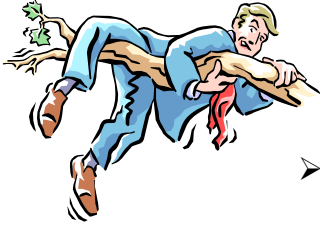


# Supporting an Individual with Challenging Behavior

## A Team Approach

### The Positive Approaches Paradigm for Support Includes:



- Environment
- Communication
- Assessment
- Hanging in there

### Supporting an Individual with Challenging Behavior

- In the community this can be a difficult task.
- What do you do?
- How do you do it?
- If the person has significant challenging behaviors, the task of supporting the person can become more “challenging” than the behavior.

### Remember: It is a Process!

1. To support someone you need to:
  - a. Constantly look at where you are
  - b. Where you were
  - c. Where you want to be



### As a Supporter We Need to Remember:

1. Don't actually support the individual to change...you change.
2. You learn.
  - a. You must really listen and hear what the individual is trying to tell you.
  - b. Those things that we feel are so very important may not really be important to the person.
3. We offer choices to the people we support.
4. Unfortunately, sometimes we need to remember that the person may not really know what those choices mean.
5. Choices need to be offered with explanations, demonstrations, very concrete examples.
6. We change our minds so we need to understand when someone else does.



### In Supporting People:

1. We sometimes teach them to become more dependent on us.
2. We are always there to “support” them.

3. They learn that, in many instances, there really and truly are not any natural consequences for their actions.

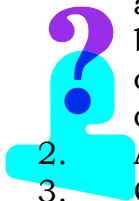
### **Change Your Vision from Caretaker to Support Person:**

1. Put interests of person first and foremost
2. All people need to try new things and maybe fail
3. The best learning occurs when we are presented with obstacles that we must overcome
4. Be an advocate
5. Find appropriate medical and psychiatric treatment
6. Learn about medications and psychiatric behaviors
7. In many cases medications can be overused and they tend to exaggerate the behavior



### **If there is a Psychiatric Disorder, Treat it Properly:**

1. Find a good psychiatrist
  - a. Describe symptoms completely, not just as challenging behaviors.
  - b. How does the person sleep?
  - c. Are there clinical patterns to the behaviors?
  - d. Is the person extremely happy or sad?
2. Are the behavior “truly” challenging?
3. Could they be exaggerated natural reactions to situations?
4. What tools have you given to the person to learn to better deal with those difficult situations?



### **A Few Other Thoughts**

1. Ask for Assistance and advice
2. There are a lot of “new solutions to old problems”
3. Don’t be afraid to ask for help
4. Sometimes having another point of view is the answer
5. They may see something you don’t

### **Take Care of Yourself**

1. Stay in control of your behavior and don’t take things personally
  - a. know your triggers
  - b. know your plan
  - c. know the person
  - d. attend and ask for training and information
  - e. take care of yourself and get enough sleep, rest, safe environment, have outside interests
  - f. communicate
2. During the crisis
  - a. put your plan into action
  - b. remain calm
  - c. use the team approach
  - d. be consistent but flexible



- e. pass the ball when needed
  - f. keep your focus
3. After the crisis
- a. debrief and assess the situation with the team
  - b. talk about the positives first
  - c. assess the team
  - d. talk about then give the person feedback
  - e. revise the plan if needed
  - f. reconnect with the person
  - g. support one another
  - h. reaffirm the team and yourself

References Resources:

PA Positive Approaches Journal Volume #2 Number #1 1996 – Devin McFerren.

### **A CREDO FOR SUPPORT**

*Do not see my disability as the problem.  
 Recognize that my disability is an attribute.  
 It is you who see me as deviant and helpless.  
 Do not try and fix me because I am not broken.  
 Support me. I can make my contribution to the community in my own way.  
 Do not see me as your client. I am your fellow citizen.  
 See me as your neighbor. Remember, none of us can be self-sufficient.  
 Do not try to modify my behavior.  
 Be still and listen.  
 What you define as inappropriate  
 May be my attempt to communicate with you in the only way I can.  
 Do not try and change me, you have no right.  
 Help me to learn what I want to know.  
 Do not hide your uncertainty behind “professional” distance,  
 Be a person who listens and who does not take my struggle away from me  
 By trying to make it all better.  
 Do not use theories and strategies on me.  
 And when we struggle with each other, let that give rise to SELF-REFLECTION.  
 Do not try to control me. I have a right to my power as a person.  
 What you call non-compliance or manipulation may actually be the only way  
 I can exert some control over my life.  
 Do not teach me to be obedient, submissive and polite.  
 I need to feel entitled to say NO if I am to protect myself.  
 Do not be charitable towards me. The last thing the world needs is another Jerry Lewis.  
 Be my ally against those who exploit me for their own gratification.  
 Do not TRY to be my friend. I deserve more than that.  
 Instead get to know me. We may become friends.  
 Do not help me, even if it makes you feel good.  
 Ask me if I need your help. Let me show you how you can best assist me.  
 Do not admire me, a desire to live a full life does not warrant adoration.  
 Respect me, for respect presumes equity.  
 Do not tell, correct or lead.  
 Instead listen, support and follow.  
 Do not work on me.  
**WORK WITH ME***

- Author Unknown