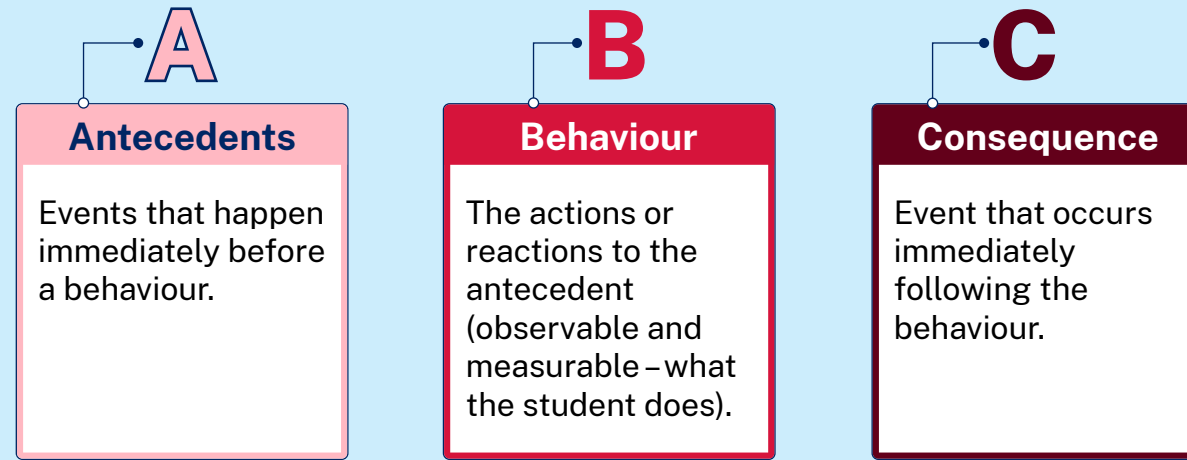# Competing behaviour pathway

Teachers can use a competing behaviour pathway to identify the reasons behind a student's behaviour and inform individual behaviour support planning. This approach involves analysing three key components: antecedents, behaviour, and consequence.

A
Antecedents
Events that happen immediately before a behaviour.

B
Behaviour
The actions or reactions to the antecedent (observable and measurable – what the student does).

C
Consequence
Event that occurs immediately following the behaviour.

These elements help reveal the function of the behaviour, which may be to:

- **obtain** something the student wants
- generate adult or peer **attention**
- **escape** from an aversive situation or person.

By identifying the function, teachers can identify and explicitly teach appropriate replacement behaviours that fulfil the same function.

Reinforcement will increase the likelihood of the appropriate behaviour being repeated.

What is a replacement behaviour?

Replacement behaviours are:

- an immediate attempt to reduce disruption and potentially dangerous behaviour in the classroom

- those which take the pressure off the teacher

- designed to actively begin breaking the student's habit of using behaviour of concern to meet their needs, by replacing it with a more acceptable replacement behaviour.

An appropriate replacement

- serves the same function as the behaviour of concern

- is easier to do and more efficient than the behaviour of concern

- requires less physical effort and provides quick, reliable access to the desired outcome/response than the behaviour of concern

- is socially acceptable.

Want to learn more?

Universal resources:

- Individual behaviour support resources collection

On-demand eLearning:

- Understanding Behaviour
- Understanding Behaviour Support Planning
- Functional Behaviour Assessment
- Positive Behaviour for Learning (PBL) Tier 3 Individual systems of support
- De-escalation of student behaviour

Where to get more help?

Contact Team Around a School for more help to develop and use a completing behaviour pathway and develop function based support strategies.
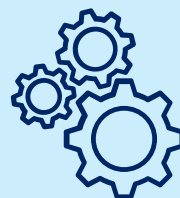
Tools that may be used prior to completing a competing behaviour pathway

- Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence (ABC) resources

Roberts, M. L. (2017). The Competing Behaviour Pathway Model: Developing Function-Based Supports for Students with Problem Behaviour. Retrieved from https://socialinnovationsjournal.org/75-disruptive-innotions/2615-the-competing-behavior-pathway-model-developing-function-based-supports-for-students-with-problem-behavior

