



CTRI
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CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS IN YOUTH

A Framework for Intervention



**We envision a world where
everyone is trauma-informed.**

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS IN YOUTH – A FRAMEWORK FOR INTERVENTION

For those who work with youth, managing challenging behaviours that interfere with development, learning, or success can be both frustrating and exhausting. This workshop will review challenging behaviours related to aggression, non-compliance, and connection-seeking, and will provide a framework for intervening with these behaviours. Participants will analyze the effectiveness of their current approach and develop insights into what is happening when attempts at intervention do not work. A framework, with guidelines for structuring interactions for positive outcomes will be given using a leadership, guidance, mentorship model to bring out the best in youth who exhibit challenging behaviour will be provided. This workshops will involve interactive opportunities for practicing the skills learned.

Challenging Behaviours in Youth – A Framework for Intervention

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Challenging Behaviours
5	My Experience with Challenging Behaviours
6	Key Terms
7	Leading, Guiding, Mentoring, & Providing Direction
8	Finding your Interaction Style
10	Key Traits of Behaviour Guidance Styles
11	Your Response & the Role of Empathy
13	Escalating Challenging Behaviour
14	Control Strategies
16	Guiding Frameworks & Strategies for Working with Challenging Behaviours
20	Aggressive Behaviours
21	Noncompliant Behaviour
23	Connection-Seeking Behaviour
25	Action Steps: Reshaping the Challenging Behaviour
28	Quick Reference for Guiding Frameworks
29	Case Studies & Skill Development
33	Appendix
39	Resources
40	CTRI Workshops and Services

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Challenging behaviour refers to actions that cause harm to others or limit a youth from fulfilling some aspect of their life. It is the impact of these behaviours that makes them challenging, not the youth themselves. The term itself does not carry with it any diagnostic relevance or significance and does not make conjectures about the cause of the behaviour.

WHAT ARE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS?

Each one of us will have different views about the behaviours we find challenging. Although we may find various behaviours difficult, there are some common categories that many people find challenging in youth. This manual will explore three challenging behaviours in particular:

- Aggressive Behaviours
- Noncompliant Behaviours
- Connection-Seeking Behaviours

We will explore these patterns of behaviour and how we can exert influence to elicit behaviours that we prefer and would be beneficial for the youth. We will focus on what we can control rather than on what we cannot.

This course will also explore how our basic intervention styles impact how we deal with challenging behaviours and what we can do to be more effective. There will be space throughout this course for self-awareness to identify how “we” as the helper, worker, or adult are responding versus reacting to these challenging behaviours.

Notes:

MY EXPERIENCE WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

PICTURE A YOUTH WHO EXHIBITS A CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR.

01 | Who do you see? _____

02 | What is your relationship to them? _____

03 | How would you describe them with only one word? _____

04 | How do you feel when you picture them? _____

Here are some words you can choose from that may describe how the Youth's behaviours made you feel:

Angry	Annoyed	Frustrated	Fearful	Disgusted	Anxious
Awkward	Baffled	Blamed	Bothered	Irritated	Attacked
Criticized	Cut down	Desperate	Depleted	Helpless	Defensive
Disappointed	Suspicious	Edgy	Furious	Guilty	Harassed
Inconvenience	Inadequate	Judged	Manipulated	Mistreated	Picked on

Describe the challenging behaviour:

What is the impact of their behaviour (think mental, emotional, and physical) . . .

On others? _____

On themselves? _____

On you? _____

How have you reacted or responded to this person and their challenging behaviours in the past?

KEY TERMS

Before we walk through the role empathy plays when working with challenging behaviours, let's take a brief moment to review some key concepts that will be used throughout this workshop to support our work and learning.

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness is about consciously and unconsciously knowing who we are – truly knowing our personality, feelings, motives, and/or needs as individuals first before we assume or receive the roles that become part of our lives. Roles such as parent, partner, friend, victim, survivor, sibling, or child.

Understanding who we are, where we come from, and our own strengths and challenges as the helper, worker, adult, mentor, or leader is a key concept when working with challenging behaviours.

Our self-awareness will often determine whether we react or respond.

DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN REACT AND RESPOND

REACT: Would suggest that we act immediately, without delayed thought. This can often show up as anger, yelling, or a raised voice. It is often done quickly, without thorough thought.

RESPOND: Would suggest we act in a more thoughtful, paused, mindful manner. It means taking a moment to pause and notice our own response within our body and mind before taking action.

Both our reactions and responses can be based on our own experiences (trauma-informed), confirming why our own awareness of self is a key component when working with challenging behaviour.

Notes:

LEADING, GUIDING, MENTORING, & PROVIDING DIRECTION

The practice of *leading*, *guiding*, and *mentoring* youth comes out of a particular approach that is anchored in both the positive *role* of adults in lives of youth and a positive *relationship* between adults and youth. We differentiate from the practice of managing or supervising youth as follows:

SUPERVISING AND/OR MANAGING YOUTH

Directing the behaviours and activities of youth in a top-down way. It relies on structured roles and a hierarchical relationship.

LEADING, GUIDING, AND MENTORING YOUTH

Providing vision and inspiring youth to action by example and through supportive empowerment in order to meet their goals/needs. It relies on a clear understanding of roles and boundaries for all and a willingness to engage in relationship.

Supervision is about fulfilling functions. Guidance is about who you are and how you engage in relationships.

Those who guide youth operate with an essential attitude of confidence in the capabilities of the youth they lead. When intervening in the affairs of youth, they do so with the goal of empowering them, and they balance accountability with support where it is needed.

Words that describe supervision/managing:

Words that describe leadership/guidance:

FINDING YOUR INTERACTION STYLE

Using the scale below, indicate how these statements reflect your actions and feelings in your role with the youth you encounter. If time allows, go through the inventory a second time with a high pressure/stressful situation in mind.

5 = Very often 4 = Often 3 = Sometimes 2 = Occasionally 1 = Seldom 0 = Never

- ___ **01** | It's better to stay away than to jump into the middle of situations.
- ___ **02** | I try to get youth to think as I do.
- ___ **03** | I try not to be intrusive.
- ___ **04** | I think it's best to talk about issues.
- ___ **05** | It's best to keep quiet and let them figure it out.
- ___ **06** | I rely on my position of authority to meet my goals.
- ___ **07** | I typically want to tell youth what they want to hear.
- ___ **08** | I believe youth should be consulted if the decision impacts them.
- ___ **09** | Those who stay out of it lives another day.
- ___ **10** | I have won if I come out on top.
- ___ **11** | I find it uncomfortable when youth are mad or upset with me.
- ___ **12** | I want to consider and listen to all sides before making a decision.
- ___ **13** | It's better to avoid intense situations or conversations.
- ___ **14** | The best way to save face (not look stupid) is to win the argument.
- ___ **15** | I often put the needs of others first.
- ___ **16** | I tell the youth my thoughts and ask for theirs.
- ___ **17** | It's best to let others worry about the major problems.
- ___ **18** | If you keep arguing long enough, they will give in.
- ___ **19** | I always provide encouraging comments, especially when things look down.
- ___ **20** | Transparency leads to the best decisions.
- ___ **21** | I try not to take positions that will create controversy.
- ___ **22** | I put my foot down at certain things. I have to – it's my job.
- ___ **23** | I try to soothe feelings.
- ___ **24** | I ask for opinions before making significant decisions.

SCORING

Write the number you wrote for each question onto the blank below. Total the columns; the highest score is your dominant interaction style.

Distant	Authoritarian	Permissive	Mentoring
____ 01	____ 02	____ 03	____ 04
____ 05	____ 06	____ 07	____ 08
____ 09	____ 10	____ 11	____ 12
____ 13	____ 14	____ 15	____ 16
____ 17	____ 18	____ 19	____ 20
____ 21	____ 22	____ 23	____ 24
_____	_____	_____	_____
TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL	TOTAL

What is your first response to the score you received? Does this feel true? Is there anything surprising?

KEY TRAITS OF BEHAVIOUR GUIDANCE STYLES

Each interaction style has a particular manner in which it disciplines, communicates, nurtures, and expects certain behaviours. In turn, each style has a distinct impact on youth and may reinforce certain challenging behaviours.

AUTHORITARIAN INTERACTION STYLE

Discipline	Punitive and harsh
Communication	Hierarchical
Expectations	High, but not age appropriate
Nurturance	Minimal warmth and affection

Impact on Youth: Find ways to get around the system, react to the system, or give in.

DISTANT INTERACTION STYLE

Discipline	Minimal discipline
Communication	Infrequent exchanges
Expectations	Few, if any
Nurturance	Minimal warmth and affection

Impact on Youth: Feel uncared for and not the worth the time or effort of the adults in their lives.

PERMISSIVE INTERACTION STYLE

Discipline	Little or nonexistent
Communication	Frequent exchanges
Expectations	Few, if any
Nurturance	Frequent and responsive

Impact on Youth: Feel free to act and do what they deem best to meet their wants and needs. Do not experience the natural consequences for their choices or behaviours.

MENTORING INTERACTION STYLE

Discipline	Responsive and reasonable
Communication	Frequent exchanges
Expectations	High and age appropriate
Nurturance	Frequent and responsive

Impact on Youth: Feel valued and understood. Believe they are responsible for the consequences of their behaviours.

YOUR RESPONSE & THE ROLE OF EMPATHY

THE ROLE OF EMPATHY

Empathy is the experience of relating to another person's condition or situation from the perspective of the other. Empathy has been associated with prosocial or helping behaviours. If we are going to be supporters of youth with difficult behaviours, we need to work towards understanding their perspective, believing them, responding with empathy, and modelling expected empathetic responses.

Most of us understand our response to challenging behaviours as a reasonable course of action given the nature of the behaviour. We see our way of interacting as reasonable and often wonder what is wrong with the youth – why can't they simply understand how inappropriate their behaviour is? However, changing the dynamics in our interactions begins with changing the way we think and continuously increasing our own self-awareness.

01 | What behaviour did you struggle with as a youth?

02 | How did the adults (parents, teachers, coaches, relatives) respond/react to you?

03 | Which reactions/responses were helpful? Which were not? How did you respond/react?

WHAT WE CONTROL

Ultimately, we only control one element of our interactions with youth: ourselves. Investing in ourselves is the only guaranteed place where we can make a change in the cycle of escalating challenging behaviour.

There are two things that we can change about ourselves:

- Our thoughts/judgements
- Our actions

SHIFT JUDGEMENT TO CURIOSITY

Interacting effectively with youth who exhibit challenging behaviours requires a shift from judgement to curiosity. We want to find out what needs are not being met in the moment, and what we can do to help facilitate a more positive response. We want to begin to examine what may be motivating the challenging behaviour and approach it in a way that does not immediately create defensiveness or escalate the interaction.

Examples:

- Judgemental thought: She is so out of control – she’s a monster.
- Curious thought: I wonder what motivates her to do that. What would cause someone to react so strongly?
- Curious thought: Why am I reacting to this behaviour so strongly?

REFLECTION

01 | Identify a judgemental thought you have had about the youth on page 5. Now shift judgement to curiosity. What curious thought could you replace the judgemental thought with?

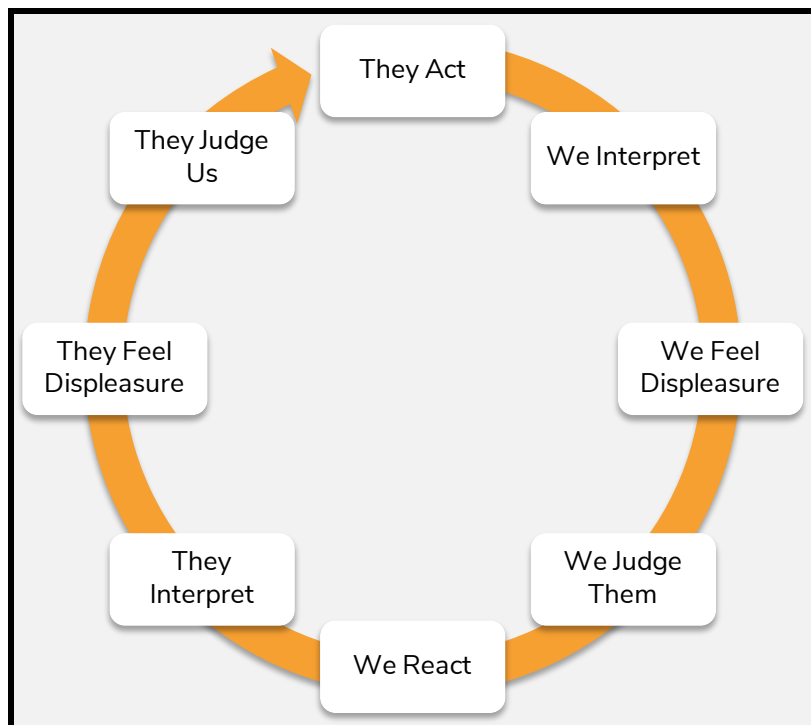
02 | What might be an alternate reason for the behaviour that you have not considered?

03 | What role does empathy play in setting you in the right frame of mind to change the interaction with the child exhibiting the challenging behaviour?

ESCALATING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

Responding out of a place of displeasure and judgement will most likely result in an escalation of the challenging behaviour as the youth will experience our reaction as unreasonable. This leads into a cycle of escalating challenging behaviour (see diagram below).

CYCLE OF ESCALATING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR



- 01 | The youth exhibits a challenging behaviour.
- 02 | We interpret their action negatively.
- 03 | We feel displeasure and want to rectify the situation.
- 04 | We judge their intent, maturity, or capability.
- 05 | We react, because we feel we need to protect ourselves or others, or set things back in balance.
- 06 | They interpret our reaction negatively.
- 07 | They feel displeasure.
- 08 | They judge us and our intentions.
- 09 | They (re)act, often defensively...

Changing the way we think will inevitably change our actions. When we act out of displeasure and judgement, our reactions normally fall into one of the following two categories: fight or flight. Either may be appropriate in the moment, but neither leads to long-term change.

Notes:

CONTROL STRATEGIES

Behaviour guidance is the practice of supporting youth in finding positive and effective ways to manage their own behaviour. It is both a mindset and practice. Behaviour guidance requires helpers, workers, adults, mentors, and leaders involved to consider, adopt, and practice a supportive approach that builds a sense of capability as well as reduces the occurrence of the challenging behaviour.

CONTROL STRATEGIES

People use a host of strategies to try to get youth to change. Common ones include:

- Force – physically removing the individual
- Shaming – negative comments in a public setting
- Punishment – removal of privileges
- Superior reasoning – arguing with the youth
- Bribery – offering rewards for the desired behaviour

Each of these may be effective in some situations but each has potential negative effects that may include the following:

- Force leads to resentment
- Shaming leads to internal or external violence
- Punishment leads to anger or learned helplessness
- Superior reasoning leads to argument or feeling unable to cope
- Bribery leads to empty pockets (only provides extrinsic motivation)

EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Extrinsic motivation occurs when a person is motivated to perform in order to obtain a reward or avoid a punishment. External motivators may be helpful in the following situations:

- When the individual has no desire or interest to change a behaviour
- When they are being asked to exhibit a new behaviour that has little or no baseline of similar behaviours
- As a source of feedback to inform the person they have met a certain standard

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Intrinsic motivation occurs when the behaviour itself is personally rewarding. Ultimately, the goal of guiding youth is to foster intrinsic motivation; however, this does not mean that extrinsic motivators are not helpful in some instances.

REFLECTION

01 | What are some of the reactions you have had with the individual you identified on page 5? Think mental, emotional, and physical.

02 | How might they have interpreted your actions negatively?

03 | How might this have contributed to the situation?

04 | In what ways can you see the cycle of escalating behaviour in this situation?

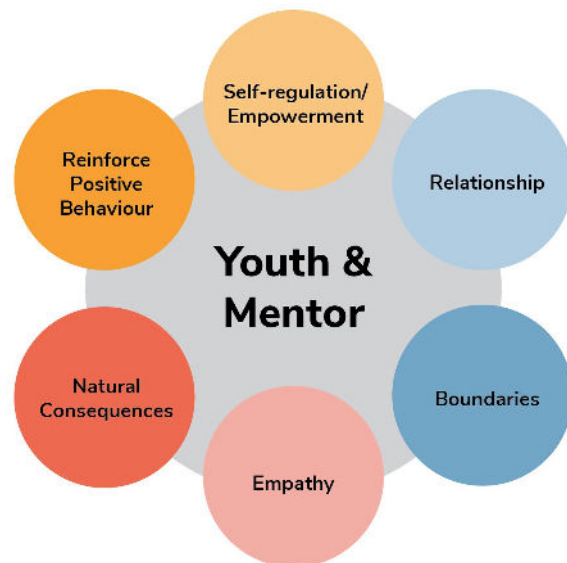
GUIDING FRAMEWORKS & STRATEGIES FOR WORKING WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS

Guidance strategies aim to assist youth in developing positive behaviours. The ultimate goal is to have youth move towards independence in regulating their own behaviour and understanding what behaviours are acceptable.

In the context of *leading, guiding, and mentoring* youth, the practice of working directly with young people to help them to solve problems, reach their goals, and/or deal with their conflicts is our goal.

The following are crucial underlying values in the guiding framework and strategies for working with youth and challenging behaviours:

- Affirming the child and maintaining a positive relationship
- Healthy boundaries are in place
- Recognizing and encouraging strengths of the child
- Clearly identifying the challenging behaviour
- Ensuring limits are clear
- Providing alternate behaviours
- Providing supports to change behaviour and meet their needs
- Aiming to address the behaviour to promote change
- Seeking to elicit intrinsic motivation



Placing these strategies in a circle symbolizes the fluid nature of these strategies and that they are all interconnected with the youth and the mentor.

01 | BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

A safe relationship with a trusted adult plays a crucial role in the process of changing behaviour. The strength of the relationship is foundational in fostering change. The following strategies are helpful in building relationships:

- Address by name
- Greet at the start of the day or interaction
- Find time to do something special
- Ask for advice or help
- Create a sense of group belonging
- Model and discuss the characteristics of healthy relationships
- It is your responsibility
- Make every encounter count
- Interactions form a pattern

02 | HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

As a helper, worker, adult, mentor, or leader, it is essential to have, know, and practice healthy boundaries with the youth at all times. Knowing yourself and your challenge areas and strengths is key to working with challenging behaviours. Healthy boundaries are about doing what is best and safe for the youth and yourself, even when it seems like a tough task to do.

- Self-awareness
- Knowledge of program/policy/procedures
- Structure, predictability, consistency, and follow-through
- Be friendly, but not their “friend”

03 | FOSTER EMPATHY

Empathy is the ability to consider and attempt to understand the feelings of others. It requires a person to put themselves in the position of another and envision what the experience would be like as the other. Adults can facilitate empathy in youth by encouraging them to be curious about others and by modelling empathetic behaviours.

Empathy can be encouraged by asking youth to:

- Consider another’s vantage point through role playing and role-playing games
- Anticipate how they might have responded if they were on the receiving end of certain actions
- Foster curiosity by encouraging multiple ways to interpret events and actions

04 | PROVIDE LOGICAL AND NATURAL CONSEQUENCES

Sometimes it will be necessary for the child to experience the natural consequences of their actions. Logical consequences are a result of the child's behaviour but imposed by an adult. They should be linked to the behaviour itself and are a means to allow the child to learn what happens when certain behaviours occur and to support them in becoming more responsible. It is critical that these consequences be developmentally appropriate and reasonable, and that they do not shame or punish the child.

Logical consequences are most effective when the following are present:

- The behaviour is clearly identified
- The consequence is clearly tied to the behaviour
- The consequence still offers the child choice if possible
- The behaviour is clearly separate from the person
- The consequence is done in a clear and kind manner

05 | REINFORCE POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS

Positive reinforcement is a useful behaviour strategy that is often overlooked and underused. When we verbally offer positive reinforcement, we are offering direct feedback. The goal is to use positive reinforcement to give information, not to control behaviour. Some children are not accustomed to hearing positive reinforcement and may initially react with additional challenging behaviour. This is not a message for us to stop, but rather to work to create comfort around hearing positive messages.

06 | SUPPORT SELF-REGULATION/EMPOWERMENT

Many youth who exhibit challenging behaviours have difficulty regulating their impulses. They may know what they should do and what the rules and expectations are, but still find it difficult to self-regulate their responses. Youth need guidance and specific strategies to help them monitor and regulate. Physical, emotional and cognitive regulation are important areas to consider when building regulation capacity.

Physical Self-Regulation is learning the body's warning signals and having ways to calm oneself down.

- Identify bodily reactions to stressful situations. How do they know they're becoming angry? Do they feel tightness in their stomach? Tensing of their facial muscles?
- Teach calming strategies. Use meditation, deep breathing, and muscle relaxation exercises.

Emotional Self-Regulation is learning to appropriately label emotions, taking ownership for them, and being able to express them in a positive manner.

- Build an emotional vocabulary.
- Identify personal triggers.
- Teach positive self-talk that the youth can use in stressful situations.

Cognitive Self-Regulation means being aware of thinking patterns, identifying unhealthy thought patterns, and having strong problem-solving abilities.

- Name and discuss the difference between feelings and actions.
- Consider alternative behaviours – what are their choices in the situation?
- Identify and normalize ambivalence in the change process.
- Teach exit strategies and identify people and places of safety and support.
- Role play to support skill development.

MEANINGFUL ENVIRONMENTAL EXPERIENCES

Youth need to be active and stimulated, which is why it's important to provide interesting experiences. Environments that expect too much or too little may set the stage for challenging behaviour.

Attentiveness

Monitor how the child is responding in an ongoing manner. Do they seem upset? Are they unsettled? Are they happy? What is easy for them? What is hard?

Prompt Responses

Be as proactive as possible. What does the youth need to move them in a positive direction right now?

A Focus on Vital Behaviours

Know the key behaviours that require attention and concentrate on those in particular. Know which are secondary behaviours that can be ignored or deferred for the time being.

Youth who exhibit aggressive, noncompliant, and/or connection-seeking behaviours may benefit from being responded to using the above model for guiding, mentoring, and coaching. This model can be utilized to explore and work with each challenging behaviour listed in this workshop, and it can also be widely transferable to other challenging behaviours that come our way.

AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS

AGGRESSION

Aggression is a hurtful act in response to a strong internal feeling of displeasure or disapproval resulting from the perception that things are not going as we think they should. Typically, youth who react in anger are feeling threatened either physically or emotionally. Other reasons that youth may express aggression/anger include sadness, embarrassment, jealousy, shame, anxiety, grief, hurt, tiredness, helplessness.

We all become angry from time to time, but we do not all act out aggressively. We often get through the anger easily and move on. Anger can be a useful emotion. It signals to us when we feel unsafe and it helps us protect ourselves. The youth who exhibits aggressive behaviours may have learned that aggression is their most useful tool to meet their needs.

Note that in some cases aggression and anger may also be related to brain injury or psychological trauma resulting from previous traumatic events.

THE IMPACT OF AGGRESSION

Aggression bruises and often destroys relationships. Youth who exhibit aggression come to be avoided and feared by those around them. Oftentimes adults allow other negative behaviours to go unchallenged because they do not want to elicit an aggressive or angered response.

At its core, anger is a response to not being heard or not having one's needs met.

PURPOSE OF ANGER

At a basic level, anger helps people meet their needs. Some of these needs include:

- Control
- Being listened to
- Safety
- Protection

REFLECTION

Consider the last time you were angry. What was at the core of your anger? Think about youth or others who have responded to you in anger. What was the purpose of their anger?

NONCOMPLIANT BEHAVIOUR

Noncompliance: The act of opposing new and different ideas or change.

We all will become resistant to different ways of thinking or doing things at some point in our lives. This is a normal part of the human experience and it helps us fully test ideas and processes. Where it becomes a problem is when someone begins to be resistant to almost anything new or different.

The Noncompliant Youth: Someone who is resistant to most new or different ideas or change.

Someone who is resistant often feels or appears to be stuck. This may manifest itself in:

- Automatically saying no to requests
- Repeating themselves without changing position
- Constantly debating

PURPOSE OF NONCOMPLIANCE

Youth may become resistant for a variety of reasons including:

- Disagreement about an idea
- Dislike of something
- Preference
- Believing something different
- Thinking what is happening is not in their best interest

At its core, noncompliance is often about an unarticulated fear.

At its core, noncompliance is often about an unarticulated fear. These fears may be related to:

- Fear of being incompetent
- Fear of being out of control
- Fear of not being heard or respected
- Fear of not being valued
- Fear of loss
- Fear of risk
- Fear of being overwhelmed
- Fear of a hidden agenda
- Fear of failure and/or success

Resistant people have learned that resistance is a way to stay safe.

REFLECTION

Part 01

01 | Think about the last time you resisted something. What did you articulate as the reason for your resistance?

02 | What (if any) deeper fears may have been present for you?

03 | What would need to be done to address your deeper fears?

Part 02

01 | Think about the last time you had a conversation with someone who was being resistant. What did they articulate as the reason for their resistance?

02 | What (if any) deeper fears may have been present for them?

03 | What may need to be done to address their deeper fears?

CONNECTION-SEEKING BEHAVIOUR

Connection Seeking: Behaving in a manner that invokes the attention or connection of others around them. Often these behaviours are displayed at inappropriate times or can be seen as disruptive.

We all need and enjoy social interaction, feedback, affirmation, and validation. In many situations, being the focus of attention is socially acceptable. It's a problem when the behaviour is disruptive, hurts others, or distracts from the objectives of the group.

The Connection-Seeking Youth: Youth seeking connection may take centre stage at inappropriate times. Often the group responds in a way that reaffirms the individual by giving them the attention they crave. Often those who are connection-seeking appear stuck in a particular role or that they are seeking attention. It may manifest itself as:

- Playing the class clown
- Overly dramatic reactions
- Constantly debating
- Socially repulsive behaviours
- Distracting sounds and movements

At its core, attention seeking is about looking for validation.

PURPOSE OF CONNECTION SEEKING

Youth may display these behaviours for a variety of reasons, including:

- Lack of interest
- Bored
- Providing entertainment
- Just saying the truth
- Just being who I am

At its core, these behaviours are often about the individual not having their needs met or feeling poorly about themselves. It may be that they long for connection from the helpers, workers, adults, mentors, leaders around them. Connection seeking can occur for the following reasons:

- Feeling competent
- Creating self-confidence
- Creating self-worth
- Feeling safe
- To understand/learn
- To belong
- To receive one-on-one time

Over time, Youth have learned that these attention-seeking behaviours are a way to receive affirmation, validation, and connection from those around them. They are meeting their deeper need for connection, which is why our role is to remember to shift from judgement to curiosity.

Ask yourself, What need is their behaviour expressing?

REFLECTION

01 | Think about the last time you experienced connection-seeking behaviours. What was the behaviour? What did the person say? What did they do?

02 | What was the reaction or response from the larger group? How did it meet their need (positively or negatively)?

03 | What role does the individual typically play?

04 | How did you respond? How did you react? What happened?

ACTION STEPS: RESHAPING THE CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

When confronted by a youth that is expressing anger, noncompliance, or connection-seeking behaviour, the first thing we have to do is ground ourselves as the helper and support them to self-regulate.

Using the following steps can guide us through these situations and ensure de-escalation occurs, needs are met, and safety is attended to for all.

STEP 01 | CALM YOURSELF

- Take a deep breath.
- Practice self-awareness by asking yourself, *How am I reacting or responding right now?*
- Use positive self-talk. For example, *I can get through this. I am in control of myself.*

*Listen to them
and make
them feel safe.*

STEP -2 | SHIFT JUDGEMENT TO CURIOSITY

- Ask yourself what else might be going on. What might this behaviour be about?
- What does the youth/person need in this moment?
- Am I the right person to manage this situation? Is another person an option?

Notes:

STEP 03 | MAKE IT SAFE TO TALK – SET THE STAGE

- Use paraphrasing – reflect both content and emotion.
- Use open questions.
- Use or move to humour when appropriate.
- Use distraction when appropriate.
- Provide a supportive message.
- State that the conversation is not about discipline.
- Reiterate that you are there as a support and resource.

Be Positive

Be Invitational

Be Authentic

Example: “Good to see you, Melissa. I want to talk with you – is now a good time? I really value your contribution to group discussions and appreciate your honesty and willingness to share. In the last while, I have noticed some behaviours I think you might want help with. I would like to be here for you to give you the support and help you need.”

STEP 04 | NAME THE ISSUE

Be Objective (remember to stay in your perspective)

State the Impact

- 01 | Point out what you have noticed.
- 02 | Name particular behaviours or patterns.
- 03 | State the impact.

Example: “This week I’ve noticed that you haven’t been sitting with Teal during the break. Last week you had an argument and were shouting at Teal about being slow during the game. Over the past month, you have acted out in anger several times and I have seen you sitting on your own at the breaks.”

Notes:

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STEP 05 | ASK FOR THEIR PERSPECTIVE

Listen, Listen, Listen

- 01 | Acknowledge their thoughts and feelings with belief.
- 02 | Use paraphrasing.
- 03 | Ask open-ended questions.

Examples: “Tell me what is going on for you?” or “Can you tell me more about that?”

STEP 06 | DEVELOP A GOAL – FOLLOW THROUGH AND FOLLOW UP

Think Vital Behaviours

Think Attainable

Include Follow-Up

- 01 | Invite them to change.
- 02 | Have a few doable steps.
- 03 | Include and plan for trigger situations.
- 04 | Be sure to outline the steps in specific behaviours.
- 05 | Practice strategies such as those on pages 18–19 (identifying emotions, positive self-talk, verbalizing emotions rather than acting them out, and walking away).

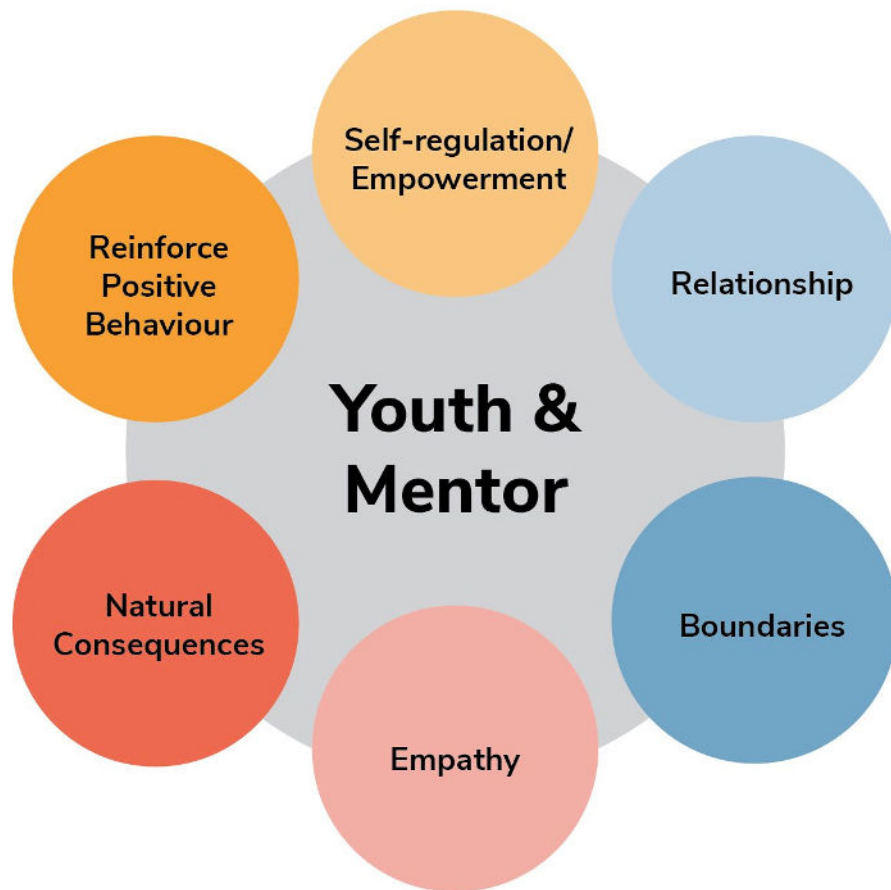
Example: “I’m wondering if you might be open to finding some ways to manage your anger. I would like to come up with some ideas that will be of help. What do you think you could do to help yourself out? I have some suggestions that you might want to consider. I’d like to meet every week at the start of the programming for 15 minutes for the next month or so, what would you think? It would give us time to work on ways for you to manage your anger and to build relationships with the youth here at the centre.”

Note: It may be necessary to be clear about expectations and what will happen if expectations are not met in order to provide motivation to change the behaviour.

Notes:

QUICK REFERENCE FOR GUIDING FRAMEWORKS

Now that we have learned about *Challenging Behaviours*, it is time to practice what we have learned. Below are quick references for the framework and action steps. Remember, the more we practice something, the better and more confident we become.



STEP 01 | CALM YOURSELF

STEP 02 | SHIFT JUDGEMENT TO CURIOSITY

STEP 03 | MAKE IT SAFE TO TALK – SET THE STAGE

STEP 04 | NAME THE ISSUE

STEP 05 | ASK FOR THEIR PERSPECTIVE

STEP 06 | DEVELOP A GOAL – FOLLOW THROUGH AND FOLLOW UP

CASE STUDIES & SKILL DEVELOPMENT

SKILL DEVELOPMENT INSTRUCTIONS

- Follow the processes outlined in the manual for the issue identified in the role play.
- Choose parts and only read your part.
- If there are observers, they may provide input into the coaching process and debriefing.
- Don't be over the top and exaggerate – be realistic.

CASE STUDY REVIEW INSTRUCTIONS

If you choose to talk rather than practice, consider the following questions:

- What would be your response? Decide what you would say and do.
- What would you do if your response was not effective?
- What are things you should have considered prior to coaching in this situation?

DEBRIEFING

- What could have been done differently?
- What went well?
- Any surprises?

Notes:

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR – WORKING WITH AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS

(Use the framework, strategies, and action steps as outlined on page 20)

INFORMATION FOR HELPER/ WORKER/ ADULT/ MENTOR/ LEADER

A new student named Stephan recently joined your grade 9 classroom. He moved from another school into your community, and is hardworking and diligent in getting his work done. You are going out of your way to be welcoming. You have included him in every activity and given him a primary role when it comes to leading group activities. You realize that you are setting patterns of interaction and want them to be positive. You have made sure to talk with him at every spare minute and draw him out during group discussions.

The first sign of aggression was two weeks ago. You surprised the class by telling them you were giving them an extension on their book report. Stephan threw his book down and jabbed the girl standing next to him with his elbow. You thought that was a random response. However, last week he acted out again. You asked him to move his desk to join a new group. He got up, pushed the desk, and kicked over his chair. It seems like his antagonism towards you is growing despite your best efforts. You are not sure that he is going to be able to fit in and are hoping he will make friends. The problem is you only see Stephan for one class each day. You are going to need to change the dynamics and are wondering what to do.

Talk about what might be going on with Stephan. What curious thoughts might help prepare you for a conversation?

INFORMATION FOR THE PERSON PLAYING STEPHAN (THE STUDENT)

Your parents are recently divorced and you are living with your mom for now. You are not thrilled you had to move to a new town because she took a new job. You don't know a lot of people and are hoping to make friends.

There is one teacher in particular who is driving you crazy. She keeps putting you in the limelight and seems to be nattering at you at every turn. The classroom is very unpredictable. She keeps changing due dates and thinks she is doing the class a favor. From your perspective, it is only a favor for those who don't finish their work on time. She has you working with a new group every other day it seems. Last week she asked you to move your desk and you lost it. Just when you start to feel comfortable she drags you into something new. You wish she would give you some breathing space and let you be. You feel like you are on the edge and even small things tick you off these days.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR- NONCOMPLIANCE

(Use the framework, strategies, and action steps as outlined on page 21)

INFORMATION FOR THE HELPER/ WORKER/ ADULT/ MENTOR/ LEADER

You are a teacher in a grade 8 classroom, and your school has a policy on cell phone use. Students can only use their phones during breaks, lunch hours, and in class in extreme cases. It's difficult to enforce, and the in-class part has become an issue.

Most kids are pretty good at being discrete about usage, except for one. Max has been on his phone more and more during class and doesn't seem to care if you see. Last week he was on his phone for the duration of several classes. On Friday you asked him to put his phone away and he made some snide comment and kept on texting. You asked again a little more forcefully and he rolled his eyes at you. You commented that his eye rolling was rude and that he had better watch out or he would find himself in detention. He made another rude comment and then put the phone away. You have decided that you will give him a detention to make a point and let him know that you will not stand for his disrespect. You have not told him, but when he comes back on Monday, you will let him know what the consequences are.

While planning for classes, you spend some time thinking about what went wrong in your exchange with Max. What would be some of your considerations?

You sit down with Max and begin a conversation. He immediately starts rolling his eyes and sighing at you – you can feel your blood begin to boil.

Your task is to focus on staying calm and then connecting with Max and moving the conversation in a better direction.

INFORMATION FOR THE PERSON PLAYING MAX (THE STUDENT)

You don't really like school. The work is mostly too hard for you, but you don't want to let on. You have figured out ways to pass the time in class without having the teacher notice. You don't mind your teacher – he really isn't a bad guy, but lately it seems he is picking on you. There are a lot of other people texting in class; you are not the only one. You have a lot going on at home and your older brother is in some trouble with the law. Lately you have been texting him and trying to keep tabs on what is going on. He doesn't have a job and so he is available to text at any time. You wouldn't have to do it in class but seeing as everyone else is on their phones, you don't feel compelled to refrain. When your teacher begins a conversation with you, you give a big sigh and roll your eyes. You can't believe he doesn't have bigger fish to fry. Besides, he has no idea what is going on in your life outside of class.

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR – CONNECTION SEEKING

(Use the framework, strategies and action steps as outlined on pages 23)

SCENARIO INFORMATION FOR HELPER/ WORKER/ ADULT/ MENTOR/ LEADER

You are a team leader at a youth drop-in centre. Each week you are in charge of directing the evening programming, which varies in content from building self-esteem and positive lifestyle choices to maintaining healthy relationships. The youth in the centre have chosen to be a part of the program, and are from across the city and represent various ethnic backgrounds. One of the youth, Selma, presents as loud and obnoxious. She seems to be especially disruptive during small group activities. The other youth are pretty sick of the behaviour and some of them have spoken to you about it, but they don't seem to know what to do. Last week she began singing at the top of her lungs during one of the small group discussions. You are not sure what that was about. Selma and two other youths, Clara and John, have been hanging out since the start of the program, but lately you notice Selma is on her own a lot. You have decided you need to sit down and make a plan to help Selma as well as try your hand at the coaching process. You are also going to find out if Selma has any outside interests that you can encourage and maybe have her share with the group.

When you sit down to talk with Selma a week later, she immediately gets defensive and starts blaming you for the situation in a loud, angry tone.

Your task is to focus on validating Selma while discovering what needs she may have. Your task is to get curious with her and her behaviour.

INFORMATION FOR THE PERSON PLAYING SELMA (YOUTH)

You attend programming at a youth drop-in centre. The centre offers great snacks, some cool kids, and fun activities. You have a bit of a crush on John, one of the guys who also attends. You think John might like you, but you are not sure. You really like Clara and thought she was a good friend, but when you saw John and Clara sitting together last week, you reacted by being silly and singing. Clara and John are both of a different ethnic background than you and you feel insecure about that. You were teased a lot in the last school you attended about your background. You know you have a problem with overreacting, especially when you are not sure where you stand in relationships. You are not sure what you should say or do to make things better but would be receptive to receiving help. You just want John to notice you. Your group leader is great, but you are not sure he is interested in your relationship issues. When he approaches you to talk about the situation, you blame him for your behaviour because he always puts John and Clara together in groups. You have not told anyone in the group, but you have a pretty extensive LP collection and are into foreign music. Your uncle owned a pawnshop and got your collection started a couple of years ago.

APPENDIX

01 | SUPPORTING PHYSICAL REGULATION

BREATHING EXERCISES

Regularly practicing breathing exercises is an excellent way to develop self-soothing skills. They can be used anywhere and are an excellent coping strategy for people struggling with emotion regulation. The effectiveness of these exercises is increased through relaxed abdominal nose breathing – as opposed to shallow chest breathing.

COUNTING BREATHING

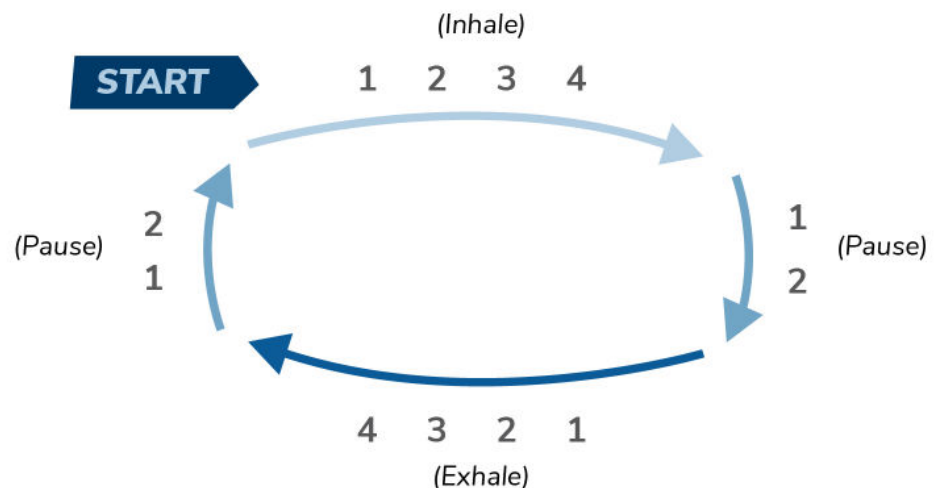
Breathe in . . . breathe out and say, “One.”

Breathe in . . . breathe out and say, “Two.” Continue until “Ten” is reached, then start over.

CYCLE BREATHING

Inhale (count to four),
hold (count to two).

Exhale (count to four),
hold (count to two).



BECOMING CALM BREATHING

Breathe in and think or say, “I am.”

Breathe out and think or say, “becoming calm” or “letting go.”

Use any phrase that promotes relaxation at the time.

RAISED ARM BREATHING

Sit with a forearm resting on each leg, palms down.

Breathe in (bend elbows and raise back of hands to shoulders).

Breathe out (return arms to lap).

WALKING BREATHING

Walk very slowly, synchronizing your breath with your steps: one step for each inhalation, one step for each exhalation.

BREATHING GAMES

- Play with breath using balloons, cotton balls, or feathers.
- “Square” breaths – have children create a “breathing square” with popsicle sticks or construction paper and focus on each corner for 1 count (total of 4) on each exhalation and inhalation. Also, you can choose animals to imitate their breath.
- Balloon breath – sense breath in the abdomen and imagine you are inflating a balloon.
- Use colours to breathe in and out and describe sensations.

TREE EXERCISE

- Ask the child to imagine that they are a tree with roots that grow deep into the ground, a strong trunk, and branches with many leaves. Take your time as you describe each part. You can expand this exercise by having wind (or other weather) come and shake the leaves, but have the trunk and roots stay steady.

MOVEMENT GAMES

- Games that invite excitement and movement, alternating with being still and quiet, such as Freeze Tag, Simon Says, or Musical Chairs.
- You can make up arousal-settling games together!

BOUNDARY EXERCISE

- This exercise can be done alone or in a group with hula hoops or ropes/yarn. Invite the child to make a boundary around them and explore their own personal space.

MINDFUL AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Any practice that promotes a state of heightened and receptive attention to moment-by-moment experience is an activity that encourages mindful awareness. Here are some examples:

- **Yoga** – There are some great children’s yoga programs, often involving mimicking animals for different poses.
- **Walking/Nature** – Have the child pay attention to all of the sensory experiences outdoors – the colour of the sky and clouds, the trees and bushes, water, flowers, snow, leaves, etc.
- **Sensory Activity** – Have a bag or basket with a variety of items, and each of you close your eyes and guess what each of the items are.

02 | SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL REGULATION

FIND A SAFE/CALM PLACE

Invite the child to imagine a place where they felt safe, comfortable, and calm. It could be a place in nature, somewhere they have been, or an imaginary place. They can describe the place using all of their senses. If possible, they can also find a place inside themselves (no matter how small) that has a similar sensation.

SENSATION/EMOTION BODY MAPS

You can either use large sheets of paper to make an outline of the child's actual body or a drawing of a gingerbread body.

- Have the child choose colours to represent different sensations and draw them on the actual places on the body map where they notice them. They can use squiggly lines, polka dots, colour in certain areas, dark/light shading, etc.
- If they only describe negative feelings, ask them to imagine what the opposite would feel like.

EXPRESSIVE ACTIVITIES: PAINTING, DRAWING, AND MUSIC

IMAGINATIVE PLAY, EXPLORING SOCIAL ROLES

USING PLAY TO EXPRESS WISHES AND FEARS

USE OF CHARACTERS AND SUPERHEROES TO EXPLORE AND TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

STORYTELLING AND PUPPETS

WELL WISHES/FRIENDLY WISHES

Encourages children to think of the needs of others who may be in need of compassion or kindness. This can also be used with a drawing or painting activity, tracing a hand, and writing names on each finger.

GRATITUDE PRACTICE

Encourages children to be aware of what they are thankful for, including people and experiences (not just material things!).

MINDFUL EATING

Have a small piece of fruit or even a candy, slowing down the whole experience of anticipating and then eating it.

SOUND MEDITATION

Use music or sounds and have the child notice their reaction.

PERSONAL WEATHER REPORT

Using the metaphor of the weather to describe internal sensations and feelings.

REFLECTING AND VALIDATING FEELINGS

Identifying, acknowledging, and normalizing the feeling expressed. This can validate a person's experience and feelings, which helps them to feel that their emotions are not wrong. It also facilitates your connection.

- "You're feeling really sad right now."
- "It makes sense you are angry."
- "Being afraid in these situations is not uncommon."
- "I'm not sure anyone can fully understand how much agony this incident has caused you."

Notes:

03 | SUPPORTING COGNITIVE REGULATION

CONSIDER THE FUTURE, PAST, AND GOALS

When evidence of change is visible or openness to change begins to emerge in your conversation, it is important to elicit action words (verbs) to solidify commitment. For example, statements that begin with:

- “I will...”
- “My plan is to...”
- “I intend to try...”

Change talk can also be in the form of describing actions (however small) already taken, such as:

- “I helped myself think about my choices before I reacted.”
- “Even though I felt that feeling of not wanting to pay attention to the instructions, I gave myself a positive message that I could do it.”
- “I reminded myself that I have places and people who are there to help me.”

We can elicit these statements by asking *curiosity* questions that draw out specific information:

Consider the Future

How would this part like things to be? What is the first step in that direction?

Consider the Past

How can this part’s wisdom and experience guide you through this? How can it support you in making it happen?

Consider Goals

What does this part want for you? How can its skills and talents be helpful to you?

Adapted from Rosengren, 2009

PUT IT OUT THERE

When you are making a decision, verbalize the process. Describe the pros and cons of each option, compare the options, and verbally explore the outcomes of each. Talk about how big or small the decision is, who else will be impacted, etc. Include the following:

- 01 | What are the options?
- 02 | What is the best one for me now?
- 03 | What about others?
- 04 | What will be best for me in the future?
- 05 | Make a choice.

THE WHAT IF GAME

Offer scenarios and have the child make choices and offer possible solutions to fictitious characters. This will help them internalize this way of thinking when problems are posed or occur in their lives. This could include writing alternative endings to scenarios or stories.

ROLE REVERSAL GAME

They get to instruct you on how to act when they take over the adult role (parent/teacher/caregiver), and whether you are portraying them accurately.

Notes:

RESOURCES

- Appelstein, C. (1998). *No such thing as a bad kid: Understanding and responding to the challenging behaviour of children and youth*. Weston, MA: Gifford School.
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CTRI WORKSHOPS & SERVICES

TRAINING

Our training is available through open enrollment **public** workshops that anyone can attend virtually or in-person, **private** workshops held on-location or virtually for your group, and **on-demand** and **webinar** formats. What follows is a sample of the 50+ workshop topics we offer. For a complete list, please visit our website.

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Crisis Response Planning

Trauma – Strategies for Resolving the Impact of Post-Traumatic Stress

Trauma-Informed Care – Building a Culture of Strength

Walking Through Grief – Helping Others Deal with Loss

COUNSELLING SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Anxiety – Practical Intervention Strategies

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy – Tools for Thinking Differently

Mindfulness Counselling Strategies – Activating Compassion and Regulation

Motivational Interviewing – Strategies for Supporting Change

CHILDREN & YOUTH ISSUES WORKSHOPS

Challenging Behaviours in Youth – Strategies for Intervention

Play Therapy – Tools for Helping Children and Youth

Self-Injury Behaviour in Youth – Issues and Strategies

ADDICTIONS, MENTAL HEALTH, & DISABILITY SUPPORT WORKSHOPS

Addictions and Mental Illness – Working with Co-occurring Disorders

Autism – Strategies for Self-Regulation, Learning, and Challenging Behaviours

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder – Strategies for Supporting

Harm Reduction – A Framework for Change, Choice, and Control

VIOLENCE AND RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WORKSHOPS

De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations™

Violence Threat Assessment – Planning and Response

Restorative Justice – Facilitating Dialogue

TOOLS FOR HELPERS

Managing Difficult Phone Calls

Peer Support – Equipping the Natural Helper

Providing Support Remotely – Strategies for Helping From a Distance

MEMBER PLAN

CTRI offers a membership plan that provides the member with unlimited access to our on-demand, one-hour webinars. Member benefits include:

- Unlimited access to all on-demand webinars whenever and however often you want. New content is added throughout the year.
- Notification of special discounts and promotions on products and training only available to members.

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CTRI's consulting services are designed to help individuals, caregivers, communities, and organizations prevent and cope with unfortunate and distressing events. To explore how to implement these services, please contact us to discuss your needs in more detail.

- Clinical Consultation
- Crisis Response Team and Plan Development
- Violence Risk Assessment and Planning

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CTRI assessment tools help leaders and organizations have thoughtful and proactive discussions related to a variety of topics and issues. Each assessment tool package includes one facilitator's guide and 25 copies of the assessment tool questionnaire.

- Trauma-Informed Workplace Assessment Tool
- Wellness Assessment Tool
- Workplace Violence Assessment Tool
- Emergency Preparedness Assessment Tool

BOOKS

We have books available for purchase through our ACHIEVE Publishing division:

- Counselling Insights – Practical Strategies for Helping Others with Anxiety Grief and More*, edited by Vicki Enns, with contributions from eight CTRI trainers.
- Counselling in Relationships – Insights for Helping Families Develop Healthy Connections*, edited by Vicki Enns, with contributions from nine CTRI trainers.
- Once a Wizard*, by Curtis L. Wiebe, clinical consultation by Vicki Enns.