



Meeting Agenda: Behavior Support Policy Planning

Welcome (5 minutes)

- Introduce any new members to your team.
- Provide space for employee recognition through shout-outs for a job well done.

Introduction (5 minutes)

- **Topic/Meeting Purpose:**
 - Club leadership, management and youth development professionals will complete the Behavior Support Policy Planning tools as a cross-functional team.
- **Why:**
 - To begin the process of creating a culture of behavior support.
 - To create a shared understanding and way of responding to, and supporting youth behavior.

Icebreaker/Teambuilding (15 minutes)

- Ask participants to share their rose, bud and thorn in relation to behavior support.
 - Rose = Give an example of a time you did a particularly excellent job supporting a young person through a behavior challenge.
 - Bud = What is something you are looking forward to in terms of your role in supporting youth behavior?
 - Thorn = What is an example of a time you could have done a better job supporting a young person through a behavior challenge?

Meeting Content (90 minutes)

- **Main Points:** Review Key Concepts
 - Behavior is an observable action and form of communication.
 - Behavior support is a process of understanding what youth are communicating with their actions and using that information to adjust their environment and teach skills that promote positive behavior.
 - The 5 Guiding Principles of Behavior Support
 1. All behavior is communication.
 2. All youth are in the process of learning how to cope with demands, recognize emotions and negotiate interactions. As youth are learning to meet expectations they will often act in ways that are challenging or concerning.
 3. People interpret behavior based on culture, upbringing and experience.
 4. Behavior is an opportunity to learn how youth respond to their environments, and the skills they are working on in those spaces.
 5. Behavior support is a team approach that should include parents, mentors, elders, extended family or other caregivers, and supportive adults in the young person's life.
 - Create Your Club's Behavior Support Policy
 - Step 1: Define Your Behavior Support Goals
 - Step 2: Define the Types of Behavior for Your Policy
 - Step 3: Outline Responses to Behavior
 - Step 4: Create Your Unsafe Behavior Policy
 - Step 5: Create Your Communication Plan
- **Activity:** Complete the Behavior Support Planning Tools
 - Provide each participant with a copy of each of the steps.
 - Step 1: Define Your Behavior Support Goals
 - Step 2: Define the Types of Behavior for Your Policy



- Step 3: Outline Responses to Behavior
 - Step 4: Create Your Unsafe Behavior Policy
 - Step 5: Create Your Communication Plan
- As a group, review the content in each step, and complete the following steps.

Planning for Action (25 minutes)

- Discussion
 - What was your overall experience of creating our Club's Behavior Support Plan?
 - Were there any themes?
 - Was there anything that may be difficult to implement?
 - What are the next steps?
 - Who should be included to move this forward?
- Next Step
 - The next step in improving our approach to supporting and responding to youth behavior is to educate everyone (staff, youth and caregivers) about your Club's new Behavior Support Policy. Create a plan and identify what everyone will be responsible for.

Reflection (5 minutes)

Ask staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting and their ability to apply the information learned.

Total time: 2.5 hours



Behavior Support Policy Planning Tool

Step 1: Define Your Behavior Support Goals

What are your Club or Youth Center’s Goals for your behavior support policy? What is the overall goal? What is the goal for staff? What is the goal for youth? What is the goal for parents/caregivers? Use this information to guide your responses for the remainder of this planning tool.

For Example:

- **Overall** the Club has a consistent and clear approach to supporting behavior that considers culture, youth strengths and opportunities for growth.
- **Staff** are clear on what the Clubs approach is, and consistent in supporting youth behavior.
- **Youth** are provided with opportunities to learn and grow.
- **Caregivers** play an active role in supporting youth behavior by working collaboratively with staff to support their children’s behavior growth at the Club.

Outline the agreed upon goals below:

Overall Goal	
Staff Goal	
Youth Goal	
Caregiver Goal	

Step 2: Define the Types of Behavior for Your Policy

It is important to clearly define behavior within your Club’s or Youth Center’s policies. If you do not have clear definitions for behavior, it may be open to staff interpretation. How staff interpret a young person’s actions can affect how they respond. Clear definitions help everyone interpret actions in a similar way.

- **Positive behavior** is defined as an action that communicates a young person’s thoughts and feelings in ways that promote safety and connection with peers and Club staff. For example, a young person helping a peer with homework, or a young person helping staff set or clean up an activity.

Discuss: What are some examples of positive behavior you see at the Club?

- **Concerning behavior** is defined as an action that negatively impacts a young person’s participation in Club activities or relationships with others. For example, a young person refusing to clean up a game, or a group of youth excluding one member.



Discuss: What are some examples of behaviors that concerned or challenged you at the Club?

- **Unsafe behavior** is defined as an action that places other youth or staff at risk for immediate physical, social or emotional harm. For example, fighting, running away or throwing items at staff or youth.

Discuss: What are some examples of unsafe behavior you see at the Club?

Keeping these definitions and examples in mind, define the types of behavior for your Club:

Type	Your Club's Definition
Behavior	
Positive	
Concerning	
Unsafe	

Step 3: Outline Responses to Behavior

It is important to respond to all behavior in ways that center youth, and help them identify and communicate their feelings. It is also important that staff responses promote positive behavior and honor the youth's family and cultural values. Outlining expectations for how staff should respond to behavior can help youth development professionals respond more confidently and calmly to all types of behavior.

- **Positive Behavior:** Discuss how staff should respond to positive behavior. For example, staff will respond by sending a note of appreciation home about the positive behavior.

Make a plan for how staff will respond to positive behavior:

Staff Responses to Positive Behavior	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

- **Concerning/Challenging Behavior:** Discuss how staff should respond to concerning behavior. For example, staff will respond to concerning behavior by using a calm voice, pulling youth aside, and finding a safe space before processing what happened.



Make a plan for how staff will respond to concerning behavior:

Staff Responses to Concerning Behavior	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Step 4: Create Your Unsafe Behavior Policy

Behavior becomes unsafe when actions place youth, staff or volunteers at risk for immediate physical, social or emotional harm. Unsafe behavior is different from concerning behavior. Members engaging in unsafe behavior are not making decisions about their behavior choices from their “thinking brain,” and are often not able to comprehend the consequences to their actions in the moment. It is critical to their safety, and the safety of others that youth development professionals receive adequate training and support on how to respond to unsafe behavior.

Examples of unsafe behavior may include:

- Ten-year-old Kayla is screaming, “I hate you!” and throwing chairs toward the youth development professional. The youth development professional is in immediate risk of being physically harmed.
- Fourteen-year-old MJ is posturing at a peer with clenched fists, breathing heavy with a red face and furrowed eyebrows. MJ is not responding as the youth development professional calls his name. MJ and the peer are in immediate risk of being physically harmed if MJ decides to fight.
- Six-year-old Ollie is crying and running toward the door to the parking lot. He pushes a youth development professional out of his way. Ollie is in immediate risk of being physically harmed in the busy parking lot.

It is important that you create an unsafe behavior policy that clearly outlines how youth development professionals can determine when behavior becomes unsafe, and what resources and choices are available when this happens.

Unsafe Behavior Policy SHOULD:	Unsafe Behavior Policy SHOULD NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD keep everyone involved safe. • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD outline strategies for approaching the member once they have regained control of their actions. • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD outline how to communicate and document the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD NOT advise staff to place their hands on members. • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD NOT be used to label or stigmatize youth for their behavior. • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD NOT rely on suspensions as a method of



<p>incident.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD include a plan for how to prevent unsafe behavior from occurring in the future. • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD provide guidance on connecting with caregivers. It is important that members and caregivers understand that the behavior was unacceptable, <u>and</u> that the Club wants to help them learn the skills they need to respond differently in the future. • Unsafe behavior policies SHOULD be communicated and provided to youth and caregivers when they join the Club. 	<p>intervention. Suspensions do not change behavior because they don't teach the youth the skills they need to be successful in developing relationships, regulating emotions and solving problems. Suspensions, if used, should be used in combination with other support efforts such as teaching coping skills, behavior support plans and making referrals.</p>
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Make a plan for how staff will respond to unsafe behavior:

