

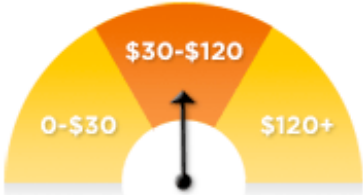


Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)

At a glance: Positive Behavioural Support (PBS)

Type of therapy	Behavioural
The claim	Improves social, communication, academic and daily living skills, as well as difficult behaviour
Suitable for	People with ASD
Research rating Find out more about this rating system in our FAQs .	 <p>Established Research shows positive effects.</p>
Time Estimate of the total time for family in hours per week and duration.	 <p>The time involved in this intervention depends on the number and duration of sessions.</p>
Cost Estimate of cost to family per session/item or week.	 <p>The cost of this intervention depends on the number and duration of sessions. Cost is not ongoing once the program is implemented.</p>



Visit the [Autism Service Pathfinder](#) to browse Service Providers information.

About this intervention

What is it?

Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) involves the development of an individualised and comprehensive plan that parents and carers use to teach and encourage appropriate behaviour (to replace difficult behaviour).

Psychologists usually develop PBS support plans along with parents, teachers and others involved in the daily life of the child.

Who is it for?

PBS is for anyone who shows difficult behaviours, including children with ASD. The approach can also be used with people with intellectual, learning, developmental and social difficulties.

What is it used for?

The main goal of PBS is to reduce difficult behaviour.

This is done by making difficult behaviour unnecessary by removing the things that trigger, encourage or reward that behaviour, and teaching children alternative, more appropriate behaviour.

Where does it come from?

PBS emerged in the 1980s, evolving from [Applied Behaviour Analysis \(ABA\)](#). Both PBS and ABA are based on 'learning theory', but PBS developed with a stronger focus on being [family-centred](#).

What is the idea behind it?

PBS is based on learning theory, which says that most human behaviour is learned through our interaction with our environment.

The idea behind PBS is that all behaviour serves a purpose. Difficult behaviour can be reduced if we know what people are trying to achieve by behaving in a particular way. The approach aims to teach people to behave in more appropriate ways to get what they want.

Key features of the PBS approach are that the individualised plan is:

- meaningful to everyone involved with the child
- implemented by these people on a day-to-day basis
- used in the natural environment where a behaviour occurs.

The PBS approach changes the environment in which a behaviour is occurring. At the same time, children might be taught more positive and socially appropriate ways of communicating and getting what they want (such as using their words or signs). This then makes the difficult behaviour ineffective or unnecessary and less likely to be repeated.

What does it involve?

PBS involves the development of a behavioural support plan for carers and children:

1. The child has a medical assessment to make sure the problem behaviours are not caused by a physical illness.
2. A psychologist talks to the family and holds observation sessions to identify the purpose of the behaviour and what the child gains by behaving in that way. This process is known as a [functional assessment](#).
3. After the assessment, families work with the practitioner on a detailed plan to remove or minimise triggers of the problem behaviour and, wherever possible, stop any accidental rewards for the behaviour.

The child is also taught and encouraged to use new skills and alternative, appropriate ways of communicating with others and expressing wants and needs.

Cost considerations

PBS plans are implemented by carers in the child's natural environment, so there is no financial cost of implementing the plan. There will be a cost for developing the plan because this is done with a trained practitioner, usually a psychologist. This cost will vary depending on how long it takes to develop the plan, as well as the practitioner's qualifications.

Parents might be eligible to access a psychologist at a subsidised rate for a limited number of sessions through Medicare. The Australian Psychology Society (APS) provides information about [psychology services available under Medicare](#). Some private health care funds might also cover a portion of the consultation fee. If the therapist has [HICAPS](#), parents might be able to make a claim immediately.

Does it work?

PBS is supported by quality research. Reported positive changes include improved school performance, making requests appropriately, and giving or sharing information.

Other found improvements include:

- reduced aggression towards oneself and others
- reduced [self-stimulatory](#) behaviour
- fewer tantrums and less disruptive behaviour.

As with all types of behavioural intervention, outcomes can be influenced by whether the intervention is consistently and accurately implemented.

Who practises this method?

Psychologists and other professionals who are trained in PBS are able to develop PBS interventions and support carers in implementing them.

Parent education, training, support and involvement

Parental involvement is essential to this approach. Parents are central to the collaborative team who work together to develop the PBS support plan, and practitioners should provide parents with training in implementing the plan. They should also give parents information about – and support for – responding to difficult circumstances in appropriate ways.

Parents continue to be responsible for implementing the PBS plan at home and play an active role in providing feedback to the team about their child's progress.

Where can I find a practitioner?

If you plan to use a psychologist, you can find one by going to your state [psychologists registration board](#). In addition, the Australian Psychological Society (APS) is the national organisation for psychologists – it provides a service to help people [find a psychologist](#). Note: membership of the APS is not compulsory, and not all psychologists are listed on the APS database.

Rated

(0 ratings)

GLOSSARY

Family-centred

A practice philosophy that considers how an autism spectrum disorder intervention or therapy will impact on all family members, not just the child. Therefore the family's circumstances and wishes are taken into account when the plan is being developed.

Functional assessment

An approach therapists use to learn what could be triggering or reinforcing difficult behaviours in children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). A functional assessment might take place over several days, looking for patterns of behaviour. This information helps therapists come up with a plan to increase appropriate behaviours and reduce difficult behaviours. For example, the assessment might show that a child becomes aggressive only when a certain teacher asks a question, and that the aggression enables the child to avoid answering the question.

Professionals who do functional assessments often use descriptive methods (such as interviews and rating scales), direct observations and functional analysis. Research shows that interventions based on functional assessments are more effective than those based on other kinds of assessment.

Self-stimulatory behaviour

Repetitive body movements (such as hand flapping or body rocking) or repetitive movement of objects. This behaviour is common in many individuals with developmental disabilities, and it appears to be more common in autism.

More to explore

- ▶ Testing interventions for autism spectrum disorder
- ▶ Therapy hours: how many are enough for autism spectrum disorder?

Web links

- ▶ Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Support
- ▶ Rehabilitation Research & Training Center – Positive Behavior Support

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