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Mental Health Wellness for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

Click the "Next" button to begin the Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Behavior Supports Module

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Mental Health Wellness for Individuals with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (MHW-IDD)

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Acknowledgements: Much thanks to Karen Weigle, PhD, for her time and expertise in developing this module

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Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Behavior Supports

Objectives:
1. Introduce the concepts of positive behavior support and functional behavior assessment.
2. Describe the ABCs model in understanding why behavior occurs.
3. Review the role of the DSW in this process.

Outline:
I. What are Positive Behavior Supports (PBS)?
II. Understanding Behavior
III. Functional Behavior Assessment
IV. Supporting Individuals through PBS
V. Summary

Outcome:
Learners will understand the purpose of functional behavior assessment and learn to identify the functions of an individual's behavior based on an individual's specific needs and goals. Participants will learn how to use positive behavior support and will be able to use more effective means of communication (and other skills) to help individuals get their needs and desires met.

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What is Positive Behavior Support? (Slide 1 of 7)

The Association for Positive Behavior Support defines Positive Behavior Support (PBS) as "a set of strategies used to increase quality of life and decrease challenging behavior by teaching new skills and making changes in a person's environment."

• Preferred lifestyle by using a person-centered approach

• Change their environment so that direct challenges are less likely to occur, and by helping the person learn new skills

• PBS can make problem behavior irrelevant, inefficient and ineffective

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What is Positive Behavior Support?
(Slide 2 of 7)

- Researchers have found that by understanding the reason for challenging behavior, a new, more effective and socially accepted response can be developed. PBS is based on this research
- PBS requires three activities:
  1. **Prevention:** Through recognizing and avoiding situations that set up challenging behavior and making environmental changes to set up successful outcomes the person is able to build positive relationships and provide new opportunities for themself
  2. **Teach skills and develop strengths:** This entails building upon an individual's existing strengths and skills, and teaching new skills and replacement behaviors that help a person achieve goals
  3. **Positive interventions:** Recognize and reward positive behaviors and accomplishments when they occur

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What is Positive Behavior Support?
(Slide 3 of 7)

- In your work, you may feel like what you've tried to do to respond to someone's challenging behavior hasn't worked
- If we just respond to a person's behavior without understanding why the behavior is occurring, that person will not learn how to get their needs met any other way
- The person will continue to engage in a behavior, even if it is destructive or harmful to themselves or others, because it ultimately meets a need

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What is Positive Behavior Support?
(Slide 4 of 7)

- It could be that someone you support may repeatedly interrupt you whenever you are on the phone. Why? Because it works. You respond to them by giving them your attention, even though you may be responding out of irritation
- In spite of your reaction being negative, the interrupting behavior is reinforced, and the person is likely to do it again, because getting your attention is desirable to them
- Helping the person to change their behavior using PBS is a better solution
- **PBS is a systematic approach to increase quality of life and decrease problem behaviors by teaching new skills and making changes in the environment**

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What is Positive Behavior Support?
(Slide 5 of 7)

- It's important to understand that behavior support is different than just changing or "managing" a person's behavior
- Behavior support focuses on relationships, **happiness and meaning in life**, including understanding why the person does what they do
- The focus is on identifying what the person is attempting to **communicate** through their behavior, then supporting that person to find a better way to get their needs met, without the need for engaging in challenging behavior

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What is Positive Behavior Support?
(Slide 6 of 7)

- Some interventions only focus on decreasing challenging behavior without considering how these interventions might affect other areas of an individual's life
- PBS strategies are considered effective when interventions result in increases in an individual's **success** and personal **satisfaction**, and include the enhancement of positive **social interactions** across work, academic, recreational, and community settings
- Valued outcomes include increases in **quality of life** defined by an individual's unique preferences and needs and positive lifestyle changes that increase social belonging

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What is Positive Behavior Support?
(Slide 7 of 7)

- Sometimes we respond with frustration and just want the challenging behavior to stop
- Our behavior may show **frustration**, which usually leads to more **aggravation** for everyone and can worsen a situation
- We must ensure we are paying attention to the person's whole life and supporting long-term changes

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Application Exercise

Understanding Behavior: Communication Tool

All behavior is a form of communication!

Behavior serves a purpose!

Behavior can:
- ✓ Communicate something to us about needs or desires
- ✓ Indicate that the person is seeking to either gain or avoid something in their environment, or is experiencing pain of some kind
- ✓ Be a sign of post-traumatic stress, a medical, or other psychiatric conditions
- ✓ Communicate to us that a person is experiencing frustration, anxiety, depression or anger about a need that has not been met

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Understanding Behavior: Why is it Happening?

- Because behavior can originate from many different sources, it is our responsibility to try to understand why the behavior is happening
- The challenge for us is to find ways of understanding the interactions between a person and the environment so we can develop a plan that leads to productive and lasting behavior change
- People can learn and develop more appropriate and effective means of communicating at any time during our lives, particularly when others respond positively and our needs are met

have a nice day

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Introduction

- Functional Behavior Assessment is a process for the entire support team to gain an understanding of why a behavior occurs
- The goal is to identify what the person is trying to communicate and recognize possible medical and psychiatric issues
- Data is collected to determine the possible cause of challenging behaviors and to identify strategies to change them
- Behavior Analysts and Behavior Specialists conduct a Functional Behavior Assessment when they are developing a positive behavior support plan (PBSP)

TEAM

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Introduction, Continued

- As part of the person's support team, you have a very important role in informing the rest of the team about:
  - What you observe
  - What works
  - What does not work to support this person
- When collecting and providing information about the possible cause of someone's challenging behavior, it is important to consider the person's
  - Personality and typical disposition
  - Medical conditions
  - Behaviors associated with the condition
  - Effects of any medications the person is taking

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Functional Behavior Assessment: ABCs Model - Introduction

ABC Model – Antecedents, Behaviors and Consequences

ABC

Antecedent	Behavior	Consequence
What happens right before the behavior of interest	The behavior of interest	What happens right after the behavior of interest

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Antecedents

Antecedents Overview
- One way we may understand the function of a person's behavior is by identifying what happens right before the behavior occurs
- An antecedent is an event that occurs before a behavior and makes it more likely that the behavior will occur
- Once we have collected data and have some ideas of what antecedents tend to trigger a person to have challenging behavior, we can begin to make more changes in the environment that helps avoid the challenges in the first place

Antecedent ❯ **Behavior** ❯ **Consequence**

| What happens right before the behavior of interest | The behavior of interest | What happens right after the behavior of interest |

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Antecedent - Examples

Antecedent Examples
- Myrna's dad places a magazine on a table in front of Myrna and then Myrna immediately begins looking at the magazine
- Tyrone sits down next to Samuel on the sofa and then Samuel begins to hit his forehead with his palm
- Benny sits down next to Samuel on the sofa and then Samuel smiles broadly
- Mary begins hopping and whining and then knocks over a chair

Understanding Antecedents
- Antecedents occur close in time to the target behaviors
- Can be something someone else does, or the something the person himself does, which serves as a warning that the target behavior is coming, and perhaps provides a clue to why it is happening
- Knowing what the antecedent is helps us develop an effective intervention

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Behaviors

Behaviors
- Define the behaviors in terms that everyone understands, and focus on the one or two behaviors that are the most serious
- We must **ALL** agree on what that challenging behavior is
- It must be something we can actually see
- We cannot say that Sarah's challenging behavior is "moodiness"
  - How do you see that?
  - How do you know we agree on what that means?
  - How do we know when it starts and stops?

Antecedent ❯ **Behavior** ❯ **Consequence**

| What happens right before the behavior of interest | The behavior of interest | What happens right after the behavior of interest |

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Behaviors, Continued

Behaviors
- It is better to describe the specific behavior that tells us Sarah is moody
  - "yell at people without any warning or indication she was angry before she yelled"
  - "go from laughing to crying within in a short period of time"
- Saying that Sean's challenging behavior "is disruptive" is not specific enough

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Application Exercise

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Consequences

Consequences
- When we look at consequences, we may be surprised at how often we find that we are actually teaching a person to keep engaging in a challenging behavior because of **OUR** reactions and responses
- What happens **AFTER** the target behavior can also inform us about why someone does it
  - What consistently happens immediately after the challenging behavior?
  - Does the thing that happens after the behaviors make it more likely that it will occur?

