

Behavior Issues Tip Sheet

Behaviors serve as a way to communicate many things. To name just a few:

- the person's satisfaction with his or her environment.
- Sickness or pain from a medical problem.
- An attempt to find a way to express wants or needs.
- A method to cope with stressors
- A wish to gain important reinforcers or to escape or avoid unwanted situations.

This is why it is important to discuss behavior from the view of these various influences. Input and information can be helpful from all the persons who know the individual, including direct support professionals, parents, and friends. Sometimes all this information will add up to important ways for staff to be responsive, resulting in the person communicating effectively without resorting to challenging behaviors. This may work so well that psychiatric, psychological, or behavior services are not needed.

Before making a referral for a behavior assessment, the ISC/CM, the individual, and the other members of the Circle of Support should talk about the behavior in its relationship to the total person and total environment. Consider discussing:

What's working: for example consider whether there are any people, places, times of the day, where there are no behavioral issues; what makes those situations work so well?

What's not working: for example, what situations seem to often result in the behavior issues; can anything be adjusted that will help to resolve the behavior issue; what has been tried and did not work.

What has helped in the past: for example, when these behaviors have occurred, was there some action that resulted in the behaviors decreasing; this is especially important for medical issues. Medical discomfort and pain has an important influence on a person's behavior, and the Circle should consider if any medical assessment or intervention needs to be considered first.

If these ideas still do not resolve the behavioral issue, then bringing in a behavior provider certainly should be considered.