# FROM SUPPORTS TO SUCCESS:

Agency-Wide Proactive Behavior Strategies Drivnig Integrated Employment



Rachl Ballard, Tim Kirk, and John Stidham

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# BIO

Rachl's journey began in Pre-Employment Transition Services, where she supported individuals as they explored their strengths, developed vocational skills, and prepared for greater independence. It was through this work that Rachl discovered her passion for behavior support and began to understand how behavior can serve as a powerful form of communication.

Rachl became deeply interested in learning not only how to help individuals connect more successfully with the world around them, but also how to help the world better understand, accept, and connect with individuals with disabilities. This perspective continues to guide her person-centered approach to behavior support, advocacy, and professional education.

She earned her Master of Science in Applied Behavior Analysis with an emphasis in Autism Spectrum Disorder from Capella University. Rachl specializes in supporting individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities by integrating applied behavior analysis with trauma-informed and neurodiversity-affirming practices. She is passionate about teaching caregivers and professionals practical strategies that promote independence, dignity, meaningful skill development, self-advocacy, and lasting behavior change.

In addition to her clinical work, Rachl is an Advanced Certified Autism Specialist, a Trauma-Informed Care Certified Professional, a Neurodivergence Coach, and a Certified



# Tim Kirk

BEHAVIOR CLINICIAN

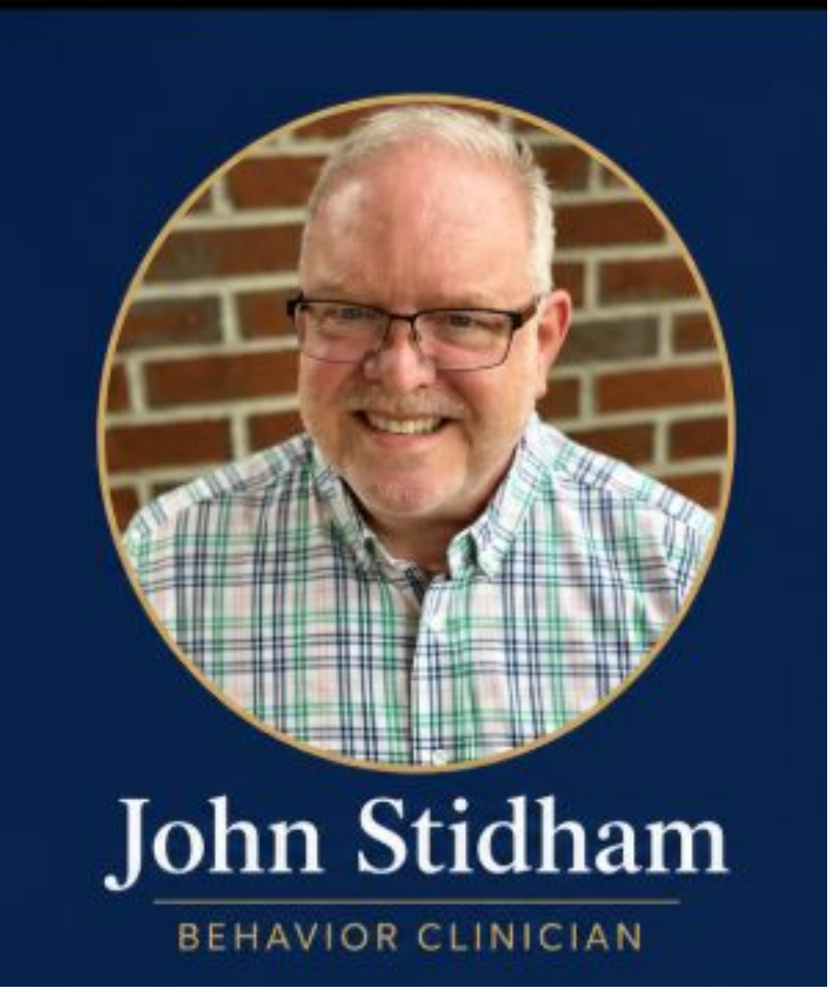
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# BIO

Tim’s career has been dedicated to empowering individuals to achieve meaningful, self-directed lives. His journey into the disability field began in Vocational Rehabilitation and continued as Director of Dove Employment Services, where he developed a deep appreciation for person-centered supports and the impact of meaningful employment on quality of life. These experiences inspired him to pursue a master's degree in Special Education and continue advocating for individuals of all abilities.

Tim is passionate about helping people identify their goals, explore opportunities, and take meaningful steps toward greater independence, community inclusion, and fulfilling employment. Throughout his career, he has focused on building strengths, fostering self-determination, and supporting individuals in creating lives that reflect their own values and aspirations.

His professional background includes vocational rehabilitation, special education transition services, benefits counseling, autism training initiatives, and




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# BIO

John's journey into behavior support began with a desire to better serve teenagers and families through his work as a youth pastor. That passion led him to pursue a master's degree while working with Children's Services, where he supported children who had been removed from their homes due to substance use and unsafe living conditions. These early experiences deepened his understanding of trauma, resilience, and the importance of compassionate, person-centered support.

John later served as an Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, helping individuals overcome barriers to employment, independence, and community participation. He went on to become the Director of Dove Employment Services, where he expanded his leadership experience and continued advocating for individuals with disabilities to achieve meaningful employment and greater inclusion within their communities.

Today, John brings the knowledge and experience gained throughout each stage of his career to his role as a Behavior Clinician. He partners with individuals, families, caregivers, and interdisciplinary teams to promote positive behavior change, strengthen independence, and improve quality of life.

John believes behavior support is most effective when it recognizes each person's strengths,

# THE MODEL

**Moving support from crisis response to independence building.**

When we train staff before behavior escalates, we create more space for independence, skill building, dignity, and employment success.



**Proactive support**
protects dignity.



**Shared language**
reduces confusion.



**Better staff tools**
create better opportunities.



**Human service**
is ALWAYS about Humanity.

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# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this session, attendees will be able to:



01

**TEACH BEHAVIOR FROM A FULL SPECTRUM APPROACH**

Explain why staff need to understand positive, negative, and neutral behavior. 'Not just' problem behavior.



