



CBI Consultants Peer Power



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CBI Consultants

CBI Consultants was established in 1990 in British Columbia, Canada. Since 1990, we have supported more than 10,000 people with complex support needs. We are a group of professionals with diverse backgrounds including early childhood education, education, psychology and rehabilitation. We are committed to evidence based practices in inclusion, person centered planning, family centered practice, collaborative teaming and positive behavioural support. Our consulting and training approach The Lifestyle Development Process (Malette et al., 1992) was published in the Pro-Ed textbook Positive Behaviour Support: Critical Articles on Improving Practice for Individuals with Disabilities. CBI Consultants has provided consulting and training to school districts, community agencies and families throughout North America.





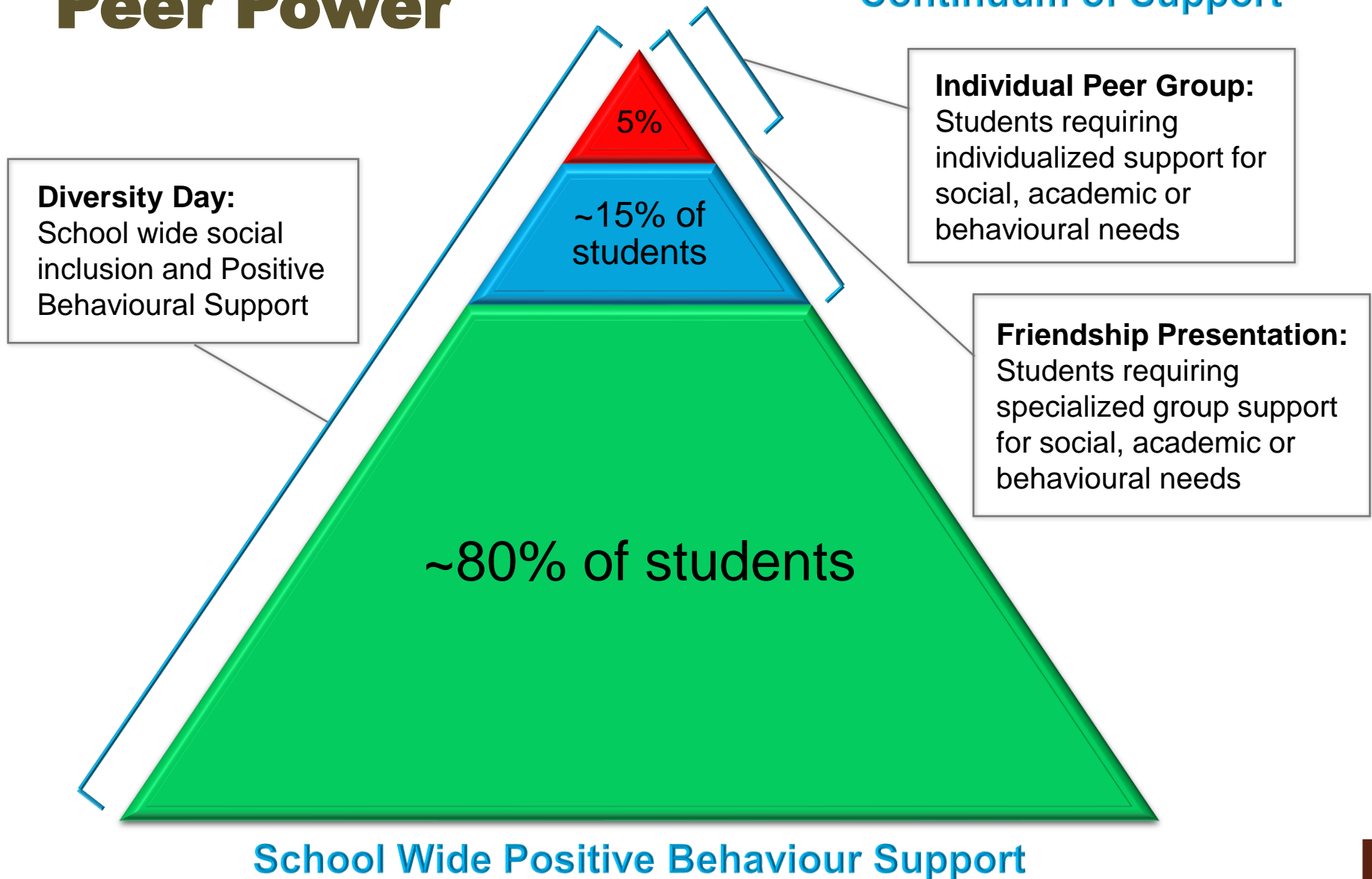
PEER POWER

Peer Power is a social inclusion process that enhances other school wide initiatives such as positive behavioural support, code of conduct (Polite, Accountable, Welcoming, Safe (PAWS)) and anti-bullying programs. Peer Power helps to create an inclusive school culture that embraces diversity. Peer Power uses the strengths of students with excellent social skills to mentor and support their fellow students who need direct teaching to learn friendship skills and be a truly included member of their school. Peer Power has three different levels and is designed to enhance the social and emotional competence of **ALL** students.

Peer Power follows the evidence based research of school wide positive behavioural support and peer mediated learning. The British Columbia Council of Administrators of Special Education (BCCASE) has embarked on a ten-year school wide positive behavioural support project titled "Making Connections." There are three tiers of support in school wide positive behavioural support and Peer Power.

Peer Power

Continuum of Support



Distinguishing Features of Peer Power

Peer Power is developed from the inclusion research and universal design perspective. The goal is to take the very best of “special” and “regular” education practices and combine them for the benefit of **ALL** students. CBI Consultants has been implementing inclusive practices and positive behaviour support in home, school and community settings for the past 20 years. Peer Power is therefore individualized and linked directly to the code of conduct for each school. Peer Power is designed for students of all ages who require more intensive support to develop friendships and be included members of their school.

Peer Power has guiding principles and core training material but is ultimately individualized to each school and each peer group. It is specifically designed to empower students, educators, parents and community members to create their own culture of inclusion and implement evidence based strategies independently over time. Successful implementation of Peer Power results in a noticeable inclusive school culture. The goal of Peer Power is to capitalize on the collective strengths of students, schools and communities to celebrate diversity and enhance the social emotional competence of each and every student.

Three levels of Peer Power have been developed, allowing schools the opportunity to select the level that best embraces their schools goals and needs.

- Level 1: **School Wide Diversity Day**
- Level 2: **Friendship Presentation**
- Level 3: **Students Helping Students (Individual Peer Group)**



First Level of Peer Power: School Wide Diversity Day

To support a strong school culture of inclusion, and enhance the social/emotional competence of all students at your school, the first level or tier in Peer Power is a one day Diversity Day. All of the students, administrators, teachers, support staff, parent groups and community members attend. The workshop can be individualized to the unique strengths and needs of your school and surrounding community. The following key concepts are covered in the Diversity Day.

- What do we mean by inclusion?
- How do we build on this word in our actions at your school?
- We all have strengths and gifts and we all need help from each other
- As we learn more about each other and embrace diversity, your school becomes an even stronger place of learning and acceptance

The School Wide Diversity Day capitalizes on the strengths of the school, school teams, students, community and PAC members. The Diversity Day of Peer Power grew out of CBI Consultants' collaboration with Hammond Elementary School in Maple Ridge, British Columbia. CBI Consultants was contracted to provide consultation and training to the school team for an individual play group for a student with developmental disabilities. Hammond Elementary had consciously influenced a culture of inclusion in their school and had developed a diversity workshop to reflect their school and community.



CBI Consultants believes that the School Wide Diversity Day is an essential component of Peer Power. CBI Consultants will provide all of the training and support to school based teams to develop their own diversity workshop.

The School Wide Diversity Day is broken into small workshops and sessions:

- Presentations on different ethnic backgrounds in the school;
- Presentations on and inclusion of ethnic foods;
- Presentation by Canadian National Institute for the Blind;
- Presentation by wheelchair athletes (wheelchair basketball team);
- Friendship presentation (presented by CBI Consultants).



Second Level: Friendship Presentation

The Friendship Presentation is designed for all students (school wide) and specific classrooms as needed. The presentation introduces students to the diversity of learners in each class. Students are supported to focus on the strengths and gifts of each other and to recognize that everyone has particular strengths and challenges and together students can help and support each other through most challenges that arise in a school day.

The Friendship Presentation is a 2.5 hour workshop per class. Presentation and stations can be tailored to meet individual classroom needs. CBI Consultants provides the materials, sets up the stations and facilitates the lesson.



The Friendship Presentation has the following features:

- Friendship: What it means to be a good friend; how do friends help one another
- Personal profiles: Explore our strengths and challenges that all individuals encounter; share the diversity of these
- Stations for students: Experience living with a challenge
 - Fine motor – beading while wearing large gloves
 - Visual impairment – reading through scratched goggles
 - Auditory – trying to follow directions while listening to white noise
 - Perception – skipping with a piece of yarn
 - Communicating without words – using a communication board and picture symbols
- Students share perspectives:
 - Diversity
 - Strengths and differences
 - Everyone has strengths
 - We all need help in some areas
 - Together we can

Third Level: Students Helping Students (Individual Peer Group)

The third level of support offered by CBI Consultants is Individual Peer Group which involves direct training to develop individual social groups for children and youth who require direct intentional support to develop social/play skills and friendships and be truly included members of their school. The training and support to school based teams by CBI Consultants consists of the following key components:

- Support to plan and set goals for each group
- Teaching key skills to typical peers
- Structuring initial play and friendship groups for success and providing direct adult support to the social groups
- Carefully planning opportunities for students to practice the skills by arranging environments to support peer interactions and embedding natural social opportunities into existing routines and activities
- Providing necessary prompting and cueing for students to use the targeted skills
- Putting a system in place to reinforce the positive social behaviours

This level allows us to put in place the knowledge that we know about children and how they learn play and develop social skills. It allows us to provide the necessary training to typical peers to help create an inclusive environment for all students. CBI Consultants provides approximately 35 hours of support including training of group facilitators, facilitation of peer power sessions, and monitoring of peer group.





Why does this kind of friendship program work so well?

1. This program results in special needs and/or isolated children creating real lasting friendships. Despite excellent programs like ROE, excellent school codes of conduct, support workers helping children, we still see major issues with special needs children not integrating very well with other children.
2. Peers learn social behaviours best from each other.
3. Typical children do not have the skills to help an isolated child integrate and this program focuses on training the isolated child's peers. This also involves a different way for the support workers to learn to help the isolated child as instead they work with the peers.
4. The benefits are as rich for the typical peers and the school as they are for the formerly isolated child. Both typical and isolated children want to be in this program.



What do the children learn?

Life skills that will benefit them in everything they do:

1. **Empathy** - how we are all similar and different, how we all have strengths and can help each other with our weaknesses, what motivates 'different' behaviour
2. **Respectful feedback** - how to give feedback in a way that preserves dignity
3. **Boundaries** - how to speak up when something isn't working and ask for what you want
4. **Managing conflict** - how to work through conflict and stay good friends
5. **The joy of contributing to teach other** - we all have strengths and weaknesses and the joy of helping each other
6. **More experience creating healthy new relationships**