

# projectart works

## 4. Person Centred Planning

### Behaviour Support Strategies

*By Dan Marshall, Senior support worker for the Paul Colley Company*

#### Introduction

*This document is intended help support Artists and volunteers at Project Art Works understand some of the behaviours expressed by the people we support, why they might happen, and what we can do to ensure better well-being and a positive working environment for the makers and participants of the studios. It will hopefully help to ensure a less stressful work area and positive inclusive relationships.*

*This document is not intended as a full support plan for an individual. Their own personalised support plans should be thoroughly read and understood, along with Risk assessments and discussion with the maker's team.*

*Alongside this document there are a few papers written by professionals, and lecturers that are accessible and fun to read, that will further your understanding of what challenging behaviour is, and how people have traditionally responded to it. Project Art Works is a forward thinking and inclusive environment that has enabled people with complex, emotional and physical needs the freedom of expression. Once you have taken fear out of the interactions you have with people, you begin to realise we are all the same.*

*"There is no such thing as a weird human being, it's just that some people require more understanding than others."*

*— Tom Robbins*

When it comes to supporting people with behaviours that challenge we should understand what a behaviour support strategy is. A behaviour support strategy enables us to make small but effective changes to the environment or to our support approaches that enables the makers to feel less inclined to present behaviours that challenge.

We NEVER try to change the behaviours of the people we support. The only exception to this is skills teaching, where we help someone learn a better way of communicating or enable them to do things for themselves.

We NEVER use punitive measures to punish or shame anyone. The strategy outlined below falls into Positive Behaviour Support (PBS).

## Understanding behaviours

Why do they happen, and how can I help?

Supporting a person with difficult behaviours begins when we make a commitment to know the person. Sadly, it is often the case that the people who develop an intervention to stop someone from engaging in difficult behaviours, do not know the individual in any meaningful sense.

Instead, they see the person as a someone (or something) that needs to be fixed, or modified.

*But attacking a person's behaviour is usually ineffective and always disrespectful.*

- David Pitonyak

## When do behaviours occur?

To enable us to support and modify the environment we try to understand the behaviours presented, and why they happen, when they happen, or even when they don't happen. We can record the times they happen and what happened in an Incident report (Attached). We have a good understanding of when and how often the behaviours occur we can try to understand them and formulate a support plan to try to reduce them. Below, is a section that outlines why most behaviours occur.

Behaviours can occur for no reason?

Not really!

There is always an antecedent to a behaviour, whether we can see it or not.

They can be a response to something that is either not present (music, food, certain people), or is present (too much noise, too crowded, too many demands). There may be factors that we cannot account for, such as pain that can't be communicated, worry, stress, all the things that keep us awake at night. They can also be a learned behaviour i.e. They may have tried to get what they want in the past but found they were not listened to, so have developed methods that get a response (hitting themselves, hitting others, shouting etc.) These behaviours elicit a response that appropriate behaviour did not. There are myriad stories of people being very aggressive just to have the response of human contact, in most cases restraint from staff.

These four functions can explain (to some extent) the reasons that behaviours can occur. To understand which functions are playing a part in the behaviour you will have to think a bit about what happened. It can and will be beneficial to write a report on the occurrence. Once the reports have been written it's good to look back on them and start to devise strategies. We will discuss later primary and secondary prevention strategies, and these reports, along with other evidence will form the basis of them. Let us now look at the four major functions.

- **Escape from demand**

*Look for clues that X might suspect a demand is to be made upon them:*

- Asked to do something
- Appearance of someone associated with demands
- Equipment associated with demands
- Somebody else asked to do something
- The time of day demands are made
- This could be a place associated with a demand e.g. Sainsbury's car park
- X wants to get away from somewhere, someone or something

- **Attention**

*Look for clues that X was in need of attention:*

- Alone for a period of time
- A Person stops giving attention
- A person giving attention to something/someone else
- A person arrives

- **Tangible reinforcement**

*Look for clues that X might want something:*

- Usually around food
- Period without something they usually have regularly
- Something in the environment but not accessible
- Presence of person associated with giving/getting things for X
- Being made to wait

- **Sensory stimulation**

*Look for clues that not enough or the wrong sort of stimulation is on offer:*

- Little happening
- Things happening but not of interest to X
- Nothing novel occurred

So, when the reports have been written and analysed, we can look for the functions and modify our behaviours accordingly.

Using Demand avoidance as an example:

*If X is asked to do the washing up at 5pm every day, and X hits themselves and runs to their room at 5pm every day (recorded on an incident form) then it may be safe to assume that the demand of being asked to wash up is the cause. It may be the case that the person making the demands doesn't even need to speak, the mere presence of them at 5pm could be enough to cause distress and the expectation of a demand. When looking back through the incident reports then it may be apparent that the demand needs to be modified (such as: I'm doing the washing up, you can help me if you like), or perhaps removed completely (who likes washing up!).*

## **Primary prevention**

Primary prevention is a robust support plan that describes all the challenges and behaviours that person you support may express. It will be written by people that know the person well (professionals, parents, support teams over the years) It is an evolving document that includes: personal history, medical history, risk assessments, training plans, activity plans, specific behaviours and how they manifest, guidelines for supporting a person around environmental factors, social interactions etc. It should include ways to present and support choice making, communication styles and methods/limitations. Essentially primary prevention should be specific guidelines to help someone cope with life and all its challenges. By modifying our behaviours and the environment we can help someone cope better. Of course, this is not always possible, so a secondary prevention will be necessary.

Build guidelines around the functions-support plans:

- Include choice
- Deviate from timetable
- Communicate
- Vigilance - sometimes the plans don't work! Go to secondary prevention, do not pass go...
- Consistency
- Positive interaction profile (PIP)

## **Skills teaching**

This can be a great way of giving people more freedom and boost self-esteem. Essentially skills teaching is taught in small manageable steps. The task will be broken down into individual steps and recorded every time it is done. Each step that is achieved is a step towards the total goal. An example might be learning to brush your own teeth, and it could be broken down as such:

- Step 1. Pick up your toothbrush.*
- Step 2. Pick up the tooth paste.*
- Step 3. Take the lid off the tooth paste.*
- Step 4. Squeeze the toothpaste onto the brush.*
- Step 4. Turn on the tap.*
- Step 5. Put the toothbrush under the tap.*
- Step 6. Turn off the tap.*
- Step 7. Brush your teeth*

*Etc, etc. There is no time limit on each step. People will learn at different speeds, and some people will need more time and more steps.*

Anything that someone can do for themselves is one less thing they rely upon you for. It is aiming to help promote independence and self-reliance.

Makaton is a simplified sign language that is easy to learn and incredibly useful. Communication could be the single most important thing for a person to learn. How difficult would it be if you were unable to say no!

- Learning how to make choices using symbols or pictures
- Replacing negative behaviour by using a stop task symbol

Things that help:

- Communication systems
- Life skills
- FERB (Functionally equivalent replacement behaviour)
- Staff training
- Choice protocol

## **Secondary prevention**

Secondary prevention will be part of the care plan and work in conjunction with the primary prevention. It will be devised by people who know the person well. It will demonstrate knowledge of early warning signs, that normally suggest that a behaviour will occur. An example of early warning signs could be that before the behaviour occurs, the person's demeanour might change. They may refuse eye contact or not respond to communication. They may begin to exhibit odd behaviours, or their voice might become more frustrated. It is good practice to have an early intervention for cases such as these, they are designed to change the environmental stimulus or distract from the thing that is causing the person discomfort.

Good examples of early intervention might be: Moving to another place that doesn't have the negative stimulus in; perhaps a preferred thing like music or food; perhaps looking through photo books. Whatever the preferred thing, it should be documented and a guideline written for people to follow.

It is really important that we show empathy when people are becoming uncomfortable, we never really know how extreme the person is finding a situation. Trying to empathise and understand why something is happening can be useful as it may show a resolution to the incident or behaviour. It's also nice to know that people are trying to understand what you are going through.

Useful skills or techniques:

- Looking for early warning signs
- Pre-emptive strategies-diverting attention etc
- Body language /tone of voice/noise levels
- Empathy

## **Reactive strategies**

Reactive strategies are used when the person you are supporting is at crisis point and in danger of hurting themselves or others. It is referred to as physical intervention and is a last resort to protect the person being supported when the primary and secondary preventions have failed.

Our training is taken from the NHS Positive behaviour support training, which is free (PBS). It can only be used by people who are trained in it to avoid hurting the person being supported. The physical intervention policy must be present and up to date in the support plan. People trained in it are to undertake refresher training every 12 months. The policy must be agreed by a professional with knowledge of PI policies. The policy must be clearly written and must state exactly when it is appropriate for PI to be used. The rule is, that it should be the minimum amount of Physical intervention required and for the shortest time. Once the person is safe from harm, it must be stopped and then you must revert back to the primary and secondary prevention techniques.

Any time a form of Physical intervention is used, it must be clearly written up in an incident report, with the type of intervention, why it was used and for approximately how long. It will also include any injuries that may have occurred to either party.

It may just be a case of leaving the place or activity you are in to stop the incident/behaviour occurring. As stated before, it should be ok to abandon an activity. Be flexible and allow the person you are supporting choice of how much to participate or withdraw.

It is important to note, that where possible, it is desirable to withdraw any demands being made. This may be enough to avoid continuation of behaviours that challenge.

- PI (used rarely)
- Written guidance on how and when
- Reviewed regularly
- Refresher training (Free)

## **Recording and analysis**

When an incident happens its useful and desirable to record what happened so you can introduce better strategies to help the people you support. It can be a great way of reflecting on incidents that happened. Normally the standard document records (the antecedent) what happened before the incident occurred (the behaviour) what did the person do? and (the consequence) how did you resolve the incident.

So, questions you can ask are:

- Does the same antecedent always come before the behaviour or was it a one off?
- Does the behaviour get more or less severe depending on how quickly it is resolved, or is there a slowly increasing spiral of behaviour until crisis point?
- Does the person have an internal issue, such as pain or sickness, a temperature?

Most reports will have specific guiding questions to extract the information needed and also it should give you time to reflect and give your opinion on why you think it happened and what could have been done differently.

Aside from incident recording, you should record a document of the day, in a diary, to monitor social integration, new opportunities for tasks, and it's a legal document. It can also be used to summarise the person's general mood, so our approaches could include more demands or less demands.

You can also record any tasks that are part of a functional skills teaching program to ensure that the targets are being worked towards and consistent.

- ABC form
- Googledocs
- Diary entries
- Review incidents monthly

## **Team meetings**

A great place to get everyone together and discuss the service and its practices. It can be useful to assess any needs for change in service approaches or changes to service user's specific needs. It can be used to discuss written records and data collection and a good way of reconnecting with your colleagues, and not to mention everyone's involved so better input to strategies is achieved.

- Discuss strategies
- Things that are working or not
- Amend current strategies

## **Supervisions**

I'm sure we have all had supervisions in the past, some are better than others, but generally any chance you get to talk about your work and what happens in it is good. It can be a useful platform to get feedback, give feedback and talk about the aims of your work. It's a good time to ask for and accept any training that you may need and a way of reflecting on current best practice. They should be around 6-12 weeks apart, but monthly is perfect.

- Reflective practice
- Discussing specific needs of the team in relation to support
- Ensuring guidelines are being followed and understood
- Emotional support
- A chance to discuss the content of ABC forms, diary entries etc.

## Debriefing

As you may well know, working with and supporting people can be very tiring, and sometimes, distressing if you are the focus of that person's attention. Perhaps you found the day challenging? This can lead to trauma (real trauma) and in order to cope it will be helpful to talk about what happened, either with one of your colleagues or a supervisor.

Allowing the negative feelings of the incidents to brew, can lead to a build-up that goes beyond your ability to cope (resilience). Debriefing can help alleviate a lot of negative feelings and support you to find ways around the incidents in the future. It can be another way of forming useful strategies for the future. The conversations can be recorded or an informal 5-minute chat. It's entirely up to you. Video reflective practice may also be useful. It's talking into a camera using guided questions about what happened and how you felt. The similarity between the two systems, whether formal or informal is that it is taking time away and getting a breather. Allowing you to have time to vent. We are all only human.

Although, not all debriefing has to be negative, it can be just as beneficial to discuss what went really well. If you have broken through a previously impenetrable barrier, it merits discussion and may be something no-one else has thought of or tried. It's also a great way to boost your self-confidence and be rewarded for all the hard work!