02

**USE EFFICACY TOOLS**

Identify training tools that support ongoing staff competency, not one time education.



03

**COMPARE APPROACHES**

Distinguish proactive strategies from reactive strategies in residential, day program, and employment settings.



04

**INVEST IN STAFF BEGINNING WITH NEW HIRE TRAINING**

Describe why training all staff supports consistency, safety, and integrated employment.

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# FROM CAREGIVING TO SKILL BUILDING

Dignity means building capacity, not creating dependence.

**“The goal is for daily life to become safer, more fulfilling, and independent.”**



It is not dignified if only behavior services can deescalate.



Build both paid and natural supports.



Include peer and relationship-based supports when appropriate.



Teach healthy relationship and behavior management skills

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# AGENCY CULTURE SHIFT

*From 14(c) Transition to Integrated Employment Capacity*

**Key agency presidential decision with management reinforcement**

- From "Can we do this?"
- To "How are we going to do this?"
- Emphasize the common human experience
- Prioritize evidence-based practices.

**CORE: Everything is about self-determination and independence skill building.**

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# THE NEED

## A WORKFORC
## NEED AND A
## HUMAN NEED
## COME TOGETH

**Individuals** need access to jobs, income, and life in their community.

**Employers** need reliable workers.

**Work** becomes an active part of a healthy life, not just a placement.

**Money, choice, and belonging** expand real options.

> “VR and Integrated employment only work when the support model travels with the person.”

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# THE AGENCY-WIDE SHIFT

FROM A
**BEHAVIOR DEPARTMENT**
TO A
**BEHAVIOR-INFORMED ORGANIZATION**



## 1. AGENCY CULTURE

Build common language, shared responsibility, and consistent problem solving.



## 2. DAY PROGRAMMING

Start with highly visible daily routines, transitions, and work expectations.



## 3. RESIDENTIAL

Generalize strategies into home routines, relationships, and natural supports.



## 4. EMPLOYMENT

Translate behavior supports into job readiness, task persistence, and workplace stability inside and outside of the workplace.



**GOAL: Proactive behavior support becomes everyone's skill NOT one department's emergency response.**

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# THE ENVIRONMENT BECOMES PART OF THE INTERVENTION

- Move from crisis response to proactive environmental supports.
- Reduce high-risk behaviors by building replacement behaviors.
- Minimize adverse behaviors.
- Increase healthy replacement.
- Build forward movement.

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# WHY PROACTIVE BEATS REACTIVE

Although reactive support is necessary, **proactive support is imperative** for long term success.

**REACTIVE STRATEGIES ANSWER:**

"What do we do right now?"

**PROACTIVE STRATEGIES ANSWER:**

How do we make positive behavior more likely tomorrow?

Integrated employment requires teaching and consistency, **NOT** just response.

Crisis response keeps people safe.
Proactive support helps people grow.

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# START WITH STAFF LANGUAGE

*Consistency starts before the intervention.*

- Use direct, respectful, observable language.
- Replace labels with skill-based descriptions.
- Teach staff how to see precursors and replacement skills.
- Keep the person, NOT THE BEHAVIOR, at the center.

**EXAMPLE SHIFT**

"noncompliant" → "needs support to start the transition routine."

**EXAMPLE SHIFT**

"attention seeking" → "requesting connection, clarification, or reassurance."

**EXAMPLE SHIFT**

"bad behavior" → "communication plus a skill gap."

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# HUMAN SERVICE IS ALWAYS ABOUT HUMANITY

## Language shapes culture before the interventions do.

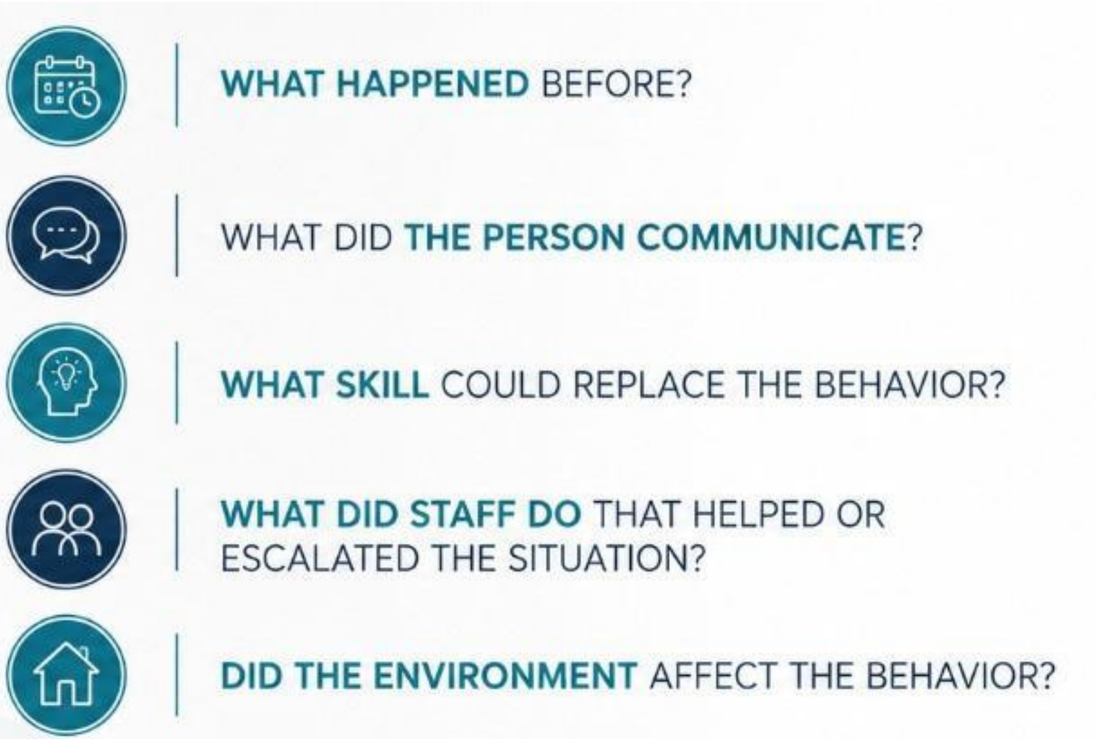
- **Person-centered planning** anchors the work in dignity.
- **Teach behavior** from a neutral standpoint.
- **Coach staff** to keep observations objective.
- **Common language** builds rapport quickly.

