

# Functional Behaviour Assessment 101

## Classroom Problem Solving: The Initial Step in the Tier Two Process

Presenters: Marcus Gough and Wendy Morgan

Positive Behaviour for Learning School-wide Regional Practitioners

# He tīmatanga: Whakataka te hau

Whakataka te hau ki te uru

*Cease the winds from the west*

Whakataka te hau ki te tonga

*Cease the winds from the south,*

Kia mākinakina ki uta

*Let the breeze blow over the land*

Kia mātaratara ki tai

*Let the red tipped dawn come*

E hī ake ana te ataakura

*With a sharpened air,*

He tio, he huka, he hauhunga

*A touch of frost, a promise of a*

Tīhei Mauri Ora

*glorious day.*

Ko te kai a te rangatira he  
kōrero

*The food of chiefs is dialogue*



# Kō wai tātou?

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# Session objectives



1. Understand where classroom problem solving fits within the Positive Behaviour for Learning School-wide framework.
2. Complete a simple functional behaviour assessment.
3. Explore the main functions of the classroom practices team.
4. Complete a simple behaviour support plan for an individual learner.

# Acknowledgements



IMPLEMENTATION MANUAL





# Positive Behaviour for Learning

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- Home
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- Incredible Years Teacher
- Incredible Years Parent
- Kaupapa Māori
- Check & Connect
- My FRIENDS Youth
- PB4L Restorative Practice
- School Climate & Culture
- Encourage Positive Behaviours

## Welcome

Positive Behaviour for Learning initiatives help parents, whānau, teachers, early childhood centres, and schools address problem behaviour, improve children’s well-being, and increase educational achievement.

By strengthening relationships and creating more positive home and school environments we remove barriers to engagement and improve students’ chances to achieve at school and beyond.

PB4L is a long-term, systemic approach involving ten initiatives. These include whole-school change initiatives, targeted group programmes, and individual student support services. Five of the initiatives are in development.

Read more about PB4L in the PB4L Overview

[PB4L 2015 Overview](#) (PDF, 3 MB)



PB4L School-Wide



Incredible Years Teacher



Incredible Years Parent



Incredible Years Autism

## Contact PB4L

- [PB4L@education.govt.nz](mailto:PB4L@education.govt.nz) for further information, guidance, or resources.



Positive Behaviour for Learning

# SECTION 4 WĀHANGA 4

SCHOOL-WIDE

UNDERSTANDING AND RESPONDING TO BEHAVIOUR  
TE MĀRAMA ME TE URUPARE KI NGĀ  
MOMO WHANONGA

Positive Behaviour for Learning

# SECTION 5 WĀHANGA 5

SCHOOL-WIDE

STRENGTHENING CLASSROOM PRACTICES  
TE WHAKAPAKARI I NGĀ MAHI I TE AKOMANGA

Positive Behaviour for Learning

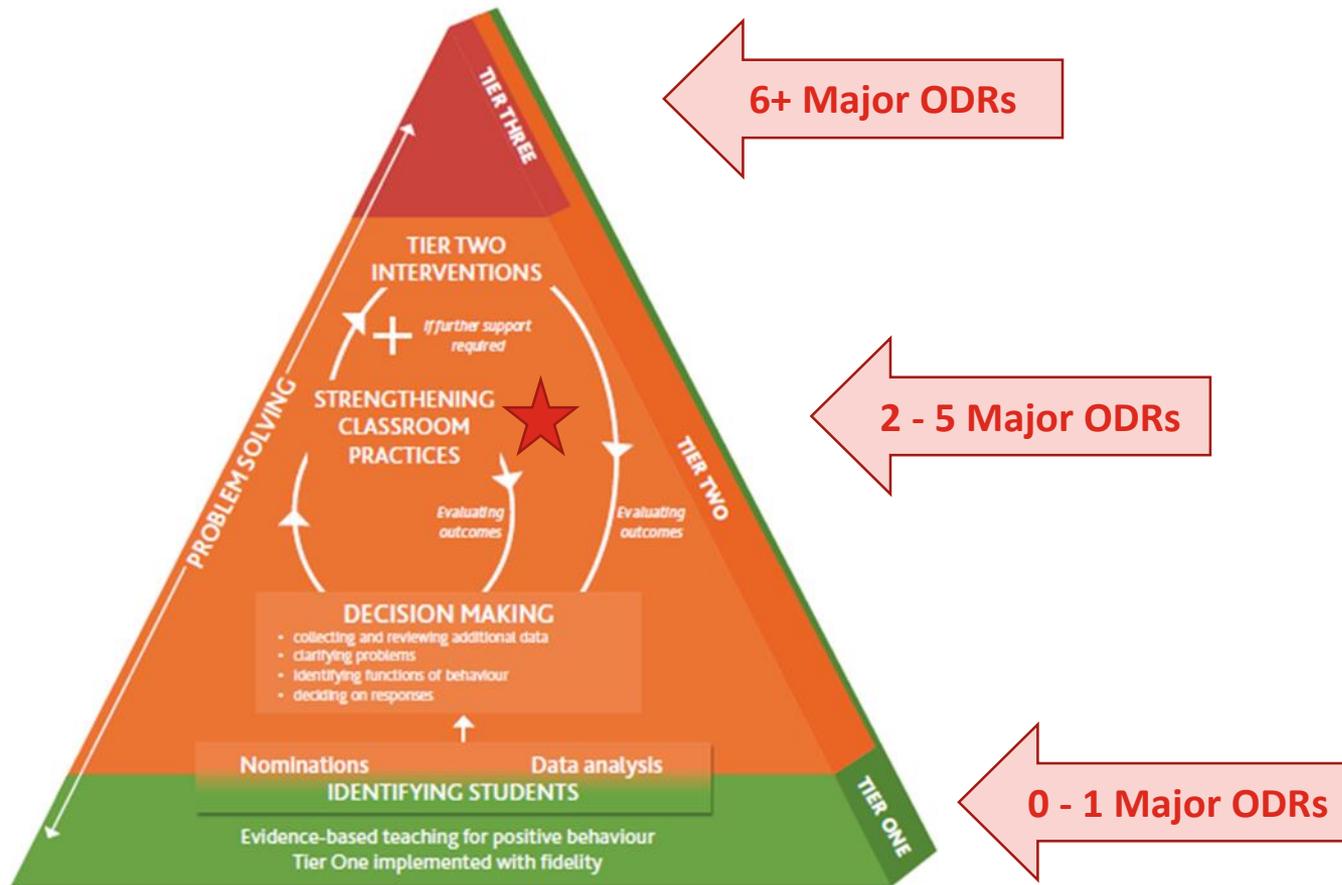
# TEACHING FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Supporting engagement, participation, and learning  
Tracy Rohan

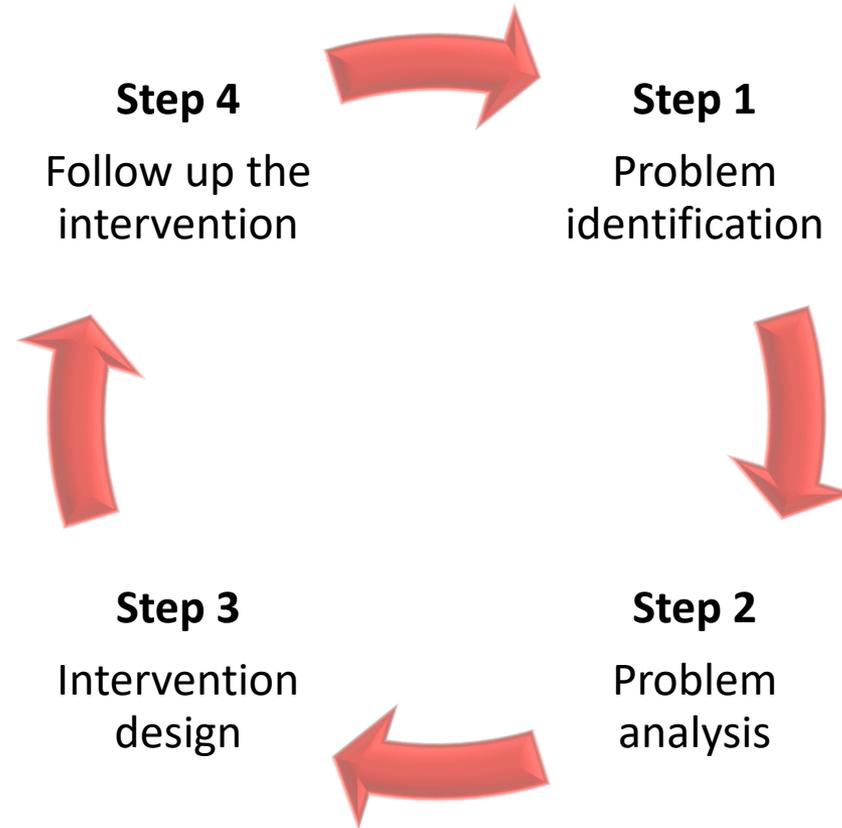
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION  
TE TĀHĀPOKI O TE MĀTANGAHERI

# Where does classroom problem solving fit within PB4L?

Figure 3: The Tier Two student support model



# The problem solving process





# The Theory of Behaviour

# Essential behaviour principles



1. All we do is **behave** – behaviour is everything we do.
2. Most behaviour is **learned**.
3. Behaviour must be **observable** and **measurable**.
4. Behaviour tends to be **triggered** by an event around (or within) us.
5. Behaviour is **purposeful** and depends on the context and the person's behaviour skill set.

# Essential behaviour principles



6. Behaviour is controlled (weakened or reinforced) by what happens after it (**consequences**).
7. Managing challenging behaviour is often unsuccessful because we try to manage the **form** of the behaviour (the **what**) rather than its **function** (the **why**).
8. We can never directly manage/control another's behaviour. We can only influence it by adjusting the **context** or by improving the **skill** set.



The practices, systems, and processes of PB4L-SW are based on three assumptions about human behaviour: that it is **functional**, that it is **predictable**, and that it is **changeable**.

(Crone & Horner, 2003).

# Behaviour as communication



- Behaviour is a form of communication.
- Some students have learnt that problem behaviour is the most efficient way to communicate their needs.
- When a learner repeatedly engages in socially unacceptable behaviour they are likely to be doing it for a reason – the behaviour is paying off for them.
- When adults interpret behaviour as naughty or bad they seek to control the behaviour through punishment, which has proven to be ineffective in the long term.

# Functions of behaviour



There are only two research-validated functions of behaviour:

1. to **obtain** or **seek** something
2. to **escape** or **avoid** something.

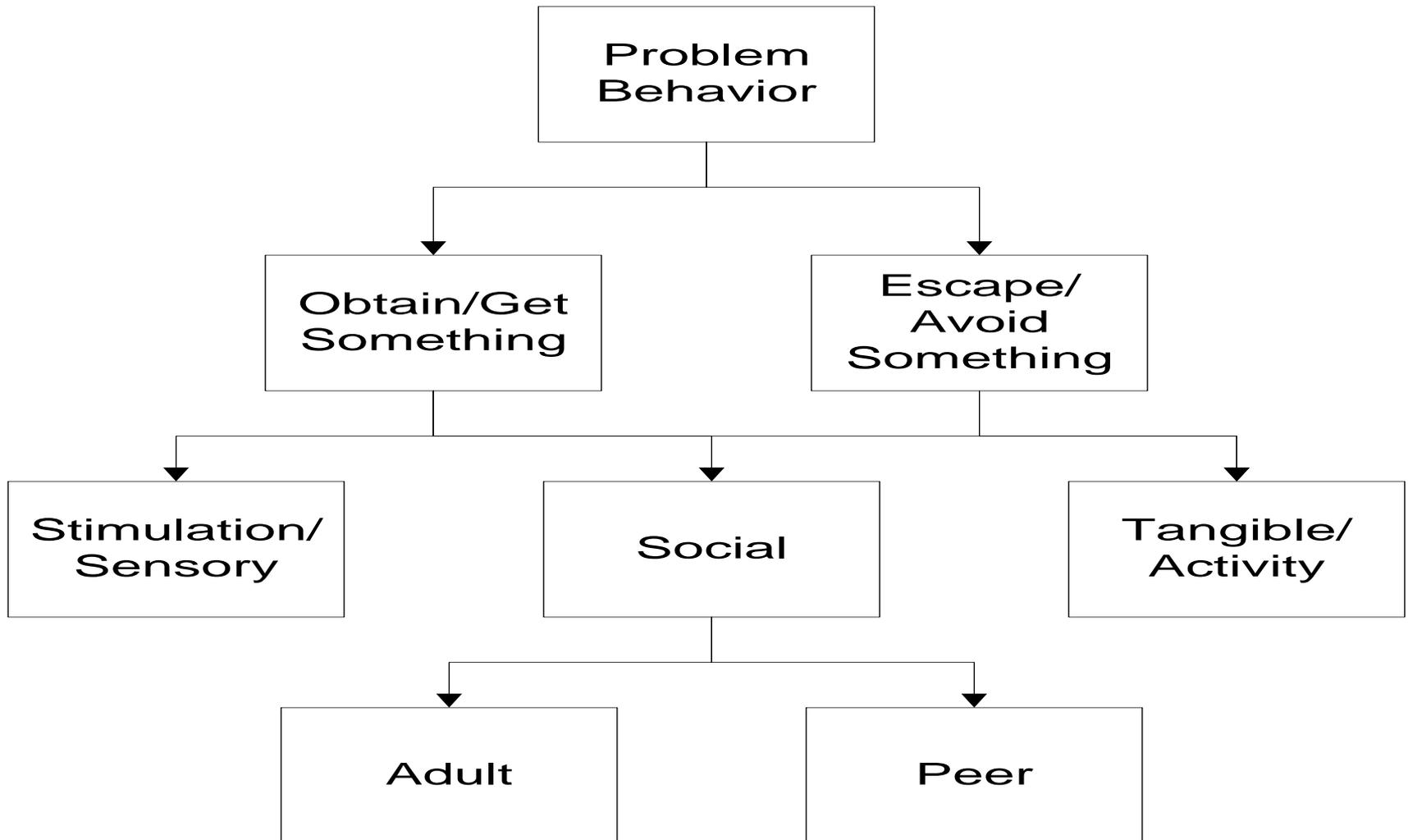
(Alberto and Troutman, 2012).

# Two minute kōrero



1. What do learners/ākonga try to **seek or obtain** through their behaviour?
2. What do learners/ākonga try to **escape or avoid** through their behaviour?

# Functions of behaviour



# Remember...



- Learners are not always aware of the function of their behaviour (obtaining or avoiding).
- Their behaviour is not always deliberate and calculated – sometimes they are acting on impulse and emotion in a moment of stress or anxiety.
- The way that people have responded to the behaviour over time will have shaped and reinforced the behaviour.



# Functional Behaviour Assessment

# Functional behaviour assessment



Functional behaviour assessment (FBA) is a process for identifying the:

- purpose or function of a behaviour
- variables that predict behaviour (when it is likely and when it is unlikely to occur)
- variables that maintain/reinforce the behaviour
- components of an effective behaviour support plan.

# Functional behaviour assessment



- FBA is a systematic, evidence-based process for assessing the relationship between a behaviour and the context in which that behaviour occurs.  
(Blair, Umbreit, & Bos, 1999).
- By knowing why learners behave the way they do, teacher can predict when problem behaviours might occur and prevent them from happening.
- FBA provides a basis for teaching alternative ways of behaving so that learner's needs can be met in more socially acceptable ways.



‘Research has shown that interventions based on an FBA result in significant change in student behaviour.’  
(Ingram, Lewis-Palmer, & Sugai, 2005).



# Completing a Simple FBA

# FBA is a five step process



1. Describe the **behaviour**

2. Identify the **antecedent**

3. Identify the **consequence**

4. Identify the **function**

5. Check for **setting events**

# Step 1: Describe the behaviour



The behaviour needs to be:

1. **observable** (it can be seen or heard)
2. **measurable** (it can be counted or timed)
3. **recognisable** (anyone would be able to recognise or identify it).

# Which of these behaviours are observable and measurable?

Hits with their fist

Aggressive

Bully

Takes money from peers

Psychotic

Says she hears voices

Ten minutes late to class

Irresponsible

Out of seat 55% of time

Hyperactive

# Working with a partner...



...develop an observable and measurable definition for one of the example behaviours below:

1. Aj is always **disruptive** in class
2. Hailey is constantly **off-task** during maths
3. Chris is **defiant**
4. Brandon is **angry and hostile**
5. Mihorangi uses **inappropriate language**.



# Let's Meet Joe

# Let's meet Joe...

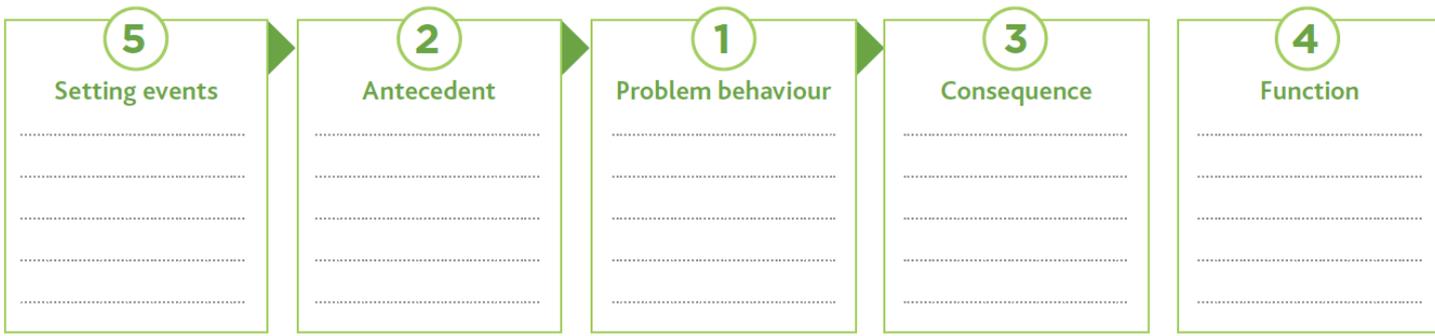
Joe is a year eight student in a local intermediate school. He has met the criteria for Tier Two support because of persistent challenging behaviour affecting his relationships, achievement and attendance. His behaviour is particularly problematic during maths, when he is frequently out of his seat, distracts other students, and is abusive or sullen in response to teacher instruction.





Routine/context: .....

Student: .....



Hypothesis: .....

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This template is available as a PDF and Word document online at <http://pb4l.tki.org.nz/PB4L-School-Wide/Support-material>

# FBA is a five step process



1. Describe the **behaviour**

2. Identify the **antecedent**

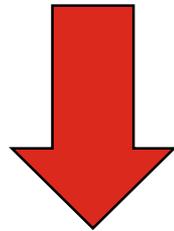
3. Identify the **consequence**

4. Identify the **function**

5. Check for **setting events**

# Step 1: Describe the behaviour

Always start with the  
**behaviour.**



**Joe is frequently out of his seat, speaks abusively in response to teacher instruction, and refuses to start the task he has been given.**



# FBA is a five step process



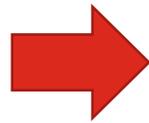
# Step 2: Identify the antecedent



Once we have described the behaviour (the ‘what’), we want to find out its antecedent or ‘trigger’ – what happens immediately before it occurs. We will also want to consider the specific routine or context in which the behaviour most often tends to occur.

## **Antecedent:**

**This behaviour usually occurs when Joe is given a task to complete independently that he’s not confident about. The behaviour occurs most often during maths lessons.**



## **Behaviour:**

Joe is frequently out of his seat, speaks abusively in response to teacher instruction, and refuses to start the task he has been given.

# FBA is a five step process

1. Describe the **behaviour**

2. Identify the **antecedent**



3. Identify the **consequence**

4. Identify the **function**

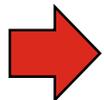
5. Check for **setting events**

# Step 3: Identify the consequence

Once we have identified the behaviour and its antecedent, we then need to find out what the consequence or outcome of the behaviour is (what happens immediately afterwards).

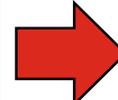
## **Antecedent:**

Joe is given a maths task to complete independently that he's not confident about.



## **Behaviour:**

Joe is frequently out of his seat, speaks abusively in response to teacher instruction, and refuses to start the task he has been given.



## **Consequence:**

**Joe is sent out of the classroom for time out, or is sent to the dean.**

# FBA is a five step process



1. Describe the **behaviour**

2. Identify the **antecedent**

3. Identify the **consequence**



4. Identify the **function**

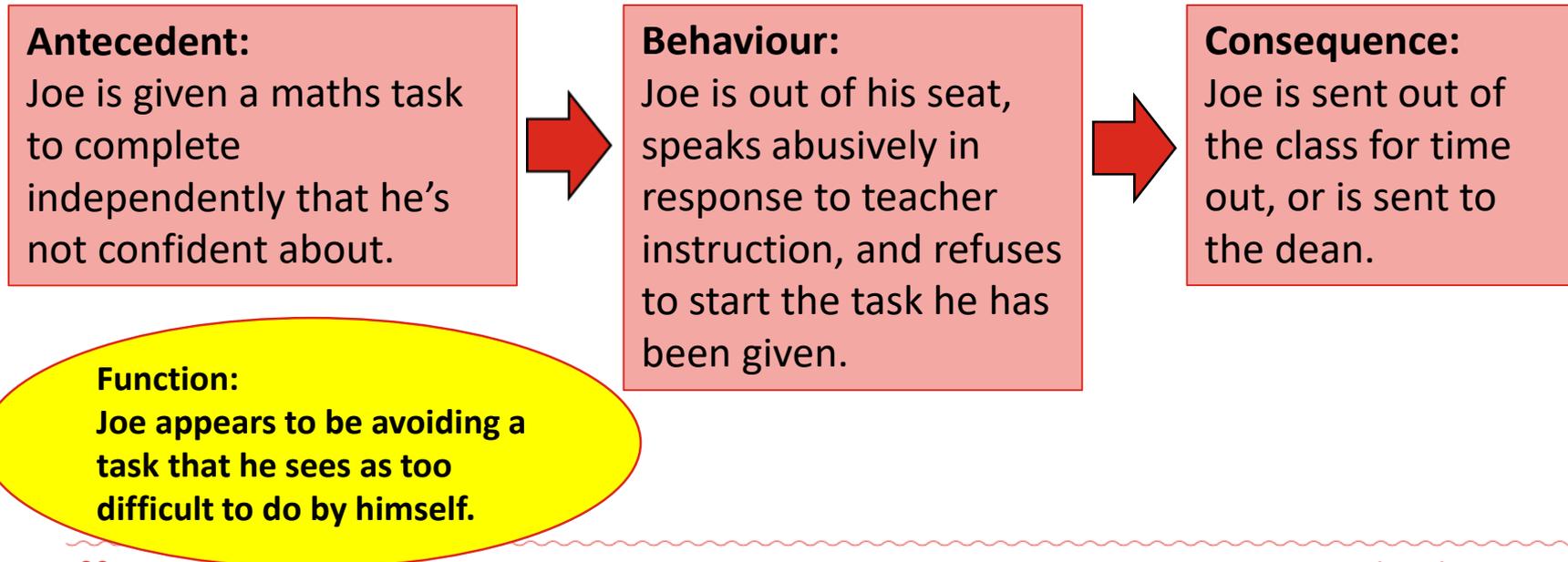
5. Check for **setting events**

# Step 4: Identify the function



Now use the information we have gathered about the behaviour and its antecedent and consequence to identify the likely function of the behaviour:

- is it to avoid or to obtain something?
- what is being avoided or sought (e.g., attention, an activity, a tangible item)?



