

Behaviour Interviews and Questionnaires | FACT SHEET

Purpose

A full, accurate view of the student's pattern of behaviour is enhanced by including input from a wide range of stakeholders including the family, the student, external professionals, and school staff. The purpose of interviews and questionnaires is to ascertain the extent of the behaviours, their frequency and intensity, the most likely preceding factors and the usual consequences of the behaviour. The interview/questionnaire can also provide direction as to the potential functions of the behaviour and assist in prioritising the behaviours of greatest concern.

Interviews are done in a one to one setting while questionnaires are usually completed independently. There are advantages and disadvantages of each. Interviews can elicit deeper information depending on the rapport between the interviewer and interviewee. However, questionnaires can allow time for more responses to be obtained.

Target Groups

- **The student:** Critical insights can be discovered through identifying the student's viewpoint. It can also assist with building the student's engagement with the behaviour support strategies developed.
- **The family:** Determining whether the behaviour is occurring outside the school, and in what other contexts, provides a broader insight into the potential triggers and consequences of the behaviour.
- **School personnel:** The perspective of the student's classroom teacher in primary school, or home room or year coordinator, is essential as they have the most regular contact. In high school, other teachers including learning support, may also be asked to contribute their valuable insight across a range of subject areas.

When to use

At the start of the information gathering process, interviews and questionnaires can provide clarity, and assist in identifying and prioritising the behaviours of concern.

How to use

Clarify that the purpose of the interview or questionnaire is to gather as much information as possible about the student and their behaviour so that appropriate supports and adjustments can be provided.

Conduct the **interview** in comfortable area with a friendly manner and focus on student's strengths as well as the behaviours of concern.

Allow a time period for completion of the **questionnaire**, but set a deadline for return, usually one or two days, but no longer than a week.

Sample Questions for Interview/Questionnaire: Student

Type here

- What is the best thing about school?
- Who are the friends you most like to be with?
- What do you like to do with them?
- Is there a particular subject or teacher that you really enjoy?
- What do you like least about school?
- Are there any students who you do not enjoy being with?
- Do you ever get into trouble at school? What for?
- Is there something that we could change so that you don't get into trouble anymore?
- What could teachers do that would be helpful?
- What could we change? What could the other kids do? The teachers do?
- What happens straight after the behaviour?
- Does anything help stop the behaviour from happening?
- Do your teachers or peers do anything that helps prevent the behaviour from happening?
- How do you feel when that behaviour happens?

Is there something you could learn to do instead that won't get you into trouble?

Sample Questions for Interview/Questionnaire: School Personnel / Parents / External Specialist

- What are the (student's) strengths and interests?
- What does (student) like about school?
- Who are (student's) friends?
- Tell me about (student's) behaviour (s) of concern?
- When did the behaviour(s) of concern emerge?
- What events/situations occur just before the behaviour(s) appears to predict its occurrence?
- How often does the behaviour(s) occur? (e.g. daily, weekly)
- How long does the behaviour(s) last?
- How intense is the behaviour? For example:
 - can be handled with redirection/reprimand
 - requires multiple redirection/reprimand

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- requires removing student from environment
- requires additional staff assistance
- disruptive to students nearby
- disruptive to entire class
- Why do you think the student behaves this way?
 - to get
 - to avoid
 - to communicate
- Does the behaviour appear to be related to any of the following? For example:
 - skill deficit
 - lack of sleep or good food
 - environmental (e.g. changes at school, to peer group)
 - medical needs
 - seeking attention from adults or peers
- In what situations does the behaviour(s) never occur?
- What consequences appear to maintain the behaviour(s)?
- What could the student learn to do instead which may result in the same outcome for them?
- What has been done to date to try and change/eliminate the problem behaviour(s)? What has worked to assist the student?
- What would help (student) to follow the school's expectations?