

Dos and Don'ts of Delivering Positive Reinforcement to Adolescents and Young Adults

Do	Don't
☒ Incorporate choice and subtly record choices for a more naturalistic preference assessment. ☒ Focus more on engagement and less on "stigmatizing" behavior. ☒ If there is increased response effort, the power of reinforcement should be increased. ☒ Have the individual retrieve the reinforcer for themselves. ☒ Identify environmental conditions that act as discriminative stimuli. ☒ Make your behavior-specific praise conversational in nature (e.g., "nice job, man!", "thanks, I appreciate that"). ☒ Train community members to deliver behavior-specific praise. ☒ Teach self management/self reinforcement.	☒ Don't hand deliver the reinforcer, whatever it is. ☒ Don't, unless absolutely necessary, use a token board. ☒ Don't, unless absolutely necessary, use a timer that is not controlled by the learner (if a timer is necessary, program a smartphone/tablet). ☒ Don't use your "high-pitched/singsong" praise voice. ☒ Don't, unless absolutely necessary, use physical contact as a reinforcer. ☒ Don't, unless absolutely necessary, use reinforcement that is age inappropriate (e.g., watching Barney). ☒ Don't establish demands (e.g., eye contact) that place a distance between the behavior and the reinforcer. ☒ Don't stop thinking about how to do this better.