

# POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT WORKSHOPS

FOR PEOPLE WHO WORK WITH OR CARE FOR CHILDREN OR ADULTS WITH SEVERE LEARNING DISABILITIES AND BEHAVIOUR DESCRIBED AS CHALLENGING



**The Challenging  
Behaviour Foundation**  
making a difference to the lives of people with severe learning disabilities

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# Positive Behaviour Support Workshops

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## 1. Introduction

### About the Challenging Behaviour Foundation

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation (CBF) is the only UK charity focussed on the needs of people with a severe learning disability whose behaviours challenge and those who support them. There are three strands to our work:

- 1. Information and support:** Developing and sharing a range of accessible, practical information and resources to equip and empower families and professionals, promoting early intervention and prevention, supporting families whose relatives are at risk, and providing casework to families in complex situations.
- 2. Campaigning and influencing:** Informed by our family support work, this strategic work focusses on ensuring that children and adults with severe learning disabilities who display behaviour described as challenging, and their families are included, engaged and represented in policy and practice at a national, local and individual level.
- 3. Promoting best practice:** There is a range of evidence and practice that demonstrates how children, young people and adults with severe learning disabilities who display behaviour described as challenging can be supported to have a good quality of life within their local community. The CBF is committed to actively sharing and promoting evidence-based best practice, including working with researchers and practitioners.

### What does the CBF do?

We want to see children and adults with a learning disability whose behaviour challenges and their families getting the right support, in the right place at the right time. To work towards making this vision a reality we:

- Provide information and support to family carers
- Facilitate peer to peer support for family carers and professionals
- Deliver Positive Behaviour Support workshops to families and paid carers
- Listen to the experiences of families and use these to highlight the needs of individuals whose behaviour challenges and their families on a national and local level
- Chair the *Challenging Behaviour – National Strategy Group* which promotes partnership working and high quality support for people whose behaviour challenges
- Support services and local areas to develop good relationships with family carers
- Share and promote best practice

## About this guide

This guide is aimed at family carers, professionals and support staff across health, education and social care caring for children or adults with severe learning disabilities (or moderate learning disabilities and autism) who display behaviour described as challenging.

The Guide sets out how the CBF workshops aim to build staff and family carers ability to reduce challenging behaviour by increasing their knowledge and skills to support an individual's behaviour positively. The workshops facilitate family carers and professionals to work together to identify appropriate Positive Behaviour Support strategies for individuals they support that can be used consistently in all settings.

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation also supports local areas and researchers to build capacity and engage with families. You can find out more about this in our "*Building Local Capacity*", "*Engaging and Listening to Families*" and "*Involving Families in Research*" brochures. The work set out in this brochure can either be commissioned individually or in any combination with our building local capacity and engaging and listening to families work.

## What do we mean by 'challenging behaviour'?

Some children and adults with severe learning disabilities typically display behaviour which may put themselves or others at risk, or which may prevent the use of ordinary community facilities or a normal home life. This behaviour may be in the form of aggression, self injury, stereotyped behaviour or disruptive and destructive behaviours, such as:

- Hitting
- Kicking
- Hair pulling
- Destroying objects
- Headbanging
- Eating inedible objects
- Smearing faeces
- Sitting down & refusing to move

**Note:** The work of the Challenging Behaviour Foundation is specific to challenging behaviour associated with **severe learning disabilities** only.

## **What do we mean by ‘severe learning disabilities’?**

Severe learning disability is a developmental disability and refers to individuals who have either no speech or limited communication, a significantly reduced ability to learn new skills and who require support with daily living skills such as dressing and eating.

The workshops may be helpful for those caring for individuals with an additional diagnosis of autism, but would **not** be relevant for those caring for children or adults with Asperger syndrome / autism only. If in doubt, ask:

- Does the person have either no speech or limited communication skills?
- Does the person have a significantly reduced ability to learn new skills?
- Does the person require support with daily living skills such as eating and dressing?

## **What is Positive Behaviour Support?**

This is an approach to support that research tells us is a good way of working with people whose behaviour challenges services. It grew out of Applied Behaviour Analysis (the academic approach that gives us functional analysis) and personalisation ideas.

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is about:

Support led by values of choice, respect and inclusion for all people

Understanding why people challenge and basing support around that understanding

Improving quality of life (as a strategy and as a measure of success)

Awareness and exploration of the many possible reasons for challenging behaviour

Long-term commitment to supporting positive behaviour change

Staff, family carers and support workers who follow PBS aim to understand the purpose and reasons for an individual’s behaviour, then adapt the environment and a person’s support to suit them, rather than trying to change them or fit them into what’s there.

PBS eliminates punishment and aims to reduce or eliminate physical intervention by using positive proactive and reactive strategies.

PBS reduces the likelihood of behaviours by altering triggers, developing skills & teaching alternative strategies.

## 2. Outcomes

The workshops have been developed and co-produced at every stage with family carers who have lived experience of caring for a family member with a severe learning disability and behaviour described as challenging. This is alongside positive behaviour support professionals who are able to deliver the ‘theory’ and evidence based knowledge in a way that is easy to understand and gives the participant the tools to understand the person they are supporting and develop strategies to reduce challenging behaviour. The workshops help provide a consistent approach both at home/with the families and with staff supporting them.

### Learning outcomes include:

- Understanding reasons for challenging behaviour
- Identifying strategies to prevent and reduce challenging behaviour
- Where/how to access ongoing support
- Practical communication strategies
- How to improve partnership working between families and professionals

### What people say

*“Theory and practical balance was excellent”*

**Teacher**

*“Excellent – particularly listening to parents’ points of view – it is so easy to forget about a child’s home life”*

**Teaching Assistant**

*“What I like best about the workshop is working alongside parents, having the time to reflect on challenging behaviour, to step back from a situation and reflect on it, and then plan together”*

**Speech and Language Therapist**

*“It was of immense value as it will enable us to approach behaviour in a consistent way. It will also encourage a more analytical approach to our observations of behaviour which in turn is more likely to lead to positive outcomes”*

**Behaviour Support Leader**

### 3. Why CBF workshops are unique

#### A holistic partnership approach

CBF workshops are delivered by a Positive Behaviour Support trainer and a family carer co-trainer working together in partnership. The co-trainer is the relative of a child or adult with severe learning disabilities and behaviour described as challenging. **The family carer co-trainer provides real life examples from his/her experience.** This approach ensures that all 'theory' translates into practice and facilitates partnership working between families and professionals.

The workshops facilitate partnership working, to enable staff and families to work together to identify appropriate individualised behaviour support strategies that can be used consistently in all settings.

#### Developed and tested with family carers

The CBF workshops were devised and developed in partnership with family carers, and the content and format were extensively tested and evaluated with feedback from both family carers and professionals over an 18 month period. The terminology and illustrations used have all been selected to ensure the workshops are practical and rooted in daily life experience.

#### Follow up support

Free follow-up support is available to workshop participants through the CBF email networks (for families and professionals) and family helpline.

#### Evidence of results

The CBF workshops were piloted at five special needs schools in Kent and formally evaluated by the University of Kent Tizard Centre.

Both school staff and family carers reported:

- the frequency of challenging behaviour reduced
- the severity of challenging behaviour reduced
- challenging behaviour was easier to cope with

*“My daughter is getting on very well with the new strategies and is starting to understand that there are other ways of making her needs known.”*

**Family Carer**

*“What’s had the greatest impact is working as a team. We all know that we are all doing the same thing and consistency has had a huge impact”*

**Family Carer**

*“The workshops provided the perfect platform to bring the school and parents together and be able to focus on one thing – behaviour.... At the end of the workshop there was a really positive atmosphere of parents and school working together...”*

**Behaviour & Learning Leader**

## 4. Content of CBF workshops

The workshops give participants basic skills in functional assessment, reactive/proactive strategies and behaviour support plans. The workshops can be run for professionals and/or family carers; they can have the workshops separately or combined as shown in the format diagram overleaf. The content is the same for any group but activities and discussions are group-led so may differ between workshops.

The approach is person-centred, non-aversive and reflects families' perspectives.

The style is interactive and informal - participation is encouraged through discussions and activities in small/whole groups.

Understanding Challenging Behaviour and Supporting Behaviour Change form a two part workshop set about Positive Behaviour Support.

### **Understanding Challenging Behaviour** includes:

- What is challenging behaviour
- The impact of challenging behaviour
- Why do people challenge
- Context and environment
- Purposes (functions) of behaviour
- Reinforcement
- Setting events and triggers
- Sensory issues in autism
- ABC recording chart
- A story of success
- How to look after yourself

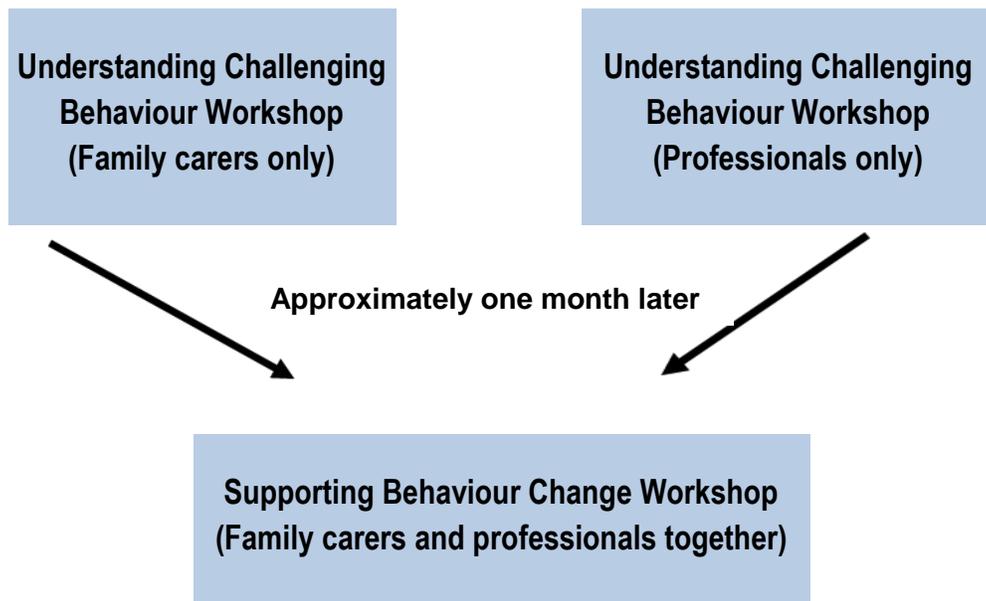
### **Supporting Behaviour Change** includes:

- Why do people challenge (recap)
- Reasons and purpose (recap)
- Arousal curve
- Positive behaviour support
- Proactive and reactive strategies
- How to prevent challenging behaviour
- How to stop behaviour escalating
- How to manage in a crisis
- What to do after an incident

Individual planning and behaviour support plans  
Working in partnership

**Note:** It is important that all participants attend both of the above workshops: to attend Supporting Behaviour Change, participants must have completed Understanding Challenging Behaviour first.

### Format of Positive Behaviour Support workshops



*This diagram of the workshops format shows how our combined professionals and families option works.*

The **Communication and Behaviour** workshop looks at:

- What is communication for
- How we communicate
- The interaction between communication and behaviour
- Communication and severe learning disabilities
- Common difficulties
- Communication systems
- What is a communication passport
- Practical activities

Communication and Behaviour is available either as a 'stand alone' workshop, or in addition to the Positive Behaviour Support workshop.

## 5. Practical details

### Cost

1 workshop = £1500

2 workshops = £2750

3 workshops = £4000

4 workshops = £5000

As *Understanding Challenging Behaviour* and *Supporting Behaviour Change* form a 2 part set of workshops, it is necessary to book both workshops as follows:

Family carers only = 2 workshops = £2750\*

Professionals only = 2 workshops = £2750

Family carers + professionals = 3 workshops = £4000\*

*Communication and Behaviour* can be booked as a standalone workshop or together with the other workshops for a discount.

\* Bursaries may be available for family carer workshops – please enquire with the CBF

### **Challenging Behaviour Foundation provides:**

Positive Behaviour Support Trainer  
Family Carer Co-trainer  
Workshop materials and PowerPoint presentation  
Handouts and information  
Travel expenses for trainers and accommodation if required

### **Host organisation provides:**

#### **Venue, equipment & refreshments**

The host organisation will provide a suitable venue for the workshops:

venue should be in a quiet, private room  
tables for small group work  
flip chart & pens  
screen & projector (for PowerPoint presentations)

Host should provide refreshments for participants (drinks, biscuits and lunch as appropriate).

### **Identify specific individuals**

Participating organisations will need to identify 12-15 individuals who would gain most benefit from their family and support staff/professionals attending. These should be people with severe learning disabilities whose behaviour is described as challenging (or moderate learning disabilities and autism). Please refer to the screening form.

### **Invite families to participate**

Once you have identified the 12-15 individuals, CBF materials (flyer, letter to parents, trainer profiles) can be used to invite their family members to attend the workshops. The workshops can be attended by parents, grandparents and older siblings. The CBF will email you copies of the materials to adapt for your own use.

### **Identify support staff and other professionals**

Once you have identified the individuals and have engaged with the families, we would ask that you liaise with the families to identify the relevant staff and invite them to attend two workshops (the first for professionals only, the second with family carers).

CBF workshops are designed to facilitate staff and parents working together to identify appropriate behaviour support strategies that can be used consistently in all settings, so it is important you enable as many people as possible who are involved in the lives of the individuals to attend. This may include short breaks staff, school/collage staff, health professionals and key workers.

### **Help with evaluation**

Participants will be asked to complete a short questionnaire before the first workshop, at the end of the final workshop and around one month following completion of the workshops. Your co-operation is requested in helping to distribute questionnaires to participants at the appropriate times.

All data will be treated in confidence and names will be removed. The data gathered will be used to report on the effectiveness and impact of the workshops and for quality monitoring purposes.

## 6. Next Steps

Please contact the Challenging Behaviour Foundation to discuss the workshops and arrange provisional dates if you would like to go ahead:

Telephone: 01634 838739 Email: [workshops@thecbf.org.uk](mailto:workshops@thecbf.org.uk)

Experience has shown that to engage successfully with families ideally workshops should be planned **at least three months in advance**.

### Checklist with suggested timescales

As soon as possible	Book workshop dates with CBF	
Minimum 12 weeks before first workshop	Identify the 12 individuals who would benefit and send invitations to families	
Minimum 10 weeks before first workshop	Identify the staff who work with the individuals identified and ask them to attend the workshops	
Minimum 8 weeks before first workshop	Follow up individual families to confirm attendance	
Minimum 4 weeks before first workshop	Confirm arrangements for venue and refreshments: A room appropriate for workshops Tables for small group work Flip chart & pens Screen & projector (for PowerPoint slides) Drinks & biscuits Lunch	
Two weeks prior to first workshop	Send out questionnaire to all workshop participants with reminder of date of workshop	
Workshops starts	First two workshops held (one for staff, one for families) – Understanding Challenging Behaviour	
Approx 4 weeks later	Final workshop held (for staff and families together) – Supporting Behaviour Change	
4 to 6 weeks following final workshop	Circulate follow-up questionnaire to all participants	

## 7. Frequently Asked Questions

### Who should attend CBF workshops?

CBF workshops are specifically designed for family carers or professionals/support staff caring for children or adults who have [severe learning disabilities](#). The workshops are suitable for those caring for children or adults with moderate learning disabilities and autism, but would not be relevant for those caring for children and young people with Asperger syndrome/Autism who have good communication skills.

The CBF workshops aim to promote a holistic partnership approach to behaviour support, so for the maximum impact we recommend that everyone involved in providing care to a specific child attend the workshops – i.e. family carers, siblings over 16 years old, teachers, teaching assistants and learning support staff, health workers, short break staff, etc. Please contact the CBF to discuss.

### How many people can attend a workshop?

Ideally 15 – 25 people for each workshop (maximum 40).

Note: for organisations offering workshops to both staff and families, please bear in mind that the maximum number of participants for the joint workshop (Supporting Behaviour Change for families and professionals together) is 40, therefore a maximum of 20 family carers and 20 professionals should be invited to attend.

### How long does each workshop last?

Understanding Challenging Behaviour: 4 hours including breaks

Supporting Behaviour Change: 4.5 hours including breaks

Communication and Behaviour: 4 hours including breaks

For workshops with family carers we recommend 10.00/10.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. with a break for lunch. A workshop for only professionals could be run a.m. or p.m. without a lunch break: this would take 3.5/ 4 hours.

