

Aspect Positive Behaviour Support Individual Autism Profile Information Sheet

Why develop an individual autism profile?

People on the autism spectrum may have a range of support needs based on their preferences, age, abilities and where they live work or learn. Challenging behaviour often occurs because there is a mismatch between what a person needs and what is being provided to them. The first step in Positive Behaviour Support is to develop a thorough and accurate understanding of a person and then to provide a range of supports that match their individual needs.



Developing an Individual Autism Profile is essential to promote positive changes in behaviour and to reduce the likelihood of challenging behaviour occurring in the future. For many individuals, implementing the strategies from a **Individualised Autism Profile (Green form)** will be enough to promote significant positive behaviour change. For some others, further intervention may be required by developing an **Individual Behaviour Plan (Orange form)** and **Behaviour Response Plan (Red form)**.

This form is often completed via an Aspect Practice PBS workshop. It is important that every profile:

- Understands the big picture including assessing the person's quality of life. This includes accessing basic necessities, being satisfied with the parts of life that are important to them, enjoying life and feeling fulfilled.
- Recognises the strengths and abilities of people on the autism spectrum and builds on these when develop support strategies
- Tries to develop empathy by understanding the impact of autism on someone's daily life such as their ability to understand spoken language.
- Carefully matches a range of evidence based strategies to an individual's specific circumstances

Completing an Individual Autism Profile

The autism profile prompt sheet (which is found on the back of the profile) will help you work step by step through each of the boxes to complete the plan. It may take some time to complete (to gather all the information) and you may need some support in specific areas e.g. a Speech Pathologist to help with the communication section. Before you begin filling in the profile, ensure you write the individual's name at the top of the form.

Step 1. Quality of Life - Having a satisfactory quality of life and knowing people are working towards their happiness will have a positive effect on a person and help reduce behaviours of concern. Think about the person's whole life. Write down what areas of the person's Quality of Life are going well and areas which need support. Key areas to review include; age appropriate choice and control, having genuine friendships and other relationships, being included in their community, having access to activities and hobbies they like. How satisfied is the person with these areas? Does the person feel safe, liked, competent and have things to look forward to?

Step 2. Strengths, interests and characteristics - Viewing people positively, acknowledging strengths and embracing their differences reduces the negative impact of labelling and low expectations and produces positive outcomes. This section of the profile looks at the individual's likes and dislikes, strengths and individual personal characteristics which we use to develop strategies to promote/teach new behaviours and skills. Common characteristics and strengths of individuals on the spectrum include good attention to detail, being logical, persistent and focussed, having a quirky sense of humour or an aptitude for technology.

Step 3. Communication - In this section, write a brief description of what that person can do in terms of communication and what any specific support needs might be. (a) How is the individual currently communicating their needs and wants to get their needs met (expressive communication)? For example, do they use words, pictures or gestures? (b) Do they understand instruction and what you are saying (receptive communication)? For example, do they understand better when you use pictures? (c) Can they read others body language (non-verbal communication) and use their own body language appropriately for example standing to close, speaking to loud etc.

Step 4. Social Relating - Describe the individual's social abilities, preferences and needs. How do they show their social interest? What social interactions are they good at? Do they have difficulty in initiating conversations or making friends? Do they have a desire for social interaction? Consider some of the difficulties that may result, such as isolation from peers.

Step 5. Restricted, Repetitive Behaviours and Interests, and Sensory Processing - Describe any issues such as repetitive speech or motor movements, or sticking rigidly to routines. Does the person have a specific special interest or obsession? Explain the potential difficulties this could lead to e.g. it could look socially inappropriate, or they struggle when routines are broken.

| Individual Autism Profile | | Who is it for? |
|---|---|----------------------------|
| Individual autism abilities & support needs | | Matched Support Strategies |
| Quality of Life | 1 | 7 |
| Strengths, interests and characteristics | 2 | 8 |
| Communication | 3 | 9 |
| Social | 4 | 10 |
| Restricted/repetitive behaviours or interests | 5 | 11 |
| Sensory | 6 | 12 |
| Thinking of thinking and learning | | |

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Individual Autism Abilities & Support Needs Column

The abilities and support needs column is to capture a description of a person's skills and abilities in each area as well as specific needs.

