

# Behavior: The Growing Need to BE in the World

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## ABSTRACT

Traditional approaches to problematic behavior may temporarily reduce actions that are not conducive to the environment, but how do they prepare individuals to act as independent, productive citizens of the world? There is a growing need to broaden the traditional treatment approach of behavior analysis to be more inclusive of strengths, differences and creative solutions. It is then that students receive the tools and methods for ‘BEing,’ which transfers across environments and conditions.

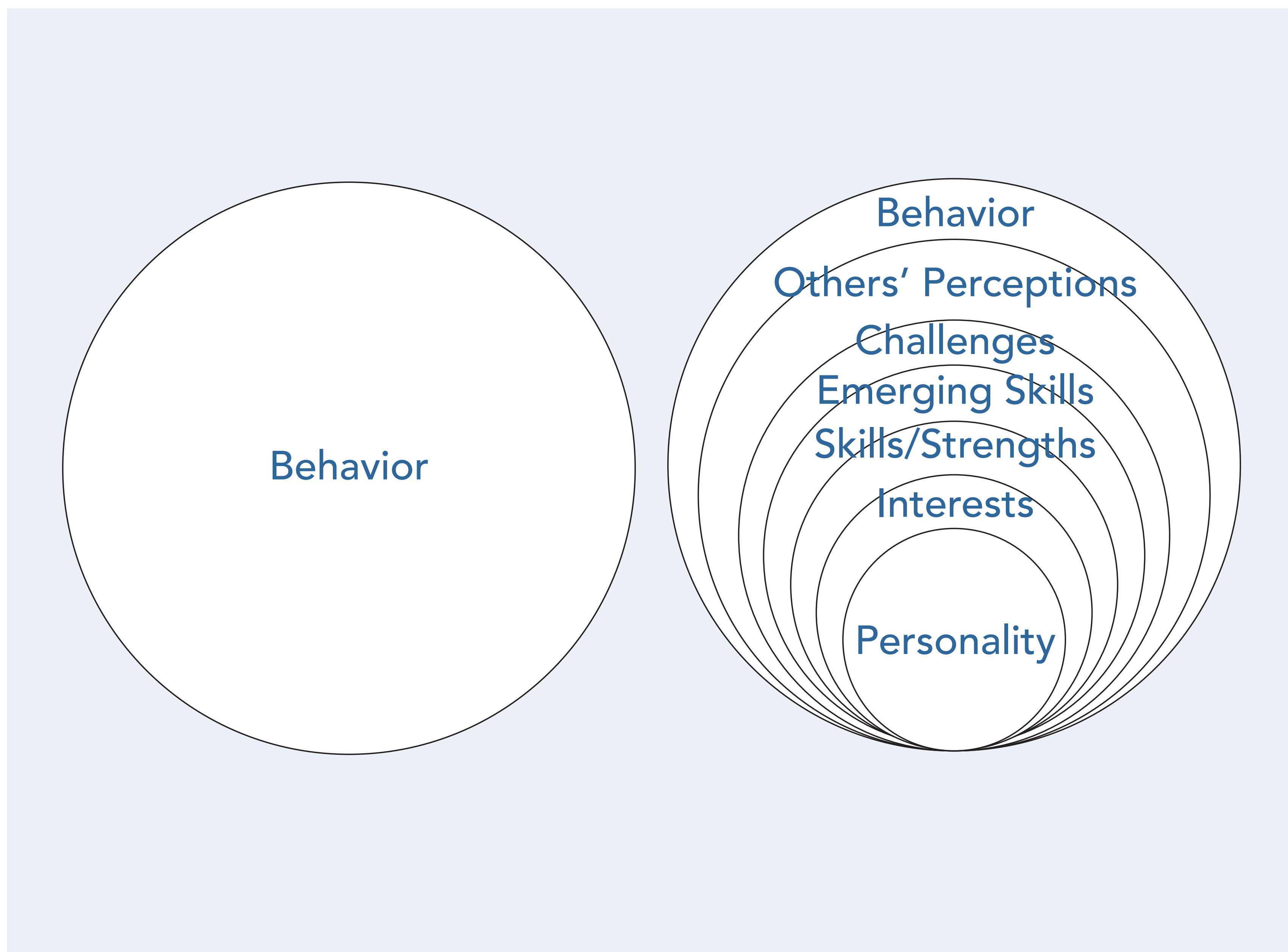


Figure 1. Compliance is the viable asset in the Behavioral Approach (left), however limits the child to a predetermined outcome. Problem solving is the viable asset in the Person-Centered Approach (right) which recognizes a shift from obedience to exploration by leveraging the child's strengths.

## CASE STUDIES

There is a current demand to address maladaptive behavior from a much more practical perspective. Table 1 details three individual case studies from various educational models of schools in Washington, DC. In each scenario, the traditional behavioral approaches failed to recognize the unique cultural aspects, strengths, and possibilities of the individual learners. Through a broader yet still scientifically rooted approach, the struggle between the learners and others in the environment diffused, and the focus shifted to productive, positive engagement.

STUDENT	A	B	C
<b>Diagnosis</b>	Emotional-Behavioral Disorder	ADHD	Autism
<b>Educational Model</b>	Highly structured, zero tolerance	Bi-lingual	Child-centered
<b>Cultural Considerations</b>	Low-Income, Urban	Adopted family, holistic approach	Father is on the Autism Spectrum; a range of acceptable behavior and participation
<b>Strengths</b>	Creative, leader, developer	Highly personable, theatrical	Linguistic, fluent reader, sense of humor
<b>Potential</b>	Active learner; create modalities to demonstrate his knowledge of content	Greater inclusion; maximize personality and talent into learning	Acceptance of varying conditions; contingent behavior
<b>Behavioral Approach</b>	Positive Behavior Support Plan with built-in learning flexibility	Re-structured academic program; acting classes	Heavily contingent PBS Plan, with broad based conditions

Table 1. Case studies of Broad Behavioral Approaches

## ANALYSIS

Instead of aiming to shape, or adjust, behavior by recognizing the qualities within the expression that are meaningful and revealing a viable strength, the traditional approach to behavior analysis aims to suppress what is not comfortable. In this process, the focus for all individuals becomes what is limited and not desirable, instead of what is possible. Figure 2 reflects the initial effectiveness of a Positive Behavior Support Plan focused more on the student's abilities and strengths than on the target behavior.

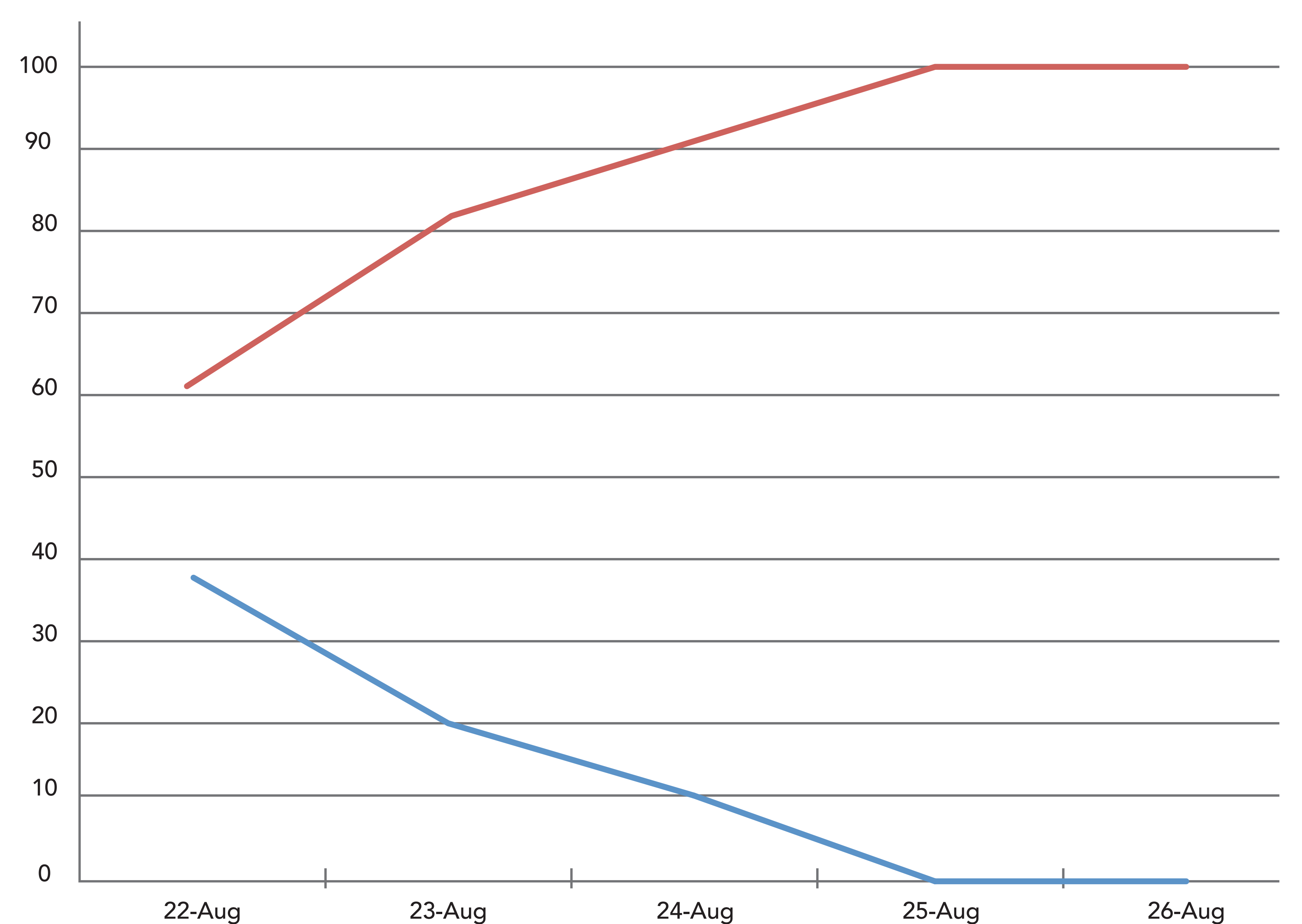


Figure 2. Frequency Data, Week 1

## CONCLUSION

**Behavior: The Growing Need to BE in the World** is precisely about navigating change. The current focus globally is to build individuals' skills sets so that they can more productively, and uniquely participate in their communities. The future depends on a variety of talents, strengths, differences, complimentary skills, and a deep level of trust and cooperation. All individuals are needed. When the focus shifts from "behavior reduction" to "behavior production," we will be building our future together. In this way, we will prepare not only productive and engaged citizens of the world, but interested and dynamic problem solvers. Now is the time for all voices, perspectives and values to be shared.

