

# Supporting Persons who Exhibit Challenging Behaviors in the Workplace: A Seminar for PLB-funded Employment Providers

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# Goals of this training

- Empower attendees to provide leadership in behavior support
- Focus on common sense and easy solutions using non-technical, non-jargon language
- Present behavior support as a critical component of improving employment and productivity
- See problem behavior, regardless of disability, as a part of all of our lives

# Behavior Support

- *People are people, with disabilities or without!*
- *Same types of problems, challenges, and ways to cope with the world.*

# An Exercise

You go to the doctor's office because you are sick.  
You check in at the desk, and now you have  
been waiting for 45 minutes.

- What are the good things to do?
- What are the bad things to do?
- What skills do you need to do the good things?

# Another Exercise

You are about to head to work to start your new job. It is a 15 min drive, and you need to be there in 20 min. You can't find your keys.

- What are the good things to do?
- What are the bad things to do?
- What skills do you need to do the good things?

# Make This Real

- Think of a person with disabilities and problem behaviors whom you support. Go through the list of things that help us manage our behavior. Does the person have these skills and life experiences?

# A Wellness Perspective

Rate yourself 1-3 (1=low)

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Rate a person with problem behaviors whom you support

Contact with nature \_\_\_\_\_  
Experienced creativity \_\_\_\_\_  
Optimism \_\_\_\_\_  
Balanced nutrition \_\_\_\_\_  
Work Satisfaction \_\_\_\_\_  
Goal accomplishment \_\_\_\_\_  
Economic essentials \_\_\_\_\_  
Intellectual stimulation \_\_\_\_\_  
Coping with stress \_\_\_\_\_  
Rest and sleep \_\_\_\_\_  
Spirit awareness \_\_\_\_\_  
Time and space alone \_\_\_\_\_  
Positive self-image \_\_\_\_\_  
Physical prowess \_\_\_\_\_  
Fulfilling relationships \_\_\_\_\_

This list appears with the permission of Dr. JoAnn Cannon. Please order the entire appraisal, "What is Right with Your Life," at 831-582-3671.

# Who is more “well?”

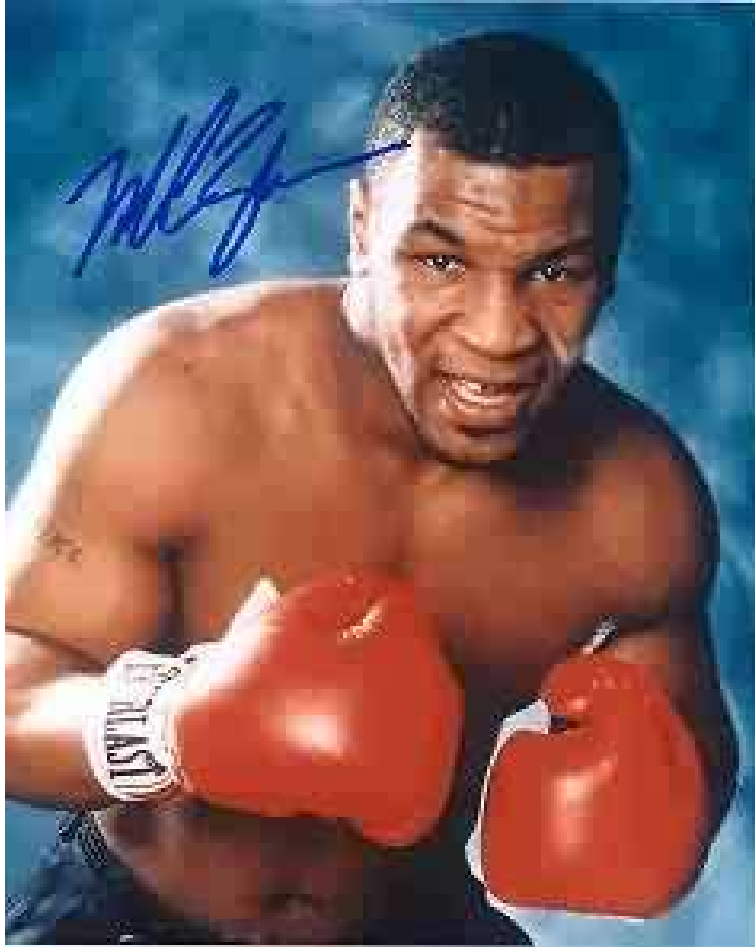
- Lack of wellness is a contributor to problem behaviors
- When you don't know why a person is having problems, look to wellness first
- But wait, we are employment providers – isn't this somebody else's responsibility???