Antecedent ❯ **Behavior** ❯ **Consequence**

| What happens right before the behavior of interest | The behavior of interest | What happens right after the behavior of interest |

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Consequences, Continued

1) Use the information collected **+**
2) Track where and when the behavior occurs **+**
3) See what the person gets, or gets away from **=**
4) Form an educated guess about **WHY** the behavior is occurring

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Functional Behavior Assessment: Consequences - Examples

Consequences
- Mary begins hopping and whining and then her favorite DSW comes and takes her to her room to listen to music. We may hypothesize that she hops and whines in order to get alone time with her favorite staff and listen to music
- Andrew's DSW starts brushing his teeth and then Andrew hits the DSW. We can assume, if this pattern continues over time, that the person wants to get out of tooth brushing
- Recognize the reason or function of the behavior, then figure out how to help develop other ways to meet their needs

Antecedent ❯	**Behavior** ❯	**Consequence**
What happens right before the behavior of interest	The behavior of interest	What happens right after the behavior of interest

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Functional Behavior Assessment: ABCs Model in Action

- Andrew doesn't like having his teeth brushed because he has sensitive gums
- Use a PBS approach to help him achieve positive outcomes and decrease his challenging behavior
  - We can make sure that we are using a toothbrush that has soft bristles
  - We can offer him the choice of using an electric toothbrush to see if he may prefer that
  - We can also make sure we use warm water when brushing
  - He can learn to brush his own teeth with support and skill building
- We may need **A LOT** of data in order to better understand why someone engages in a certain behavior
- If we do not write it down, we tend to forget what we saw or when we saw it

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Application Exercise

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Functional Behavior Assessment: (Setting Events (Slide 1 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

Antecedent ❯	**Behavior** ❯	**Consequence**
What happens right before the behavior of interest	The behavior of interest	What happens right after the behavior of interest

There are three major categories of setting events:
1. Environmental & Social factors
2. Biological & Genetic factors
3. Psychological & Mental Health issues

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Functional Behavior Assessment Setting Events (Slide 2 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

- Setting events don't directly **CAUSE** the challenging behavior, but make it more likely to happen
- They reduce the person's strength or tolerance, making it more likely they will engage in challenging behavior
- Example: Rush hour traffic + headache + anxiety might lead to cursing and crabbiness towards our families
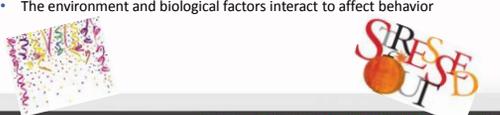
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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Setting Events (Slide 3 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

Environmental and Social Factors as Setting Events
- The **environment** affects a person's daily enjoyment, learning and using important life skills, and whether challenging behavior will occur
- A noisy chaotic environment may be "festive" or fun for some people, while it may be overwhelming and stressful to others
- Someone who typically enjoys crowds may not when they have an earache
- The environment and biological factors interact to affect behavior

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Setting Events (Slide 4 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

Environmental and Social Factors as Setting Events
- **Social factors** can also increase the likelihood of challenging behavior occurring
  o Tim dislikes Zachary and Zachary is coming over to Tim's house tonight to visit with Tim's roommate
  o Tim is more likely to become aggressive when the TV channel is changed from his favorite show
  o Thus, Zachary's presence makes Tim more irritable and less likely to "put up with" someone changing the TV channel; he may get aggressive more quickly because he is already irritated

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Functional Behavior Assessment
Setting Events (Slide 5 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

Biological and Genetic Factors as Setting Events
- Remember we need to be alert to whether a medical problem may be at the root of challenging behavior!
  o Pain, such a tooth, ear or headache
  o Illnesses which can be long term or short term
  o Sleep Deprivation
  o Allergies (skin scratching, or congestion)
  o Fatigue, or being over tired
  o Hunger
  o Constipation, diarrhea, or other stomach problems

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Setting Events (Slide 6 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

Biological and Genetic Factors as Setting Events

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Setting Events (Slide 7 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

Biological and Genetic Factors as Setting Events
- Consider the effects of biological setting events when challenging or unusual behavior occurs
- Ensure that the person has gotten a complete **medical evaluation** of possible biological factors
- **Collect data** on the presence or absence of any medical or biological problems and frequency of challenging behavior

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Setting Events (Slide 8 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

Biological and Genetic Factors as Setting Events
- A person's **genetic syndrome** can also have a big impact on the person's behavior, as well as on our attempts at supports and interventions
- Genetic differences can have many important effects such as making the person more likely to have certain behaviors, and impacting the types of interventions chosen
- A person with Prader-Willi Syndrome may have an obsession with food. We would not use food as a reward for him because we know that obsessive eating is a specific behavioral feature of his genetic disorder causing a difficult time controlling eating habits

