Staff Meeting Pack:

Moving on From 'Challenging Behaviour'



Questions and activities to prompt reflection and discussion about the language we use to describe behaviour.

How to use this pack

The language we use has the power to transform the way we think about, talk about, and support behaviour.

This pack contains questions and activities to prompt discussion and reflection about the language we use to describe behaviour.

It can be used as a focal point for staff meetings, to encourage collaboration and facilitate the creation of a coherent, joined-up approach to behaviour support across your setting.

Please note: these exercises require staff to feel comfortable to openly share their views, so that all team members can engage in positive dialogue to reach a shared perspective.



1: Look at the words and phrases below. What is your response to each and why? Discuss with a colleague.

challenging behaviour

disruptive

naughty

badly behaved

well behaved

kicking off

having a tantrum

dysregulated

attention-seeking

distressed

You may have come across these words and phrases to describe behaviour. Why might <u>some</u> of them be problematic?

Which of these words and phrases <u>would</u> you use and why?

2: Compare these pairs of sentences. Record your reflections in the boxes provided.

Billy is challenging.

Billy feels anxious.

Nihal is kicking off.

Nihal is in crisis.

Jemma is attention-seeking.

Jemma is connection-seeking.

We need to manage her behaviour.

We need to support her behaviour.

Carlos was disruptive in the session.

Carlos was dysregulated in the session.

The language we use to describe behaviour can influence how we respond to it.

When we use words like ‘challenging’ and ‘disruptive’, we might feel fearful and apprehensive about responding.

However, when we use words like ‘anxious’, ‘distressed’ or ‘dysregulated’, we want to help and support the individual.

3: Look at these two reports of the **same incident.**

- What do you notice about Report 1?
- What do you notice about Report 2?
- How might you respond to each?

1

When Casper arrived this morning, he was really angry. He swore at staff, kicked the door and pushed a table over. He refused to take part in the session and ran off across the outdoor area. He ignored staff when they asked him to come inside.

2

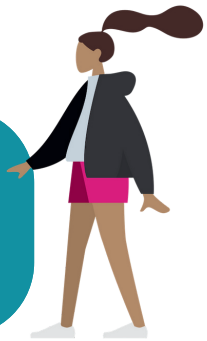
Casper was very anxious today. His mum is seriously ill, and he is worried about her. He found it hard to focus during our session, and became distressed when a planned activity changed. He ran outside to regulate himself, and staff stayed close by, ready to offer support.

Report 2 focuses on the underlying causes of the behaviour, rather than the behaviour itself. When we understand what is driving behaviour, we can take a more understanding, compassionate and supportive approach.

Read the contextual information, then re-write the example report in a way that reflects this approach.

Contextual information:

Penny is autistic. She is highly sensitive to loud noises and finds crowded spaces overwhelming.



Penny kicked off in the supermarket today. Her behaviour was very challenging. She threw items off the shelves and ran out of the store. She was disruptive and aggressive.

Consider the following scenario:

You hear a noise in the corridor, so you go to see what is going on. An individual you support is running up and down the corridor, shouting and crying. They are pulling posters off the wall as they go. Two other staff members are running after them.

Thinking about yourself, the individual, and the other staff members:

What questions might you ask?

What might you say or do?

What language could you use?

What are your key takeaways from these exercises?



And finally...

When we are intentional about the language we use, we can transform our approach to behaviour support. We can seek to understand what is driving the behaviour, and decide on the best supports.

Reflecting on the activities, work together to decide on any next steps /actions, for example, updating policies and guidelines. You might also want to consider opportunities for further support or development.

Next steps and actions:

Further support or development: