

# Research Highlights

## Topic: Self-Determination

Wehmeyer, M. L., Baker, D. J., Blumberg, R., & Harrison, R. (2004). Self-determination and student involvement in functional assessment: Innovative practices. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 6(1), 29-35.

### BOTTOM LINE

The major difference between positive behavior support (PBS) from previous applied behavior analysis is that PBS removes negative factors that are determined to be the cause of the problem. Determining the factors and causes requires a functional behavior assessment. In order to understand the underlying causes of the behavior, professionals therefore need to solicit the perspective and knowledge of the person displaying the behavior. This article examines of a pilot program of person guided functional behavioral assessment and presents further ideas on how to include consumers in functional assessments.

### KEY FINDINGS

- Both adults and children identified with problem behaviors were interviewed on setting events (such as things that make them bored, angry, mad), problem behaviors, antecedents and consequences.
- The mean number of problem behavior identified by adults and children were identical at 2.8.
- The highest agreement was for the consequences category where 73% of the consequences of behavior identified by the adults were also identified by the children.
- But 27% of the consequences reported by adults were not reported by students and 48% of the consequences reported by students were not reported by adults.

## KEY FINDINGS cont.

- They were also less agreement on setting events only 23% of student responses appeared on adult reports and 38% of adult responses appeared on student reports.
- Overall it appeared that gathering information regarding setting events, problem behaviors, antecedents and consequences from both adults and students may provide a richer data pool to create functional behavior assessments.

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## METHOD

- Ten students, (ranging from 6 to 12 years of age) who professionals believed would benefit from a functional behavior assessment and school staff members were interviewed on routines or events during the day. Following these responses, the interview asked both professionals and students “What happens”, “What do you do?”, “What happens next?” to determine the antecedents, problem behaviors and consequences. Then the interviewer asked about setting events such as sleep problems, anger, boredom, or communication problems.

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## RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Lucyshyn, J. M., Blumberg, E. R., & Irvin, L. K. (2001). *Transforming coercive relationships in family routines*. Public Health Service Grants. Washington, DC: National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.
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- Stancliffe, R. (1997). Community living-unit size, staff presence, and residents’ choice-making. *Mental Retardation, 35*, 1-9.

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- Stancliffe, R., & Abery, B. (1997). Longitudinal study of deinstitutionalization and the exercise of choice. *Mental Retardation*, *35*, 159-169.
- Stancliffe, R., Abery, B., & Smith, J. (2000). Personal control and the ecology of community living settings: Beyond living-unit size and type. *Mental Retardation*, *105*, 431-454.
- Stancliffe, R., & Wehmeyer, M. L. (1995). Variability in the availability of choice to adults with mental retardation. *The Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation*, *5*, 319-328.
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- Wehmeyer, M. L., Palmer, S., Agran, M., Mithaug, D., & Martin, J. (2000). Promoting causal agency: the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction. *Exceptional Children*, *66*, 439-453.

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