



Working with People



BEACON
Specialized Living

Objectives

Learn About Resident Needs, Values, & Guiding Principles

Learn How Behaviors are Responses to Needs

Learn How Behaviors Communicate

Learn About Functional Learning

Learn How Relationships Impact Learning

Normalization

The idea is that people with disabilities are supported and allowed by society to live a life as close to typical/normal as possible.



Ways to Promote Normalization



- **Treat residents as members of society.**
- **Provide as “normal” as an environment in our homes as possible.**
- **Learn about and understand that basic human needs are needed by all and how you can help residents meet their needs.**
- **Understand how critical it is for all humans to have basic needs met before they can pay attention to other (higher) needs.**

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Created by psychologist Abraham Maslow, the hierarchy states that all living things have needs.

The pyramid is made up of 5 levels. The 4 lowest levels are considered basic needs.

The uppermost level can be achieved when all basic needs are met.



Test Your Knowledge

Below are the 5 Levels. Match the needs to the level you think they belong to. We will highlight each level in the following slides.

Physiological

Safety

Belonging

Self-Esteem

Self-Actualization

Recognition

Family

Water

Shelter

Shelter

Security

Friends

Stability

Freedom from Fear

Warmth

Respect

Food

Love

Talent

Achievement Mastery

Level 1 - Physiological Needs

This level focuses on needs that are vital to our survival. Some examples are food, water, temperature regulation, shelter, etc.



If you are cold and hungry, you will communicate that need. For our non-verbal residents, they may be unable to effectively communicate their needs to you. This can lead to frustration.

It is important to recognize that behavior and non-verbal expressions are sincere and a way for verbal and non-verbal residents to communicate their needs.

It is unethical to work in a way that ignores or suppresses a resident's attempt to express or meet these needs.

Work with the resident to attempt to understand what they are trying to communicate. This may include helping the resident learn more effective ways to meet their needs.

Level 2 - Security and Safety



The higher you move up the pyramid, the more complex the needs become. Security and safety focus on people wanting control and order in their lives. This can include financial security, health and wellness, routines, safety from accidents, etc.



Those in our care may have lived in a series of settings where they were unable to develop close relationships with others. This means they might not have developed a sense of predictability for the people that cared or currently care for them. Or for their environments.

They may not have been the choice of responsibility or control over making their own decisions.

In contrast, they may have been recently required to leave a community and the familiar care of people that they have come to trust.

Level 3 – Belonging Needs

The social needs in Maslow's hierarchy include things like love, acceptance, and belonging. At this level, the need for emotional relationships drives behavior. Some of these relationships include friendships, romantic attachments, family, social/community groups, or churches and religious groups.



In order to avoid problems like loneliness, depression, and anxiety, it is important for residents to feel loved and accepted by others. This can be through personal relationships with friends, family, or significant others. It can also be through involvement with religious groups, interest-based groups like sports or book clubs, and other group activities.

Level 4 – Esteem Needs

The fourth level is the need for appreciation and respect. Once the bottom three levels are satisfied, the esteem needs begin to play a more prominent role in motivating behavior. This can include the feeling of accomplishment, building self-esteem, or a feeling of personal worth.



Residents need a sense that they are valued by those around them and feel like they are contributing to their world. This can be through participation in academic-based activities, athletic or team participation, or personal hobbies.

Residents who are able to satisfy esteem needs can build their self-esteem and feel more confident in their abilities. Conversely, those who lack in this area can develop feelings of inferiority.

Level 5 – Self-Actualization

At the peak of the pyramid is the self-actualization needs. Those that reach the peak are self-aware, concerned with their personal growth, and interested in fulfilling their potential.



To reach the peak, residents will have to use and exploit their full roster of talents, capabilities, and potential.

According to Maslow, Those that reach this level seem to be “fulfilling themselves and are doing the best that they are capable of doing. They are people who have developed or are developing to the full stature of which they are capable.”