> “No one is too disabled to take an active role in their own life.”

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# TEACH STAFF TO SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE

*Behavior can be positive, negative, or neutral*




> **The goal is not to "catch" a behavior.**
>
> **The goal is to understand it early enough to teach.**

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# SCAFFOLDING SUPPORT

Train staff the way you want them to teach the individual.



## I DO

Model the skill in the real setting.



## WE DO

Practice with staff and individuals together.



## YOU DO

Fade prompts and reinforce independence.



**The goal is not** to keep behavior services in the middle forever; the goal is to build capacity so daily natural and paid supports work.

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# AUTHENTIC AND CONSISTENT TRAINING DESIGN

*Initial training is the foundation—refreshers make it stick.*



## INITIAL NEW HIRE TRAINING

Shared agency expectations, behavior basics,
proactive supports, documentation, and person-centered language.



## ROLE BASED EXAMPLES

Residential, day programming, transportation, and employment
scenarios that match actual staff work.



## COMPETENCY CHECKS

"I do, We do, You do" observed implementation.
More than just a sign in sheet.



## REFRESHERS

Short targeted follow up when data, staff questions,
or new trends show a need.



Build fluency the same way we build replacement skills:
**model, prompt, practice, reinforce, and fade.**

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# RESOURCES THAT WORK

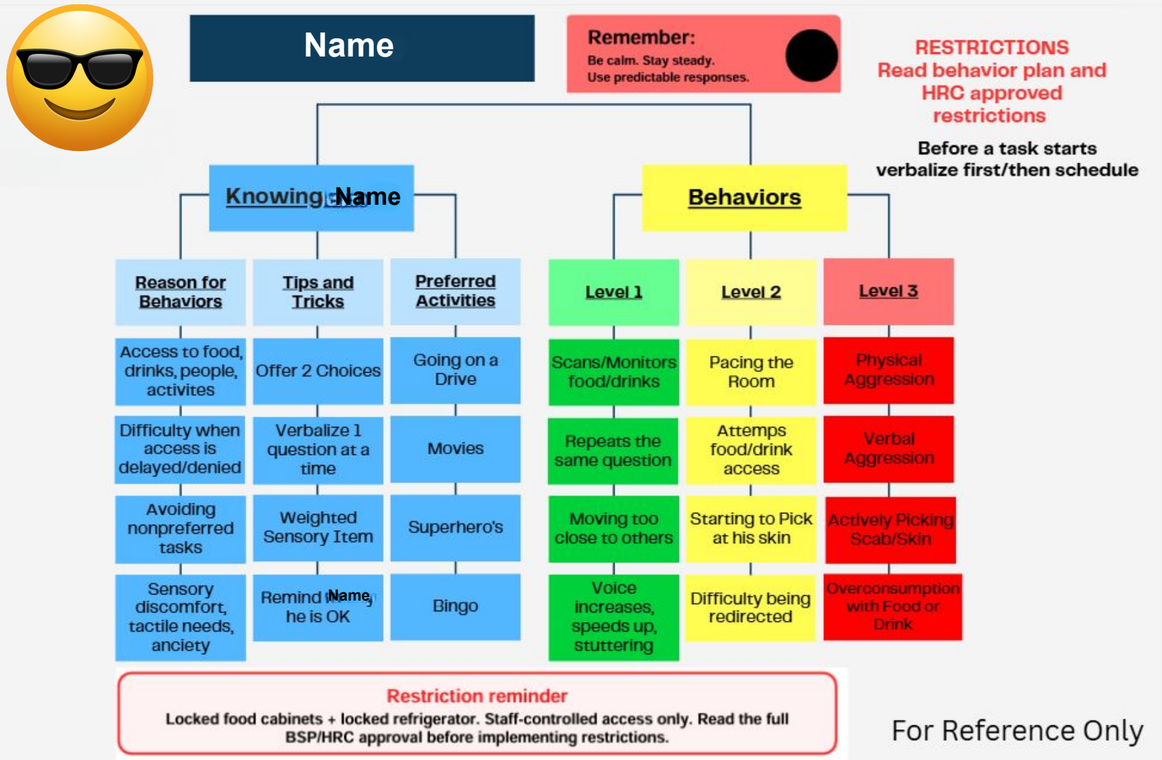
Make the right action easier to do in the moment.

- One-page staff instructions
- Visual checklists and transition flows
- Prompting and fading plans
- Role play scenarios
- Fidelity checks with feedback
- Positive recognition for staff use