# FBA is a five step process



1. Describe the **behaviour**

2. Identify the **antecedent**

3. Identify the **consequence**

4. Identify the **function**



5. Check for **setting events**

# Step 5(a): Check for setting events

Often the likelihood of a behaviour occurring is influenced by one or more 'setting events' – other things going on in a student's life. These are likely to be a mix of long- and short-term issues, and may include health, social, and academic concerns.

**Setting Event:**  
Joe struggles with maths and has difficulty managing feelings of frustration and anxiety. This year has been particularly unsettled for him, as it has included a move into foster care.

**Antecedent:**  
Joe is given a maths task to complete independently that he's not confident about.

**Behaviour:**  
Joe is out of his seat, speaks abusively in response to teacher instruction, and refuses to start the task he has been given.

**Consequence:**  
Joe is sent out of the class for time out or is sent to the dean.

# Step 5(b): Write a hypothesis



Finally, use what you have learnt in steps one to five to write a hypothesis that summarises the 'ABC' of the behaviour and provisionally identifies the function of the behaviour. The hypothesis provides a starting point for writing a Behaviour Support Plan.

## **Hypothesis Statement:**

**Joe's inappropriate behaviour occurs when he is given a maths task he is not confident about and results in him being sent out of class. The function of his behaviour therefore appears to be to avoid a task he sees as too difficult to do by himself. The behaviour may be exacerbated by a recent move into foster care and difficulty in managing feelings of frustration and anxiety.**

5

### Setting events

Joe struggles with maths and has difficulty managing feelings of frustration and anxiety. This year he has had to move into foster care.

2

### Antecedent

Joe is given a maths task to complete independently that he's not confident about.

1

### Problem behaviour

Joe is out of his seat, speaks abusively in response to teacher instruction, and refuses to start the task he has been given.

3

### Consequence

Joe is sent out of the class for time out or is sent to the dean.

4

### Function

Joe appears to be avoiding a task that he sees as too difficult to do by himself.

## Hypothesis

Joe's inappropriate behaviour occurs when he is given a maths task he is not confident about and results in him being sent out of class. The function of his behaviour therefore appears to be to avoid a task he sees as too difficult to do by himself. The behaviour may be exacerbated by a recent move into foster care and difficulty in managing feelings of frustration and anxiety.

# Here's another example...



When the class has been asked to work quietly and independently, Gemma is frequently out of her seat, visiting other students or looking for tools and materials, as well as calling out that she is bored or doesn't know what to do. When her behaviour becomes particularly difficult to ignore, she is sent to the D.P., or to work in another classroom.

## **Setting Event:**

Gemma's parents have recently separated and she is having frequent arguments with her mother.

## **Antecedent:**

The class has been asked to work quietly and independently.

## **Behaviour:**

Gemma talks to other students, calls out, and makes loud comments like, "What am I supposed to be doing?"

## **Consequence:**

The teacher sends Gemma to the D.P., or to work in another classroom.

## **Function:**

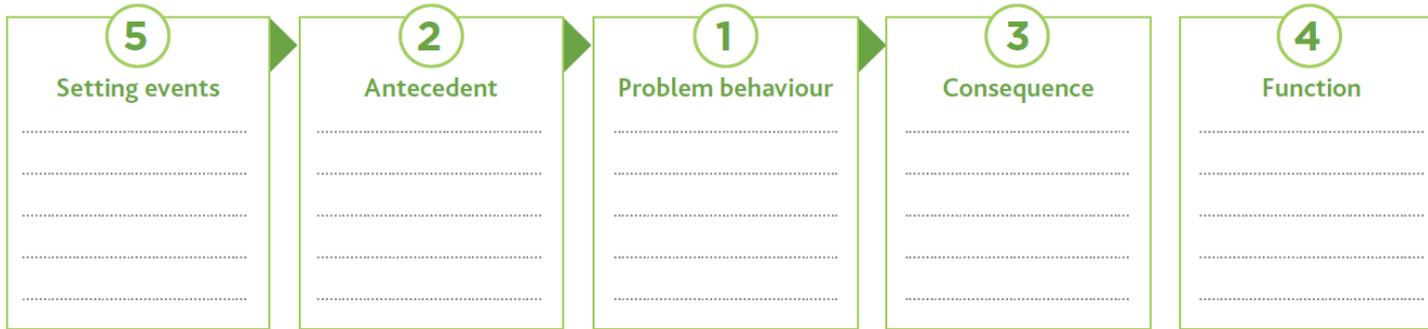
Gemma appears to be seeking attention from the teacher or another adult

# Think of your own scenario/learner

TEMPLATE FOR A SIMPLE FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOURAL ASSESSMENT

Routine/context:

Student:



Hypothesis:

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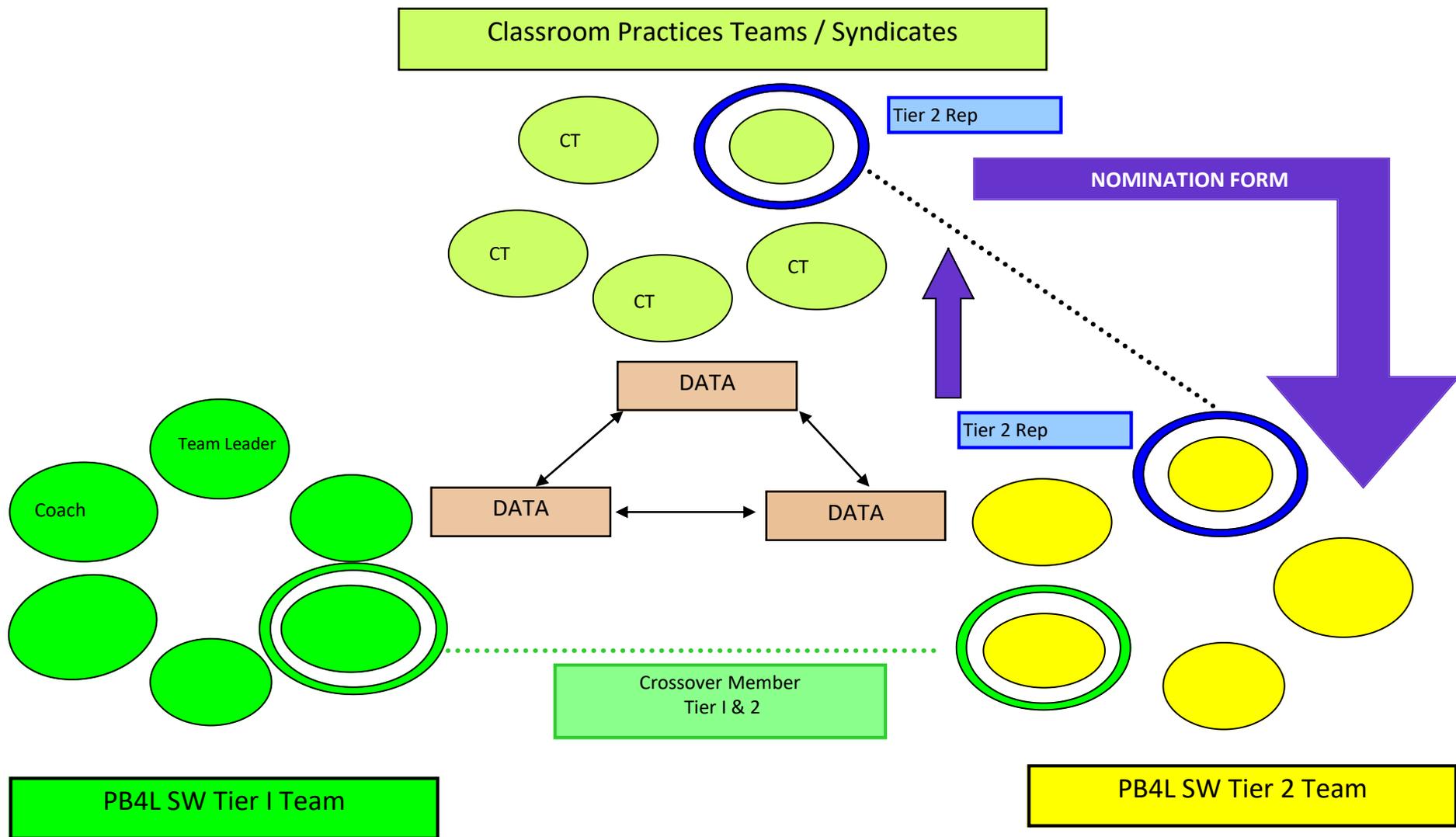


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# Classroom Practice Teams

*In your school, who currently meets to discuss children of concern?*



# Classroom practice teams



- The heart and soul of the Tier Two system.
- Teams that currently meet to discuss curriculum and/or learner behaviour.
- Teachers supporting teachers.
- Generally have about five members including a representative from the Tier Two team.
- One or multiple teams in a school depending on school size.

# Main aspects of the CPT's role



1. Accepting learners for additional support.
2. Supporting teachers to examine their practice.
3. Understanding learners' behaviour and developing strategies in response.
4. Grouping learners when required.
5. Monitoring learners' progress.
6. Communicating with others.

# 1. Accepting learners for support



Students in need of additional support may be identified by:

- a PB4L team
  - identifying a learner while reviewing school-wide data
  - using the school's data decision rules
- a teacher or school leader
- whānau members, or other students.

## 2. Examining teacher practice



‘In the past, the traditional approach for responding to inappropriate behaviour in the classroom has tended to locate the ‘problem’ with the student. Teachers have often not considered the nature of their relationship with the student, their organization of the classroom, and their way of approaching problem behaviour as possible influential factors.’

(School-wide Tier Two Implementation Manual p.106).

## 2. Examining teacher practice



‘Students learn best when they feel accepted, when they enjoy positive relationships with their fellow students and teachers, and when they are able to be active, visible members of the learning community. Effective teachers foster positive relationships within environments that are caring, inclusive, non-discriminatory, and cohesive.’

