



# Tangled in Tangibles: Cracking the Case of Bluey's Outbursts



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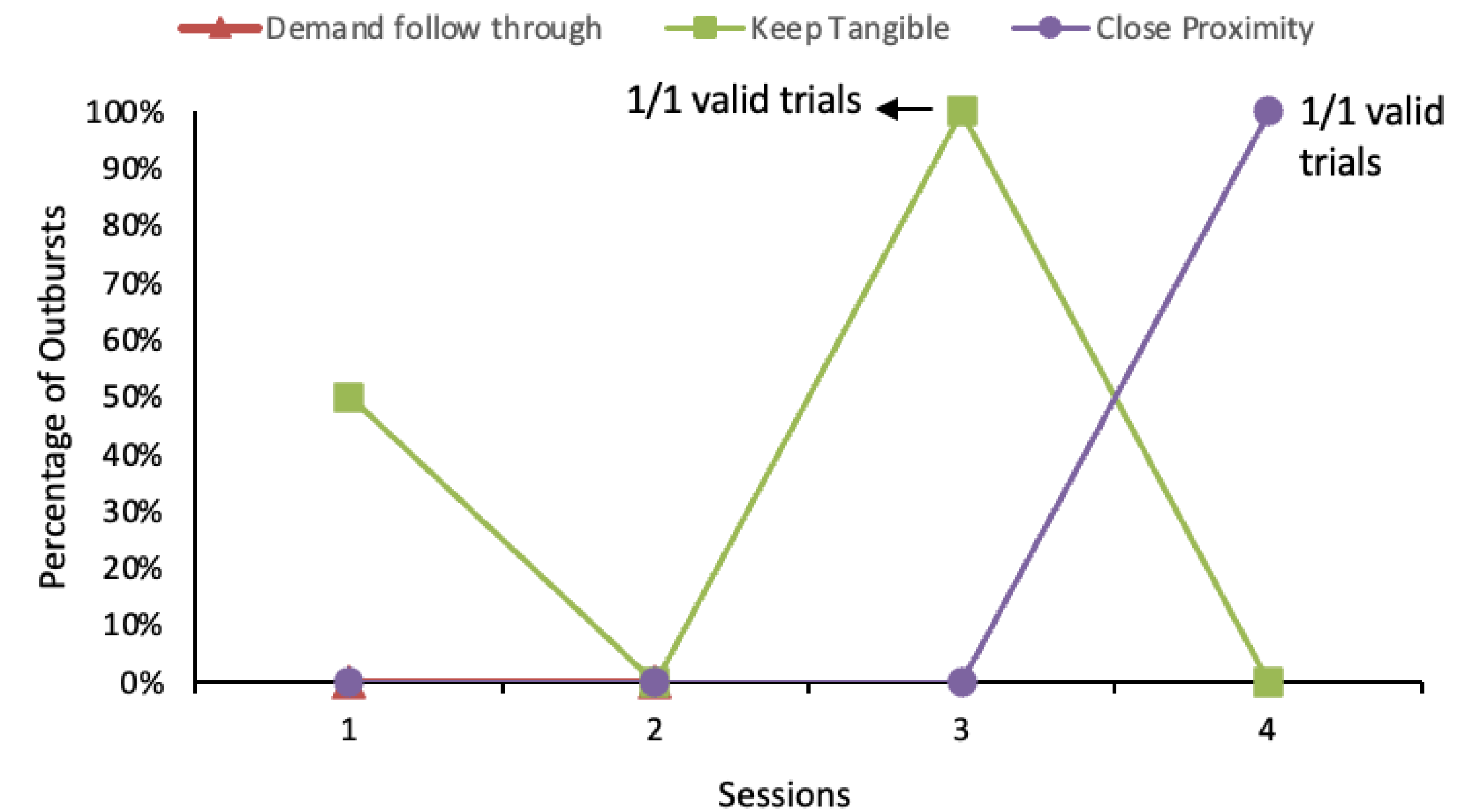
## INTRODUCTION

- Bluey is a 3-year-old female diagnosed with autism (May 2024)
- Concerns: language delays, communication regression, unsafe behavior, difficulty with routines, low tolerance for interruptions.
- Frequent vocal outbursts occur after demands, transitions, redirections, and when items don't work as expected.
- Sleep and medical issues (constipation history, MiraLAX use, poor sleep schedule) sometimes intensify behaviors.
- Outbursts limit instruction and create difficulty delivering consistent ABA services.
- Functional Analysis (FA) needed to pinpoint maintaining variables of outburst behavior.

## METHODS

- FA based on McKerchar et al. (2005) multielement design.
- Antecedent held constant: presentation of demands.
- Consequences alternated:
  - Tangible access
  - Escape from demand
  - Increased distance
- Treatment condition: Demand follow-through while keeping the tangible and being in close proximity
- Conditions identified by therapist shirt color (black: tangible, red: escape from demand, green: increased distance).
- Preference assessment conducted to determine items for tangible condition.
- Observer recorded outbursts per trial.
- Safety checks and termination criteria in place to prevent harm

## Treatment



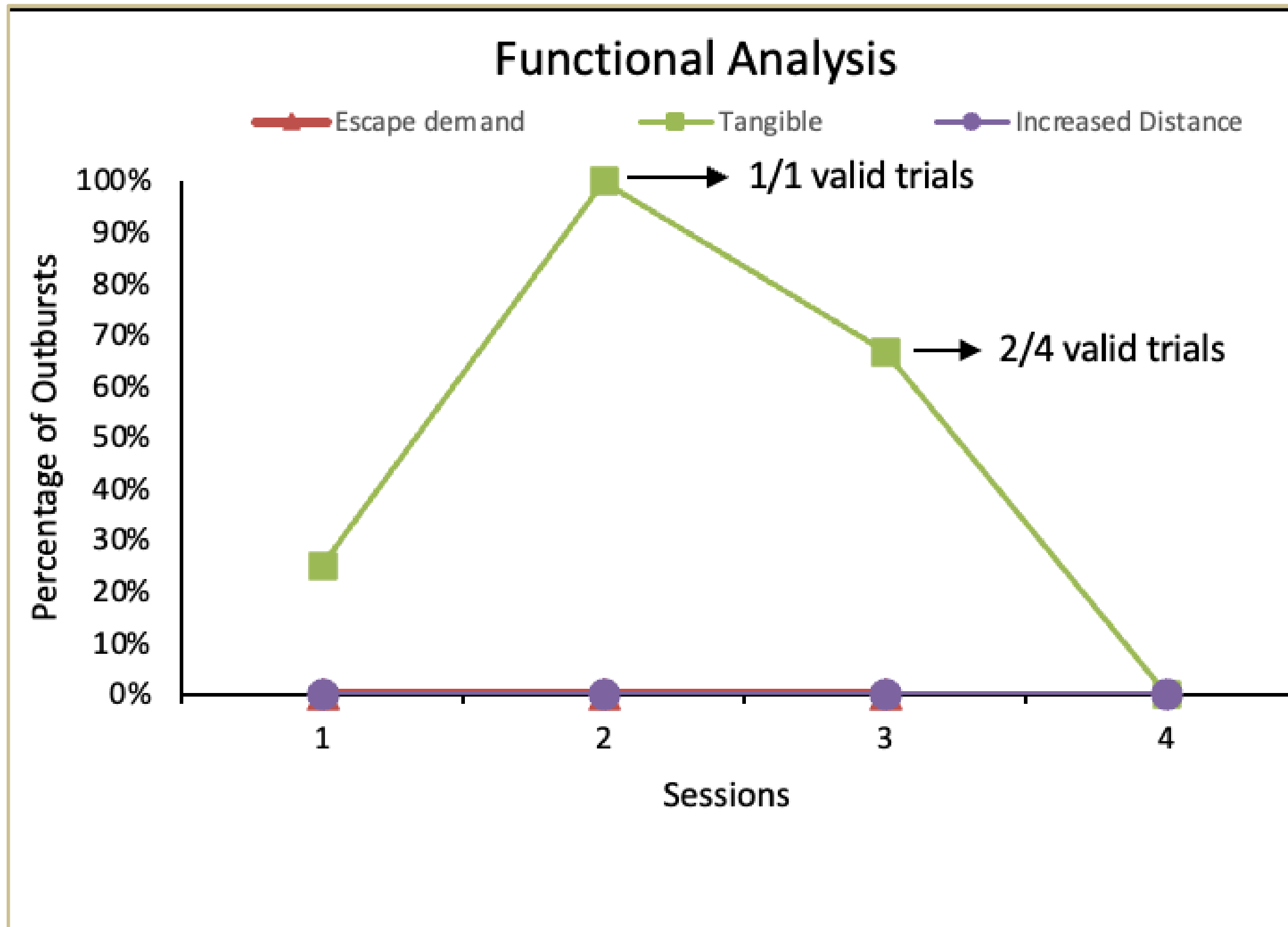
## FBA POSSIBLE FUNCTIONS

- Escape from demands, Access to tangibles & Increased therapist distance
- FA needed to confirm which consequence reliably maintains outbursts.
- Outbursts defined as screaming, yelling, or crying after demands.
- FA will clarify environmental factors predicting and maintaining behavior.

### PREFERENCE ASSESSMENT:

- Items used: Steamboat Willy, Mickey Mouse, blocks, puzzles, stretchy noodle, balloon.
- Balloon & blocks = most preferred.
- 7/15 trials terminated due to demand avoidance → demands evoke behavior.
- Bluey preferred newly introduced items; tolerance decreased with repetition (satiation).

## FUNCTIONAL ANALYSIS



## DISCUSSION

- Outbursts occurred only in tangible-related trials.
- Many trials marked N/A due to completion/non completion without outburst → not counted
- Compliance occurred in multiple trials, showing outbursts not tied to noncompliance.
- Behavior occurred specifically when access to a preferred item or activity was blocked, indicating attempts to retain or regain it.
- Bluey appeared in good health during FA and treatment sessions, which may have increased tolerance for demand follow-through.

### FA FOLLOW UP and LIMITATIONS:

- Managing tangible access (provide preferred items during work and after task completion).
- Avoiding reinforcement of outbursts by withholding tangibles until task completion.
- 1/1 valid trial in treatment due to decreased tolerance/increased demand avoidance
- Close-proximity condition will continue to determine whether it contributes to the maintenance of outbursts

References  
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