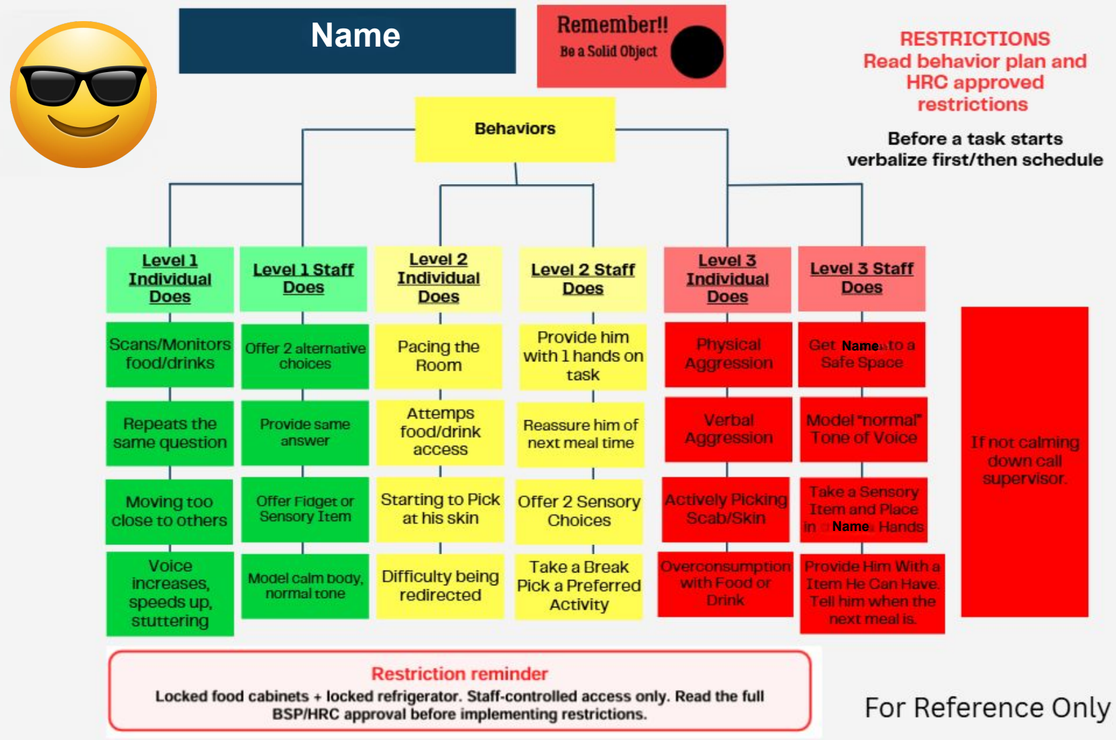
**Training is not complete until staff can use the skill under real conditions.**

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# RESOURCES THAT WORK (EXAMPLES)




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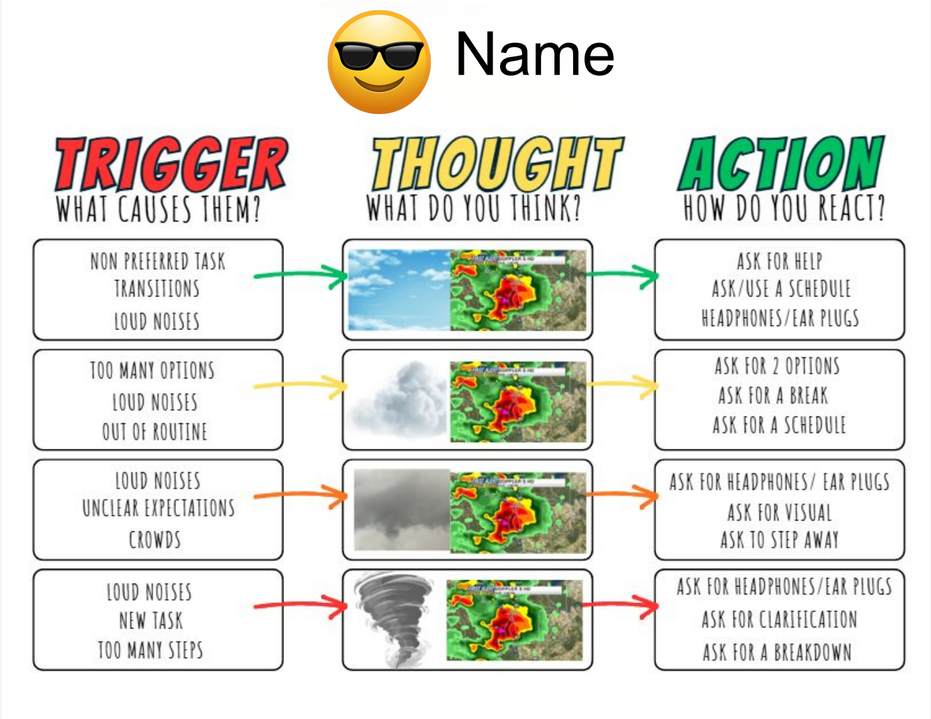



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# RESOURCES THAT WORK (EXAMPLES)



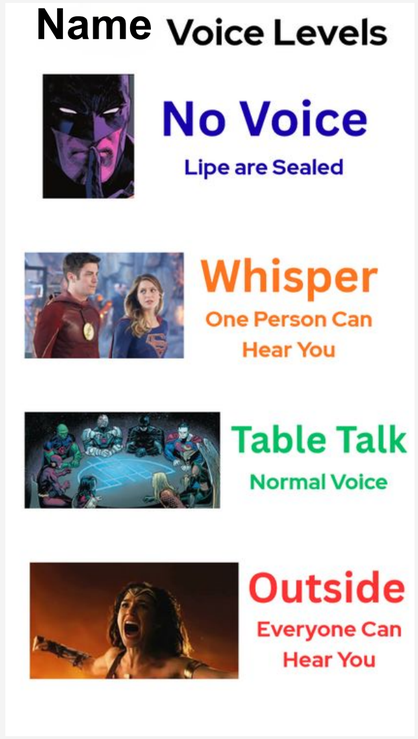




These resources help build communication, independence, and self-regulation.
Use what works. Adapt as needed. Review often.

