



# Working With Challenging Behaviour (YLT)

## Training Material

### The Aim :

To enable BB leaders to make positive responses to challenging behaviour in children and young people.

### Learning Outcomes :

**At the end of this training session participants will be able to:**

- Identify a range of behaviours that are challenging to leaders
- Be aware of the impact of these behaviours on the individual child, other children and young people and adult leaders
- Build strategies to cope with challenging behaviours
- Name and understand some of the more common conditions and impairments among children that can influence behaviour

### Resources :

Flip chart and pens  
OHP and screen  
OHP 1: Learning Outcomes  
OHP 2: Step 1  
OHP 3: Step 2  
OHP 4: Step 3  
OHP 5: Step 4  
(PowerPoint presentation available instead of OHP's 1 to 4 if preferred.)  
BB Disability Awareness leaflets  
Handout 1: What do we mean by "challenging"?  
Handout 2: The range of challenging behaviours  
Handout 3: Strategies  
Handout 4: Challenging behaviour in teenagers  
Handout 5: Communications with teenagers

### Timing:

90 minutes

## Training Material

Introduce this module by saying that the BB traditionally has an excellent track record of being inclusive. We have a good reputation in many places for taking children and young people who would perhaps find it difficult to find a place in other out of school activities.

Thank people for choosing to do this module and remind them that a one-day course is available if they wish to attend after doing this short session.

### **Exercise I: What do we mean by “challenging”? (30 minutes)**

Introduce this session by emphasising that we do not wish to “medicalise” this subject, or to get into the field of **identifying** syndromes in children and young people. Although it can be useful to have an overview of some of the more commonly diagnosed conditions, most behaviour that we find challenging would be as a result of non-medical causes. The purpose of this course is to improve the way we cope with the behaviour.

Stress that in this session we are going to focus on the **behaviour** that we may find difficult, and the effect it has at a BB night. We will look later at causes and responses, but for now we are going to describe what happens and how we feel about it.

#### **Key Training Tip!**

It is very important that in this introductory exercise you set it up with the boundaries outlined above. The purpose is to identify what behaviour we are talking about and how people feel about working in the environment where the behaviour occurs. Participants may stray into talking about children in their families with challenging behaviour, and this is fine. What you want to prevent at this stage, however, is a discussion on various conditions and their treatment.

Ask the group to get into three's, and give them 10 minutes to discuss the following questions, which are found, on Handout I:

- What sorts of challenging behaviour have you experienced at your BB company?** Give examples in a range from mild or moderate through to extreme.
- What sort of impact does this behaviour have on:**
  - the child/young person
  - other children or young people
  - the leaders (Discuss the feelings you have when you are coping with this behaviour)

#### **Issue Handout I: “What do we mean by challenging?”**

Ask the groups to agree someone to jot down the main points of the discussion.

Do not go round the groups listening in, as this can be off-putting and inhibit free discussion. However, at periodic intervals, call out things like “Make sure everyone has an opportunity to contribute” and “You should be onto the second question by now.”

After 10 minutes discussion time, bring the group back together and organise feedback so that each group has an opportunity to contribute. Jot any themes or important points onto the flipchart in case you may need to refer to these later. You do not need to record everything.

The feedback on the first question (“what sorts of challenging behaviour have you experienced at your BB company?”) will probably include some of the following:

- Not listening
- Not finishing any tasks
- Lack of concentration and easily distracted
- Unable to work at something without constant supervision
- Always fidgeting and on the move

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- Talking excessively
- Losing control of temper
- Frequent disputes or arguments with adults
- Actively refusing to cooperate with requests made by adults
- Deliberately doing things to annoy other people
- Blaming others for own misdeeds
- Easily annoyed by others
- Angry or spiteful
- Intimidation or harassment of others
- Physical fights
- Using weapons against others
- Physically cruel to others
- Lies or breaks promises
- Steals

When you have taken feedback on the first question, issue the above list on **Handout 2**

### Issue Handout 2: The Range of Challenging Behaviours

#### Key Training Tip!

Make the point that challenging behaviour is within a range, and that many of us would recognise some of the behaviours at the top of the list in our own children, our colleagues and managers and even ourselves! When we move into the area of addressing challenging behaviour, it is worth remembering that “good practice” is as relevant in our own homes as in the BB company.

Take feedback on the second question “**what sort of impact does this behaviour have?**” The feedback is likely to include some of the following:

- Conflict, leading to damaged relationships
- Child with challenging behaviour can become socially isolated within the company
- Other children neglected as attention focused on the child with challenging behaviour
- Leaders feel drained and exhausted
- Leaders become demoralized and despairing
- Leaders become depleted of emotional resources to cope
- People may leave
- Parents complain to you

Make the point that even by coming to this course the participants have taken a step forward in developing their own skills in responding to challenging behaviour. It can be reassuring to know that most BB companies are familiar with the problem and although there is no magical solution, there are lots of things we can do, both for the children and for ourselves.

#### **Exercise 2: Possible causes of challenging behaviour (10 mins)**

Now ask the group to think of a range of possible **causes** of challenging behaviour. Write the suggestions onto a flipchart. It is likely that the responses will include the following:

- A medical condition
- Difficulties at home
- Difficulties at school
- Lack of boundaries
- Boundaries at home too strict – let off steam at BB
- Social disadvantage
- Poor relationships with BB leaders
- BB programme boring or unchallenging

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- ❑ BB programme pitched too high, or too structured

As the trainer you can group the possible causes into three main categories:

1. Social/domestic
2. Diagnosed medical condition or behavioural impairment
3. BB programme/leader skills

**Make the point that not only is number 3 the only one you can change, but it may well be one of the causes of challenging behaviour at BB. We will be looking at some simple techniques to modify behaviour in a minute, but take some time to discuss how we relate to children and young people to ensure that they feel ownership of the programme, and are given choice, whatever age they are.**

(You can help leaders to understand how to work with a child/young person with a diagnosed impairment by handing out the BB Disability Advice leaflets. You can also tell them about the Disability Advice Network of BB volunteers with expertise and experience in these areas. Further information is on the BB website here: <http://www.boys-brigade.org.uk/dan.htm>)

**Whatever the causes of challenging behaviour we in the BB are there to ensure each child or young person has the opportunity to reach their potential and to have space to develop in a supportive environment.**

### **Exercise 3: Strategies to respond to challenging behaviour (30 minutes)**

Introduce this session by saying a little bit about how we have changed in our understanding of challenging behaviour, its causes and how we respond to it. Say that it is by drawing on the last 20 years experience of special education services and behaviour modification that we are going to explore what strategies may work for us as BB leaders.

Firstly, ask the group members if anyone has used the technique of getting the children or young people to agree and write their own rules? If people are using the system of children's own "golden rules" discuss how it is easier to keep to rules if you yourself have put them in place. Also if a child swears when she or he has agreed or suggested a "no swearing" rule then it becomes an easier task to remind them of "their" rules.

The "golden rules" should be displayed on a chart on the wall, preferably written and decorated by the children.

Once children/young people are aware of and agree with the standards of behaviour expected then you can move on to adopting strategies and techniques to deal with any behaviour that is challenging.

The trainer will be working this session as a whole group discussion, using OHP slides (or PowerPoint if that is preferred)

Explain that you are going to take them through a system called "**Four Steps to Better Behaviour**".

### **Show OHP 2: Four Steps to Better Behaviour, Step 1**

#### **Learn to pay positive attention to children**

- ❑ The quality of the attention we give to children is powerful
- ❑ If positive attention is not forthcoming, negative attention may seem worth seeking out (criticism, telling off etc)
- ❑ Make sure you don't combine praise and criticism in backhanded compliments, such as "You did well tonight and listened, now why can't you be like that all the time?"
- ❑ When you give praise make it accurate and honest, not over the top, such as "Good work!", "Its nice when you...", "What a nice thing to do", "You played that game very fairly"
- ❑ Remember non-verbal signs of approval: smiling, thumbs up, wink

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- ❑ Always show approval immediately. *Don't wait!*
- ❑ Always be specific about the behaviour you like

### Show OHP 3: Four Steps to Better Behaviour, Step 2

#### Use this positive attention to improve behaviour

- ❑ This step builds on the positive attention outlined in Step 1
- ❑ Seek out opportunities to use positive attention, "Catch 'em being good!"
- ❑ Find times when the child is not involved in an activity and ask them to do small favours, for example "Could you pass me a pencil please?" or "Can you bring the keys over?"
- ❑ Make sure the favours are simple and brief, and as the child follows each one, be sure to provide specific praise.
- ❑ Because the requests are very simple and brief, most children (even those with behavioural problems) will do them
- ❑ This step, if used over a number of weeks can make a dramatic difference in a child's behaviour

