

**British Columbia Foster Care
Education Program**

**CARING FOR CHILDREN:
GUIDING BEHAVIOUR OF
CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

(6 Hours)

Ministry of Children and Family Development

About the Author

Leslie Welin, M. Ed., is a faculty member in the Child and Youth Care Programs at Malaspina University-College. She has a Master's degree in Counselling Psychology from the University of Alberta. Prior to joining Malaspina, Leslie worked in a number of settings, including schools and private practice, with children, youth, and families. She has conducted numerous workshops with foster parents, social workers, mental health professionals, law enforcement, and medical personnel on child development, the impact of trauma on children and youth, and guiding children's behaviour.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

A. RATIONALE

Each child has unique experiences of the world. Being able to appreciate how a child might view himself, other people, and the world is important to providing guidance and nurturing. Many children in care have experienced separation and loss as well as other difficulties. Their ability to trust and to form meaningful relationships may have been impacted, particularly if they have experienced abuse or neglect at the hands of someone they believed was supposed to take care of them. Children need to experience warmth, affection, and respect, while at the same time experiencing limits and structure.

Finding the balance between establishing “...parental authority to introduce and enforce reasonable limits while gradually giving freedom to children by encouraging them to be appropriately responsible for themselves” (National Extension Parent Education Model, p. 7) is a challenge for all parents. When guiding children or youth who may not have experienced limit setting or who may not feel very good about themselves, the challenge is even greater. That challenge is “...about not taking behavior at face value, it is about trying to interpret the behavior and looking at what the child/youth might be feeling or trying to tell us” (James, p. 168). There may be times when the child tests all the limits and when caregivers wonder why they ever got into this. Those are the real tests of a caregiver’s ability to balance limits with the child’s needs.

Many of us parent the way we were parented. As caregivers, it is important to explore our own beliefs, values and ethics related to caring for children and youth, and to consciously develop guiding practices that “...communicate values, nurture self-control and respond to misbehavior.” (National Extension Parent Education Model, p. 7).

This module addresses practices that research has identified as being effective in guiding behavior of children and youth as exemplified by the National Extension Parent Education Model: These practices include:

- observing and interpreting children’s behavior and adjusting parenting behaviors
- modeling appropriate desired behavior
- establishing and maintaining reasonable limits
- providing children with developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn responsibility

- conveying fundamental values underlying basic human decency
- teaching problem-solving skills
- monitoring children’s activities and facilitating their contact with peers and adults (p. 7).

Publications referred to in the “Foreword” support the preceding research. It is important that trainers be familiar with the legislation, policies, and standards that direct the work of caregivers and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

B. LEARNING OUTCOMES

The caregiver can:

- identify and explore her own beliefs, values, ethics, and parenting styles in relation to guiding the behaviour of children and youth.
- describe possible ways to make sense of at the behaviour of children and youth.
- describe the major elements of positive parenting.
- describe elements necessary for an effective caregiving environment.
- describe how to support the development of positive self-esteem and pro-social behaviour in children and youth.
- describe how anger and aggression develop in children and youth and can articulate strategies to help children and youth manage these feelings and behaviours.

C. PREPARATION

Guiding Behavior consists of two 3-hour modules, which could be delivered in the same day.

Trainers should be familiar with the material in this module. Read it thoroughly and imagine yourself going through the exercises. Think of examples you might share with the group. Make notes for yourself to supplement the Trainer’s Instructions.

The training is a joint initiative of the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Explain the educational institution's role in delivering the training.

There are numerous videos, books, courses, and groups for support in guiding the behaviors of children and youth. It is important to emphasize that the caregiver should respond to the immediate behaviors, feelings, and needs of the child or youth. The manner in which the caregiver responds is foundational to developing a relationship with the child. Any response should be able to meet the standard of "How does what I have done nurture and support the development and needs of this particular child?"

2. BELIEFS, VALUES, ETHICS, AND PARENTING STYLES)

Learning Outcome:

The caregiver can identify and explore her own beliefs, values, ethics, and parenting style in relation to guiding the behavior of children and youth.

Materials:

Handouts

- Handout #5 Beliefs, Values, Ethics
- Handout #6 What's Important
- Handout #7 Parenting Styles

- Handout #8 Discipline and Punishment

Overheads

- Overhead #5 Beliefs, Values, Ethics
- Overhead #6 Parenting Styles

Exercise:

Think back to a time in your childhood when an adult was correcting their behaviour. Answer the following questions.

- What was happening?
- What did the adult do to guide your behaviour? (Provide examples if needed.)
- What did you feel about yourself and the adult? What did you say to yourself about what was happening?
- What did you do as a result of the adult's actions?
- As a child, did you think the adult was fair?

Summary Remarks:

How our parents raised us, how we responded to our parents, and how we felt about our experiences influence how we care for children. Appreciating the impact on a child of what a caregiver may see as a minor incident can help us to understand the importance of guiding behaviours in ways that nurture and empower children rather than punish and neglect them.

We learn about parenting from our experiences as children. Our beliefs and values about children are reflected in how we interact with them. In the past, children were seen as property and as inferior beings to be controlled and bent to the will of adults. Today, our society has decreed that children are unique individuals with rights of their own. The power and control dynamic in which many of us were raised can change.

The past does not have to be repeated. The manner in which we guide children's behaviour will help determine their view of themselves and has the potential to affect how they will guide their own children.

Barbara Coloroso (1995) suggests that in deciding how to guide behaviour we might ask ourselves "Would I want it done to me?" (p. 15).

Refer participants to Handout #5, "Beliefs, Values, Ethics," and using Overhead #5, "Beliefs, Values, Ethics," explain the following concepts.

- Beliefs are what we hold to be true about something.
- Values are what we think is important.
- Ethics are the rules or standards under which we operate. The "shoulds," "musts," "ought to's."

Some examples:

- Belief: "Children are born without a sense of right and wrong."
- Value: "It is important that children be given moral guidance."
- Ethic: "Adults must provide moral guidance to children."

TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

The underlying concepts of beliefs, values, and ethics are connected to behavior (what we think, feel, and do). You can identify areas in the Rights of Children in care, the Child, Family and Community Service Act, and specific parts of the Standards for Foster Homes, Practice Standards for Guardianship that support these beliefs and values.

Exercise:

Refer to Handout #6, "What's Important." Answer each of the questions.

It is important to remember that our beliefs, values and the rules we operate under influence our parenting styles.

Summary Remarks:

Remember discussions about parenting styles in Pre-Service Training.

Review Handout #7, "Parenting Styles". The Foster Parent Handbook describes in detail the differences between discipline and punishment. These are summarized in Handout #8, "Discipline and Punishment."

Discipline comes from the word "disciple," which means to teach. Our goal as caregivers is to guide, to coach, and to teach as children develop their own self-discipline. Coloroso (1995, p. 29) suggests that discipline:

- shows kids what they have done
- gives them ownership of the experience
- gives them options for solving the problem

-
- leaves their dignity intact.

One of the beliefs guiding this module is that children usually try to do the best they can in situations that may overwhelm them. Given developmental stages, their skills may be limited, even though some of their behaviours are not what we would hope for. Another belief is that the relationships that we form with children provide a foundation from which we can guide and coach them.

Close by emphasizing that we are involved in the care of children and the manner in which we do this is crucial to nurturing and guiding their development. Remind participants of the "Child and Youth Development" module. Ask them to ask themselves how the guidance model that we are looking at fits with the developmental needs of children and youth.

3. MAKING SENSE OF THE BEHAVIOURS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

Learning Outcome:

The caregiver can describe possible ways to make sense of the behaviour of children and youth.

Materials:

Handouts

- Handout #9 Caregiver Experiencing Difficulty and Caregiver Experiencing Joy
- Handout #10 The Functions of Behaviour
- Handout #11 Looking at Behaviour

- Handout #12 Questions for Decoding Behaviour

Overheads

- Overhead #6 Impact of Negative Personal Theories of Behaviour
- Overhead #7 Impact of Positive Personal Theories of Behaviour

A. Context For Behaviours

Instructions:

In order to respond to children and youth in caring ways, we need to look at possible reasons for their behaviour. This section will focus on looking at the behaviour of children and youth by considering:

- what influences behaviour of children and youth
- effects of children's behaviour on caregivers
- a way to look at behaviours and their possible meanings
- the impact of labeling behaviours on children and youth.

