

Hawaii State Council on Developmental Disabilities Position Paper

POSITIVE BEHAVIORAL SUPPORTS

POLICY

The Council believes that it is imperative for individuals to be able to express their personal needs and desires in positive ways that help them achieve a sense of self-determination and an improved quality of life.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of most behavior is to communicate. There is a need to “recognize that behavior is an attempt to respond to the things going on around a person, to influence those events, and to structure the environment to best meet the needs of the individual. Behavior is also seen as a way of controlling impulses (or sometimes not...), and of conforming (or not) to generally accepted social standards ... and the result of complex neurological and sensory processes.” (The Mandt System, David Mandt & Associates, January 1, 2005.)

“What others view as a “behavior problem” is often an individual’s response to the complex ways in which events in the environment interact. Behaviors are learned responses to particular environmental situations, interactions, or events in an effort to accomplish what an individual needs or wants. Viewed this way, these behaviors, rather than being seen as “problems” can be interpreted as person’s logical response to environments that are not supportive of his/her goals and interests.” (*Positive Behavioral Support*. TASH, 2006)

“Behavioral support” is the ongoing process of providing the least amount of structure necessary for individuals to live, learn, work, and play in the community; and a set of interventions designed to help people to use their own strengths to meet their own needs.” (The Mandt System, David Mandt & Associates, January 1, 2005.)

A review of “best practices” suggests that in order to successfully support people in the community the following are needed:

1. Recognition that a person’s behavior is often a reaction to the environment and need to communicate preferences and wants with others;
2. Use of positive behavioral supports, which promote the dignity and respect of individuals;
3. Use of assessments, person-centered approaches, the least intrusive strategies, and the principles of self-determination; and
4. Understanding that the individual’s supporters and those surrounding the individual are crucial, are part of a reciprocal relationship, and also need education and information on best practices in order to effectively support the individual.

POSITION

Based on current best practices, the Council recommends that the following be implemented to successfully support people in the community:

1. Individualized planning using a “person-centered/directed approach” in which the individual actively participates in and leads the planning process with the help of family and key supporters. The approach must assure that people are living in settings conducive for the individual; must include recognizing their interest and preferences; and must provide opportunities for meaningful relationships with family and friends.
2. The principles of self-determination, which are critical in ensuring that people feel a sense of comfort, security, well-being, safety, belonging, and ownership. An integral part of self-determination is that the individual has control over major life decisions, such as where and with whom to live, and daily choices.
3. Flexible and individualized supports and services with sufficient funding and natural supports to accomplish desired outcomes.
4. Education and supports to help individuals find ways to communicate their needs, wants, and preferences in positive ways and to increase their awareness as to how their behavior affects others while supporting their attempts to succeed.
5. Education and training for families, supporters, and direct support workers to build capacity and expertise. Training should include the development and/or strengthening of concrete skills, such as communication (in the mode appropriate for the person), problem solving, and conflict resolution.
6. Positive behavioral support plans that at a minimum include:
 - a. A comprehensive assessment, such as a Functional Behavioral Assessment, in which it is important to understand what a person is trying to communicate through his/her behavior. The assessment is based on gathering information by talking with and directly observing the person and people that know the person, and an analysis of the relationships between the individual’s behavior and the environment. (*Functional Assessment of Behavior*. US DOE, OSEP Technical Assistance Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports, 2006.)
 - b. Clearly defined desired goals and outcomes that result in improved quality of life.
 - c. Culturally competent strategies and activities that: assist individuals with developing more effective ways of communicating, identifying and managing emotions, and expressing needs and fulfilling wants; minimize or reduce stressors; train caregivers; modify the environment; strengthen relationships; provide opportunities for the individual to exercise more control of their lives; and increase access to and participation in the community.
7. A statewide crisis network which builds upon interagency and community collaboration and teaming, focuses on crisis prevention, and provides supports based on a positive behavioral support plan.