

BOOK REVIEW

Positive Behavior Management in Physical Activity Settings, 3rd ed.

by Barry Wayne Lavay, Ron French, and Hester Henderson (2016)
Human Kinetics

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The title of this book leads the reader to think beyond the typical physical education teacher working with students in the gym. The authors in this third edition have expanded their target audience to professionals working with varied age groups in school, community, recreation, or other physical activity settings. Their goal is to guide professionals to motivate participants to be empowered rather than to be controlled as a consequence of inappropriate behaviors. For the professional employed in various therapeutic recreation settings there are hands on charts, tips, and guidelines that will be helpful. Additionally, the four-part publication (11 chapters), offers information on topics such as bullying, crisis intervention, and biological factors impacting behaviors. The publication also presents the research supportive of evidence-based and best practices with behavior strategies. Creating a positive activity and learning environment is applicable for many of us, even in the higher education setting.

In the first chapter, the authors start with an overview of what creates a positive learning environment. They emphasize being proactive or preventive rather than reactive or punitive. The first chapter provides a review of the most recent research and best practices in behavior management. Different concepts are discussed with the emphasis being placed on positive approaches that use systematic, planned and structured methods. The authors focus on encouraging socially acceptable and responsible interactions as a way to prevent, reduce, or stop inappropriate behavior that interferes with learning in settings for physical activity. To illustrate, a practitioner working with a stress management group in a behavioral health setting might employ some of the strategies with, for example, learning names such as:

1. Label the names on a photograph on a tablet or smartphone.
2. Greet each participant by name as they enter the room or space.
3. List names difficult to remember on a note card as a quick reference.

The first chapter also sets up the profile of three case studies that are used throughout the rest of the book. These serve as examples for many of the strategies described in each chapter.

The second chapter, “Preventing Inappropriate Behaviors and Promoting Positive Behaviors,” has more details on this proactive approach to creating a positive environment. Concrete operational functions are managed by a program design that preempts situations that may foster disruptive behavior. For example, professionals develop strategies so participants stay involved and engaged instead of waiting in line or watching from the side. Also, having clear expectations is important to being proactive: The authors explain best practices for designing and putting into practice expectations. Two of these best practices are: Involve others in program design and employ only expectations that are reasonable and enforceable. The authors believe strongly in planning as a way to create a positive intervention environment.

The next five chapters which comprise Part II, “Exploring Behavior Management Approaches,” are perhaps the most relevant to recreation therapy practice and include the theoretical approaches that explain various behavior strategies and applications with specific special needs individuals. This part introduces three distinct theoretical approaches to behavior management: behavioral, humanistic, and biophysical. Chapters 3-6 discuss these approaches and provide clear explanations for how to put each into practice. Each chapter explains one of the three perspectives and suggests why it is important to first evaluate each individual in order to target a behavior to adjust then, second, to determine the best approach. Examples of interventions suggested for the theoretical constructs are illustrated: With the biophysical approach the practitioner might use yoga as an intervention for managing stress related behaviors. Character education and self-assessments are strategies supportive of the humanistic approach. The behavioral approach is more typically what might come to mind when we think about behavior management with token economies and other reinforcement methods; yet the authors consider in the two chapters devoted to this approach, strategies to use during crisis intervention in addition to several others used to defuse inappropriate behaviors.

The last chapter in Part II, Chapter 7, “Evaluating the Behavioral Intervention,” contains helpful tools and strategies that support the ‘E’ in the therapeutic recreation process. One useful chart compares measurable to immeasurable behaviors in physical activity settings (see below). Using this approach in varied settings would increase effective evaluation of behaviors that are targeted to be changed by interventions as the list clearly differentiates observable indicators of documentable behaviors.

Immeasurable behaviors

Paying attention

Cooperating

Measurable behaviors

Going from the warm-up to the first activity when the signal is given.

Putting equipment away after completing the activity

Part III, “Behavior Management Challenges,” includes two chapters: bullying of children and youth is the topic of Chapter 8, while Chapter 9 covers children and youth with unique needs like autism spectrum disorder, traumatic brain injury, ADHD, behavioral and intellectual disorders, and obesity issues. There is a focus on a variety of evidence-based approaches for needs unique to the identified individuals that are applicable in activity settings and during various types of programs. The authors present

extremely useful information in checklists, charts, and excerpts from real life situations in these two chapters. They connect bullying and persons served in the schools with disabilities in a way that shows the interrelatedness of the problem of bullying with children and youth with unique needs.

The last part of the book is entirely focused on professionalism of the physical activity professional. Chapter 10 primarily discusses ethics and Chapter 11 explains how to develop a portfolio. The authors assert that developing a teaching and behavior management portfolio is an effective way to pull the ideas presented together; they believe this can lead to success in utilizing behavioral approaches. For recreation therapists this may be a very helpful way to organize information on behavioral strategies and for instructors and students to highlight their learning on the topic.

The authors provide key points in all the chapters where there are also web resources for further exploration; these resources and other ancillaries are available with either the hard copy (\$49.00) of the book or the electronic version (\$27.00). This is a very useful resource for professionals who desire to create a positive learning environment for varied settings and age groups. The text is supportive of modalities and intervention classes and with professionals who utilize behavior strategies in their day-to-day practice. The case studies are examples of how professionals might document the use of evidence-based and best-practices.