

# **Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)**

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# Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)

- Standards related to Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- Definition of FBA
- Purpose of a FBA
- Basic Elements of a FBA

# Positive Supports Rule 9544.0005

## Purpose

- Chapter 9544 establishes methods, procedures and standards to be used by providers governed by this chapter for the use of positive support strategies with persons receiving services.

# Positive Supports Rule 9544.0005

## Purpose (2)

- The purpose of these rules is to improve the quality of life of persons receiving home and community-based services or other licensed services by:

# Positive Supports Rule 9544.0005

## Purpose (3)

- A. promoting community participation, person-centeredness and an approach that focuses on supporting persons receiving services in the most integrated setting;
- B. Focusing on creating quality environments and lifestyles as primary responsibilities of license holders;

# Positive Supports Rule 9544.0005

## Purpose (4)

- C. Ensuring collaborative, team-based development of positive support strategies;
- D. Providing training to the person who receives services to improve the person's skills and facilitate the person's ability to meet self-identified goals;
- E. Increasing the person's self-determination abilities so the person may engage in community activity to the greatest degree reasonably attainable;

# Positive Supports Rule 9544.0005

## Purpose (5)

- F. Developing specific support programs that promote outcomes valued by the person, the person's family and the community to help the person receiving services improve the person's quality of life.
- G. Ensuring people are free from humiliating and demeaning procedures;

# Positive Supports Rule 9544.0005

## Purpose (6)

- H. Eliminating all uses of aversive or deprivation procedures;
- I. Creating a consistent set of standards for license holders to respond to behavior when serving people across licensed services and settings; and

# Positive Supports Rule 9544.0005

## Purpose (7)

- J. Building staff knowledge and competence throughout a license holder's organization about the development and implementation of positive behavioral supports, person-centered planning, and community integration.

# Positive Supports Rule 9544.0020

## Definition of a FBA

- Subp. 21. Functional Behavior Assessment: means an assessment that
  - operationally defines the target behaviors,
  - identifies the situations in which the target behaviors are likely to occur and not occur, and
  - generates a hypothesis of why the behaviors occur.

# Proposed Positive Supports Rule 9544.0020 Definition of a FBA

- A functional behavior assessment must be conducted by a qualified professional and must consist of direct observation and one or more of the following elements:

# Proposed Positive Supports Rule

## 9544.0020 Definition of a FBA

- A. An assessment of **biological** factors, such as a medical assessment or a dental assessment;
- B. An assessment of **psychological** factors, such as a diagnostic assessment or a suicidality assessment;
- C. An assessment of **environmental** factors, such as direct observation or interviewing a significant individual in the person's life; and
- D. An assessment of **quality of life** indicators based on the person's goals and needs within each domain of a meaningful life.

# Proposed Positive Supports Rule 9544.0040

## Subp. 3 Required Elements

- The professional must use the evaluation to generate a hypothesis about why the behavior occurs.



# Additional Resources

The Association for  
Positive Behavior Support (APBS)

Positive Behavior Support Standards of Practice  
(March 2007)

- V. Comprehensive Person Centered and Functional Behavior Assessments

[www.apbs.org](http://www.apbs.org)



# Definition of FBA

- A **functional behavior assessment** is a collection of methods for gathering information about antecedents, behaviors and consequences in order to determine the reason (function) of behavior.

(Horner, 1994; Sugai et al., 2000)



# FBA Multi-method Strategy

- FBA is a multi-method strategy involving a full range of procedures and methods such as: observations, interviews, and review of records regarding a person's, their target behaviors, antecedents and consequences.

# Purpose of a FBA

- To gather information that can be used to develop effective intervention and support strategies for a person.

# 4 Basic Goals of a FBA

1) To identify the full range of target behaviors that are of concern for a person and how those behaviors may occur or be related as response classes or escalating sequences.

## 4 Basic Goals of a FBA (2)

2) Identification of the broader setting events and more immediate antecedents that appear to increase the likelihood of the occurrence of the target behaviors

## 4 Basic Goals of a FBA (3)

3) Identification of the consequences that appear to maintain the target behaviors (their functions)

4) Development of a hypotheses that puts all the information gathered into a summary statement that can be used as a basis for developing behavior support plans.

# FBA Process

- View as a problem solving strategy that consists of:
  - problem identification
  - information collection and analysis
  - intervention planning, and
  - monitoring and evaluation.

# Why Do a FBA

- To enhance the
  - **Effectiveness**
  - **Efficiency**
  - **Relevance**of a positive behavior support plan.

# FBA Ongoing Process

- Functional behavior assessments should be an on-going process of learning and discovery.

# When to Update a FBA

- FBAs need to be updated on a regular basis, especially if the target behaviors are not changing or if there is an increase in the frequency or intensity of the targeted behaviors.



# Desired Outcomes of an FBA

- Operational description of the target behavior
- Prediction of the times and situations when the target behavior will and will not occur across the full range of daily activities.
- Definitions of the functions that the target behavior produces for the person
- Development of a **hypothesis statement**



# Functions of Behavior

- The purpose that a behavior serves for the person.
- 4 Main Functions of Behavior
  - Social attention/communication
  - Access to tangibles (items) or preferred activities
  - Escape, delay, reduce or avoid
  - Internal stimulation

# 3 Basic Methods for Developing FBA's

- 1) Indirect methods
- 2) Systematic direct observations
- 3) Functional analysis

# Indirect Methods

- Process through which the professional gathers function-based information about the person from the person, teachers, staff, family and others
- Good starting point in gathering information
- Good to identify potential reinforcers
- Interviews, rating scales, record reviews.

# Sample Interview Questions for FBA

- 1) What is your major concern? Rank the target behaviors you see from most important to least.
- 2) What do you think is causing the target behaviors?
- 3) What is the reaction of other's to the person's target behaviors?
- 4) Is there a time of day when the target behaviors are worse?
- 5) Is there a time of day when the target behaviors do not occur or is better?

(These are examples and not a comprehensive list.)

# Functional Assessment Interview

## 4 Primary Goals

- 1) Identify and operationally define the target behaviors
- 2) Identification of the setting events, antecedents and consequence events as well as problematic routines throughout the day;
- 3) To obtain preliminary information concerning the hypothesis or probable function of the targeted behaviors
- 4) To identify appropriate replacement behavior that will serve the same function served by the target behavior.

# Limitations of Indirect Methods

- Information may be biased or misinterpreted
- Disagreements about the functions of targeted behaviors is common (can be multiple functions of behavior)
- Indirect methods alone are not as effective as combining them with direct observation and sometimes functional analysis of the targeted behavior

# Systematic Direct Observation

- The process of directly observing the person in the setting(s) where the target behaviors occur, in order to determine the setting events, antecedents, and consequences that maintain targeted behaviors.

# Indirect and Direct Observation Processes

- Indirect methods (interviews, rating scales, record reviews) provide initial information to help develop/generate hypotheses about the targeted behaviors.
- Direct observation methods can then be used to confirm and or develop alternative hypotheses as to the functions of the targeted behaviors

# Direct Observation is the Hallmark of an FBA

- Direct observation of antecedents, behaviors and consequences.
- Used to confirm the information obtained in the indirect assessment process.

# Systematic Direct Observation Guidelines

- Observe the person in the settings in which the problem behavior is likely to occur and in settings where it is NOT likely to occur.
- Observe at least 10-15 occurrences of the target behaviors (O'Neil et al.,1997).
- Most useful method for conducting a description observation is an C-A-B-C recording system.

# C-A-B-C Observation Forms

- Most commonly used observation form for gathering FBA information.
- Data form identifies the date, location, time, context, antecedents, behaviors and consequences.
- Observations should take place during the times when the targeted behaviors are most problematic.

# Descriptive Direct Observation

- By observing and recording the sequence of events that surround target behaviors, one can form hypothesis regarding antecedent and consequence events that may be prompting and maintaining the person's targeted behaviors.

# Limitations with Direct Observations

- Disagreements between the indirect (interview) methods and direct observations about the hypothesis of targeted behaviors
- Determining when, how long, and across how many days direct observation occurs can be challenging
- Behaviors may serve multiple functions.
- Behavior functions identified are only hypothetical because no experimental manipulation occurs during direct observations.

# Functional Analysis

- Another method in the FBA process (full range of procedures) used to identify the antecedents and consequences associated with the occurrence of targeted behavior.

# Functional Behavior Analysis Defined

A FBA method that involves evaluating specific antecedents and consequences under controlled experimental conditions in everyday settings where the behavior is most likely to occur.

# Functional Analysis Involves

- Two ways to design a functional analysis: one in which both antecedents and consequences are manipulated and one in which just the antecedents to the target behavior are manipulated.

# Four Maintaining Contingencies (Functions of Behavior)

- Social attention
- Access to tangibles (items/activities)
- Escape and avoidance (people/activities)
- Internal reinforcement (sensory/non-social)

# Functional Analysis Results

- Rates of the target behavior under each of the maintaining contingencies are graphed and compared.
- The conditions producing dramatically higher rates of responding are considered to be functional in controlling the target behavior.

# Functional Analysis Guidelines

- The manipulation of events to prove why the behavior is happening.
- Functional analysis procedures can be complicated
- Need to be conducted by a professional with expertise in functional analysis procedures
- A functional analysis can result in an increase in target behaviors, not appropriate in some situations.
- Should result in a graph depicting the results of the analysis

# Limitations of Functional Analysis Procedures

- Must be overseen, conducted by an experienced behavior analyst professional well trained in functional analysis procedures
- Involves setting up conditions for the occurrence of target behaviors, in order to identify relevant antecedent and consequence variables.
- In natural settings it is difficult to control all the possible variables influencing the targeted behavior.

# 3 Methods for Developing FBA's

- 1) Indirect methods
- 2) Systematic direct observations
- 3) Functional analysis

# Proposed Positive Supports Rule 9544.0040

## Subp. 3 Required Elements

- The professional must use the evaluation to generate a hypothesis about why the behavior occurs.

# 4 Key Elements for Hypothesis Statements

- Identification of the target behavior
- Triggering antecedents or events that predict target behavior
- Maintaining consequences that increase likelihood of target behavior happening again
- Setting events or factors that make the target behavior worse

# Hypothesis Example

“When Maria hasn’t had much sleep and is asked to do difficult academic tasks, she will curse, destroy materials, and attempt to hit the instructor in order to avoid those task demands.”

(Brown, Anderson & DePry, 2015)

# FBA Ongoing Process

- Functional behavior assessments should be an on-going process of learning and discovery.

# Desired Outcomes of a FBA

- To gather information that can be used to develop effective interventions and support strategies into a positive behavior support plan.
- Based on the development of a hypothesis statement generated from the functional behavior assessment process.

# Competing Behavior Model

- Helps provide a link between functional assessment information and the development of a positive behavior support plan.

# Competing Behavior Model Logic

- Based on the logic that many different behaviors, some more appropriate than others, may serve the same function.

(Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Todd, A.W., & Lewis-Palmer, T. (2000). Elements of behavior support plans: A technical brief. Exceptionality, 8(3), 205-216.)

# Key Points to Competing Behavior Model

- When a positive alternative behavior (replacement skill) provides the same type of consequence that problem behaviors produce the likelihood that a person will use the alternative behavior increases.
- Especially true if the positive alternative behavior is easier, or somewhat more efficient than the problem behaviors.
- The problem behaviors are replaced by alternatives that successfully compete.



