

## GETTING STARTED!!!

Using Visual Systems to Provide Positive Behaviour Support

By

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*Disability Specialist Speech Pathologist*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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This booklet was developed by Dolly Bhargava, Disability Specialist Speech Pathologist in conjunction with the students and staff at Carson Street School. She works with children and adults with intellectual and/or multiple disabilities in a variety of settings. Dolly has also completed a Masters in Special Education (Sensory Disability). She provides consultancy and training services on a range of communication, behaviour management, literacy and vocational related issues nationally and internationally.

She developed this booklet and DVD in collaboration with the teaching staff at Carson Street School. The images are from and copyright of the following picture software programs:

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## **INTRODUCTION TO THE MANUAL**

Teaching is a demanding enterprise. Teaching students who exhibit challenging behaviour can be yet more demanding. When one student begins to present challenging behaviours in a classroom, the climate of the classroom can begin to change dramatically. Often the teacher will spend a considerable amount of time and energy on the student with the challenging behaviours, which in turn begins to have a deleterious impact on the quality of the educational experience for all students.

Research has shown the significance of the role of staff's behaviour, beliefs and response to a student's challenging behaviour and its persistence over time. Ignoring the challenging behaviour does not make it disappear and, in many cases, does not disappear completely at all. Challenging behaviour at any age should be taken seriously. It should not be dismissed as a 'phase' or something the student will 'grow out of'.

All behaviour i.e. challenging and non-challenging behaviour is a form of communication. Students with disabilities often have trouble communicating. The student may have tried several times to communicate to staff about their needs, but if staff haven't recognised and responded to the student's communication appropriately, they will resort to using challenging behaviour as a way of expressing their message. Thus, the student engages in challenging behaviour for a reason and the challenge for us is to figure out the reason.

This manual looks at ways of helping staff members recognise, interpret and respond to the student's challenging behaviour in proactive ways. The approach used in this manual is based on positive behaviour support which is a three-fold approach to managing challenging behaviour by focusing on the:

- Student (help them learn more effective ways of communicating instead of resorting to using challenging behaviour);
- Communication partner (help them learn more effective ways of interacting with the student) and;
- Environmental redesign (eliminate factors associated with the occurrence of the challenging behaviour).

By understanding what the student is communicating through their behaviour, we can respond in positive and proactive ways. When student feel respected and have their needs met, there is no longer a reason to use challenging behaviour to communicate. Yelling at or punishing a student for a behaviour may stop the behaviour for the moment, but it does not give the student support or provide alternate ways to act in difficult situations. When staff use punishment, they are sending the message that anger is a good way to solve problems. When staff members help student find positive ways to communicate their needs to others, the student learns important social and problem-solving skills that will help them throughout their life.

As the famous Russian author Leo Nikolayevich Tolstoy says, 'Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself'. Hence, rather than starting with trying to change the student's behaviour directly, start by trying to change the environment and the way staff interact with the student.

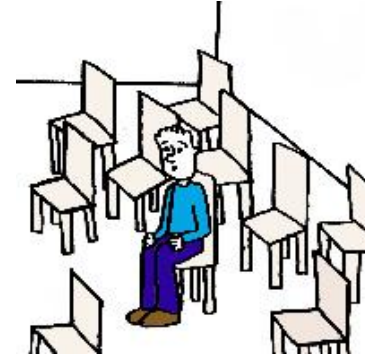
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## Chapter 1 - What are challenging behaviours?



'Challenging behaviours' has been defined as those behaviours that are of such intensity, frequency or duration that the person or others are likely to be placed in serious jeopardy or behaviour which is likely to seriously limit or delay access to and use of ordinary community facilities' (Emerson, 1995, pg. 3).

In a school setting, challenging behaviour can be defined as any behaviour that:

- Interferes with the student's own and/or other students' learning;
- Challenges the day to day functioning of the classroom;
- Socially isolates the student;
- Challenges the right of staff and students to a safe and orderly environment and
- Has a duration, frequency, intensity or persistence that causes concern to staff and students.

Classroom behaviour problems are a principle source of frustration, stress and burnout for both new and experienced teaching staff. Teachers often report feeling poorly equipped to deal with misbehaviour, often pointing to their lack of experience, training and assistance in establishing positive and productive classroom environments. Hence, the aim of this step by step manual is to bridge this information gap by developing your understanding, ability to prevent, and address the challenging behaviour in effective ways.

## Chapter 2 - What are the different types of challenging behaviours?

The different types of challenging behaviours that are displayed by students can be categorised as:

EXTERNALISED BEHAVIOUR	INTERNALISED BEHAVIOURS
<b>Aggressive Behaviours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hitting</li> <li>• Kicking</li> <li>• Punching</li> <li>• Pulling</li> <li>• Scratching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appearing shy</li> <li>• Being fearful</li> <li>• Consistently tired</li> <li>• Lacking motivation</li> <li>• Refusing to participate in an activity</li> <li>• Sitting still</li> <li>• Being withdrawn and not interacting</li> <li>• Failure to respond</li> <li>• Avoidance of people or activities</li> </ul>
<b>Disruptive/Antisocial/Dangerous Behaviours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Screaming/tantrums</li> <li>• Spitting</li> <li>• Swearing</li> <li>• Persistent non co-operation pica, faecal smearing</li> <li>• Public masturbation</li> <li>• Running away</li> </ul>	
<b>Stereotypic/Repetitive/Ritualistic/ Self Stimulatory Behaviours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Body rocking</li> <li>• Repetitive noises/speech</li> <li>• Pacing</li> <li>• Twirling</li> </ul>	
<b>Destructive Behaviours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Throwing objects</li> <li>• Breaking windows</li> <li>• Overturning furniture</li> <li>• Smashing things</li> <li>• Burning</li> </ul>	
<b>Self injurious Behaviours</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Head banging</li> <li>• Eye poking</li> <li>• Hand biting</li> <li>• Picking at skin</li> <li>• PICA (Eating non food stuff)</li> </ul>	

## Chapter 3 - Why does challenging behaviour occur?

There is always a reason why a student is behaving in a challenging manner. We need to broaden our view and not place the entire responsibility for the problem on the student. Challenging behaviour does not happen in a vacuum; rather it is the product of the interaction between the student, communication partners and the environment. Hence, the problem may be caused by variables related to the environment or communication partners (i.e. staff members and/or other students). Identifying the reason/s is the key to finding a solution to understanding, managing and preventing the occurrence of challenging behaviour. The most common causes of challenging behaviour in the classroom can be categorised into three broad areas. Please use this checklist to identify the possible reason/s why your student is engaging in challenging behaviour.

