



What Qualifications do Positive Behaviour Support Professionals have?

PBS professionals can come from a variety of backgrounds and work in a wide range of places. There is currently no accreditation scheme for PBS professionals, so how do you know whether the person providing PBS to your family member is competent? Here we give some advice on what to look for.



Positive Behaviour Support is about everyone working together

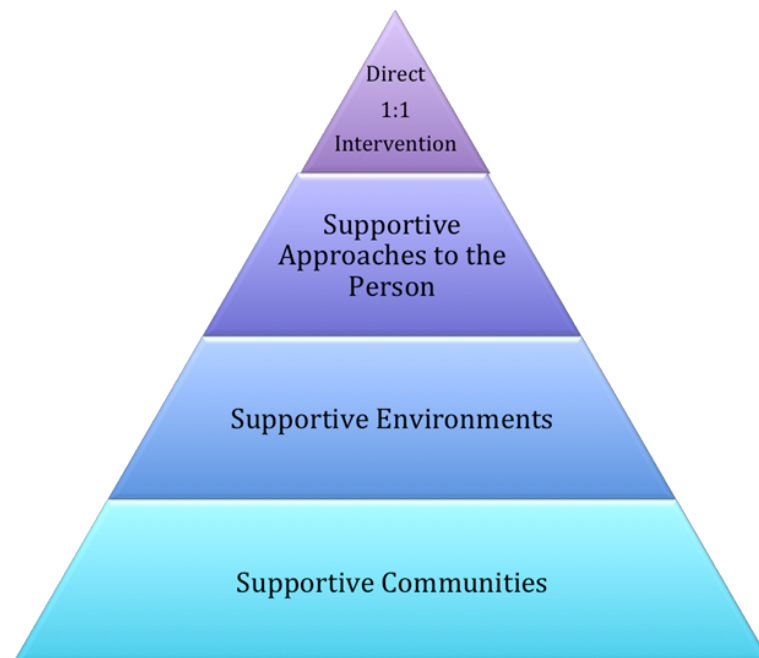
Everyone has a role in delivering Positive Behaviour Support

Before we begin to discuss the specific qualifications of a Positive Behaviour Support professional, it is important to stress that for it to be effective Positive Behaviour Support needs to be inclusive of everyone and everything. The advice given in this guide are recommendations for people who are clinically delivering interventions of leading on implementing Positive Behaviour Support in a workplace. It is not aimed to exclude people and professionals who will have a key role to play without these qualifications.

Positive Behaviour Support works best when it is including the person it aims to benefit, their family, and any other interventions and approaches that are supportive for them.

A community-wide approach to Positive Behaviour Support

The diagram below demonstrates how Positive Behaviour Support should work on different levels. This will mean a level of competence in Positive Behaviour support is needed by a wide range of people.



Supportive Communities:

Positive Behaviour Support should lead to valued roles for the person in the communities they spend time in, which in turn leads to communities where the person is respected, valued, and has opportunities to join in. For children the school would be included part of their community.

Supportive Environments:

This refers to places where the person spends their time, including the people who they spend time with. Supportive environments enable the person to be independent and develop skills, regardless of their disabilities. For example, if someone uses sign supported language, all people who spend time with them will know how to sign.

Supportive approaches to the person:

This describes general advice or support plans for how to support the person. This helps everyone who is part of their support to do things consistently.

Direct 1:1 input:

These are specific sessions with the person, usually aimed at increasing independence and skills.



Without an appropriately qualified person, Positive Behaviour Support can be misunderstood and done incorrectly.

Qualifications

If a service is called a Positive Behaviour Support service, somewhere in the team's structure there will be an appropriately qualified person. This person will need to be able to complete a functional assessment of behaviour – an assessment to help understand the reasons why a behaviour happens. Without an appropriately qualified person in the team, approaches of Positive Behaviour Support can be misunderstood and done incorrectly. This can result in approaches being unsuccessful, or at worst they could be harmful.

There are three things to consider when seeing if a person is appropriately qualified:

- Their registration with a professional body
- their level of training
- and that they receive appropriate clinical supervision.

All three are equally important and essential for Positive Behaviour Support professionals.

Registration

Professional registration means that the practitioner will be regulated by a professional body and they will have a code of conduct they need to adhere to. You will be able to search these bodies to check if people are registered by going to their websites.

There are three recognised bodies a practitioner may be registered with:

- The Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) – Practitioners regulated by the BACB will use the title Board Certified Behaviour Analyst (BCBA). Details of this professional body can be found here: <http://bacb.com/>
- The Nursing & Midwifery Council (NMC) – Practitioners regulated by the NMC doing Positive Behaviour Support are likely to be Registered Learning Disability Nurses. Details of the NMC can be found here: <http://www.nmc-uk.org/>
- The Health Care Professionals Council (HCPC) – The HCPC regulates other health professionals. Professionals they regulate who are Positive Behaviour Support practitioners are likely to be Clinical Psychologists, but may also include other professionals such as Speech & Language Therapists or Occupational therapists. Details of the HCPC can be found here: <http://www.hcpc-uk.org.uk/>

Training

Positive Behaviour Support is an application of Applied Behaviour Analysis. It is recommended that a Positive Behaviour Support professional should be trained to Masters level degree or higher in Applied Behaviour Analysis. This is an internationally recognised level of training to be competent in the use of Applied Behaviour Analysis as a consultant. Details of courses that have been recognised to provide this level of training can be found at: <http://bacb.com/index.php?page=100358>

There are other courses that can give professionals some competencies in Positive Behaviour Support, such as:

- A Bachelors level degree in approaches to challenging behaviour – This will provide practitioners with the skills and knowledge to practice Positive Behaviour Support, but it is recommended their practice should be supervised and reviewed by someone with Masters level training or higher.
- Undergraduate courses and short courses – These will equip practitioners in some of the skills and approaches used in Positive Behaviour Support but a practitioner with a higher level of competence will also be needed.



We would not accept surgery from a theatre nurse who knows the names of all the surgery tools. Positive Behaviour Support should be the same. You should expect to receive this from a competent professional.

Supervision

All health professionals should receive appropriate supervision to ensure that their practice remains current in line with the latest evidence, and it is safe and ethically sound. Usually supervision will be done by someone with a higher level of training, a higher position, or more experience. This can be done by someone internal or external to their organisation. You can ask about the supervision professionals receive.

Raising concerns

If you have concerns about a PBS practitioner you should try to address this with them in the first instance. If this hasn't resolved the problem or you feel you cannot do this you can ask for their employers complaints procedure.

As the PBS practitioner should be regulated, if you are not satisfied with the organisations response you can address concerns to the regulating body whose key role is to protect the public. Details of how to raise concerns are available on all of the websites above.

Key Points

- Everyone can have a role in delivering Positive Behaviour Support
- A Positive Behaviour Support Practitioner should be registered with a professional body (BACB, NMC, or HCPC) and should be trained to Masters level degree in Behavioural Sciences
- A Positive Behaviour Support Practitioner may not meet this criteria but may be supervised by someone with these qualifications.
- It is ok to ask about levels of training and supervision of Positive Behaviour Support Practitioners.

Thinking Points

- Do you know the qualifications of the Positive Behaviour Support practitioner who is supporting your family member?
- Do you know what supervision the Positive Behaviour Support practitioner gets?