

International Journal of Positive Behavioural Support

Author guidelines for a practice paper

The purpose of this section

The Practice Paper section of the *International Journal of Positive Behavioural Support* is for practitioners to share information about effective, interventions in the field of Positive Behavioural Support that are function-based, person-centred, and/or constructional. Practice papers are by, definition, practice-based rather than research led. Practice papers must, however, be theoretically grounded in the definition and scope of PBS (Gore et al, 2013).

Contributions are welcome from practitioners, family members, and students. Manuscripts should have original value and be likely to benefit others. Manuscripts should total no more than 4,000 words and follow the structure outlined below. Successful manuscripts will include a clear and relevant aim, a replicable description of what was done, a convincing account that aim was achieved with supporting data, and a brief discussion of the outcome and its implications. Each contribution will include references formatted in Harvard style. All submissions will be peer reviewed for quality, clarity, relevance, impact, and appeal.

General guidelines for preparing a manuscript

The contribution should be written in present tense, except when describing what was done, using first person – (eg, I or we), and include relevant references from published literature, in Harvard format.

Cover page

This should have only the title and any sub-title; this is so submissions can be reviewed anonymously. The author/s details should be supplied on a separate sheet and should include names and institutional affiliations, including country / region, of **all** contributing authors. The author for correspondence must be clearly identified and should include their contact details, including address, email, and telephone number.

Summary (maximum 150 words)

A summary of the contents of the manuscript under four headings: Background; Method and materials; Results; Conclusion

Introduction – (approximately 750-1000 words)¹

The introduction should begin by describing the broad context or background to the project, (eg, many people with severe intellectual disabilities miss out on opportunities to do ordinary activities of daily living), and work toward clearly stating the project aim (eg, this project

¹ The examples provided are fictitious. They are meant to illustrate style and indicate content but are not indicative of length or detail.

assessed the impact of activity planning on opportunity for engagement). On the way readers will want to know why the issue is important to people using or working in services (eg, activity and opportunity affect quality of life), what is already known about the issue (eg, evidence from published research, such as compared to the general population, activity and opportunity are low), and why working on the issue is important (eg, pursuing improved quality of life outcomes depends on, but is not limited to, increasing opportunities for people to participate in activity). Our aim in this project was to increase opportunity for activity engagement through activity planning.

What we did and how it was done – (approximately 1000-1250 words)

This part of the manuscript provides important information about who did what with whom and how.

- Say who participated in the project – essential information only about contributors and consumers
- State the type of service and/or context in which the project was done
- Describe the essential components of what was done and how
- Describe how change was measured and assessed
- Say how information was verified, and how implementation was assessed
- Say how the information was analysed

For example, you might say five people with moderate to severe learning disabilities and ten paid staff participated in our project. All lived or worked at the same address, a shared tenancy. We ran an informal workshop in a nearby community centre in which we helped participants identify and describe personal and household routines. These were written in an accessible format for use in the home. The main aim was to harmonise staff support provided for participation in activity. We measured change by observing and recording activity participation for 6 hours, two weeks before and after the workshop, using the Active Support Measure (ASM; Mansell and Elliot, 1996). We verified the measure by having two people rate one session before and one after the workshop. The overall scores were identical although differences were apparent in individual ratings. We compared the scores before and after the workshop.

Outcomes (approximately 750-1000 words)

Here you describe what you found but be sure to include only information for which a method has been described. For example, ASM scores for all five tenants were substantially higher following the workshop than before. Proportional increases ranged from 67-98%. Tables and graphs would fit well in this section. Although brief reports are short by definition, they still require high quality data. Reviewers will want to know that the information presented is trustworthy (ie, can be relied upon), and that the measures used, and information obtained are relevant to the topic. Outcome data may be quantitative or qualitative.

Discussion (approximately 1000-1250 words)

- Say whether or not the specific aim of the project was met, and why your findings may be important and substantial for people with intellectual disabilities
- Comment on how your findings fit with what is already known
- Be modest about the limitations of your findings and the relevance to others
- Suggest next steps for practice or research
- Say whether or not the specific aim of the project was met, and why your findings may be important and substantial for people with intellectual disabilities
- Comment on how your findings fit with what is already known
- Be modest about the limitations of your findings and the relevance to others
- Suggest next steps for practice or research

For instance, you might say something like – outcomes from our project are consistent with those reported in the Active Support literature (eg, Flynn et al, 2019). We welcome our findings and note how tenants' lives seemed to have been enriched by increased opportunity for activity engagement. For instance, we noted more examples of activities being undertaken without requiring instruction from staff. Although limited in scope, we have shared our work as we believe it might benefit others involved in residential services for persons with moderate to severe learning disabilities. We encourage researchers to consider the potential merit of a more detailed component analysis.

References or bibliography

List citations or further / related reading.

Flynn, S, Totsika, V, Hastings, R P, Hood, K, Toogood, S and Felce, D (2018) 'Effectiveness of active support for adults with intellectual disability in residential settings: Systematic review and meta-analysis', *Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 31(6), 983-998. doi:10.1111/jar.12491.

TEMPLATE

Cover page

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Summary (maximum 150 words)

A summary of the contents of the manuscript of around 150 words, under four headings: Background; Method and materials; Results; Conclusion

Introduction (approximately 750-1000 words)

Replace this text with about 750-1000 words introducing the reader to your topic. Set the scene in your first sentence and work logically toward declaring the aim of the work you are describing

What we did and how it was done (approximately 1000-1250 words)

Replace this text with a description what you did, how it was done, and who was involved. Make your description as clear and simple as possible so that a reader could copy it.

Outcomes (approximately 750-1000 words)

Replace this text with a description of what happened as a result of your work. Make sure you stick to describing this as it relates to your aims and using only information obtained from methods described above.

Discussion (approximately 1000-1250 words)

Replace this text with a discussion of what the findings mean – do they match expectation and what has been reported in the research literature? Then describe the limits of your work and any ideas you have about further work or formal research.

References

List citations or suggest a reading list

Peer Review Policy

All submissions to the International Journal of Positive Behavioural Support are first reviewed for adherence to the submission criteria and only then sent to be assessed by an Editor who will decide whether they are suitable for peer review.

Where an Editor is on the author list or has any other competing interest regarding a specific manuscript, another member of the Editorial Board will be assigned to oversee peer review.

Editors will consider the peer-reviewed reports when making a decision but are not bound by the opinions or recommendations contained within. A concern raised by a single peer reviewer, or the Editor may result in the manuscript being rejected.

Authors will receive peer review reports together with the editorial decision on their manuscript.

Research and Publishing Ethics

You should only submit your research to us if the following conditions apply:

- The article/chapter/book/case study is original
- The work has not been submitted elsewhere and is not under consideration with any other publication
- The work does not include libellous, defamatory, or unlawful statements
- Permission has been cleared for any third-party material included
- Authorship has been agreed prior to submission and no one has been 'gifted' authorship or denied credit as an author (ghost authorship)
- The research has been conducted with the highest standards of rigour and integrity.

For manuscripts reporting studies that involve human participants, a statement identifying the ethics committee that approved the study and confirmation that the study conforms to recognised standards is required, for example: [Declaration of Helsinki](#); [US Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects](#); or [European Medicines Agency Guidelines for Good Clinical Practice](#).

It should also state clearly in the text that all persons gave their informed consent prior to their inclusion in the study. Participant anonymity should be preserved. Photographs need to be cropped sufficiently to prevent human participants being recognised (or an eye bar should be used). Images and information from individual participants will only be published where the authors have obtained the individual's free prior informed consent. Authors do not need to provide a copy of the consent form to the publisher; however, in signing the author license to publish, authors are required to confirm that consent has been obtained.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests Policy

A Declaration of Conflicting Interests policy refers to a formal policy a journal may have to require a conflict-of-interest statement or conflict of interest disclosure from a submitting or publishing author

The Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) states in its Guidelines on Good Publication Practice (2003) that:

'Conflicts of interest arise when authors, reviewers, or editors have interests that are not fully apparent and that may influence their judgments on what is published. They have been described as those which, when revealed later, would make a reasonable reader feel misled or deceived.'

Many scholars, researchers and professionals may have potential conflicts of interest, that could have an effect on – or could be seen to – have an effect on their research. As a result, some SAGE journals require a formal declaration of conflicting interests enabling a statement to be carried within the paginated published article.

A potential conflicting interest might arise from relationships, allegiances or hostilities to particular groups, organisations, or interests, which may influence excessively one's judgments or actions. The issue is particularly sensitive when such interests are private and/or may result in personal gain.

Articles will be evaluated fairly and will not necessarily be rejected when any competing interests are declared.

Examples of conflicts of interest might include the following, although it is not an exhaustive list:

- Having received fees for consulting
- Having received research funding
- Having been employed by a related company
- Holding stocks or shares in a company which might be affected by the publication of your paper
- Having received funds reimbursing you for attending a related symposia, or talk

If there are other interests which the reasonable reader might feel has affected your research, you may also wish to declare them.

*Please note that it is not expected that details of financial arrangements be disclosed when a competing interest is declared.

How do I make a declaration?

Please include such a declaration at the beginning of your manuscript the heading 'Declaration of Conflicting Interest'. If no conflict exists, please state that 'The Author(s) declare(s) that there is no conflict of interest'.

Author obligations regarding conflicting interests

- All forms of financial support, including pharmaceutical company support, are acknowledged in your Contribution
- Any commercial or financial involvements that might present an appearance of a conflict of interest related to the Contribution are disclosed in a covering letter accompanying the Contribution and all such potential conflicts of interest will be discussed with the Editor as to whether disclosure of this information with the published Contribution is to be made in the journal
- That you have not signed an agreement with any sponsor of the research reported in the Contribution that prevents you from publishing both positive and negative results or that forbids you from publishing this research without the prior approval of the sponsor
- That you have checked the manuscript submission guidelines to see whether the journal requires a Declaration of Conflicting Interests and have complied with the requirements specified where such a policy exists

Editor obligations regarding conflicting interests

The same obligations equally apply to editors or guest editors writing an editorial that will be published in the journal.

Additional Information

You may find the following useful resources to refer to for more information on Conflict-of-Interest policies, existing codes of practices and more general good practice in relation to journal publication ethics:

View the [Guidelines published on good publication and the Code of Conduct by the Committee of Publication Ethics \(COPE\)](#).

View the [guidelines published by the International Committee of Medical Journal Editors \(ICMJE\)](#).

View a [Common Standard for Conflict-of-Interest Disclosure](#) published by Center for Science in the Public Interest.

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