



PURPOSE OF THE BRIEF

The purpose of this brief is to describe a tiered model of positive behavior support (PBS) in service agencies for people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

INTRODUCTION

A growing number of agencies are implementing PBS using a continuum of supports to improve quality of life and prevent challenging behavior. This multi-tiered framework includes the following tiers or levels.

UNDERSTANDING TIERS 1, 2 AND 3

Tier 1 involves teaching everyone to use proactive strategies and to work together to define the specific behaviors for staff and people served in a way that reflects the life values people feel are important. Everyone has a chance to practice, model, and reinforce positive social behaviors and use tools for improving relationships and quality of life for all. A plan to address challenging behavior is in place to create a consistent way to respond that everyone can follow.

Tier 2 is used to quickly find and prevent risk for challenging behavior as part of function-based screening systems. This information is then used to provide additional supports as needed for each person. These skills and additional special supports are often easy to use and deliver.

Tier 3 includes further development of the systems for intensive individual interventions within service provider agencies. The goal is to identify people experiencing the highest levels of risk, and to use data that do not rely on self-report for accurate tracking of need and progress.

Agencies implementing a multi-tiered PBS framework start by forming a planning team. The team includes people who have a role within the setting. People who receive services, family members and caregivers, direct support staff, supervisors and managers, staff from human resources, agency leaders, and community members may be part of the team. The goal of the team is to work with everyone to assess

agency strengths, identify where the team will start using PBS, create an action plan for moving forward, and use data to guide progress over time. The primary focus and ongoing work of the planning team is to build universal strategies and data systems.

Examples of tiered PBS include:

- Changing the organization's mission to reflect person-centered values,
- Adapting policies and procedures to prevent challenging behavior,
- Training all staff by creating a skills curriculum, coaching and mentoring systems,
- Developing and using a data collection system for performance feedback and analysis
- Teaching, prompting, and modeling positive social and emotional skills,
- Creating a plan to respond to challenging behavior, and
- Building capacity to facilitate PBS efforts.

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

CHALLENGE

Turnover of staff is challenging and makes it hard to spend time on training



SOLUTION

Agencies use PBS report to decrease in staff turnover by:

- Creating a climate to support staff, and decrease stress, injury, and shift cancelations
- Focusing on building staff retention
- Establishing Tier 1 strategies that help staff understand their job better
- Investing in building capacity for PBS within supervisors and/or managers who do not turn over as frequently
- Reinforcing staff frequently for implementing PBS with fidelity

Investing in training staff who will facilitate PBS plans is very expensive and time consuming

- Focusing on universal tier 1 strategies can decrease the need for more intensive interventions
- Investing in training staff can decrease challenges that occur between one or more people

There is no time to focus on PBS



Agencies that are effective at PBS are:

- Embedding action planning into everyday work
- Working smarter not harder by focusing PBS in activities that are already part of the everyday work
- Choosing a small number of “doable” number of goals to work on each year and to make small changes over time based on a balanced workload

Agencies are expected to use more than one practice and this spreads everyone too thin

Layer training systems instead of trying to make each person an expert in every practice by:

- Integrating messages at the universal tier 1 level into staff training across practices (include trauma-informed care, person-centered planning, PBS, and other practices)
- Investing in internal capacity building and sharing expertise across agencies in a region so that ongoing training can be provided workload

RECOMMENDATIONS

Active leadership and team-based action planning is essential for agencies to be successful using PBS.

Create a diverse planning team that includes different cultures and views (people with IDD, people representing marginalized communities, champions of PBS, others from distinct groups within the organization).

Assess whether people within the organization are ready to try a new practice. Spend time sharing information about PBS and ask people to vote on whether to move forward.

Use the team's assessment to select one area or setting to begin using PBS. This may include starting in a few homes where people are interested in using PBS, a program setting at work, or a type of service provided by an agency (family in-home support, self-directed services, supported employment, etc.).

Encourage teams to embrace cultural differences and ensure that the voices of everyone in an organization are heard. Integrate training in diversity, equity, and inclusion in all elements of PBS.

Create ongoing ways to practice new skills and design systems for celebrating success over time.

Work together to create consistent ways to respond to challenging behavior using conflict management and PBS.

Use data for decision making and to guide PBS efforts over time.

Reach out to other agencies within a region to share costs for trainers, create learning opportunities, and build capacity for PBS.

CITATION

Evans, R., Rodgers, T., Shear, S., Jones, E., Freeman, R., & Putnam, R. (2022). Tiered positive behavior support implementation in human services [positive behavior support brief]. *White paper on positive behavior support in the field of IDD*. Association for Positive Behavior Support.

