

Idaho Vouchered Respite Care Program Training

Provided by the Idaho Dept. of Health and
Welfare in partnership with BPA Health



Learning Objective 3: Difficult Behaviors

- How to respond to difficult behaviors
- De-escalation techniques
- Post-behavior wrap-up



Learning Objective 3: Difficult Behaviors

Behaviors serve a purpose. They are used to communicate needs, wants, dissatisfaction, excitement, or indicate a desire for attention.



Responding to Difficult Behaviors

Handling potential incidents include a few different key strategies:

- **Prevention**

- Identify and eliminate triggers
- Give choices
- Provide attention and praise to the positive behaviors
- Maintain structure and schedules to be predictable
- Manage any identified difficulties a little at a time with some rewards and praise along the way.

Responding to Difficult Behaviors continued:

Key strategies for handling potential incidents, continued:

- **Respond** (if a life-threatening emergency call 911)
 - Redirect the undesired behavior to a more appropriate activity or behavior
 - Provide plenty of praise for positive behaviors
 - Ignore or limit interaction and attention with negative behaviors.
 - If the child is damaging property or causing self-injury, follow the instructions and plans left by the parent / legal guardian.

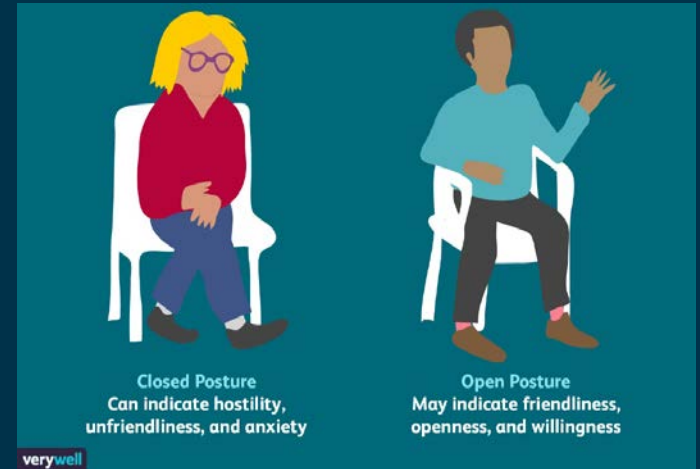
Responding to Difficult Behaviors continued:

Keys to handling potential incidents include a few different steps:

- **Teach**-Role model and practice the desired behaviors on a consistent basis to provide an alternative response for the child instead of enforcing the negative behavior they have been using to get their needs met.
- **Building Rapport**-Consistency, patience, and repetition are the most important aspect in bringing security to the child and improve chances of real change.

De-Escalation and Cool Down

- Remain calm and non-confrontational
- Be deliberate and even with your tone and body language. Keep in mind most conversation happens based on body language and tone, not the words being used.
- Validate the child's feelings with positive body language (open and welcoming language) and verbal communication
- Do not touch the child, raise your voice, rush your speech, or have closed body language



Post Behavior Wrap-up

Negative behaviors and melt downs happen. It's important to manage the behavior and minimize the damage while it's occurring. Actions following an incident are important to establish rapport and maintain trust.

- Don't nag or continue to bring up the negative behavior
- If appropriate, ask the child if they have ideas on how the situation could have been handled differently

Post Behavior Wrap-up continued:

- Identify a reasonable alternative to the behavior and practice
 - When the child is feeling overwhelmed because of a crowd, instead of running away, they can signal with their hands or body language allowing the respite caregiver to remove the child from the area safely and calmly before the child is triggered into a behavior
- Give lots of praise and attention to the things the child did right. This includes calming down, processing alternatives, being willing to make choices, and practicing what to do next time

Additional Information:

- [Respite Care: Understanding Children](#)
- [Respite Care: Caring for the Caregiver](#)
- [Starting Places: Oppositional Behavior](#)
- [Handling Escalation: From Anger to Out-Of-Control](#)
- [5 Unhelpful Responses We Have to Escalated Kids and Adults](#)

Thank you!



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