# Exercise on Wellness

- Pick one Wellness Factor. Pick three things you could do to support a person with disabilities in enjoying more from that factor.
  - 1
  - 2
  - 3

**How about learning by example?**









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# Understanding Behavior

- If we don't know why a person is having a problem, we are as likely to make the problem worse as we are to make it better.
- Here's a story...

# Perspectives on Behavior

	Why problems?	What do we do?
Behavioral	Consequences promote problem behavior	Rearrange consequences and teach appropriate behavior
Mental Health	Mental Illness	Therapy Healthy interactions Medication
Person-Centered	Life doesn't match preferences	Determine preferences and support



# Example 1: KiJay

KiJay was a young man who had been exposed to severe violence as a child. His physical injuries from abuse are life long, and he was diagnosed as having Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

During holidays, he would become terrified and ultimately violent if he was approached by people who even remotely resembled his abuser. Of course, this is a problem at work.

## Example 2: Mary

Mary is a woman with Down's Syndrome. She is in her 40s, and her health is failing. She no longer has the energy to do the things she likes to do, Beverly Hills 90210 is no longer on the air, Luke Perry is balding, and Jason Priestly's fan club is no longer answering her letters. Her life just seems to be slipping away. She gets crabby and takes her frustration out on staff who encourage her to get back to work, taking an occasional swing when she has energy and spitting at staff when she does not.

## Example 3: Adrianna

- Adrianna is a woman in her 30s with diagnoses of Generalized Anxiety Disorder and mild mental retardation. She has spent her life chasing people away and sabotaging herself so she does not feel so stressed and unhappy. Also, she does not want people to think she is not smart. She can not hold a job.

# Your Exercise

- Pick the example that is most like people you support, and think about how each of these approaches fits into the story and what kind of interventions you might use.
  - Behavior support
  - Mental health
  - Person centered thinking

# Functional Assessment

- What the behavior is
- Why the behavior occurs
- If the behavior is:

An attempt to communicate, or

The result of a medical condition

# How Do You Complete Functional Assessments?

- Interview the person or care providers
- Observe the person to see what else might be happening
- Use the interview and the observation to make some guesses and then...
- Back up your guesses with behavior data

# Tips on Using FA Interview Forms

- Review the form very thoroughly and know every question.
- Before you use it for a person with problem behaviors, have two people who know the person well answer the questions for which they are **sure** they know the answers.
- Take the partially completed form to the team of people supporting an individual, and have them complete the interview with you facilitating.
- Have the team discuss all of the more difficult questions, and also have the team approve and agree with the items that have already been completed.

# Summarize the FA

- Put together a Summary Statement. Build A Model of the Problem Behavior (Sometimes call the hypothesis statement)

*Model means a way to explain and present information.*

*George Box (a researcher) said, “All models are wrong, but some are useful.”*

*Dan Baker says, “Be sure your FAs are useful!”*



1. Something Sets Me Up . . . *Also called the setting event*  
Examples: boredom, illness, stress, exhaustion...
2. Something Sets Me Off . . . *Also called the trigger*  
Examples: requests, told “no,” rude comment, target for teasing...
3. So I . . . *The behavior*  
Examples: hit, kick, spit, yell, vomit, curse...
4. And I Get/Avoid . . . *The reward*  
Examples: Attention, drama, an object, an activity, fun, relief...

# An Example

Set up	Set off	Behavior	Get/Avoid
<b>Anxiety Disorder</b> History of bus access problems	Worry about another person using a wheelchair being up the street from me while I am waiting for the bus	Yell and scream. When a staff person gets too close I try to poke his eye out	Escape from the stressful situation Vent

# Another Example

Sets up	Set off	Behavior	Get/Avoid
Bored for long periods of time – low activity levels, repetitive job, not much fun interaction	Person comes up to me and says hi	Make a huge scene (insert your favorite scandalous story here)!	Lots of drama and attention Possibly some interactions that are fun to the person with disabilities but not fun to people around him or her

# Your turn!

Set Up	Set Off	Behavior	Get/Avoid

# And Now A Word About Data

- What sources of data do you already have regarding problem behavior?
- What other sources might you need?
- You need to prove if the behavior is improving or getting worse.
- You need to detect any change in the behavior

# The Behavior Support Process

## ■ 1. Is it a problem behavior?

Elderly person refuses to wear hearing aids

Eating candy from the bulk bin at a supermarket

Having 4 drinks at a work party and driving home

Driving 5 miles to avoid a big bridge

Not wearing helmet while biking

Cursing at other drivers

# The Behavior Support Process

2. Start with the completed FA in a graphic format
3. Next, for each item, brainstorm what you can to do either:

Get rid of that

Add something to change that

Cover it up

These efforts can happen before a problem starts (proactive) or after a problem starts (reactive).

