

# BEHAVIOR BASED SAFETY AND THE MANDT SYSTEM®

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Behavior Based Safety is a relatively new approach that utilizes the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis in establishing and improving job safety programs in business and manufacturing settings. The Mandt System® is a systematic training program for human service organizations designed to reduce the risk of injury to individuals served as well as to the staff of human services organizations.

The concepts of Behavior Based Safety appear to fit nicely with Evidence Based Practice. We want to use interventions and techniques that have been demonstrated to be effective in keeping all people staff, and which facilitate the treatment, education, therapy, habilitation or rehabilitation, etc. that are central to the purposes of the organization.

The purpose of this brief paper is to review the principles of Behavior Based Safety as established in "How to Get More People Involved in Behavior-Based Safety: Selling an Effective Process." E. Scott Geller (2003). There are 10 principles outlined in this paper, which I believe are very consistent with the approach taken by The Mandt System®.

## Behavior Based Safety Principles

## Mandt System® Training

<p><b>1. Watch Your Language</b> - "Use language people can relate to as human beings who think and feel, and who like to believe they have dignity, freedom, and personal control.</p> <p>Safety professionals commonly use words like 'accident,' and 'investigation,' Who wants to get involved in an 'accident investigation' that seemingly attempts to find out who didn't comply with some safety 'regulation' and therefore contributed to a 'loss?'</p>	<p>Mandt System® training stresses using non-technical language, avoiding the use of labels or diagnoses unless needed to facilitate discussion, and stresses the phrase "people affected by disabilities" rather than "people with disabilities." Disabilities affect what people do, not who people are.</p> <p>We also want to process after the use of restraint and look into situations in which injuries occurred so as to prevent the occurrence in the future, rather than to assess blame in the present.</p>
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<p><b>2. Take Advantage of the Competence Motive</b>– “People want to be competent. . . How can competence be improved? Does practice make perfect? Of course not, practice increases fluency, but without appropriate feedback, simply repeating a behavior can not improve it. This is the perfect lead-in to teaching and demonstrating a key process of BBS – observation and feedback. With BBS, competence-improving feedback is delivered in three basic ways: (a) through one-one-one coaching conversations, (b) through periodic performance appraisals that focus on behavior, and © through group data graphs that display a work team’s level of safe vs. at-risk behavior, sometimes comparing one team’s safety performance with that of another group.</p>	<p>In Mandt System® training, we stress practicing a skill with a certified trainer present at all times to give feedback. The threshold for certification is 100% competency in both non-physical and physical skills. Because class sizes are small there is ample opportunity for the one-on-one coaching. The Mandt System® recommends quarterly review of the skills in order to go periodic performance appraisals and maintain if not improve the skill level of staff. “Evidence Based Practice” is the method we will be using to compare the level of safety of The Mandt System® to other programs. “Transparent Data Sharing” is one of the techniques the Pennsylvania Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse used in achieving the dramatic reductions in the use of restraint in psychiatric and substance abuse settings in Pennsylvania, and we intend to use a similar strategy.</p>
<p><b>3 – Make feedback a positive experience</b>  “The context of a feedback conversation is crucial. More specifically, the nature of the conversation or group discussion surrounding a feedback session will determine whether such a process will be appreciated, supported, and sustained. Therefore, the first feedback session really needs to be positive and constructive.”</p>	<p>The Mandt System® uses Marc Gold’s approach (Try Another Way” in which we do not use the words “no” or “wrong” when giving feedback. We tell people “that was a good answer” or “this step was good, let’s try it again.” Most people want to be competent, and internalize the standards we teach. When a staff person says “I did it wrong” it means they know how to do it right! They have internalized the standard and need only further opportunity to practice with positive feedback in order to learn the skills.</p>

<p><b>4 – Distinguish SMART Goals from Purpose</b> – SMART is an acronym that represents the “essential components of an effective goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Specific</li> <li>Motivational</li> <li>Attainable</li> <li>Relevant</li> <li>Trackable</li> <li>Shared (with team members)</li> </ul> <p>Teach employees (especially managers) to talk about zero injuries as a purpose or vision. The ultimate result of gaining and sustaining maximum employee involvement in BBS is an injury free work culture. So our <i>purpose</i> for getting more people involved in BBS is to reach and maintain zero injuries.”</p>	<p>The Mandt System® is committed to assisting organizations to achieve and maintain restraint free environments. We offer <b>specific</b> ways to do this through training in The Mandt System®, Mandt for Managers™ and Relational Behavior Support™. The training is provided in ways that <b>motivate</b> people to do more than attend training, we seek to provide principles that can be applied rather than techniques that are used. Many organizations throughout the country have <b>attained</b> restraint free environments because of the <b>relevance</b> or relationship between not using restraints and improving the quality of life of all people. The data is <b>trackable</b> and shared with all stakeholders.</p>
<p><b>5 – Elevate Self-Efficacy and Response-Efficacy</b>” “Self-efficacy refers to one’s belief that s/he can handle an assignment. Response efficacy means the person believes an assignment is useful in accomplishing a particular objective or purpose (Bandura, 1997)</p>	<p>For many years, trainers in The Mandt System® have shared their experiences in seeing staff improve their skills and as a result become more comfortable and effective in their work. The Mandt for Managers™ workshop stresses giving staff a clear connection, a vision, between their efforts and the organization as a whole.</p>
<p><b>6. Sell Outcome-Expectancy with Personal Testimonies</b> – “This is the ‘motivational’ component of SMART goals. Specifically, outcome-expectancy means the participant believes the completion of a given activity or the attainment of a certain goal will result in worthwhile consequences. . . . Personal testimonies provide a powerful image. Listeners can relate to an individual’s story and put themselves in the same situation. Two kinds of testimonies can motivate participate in a BBS process: (a) a personal account of an injury that could have been prevented by a certain BBS technique, and (b) an anecdote</p>	<p>One of the common themes in evaluations of Mandt System® training is the stories trainers tell. We encourage trainers to tell their successes and the times they made mistakes because Geller is right when he says “personal testimonies provide a powerful image.”</p> <p>The stories Mandt trainers tell empower students of the program to feel the possibility of success and to see the connection between training and implementation. Word of mouth, personal testimonies, is the marketing program of The Mandt System®. We do not do mass mailings, we do not have brochures, we just have people</p>

<p>about someone who avoided an injury by using the particular BBS technique.”</p>	<p>who share their experiences with our program.</p>
<p><b>7. Teach Theory and Principles Before Procedures</b> – “In fact, by summarizing the right theory or principles into a mission statement, you have a standard for judging the value of your company’s procedures, policies, and performance expectations. When companies start with step-by-step procedures but don’t first teach about the principles or rationale behind a particular safety policy, program or process, the result is programs referred to as ‘flavor of the month.’ Such programs usually attract less than desired involvement, and they don’t last very long.”</p>	<p>This principle is central to the philosophy of The Mandt System®. The Basic Modules provide the theoretical framework upon which the program is based, and the Intermediate modules provide the technical tools. The principles upon which our program is based are quite simple – “Treat people with dignity and respect at all times. No matter what people do, treat them with dignity and respect. It is our response that decides if a situation is escalated or deescalated and a person humanized or dehumanized. The most important skill you, the trainer, can give to staff is the ability to manage their own behavior, to respond, and not react.”</p>
<p><b>8. Use Process Measures of Safety Performance</b> – “The bottom-line measure – total recordable injury rate (TRIR) – provides neither instructive guidance nor motivation to continue a particular safety process. . . . As per basic reinforcement principles of BBS, this motivates employees to cover-up their injuries and stifles the very kinds of communication needed to prevent injuries.”</p> <p>Instead, keep score on the various proactive things individuals do for safety. . . . Track the number of corrective actions implemented and evaluated, the number of environmental and behavioral audits conducted, the number of environmental hazards eliminated, the number of safety suggestions and safety work orders submitted, and so</p>	<p>The Mandt System® wants to assist human service organizations such as schools, psychiatric centers, community based residential and employment services, center based vocational services, detention centers, etc. achieve Restraint Free Environments. However, not doing a restraint and calling the police to remove a person may be “restraint free” but it is not, in our opinion, “restraint appropriate.”</p> <p>Likewise, we can not punish people when they use restraint in response to a behavior which is harmful to self or others.</p> <p>We recommend (in settings serving children and adolescents it is required) that after every use of restraint or seclusion that the team process what happened, and what steps to take next time so restraint may not be needed.</p>

<p>on. Graph and post the percentage of individuals who participate in various safety-related activities, as well as the percentage of safe work environments and behaviors observed during systematic audits. Now you have an accountability system that can facilitate participation.”</p>	<p>Tracking the number of times a person’s behavior escalated and <u>was not restrained</u> may provide more relevant data.</p> <p>Evidence Based Practice requires more than simply counting numbers. Plans at an organizational and systems levels must be implemented to attain restraint free environments. In addition to The Mandt System®, we offer Mandt for Managers™ and Relational Behavior Support™ to provide some of the tools to achieve these goals.</p>
<p><b>9. Look Behind the Numbers –</b>  “Managers focus on the numbers, but leaders look beyond the numbers. . . Leaders believe, for example, it’s important to increase employee’s self-esteem or awareness of individual importance, feelings of empowerment, and a sense of belonging or interdependency. . . . genuine one-to-one recognition increases trust and feelings of importance, SMART goal setting builds feelings of empowerment, and group celebrations facilitate a sense of belonging. You need to perform and support these sorts of activities without expecting to see an immediate change in the numbers of an accountability system.”</p>	<p>In the Behavior Support module and throughout the Building Communication module, The Mandt System® teaches that feelings drive behavior more than facts. In every communication, we say, content and feelings are present, and when facts and feelings collide, feelings always win.</p> <p>Training in The Mandt System® and other programs offered by David Mandt and Associates stress building teamwork by celebrating success, facilitating a sense of belonging, and building healthy relationships. We teach that it is the relationship between and among staff that forms the context in which all services and supports take place. Looking behind the numbers is an important skill team leaders need to develop.</p>

## 10. Build and Maintain Momentum

“Three factors are crucial [to build and maintain momentum for occupational safety].

- *Achievement of the Participants* – you’ve got to keep score. You need a system that can track small wins in safety that can build momentum. This should be a system that tracks accomplishments – what people have done for safety, and what additional achievement potential is within their domain of control
- *Atmosphere of the Culture* – Questions to ask include
  - Is the work culture optimistic about achieving the goals?
  - Do the workers trust management to give adequate support to a long-term intervention, or is this just another ‘quick fix?’
- *Attitude of Leaders* – the key is to find pockets of excellence to acknowledge. . . For momentum to build and continue, support means more than providing necessary resources. It means looking for success stories to recognize and celebrate. This helps to develop feelings of achievement among those directly involved (the team) and an optimistic atmosphere from others (work culture)

Since 1975 David Mandt and Associates has worked hard to build healthy relationships in the workplace. Healthy relationships are necessary for achievement to take place initially and to continue over the long run.

We emphasize the role of trust in building healthy relationships within the culture, and specifically address these issues in the Mandt for Managers™ program. The Mandt System® has been used by some organizations as a ‘quick fix’ and those organizations tend to use our program for several years and then try a new program or a new ‘flavor of the month’ as Geller describes it.

Attitude of leaders is critical in building teamwork. It is the first item listed in the factors that lead to teamwork, and is emphasized in all our training programs.

Behavior Based Safety has a great deal of potential as human services organizations and training programs such as The Mandt System® work towards a true Evidence Based Practice model. We are pleased to find such a well documented approach available in business settings, and if you want to read the entire paper by Dr. E. Scott Geller you can download it at <http://www.behavior.org/safety/geller.pdf>