If a caregiver can figure out what the meaning is behind a behaviour she may be able to make sense of it and find ways to support the child in growth and development. You may want to use the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle and relate it to caring for children. If a child is unable to communicate needs

TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

verbally, then she finds another way to do it—through behaviour. That leaves caregivers trying to figure out the meaning of the behaviour. Share the notion of the Four H's. "...caregivers begin with a little History, a few Hunches, some Hope, and a few Helpful ideas" (Straus, p. 131).

Exercise:

Answer the question "What factors influence the behaviour of children and youth?" Record your responses on a sheet of paper, using the instructional strategy of mind mapping or webbing if you are familiar with this technique. Ensure that factors such as heredity, temperament, family, neighborhood, peer group, school, ability to form attachments, developmental level, and ability to communicate with others are included.

Identify any themes that occur from the notes or mind map. Refer to the "Child and Youth Development" module as a reference point when determining the capabilities of children and youth.

Behaviour is influenced by many factors and as caregivers it is important to consider the context in which behaviours occur.

When behaviours happen and caregivers have to immediately respond there is not much time to look at what might influence the child's behaviour. Take some time now to explore situations you have experienced with children or youth, and to put to use an approach to help in understanding what may have been happening for a particular child or youth.

Think of an experience with a child in which you had a real problem with what the child was doing. Using Handout #9, "Caregiver Experiencing Difficulty and Caregiver Experiencing Joy," jot down brief responses to each question under the heading "Caregiver Experiencing Difficulty."

Next, think of an experience with a child in which you as the caregiver felt really good about what the child was doing. Under the heading on Handout #9, "Caregiver Experiencing Joy," jot down brief notes.

Summary Remarks:

What similarities and differences did you notice about the two experiences. Record your comments on paper. Taking time to consider the context of the behaviour (who else is around, where the behaviour occurs, when the behaviour occurs, and what seems to trigger the behaviour) can help us when we work with a child.

Recognize that behaviour happens within the context of the child's experience.

B. Understanding Behaviours

Instructions:

Review the functions of behaviour, using Handout #10, "The Functions of Behaviour". Think of some examples from your own experience.

When trying to figure out what function a behaviour may be serving it can be helpful to consider what happens before and after a behaviour. Refer to Handout #11, "Looking at Behaviour."

Using one of the behaviours from earlier in the module, walk through the questions in the handout.

Behaviour has a purpose. When thinking about what we might do to guide or coach the behaviour, we need to remember the context in which the behaviour takes place and the perspective of the child. Fox's (1987) analogy of seeing assists in making the point:

"It's as if some children's sense of self is similar to damaged eyes: people who need glasses to see the board cannot see the board without their glasses. It's not that they refuse to see the board; it's not that they are unwilling; they are unable! We could threaten, bribe or take away privileges all day, demanding that they read the board without their glasses, to no avail" (p. 44).

If children have not had a chance to figure out who they are in relation to other people and the world, they may not be able to see things as we would like them to. It is not that they are unwilling to, it is that they have a distorted and damaged sense of who they are and, based on their experiences, are often hostile toward and suspicious about adults. After all, many adults have let them down and betrayed them in the past. One of the major tasks when guiding children is to find a way to grow and develop as a result of our interactions.

The question for us as caregivers is to be creative and to actively engage children and youth who are behaving in ways that we find difficult to handle rather than to isolate, ignore, or punish them. If these young people knew how to do something else that would connect them with other people in positive ways, they would do it. Guidance isn't something you do to someone. Instead, it is a way of exploring together ways to meet the child's needs and our needs.

Remember the importance of descriptive language rather than evaluative language when observing and recording behaviours.

Negative labels and those that pathologize children lead caregivers to avoid, punish, or coerce children. Words that build esteem and show empathy lead to caregivers nurturing, empowering, and encouraging children. Refer to Overhead #6, "Impact of Negative Personal Theories of Behaviour," and Overhead #7, "Impact of Positive Theories of Behaviour".

