

Ten Commandments of Monitoring Behavior

Thou shalt...

1. define one's monitoring plan very carefully such that monitors will have little difficulty assigning units of behavior to appropriate categories.
2. develop a monitoring plan which is closely related – hence relevant – to assess the problem.
3. avoid monitoring procedures which are too cumbersome or aversive to either the monitor or the client.
4. remember that a pilot premonitoring is useful to determine if the procedure is cumbersome or aversive.
5. be able to provide the monitor with reinforcement for his/her efforts – neglect of this principle is the most frequent cause of failure.
6. remember that monitoring is not a high probability behavior in anyone's repertoire: monitors will often require training, and training may involve shaping, modeling and practice if the procedure is difficult.
7. make resources for monitoring (counters, tally sheets, pencils, timers or digital devices) readily available.
8. be sure to use time samples for high frequency behaviors. A rule of thumb – the lower the frequency the larger the sample.
9. remember that sampling may be by time and/or location and include a record of duration and number of units observed.
10. select a sampling periods and locations in which the target behavior is most likely occur. There are some exceptions to this rule.