



**Down's Syndrome
Association**

A Registered Charity No. 1061474

Behaviour Series



Supporting Behaviour Positively

Guidelines for formulation and problem solving workshops to tackle behaviour which is challenging.

A Down's Syndrome Association publication

Our resources and Information Team are here to help

Please see our website for up-to-date information: www.downs-syndrome.org.uk

If you would like to talk about the activities or where to start, then please get in touch with our helpline by calling 0333 1212 300 or by emailing us on info@downs-syndrome.org.uk.

Helpline Monday - Friday 10am-4pm | Telephone: 0333 1212 300

Background/Principles

Based on Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) which is geared towards helping people develop and engage in adaptive, socially desirable behaviours and overcome patterns of destructive and stigmatising responding. The methods to achieving this are designed to: -

- Change undesirable patterns of behaviour
- Respect a person's dignity
- Promote a person's capabilities and opportunities
- Enhance the quality of a person's life

Based on Applied Behavioural Analysis, the workshop aims to consider a **functional analysis** of the behaviour i.e. working out what impact the behaviour is having on and for the person themselves, on other people and the environment. The aim is to understand **why** the behaviour is occurring, **what** it means to the person and **what** they are trying to communicate.

Common functions of challenging behaviour include: -

- Gaining social attention/interaction
 - Getting away from something the persons does not like (escape/avoidance)
 - Getting something they do want
 - Gaining sensory pleasure or stimulation
 - Relieving stress/anxiety
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- The workshop helps to produce a **behaviour support plan**, which will have both preventive and reactive strategies.
 - The workshop is a time efficient way of **bringing together key people and key information** to achieve the best plan.
 - They work best if some preparatory work can be done such as collating behavioural records.
 - They should include family members (siblings and grandparents can often be helpful, as well as parents/carers), school staff (TA's as well as teachers) and anyone else who may be helpful.
 - The workshop should be facilitated by someone with a good working knowledge of PBS, and the ability to elicit and summarise contributions from all the people attending. This often does not include the person whose behaviour is being considered but it could do, if that is meaningful for them.

Agenda for a positive behaviour support workshop

Allow 2-3 hrs minimum for this

1. Positives and Strengths

It is very important to start with a list of strengths. This sets the tone for the workshop, and can reveal things that may be helpful later, when designing the support plan.

List likes and preferences, good relationships, skills the person has, things they have learned to do.

2. Needs

List here the important things in supporting the person e.g.

- *Needs to wear ear defenders in the community*
- *Needs to be given no more than two word instructions*
- *Needs to have Thomas the Tank story every night at bedtime*

These can also include things that the person is struggling with but need to be stated positively e.g.

- *Needs help to stay in the playground at break*
- *Needs to have breaks from task every 15-20 minutes*
- *Needs lots of encouragement and patience to take a shower*

3. Defining the “problem behaviour”

1. List behaviours of concern
2. If necessary, prioritise and pick one to start with
3. For each behaviour, answer these questions: **WHAT? WHERE? WHEN? WHO WITH?**

4.

Ask Why? What does the person seem to be gaining from the behaviour/ what are the results?
When does the behaviour NOT happen?

4. Successful and Unsuccessful Strategies

Share information about how people have responded to the behaviour, now and in the past. What has worked or been helpful? What has not been helpful?

Sometimes it can be a good idea to then brainstorm all possible strategies, even ones that seem silly or unusual, and then discuss to see how feasible or helpful they might be.

5. Formulation, Action Plan and next steps

The Behaviour Support Plan should include a description of the behaviour of concern, information about triggers and the communicative function, and a description of “what to do” in trying to change unwanted behaviour. As well as reactive strategies (how to respond to the behaviour) the plan should include what people will try to do to prevent the need for the person to engage in the behaviour in the first place (proactive strategies).

The Down's Syndrome Association provides information and support on all aspects of living with Down's syndrome.

We also work to champion the rights of people with Down's syndrome, by campaigning for change and challenging discrimination.

A wide range of Down's Syndrome Association publications can be downloaded free of charge from our website.

Contact us

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