Taking the time to observe what happens before a behaviour, what the child actually does, and what happens after the behaviour gives us information to decode the behaviour. These are the A-B-Cs of behaviour (the antecedents, behaviours and consequences).

R

Refer to Handout #12, "Questions for Decoding Behaviour."

TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

A primary motivating force for many behaviours is to maintain a sense of self and to protect that sense. Children and youth who are trying to make sense of the world and themselves need help to:

- distinguish feelings from one another.
- integrate those feelings. (That is, realize that a person can have more than one feeling at a time about someone or something.)
- develop affect tolerance - the ability to tolerate feelings.
- learn how to put words to the feelings and thoughts the child is having.

By decoding the needs of children and youth, caregivers can often respond in ways that prevent the expression of the needs in ways that annoy or threaten others. Remember that if needs are unmet, a child's behaviour may become so troubled that we begin to label it in negative ways and a downward spiral may begin.

4. ELEMENTS OF POSITIVE PARENTING

Learning Outcome:

The caregiver can describe the major elements of positive parenting.

Materials:

Handouts

- Handout #13 Models for Children and Youth
- Handout #14 Standards for Foster Homes
- Handout #15 Positive Parenting

- Handout #16 Guidelines for Relationship Building

Overhead

•Overhead #8 The Role and Goals of Positive Parenting

Instructions:

What adults do is a very powerful model and has a huge impact on children and youth. You may want to think of one of your own experiences about finding a child who is close to you modeling a behaviour of yours or an example from a TV show like *The Simpsons*. Children watch and listen to us more than we may think. So, it shouldn't be too surprising for us to find children resolving conflict, walking, or talking like us.

Positive parenting involves being worthy role models for children and youth.

Exercise:

The next exercise invites participants to consider a relationship with a child for whom they have recently provided care and to look at how they have modeled a positive parenting approach. The exercise is about growing as caregivers and learning from what we do.

Think about a child or youth for whom you have provided care in the last month. Refer to Handout #13, "Models for Children and Youth," and briefly jot down a few points.

Respond to the following:

- how you supported the development and growth of the child, and
- what you would like to do differently in the relationship.

Summary Remarks:

Positive parenting is caregiving that creates a healthy environment and supports the growth and development of children.

Our actions and words determine the kind of relationships we have with children. If we believe that the role of caregivers is to control and change children, then the focus is on who has the

power. If, instead of fighting over who is the boss, caregivers create opportunities for learning and demonstrate a genuine liking for the child, positive parenting occurs.

Review the definition of positive parenting in Handout #14, "Standards for Foster Homes," and take some time to review the standards. Positive parenting involves being a role model for children and youth and using skills that help children and youth "...feel safe, accepted, nurtured, engaged, challenged, and supported in assuming more responsibility and self-control" (CYC On-line, p. 3).

Review Overhead #8, "The Role and Goals of Positive Parenting," in order to explain how the Ministry sees the role and goals. Read Handout #15, "Positive Parenting," and Handout #16, "Guidelines for Relationship Building," for details.

Session II

Learning Outcome:

The caregiver can describe elements necessary for an effective caregiving environment.

Materials:

Handout

- Handout #17 Components of the Core of Care

Overhead

- Overhead #9 A Good Place to Be

Instructions:

We introduce the topic by reviewing the contexts or environments in which human beings live (family, neighbourhood, community, society). This section explores what an effective caregiving environment is and some ideas for creating one. Research indicates that the one of the first things a child in care wonders when the door to a caregiver's home opens is, "Will this be a good place to be?"

Exercise 1:

Refer to Overhead #9, "A Good Place To Be," and draw a similar grid on a sheet of paper. Brainstorm specific examples for each column.

Exercise 2:

Think of a time in your life when you received nurturing care or when you had the sense that you really counted at that particular moment. Take a few minutes and jot down what gave you that sense of being personally cared for and cared about.

Personal experiences reflect what have been called the “components of the core of care.” For children who are experiencing care, both the physical setting and relationships within that setting make up the components of the core of care.

Refer to Handout #17, “Components of the Core of Care.” The components are interrelated and all of them are necessary to the nurturing care of children.

