Facilitator's Guide

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Behavioural Skills Training for Learners

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After viewing the video, Behavioural Skills Training for Learners, complete the activities below. You may review the video as necessary to answer the questions and to complete the practice activities.

Activity 1: Reflection Questions

1. Name and describe each of the 5 steps involved in the Behavioural Skills Training (BST) process. Discuss with your group why each step is an essential component of the process.

2. What are 3 key considerations or questions to ask when deciding whether or not to use Behavioural Skills Training to teach a particular skill to a learner?

3. Why is it important to understand the distinction between "giving information" and "teaching a skill"?

4. The presenter described a variety of strategies that can be used to model the new skill for the learner. Discuss these different approaches with your partner or small group, and describe some advantages and disadvantages of each approach. How would you decide on the best approach for an individual learner?

5. Behavioural Skills Training takes some time and effort to carry out, and may require that the learner have several opportunities for practice and feedback. In a school setting, some staff may feel that this is not a good use of time. If a colleague questioned the amount of time required to carry out the BST process, how would you help that individual understand the value of this investment of time and effort?

Activity 2: Share your Knowledge

Part A: In a small group (2-4 people) create a brief professional learning presentation to share what you have learned about Behavioural Skills Training with your own staff or team. Feel free to use PowerPoint, Prezi, Keynote, Powtoon, or any other presentation software that you prefer. Include, at minimum, the following components in your presentation:

- The rationale for using a Behavioural Skills Training approach to teach skills
- A description and explanation of each of the 5 steps in the BST process
- 1 or more practice activities to help the team practice at least 1 of the steps in the BST process
- Suggested resources / references where people may obtain more information on Behavioural Skills Training

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Part B: Once each small group has created a presentation, share each of the presentations with the large group. The large group should provide: 1) specific feedback on the components of each presentation that are effective in communicating the important points about Behavioural Skills Training, and 2) one or two suggestions for areas that might be changed or improved if this presentation were to be shared with a school team.

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Take Flight Facilitator's Guide – ANSWER KEY

Behavioural Skills Training for Learners

Activity 1: Reflection Questions

Question 1:

Name and describe each of the 5 steps involved in the Behavioural Skills Training (BST) process. Discuss with your group why each step is an essential component of the process.

Behavioural Skills Training		
Step	**Description**	**Importance (Answers may vary)**
1. Verbal and written instruction	Describe the skill you want the learner to perform in terms that will be easily understood, based on the learner's individual strengths and needs	• Some individuals understand and remember better when information is presented verbally, and some prefer written instructions or visuals • Written or visual instructions provide a permanent reminder the individual can refer back to • It is important for many learners to understand WHY the skill is important and how it will benefit them • Ethical and professional considerations regarding social validity and learner assent may also be part of the discussion
2. Modeling	Demonstrate, or model, the skill for the learner in a role-play situation or using a video model	• The learner should have as many opportunities as necessary to see what the skill looks like when performed correctly, and to ask questions if desired • Working in role play or using a video model may be most beneficial in terms of the learner's dignity and confidence while learning to perform the skill
3. Practice / rehearsal	Have the learner practice the skill in a role-play situation	• This allows the learner to practice the skill in a safe environment without

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		the pressure and anxiety that may be associated with real-life situations • The learner has as many opportunities as necessary to learn to perform the skill correctly Prompting and support can be provided where necessary
4. Performance feedback	Give specific positive praise for the components performed correctly, and corrective feedback for components that need more practice	• The learner should receive lots of descriptive praise for the components of the skill performed correctly, which may serve as positive reinforcement and help with learner confidence • Helping the learner identify how to correct components of the skill that still need improvement in a supported way can improve the overall learning experience for the learner.
5. Observation in the natural environment	Observe the learner performing the skill in the natural environment and provide feedback and additional practice if necessary	• Just because the skill is mastered in the role-play doesn't mean that the learner will necessarily be able to perform the skill perfectly in the natural environment.

Question 2:

What are 3 key considerations or questions to ask when deciding whether or not to use Behavioural Skills Training to teach a particular skill to a learner?

Consideration / question #1: Is the skill I'm trying to teach one that involves the learner having to perform a specific behaviour, task, or activity?

Consideration / question #2: Can the learner already do all of the pieces that make up this new skill?

Consideration / question #3: Does the learner have the skills needed to learn from an explanation, model, and role-play of how to do the skill?

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Question 3:

Why is it important to understand the distinction between "giving information" and "teaching a skill"?

In most cases, we are good at "giving" and "receiving" information. We are often not as good at teaching and learning how to **"do"** things as efficiently and effectively as possible. Giving information and teaching skills are two completely different processes, and require different skill sets on the part of the person doing those tasks. Yet we often think that because we tell someone what we would like them to do, that they should be able to do it. Most of us have not been specifically taught, or had much opportunity to practice, an evidence-based approach to teaching someone else how to perform new tasks.

Question 4:

The presenter described a variety of strategies that can be used to model the new skill for the learner. Discuss these different approaches with your partner or small group, and describe some advantages and disadvantages of each approach. How would you decide on the best approach for an individual learner?

Strategy #1: Modeling the skill in a live role-play situation, where the staff member plays the role of the learner performing the skill and another staff member plays the role of the teacher/adult (if necessary, depending on the skill), while the learner observes.

Strategy #2: Having the learner play the role of the teacher or adult in the role-play scenario, while the staff member plays the role of the learner and demonstrates how to perform the skill.

Strategy #3: Using video modeling, in which you would have somebody participate in a similar role-play scene in advance, and record the scene. Then you could play the video for the learner to watch, and this would serve as the demonstration.

**For any of these strategies, it may be helpful for some learners to see examples of the skill being performed correctly AND incorrectly, and to practice identifying the correct and incorrect examples. However, this may not be a good option for some learners.

How to decide on the best approach for an individual learner:

Answers will vary, but some consideration may include:

- The strengths, interests, and needs of the learner

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- The available resources
- The setting in which the skill will be modeled and the natural environment in which the learner will be expected to perform the skill following training
- The number of times you expect to have to model the skill for the learner
- Consider the best fit for the learner, the skill being taught, and the context

Question 5:

Behavioural Skills Training takes some time and effort to carry out, and may require that the learner have several opportunities for practice and feedback. In a school setting, some staff may feel that this is not a good use of time. If a colleague questioned the amount of time required to carry out the BST process, how would you help that individual understand the value of this investment of time and effort?

Answers will vary, but some consideration may include:

- BST has been demonstrated in well-controlled scientific studies across numerous disciplines to be one of the most effective and efficient approaches to successfully teach someone to perform a skill correctly
- BST offers a single, structured process that is effective at teaching a wide range of skills; once people know how to use the BST process, it can be used for multiple purposes
- Teaching the learner to perform the skill correctly and accurately the first time will save time in the future (re-teaching, correcting errors, etc.)
- BST focuses on positive, proactive approaches to teaching skills

Activity 2: Share your Knowledge

Presentations will vary. Refer back to the video if necessary to check on specific components.

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The Autism in Education (AIE) Partnership is an inter-provincial collaboration of the Departments of Education & Early Childhood Development / Early Learning & Culture of the four Atlantic Provinces. Created as a new initiative of the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) in 2010, the AIE Partnership provides support to educational personnel working with students with ASD across the Atlantic region and facilitates the sharing of information and expertise among stakeholders. Priorities of the AIE Partnership include:

- Research to clarify and articulate standards of practice in the area of Autism Spectrum Disorder
- Dissemination of information and current research on issues of concern among the four Atlantic Provinces
- Professional development and learning opportunities for educational staff, partner professionals, and families

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