

# Positive Behavior Support - Training Topic - Reframing

All behavior is communication. Individuals may use a challenging behavior to get a need met. This can occur for various reasons: language development problems, social/emotional delays, difficulties with peer interactions, developmental disabilities, neglect or trauma, not having had the opportunity to learn the skill, or simply – the challenging behavior works to get the need met.

Reframing is essentially changing how we think about the challenging behavior. Reframing is a central cognitive-behavioral technique of "telling yourself a different story" about the same events or characteristics. We start the reframing process by putting aside the notion that the individual is trying, on purpose, to make be challenging. We continue the reframing process by asking the question (rhetorically or literally), "What do they want or need that is leading to this challenging behavior?" When we put aside our own discomfort and emotional reaction to the challenging behavior, it may become easier to determine what the individual needs or help them through the situation

Now, ask yourself the next question, "How can we help them obtain what they want using acceptable behaviors?" As staff, you likely know how to seek the things you want or need without resorting to violence or emotional manipulation. This is because we have learned the necessary skills from other adults throughout our lives. In these situation, it is now our turn to teach these skills to individuals who struggle. These skills include how to ask for help, how to offer something in trade, how to share things, how to express our emotions in an acceptable manner and how to calm ourselves.

It is important to share with the team the situations of challenging behavior. As a team, you will brainstorm potential triggers, potential reasons, and potentially what has worked for others to ensure the needs are met and the behavior is not necessary.

As you work through the process to learn why the individual displays a challenging behavior, below are examples of how you may reframe the behavior:

## ***When you use this – try this instead:***

Obsessive – Tenacious, Deliberate  
Compulsive - Thorough  
Talkative – Gregarious  
Easily distracted – Easily fascinated  
Emotional – Influential, Charismatic  
Controlling – Convincing  
Impulsive – Inquisitive  
Obstinate – Determined, Persistent  
Aggressive – Assertive  
Opinionated – Confident  
Isolated – Selective  
Immature – Innocent  
Dramatic – Powerfully vivid  
Disorganized – Creative  
Oppositional – Independent  
Anxious - Cautious or concerned  
Boisterous - Enthusiastic  
Bossy - A leader  
Chatterbox - Communicative  
Clingy – Loving  
Controlling - Determined

Disruptive - Eager  
Distractible - Perceptive  
Dreamy - Imaginative  
Explosive - Dramatic  
Fearful - Sensitive  
Giddy - Good-humored  
High strung - Energetic, enthusiastic  
Hyper - Loves to move  
Intense - focused; dedicated  
Moody - Charismatic  
Non-participatory - An observer  
Picky - Selective  
Self-centered - Proud  
Serious - Contemplative  
Shy - Reflective  
Silly - Joyful  
Stubborn - Tenacious; persistent  
Troublesome - Challenging  
Unpredictable - Curious  
Whiny - Willing to communicate