Summary Remarks:

Effective caregiving environments create conditions in which children feel safe and nurtured, provide opportunities to take risks and to learn, buffer stress, and create a climate of reliability and trustworthiness. These environments involve all members of the caregiving family, including natural children. If a child experiencing care senses that he is somehow in the way or unwanted, it may be difficult to establish a relationship.

There are a number of ways to establish and maintain effective caregiving environments, many of which participants know and practice. Think of ways you have worked to create a “core of care” in your environment and refer to Handout #17.

3. SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-ESTEEM AND PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR)

Learning Outcome:

The caregiver can describe how to support the development of positive self-esteem and pro-social behaviour in children and youth.

Materials:

Handouts

- Handout #18 Encouragement
- Handout #19 Self-Image, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem
- Handout #20 Constructive Feedback
- Handout #21 Pro-social Behaviour
- Handout #22 Strategies for Positive Parenting
- Handout #23 Guidance Strategies

Overheads

- Overhead #10 Self-Image, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem

Other

- IALAC sign (I Am Loveable and Capable)

A. "I Am Loveable and Capable"

Instructions:

There are many tools and strategies for guiding children. Positive parenting focuses on developing self-esteem, promoting positive relationships and pro-social behaviours, as well as preparing children for responsibility.

Exercise:

Depending upon their backgrounds and experiences, some participants may find this exercise upsetting. Advise participants of this and let them know that there will be an opportunity to debrief the exercise.

Ask for a volunteer to come up and hold the IALAC sign (they don't have to say anything).

Use Sidney Simon's IALAC (I am Lovable and Capable) and write this down on a sheet of paper.

Scenario:

Brian (or any name that is appropriate), age 11, woke up one school morning and looked at his pajama top. He saw a neon sign. It flashed on and off, IALAC. Brian knew at once that this meant "I Am Lovable and Capable." He dressed and went off to the kitchen. He was looking forward to his day.

Before Brian could speak, his sister, Molly, said, "You pea-brain (rip off a corner of the sign) what did you do with my jacket?"

"Nothing," Brian said.

"Man," whined Molly, "you're such a jerk." (rip)

"Brian, where is your backpack?" asked his mom.

"Oh no, I left it at school," said Brian.

"Brian," said his unhappy mother, "You ought to know better. Why can't you use your brain?" (rip)

"But Mom," Brian said "I..."

"Don't sass me back," said his mom. "You are such a smart mouth." (rip)

Brian saw his sister smirking and whispering "Smart mouth, smart mouth." (double rip)

By the time Brian left for the school bus, half of the IALAC was ripped. On the bus, Missy Burns said, "Brian you're dumb (rip) and a cry baby." (rip). Jenna, who Brian thought was his best friend, laughed each time. (triple rip).

In the first period, Mrs. Smartzolla asked Brian to put a homework problem on the board. Brian forgot a division sign in the formula. "Brian," Mrs. Smartzolla moaned, "how can you be so careless? I've told you a thousand times." (rip)

In language arts, Mr. Thomas barked at Brian for getting the lowest score on the vocabulary quiz. (rip)

By the end of the day, Brian went home with a very small IALAC sign. He was very upset.

The next day, Brian woke up to find IALAC on his pajamas, but it was very small. He hoped today would be better. He wanted to keep his IALAC so much.

Make a list of what you can do or say to increase children's sense of IALAC.

The examples are ways of encouraging the development of self-esteem in children. Refer to Handout #18, "Encouragement."

B. Self-image, Self-concept, and Self-esteem

Instructions:

Use Handout #19, "Self-Image, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem," and Overhead # 10, "Self-Image, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem," to define terms.

Competence or a sense of mastery comes from doing something successfully. Success comes from working towards something, from seeking challenges, and from trying to solve problems. It does not come from praise for doing well and criticism for not doing well. It comes from an internal sense of mastery rather than from evaluations of accomplishment from others.

Control or a sense of power comes when the child has a sense that she has some influence on what happens in her life. This involves a sense that "I am capable."

Worth or significance to others happens when children like themselves and have a sense that others like and accept them for who they are. "When a child feels good, valuable, and well-liked, the child develops positive self-esteem."

