



Behaviour Management

Outline for Interactive Group Training Session



Resources needed:

- Board or flip chart & pens
- Pen & paper for each person
- Interactive sheet on 'Influencing Behaviour': one each

Starter

Give out the sheet on 'Influencing the behaviour of others'. (See separate document) Allow 5 minutes for everyone to reflect individually, then discuss as a group. The time you spend on this will depend of the needs of the group. If you wish to do this quickly as an opening activity, have the words already listed on the flip chart under positive and negative. Other groups may need to spend a long time on this.

Questions for general discussion

Take each of the following questions in turn, get them to discuss it in pairs for a few minutes and then discuss it as a group. Write the bullet points on the board as they occur.

- Why do youngsters misbehave?
- 'Prevention is better than cure.' How can we set about this?
- How can we deal with discipline problems when they do occur?

Questions specific to individual groups

Once you have covered these general principles, take a specific look at your own situation. If people are from different groups, make sure they discuss these questions with their own group.

- What perimeters do we have/ wish to set for our group?
- How do our aims for the group influence the way we deal with discipline?
- Which child/children are causing particular concern?
- What may be causing the problem?
- How can we deal with it?
- What can we do as leaders to support each other?

Finish by praying in groups.

Image: Microsoft clip art

Notes: Summary

Why do youngsters misbehave?

Physical reasons

- Energy
- Food: sugar hype; 'E' numbers
- Weather – wind; snow
- Tiredness: exams; end of term; sleep-overs

Intellectual/emotional reasons

- Boredom
- Frustration
- Compensation/ Low self-esteem
- Too much 'hype' or stimulation
- Personal problems: temporary and long-term
- Special needs such as dyspraxia; ADHD; Autism

Spiritual reasons

- Human sinful nature
- Spiritual challenge
- Spiritual attack

'Prevention is better than cure.' How can we set about this?

1. Know them by name.
2. Recognise the importance of relationship
3. Understand the age group
4. Decide as a team what your standards will be.
5. Plan the programme carefully.
6. Be well organised/arrive early
7. Have enough for them to do.
8. Don't exhaust their concentration span.
9. Try to pitch activities at the right level.
10. Reward good behaviour rather than punish bad behaviour
11. Music can help to create the right atmosphere.

Dealing with problems

1. Be consistent about enforcing any rules you have.
2. Learn to put a tone of authority into your voice.
3. Take into account the individual needs of the child causing the bad behaviour.
4. Label the behaviour rather than the person.
5. Discuss and pray about problems as a leadership team
6. Have an ultimate punishment which you can use when all else fails.

Full Notes

Why do children misbehave?

Physical reasons

- Energy: They have a lot of energy that will channel itself in the wrong direction, if it is not channelled in the right direction
- Food: sugar hype; 'E' numbers: You can't control what they eat before they arrive but you can influence what they eat and drink after they arrive. Look carefully at labels; speak to anyone you know who may be well informed concerning what to avoid. It may be worth spending a little more on the squash if necessary to using fruit instead of iced biscuits if you can get away with it.
- Weather – wind; snow. Both wind and snow hype them up and being indoors all day because it's raining doesn't help either.
- Tiredness: exams; end of term; sleep-overs. Even your sensible ones can get very silly at exam time and tiredness affects most of us at times.

Intellectual/emotional reasons

- Boredom: Caused by the subject being too long, too dull, too easy, they've heard it all before, or they don't understand. Boredom often leads to
- Frustration: They get frustrated if too much is expected of them or they are extremely bored.
- Compensation. To compensate for feelings of inferiority or inadequacy. It can be caused by the material not being at the appropriate level or by general lack of self-esteem.
- Too much 'hype' or stimulation. If the brain receives too much stimulation, it becomes impossible to concentrate or learn anything. It also makes it difficult for them to sleep. The build-up to Christmas in some cultures can be a nightmare for adults dealing with children.
- Personal problems: temporary and long-term. Problems at home or personal upset. For example if their parents are getting divorced, this can make it very difficult for them to concentrate on anything, and can make them very restless.
- Special needs such as dyspraxia; dyslexia; autism or Asperger's; Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder. These children are often extra fidgety. They just have to fiddle with something. Provide something in the room it is okay for them to play with which won't make a noise or break. Even with ordinary youngsters, it helps to have something to fiddle with such as paper & pens for doodling.

Spiritual reasons

- Human sinful nature: They are born with 'original sin' and can be malicious, selfish etc. just as much as the rest of us!
- Spiritual challenge: if they are being challenged by the Holy Spirit that their lives need changing and they are fighting this, it can affect behaviour.
- Spiritual attack: We are in a spiritual battle and if we are being used by God to help others, the enemy will try to give us hassle. This makes prayer support vital.

'Prevention is better than cure.' How can we set about this?