### Show OHP 4: Four Steps to Better Behaviour, Step 3

#### Set up a BB token system

- ❑ Children with behaviour problems often need a more powerful incentive than praise. The token system rewards good behaviour.
- ❑ Start the system with all the children (this would work best in Anchors and Juniors)
- ❑ Be positive when you are explaining the system. Say something like "We want to reward good behaviour in the section, so you can now earn tokens for listening, following instructions and helping"
- ❑ Decide on the sort of tokens you are going to use. Tiddlywinks counters can be colour coded, for example, green tokens are worth 1 point, blue 5 points and red 10 points.
- ❑ Be clear about what privileges the tokens can earn, for example snacks or sweets, trips out or activities on a holiday if they are totted up on a collective basis.
- ❑ Its better not to make it a competition, as the better-behaved kids will win, reinforcing old patterns of winners and losers.
- ❑ *Do not take tokens away for misbehaviour!*
- ❑ Ask the children what rewards they want on the list
- ❑ Don't give tokens away before the child has deserved them, but be as quick as possible in rewarding the child for good behaviour
- ❑ When you give tokens, smile and tell the child how pleased you are.

### Show OHP 5: Four Steps to Better Behaviour, Step 4

#### Coping with the inevitable, responding constructively to incidents

- ❑ Use "Time-outs" for serious misbehaviour:
- ❑ Ask the child to come and stand by you for a short period of time, being clear with the child why you have asked them to do this.
- ❑ Once the time out is passed and if the child is calm, then they must agree to do what they were asked to do. (If it is something that cannot be corrected like swearing or lying, the child has to promise not to do it again.)
- ❑ If they refuse, then keep them with you for a while longer. When they have done what was requested, say "well done" in a neutral tone.
- ❑ **Remember! After a time-out, watch out for the next appropriate behaviour by the child and praise them for it. This ensures that the child always receives as much reward as punishment and shows that you are not angry at the child but at the inappropriate behaviour.**

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After you have talked the group through the OHP slides or PowerPoint presentation, open up the 4 Step method for discussion. Ask people to think whether or not they already use this sort of approach. Point out that many of us are aware of the idea of positive reinforcement, but perhaps had not thought to try and apply it in a planned and organised way.

### Key Training Tip!

Make the point that the 4 step method is likely to work better for the Anchor or Junior age groups. For people who work with Company and Senior sections, give out the handouts on challenging behaviour in teenagers.

Finally, you need to help the group to feel confident in handling a situation where a company has decided that it cannot keep a child or young person.

Ask the group if anyone has ever had to exclude a child/young person from BB. Say that it is rare and often at the end of a long period of trying but that sometimes it is the right decision.

Say to the group that in order to reduce the trauma for all involved, it is essential to have established positive and honest communications with the parents or carers. It is also essential to have discussed the actions taken with other staff and the church.

Say that experience shows that the message is more acceptable to parents when it is expressed as us not having the skills to deal with their child's **behaviour** – **not** that their child is too disruptive or difficult. This way of communicating the decision avoids labeling the child and doesn't close doors to that child accessing another group (BB or otherwise) who feel they **do** have the skills to cope with that child's behaviour.

### Exercise 4: Summarising learning. Taking skills and knowledge back to the company (20 mins)

The final session is to help participants transfer the learning from the session into a context that is a real example from their own companies.

Ask the group to get into pairs (and if people have come from the same company, then it is fine for them to work together, but not essential.)

Ask them to think of one of their own BB members, from any section, who demonstrates challenging behaviour.

### Issue Handout 3: "Strategies"

The participants in the pairs should take **10 minutes each** to do the following:

- ❑ **Describe the behaviour.** This should be in as much detail as possible, ie Is there any pattern to the behaviour? Is it at a certain point in the evening? Are some leaders more likely to experience the behaviour than others? What, if anything, is more likely to spark off the behaviour?
- ❑ **What is the impact of the behaviour?** Participants should consider the impact on the young person, the other young people and the leaders (particularly him or herself.)
- ❑ **Strategy.** Participants are encouraged to outline a new strategy to take back to the company to work with this young person. It can be very simple, like stress relief in themselves in order to cope better, or a planned approach to attempt to modify some of the behaviour to make it more acceptable to a group situation.

