
Making this plan work – effectively

A planning guide for practitioners engaging
the people needed to make a behaviour
support plan work



The
Right
Direction

Working together on positive
behaviour support (PBS)

This guide provides an overview of how to help people engage successfully with the behaviour support plan

Ensuring the behaviour support plan works effectively once it has been prepared relies on the right people being involved in the plan and engaging with it at the right times in the right ways.

An effective model for making changes to behaviour is the ADKAR Model, by [Prosci](#), which we explore further in terms of how to apply it to the behaviour support process in The Right Direction resources on [engaging participants in change](#) and [engaging support networks in change](#).

The model proposes that successfully engaging people in the behaviour change process that underpins a behaviour support plan is more likely to happen when you involve people (most importantly, the participant who the plan supports) in:

- preparing the plan from the outset (building their **A**wareness),
- understanding the need for the plan, and believing in the plan and the difference it can make (building their **D**esire),

* ADKAR Model developed by Jeff Hiatt (2003), [prosci.com](#)

- the details of the plan and what it might involve (building their **K**nowledge),
- what they need to do as part of the plan and identifying what they need to feel confident in implementing the plan (building their **A**bility), and
- checking in, celebrating successes and supporting needs (**R**einforcement).

This guide outlines key steps to consider when preparing a behaviour support plan. The information provided in this guide is intended to support the behaviour support practitioner in communicating the plan with the participant and other key members of their support network. It is also intended to connect them and enable them to work together on the plan.

By taking into consideration and addressing these key steps, you will be able to gain input and feedback about the plan. You will also be able to identify any required changes to the plan based on the insights gathered from the people who will be involved directly with the plan, through:

- ensuring those involved understand the plan;
- gauging people's readiness and skills to implement the plan;
- seeking constructive feedback; and
- identifying any unforeseen barriers.

Key steps for practitioners preparing to connect people with the plan

Key resources

You may wish to gather and review the following tools and resources ahead of beginning this engagement process.

- [The Spectrum of Participation in behaviour support planning](#)
- [Your support network](#)
- [Engaging support networks in change](#) (using the ADKAR Model)
- [Engaging others in change \(video\)](#)
- [Preparing for and conducting inclusive behaviour support planning](#) (using the ADKAR Model).

As you prepare the plan

1. **Identify a complete list** of the people required to make the plan successful. This includes the participant, people with active roles in the plan and other people who need to be aware of the plan.
2. **Review the participant's wishes** and input, including their needs and preferences about their degree of involvement (eg: using [the Spectrum of Participation](#)) and their ideas and permissions for [including their support network in their plan](#).
3. **Consider how best to communicate** with each person, based on their needs, preferences and role. What communication style is most likely to positively engage them in the behaviour support plan implementation?
4. **Clarify their contribution** to the plan's success. Ensure you communicate to them their importance in the plan so that they understand the value of their contribution and what the value of that contribution is to the participant.
5. **Plan when and how often** to communicate with people involved – starting with the participant and key trusted people, to embed engagement into the behaviour support plan and review process.

When engaging with each person

1. **Check the plan's details and strategies with the participant**

Always follow their agreed level of involvement and ensure they have a trusted member of their support network present if needed. This is especially important for people who need support from people who know them well to interpret their communication methods.

You may need to include an independent advocate. Some states and territories require a formal independent person to be present.

The participant and other key members of their support network must have the plan explained to them and they must have the opportunity to ask questions and identify any issues. You must also explain to each person their rights to have the plan explained to them and reviewed. As the behaviour support practitioner, you must also communicate with them about any changes to the plan and ensure that they agree.

Time and resourcing can be a barrier to implementing the behaviour support plan for many people involved in the process, including family carers and support workers. Speaking with them about the practicality of the proposed process is critical to successfully and consistently implementing the strategies.

2. Remember the power imbalance

As a behaviour support practitioner, you have a lot of influence over what will happen in the participant's life.

Without a solid basis of trust, people may not feel able to voice any disagreement with the plan or speak up if they don't understand. It is your role to overcome this through [engaging effectively in 2-way communication](#) and practices that promote respect and build trust [such as Yarning](#) to ensure everyone can communicate honestly and openly to get the best outcome for the participant.

3. Show your respect for each person and their choices by listening, responding to their ideas and thoughts, and taking them seriously. Think about and prepare for the most suitable way to do this before any meetings.

4. Ask open-ended questions

Questions that can be answered with a simple 'yes' or 'no' can prevent people from expressing how they really feel.

It can be difficult to gauge their true views based on one word and people may not tell you they don't feel the plan will work or they don't like it.

You could ask:

- How do you feel about this plan?
- What do you think will work?
- What in here is unlikely, or least likely, to work? Why?
- What can we do to change this to be more effective?
- What would you add to the plan?
- What would you change about the plan?
- What do you need to help you with your part in the plan?
- When is the best time for us to check in to see how you're going with the plan?
- Can you explain back to me in your own words your role in this plan?
- When X happens, what's the plan?

5. **Things can (and probably will) change.** Invite feedback, not only when the plan is first explained, but also as it is implemented.

The plan can be adapted if things aren't working well – or if particular things are working very well – there are different strategies that can improve the behaviour support plan if you work together as a team and communicate successes and barriers.

Emphasise you are open to change and that the plan can (and will) be reviewed, not only as part of a process but also if the designed plan isn't moving the participant toward achieving their goals over an agreed period of time.

The participant and others in their support network should be aware of this timeframe and when/how to contact the practitioner.

Ensure that people know how to contact you and also when you will next be in touch with them.



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