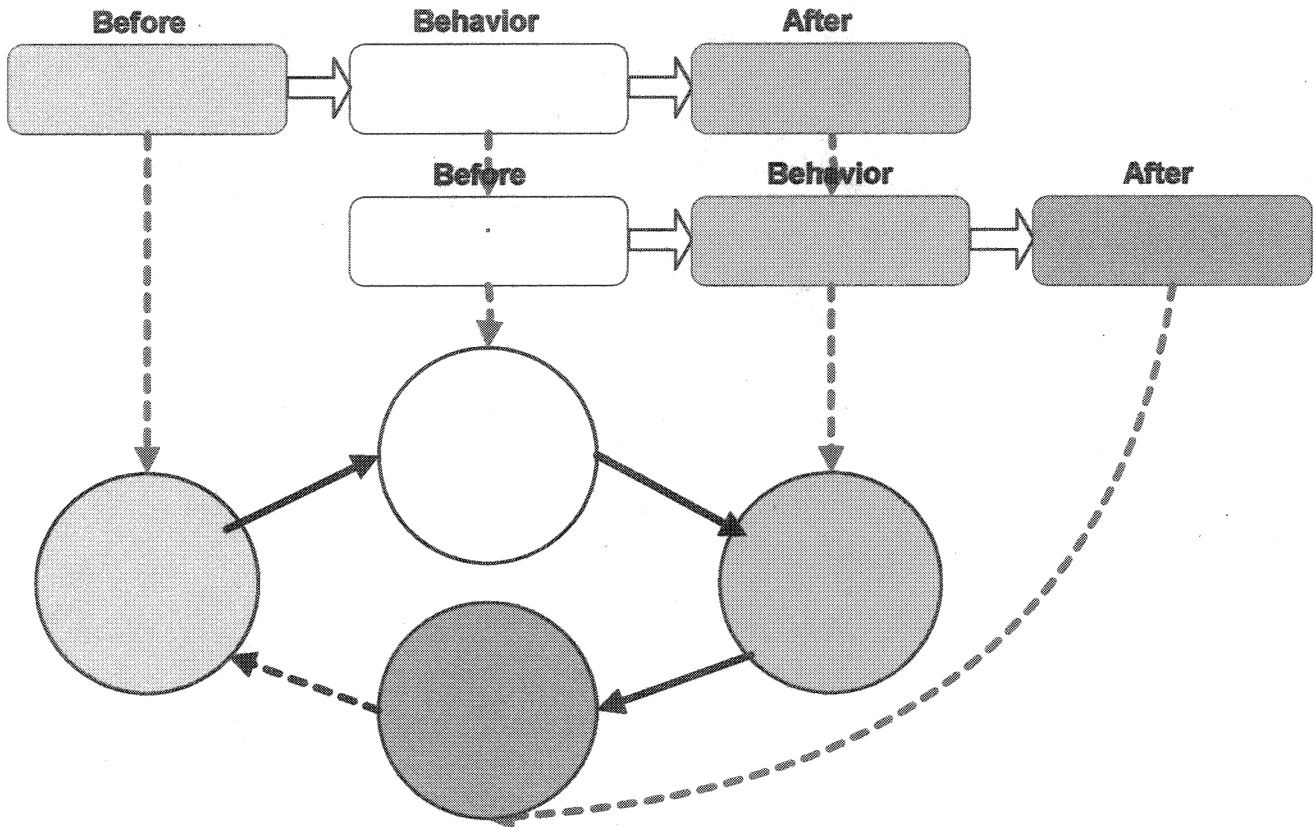
16. Diagram the contingency maintaining Juke, the victim's, giving Spot a bone:



17. What is the before condition?
- A. Absence of a reinforcer
  - B. Aversive condition
18. What is the after condition?
- A. Presentation of a reinforcer
  - B. Removal of an aversive condition
19. What type of contingency is maintaining Juke's behavior?
- A. Reinforcement
  - B. Escape

20. Now please fill in the diagram for the whole sick social cycle. (The contingency for Spot, the perpetrator, goes in the top row; and the contingency for Juke, the victim, goes in the second row.)

## Your Sick Social Cycle (Victim's Escape Model)



Remember that the first contingency is always some sort of reinforcement contingency, either reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer or reinforcement by the removal of an aversive condition; but, in either case, the perpetrator's inappropriate behavior is reinforced.

Remember that the second contingency is always an escape contingency, where the victim's inappropriate escape behavior is reinforced.



# Your Original Example of a Sick Social Cycle

Now give your original example of a sick social cycle.

Here are some student examples, all of which are real, I believe:

Amy and her husband lift heavy object; Amy whines, so her husband escapes the whine by lifting the heavy object alone.

In the grocery store, Daddy doesn't give autistic Joey bubble gum; Joey makes a disturbance, and you know what happens.

Ed buys the Girl Scout's cookies, which escapes her aversive sales pitch. This may be common with charitable solicitation, because it would be even more morally aversive to say *No* to a worthy cause.

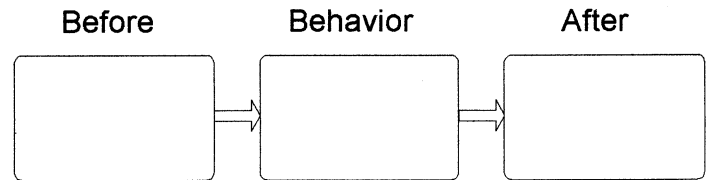
My 18 year old nephew gets money from my uncle, when he whines.

The wife refuses sex with her husband, because she fears his philandering has caused him to be HIV positive; but she relents to escape his beating her.

The screaming child in church gets a sucker from Mom, which shuts him up.

Please describe your example:

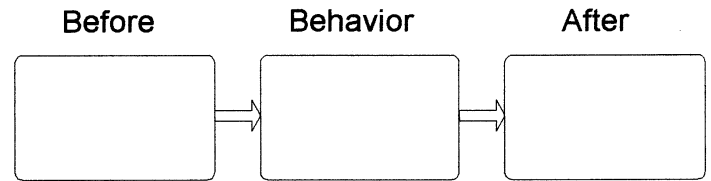
21. Please diagram the *reinforcement contingency* for the perpetrator in your original example and put it on a transparency:



22. Is this a type of reinforcement (either reinforcement or escape) contingency?

- A. Yes
- B. No (If not, revise!)

23. Please diagram the *escape contingency* for the victim in your example and put it on a transparency:



Use the Contingency Diagramming Checklist to analyze your original example

24. Is it an escape contingency?

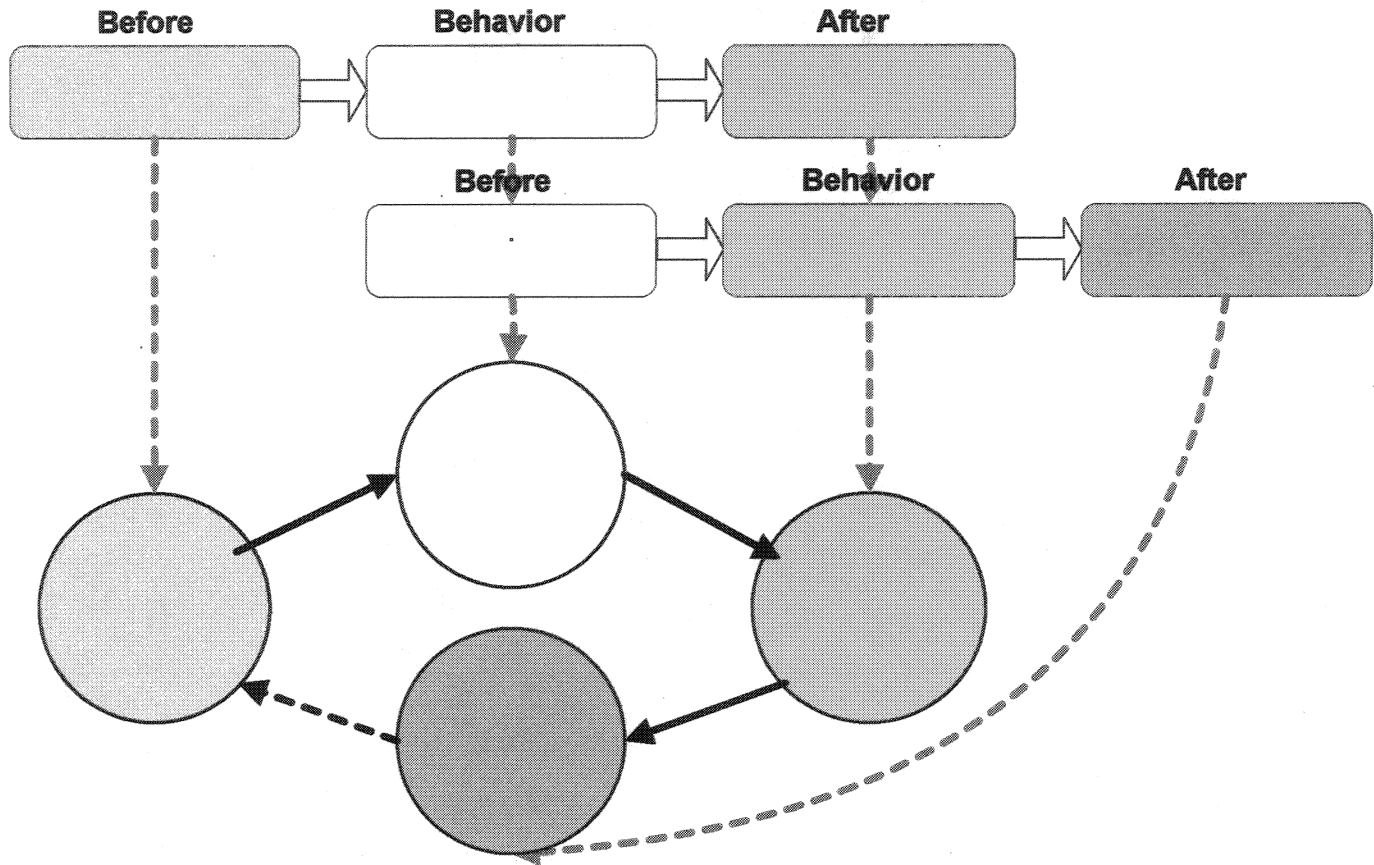
- A. Yes
- B. No (If not, revise!)

Finally, please fill out the diagram on the sick-social-cycle diagram on the next page. Then using your transparency master, make a transparency of it to show in class. You do not need to hand this transparency in with your homework. Thank you.

3. Actually, the perpetrator's contingency could be an escape contingency too, for example, Bobby Brat, the perp., whines when he has to do his homework, and Mellow Mom, the victim, let's him off the hook. So you can use an escape contingency for your perp. too, but be careful.

25. Now please fill in the diagram for the whole sick social cycle. (The contingency for the perpetrator goes in the top row; and the contingency for the victim goes in the second row.)

## Your Sick Social Cycle (Victim's Escape Model)



Remember that the first contingency is always some sort of reinforcement contingency, either reinforcement by the presentation of a reinforcer or reinforcement by the removal of an aversive condition; but, in either case, the perpetrator's inappropriate behavior is reinforced.

Remember that the second contingency is always an escape contingency, where the victim's inappropriate escape behavior is reinforced.

26. Finally copy the preceding diagram onto your transparency, using the sick social cycle transparency master in your course pack to make your transparency--remember, lay your blank transparency over the transparency master and fill in the words, but don't draw the diagram, because your instructor has a transparency master, itself, on another transparency; so when you put your on top of your instructor's, it'll look way cool; but if you draw the diagram itself, it'll look like crap. You do not need to hand this in with your homework.