

# Managing and Understanding Behaviour Training

Jayne Saul 2023

# Welcome

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# Ground Rules

- ▶ **Confidentiality - what is discussed in the session remains confidential**
- ▶ **Allow everyone an opportunity to speak and listen respectfully**

# Aims of this session:

To support parents to develop a better understanding of why children behave the way they do

Explore the different experiences of the group

Look at strategies to manage difficult behaviour and promote positive behaviours

Suggest new strategies to support children and young people

Highlight the support that is available to parents and caregivers

# What do we know?

Children are diverse

They experience different social and emotional experiences which impact on their behaviour

As a result of these experiences children can present with many different behaviours, sometimes these can be challenging even for the most experienced parents or caregivers

This training will provide you with some strategies to support you in managing difficult behaviour and to give you the opportunity to share your own experiences

## **Remember!**

**Its important to recognise that children with attachment disorders, Foetal alcohol spectrum disorder or additional learning needs may need alternative support through specialist services.**

Why do the children and young people  
behave the way they do?

Group activity



**When we seem angry or aggressive, there are often other feelings hidden under the surface.**



# ICEBERG

When your child is acting out, it can be helpful to think about the image of an iceberg. We only see the top of an iceberg because most of it is underwater. Similarly, when your child is behaving in challenging ways, there will be feelings going on under the surface that you cannot see. Your child may not be aware of these feelings and may need your help to talk about them.

Underneath their behaviour, a child or young person may be feeling angry, tired, stressed, anxious, confused, hurt, jealous, bored or something else. Whatever's going on, try to remember that the behaviour you see on the surface is not the whole story.

**Positive or negative behaviour can relate to the way adults in their lives have treated or responded to them. Children and young people develop certain ways of behaving and relating to people and certain beliefs and feelings about themselves**

**They have developed behaviour patterns to 'help them' to understand and navigate the care given to them**

**We need to think about learned behaviour**

**It is important to also think about children who have experienced physical and or emotional abuse or neglect, loss and trauma may also develop mental health problems or behaviour disorders as a result of their difficult early experiences**

# What is behaviour ?



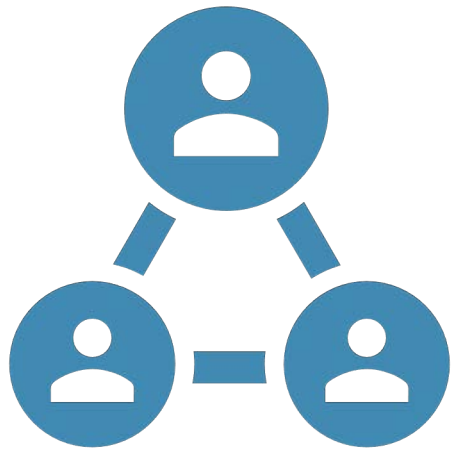
How is it influenced ?



??????????

**Behaviour is a form of communication, it conveys a message, it's a means to an end**

**Only 7% of communication is verbal  
55% - body language  
38% tone of voice**



- ▶ Behaviour is influenced by the culture in which we live and the attitudes, emotions, values, ethics and authority of the people who care for us.
- ▶ What environmental factors can impact on behaviour?

# Other environmental factors that play a part

Physical and  
mental health


Drugs/ alcohol

Diet- failure to  
thrive, health need  
diagnosed or  
undiagnosed

Lack of sleep

Worried about  
something - school  
move, loss, any  
transition, peer  
pressure, bullying

and more...



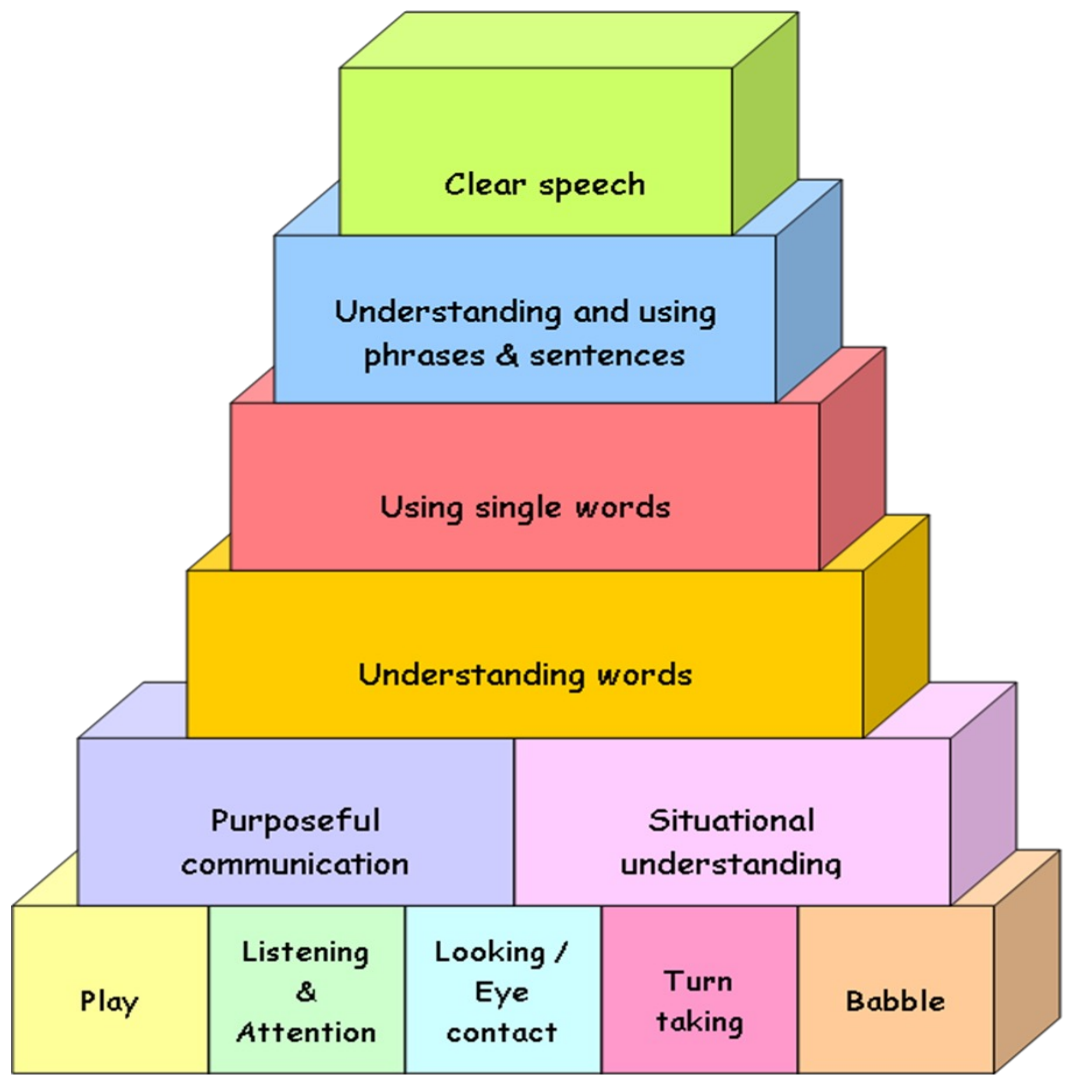
**Beneath every  
behavior there is a  
feeling. And beneath  
each feeling there is a  
need. And when we  
meet that need rather  
than focus on the  
behavior, we begin to  
deal with the cause,  
not the symptom.**

- Ashleigh Warner

# Regulating Behaviours and Emotions

- ▶ 1 Week old baby can distinguish between happy, sad and surprised caregivers
- ▶ 11 week old baby will freeze in response to fear but show interest in a happy face
- ▶ By 2 to 3 years of age, a child can use vocabulary to talk about their own thoughts and feelings
- ▶ By 3 years they can talk about how other people feel and understand how what they say can affect others
- ▶ Dan Siegel - clinical professor of Psychiatry says
- ▶ **“Name it to Tame it” (emotion)**




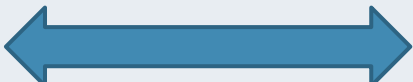




# Speech, Communication and Language Difficulties

- ▶ We know that 10% of the population in the UK have Speech, Language and Communication difficulties
- ▶ 75% of brain development takes place within the first 2 years of a child's life
- ▶ Impact of trauma on the developing brain (Temporal Lobes control Speech, Language and Communication) can lead to behavioural and psychiatric difficulties

# Parent/Caregiver - Child perception - Interpreting behaviour

What the caregiver may see and think		What is really going on for the child
Feel a behaviour is unacceptable		Understandable behaviour
Feel the child is avoidant and ignoring carer as turning away		Child is in flight
Feel the child is being defiant		Child is coping with threat in “survival” mode
See the child as aggressive		Child feels fearful and frightened

# The attachment bond

- ▶ • The infant brain is profoundly influenced by the attachment bond.
- ▶ • When the primary caregiver is able to manage their own personal stress, calm the infant, communicate through emotion, and see the infant as separate, the young child's nervous system becomes “securely attached.”
- ▶ • The strong foundation of a secure attachment bond enables the child to be self-confident, trusting, hopeful, and comfortable in the face of conflict. As an adult, he or she will be flexible, creative, hopeful, and optimistic

# Containment - Key to secure attachment

- ▶ Containment is the way in which one person can take on board the powerful feelings of another
- ▶ By communicating with touch, gesture and speech, make the feelings more manageable
- ▶ Helps children to regulate their feelings

What kinds of behaviours have you  
seen from your children?

## Behaviours we might see in children

- ▶ Act withdrawn/ shut down or...
- ▶ Demand attention through positive and negative behaviour
- ▶ Excessive temper tantrums
- ▶ Aggressive behaviour
- ▶ Poor appetite/ low weight/ digestive problems
- ▶ Regressive behaviour
- ▶ Scream and cry excessively
- ▶ Poor sleep pattern/ night terrors
- ▶ Show irritability/ anxiety/sadness
- ▶ Startle easily
- ▶ Poor verbal skills

## What behaviours might we see in older children?

- ▶ Normal childhood development, **HORMONES!**
- ▶ Inability to identify what they are feeling
- ▶ Inability to regulate emotions (co-regulate), behaviour
- ▶ Cannot always tell you why they did something
- ▶ Often dissociate (blank out) resulting from hypo arousal
- ▶ Feel they are the cause of all traumatic events
- ▶ Do not respond well to sanctions, punishments and exclusion
- ▶ Time out can be traumatising (reliving or feelings of rejection)
- ▶ Often sensitive to another person's feelings and unconsciously pick up another person's weakness
- ▶ PTSD, triggered by sights, sounds, smells surrounding them
- ▶ Unworthy of good things so sabotages days out, activities etc



# The ABC of Behaviour:

## A model of social learning theory

- ▶ A is the antecedent or trigger and is something which comes before
- ▶ B is the behaviour we see and which we are trying to understand and potentially change
- ▶ C is the consequence, or what comes after the behaviour and in response to the behaviour
- ▶ Behaviour is affected by things that happen before it as well as things that happen afterwards

Social Learning Theory suggests that children learn behaviour through modelling, observation and imitation from the people who care for them

- ▶ Behaviour, reactions and responses are learnt not only from observing others and by what they do, but also from the responses which they give us
- ▶ Children who have learnt how to manage abusive and neglectful treatment will need support to learn alternative strategies.
- ▶ Behaviour is learnt, it can also be unlearnt, adapted or changed

## Example

*John has been asked several times to sit at the dining table to eat his tea. He refuses, throws his toys around, shouts abuse at his Mum when she speaks to him and refuses to move.*

- ▶ **Antecedent** - Was Mum asking John to sit at the table
- ▶ **Behaviour** clearly indicates that he is unhappy and wants to remain playing with his toys.
- ▶ **Consequence** was it that Mum gave up and let John sit on the floor and have his tea there. This will re-enforce the behaviour pattern
- ▶ How can Mum change the pattern of behaviour and make meal time a positive experience?

# Behaviour is learnt

It is influenced by both what comes before (antecedent or trigger) and also by its consequence.

## **REMEMBER**

It may be possible to change the antecedent or the consequence in order to produce change in the behaviour

## Whenever you see negative behaviour be curious about context....

- ▶ Immediate triggers
- ▶ Person
- ▶ Place
- ▶ Time of day
- ▶ Situation home, school
- ▶ Memories thoughts and feelings
- ▶ Self talk - negative thoughts and feelings about themselves

# What can you do?

- drawing or painting
- doing something active like running or their favourite sport
- listening to music
- having some time alone
- reading a book
- writing
- cooking or baking
- making something out of playdough or Lego

Having a list of coping strategies will help children to build up a bank of tools they can use when they're struggling.

## Promoting Positive behaviour

### Attending- Spending time

- ▶ **Attending is a way of relating and noticing the child providing positive attention and showing an interest in who they are and what they are doing. Serve and return**
- ▶ **Powerful for those children who are not used to receiving much positive attention.**
- ▶ **Opportunity to observe how a child sees and experiences the world. (The child's internal world)**
- ▶ **It increases the child's positive feelings about themselves and a stronger sense of intimacy and trust with the carer.**
- ▶ **Promotes attunement and develops attachment**

# Avoid



Asking  
questions



Directing the  
child's play



Giving  
Instructions



Teaching



# Using positive praise

- ▶ It can be difficult to praise children when its been a particularly bad day and a child constantly challenges you with negative behaviour
- ▶ How you react and respond to a child has a direct impact on whether the situation will escalate or de-escalate
- ▶ Remember the caregiver needs to break the negative verbal cycle and change the mood as the child will not..

## Resist negative statements such as

- ▶ *Don't do that...*
- ▶ *How many times do I have to tell you....*
- ▶ *Don't speak to me like that...*
- ▶ *Why have you???*
  
- ▶ *Asking a child “why” can push them out of their window of tolerance, fight, flight, freeze*

# Use positive praise/ language to increase a child's self esteem, confidence and abilities

I like it when you listen to what I am saying

It helps me when you tell me how you are feeling

I'm so pleased that you were able to calm down

You've done a great job of doing what I have asked you to do



10 minute  
break

# Understanding the stress response

- ▶ Fight - Fighting a threat
  - ▶ Flight - Running away from a threat/ danger
  - ▶ Freeze - Unable to move and do anything in response to a threat
  - ▶ Fawn - Cooperating with one's threat, acting to please to avoid conflict
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- ▶ The stress or Fight or Flight response is the automatic reaction system of the body which is designed to protect us from danger.
  - ▶ It is not in our conscious control, it just happens

