

“Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)” by APT (Association for Psychological Therapies)

I am a Clinical Psychologist working in a Neurodevelopmental Team in CAMHS in the NHS. I work with children and young people with autism, ADHD and other difficulties, and their families. I attended the course titled “Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)” by APT (Association for Psychological Therapies). The course was 18 hours long over 3 days and took place online via Zoom. After completing the course, I was awarded APT’s Level 1 accreditation. The training was completed 8th to 10th of February 2023.

On day 1, the course covered theory, including the basic behavioural model, and PBS values with a focus on improving quality of life and building skills. We learned about the importance of noticing and reinforcing “adaptive behaviour” (behaviour that works well). We also explored the use of productive questions which focus on adaptive behaviour rather than problem behaviour. On day 2, we spoke about the punishment cycle, which is common in our culture, and how to break out of the cycle. It was useful to hear about how non-contingent reinforcement, where reinforcement does not have to be earned, can be required to get out of a punishment cycle. The speaker spoke about how simple, clear, and black and white rules, and adapting environmental factors, can help reduce arousal levels. Finally, we practised using Antecedent, Behaviour and Consequence (ABC) forms to explore the functions of behaviour - what is the person trying to obtain or communicate? On day 3, the speaker talked to us about ignoring the problem when not in a dangerous situation, modelling good behaviour and noticing other good role models. We learned how to construct behaviour support plans with proactive strategies and reactive strategies. Throughout the training we discussed scenarios and were given tasks to complete between the training days.

I am so grateful to have received funding from the Foundation for Professionals in Services to Adolescents (FPSA). The training has been very useful for my work, for example in supporting families who are struggling to manage their child’s behaviour and helping to increase the individual’s self-esteem and self-image. I have been framing questions using a PBS approach, educating families on PBS techniques, and focusing on the functions of behaviours that challenge. I intend to continue to use PBS techniques in my role and help to implement PBS plans. I believe this approach is very useful for the families I work with. Thank you for enabling me to develop knowledge and skills in this area.