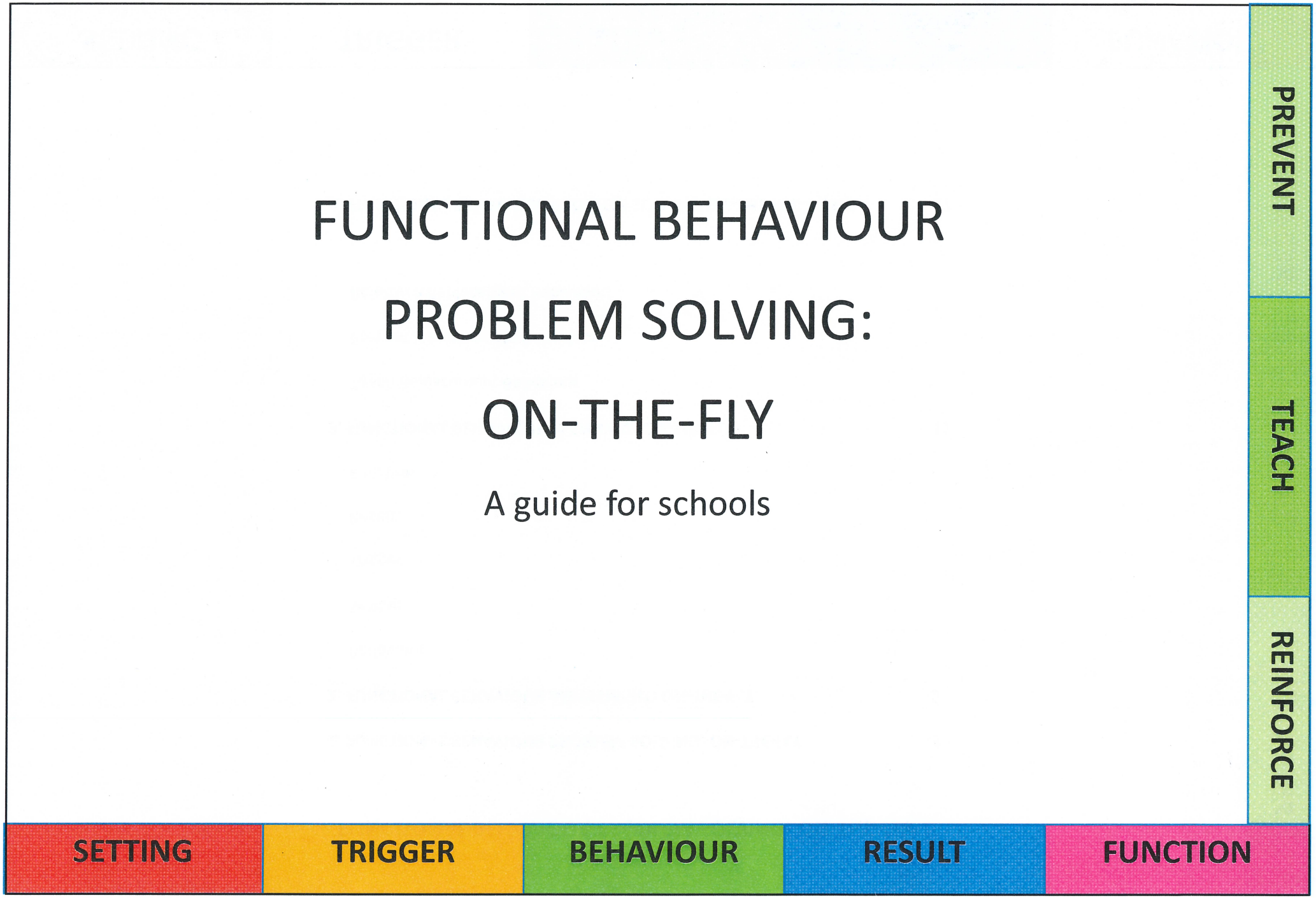
FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM SOLVING: ON-THE-FLY

A guide for schools



FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM SOLVING: ON-THE-FLY

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PREVENT

TEACH

REINFORCE

SETTING | TRIGGER | BEHAVIOUR | RESULT | FUNCTION

1. FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM SOLVING: ON-THE-FLY

An Functional Behaviour Problem Solving On-The-Fly is best used for chronic low level disruptive and dis-engaged behaviours.

Please Note - It is not to be used for:

- infrequent or one off behaviours;
- behaviours which are high risk to self or others (use more appropriate assessments such as escalation profiling and risk management planning) or;
- when there are complex behaviours across many settings (seek the assistance of personnel with behavioural expertise within your school or region).

Functional Behaviour Problem Solving is made up of:

1. Assessment
2. Planning

PREVENT

TEACH

REINFORCE

SETTING | TRIGGER | BEHAVIOUR | RESULT | FUNCTION

Basic premises to using Functional Behaviour Problem Solving On-The-Fly:

1. The educator already has an existing hypothesis to what is causing the student 's behaviour. By going through this problem solving process they clarify and amend their hypothesis.
2. A hypothesis is always a considered guess of the factors which are setting up and maintaining the behaviour. It can never be 100% accurate.
3. If the educator doesn't have confidence in the hypothesis then they will not try out the new strategies.
4. It is better to put in one strategy and do it well then have numerous strategies which are not implemented with fidelity.
5. There is no such thing as wasted time on a strategy that didn't work—this just gives us information on what to do next.

PREVENT

TEACH

REINFORCE

SETTING | TRIGGER | BEHAVIOUR | RESULT | FUNCTION

2. FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR ASSESSMENT: ON-THE-FLY

A Functional Behaviour Assessment is part of a problem solving process and is used to answer the question—

'Why is a student continuing to behave in an inappropriate way?' The outcome of doing an FBA is to arrive at a plausible answer (hypothesis).

Everyday, educators develop hypotheses to why students behave the way they do and these hypotheses guide how the educators respond. The most common way educators do this is to put themselves in the student's shoes and ask—'What is the student achieving through their behaviour?' In other words 'What are they getting or avoiding?' FBA's are being conducted at an informal on-the-fly level everyday by those needing to respond to student's behaviours. The majority of the time educators are successful in preventing students' behaviours from becoming entrenched and habitual patterns of behaving inappropriately.

When the hypothesis is off the mark then generally the strategies being used are also off the mark and are ineffective in creating behavioural change.

Using this guided problem solving process in a peer or team consultation helps the educator to identify the factors which are setting up and maintaining the behaviour. Through working out a new hypothesis the educator is then able to identify new strategies to try.

SETTING	TRIGGER	BEHAVIOUR	RESULT	FUNCTION

BEHAVIOUR

AIM: To describe the behaviour in observable and measureable terms

Questions to ask:

If I was a fly on the wall what would I hear and see the student doing? Give me a step by step account.

For how long has this been happening? How often?

Have they ever shown the appropriate behaviour in this situation before? What was different?

Which of these behaviours is the most concern for you? Let's prioritise it (underline it) so we have a focus for this FBA. (Trying to tackle all behaviours at once can get confusing).

Possible answers that are observable and quantifiable:

Walks around, fidgets with pencils, talks out of turn, swears, makes sucking noises, talks to peers, scribbles on work, looks away when given instructions, argues back, throws paper balls, swings on seat, picks at scabs, grabs others work, runs out of the class, bangs desk, pushes others in line, calls a girl names, puts their uneaten lunch in the bin, hands in unfinished homework, does not have the right equipment, threatens to hit others, yells at other students, crawls under desk, asks to go to the toilet, is late for class,

Answers that are <u>not</u> observable and quantifiable:

Gets angry, acts aggressively, is defiant, is non-compliant, is rude, distracts others, is antisocial, picks fights, annoys teachers, doesn't follow instructions, is withdrawn, has poor regulation, acts crazy, doesn't try, is lazy, needs power and control, is inconsiderate, lacks empathy, is immature, acts the clown,

SETTING	TRIGGER	**BEHAVIOUR**	RESULT	FUNCTION

SETTING

AIM: To identify the factors which set up the likelihood of the behaviour occurring.

Setting factors or events helps us understand what is impacting on the student which is leading to the behaviour and we may be able to put in long term strategies to address those factors. The setting factors create a situation in which the student is made vulnerable to displaying the behaviour. The behaviour is displayed though only under certain circumstances which hold the triggers. By doing something about the setting factors you can decrease the vulnerability. For example, a student who comes to school highly anxious (setting) is more likely to run out of the class (behaviour) when asked to read in front of others (trigger).

Questions to ask:

What background student information do you have that may explain why the behaviour is occurring?

Tell me about academic and social skills, family and peers, health, etc.

In what state is the student arriving to school in? Calm, agitated, disorganised?

Possible setting factors

Poor sleep and/or diet, disability, learning difficulties, sensory issues, family history of mental health problems, drug use, temperament, poor attachment, lack of social skills, poor communication skills, doesn't like the teacher/school, poor problem solving, lack of emotional regulation, easily angered, difficulty in code switching between settings, high anxiety, conflict and poor behavioural boundaries at home, peer group, school's behaviour plan does not meet student's needs, low socio economic issues, disengagement,

SETTING	TRIGGER	BEHAVIOUR	RESULT	FUNCTION

TRIGGER

AIM: To identify what sets off the behaviour.

A trigger , also known as an antecedent, is what happens immediately before the inappropriate behaviour. Sometimes it is difficult to observe because it is happening internally for the student or the teacher is busy and doesn't get the opportunity to see what happens beforehand. If you can't identify any triggers then organise for an independent person (not the teacher) to observe the situation unfold. Do a few observations so that a pattern of trigger and behaviour is identified.

Questions to ask:

Give me an example of when the student showed the behaviour. What happened beforehand that set off the behaviour?

Is the trigger related to the task, is the lesson structured or unstructured, certain people, subjects, instructions, transition times?

Is the trigger a social situation requiring certain skills e.g., sharing, sitting still?

What could the student be feeling beforehand? Is the student calm, already agitated?

What hints does the student give that they are likely to behave inappropriately?

In what situations can you confidently predict that the behaviour will occur? E.g., sitting near a certain student, given writing tasks, during transition times.

RESULT

AIM: To work out what happens after the inappropriate behaviour.

The result of the behaviour, also know as the consequence, is the effect that the behaviour has on others and the environment. Understanding how the student's behaviour changes the course of events provides the clue to what the purpose of their behaviour is. The result of a student's behaviour is always highly linked to the function of why they are behaving like they are.

For example, a student may find getting teacher praise (reward) for finishing work (behaviour) as punishing because they have a need to avoid adult attention (function) so they never complete their work (inappropriate behaviour). Or a student who is suspended (punishment) for swearing at a teacher (inappropriate behaviour) perceives the suspension as a reward because it meets their need to avoid work (function) in that teacher's class.

Questions to ask:

After the behaviour what happens? What do you do? What do other student do?

How does the student's behaviour influence others? Do peers laugh, move away, or offer to help?

Describe what happens to the student? Do they get sent out of the class, does someone speak with them, get to go home, get extra teacher time, are given easier work or no work?

If you didn't respond in the same way you have been responding and tried something different what would happen?

Are the existing classroom and school rewards and punishments meaningful for the individual student?

FUNCTION

AIM: To identify what purpose the inappropriate behaviour serves.

The reason why the behaviour is being repeated is because it works for the student to get or avoid something sensory, something tangible or something social. The issue is not that the student is trying to get or avoid something—the issue is that they are doing it in a way that is socially inappropriate and disruptive to the teaching and learning of others. If we can work out what the student is getting or avoiding then we can teach and promote incrementally more appropriate behaviours that, to begin with still meets that function.

Questions to ask:

Look at the Functions Flowchart (**FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM SOLVING FORM**). Go through each potential function (there are 8 of them). Which of these do you think apply to the student's behaviour?

Is the student trying to get some internal stimulation or sensory need met? Are they avoiding certain feelings of embarrassment, anxiety, distress? Are they stuck in a sensory state they can't shift? Is there a tactile, visual or auditory sensitivity?

Does the student like attention from peers or adults or both? Does their behaviour increase the amount of attention they get? Are they avoiding attention? What is their behaviour trying to communicate?

Does the student escape anything from behaving the way they do? E.g., is it work, an activity, having to follow through with teacher instruction? Are they getting something tangible? E.g., is it extra time on the computer, access to playground equipment?

Out of all of these functions which most likely explains the behaviour? (Strategies to be developed will use this as a focus).

Working out which function to focus on can be tricky. For example, a student who comes to class without equipment may be doing it to avoid work and/or to get extra peer attention by asking if they can borrow the equipment. To figure out which is the main function ask:

1. If the student had the right equipment would they start work immediately or would they find another way to avoid the work?
2. If I had a spare set of equipment that I gave the student at the beginning of class would they still try to get their peer's attention another way?

If it is work avoidance then the strategies that you would put in place would be different to the strategies if the function is to get peer attention.

3. FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR PLANNING:

ON-THE-FLY

Once you are confident with your hypothesis then you can plan for a few strategies to put in place. Usually by developing a new hypothesis, new strategies immediately come to mind. Those strategies would more than likely fit into either:

- preventing the inappropriate behaviour
- teaching a new replacement behaviour or
- reinforcing the new replacement behaviour.

A reason why behavioural plans don't work to modify a student's behaviour is because they are too complicated and time consuming to put in place properly. Planning on-the-fly means that you are not tempted to come up with detailed and impractical strategies that are difficult to implement. Choose strategies that will fit in with your time management and existing resources. Set yourself and the student up for success.

PREVENT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

TEACH REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOUR

REINFORCE REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOUR

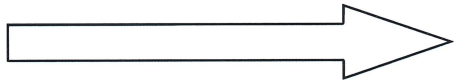
TEACH REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOUR

AIM: To work out the replacement behaviour.

A replacement behaviour is not that the student behaves exactly like other students in the school. Meet the student half way and consider the function of the individual student's behaviour. Better the student gets their need met through more socially acceptable behaviour than continue with the disruptive non-engaged behaviours.

Questions to ask: From your hypothesis, consider the inappropriate behaviour and its function. What potential behaviour could replace it which would meet all these:

1. Is more socially acceptable?
2. Is easier or more efficient for the student to do?
3. Still meets the get or avoid function?

BEHAVIOUR AND FUNCTION 

Example of a behaviour, all its possible functions and corresponding replacement behaviours:

A student is frequently out of seat to...	Get something sensory	**Instead try...**	Using headphones/visual stimulation/physical movement during tasks
	Avoid something sensory		Going to a less sensory stimulating place in the class to work
	Get adult attention		Putting up hand to get teachers attention
	Avoid adult attention		Communicating need that education assistant doesn't sit at their desk
	Get peer attention		Working with selected peers on tasks
	Avoid peer attention		Asking to sit with another group of peers
	Get an activity		Giving designated time that the student can go do the activity
	Avoid an activity		Choosing easier activity/work to do from a folder of work

TEACH REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOUR

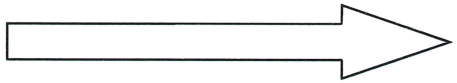
AIM: To work out how the replacement behaviour will be taught.

Questions to ask:

What specific skills does the student need to know?

What teaching strategies could you use? What is best—whole class or individual one-to-one model and practice?

Are there any scaffolds such as prompts and visual cues that would help?

BEHAVIOUR AND FUNCTION 

Example: Student who is frequently out of seat to avoid doing work. Replacement behaviour is to teach the student to choose easier work from a folder of work.

Possible steps:

1. Teach student to take out the folder of high interest/low challenge work tasks and select work to complete at their desk.
2. Once the student is choosing easier work rather than getting out of seat and wandering the class then move to the next replacement behaviour. This may be that the student completes part of the work (that is within their capacity to complete), for example answer the first three questions out of ten.
3. Once the student is completing part of the work move to the next replacement behaviour which increases the amount of work to be completed.

PREVENT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

AIM: To work out what settings and triggers we can modify to prevent the inappropriate behaviour.

SETTING AND TRIGGER →

Questions to ask:

Is there anything that can be done with the setting or triggers to remove or change them so that the behaviour is prevented?

Out of the triggers which one do you think is having the most impact on setting off the behaviour? What can you do about it?

Would modifying the usual class or school procedure for responding to inappropriate behaviour for this student help? E.g., Don't write the student's name on the board.

What teaching or learning adjustments would help prevent the need for the behaviour?

What environmental factors can be changed? E.g., Seating, remove distractions.

What can be put in place first thing in the morning if the student is coming to school in a non-learning state?

Examples of strategies for setting factors:

Teach emotional regulation/social skills

Provide parents with information on outside agencies

Provide a curriculum to meet academic needs

Improve whole class management

Consider placement options

Improve student—teacher relationship

Examples of strategies for triggers:

Move the student or other students

Remove or change activities/objects

Change content and delivery of instructions

Provide food, rest, calming safe place

Provide work that student can complete successfully

Provide structured social activities for breaks

PREVENT INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

TEACH REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOUR

REINFORCE REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOUR

REINFORCE REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOUR

AIM: To work out what is reinforcing for the replacement behaviour.