# The Limbic System:

## Processing stressful events in the brain

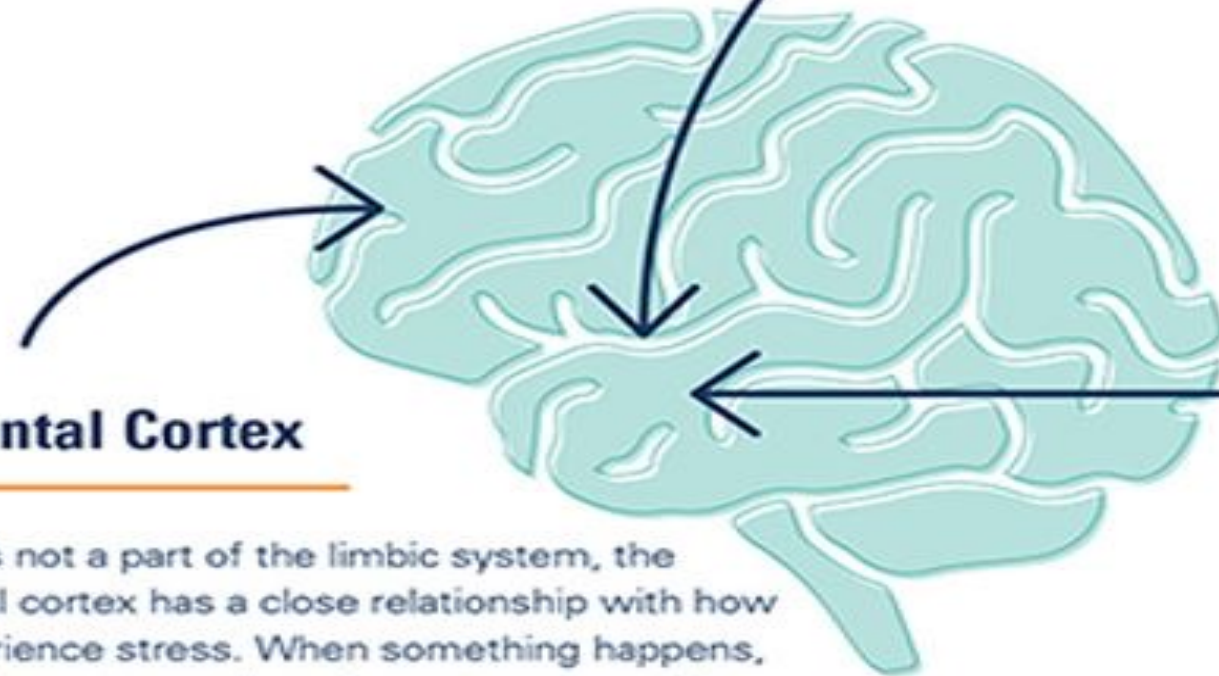
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These components in the Limbic System help process stressful events. They work together to help the brain determine whether something is stressful and triggers stress responses in the body.

## Amygdala & Hippocampus

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If something is seen as a threat or a stressor, the amygdala triggers the fight-flight response in the brain. Then it tells the hippocampus to remember everything about it, shaping our future response to similar events. Because of this, people who suffer more trauma are more likely to react poorly to stressors.



## Prefrontal Cortex

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While it's not a part of the limbic system, the prefrontal cortex has a close relationship with how we experience stress. When something happens, information gets sent here for us to process the event on a more intellectual level - with logic and evaluation skills. Using those, we develop a response. But stress can disrupt the prefrontal cortex, making it harder to make good decisions.

## Hypothalamus

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After the Amygdala triggers the fight-flight response, the hypothalamus carries it out. It sends a message to your adrenal glands to release adrenaline and cortisol. Cortisol is a hormone that causes stress reactions throughout the body. If you're constantly in a fight-flight state, these hormones will do great damage to your body.

# Helping children to regulate emotions

The ability to manage social and emotional skills which enable children to build resilience are built and fostered in the early years.

Those children with disrupted or insecure attachments will be disadvantaged in terms of their social and emotional competence

This can result in a Child who is unable to regulate their emotions and therefore regularly in crisis



Children need  
to learn to  
co-regulate  
their  
emotions first

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Support the child to identify and name the emotions they are feeling.

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Children who have missed out on this key development stage will struggle to regulate and understand their own emotions and responses.

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They may exhibit a poor ability to relate to, empathise and interpret other people's feelings