If there is time, you can ask if anyone is willing to share their thoughts from this discussion with the rest of the group.

If you are out of time, then you can say that there is a one-day course available for people who would like to look at the subject in more depth.

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Recap the main learning points by referring to the OHP or Powerpoint screen showing the learning outcomes.

Thank the group and wish them well.

End.



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# Working With Challenging Behaviour

## RESOURCES

- OHP 1: Learning Outcomes**
- OHP 2: Four Steps to Better Behaviour: Step 1**
- OHP 3: Four Steps to Better Behaviour: Step 2**
- OHP 4: Four Steps to Better Behaviour: Step 3**
- OHP 5: Four Steps to Better Behaviour: Step 4**

### **BB Disability Awareness leaflets**

- Handout 1: What do we mean by “challenging”?**
- Handout 2: The range of challenging behaviours**
- Handout 3: Strategies**
- Handout 4: Challenging Behaviour in Teenagers**
- Handout 5: Communications with Teenagers**

Training Material

OHP 1

## Learning Outcomes

**At the end of this course participants will be able to:**

- Identify a range of behaviours that are challenging to leaders
- Be aware of the impact of these behaviours on the individual child, other children and young people and adult leaders
- Build strategies to cope with challenging behaviours
- Name and understand some of the more common conditions and impairments among children that can influence behaviour

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OHP 2

## Four Steps to Better Behaviour: Step 1

### Learn to pay positive attention to children

- The quality of the attention we give to children is powerful
- If positive attention is not forthcoming, negative attention may seem worth seeking out (criticism, telling off etc)
- Make sure you don't combine praise and criticism in backhanded compliments, such as "You did well tonight and listened, now why can't you be like that all the time?"
- When you give praise make it accurate and honest, not over the top, such as "Good work!", "Its nice when you...", "What a nice thing to do", "You played that game very fairly"
- Remember non-verbal signs of approval: smiling, thumbs up, wink
- Always show approval immediately. *Don't wait!*
- Always be specific about the behaviour you like

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OHP 3

## Four Steps to Better Behaviour: Step 2

### Use this positive attention to improve behaviour

- This step builds on the positive attention outlined in Step 1
- Seek out opportunities to use positive attention, “Catch ‘em being good!”
- Find times when the child is not involved in an activity and ask them to do small favours, for example “Could you pass me a pencil please?” or “Can you bring the keys over?”
- Make sure the favours are simple and brief, and as the child follows each one, be sure to provide specific praise.
- Because the requests are very simple and brief, most children (even those with behavioural problems) will do them
- This step, if used over a number of weeks can make a dramatic difference in a child’s behaviour

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OHP 4

## Four Steps to Better Behaviour: Step 3

### Set up a BB token system

- ❑ Children with behaviour problems often need a more powerful incentive than praise. The token system rewards good behaviour.
- ❑ Start the system with all the children (this would work best in Anchors and Juniors)
- ❑ Be positive when you are explaining the system. Say something like “We want to reward good behaviour in the section, so you can now earn tokens for listening, following instructions and helping”
- ❑ Decide on the sort of tokens you are going to use. Tiddlywinks counters can be colour coded, for example, green tokens are worth 1 point, blue 5 points and red 10 points.
- ❑ Be clear about what privileges the tokens can earn, for example snacks or sweets, trips out or activities on a holiday if they are totted up on a collective basis.
- ❑ Its better not to make it a competition, as the better-behaved kids will win, reinforcing old patterns of winners and losers.
- ❑ *Do not take tokens away for misbehaviour!*
- ❑ Ask the children what rewards they want on the list
- ❑ Don't give tokens away before the child has deserved them, but be as quick as possible in rewarding the child for good behaviour
- ❑ When you give tokens, smile and tell the child how pleased you are.

