Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Positive Behavior Supports in the Workplace Module 3: On-the-Job Strategies

Transcript

SPEAKER: Welcome to the Positive Behavior Supports in the Workplace Training Series module 3-- On-the-Job Strategies. Before we begin, let's review what we've learned. In module 1-- Rethinking Challenging Behavior, we discussed how behavior is a form of communication. Positive behavior support begins when we use empathy and person-centered thinking to determine the root cause of challenging behavior. Person-centered thinking focuses on the five quality of life experiences-- sharing ordinary places, making choices, developing one's abilities, social respect and roles, and having meaningful relationships. Learning about quality of life factors that are important to the person lets us understand what they want and need so we can provide the right support.

In module 2-- Discover and Job Matching, we discussed how to define discovery as a tool for job matching. Apply discovery strategies used for job matching for people with complex disabilities. Identify negative consequences for a person related to a poor job match.

Here's a look at the learning objectives for today. After completing this training, you will be able to define and apply positive support strategies for use on the job. Identify and apply strategies when an individual displays challenging behavior. In this module, we will talk about strategies to reduce the likelihood of challenging workplace behavior, including how to foster workplace inclusion and provide consistent support. We will also discuss disclosing potential behavior concerns and strategies to use if someone ends up displaying challenging behavior at work.

Workplace inclusion depends on employers and coworkers interacting with and providing training and assistance to a new hire. Clarifying this expectation with the employer in the beginning sets the stage for the supports and services you'll be able to provide to them and their new employee.

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- [**The Seven Phase Sequence for Balancing Naturalness and Individual Needs**](#)

For decades, he has made groundbreaking contributions to the disability employment field. He developed a way to foster workplace inclusion called the Seven Phase Sequence for Balancing Naturalness and Individual Employee Needs. Let's take a look at these seven steps to foster inclusion.

In the first step in fostering inclusion, the employment specialist examines the employer's natural onboarding process as well as workplace procedures and culture. Examples could be reviewing the employee handbook, a walk through the work site to check the environment for possible triggers, and meeting some of the current staff. Callahan uses the term "natural" to describe the current training, procedures, and information given to all new employees regardless of whether they have a disability.

In the second step of fostering independence, the employment specialist identifies the employer's natural training approaches. Reviewing ways that workplace rules, reinforcement, and motivation are taught. In the third step, the employment specialist identifies and enlists supervisors and coworkers who can use natural training approaches to support the new hire while learning the job. In the fourth step, the employment specialist supports the current employees who are training and supporting the new worker.

In the fifth step, if the new worker is having trouble learning necessary job skills, the employment specialist can either identify other coworkers who could help with training or directly assist the employee themselves. In the sixth step, if the additional training doesn't help the worker learn what they need to learn, the employment specialist will work with the employer to explore alternative, more effective ways to train the worker. This can include retraining the new hire on rules, performance expectations, behavior reinforcement, and motivation.

In the final step of fostering inclusion, when all other means have been tried, the employment specialist will work with the employer to alter the natural environment to better accommodate the person. This may include changing procedures, methods, or steps to complete job tasks. If natural training and supports are not enough, the employment specialist will first work with the employer and coworkers to come up with additional help or accommodations. If these ideas

don't produce the desired outcome, then the employment specialist arranges for job coaching on a temporary basis. The support will be faded as soon as possible.

If job coaching is deemed necessary for a person with a significant disability, job coach consistency is of utmost important. If there is more than one job coach, then all coaches must use the same approach for the order in which work tasks are completed, employer quality standards, communication, and prompting used, how support is faded. If coaches are inconsistent, a worker may become confused or upset. For example, one coach might teach the new employee to enter all registration forms into the database before they can leave work. If another coach indicates that the forms can be left until the next day, the new employee might be afraid that they are doing the job wrong and that they will get in trouble. This inconsistency may cause behavior challenges to occur.

In the situation on the previous slide, it is necessary to know the employer standard or expectation for the job. Does the employer typically expect workers to complete all the forms before they leave or can they complete them at the beginning of their next shift? To prevent challenging behavior, employment specialists and job coaches need to align their training with the employer's preferred way of doing things.

Systematic instruction provides a framework coaches can use to make sure their training is consistent. Developed in the 1970s by psychologist Marc Gold, systematic instruction was developed to help people with significant disabilities to handle complex tasks. Using this method, a coach breaks down complex tasks into small, teachable steps. The coach also uses specific prompting and fading strategies.

It is crucial for job coaches to know how to employ systematic instruction and also know how to implement the prompt hierarchy effectively. Coaches should develop an update task analysis and use tracking to document the prompting strategies they use with the worker. This will ensure consistency across staff and will lead to faster fading of job coach supports. This technique is predictable and typically helps people with more complex disabilities lessen challenging behaviors.

Sometimes, coaches set higher standards or expectations about behavior and work performance for people with disabilities than they do for other people. A common example is when workers with disabilities stop what they are working on to chat with coworkers or customers. Job coaches may sometimes label this off task behavior and try to correct it. However, most people spend some time talking with coworkers at work. It is unrealistic to

expect someone to be on task 100% of the time, and socializing reinforces the employee's sense of belonging on the team. It is important for job coaches to train to the employer expectations and workplace culture.

When working with the job seeker, part of discovery involves learning about their previous work experiences. If there is a history with challenging behavior, you need to find out about it before you start the job search process. Find out about the previous circumstances, root causes, and triggers for past challenging behavior. Knowing about root causes and reasons for past behaviors can help you determine the likelihood that past behavior may occur in the new environment.

As you conduct tours, job shadows, and informational interviews with prospective employers, you can assess the workplace for these variables. Talk in-depth with the person and their support team about circumstances, root causes, and triggers for the behavior challenges. Also, ask if there is a Behavior Support Plan-- BSP-- in place. If there is not, discovery is a good time to create one along with the person's long-term support team. Much like skills may transfer across environments, so can triggers. A BSP may help to identify triggers, root causes, and circumstances that could help identify the best workplace match. While the discovery process highlights transferable skills that might support a good fit for employment, developing a BSP might identify triggers that would highlight employment that might not be a good fit or may need a workaround.

Should an employment specialist tell a prospective employer about an individual's previous challenging behavior before the person is hired? The short answer is no. It is, in fact, illegal to do so. Prematurely telling an employer about possible challenging behaviors could cloud employer opinions about the job seeker. The employer might hyperfocus on things that could go wrong at work rather than giving the employee the chance to share their strengths. If the employment specialist has concerns about previous challenging behaviors occurring in a new job, they must first talk with the job seeker and their legal decision maker about the pros and cons of disclosing their disability.

Employment specialists are required to have the job seeker's explicit permission to share any disability information, including potential behavioral concerns. If the job seeker does decide to disclose, they and the employment specialist should brainstorm and make a list about possible triggers for challenging behavior, things that could go wrong at work, ways to effectively approach each potentially triggering situation. Having a response plan will outline what the job

coach, employer, and coworkers need to do to best support the individual if the behavior occurs, the "no surprises rule."

Despite the best preventative efforts, a new hire may still end up engaging in challenging behavior at work. If it happens, the employment specialist needs to find out the circumstances around the exhibition of the behavior so action can be taken to prevent it from happening, again. The ABC approach is a way to observe and collect information about what is happening before and after a behavior occurs to determine the cause and function of the behavior as a form of communication. In this protocol, A stands for Antecedent, B for Behavior, and C for Consequence.

When determining the cause of challenging behavior, consider events that are happening in the person's life outside of work. Talk with a person's team to explore possible stresses. Areas to consider and discuss are, did something happen before or after work on the day of the incident? Are there changes happening in the person's life? Is the person experiencing physical pain or illness that they are unable to communicate? Did the person have a bad night's sleep or miss a meal? Are restrictions being placed on the person at home?

You are one person to help identify causes of behavior and develop solutions with the employer. Always involve the person's employment support team when developing a plan. You may also need to talk with a person's employment support team about referring the person to a behavioral support specialist depending on the frequency and severity of the challenging behavior. Let's look at some examples.

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Chad came into work late and forgot to punch in. When the supervisor asked him what was wrong, he snapped, "None of your business." He refused to straighten the shoe shelves, and would not tidy up the clothing racks, and was rude to customers and coworkers. Chad's supervisor wrote him up for his behavior. He warned Chad that if he behaved that way again, he would be terminated. The supervisor called the employment specialist to explain the incident and asked what to do.

The employment specialist met with Chad's support team to find out what might have caused the behavior. Chad's mother recalled that on the day of the incident, Chad and his brother,

Jack, had argued. She intervened and ended the argument, but Chad was still angry when she dropped him off for work. When the group realized the calls, they were able to make a plan. Chad's mom asked Jack to try and avoid arguments with Chad before work. His supervisor agreed to let Chad call in and start his shift a little late so he would have time to calm down before coming into work if a situation like this happened in the future.

