

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

**00:00:02** Good afternoon and welcome everyone. My name is Michelle Norman. I'm the executive director and founder of Partners in Promise. Thank you for joining us today to learn more about behavior supports and building a foundation for success. The webinar today is presented by the USAA Foundation, where we will focus on helping military families learn what those behaviors look like and what strategies and tools they can pull from their toolbox that are available to them to support their military-connected child so they can succeed in school, in their home, and in the community.

**00:00:34** Our goal is to try to finish this webinar within 30 minutes for the slide deck portion of it, and then we will slide into the Q&A piece. Additionally, we have live comments available on the right of your screen, so please introduce yourself, tell us where you're joining us from, and if you have any comments or questions, just drop them in the comment section and we can try to get to those at the end of the webinar.

For those who are new to our organization, Partners in Promise is a military spouse and veteran spouse-led organization whose mission is to protect the rights of military children in special education (AKA PROMISE) and our disability communities to ensure that they receive equal access to an education. We often say we love data and it informs everything that we do, so we utilize it to develop those top-level solutions that equip our parents. Like today's webinar, it informs our leaders and enables our military children to thrive.

**00:01:46** Today I am thrilled to introduce you to two of our PIP team members who will be leading the discussion. First, we have Crystal Devas-Mahany. She is our special education legal analyst and our research editor. Then also today, we are excited to have Destiny Huff, who is our special education advocate and our amazing social media manager. I want to say thank you both for hosting this webinar. I appreciate your expertise on this subject and I look forward to hearing more about behavior. Over to you, Destiny.

**00:02:18** Good afternoon, and thank you, Michelle, for the introduction. Military families move approximately three times more frequently than civilian families and as many as nine times during a child's K through 12 education. Every time families move, they need to reestablish all personal and community connections. For families of children with special needs, this also means any medical appointments and reestablishing therapeutic services. There are stressors specific to the military lifestyle, such as transitions and deployments, that may impact the child's education, especially those who need behavioral support. Those behavioral supports are critical in school, at home, and in the community to help children succeed, learn about themselves, and develop necessary skills.

**00:02:50** During our special education EFMP training workshops, military families have consistently wanted to know more about behavioral supports. We listened and developed this webinar as a deep dive on this topic to explore further.

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

So what is behavior? Behavior is a range of actions and mannerisms in an environment. What can impact behavior?

**00:03:24** Environment: This is the setting. Are they in the general education classroom, the hallway, recess, lunchroom?

Communication: This is not just how the child communicates, but how others are communicating with the child.

Sensory needs: We'll talk about this a little later on the next slide, but are they sensory seekers? Are they sensory avoiders? Are we recognizing these sensory needs and accommodating them?

Emotional regulation: Do they have the tools to emotionally regulate? Do they know how to emotionally regulate?

**00:03:57** Developing coping skills: Have they been taught how to cope, identify their triggers, and how to use specific coping skills in specific areas depending on the trigger?

Questions I ask: What are they trying to communicate? Are they upset? Are they frustrated? Are they hungry? Are they tired? Do they need help? Do they need a break?

What is triggering the behavior? Is it that you're giving them math work and they are frustrated with the math work because they don't understand or they didn't hear the directions? Is there a sensory need? Do they know how to do the writing work, but everyone in the classroom is talking and it's too loud and they're overstimulated, dysregulated, and overwhelmed?

**00:04:26** When is the behavior occurring? Is it occurring in the morning? Is it occurring in the afternoon? Is it only occurring after recess? Is it only occurring before specials like music or PE or art?

Where is the behavior occurring? Are you noticing the behavior is only occurring at recess, or it's only occurring when transitioning between classes?

**00:04:59** Who is around when the behavior is occurring? Often we'll see where children don't tell us when somebody is bothering them or they don't get along with somebody. So are you noticing that there's a particular child, and every time this student gets dysregulated, it is because this other child is around and they don't get along and they kind of trigger each other?

What happens before the behavior? Is everything fine and then we start to notice that every time it's time for them to switch to small groups, then they start to get dysregulated?

**00:05:30** What happens after the behavior? We're talking about how long does it take for them to calm down? What is their response? What is their reaction? Are you noticing that every day

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

at 12 o'clock they're having this dysregulation, and then once they get cooled down and they're good to go from 1:00 to 3:15, they're fine?

What purpose is the behavior serving? Again, we go back to: are they trying to meet a need? Are they trying to get out of math work because it's frustrating? Because that tells us something too. If every time I do this, you let me exit and not do the math work, then I don't have to be embarrassed. I don't have to feel ashamed. I don't have to express that I don't understand, and maybe I don't have to be embarrassed by my peers. So these are all questions that we want to ask.

**00:06:30** Sensory needs: We have under-responsive to sensory input and over-responsive to sensory input.

A sensory seeker may appear like they're always on the go. Their motor's always running. They chew and bite non-food items. They enjoy crashing into things, so these are your kids that like to bump into the couch or they like to bump into the Nuggets. The Nuggets are those soft materials you can use to build with. They like jumping, bouncing, and swaying, so you notice that they're maybe not always standing still. They're always moving or swaying, and they have difficulty sitting still.

**00:06:59** Slow to register sensory input: This means they may have low arousal, so they fatigue easily. In the academic setting, think about a child that is pressing down really hard to write. If they're pressing down really hard to write on the paper, then their hand is going to get tired quicker, right? And then they're going to become dysregulated the more they have to write. They're slow to react and respond. This is when they hear a loud noise and it takes a pause, and everyone's like, "Did you hear that?" and then they're like, "Ah, okay." They can appear clumsy, so when walking, you notice they bump into things that you feel like they see, and they're bumping into objects.

**00:07:27** When we talk about over-responsive to sensory input, we have sensory sensitive. These are individuals where they register the information intensely but they don't leave the situation. So I'm overstimulated by the loud sounds, but I just cover my ears. I'm overstimulated by the bright lights, but I just cover my eyes or I become dysregulated, but I stay in the situation because no one's really taught me what to do when that happens.

**00:07:58** Then we have sensory avoidance. This is when they register the information from their senses intensely and actively avoid the experiences. So I'm not going into the music room because everyone's playing their instruments. It's too loud. I'm overstimulated. Or everyone's talking and being too loud in the classroom, and so I'm going to run out of the room, which is also an issue because of safety. But the difference here is that one, they stay in it even though they're overstimulated. On the other side of that, we're talking about the over-responsive - they exit the room or the area or refuse to enter into the room or area because of the overstimulation.

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

**00:08:29** Breaks: counselor office, OT, playground. A lot of schools are developing sensory rooms now where they have trampolines and they have sensory swings, so they're incorporating those. Heavy work: this is actually like pushing things, pulling things. Think about a sports workout. Proprioceptive input - I struggle with that term all the time. This is that pressure. Sometimes we know kids do well with weighted vests, weighted lap pads, weighted lap materials. I can't think of that term right now, where they can put it on their lap, but it's still essentially like a weighted vest.

**00:08:58** Offering them choices and reducing demands: This is a big one for our neurodivergent kids - having that ability to have some of that autonomy back and being able to choose. You get three options for your break. Which of these three options would you like? When we say offering choices too, we're referring to allowing them to come up with those choices previously. So at a time when they're regulated, sit down and discuss: "Oh, I like drawing. I'd like to be able to jump on the trampoline in the sensory room, or I'd like to be able to play a board game with whoever I'm taking the break with." Then when the time comes, giving them the options of which ones they'd like to choose.

**00:09:56** After asking "How can I help?" rather than offering solutions: This is a big one because we know sometimes if we're already struggling with making decisions, if somebody comes in and offers something that we don't agree with or we're not okay with, sometimes then we default to "there's no way to get out of the situation in a helpful way" versus saying "How can I help?" and they're like, "Maybe I just need for you to give me a break, or maybe I just need for you to re-explain how I'm supposed to do this classwork."

**00:10:25** Using descriptive language: First-person, making observations, and emphasizing alternatives. So saying, "Oh, I think I'm going to sit down and write and do this question" versus going, "You need to sit down and do this question" or "You're going to sit down and do this question." What that does is for our kids that struggle with demand avoidance, where their central nervous system gets over-regulated with demands, it makes it sound like this is an appealing option and choice, and I am choosing with that autonomy to do it.

**00:10:55** Connect then request: This is for when they're overstimulated. So when they're overstimulated, they're dysregulated. Instead of deciding to sit and be in that space with them, connect with them, and then make the request. Often we're like, "You're dysregulated, you're overstimulated, walk out the classroom" instead of just sitting there and being in that space with them and validating. Sometimes they like the verbal, sometimes not, but acknowledging you understand that they're upset or they're frustrated, and then saying, "So can we go maybe cool down, reset, get back regulated in another space?"

