

Behaviour

(Ages 7-11)

Session 2



CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

What is Challenging behaviour.

- It could be an outburst which parents have come to understand as a known reaction or response to a daily activity, or a behaviour so out of the blue with no obvious trigger.
- Challenging behaviour happens for a reason and it's a way of communicating. It is normal for children to show defiance or lose control of their emotions sometimes while their social and emotional skills are developing.



Types of Challenging Behaviours

- Self-injury – hand biting, head banging, hair pulling and eye poking, face slapping, skin picking
- Hurting others – hitting, biting, hair pulling a head-butting, aggression
- Destructive behaviours – throwing things, tearing things up and breaking furniture.
- Other behaviours – spitting, smearing, swearing, opposition to parents or adult requests, tantrums that last for longer than typical.



Causes of Challenging Behaviour.

- Challenging behaviour can be caused by children not having the social and emotional skills they need to behave the way they are expected to.
- Other causes of challenging behaviours are
 - Being unwell
 - Being tired or not having enough sleep
 - Being hungry or poor diet
 - Too much screen time
 - Change in family routine or circumstances
 - Change of environment (e.g. starting a new school)
 - Having problems at school or being bullied
 - The development of mental health issues (e.g. anxiety, depression).



The next few slides are going to be about how to deal with children when they are exhibiting challenging behaviour.

You are not alone.

- Parenting can be hard work and very stressful, lots of things, not only your child's behaviour, can cause stress to you; family problems, money problems, work, health, housing issues, etc.
- Don't be too hard on yourself, you might not always be able to get things right.

- Some children play up more and are more difficult, more active and less keen to do as they are told.
- This makes it extra hard work for you as a parent.
- There are however techniques that work well with children regardless of their age, temperament, background, culture or tradition.



Setting Boundaries.

- All children need love and guidance and to have rules and boundaries. Rules and boundaries help families to understand how to behave towards each other and to learn what behaviour is acceptable and what is not acceptable. *Part of being a parent is creating boundaries.*

Boundaries need to be.....

- **REALISTIC** – are they reasonable for the child's age? Are your expectations realistic? A five year old is not a little adult, rules need to be achievable.
- **SIMPLE** – they need to be clear and simple with not too many instructions
- **CONSISTENT** – be consistent, it is very confusing for a young child if one day you enforce a rule but the next day you don't. Children feel more secure if you stick to the limits you set.



Rewards and Consequence.

- All parents have their own ideas about this, younger children may respond well to reward charts and treats, whilst older children may prefer privileges.
- Rewards will not work for all children, it is best not to rely too much on rewards or punishments as the power of these gets less as children get older.
- Talk to your child about rewards and choose something they really like or would want.

Ideas and Tips...

1. Have clear simple rules and be consistent
2. Describe exactly what you want your child to do and give reasons. Try not to give too many orders it can be overwhelming.
3. Ignore behaviour that is designed to get a response, turn your head away, break eye contact, wait a few seconds then explain that you will not talk to them until they are being polite and sensible. The child then sees that being naughty is not the way to get the attention they want



Ideas and Tips...

- 4. Let minor misbehaviours go, choose your battles wisely.
- 5. Criticise the behaviour not your child so they understand that they are not a bad person but have behaved in a way you don't like, it's the behaviour not them you don't like.
- 6. You don't need to shout, use the broken record approach,
*e.g. Pick up your clothes (child says no),
pick up your clothes (no) pick up your clothes*

Your child will get fed up in the end with your lack of reaction and just do it.



Ideas and Tips...

- 7. If you need to punish your child it is best to take away privileges or use time out.
- 8. Don't smack as it can give a bad example on how to handle strong emotions and it could make them angry and resentful.
- 9. Try to be positive even when talking about bad behaviour, such as *you are normally such a polite person, please don't be rude'*

That's not like you, you are normally such a helpful person'



Ideas and Tips...

- 10. Negotiate with older children, distract younger children
- 11. Praise your child for good behaviour, so they learn that the best way to get attention is by being good, *'thank you for doing that it was very kind/sensible of you, you are getting so sensible and grown up'*
- 12. Reward good behaviour, hugs and kisses are best, as you are showing your child love and warmth'

Allow your child some control and to make some choices so they feel more in control and valued.



If you feel like your loosing it

- If you feel you are losing control, walk away and count to ten
- If you feel you have behaved in a way you regret or feel you were wrong, say sorry, admit you were wrong, hug and kiss and try again. The child then sees that grown-ups make mistakes too and say sorry
- Love is an important part of positive discipline. The more you show love to your child the more they will want to behave for you. Spend quality time listening to your child and take an interest in what they have been doing, their interests, their friends and their worries.



Looking after yourself..

- Working at discipline takes a lot of energy and can be exhausting. No parent will do it perfectly or get it right all the time. You will have days when you are too tired or stressed to work at it. Don't give up or be too hard on yourself if things don't change immediately, focus on small steps and goals that are achievable and be realistic. You are important so try to take time out now and again to do something you like or meet up with your friends or family; time just for you.



What support is out there for you.

- Schools
- Medway School Nursing Team – 0300 123 4444
- Your GP
- www.nhs.uk
- Childline – 0800 1111
- NSPCC - 0808 800 5000



- Incredible Years
- The importance of Play in Promoting Healthy Child Development and Maintaining Strong Parent-Child Bond.
- Child Development Centre
- www.nhs.uk
- NSPCC – Parenting and Behaviour
- Downstairs/Upstairs Brain - by Huddl Advisor Dr Hazel Harrison – Clinical Psychologist

