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# **PBS & Autism: Research, Expertise and Stakeholder Values & Preferences**

**Tom Tutton & Emma Gallagher 2020**

# Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)



**Autism specific service provider. Support people across the age and autism spectrum at any point through their life**

- **Diagnosis**
- **Early Intervention**
- **Education**
- **Individual & Family Support**
- **Employment**
- **Leisure & community**
- **Research**
- **Autism friendly environments**
- **PBS**



# Definition of terms

***ABA theory & principles***

***ABA application***

- **Workplace e.g. airport safety**
- **Autism & Early Intensive Behavioural Intervention**
- **Discrete trial**
- **PECS**

***ABA techniques: prompting, shaping, reinforcement***

**Positive Behaviour Support**



## APBS EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE INFORMATION

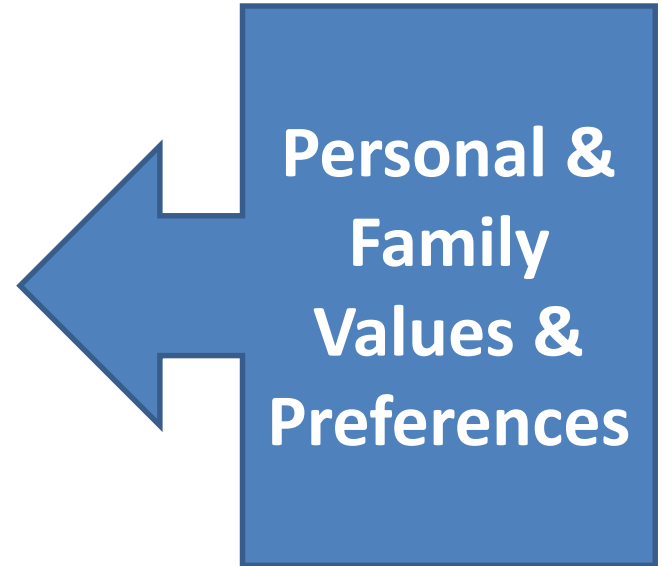
**Evidence-based practice in Positive Behavior Support is defined as the integration of rigorous **science-based knowledge** with applied **expertise** driven by **stakeholder preferences, values,** and goals within natural communities of support**

APBS Approved Definition March 26, 2013



**Sackett *et al* (1996)**

**Evidence  
Based  
Practice**



# Autism Context

Autism support services are increasingly demonstrating this with organisational inclusion plans, participatory research, co-presentations, increased employment of autistic people, use of peer mentoring etc.



This recognises the expertise and right of people to contribute to support services and is captured by the motto of the autism self advocacy network *'nothing about us without us'*

# Emma



**Growing up**

**My experience of ABA**

**My role & work  
background**

**My experience of Working  
in Partnership**





**POSITIVE  
BEHAVIOUR  
SUPPORT**

**The Aspect Think Tank is a group of Autistic adults**

**They review the Aspect's PBS element in Dec 2019. Three themes emerged**

- 1. Context is essential to understand challenging behaviour**
- 2. Autistic behaviours are not challenging**
- 3. Autistic voice helps to build empathy**

**Before we think about challenging behaviour, it is important to know how the world affects Autistic people and how this context can set the scene for challenges to emerge.**

### **Communication context**

'Tiana': "I spent the first 18 years of my life not speaking or speaking minimally to everyone except my sister. This was because she represented safety and she never reacted in a negative way to any of the things I said.

When I did speak, I got in trouble for being rude or unfriendly (As an adult, I have learned that this was because I wasn't born with a communication 'filter'). So I stayed silent. I felt like that was my only choice. I overheard others talking about me being weird or 'snobby' because I didn't speak.

Apparently, not speaking is also 'challenging behaviour'. It made me feel worthless and like I couldn't win no matter what I did.

Over the years, I have learned to mimic the communication of people who were popular in their context. This has helped a little but constantly being 'on' is exhausting. If I have a day where I am around people I do not know well who I am trying to fit in with, doing this leaves me at a level of exhaustion that feels like an enormous hangover. Which in turn can make me quite grumpy and saying 'no' to pretty much everything.

# Best Research Evidence



- 1. Broad search: Very few specific papers**
- 2. Select a paper and follow links: A few more**
- 3. Select an autism strategy and link to PBS & vice versa**

**“Are there behavioral interventions that are uniquely identified for, and effective with, young children with autism?”**

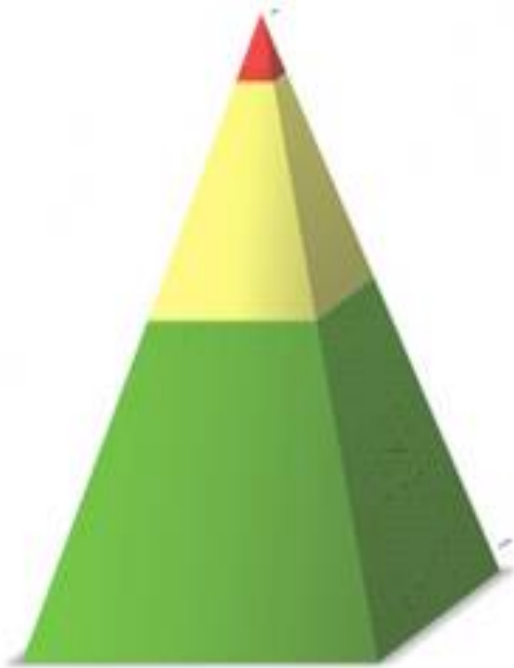
***“This paper [did] not identify any type of intervention that is **uniquely** effective with young children with autism”***

**Organise environments that minimise aversive events, maximise access to rewarding activities and outcomes**

- (a) a high level of child engagement**
- (b) access to preferred activities and rewards**
- (c) consistent & predictable system of visual scheduling**
- (d) continual access to typical peers**
- (e) an immediate and effective system of communication**

**Horner, Carr *et al* (2002)**

# PBIS adapted for autism



**Tier 3**: More intensive, comprehensive & individualized wraparound interventions

**Tier 2**: Quick response PBS interventions (a) using FBA to design a behaviour plan (b) implementing plans during ongoing routines

**Tier 1**: Address the core strengths & support needs of autism (a) organise a high-quality 'autism friendly' environments (b) arrange the environment to support positive behaviour (c) develop communication & social skills as part of the core curriculum

? Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)

Neitzel (2010)

## Loman, Strickland-Cohen & Walker (2018)

Use principles of **Universal Design** for Learning to support participation

- Multiple means of representation (visual supports)
- Multiple means of expression (Augmentative Alternative Communication)
- Multiple means of engagement (Systematic instruction & individualised reinforcement)

***“Designing & posting behavioral expectations with clear language and visuals may be beneficial to all students and staff in prompting positive behaviors”***

# 1:1 Structured / Visual Supports

**Structured / Visual supports are strategies to increase independence & success through individualised structure**

**= Physical organisation, routines, schedules, work systems, visual structure**

- ✓ **Proactively address antecedent conditions that may be stressful or induce challenging behaviour e.g. verbal overload, unpredictability or sudden change**
- ✓ **Persistently available visual cues increases independence in meeting positive behavioural expectations or replacement behaviours**

**Kidder & McDonnell (2017)**

# 1:1 FBA & Social Stories

**Brief functional analysis to help develop a Social Story™ that matched the function of the target behaviour for two boys on the autism spectrum**

**FBA based Social Stories can be**

- **Effective on increasing replacement behaviours**
- **Support maintenance of skills**
- **Preferred by people using the social stories**

***Pane et al (2015)***



Clinical  
Expertise

**PBS is one of 8  
elements of an  
autism specific  
relationship based  
approach**



- ✓ **Consistent & predictable  
system of visual scheduling**

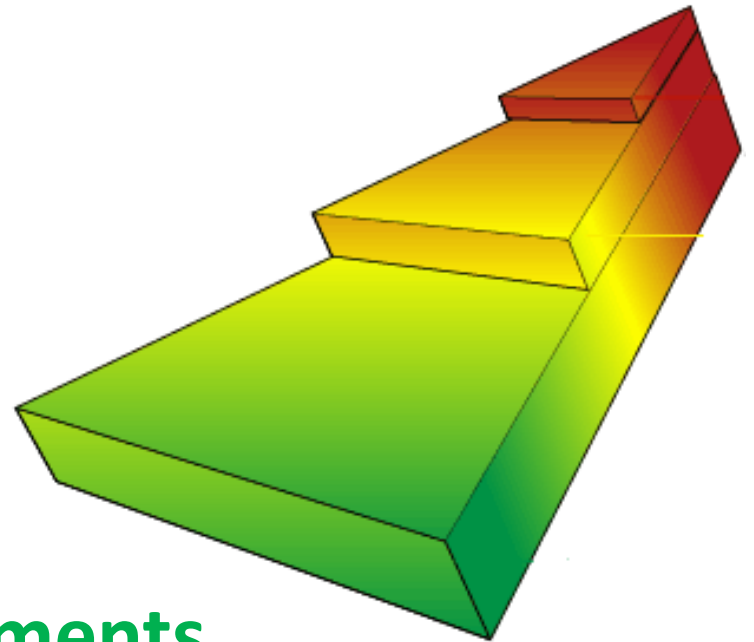
# Tier 1 adaptations

All students have an Individual Plan

- Quality of Life
- Strengths & Interests
- Communication
- Sensory
- Emotional Regulation

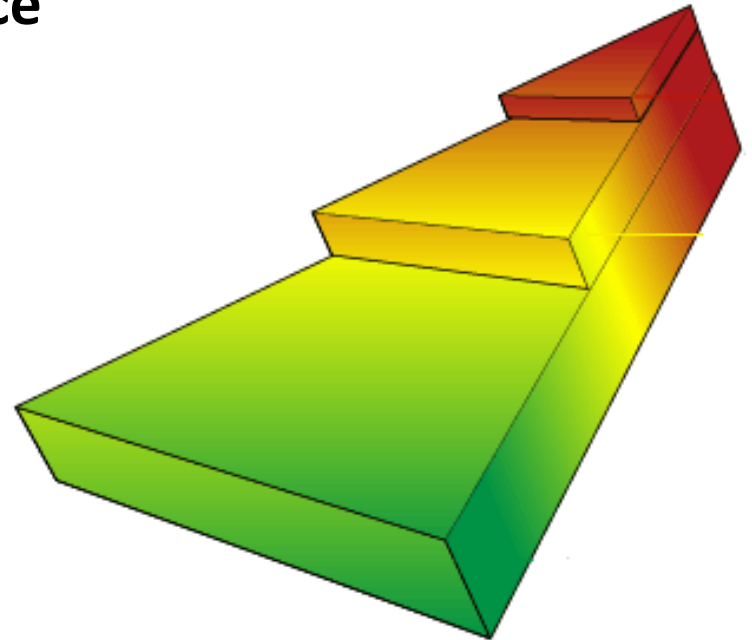
Whole school visuals &  
Structured Supports

Capable environments



# Tier 2 adaptations

- **Specialist autism group supports**  
e.g. 'Secret Agent Society' evidence-based, multimedia curriculum to help children improve their social and emotional resilience
- **Sensory assessment & support**
- **Simplified PBS**



# Simplified PBS

**Without a simpler manner of training, FBA likely will continue to be inconsistently or inadequately applied to many students who need it the most**

***It is not a watering down of principles***

**Simplification indicates more precise & straightforward language, rationale, & examples of how FBA can be applied in the classroom or home**



**POSITIVE  
BEHAVIOUR  
SUPPORT**

**Scott et al (2010) & Bradshaw et al (2012)**

Understand behaviour

**Before the behaviour**  
Setting conditions (most likely):

**A**

Triggers:

**Challenging Behaviour**  
Description:

**B**

Intensity:  
Duration:  
Frequency:

**Response to the behaviour**  
How do others typically react?      How does the person respond?

**C**

Identify the function

**The person is trying to...**

GET	GET AWAY
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↓

SENSORY	ATTENTION	TANGIBLE <small>Object &amp;/or activity</small>
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**Possible purpose of the challenging behaviour**

**F**

unction

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Why are they using this behaviour instead of something more helpful?

What do you think they are trying to say?

How do you think the person is feeling?

Proactive plan for intervention

**Prevention & stress reduction**  
Matched Setting Condition Strategies

**P**revent

Matched Trigger Strategies

**Teach quick replacement behaviour**

**T**each

Teach longer term new skill

**Plan to Reinforce replacement behaviour / new skill**

What?      **R**einforce

When?

How often?









































**Reactive Strategies** (see Response Plan)  
**Review date:**

# Spoon Theory

- **Spoon theory is a concrete way of describing and communicating the social / emotional and sensory demands for Autistic people**
- **Spoon theory can be used as a communication tool to privately and easily communicate levels of stress and overwhelm**

How will I use my spoons today?

I have ..... spoons to use each day, therefore, I must choose wisely.

 Get out of bed 1x 	 Shower 2x 	 Attend social event 5x 	 Go out for coffee 5x 
 Drive 4x 	 Make a phone call 3x 	 Garden 5x 	 Work 5x 
 Play games 3x 	 Clean the house 5x 	 Have a meal 2x 	 Walk the dog 4x 
 Study 5x 	 Watch TV 3x 	 Ironing 5x 	 Exercise 4x 
 Shopping 4x 	 Read 2x 	 Catch public transport 4x 	 Cook 4x 

Note: A good guide is 20-25 spoons per day depending on your personal condition. If you exceed your daily limit, be aware that you will be taking spoons from tomorrow's allocation, so be sure to plan ahead accordingly.

# Behaviour & Sensory

**Sensory issues (e.g. pain, discomfort or under-stimulation) can be setting conditions & triggers to challenging behaviour**

**Responses to behaviour can be sensory**

**One function of behaviour is to 'Get' or 'Get Away' from sensory**

**Environmental changes can be sensory & a 'low arousal' approach is part of PBS**

**Replacement behaviours can be sensory & coping**

***Note:* MAS has no 'escape from sensory' option**



***Group chat:* How can we understand & incorporate the perspectives, values and aspirations of Autistic customers? What are my next steps?**



# Feedback & Questions



***“Organise environments that minimise aversive events, maximise access to rewarding activities and outcomes”***

**Get to know the lived experience of Autistic people, the individual & partner in PBS**

**Maintain focus on Quality of Life, happiness & safe relationships**

**Use multiple means of representation, expression and engagement**

**Recognise strengths & interests to maintain engagement**

**Provide access to preferred activities & rewards**

**Address communication, emotional regulation, sensory at T1 & T2**

**Maintain consistent & predictable visual scheduling & organisation**

**Provide continual access to typical peers**

**If challenges emerge: ensure the behaviour is actually ‘challenging’ & appreciate the distress involved**

**Initiate simplified FBA at T2, consider sensory issues**

**Use autism specific strategies to assist e.g. FBA based social stories**

**Adapt implementation measurement tools (e.g. TFI)**

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