As care providers, we must provide as many opportunities as possible to ensure residents’ highest needs are met. This can include volunteering, creating scrapbooks or albums of accomplishments, or allowing them to share knowledge and personal treasures. **We must celebrate the importance of our residents and their contributions to their community.**



The Struggle to Achieve Human Needs

Those under our care may struggle to achieve their needs. For many years society has treated them in ways that make them feel:

- Different from “Normal” People
- Not Valued or Appreciated
- Uncomfortable or Frightened

This combination of being made to feel different and devalued has a stigmatizing effect on people.



What Can You Do?

Your language, attitude, and action are your most important tools.

The techniques and quality of your actions have a monumental impact on those under your care. We need to be careful of the language used to describe residents. Our words have a big influence on the acceptance of those we care for by others.

Never use negative words to describe residents. Do not use slang words or derogatory words. This is not acceptable.

Do not treat residents as if they are children.

Roles in Society

Formal roles in society are roles with clear expectations of how the person should behave. Examples include doctors, law enforcement, etc.

However, there also exist informal roles that lack well-defined expectations. These can include talking with friends, standing in line at the store, or playing a game. We take on many of these informal roles throughout our days.

It is important to understand that the role you are currently inhabiting may not be the only role played your entire lifetime.

Think about if you were only given one role for your entire life. What if this role was not valued by those around you or society at large?

Unfortunately, many of those that we serve were given limited opportunities to experience different roles.

Roles in Society



These limited opportunities can become a vicious cycle of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

The messages you send to the public about the people you work with, and the general nature of your job can alter or continue the stereotypes of those with physical or mental illnesses or disabilities.

Consider this scenario:

You do not believe that our residents have the ability to make their own meaningful decisions. As a result, our residents are not taught how to make meaningful decisions.

If you already believe they do not have the ability to make their own meaningful decisions, the fact that they do not know how to will just confirm your held prejudice belief.

This effect would result in you having low expectations in those you work with to make meaningful decisions. You would then not offer the residents opportunities to make decisions and grow and learn.

The above scenario is an example of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Think about others who may have cared for our residents and if they held these same beliefs. It would be no wonder why a resident may not be able to make their own meaningful decisions without assistance.

What would you do to break the cycle for the resident?

The Function of Behavior

When working with residents, it is extremely helpful to ask key questions when a challenging behavior occurs.

These questions may give you clues as to if the behavior is due to a need not being met or is the result of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Ask yourself

- What is the behavior doing?
- Are they trying to escape something?
- Are they trying to avoid a situation?
- What need is being communicated?
- Why do they resort to this behavior?





Principles of Normalization

The Principles of Normalization are made up of 5 different components.

Community Presence

- Take residents out into the community to build a presence.
- Taking them out into the community also builds a sense of normalcy and inclusion.

Community Participation

- Promote local contacts within the community.
- These contacts can lead to joining in with community events on a large or small scale.

Principles of Normalization

Skill Building and Enhancement

- Challenge society, caregivers, and service organizations to expect and teach residents to perform accordingly to the expectations of our culture.
- Teach necessary skills for everyday living.
- Be committed to helping each person achieve their highest level of independence.
- The more the individual believes they can do, the more they can become.
- All interactions with the individuals we serve (whether planned or unplanned) should be recognized as a potential teachable moment.



Principles of Normalization

Image Building and Enhancement

- Strongly advocate that programs for our residents project a positive message and techniques for the people they serve.

Autonomy and Empowerment

- Make sure residents understand, to the best of their ability, their options to exercise their legal rights.
- All persons, including residents, have basic rights.



Understanding the Residents, You Work With

Below are some things to keep in mind when working with our residents. Sometimes they may be rude, inconsiderate, or vulgar. You may at times have to remind them of manners and social graces. Our words should be chosen carefully to communicate respect and value. We also may misunderstand or misconstrue what they are trying to tell us.

They are people first.

They have varying degrees of energy.

They want their space respected.

They may find expressing themselves difficult.



How People Relate

People relate to others, places, and things. Some factors that may affect this are:

1. **Early Life Experiences**
2. **A Person's Expectations**
3. **Stress**
4. **Communication Modes**
5. **Understanding**
6. **Support Systems**
7. **Illnesses**
8. **Physical Needs**



Your Responsibility as Staff

- Recognize behavior always has a purpose.
- Understand, interpret, and act.
- Give reassurance of safety.
- Allow initiation and participation.
- Help residents complete all that they can.





