



# Student Resource Guide

## 10. Positive Behavior Support, Part 2



# Student Resource Guide: SESSION 10

## Positive Behavior Support, Part 2

### OUTCOMES

When you finish this session, you will be able to:

- Identify the way(s) the individual learns best.
- Describe the reasons why challenging behaviors happen.
- Identify replacement behaviors and skills.
- Identify meaningful reinforcement for desired behaviors.
- Describe ways you can change how you support the individual to lessen the likelihood of challenging behavior.

### KEY WORDS

Key Word	Meaning	In My Own Words
<b>Behavior Support Plan</b>	Plan that determines a specific course of action to take when a challenging behavior occurs.	
<b>Charting Progress</b>	Recording data on how an individual is doing on a specific task or activity.	
<b>Meaningful Reinforcement</b>	Any item, event, or activity that follows a desired behavior and makes that behavior more likely to occur again.	
<b>Reinforcers</b>	Rewards given after the successful performance of a desired behavior.	
<b>Replacement Behavior</b>	Skill or behavior to use in place of the challenging behavior, which serves the same function as the challenging behavior.	

## A C T I V I T Y

### What Do You Want to Know?

**Directions:** *Think about the topic of this training session. Answer the first two questions in the space provided below. You will come back to this page at the end of the session to answer the last question.*

What do you **already know** about positive behavior support?

What do you **want to know** about positive behavior support?

To be answered at the end of the session, during review:  
What **have you learned** about positive behavior support?

## Opening Scenario

*Mary has been working with Suzy over the last week. She has discussed her behavior with the other DSPs at the home and she has talked to Martha, the administrator. Together, with the person-centered planning team, they have completed the tasks from the last session. These include defining the behavior, quality of life concerns, A-B-C Chart, and a scatter plot. They have a lot of information about Suzy's challenging behaviors but Mary is unsure of what to do with it.*

## Supporting an Individual with Challenging Behaviors

In the previous session, we discussed developing a **Behavior Support Plan** as a means of supporting an individual with challenging behavior. As you will recall, a **Behavior Support Plan** is a plan that determines a specific course of action to take when a challenging behavior occurs. DSPs who support an individual with challenging behavior should be included as part of the team that is analyzing the behavior and developing and implementing the plan. This is important because DSPs often have the most information and the most frequent contact with the individual. You may be asked to assist the team in several ways:

- Collect information on the daily activities of the individual (individual's daily schedule, individual profile).
- Collect information on the specifics of the challenging behaviors such as how often it occurs, under what circumstances, etc. (Scatter Plot and A-B-C Data Sheet).
- Develop suggestions for replacement behaviors and activities.
- Implement the plan.
- Collect data on how the plan is working.
- Help inform the team on the success of the strategies in the plan.

We also discussed developing a Behavior Support Plan, which involves a team effort and includes the following steps:

1. **Identify "Quality of Life"** areas that may be lacking and therefore contributing to behavior challenges.
2. Identify and **define the challenging behavior(s)** by precisely defining exactly what the person does.
3. **Identify the antecedents** (behavioral triggers and other factors) that are present immediately before the challenging behavior occurs).
4. **Identify other events** including medical variables, activity, environment, people present, time of day, etc., that may be influencing behavior.
5. **Identify the consequences** that happen after the behavior that may be reinforcing (maintaining) the challenging behavior.
6. **Identify "learning characteristics"** of the individual so you know how the individual learns best.
7. Use the individual learning characteristics to **teach to the individual's strengths**.
8. **Identify possible reasons for the challenging behavior**. What is the individual getting or avoiding through their behavior?

## Supporting an Individual with Challenging Behaviors (cont.)

9. **Identify replacement behaviors** or skills that:

- a. Allow the individual to get their needs met in a more socially appropriate way
- b. Will “work” just as well as the challenging behavior

We then went into greater detail about the first five steps and learned how to

use an A-B-C data sheet. This process helps to identify what is happening before the challenging behavior and that may be “triggering” the behavior and/or what happens after the behavior, which may reinforce the behavior.

This session will focus on the remaining four steps and will allow for practice of these new skills.

