Positive Behavioral Support
Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Interventions

What is Positive Behavioral Support?

A collaborative assessment-based process to develop an effective, individualized intervention for students with challenging behavior. Support plans focus on proactive and educative approaches.

For what reasons do we use PBS?
- A pattern of dangerous, destructive, or highly disruptive behavior exists
- Behavioral concerns are resulting in exclusion from integrated activities
- Difficulties persist despite less comprehensive or systematic approaches

Who is involved in the PBS process?

A collaborative team consisting of the individual, their families, direct support providers (teachers, therapists, etc.) administrators and others responsible for implementing the support plan; effective teams include members who can:

> Establish a collective vision regarding the goals of intervention
> Communicate, resolve conflicts, and share in decision-making
> Make a commitment to implement and evaluate interventions
> Effectively access and utilize resources and natural supports

How is PBS implemented?

The behavioral support team, often facilitated by individuals skilled in this process:
1. identifies goals of intervention
2. gathers relevant information
3. develops summary statements
4. generates a behavioral support plan
5. implements strategies and monitors outcomes

Positive Behavioral Support Process (Case Example)

Identify Goals of Intervention: Based on the available information, the team identifies the specific concerns:
- What the child is saying or doing that is problematic (observable behaviors)
- To what extent these behaviors are occurring
- What goals the team hopes to achieve through intervention

> Johnny's disruptive behavior is interfering with the other student's learning. The team is considering alternative placement. His disruptions include slamming materials and making noises (e.g., bird calls). Teacher observations indicate that these behaviors occur 10-15 times per class. Johnny is also failing academically. The team determines that their goals are to:
> - Decrease Johnny's disruptive behavior
> - Increase the assignments he completes
> - Improve relationships with peers
> - Maintain Johnny's current placement

Gather Relevant Information: Members of the behavioral support team gather information through a variety of sources:
- Review of existing records
- Interviews of support providers
- Direct observations

> Members of Johnny's team divide responsibility for information gathering. The school counselor reviews his records (disciplinary referrals, anecdotal records, psychological evaluations). The behavior specialist and assistant principal conduct interviews with Johnny, his family, his teacher, and a cafeteria aide. The teacher tallies incidents of disruptive behavior in the classroom and the behavior specialist does "ABC recording" to identify events or circumstances that may be affecting Johnny's behavior. The team then reviews the information gathered to discern patterns.
> - Develop Summary Statements: The team uses information gathered to create statements that describe relationships between Johnny's behaviors of concern and the environment. The statements include: When, Where and with whom the behavior is least/most likely to occur.
> - What happens following the behavior? Other variables that appear to affect the student's behavior.

> The team develops the following summary statements:
> During paper and pencil activities where students are working independently for longer than 10 minutes, Johnny makes noises and slams materials on his desk; this results in the teacher checking his work and reminding him to be quiet. If Johnny's disruptive behavior continues following redirection (and peers begin to complain), his teacher sends him to time-out, which results in him avoiding the academic assignment. Johnny's behaviors of concern never occur during music or cooperative learning activities.

Generate Behavioral Support Plan: A plan is developed based on the summary statements that best fit within the environments in which it will be used. The plan includes:
- Adjustments to the environment that reduce the likelihood of problems
- Teaching replacement skills and building competencies
- The most natural and least intrusive consequences to promote positive, and deter problem, behavior a crisis intervention plan (if needed)

The team generates a behavioral support plan to include:
- Increased use of cooperative learning strategies in the classroom
- Allowing Johnny to use a keyboard when working on lengthy written assignments
- Teaching Johnny to raise his hand when he needs assistance, is ready to have his work checked, or needs a break.
- Providing attention whenever Johnny raises his hand, even if just to say "I'll be there in a minute." Ignoring all noises, and instructing his peers to do the same.
- Minimizing the use of time-out; instead, allowing Johnny to earn homework passes for assignments completed.
- Encouraging Johnny to join Band and to develop friendships.

Implement and Monitor Outcomes: The team works together to insure that the plan is implemented with consistency, and effective in achieving their goals. The team identifies the training and resources needed, determines who is responsible for monitoring implementation, evaluates outcomes (through continued data collection), and communication periodically, making adjustments in the plan as needed.

Members of Johnny's team divide responsibility for implementing and monitoring the plan. The counselor assists the teacher in altering the activity schedule in her class and observes in the class biweekly to take data and provide extra support. The teacher implements the plan and tallies incidents of disruptive behavior. Johnny's mother provides support at home. Team members then communicate by phone periodically, making changes to the plan as needed. Six weeks later, the team reconvenes to evaluate the outcomes and to celebrate the positive changes.

What resources are available on PBS?

Koegel, L.K., Koegel, R.L., & Dunlap, G. (1996). Positive behavioral support: Including people with difficult behavior in the community. Baltimore, Paul H. Brooks.

O;Neill, R.E., Horner, R.H., Albin, R.W., Sprague, J.R., Storey, K., & Newton, J.S. (1997). Functional assessment and program development for problem behavior: A practical Handbook. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole