Guidelines for Completing ABC Charts

In order to develop strategies for managing challenging behaviour, it is necessary to first gather information about the behaviour. This information should include a description of antecedents, behaviour and consequences (A, B and C).

**Antecedents (i.e. what happens before)**

Questions to consider include:- where was the person, and exactly what were they doing? Was anyone else around, or had anyone just left? Had a request been made of the person? Had the person asked for, or did they want something to eat or drink? Had the person asked for, or did they want a specific object or activity? Had an activity just ended, or been cancelled? Where were you and what were you doing? How did the person’s mood appear, e.g. happy, sad, angry, withdrawn or distressed? Did the person seem to be communicating anything through their behaviour, e.g. I don’t want…; I want…?

**Behaviour (i.e. what happens during)**

Provide a step by step description of exactly what the person did, duration, location etc. Try to be as specific, descriptive and objective as possible. Do not try to offer interpretations here, simply describe what they did. Examples of poor versus good descriptions of behaviour are given below.

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| Fuzzy/Poorly written behavioural incident | Objective description |
| Barney was disruptive. | Barney shouted loudly when a staff member spoke to another client. |
| Jane was attention seeking. | Jane threw her cup at her carer, she had just finished her drink. |
| Peter was upset. | Peter was alone in his room, he was crying and pacing around the room. |
| Jim started to kick off; he became angry at staff and started shouting at them and put his fingers up. | Whilst watching TV Jim became restless and started to rock back and forth in his chair he looked at staff member TA and shouted “get out” in a voice loud enough that it was heard by staff member JB in the garden. JB came into the lounge. Whilst looking at JB, Jim made a “V” gesture with his right hand, stood up from the chair and shouted “get out” again at the same volume. |

**Consequences (i.e. what happens after)**

Questions to consider include:- exactly how did you respond to the behaviour? Give a step by step description. How did the person respond to your reaction to the behaviour? Was there anyone else around who responded to, or showed a reaction to the behaviour? Did the person’s behaviour result in them gaining anything they did not have before the behaviour, e.g. attention from somebody (positive or negative); an object, food or drink; or escape from an activity or situation?