**00:11:28** Accepting all forms of communication: So this is a big one - AAC, gesturing, verbal, written. AAC is augmentative alternative communication assistive technology. Also, you tend to see that in place of them saying AAC.

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

Alternative seating options: When we hear this, what do we think? Preferential seating, sitting next to the teacher. This is actually the seating that they're in. So not having them just sit in your typical desk-seat combo, but maybe allowing them to sit on a bouncy ball, maybe letting them sit on a seat that swivels. This is actually the alternative seat they sit in.

**00:12:04** This is one that I put at the end because we see this more often. I see it more commonly in the school settings that are more receptive to it: noise-cancelling headphones, especially for those that get overstimulated with auditory input.

Related services: I'd like to add this here because this is something that you can request if your child has an IEP or a 504. By the way, even though a lot of schools don't recognize it as much because they think it has to be with an IEP...

**00:12:39** Counseling and social work: Adding that person for the check-in, working with the child on discussing feelings and emotions, how to communicate them, recognizing where they feel those emotions. Sometimes you have to do that piece first, and that's interoception. So when I'm angry, I notice I'm balling my fist up. When I start feeling my heart racing, I notice my anxiety is rising. That's where we really want those coping skills and things to be implemented. We want them there, not once they've already entered into a panic attack or anxiety attack.

**00:13:07** Speech language: I'd like to mention speech pragmatics. Every time a child gets a speech language and communication assessment, they assess for pragmatics. Pragmatics is how they're entering social situations, how they're engaging with their peers, how they handle being upset in social situations. Pragmatics can work on problem-solving. We want our kids to advocate for themselves, to feel comfortable saying what they need to say. Personal space, recognizing non-verbal body language - being able to recognize that somebody seemed upset with them or frustrated with them. Multimodal communication: multimodal communication goes back to honoring all communication, so making sure we're acknowledging assistive technology devices, AAC, writing, drawing, being verbal.

**00:14:09** Initiating and maintaining and ending a conversation: I come from a neuro-affirming standpoint. What that means is we're not teaching our autistic learners, for example, not to talk about different topics. We're allowing them to talk about their special interest, whatever that may be. But we're also letting them know, "Hey, your peer might not want to talk about that, so they might go engage in another conversation." Or if your peer is talking about something that you don't want to talk about - because we all get into that where someone's talking to us about something we're like, "I'm not interested" - then teaching them to be able to say in a more respectful way, "Okay, well I prefer to talk about this," and kind of exiting the conversation versus that kind of abrupt "I don't want to talk about that."

**00:15:12** But that's coming from that neuro-affirming standpoint of not trying to change what they talk about and not trying to tone-police, but to help them be considerate of others when engaging in talking.

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

Parent counseling and training is one that I think is way underused, same with staff training. Parents, you can be trained on your child's diagnosis and disabilities and how to support them in the classroom. You can request that and find more information out about that. Same with staff training - that is in IEPs as well. You can request that the staff is trained on your child's disability, their diagnosis. If they have a mental health diagnosis, you can request they're trained on the assistive technology device or AAC device that your child is using, that they're trained on the auditory language processing, which is common for autistic learners. You can request those trainings, and then always get a PWN, which is prior written notice, if they say "We can't do that" or "We don't feel that that's necessary."

**00:16:16** Since we're talking about behavior and particularly in the school setting, what is an FBA and what is a BIP? A lot of times I will come across military families that are saying there are these behavior concerns. The school is mentioning them. Maybe there are concerns you've never seen at your previous duty station, but you're like, "I want to address them too, but I'm just getting phone calls and writeups and suspensions." I often say, "Well, have they conducted an FBA and does your child have a BIP?" and it's like, "I have no idea what that is."

**00:16:44** A Functional Behavior Assessment is where typically - a lot of times a school psychologist (it depends on your state; they have different titles and who does this role) - but they will collect data to determine why a behavior is occurring and what factors are reinforcing this behavior. For example, if they're noticing the child is constantly getting dysregulated when it's time to write, this person will say, "Okay, what am I noticing? Once they've cooled down and we're able to have these conversations, oh, I'm noticing they have anxiety about writing or they have anxiety about answering a question, and so they immediately jump to whatever response they have when they're dysregulated." Why is this child refusing to do their schoolwork? Why are they only dysregulated when they enter into the lunchroom? Why are they eloping only from PE or music?