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# RESOURCES THAT WORK (EXAMPLES)



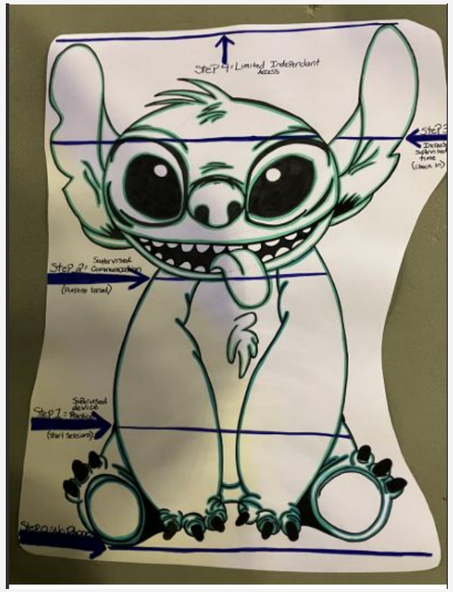















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# CUSTOMIZE STAFF TRAINING

> **Training sticks when staff can see exactly what it looks like in their workplace environment.**

## Meet the learner in front of you

- Adapt training to staff learning style and comprehension.
- Use basic language, clinical definitions, and direct examples.
- Teach with the people being served, not only through academic content.
- Pair evidence-based practice with real world application.

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# THE PROACTIVE TRAINING LOOP




**Staff behavior is behavior.**
**We teach it, prompt it, reinforce it, and shape it.**

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# DAY PROGRAMMING PILOT

**IDENTIFY**
Identify support gaps in daily routines.

**SHARED LANGUAGE**
Develop a shared language for staff to recognize early indicators.

**MODEL**
Teams practice proactive prompting, visual supports, and reinforcement.

**INTEGRATE**
Behavior supports become part of daily engagement, not a separate emergency call.

**PILOT QUESTION:** ***"What would staff need to know before this becomes a crisis?"***

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# RESIDENTIAL EXPANSION

## GENERALIZE PROACTIVE SUPPORTS INTO HOME LIFE

Move from "behavior plan on paper" to routines staff can follow.

Embed supports into meals, hygiene, transitions, relationships, and downtime.

Build natural supports, greatest level of independence, and least restrictive modifications whenever possible.

### VISUALS

Schedules, checklists, and first/then supports.

### ENVIRONMENT

Reduce triggers without removing meaningful choices.

### RELATIONSHIPS

Train staff to support connection, not control.

Residential success depends on practical humanity: dignity, routine, and consistency.

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# EMPLOYMENT INTEGRATION

Behavior supports should open doors, not close them.

**Teach** job readiness behaviors before employment expectations intensify.

**Build** tolerance for correction, waiting, transitions, and schedule changes.

**Supports** supervisors and HCSPs with the same language and tools.

> **Integrated employment is more sustainable when behavior support is built into the work system.**

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# CROSS DEPARTMENT COLLABORATION

The model works when departments stop operating in silos.

### DAY PROGRAMMING
Identify routines and trends.

### RESIDENTIAL
Generalize skills to the home life.

### EMPLOYMENT
Translate support into workplace expectations.

### LEADERSHIP
Protect time, expectations, resources, and culture for effective training and follow through.



**SHARED BURDEN.**
**SHARED RESPONSIBILITY.**
**SHARED WINS.**

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# THE TIPPING POINT



**“There has to be more we can do.”**

Start with one skill, one behavior, one situation.



Train in the real environment while the behavior plan is active.



Move from “this is too challenging” to “What support is needed?”

> **The impossible is possible when support is organized and consistent.**

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# TRANSLATING THE CLINICAL LENS

*Evidence-based does not have to feel cold.*



Use **data** to identify patterns.



Use **compassion** to choose how support is delivered.



Use **dignity of risk** to embrace dreams, and avoid restrictions.



Use **teaching** to create opportunity.

**People do not need perfect systems. They need systems that are consistent, humane, and able to learn.**



**CLINICAL QUESTION:**
"What skill, support, or environmental change would make success more likely?"

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# WHAT TO MEASURE

*Data should answer the question.*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Interfering Behavior** | Frequency, duration, intensity, setting, time of day, and trends. |
| **Replacement Skills** | Requests, coping skills, communication, task engagement, and transitions. |
| **Staff Implementation** | Fidelity, prompt level, response time, and use of proactive strategies. |
| **Quality of Life** | Access, participation, independence, safety, and employment stability. |