## Step 6: Identifying Learning Characteristics

**Step 6. Identify “learning characteristics”** of the individual so you know how the individual learns best when teaching new skills and replacement behaviors. You must match your teaching style to the individual’s learning style.

Think about how you learn best. As you sit through these classes, what do you find is the best teaching style for you?

Types of learning styles:

- **Auditory learner:** Learns best through what is heard. Do you find that you can learn best by listening to someone tell you about something? When you ask for directions, do you like the person to tell you how to get there?
- **Visual learner:** Learns best through what is seen. Do you need to see things in order to learn? Do you find the overheads or note pages in your notebook help you? Do you prefer someone to draw you a map instead of telling you how to get to a new location?

- **Kinesthetic-motor learner:** Learns best by doing. Do you like activities to “try” out a new skill? Do you need someone to take you to a new location before you can learn how to get there?

It is common to have strengths in more than one area; for example, individuals with autism tend to be better “visual-motor” learners who learn best by both seeing and doing. You may have noticed that very few of you raised your hands when asked if you were an auditory learner. That is because most people are not auditory learners. Yet, how do you give instructions to the individuals you support? You mostly tend to give information verbally when that may not be the best way for them to learn new information.

Think back to Step 2, getting to know the individual. As you were creating his or her Profile, you identified the individual’s likes and strengths. Identifying the individual’s strengths should give you an idea of his or her preferred style of learning. You can also refer to the IPP for a description of the individual’s learning styles.

## Step 7: Teaching to the Individual’s Strengths

**Step 7. Use the individual learning characteristics to teach to the individual’s strengths.** If an individual learns best by what he or she sees, then you should maximize the use of gestures, modeling, and visual cues such as pictures

and objects. If an individual learns best by actually “doing” an activity, you should promote opportunities for participation in healthy routines to help the individual acquire new skills and behaviors to replace the challenging routines and behaviors.

## Step 7: Teaching to the Individual's Strengths (cont.)

To ensure maximum learning, match your teaching style to the person's learning style. The best teaching strategy is to use *all* learning modalities when teaching by:

- Saying
- Showing and modeling with visual cues and gestures
- Actually *doing*; that is, role playing and practicing the skill in the actual setting where you want the individual to display that skill or behavior

## Step 8: Identifying Possible Reasons for Challenging Behavior

**Step 8. Identify possible reasons for the challenging behavior.** What is the individual getting or avoiding through his or her behavior? There are a variety of assessment tools to help you develop a hypothesis or “best guess” as to *why* the behavior is happening and *what* the behavior is saying. Is the behavior related to hunger or medical issues such as pain, allergies. Is the behavior a way to get, avoid, or escape something?

### Behavior Motivations

We all have basic needs. Behaviors are strategies that we use to communicate our wants, needs, and feelings and to get our needs met. What motivates us to behave in certain ways? Individuals exhibit behavior for a multitude of reasons.

### Sensory

These are internal reasons for a behavior such as personal enjoyment; stimulation and pleasure, or even pain; medical issues; mental illness; or neurological issues such as seizures.

#### **Examples:**

Drinking coffee, eating chocolate, bungee jumping, snow boarding, doing something nice for someone, the feeling you get when you teach someone a new skill, and so on. For individuals with developmental disabilities, these include behaviors that are often called “self stimulatory;” for example, rocking.

### Avoidance

Some behaviors help a person to escape or avoid things they don't like such as certain activities, jobs, people, or places.

#### **Examples:**

Procrastinating (putting things off), daydreaming during this class, and so on. In extreme cases, tantruming or “acting out” are examples of escape behavior.

### Attention

Sometimes individuals engage in behaviors to be noticed or to get attention from either one or more specific individuals, or from a whole group of people who are around to give attention.

#### **Examples:**

Starting a conversation, whining, pouting, interrupting, and so on.

### Tangible Consequences

Individuals use behaviors for tangible reasons to “get” something they desire such as a favorite, object, food, token, money, a paycheck, or a favorite activity or game.

#### **Example:**

Working at your jobs is an appropriate behavior that we use to earn a paycheck.

