

UNDERSTANDING & RESPONDING TO BEHAVIOR CONCERNS

ALL BEHAVIOR COMMUNICATES SOMETHING AND SERVES A PURPOSE OR A FUNCTION.

Typically, the person with the identified behavior concern doesn't have a problem with their behavior, they are meeting a need in a way they know how.

When we look at addressing behaviors that are considered maladaptive (unhealthy, unsafe etc.) we need to look at teaching replacement behaviors and skills so that the person can get their needs met in healthy and safe ways. These should serve the same function as the originally identified behavior.



WHAT MOTIVATES THE DISPLAY OF OUR BEHAVIOR?

There are 5 typical functions that are considered when assessing target behaviors - MEATS!

- Medical** *Is there something going on medically that can explain the person's behavior?*
- Escape** *Is the person trying to avoid or get away from something?*
- Attention** *Is the person trying to get someone's attention?*
- Tangible** *Is the person trying to gain access to something?*
- Sensory** *Is the person seeking or avoiding some type of stimulation or input?*

CONSIDER DOING THE ABC'S

The ABC method can be helpful to track behavior concerns to bring to the attention of behavior support or other professionals.

- Antecedent** *What seemed to trigger the behavior? Or, what happened before the behavior occurred?*
- Behavior** *What did the behavior look like? Be specific and concrete.*
- Consequence** *What was the response to the behavior?*

With that said, it's difficult to provide strategies for a behavior concern without assessing for the function or knowing the context and circumstances that the behavior is displayed. **Specific intervention strategies should only be implemented under the guidance of a professional.**

GENERAL TIPS THAT CAN BE INDIVIDUALIZED

Demands placed should be given in a way that honors a person's communication style.

Can the person handle 1-2 step directions? Do they need a visual, use an electronic device or picture exchange system?

State what you want to see versus what you don't. In other ways strive for the positive.

"Use walking feet" instead of "don't run."

Praise often and specifically!

We tend to do a lot of correcting, re-directing etc. When you see a loved one making a good choice, engaging in a positive behavior, let them know it!

Positive reinforcement can take different forms. Consider what is sustainable to keep up.

- Praise
- Attention
- Tangible items

Offer choices when possible

We all seek agency & control over our lives whether or not we can communicate it. Choice is a key part of this.

Prepare for transitions or changes in routine.

Consider a "heads up," activity for during a transition, "First, then" visuals

Set boundaries and expectations.

This allows a person to know what's acceptable and unacceptable, safe versus unsafe, etc.

Be open about behavior concerns with providers who are responsible for the direct care or monitoring of your loved one.

What we don't know, we don't know! Knowing about behavior concerns can help across all environments.

ASK YOUR CARE MANAGER FOR SUPPORTS & SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ADDRESS BEHAVIOR CONCERNS OF A LOVED ONE