**Graph what went wrong AND what went right!**

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# REPORTING CULTURE

*"No report, no help." -- Data makes support possible*



**TRAIN STAFF**
to understand ABCs and complete behavior observation forms.



**REFRAME REPORTING**
as help, NOT failure.



**REPORT POSITIVE PRAISE,**
not only adverse incidents.



**REAL HELP**
follows real reporting in homes and programs.

**PEOPLE ARE NOT IN TROUBLE BECAUSE THEY REPORT. REPORTING CREATES THE PATH TO SUPPORT.**

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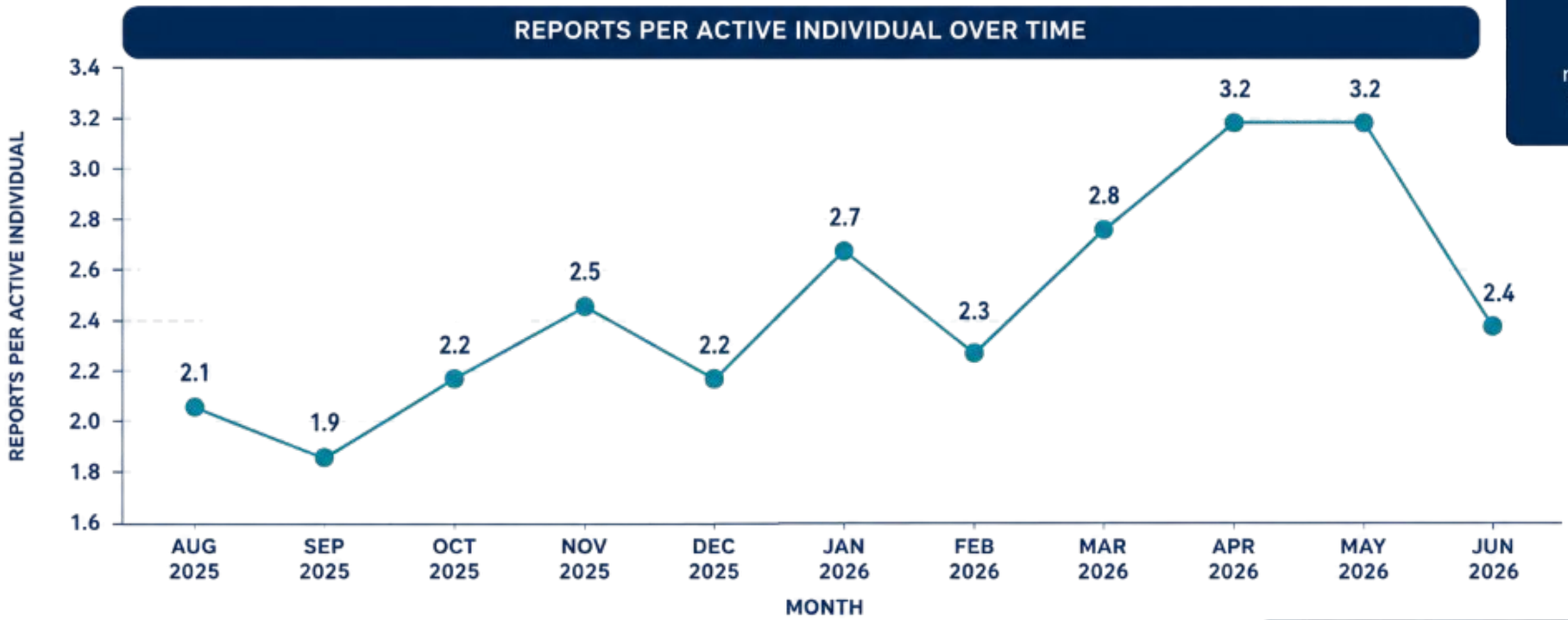
# BEHAVIOR REDUCTION




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# BEHAVIOR REDUCTION

*Interfering Behavior Reports per Active Individual*




**Consistent Increase in Positive Recognition**

Positive Recognition rose from 0% in Aug 2025 to 16.76% in Jun 2026.

**2.1**
AUGUST 2025
Baseline

**3.2**
PEAK
April–May 2026

**2.4**
JUNE 2026
Most Recent

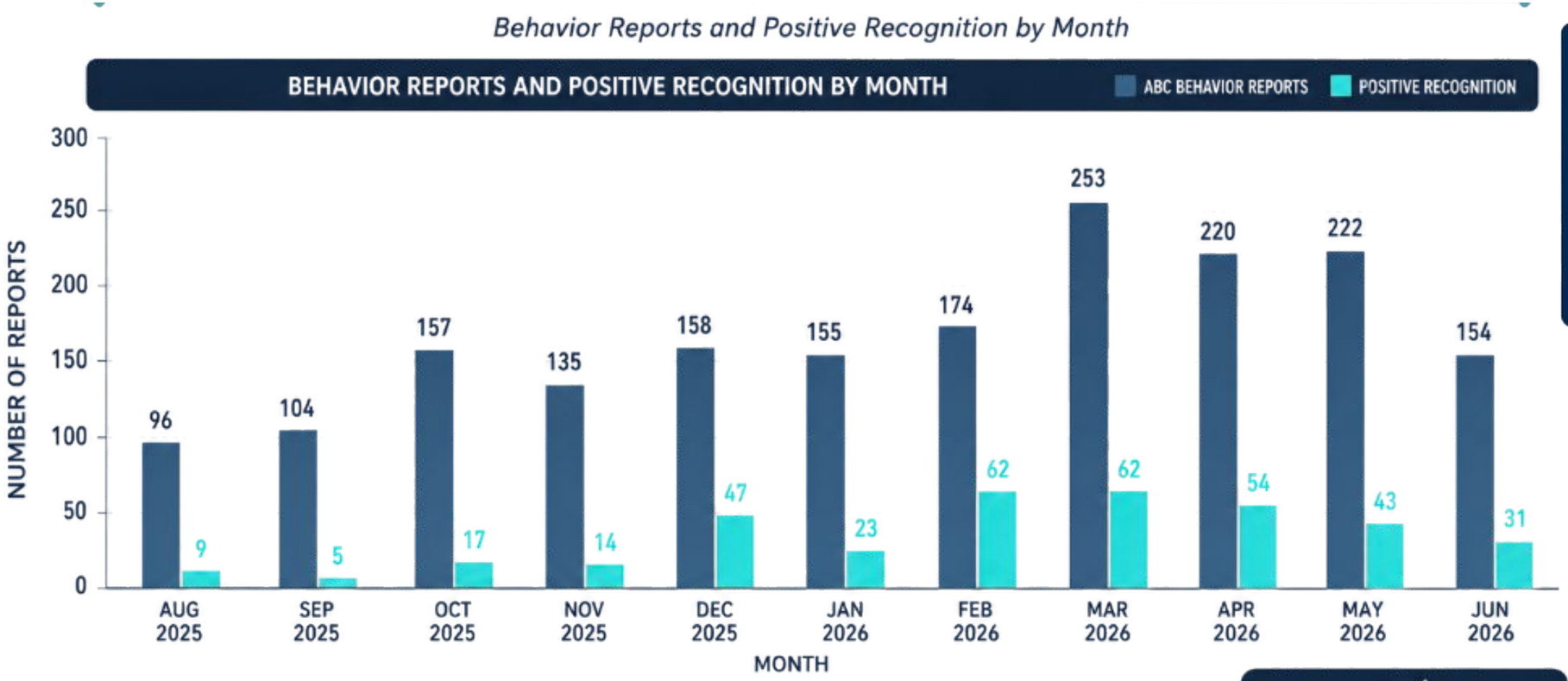
**25%**
REDUCTION
Peak to June 2026

Our goal is sustainable reduction in interfering behaviors while increasing adaptive skill use.

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# BEHAVIOR REDUCTION

*Behavior Reports and Positive Recognition by Month*




**253**
PEAK BEHAVIOR REPORTS
March 2026

**62**
PEAK POSITIVE RECOGNITION
Feb & Mar 2026

**39%**
REDUCTION IN BEHAVIOR REPORTS
March–June 2026

**3.6x**
INCREASE IN POSITIVE RECOGNITION
Aug 2025 to Mar 2026

**Consistent Increase in Positive Recognition**

Positive Recognition rose from 0% in Aug 2025 to 16.76% in Jun 2026.

increasing positive recognition while reducing interfering behaviors.

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# REPLACEMENT SKILL ACQUISITION

*Growth in Documented Skill Demonstrations Through Positive Recognition*




**380**

**POSITIVE RECOGNITION REPORTS**

**+675% INCREASE**

From July 2025 (4) to March 2026 (62)

**WHAT THIS MEANS**

Individuals are demonstrating replacement skills more independently across environments. Staff are consistently recognizing and reinforcing positive, adaptive behaviors that support long-term success.

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# CASE EXAMPLE: A COOPERATIVE TRANSITION

*De-identified example of proactive support across settings.*

### NEED

Transition between home, transportation, and day programming.

### SUPPORT

Posted transition flowchart, comfort item, prepared materials, and staff prompting.

### OUTCOMES TO HIGHLIGHT

Safer movement through steps with fewer crisis responses.




TEACHING THE ROUTINE REPLACES SURPRISE WITH PREDICTABILITY.

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# CASE EXAMPLE: REAL TIME STAFF SUPPORT

MOVING FROM "CALL BEHAVIOR" TO "COACH THE MOMENT"



**STAFF FELT UNSURE**

Staff felt unsure what to do during escalation.



**BEHAVIOR SUPPORT MODELED**

Behavior support modeled the exact response in the moment.



**FOLLOW UP TRAINING CONVERTED**

Follow up training converted crisis support into future fluency.

**The best crisis call is the one that becomes a training plan afterward.**

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# CASE EXAMPLE: TECH SAFETY AND FADING



# CASE EXAMPLE: INDEPENDENCE THROUGH PROMPTS

*Prompt fading is not removing help; it is transferring control*

- Start with the level of support needed for success.
- Fade prompts systematically when performance stabilizes.
- Teach staff to wait, observe, and avoid over-prompting.
- Celebrate independent steps—not only absence of behavior.



**MODEL**

Show the routine.

**FADE PROMPT**

Use the least intrusive effective prompt.

Allow processing time.

**WAIT**

Shift responsibility back to the person.

Independence is built one supported step at a time.

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# STAFF BUY-IN

People implement what feels **possible**, **supportive**, and **meaningful**.



Use **real scenarios** from the floor.



Keep strategies **concrete** and **short**.



**Recognize** staff doing the right thing.



Create space for staff to say, *"I do not know what to do."*

**Buy-in grows when staff experience success and support—**
**not blame.**

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# ADDRESSING COMMON BARRIERS

## How to Keep the Model Alive After the Presentation

**DATA-INFORMED TRAINING**
Monthly training targets based on data.

**TIMELY REFRESHERS**
Short refreshers after incidents or trends.

**COMPETENCY IN PRACTICE**
Competency checks embedded into supervision.

**RECOGNIZE PROACTIVE SUPPORT**
Positive recognition tied to proactive implementation.

**LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT**
Leadership protects time for training and follow-up.

Sustainability depends on **RHYTHM:** review data, train the need, observe the skill, reinforce the practice.

The system should make the right support **EASIER TO REPEAT.**

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# SUSTAINABILITY PLAN

## How to keep the model alive after the presentation

- **Monthly training targets** based on data.
- **Short refreshers** after incidents or trends.
- **Competency checks** embedded into supervision.
- **Positive recognition** tied to proactive implementation.
- **Leadership protects** time for training and follow-up.



Sustainability depends on **rhythm**: review data, train the need, observe the skill, reinforce the practice.



The system should make the **right support easier** to repeat.

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# IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP



01

## PICK ONE ROUTINE

Start where risk, confusion, or repeated staff questions show up.



02

## DEFINE THE SKILL

Write what success looks like in observable terms.



03

## BUILD A STAFF TOOL

Create a checklist, visual, script, or one page instructions.



04

## TRAIN AND PRACTICE

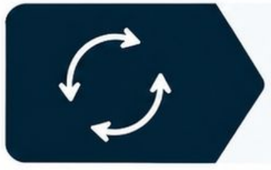
Model, role play, observe, and coach in context.



05

## MEASURE BOTH SIDES

Track interfering behavior  and replacement skill growth.



06

## REPEAT AND SCALE

Use what worked to expand across settings.

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# WHAT CHANGES WHEN THIS WORKS

**Individuals** gain skills, access, and self-determination.

**Staff** gain confidence and clinical curiosity.

**Teams** gain a common language and shared responsibility.

**Employment** becomes more realistic because support is proactive and integrated.

The outcome is not simply fewer incidents.
The outcome is more **possibility.**

Outcomes are bigger than behavior reductions

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# THE PERSONAL WHY

*Authenticity can reduce stigma and build hope*



Lived experience increases identification and understanding.



Being honest about support needs reduces shame.



People can see a real future when someone models possibility.



A small act of kindness can affect one person... or hundreds.

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“I am not going to leave people behind.”

# “They Deserve Better”

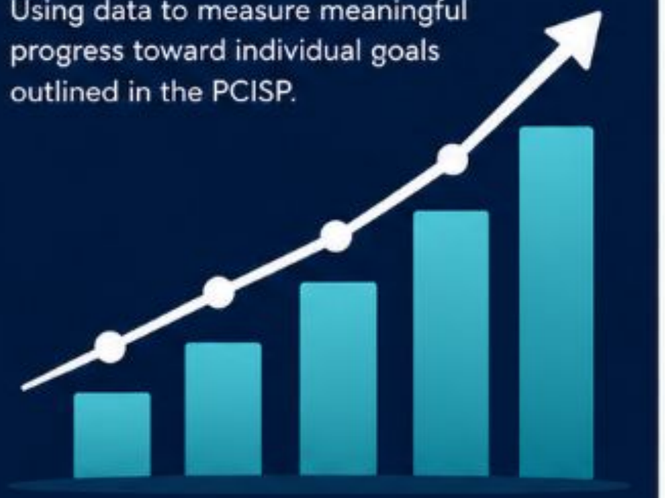
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# PCISP BEHAVIORAL FOUNDATION

*Data-Driven. Person-Centered. Results Focused.*

## OUR FOCUS

Using data to measure meaningful progress toward individual goals outlined in the PCISP.