Research about resilient children -you may want to refer to work by Wolin, S.. www.projectresilience.com.

In addition to guiding and supporting children to develop a sense of self, caregivers also need to encourage them to care for and about other people. Developing a concern for others is called "pro-social behaviour."

Describe categories of pro-social behaviour using Handout #22, "Pro-social Behaviours."

In order for a child or youth to develop these behaviours he must be capable of:

- cognitively telling the difference between how he is feeling and the feelings of other people.
- emotionally responding to another person.
- behaving in helpful, cooperative, and generous ways.

The "Child and Youth Development" module can be referred to for information about the cognitive, emotional and behavioural development of children and youth.

Very young infants pick up on the emotional states of caregivers and research indicates that children can demonstrate pro-social behaviours at two years of age. The attachment to a primary caregiver seems to have an effect on the development of pro-social behaviours.

Having the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural abilities to do something does not mean that a child will do it. Caregivers must teach a child to behave pro-socially as many children and youth-in-care may be developmentally delayed in this area due to missed or interrupted opportunities to acquire such behavioural skills.

Exercise:

Refer to Handout #22, "Strategies for Positive Parenting". The three categories presented—promoting positive relationships, promoting self-esteem, and preparing for responsibility.

What pro-social behaviour does each parenting strategy support. For example, demonstrating constructive conflict resolution supports cooperating.

It is important for caregivers to model the behaviours that we want children to do; to coach by telling children what we want, rather than what we do not want; and to provide opportunities for children to develop these behaviours through cooperative games and activities. Review Handout #23, "Guidance Strategies," which provides another listing of appropriate guidance strategies for you to consider.

I A L A C
“I Am Loveable and Capable”

4. WORKING WITH ANGER AND AGGRESSION

Learning Outcome:

The caregiver can describe how anger and aggression develop in children and youth and can articulate strategies to help children and youth manage these feelings and behaviours.

Materials:

Handouts

- Handout #24 The Stress Response Cycle
- Handout #25 Self-Talk
- Handout #26 When a Child is Angry
- Handout #27 Aggression
- Handout #28 Addressing Aggression

- Handout #29 Defusing Yourself

Overheads

- Overhead #11 Coaching Strategies When Aggression is an Issue

A. Stress and Anger

Instructions:

People often have problems working with anger and aggression because of their own past experiences, concerns for their own safety and that of the child, or because anger often occurs unexpectedly and they are not prepared for it.

Consequently, we do not take the opportunities presented when children have been angry or aggressive to explore ways to de-escalate situations and to coach children in alternative ways to express themselves.

Prevention is a crucial part of working with anger and aggression. Caregivers have a responsibility to be aware of factors that may contribute to children and youth becoming angry. For example, deaf children may become angry because they don't understand what is being said to them. Some children may have poor emotional and/or behavioural control because of organic brain damage or other factors beyond their

control, so the focus needs to be on managing or minimizing the outbursts.

Exercise:

Think of a time when you felt angry. Observe your facial expressions, body posture, etc. when thinking of the situation.

B. The Stress Response Cycle

Instructions:

Refer to Handout #24, "The Stress Response Cycle," and review the phases below in relation to supporting children when they experience anger.

1. The **trigger phase** is the event that sets things off; a child feels threatened and his body goes into action to meet the threat.

2. The **escalation phase** is when the child's body prepares to fight, flee, or freeze. The breathing rate and heart rate increase, blood pressure rises, muscles tense, voice gets louder, and eyes change shape (steely look, brows fall). Restraint, at this juncture, is usually not a good idea.

3. The **crisis phase** is when we take action. Collaboration responses may not be effective because the child's ability to reason decreases. This is not the time to try to problem-solve with a child.

4. The **recovery phase** happens when the child has done something and her body starts to recover. This takes time.

5. The **post-crisis depression phase** occurs when we start to process what happened. The child may feel guilty or depressed.

Anger is just a feeling and feeling angry is OK. What is not OK is abuse and violence. We have a choice about what we do with our anger; the feeling of anger does not have to be acted on.

You may want to use the following anger rule in your homes:

It's OK to feel angry, but it is not OK to hurt others, yourself or property. It can be very scary for children to feel out-of-control, so it is important to let them know that you will intervene to help them. Remember that the intervention is about safety and self-control.

TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

Refer to Handout #25, "Self-Talk," and remember we sometimes re-experience the incidents in which we experienced anger by the way we replay it in our heads. Our bodies don't know if the event is a replay or reality, so we often respond in ways that keep us stuck in the anger.

Forming a relationship with a child in ways to process the underlying feelings is crucial to working with aggression. Caregivers need to be able to "stand beside children" as they learn new ways to manage their feelings and behaviors. Getting angry or insulting the self-esteem of a child only serves as a wedge in your relationship. It is a feeling and is normal. It is when it gets bottled up that it can become a volcano and explode into aggression towards self, others, and property.

Exercise:

What strategies have you used to de-escalate a young person's anger? Write responses on a piece of paper.

Refer to Handout #26, "When a Child is Angry," for additional ideas.

C. Aggression

Instructions:

Aggression will be considered next. Have someone in mind as you go through the material.

Refer to Handout #27, "Aggression."

Aggression or "being mad" comes out of feeling frustrated and experiencing an impulse to attack. If we can see the child as being frustrated and lacking impulse controls, then we can respond in supportive ways that coach appropriate behaviour. The frustration most often occurs because attachments to other people are not working. The resulting feelings are rejection, a sense of loss, and feeling put down. If we respond by isolating the child through time-outs, expulsions from school, or withdrawing love, then we risk making the situation worse. With aggressive children we need to find ways to walk beside them as they find ways to move from being stuck in their frustrations with life.

Children who show aggressive behaviours tend to have a difficult time expressing their feelings of loss and grief, often do not have the words to describe what they are feeling and do not seem to have a sense of self and what is happening inside for them.

So what does a caregiver do? Refer to Handout #28, "Addressing Aggression."

It is important to form a relationship with the child and to coach in words that don't insult the child. It is OK to feel frustrated. You are modeling how to handle it. You are putting a name to what is happening. This is the time to use the skills you looked at in the "Communication and Self-Awareness" module, such as active listening and open questions. Create opportunities in

which the child can feel safe enough to be vulnerable.

The North Wind and the Sun were arguing over who was the stronger. They decided to settle their dispute by seeing who could be the first to get a traveler to shed his cloak. The North Wind tried first. With all the gust he could muster, he blew down so furiously upon the man that the man swirled around like a leaf spinning through the air. But all the while the man held onto his cloak all the tighter.

Next it was the Sun's turn. He cast some gentle rays at the man, causing him to feel just the slightest bit too warm. The man soon unfastened his cloak. Then the Sun gradually increased his rays, causing the man to hang the cloak loosely across his shoulders. The Sun continued to gradually increase the warmth until the man, with a great sigh of relief, threw his cloak off and continued on his journey in great comfort. (Source Unknown)

Conclusion: warmth brings down defenses.

It is important to address the sources of frustration. This is where guiding strategies such as managing the environment can help. Perhaps the situation is beyond the child's developmental coping capacities.

Review Overhead #11, "Coaching Strategies When Aggression is an Issue."

Caregivers need to coach children in ways to handle frustration. This involves looking at what the child is experiencing and encouraging the child to use words to express what is happening. This may also mean inviting the expression of sadness. Children who are in care have experienced a number of losses. They may use anger and aggression as ways to protect themselves. Expressing sadness may leave a person vulnerable. Sometimes "coaching" is better done after the emotions have been defused. Coaching in the moment is best done when the coaching technique(s) have been explained to and accepted by the child

TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

prior to the incident. Physical closeness (if invited and appropriate) can be helpful.

It is also important to coach the child to accept responsibility for his actions.

Summary Remarks:

One of the first things we must do when we are in a caregiving relationship with children who are displaying angry or aggressive behaviour is to defuse ourselves. It is important that we move emotionally toward children rather than away. Refer to Handout #29, "Defusing Yourself."

5. CLOSURE

Materials:

Handouts-Review the following:

- Handout #30 Guiding Behaviour Summary
- Handout #31 Suggested Resources

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