Generally, the function of a behavior is to get away from something, avoidance, or to get more of something that is reinforcing. This may include a person's sensory sensitivity by them seeking or avoiding specific sensory experiences. For example, a person might hide in the bathroom at work because they are bored with their work tasks, the lighting is bothering them, or the environment becomes too noisy. Generally, all behavior is a form of communication. Behavior may be communicating a need to avoid or seek more of something.

To use the ABC approach, use a chart to document the date and time a behavior occurred , the location where the behavior occurred, events or aspects of the environment just before the behavior occurred, describe the behavior, describe the events or consequences that happened after the behavior occurred. Developing an ABC chart can help identify changes in work routines, environmental factors, and actions and interactions with people, which could be the cause of the challenging behavior. Remember to think about, what is this person trying to communicate with this behavior?

From the collected information, we could conclude that Joe does not like customers getting in the way of his work tasks and does not respond well if he is corrected by a coworker. In this situation, the employment specialist could talk with the employer about rearranging Joe's work tasks so he is not tending to the beverage station during the lunch rush. A plan could also be put into place for coworkers to notify the manager if Joe does not do a task correctly. The manager could be responsible to talk with Joe about the correct way to do the task.

If challenging behavior happens at work, the employer will likely have concerns. Have an open discussion with the employer to determine whether the event or behavior is a performance issue or a violation of workplace rules and safety guidelines. Discuss the typical consequences when these types of infraction actions occur with employees and then determine if it is appropriate for the employer to take corrective measures with the employee. When the employer is willing, assure the employer that you will determine the cause of the behavior and work with them to implement a positive behavior support plan to address the undesirable behavior. Once you have identified possible causes, negotiate changes with the employee and

employer, then work with the employer to assess whether these changes improve the situation.

Alyssa started stealing partially-used products from the salon where she works. When the employer found out, she called the employment specialist to ask what to do. Typically, an employee would be fired for theft. The employer agreed to keep Alyssa on staff if a job coach could be brought back in to monitor Alyssa to ensure she wouldn't steal products while the employment specialist determined why Alyssa had started stealing from work.

The employment specialists learned that Alyssa's representative payee, who manages her money, had reduced the amount of fun money she had available to her because her rent increased. Her weekly shopping trips to Target had also been reduced from once a week to once a month due to short staffing and the pandemic. Alyssa's team made the following plan. The employment specialist talked with Alyssa's support team about how these factors may be connected to her stealing at work. The team talked with Alyssa about adjusting her spending and shopping plan after which, she stopped stealing at work. The job coach was able to fade supports, again.

Chris started arriving to work disheveled and agitated. He would punch in, go to the back storage area, yell to himself, and take off your shoes and some of his clothes. After about 10 to 15 minutes, he would calm down, get dressed, and start work. The employment specialist and the employer did not know how to approach Chris when he did this so they didn't say anything to him. Eventually, Chris started doing this during other parts of his shift, as well.

Knowing that Chris's job was in jeopardy, the employment specialist called Chris's care manager. A meeting with Chris's day service provider and parents was arranged. At this meeting, the team discussed events that might be causing Chris's behavior. Chris's mom shared the fact that he had exhibited similar behavior in school when he was missing out on field trips or other fun activities with his peers. She also explained that once Chris starts doing this, he will keep doing it if he isn't reminded of the rules or expectations.

Hearing this, the day service staff realized that a change in their weekly schedule may be what is causing his behavior since they are now doing some community activities that he enjoys on the days he is at work. The team developed the following plan. The employment specialist would work with the supervisor to create and review a plain language code of conduct document with Chris and remind him of workplace expectations. Chris will sign this and be

given a copy. Chris's mom will check in with Chris using the code of conduct form and provide positive reinforcement at home for a job well done.

The employment specialist will negotiate a change in Chris's schedule to allow him to join the activities he is interested in. The day service provider will work with Chris to identify some new activities that he enjoys that happen on the days he is not working, just in case he has to work some days during his preferred activities. Not all BSPs have to be formal. In this case, Chris's code of conduct helps support positive behavior across multiple environments. These are two examples of how to use this approach to achieving positive behavior outcomes. Let's summarize what we have learned.

During this training module, you learn how to define and apply positive support strategies for use on the job. Identify and apply strategies when an individual displays challenging behavior. Thank you for attending Positive Behavior Supports in the Workplace Module 3-- On-the-Job Supports. We hope you will join us again soon.