



**UK Society for
Behaviour Analysis**

UK-SBA Position Statement on the Use of Punishment

The UK Society for Behaviour Analysis (UK-SBA) does not condone the use of procedures that are harmful, degrading, painful or dehumanizing.

The UK-SBA advocates the use of constructional, reinforcement-based procedures that focus on equipping people with the skills they need to live the life they want – procedures such as:

- teaching alternative communication strategies to replace behaviour that can be described as “challenging,” for example, aggression or self-harm;
- supporting individuals to make choices and engage with activities that improve quality of life;
- examining environments for sources of punitive, restrictive or otherwise stressful events and altering those environments to cultivate positive and successful relationships and satisfying experiences.

In situations where behaviour is described as “challenging”, the UK-SBA recommends taking proactive steps to address contextual factors that contribute to those behaviours– for example:

- enhancing the person’s quality of life through engagement in meaningful activity
- addressing social, activity-related and biological factors that occasion challenging behaviour
- making challenging behaviour unnecessary by identifying the needs and desires of individuals and making sure those needs are met proactively.

Positive, proactive, values-based approaches that are based on understanding and meeting people’s needs and focussed on skill-building and creating opportunities to succeed make punitive procedures unnecessary.