



BEHAVIORAL ENGINEERING

PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE

Prepared for Sacred Wagon Forms, Training, and Public Resources
Version 2.0 Educational Framework Not a Clinical, Legal, or Law-Enforcement Manual

Behavioral Engineer Summary:

Behavioral Engineers are detached SRD components, meaning they can be assigned across multiple Sacred Wagon Group offices and operational elements depending on organizational needs.

Behavioral Engineers support the analysis of collected information and data, including UAS-derived footage and other operational material. Their role is to identify patterns, relevant activity, environmental conditions, potential risks, and information requiring further assessment. Behavioral Engineers analyze operational and organizational information to identify potential liabilities, threats, vulnerabilities, and emerging risks. They help develop preventative measures and assess potential scenarios that could affect personnel, operations, or organizational objectives. Behavioral Engineers support situational understanding by studying people, communication, behavior, and operational conditions. They help transform scattered pieces of information into organized assessments that support decision-making, prevention, preparedness, and response.

Core Skills:

- Behavioral observation
- Interviewing and information collection
- Communication analysis
- Body language and nonverbal communication awareness
- Critical thinking
- Pattern recognition
- Intelligence analysis
- Operational awareness
- Research and information verification
- Risk and threat assessment
- Scenario development
- Contingency planning
- Report writing
- Information dissemination
- Cross-functional communication

Behavioral Engineers should avoid assuming that body language, tone of voice, or a single behavioral indicator can prove truthfulness or deception. These observations are best treated as contextual information that may identify inconsistencies, stress, or areas requiring further verification. The Behavioral Engineer's responsibility is not to “read minds” or determine guilt. Their responsibility is to collect information responsibly, identify patterns, test assumptions, recognize information gaps, and provide decision-makers with a clearer operational picture.

1. Purpose of This Handbook

This handbook provides a structured educational framework for understanding behavior in individuals, groups, and organizations. It draws from established concepts in applied behavior analysis, criminology, psychology, decision science, organizational behavior, and public-sector risk and threat assessment.

The purpose is to help Sacred Wagon Group employees/members and/or volunteers observe behavior responsibly, recognize patterns, understand environmental influences, communicate effectively, and support constructive decision-making.

This handbook does not authorize clinical diagnosis, law-enforcement activity, coercive interrogation, surveillance, or treatment. It is a framework for responsible observation, analysis, prevention, education, and organizational improvement.

2. What Is Behavioral Engineering?

Behavioral Engineering is the practical and ethical application of behavioral science and systems thinking to understand how people respond to their environment, incentives, information, social conditions, and consequences.

A Behavioral Engineer studies the relationship between behavior and context, then helps design safer, clearer, and more effective systems.

Core questions include:

- What behavior is occurring?
- Under what conditions does it occur?
- What appears to precede it?
- What consequences may reinforce or discourage it?
- What environmental, social, or organizational factors influence it?
- What ethical change could improve the outcome?

3. Foundational Frameworks

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)

A foundational concept is that behavior can be studied in relation to observable events and consequences. A basic tool is the ABC model:

Antecedent: What happens before the behavior?

Behavior: What observable action occurs?

Consequence: What happens afterward?

This model helps prevent vague conclusions by directing attention toward observable conditions.

Routine Activity Theory

Associated with criminologists Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson, this theory examines how harmful events may become more likely when a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardianship converge. In prevention work, this encourages examination of opportunity and environmental conditions rather than assuming behavior has a single cause.

Social Learning Theory

Associated with Albert Bandura and later criminological applications, this framework emphasizes that people

can learn behavior through observation, modeling, reinforcement, and social influence.

Situational Crime Prevention

Associated with Ronald Clarke, this approach focuses on reducing opportunities for harmful conduct by improving environments, increasing effort or risk, reducing rewards, reducing provocations, and removing excuses.

Rational Choice Perspectives

These perspectives examine how individuals may weigh perceived costs, benefits, opportunities, and constraints. Decisions are not always perfectly rational, but perceived consequences often matter.

Social Disorganization and Environmental Context

Criminological research also emphasizes the importance of community conditions, social cohesion, informal social control, and environmental stability when examining patterns of harm.

4. The Behavioral Assessment Model

A disciplined assessment separates observation from interpretation.

Step 1 — Define the Behavior: Describe what can be observed without assigning motives.

Step 2 — Establish Context: Identify location, timing, social setting, and relevant conditions.

Step 3 — Identify Antecedents: Determine what occurred immediately before or consistently around the behavior.

Step 4 — Identify Consequences: Examine what followed and whether it may increase or decrease repetition.

Step 5 — Consider Multiple Explanations: Avoid treating one theory as proof.

Step 6 — Assess Risk and Impact: Consider who may be affected and how.

Step 7 — Recommend an Ethical Response: Focus on proportionate, lawful, and constructive options.

5. Observation: Facts Before Conclusions

New analysts often make the mistake of confusing an interpretation with an observation.

Example:

Observation: “The individual left the meeting three times.”

Interpretation: “The individual was intentionally disruptive.”

The first statement describes an observable event. The second assigns a motive that may or may not be supported by evidence.

Good practice:

- Record specific actions.
- Record time and context.
- Distinguish direct knowledge from reports.
- Identify information gaps.
- Consider alternative explanations.
- Avoid diagnostic labels outside professional qualifications.
- Update assessments when new evidence appears.

6. Environmental and Situational Analysis

Behavior is influenced by conditions surrounding the individual or group. A Behavioral Engineer should examine:

- Physical environment
- Access and opportunity
- Rules and procedures
- Information quality
- Time pressure
- Social influence
- Incentives and consequences
- Leadership and organizational culture
- Resource availability
- Friction points and barriers

A recurring principle across prevention and public-safety research is that changing conditions can sometimes change outcomes. Improving a system may be more effective than simply blaming the person within it.

7. Risk, Threat, and Concerning Behavior

Behavioral analysis should not be confused with predicting crime with certainty. No framework can reliably identify future wrongdoing in every case.

Government and public-safety guidance commonly emphasizes behavior, context, and concerning patterns rather than relying on stereotypes or protected characteristics.

When evaluating a concerning situation:

- Focus on observable behavior and credible information.
- Consider context and escalation.
- Document facts accurately.
- Avoid profiling based on race, religion, ethnicity, disability, gender, or other protected characteristics.
- Follow applicable organizational reporting procedures.
- Escalate emergencies to appropriate authorities.

Immediate threats to life or safety require emergency response, not informal behavioral experimentation.

8. Communication and Influence

Communication can shape understanding, cooperation, trust, and decision-making.

Effective communication should be:

Clear: Use understandable language.

Relevant: Address the actual situation.

Credible: Support claims with evidence.

Respectful: Preserve dignity.

Proportionate: Match the response to the risk.

Open to feedback: Check whether the message was understood.

Ethical influence helps people understand options and consequences. Deception, intimidation, and exploitation of vulnerability are outside the purpose of this handbook.

9. Behavioral Intervention Design

Before changing a process or intervention, identify the mechanism.

Possible constructive approaches include:

- Improving instructions
- Reducing unnecessary friction
- Changing environmental cues
- Providing timely reminders
- Strengthening training
- Improving feedback
- Clarifying expectations
- Increasing access to legitimate resources
- Recognizing desired conduct
- Removing opportunities for preventable errors

Every intervention should have a measurable objective and a review point.

10. Tips for New Sacred Wagon Volunteers and Members

1. Learn before you lead.

Do not assume expertise. Study the mission, procedures, and limits of your role.

2. Observe carefully.

Train yourself to notice facts before forming conclusions.

3. Document responsibly.

If documentation is required, be accurate, objective, and concise. Never exaggerate to make a situation appear more serious.

4. Ask better questions.

“What happened?” is often more useful than “Why would they do that?”

5. Avoid amateur diagnosis.

Do not label people as mentally ill, dangerous, deceptive, or criminal without appropriate evidence and authority.

6. Respect privacy.

Only collect, share, or retain information that is appropriate to the task and permitted by applicable rules.

7. Know when to escalate.

Volunteers and members should understand reporting channels, leadership responsibilities, and emergency procedures.

8. Stay inside your role.

Behavioral observation does not make someone a law-enforcement officer, therapist, investigator, or intelligence professional.

9. Use theories as lenses, not proof.

A theory helps organize questions. It does not automatically prove motive or intent.

Keep learning.

