

Behaviour Strategies

HELP FILE

Naming Students in General & in Teacher Behaviour Support Teams

(See our ["5-Step" Programme](#) which incorporates these teams)

Naming is Blaming

Once a student is named in the group setting of a behaviour support team, or indeed in any setting, including the classroom, it instantly moves the focus from the behaviour to the student him or her self. This dilutes and even removes the need for the teacher to manage the behaviour rather than the student. It can be a constant temptation to revert to habitual ways of managing behaviour which is precisely what the support team process is aimed at preventing – and also carrying forward the workshops' skills.

When it is understood and fully grasped that focusing on the behaviour **alone** is the key to the whole process, the support team process will steam ahead.

Students really love a teacher who can do this because the student learns that their person and their dignity is protected and they feel safe, they settle fast and they become much more productive. In short, students learn quickly that it is their behaviour and not their person which is the focus of the teacher's attention, and it is this realization that triggers trust and respect for the teacher.

The aim of the behaviour support team process is:

1. To focus on empowering and supporting teachers in their management of behaviour – not on students' issues – that is pastoral care or the province of psychologists.

Behaviour may not necessarily involve a student or students, it may be managing another adult – parent or colleague.

Not using names (or identifying the person in some other way!), enables people to bring up even very sensitive and worrying problem behaviours and obtain support and new ideas ..

- Without responses being coloured by name or title.
Remember, no name = no blame.
- Allow people to put a real problem on the table.

This enables teachers to be supported and given coping skills without feeling vulnerable - feeling judged, inadequate etc. - these can be unconsciously conveyed through simple body language, facial expression and gesture.

The whole group relaxes into a safe environment and people become more open. (This sense of trust in the group is an interesting corollary to the whole process. It is teachers using the same skills in the group that they use in the classroom)

2. In having to describe a behaviour to bring clarity to both the action and reactions and..
 - People's responses to a situation/issue are not clouded by personalities.
3. To train teachers to focus on the behaviour – not the person. "I cannot change who I am only what I say or do".

Focusing on the person for misbehaviour (reaction) generally results in that person..

- Taking it 'personally' and being defensive.
 - Feeling disempowered, resulting in further acting out behaviours – e.g. denying, blaming others etc., because they are not enabled to respond appropriately – they are prevented from having the opportunity to themselves, 'put it right'.
4. To encourage teachers to think creatively about managing student behaviour without being caught up with 'who did it.' This is a sideshow and prevents the behaviour from being the focus for management.
 - A teacher's response to a 'name' can bring up personal experiences and emotional responses that can unconsciously cloud the issue and influence a teacher's thinking and response and focus on what they did and how they felt instead of management options – skills, strategies, techniques etc.

These are not discussions about students (that is the role of pastoral care) they aim to...

- Empower and skill teachers in their management of behaviour
- Build empathy between and support for colleagues
- Encourage creative thinking as all ideas are accepted, no matter what others think – for the ultimate management decision lies with the presenting teacher.
- For students to realise that it is what they say and do that needs changing. This enables them to change their words and actions ... not become defensive because they cannot change who they are – only what they do and say
- Enable teachers to manage behaviour in all circumstances and be able to build a wide ranging personal suite of skills and strategies for any occasion and any confrontation or behaviour.

Jenny Mackay