Your Role as a Teacher

- Part of your everyday role is to teach and instruct.
- The process of sharing in which both the teacher and learner may experience positive and nurturing changes in the process.
- During the teaching process there are three non-negotiable items.
 - Be flexible.
 - Be willing to adjust and adapt for the resident.
 - Offer reinforcements and rewards, do not punish.

Reinforcements and Rewards

- Human Rewards
 - Always available
 - Increase frequency or special interactions
 - Comes in many forms
 - Easily delivered
 - Never gets old



Identifying Reasons to Reward

- Building or strengthening relationships
- Acceptable interactions
- Working on strengthening current skills
- Learning new skills



How to Identify the Lessons of the Reward



- Begin the interaction the minute you encounter a resident. This will help build the relationship.
- Acknowledge and reward when a resident is making an effort to complete a task.
- You can also reward prior to beginning an activity so that they are excited about it.
- Use a schedule to provide activities.
- Maintain constant and clear communication to provide feedback.
- Be enthusiastic and interested.
- Make sure the resident is sharing in the reward with you. If they are not as equally happy about completing the task at hand, the reward will not help.

Types of Rewards

- Verbal
- Physical
- Edible
- Tangible
- Incentive Programs
- Presence of Someone In-Particular

Rewards should be given freely and not be a focus of something they earn.

It is our job is to make it possible for residents to receive rewards and approval. We should focus on accomplishments.



Effective and Functional Teaching

Functional teaching is when you teach a skill a resident will use to function in everyday life.

Where to Teach?

- It takes a village. Teach in the home and community.
- Involve residents and staff and encourage collaboration.
- Communicate regularly with other staff. Share ideas, listen, set goals, and plan for things together to make the home more special.
- Don't discount the resident's knowledge and experience. Don't patronize, ignore, or talk down to. This takes energy away from learning to process and deal with the feelings these actions can cause.
- Show respect for everyone's individuality and experiences. Be open to different perspectives.

Effective and Functional Teaching

What to Teach?

- Teach for long-term goals. Have the resident's long-term goals in mind when teaching. This will allow you to go beyond the notion of getting them through the task at hand and instead hone the necessary skills for them to thrive.
- Remember, mistakes are just learning opportunities. Use emotional intelligence, sensitivity, and empathy. By being kind to yourself and others, you can navigate through difficult situations.
- Develop interpersonal skills like collaboration, positivity, self-confidence, work ethic, showing appreciation, and more.
- Let the resident know why they are learning something. Think about:
 - What is in it for them?
 - How do they benefit?
 - Why do they need the information?
 - How can they use it in a practical way in everyday life?

Effective and Functional Teaching

When to Teach?

- Teach when doing so means something.
- Utilizing in-the-moment learning opportunities can utilize Active Learning. Active Learning allows students to relate what they are learning to situations in their everyday life. This is done by being able to talk presently about what they are learning and relate it to their current and past experiences to gain perspective.
- Be prompt with feedback. This lets residents know their current knowledge and capabilities. This will better give them and you a chance to reflect on what they learned and what they still need to know.

Effective and Functional Teaching

How to Teach?

- Clearly define goals, objectives, and timeframes.
- Cater to their learning style:
 - “Show Me” – These residents may be visual learners. They learn best by watching how it is done. You can demonstrate, provide visuals like diagrams, videos, illustrations, or write/draw it out for them.
 - “Tell Me” – These residents may be audio learners. They learn the best by hearing how it is done. Explain to them by walking them through a process, using stories, examples, or mnemonic devices to help them remember how to do things.
 - “I Need to Do It Myself” – These residents may be kinesthetic and need to physically do something to understand it. They tend to trust their feelings and emotions about what they are learning. They prefer to try a task, roleplay a situation, or just repeatedly practice what they are learning.

Learning Essential Communication Skills

Conversations are a two-way street, even if one person is doing all the talking. How you listen and respond can change the tone and outcome of a conversation. Here are some essential skills to hone.

Don't Judge or Assume

People deal with life in various ways. It is easy to say how we would behave in another's situation.

Listening Speaks Volumes

Try to avoid offering suggestions and anecdotal stories in an attempt to connect unless that is what they are looking for. If unsure, you can ask if they prefer you to just listen for support or brainstorm helpful next steps.

Small Gestures Make a Big Difference

Some are better at showing they care than expressing it verbally. Pay attention to non-verbal communication like posture, proximity, and facial expressions.



Teaching by Communicating

Inclusion conveys belonging, membership, and involvement as well as closeness. It is the opposite of exclusion.



Avoid:

- Feigning empathy but not really listening.
- Treating interactions as transactions.
- Making decisions without consulting the resident.
- Planning and scheduling things without the resident's input.
- Not listening to the resident's wants and needs.
- Acting uninterested when interacting with the resident.

Teaching by Communicating

Respect and inclusion are demonstrated when staff acknowledges and acts on the choices made by the resident. This helps to build the resident's self-esteem and belief in their choice.



Teaching by Communicating



Residents learn effective ways of communicating their needs by observing the way you verbally and non-verbally interact with other residents, staff, themselves, and community members.

The Solidarity Posture

What makes up posture?

The set of attitudes, values, and beliefs that guide and direct our actions in life's circumstances.

- Facial Expressions
- Physical position in relation to others
- Words used when communicating
- Things said and not said.
- What we choose to do and not do.



The Solidarity Posture



The Solidarity Posture and Partnership assumes that we must rely on each other to meet mutual needs. In addition to achieving maximum benefit from the partnership, both parties must give and expect mutual dignity and respect.

Why is the Solidary Posture and Partnership Important?

- All interactions are shaped by attitudes, values, and beliefs.
- In teaching, we cannot avoid revealing our posture to the person we are teaching
- If we do not make the effort to identify and define our own posture, we risk changing when working with someone with intellectual or physical hurdles to overcome.
- This means we risk adopting a posture that devalues the resident being taught.
- In order to promote an effective relationship, staff needs to be fair and not hold unreasonable expectations. No matter what the resident's behavior is at the time, remain respectful, accepting, and tolerant.

Remember, behavior is an effort by the resident to communicate their needs at that particular time. You should never dismiss their behavior simply as a way to get attention.

Relationships as Learning Tools

Thinking of relationships as learning tools can help you identify relationships that can support the learning of all residents and staff in the home.

You can also enhance learning opportunities by:

- Fostering new learning-focused relationships within the home and among the wider community.
- By sharing key relationships and community resources among staff.

Types of Relationships

There are many types of relationships. Categorizing different types of learning relationships can help you focus on the ones you want to help foster. Some people have roles that branch across multiple relationship types. For example, the CMH might be viewed in a stewardship role, which entails a partnership relationship. At the same time, they may provide educational resources, so could be resource provider.



Partnerships

Long-term relationships that are of mutual benefit. Partners deeply understand and have a shared interest in the learning and well-being of residents. They help develop and share ownership of visions or strategies. Other staff, guardians, family members, friends, and case managers are examples of possible partners.

Collaborators

These are relationships where individuals, groups, and organizations outside of the home are directly involved in working with staff to support the learning of residents. These may include CMH staff, service providers, day or work program staff or Beacon support staff.



Resource Providers

These are relationships with people who enable those working directly with the resident to provide rich learning experiences. They might include local health services, the IT department, publishers of educational resources, or a business that offers work experience.

Professional Connections

These are the relationships that support the work of staff, enabling them to provide quality teaching moments. They might include supervisors, Trainers, Beacon support staff, and associations or organizations.

Relationship Expectations

Each type of relationship requires a different kind of commitment, knowledge about each other, and sets of expectations. When these expectations are met, there are high levels of trust created. For example

- Service providers know your resident's needs, are expected to respond when needed, and expect the home to refer to them for advice.
- Partners are trusted for their commitment and because their knowledge of the resident can help make the goals a reality. They, in turn, expect staff to be engaged in the desires and goals of the resident. For these things to happen, both parties need to know that, when expectations are met, both parties will benefit.

When Relationships Go Bad

Poor or weak learner-teacher relationships can cause

- Chronic elevated cortisol levels (the stress hormone that can shrink or kill brain cells and hurt memory skills)
- Impaired social decisions
- Decreased desire to learn.

When Relationships Go Bad

How can you fix it?

- Embrace the learner's voice. When learners have a voice and can advocate in their learning, they are more engaged.
- Co-create rules, goals, and expectations. Co-creating honors voices while still allowing behaviors to be managed proactively.
- Set Realistic Expectations. Setting the bar low offers low-quality learning but, setting the bar too high can cause them to become discouraged.
- Establish a “We are a Family” mindset. Families help take on each others' problems, give ideas to solve them, hold each other accountable for goals that need to be completed, celebrate success, and encourage kindness among its members.

Creating Connections



Recognize varying connection needs.

People have different attitudes when it comes to feeling connection or lack thereof. People respond differently to actions in terms of whether it makes them feel connected.

Be present in conversations.

When working with people, get in the habit of being present by giving them your full attention. Show that you are engaged by asking questions and listening carefully.

Develop the ability to empathize.

When we feel the emotions of others, it makes them feel connected to us. When we feel their positive emotions, it enhances the positive emotion. When we feel their pain, it can help diminish their pain. If someone expresses an emotion, it is OK, and natural, for you to feel it to.

Tip to Create Connections with Others

Everyone at Beacon needs to develop connection skills, with both Residents and other staff members.

The accompanying attitudes, language, and behaviors will help create and maintain connections with everyone at Beacon.

Creating Connections



Develop the habit of emphasizing positives.

People need affirmation and recognition, so get in the habit of looking for ways to affirm and service others. This can be as simple as complimenting them on a task they did

Control your tone of voice.

People will instinctively react to the delivery of a message before they hear the content. They may put up a wall and become defensive or feel threatened if your voice is booming, shrill, or strident.

Provide autonomy in execution.

Monitor progress and be available to help, but refrain from micromanaging unless they ask for specific help. This meets the human need for autonomy and allows people to experience personal growth.

Apologize when you make a mistake.

Apologizing is an important step that will help rebuild connection.

Develop social skills and relationship skills and recognize the difference between them.

Social skills make someone an excellent networker who can impress and others in casual interactions.

Relationship skills help create deeper connections with a few people who have your back. Relationship skills include sharing your struggles, sharing someone's joy and pain, being there in time of need and more. These help develop the deeper connections that are necessary for individual wellness and well-being to thrive life and achieve goals.

Consider the skills you use when meeting someone the first time versus nurturing your relationship with your best friend.

Cultivating Self-Advocacy Through Connections



Provide education and opportunities to enable residents and their family/friends to be more actively involved.



Create and maintain trusting and caring relationships that promote open communication among residents and staff.

Create decision-making processes that facilitate resident and staff achievement and empowerment.



Teach and promote life, emotional, and social skills to help Residents be actively engaged in their community inside and outside the home.



Natural Support Benefits

Natural supports are the relationships that occur in everyday life (family members, friends, co-workers, neighbors, and acquaintances).

Natural supports foster empowerment, independence, and growth and reduces the need to rely on services. According to research, the quality of close family relationships can positively affect endocrine function, immune system functions, and nervous system activity.

The support by this informal community cannot be taken for granted. Research has shown that the communities we serve, as each of us, consider these relationships significant sources of support, perhaps even more so than the general public.

Work colleagues are also identified as major sources of emotional support.

Formal supports usually involve some form of payment for services and may include relationships with service providers (counselors, therapists, direct care staff, etc).

Developing Natural Supports

There is no single method or easy answer for helping residents develop a system of natural supports. It will require time and persistence, as well as open and honest communication in relationships.

The best ways to meet people are by getting involved. Some ways to help build up natural supports are

- Participating in community activities and projects
- Joining groups or clubs
- Socializing with one's immediate and extended family and neighbors
- Attending work

Strengthening Natural Supports

Working together, you can develop specific strategies that enhance an individual's natural support.

Examples include

- Help people discover and express their interests. Engage them in discussions about possible choices.
- Collaborate and partner with a person's family if they are comfortable with this choice.
- Identify community resources that fit the person's interest.
- Encourage people to participate in social or community activities that are consistent with their interests and culture, in addition to service programs and groups they may already be attending.
- Help people cope with social adversity by recognizing potential discrimination or barriers.



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