



# Glossary

**This glossary of terminology draws upon current PBS research and literature, and critical reflection on best-practice principles. This list is not exhaustive; use it to understand a variety of Positive Behaviour Support practice terminology.**



Terminology	Definition/Description
<b>Accessible plans</b>	<p>Plans (e.g., Targeted Intervention Plan/Risk Management Plan/Implementation Plan) that are easy to read/understand, engage with and action. For example, uses accessible language (e.g., Easy Read, avoids jargon) and information is clearly presented (e.g., clearly spaced, with one strategy presented at a time).</p> <p>Accessible planning is not a 'one-size-fits-all' approach, but rather it takes into account the needs of different stakeholders involved across PBS process (e.g., with different literacy levels and PBS awareness). Information may need to be presented differently according to the needs of different audiences/stakeholders.</p>
<b>Antecedents</b>	<p>The term “antecedents” refers to specific events/stimuli that occur before the target behaviour. Antecedents are commonly used as an umbrella term referring to triggers and setting events that increase the likelihood of target behaviours. More detailed definitions of these terms are provided below.</p>
<b>Behaviour Support Practitioner</b>	<p>Those who provide specialist behaviour support; I.e., are responsible for (and expected to have skills in) behaviour assessment, planning, implementation, and reviewing behaviour support interventions.</p> <p><u>NDIS language guide</u>: Behaviour support practitioners supporting NDIS participants are required to complete a self-assessment against required capabilities (according to the PBS Capability Framework) to determine suitability to practice. They are commonly referred to as 'PBS practitioners'.</p>
<b>Challenging behaviour</b>	<p>Behaviours that have a negative impact on a person’s quality of life (e.g., limiting community participation, opportunities, and relationships) and those that present risk of harm to self or others. These may include behaviours such as physical and verbal aggression, property destruction, reduced initiation and social or sexualised behaviours that negatively impact the person or present risk to self or others.</p> <p>These behaviours are referred to as ‘challenging’ because they challenge the service system to address them in a way that is <i>effective</i> (decreasing their frequency or severity, whilst also increasing relevant skills) and are <i>appropriate</i> (consistent with best practice, the person’s values, community expectations, and the context/situation).</p> <p>If a challenging behaviour requires/has been prioritised for intervention (i.e., is the focus for specialist behaviour support), it is referred to as the ‘target behaviour’ (see definition below).</p> <p><u>Synonyms</u>: Behaviour of Concern, Behaviours that Challenge</p>
<b>Data-based/Data-informed decision making</b>	<p>The iterative processes of collecting and analysing data (information) to inform evidence-based decision-making. These processes underpin all aspects of PBS, guiding formulation and functional analysis, decisions about who should be involved and how, the development of function-based strategies, and ongoing monitoring and modification to ensure PBS plans continue to meet the person’s needs.</p>

	Data-based decision making relies upon a range of qualitative and quantitative data and includes all relevant information collected about the person, their behaviour and environment. Data collection, collation and analysis are therefore core competencies for behaviour support practitioners.
<b>De-escalation strategies</b>	Strategies used to de-escalate challenging situations/prevent situations from escalating further by responding to early indicators (e.g., when the person is becoming elevated, but before the challenging behaviours has occurred).
<b>Evidence-informed practice</b>	Practices (e.g., approaches, supports and strategies) that we know may be helpful based on available evidence/data (i.e., there is good evidence that the specific approach/strategy will be effective for the person). PBS is often described as an 'evidence-based' practice. This is because PBS has been shown to be effective (e.g., in the research literature), but also because it includes a process for collecting primary data/information about a person and their situation to inform data-based decision-making (see definition above). This is critical to PBS planning, ensuring decisions and strategies reflect the person's goals, preferences, values and circumstances. This data-driven approach minimises the influence of confirmation bias and pre-conceptions (i.e., uninformed assumptions) about people and strategies.
<b>Formulation</b>	<p>The process of summarising relevant information to explain why the target behaviour occurs within the context of the person's life and circumstances. It is informed by the data collected, including the functional behaviour assessment (FBA), and takes into account environmental factors and systems to explain behaviour as a coherent whole.</p> <p>There are many different styles and models of formulation (e.g., functional analytic approaches and cognitive, behavioural, psychodynamic and integrative models).</p>
<b>Foundation supports</b>	<p>The kind of structures and practices in the physical and personnel environment that are considered minimum standard when providing support to people with disability. For example, the expectation that support providers would work with a person to build environments that are stable, predictable, safe, and meaningful.</p> <p>Foundation supports are premised on the notion that everyone has the right to live a good life, and support providers have responsibility in upholding and protecting a person's rights. In the context of a tiered or 'systems-wide PBS' approach (defined below), they are considered the first and primary level, because they are focussed on upholding human rights and can therefore reduce or eliminate challenging behaviours and remove the need for individualised PBS planning.</p> <p>Foundation supports are different to supports/strategies that form part of a risk assessment, as they are the supports that everyone is entitled to, and are not considered to be only as a response to (or to prevent) challenging behaviour.</p>

<b>Function (of behaviour)</b>	The purpose/reason for behaviour occurring (e.g., to escape/avoid or access something or someone). If the function of behaviour is not clear/apparent, then this is determined through functional behaviour assessment (FBA) and analysis.
<b>Function-based planning</b>	The process of developing and implementing behaviour support strategies that directly (and explicitly) address the underlying function of the target behaviour/s; determined through functional behaviour assessment (FBA) and formulation.
<b>Functional analysis</b>	<p>The processes of confirming/testing functional hypotheses to determine if assumptions about behaviour are correct. 'Experimental functional analysis' specifically refers to testing functional hypotheses by manipulating variables thought to maintain behaviour.</p> <p>Effective PBS planning and implementation often does not require experimental functional analysis. In many cases, the function of the target behaviour can be determined through open communication with the person, a comprehensive functional behaviour assessment (FBA) and careful observation. However, if experimental analysis is deemed necessary, it should be conducted by a qualified professional with specialised training in this area due to the potential for exacerbating harm.</p>
<b>Functional behaviour assessment (FBA)</b>	The specific process used to collect data to determine the purpose/function of the target behaviour. It includes various assessment methods (e.g., indirect and direct) that help to understand and explain the relationship between the behaviour, the person and the environment.
<b>Functional Behaviour Assessment Report (FBA Report)</b>	A formal report summarising the process, findings and conclusions of a functional behaviour assessment (FBA). It will outline the assessment process, identify factors contributing to and maintaining the target behaviour, and provides a basis for developing effective support strategies.
<b>Functional hypothesis/hypothesised function</b>	A data-informed hypothesis (i.e., 'educated guess') for why the target behaviour is occurring/what function it serves (to escape/avoid or access something or someone). This is informed by the functional behaviour assessment (FBA) and may need to be confirmed through functional analysis.
<b>Functionally equivalent replacement behaviour/FERB</b>	Behaviours/skills that serve the same purpose (function) as the target behaviour. A FERB must be a behaviour/skill that the person already uses (e.g., saying or gesturing "no") or be built upon existing skills in their repertoire (e.g., communication methods they use to communicate this need across this or other areas in their life). Therefore, identifying and teaching FERBs often involves adjusting supporter responses to existing behaviours rather than teaching the person new skills.

<b>Goals and objectives</b>	<p>The 'PBS goal' refers to the aim/desired outcome of PBS for the person, and the 'objectives' refer to the specific steps required to achieve this. It will focus on quality of life (QoL) improvements and address challenging situations for the person.</p> <p>The person's PBS goal is developed with them and others who know them well and is the focus of the targeted intervention plan. It is informed by functional behaviour assessment (FBA) and formulation processes and aligns with the person's values and preferences. The short-term objectives (or 'plan objectives') then provide clear concrete steps about what will happen and how to support success towards the person's PBS goal.</p> <p>Please note: Implementation planning (see definition below) also requires support goals and 'implementation' objectives to promote accountability across the support team.</p>
<b>Implementation planning/plan</b>	<p>The process of translating a plan (e.g., targeted intervention plan, risk management plan) into practice, including specific strategies, responsibilities, resources for all stakeholders involved.</p> <p>Implementation planning takes place/is considered across the whole PBS process, including identifying and implementing foundation supports, risk management and targeted intervention plans; It's not a separate set of tasks that occurs after a comprehensive plan has been written. With clearly articulated objectives, implementation plans promote accountability and fidelity across the support team to ensure the plan is delivered as intended.</p>
<b>Maintaining consequence</b>	<p>The specific event/s that occur immediately following the target behaviour, which reinforce (maintain) that behaviour. The 'maintaining consequence' is different to the 'function'. The maintaining consequence is what happens immediately after the behaviour (e.g., 'others leave the room/environment'), whereas the function is the purpose of behaviour (e.g., 'to gain access to time alone').</p> <p>Please note: The term 'consequence' relates to whatever occurs after the target behaviour; it is not something negative or aversive, as it is commonly used in social contexts (I.e., "<i>don't do that..., or there will be a consequence!</i>").</p>
<b>PBS Process</b>	<p>The whole PBS process, from engagement and assessment through to targeted intervention plan development, implementation, and monitoring and modifying plans over the longer-term. It encompasses all aspects of effective PBS, which extend beyond the development of the written intervention plan.</p>
<b>Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)</b>	<p>A person-centred and function-based approach to behaviour support that upholds human rights and promotes quality of life (QoL) outcomes. PBS involves understanding the person's needs, the function of their target behaviours, and the environmental factors that influence this behaviour. This knowledge then informs the development of targeted supports and strategies that address target behaviours through quality of life (QoL) improvements.</p>

	<p>PBS encapsulates a range of interventions (therapies, techniques, strategies) and systems change methods to improve the environment and support skill development for the person and their support team. It involves a process of assessing, planning, implementing and reviewing.</p>
<b>Practice Documents</b>	<p>The appendices/attachments to the risk management or targeted intervention plan that support effective implementation. These can be used/printed as standalone documents (i.e., provided to stakeholders who do not require/want access to the full intervention plan or master document/PBS plan). These may include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• data collection templates</li> <li>• instructional/teaching strategies</li> <li>• visual prompts</li> <li>• role/setting specific documents (e.g., specific strategies for support workers, family members, teachers)</li> <li>• implementation checklists</li> <li>• documents outlining 'next steps'</li> </ul>
<b>Preventative strategies</b>	<p>Targeted strategies developed with the aim of preventing the target behaviour occurring again in the future. They focus on addressing the underlying causes of the behaviour, including setting events and triggering events, by improving the environment and supporting skill development. Preventative strategies play a crucial role in individualised targeted intervention plans that focus on improving environments and systems around a person.</p> <p>Please note: In a tiered PBS approach (see definition for systems-wide PBS below), 'preventative' supports and strategies may refer to Tier I (foundational) supports and Tier II (targeted) strategies, which should be established before more specialist/individualised behaviour support is implemented. Tier I and Tier II practices seek to prevent challenging situations in the first place and remove the need for individualised PBS plans (Tier III supports).</p> <p><u>Synonyms</u>: Antecedent-based or environmental strategies (those that address setting events and triggering events).</p>
<b>Quality of Life (QoL)/ Living a good life</b>	<p>A subjective measure of a person's satisfaction with their life, including their physical, mental, social and emotional wellbeing. While there are some universal indicators of quality of life (based on cultural norms of wellbeing), a 'good life' will look different for everyone as defined by their values and preferences and what is currently important to them.</p>
<b>Reactive strategies</b>	<p>Strategies used in direct response to the occurrence of challenging behaviours. These strategies prioritise the physical and psychological safety of the person and those around them and might be context dependent (i.e., changing support needs across their escalation cycle and across different settings/circumstances).</p>

<b>Restrictive Practices (RP)</b>	<p>A restrictive practice (RP) is any behaviour support strategy that restricts the rights or freedom of movement of a person with disability. A 'regulated' restrictive practice (RRP) is a behaviour support strategy that restricts the rights or freedom of movement of a person with disability and that is subject to regulation under the NDIS (RPs and Behaviour Support) Rules 2018.</p> <p><a href="https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/understanding-behaviour-support-and-restrictive-practices-providers">https://www.ndiscommission.gov.au/providers/understanding-behaviour-support-and-restrictive-practices-providers</a></p>
<b>Risk assessment and Risk management</b>	<p>The process of identifying, assessing and addressing potential risks associated with the challenging behaviours for the person and others (physical and psychological). This may involve formal or informal process such as developing a risk management plan, discussion with stakeholders, modelling and providing resources. Risk assessment is typically conducted before a functional behaviour assessment (FBA) to establish immediate supports for the person and mitigate potential risks.</p> <p>The risk management plan outlines the identified risks and the targeted strategies to respond to and address these risks. This is reviewed and updated regularly throughout the PBS process.</p> <p>It is important to distinguish between 'risk assessment' in the context of PBS, and an organisation's process for addressing the safety of practitioners. The latter refers to the measures taken by an organisation to ensure the safety of staff when providing behaviour support.</p> <p><u>NDIS language guide:</u> Risk Management Plans equate to 'Interim Plans' as described by the NDIS.</p>
<b>Setting events/ motivating operations</b>	<p>Environmental events or internal stimuli that influence the likelihood of a target behaviour occurring. These are also known as 'distal' antecedents and occur prior to the target behaviour but not immediately before it; For example, sleep deprivation, or access to preferred activities. The terms 'setting events' and 'motivating operations' are often used interchangeably. In simple terms, they describe events that impact a person's motivation by altering (i.e., increasing or decreasing) the reinforcing value of consequences. For example, when sleep deprived, rest becomes more reinforcing, which then increases the likelihood of behaviours that result in rest.</p> <p><i>Please note: There are technical differences between setting events and motivating operations, which are not outlined here. Practitioners should seek further training around if these terms/concepts are unfamiliar, as they provide critical knowledge in behaviour analysis (i.e., determining the relationship between the person, the target behaviour, and their environment)</i></p>
<b>Specialist/ Individualised PBS</b>	<p>Comprehensive PBS that includes (and requires) functional behaviour assessment (FBA) and formulation, and the development of function-based and person-centred planning and processes. Individualised PBS processes and strategies are documented in a target intervention plan. In the context of a tiered or 'systems-wide PBS' approach (defined below), specialist/individualised PBS would be considered the third and final tier.</p>