### Reasons related to the student

#### Medical factors

*Students with a disability will experience a range of physical and mental health problems throughout their lives. However, communication difficulties may make it difficult or impossible to inform others of their:*

- ☐ Pain/Discomfort
  - ☐ Dental
  - ☐ Gastrointestinal (stomach ache, reflux, ulcers, etc.)
  - ☐ Joints/muscles
  - ☐ Headache
  - ☐ Ears
  - ☐ Eyes
  - ☐ Lungs
  - ☐ Menstrual
- ☐ Allergies
- ☐ Medication side effects (specify)
- ☐ Hunger
- ☐ Thirst
- ☐ Tiredness
- ☐ Illness
- ☐ Mental health issues (e.g. depression, anxiety)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_



**Clothing factors**

*Some students with a disability will not like particular kinds of clothes or fabrics. However, communication difficulties may make it difficult or impossible to inform others that the:*

- ☐ Clothing is too tight (e.g. waistbands, collars, cuffs)
- ☐ Clothing tags are irritating the skin
- ☐ Fabric feels unpleasant against their skin (e.g. wool, nylon)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Communication Factors**

*Communication is one of the most important ways in which we control our environment and influence other people. If a student's has communication impairment they may have difficulties with expressing themselves and understanding messages such as.*

- ☐ I want/don't want social interaction
- ☐ I want/don't want an object
- ☐ I want/don't want to do an activity
- ☐ I don't know how to do an activity
- ☐ I do not understand what is expected of me
- ☐ I want a break
- ☐ I am not feeling valued
- ☐ I am feeling stressed/ overwhelmed/sad/angry...
- ☐ I don't know how to manage my feelings
- ☐ I don't know how to talk about my problems
- ☐ I don't know how to resolve problems
- ☐ I don't know how to behave socially
- ☐ I am having difficulty with transitions
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Reasons related to the environment**

*In a school setting the environment refers to the area inside the classroom, outside the classroom and the activities that are carried out in either environment. It can influence the student's behaviour as it can make the difference between them feeling*

- *Feeling comfortable vs. uncomfortable*
- *Feeling safe vs. unsafe*
- *Feeling dependent vs. independent*
- *Feeling in control vs. anxious*
- *Making sense of what is going on vs. being confused*

*To work out the best ways to help the student feel relaxed, secure and safe in their environment you need to examine factors such as:*

Inside the Classroom

- ☐ Too noisy
- ☐ Too quiet
- ☐ Too hot
- ☐ Too cold
- ☐ Too much light (e.g. fluorescent lighting)
- ☐ Dark/dim
- ☐ Unpleasant smells
- ☐ Unfamiliar people in the room
- ☐ Too many people (students and/or teaching staff) in the room
- ☐ Distractions in the room (e.g. air conditioner, fan, whiteboards)
- ☐ Not enough personal space (e.g. people bumping into the student)
- ☐ Difficulty accessing items/people in the environment
- ☐ Sensory stimuli in the classroom is under stimulating
- ☐ Sensory stimuli in the classroom is over stimulating
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Outside the Classroom

- ☐ Outside noises such as lawn mowers, garbage trucks, sirens
- ☐ Movement outside the classroom
- ☐ People coming in and out of the classroom
- ☐ Sensory stimuli is under stimulating
- ☐ Sensory stimuli is over stimulating
- ☐ Certain times of the day or week (e.g. morning, before meals, beginning of the week, end of the week)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Activity Characteristics

- ☐ Activity is boring
- ☐ Activity is difficult
- ☐ Activity is easy
- ☐ Activity is too long
- ☐ Equipment is uncomfortable (e.g. seating)
- ☐ Activity expectations not well understood
- ☐ Not enough opportunities for choice making
- ☐ Student only wants to engage in particular activities (i.e. obsessions, rituals, repetitive mannerisms)
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

### Reasons related to communication partners

*It is human nature that all of us have a basic desire to be liked. A staff member's attitude, perceptions, beliefs, interaction and communication style can impact on the student's thinking feeling and actions. Hence, we need to look closely at the way staff interact with the student. Also, other students in the environment*

- ☐ Staff talking among themselves and excluding the student from the conversation.
- ☐ Individual members of staff being inconsistent in the way they interact with the student.
- ☐ Failing to communicate with the student using their preferred form of communication.
- ☐ Using an angry tone of voice or shouting at the student.
- ☐ Staff not recognising and/or responding to the student's communication.
- ☐ Staff not preparing the student for the upcoming activity
- ☐ Staff not informing the student of changes
- ☐ Staff giving too many directions at the one time
- ☐ Staff not giving enough directions
- ☐ Other students in the classroom engage in disrespectful ways with the student
- ☐ Other students may engage in behaviours that are distressing to the student
- ☐ Other \_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 4 - How do you identify the reasons for the occurrence of challenging behaviour?

Assessment is a process by which we engage in detective work in order to find the meaning contained in the message (function) that the student is communicating about her/his behaviour. In other words, the assessment helps to answer the question, "Why does a student keep engaging in the challenging behaviour over and over?" Assessment provides information to help answer that question by asking:

- What does the challenging behaviour look like?
- When does it happen?
- Where does it happen?
- Are there any classroom routines when the challenging behaviour seems to consistently occur?
- What people (e.g. staff, students) seem to be involved in the challenging behaviour when it occurs?
- What happens immediately BEFORE the challenging behaviour occurs?
- What happens immediately AFTER the challenging behaviour occurs?

When these questions are considered carefully and the answers connected to each other, it is possible to make a "best guess" about a function of behaviour. This "best guess" is called a hypothesis about the possible function of the student's problem behaviour. Based on this hypothesis you can work out a plan on how to respond to minimize or prevent the occurrence of the challenging behaviour.

There are a variety of questionnaires, observation methods, data collection tools and interview protocols that are available. In this manual the following assessment process will be discussed:

Step 1 – Complete a 'Broad View Routine Analysis' (to work out when the challenging behaviour surfaces)



Step 2 – Complete a Functional Behaviour Analysis' (to work out the reason for the behaviour)



Step 3 - Hypothesizing testing (Based on the identified reasons for the challenging behaviours preventative/proactive strategies are designed and trialed to see if they minimize or eliminate the occurrence of challenging behaviour)

### **FORM 1 - BROADER VIEW: ROUTINE ANALYSIS**

'Form 1: Routine analysis' can be used to identify hot spots (times/activities) in the routine when the challenging behaviour surfaces. Fill out Form 1 by recording the:

1. **Time** – Record the time the challenging behaviour surfaces
2. **Hot spot** – Record the activity in which the challenging behaviour has surfaced
3. **Specific Behaviour Problem** - Describe the internalized or externalized behaviour in as much detail as possible.

<b>Externalized challenging behaviour</b>	
Aggressive Behaviours	For example, hitting, pushing, kicking, punching, pulling
Antisocial Behaviours	For example, screaming/tantrums, spitting, swearing, persistent non compliance, public masturbation
Self Stimulatory Behaviours	For example, body rocking, repetitive noises/speech, pacing, twirling, spinning objects or self, gazing at lights
Destructive Behaviours	For example, throwing objects, Breaking windows, overturning furniture, smashing things
Self injurious behaviours	For example, head banging, eye poking, hand biting face slapping, picking at skin
<b>Internalized challenging behaviour</b>	
For example, being withdrawn, falling asleep, show reluctance to participate etc.	

#### **Broader view – Routine Analysis**

Name of student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Time</b>	<b>Hot spot</b>	<b>Specific Problem Behaviour</b>

## **FORM 2 – FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS**

Once you have identified the hot spots you need to complete ‘*Form 2: Functional Behavioural Analysis*’. This form aims to help summarize the sequence of events around the challenging behaviour. This information is crucial to understanding the specific factors triggering and maintaining the challenging behaviour. Fill out Form 2 by recording the:

1. **Antecedent**– What precedes (occurs before) the challenging behaviour include information on what happened, when did it happen, where did it happen and whom it happens with?
2. **Behaviour** – Describe the challenging behaviour (what does it look like)? How long does it last?
3. **Consequence** – Describe what happens immediately after the behaviour (include student, peer and staff responses as appropriate)?

As appropriate include information about the ‘**Setting Event**’. Setting events or circumstances beyond the immediate context that affect the likelihood of the challenging behaviour occurring. For example, events may include illness, lack of sleep, or a stressful experience on the bus. By completing this chart for a period of time e.g. two weeks, it will show a pattern, the frequency, when it happened, what the behaviour is and who was involved. Analysis of the antecedent and consequence section helps develop an understanding of how a situation develops or is maintained.

### **FUNCTIONAL BEHAVIOURAL ANALYSIS**

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

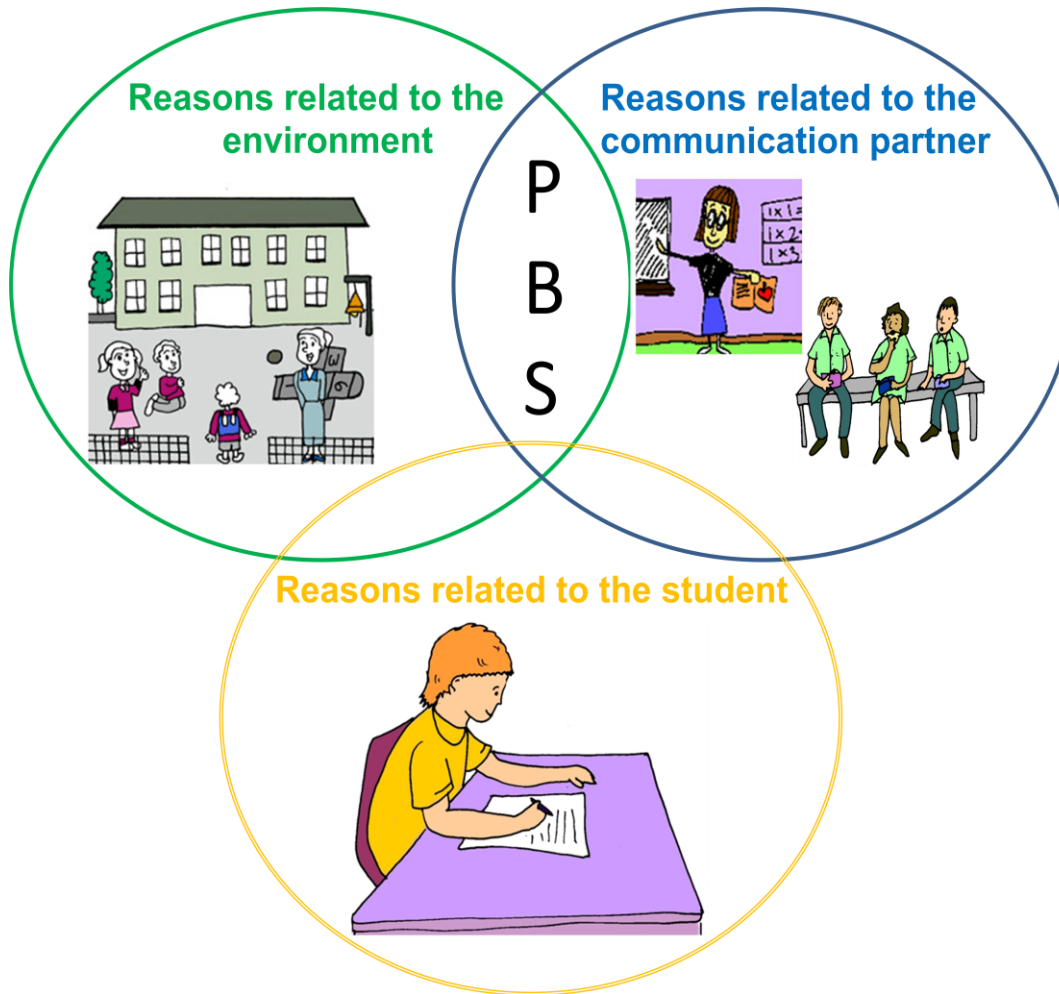
Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Antecedent</b>		<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
1			
2			
3			
4			

### **FORM 3 – HYPOTHESIS TESTING**

The aim of 'Form 3 is to develop a hypothesis about the possible causes. (i.e., under x conditions, the student does y, in order to achieve z). This will enable us to develop an intervention plan to minimize or prevent the occurrence of challenging behaviours.



