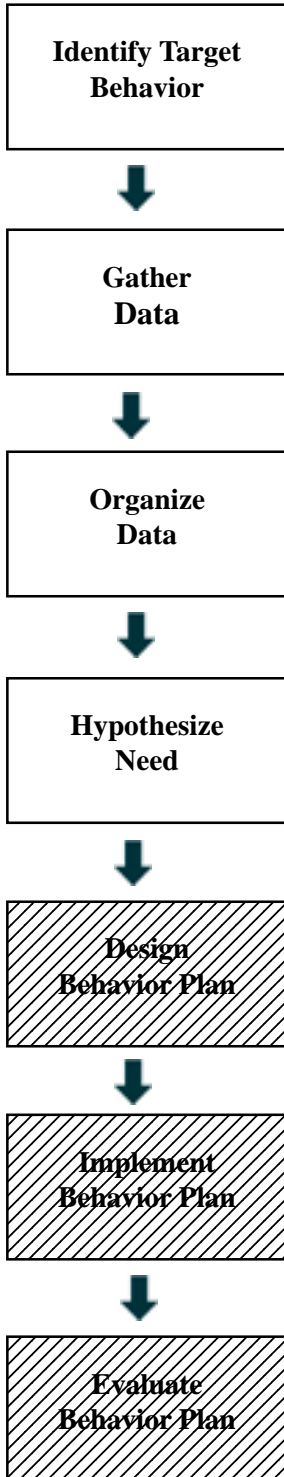


Building a Positive

Positive Behavior Support



When providing positive behavior support to an individual whose behavior is getting in the way of his relationships at home or in the community, the first steps in the process involve :

- ◆ gathering a team,
- ◆ identifying the behavior(s) you want to target,
- ◆ gathering data , and
- ◆ developing a hypothesis about why the behavior is occurring.

In Part I we talked about one strategy--the **Initial Line of Inquiry (ILOI)**--that can be very helpful in assessing or figuring out the function of a challenging behavior and what factors might be helping to trigger that behavior.

The ILOI ends with a hypothesis, or best guess, based on all the information gathered that states, "Given these circumstances _____ (slow triggers), when _____ occurs (fast triggers), the individual does _____ (problem behavior), in order to _____ (perceived function)."

Nearly all behavior, including problem behavior, has a purpose or function. Challenging behaviors often tell us that the child or adult does not have other ways to get his or her needs met. The problem behaviors "work" in some sense, or the individual would stop using them.

MOST COMMON FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOR

To obtain:

- attention
- desired activities/objects
- internal stimulation

To escape/avoid:

- interaction
- tasks or activities
- physical discomfort

Part II looks at the next three steps in the process:

- ✍ **Designing a Behavior Plan,**
- ✍ **Implementing the Plan, and**
- ✍ **Evaluating the Plan.**

DESIGNING A BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN




The first step in putting together a Behavior Support Plan (BSP) is to define behavioral goals for the individual. The team needs to identify alternative, desired behaviors to replace the target problem behaviors. These will include long-term goals (the preferred behavior) and short-term objectives (what would be an acceptable replacement behavior while working toward the preferred behavior).


These replacement behaviors need to serve the same function as the problem behavior and get the individual's desired results at least as:


- √ quickly
- √ often
- √ easily
- √ intensely.

Once the behavior goals are defined, the team must identify strategies that will reduce the likelihood of the problem behavior and increase the likelihood of the desired replacement behavior.

These strategies fall into the four categories that match up to the assessment:

 *Slow trigger* (setting event) strategies

 *Fast trigger* strategies

 Strategies for teaching skills required for the desired *replacement/alternative behaviors*

Behavior Support Plan



DESIGNING A BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLAN

(continued)

- 💡 Consequence strategies (either reward strategies for desired behavior or consequences for undesired behavior).

In some cases, it might be necessary to also develop a *crisis/emergency plan* to address a dangerous or serious situation. Examples might be threat of injury to self or others, destruction of property or a major disturbance of the individual's work or home situation.

IMPLEMENTING THE BSP

The BSP needs to contain clear directions for implementing the strategies including



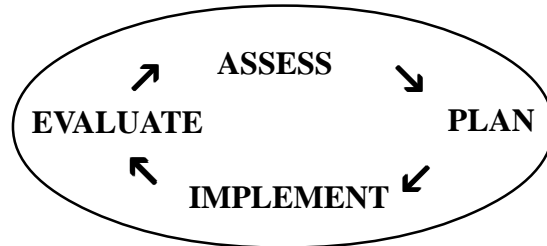
- 👉 when and where the strategies will be carried out and by whom
- 👉 who will have the overall responsibility for making sure the plan is implemented
- 👉 how the team will know if the plan is working
- 👉 a schedule for assessing progress and
- 👉 a plan for training staff (and parents) on strategies, as needed.

EVALUATING THE BSP

The evaluation should monitor how well the plan is being followed and, more importantly, how effective it is in changing the individual's behavior. To be able to measure progress, the BSP team should have some *baseline* data -- a description of what the behavior looked like before any intervention. Then team members must make periodic progress checks to see what impact the plan is having.

If a problem behavior proves resistant to change, it may be necessary to move back into the assessment phase, so that more data can be gathered and a new hypothesis developed. Providing positive behavior support to individuals is an ongoing process that must be flexible enough to meet the changing needs of the individual and his or her environment.

ONGOING PROCESS



BARRIERS TO EFFECTIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLANS

When putting together a BSP it is important to be aware of factors that might keep the plan from being successful:



- ✗ not including all team members (especially the individual and his or her primary support team) in the development, implementation and evaluation of the plan.
- ✗ having too vague a definition of a target behavior
- ✗ incomplete measurement or data collection
- ✗ an inaccurate hypothesis
- ✗ inappropriate interventions
- ✗ a lack of skill or support to carry out the interventions
- ✗ failing to take into account other issues (like environment, culture, mental health, physical health, drug use, community activities, etc.) that are affecting the individual's behavior

Thanks to Dr. Richard Hess and the Windward District School-Based Behavioral Health Team for the information in this article.

Adapted from an article that appeared in the *SPIN News*, February 2002

CHECKLIST FOR DESIGNING SUPPORT PLANS



Antecedent & Setting Event Modifications

- Plan includes antecedent and setting event modifications to prevent problem behavior from occurring.
- Plan includes modifications to make desired behaviors more likely.

Teaching Alternative Skills

- Team considered various approaches to alternative-skill training (i.e. replacement skills, general skills, coping and tolerance skills).
- Replacement skills chosen serve the same function as the problem behavior.
- General skills chosen help the student prevent problem situations from occurring.
- If the plan targets multiple alternative skills, the ones that produce the most immediate effect are taught first.

Consequence Interventions

- Plan includes consequence strategies for (a) strengthening alternative skills, (b) reducing the pay-off for problem behavior, and (c) crisis management, if necessary.
- Consequences for alternative skills produce outcomes that are more effective or efficient than the problem behavior.
- Undesired outcomes for the problem behavior are reduced or eliminated.
- Crisis management plan addresses three phases of a crisis: (a) escalation, (b) eruption, and (c) de-escalation.

Lifestyle Interventions

- Plan includes supports that will improve the student's quality of life.
- Plan includes long-term adaptations that will (a) help the student maintain new skills, and (b) prevent problem behaviors from occurring.

Overall

- Intervention strategies are logically linked to the hypotheses.
- Plan reflects individual and family preferences.
- Intervention strategies are (a) age appropriate, (b) and acceptable for other people without disabilities.
- Plan can be carried out in everyday settings without stigmatizing the individual.
- Supports that the team needs to implement the plan have been identified.