(The New Zealand Curriculum, p.34).



Positive Behaviour  
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# TEACHING FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR

Supporting engagement, participation, and learning  
Tracy Rohan





## TEACHING FOR POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR: SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Date and time: \_\_\_\_\_ Observer (If applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Instructional activity (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

*Rate yourself for each strategy by checking 'Emerging', 'Partly in place', or 'Established'*

Teaching approaches & strategies	Teacher actions that support expected behaviour
<b>1. Creating a supportive learning environment</b>	
<b>Collaboratively developing behaviour expectations</b>	<p>My students and I have agreed on behaviour expectations linked to our school values. The expectations are displayed in our learning space. Students can explain the expectations.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <b>Emerging</b>    <input type="radio"/> <b>Partly in place</b>    <input type="radio"/> <b>Established</b></p>
<b>Establishing a supportive physical environment</b>	<p>The learning space allows ease of access and movement and minimises crowding and distraction. Equipment and materials are clearly labelled, and there are established routines for students to collect and return them. There is a neutral space available where students can go to calm down if they need to. Visual Images and resources reflect and celebrate cultural diversity. My relationships with students are warm and caring, reflecting the values of manaakitanga and whanaungatanga.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <b>Emerging</b>    <input type="radio"/> <b>Partly in place</b>    <input type="radio"/> <b>Established</b></p>
<b>Establishing and explicitly teaching routines</b>	<p>My students and I have developed routines for the learning space. The routines are displayed and regularly taught. Students receive feedback and encouragement to follow the routines, both from me and from one another.</p> <p><input type="radio"/> <b>Emerging</b>    <input type="radio"/> <b>Partly in place</b>    <input type="radio"/> <b>Established</b></p>

# 3. Analysing and responding to learners' behaviour



At their meetings, the members of a CPT:

- share ideas about teaching for positive behaviour
- reflect on and select appropriate strategies for learners in their class
- discuss any barriers they have encountered as they implement these strategies
- discuss what has worked and why it has been successful.

# Overview of the problem-solving process



1. Summarise the problem using a Simple FBA template.
2. Identify a replacement behaviour and learner goal.
3. Identify strategies to support behaviour change which match the function of the learner's current (problem) behaviour.
4. Plan how to monitor learner progress.
5. Set a follow up date to review the learner's progress.



# Developing a Behaviour Support Plan

# Key question/discussion:



As a result of completing a basic FBA, the key question to ask is:

“What will the teachers in this learning space do differently to better support this student?”

## SIMPLE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Summary of problem

We have the most problems during:

\_\_\_\_\_

(time of day/ activity/ class/ routine)



### 2. Replacement behaviour:

What do we want the student(s) to do instead? (e.g., choose an observable behavioural skill from your school's expectations matrix)

\_\_\_\_\_

Student goal:

# Joe's teachers could:



- arrange some extra tutoring in maths
- teach the whole class strategies for self-help and helping others
- provide a space that Joe can use to calm down if he feels frustrated
- give Joe extra feedback and encouragement as he develops self-management skills.

# Joe's teachers could also:



- ensure that he has easier, shorter tasks to complete before he moves onto more challenging tasks.
- provide scaffolds (such as prompts or peer tutoring) to enable him to manage more challenging tasks successfully.
- encourage Joe to use a cue card to signal the need for help.
- immediately acknowledge his need for support when he uses the cue card, and provide help as soon as possible.
- acknowledge and reinforce his positive behaviour.

# 5. Monitoring learners' progress



The Classroom Practices Team will need one or more follow-up meetings to share data on the learner's progress towards their goal. At that time, the team will decide whether to:

- continue the strategies
- modify the strategies
- try a different strategy
- refer the learner for a Tier Two targeted intervention.



# Let's Practice - Lauren!

# Lauren



- Lauren is a Year 10 student who is described as ‘disruptive’ by her French teacher.
- Her disruptive behaviour occurs most frequently when she is asked to speak out loud in front of her peers.
- When Lauren engages in disruptive behaviour, her teacher engages in a verbal argument with her.
- Lauren’s disruptive behaviour is most likely to occur just after she has received negative or corrective feedback about her work from her teacher.

## SIMPLE BEHAVIOUR SUPPORT PLAN

Student(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### 1. Summary of problem

We have the most problems during: \_\_\_\_\_

(time of day/ activity/ class/ routine)



### 2. Replacement behaviour:

What do we want the student(s) to do instead? (e.g., choose an observable behavioural skill from your school's expectations matrix)

Student goal: \_\_\_\_\_

# Potential replacement behaviours for Lauren:



- free time with peers for every question answered in French
- complete the French test at the end of the class with the teacher
- record her answers on an audio recorder
- complete the oral test with a peer (in pairs).

# Pātai/Questions



Lifting aspiration and educational  
achievement **for every New Zealander**