



# POSITIVE BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT

## RESOURCE 1

WHAT IS POSITIVE BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT?



The Challenging  
Behaviour Foundation

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## Further information

To see all resources in this pack and additional information from The PBS Academy, The Challenging Behaviour Foundation and the Early Intervention Project go to:

[www.pbsacademy.org.uk](http://www.pbsacademy.org.uk)

[www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk)

[www.pavingtheway.works](http://www.pavingtheway.works)

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<sup>1</sup> The PBS Coalition laid the foundation for the establishment of the PBS Academy and all materials are now published under the PBS Academy name.

## What is Positive Behavioural Support?

Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)<sup>2</sup> is an effective and ethical way of supporting people with learning disabilities who are at risk of behaviour that challenges. PBS is a framework for developing an understanding of behaviour that challenges rather than a single therapeutic approach, treatment or philosophy. It is based on an assessment of the broad social, physical and individual context in which the behaviour occurs, and uses this information to develop interventions.

The overall goal of PBS is to improve the person's quality of life and of those around them, thus reducing the likelihood of challenging behaviour occurring in the first place.

When a person receives PBS it is unlikely to come from just one individual, one professional group or one service. Families, carers, professionals, service providers and commissioners need to work together and each play their part in supporting that person.

The PBS framework is made up of ten core elements each of which should be included and visible if a service is providing PBS. The elements relate to the values that underpin PBS, the theory and evidence base that supports PBS interventions, and the process, i.e. the methods used to implement PBS. (See *Box 1 on page 4*).

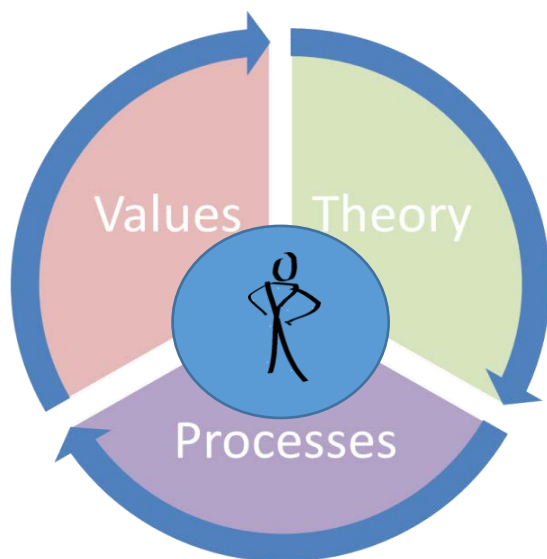
PBS and/or its components have been recommended in a number of policy documents and professional guidelines<sup>3</sup> including the NICE guidelines for Challenging Behaviour; Ensuring Quality Services; Positive and Proactive Care: Reducing the need for Restrictive Interventions; A Positive and Proactive Workforce; and Supporting Staff who work with People who Challenge Services.

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<sup>2</sup> Positive Behavioural Support is sometimes referred to as Positive Behaviour Support. The PBS Academy uses Positive Behavioural Support to ensure that the emphasis is not on specific behaviours but on a behavioural approach to understanding and working with challenging behaviour.

<sup>3</sup> Full references are provided at the end.

**Box 1: The Core Elements of PBS (Gore et al., 2013)**



Each of the 10 elements described opposite must be included and visible in any service delivering PBS; and each must have as their central focus, the person being supported and their family.

**Values**

1. The core aim of PBS is to improve the quality of life of the person and those around them by preventing and reducing challenging behaviour.
2. It works by developing and building skills of the person and of those who support them rather than using aversive (i.e. unpleasant) or restrictive (i.e. limits the person's movement or activities) interventions
3. Practitioners work in partnership with the person and all of those who are important to them including their family and friends, carers, and other professionals and actively include them in assessments, defining targets, implementing interventions, and reviews

**Theory**

4. All behaviour, including challenging behaviour, happens for a reason - understanding what this is (practitioners call it the *function* of the behaviour) can suggest how to make sure the person has access to the things they need in other ways (e.g. by changing the environment, teaching them new skills etc.)
5. PBS uses the principles and procedures from behaviour analysis to assess and support skills teaching and behaviour change
6. Other, complementary evidence-based approaches may be included in PBS plans (e.g. Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Parent training for children who display challenging behaviour, early intervention for children 3-5 with emerging challenging behaviour)

**Processes**

7. PBS bases decisions on information gathered about a person's skills, behaviour, and needs
8. A functional assessment helps to identify the reasons (*function*) for a person's behaviour and is used to create a clear and structured plan of action
9. A PBS plan will include proactive strategies to prevent challenging behaviour from happening, strategies to teach new skills to make the challenging behaviour less likely and reactive strategies that minimise restriction if it does occur
10. PBS is not a quick fix: the aim is to actively support people over the long-term and to monitor and maintain their quality of life

## Other resources to help you understand more about PBS

The following resources are available free of charge:

**A short animation:** The British Institute of learning Disabilities (BILD) have produced a six minute animation which summarises PBS. You can access it at: [www.bild.org.uk/capbs/animation](http://www.bild.org.uk/capbs/animation). If you are unable to view the animation online you can email BILD to ask them to send you a copy: [capbs@bild.org.uk](mailto:capbs@bild.org.uk)

**Information sheets:** The Challenging Behaviour Foundation provides information and support for family carers of people with severe learning disabilities and behaviours described as challenging. The information sheet about Positive Behaviour Support planning provides information on managing challenging behaviour. It explains what a positive behaviour support plan is, who needs one and why. It should be read alongside the information sheets “Understanding challenging behaviour” and “Finding the causes of challenging behaviour”. Information sheets can be found at: <http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/information/information-sheets-and-dvds/understanding-behaviour.html> or can be ordered free of charge by emailing [info@theCBF.org.uk](mailto:info@theCBF.org.uk)

**DVD for family carers:** “Challenging Behaviour: Supporting Change”. This DVD is free to family/unpaid carers in the UK. To order it you can download the Challenging Behaviour Foundation resource order form from: <http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/information/resource-order-form.html> or email [info@theCBF.org.uk](mailto:info@theCBF.org.uk)

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