

Threshold Guidance - Behaviour of Concern

Name of Young Person:

Staff member supporting:

Has this been completed in collaboration with the YP? Yes/NO

What we do, what we don't do and what you can do if you are worried about your child

All behaviour has meaning. Children and young people communicate through their behaviour, especially those who have not acquired language and vocabulary skills to tell the adult what the problem is. A young person's behaviour can be made stronger and more likely by how it is responded to. Here's a guide to help you know how best to support your young person if they are behaving in a way that is concerning. This is not an exhaustive list; there may be other behaviour and responses to this which have not been included:

Coping/needs for support; These are experiences that most young people will have from time to time.

Type and nature of situation that may impact on a young person's behaviour

It is common for children and young people to behave in ways that concern adults from time to time. The behaviour they display tends to be situation specific, short term and can be managed with the love and support of parents/carers. Behaviour of concern is often a result of young people experiencing emotions such as worry, sadness, frustration/anger, guilt or shame. Examples of situations which might provoke these feelings include:

- Not feeling heard or understood; difficulties expressing themselves
- Demands being made (and having to do things they don't feel able or want to do)
- Perceived or real pressure or expectations by others
- Uncertainty and unpredictability (such as the way adults respond)
- New/ unfamiliar things and change/ transition
- Inconsistency (such as; inconsistent rules or boundaries, disrupted or chaotic routines and living environment)
- Conflict (either witnessing this, or being part of this)
- Perceived or real rejection or abandonment by others
- Perceived or real being ostracised (being left out) and not having or feeling connected to others
- Low self-esteem and beliefs of being a failure/not being good enough

Factors such as tiredness, hunger, not feeling physically well, or being in pain, can impact on how young people cope, respond and behave.

Some young people with physical disabilities and conditions, learning disabilities or those with neurodevelopmental difficulties (such as Autistic Spectrum Condition or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) may have additional difficulty in being able to identify, express and communicate their emotions, thoughts, needs or preferences. This struggle may result in strong emotional responses and behaviour of concern.

| What you might see or a young person might report (Tick all those that apply) | Date Completed | Date completed | Date completed | Date completed |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Appearing unsettled, distracted or irritable. | | | | |
| May appear more challenging or oppositional/argumentative. | | | | |
| Shouting or verbally aggressive (e.g., name calling, swearing). | | | | |
| Crying or becoming distressed. | | | | |
| Not telling the truth. | | | | |
| Avoidance of or refusal to doing things when asked or expected. | | | | |
| Withdrawal from spending time with friends or family or persistently seeking reassurance. | | | | |
| Having bad dreams/ mild sleep disturbance. | | | | |
| Having some physical symptoms such as feeling sick, hot and clammy, tummy aches. | | | | |
| Appearing restless and fidgeting. | | | | |

Things to try, support and Next Steps

- Normalise that having feelings such as worry, sadness, frustration, guilt or shame are natural emotions and responses to events and situations
- Try to identify the situation which has led to the young person experiencing a strong emotional response. It may be possible to problem solve the situation. If not, acknowledge and validate the young person's feelings
- Make sure basic needs have been addressed e.g., the young person is getting good quality and enough sleep, is not thirsty or hungry and is not feeling unwell or is in pain
- Ensure that messages, rules and boundaries, language and adult behaviour is consistent, reliable and predictable
- Prepare young people for change, transition, unfamiliarity or unpredictability (e.g., give warning, discuss worries and concerns, problem solve how to do things, offer support)
- Give children limited options (i.e., choose this or that)- as too much choice can be overwhelming
- Ensure routines in the morning and evening.
- Stay calm and be clear in your own communication. Avoid getting into lengthy debates, explanations or arguments
- Use techniques to help young people manage their emotional responses in more helpful ways. Here are some strategies to try;

An A-Z of coping strategies: <https://youtu.be/5EXpkVw3fh0>

How and when to use a coping box: <https://youtu.be/OyfgodSSdV4>

- Role model and demonstrate that you can do things even when you experiencing strong emotions and have urges to respond or behave in certain ways. Young people often learn and copy language and behaviour that they experience, so try to respond in ways that role model to the young person
- Watch our parent/carer workshop on Coping and Resilience Skills here: *Film to be added*
- Watch our parent/carer workshop on Challenging Behaviour: <https://youtu.be/RMPn3gTEh5Q>
- Download our top tips sheet for parents on how to manage challenging behaviour *Film to be added*