# 7 Steps for Competing Behavior Model

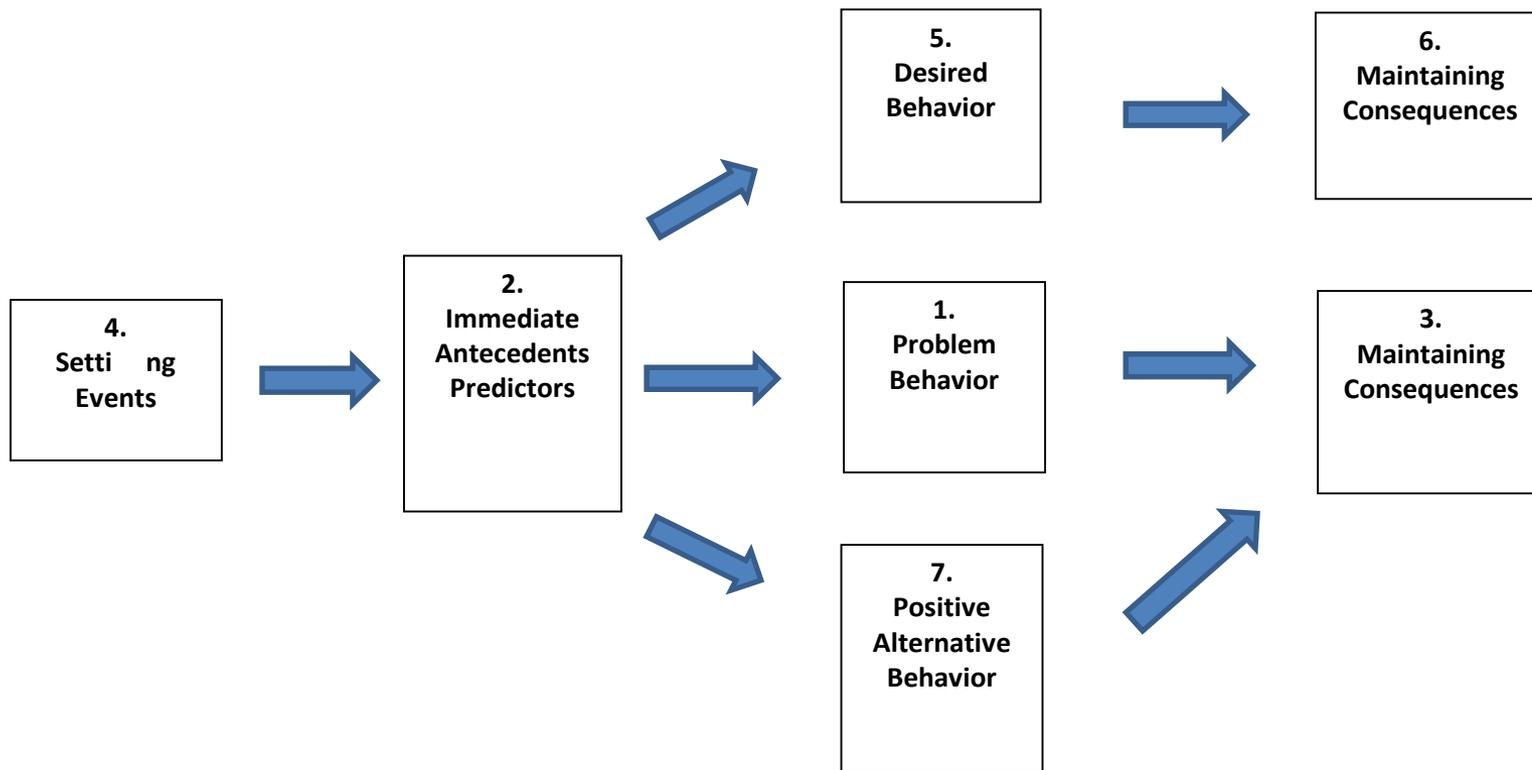
- 1) target behavior
- 2) predictor (immediate antecedents)
- 3) maintaining consequence of target behavior
- 4) setting events



# 7 Steps for Competing Behavior Model

- 5) desired behavior in that situation
- 6) the maintaining consequence for the desired behavior
- 6) the maintaining consequence for the desired behavior
- 7) a positive alternative behavior (replacement skill)

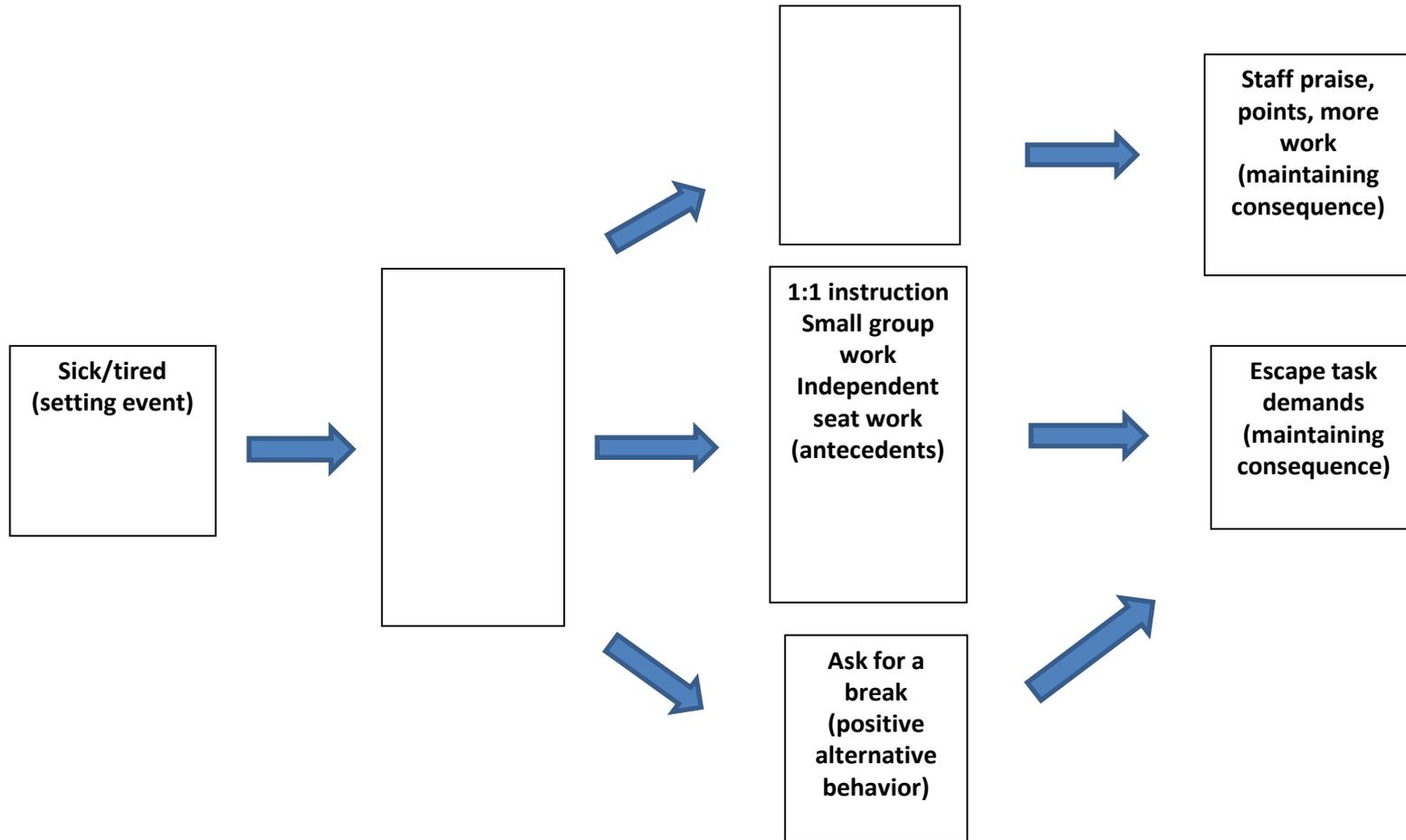
## COMPETING BEHAVIOR MODEL



Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Todd, A.W., & Lewis-Palmer, T. (2000). Elements of behavior support plans: A technical brief. *Exceptionality, 8(3)*, 205-216.



**EXAMPLE of a COMPETING BEHAVIOR MODEL**



Horner, R. H., Sugai, G., Todd, A.W., & Lewis-Palmer, T. (2000). Elements of behavior support plans: A technical brief. *Exceptionality*, 8(3), 205-216.

# Basic Idea of Competing Behavior Model

- The basic idea in developing a support plan based on the competing behaviors model is to make the target behavior irrelevant, inefficient, &/or ineffective.

# Competing Behavior Model

- Provides a link between functional assessment information and the developing of a positive behavior support plan.

# FBA Implementation Checklist

- 1) Collect information
- 2) Develop hypothesis statement
- 3) Confirm hypothesis statement
- 4) Develop competing behavior model

# 1) Collect Information

- a) Include key individuals in the initial assessment meeting
- b) Review relevant records
- c) Collect informal direct observation data
- d) Interview the person and other people who have direct experience with the person

## 2) Develop Summary Information

- a) Define problem behavior in observable terms
- b) Identify triggering antecedent events
- c) Identify maintaining consequence events
- d) Identify possible setting events
- e) Develop hypothesis/summary statement based on a-d.
- f) Determine level of agreement or confidence that people have in resulting hypothesis/summary statement.

### 3) Confirm Hypothesis/Summary Statement

- a) Collect formal direct observation information on behavior, antecedents, and consequences.
- b) Determine if direct observation data confirm hypothesis/summary statement.

## 4) Develop Competing Behavior Model

- a) Identify desired replacement behavior (long-term objective)
- b) Identify common reinforcing consequences for desired replacement behavior
- c) Identify alternative replacement behavior based on function of targeted behavior (short-term objective)
- d) Determine level of agreement or confidence in competing behavior model summary.

# FBA Implementation Checklist

- 1) Collect information
- 2) Develop hypothesis statement
- 3) Confirm hypothesis statement
- 4) Develop competing behavior model

# Purpose for Doing a FBA

- To gather information that can be used to develop effective & efficient interventions and support strategies into a positive behavior support plan.

# References

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