## Step 8: Identifying Possible Reasons for Challenging Behavior (cont.)

It is important to know that even extremely inappropriate and problem behaviors are serving a *need* for the person, and that need is *normal* and valid, even if the behavior is not. Your challenge as a DSP is to teach the individuals you support that to get their needs met they must use behaviors that are socially acceptable.

There is no difference in the needs we all have, but there is a difference in the strategies or the behaviors we use to get our needs met. Some individuals you support may use strategies that are socially inappropriate for a situation, or exhibit behavior that may not be right for the time and place.

### A C T I V I T Y

#### Behavior Motivations

**Directions:** *Please list some behaviors that you use to get your needs met in each of the following areas.*

*Sensory: What behaviors do you engage in that allow you to feel good or avoid feeling bad?*

*Avoidance: What do you do to avoid activities you do not enjoy?*

*Attention: What do you do when you want attention from someone?*

*Tangible Consequences: What do you do to get something you want (tangible consequence)?*

## Step 8: Identifying Possible Reasons for Challenging Behavior (cont.)

DSPs must often teach individuals new behavioral strategies that are more socially appropriate for each situation in order to get their needs met.

It is a myth that all individuals with challenging behavior are just trying to get attention. In fact, the same behavior may be used in several different ways. Aggression can be used to get attention

one time and on a different occasion to escape something a person doesn't like.

Research shows that individuals engage in challenging behavior to get attention only about 25% of the time.

## Step 9: Identify Replacement Behaviors

**Step 9.** Identify Replacement Behaviors or skills that:

- Allow the individual to get their needs met in a more socially appropriate way; and
- Work just as well as the challenging behavior.

You have thought about how to identify behaviors and figured out when and where it happens, and under what circumstances it occurs most frequently. You have also looked at the individual's daily activities and overall quality of life, but what do you do now? It is now time to look at teaching an alternative to the challenging behavior—a replacement behavior.

You should focus your time on teaching a new or replacement behavior or skill instead of trying to get rid of the challenging behaviors. When you try to get rid of challenging behaviors without addressing what need that behavior is serving, the individual will usually come up with a new behavior to take its place and often the new behavior is just as bad or worse than the old one. When you teach individuals replacement skills that are more socially appropriate and that still work to get their needs met, the need to use the old challenging behavior no longer exists.

Replacement skills can include:

- Communication
- Social skills
- Assertiveness skills
- Hobbies, recreation, and leisure skills
- Coping strategies and problem solving skills
- Self-care, domestic, and community skills
- Teaching new productive routines to replace routines that are harmful
- Relaxation skills

Your goal is to focus on teaching new skills, especially skills that serve the same purpose as the challenging behavior. When identifying replacement behaviors and skills, it is helpful to work as a team with other people who know the individual well. During this phase, it is also helpful to include the individual, when possible, in the development of the strategies. The more ideas you have, the more likely it is that one will be successful. Remember, you don't want to get rid of challenging behavior without teaching something more appropriate to replace it.

## Step 9: Identifying Replacement Behaviors (cont.)

The replacement behavior must:

- Serve the same purpose as the challenging behavior.
- Include a payoff (reinforcement) as soon or sooner than the challenging behavior.
- Get as much or more payoff (reinforcement) than the original challenging behavior.
- Be just as easy or easier to do than the challenging behavior.

When reviewing the data recorded on an individual's A-B-C chart, you should go through four steps when determining possible replacement behaviors:

1. Identify possible consequences that may be reinforcing (or maintaining) the behavior.
2. Figure out what the individual is either getting or avoiding through his or her behavior.
3. Identify some replacement behaviors or skills that the individual can use in future situations to serve the same purpose.
4. Describe how you would plan to reinforce this new skill.

To provide more choice-making opportunities, consider a variety of areas including choice in schedule, activities, and menus. Also look at how to expose individuals to a variety of new activities, places, events, hobbies, and people so that they have a wider array of opportunities to choose from.

Often, some of the things you say or do can lead to behavioral issues. By changing some of the ways in which we support the person (by removing things that are triggers) can help the person to improve his or her behavior.

## ACTIVITY

### Identifying Positive Replacement Behaviors and Skills

**Directions:** *Based on the following information, think of as many positive replacement behaviors and skills as you can for each situation. Be sure to list replacement behaviors that serve the same purpose as the challenging behavior!*

1. *Tanya has a history of hitting and scratching her stomach. She has no verbal language. From staff and family observations and A-B-C data, you have discovered that she hits and scratches her stomach when she is experiencing menstrual pain. When she hits and scratches her stomach, staff now knows that Tanya has a prescription in her file for Advil or Motrin as needed.*

**What could you teach Tanya to do instead of hitting or scratching her stomach to indicate that she is in pain and needs medication?**

2. *Leon has a habit of hitting or slapping people on the back. The A-B-C data shows that when people turn around after they are hit, Leon smiles and says, "Hi!" Based on the data, Leon's support team believes that he hits and slaps people on the back to start a conversation.*

**What are some replacement skills you could teach Leon that would be more positive ways to start a conversation?**

3. *Robert loves to talk to people and has great conversation skills. He has 11 other housemates but likes to talk to staff. The challenge is that Robert wants to talk to the staff even when they are helping others. When staff members tell Robert that they can't talk with him, Robert becomes upset and often runs away from the house and staff have to chase him. The A-B-C data shows that when Robert goes out in public places, he rarely gets upset. The home where Robert lives takes him out in the community once each week. Based on this information, Robert's team has realized that he needs more opportunities to go out into the community and/or to talk to people.*

**What ideas can you think of that will help Robert to have more opportunities to go out into the community and/or talk with people?**

## Step 9: Identifying Replacement Behaviors (cont.)

### Meaningful Reinforcements

Reinforcement includes any item, event, or activity that follows a behavior and makes that behavior more likely to occur again in the future. **Meaningful reinforcement** is any item, event, or activity that follows a behavior and makes that behavior more likely to occur again.

A **reinforcer** is something that a person seeks to gain or get more of. This can include certain objects, foods, places, people, and activities. When developing reinforcement plans, remember that:

### Different individuals have different reinforcers!

When behaviors and skills are not improving over time, it is often because the reinforcement plan is not reinforcing to the person. Reinforcers are *not the same for everyone!* Even common reinforcers such as praise and cookies are not enjoyable to everyone. Remember, reinforcers have to be varied—too much of a good thing is no longer a reinforcer.

Everyone needs and enjoys opportunities to receive reinforcement. It is important for everyone to have and do things that are enjoyable on a daily basis.

When an individual does not have a rich life full of choices and things to enjoy, his or her behaviors, attitudes, and motivation may become challenging.

When developing reinforcement plans, two common mistakes are:

1. Not providing reinforcers that are meaningful to the person.
2. The criteria, or goal, for the person to earn the reinforcement is too hard. (This usually means that the individual is not earning the reinforcement often enough.)

To make reinforcement plans meaningful:

- Use reinforcers that are based on the individual's likes and preferences and vary the reinforcers.
- Set goals that allow the individual daily opportunities to earn and receive reinforcement.

### Developing Support Strategies

Here are more details regarding the ideas in the previous list of strategies.

Things you can change at each step of the behavior:

#### Antecedent:

1. **Match your teaching style to the individual's learning style** to ensure that the individual's learning is maximized. The best teaching strategy is to use *all* learning modalities when teaching:
  - Saying
  - Showing and modeling with visual cues and gestures
  - Actually *doing*; that is, role playing and practicing the skill in the actual setting where you want the person to display that skill or behavior
2. **Provide more choice-making opportunities**; that is, consider a variety of areas including choice in schedule, activities, and menus. Also look at how to expose the individual to a variety of *new* activities, places, events, hobbies, and people so that he or she has a wider array of opportunities to choose from.
3. Often, some of the things that you say or do can lead to behavioral issues. These are called "triggers." By changing some of the ways in which you support the person (by *removing things that are triggers*) can help the individual to improve his or her behavior.