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OHP 5

## Four Steps to Better Behaviour: Step 4

### Coping with the inevitable, responding constructively to incidents

- Use “Time-outs” for serious misbehaviour:
  - Ask the child to come and stand by you for a short period of time, being clear with the child why you have asked them to do this.
  - Once the time out is passed and if the child is calm, then they must agree to do what they were asked to do. (If it is something that cannot be corrected like swearing or lying, the child has to promise not to do it again.)
  - If they refuse, then keep them with you for a while longer. When they have done what was requested, say “well done” in a neutral tone.
- **Remember! After a time-out, watch out for the next appropriate behaviour by the child and praise them for it. This ensures that the child always receives as much reward as punishment and shows that you are not angry at the child but at the inappropriate behaviour.**

## Training Material

### Handout 1

## What Do We Mean By “Challenging”?

- **What sorts of challenging behaviour have you experienced at your BB company?** Give examples in a range from mild or moderate through to extreme.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- **What sort of impact does this behaviour have on:**
  - the child/young person
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - other children or young people  
the leaders (Discuss the feelings you have when you are coping with this behaviour)

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Handout 2

## The Range of Challenging Behaviours

- Not listening
- Not finishing any tasks
- Lack of concentration and easily distracted
- Unable to work at something without constant supervision
- Always fidgeting and on the move
- Talking excessively
- Losing control of temper
- Frequent disputes or arguments with adults
- Actively refusing to cooperate with requests made by adults
- Deliberately doing things to annoy other people
- Blaming others for own misdeeds
- Easily annoyed by others
- Angry or spiteful
- Intimidation or harassment of others
- Physical fights
- Using weapons against others
- Physically cruel to others
- Lies or breaks promises
- Steals



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### Handout 3

## Strategies

- **Describe the behaviour.** This should be in as much detail as possible, ie Is there any pattern to the behaviour? Is it at a certain point in the evening? Are some leaders more likely to experience the behaviour than others? What, if anything, is more likely to spark off the behaviour?
- **What is the impact of the behaviour? Consider the impact on the young person, the other young people and on you!**
- **Strategy.** Outline a new strategy to take back to your company to work with this young person. It can be very simple, like stress relief in yourself in order to cope better, or a planned approach to attempt to modify some of the behaviour to make it more acceptable to the young people and adults in the company.

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Handout 4

# Challenging Behaviour in Teenagers

## Common Behaviours and Ideas How to Help

(Taken from [www.adders.org](http://www.adders.org), the website for ADD/ADHD)

### Challenging Behaviour

Seeking independence and freedom

### Possible Ways to Help

- o Encourage independence
- o Trust the young person until they prove they are not trustworthy
- o Be observant of activities & friends
- o Consider compromise
- o Set up win-win situations
- o Offer an attractive alternative

### Challenging Behaviour

Disobey/conflict with adults

### Possible Ways to Help

- o State rules clearly
- o Involve in developing rules
- o Write down rules/post them

### Challenging Behaviour

Acting younger

### Possible Ways to Help

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- o Adjust expectations
- o Ask his help in solving problems
- o Teach desired behaviour
- o Impose consequence if necessary

**Challenging Behaviour**

Are impulsive

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Anticipate problems
- o Avoid tempting teenager

**Challenging Behaviour**

Difficulty paying attention/don't seem to listen

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Make eye contact/use touch
- o Keep instructions brief and simple
- o Avoid preaching
- o Write instructions down
- o Accept their listening style

**Challenging Behaviour**

Forgetful/doesn't do chores

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Make a written list
- o Use "post-it" notes
- o Help get started/show how to do
- o Ask how you can help

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**Challenging Behaviour**

Disorganised/lose things/have messy rooms

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Put name on possessions
- o Purchase less expensive things
- o Assist in being organized
- o Serve as a coach
- o List steps for clean room
- o Help clean room/garage
- o Close door to messy room

**Challenging Behaviour**

Lack awareness of time/they're late

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Use wrist watch alarm
- o Rent or buy a beeper
- o Teach awareness of time

**Challenging Behaviour**

Difficulty planning ahead

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Teach planning
- o Teach time management

**Challenging Behaviour**

Difficult to discipline

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### **Possible Ways to Help**

- o Use positive reinforcement
- o Use logical consequences
- o Reward or punish immediately
- o Be consistent
- o Create new consequences/rewards
- o Use behavioural charts
- o Use rewards
- o Avoid power struggles
- o Redirect interests
- o Give second chance
- o Be humane

### **Challenging Behaviour**

Low frustration tolerance/irritable/emotional

### **Possible Ways to Help**

- o Listen/be supportive
- o Use active listening
- o Teach problems solving skills
- o Teach anger control

### **Challenging Behaviour**

Argues/talk back

### **Possible Ways to Help**

- o Ignore minor infractions
- o Walk away from conflict
- o Give space and time to cool off
- o Impose a consequence

### **Challenging Behaviour**

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Don't accept responsibility for actions

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Deal with problem behaviour
- o Let them know that whatever they have done you still like them. It is the behaviour you don't like

**Challenging Behaviour**

Dishonest

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o If you know answer, don't ask
- o Eliminate some punishment
- o Develop plan to deal with problem
- o Impose a consequence

**Challenging Behaviour**

Difficulty participating in sports

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Play large muscle sports
- o Play an active position

**Challenging Behaviour**

Restless/easily bored

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Get involved in activities and sports
- o Plan interesting trips and visits
- o Encourage hobbies & interests
- o Make special plans for Holidays

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**Challenging Behaviour**

Self-centred

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Encourage to do things for others

**Challenging Behaviour**

Break things or have accidents

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Handle accidents philosophically
- o Treat as would an adult
- o Discuss physical strength
- o Put expensive possessions away

**Challenging Behaviour**

Daring/have accidents/ break bones/climb the unclimbable/do harrowing stunts/

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o Encourage safe, stimulating activities
- o Monitor level of danger
- o Provide supervision
- o Negotiate compromise
- o Ask others for help

**Challenging Behaviour**

Absent-minded/spacey

**Possible Ways to Help**

- o See suggestions re: organisation

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- o Anticipate problems/make adjustments

## **Challenging Behaviour**

Attention seekers

### **Possible Ways to Help**

- o Give opportunities to be centre stage
- o Participate in activities allowing recognition
- o Discuss inappropriate attention
- o Ignore some behaviour

**Try to enjoy your teenager and allow them to try to express themselves to you without getting annoyed with them. Remember to let them know that you love them but it is often the behaviours you don't like!**

Part of this is from the books by Chris A. Zeigler Dendy Teenagers with ADD and Teaching Teens with ADD and ADHD



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Handout 5

## Communications with Teenagers

### What you should do

There are many ways you can encourage and help a teenager to speak with you.

- **Make time to listen** - many teenagers say adults don't listen to them. Communication is a two-way street: if you want him/her to listen, you have to make sure you're willing to do the same.
- **Show respect for a teenager's point of view** - take a deep breath and be willing to acknowledge that he/she may have something worthwhile to say.
- **Try to act as a role model for your teenager** - find ways of modelling good communication in company, with other leaders or with younger children.
- **Be flexible** - be willing to talk at times or in places that suit the young person, if possible, rather than you.

### What you shouldn't do

- **Score points** - like all of us, teenagers don't like being put down or feeling that adults are playing power games.
- **Push your ideas down your teen's throat** - if you try to impose them on them, they'll inevitably reject what you have to offer.
- **Make snap judgements** - listen to the young person before you jump to conclusions. There's nothing worse for a teenager than to find you have a closed mind and aren't willing to listen to their views.

### Tips for talking to teens

- Take the cue from your teenager. There's absolutely no point barging your way in, saying you want to talk, when he/she's rushing to get involved in an activity. Try to catch him/her at a time when he/she's relaxed, or you are able to chat.
- Use open questions that don't just need a yes/no response. That is, "How did the football practice go?" rather than "Did you have a good day?"

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- Guard against using a chat as an excuse to nag or tell off.
- Never put a young person down for their views or ideas. Don't say: "That's so stupid. How can you possibly think that?" They need your approval, even though they'd never admit to it.
- Treat your teen with respect - much as you would another adult.
- When you both have different points of view and a disagreement is inevitable, it's better to negotiate a solution than enforce your demands, which will lead to resentment.
- Listen and reflect back what you hear. For example: "So, there's just too many rules at BB?" Active listening such as this is also about looking beyond the words for what's really being felt and said.
- No matter how well intentioned your advice, your teen is probably not going to be keen to take it. What's important is paying careful attention to the young person, keeping quiet to give them a chance to talk and not rushing in with your opinion.
- Use all the informal opportunities you can to communicate - for example, driving young people on trips and visits often leads to great conversations.
- Show you're genuinely interested when your teen tells things, by using body language and eye contact. Stop what you're doing to listen, if possible.
- Don't overreact or fly off the handle if you don't like what you hear. Comments such as: "Are you telling me they were smoking?" are the surest way to close down communication.