Using Individual Behaviour Support Plans

- An individual behaviour support plan, which documents supports and strategies based on students' unique and individual characteristics, will **benefit students with behaviour challenges**.

- The development of a support plan should be a **collaborative effort between parents and school staff** and should be done at the beginning of the school year or as soon as possible after a student has been identified as needing a support plan. It is important that parents are aware of this plan and are supportive of the proactive strategies, preplanned consequences and crisis management plan.

- The goal of this plan is that all staff working with the student **are aware of and committed** to using positive behaviour support strategies to create and maintain a safe learning environment for the student, other students and school staff.

- All school staff need to **review this plan** before working with the student. The plan should be kept in the office, with duplicate copies with each teacher working with that student.

- These step-by-step plans should include:

  - **key understandings** about this student's behaviour

  - conditions or antecedent events that are most likely to **trigger** the problem behaviour

  - **warning signs** that the student is experiencing difficulty

  - plans for **diffusing** the behaviour

  - **positive supports** to help the student increase his or her abilities

  - what **peers need to understand** learn to do in order to support this student

  - other **strategies** school staff can use to support and encourage this student.

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Sample Individual Behaviour Support Plan

Sonny (13 years old, Grade 7)

Objective of plan

Staff working with Sonny will commit to using behaviour support strategies to maintain a safe environment for Sonny, other students and staff.

Key understandings about Sonny
(Functions of problem behaviour)

- Sonny wants to have friends and be respected for his vast knowledge of video games and computers.

- Academic pressures increase Sonny's anxiety—he sometimes gets physically aggressive to avoid certain academic tasks, especially in math.

- Sonny often feels that peers are teasing or rejecting him—he sometimes gets physically aggressive to avoid what he perceives as peer rejection.

Plan

1. Staff working with Sonny will review this plan and sign to indicate their agreement to support this plan.

2. Be aware of **antecedent events**. Problem behaviour is most likely to occur when:
   - Sonny is presented with a new assignment, especially in math
   - Sonny thinks other students are making fun of him or rejecting him
   - Sonny misunderstands or overreacts to other students' casual comments.

3. Be aware of **warning signs** that problem behaviour may escalate.
   - Sonny starts talking to himself.
   - Sonny approaches the student he believes is making fun of him or rejecting him.
   - Sonny reaches for a desk or another piece of furniture.

4. Immediate **plans to defuse** the situation
   - Give Sonny a problem-solving card with calm-down choices (e.g., breathe deeply, go get a drink, don't react).
   - If necessary, ask other students to quietly leave the area.
   - Once Sonny has calmed down, he will outline a plan for upcoming activities, with assistance from a staff member.

5. **Positive behaviour supports** throughout the school year
   - Before asking Sonny to carry out a new activity independently, give him the opportunity to successfully practise it in a group setting or with a peer.
   - To ensure success, give Sonny structured assignments (e.g., with completed sample, cue cards, reduced number of questions required), particularly in math.
   - Work with Sonny each week to set personal goals and to set up a self-monitoring system re: completing assignments, getting along with peers. Review progress at the end of each week.
   - Select, teach and practise problem-solving strategies. Record them on a cue card for easy reference.
   - Select, teach and practise calm-down strategies. Record them on a cue card for easy reference.
   - Help Sonny to write a social story dealing with teasing (or perceived teasing).
   - Provide verbal praise privately when Sonny uses calm-down strategies.
   - Look for opportunities for Sonny to share the computer games and programs he creates with other students.
   - Send home weekly good news e-mails describing Sonny's recent successes.

6. Help **peers learn** to:
   - understand that Sonny may not always understand their intentions
   - reduce joking and teasing that can be misinterpreted
   - include Sonny in their activities.

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7. Staff will provide **additional support** by:
   - looking for natural opportunities to model calm-down strategies and problem solving for all students across the subject areas and throughout the school day
   - encouraging Sonny to join school computer club and providing informal coaching to help him create and maintain positive relationships with peers in this social setting.

> ### Crisis Management Plan
> *If aggressive or unsafe behaviour occurs in spite of proactive strategies, the school plan is to:*
>
> - Ask Sonny to leave the classroom and go to Ms. R's office. An adult walks with him.
> - If he refuses to leave, hold up the red card and quietly ask the other students to pick up their materials and go to another area (e.g., the library).
> - Have Sonny stay in Ms. R's office until he calms down.
> - Once he is calm, ask Sonny to express his feelings about the incident through drawing. With assistance, Sonny identifies an alternate way of dealing with similar incidents in the future (by choosing one of his problem-solving strategies).
> - Notify Sonny's parents of unsafe incidents. (Mom's cell number is 222–2222.)

I have read this plan and commit to using these supports when working with Sonny.

Team members' signatures:

....

....
Date: Review date:

....

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Individual Behaviour Support Plan

Re: _____

Objective of plan

Staff working with _____ will commit to using behaviour support strategies to maintain a safe environment for _____ , other students and staff.