Unsafe Behavior Policy	
Remain Calm	When unsafe behavior occurs, youth development professionals will approach all situations calmly by:
Maintain Distance	Staff will approach the person engaging in unsafe behavior calmly and stay at a minimum of an arm's length away.
Call for Help	Staff will call for help by:
Remove Others	Staff will direct other youth to go to the following designated safety zone:
Shadow	Two staff will shadow the youth for safety whenever possible. Staff will watch closely for signs that the young person is regaining control of their actions, which include, but are not limited to: slowed breathing, relaxed posture, talking and answering questions.
Give Choices	Staff will offer the young person the following two concrete choices: Staff will offer support by:



Contact Caregivers	<p>The Club/Youth Center director will call the youth's caregiver to inform them of the incident within _____ minutes/hours.</p> <p>Staff, director, the young person and caregivers will meet within _____ days to develop a plan to support the young person at the Club.</p>
Document the Incident	<p>Details of the unsafe behavior incident and subsequent caregiver meeting will be documented within _____ hours.</p> <p>Documentation will use objective and observable language.</p> <p>All documentation will be submitted to:</p>
<p>In cases where unsafe behavior continues despite the Club's efforts, contact BGCA's Child & Club Safety team for guidance on next steps. You can find their page at BGCA.net/ChildSafety/.</p>	

Step 5: Create Your Communication Plan

Clear communication channels are an important piece of behavior support. Behavior support is a team approach that includes the leadership, youth development professionals, parents/caregivers, and at times, other community professionals in the young person's life. Clear communication between all adults involved helps ensure everyone has the same information and approach when supporting the youth.

- Internal Communication Among Youth Development Professionals:** Effective behavior support requires strong communication among youth development professionals. This helps ensure that everyone is on the same page as they respond to, and support youth behavior. If staff respond to concerning behaviors differently, it can be confusing for youth, and potentially lead to more behavior concerns. Having a communication policy helps staff know when and how to support youth who act in concerning or unsafe ways.

Make a plan for how staff will communicate internally about concerning behavior:

Internal Communication Plan	
Staff will communicate concerns about behavior by:	
Staff will communicate concerns about behavior to the following people:	
Staff can expect support on concerns about behavior in the following ways:	



- **Caregiver Communication:** Gathering meaningful information from caregivers is critical to responding to youth in ways that value their family and culture. Culture plays a central role in shaping how we understand behavior. Although many cultures hold similar values, there is often variation in expectations, habits and ways of doing things. It is important to gather information on how parents see the world, what they value, what they are worried about for their children, and what they expect from their children.

Make a plan for how staff will communicate with caregivers about behavior:

Caregiver Communication Plan	
Staff will gather information from caregivers by:	
Staff will approach caregivers with behavior concerns by:	
Behavior concerns will be communicated to caregivers by the following people:	

- **External Communication With Professionals Outside the Club:** When a young person is engaging in concerning or unsafe behavior, Clubs may want to communicate with external professionals like the young person’s teachers, social workers, mentors, doctors, coaches or other important adults in their life. The first step to an external communication channel is obtaining written consent from the young person’s parent or guardian to share information prior to reaching outside of the Club for support. Use this [Release of Information Template](#) when communicating with external professionals.

In addition, there may be certain situations or behaviors that require staff to externally report events to child protective services or law enforcement. Make sure all staff are up to date on their safety trainings and are clear on mandated reporting policies and practices.

Make a plan for how staff will communicate externally about concerning behavior:

External Communication Plan	
The Release of Information form will be completed by the following people:	
We will protect member confidentiality by:	



Release of Information Template

I, _____, the parent/guardian of _____, give permission to the
(Member Name)

_____ staff to release information/obtain information from:
(Club/Youth Center)

_____ for the purposes
(Name of Agency)

of supporting my child at the Boys & Girls Club or Youth Center.

Please note any information you do not want released in the space below:

This consent will automatically expire one year after the date of my signature as it appears below, or on the following earlier date _____. I understand I may revoke my consent at any time in writing (except to the extent that information has already been released).

Parent/Guardian Name

Parent/Guardian Signature Date