

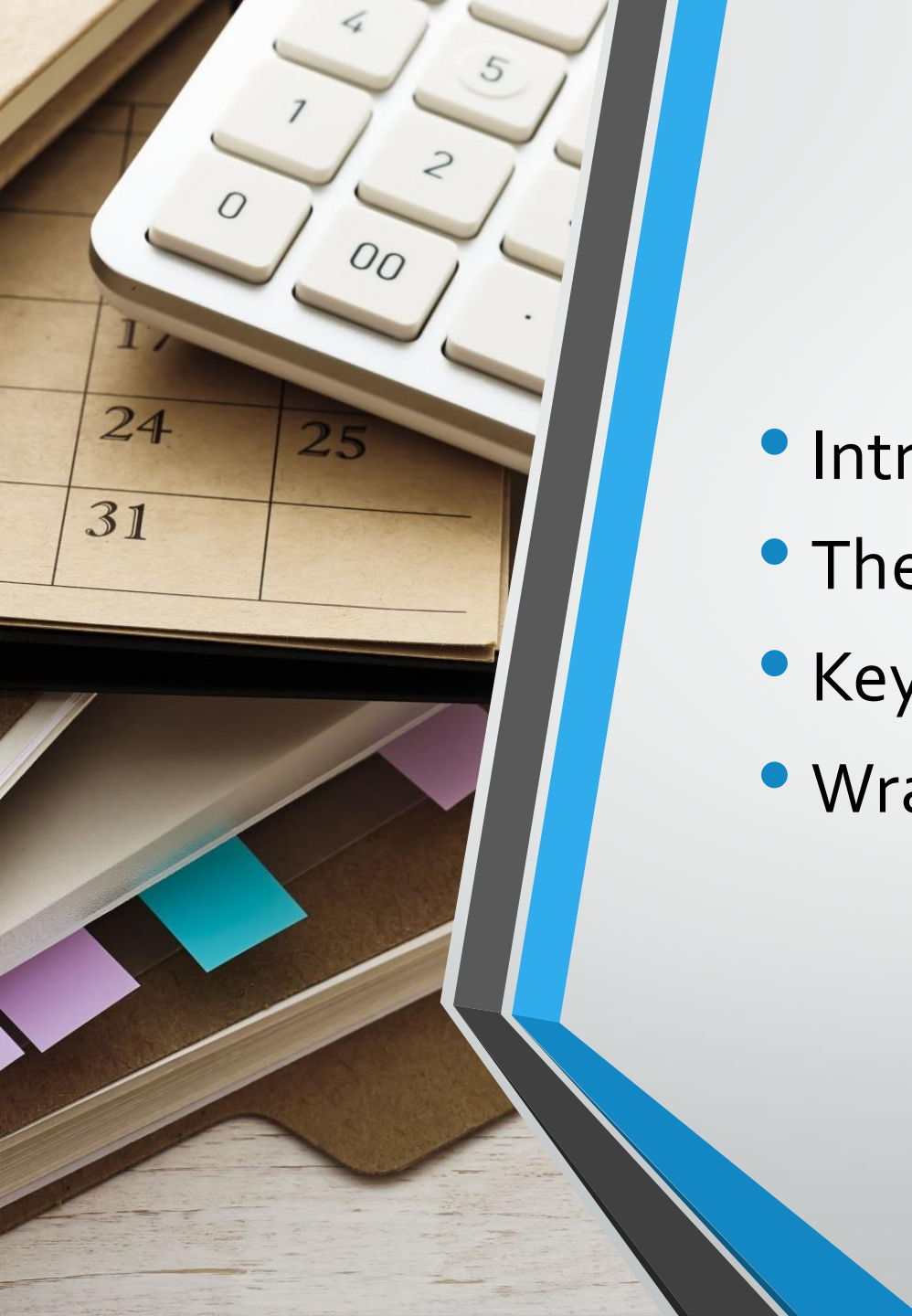


Behaviour as Communication

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INTO Workshop

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Agenda

- Introduction
- The Four Functions
- Key Strategy
- Wrap-up



Key Message

All behaviour is communication.
Every action, every outburst,
every withdrawal, is a message.

Instead of just seeing what students *do*, we'll explore *why* they do it."





Check-in

Think of a recent behaviour of concern/distressed behaviour you observed.

No need to share details, just think of one.



Rapid Brainstorm



Student frequently disrupts quiet work time with loud noises



Student consistently puts head down during maths



Student refuses to participate in group activities

Turn to the person next to you.

For *one* of these scenarios on the left, quickly brainstorm:

- What's your *usual* immediate reaction?
- Then, what might the student actually be *trying to communicate* through that behaviour?"

Any surprising insights??

What is the Behaviour Communicating: Common Reasons for Behaviour



Attention: "I need connection/recognition."

(Ex. calling out, silly noises, asking many questions).



Escape/Avoidance: "This is too hard/overwhelming, or I want to get away from something."

(Ex. refusal to work, hiding, dawdling).



Access to Tangibles/Activities: "I want something specific."

(Ex. grabbing a toy, demanding a turn, interrupting for a privilege).



Sensory Needs/Self-Regulation: "I need to feel comfortable or regulate my body/emotions."

(Ex. fidgeting, rocking, chewing, humming).

Recap

What are the four functions of behaviour?



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Crucial Point

Behaviours of concern are rarely malicious.

It's often a child doing the best they can with the skills they have, to meet a need.



Function Matching

- On the next slide, you will see several examples of student behaviour.
- Quickly decide which of the four functions of behaviour is the most likely reason the student is doing this. Record your answer
- Then, briefly turn to your neighbour and compare your thoughts (2 minutes)
 - Did you agree? Why or why not?"



Function Matching



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Discussion

- **Scenario 1:**

Behaviour: A student frequently calls out answers without raising their hand, even when asked to wait.

- **Scenario 2:**

Behaviour: A student consistently puts their head down or slowly packs their bag when a writing task is assigned.

- **Scenario 3:**

Behaviour: A student consistently gets up from their seat and walks around the classroom during independent work time, sometimes touching objects or other students' desks.

Beyond the Functions – Context Matters

- Is the child tired?
- Hungry?
- Anxious?
- Is the task too easy/hard?
- Are there peer issues?

These are often the *antecedents* that can trigger the behaviour.

The goal isn't to be a psychologist, but a detective, asking 'What's the message? What's the unmet need?'





Check-in

Think of a recent behaviour of concern/distressed behaviour you observed.

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The Power of Proactive

- Once we know the *why*, we can respond differently. We want to be proactive – meeting the need *before* the behaviour of concern escalates.
- Instead of just 'stopping' behaviour, we're teaching new, more appropriate ways for students to communicate their needs.



Teaching a Replacement Behaviour

If a student uses an ineffective behaviour (e.g., shouting for attention), we teach them an effective, more appropriate way to get the same need met (e.g., raising hand, tapping your shoulder)

Example Walkthrough:

- **Behaviour of concern:** Student hits teacher/SNA when frustrated with writing task (*Function: Escape*).
- **Desired Replacement Behaviour:** Student asks for a break or asks for help.
- **How to Teach:** Model, practice, praise. "When you're frustrated, you can say 'I need a break' or 'Help, please.' Let's practice that." Provide the break or help immediately when the replacement behaviour is used.

Teaching approach can be adapted depending on the strengths and needs of the student (e.g., non-speaking autistic student).

Functions of Behavior

It's as easy
as A-B-C
well, it

???



Rapid Brainstorm

- Think back to one of the behaviours of concern you considered earlier.
- With your neighbour quickly identify its likely function.
- Then, brainstorm **ONE** specific, positive replacement behaviour you could teach that student to meet that same need.





You now have a powerful lens:
Behaviour is communication.

And a *key strategy*:
Teach replacement behaviours.

This shifts us from just managing to truly understanding and supporting our students.

Challenge Yourself!

You don't need to solve all the problems at once.

Progress is built one step at a time.

What is *one* behaviour you will observe differently this week, and what's *one* replacement behaviour you might consider teaching?

(Tip: Write these down)



Resources

- Behaviorbabe website
 - <https://www.behaviorbabe.com/applicationsofabab>
- Understanding Behaviours of Concern and Responding to Crisis Situations - Department of Education
 - <https://assets.gov.ie/static/documents/understanding-behaviours-of-concern-and-responding-to-crisis-situations.pdf>
- Positive Behaviour for Learning - Ministry for Education, New Zealand
 - <https://pb4l.tki.org.nz/PB4L-School-Wide/Support-material>



Questions?

