

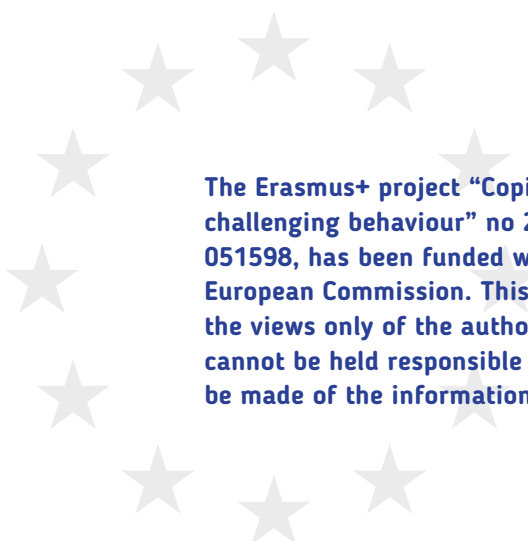


**COPING WITH STUDENTS
CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR**

MANUAL FOR TEACHERS, PARENTS AND OTHER SPECIALISTS TO PREVENT AND COPE WITH CHILDREN'S CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR



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INTRODUCTION

This manual is created by four schools during the Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project “Coping with students challenging behaviour”. The coordinator of this project was Pärnu Päikese School from Estonia, partners “Dr. Zlatan Sremec”- Skopje from North Macedonia, Rigas Valda Avotina pamatskola from Latvia and Institut for working rehabilitation for physically handicapped citizens from Slovakia.

The idea of “Coping with students challenging behaviour” project appeared after attending the TCA seminar in Poland “School to school (S2S) partnerships- how to plan an excellent project” for headmasters and teachers of special schools. We are European schools with a different background, mentality and experiences, still, we all face the same problem- how to deal with challenging behaviour of children with special needs during the school day.

Aim of the project was to share best practice in other countries in order to increase staff competences about methods and approaches of preventing and reducing students’ challenging behaviour.

During the project we worked towards our aim, we shared and collected many methods and approaches and with this manual we are happy to share our collections of them.

May this manual help parents, teachers and other specialists to instruct, redirect and teach students with special needs the way that less challenging behaviour occurs. The manual also provides approaches on how to deal with already appeared challenging behaviour.



THEORETICAL APPROACH

There is no one universally accepted definition of challenging behaviour, but there are different types of challenging behaviour:

- * aggressive behaviour—which can include pushing, punching, kicking, biting, spitting, scratching and threatening behaviour;
- * destructive behaviour—which can include destruction of property and the environment;
- * disruptive behaviour—which can include screaming, tantrums, verbal abuse, non-cooperation, running away;
- * withdrawn behaviour—which can include failure to respond, or avoidance of people or activities;
- * stereotypical behaviour, particularly in children with learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders, which can include rocking, repetitive vocalisations, ritualistic hand movements; and
- * self-injurious behaviour, including head banging, scratching and poking.

EFFECTS ON TEACHERS

Challenging behaviour can be a big distraction in the classroom. It can take time away from the lesson and, in the long run, impact student scores. It can also impact mood, emotions and mental health. A challenging student can cause stress, as well as worsen symptoms of anxiety in teachers. A misbehaving student also

challenges your authority. If one student becomes challenging, other students could do the same. If challenging behaviour doesn't go away, then the situation should be solved properly.

EFFECTS ON STUDENTS

If a student is disruptive, it can make it hard for other people to complete their work. Even worse, it can also cause emotional distress. Challenging behaviour can include bullying, which may upset some children. It also creates a negative classroom environment, which could decrease productivity and grades. Worse, it could influence students to replicate this behaviour.

PREVENTING THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

1. COOPERATION BETWEEN HOME AND SCHOOL

Cooperation between home and school is very important. Getting to understand the home situation will help teachers understand the problematic students so that teachers can find ways to manage their behaviour. There are many reasons why a child might be misbehaving. One can have a poor home environment. Maintaining frequent communication with parents is essential for managing challenging behaviour. School should be in active communication with homes. Talking to parents or carers will help school to know them better, so teachers can understand the causes of bad behaviour. It will help teachers to establish some good behaviour management techniques for school as well as some that might work

effectively at home. In the presence of a child, it is important for parents to avoid negative expressions towards teachers, especially if the teacher is an authority for the child.

2. RAISING A CHILD'S SELF- ESTEEM

Raising self-esteem, developing empathy and respect is important in teaching anger and emotion management.

To build a child's self- esteem , it is important to focus on their strengths, interests and talents. All children but especially autistic children and teenagers who are confident can cope better when things go wrong. They're less likely to feel afraid in new or unexpected situations.

In general, educators should appreciate effort, encourage curiosity and treat mistakes as building blocks for learning from mistakes. Educators and parents should accompany children when encountering setbacks but if possible let them figure out problems by themselves.

Newly acquired skills can help build a child's self-esteem, experiences help children understand others.

SOME USEFUL TIPS:

Social stories can be created – these are excellent in explaining social situations to autistic children but they can be also used to describe individual child's successes or talents, including related photos.

Strength cards can be created with children, depicting different

strengths for example, I am a good listener or I am brave. Each week children can draw a card from a colourful bag, educators praise a child whenever they show this strength.

Many autistic children and teenagers have special interests. These can be used to improve a child's learning and social skills.

For example:

- * interest in types of vehicles (cars, trains, buses) to teach them counting
- * enthusiasm for water to teach them self-help skills, like taking a shower or bath and washing hands
- * special interest of nature to develop an interest in reading, by looking at books about animals/birds/vulcans with them
- * interest in a TV or movie character to develop skills for managing emotions - 'When Spiderman feels angry or upset, he finds a quiet place and takes three deep breaths'.

3. GOOD RELATIONSHIPS

Good and respectful relationships at home and at school are important for the child. Children need attention and the knowledge that what they are doing will work for others. Healthy relationships build positive friendships and support children to self-regulate their emotions. It's essential for children to develop 'social competence' and the ability to interact with others with care, empathy and respect.

4. TRUSTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

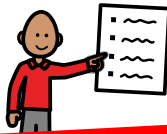
A relationship of trust with your family members helps the child to

talk about their worries and thus reduces tensions. Parents need to know who their child's friends are. To build a trustful relationship parents allow for unstructured, uninterrupted time with their child each day. Adults let the child know that they are interested in their activities. They must encourage children to express their feelings in age-appropriate ways, respect children's feelings and play games that explore feelings.

5. THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF SPECIAL NEEDS

It is important to familiarise yourself with the child's special needs, the parents can ask the school for advice, and turn to different specialists. It is important that adults not limit children by their disabilities or challenges, but that they give them the freedom to achieve whatever successes and accomplishments they can in life. It is important that parents have realistic expectations towards their children. Understanding special needs also helps to understand different behaviours.

CLASSROOM RULES



GOOD



6. ROUTINES AND RULES

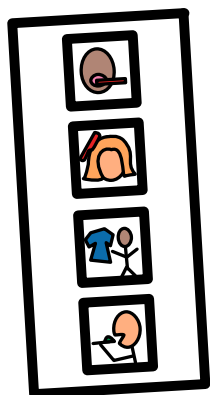
Routines and rules are important. The rules allow the child to learn the right behaviour. Routine and order give him security and a sense of security. The purpose of the rules should be explained in simple words (eg "If you hit me then I will be hurt and I

BAD

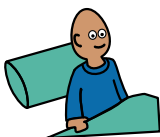
will cry"). If the child does not understand why they have been imposed, he will violate them as soon as possible.

7. SCHEDULE, DAY PLAN

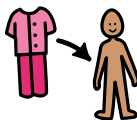
MORNING ROUTINE



7.00
WAKE UP



7.15
GETTING DRESSED



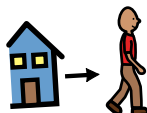
7.20
BREAKFAST



7.40
HYGIENE



7.50
LEAVING HOME



The daily plan /a schedule is important, helps children keep track, creates a structure for the day that is easier to follow. Visualise (in writing, with pictures) if necessary. Providing a visual schedule to follow provides predictability. The free picture bank for individual use: arasaac.org, paid picture bank www.tobiidynavox.com.

Support your child's daily routine. The child must know that after completing his/her tasks or duties, he/she also has free time during which he/she can do what he/she likes (watching a movie, playing a game with his/her parents, etc.).

8. STICK TO THE SCHEDULE/DAY PLAN

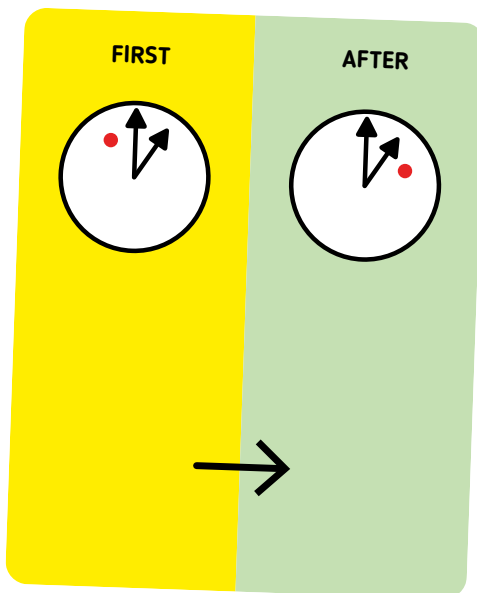
The plan must be adhered to, learned while studying. In case of urgent need (the child is obviously tired; the state of health requires) must be flexible.

9. BOUNDARIES

The established boundaries must be maintained and done by all adults working with or instructing the child. Boundaries give children a sense of security and a safe feeling. The rules must be the same and followed by all instructors.

10. PREDICTABILITY

It is important to create predictability for the child, it teaches children the different connections in the world and helps them to understand them. What is next to happen is very important for children with special needs, especially children with autism.



11. TRANSITIONS

Switching from one activity to another can be difficult for children. Let them know in time so that the child can get used to the idea, and support him in this. If necessary, visualise the transition. E.g. first- then; the sequence of visualised actions; visual timers; visuals to count down.

Possibility to use “first-then” technique. Example: A child has to do a less desired task first and then gets a more pleasant task or activity. It can also be just to create predictability, use some form of visualisation (with pictures, writing, with objects).

12. CONSISTENCY

Consistency is important in keeping demands, boundaries and routines. The established boundaries must be maintained and must be done by all adults working with or instructing the child. Consistency gives a sense of security, the child knows what to expect which helps to prevent challenging behaviour.

13. COMMUNICATE WELL

Communication is the key to effective behaviour management in school and at home. It's important to communicate with children, no matter how badly behaved they are. Shouting to or embarrassing other person isn't a good way to build a positive relationship. Instead, get to know them better and understand why they misbehave. Always ensure that you communicate clearly and consistently. The way you phrase your comments can have a big impact on the way children perceive them. For example, you can try to:

Preface your requests with ‘thank you’. For example, “Thank you for putting your crisps packet in the bin.” This is a closed request and doesn't give the child any element of doubt to hold onto or argue with.

Be specific. For example, “Hand your homework to me at the start of the lesson on Monday” is much more specific than “Hand your

homework in on Monday". In doing this, you have communicated to the student exactly what they should do.

You should aim at keeping your communication calm, authoritative and neutral. If you speak calmly without resorting to sarcasm, shouting or demonstrating a loss of control, children are more likely to listen and to do what you ask. Always keeping your word regarding any type of sanctions for bad behaviour, children will know where they stand.

And also, be active when communicating with the child. If you need to send a negative message, start with a positive one. When communicating, switch off the phone, switch off the TV, stay present.

14. MOTIVATION

It is important to motivate the child. Motivation is a key factor when working or instructing with individuals on the autism spectrum, and the key to what motivates can often be found in a person's interests and hobbies. When creating schedules, make sure some time for interests/hobbies is allotted. This can be a motivator for doing less preferred tasks beforehand.

15. PRAISE

The child should be praised for his efforts, and try to highlight his trouble. This is necessary for further motivation and cooperation. It is also important to praise a child when the tantrum is over. It can also be good to acknowledge their feelings. Learning to cope with challenging emotions is a very important life skill. Children should definitely be congratulated when they manage to calm themselves.

Stickers, sign “good/great”, visual sign good job, thumb up, verbally or edible snack.

16. BONUSSES

One way to motivate is to use bonuses. Stickers are suitable for sub-activities, activity stages, smaller activities. An agreed bonus for getting a certain number of stickers together: e.g. a treat, a joint action, a favourite movie, etc. favourite activities in performing agreed activities (e.g. time on a tablet, cartoon, etc.)



17. POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

In the case of positive, expected behaviour, let the child know that it is right. Confirm it with something positive or desirable for your child:

- * preferred activities
- * free time

- * time spending with a parent
- * verbal praise/recognition
- * food-related activities (making delicious food with something)
- * if possible, the desired things/toys
- * privileges (activity manager, trip choice)
- * stickers, signs on the table/board/refrigerator

18. SIGNAL “FINISHED”

It is important to signal to the child that the activity or class has ended. Once the exercise/task/lesson is done, it is important for the child to know where to put things or to let him or her know that the task/activity has been done/completed (eg sticker, water to drink, soothing activity for the child, there should be a concrete place to put the item or finished task to let a person know it's over. This can be a tray or box to put the items into. This provides a clear, visual cue that an activity is done and can move on to something else. If there is not enough time to complete a task and it has to be finished later, consider having a special market box for it.). Visually show on a daily basis that the day is getting shorter, activities are getting done.



Being able to transition successfully is an important skill to have

to increase independence, reduce challenging behaviour, foster flexibility, and lessen anxiety. There are many tools that are simple to make and easy to use to support transitions. Remember to tweak tools and visuals as a child grows and develops to ensure they remain effective and age appropriate.

19. PHYSICAL EXERCISE AND SPORTS

Physical exercise and sports are important for relieving tension, it supports cognitive and emotional / social development. Regular self-movement reduces anxiety, develops muscle strength and motor skills. It is also important to be in the fresh air.

Sometimes, if a student becomes distressed, you'll need to calm them down. Some positive techniques that might help are sport activities.

Motor skills - students with challenging behaviour are often lacking coordination and proper motor skills. They can appear stiff and clumsy during physical education lessons. The teachers of PE should consider which exercises or games the students with challenging behaviour are able to attend, encourage them during training and develop their motor skills taking into consideration their limitations. If serious problems with gross motor skills are identified children should be sent to a physiotherapist.

20. A BALANCE BETWEEN ACTIVITIES AND BREAKS

When assigning tasks and activities, it is important to ensure that the child is not overloaded. It is important to avoid irritation and restlessness due to fatigue.

Tasks should be reduced into small parts. Only one part at a time should be shown to the child so he does not become overwhelmed with a large number of tasks. Visual elements and manipulatives can also be added.

21. REST PERIODS

Ensure that the child has adequate rest periods, changing responsibilities. Unscheduled time allows for discovery and learning at one's own pace.

22. STATE OF HEALTH, ABILITIES AND SKILLS

The child's state of health, abilities and skills must be considered. Keep discussions and learning materials appropriate for both age and developmental level. All children have things they do well and things that are difficult for them. Find a child's strengths and help them learn to use them.

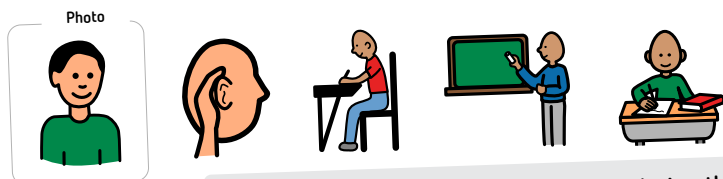
23. COMMUNICATION

Clear and understandable communication is important for the child. Ask simple questions and use appropriate language to the child's level of communication. Use short simple sentences, simple orders. Use alternative communication if necessary (PCS pictures, sign language).

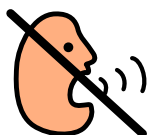
24. VISUALISATION

Visualisation is important for children with special needs to better understand the environment. A timer is suitable for capturing the time or moving from one activity to another. Social stories are

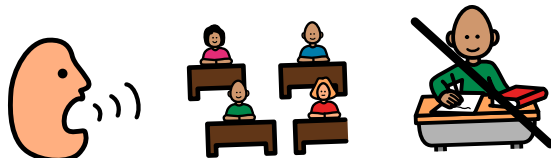
suitable to support comprehension and generalisation skills. It is possible for a parent to communicate with their child's class teacher or special education teacher about this topic.



„Name of a child” listens to the teachers during the lessons and does his tasks quietly.



No loud speaking during lessons.



Due to speaking loudly, classmates cannot learn.

Simple example of a social story.

25. COMPROMISES

Making compromises can explain to a child the opportunity to get what is desired/deal with what is pleasant when the responsibilities have been made.

26. WARNINGS

Warn your child if they misbehave. This gives the child the opportunity to stop or change the prohibited behaviour. Agree on the number/frequency of alerts in advance. Stick to it.

27. TRIGGERS

Identify the triggers for challenging behaviours, monitor the child, and find the reasons for the behaviours. Mapping the pattern of behaviour in children to see how escalation occurs can be very helpful. It may be possible to start a calming routine before total meltdown if you are aware of the symptoms of escalation. Symptoms can include more than normal stimming, or rocking, asking to leave an environment, or simply bolting to escape etc. Understanding what triggers, the child/student is able to stop a meltdown before it happens.

28. RESTING PLACE

Find a place for the child to calm down (arrange it with the child), the resting corner is important for the child. Guide the child to calm down and/or be alone to reduce, calm down, or regain control of themselves. Good idea is to supply the place with some child's favourite items, e.g. fidget toys, books, magazines.



Corner in the classroom



Resting place in the classroom

29. POSITIVE ENDING

A positive end to the day, both at school and at home, is important. Calm conversations, playing board games, reading/watching books together, etc. may be appropriate in a home environment. A positive end to the day gives a child strength for a new day and a desire to go back. It also gives a child feeling he is important and raises his self-esteem.

30. ENCOURAGING DESIRED BEHAVIOURS

Present the new behaviour to be acquired so that the child understands it and has the opportunity to emulate this skill. For a child it means that if he engages in a certain behaviour, and this behaviour gets him something that he wanted, then he is more likely to engage in that same behaviour again when he wants the same outcome in the future.

31. COOPERATION WITH A CHILD

In the case of children with special needs, it cannot be assumed that the child can cope with his tasks/activities alone, the parent/supervisor must be present, instructed and assisted at all times.

32. SENSORY ACTIVITIES

Provide sensory activities for the child. Sensory play encourages learning through exploration, curiosity, problem solving and creativity. It helps to build nerve connections in the brain and encourages the development of language and motor skills.

Ideas:

- * playing with kinetic sand/gel balls
- * Play Dough
- * water games/toys (indoors)
- * calming bottles
- * swinging (rocking chair)
- * sound tubes
- * shaving cream and soap foam play
- * scented items (soap, bags, candles)
- * “heavy work” activities (pushing and pulling a heavy box around the room)

33. ADAPTATION OF ENVIRONMENT

Adapting the environment to prevent the child from engaging in challenging behaviours, opportunities for irritation/stress/meltdowns. Some ideas:

- * dividers to divide the field of view;
- * removing attractive/irritating objects from the field of view (e.g. favourite book/ tablet, etc. is not visible during learning)
- * noise blocking earpads;



Divider in the classroom.



Table divider in the classroom

34. SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Offer activities for the child where the child both experiences success and learns something new. Achieving children thrive when others acknowledge their efforts and accomplishments. Children with special needs often don't come as easily to accomplishments, for this reason, makes them a greater cause for celebration. After all, it's the smaller, "quieter" successes in life that can add up to a lot, especially when it comes to the self-esteem of kids.

35. SELF-INJURIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Self-injurious behaviour is any behaviour that results in someone causing physical harm to themselves. Examples of this behaviour shown by people with severe learning disabilities include: hitting self, banging head or other parts of the body on hard surfaces, biting self, eating too little/too much, eye poking, Pica (eating inedible items), pulling nails, hair, ripping, tearing, picking skin.

Self-injurious behaviour is complex and must be addressed comprehensively, and not managed solely incident by incident. Key steps that should be considered and initiated prior to treatment are:

- * Medical examination to rule out other causes and identify any potential medical reasons that may be causing the self-injurious behaviour such as: toothache, headache, stomach problems, dermatological issues, or digestive ailments.
- * Protection in the least restrictive manner possible before and during treatment, including: removing dangerous materials from the person's environment and replacing them with safer tools and materials, replacing glass with plexiglass,

softening sharp edges of furniture with foam pads, or replacing some items with softer furniture. Clothing and protective devices must be available at home/school such as padding, helmets, gloves and long sleeves. There should be continuous supervision and the staff/parents should be trained in safe ways to manage crisis situations. It is important to remember that these forms of prevention are not a replacement or treatment, because they do not teach an individual not to self-injure or to develop appropriate behaviours, in other words they do not address the cause of the behaviour. Whilst protective devices often reduce the frequency of self-injury, their use must be carefully and closely monitored to prevent negative effects for the child.

- * Observing and keeping data on the behaviour and the environment in which it occurs. Gathering data helps to identify or rule-out various factors that contribute to the self-injurious behaviour. The data collection should include: description of the behaviour, the frequency, duration, and intensity; in addition it is important to describe the context of the behaviour: where does it occur? where does it not occur? What are the consequences of the behaviour? Identification of what happens immediately after or as a result of the self-injurious behaviour is a clue as to what the function of the behaviour is. There are three main consequences that may strengthen or maintain self-injury, and that is: (1) the self-injury is strengthened by positive rewards (to gain something, attention, comfort, and even negative attention); (2) the self-injury is strengthened because it gets the individual out of unpleasant or undesirable situations, and (3) the self-injury is strengthened by sensory stimulation. (Ristic, 2022)

36. SENSORY DIET

Sensory diet is defined as a type of therapy that involves a planned and scheduled activity programme implemented by an occupational therapist. Each diet is designed to meet the needs of each particular child's nervous system. Just as the five main food groups provide daily nutritional requirements, a daily sensory diet fulfils physical and emotional needs. A sensory diet stimulates the "near" senses in combination of alerting, organising and calming techniques. (Bogdashina, 156).

A sensory diet does not simply indiscriminately add more sensory stimulation into the child's day. Additional stimulation can sometimes intensify negative responses. The most successful sensory diet includes activities in which the child is an active participant. The sensory diet can be a powerful behavioural tool. If the sensory diet is properly designed and implemented, it can help prevent many challenging behaviours, including self-stimulatory and self-abusive behaviours. A child can feel less anxious when he feels more comfortable and in control. (Aquilla, Yack, Sutton, 2015)

A sensory diet includes a combination of alerting, organising and calming activities. Example table of sensory diet plan seen below.

Hypo or hyper perception needs	Sensory diet- example plan SENSORY ACTIVITY	Duration or number of repetition
Visual- hyposensitive	piecing together a colourful puzzle, using an app with visual effects on tablet	3- 4 minutes
Visual- hyposensitive	piecing together a colourful puzzle, using an app with visual effects on tablet	3- 4 minutes
Auditory- hyposensitive and hypersensitive	alerting: using bluetooth headphones and listening to her own recorded jabber, listening to fast-paced rhythmic music, playing on xylophone, listening the sound of home appliances calming: silence, using sound-absorbing headphones, listening to relaxing/soothing music	5 minutes
Tactile- hypersensitive	playing with kinetic sand, squeezing a stress ball	5 minutes
Vestibular- hyposensitive	bouncing on the therapy ball, swinging in the bag hammock in different directions, moving in different ways on the floor skateboard (sitting on it, on stomach etc.)	2 minutes
Proprioception- hyposensitive	jumping rope, jumping mini trampoline, using body sock (exercise, dancing)	2 minutes
Way of use- varies	Use a total of 5- 6 tools over 10 minutes, about 1,5- 2 minutes for one tool/exercise	

Hiiesalu, 2017



37. DIFFERENT THERAPIES

Therapists give praise and support as kids learn. There are different types of therapies, what is necessary and appropriate for one child may not, of course, be appropriate for another child. It all depends on the child and the needs to support him. Some recommended therapies: play-, music-, hippo-, art-, creative-, dolphin-, occupational therapy.

38. ASKING HELP/ADVICE

As an adult, be open to ask for help if you are unable to cope or don't know how to help/support a child with a particular problem. Raising a child you love who has disabilities

or special needs can make parenting tougher. Those parents and caregivers can deal with feeling frustrated, lonely, and overwhelmed. By offering these parents the support and encouragement they need, they can feel less alone. Asking for help allows for the possibility of fresh ideas and a new perspective. Talking with a counsellor, special educator in the school, finding a support group or leaning on friends and family can also help to ease the burden these parents carry.

39. ACCEPTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

It is wise for parents to accept teachers' recommendations for coping with their child's challenging behaviour. Teachers may have more experience and knowledge.

INTERVENTION TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Calming/interfering techniques depend on the child and his challenging behaviour. It is important to find ways to help your child reduce challenging behaviours. The recommendation always depends on the child's behaviour.

1. REASONS, MOTIVES FOR CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

It is important to identify the need for challenging behaviour and teach alternative behaviour to reduce problem behaviour. E.g. how to get attention in a polite way, how to signal your wishes.

2. BE CALM

In a conflict situation, stay calm, do not show your irritation or feelings. The calmness of an adult also helps the child to calm down. Going with a child's emotion creates even more insecurity and anxiety in the child.

3. COMMUNICATION

Clear and understandable communication for the child. Ask simple questions and use appropriate language to the child's level of communication. Use short simple sentences, simple orders. Use alternative communication if necessary (PCS pictures, sign language).

4. WORD “NO”

It's more concrete to use “No” instead of using “Don't ...” Long sentences may distract and confuse the child in conflict situations. Saying “No” helps to stick to the orders rather than obey the child's demands.

5. COMPROMISES

To make compromises, give the child the opportunity to make choices within certain limits. The child can be explained the opportunity to get what is desired/to do what is pleasant when the responsibilities/ necessary have been made.

6. PREDICTABILITY

It is important to create predictability for the child, it teaches children the different connections in the world and helps them to understand them. What is coming/happening next is very important to know for children with special needs, especially children with autism.

7. PHYSICAL AND ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES

Physical activities help to reduce stress. In problem situations might help swinging, jumping on the trampoline, hitting the punch bag, throwing a ball, laying in the ball pit etc.

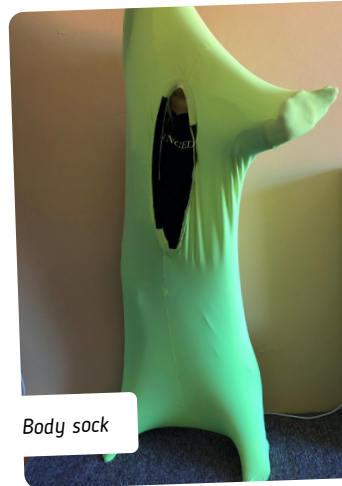
Replace the activity with a socially appropriate sensory alternative. E.g. offer to jump on the mini trampoline rather than on the couch; chewing ring instead of chewing clothes, etc.



Wearing a heavy vest

8. CALMING PLACE

Instruct the child to go to a calming corner to calm down and/or be alone to reduce irritation, or regain control of themselves. Suitable examples for calming places: indoor tent, big box, bean bag, a corner with heavy blankets/vest, body sock, pillows.



Body sock

9. CALMING TECHNIQUES

Using those techniques (by child or adult) help to fasten the process of calming, reduce anxiety, relax body and mind.

- * physical rub
- * patting
- * using a heavy blanket
- * moderate pressure hugging
- * counting numbers
- * walking with heavy (stuffed) backpack/vest
- * using different relaxing breathing techniques
- * swinging
- * singing or humming
- * relaxing music (nature, different sound frequencies)
- * etc.

10. POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

In the case of positive, expected behaviour in a conflict situation, let the child know that it is right. Confirm it with something positive or desirable for your child:

- * preferred activities
- * free time
- * time spending with a parent
- * verbal praise/recognition
- * food-related activities (making delicious food with something)
- * if possible, the desired things/toys
- * privileges (activity manager, trip choice)
- * stickers, signs on the table/board/refrigerator

11. MAKING UP

Make up after a disagreement or the child's tantrum. Since the challenging behaviour has ended, it is wise to show the child that in a calm state the relationship is in order. The child is still important and loved despite the previous behaviour.

12. AVOID AUDIENCE

A challenging behaviour will often stop if the audience is removed: if the adult removes themselves, or the child is removed from the public space. If an adult removes themselves, staying in the child's field of view, has to ignore the child until he calms down. It's also necessary to remove siblings or classmates.

13. DISTRACTION

In the case of some children, diversion or distraction of current activity helps to stop challenging behaviour. For example: walking, reading a favourite (familiar) book, listening to calming music, looking outside or other interesting and calming activities.

14. IGNORING

Depending on the situation, ignoring may also stop challenging behaviour. Any attention (talking to child) is paying attention and often challenging behaviour is aimed to attract attention. In that case don't talk to the child, don't comment on his behaviour and don't look into his eyes. If possible keep the distance.

15. UNPREDICTABLE RESPONSE

Depending on the situation, unpredictable behaviour (which is out of the context) from adult can end a child's challenging behaviour. This can be a distraction but also a surprising course of events. Some examples during child's challenging behaviour:

- * take their sock off (if he kick you with his foot)
- * rapid clap
- * whispering or starting to talk something in very inspiring way
- * mindless sentence
- * intervention by a out of context person (another teacher)

16. INTERVENTION IN CASE OF SELF-INJURING BEHAVIOUR

Pay attention to self-injuring behaviour (biting, banging the head, picking skin and/or scabs, pulling the hair, etc.) because the safety of the student is paramount. It is also very important to collect data during the intervention and review it to see if an intervention is working. Some important considerations in the development of the intervention plan include:

- * Rearranging the natural environment by: increasing predictability and routine in the student's environment; using individualised schedules; reducing the amount of unstructured time in the schedule; reducing the exposure to overstimulation, noisy, or crowded environments; structuring and organising the work areas; providing clearly established rules, boundaries, and expectations and all other recommendations seen above.
- * Extending the time when self-injurious behaviour does not occur by providing positive support for appropriate behaviours. This can be done by using reinforcing incentives or positive reinforcement strategies for refraining from self-injurious behaviour, and establishing or increasing positive reinforcement for positive behaviours. In order for this strategy to be effective there has to be data collection on strong, individualised reinforcers and identification on what effectively reinforces positive behaviour.
- * Providing appropriate ways to help individuals meet their needs by recognizing and supporting their specific individual needs. Focus should be on teaching communication, meeting sensory needs, and teaching skills that promote

independence. By providing attention, communication systems, and sensory opportunities the parents/teachers/specialists can often help prevent and/or minimise self-injurious behaviour from occurring. Self-injurious behaviour is often a form of communication, and if individuals are taught a more appropriate way to communicate, they will use the communication behaviour rather than the self-injurious behaviour as a more accessible means to achieve their goal (they can acquire skills to request for break, seek help, and independently meet their own needs). Having in mind the person's sensory needs, the sensory diets can provide opportunity for individuals to develop more adaptive behaviours. (Ristic, 2005)

CONCLUSIONS

Despite the presence of children's challenging behaviour, adults want to help them and prevent it if possible. Sometimes reading what you already know and use just gives you the confidence and strength to continue. All children deserve fair and equitable treatment. This manual is meant to be a guidance material.

We hope this manual is helpful and if you need more information please turn to your child's school, to the Education and Counselling Centre or to the special institute for disabled children in your country.

Examples used in this manual with graphic drawings are picture communication symbols (PCS), which are a set of colour and black & white drawings originally developed by Mayer-Johnson. PCS and Boardmaker are trademarks of Tobii Dynavox LLC.

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APPENDIX

ABC WORKOUT

This exercise is an example of physical activity, which can be used in the learning process with children with challenging behaviour. Workout consists of exercises which follow the letters of the alphabet. Each letter consists of a simple exercise and students/children can perform the exercise that corresponds with each letter. Children can exercise their names or words. Alphabet workout cards are visually and methodologically easily understood by students. Scan the QR code to see video of the workout:





SLOVAKIA

INSTITUT PRE PRACOVNU
REHABILITACIU OBCANOV SO
ZDRAVOTNYM POSTIHNUTIM



ESTONIA

PÄRNU PÄIKESE KOOL



LATVIA

RĪGAS VALDA AVOTIŅA
PAMATSKOLA



NORTH MACEDONIA

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