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Slide 1

Functional Behavior Assessment:
Setting Events (Slide 9 of 9)

Setting Events
What events or circumstances are impacting the person that might make the behavior more likely to occur

Mental Health Status as Setting Events
- Examples:
  - Sam likes to take apart electronics. If Sam is experiencing **hyperactivity due to mania**, we cannot expect him to sit down and complete a task with us
  - If Ashley is hearing voices, she may be more likely to yell and run away when asked to do tasks she usually does. The voices are **NOT** the antecedent to her running away; rather the being asked to do a task is the antecedent. The **voices she hears** is the setting event that makes it more likely the antecedent might provoke running away

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Slide 2

Application Exercise

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Slide 3

Application Exercise

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Slide 4

Functional Behavior Assessment:
Replacement Behaviors and Skill Building (Slide 1 of 4)

Replacement Behaviors and Skill Building
- Once we develop a hypothesis as to **WHY** we think the behavior happens, we can figure out another way for the person to get what they want **WITHOUT** having to engage in the challenging behavior
- Using a PBS approach means teaching new skills and building upon existing skills that help a person achieve their goals
- Once we know the function of a person's challenging behavior, we can support them by teaching "replacement behaviors"
- Teaching a replacement behavior means teaching an **ALTERNATIVE WAY** to achieve their goal; one that accomplishes the same purpose as the challenging behavior
- **The replacement behavior must get the same results for the individual as the challenging behavior did in order for it to be effective**

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Slide 5

Functional Behavior Assessment:
Replacement Behaviors and Skill Building (Slide 2 of 4)

Replacement Behaviors and Skill Building
- Example:
  - Tommy, an individual with moderate intellectual disability and who uses only hand motions and gestures to communicate, often bites his hands
  - Through a thorough **functional behavior assessment**, and data collection, we learn that Tommy bites his hand when he wants pizza
  - If we give Tommy pizza every time he bites his hand it may stop his behavior from occurring at that moment, but it will not teach him how to get the pizza without having to bite his hand

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Slide 6

Functional Behavior Assessment:
Replacement Behaviors and Skill Building (Slide 3 of 4)

Replacement Behaviors and Skill Building
- Replacement behaviors often involve building on and learning new skills
- Identifying which skills to teach is going to depend on the individual you are supporting
- **Everyone has different strengths and interests that you can build upon,** along with different challenges
- Using a Positive Behavior Support approach, we should always choose **functional skills** that improve quality of life and promote personal dignity

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Replacement Behaviors and Skill Building (Slide 4 of 4)

Replacement Behaviors and Skill Building
- After identifying a skill to teach, make sure to teach it in the setting where the skills are needed while using materials the person would normally use
- Teach the skill often, provide opportunities for the individual to practice, and reinforce the skills regularly
- Example:
  - If Tommy carries his picture book with him everywhere he goes and is prompted to use it when it is mealtime, you can reinforce him by providing him with his food of choice when he points to it
  - If he does not have his picture book with him and does not have the opportunity to **practice this skill**, he may continue to bite his hand, even when he does have it, as this is his only effective means of expressing what he wants at the time

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Choosing Reinforcers

Choosing Reinforcers
- Something that happens **AFTER** a behavior that increases the chance that the behavior will happen again
- Provide rewards or reinforcers after the person does the **NEW**, replacement behavior
- Respond in a way that will keep the person doing the new behavior instead of falling back into old habits of engaging in challenging behavior, especially if this new behavior is harder or more effortful at first
- Find reinforcers that are likely to work and be motivating to the person

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Choosing Reinforcers, Continued

Choosing Reinforcers
- If we are able to identify rewards or reinforcers that really motivate the person it is best that the replacement behavior results in getting the person's original needs and desires met by providing a reward that is easy to give and readily available, such as **praise**
- Advantages to using **praise** and **positive feedback** as reinforcers
  - Praise and feedback are always available and cost nothing to provide
  - It is a normal social activity for people to receive praise and positive feedback
  - For practicality's sake, praise and feedback can be provided without disrupting an ongoing activity and, you don't need to carry anything with you!
  - You have to care about the person and feel connected with them for your praise to be rewarding to them