Key understandings about ....

(Functions of problem behaviour)

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Plan

1. Staff working with _____ will read and sign this plan.

2. Be aware of **antecedent events**. Problem behaviour is most likely to occur when:

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3. Be aware of **warning signs** that problem behaviour may escalate.

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4. Immediate **plans to defuse** the situation

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5. **Positive behaviour supports** throughout the school year

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6. Help **peers learn** to:

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7. Staff will provide **additional support** by:

If aggressive or unsafe behaviour occurs in spite of proactive strategies, the school plan is to:

I have read this plan and commit to using these supports when working with [   ].

Team members' signatures:

....

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Date: Review date:

....

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Individual Behaviour Support Plan

Identify key understandings

- Begin the planning process by identifying at least three challenging behaviours that are barriers to this student's school success.

- Use data from systematic classroom observations to describe typical problem behaviours, and why these behaviours might be happening.

- Identify at least one positive strength-based behaviour.

Target specific problem behaviours

Consider the types of problem behaviours that might be barriers for this student.

- Internalizing behaviours:
  - anxiety (e.g., worries incessantly, is nervous, is fearful, avoids tasks or situations)
  - depression (e.g., cries easily, is pessimistic, is easily upset)
  - withdrawal (e.g., refuses to talk or join in group activities, avoids others)
  - inattention (e.g., has a short attention span, is easily distracted, does not complete tasks)
  - somatization (illness related to psychological distress; e.g., has headaches and/or stomach aches, complains of general pain or fatigue)

- Externalizing behaviours:
  - anger control(e.g., has temper outbursts or "explosions", is unable to regulate emotions)
  - aggression (e.g., teases others, threatens others, swears at or is rude to others, breaks others' things, physically hurts others)
  - hyperactivity/impulsivity (e.g., is excitable, is restless or overactive, talks excessively, interrupts others, cannot wait to take turn)
  - oppositional behaviour (e.g., argues, disrupts that play of others, annoys others on purpose, refuses to follow directions or respond to requests, breaks rules, including lying "and stealing)

Determine priorities

- Begin by choosing one behaviour of concern to target in the behaviour support plan. When possible, parents should participate in the identification of priority behaviours.

- This choice often depends on factors such as the impact of that behaviour on the student's:
  - well-being and the well-being of others (behaviours that place the student at risk or other staff or students at risk, must be addressed first)
  - participation and learning
  - relationships with other students and teachers
  - likelihood of success over the short term (e.g., within three months)

Warning signs, antecedents and plans for defusing

- Use data gathered about this student's behaviour to identify warning signs, antecedents or contexts in which the problem behaviour is most likely to occur. This data will help staff be aware of what to look for in the classroom in order to defuse potentially problematic situations.

- Having a plan in place to defuse situations will give staff confidence to act proactively and will help students better understand their role in managing their own behaviour.

Positive supports

- Identifying positive supports for a student is the most important part of an individual behaviour support plan.

- Identifying proactive strategies to help the student develop and maintain positive behaviours to replace problem behaviours is key.

- Identify specific skills and concepts that need to be taught, practised and reinforced, and the specific type of reinforcers that are effective for this student.

- These supports should be in place across school environments across the school day and throughout the school year.

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Role of peers

- The choice of a target problem behaviour in the plan is also determined by the impact the behaviour is having on other students. Consider whether the behaviour is affecting other students':
  - ability to learn
  - participation in the class
  - stress level in class (e.g., feeling of safety)
  - tendency to imitate the negative behaviour.

- Classroom behaviour expectations that support inclusive and supportive behaviour (such as including others or not engaging in teasing or bullying) can create a supportive structure in which peers model positive behaviour and effective social skills.

- Peers are more likely to support positive behaviour when they understand what they can do to help.

Additional support

- Identify other opportunities staff can use to model, teach and support positive behaviour throughout the school day. Use proactive strategies that will benefit all students.

Crisis management plan

- Some students with behaviour difficulties may occasionally become very agitated. When this occurs, the behaviour support plan for that individual student becomes a crisis management tool.

- All staff working with the student, and perhaps other students in the class, need to be aware of and understand this crisis management plan. Ideally this plan has been developed collaboratively by staff working with the student, including parents.

- Although the main focus of the plan is identifying steps for decreasing the likelihood that the problem behaviour will occur, but there needs to be a plan in place in the event that the interventions are not effective.

- If behaviour escalates and requires this alternate plan, the team needs to revisit the behaviour support plan as soon as possible to rethink and adjust the level and type of individualized intervention.

Physical intervention

- Physical intervention is not a strategy for managing behaviour and should only be used in emergencies.

- Teachers and administrators need to understand their jurisdictional policies on physical interventions, what training is available and what documentation, including communication with parents, is required.

- The goal should always be to increase proactive behaviour interventions so physical intervention is never necessary.

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