**A C T I V I T Y****What About Your Reinforcers?**

1. *List some reinforcers that you enjoy (include things, activities, foods, music, people, and so on).*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. *List some reinforcers that you need to have everyday.*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. *How would you feel if someone told you that you couldn't have those reinforcers today?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. *You had a bad day; (for example, you made a big mistake, such as saying or doing something truly inappropriate and you regret the action). What do you do? Circle the answer that best fits you.*
  - a. *You punish yourself by not doing anything you enjoy for the rest of the day.*
  - b. *You feel bad about it and go out and do something you enjoy to help you feel better (like shopping, going out to dinner, putting your favorite CD on, meeting with a friend).*
  - c. *Something else. Please share:*

One key concept in Positive Behavior Support is to teach a positive replacement behavior or skill as an alternative to a challenging behavior. Once you understand the “function” or meaning of the behavior, you can teach the person a more appropriate way to meet their needs.

## Developing Support Strategies

<b>ANTECEDENT</b> <i>What happened  <b>BEFORE</b>  the Behavior</i>	<b>BEHAVIOR</b> <i>What happened  <b>DURING</b>  the Behavior</i>	<b>CONSEQUENCE</b> <i>What happened  <b>AFTER</b>  the Behavior</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Use teaching strategies that match the individual's learning style.</i></li> <li>• <i>Provide more choice in all areas of life.</i></li> <li>• <i>Remove or change some of the behavior "triggers."</i></li> <li>• <i>Make life more predictable for the individual.</i></li> <li>• <i>Use calendars and pictures.</i></li> <li>• <i>Rehearse what you will do before you do it.</i></li> <li>• <i>Help the individual develop routines they enjoy.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Teach new, socially acceptable behaviors and skills to replace challenging behaviors.</i></li> <li>• <i>Teach a more appropriate way to get his or her needs met.</i></li> <li>• <i>Work closely with doctors to monitor medications, medical issues, and possible side effects.</i></li> <li>• <i>Increase and reinforce appropriate skills that the person already has.</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Focus on what the individual is doing well, instead of what they are not doing well.</i></li> <li>• <i>Have a plan to reinforce replacement skills and positive behaviors.</i></li> <li>• <i>Reward and celebrate small successes! Don't demand perfection.</i></li> <li>• <i>Ignore the challenging behavior, not the individual.</i></li> </ul>

## Developing Support Strategies (cont.)

4. **Make life more predictable for the individual.** Some individuals with disabilities become upset with things they are not used to or not expecting. Helping them to understand when things are going to happen and what they can do to prepare can help reduce the stress of the unknown.
5. **Use calendars and picture schedules.** Calendars, written notes, schedules, and information are fairly simple ways to provide visual information to individuals who need assistance understanding information. These are normal strategies that we use to help keep ourselves organized. You can also use pictures and symbols for individuals who cannot read.
6. **Rehearse what you will do before you do it!** Verbally rehearse what you will do, when you will be doing it, how long the activity will last, and other expectations regarding behavior. This is an excellent way to help individuals to understand what is expected from them and what they can expect from an event or activity. This helps people feel more in control of what is happening.
7. **Help individuals develop routines they enjoy.** It is extremely important to assist individuals in developing routines they are comfortable with and to respect routines that are important to them. Routines help provide individuals with structure and a sense of control in their lives.

Now let's look at some strategies that you can use when challenging behaviors happen.

### Behavior:

1. Try to **teach new socially appropriate behaviors and skills** to *replace* challenging behaviors. Teach the individual a more appropriate way to get his or her needs met.
2. When individuals display challenging behaviors, you should try to teach them a new, socially appropriate behavior or skill that meets their need. You need to **identify a new behavior or skill that meets the same need** (serves the same function) as the challenging behavior. You did this exercise earlier and we will go over more samples of replacement behaviors and skills later in this session.
3. **Work closely with physicians to monitor medications, medical issues, and possible side effects.** The individual's challenging behavior may be the expression of a symptom of illness, pain, or discomfort.
4. It is also important to **reinforce and provide positive feedback for appropriate behavior and skills.** This will strengthen the appropriate behavior and motivate the person to do it again. Provide positive feedback and reinforcement when an individual is acting appropriately or the appropriate behaviors may stop!  
Now let's look at some strategies you can use after the behavior occurs.