### **We care for children/adults with autism - are these workshops for us?**

The workshops are suitable for family carers and professionals caring for individuals with autism where they also have a diagnosis of moderate or severe learning disabilities. If you are supporting someone with Asperger syndrome or autism and mild learning disabilities you will not find the workshops relevant to your needs.

### **If staff have attended training in challenging behaviour before can they attend the Supporting Behaviour Change workshop only?**

It is important that all participants attend both Understanding Challenging Behaviour and then Supporting Behaviour Change as they are a set to be done in that order. The activities continue from the first workshop to the second and everyone attending is able to use the same language and work from the same starting point.

### **Why is there a gap between the two workshops?**

We recommend allowing approximately one month between Understanding Challenging Behaviour and Supporting Behaviour Change to allow participants opportunity to practice recording episodes of challenging behaviour and identifying possible reasons for the behaviour prior to developing positive behaviour support strategies when they come back together.

### **Can other family members attend the workshops?**

Yes, we welcome mums and dads, grandparents, siblings over 16 - anyone who is involved in the day to day life of the person with behaviour described as challenging.

### **Some of the families who would like to attend workshops will need a translator. Can CBF provide this?**

The host organisation will need to provide translators where needed, and should inform the CBF so that we can allow additional time in the workshops.

### **Can families bring their family member with severe learning disabilities to the workshop?**

The workshops are not suitable for children or adults with severe learning disabilities, or any other children below the age of 16. Siblings over the age of 16 are welcome to attend. The trainers will be flexible to accommodate any additional needs of workshop participants.

## 8. Other CBF resources

The CBF offers a range of opportunities and resources which might help support your work and the families you work with.

You may benefit from our information resources to complement the workshops, or as an alternative if you are not able to book the workshops.

### Information Sheets

Understanding Challenging Behaviour: Part 1

Finding the Causes of Challenging Behaviour: Part 2

Positive Behaviour Support Planning: Part 3

Communication and Challenging Behaviour

And **many other titles**, available at [www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk) (**free to download**)

### DVDs

An Introduction to Challenging Behaviour

Challenging Behaviour - Supporting Change

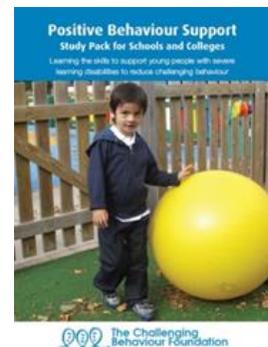
Communication and Challenging Behaviour

Self-injurious Behaviour

### Positive Behaviour Support Study Pack for Schools and Colleges

For schools and colleges who have students with severe learning disabilities, we offer our PBS Study Pack *free* with the workshops. This unique learning resource mirrors the content of the workshops and can be used for independent study or small group work to refresh staff knowledge or as a tool for any staff unable to attend the workshops.

For any schools or colleges not booking workshops, the PBS Study Pack can be purchased for £45.



*All the CBF resources are available from the Buy Resources page on our website: [www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk), by email at [info@theCBF.org.uk](mailto:info@theCBF.org.uk) or by calling 01634 838739. Please note, family carers can order any resources free of charge.*

### Newsletter

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation's newsletter "Challenge" is produced three times a year. Subscription is free of charge. To join our mailing list for "Challenge" please contact us with your email address.

## Networks

We have several networks you can join to receive information or share experiences and receive support. For further information or details of how to sign up see the links below:

1. Family Carers' email network  
[www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/supporting-you/for-families](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/supporting-you/for-families)
2. Professionals' email network  
[www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/supporting-you/for-professionals/professionals-network.html](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/supporting-you/for-professionals/professionals-network.html)
3. Early intervention reference group  
[www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/driving-change/early-intervention/early-intervention-project.html](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/driving-change/early-intervention/early-intervention-project.html)

## The Challenging Behaviour National Strategy Group (CBNSG)

The CB-NSG is an action focussed group which meets twice a year to discuss the policy and best practice around a variety of issues related to the care and support of children and adults with a learning disability whose behaviours may challenge. Members of the CBNSG are drawn from a range of backgrounds across government, professional bodies, services and charities and include families and people with a learning disability.

To find out more and to sign up for associate membership (free of charge) to receive updates see: [www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/driving-change/national-strategy-group](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk/driving-change/national-strategy-group)