## A Completed Example

Something sets me up	Something sets me off	So I	And I Get/Avoid
<p><b>Anxiety Disorder</b>  <b>History of bus access problems</b></p>	<p><b>Worry about another person using a wheelchair up the street</b></p>	<p><b>Yell and scream, eye poke when staff approaches</b></p>	<p><b>Escape from the stressful situation</b>  <b>Vent</b></p>
<p><b>Treat the anxiety disorder. Get a psychiatric evaluation</b>  <b>Build in relaxation times</b></p>	<p><b>Check the bus schedule</b>  <b>Alternate transport if needed</b>  <b>Find out how many wheelchair spots are on the bus</b></p>	<p><b>Teach calming routine.</b>  <b>Validate the concern instead of arguing.</b>  <b>Do not get too close, and use evasion and deflection if aggression occurs</b></p>	<p><b>Teach to stay with the stressful situation</b>  <b>Encourage and support, without telling what to do.</b>  <b>Don't get on the bus in a full-blown rage.</b></p>



# The Behavior Support Bag of Tricks

- Structural Interventions
- Environmental Interventions
- Meeting Personal Needs
- Mental Health
- Instructional Interventions
- Motivation and Consequence Interventions

# Your bag of tricks...: Structural Interventions

- Structural Interventions refer to the things that we do to add structure to an environment. We most often need to add structure when people are confused or unsure about what is going on or what is expected of them. We often think of the need for preference and choice, but we also need to think of the innate human need to clarify and understand the world.

# Examples of Structural Interventions

- Defining jobs
- Defining expectations and role
- Adding reminders of expectations or instructions
- Schedules
- Information regarding who is on staff and who is on what shift
- Teaching limits
- Teaching when things are ok versus not ok
- Teaching routines
- Add predictability

# Your bag of tricks...: Environmental Interventions

- Changing features of the environment that cause a person problems, such as:
  - Remove the thing that is bothering the person
  - Change jobs
  - Change housing situations
  - Change features of the work or home, such as noise or lighting
  - Listen to preferences
  - Distract a person when a trigger occurs
  - Keep people involved and occupied

# Your bag of tricks...: Meeting personal needs

- Unmet needs are a significant source of unhappiness, and therefore a significant source of problem behaviors. Most of us do a pretty good job of meeting our own needs. But when a person relies on others to help in daily life, needs can get forgotten quickly by the care provider. This is where wellness comes back to us.

# Examples of Interventions

- Lifestyle changes
- Increasing hobbies
- Listening to preferences
- Address wellness issues
- Consider a person's spirituality
- David Pitonyak says that loneliness is the greatest disability
- Romance? A person with disabilities? Of course!

# How to build a friendship network

- Introduce people to other who are near them, whether in work or in neighborhoods
- Don't set limits on who can be friends. People with and without disabilities can be valuable in social lives
- Give coworkers and neighbors “permission” to visit – don't create invisible walls around a person
- Always model respect and politeness in your supportive interactions in the community

# Your bag of tricks...: Mental Health

- Medication. If a person has a psychiatric illness, medication is often the treatment of choice.
- Counseling. Counseling can be adapted to people with the range of abilities, and may take the form of individual or group therapy.
- Desensitization. Get a person used to the things that bother him or her slowly.
- Relaxation. Relaxation is a need for all of us. Many people, with or without disabilities, have a tough time relaxing. Here are some strategies that work: Breathing meditation, Visual meditation, Long walks when you teach breathing meditation during walking time, Aquatics for people with physical disabilities



# And more Mental Health

- Listening to music
- If person “stims,” use that as a planned relaxation strategy
- Journaling. Journaling means keeping a journal of some sort. Journaling is recommended very often with counseling for persons without disabilities. Journaling helps a person keep the sense of who s/he is among the hustle and bustle of daily life. If a person can not write, use other forms of pictorial communication, such as photos or icons.

# Your bag of tricks...: Instructional Interventions

- Teach new communication skills
- Teach hobbies
- Teach job skills
- Teach routines to follow
- Use improved instructional strategies
- Use different modes of instruction (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)
- Teach people to make choices. Choice making can be taught like any other skills.

# Your bag of tricks...: Motivation and Consequence Interventions

- **Motivation Interventions** help build motivation to do things. They are often followed by consequence interventions.
  - Goal setting
  - Planning for big life goals
  - Giving frequent feedback
  - Making things more fun to do
  - Get allies in creating interest in activities

# Your bag of tricks...: Reactive Interventions

- De-escalation
- Calming
- Relaxation
- Reduce demands
- Increase rewards
- Give the person time or space alone