1. Know them by name wherever possible. It is very difficult to effectively discipline a child whose name you don't know, and they know it. It also makes them feel that you care about them. Help new leaders to learn the children's names.
2. Recognise the importance of relationship. I was at a secular training course a few years ago where the tutor said 'If you don't have a relationship with a class, you can't teach them anything.' Try to get to know them as individuals. Make sure there is time to chat, rather than just teach. Home visits are rarely done in the UK any more due to our change in lifestyle, but they can be of great value.
3. Understand the age group
4. Decide what your standards will be. Take into account what is reasonable to expect and then be consistent. They will not behave like angels, as rumour has it they once did, and a certain amount of fidgeting does not mean they are not listening. On the other hand, you cannot allow too many distractions or they will not hear the story or the instructions etc. Knowing where to draw the line comes largely from experience, but praying for wisdom can also help considerably. If you have any set rules such as 'no go' or 'no touch' areas, make sure all your leaders consistently enforce them and that any new leaders joining your group are informed about them.
5. Plan the programme carefully. What have they been doing beforehand? Will they need to start with a lively activity to enable them to let off steam, or would a quieter one help them to settle better? Try to alternate the lively and the passive activities. Never have too many passive things together or their minds will wander. Too many lively games can get them hyped-up more than is helpful.
6. Be well prepared. Make sure that you get there well before they do. This will give you time to organise yourself and set up anything necessary. When they arrive, you will be able to greet them properly and get things off to a snappy start. It is much easier to control a crowd of children if they have not been given the opportunity to run wild first. In schools, where you go to them, make sure you are not late.
7. Ensure there is always something for them to do if they wish. Sometimes they may just want to chill however.
8. Don't exhaust their concentration span. Try to end an activity while they still enjoying it. This even applies with games. If they become very bored, it can be difficult to regain their attention.



9. Try to pitch activities at the right level. Take their needs and limitations into account. If you expect too much of them, they are likely to feel frustrated and will cause trouble. For example don't ask them to recap the whole of last week's lesson, as our memories just don't work that way. On the other hand, if you do something that is too easy or they have heard too often before, they will get bored and will look for another way of amusing themselves. Younger children like repetition, but older children do like to be stretched. This can entail more thorough preparation.
10. Reward good behaviour rather than punish bad behaviour. Stars and sweets, and putting children in teams can work wonders and is much more positive than telling them off too often.
11. Be a role model of how to behave. They will learn far more from how you treat them than they ever will from what you tell them.
12. Depending on the circumstances, music can help to create the right atmosphere.

Dealing with problems

1. Be consistent about enforcing any rules you have. Be firm but polite
2. Learn to put a tone of authority into your voice. It is much more effective than shouting. Only shout if it is necessary in order to make yourself heard above their noise, or where a matter of safety is concerned.
3. Take into account the individual needs of the child causing the bad behaviour. If they are over-excited, or possibly distressed, it may be a good idea for a leader to take them for a walk to calm them down, or find out the cause of the problem.
4. Be careful what words you use when you tell them off. There is a difference between putting them in their place and putting them down. Label the behaviour rather than the person.
5. Discuss and pray about problems as a leadership team.
6. When all else fails, you do not have to put up with them. You can send them home, or back to where their parents are, and/or ban them the following week. Have an ultimate punishment which you can use when necessary.

Influencing the Behaviour of Others - Activity Sheet

The aim of this exercise is to help us examine our underlying approach to discipline. It would be helpful to have different colour pens or highlighters.

- Highlight the methods that you use most often.
- Circle or underline positive methods of discipline in green and negative methods in black or red
- Now mark the methods that you consider to be the most effective.

ENTHUSE

INSPIRE

NAG

PERSUADE

VERBALLY ABUSE

ENCOURAGE

WHINGE

SHOUT

MOTIVATE

BULLY

BELITTLE

CRITICISE

VALIDATE

PUT DOWN

PRAISE

RIDICULE

EMPOWER

BUILD UP

CONSULT

GUILT MANIPULATION

REASSURE



Influencing the Behaviour of Others – Notes

Discuss or reflect on what this exercise has shown you.

As with many aspects of life we are influenced by our childhood experiences or the behaviour of those we admire.

Did we grow up in a positive environment where we received much encouragement and understanding when we made mistakes?

Or did we grow up facing a great deal of criticism and fault finding?

Hopefully we will mostly use the positive methods, but sometimes we may need to use some of the negative ones. Think of and discuss some examples.

One example here could be the use of shouting. I generally consider it unacceptable to shout at children unless there is a health and safety issue involved or it the only way you can be heard (although a whistle can be helpful here). If you very rarely shout at anyone, they will take far more notice of you, if you ever do.

If you make a mistake and use a negative method of discipline, perhaps because you are tired, what can you do about it?

This worksheet could also be used as part of a parenting course.