

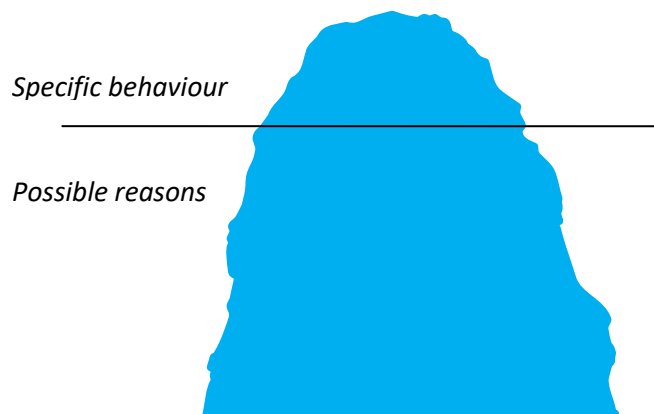
ASD

Resource

Section: [Assessment](#)

The Iceberg Analysis

The Iceberg metaphor illustrates the idea that the reasons for a particular behaviour (or behaviours) may lie in some of the characteristics of a young person with autism which are not obvious to the uninformed observer. What we see on the surface (the specific behaviour) may arise from hidden causes of which we may be unaware. This metaphor was first proposed by Eric Schopler in 1994, an American professor of psychiatry and psychology. It may therefore be helpful to analyse behaviour from this perspective if the specific behaviour being shown is a problem.



STEP 1

The first step is to describe the behaviour that you would like to change or modify. The description should be of the behaviour observed, rather than an interpretation of it e.g. *Jack screams and flaps his hands* rather than *Jack appears distressed*.

STEP 2

Now consider what the underlying causes for this might be, based on your knowledge of autism in general and Jack in particular e.g. *Jack finds change difficult to cope with, Jack is sensitive to noise etc.*

STEP 3

Are there any consistent antecedents to the behaviour being observed? These may include the context in which it occurs e.g. *Jack screams and flaps his hands when strangers enter the classroom, or in response to the noisy behaviour of others.*

STEP 4

This is the biggest challenge. You now need to consider how you might change the antecedents and /or context so that the behaviour doesn't occur. In Jack's case you are unlikely to be able to stop strangers entering the classroom, but you might ask people to knock first to give you the opportunity to warn Jack that a stranger is going to enter.