Understanding behaviour is an interaction between three things;

- An individual, their disability, current and past experiences and what they have been taught
- The other people in their lives and their interactions, attitudes and beliefs
- The environments, communities and cultures they live in



In this box, also consider the individual's sensory needs - Do they experience the sensory world differently? Are they avoiding or seeking specific sensory stimulation? For example; do they struggle to concentrate because of background noise or smell others hair? Consider what difficulties may arise e.g. they limit opportunities.

Step 6. Thinking and Learning - This section is where we consider the similarities and differences in the way people with Autism understand others, process information and use complex thinking skills. We review a person's thinking including 'Weak' Central Coherence (focussed on detail over the big picture), Theory of Mind (putting yourself in someone else's shoes) and Executive Functioning (complex thinking skills). People may have strengths or difficulties in one of these areas or all of them.

Step 7. Matched Support Strategies for Quality of Life - Write down what areas of Quality of Life you have identified need support (with the person as much as possible). Work as a team with all those who support the person. Set goals to achieve improved Quality of Life outcomes. For example, Mark will have one or more sleepovers with someone he considers a friend in the next 3 months.

Step 8. Matched Support Strategies for Strengths - We use the person's strengths and interests to develop strategies to promote motivation and engagement, increase success in learning new skills and develop support strategies that are matched to the individual. For example, if the person loves Minecraft, we use this to develop a motivating learning curriculum, link the person socially to others who share the same interest and use their knowledge and skills to have them teach others.

Step 9. Matched Support Strategies for Communication - In this section write down strategies you will implement that are matched to the features and difficulties in point 2 e.g. simplified language, using visuals, using positive language, focus on what to do. What communication skills would help the person day to day get their needs met? Give opportunities to practices new communication skills each day across all the settings in their life.

Step 10. Matched Support Strategies for Social - Consider ways to increase the individual's understanding of social skills and remember to link the support strategies for social relating back to point what you identified in the abilities and support column. For example, teaching new skills such as waiting, turn-taking, or how to initiate and maintain conversations, using visual supports such as social stories or comic strip conversations.

Step 11. Matched Support Strategies for Restricted, Repetitive Behaviours and Interests (RRBI) and Sensory - When considering strategies for RRBI, only intervene if it is a problem i.e. it is distressing for the individual, or it impacts on social and learning opportunities. It's essential to understand why the behaviour is happening before matching an intervention. We commonly encourage special interests but may need to put boundaries around access, we may address underlying issues by reducing anxiety or increasing the person's occupation and engagement and usually plan gradual step by step changes.

| Individual Autism Profile | | Who is it for? Name? |
|---|---|---|
| Individual autism abilities & support needs | | Matched Support Strategies (to create an autism friendly environment) |
| Quality of Life | 1 | 7 |
| Strengths, interests and characteristics | 2 | 8 |
| Communication | 3 | 9 |
| Social | 4 | 10 |
| Restricted/repetitive behaviours or interests | 5 | 11 |
| Sensory | 6 | 12 |
| Types of thinking and learning | | |

Matched Support Strategies Column
To create an autism friendly environment

Match your 'Support Strategies' to the information gathered in the abilities and support needs column taking into account both the persons strengths and support needs and putting in place supports which best match the individual's needs. All strategies and supports need to be motivating and meaningful for the person and we highlight the value of visual support strategies (video, photo, picture, written word) and consider the physical structure of any environment, as well as providing organisation, structure in the individual's daily life and routine to improve predictability and understanding.

For sensory issues, consider how their needs may change throughout the day and consider (a) adapting the environment to reduce discomfort (b) providing planned opportunities to access the needed sensory activities and (3) teaching skills to cope with, or avoid, sensory challenges such as using headphones / ear defenders.

Step 12. Match Support Strategies for Theories of Thinking and Learning - We use our knowledge of individual thinking differences in Autism to develop understanding of the person & any behaviours of concern. If we realise that the person struggles to think flexibly, we need to be more patient and positive in supporting the person where flexible thinking and behaviour is needed.

We encourage setting one simple SMART goal to help the person learn a new thinking skill. Break the skill down into basic steps (first step to last or easiest to most difficult), prepare your resources, teach sensitivity and with support and then give opportunities to practice every day. Review progress regularly.

Note: For persistent challenging behaviour we would recommend choosing one behaviour and completing the Individual Behaviour Planning form (orange form) for a specific behaviour assessment and intervention.

Individual Autism Profile

Who is in your team?

Name

| Individual autism abilities & support needs | Matched Support Strategies To create an autism friendly environment |
|--|--|
| <p><u>Quality of life</u></p> <p>1</p> | <p>1</p> |
| <p><u>Strengths, interests and characteristics</u></p> <p>2</p> | <p>2</p> |
| <p><u>Communication</u></p> <p>3</p> | <p><u>Think visual and structure</u></p> <p>3</p> |
| <p><u>Social</u></p> <p>4</p> | <p><u>Think visual and structure</u></p> <p>4</p> |
| <p><u>Restricted/repetitive behaviours or interests</u></p> <p>5</p> | <p><u>Think visual and structure</u></p> <p>5</p> |
| <p><u>Sensory</u></p> | |
| <p><u>Theories of thinking and learning</u> (Theory of Mind, Executive Functioning, Weak Central Coherence)</p> <p>6</p> | <p><u>Think visual and structure</u></p> <p>6</p> |

Individual Autism Profile

Who is in your team?

Name

| Individual autism abilities & support needs | Matched Support Strategies To create an autism friendly environment |
|---|--|
| <p>Quality of life Having a satisfactory quality of life will have a positive effect on a person, their family and help reduce behaviours of concern. Key areas to review include: feeling competent purposeful and likeable, having age appropriate control and choice in their life now and in the future, having genuine friendships, being included in their local community, regular predictable access to the things they like. Consider mental and physical health.</p> | <p>Review the components of quality of life listed (with the person if possible) as part of a supportive team and set meaningful goals to increase quality of life in the areas that are less satisfactory.</p> <p>Use an age and ability appropriate visual schedule everyday</p> |
| <p>Strengths, interests and characteristics It is important and effective to recognise people's strengths, interests AND positive characteristics. Write down what the person is good at, what people like and admire about the person and a range of things they enjoy.</p> | <p>We use the person's strengths and interests to develop strategies to promote motivation and engagement, increase success and learning new skills and develop support strategies that are matched to the individual.</p> |
| <p>Communication Write down how the person communicates For example; full sentences, single words, signs, pictures. What are their communication strengths and what are their communication needs? Think about receptive, expressive, non-verbal communication (body language). Can the person communicate key messages (such as 'I need help' or 'I need a break') when they need to wherever they need to?</p> | <p>Think visual and structure Write down (1) new communication skills that would help the person (2) strategies you can put in place to support the skill (3) the opportunities to practice these skills and minimise the difficulties. For example; PECS, Key Word Sign, visuals, 'I need a break card'. Write how you will communicate more clearly so the person can always understand the message.</p> |
| <p>Social Write down what social skills the person has, their strengths and needs. This might be <u>basic</u> skills such as turn taking, communicating 'Hi' and 'Bye', knowing private vs public behaviour. Or <u>complex</u> skills such having 'to and fro' conversations or maintaining friendships.</p> | <p>Think visual and structure Write down (1) skills that will help the person socialise (2) the strategies used to teach these skills and (3) the opportunities to practice these skills. For example; Teach 'turn taking in conversation' using a video Social Story, role play and introduce a buddy at school for recess and lunch.</p> |
| <p>Restricted/repetitive behaviours or interests Write down what RRB behaviours you see, eg. they obsess about Star Wars so much it causes distress, stick rigidly to a routine that's hard to keep the same, insist on sameness at family mealtimes, struggle with unplanned changes and every day transitions.</p> | <p>Think visual and structure Write down matched strategies you can put in place to support the person's RRB e.g. a visual schedule to set limits and boundaries, increase leisure activities to reduce obsessions, teach flexibility and give warning to help cope with change.</p> |
| <p>Sensory What sensory input are they seeking or avoiding? What sensory issues do you see? Are there behaviours that seem to be seeking or avoiding certain sensations (if appropriate)?</p> | <p>(1) Adapt environments to be more sensory friendly where possible (thinking about heat, light, smell, noise, busyness etc) (2) schedule a range of sensory activities through the day to help the person stay in the right alertness zone (3) teach the person to manage difficult sensory experiences e.g. using earphones when it is too noisy.</p> |
| <p>Theories of thinking and learning (Theory of Mind, Executive Functioning, Weak Central Coherence) Write down examples you have observed. For example; difficulty with planning ahead & organising their belongings, difficulty waiting, finding it hard to act flexibly, focuses on irrelevant details, repeats same part of DVD over and over.</p> | <p>Think visual and structure Write down strategies you can use to support the person. For example; use a visual schedule to organise the day. Teach a waiting skill. Use first-then to negotiate DVD issues. Support Theory of Mind by using cartooning strategy. Use choice boards to provide options for free time.</p> |