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Building Relationships

Building Relationships
- It is important to know that some people with an IDD may not seem to respond to praise at first because they have a history of poor interactions with other people
- A very high percentage of people with an IDD have experienced trauma in their lives and have learned not to trust others easily
- They need to learn the value of others and to personally feel valued
- We can't give up or assume that they don't care or don't want to hear good things about themselves
- Some may even act out when they hear a comment we intended to be positive, but it shouldn't stop us from being positive and finding other ways to connect with the person and become reinforcing to them

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Building Relationships, Continued

Building Relationships
- Be careful about how we use language
- Remember that your face, your body, and your voice tone also communicate **positivity** and **negativity**

Positive Interactions	Negative Interactions
How about trying X now?	Stop that!
Thanks for helping me	It was about time for you to help out
You look really good today	That outfit looks much better than what you wore yesterday
Your room looks super	Finally, you cleaned your room

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Data Collection

Ongoing Data Collection and Sharing
- Continual data collection is important so that we can use what we learn to continue to improve our support
- After we think we understand the function (or **WHY**) of the challenging behavior and begin to teach the person newer, better ways to get what they want and need, we should continue to write down what happens to determine if we were right and if what we are doing is working
- If not, it is time to reevaluate our thinking and try something else
- Data will help the team to make changes to be more effective

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Functional Behavior Assessment:
Data Collection, Continued

- **Keeping good data is very important! It can help to:**
  - **Identify antecedents and consequences of behaviors**
  - **Show if an intervention is working**
  - **Identify setting events**
  - **Identify trends in behavior**

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Supporting Individuals through PBS:
Prevention

PBS is a person-centered, proactive approach to enhance the quality of life of an individual and decrease challenging behaviors through:

Prevention
- Recognize that all behavior is a form of communication and that behavior serves a purpose for the person
- It is vital to build meaningful relationships with the individuals you support, to promote dignity and respect, their rights as individuals, and to focus on what their needs and goals
- Use the ABC model to clearly identify challenging behavior, avoid antecedents, provide positive consequences for alternative desirable behavior; and teach individuals to communicate pain, illness, dislikes, or other problems

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Supporting Individuals through PBS:
Environmental Changes

PBS is a person-centered, proactive approach to enhance the quality of life of an individual and decrease challenging behaviors through:

Environmental Changes
- Set up the environment to support positive outcomes and avoid challenging behavior in the first place
- The FBA is completed and we now have ideas about **WHY** the challenging behaviors may be occurring
- The next step is to use that information so you can set things up in advance to avoid the challenges by either avoiding setting events or antecedents or "triggers"

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Supporting Individuals through PBS:
Examples

Jon   Sharyn   Tyrone

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Supporting Individuals through PBS:
Teaching Skills and Developing Strengths

PBS is a person-centered, proactive approach to enhance the quality of life of an individual and decrease challenging behaviors through:

Teaching Skills and Developing Strengths
- Need to have a meaningful relationship with them
- Get to know them and find out their strengths and preferences and what motivates them
- By focusing on the needs and desires of the individual you support, you will be better equipped to help teach them effective replacement behaviors using skills that will help them to achieve the outcomes they desire without having to use challenging behavior

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Supporting Individuals through PBS:
Positive Interventions

PBS is a person-centered, proactive approach to enhance the quality of life of an individual and decrease challenging behaviors through:

Positive Interventions
- Identify what reinforces the individual's behavior
- Don't forget to use **praise and positive feedback** as reinforcers!
- Support positive behavior and success, and reinforce it whenever it occurs
- Provide opportunities for ongoing **positive interactions** and meaningful activities that will enhance the individual's quality of life
- Do **NOT** make positive interactions and **meaningful activities** be contingent on behavior
- Seek and provide opportunities to practice skills and reinforce replacement behaviors

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Functional Behavioral Assessment and Positive Behavior Supports: Summary

- Through better understanding **WHY** a person does what they do, we can relate better and problem-solve around how to improve their quality of life, help someone get what they want and need, and avoid problematic strategies
- Through our **investigation and data collection** we can determine how to change the environment to avoid problems
- By looking carefully at **what we do before and after** challenging behavior, we can find ways for the person to be more effective in getting their needs or desires met without needing to use challenging behavior
- By clearly identifying what the challenging behavior is and its **purpose**, we can teach the person other ways to get that same need or desire met
- Be aware that when people are not living satisfying, meaningful lives, they will be more likely to engage in challenges
- You may be surprised to see how challenging behavior will simply stop occurring once the person has meaning and joy in their life

Acknowledgements: Much thanks to Karen Weigle, PhD, for her time and expertise in developing this module

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