



Competing Preference Assessment

Client: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Start time: \_\_\_\_\_ End time: \_\_\_\_\_

Challenging Behavior[s]: \_\_\_\_\_

Stimulus	Trial One		Trial Two		Trial Three	
	Engagement (duration)	Challenging Behavior (duration)	Engagement (duration)	Challenging Behavior (duration)	Engagement (duration)	Challenging Behavior (duration)
<i>No stimulus control trial</i>						



### **Rationale**

This is a validated empirical preference assessment designed to identify individual client's preferences for various stimuli. Research has demonstrated that preference rankings obtained via this assessment procedure predict reinforcer effectiveness. That is, higher preference stimuli are more likely to function as more powerful reinforcers than lower preference stimuli. It should be noted that this is an absolute preference ranking because stimuli are examined singly and not relative to one another. If staff are not familiar with a client, or know of only a few stimuli that seem preferred, then a structured interview (e.g., RAISD) should be conducted with caregivers to identify additional stimuli.

### **Materials**

1. Between 6 to 12 stimuli
2. SSE data sheet

### **Instructions**

Ideally, sessions will be conducted in a room with no other client's present and no other materials nearby, other than those required for the assessment. Stimuli are presented singly in a randomized order for approximately 30s-1M, until all stimuli have been presented. The procedure is repeated for at least 3 trials, or until a stable preference emerges (or it is clear that stability will not occur after 5 trials). All challenging behavior is ignored.

Record total duration of stimulus engagement and total duration of target challenging behavior simultaneously. A no-stimulus control trial should also be conducted.

*Stimulus engagement* is defined generally as interaction with the stimulus, moving towards the stimulus, consuming the stimulus (for edibles and tangible stimuli), or engaging in the activity (when the stimulus is an activity, such as playing catch with the therapist). This includes any attempt to manipulate, "experience" or consume the stimulus in a way it is intended.

## **Data summary and analysis**

### *Engagement Data*

1. Input the total number of seconds of engagement for each stimulus into the spreadsheet. The spreadsheet will calculate the percentage of engagement by dividing the duration of engagement by the total number of seconds the stimulus was available (the default is set at 30s – but it can be changed) and then multiplying by 100%.
2. Examine changes in percentage of engagement across administrations to determine whether it is necessary to repeat the procedure more than 3 times.
3. Calculate an average percentage engagement for each stimulus across administrations, and sort the data in Excel so the stimuli are sorted from higher to lower preference.
4. Input the total duration of challenging behaviors emitted during each trial. Calculate the percent occurrence of challenging behavior while the client had access to each stimulus. The spreadsheet will calculate the percentage occurrence by dividing the duration of challenging behavior by the total number of seconds the stimulus was available (the default is set at 30s – but it can be changed) and then multiplying by 100%.
5. Calculate and average occurrence of challenging behavior for each stimulus (including during control trials) across administrations.