

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)

Many parents and carers of people on the autism spectrum seek advice and help to understand and deal with their child's challenging behaviour.

At Aspect, we believe where there is challenging behaviour, Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is the best approach that supports the right of every person of any age to make age-appropriate choices; and to have equal opportunity regardless of ability or disability; and to have full participation and inclusion in society with respect for difference and acceptance as part of a diverse humanity.

What is Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)?

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is an evidence-based framework for supporting situations where there is challenging behaviour. It can be used with an individual or across an organisation or school.

Challenging behaviour is any persistent behaviour that causes difficulties and has the potential to impact a person and their family's quality of life. It's called 'challenging' because it challenges everyone who supports the person to understand why it is happening and to work together to find a solution.

PBS is a comprehensive approach that includes a strong values and human rights base, evidence-based theory and certain process that all have to occur to meet the definition of good practice PBS. PBS is based on a model that explains why challenging behaviour happens, including interactions between the person, their environment and those people who support them. PBS understands that all challenging behaviour has a purpose or reason (this is called the 'function'), that it is not random or meaningless and that all behaviour aims to achieve or get away from something.

PBS is the generic name for the evidence based practice. There are branded programs that include elements of PBS, including programs such as Stepping Stones Triple P, '123 Magic' and Signposts..

PBS in practice

What PBS is	What PBS isn't
PBS is proactive and preventative. This means we try to anticipate and avoid known difficulties to reduce stress and upset to create calm learning environments.	PBS is not a quick fix or reactive approach to managing challenging behaviour. These approaches often result in the isolation and exclusion of people on the autism spectrum.
PBS is positive. This means increasing and strengthening helpful behaviours through 'positive reinforcement', not just stopping behaviours of concern	PBS does not use strategies designed to be unpleasant or aversive to reduce challenging behaviour. This includes 'time out' if used as a punishment
PBS addresses all areas that impact behaviour and quality of life, including the person, their environments and those people who support the person.	PBS is not a therapy that is only done with the individual (although some direct work might be part of the process).
PBS uses principles from the science of learning called 'Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA)' and can include a range of other social, psychological and medical approaches	PBS is different from Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention (EIBI) which is sometimes known as 'ABA'. EIBI is a specific early intervention for children on the autism spectrum, not a framework for responding to challenging behavior.
PBS understands that certain safety strategies used in response to challenging behaviour have the potential to be misused. PBS supports the transparent monitoring of 'Restricted Practices' such as exclusionary time out, restraint, medication for challenging behaviour or restrictions on choice.	PBS is not a way to control a person but to develop positive environments that make challenging behaviour unnecessary, inefficient and ineffective. PBS does not use prohibited practices.

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The essential features of a PBS support plan are:

- Developed and implemented by a collaborative team that promotes communication, consultation and coordination. Team work promotes a consistent approach that needs to be monitored and evaluated. The aim is for all who are involved in the process, particularly the person on the autism spectrum, to be valued and consulted, and to understand and agree to the plan.
- An assessment that includes the person's quality of life, individual strengths, abilities and support needs. An investigation into the challenging behaviour, through observation and data collection, is called a functional behavioural assessment.
- Considers the 'function' or purpose of a challenging behaviour and uses this to teach socially appropriate replacement behaviours that allow the person to have their needs met. Often this involves teaching communication or coping skills.
- A multi-component plan that includes strategies to prevent the challenging behaviour, develop replacement behaviours and provide positive reinforcement.
- Strategies that are easy to use and are implemented accurately and consistently, in important routines across all areas of a person's life.

More information about PBS

You can find more information about PBS on the Aspect website at <https://www.autismspectrum.org.au/pbs>