

Parent Workshop for the FRIENDS programs

F: FEELINGS

At home:

- Try to verbalise what you think your child is feeling.
- Validate your child's feelings **THEN...** problem solve.
- Talking about feelings shows that all feelings are ok; however, it is what we choose to do with our feelings that counts.
- Encourage your child to talk about the things that upset them including any fears and worries.
- Encourage your child to look people in the eye when talking, smile, and speak in a brave voice.
- Catch your child being brave. Give descriptive praise and reward them using their brave chart.
- Encourage them to say what they are going to do with their feeling. Encourage self-soothing and self-regulation.
- Encourage them to think about how other people may be feeling and how they can help them.

R: RELAX

At home:

- Encourage your child to verbalise body clues
- Encourage relaxation strategies to manage body clues
- Allocate quiet time each day
- Encourage and practise breathing
- Share happy experiences
- Develop a family relaxation menu of feel-good activities

N.B. Physical/active coping can be useful for anger

I: I CAN TRY

At home:

- Encourage positive attention
- Encourage bossing red unhelpful thoughts and replacing them with more positive green thoughts.
- Notice negative thinking in yourself or your child.
- Model use of helpful thinking

E: ENCOURAGE How to reward ourselves when we've tried our best

At home:

- Provide descriptive praise for trying or for being a good friend, etc.
- Encourage use of FRIENDS skills (green thoughts, deep breathing).
- Use a step plan to help develop confidence when facing challenges.
- Let your child be the boss – allow them to progress at their own pace.
- Use interpersonal rewards such as:
 - Spending time doing their favourite activity together
 - Spending fun, relaxing time with friends and family; going to a natural place (beach, park) for a picnic
 - Cooking a special, healthy meal together
 - Relaxation time together
 - Celebrating the special little things in life
- Rewards need to be immediate
- Reward for partial successes
- Focus on what children can do first.

N: NURTURE Our family, friends and teachers can help us become brave and we can help them too.

D: DON'T FORGET TO BE BRAVE Our circle of love and friends – we can all help each other.

S: STAY HAPPY Learning to be happy with our efforts

At home:

- Practise the FRIENDS skills every day for challenges and gratitude
- Help your child to give back to their community
- Setbacks may occur from time-to-time; however, FRIENDS skills are FOR LIFE!

PREVENTATIVE STRATEGIES

Quiet time

- Periods of time with low stimulation – quiet, calm places.
- Include relaxation, self-soothing and self-regulation activities.
- Increased quiet time = less need to use time out.
- Important to model rest and quiet time.

Descriptive praise

- 2 parts: describe the behaviour and how it makes you feel (e.g. “When you put your toys away it makes me feel so proud. Thank you for helping me bring in the washing.”)
- Make praise reciprocal
- Praise should be specific, immediate and consistent
- Catch your child being brave
- Praise children for brave behaviours immediately – notice the absence of undesirable behaviours.
- Describe in detail what you like about the behaviour.
- Do not reinforce avoidance behaviours.

Positive modelling

- Children respond to events as they have seen their parents respond to them.
- Model approach behaviours for difficult situations rather than avoidance.
- Model positive coping – taking quiet time, praising each other, using step plans to solve problems etc.
- Encourage the same with children using positive self-talk.

PARENTING SKILLS

Routines

- All children need routines and rituals.
 - Three major reasons: Emotional containment; Controllability; Predictability

Cohesion

- Cohesion, either decide from the start to divide tasks and back each other, OR rule jointly and compromise on everything.
- Parents need to maintain a united front with the children.
- Cohesion across authority systems (e.g. family, work, school, etc.) & model following rules (e.g., driving).

Consistency

- Consistency (at least 60% of the time) – what you decide on Monday must be same as your decision on Friday
- Decide on 4-5 key rules
- 2-3 compulsory family times

TRADITIONAL PARENTING STRATEGIES

Family goals

- Prioritise the important behaviours you wish to see and encourage.
- Choose 5 family goals (1 handful), e.g.
 - Be kind (to others, animals, nature)
 - Be safe
 - Eat family meals together at table
 - Monitoring: telling each other where you are
 - Help others

A positive approach to parenting, focuses on positive reinforcement

Positive Reinforcement: attention, descriptive praise, reward charts. Use for desirable behaviours e.g. sharing, good manners

Negative Punishment: planned ignoring, consequences, withdrawal of privileges. Use for undesirable behaviours e.g. baby voice, sulking, demanding attention

Planned ignoring

- Otherwise **IGNORE!!!**
- Examples of behaviours to ignore: Constant whinging/whining, crying for no reason, sulking, making ongoing demands (teenagers), etc.
- Aspects of ignoring
 - Don't look
 - Don't touch
 - Don't speak
 - Praise as soon as opposite behaviour begins
- Listen once, validate, and then talk about solutions.

Reward charts

- One to two behaviours maximum at a time
- Select most achievable behaviours first
- Continue even after goals are achieved to ensure maintenance.
- Phase out rewards – every time, every 2nd time, random.
- Praise child for trying, not for being perfect!

Family time out

- Try quiet time first to help everyone calm down.
- Use as a reciprocal family strategy
- 2 goals: to calm down and to think of solutions.
- Describe: "everyone is getting upset so let's all take some time out to calm down and think of ways to resolve the problem"

Withdrawal of privileges

- To be used sparingly.
- Give warning beforehand to let them know what rule they are breaking and the rationale.
- Be descriptive with consequences and what they have done wrong.
- Remove privileges the child values such as use of mobile phone, watching TV, playing on a computer, pocket money, eating dessert, Facebook, etc.
- Social and physical activities are important; avoid taking these away
- Match the punishment to the crime and ensure it is developmentally appropriate.

Time-out

1. Take child to a quiet place where they can't harm themselves e.g. sitting on a pillow in the corner. There should be no toys available.

'Time-out' is different from 'quiet time' which is implemented before 'time-out'.

'Quiet time' is preventative and 'time-out' is a behaviour management strategy.

2. Explain to the child that they will only come out when they stop screaming or being aggressive, for example.
3. Once the child is quiet for approximately 2 to 3 minutes, ask them if they are ready to apologise and take them out of the 'time-out' place.
4. Sit on the floor in front of the child, make eye contact, and ask them to apologise to the person or animal they have hurt or screamed at. In a nice voice, the child says what they've done that's a 'thumbs down' behaviour and that they're sorry.
5. Ask the child what the right thing was to do e.g. instead of hitting a sibling, they ask in a nice voice if they can please have a turn with the truck and then wait, because it's not their toy. If the sibling doesn't respond, talk to a parent for help.
6. Ask the child to repeat, in a nice voice, the right thing to do or say. They might need to repeat the words after you.
7. Give the child a big hug and a kiss or a 'high fives' and say, for example, "I'm very proud that you know the right thing to do. When you want to play with your brother's truck you say, "Please can I play with your truck"."
8. The misbehaviour has been dealt with now and needs to be left in the past.
9. Take quiet time for yourself to calm down if necessary.

Contracts with older children

- Used to mediate conflict between children and parents.
- Parents and child's views are at extreme ends and they need to find a compromise
- Agree to contract with all parties
- Include consequences for all parties if contract not followed.
- Keep contract short period (e.g. max. 2 months then review)

Computer usage

- Consider computer location
- Remind your children of online consequences
- Types of information shared online
- Get to know privacy settings
- Discuss online behaviour openly with your children