

SUPPORT PLANNING PROCESS

POSITIVE (Behavior) SUPPORT

OVERVIEW/DEFINITIONS:

All individuals, whether they exhibit challenging behaviors or simply require more supports than others, deserve to be treated with the same dignity and respect as all other members of the community. They have the right to supports that enhance the quality of their life. These supports must use strategies that are acceptable in typical community life and are not painful or punitive to the individual. In this manual we have chosen to emphasize the focus of positive supports by putting the term behavior in parentheses. This approach is commonly referred to as positive behavior supports (PBS) but this is often misunderstood as a way to address challenging behaviors rather than an approach that should be characteristic of supports for all persons.

Positive (behavior) support is essentially a communication-based philosophy and approach to teaching new behaviors or skills and decreasing challenging behaviors in all persons. It is an outgrowth of research done in applied behavior analysis and other fields, which has shown that all behaviors can be considered as communication in the sense of achieving an outcome for the person. This outcome may be understood and known by the person or not understood and not purposefully achieved. Understanding that the behaviors we see in ourselves and others achieves an outcome or purpose helps us to understand the behavior and to help to increase it or decrease it using strategies that are life enhancing or positive, rather than punishment based or restrictive.

PBS has four main components:

- 1) An information gathering process to determine possible outcomes achieved by the behavior, and barriers to the quality of life of the individual.
- 2) A focus on lifestyle enhancement (person-centered thinking and planning process)
- 3) Development of comprehensive intervention (proactive / preventative strategies, intensive strategies, crisis intervention)
- 4) A team approach which includes the individual, and all important people involved with the individual, including family, community members and paid service providers in a collaborative, supportive, problem solving, and common goal achieving process.

The basic premise of Positive (Behavior) Support is:

- All behavior is purposeful – it achieves something, avoids something or communicates something.
- Often teaching alternative skills or behaviors to achieve the outcomes is what is needed as the person is doing what achieves the outcome in the easiest and most reliable manner for them.
- People respond better to positive, life enhancing encouragement than to restrictive, punishment based approaches.

The goal of positive behavior support is to teach skills, increase independence and encourage respected roles and thereby enhancing the individual's inclusion in the community.

In providing positive behavior support, we do not use aversive interventions or punishments or in other ways infringe upon people's rights. Instead, non-aversive strategies are designed that lead to lasting generalized changes in behavior, rather than short-term "fixes".

To prevent aggressive or challenging behaviors we use proactive strategies such as:

- Teaching people to behave in more socially acceptable and successful ways.
- Rewarding other desirable behavior which helps them reach their goals.
- Minimizing attention and reactions to problematic behaviors.
- Identifying things the person finds rewarding and using those things to consistently reinforce desirable behaviors.
- Providing increased opportunities for choice-making, including the response of declining or saying "no".
- Structuring the environment in such a way that the person is more likely to experience good outcomes.
- Communicating with the person and the support team so that all involved can use the same strategies consistently and correctly.

Instead of punitive measures, we use proactive, preventative strategies such as:

- Ensuring the person has a meaningful life, nurturing relationships, self-determination, support to continuously learn skills and be independent as possible.
- Active listening
- De-escalation of behaviors using techniques taught in Mandt or CPI training classes
- Skilled support persons assisting (e.g. Support persons are competent in use of skills such as Tools of Choice: stay-close hot, redirect, reinforce and pivot).

Intervention strategies such as:

- Environmental changes
- Teaching alternative skills
- Training people who will be implementing the plan.

SUPPORT COORDINATOR ROLES/RESPONSIBILITIES:

Support Coordinators will approach the coordination of supports for an individual with a positive, person centered focus and will facilitate the individual's support team to understand and utilize this approach when supporting all persons.

Support Coordinators will work with families, the individual and contracted providers to develop and maintain adequate and appropriate methods of observation and evaluation of the plan and strategies to ensure objectives are being met.

Support Planning Process

Positive Behavior Supports

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Support coordinators will insure a plan for restrictive supports, is limited to health and safety reasons, and a functional plan is in place to remove restrictions and restore rights when such restrictions are no longer necessary.

Support coordinators will understand the process for securing additional supports and services including behavior analysis, counseling, consultation with other professionals to develop a comprehensive individual support plan with positive, person centered strategies.

Knowledge of behavior support services that can be authorized through each of the [Missouri Medicaid Waivers](#). Additional information regarding Behavior services can be found at [Behavior Services](#) on the DD website.