

Discriminating Between Available and Unavailable Edibles

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Introduction:

- Caregivers expressed concerns regarding the client's touching and consuming food items that are unavailable to him, such as touching other's food and eating sweets when unavailable.
- Clinicians have observed persistent manding for edibles that are unavailable following clinicians prompting the client to wait.
- Red/green visuals were previously used to signal availability of various items and activities.
- This behavior may be disruptive in community environments where edibles are displayed.
- Waiting to gain access to edibles is an essential self-control skill.

Methods:

Objective 1:

- Clinicians place the available edible on a green stimulus and an unavailable edible on a red stimulus (Conners et al., 2000).
- Clinicians state, "You can have the (edible) on the green side" (Dixon et al., 2003).
- Clinicians remain approximately one-foot from the edibles for the targeted duration to allow blocking if needed.

Objective 2:

- Clinicians place both edibles in front of the client and state, "You can have this one," while pointing to the available edible and then state, "You cannot have this one," while pointing to the unavailable edible and shaking their head.

General Consequential Procedures:

- If the client points to or mands for the unavailable edible more than once, it is considered an incorrect trial.

Results:

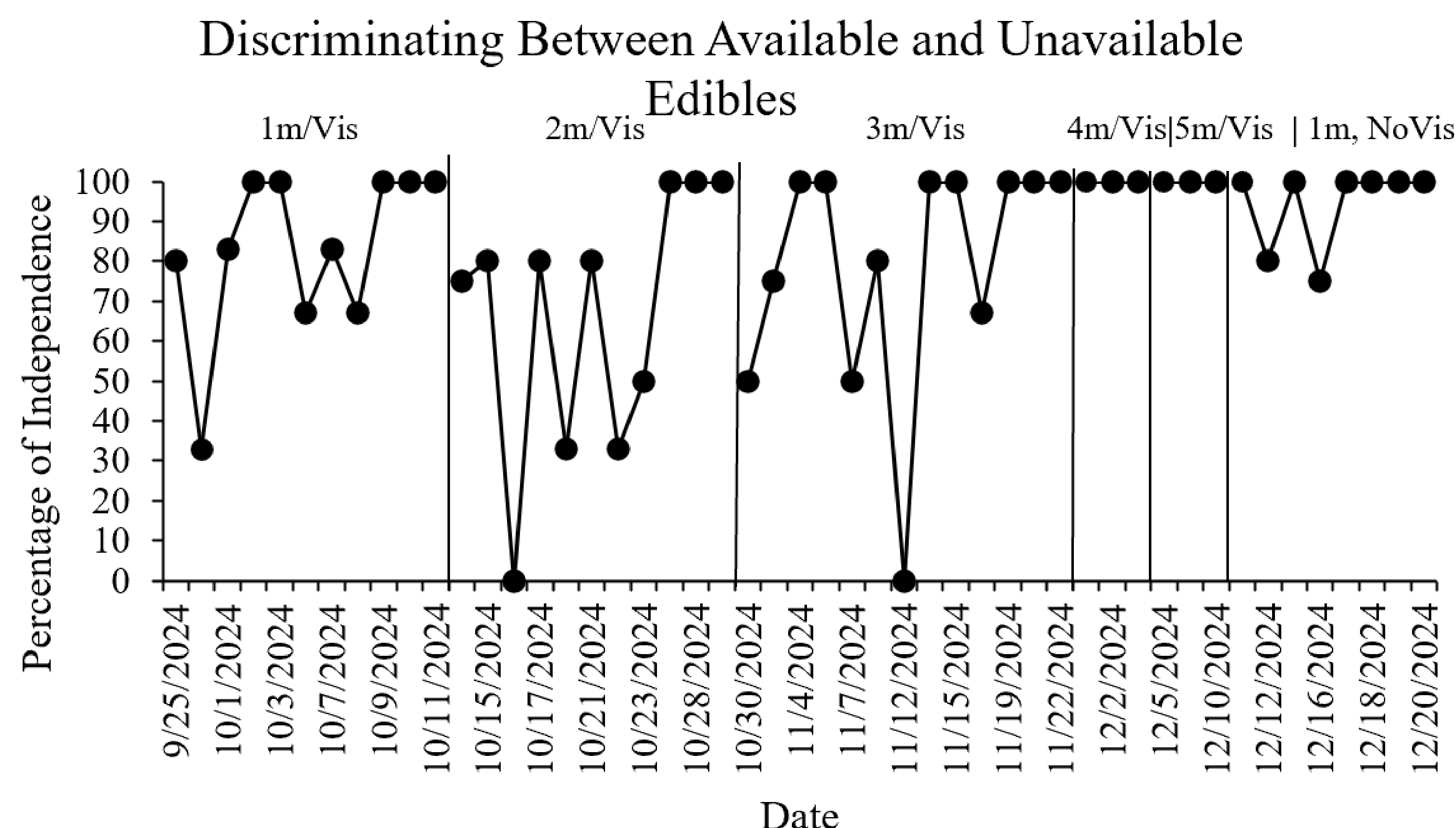


Figure 1: The figure above depicts the percentage of independence.

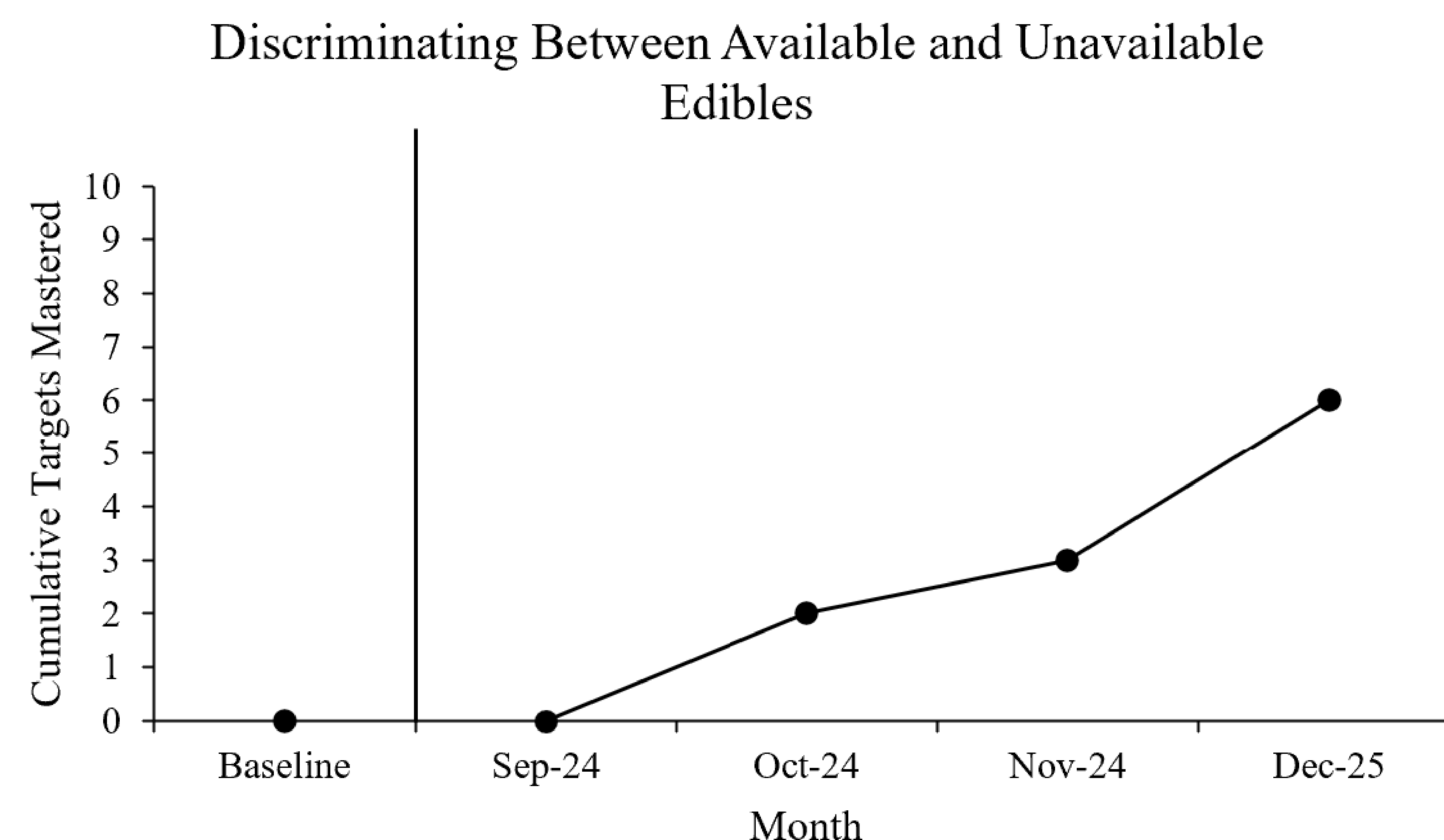


Figure 2: The graph above depicts the cumulative targets mastered.

Methods (Continued):

General Consequential Procedures (Cont'):

- If the client attempts to or successfully reaches for/consumes the unavailable edible, clinicians block the response and use least-to-most prompting to aid him in discriminating between the available and unavailable edibles (gestural, verbal, physical).
- If the client discriminates between the available/unavailable edibles, clinicians provide high-magnitude praise and place the unavailable edible on the green stimulus, signaling that the edible is available (Ghaemmghami et al., 2016).

Discussion:

- Clinicians observed minimal discrimination initially; clinicians gestured towards the available edible during the trial duration to again signal the availability of the edible.
- Clinicians continue to observe persistent manding for unavailable edibles outside of trials.
- Clinicians may consider using a visual of an edible placed on a red stimulus to signal that it is unavailable.
- Clinicians may decrease proximity.
- Clinicians may remove the available edible.
- Clinicians may increase the portion of the unavailable edible and while providing a small portion of the unavailable edible.

References:

- Conners, J., Iwata, B. A., Kahng, S., Hanley, G. P., Worsdell, A. S., & Thompson, R. H. (2000). Differential responding in the presence and absence of discriminative stimuli during multielement functional analyses. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 33(3), 299–308. <https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.2000.33-299>
- Dixon, M. R., Rehfeldt, R. A., & Randich, L. (2003). Enhancing tolerance to delayed reinforcers: The role of intervening activities. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 36(2), 263–266. <https://doi.org/10.1901/jaba.2003.36-263>
- Ghaemmghami, M., Hanley, G. P., & Jessel, J. (2016). Contingencies promote delay tolerance. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 49(3), 548–575. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.333>