

Ancient Wisdom?

what we think we know about supporting families
during positive behaviour support

Tony Osgood, May 2017

I hope to

emphasise what we know tends to work

not teach my grandmother to suck eggs

get some exercise

PBS practitioners, fluent in behavioural technology, should be equally skilled at listening hard to family members' subjective experiences that accrue from loving someone whose behaviour is impactful.

We are privileged to hear family stories of heartache and fear, joy and hope. When challenging behaviour arises, the child regardless remains at the heart of family life. Love doesn't disappear.

There is a difference between knowing a family and working with a family.

What we count might not count to families.

What matters to families might not matter to the metrics of effectiveness our employers seek.

Families want solutions and supports.

Coaches and family-centred practitioners are unfortunately too often 'remarkable events': finding someone with good technical knowledge who will listen to family contexts and collaborate in understanding and responding to challenging behaviour is essential

The small things a family seeks are not small things to them

Like research, no family is perfect but then again neither are professionals

As well as being real and impactful, challenging behaviours are a symptom of an unquiet life, an unheard complaint or an unmeasured joy.

They are a call to action to teach new ways of doing, and a reminder for us to remember what we've forgotten we know.

Being a PBS Coach Means

You will benefit from listening carefully - without prejudice - to families. Parking what you know because what you know may not be what families need.

What you know can fill your ears with fluff to such a degree you will not be able to hear what is said and what is meant by the code of language. Leadership tends to follow listening.

Families Might Want

A perspective on what is going on
and what it means

Clarity about what you bring

Practical advice and listening skills

Informational & emotional support

Families Might Want

Advice on getting through: resilience

Parent-to-parent communication

If you're the first person to listen,
you might hear plenty of kvetching

Being a PBS Coach Means

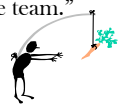
Being skilled at PBS, being present

Knowing when to shut up & listen, knowing when to lead, knowing when to follow, knowing when to deploy expertise, knowing when to challenge tropes

Being a PBS Coach Means Challenging Tropes

“If the behaviour guy says I have to earn soda rather than just have it in the fridge that’s what happens. If the legalised drug dealer says that I should take this pill then that is what will happen.

If I spit it out it will be buried in my ice cream. That is, if I’m allowed ice cream and haven’t been put on a diet by a bunch of overweight suits calling themselves the team.”



-John Clements & Neil Martin, 2002

Being a PBS Coach Means

Being skilled at finding non-PBS information
(marriage advice, respite, counselling etc)

Building an emotional bank account
(rapport)

Rapport

Communication-Based Intervention for Problem Behaviour: A Users
Guide for Producing Positive Change Carr et al (1994)

Carr et al suggest “if you associate yourself repeatedly with a wide variety of activities, people, and things that the person values, then eventually your presence will become a signal that many rewarding activities and events are available with you. In technical terms your presence becomes a generalized reinforcer”

Rapport

“You should not become a vending machine dispensing positive experiences. The idea is for you and the individual displaying the behaviour problems to interact with one another within a context of sharing entertaining and rewarding activities and generally enjoying each other’s company”

- Carr et al, (1994) Communication Based Interventions for Problem Behaviour, p.114

Rapport

1. Draw up a list of activities and items such as foods, games, topics of conversation that are preferred by the person.
2. Provide these for free. Don't make the person earn them in the name of therapy.
3. Success means the person changes their response to you. They might like being with you.

As Fox & Emerson (2002) point out, an intervention that reduces **SIB** by 75% looks great in graphs, in a paper, but is of little real value if the individual continues to be socially excluded and still maintained on dangerous medication

Intervention Options:

improving communication

increasing QoL

building skills

general ecological improvements

learning to listen to the behavioural whispers (so we don't end shouting at each other)

“Given the need for a broad impact, behavioural support can often benefit from companion assessment procedures... person centred planning, activity assessment, and assessment of medical and physical issues.

It is through this broader process that we follow the advice of the noted behaviour analyst Dr. Todd Risley to begin good behavioural support by helping a person “get a life” and then build in the more detailed behaviour support systems that may be needed.”

- O'Neill, Horner, Albin, Sprague, Storey, & Newton, 1997

Functional Assessment & Programme Development for Problem Behaviour

Some Basic FA Questions

What is the precise behaviour?

What are the consequences? (Function)

What are the antecedents?

Where does behaviour not occur?

What's the repertoire of behaviours?

What do we want the person to do instead?

Reality is...

Most challenging behaviours, including SIB, are the most effective method the individual has to gain/avoid stuff/people. Such behaviours are adaptive given the individual's skills, biology, their learning history, and ecologies

Community is not a place but a way of life

Herb Lovett

'We have people all the time having to prove they are good enough. And that is just wrong.

And whose behaviour is difficult behaviour?

When someone spends all day working and they get a meaningless treat at the end of it, who is behaving badly?

When someone gets ignored for being inappropriate or sent off alone or is kept isolated, who is behaving badly?

When someone gets tied down or is drugged up, who is behaving aggressively?

When people get routinely physically restrained, whose behaviour is out of control?

When people are kept from what they enjoy doing, apart from the places they want to go, apart from the people they want to be with, whose behaviour is antisocial?

And when people keep doing the same meaningless rehabilitation exercises year after year or keep the same behaviour plan year after year, when nothing good changes for the person, who is slow to learn and fails to profit from experience?

Goals & Outcomes

Outcome: A Life

Goals should simplify not complicate life

Goals should add meaning to life

Goals should describe change

Set goals for now not tomorrow (tomorrow never comes)

Communities of Practice

‘Collective learning in a shared domain’

“groups of people informally bound together by shared expertise and a passion for a joint enterprise” (Wenger and Snyder, 2000, p. 139)

Support: Being With Another Human



Get to Know the Person

Rapport

Trust

Preferences

= preferred interaction profile/person centred
planning and active support

dimagine.com

key advice from the past

Herb Lovett Learning to Listen (1996)

PBS: Including People with Difficult
Behaviour in the Community (1996) eds.

Families & PBS: Addressing Problem
Behaviour in Family Contexts (2002) eds.

Person Centred Planning: Research,
Practice & Future Directions (2002) eds.