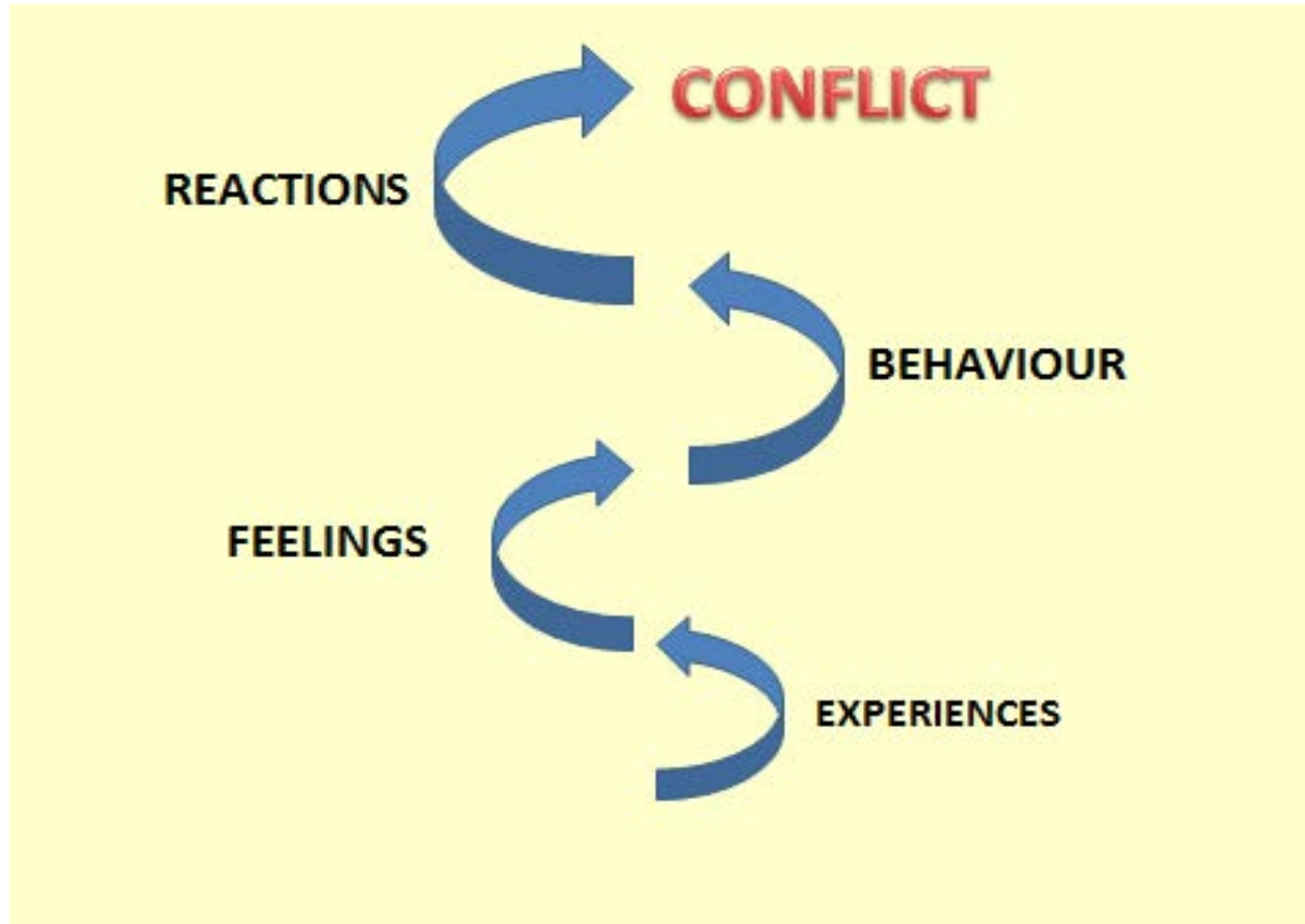
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This will leave children disadvantaged in terms of their own mental health as well as social development



## Conflict Spiral

**EXPERIENCES** > shape **FEELINGS** > which drive the **BEHAVIOUR** > which results in **REACTIONS** > which can create **CONFLICT**



**EXPERIENCES**> Result from incidents and perceptions. They can be real, imagined, anticipated or remembered. Although carers may not have witnessed the events, for the child there will have been experiences at the beginning of the conflict spiral.

**FEELINGS**> do not arise spontaneously, but are caused by experiences. negative thoughts and feelings affecting behaviour.

**BEHAVIOUR**> does not appear spontaneously either, but results from feelings and thoughts. Negative behaviour is more likely to provoke a negative reaction.

**REACTIONS**> are experiences which feed the Conflict spiral. It is essential that we recognise signs and signals at an early stage and monitor our response, because negative behaviour can provoke negative reactions which can then result in conflict

# Consequences

## ▶ **Natural Consequence's:**

- ▶ If your child walks in a puddle without wellies then they will get wet feet.
- ▶ If they don't eat their lunch then they will feel hungry by teatime.

## ▶ **Logical Consequence's:**

- ▶ If a child plays in the house with a football, the carer will take the ball away.
- ▶ If the child deliberately breaks his sisters toy, they will have to replace it out of their own pocket money. (Age appropriate )
- ▶ If they are late for school, they will get a detention.

Always give a warning before imposing a consequence and always inform the child beforehand what the consequence will be

- ▶ **Consequences should be immediate; Children can't relate to something you impose in two weeks time.**
- ▶ **Children need the link between the behaviour and the consequence**

# When Children misbehave use Reflective Listening

- ▶ Stop what you are doing and look at the child
- ▶ Use body language and facial expression to convey interest and availability
- ▶ Allow the child to say what they need to
- ▶ Ask questions to show interest and seek clarification
- ▶ Feed back to the child what you feel they have said
- ▶ Try to see things from the child's perspective
- ▶ Be present

# Help the child to name and manage those feelings

Say something like...

- ▶ It sounds as if you are very upset
- ▶ I think you must be really sad when you don't see your mum
- ▶ You sound angry right now
- ▶ It must be embarrassing when

# Create a calm zone

A place to go when they need a break

A place they can calm down when stressed or frustrated

When children believe themselves to be a naughty child, how do we help them to accept praise?

- ▶ Instead of using statements about positive behaviour be descriptive instead.
- ▶ For example “You have used lots of lovely colours in your picture”
- ▶ You can also praise the child indirectly by telling other people in his presence how good he is or how well he has done something.



# What rewards motivate your child?

Social rewards are most effective. They enhance self esteem, independence and social skills.

However, some children don't respond well to social rewards and are more motivated by tangible rewards.

Praise should always be given alongside tangible rewards

# What Kind of rewards can we give children

## Social Rewards

- ▶ Praise
- ▶ Attention
- ▶ Smiles
- ▶ Hugs

## Tangible Rewards

- ▶ Treats
- ▶ Money
- ▶ Snacks
- ▶ Special time with parent/carer

# Be specific

- ▶ Be clear about what the reward will be
- ▶ Saying “ we will do something nice” is not as effective as explaining what you will do with the child
- ▶ Rewards should be given immediately after the behaviour you are trying to encourage
- ▶ Be consistent, and follow through with the reward promised
- ▶ Children learn by getting plenty of feedback so keep making the effort to reward them throughout the day

# Focus on the positive instead of trying to stop a problem behaviour

## Problem behaviour

- ▶ If the child is shouting
- ▶ If the child is chasing the cat

## Target behaviour

- ▶ You respond quietly
- ▶ Make time with the child to stroke the cat nicely

# The “When” and “Then” Rule



- ▶ Rewards should be given after the child has done whatever it is you want them to do, not before
- ▶ For instance
- ▶ “When you have finished your homework, then you can go on the computer”
- ▶ “When you have tidied your room, then we can go to the park “

## “I Statements”

“I” statements have four parts and can be used to address positive or negative situations.

<b>I feel....</b>	Where you describe how you are feeling
<b>When you....</b>	Where you describe the behaviour or situation
<b>Because....</b>	Say why you are feeling as you do
<b>I want....</b>	You state clearly what you want the child to do now or in the future

# Example

- ▶ I Feel **disappointed**
- ▶ When you **lied to me about where you were after school today**
- ▶ Because I want to be able to trust you to tell me **the truth**
- ▶ I want **you to tell me what happened please**

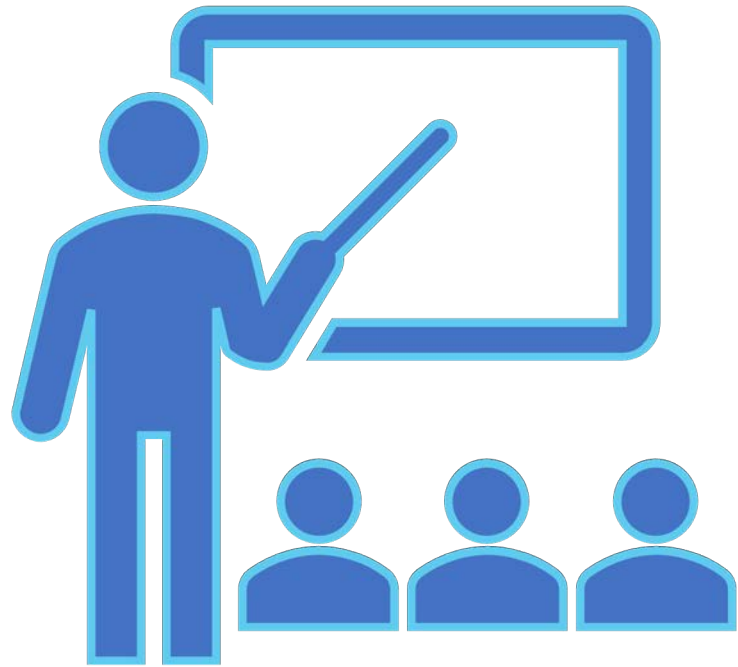
The most important part of using an “I statement” is that you are communicating with the child without blaming or criticising

- ▶ This should help you open up the lines of communication, avoiding conflict and defensive behaviour from the child



# Styles of parenting

- ▶ **Permissive indulgent** - discipline is typically high on warmth but is low on control
- ▶ **Authoritarian** - discipline in contrast is low on warmth and high on control
- ▶ **Authoritative** - parent/ carer is responsive to the Child's emotional needs. Discipline and limits are enforced creating clear expectations and safe, predictable boundaries for the Child. This will help to develop a positive trusting relationship



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help  
feel safe

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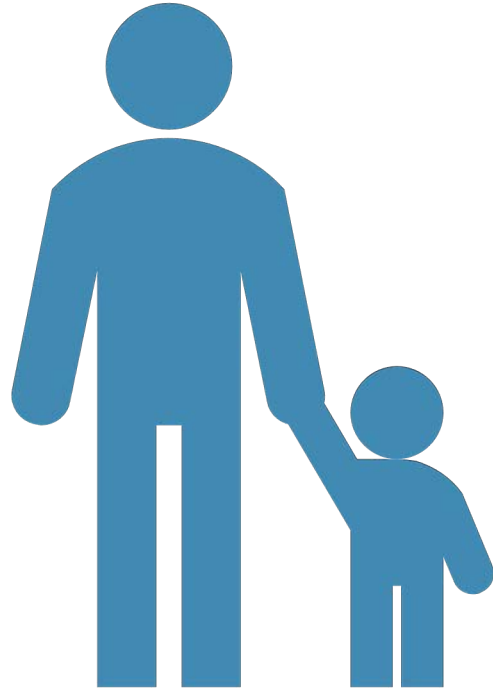
# Family Rules or Expectations

- ▶ Think about the things that matter to you and the rest of the family including the child
- ▶ Get the whole family together to discuss and agree on the rules
- ▶ Make them clear and brief
- ▶ Make the rules say what everyone should do rather than what they should not do;

**“Keep your hands and feet to yourself” rather than “Don’t kick or hit people”**

## How to make the rules work well

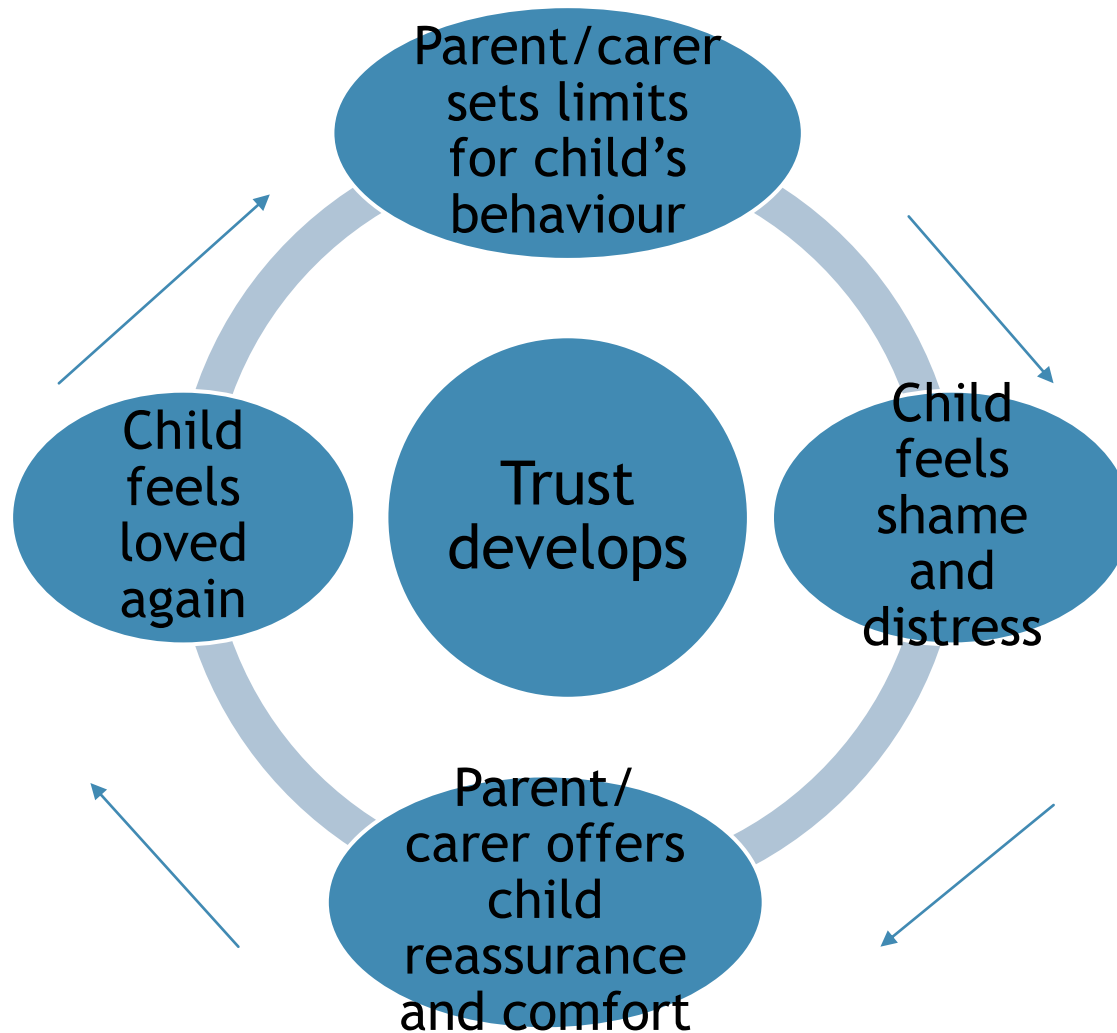
- ▶ The rules should be about behaviour you can observe not about what happens at School or football club
- ▶ Write the rules down and place them on the wall
- ▶ Make it clear the rules apply to everyone in the house

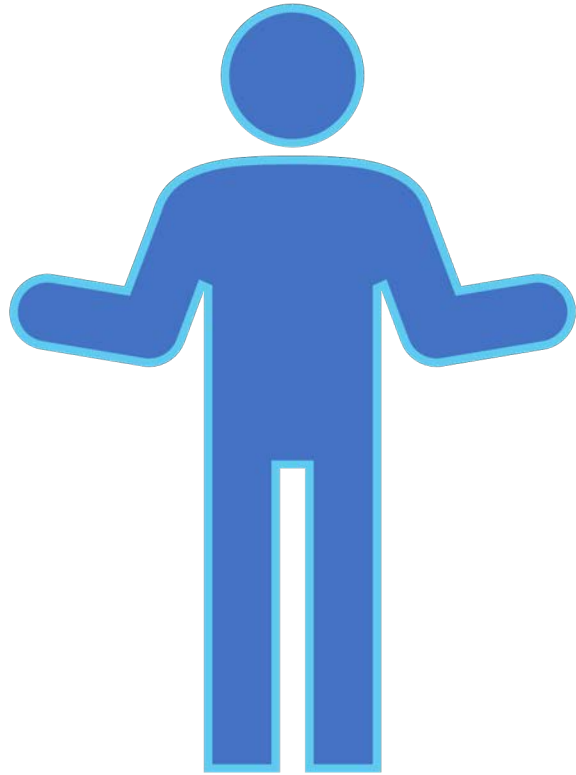


## If a child breaks the rule

- ▶ Get the child's attention
- ▶ Explain that the child has broken a rule and why that is a problem
- ▶ Get the child to explain what she should have done
- ▶ Tell her to do it
- ▶ Praise her when she does it correctly

# Cycle of Socialisation helps children accept blame and responsibility for wrong doing





## However

- ▶ If children have lived with parents who are inconsistent, overly punitive and unavailable they will develop fear in place of trust and will therefore be reluctant to tell the truth

# Planned ignoring



What behaviour can you ignore?



Planned ignoring can be a helpful strategy when trying to discourage certain behaviours. By giving attention to a child who is misbehaving instead of focussing on the child that is well behaved can backfire.




Try ignoring, moaning, whining, silly noises and voices, tantrums, pulling faces, complaining, rudeness and more



# The good things about ignoring

Child gets no attention when he behaves badly, and so bad behaviour goes unrewarded - no payback



It's a great alternative to nagging, shouting etc- it can help you to keep calm



It makes you a good role model for the child- you demonstrate the art of keeping your cool in the face of provocation.

# Selective ignoring

- ▶ Ignoring involves not making eye contact, not speaking to or touching the child and turning away from him
- ▶ Decide which behaviours you are going to ignore (Not too many that it stresses you out)
- ▶ Explain to the child what you are going to do
- ▶ Be prepared to see things through
- ▶ When ignoring the child be subtle and neutral (don't laugh)
- ▶ Be consistent in your use of ignoring
- ▶ Limit how often and for how long you use it
- ▶ Combine ignoring with distractions
- ▶ Ensure planned ignoring is balanced. We also need to offer opportunities for praise and attention when a child is behaving well

# Further considerations to be taken into account when managing a child or young person's challenging behaviour

## Consider

Consider has there been changes to the family dynamics, living arrangements

## Consider

Consider that parents/ caregivers have different approaches to discipline causing confusion about acceptable boundaries rules and expectations

## Consider

Consider attachment difficulties. Children like to please parents /caregivers but may take some time to develop

## Consider

Consider a child who has been constantly let down will feel that parent/ care givers are unreliable, unpredictable and untrustworthy

## Consider

Consider a child or young person's social, emotional and physical development

# What strategies work well

- ▶ **The adult always needs to remain calm and in control when children and young people are in crisis**
- ▶ Effective communication, be clear and concise.
- ▶ Set clear boundaries and expectations. Remain consistent.
- ▶ Intonation of voice, keep tone of voice quiet, low and speak slowly.
- ▶ Offer reassurances; let the child/young person know you are aware of their distress and available if they need to talk.
- ▶ Involve the child or young person wherever possible in discussion around expectations about appropriate behaviour. Inform of desired behaviour.
- ▶ Never threaten a punishment you cannot enforce.
- ▶ Involve the child or young person in the discussion about sanctions for inappropriate behaviour.
- ▶ Use observational skills, read the child or young person's body language and mood.
- ▶ Intervene early to prevent situations from escalating.
- ▶ Be curious about his/her anger.

# What strategies work well continued....

- ▶ Wait until a child or young person has calmed down before discussing better ways of responding to angry feelings.
- ▶ Use listening skills, allow the child or young person to speak and consider your response.
- ▶ Offer a compromise or negotiate where possible. It's ok to accept that you have over reacted.
- ▶ Consider the language you use,
- ▶ You are not going out to play until you have finished your homework - leads to a defensive response, choose an alternative such as
- ▶ Feel free to go and play as soon as you have finished your homework.
- ▶ Dont talk to me in that tone of voice - lead to a defensive response, choose an alternative
- ▶ I'll be happy to listen to you as soon as your voice is calm.
- ▶ Acknowledge the distress the child or young person is feeling, show empathy.
- ▶ Planned ignoring, Where possible ignore minor misdemeanours.
- ▶ Use positive praise where possible to encourage good behaviour.
- ▶ Appropriate humour.
- ▶ Divert or distract and introduce an activity.
- ▶ Reward charts.
- ▶ Time out/ Time in.

# Caring for yourself

- ▶ It is important to develop new skills however, this is not enough on its own
- ▶ As a parent/ caregiver you give to others all of the time and it is no wonder that you sometimes feel drained
- ▶ It is important to value yourself and make time for the things you need to do
- ▶ Remember, you need to have some pleasure, leisure and fun
- ▶ You need to look after yourself so you can look after your children

Signposting:



# Thanks for attending and participating in this session

- ▶ Any questions?
- ▶ Any final thoughts?
- ▶ One thing you will take away from this session.
- ▶ Please complete the evaluation form before you leave.
- ▶ Are there any further training sessions you would like to be offered?