

Supporting behaviour

Behaviour is a reaction to the environment. A person's behaviour can be defined as challenging if it puts them or those around them at risk or stops them from fulfilling some aspects of their life. It can also impact on their ability to join in everyday activities. Behaviour can include:

- Aggression
- Self-harm
- Destructiveness
- Disruptiveness

Ways to support behaviour:

- Look out for early warning signs
- Try to understand the behaviour by asking questions such as: Where is the behaviour taking place? Who is the individual with? Is the behaviour for attention or for a need to be met? Has anything changed in the environment?
- Ignore inappropriate behaviour when safe to do so
- Label the behaviour, not the child
- Apply strict boundaries and consequences. These should be consistent across all settings and when misbehaving, the individual should be reminded of those rules
- Use simple language, being calm yet assertive
- Match the individual's level in terms of volume and then gradually reduce the volume of your voice, this should encourage the individual to also lower the volume of their voice
- Tell the individual what they can do, not what they cannot do
- Avoid the use of emotionally loaded language such as 'No', 'Can't', 'Don't' and so on. This will create more positive interactions and should reduce defiant behaviour.
- Provide the individual with an appropriate release of frustration
- Model appropriate behaviour, particularly when upset, angry or frustrated so that the individual learns more appropriate responses
- Provide Rewards, Specific Praise and Affirmations for compliance and appropriate behaviour
- Do not take the individual's behaviour personally and try to maintain an objective approach
- Give choices so that the individual feels they have an element of control in the situation
- Stay away from empty threats and follow through on what you say

- Use pre-warnings and visual timers for those who understand time concepts
- Avoid physically restraining if possible

