**Needs and Behaviour**

**Handout 3.1**

We can think about behaviour as a way of getting needs met. We sleep when we need rest, we go out when we need company or excitement, and so on. Even undesirable behaviour is intended to satisfy some need or desire.

**Power-** I want to be in control!

###

# Revenge- I will get you first!

##  AMCONFUS

**Approval-** I’m OK, aren’t I?

**Inadequacy-** Help! I can’t do this!

#### Excitement- I want some action!!

**Attention**- won’t someone take some notice of me!!

##

*Young people generally behave ‘badly’ when they are discouraged and feel badly about themselves. Their behaviour can ‘push buttons’ for their carer- stirring up feelings of anger, hopelessness, hurt, annoyance, alarm or worry.* These feelings may provide a clue to the purpose or need underlying the behaviour. The danger is that carer-givers get hooked in to the young person’s behaviour and respond in ways that are unhelpful and ineffective. Their responses are then more likely to reward the inappropriate behaviour and perpetuate it.

Instead of responding as the young person expects and wants, carers may need to think about how they can respond differently. **For example:**

* ***Instead of being annoyed with attention-seeking behaviour, ignore it.***
* ***Instead of responding angrily to power struggles, (arguing, lecturing etc), agree to differ, calmly state your opinion, suggest that you will discuss it later when everyone is calm.***
* Instead of fuelling feelings of revenge by responding hurtfully- remain calm, friendly and encouraging.
* Instead of criticising, consoling or taking over when your child or young person is behaving ‘inadequately’- notice and encourage any efforts and improvements.
* Instead of overreacting to young people’s quest for peer approval- offer opportunities to talk about their friends and the group pressures they experience.
* Instead of responding with shock and alarm to young people’s risk-taking behaviour- provide opportunities for action and excitement within the family as well as with outside organised activities.

**Change your usual reactions**- respond differently to inappropriate behaviour. When things have calmed down, make sure that you give positive attention – perhaps when it is not expected.



**Praise**

**Handout 3.2**

● Using praise is a way that we can **encourage desirable behaviour** and make it more likely that it will occur again. Research suggests that **lack of praise leads to increased levels of misbehaviour,** and that ***praise leads to***

***increased self-esteem***

● We all know that praise is a good thing. We know we should praise, and we often think that we do. The truth is that many of us fail to praise at the times it would be most helpful and beneficial to do so

● ***Some people are reticent to praise for commonplace behaviour, and feel that praise should be reserved for exceptional behaviour. Others have such high standards that they tend to be critical of themselves and others***

● Sometimes we get so wrapped up in dealing with the problems that we fail to see the positives: we might feel so annoyed with Craig because he won’t tidy his room that we fail to see how good he is at helping at mealtimes.

● Praise offers an opportunity to break away from the negative cycle of nagging and criticism and provides a tool to focus on, and encourage, the positive

**Praise does not necessarily come that naturally. Giving enthusiastic praise can feel uncomfortable and unnatural to start with – but with practice it becomes affirming for everyone involved. Notice your young person behaving well and**

**praise them for the behaviour that you like.**

**To be effective, praise must be:**

● **Specific:** Praise and label the desired behaviour: *I’m proud you’re working so hard on your homework.*

**Describe** exactly what it is you like: *Thank you for doing as I asked straight away.*

This provides information and feedback to the child about how you want them to behave.

* **Sincere:**

Delivered with some kind of enthusiasm. Use non-verbals – eye contact, touch, smile, intonation.

● **Immediate:**

Following the behaviour.

● **Appropriate:**

Ignore behaviour that is inappropriate.

***Be careful not to combine praise with a put down:***

*Thank you for helping me clear up. I only wish you did it more often!*

There are lots of different and subtle ways of giving praise. Here are a few phrases to get you thinking about how you might express your appreciation and thanks:

**● You’ve done a great job of …**

**● It really makes me happy when you …**

**● That’s a really smart way of**

**You must feel so proud of yourself for …**

**I like it when you …**

**Good for you! You …**

**Think of some of your own phrases**

**Choosing an alternative behaviour**

**Handout 3.3**

When confronted with difficult behaviour we often to become stuck in negative patterns.

