



Dr. Geoff Potter's Clinical Corner

OVERVIEW OF VARIOUS
BEHAVIOURAL TOPICS &
INDUSTRY UPDATES

WHAT IS POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT (PBS)?

Positive behaviour support (PBS) is an applied science that uses educational and systems change methods (environmental redesign) to enhance quality of life and minimise problem behaviour. PBS initially evolved within the field of developmental disabilities and emerged from three major sources: applied behaviour analysis, the normalisation/inclusion movement, and person-centred values.

Although elements of PBS can be found in other approaches, its uniqueness lies in the fact that it integrates these nine critical features into a cohesive whole: comprehensive lifestyle change, a lifespan perspective, ecological validity, stakeholder participation, social validity, systems change/multicomponent intervention, emphasis on prevention, flexibility in scientific practices, and multiple theoretical perspectives. These characteristics are likely to produce future evolution of PBS with respect to assessment practices, intervention strategies, training, and extension to new populations. The approach reflects a more general trend in the social sciences and education away from pathology-based models to a new positive model that stresses personal competence and environmental integrity.

PBS Definition: PBS is an applied science that uses educational methods to expand an individual's behaviour repertoire, and systems change methods to redesign an individual's living environment to achieve first, an enhanced quality of life and, secondarily, to minimise problem behaviour.

Positive Behaviour means all those skills that increase the likelihood of success and personal satisfaction in normative academic, work, social, recreational, community, and family settings. Support means all those educational methods that can be used to teach, strengthen, and expand positive behaviour, and all those systems change methods that can be used to increase opportunities for the display of positive behaviour.

The primary goal of PBS is to assist an individual's lifestyle to evolve in a direction that enables all relevant stakeholders (e.g., teachers, employers, parents, friends, and the target person themselves) to have the opportunity to perceive and to enjoy an improved quality of life. An important but secondary goal of PBS is to render problem behaviour irrelevant, inefficient, and ineffective by helping an individual to achieve their goals in a socially acceptable manner, thus reducing or eliminating altogether, episodes of problem behaviour.