**00:17:12** Their purpose is to figure out what function is this behavior serving for this child. Typically, this is what is done to create a behavior intervention plan. So once we figure out - we've identified these behaviors, we've identified where they're occurring, when they're occurring, and what we believe the function is - now let's create a plan so that we can decrease those dysregulated responses. Because we don't want the child running out of the classroom. We don't want them throwing things. We don't want them refusing to complete their work. The purpose is supposed to be to look at it and find intervention strategies and support that can help them. What aids and services do they need? A social-emotional goal to help them? Do they need OT for sensory? Do they need speech because they're struggling to communicate those needs? What do they need? So that is the purpose.

**00:18:15** Also, your child does not have to have a 504 or an IEP to have a Functional Behavior Assessment done and a Behavior Intervention Plan done. Just to point that out because we get asked that a lot too when they're entering, especially for our kindergarteners where we see a lot more behavior plans coming up.

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

**00:18:48** How do you request one? Make your request in writing. I say this for my families: make any request in writing. Make your request in writing, send an email with the request attached as a letter. That's my recommendation. You can send it in the email, but I always feel like when we do that attachment as a letter like a Word document, and you put at the bottom that you want that in your child's special education file, then that goes along. Versus emails - we tend to have a lot of correspondence back-and-forth communication. I feel like that letter has more of an "I'm requesting this, it can't be denied" type dynamic, in my opinion.

**00:19:17** Make the request in writing, make it to the special education teacher, which is typically the case manager. So whoever the case manager is, and CC the principal and the general education teacher so that they are aware this request is being made because the observation will occur in all of their settings, which one will be the general education teacher's classroom.

Identify the reason for their request. Why are you requesting this FBA? Are you getting frequent phone calls? Are you getting frequent messages in the Remind app or SeeSaw or ClassDojo? At this point with my kids, I've seen all the apps in different places. So why are you making this request? Have they been suspended in school or out of school? Have they been getting detention? Are you just getting notes home? Are you noticing that the teachers are expressing they're not doing their classwork and you're finding you're spending hours at home doing homework? Because that is refusal - that's work refusal. So what are you noticing that is the reason for this request?

**00:20:19** Include proof of communication. If you've been communicating with the school, I always say send those emails as an attachment as a PDF document. Those phone calls - I will have, as an advocate, I'll have my clients pull up their call log and we will literally go by how many times and what days the school called them, and I will include that to demonstrate "This is the reason why. Even though you're saying it may not be a concern, this is clearly a concern."

**00:20:47** What if the request is denied? This happens. Request the PWN, which is the Prior Written Notice, that states in writing why the BIP is denied and what supports and interventions will be put in place to address concerns identified in the request letter. Prior Written Notice is required anytime - when your child has an IEP - anytime they are going to agree or disagree or make a change, they have to provide this PWN stating "This is what we're going to do. This is why or why not." It's giving that justification.

**00:21:17** For example, I've had it where there wasn't fidelity with following the IEP. So we're not following the IEP the way we should, and so we recognize this and we honor this. Because of that, we are not going to do the FBA yet because we feel like if we follow the IEP with fidelity, we would not have this dysregulation that is occurring. That is something they agreeably stated in the PWN that they acknowledged that this was occurring, which I thought was very interesting.

**00:21:53** Sometimes they won't deny it for that reason. Another example I like to give is if your child enters into the school system on, let's say, an IEP for speech or language, and then they start to notice that they need supports in other areas like academically, you'll see dysregulation

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

during that time and they'll feel like, "If we maybe implement academic supports in those areas outside of that speech, then we think we'll see a decrease in dysregulation and we don't feel that they'll need an FBA."

**00:22:23** What do I do if my child is disciplined at school for behaviors? Document the date and time you were notified and who notified you. This is very important because often we're notified via phone. Document that. The description of the incident and the school's consequence: What did they say was the consequence and what did they say the incident was? Make sure you get documentation of the incident. A lot of times it'll be like, "This happened. We think that they should calm down and cool off for the rest of the day. We're not going to do any type of formal suspension." Then you get to the school and that's all the communication that you have for the incident. There is no formal documentation. There's no writeup of the incident. They requested for you to even come pick up the child.

**00:22:56** I always tell parents: make sure you talk to your child. If they're able to communicate, ask them what happened. If they're able to verbalize that, try and figure out what happened from their standpoint because a lot of times they give insight into the why, which is a big piece.

Request a meeting in writing to discuss next steps. So now that this has happened, my child's been disciplined - what are we going to do? How are we going to address this? How are we going to support them and how are we going to prevent this?

**00:23:55** Always remember that if your child is on an IEP, you have the Manifestation Determination Review, triggered by 10 or more days of suspension or expulsion. That is 10 consecutive days or 10 days in a certain amount of time. The reason I say "certain amount of time" is because you want to check your state's rules. I've seen some states that have different - some will say 10 days within 75 school days. But it doesn't have to be 10 consecutive days. It doesn't have to be they suspended them for five days this week and five the next.

**00:24:26** That triggers a hearing where they have to look at: Was your child's behavior related to or caused by his or her disability, and did the behavior happen because the school is not following their IEP or their BIP? This is important for military families to know, I really feel, because sometimes what I'm noticing - a trend is that schools are not doing a manifestation hearing, but they are continuing to suspend the child and they are waiting towards the end of the school year at times to suspend them for that bulk to where there is no triggered manifestation hearing because we're at the end of the school year. Just be mindful of that. Notice those little "We're just going to suspend them one day in September, two days in October, one day in November" - that starts adding up. Pay attention to those things.

**00:25:27** I'm going to pass it over to Crystal to discuss behavioral supports at home.

Thank you, Destiny. I also, just to add to that last slide, it's important especially for all parents to pay attention to how the schools respond to your child's behavior related to their disability because if it starts in kindergarten and it goes through elementary school, and maybe they're

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

suspended one or two times in a school year, but by the time they're in middle school and high school, they have a laundry list of disciplinary incidents that your child's record has accumulated. At that point, they're going to look at your child very differently behaviorally and with discipline than they did in elementary school. I've seen schools justify expulsions based on that, even if they didn't have the child for all of those many years. They still look at the whole behavior record and discipline record. Keep that in mind. Positively advocate for your kids with discipline, especially in the school setting.

**00:26:33** Let's talk about behavioral supports at home. We know that our kids - thank you, Destiny - we know that they need and require and get these accommodations and supports in school, and she gave an excellent description of how to get them, what they are, why their kids need them. Well, what about at home? What about in the community? You probably do more than you think as parents. We know our kids better than anybody, so we take their behavior as indicators of how they're feeling, how they're regulated. If they're dysregulated, if they're hungry, we take all of that information which we've looked at and examined since the day that they were born, and we adjust. Believe it or not, those are behavior modifications and accommodations that you naturally give to your kids as a parent.

**00:27:41** When my son was struggling behaviorally when he was not quite three, a lot of it stemmed out of his inability to talk because he hadn't said any words by then, and his behavior had gotten to a point where I realized the tools in my parent toolbox could not understand this behavior and could not cope with this behavior. I didn't know how to react to this behavior because I'm a child of the '80s, so I knew how I was trying to respond and that's how I was trying to parent. But I came to realize that his behavioral needs - I didn't have the tools in my toolbox, and I sought help. Then he was diagnosed with a rare speech disorder and then autism. All these things helped me understand why his behavior was so different than a neurotypical child.

**00:28:14** I want you to ask yourself: How much do you plan and prepare for community outings, for visits to family or friends, to the grocery store, even for a lazy Saturday where everyone just - it's a gloomy day and we want to stay inside? How do you plan and prepare for that? I want you to think about all of those modifications and accommodations that you're giving your kids without really even thinking that's what you're doing.

**00:28:53** This is going to change. Set clear expectations: state the expectation, demonstrate the expectation, narrate the expectation, and then restate the expectation. This is going to change as our kids grow. It's going to change as they reach different developmental stages. But I think it's really important to first of all assume competency - assume that they understand what you mean. It's okay to say, "I need you to empty the dishwasher" or "Please empty the dishwasher. Can you help me empty the dishwasher?" and do it with them so they understand. Maybe they've seen you do it 752 times, but they've never done it themselves. So walking through that practice with them is going to help them understand what your expectation is - not just take

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

everything out, put it on the counter and leave it and they think they're done, but really following through and then restate that expectation because consistency is important.

**00:30:06** State it in a similar way. They've seen it, they hear it, they see it, they do it with you, and you restate it so then they can full circle understand exactly what those expectations are. The challenges are going to evolve. What we expect of our kids at three is going to be different when they're 12. It's going to be different when they're 18. But we want to set them up for success the older they get and obviously into adulthood.

**00:30:41** This one is probably one of my favorites, and it might seem common-sensical, but let's really talk about this. Use positive direction and positive language because kids respond to positive language positively, just as we as adults do. I try to - and I know this is like a "don't do that" phrase when I'm telling you not to do that - avoid phrases that are "don't do this" or "don't do that" because saying what not to do does not demonstrate to them what to do. I catch myself a lot saying like "don't do that" or "don't do it that way," but they need to understand what you mean by that. It goes back to the expectations, but it's also when you have that expectation, they state they know, they demonstrate understanding, and then go through it again and change it up to say in a positive way: "This is what we need to do. Let's try it this way. Do this way with me," because again, it goes back to saying how not to do it doesn't demonstrate what you want them to do or how they should be.

**00:31:57** Like this example: When we go to the grocery store, we're going to stick together. That is different than "You're not going to run away from me" because eloping to them is very different. So using that positive language: "We're going to stick together, hands to ourselves, listen and watch," and then praise, praise, praise. "Yes, that's right."

**00:32:34** Provide visuals. This is something that we kind of expect the school to do, but we might forget to do in the home setting. So kids are learning - they don't know what they don't know. Right now, my 12-year-old autistic son is going full-fledged through puberty. He needs to wash his face. It's not enough for me to say "You need to wash your face in the shower." He doesn't know what that means. Have I demonstrated that for him? If I say "brush your teeth," we have to consistently go in every once in a while and reshow him how to brush his teeth, even though he's been doing it since he was a baby, because the cognitive understanding of a task is going to change and their willingness to do it fully will change too, especially when they're stinky pre-pubescent boys.

**00:33:03** Reiterate the expectations. That goes back to: talk about it, demonstrate it, talk about it again. The goal is to mentally prepare for a task or activity. Use graphics of a task or activity, watch videos that demonstrate a task. Maybe it's not going to be enough for me to show him how to wash his face, but I can bring up educational videos of other kids doing it or kids demonstrating it or anything like that. Show pictures if you're thinking of going to a new location, maybe somewhere they've never been before that your kids have never been before. Show them a picture. Walk through it. Say, "Hey, this is what this place looks like. What do you think?" If you go to a baseball game and they've never been to a baseball park before, show pictures,

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

show them what it's like. That can help them have the expectation of what they're going to encounter, and then they can regulate. Or if they can, like Destiny said, voice their own concerns before you even get there, then you can adjust. They can adjust. You can adjust to what their needs might be.

**00:34:05** Role-play with your partner or sibling. This might sound silly, but again, it's just demonstrating a task or demonstrating what it is that you expect or what it is that you want, especially if it's something that you've never done or experienced before. Find books that relate to the task or activity.

**00:34:36** This is just reiterating: Tell them, show them, tell them again. We're going to talk about it, we're going to demonstrate it, we're going to create and provide visuals, identify their sensory needs, their emotional regulation, and develop coping skills. All of this is helping them to prepare for doing it on their own. And praise - this is something that we can never do enough of, really. Praise the success, praise for trying, and praise for listening. They still need to know that it's okay to try and it's okay - maybe it didn't work out the first or fifth time, but we're going to keep trying and you're proud of them for sticking with it even if it doesn't turn out well.

**00:35:52** This is kind of what we've been talking about this whole time. Behavioral supports are meant to help them succeed. Think about if the school took away all of the supports that you worked so hard and advocated so hard for your child to be successful in the school setting. What if you took those away at home or in the community or anywhere that you might go? Would they be successful? Not likely. We want to think about life at home in the same way that we think about life at school. Their experience there should be supported, should be accommodated according to their needs. Without similar, familiar, effective supports, children with behavioral needs are less likely to succeed. We don't want them to feel like they're on an island and they have to figure it out on their own.

**00:36:23** We want to develop routines, revisit places. I started - I wanted my son to - we don't do restaurants, but he's okay with going to a coffee shop and hanging out with me for 10 minutes, and we just practice. Then it may be 15 minutes, and then maybe one day we'll go to a restaurant as a family. He's not going to eat anything, but maybe he'll sit there with us and we'll get 45 minutes or an hour of him experiencing what it's like to be in a restaurant. He may not eat anything, he may not drink anything except water, but at least he has that experience and has the opportunity to be successful.

**00:36:54** Find people and places that are friendly to your needs. This is super important that we might want to consider asking the community, "Hey, I have an autistic son and I'd really like him to experience this location or this store or whatever it might be." Tell them. Most people are going to be kind. They're going to be - you're giving them an opportunity to be understanding and helpful. Always be willing to take breaks. Practice the behavioral corrections at home. This is something that I think all parents need to focus on - we have that home expectation of behavior and then the public expectation of behavior. Oftentimes parents feel more inclined to explosively react in public because we're worried about what other people think, and the

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

pressures are just very different. But we don't do that at home, so the kid's going to react to that reaction, and that might escalate it even further. So practice those quiet corrections at home and don't be afraid to implement whatever corrections you have at home wherever you are in the community, as long as they're appropriate, of course.

**00:38:02** Check in with your kid. "Hey, you okay? You okay?" I have this wink - I always wink at my kids, and if they give me a wink back, especially my autistic son, if he gives me a wink back, that's me just checking in and him checking back, "Yeah, I'm good." And then, of course, identify the sensory needs no matter where you're going.

**00:38:33** As always, Partners in Promise wants to give you some recommendations. I really want to encourage you to talk to friends and family, trusted people in the community about what your goals and your challenges are so they can understand and help. A lot of times with family, I'm hesitant to talk to family or I'm hesitant to share because they're just not going to understand. But if I give them the opportunity to be understanding, then that's going to go a whole lot farther than just me assuming that they're not going to understand. But it gives them an opportunity to be supportive and understand where we're coming from and understand what our kids need. So if they react differently in the community than they do, say, visiting a family member's house, your family members are already kind of prepared for that possibility.

**00:39:37** Allow them to fail, and by them I mean your kids. Allow them to fail and allow yourself to fail. I had an aunt tell me years ago, "Allow them to fail when they're young." They have to learn that it's not always going to be successful, and you as parents, give yourself some grace that we don't - we also don't know what we don't know. As they age and as we move around as military families, the expectations and the opportunities that we have wherever we live are going to change. It's okay if it doesn't work out the first time. Let them fail, let yourself fail, and forgive yourself and know that you're going to have another chance to try again.

**00:40:14** I also want to tell you to release yourself from the expectation of other people. It doesn't matter what people think in public. I really don't care if my son is having a hard time. I've never cared about this. If he's having a hard time in the grocery store or anywhere else, I don't look around, I don't apologize to people. I'm in my own world and dealing with my son's needs and what he's experiencing. I do not care what other people think. So release yourself from other people's expectations and also put your feelings of guilt and shame in the trash where they belong. Don't waste your time on feeling bad about failing or feeling bad about not getting it right. You will, and it's just working towards that.

**00:41:27** That's all for me. I just want to thank everybody for being here today. Thank you for joining us live. For those of you who have - Destiny, I'm always so honored to share any opportunity with you. Thank you so much.

Thank you, Crystal. Thank you to our sponsor USAA and our PIP members behind the scene making this a successful lunch and learn.

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

I'm not sure if we're supposed to - I see a question in the chat. "Do you practice any of the tools that were mentioned?" I guess some of the tools you were giving about at home - practice those tools. I do, absolutely. It's the only experience I have to go on is my own and other families who I've had the honor of being a part of.

**00:42:17** Same, yeah. All the insight that I gave on the school side are things that I have done to advocate for my own children. But I really think one of the most freeing things when it comes to behavior, and as we transition into how we talk about behavior and looking at and recognizing that there's a need needing to be met and sensory needs, is really to stop caring about what other people think. I think you mentioned something really powerful with that because I think a lot of times what hinders us is the fact that we care about what other people think. So we might - what I like to say is exacerbate the situation in public because we already - a lot of times as parents, I feel, know where it's coming from because we do know our child and we do know what can trigger them. Then because we start getting these looks and stares and whispers, we then respond in a way we wouldn't normally respond because we are caring about others' perception instead of really honing in on what's making them dysregulated and addressing that. So really like that you said that.

**00:43:25** I'm a millennial, so I grew up where, you know, "get it together," and so I think we revert back to that a lot too as we're parenting, especially millennial Gen X. We're trying to move the needle, and we tend to - yeah, I remember. Well, okay, real quick before I forget: my son's school - he's in middle school now - they say that he doesn't stim at school, and I thought, "Well, that's interesting because all of the notes from our previous meetings indicate XYZ, and that's stimming." So let's be honest about what this is. So don't tell me he's not this way, he doesn't do this at school, because he does. He's very calm and compliant at school, but at home, I don't care if they don't believe me that he can get aggressive or he breaks things. I don't care that they don't - I know the truth. So it's kind of letting go of that as well - of who cares what other people think.

**00:44:33** My husband would take my son to the grocery store and he's like, "He was having a hard time," and I'm like, "Who cares? I don't care. I do not say something." It doesn't - well, I think you bring up - before we talk about our PIP binder that has excellent behavior supports in it - I think Crystal definitely brings up a point too about I think sometimes it can be difficult for dads, and I see that with my husband as well when it's their son and there's also this perception of raising this young man and how that looks. I can see where sometimes, especially out in public, my husband's the same - he's a little more like "What are you doing?" Where at home he's a little more relaxed and calm in his own space environment. He said that to me a few times where he's like, "It's a little difficult. I'm trying to adapt to this new way of thinking and learning as well." He's like, "But I'm" - he was raised old school down South country, so he's like, "I'm having to adjust, but I try to take that in." And then the military component is that added layer as well.

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

**00:45:33** Also, if we become dysregulated in public, that's going to affect our kids' ability to co-regulate. So keeping that in mind - I've got to stay calm because that's going to help me and it's also going to help them to move past and to learn and to grow out of whatever it is that is triggering them to have whatever reaction it is at that time.

Absolutely. So we've got these great binders that PIP developed last year. Go to our website - [thepromiseact.org/binder](http://thepromiseact.org/binder) - and you can fill out your customizable binder, print it out, and it's got, like Destiny said, great behavioral supports in it that are meant to assist you. There's a home data sheet that I find really interesting that I think a lot of parents say that they benefit from. I've even given it to when I talk to teachers in schools and give them presentations - they've never seen an at-home data sheet, and I said, "You've got to get your parents involved and invested in taking data at home because that can help inform the IEP team."

**00:46:54** Absolutely. I think a big piece that we don't focus on a lot is that parents - a lot of times I've noticed, especially when we have kids in special education and especially for our military spouses because military spouses are typically the ones to get the phone call, right? And they're typically the ones to have to handle any behavior concerns. We are often already tracking it. We're able to turn around and say, like me calling my mom and going, "I am so stressed because they have called me five times this week," right? We're able to - that's data. What are you being called for? What is being called about? They have a perfect day in school, quote-unquote, they come home and you're like, "I can't get them to do an ounce of homework," and the school's like, "Well, they were perfect all day." Well, that's usually because they were perfect all day - they held it all in and they're coming home and letting it out there. So we're often already collecting data, and that's the piece to look at.

**00:47:52** I wanted to echo someone's comment in the chat. Amarie Wilson, she said, "Quite the adjustment for dads, for sure," and that is just so true. A lot of times, as moms, we kind of jump all in with the research, and so we start looking at things. We're like, "Oh, my child does this or needs that support or needs this help," and so we then take that and we go with it. Then we start talking to Dad, and Dad's seeing the same things but hasn't done the same research, and so we're kind of asking them for that. Then to echo Shannon Allen said, "Thank you for sharing your experiences." Absolutely. Me and Crystal are very big on letting people know why we got here, how we got here, and why we do what we do.

**00:49:02** Also to echo that Partners in Promise does have a special education mentor that we offer where families can sign up and you can get two hours funded by USAA for us to kind of help you when it comes to that special education piece. I had a family I consulted with and we simply just talked about what an FBA is, what a BIP is, and how to draft a letter to request one. So also check into that info - [partnerspromise.org](http://partnerspromise.org).

Perfect. Well, to close this fantastic lunch and learn out, thank you, Destiny. As always, please stay in touch with us, especially when our next survey is launched. Visit our website at [thepromiseact.org](http://thepromiseact.org) and sign up for the newsletter. The QR code is on the slide. Our website has many resources available for military families, educators, and leaders and students. Our newest

Rough Transcript  
Lunch and Learn Series presents Behavior Supports  
March 19, 2024

resource is special needs binders, which we already talked about, that are free and customizable to help military families navigate PCS moves and their student's education to make sure - so make sure to check that out. The behavioral supports tools we discussed, such as the ABCs of behavior and data collection sheets, can also be found specifically in our special education 504 binders.

**00:50:13** You can always - and please do - email us at [info@partnersinpromise.org](mailto:info@partnersinpromise.org) if you have any questions, if you're interested in having a one-to-one mentorship consultation with one of our advocates. That concludes the webinar and we're happy to take any more questions. Thank you for joining us. Oh, special shout-out to Trisha Wash for monitoring the chat and for Michelle for getting all the slides together and helping us on the back end. Thank you so much.