

*Building rapport and the importance of knowing preference
when supporting people*

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What is Rapport?

A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.

(Oxford English Dictionary)

Often the process is referred to as **Pairing** in behavioural settings.



Pairing

- Pairing is the process where you establish yourself as a reinforcer to build a positive relationship with your individual. (a reinforcer is something a person likes)

Primary components of pairing:

- Present yourself and your words with the delivery of reinforcement.
- Reinforce the interaction with the person without placing demands.
(Reinforcement is NOT contingent on the person doing or saying something)

<https://www.thewatsoninstitute.org/watson-life-resources/situation/pairing-with-reinforcement/>, Accessed 16/5/19)



Quality of Rapport as a setting Event for Problem Behavior (Laughlin & Carr, 2005)

- Study 1- a descriptive assessment was carried out in which rapport was operationally defined, and good and poor rapport dyads consisting of staff members and participants were identified.
- Functional Analysis of each participant's behaviours that challenge was conducted with respect to the interaction of two factors: quality of rapport and task demands.
- The results of the assessment study indicated that when rapport was poor, levels of behaviours that challenge were high; when rapport was good, levels of behaviours that challenge were low.



Quality of Rapport as a setting Event for Problem Behavior (Laughlin & Carr, 2005)

- In Study 2, the authors evaluated the effectiveness of a multicomponent intervention package designed to improve rapport between the person with disabilities and his or her caregiver.
- When rapport improved, participants showed a decrease in behaviours that challenge and an increase in task completion in the presence of staff members who had previously been identified as having poor rapport with participants.

You can teach rapport!



Why is rapport important in PBS?

- How would you feel if someone you didn't know or like was asking you to do a new or less preferred task?
- How often do we talk about new or less preferred team members being considered an antecedent within incidents?
- In functional behavioural assessments that identify the function of behaviour as attention we need to consider if attention from certain people is more valuable...



Rapport and functional behaviour assessment

- Contextual fit - sometimes may need to build relationships prior to teaching functionally equivalent skills
- Function of behaviour - Escape from less preferred team members and access to highly preferred/familiar team members
 - This is not uncommon and often includes access to people in some level of reinforcement
 - Is it about consistency or that this person provides reinforcement by actioning things?



Conceptual understanding of “testing”

Some thoughts...

- Commonly hear reports that the person we are supporting/working with has a history of testing support teams, need to get through first incident etc
- Need to consider this from a behavioural understanding, is it...
 - Bringing delayed contingencies into the immediate
 - There has not been the opportunity and time to establish the support team member as a reinforcer
- Further consideration and understanding is needed



Importance of Preference

- Finding out what people like is a key element to person centred planning.
- If you know what someone likes than you can use that activity/item to build rapport with someone.
- Helps to establish yourself as a preferred person which increases chance of being valued as a reinforcer.



Uses of preference assessments

- Teams are often very good at engaging with out of house activities but struggle to identify what individuals enjoy doing in the house – particularly when the individual is not able to vocally tell the team
- This often results in withdrawal or time spent “engaging in watching TV”
- Resulting in a function of behaviours that challenge to access to attention and tangible access to out of the house activities.



Identifying Preference

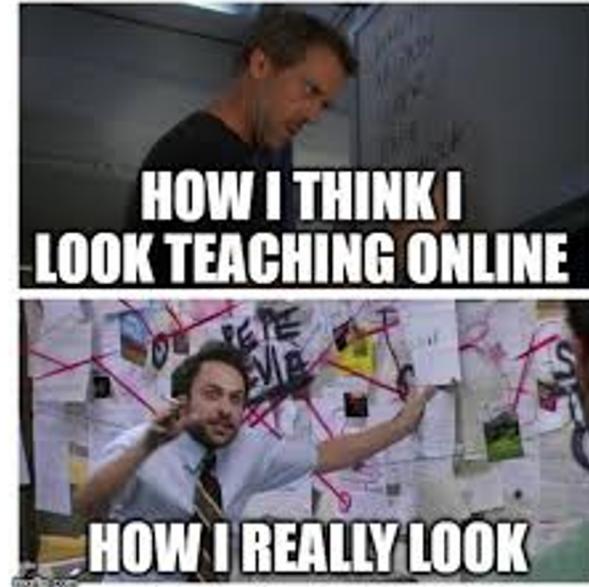
- Ask someone -what do they like?
- Open-ended questions
 - Lists
 - Checklist
 - Ranking
- Reinforcer Inventory checklist
- Ask significant others
- Offering a task prior to activity
- Carrying out more formal preference assessments alongside the Clinician

Problems: not always accurate, may be just what they know not what they like



Expectation vs reality...

- Sometimes it is possible to complete formal preference assessments as learnt
- Often you need flexibility in approach
- Considerations
 - Environment to complete the preference assessments
 - Who will be carrying out the preference assessments (think rapport)
 - Time - one session or multiple?
 - What is the preference assessment for?



Naturalistic ways to assess preference

- Introducing new activities
- Keep a record of duration engaged in, this can highlight key preferences
- Single stimulus – make a note if they engaged with it. This may begin with looking at the item whilst you engage.
- Building rapport
- By spending time sitting and finding out what people like in a low demand environment you become a preferred person!



Working with teams to assess preference

- Benefits - Rapport, frequent opportunities, engagement opportunities, developing skills of teams
- Teaching teams to engage in preference assessments is key
 - Think about terminology - does this need to be called a preference assessment
 - Simplify recording
 - Think about contextual fit of assessment for the person and the team carrying out the assessment
 - Plan it - make it prescriptive



Person centred planning and preference (Green et al, 2010)

- Used preference assessments to evaluate accuracy of preferences identified from person centred plans with adults with multiple physical and learning disabilities aged 35-53 years old.
- Person Centred planning meeting held.
- Single operant preference assessment used to assess preference of 45% of items from PCP meeting + 2 additional items.
- Assessments of approach in everyday situations were measured for 2 participants.



Person centred planning and preference (Green et al, 2010)

- 67% of items identified in the PCP meeting were highly preferred
- 11% moderately preferred
- 22% non-preferred
- Disliked items in the PCP meeting:
 - One was identified as preferred
 - 2 were non-preferred.
- Naturalistic assessment matched single operant assessment

Should use in connection with reported preferences

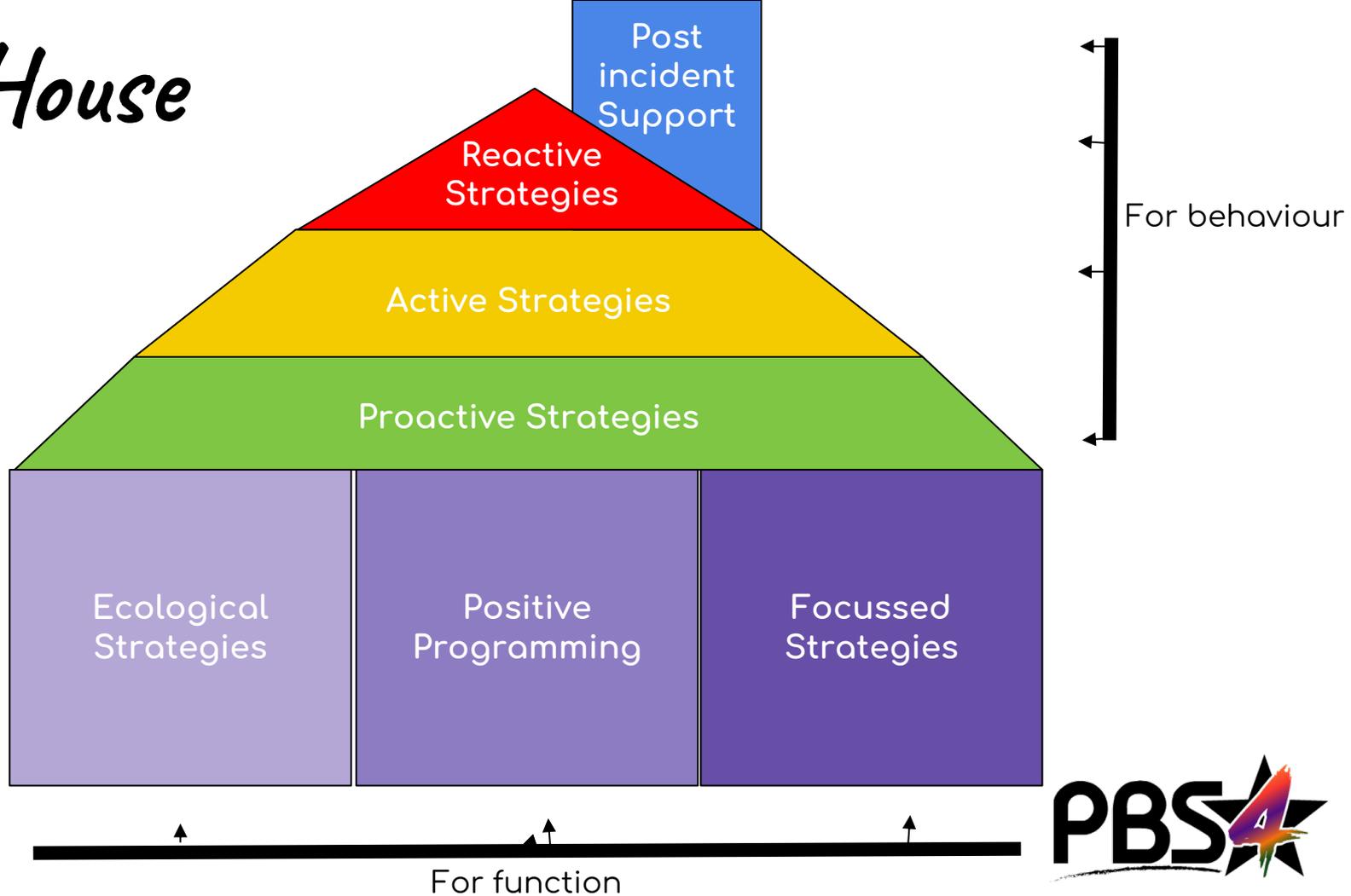


Uses of Preference assessments

- In-house activities
- Out of house leisure activities
- Work based tasks (Lattimore et al, 2003)
- Housemate options– finding shared interests
- Team matching



The House



Team engagement

- Preferred method of feedback
 - Email
 - Face to Face
- Preferred snacks for team meetings
- If team meeting becomes paired with snacks will engagement increase
- Identify possible reinforcers for staff performance



References

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