* **Avoid dwelling on the problem** – **choose a behaviour you would like to see instead. This is a much more effective and positive experience for everybody.**
* *Alternative behaviour CANNOT be done at the same time as the problem behaviour. The alternative behaviour needs to be something that is* ***related*** *to the unwanted behaviour, but CANNOT be done at the same time. If your young person tends to stay out late, then the ‘alternative behaviour’ could be to come home ‘on time’.*
* **State** in positive terms: **Avoid saying**: *stop arguing*

 **Do say**: *talk quietly and politely*

* Make the behaviour achievable
* When choosing alternative behaviour to encourage – break it down into manageable steps.

***If Marcus has great difficulty doing his homework, instead of expecting him to get on with his homework immediately, you might set the first goal as him sitting at his desk with his books open for 10 minutes each evening.***

* Think about triggers and pay-offs e.g ensure there are good incentives/rewards in place which will encourage and motivate Marcus to study or your young person to come home on time

What comes before and after the desired behaviour can help to establish positive patterns of behaviour.

**Focus on the Positive**

# CATCH THE YOUNG PERSON BEING COOPERATIVE

**Handout 3.4**

# (Encouragement and Contingency- a predictable environment)

It can be all too easy to take good/desirable behaviour for granted. Sometimes a young person may do their chores, come home on time, and we ignore it: we let it pass us by without comment. It is vital that we notice these ordinary, but positive behaviours, and show that we appreciate them. When we reliably provide positive consequences for wanted behaviours, we strengthen these behaviours.

The relationship between behaviour and the response given to it, is called contingency. A contingent environment implies a **when…. then** connection: **when** the young person behaves in a particular way, **then** the adult or carer responds in a particular way.

Here are 3 strategies to ensure that you are proactive in encouraging positive behaviour, and not just reactive to negative situations and behaviour.

* **Spontaneous compliance**: When a young person behaves in a co-operative way, it is important that his carers react in predictable and positive ways. This means that you need to pay attention to what your young person is doing, and to notice and comment on what they do. If they put the videos and CDs away after a session with their friends, it is important that you appreciate it. “You’re really good at tidying up after your friends have been. I really appreciate it that you have put the CDs away.”
* **Create situations where you can praise** your young person for their compliance. Ask them to do something easy or attractive- turn on their favourite TV programme, fetch the chocolates from the kitchen, or hold the door open. Then go out of your way to respond with praise.
* **Praise for the absence of common misbehaviours.** Think of one or two of your teenagers’ behaviours which irritate you – speaking with their mouths full, interrupting you when you are talking, giving you orders, fidgeting, bad personal hygiene etc. During the week ahead, if you are in a situation where this behaviour would normally occur and it doesn’t, go out of your way to praise. “Thank you for keeping the music down when I was on the phone” “I really like it when you ask me to do something for you in that quiet/polite voice” or “when you say please.” If you persist with these kinds of strategies the results will be gradual but real. **Try it out!**

It is interesting to note, that in families, those who give the most positive responses to others, get most back in return.

**Which of your young person’s skills are well-developed and which do you need to encourage?**

**Handout 3.5**

Good at this

Needs encouraging

**How to communicate and get on with others**

Expressing ideas, opinions and needs appropriately

Asking for help and assistance when they need it

Co-operating with adult requests and instructions

Playing co-operatively with others

Being aware of others feelings

Being aware of how their actions affect others

**How to manage their own feelings**

Expressing feelings in ways that do not harm or diminish others

Controlling hurtful actions and thinking before they act

Developing positive feelings about themselves and others

Accepting rules and limits

**How to be independent**

Doing things for themselves

Keeping busy without constant adult attention or supervision

Being responsible for their own actions

**How to solve problems**

Showing an interest in everyday things

Asking questions and developing their own ideas

Considering alternative solutions

Negotiating and compromising

Making decision and solving problems for themselves

**Other skills:**

**HOME PRACTICE**

**Handout 3.6**

Praise your young person at least 5x per day!

## Just tick in the star each time you remember to praise

## BE SPECIFIC-DESCRIBE THE BEHAVIOUR YOU LIKE

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Spontaneous Praise:** 5x per day! | Alternative Behaviour: Praise | OBSERVATIONS |
| **Tuesday** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Wednesday** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Thursday** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Friday** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Saturday** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Sunday** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Monday** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |