

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORT

Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) are a set of strategies used to increase quality of life and decrease problem behavior by teaching new skills and making changes in a person's environment. These strategies are considered effective when interventions result in increases in an individual's success and personal satisfaction, and the enhancement of positive social interactions across work, academic, recreational, and community settings, and resolves behavioral challenges to improve independence, participation, and overall quality of life of individuals living and learning in the community.

History of Positive Behavior Support

Positive behavior support emerged in response to concerns over the use of aversive and humiliating procedures to manage behavior and advocacy for inclusive home, school, work, recreational, and community settings for individuals with disabilities.

A central concern in PBS is implementation is “real-world” settings in which there are often multiple competing priorities, frequent changes, and complex circumstances.

Behavior and Problem Solving

Behavior may be interpreted as functional (often communicative), purposeful, and meaningful to an individual. In other words, people engage in problem behavior because they either get something or avoid something as a result.

Behavior is related to and affected by its context (i.e., the environment influences behavior). Through environmental modifications, it may be possible to prevent or reduce challenging behavior. Proactive support strategies are focused on reducing the likelihood of problem behavior and allowing an individual to be as independent and successful as possible

Positive behavior support may best be described as an individualized, problem-solving process. The process includes:

1. Identification of broad goals and behaviors of concern
2. Gathering and analyzing of information to identify probable patterns affecting behavior
3. Selecting and delineating strategies based on the patterns and integrating them into a comprehensive plan
4. Implementing the plan across settings and caregivers
5. Monitoring outcomes
 - Although the process is consistent, the outcomes at each step are truly individualized to the person whose behavior is of concern, the caregivers, and the situations in which intervention is necessary.

When confronted with challenging behavior:

- a) Recognize your own unique set of past experiences
- b) Become “comfortable” with challenging behaviors; realize the behavior is not personal
- c) Focus on prevention

Emphasize respect:

- For themselves
- For others
- For property

Quality of Life and Person-Centered Planning

A defining feature of PBS is a focus on improving individuals' quality of life (QoL). QoL is defined as the degree to which individuals experience personal well-being in terms of participation in valued activities and settings, physical health, and overall satisfaction with their surroundings and relationships.

Because QoL is a central focus, the intervention process does not begin with defining target behaviors but, instead, with identifying broad lifestyle goals. This occurs through person-centered planning, a collaborative process for creating a positive vision for the individual; identifying his strengths, challenges, and needs; and establishing action steps for achieving particular goals. This allows an individual brainstorm, strategize, and plan to make that vision a reality. Person-centered planning has been associated with improvements in quality of life such as increased choices, social interaction, and community participation. Target behaviors and specific skills to be taught are then identified because they will allow the individual to make progress toward the QoL outcomes.

Caregiving

Collaborating with caregivers is another foundational characteristic of PBS. Although the PBS process may need to be facilitated by someone with knowledge and experience with behavioral principles, support teams—comprised of parents and other family members, educators, direct service providers, and others involved in the individual's life—participate fully in goal setting, assessment, plan design, implementation, and evaluation of outcomes. Team members are active contributors and decision-makers. The effectiveness of engaging caregivers has been demonstrated in work with families and educators, with studies indicating that caregivers can be engaged as partners in the assessment, be responsible for the implementation of the resulting function-based interventions and produce improvements in an individual's behavior.

Since a primary focus of PBS is quality of life changes, practitioners are encouraged to record broad changes such as the frequency of the individuals' participation in community activities and quality of social interactions.

In conclusion

A comprehensive Positive Behavior Support Plan includes a range of intervention strategies that are designed to prevent the problem behavior while teaching socially appropriate alternative behaviors. The goal is an enhanced quality of life for individuals involved and their support providers in a variety of settings.

- ★★★ Clear routines and expectations
- ★★★ Stop, relax and think
- ★★★ Recognize positive behavior