## Developing Support Strategies (cont.)

### Consequences:

1. **Focus on what the person is doing correctly** instead of what they are doing wrong. In general, you will find that the behavior you focus on and pay attention to is the behavior that increases over time. All too often your focus is on problem behaviors. You should try to make sure that you pay more attention to the behaviors you want to see more of positive instead of paying more attention to the behaviors you don't want to see.
2. Have a **plan to reinforce replacement skills and positive behaviors**. Make sure you have a plan to reinforce and provide positive feedback and some type of “pay-off” for replacement behaviors. This is especially important when an individual is just learning a new skill or replacement behavior. Provide a higher level of reinforcement at first to “pay off” the behavior when it happens. Over time, as the individual learns the skill, your plan should be to fade the reinforcement.
3. **Reward and celebrate small successes!** Don't demand perfection. Nobody is perfect. Even when behaviors are improving and individuals are making progress, there will still be mistakes and bad days. It is important to celebrate the small successes; this feels great for all of us. If you demand giant steps or perfection, you may never have anything to celebrate!
4. **Ignore the behavior, *not the person***. It is good practice to ignore challenging behavior and try to focus on the positive things the person is doing. For example, when someone is constantly asking the same question, you can redirect an inappropriate topic to one that is more relevant or appropriate. This allows a

conversation to continue. Generally, if we try to completely ignore the person (instead of just the behavior), the behavior may get worse and possibly escalate into a more dangerous behavior.

### Changing How You Support Individuals

Now let's look at some things you can change about how you support individuals. These strategies can become a part of a Behavior Support Plan. Let's look at some strategies you can use before the behavior happens.

- Use teaching strategies that match the individual's learning style to maximize his or her learning.
- Provide *more choices* for the individual in *all* areas of life.
- Remove or change some of the behavioral “triggers.”
- The best teaching strategy is to use *all* learning modalities when you teach: Teach by saying, showing, and modeling with visual cues and gestures, and by *actually doing*—role playing and practicing the skill in the actual setting where you want the person to display that skill or behavior.
- To provide more choice-making opportunities, you should look at a variety of areas, including choice, in schedules, activities, and menus.
- You also need to look at how you expose the individuals you support to a variety of *new* activities, places, events, hobbies and individuals so they have a wider array of things that they know and can choose from.
- Often, some things you say or do can lead to behavioral issues. These are called “triggers.” By changing some of the ways you support the person (by removing things that are triggers) can help assist the person to improve their behavior.

## ACTIVITY

### Identify Alternatives to Challenging Behavior

**Directions:** *Read and discuss the following A-B-C data recorded on Jack's behavior. He has been spitting at others a lot more over the past month.*

*Please work together as a team to discuss and answer the questions.*

**Antecedent:** *Jack and his housemates finished dinner and were sitting at the dinner table.*

**Behavior:** *Jack spit at a staff member.*

**Consequence:** *Staff member told Jack to go to his room.*

**Antecedent:** *On Saturday afternoon, staff asked Jack to get in the van to go bowling with the group.*

**Behavior:** *Jack spit at the staff.*

**Consequence:** *Staff told Jack he couldn't go bowling and had to stay home.*

**Antecedent:** *Jack was part of a group shopping trip to the mall. The group had been shopping for 60 minutes.*

**Behavior:** *Jack spit at a community member.*

**Consequence:** *Jack was taken to the van.*

**Antecedent:** *On Sunday at 6:00 p.m., Jack and his housemates were in the backyard having a barbeque. Jack had just finished his hamburger and meal.*

**Behavior:** *Jack spit at a staff member.*

**Consequence:** *Jack was sent inside to his room.*

*As a team, please answer these questions:*

- 1. Identify possible consequences that may be reinforcing (maintaining) Jack's behavior of spitting.*
- 2. Figure out what Jack is either getting or avoiding through his behavior.*
- 3. Identify some replacement behaviors or skills for Jack that he can use in future situations as an alternative to spitting. (Remember: The "need" that Jack is expressing through his behavior is normal! It's the behavior he is currently using to get his need met that is inappropriate.)*
- 4. Describe how you would plan to reinforce these new skills.*

## Changing How You Support Individuals

Here are some specific ways to change some of the things you do. These alternative skills can make a big difference in the life of an individual you support.

Now let's practice what you've learned by working on an exercise to identify **replacement skills**. **Replacement skills** or behaviors are used in place of the challenging behavior, which serves the same function as the challenging behavior.

### Charting Progress

One of the most important reasons for collecting data is to chart progress. As a DSP, you need to know if the behaviors and skills of the individuals you support are improving over time, or if they are staying the same or getting worse. Charting progress helps you to know if your support plan is working.

You can record data on behaviors through daily Progress Notes, A-B-C data, Scatter Plots and frequency charts, Behavior Maps, and when you write Special Incident Reports. It is also helpful to speak with other people who support the individual (family members, day program/vocational representative, school and residential staff, and the individual) to get information across a variety of activities and environments and to get different perspectives about the progress being made. The best way to collect this information is to have regular team meetings with the individual or his or her family, friends, and others who provide support. Good problem solving and discussion can happen at a team meeting.

### Changing Unsuccessful Support Strategies

A support plan is not written in stone. There should be regular opportunities to review what is working and to change the plan to make it more effective. To ensure continued progress, your goal is to **chart progress** on a regular basis and to make changes to the support plan based on collected data. Charting progress is recording data on how an individual is doing on a specific task or activity.

One of the most common mistakes DSPs make is that they don't change their support strategies when they aren't working!

Here are some guidelines for improving and modifying support plans to ensure success:

1. Teaching opportunities should happen regularly. You should try to make good use of "natural" times to teach.  
Sample Scenario: At the video store, Bob, an individual you support, finds out that the video he wanted has been checked out. This provides a good opportunity for you to help him to "problem solve" and figure out how he wants to handle it. For example, ask him if he wants to choose another video or come back another day.
2. If the plan is working, data should show continual progress and improvement. *Remember to celebrate the small successes!*
3. As a rule, team meetings should be held regularly (at least monthly) to review data and to find out what is working. In some situations, you may need to meet more often to review progress.

## Changing How You Support Individuals (cont.)

4. Most of the time you don't need to throw out the entire plan. You may only need to modify or adapt some of the strategies or simply add some more. As a DSP, you should make an effort to participate in these team meetings to share your experiences and to learn what is working for others.
5. Teaching strategies should be individualized based on the individual's learning style, the activity, and environment. If you are not sure how a person learns best, try to use *all* learning modalities when you teach. For example, *say* what you want individuals to learn, *show* them what you mean, and *do* it with them so they understand how.
6. The plan should include the gradual fading of DSP assistance over time to natural cues and consequences.
7. Reinforcement should be based on the individual's likes and preferences. If the behavior isn't improving, it could be that the reinforcement isn't meaningful to the person, or that the goal is set too high for the person to earn reinforcement.

Remember the Positive Behavior Support session in Year 1, where we discussed the 10 easy ways to support a person with challenging behavior? These important suggestions help us to remember that your relationship with the individual makes all the difference. You need to respect the individual's needs and wants and honor their choices whenever possible. These steps help you look at the whole individual when thinking about a challenging behavior.

## 10 Easy Ways to Support an Individual with Challenging Behavior

1. Get to know the person—It is helpful to get to know the person behind the behavior. Spend time with that individual in comfortable places and at times the person prefers.
2. Remember that all behavior is meaningful—Challenging behavior sends a message of needs not being met. Ask questions about the individual's life and what it takes to make that individual happy and unhappy. The behavior often has something to do with what the person is asked to do and who is doing the asking.
3. Help the person develop a support plan—Including the person with the challenging behavior in the planning process will help to improve the individual's relationships, community participation, increased choices, skill development, and contributions to others.
4. Don't assume—Labels can cause us to underestimate the individual's potential. Concentrate on the individual's strengths and on providing adequate support rather than concentrating on deficiencies associated with the individual's diagnostic label.
5. Relationships make all the difference—Many individuals depend entirely upon family or paid staff for their social relationships. Brainstorm ideas for including the person in the community and setting up a social support network.
6. Help the individual to develop a positive identity—An individual with challenging behavior is often labeled as a "problem." Build a positive identity by helping the person find a way to make a contribution. When eliminating challenging behavior be sure to focus on the individual's strengths and capabilities.
7. Give choices instead of ultimatums—If the individual uses challenging behavior to express needs, give the individual choices and allow him or her to make them throughout the day. Choice does not mean free rein. Set limits with the input of the individual.
8. Help the individual to have more fun—Fun is a powerful cure for the problem behaviors. Make fun a goal.
9. Establish a good working relationship with the individual's primary health care professionals—Many individuals exhibiting challenging behavior might not feel well. Being healthy is more than being free of disease or illness. It also means a balanced diet, good sleep habits, and other good health factors. You will be in a better position to figure out the reason or solution for the challenging behavior if you know the individual's general health, talk to those who know him or her, and have regular contact with a primary health care physician.
10. Develop a support plan for the DSPs—Create a supportive environment for everyone concerned. Caregivers need care and support too. A supportive environment also minimizes punitive practices.

Adapted from *Ten Ways to Support a Person With Challenging Behavior* by David Pitonyak, 1997, Beach Center on Disability, The University of Kansas; Lawrence, Kansas.

## PRACTICE AND SHARE

Think about the individuals you support who exhibit challenging behavior. When you are at work this week try to do one new thing that supports the individual's positive behavior. This could include any of the activities or tools that have been introduced in the two sessions on Positive Behavior Support. At the next session, we will go around the room and share what you did, and how it impacted the individuals' positive behavior and overall quality of life.

### Session 10 Quiz

#### Positive Behavior Support, Part 2

- 1. What is the reason for the occurrence of challenging behavior?**
  - A) The individual is getting or avoiding something
  - B) The individual is engaging in behavior for no reason
  - C) Someone told the individual to engage in the behavior
  - D) The individual saw another person engage in the behavior
- 2. Meaningful reinforcement occurs when:**
  - A) The DSP is unsure how to react to a specific behavior
  - B) An individual's behavior is rewarded by a positive response
  - C) The DSP does not respond to a specific behavior
  - D) An individual's behavior is corrected immediately
- 3. What are some ways the DSP can support the individual in reducing the occurrence of challenging behavior?**
  - A) Teach the individual a few new skills
  - B) Teach the individual using visual cues only
  - C) Make sure the individual has more choices
  - D) Help the individual maintain their routines
- 4. The DSP is able to teach to the strengths of an individual when:**
  - A) The individual does not want to learn
  - B) The DSP can identify the individual by name
  - C) The individual does not communicate well
  - D) The DSP knows the individual's learning characteristics
- 5. Most behaviors demonstrated by individuals serve the purpose of:**
  - A) Doing something socially acceptable
  - B) Creating a disturbance in the home or care center
  - C) Communicating wants, needs, feelings and to get their needs met
  - D) Teaching others how to behave
- 6. Which is a way the DSP can assist in the creation of a Behavior Support Plan?**
  - A) Developing suggestions for replacement behaviors
  - B) Ignore the individual's negative behavior
  - C) Help the individual care for a new pet
  - D) Provide opportunities for social interaction

**Session 10 Quiz (cont.)**

- 7. Which are the first two steps in the Behavior Support Plan?**
- A) Identify learning characteristics; identify consequences
  - B) Identify quality of life areas that are lacking; define the challenging behavior
  - C) Identify replacement behavior; identify antecedents
  - D) Use learning characteristics; identify reasons for challenging behavior
- 8. What is the best teaching strategy a DSP should use in teaching individuals new skills?**
- A) Explain the new skills and wait for the individual to do it
  - B) Ask the individuals if they would like to learn a new skill
  - C) Show a video of individuals performing the new skill
  - D) Use verbal directions, showing, and role playing to demonstrate new skills
- 9. Which is an example of sensory motivators of challenging behavior?**
- A) Not speaking
  - B) Drinking coffee
  - C) Requesting an object by pointing at it
  - D) Refusing to complete a task
- 10. When an individual is whining, interrupting or starting a conversation, his behavior may be motivated by:**
- A) Need for attention
  - B) Desire to eat more
  - C) Lack of sleep
  - D) Fear of an activity