Every data point represents progress toward a better quality of life.

**42**
**GOALS ACHIEVED**
Successfully met this quarter

**87%**
**GOALS MAKING PROGRESS**
Showing measurable improvement

**13%**
**GOALS REVISED**
Adjusted based on data & individual needs

**92%**
**QUALITY OF LIFE OUTCOMES**
Indicating positive impact on daily life

## WHAT OUR DATA TELLS US

- Data guides clinical decisions
- Supports are individualized & effective
- Progress is monitored consistently
- Plans evolve as individuals grow
- Better outcomes. Stronger futures.

> The purpose of behavior data is not simply to reduce challenging behavior—it is to demonstrate meaningful progress toward person-centered outcomes.

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# YEARLY TRAINING SCHEDULE

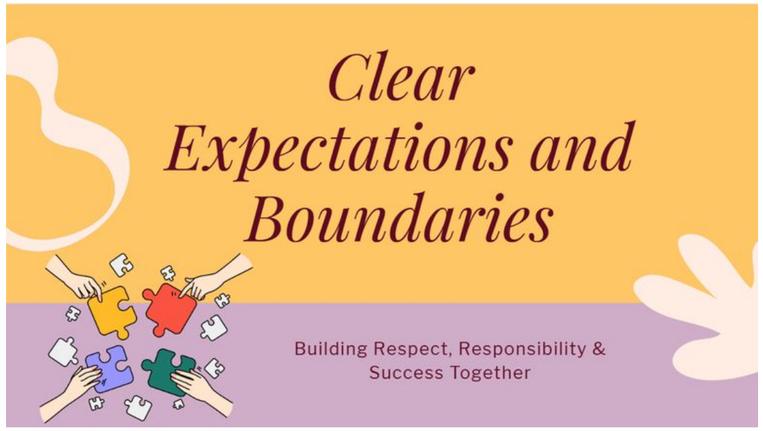
**MONTHLY BEHAVIORAL THEMES/TRAINING TOPICS**

**CUSTOMIZE TO THE DEPARTMENT**

| | |
|---|---|
| JANUARY | Proactive |
| FEBRUARY | Clear Expectations/Boundaries |
| MARCH | Ensure Safety First |
| APRIL | Maintaining a Calm Front |
| MAY | Rational Detachment |
| JUNE | Routine/Structure |
| JULY | Environmental Modifications |
| AUGUST | Active Listening |
| SEPTEMBER | Positive Reinforcement |
| OCTOBER | Offer Choices |
| NOVEMBER | Redirect Behaviors |
| DECEMBER | Debriefing |

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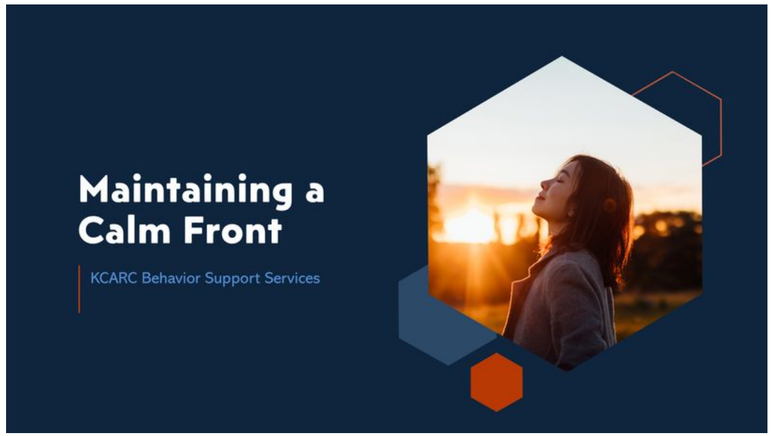
# YEARLY TRAINING SCHEDULE
















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# UPDATED KEY TAKEAWAYS

*Human services is ALWAYS about humanity.*




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# THANK YOU

> *Behavior support is not only crisis response. It is a way to build skill, dignity, and access to the life a person wants.*

## QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION


**Rachl Ballard, Tim Kirk, and John Stidham**

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# TESTIMONIES

Director of Residential:

“One of the most meaningful successes I have witnessed has been a specific individuals progress with transitions. For many years, transitions were a significant challenge for her and often created barriers to her independence and overall quality of life. Through the consistent implementation of a proactive behavior support plan, along with the dedication and persistence of the direct support staff, this individual  gradually developed the skills needed to navigate transitions successfully.

This progress did not happen overnight. It required patience, teamwork, and commitment to implementing the plan consistently every day. Watching this individual eventually complete transitions independently was incredibly rewarding. Her success is a testament to the power of proactive behavior support and the positive impact that consistent, person-centered interventions can have on an individual's confidence, independence, and overall success. Thank you.”

Direct Support Staff:

“One of the most rewarding outcomes I've witnessed is seeing individuals gain the confidence and skills needed to be successful in their communities and workplaces. I've also seen a change in how staff collaborate together with confidence to better the life of the people served. Proactive behavior supports have shifted the focus from managing challenges to building strengths, opening doors to greater independence, meaningful employment, and an improved quality of life.”

Day Programming Coordinator:

“Since implementing more proactive behavior supports, I've seen a noticeable difference in both the individuals we support and our staff. Individuals are more engaged in daily activities, more willing to try new experiences, and are building confidence in their abilities. Staff have become more consistent in how they respond to behaviors, which has created a calmer and more positive environment. Instead of focusing on reacting to behaviors, we're spending more time teaching skills, encouraging independence, and helping individuals succeed. “

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