

# Road Map for Behavior Support

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# Introduction

When we are supporting a person with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) who engages in some type of problem behavior, we often scratch our heads and struggle with creating a good way to respond without making things worse. Anyone can use this tool, which will walk you through an initial process to:

- figure out what might be going on,
- gather additional information and ask key questions, and
- offer a menu of possible interventions and resources.

These are only some first steps. If you have trouble answering these questions, a Functional Behavior Assessment can help explain the behavior. Contact your County Case Manager for assistance. We all want people to have happy lives.

[More information for Jensen Class members](#)

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# How to use this tool

The tool is organized by the a series of questions about the problem behaviors. Click **Begin** at the bottom of this slide and answering the questions on each slide. Please click the buttons at the bottom of the screen rather than using the space bar to advance.

1. Look over all of the options we offer, and choose the best one.
2. Pick from the menu of different intervention options based on your answers to the questions.
3. Use your browser's menu to print this document for use as a reference and write your intervention ideas on the [additional printable page](#).
4. **When there is nothing left to click or are returned to a page, you are done.**

There is a significant amount of overlap in both the questions and the interventions across the categories. The intervention should match the reasons you come up with for why the problem behaviors occur.

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# *Jensen* class members

If the person is a *Jensen* class member, the Successful Life Project (SLP) can provide extra technical assistance from a Behavior Analyst or a Registered Nurse.

- Referrals for assistance can be made following a request by a case manager or support provider.
- The Successful Life Project Supervisor can schedule a meeting with the person and all team members to review the services and supports SLP can provide.
- If the person's team wants to move forward with SLP supports and services, the team will sign an agreement regarding responsibilities and select a way to start to improve the person's quality of life.

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# Successful Life Project services

Below are some of the supports and services SLP can provide:

- Assessments to determine presence of any significant risk factors
- Assessments of health needs, including review of medication regimens
- Comprehensive medical reviews
- Functional behavior assessments
- Data collection and analysis support
- Person-centered plan facilitation support
- Positive behavior support plan development
- Training
- Transition planning support

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Are the behaviors dangerous?

Yes

No

# Dangerous behaviors

- Have you tried a few things and they didn't work out?
- Is there a risk of police becoming involved?
- Do you feel that you can't handle the problem behaviors?
- Do you feel like you don't know where to start?
- Is the person losing access to places or activities s/he enjoys?
- Is there inappropriate sexual behavior which could cause problems?



If the answer to any of these questions is yes, contact the County Case Manager to get more assistance and to learn about possible options and funding. Please continue through this document for additional ideas.



Does the person seem to be in some kind of physical pain?

Yes

No



# Physical or medical concerns

- Is there a possible medical cause, such as a toothache that creates irritability?
- A full physical and dental checkup may be needed.
- Determine if there are troubling side effects of any medications.





Is the person either bored or creating  
drama/excitement?

Yes

No

# Boredom

- Promote desired levels of activity and creativity
- Offer the person better ways to create positive drama or excitement. Art classes and sports are very helpful.
- Competitive employment might help.
- Wellness activities should be considered.
- Person-centered planning may help identify more activities. County Case Management can provide assistance in finding person-centered planners.



# JoAnn Cannon's 15 factors related to wellness

- Contact with nature
- Optimism
- Work satisfaction
- Economic essentials
- Coping with stress
- Spirit awareness
- Positive self-image
- Fulfilling relationships
- Experienced creativity
- Balanced nutrition
- Goal accomplishment
- Intellectual stimulation
- Rest and sleep
- Time and space alone
- Physical prowess

-JoAnn Cannon's 2005 book *Enhancing the Good* details the evidence to support these factors.



Is the person unhappy or feeling like they're not getting what they want out of life?

Yes

No

# Unhappy

- Meet the person's preferences.
- Person centered planning may help identify what makes a person happy. Case Management can provide assistance in finding person-centered planners.
- Encourage developing a hobby.
- Try [wellness activities](#).





Is the person stressed or frustrated?

Yes

No

# Stress

- Teach person relaxation, tolerance, and coping skills.
- Increase physical activity and exercise.
- Support person during times of stress.
- Teach person how to vent.





# Relaxation tips

Relaxation is a need for all of us. Many people, with or without disabilities, have a tough time relaxing. Here are some strategies that work:

- Deep breathing
- Visual meditation
- Long walks when you teach deep breathing during walking time
- Aquatics for people with physical and other disabilities
- Listening to music
- Keeping a journal



Are there specific things that trigger the problem behavior?

Yes

No

Always ask the person. If you don't know the answer to this, you may need to get an outside perspective.

# General strategies for triggers

- Try to eliminate or work around the triggers.
- Distract the person when triggers occur.
- Reward more positive actions.
- De-escalate the situation.



See [specific strategies for triggers](#) for more information.

# Specific strategies for triggers

- Do the triggers indicate unhappiness with a particular person or activity?
  - See [Unhappy](#).
- Does the person have the skills to respond well to those triggers?
  - Can you teach the person how to tolerate the trigger?
- Does the person have difficulty when they are asked to do something?
  - If so, can you teach the person or allow the person to politely refuse?
  - Can you give the person an option of asking for five more minutes?
  - Can you add some reward for doing what they are asked?
  - Can you make the request in some other way?



Can the person communicate well enough to let people know what they want?

Yes

No

# Communication

- **Yes:** Teach negotiating. For example, picking a restaurant or making a budget
- **No:** Teach communication skills. For example, how to tell somebody what you are feeling or how to ask a clerk for help
- If we know what people are trying to accomplish, we can often teach the person to just ask instead of using problem behaviors to get their needs met.





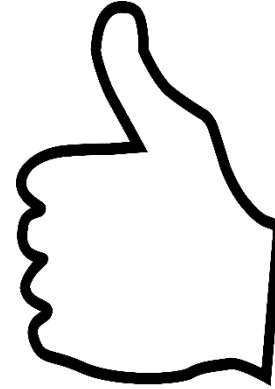
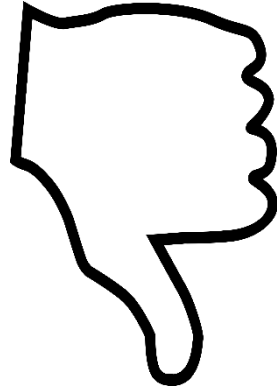
Is the person often in a bad mood before  
problem behaviors begin?

Yes

No

# Mood

- Address the cause of the bad mood.
- Do something to get the person back in a good mood, such as relaxation or a favorite activity (do both).







Does the person seem upset with his/herself?

Yes

No

# Upset with self

- Teach relaxation, tolerance, and coping.
- Increase physical activity and exercise.
- Provide emotional support.





Is the person physically aggressive?

Yes

No

# Physical aggression

- Does the person seem to enjoy aggression?
  - Teach games and fun as an alternative.
- Let the person vent.
- Teach the person to get needs met in more positive ways including communication.
- Promote mental wellness.
- Promote desired levels of activity.
- Meet the person's preferences.





Is the person trying to hurt him/herself?

Yes

No

# Self-injury

- Does the person cause injury?
- Does the person self injure ONLY when other people are looking?
- Is the person looking for a particular sensory feeling?

## What to do?

- De-escalate the situation.
- Teach the person to get needs met in more positive ways, including communication.
- Promote mental wellness.
- Find alternative, safe ways to get the same sensory input.





Is the person destroying property?

Yes

No

# Property destruction

- Was the person frustrated with the object?
  - Help the person use the object.
- Was the person frustrated with something else?
  - Help the person resolve the frustration or learn coping skills.
- Are other people's possessions being destroyed?
  - If no, this is lower priority.
- Could the property destruction cause actual harm?
  - If yes, see [dangerous behaviors](#)

## What to do:

- Teach the person to get needs met in more positive ways, including communication/negotiation.
- Reduce clutter and have fewer breakable objects.





# What should I do next?

## Mental Health Consult

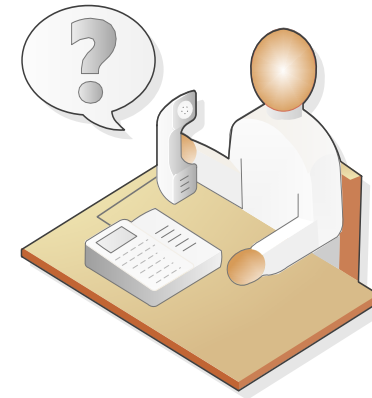
Some problem behaviors can be symptoms of a mental illness. Mental illness is more common among people with IDD than among the general population. Here are some questions you can ask which relate to the presence of a mental illness. If you have concerns about the number of “yes” responses, bring the completed set of questions to the family practice doctor, but please continue with use of this tool.

- Has there been a change in the person’s appetite?
- Does the person seem overactive? Less active than usual?
- Is the person overly fearful?
- Is the person extremely confused or disoriented?
- Does the person hear voices even when no one is there? (This is not the same as talking to oneself for company or to reduce anxiety).
- Has the person been sleeping more or less than usual?
- Is there a family history of mental health problems?

## [Additional resources](#)

## Where can I go for more information?

- [The Positive Supports Manual](#)
- [Positive Supports Minnesota](#)
- [JoAnn Cannon Inward Bound Ventures](#)
- [MN DHS YouTube Channel](#)
- [MN DHS Positive Supports website](#)
- [MN DHS Mental Health Resources](#)



# Your Intervention Ideas



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