

Behavior 101: Part One

What is it & Why should we care?

Why should we care learn about behavior? Parents and other adult caregivers may be better equipped to support healthy/positive behaviors in kids and teens, which may increase the quality of life for both individual and family, and kids' future. And It may give us some insight into our own actions.

What is it? Behavior refers to the **actions** preformed by someone in response to an event or “stimulus” in the environment. It is **observable**, which means we can see it, and is heavily influenced by what we **think** and what we **feel**.

A *very* simple example of this would be waving to someone you know.

The behavior: **Waving** your hand. We can observe the hand moving, so we can be pretty certain it's the behavior.

The stimulus or event you're responding to is: **seeing someone you know**.

Now imagine this example in slow motion:

You're walking along and you see a face on the other side of the street. Your eyes sends your brain the visual image of the face, which your brain recognizes as someone you've talked with before. A signal then travels to your hand telling it to wave.

Where does thinking come in?

Let's complicate things and add another step in between the **event** and the **action**. What we think about the event impacts how we respond to it. In our waving example above, it would look like this:

Event: Seeing someone you know

Think: “They are really nice!”

Action: Waving your hand

Or...

Event: Seeing someone you know

Think: “Uh oh - that's the grumpy guy from next door.”

Action: Looking away and pretending not to notice them

Behavior 101: Part One (continued)

Our thoughts about a situation make a HUGE difference in our behavior. But, as the example suggests, our thoughts also impact how we **feel** about the situation

Event: Seeing someone you know

Think: “They are really nice!”

Feel: Happy, excited

Action: Waving your hand

Or...

Event: Seeing someone you know

Think: “Uh oh - that’s the grumpy guy from next door.”

Feel: Nervous, shy

Action: Looking away and pretending not to notice them

Thinking, feeling, acting...it’s all connected.