Strong analysts improve through reading, training, supervision, constructive criticism, and evidence-based practice.

The Behavioral Engineering Career

BEHAVIORAL ENGINEER

What the Job Is:

Behavioral Engineers study people, behavior, systems, and operational environments to help Sacred Wagon Group understand complicated situations and make informed decisions. They work with others to analyze information, identify patterns, assess potential risks, and develop a clearer picture from fragmented or incomplete information.

What They Do:

- Analyze people, behavior, systems, and operational environments.
- Collect, organize, and assess fragmented information to identify the larger picture.
- Conduct interviews and support structured information collection.
- Analyze communication, including body language, tone of voice, verbal behavior, and inconsistencies.
- Assess information reliability and identify indicators requiring further verification.
- Support intelligence collection, analysis, and dissemination.
- Provide behavioral and analytical support to crisis management organizations.
- Identify potential threats, vulnerabilities, liabilities, and operational risks.
- Analyze environmental and behavioral factors that may influence an operation.
- Develop potential scenarios, simulations, and courses of action.
- Assist in developing preventative measures, fail-safes, and contingency plans.
- Prepare assessments, intelligence products, briefings, and reports.
- Communicate relevant findings clearly to leadership and operational personnel.
- Support both office-based analysis and field or ground-level operations.

Personality Fit:

Analytical, observant, curious, communicative, adaptable, and comfortable operating in both office and field environments. This person enjoys studying people and systems, connecting small pieces of information, and seeing relationships that may not be immediately obvious.

12. Professional Boundaries and Ethics

Behavioral knowledge creates responsibility. Sacred Wagon members should not use behavioral concepts to exploit vulnerability, deceive people about material facts, discriminate against protected groups, or interfere with lawful autonomy.

Professional practice should emphasize:

- Human dignity
- Privacy
- Accuracy
- Proportionality
- Accountability

- Transparency where appropriate
- Evidence-based reasoning
- Recognition of professional limits

When an issue involves mental health, imminent violence, criminal investigation, medical treatment, or specialized legal questions, refer to qualified professionals and appropriate authorities.

13. Intervention Planning Checklist

Before implementation, ask:

1. What specific outcome are we trying to improve?
2. What evidence supports the assessment?
3. Have observable facts been separated from assumptions?
4. What alternative explanations exist?
5. Who could be affected by the intervention?
6. Is the approach proportionate and ethical?
7. What authority exists to implement it?
8. How will effectiveness be measured?
9. What unintended consequences are possible?
10. When will the intervention be reviewed, changed, or discontinued?

14. Government and Professional Reference Points

This handbook is informed by publicly available concepts and guidance from established fields and institutions. Recommended reference areas include:

National Institute of Justice (NIJ): criminology, crime prevention, evidence-based practices, and research on public safety.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS): public awareness, behavioral indicators, threat prevention, and community reporting guidance.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI): public information concerning threat assessment, behavioral analysis, and reporting suspicious or threatening activity.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): violence prevention and public-health approaches to reducing risk.

National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST): risk-management concepts useful for structured organizational decision-making.

Behavior Analysis Literature: foundational principles associated with B. F. Skinner and applied behavior analysis, including functional assessment and the relationship between antecedents, behavior, and consequences.

Users should consult current primary sources when developing formal policies, training programs, or public guidance.

15. Suggested References for Further Study

Bandura, Albert — Social Learning Theory and observational learning.

Clarke, Ronald V. — Situational Crime Prevention.

Cohen, Lawrence E., and Felson, Marcus — Routine Activity Theory.

Cornish, Derek B., and Clarke, Ronald V. — Rational Choice perspectives in crime and decision-making. Skinner, B.

F. — Foundational work on behavior and reinforcement.

U.S. Department of Justice / National Institute of Justice — Research on crime, prevention, and evidence-based practices.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security — Public guidance and prevention resources.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — Violence prevention and public-health approaches.

This list is a starting point for education and should not be treated as a substitute for current professional, legal, clinical, or agency-specific guidance.

16. Conclusion

The purpose of Behavioral Engineering is to examine the conditions surrounding human action and responsibly improve systems, communication, readiness, prevention, and decision-making. The strongest practitioner combines curiosity with restraint: observe carefully, test assumptions, respect people, and let evidence guide conclusions.