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THE APPLICATION OF BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION TECHNIQUES
TO TWO GERIATRIC PATIENTS

by

BETH A. SCHNEIDER, B.A.

RESEARCH PROJECT REPORT

Presented to the Faculty of Behavioral Science

The University of Texas of the Permian Basin

in Partial Fulfillment

for the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS OF THE PERMIAN BASIN

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Abstract

Behavior modification techniques were applied to the behavioral problems of two geriatric nursing home residents. For the first subject, providing reinforcement for a competing activity effectively reduced both disruptive behavior defined as requests for cigarettes, attacking a fellow resident or unauthorized removal of charts, and time spent in the hallway. Similarly, for the second subject, offering reinforcement for out-of-bed behavior had the desired effect of increasing time spent out of bed. However, positive changes in behavior failed to generalize beyond the experimental situation, possibly due to an inability to exercise adequate control over the environment. Suggestions for establishing a totally structured environment that would be ideal for optimal behavioral change were made.