<b>Stakeholders/Key Stakeholders</b>	Those who are interested/invested in or affected by outcomes of the PBS process for the person. The person is the primary stakeholder, and other stakeholders may include family members and friends, supporters, service managers, and schools. Stakeholders are commonly involved in data collection, planning and/or implementing PBS plans.
<b>Supplementary Documents</b>	<p>Documents that improve the comprehension and accessibility of a person's PBS plan, but are not specific practice documents (e.g., instructional documents or templates). These may include (but are not limited to):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summaries of the plan: Easy Read versions/summaries for the person, concise summaries, specific services/supports (e.g., schools) as needed.</li> <li>• PBS team documents: Visual aids such as pictures or descriptions of team members and their roles, which can be updated throughout the PBS process.</li> <li>• Informational fact sheets: Fact sheets for the person and support team covering topics such as their rights, an introduction to PBS, outline/overview of important processes.</li> </ul> <p>Providing supplementary documents to the person and support team helps to ensure everyone has a clear understanding of the process and what's expected.</p>
<b>Supports and strategies</b>	<p>'Supports' include adjustments and accommodations that allow a person to live a full and meaningful life. These may include mental health and medical supports, or staffing/scheduling appropriate to the person's needs.</p> <p>'Strategies' are specific interventions that guide and instruct supporters, often focusing on interactions and routines. Strategies are commonly used to promote behaviour change but may also be used to ensure that supports are effectively implemented and maintained.</p>
<b>Supporters/Support networks</b>	<p>Those who are involved in providing support to the person and often play a primary role in implementing PBS plans. Supporters may also be referred to as 'implementers', and support networks as the person's 'support team'.</p> <p>Supporters may include informal supporters (e.g., family, friends, guardians etc.) and paid staff (e.g., support workers).</p>
<b>Systems change approach</b>	An approach that focuses on changes to the systems around a person to promote/enable best outcomes. PBS is described as a 'systems change approach' because it focuses on establishing supportive environments and addressing systemic barriers that may contribute to the occurrence of target behaviours. In doing so, it upholds and protects human rights.
<b>System-wide PBS</b>	A tiered PBS approach that first establishes the foundation of good support (foundation supports/Tier 1) before more targeted (Tier 2) and specialist/individualised PBS processes (Tier 3) are used/required.



	Tiered approaches to behaviour support have been developed and applied in school service systems (e.g., PBIS) and the principles of tiered models of support have also been promoted in community-based disability services.
<b>Target behaviour</b>	<p>The challenging behaviour that has been prioritised for intervention. It is behaviour that requires specialist assessment to understand why it's occurring (what purpose it serves for the person) and careful planning to inform effective supports and intervention. It has been prioritised because there is good evidence that addressing this challenging behaviour/situation will result in best outcomes for the person.</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> The target behaviour may be (and commonly is) different than the reason for referral. Practitioners will work with stakeholders to understand the reasons for referral (which may include a variety of challenging situations and behaviours) and collect the information/data necessary to prioritise the target behaviour for intervention.</p>
<b>Targeted Intervention Plan</b>	<p>The written document that outlines the 'targeted' strategies and supports required to achieve the person's PBS goals. The plan is developed in close collaboration with the person and others who know them well. It is 'targeted' because it should only include the information needed to support success towards the specific objectives of the plan as informed by functional behaviour assessment (FBA) and formulation. This will include specific strategies and planning for implementation, with relevant practice tools and templates attached, e.g., for monitoring and evaluation, and 'supplementary documents' to ensure the process and written plan is accessible and useful in supporting implementation.</p> <p>NDIS language: This refers to the 'Comprehensive Behaviour Support Plan' and is commonly referred to as the 'PBSP'.</p>
<b>Triggering events/discriminative stimuli</b>	<p>The specific events or stimuli that signal (i.e. 'trigger') the target behaviour. This is typically identified through functional behaviour assessment FBA).</p> <p><u>Please note:</u> In technical terms, discriminative stimuli (S<sup>D</sup>) signal the availability of a reinforcing event.</p> <p><i>Please note: Practitioners should seek further training around this term/concept if they are unfamiliar as it provides critical knowledge in behaviour analysis (i.e., determining the relationship between the person, the target behaviour, and their environment).</i></p>
<b>Values-based support</b>	Supports that prioritise the person's values and preferences, ensuring that supports and interventions are aligned with what matters most to them. It actively empowers the person to voice their will and preference, making them an active participant in decision-making and shaping their own behaviour support.