Steps to complete a competing behaviour pathway for a student

Part A

1. **Start with the behaviour(s) of concern:** Identify and describe the specific behaviour(s) of concern in observable and measurable terms.
2. **Antecedents:** Record what happened immediately before the behaviour. This helps identify what triggered it.
3. **Setting events:** Note any background factors that may have influenced the behaviour; these may not always be known. Examples include: lack of sleep, hunger, unstructured periods, noise levels, group sizes, pain.
4. **Maintaining consequences:** Describe what the student gains or avoids through their behaviour. For example, peer/adult attention, tangibles, tasks, sensory needs and environmental reinforcers.
5. **Function of the behaviour:** Use the information gathered to hypothesise the reasons behind the behaviour.
6. **Replacement behaviour:** Identify the skill to teach the student that will serve the same function while working towards the desired behaviour.
7. **Desired behaviour:** Define the long-term positive behaviour you're working toward.
8. **Maintaining consequence/outcome:** Record what the student gains from demonstrating the desired behaviour, such as a sense of pride, a feeling of accomplishment, or increased efficiency.

Competing behaviour pathway
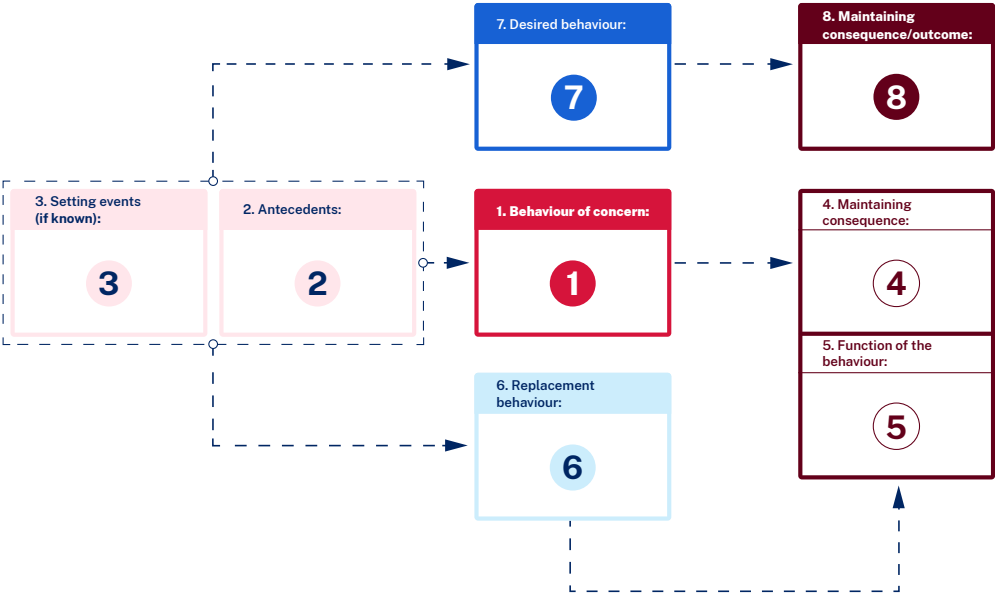
Part B

9. **Setting event strategies:** Plan ways to prevent or minimise the influence of setting events.
10. **Antecedent strategies:** Develop strategies to avoid triggering the behaviour(s) of concern.
11. **Explicitly teach behaviour:** Teach the replacement behaviour and skills needed for the desired behaviour.
12. **Alter consequences:** Reinforce replacement and desired behaviours while minimising reinforcement of behaviour of concern.

Strategies to support the competing behaviour pathway

Antecedent strategies		11. Explicit teaching of desired/replacement behaviour	12. Alter the consequences
9. Setting event strategies	10. Antecedent strategies		
9	10	11	12

Competing behaviour pathway (Part A)