Questions to ask:

When the student demonstrates the new replacement behaviour how will you respond? How will others respond?

Are these responses in line with the function?

What could happen after the behaviour so that it is encouraged for it to happen again?

What will you do if the student reverts back to the inappropriate behaviour? (See this as a teaching opportunity)

If you are thinking about a reward or punishment strategy, how meaningful will this be for the student for it to work and how sustainable is it?

Example:

A result of a student being frequently out of seat is that they get told by the teacher to get back to their seat, when the student refuses they are then asked to go to the buddy class. If the function is to avoid work they find difficult or uninteresting, the replacement behaviour could be that the student chooses an easier and more high interest activity/task to do from a folder of work. When the student does this they still get to avoid the work that requires effort. The new replacement behaviour is reinforced because it meets the student's need. The teacher can verbally acknowledge and reinforce the new behaviour and provide incentives for staying in seat behaviour and choosing easier work to complete. Gradually the easy work provided can be increased in challenge.

If the student reverts back to getting out of seat, redirect them to the easier work folder. If they refuse go back to the hypothesis as there is something else other than work avoidance which is motivating the inappropriate behaviour.

RESULT AND FUNCTION →

4. FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM SOLVING ON-THE-FLY: FORM

Using the form:

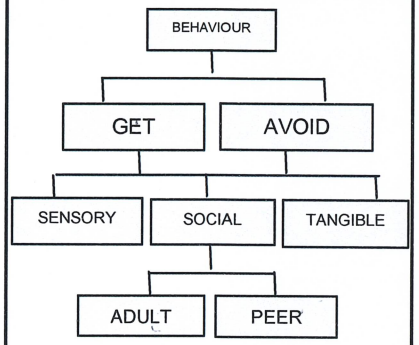
1. Find at least 30—60 minutes to sit together to complete the form.
2. Fill in names and date and identify where, when and with whom the behaviour mostly occurs. (If there are high risk to self or others type of behaviours make sure these are addressed first through other risk management procedures).
3. Describe the **BEHAVIOUR.**
4. Identify **SETTING** and **TRIGGERS**.
5. Work out what the **RESULT** of the behaviour is and its most probable **FUNCTION**.
6. Rank how confident the educator is in the hypothesis. If not confident identify what further information is needed.
7. Discuss possible **REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOURS** to **TEACH** and potential **PREVENT** and **REINFORCE** strategies that link to the hypothesis.
8. Work out who will do what and on a daily basis review if the strategies are working.
9. If the strategies are not working go back to the hypothesis and try again.
10. If the strategies are working keep doing them.... If you stop prematurely before the replacement behaviour becomes the normal behaviour then the inappropriate behaviour will re-emerge.

FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOUR PROBLEM SOLVING ON-THE-FLY

INTERVIEWER_____ INTERVIEWEE_____ DATE_____

STUDENT CALLUM KING-

Where, when and with whom does the behaviour regularly occur? (e.g., Playground, certain classes, with peers)

SETTING (factors that set up the behaviour)	**TRIGGERS** (triggers that set off the behaviour)	**BEHAVIOUR** (observed and quantified)	**RESULT** (as a result...)	**FUNCTION** (what does the student get/avoid?)
• 1½ terms • Every day. - Classroom. • Stable nuclear family unit. •	• Refuses to do written work • Work avoidance	• Talking to others • Backchatting to teacher • Plays on MAC while in lesson • calling out loudly	• tried isolation • sitting with peers. • Withdrawal • detention • one on one conversation	

Confidence in hypothesis? (not at all to very) 1 2 3 4 5 6

SETTING	TRIGGER	BEHAVIOUR	RESULT	FUNCTION
PREVENT		TEACH	REINFORCE	
Which of the settings and triggers can you modify to prevent the behaviour?		What can the student do, instead of the inappropriate 'get or avoid' behaviour, so it is more socially acceptable and still meets the function? How can you teach it?	What are the reinforcers of the replacement behaviour? What will you do if the student reverts back to the inappropriate behaviour?	

REVIEW NOTES: