

Challenging Behaviour

This Leaders Support Guide sets out to provide information on the difficult topic of Challenging Behaviour that can cause great concern for Leaders. It explains the different categories of behavioural problems and suggests where support can be found to help with the problem

An Overview on Challenging Behaviour

In Scouting today, as in society generally, there are children and young people whose behaviour disrupts activities, damages property and equipment and causes injury and mental distress to others. We should not just accept this as a sign of the times. Any problem which is unacceptable to our adults and which affects the functioning of individuals or Groups must be seen as a matter of serious concern, deserving discussion and support.

Problem behaviour takes many forms; harmless, irritating, attention seeking; bullying; physical and verbal aggression; violence, vandalism and sexual harassment.

Our personal values determine what is acceptable to us; what is a problem to one person may not be to another. Therefore it is important to be objective and, as far as possible, adopt a team approach when dealing with problem behaviours. Scouting provides a set of values through the Scout Law

The more self-confident we are, the better we are able to cope with problems and stress.

Some suggested points for discussion at Leader meetings are: -

- When does naughtiness or high spirits become unacceptable problem behaviour?
- Does our programme or structure of our meetings encourage problem behaviour?
- Are our meetings sufficiently full and challenging to help avoid boredom that may lead to problem behaviour?
- How does body language and mental attitude affect others?
- Should Leaders be expected to tolerate persistent bad behaviour?
- If challenging behaviour seems to stem from cause outside our control, can we hope to effect any change in 1-2 hours contact each week?
- What steps can Leaders take to control problem behaviour?
- How do we develop a strategy for dealing with the behaviour of the young person and provide a code of conduct
- Remember you must never resort to the use of any form of physical punishment

Coping with challenging behaviour

Challenging behaviour can be considered in two categories.

1. Behaviour that is really excessive high spirits or stretching disciplinary boundaries to their limits and beyond.

This type of behaviour is best coped with by ensuring that activities are relevant to the members and appropriate to their abilities. It is essential to ensure that the young people are kept fully occupied with challenging and enjoyable activities.

Dealing with this type of behaviour is not a special needs issue and is best coped with by Leaders in the general running and managing of the Section. Help and support is available during Training, in publications or from local Regional Section Commissioners.

2. Behaviour that is considered inappropriate and consistently needs attention and support from Leaders. This may lead to Members not being able to participate in certain activities.

This type of behaviour may arise from medical conditions and would be considered a special need that will require relevant support and attention to manage the actions of the Member concerned. This will be necessary to safeguard both the young person concerned and the others in the Section. Only in very extreme circumstances will it be necessary to curtail the inclusion of a Member. Under most circumstances it should be possible to manage the situation to ensure the Member is able to participate and enjoy their Scouting.

The challenging behaviour of a young person is something that can be discussed at a Sectional Leaders' meeting in a Group or at Region. It is a Group issue rather than just a Sectional one. It is important that a Section and Leaders with the problem do not feel they are alone and unsupported. This makes moving the young person on to the next Section much easier for everyone – both the young person and the Leaders. At the same time, any relevant information to assist the transfer, should be shared amongst the Leadership team.

The conditions most regularly encountered are ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) or Autistic Spectrum Disorders including Autism and Asperger Syndrome

Information on these conditions can be found in the following Leader Support Guides
Leader Support Guide LSG8 - Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD or ADD) –
Leader Support Guide LSG9 - Autism
Leader Support Guide LSG10 - Hyperactivity
www.nsw.scouts.com.au then look for Support Guides in the Leaders section.

The following web sites provide useful information:

General info:

HyperActivity Attention Deficit Association (NSW)
www.users.bigpond.com/hyperadd/HAAD02.html
<http://mind.scan.swin.edu.au/adhd/adhdinfo.php>

Autism Spectrum Australia (Aspect)
www.autismnsw.com.au/

www.google.com.au Then enter ADHD

SPECIAL NOTE

Illness, disorder and behavioural problems require skilled diagnosis. The treatment is then determined in accordance to the type of the particular disorder and needs of the patient.

This Guide is designed to give you a basic understanding of the problem,

If a member of your Group suddenly reacts and you have had no previous advice that the person suffered the problem you are required to simply provide what care you can, to the level of your current understanding.

If you have been advised that a member has a particular problem then there is a slight increase on the demands made upon you in their care. You don't have to do a specialised course, the best source of advice is from the guardian/parent.

The Guardian/parent will know the various idiosyncrasies of their child's problems. How to identify the need for intervention and what steps they require you to take to assist their child, and when to seek more professional help.

It can also be a wonderful training in life's skills if the guardian/parent, with the child's permission, can give a brief talk to your Section and indicate the symptoms they might see which requires them to call you for help.