Date: _____

Student name: _____

Teacher name: _____

7. Desired behaviour:

8. Maintaining consequence/outcome:

3. Setting events (if known):

2. Antecedents:

1. Behaviour of concern:

4. Maintaining consequence:

5. Function of the behaviour:

6. Replacement behaviour:
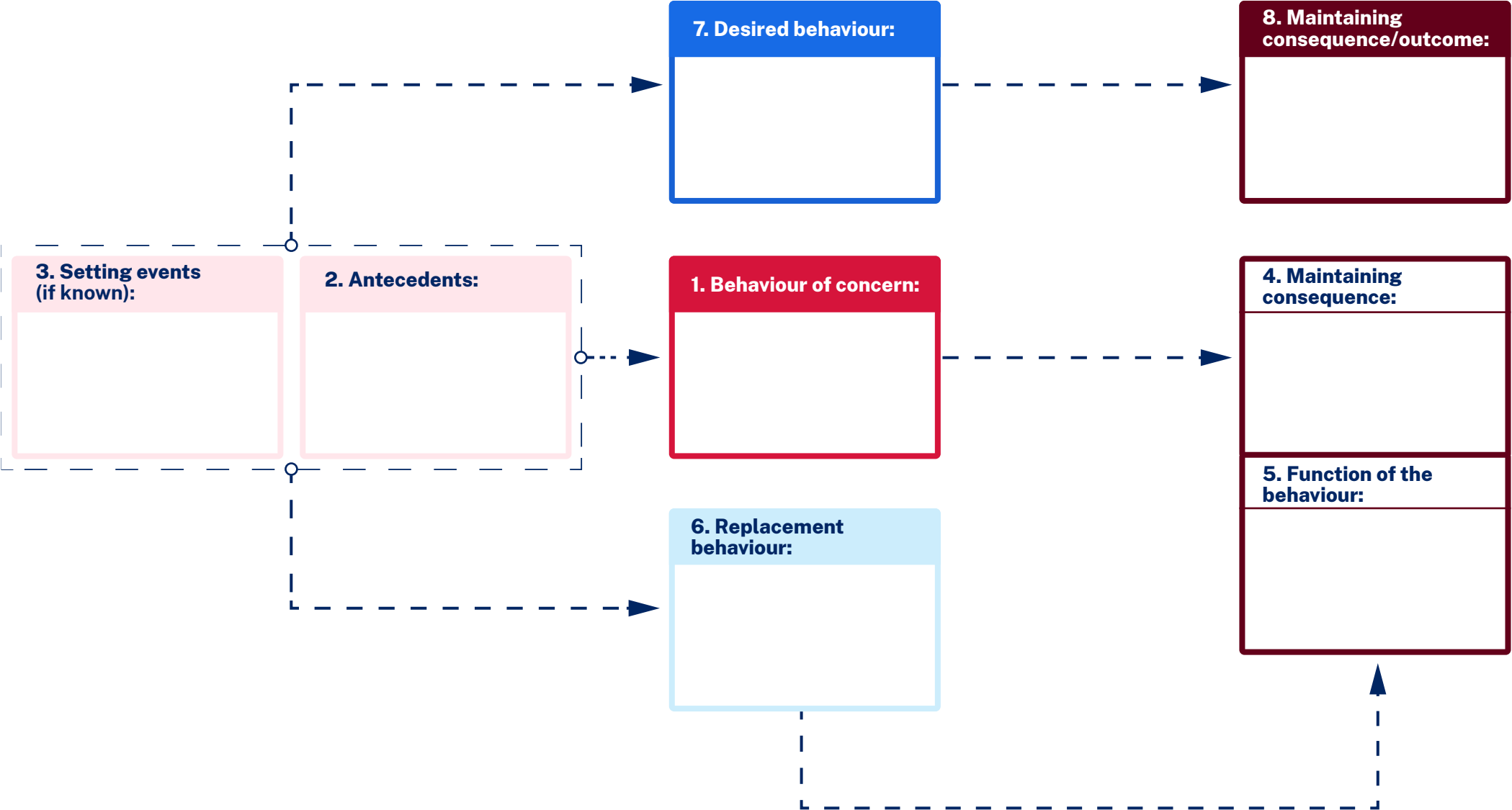
Strategies to support the competing behaviour pathway (Part B)

Antecedent strategies		11. Explicit teaching of desired/replacement behaviour	12. Alter the consequences
9. Setting event strategies	**10. Antecedent strategies**		
	Make behaviour of concern irrelevant	Make behaviour of concern inefficient and ineffective	Make behaviour of concern inefficient and ineffective
Minimise setting events (these may be unknown)			
Opportunity for regulation			

A guide to completing a competing behaviour pathway

7. Desired behaviour:

What behaviour do we want the student to use instead of the behaviour of concern?

FOR EXAMPLE
Completing a disliked task rather than destroying and throwing books.

8. Maintaining consequence/outcome:

What does the student gain from demonstrating the desired behaviour?

FOR EXAMPLE
A sense of pride, a feeling of accomplishment, or increased efficiency.

3. Setting events (if known):

What events impact and increase the likelihood of the behaviour of concern?

FOR EXAMPLE
Lack of sleep, missed medication, hunger, failure in previous task, unstructured periods, noise levels.

2. Antecedents:

What tends to happen just before the behaviour of concern?

FOR EXAMPLE
Teacher gives direction, says 'no', or a peer comments. Student faces a difficult task, works independently, while teacher assists another student.

1. Behaviour of concern:

What is the student behaviour we want to address? The behaviour must be specific, measurable and observable.

FOR EXAMPLE
Punching others, task refusal, leaving room.

4. Maintaining consequence:

What is the adult/peer response that maintains the behaviour?

What does the student gain or avoid of displaying the behaviour of concern?

FOR EXAMPLE
Attention, tangibles/tasks, sensory needs.

6. Replacement behaviour:

What skill will we teach the student while they are working toward the desired behaviour?

FOR EXAMPLE
Leaving a room instead of throwing books.

5. Function of the behaviour:

Is the student gaining or avoiding?

FOR EXAMPLE
Task/tangible, attention from peers/adult, sensory.

A guide to completing strategies to support the competing behaviour pathway

Antecedent strategies

9. Setting event strategies

What environmental changes/ structure and supports will minimise or defuse the impact of the setting events?

Minimise setting events (these may be unknown)

Can you minimise or prevent the occurrence of the setting event? **For example, student misses breakfast – provide breakfast at school.**

Opportunity for regulation

- How can you diminish the effects of setting events that have already occurred?

- Can you build in a routine that separates the setting event and antecedent? For example, have a quiet activity that allows an anxious student to calm down after experiencing a stressful ride on the bus to school.

10. Antecedent strategies

Make behaviour of concern irrelevant

Prevent behaviour of concern

- Explicitly develop strategies and adjustments to minimise each specific antecedent/trigger.

- Differentiate lesson and environment according to student need and preference, including student voice in the process. Considerations may include:

  ◦ physical layout of room
  ◦ student's communication preferences
  ◦ sensory needs/motor skills
  ◦ curriculum/learning needs
  ◦ instructional preference
  ◦ expectations
  ◦ attitiude/approach of adults
  ◦ peer influences

Prompt desired/replacement behaviour
Remind students of skill/ expectation prior to lesson/ activity/transition. Use verbal, non-verbal and visual prompts as necessary.

11. Explicit teaching of desired/replacement behaviour

Make behaviour of concern inefficient and ineffective

Explicitly teach the replacement (short-term) and desired (long-term) behaviour through modelled, guided and independent practice. Consider:

- What replacement behaviour will be taught in the short term?

- What are the skills needed to achieve the desired behaviour?

The aim is to provide enough modelling and support for students to independently and confidently apply the skill or behaviour. Consider:

- breaking the skill into smaller parts (task analysis)

- using concise and clear language

- modelling the skill and the thinking process

- using scaffolds (e.g. visuals, timers, modified instructions)

- checking for understanding

- providing specific reinforcement and corrective feedback

- providing opportunities for practise

- monitoring and evaluating student progress.

12. Alter the consequences

Make behaviour of concern inefficient and ineffective

Reinforce replacement and desired behaviour

- Does the reinforcement for using the replacement behaviour match the function? For example, if throwing books gets immediate adult attention, the replacement behaviour of saying **'help please'** must also get immediate adult attention.

- What individualised reinforcement will be used to establish, maintain and generalise the desired behaviour?

- Is there reinforcement for other positive behaviour as per school wide universal systems?

Consider a behaviour response plan and/or a student tailored risk management plan if there are safety concerns. For more information about risk management for student behaviour, visit the Health, safety and staff wellbeing – Student Behaviour webpage.