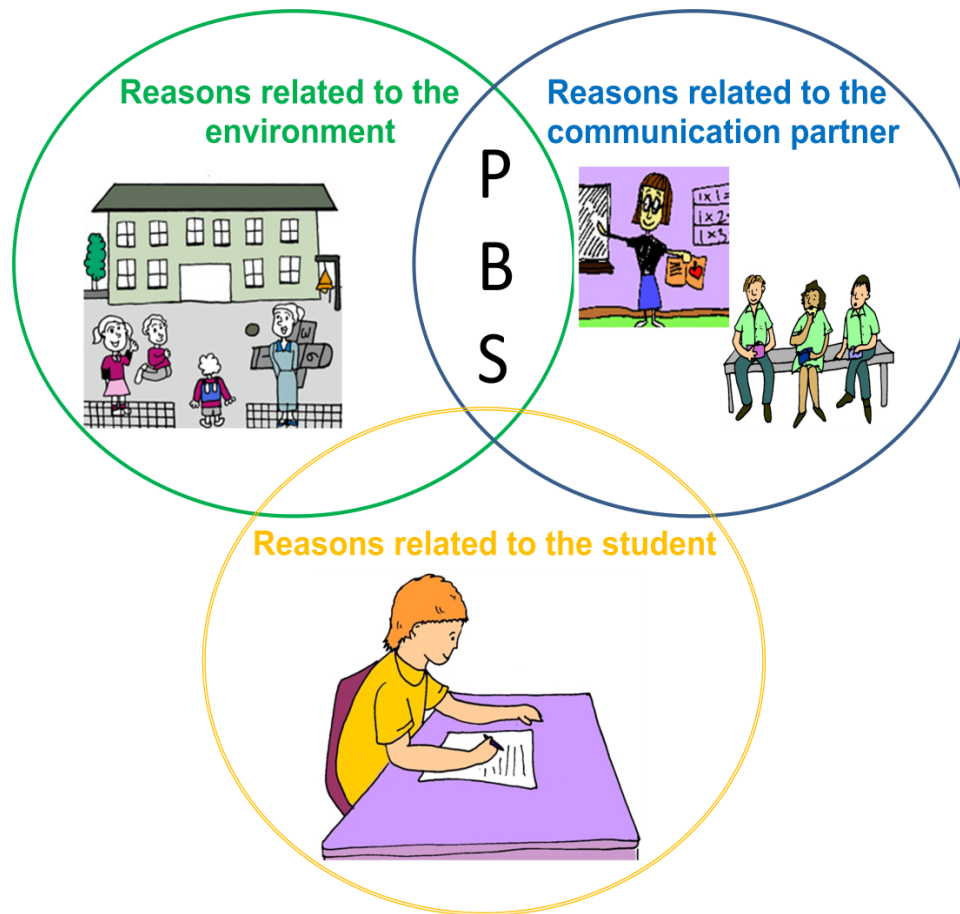
Refer to pages 7 – 10 to identify any reasons related to the environment or the communication partner or the student that may be contributing to the occurrence of the challenging behaviour being discussed.

Chapter 5 discusses a range of case studies and examples of visuals strategies that were used to address the challenging behaviour.

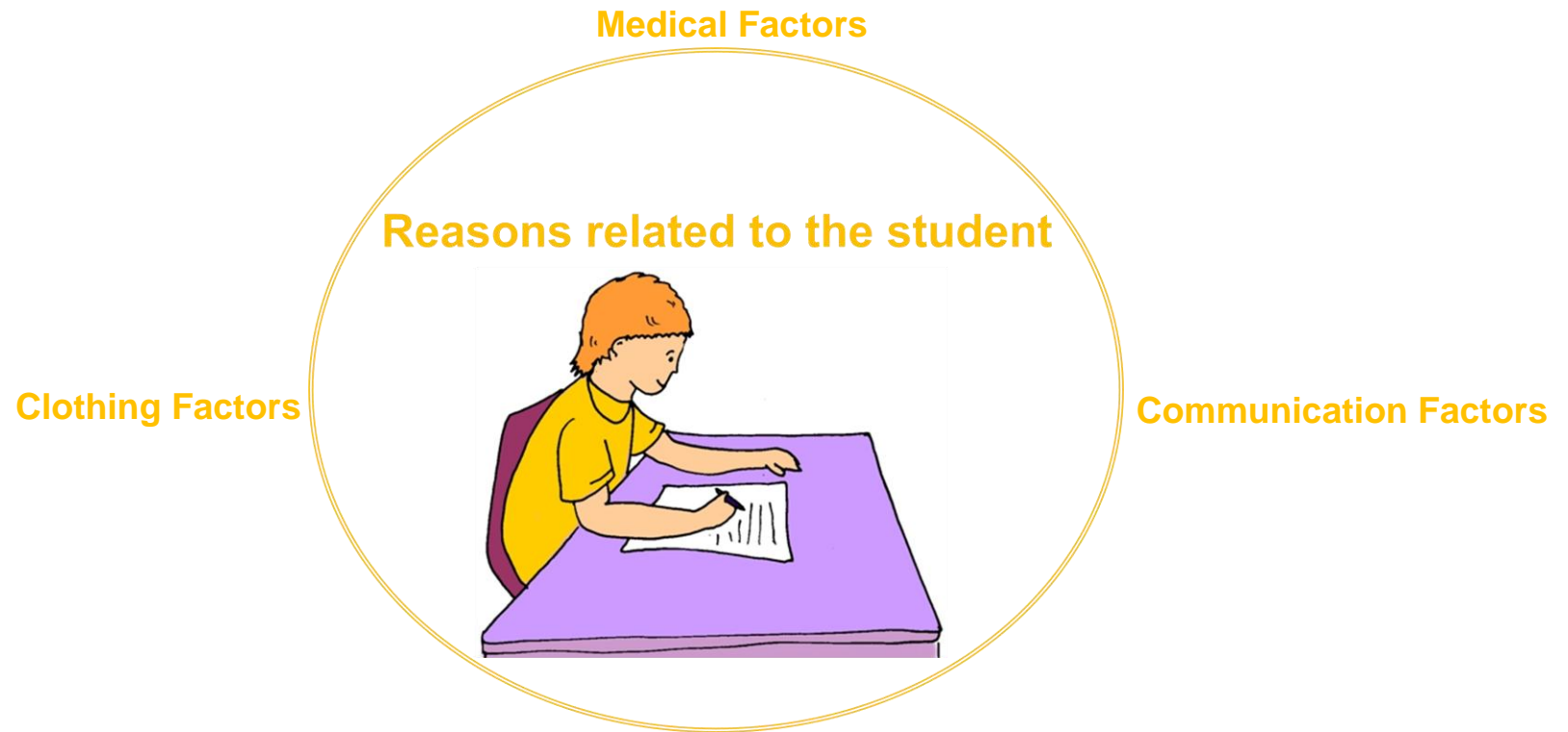
The examples provided are not templates but examples of strategies that have been used with specific student/s. Please adapt or modify the visual strategies contained in the chapter to suit the student you are assisting.

## Chapter 5 - How can we prevent the occurrence of challenging behaviour?

**Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)** is a holistic approach that considers all the reasons that could impact on the student's behaviour. The approach considers the impact of the environmental triggers, communication partner interaction style triggers and triggers related to the student's abilities, to work out the purpose of the challenging behaviour. The positive behaviour support plan focuses on the use of positive intervention strategies that are respectful to the student. The interventions that are developed are individualized and are based on an understanding of the unique abilities of the student, their environment and communication partners.





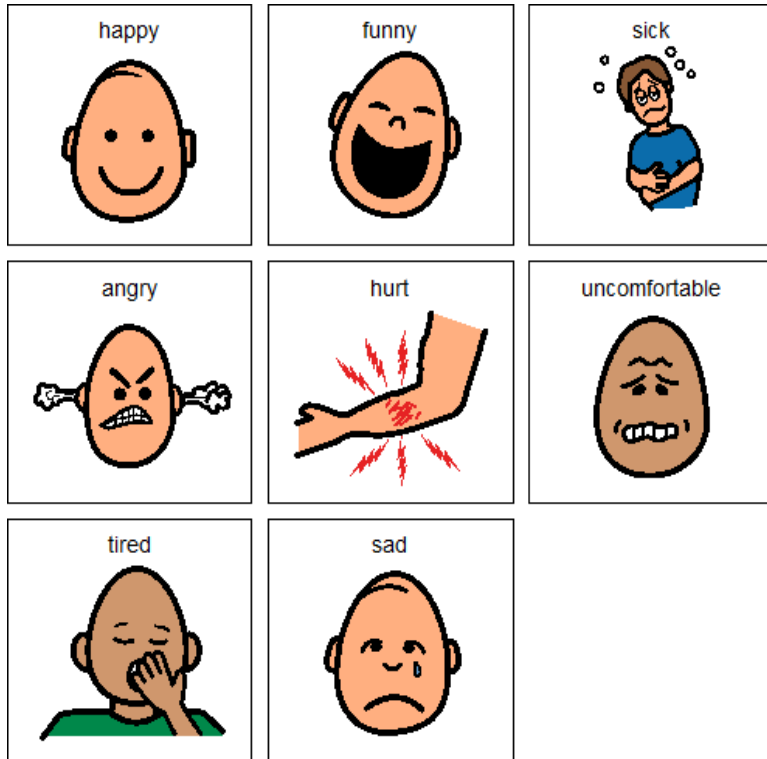


### CASE STUDY 1 → REASONS RELATED TO THE STUDENT → MEDICAL FACTORS/ COMMUNICATION FACTORS

To help work out why Steve was distressed a 'feelings – solution' chart was used. This chart enabled Steve to communicate about how he was feeling and what he could do to resolve the problem. If Steve was not open to looking at visuals or if using the visuals didn't resolve the situation then the following strategies were used:

- Offered a drink  
↓ (does not calm him down then)
- Twirl the wheelchair around for 30 secs  
↓ (does not calm him down then)
- Give him a deep pressure arm massage  
↓ (does not calm him down then)
- Tap him gently on the chest for 30 secs  
↓ (does not calm him down then)
- Offer him his favourite massage toy

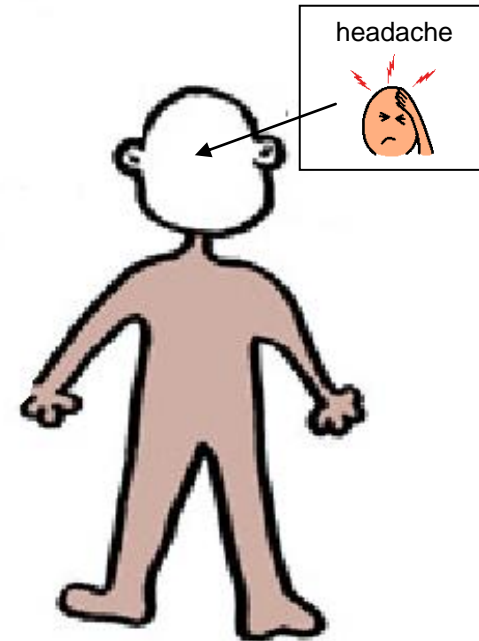
### Visual 1 - How am I feeling?



### Visual 2-Body Chart

(Use this chart if Steve is feeling sick/hurt)

Depending on the types of pain Steve experiences make supporting visuals for each body part e.g. head -headache, tummy-sore tummy etc.)



### Visual 3 - Solutions Chart

(For the feelings listed in visual 1 one or more solutions for each feeling were identified)

sore tummy - rub tummy



sore tummy - pat tummy



tired - rest



tired - sleep



### Visual 4 - Feelings - Solutions Chart

(this chart was used to record the feeling and solution as you are going through this process with Steve)

Feeling

tired



Solution

tired - sleep



**CASE STUDY 2 → REASONS RELATED TO THE STUDENT → MEDICAL FACTORS  
/CLOTHING FACTORS/COMMUNICATION FACTORS**

When Lucy experiences a negative feeling such as sad, anger or feeling uncomfortable she will bite her hand or bang her head. To help Lucy learn how to express her feelings in an appropriate way i.e. using her PODD book the following visuals were used.

Sometimes I may feel....

Angry



Sad



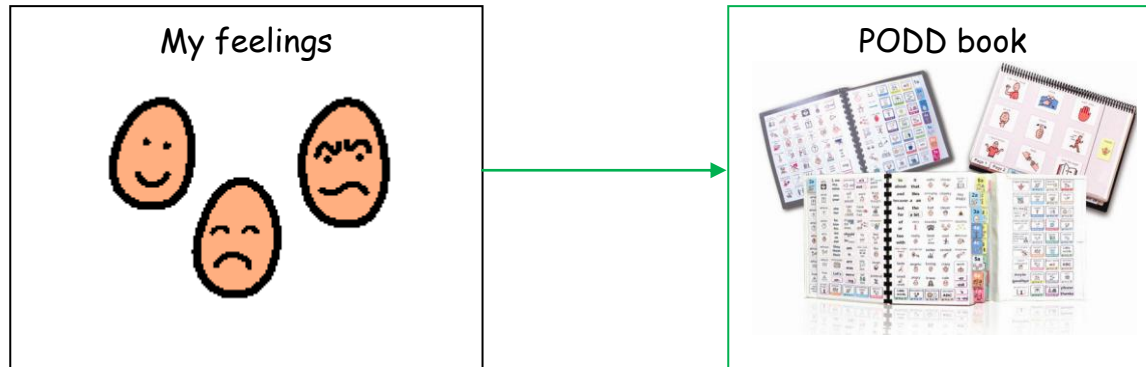
Happy



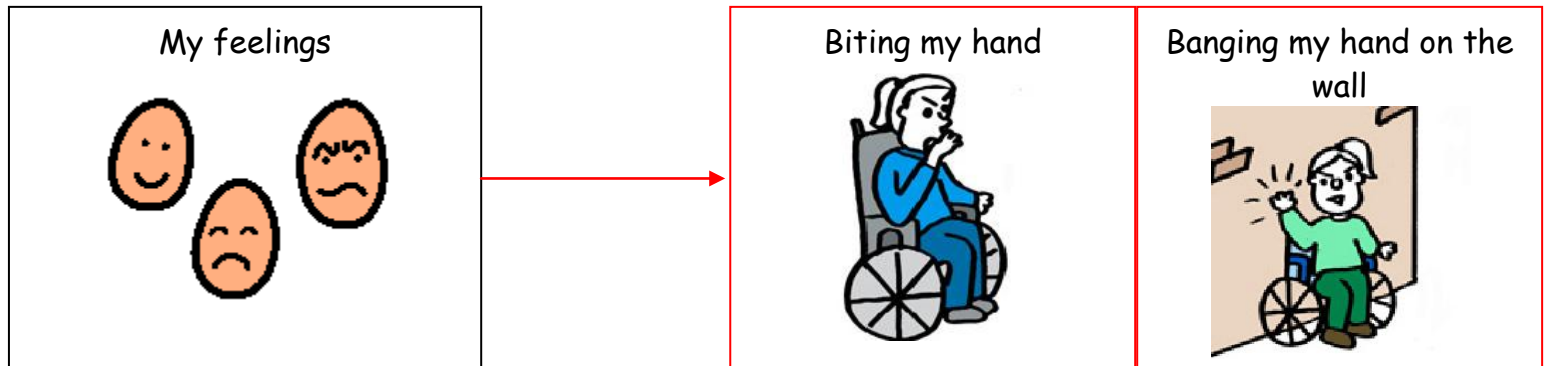
Uncomfortable



I can talk about my feelings by using my PODD book.



It is not OK to talk about my feelings by



### **CASE STUDY 3 → REASONS RELATED TO THE STUDENT → COMMUNICATION FACTORS**

To help Cate talk about what things make her feel stressed/overwhelmed/sad/angry at home and school the following visuals were made. Cate could use the visual strategies to:

- Identify what makes her angry (Things that make me angry at home and things that make me angry at school)
- Learn about the body's physiological responses to anger (HOME Body chart; SCHOOL Body chart)
- Rate degree or intensity of emotion (Anger scale - SCHOOL )
- Identify and implement anger control strategies (How am I feeling? - SCHOOL)



# Cate-What makes me angry/frustrated/upset at home?

People do not understand me



Routine has changed



Someone has done something wrong



Getting told off



Activity is boring



Activity is too hard



When an adult asks me what I am doing with my life



When someone bullies me



Someone has touched my things



Someone has entered my personal space



Someone has teased me



People yelling at me

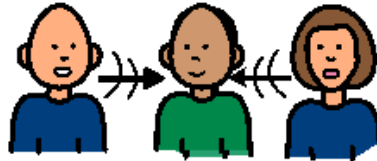


## Cate - What makes me angry/frustrated/upset at school?

People do not understand me



Confused messages - when one teacher says one thing and another teacher says something else



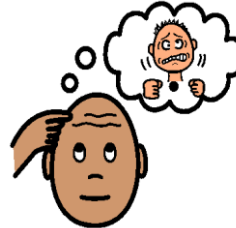
Someone has done something wrong



When people get their way at school



I get angrier at home because of what happened at school



I have lost a game



Someone hurts me (e.g. pinches me)



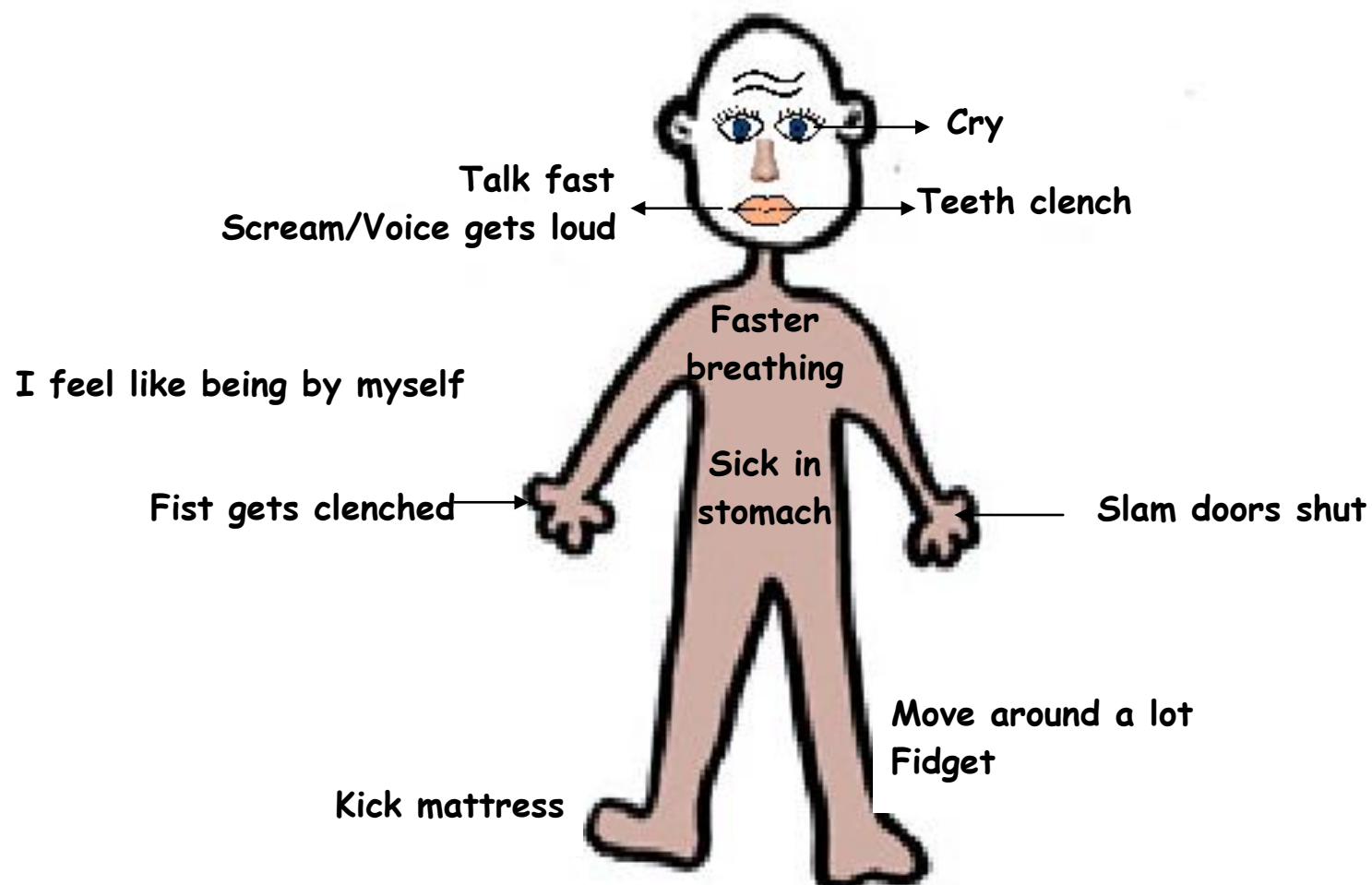
Someone has entered my personal space



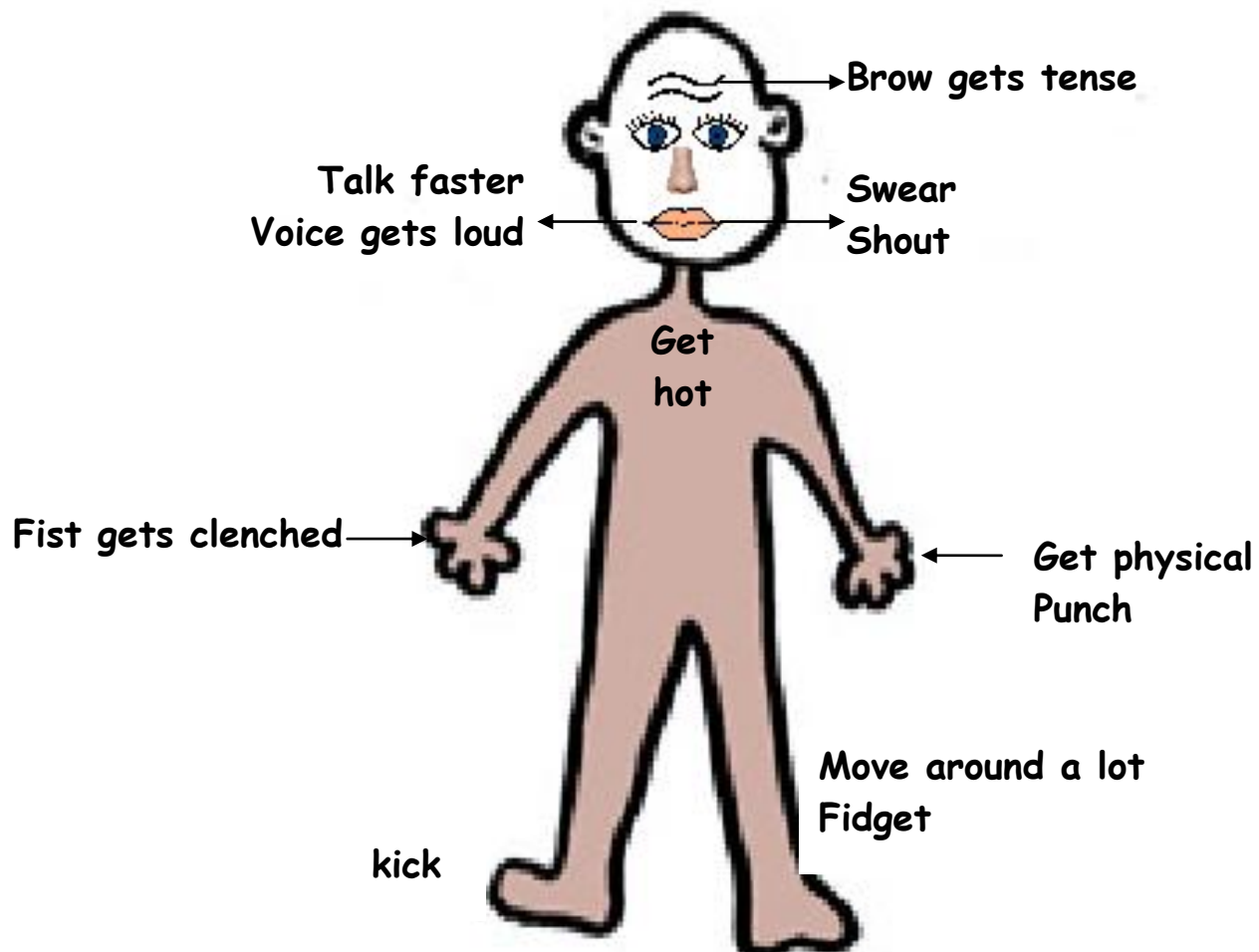
Someone has teased me



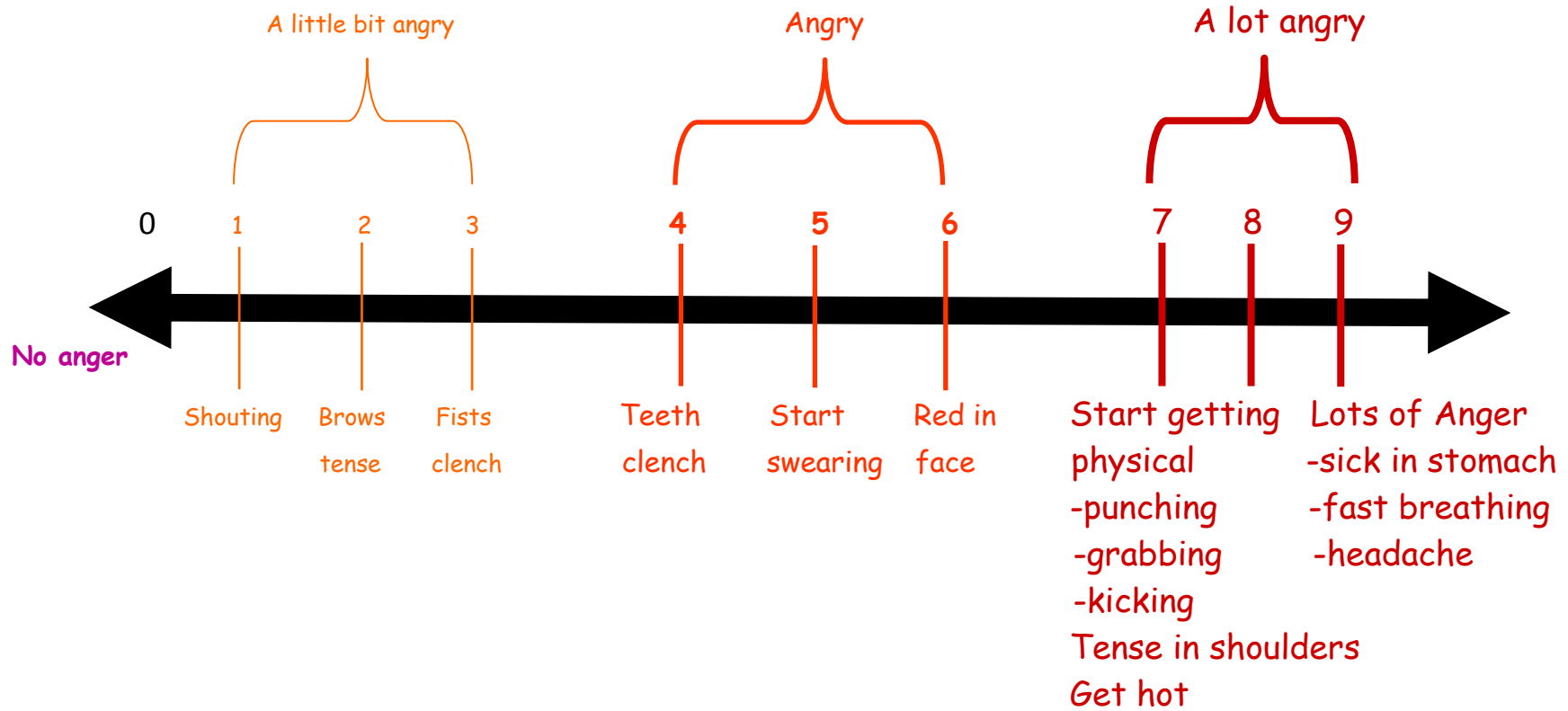
## Body Chart - HOME



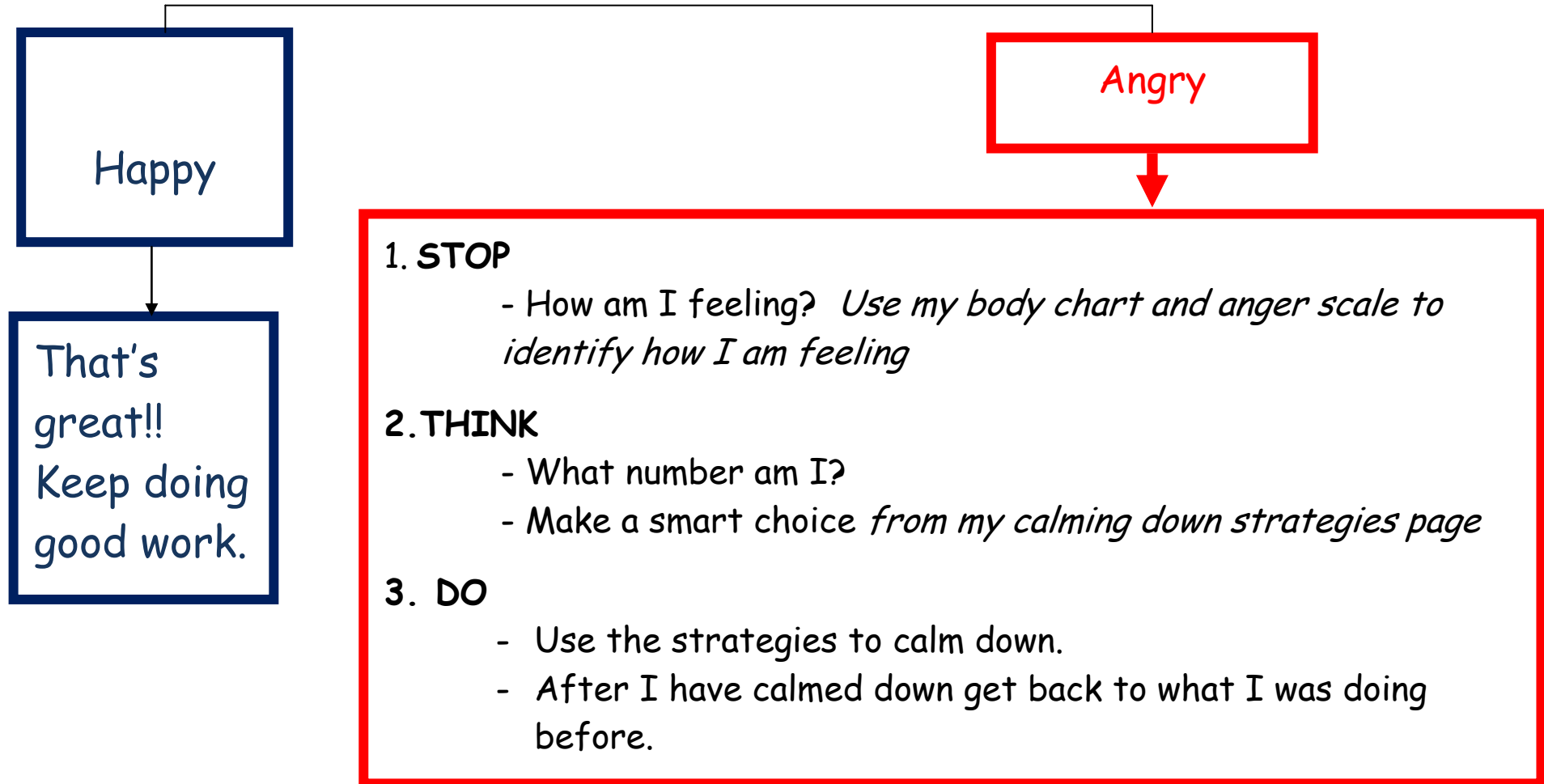
## Body Chart - SCHOOL



## Anger scale - SCHOOL



## How am I feeling?



3
2
1

A little bit angry



When I am a little bit angry I:

- find it difficult to pay attention
- find it difficult to follow instructions
- start to shout
- my brows tense
- my fists clench

When I am a little bit angry I need to:

- sit at my desk
- Open my 'thinking calm box' and read my affirmations
- Raise my hand
- Talk and sort the problem with my teacher

When I have calmed down I need to get back to what I was doing.

## 'Thinking Calm' box - Positive Affirmations

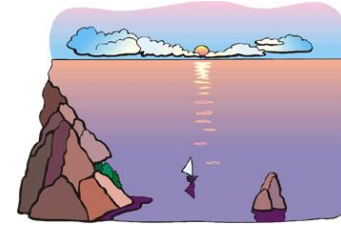
I am the one in control, not my anger.



I choose what I do with my anger.



Find out what is the problem that is making you angry.



Attack the problem not a person.



I am responsible for what I think, say and do.



I can control how I let my anger out by letting off STEAM smartly to solve the problem.





6
5
4



When I am angry I:

- Start fiddling with my hands
- Clench my teeth
- Start swearing
- Red in face

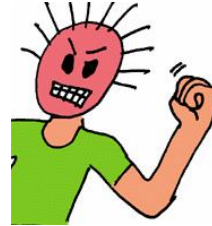
When I am angry I need to:

- Get my hassle book
- Write down the problem
- Raise my hand
- Talk and sort the problem with my teacher

When I have calmed down I need to get back to what I was doing.

9
8
7

## A lot angry



When I am a lot angry I:

- Start getting physical (punching, grabbing, kicking)
- Get tense in my shoulders
- Get hot
- Have lots of anger (sick in stomach, fast breathing, headache)

When I am lot angry I need to:

- Get my bubbles
- Walk quietly to the door
- Go outside and blow some bubbles
- When I have calmed down I need to go back inside.
- Tell my teacher that I am calm and talk to her about the problem.

I then need to get back to what I was doing.

## CASE STUDIES 4→REASONS RELATED TO THE STUDENT→COMMUNICATION FACTORS

Transitions involves the ability to move from one activity or location to the next and organising oneself in terms of attention and producing responses that are applicable to the next activity. The following students have difficulty with transitions. Below is a summary of the various strategies that were used to assist them.

- Lionel has difficulty with time management, planning and organising himself. Hence, when he makes choices he doesn't make a choice based on time limits. This causes him problems because he then finds it difficult to leave work that is unfinished. Hence, teaching staff need to assist him to make informed choices by guiding him. If he chooses a long and difficult puzzle encourage him to commence on it at the beginning of work time so he has a greater chance of finishing it. Once he has finished the long puzzle encourage him to then choose shorter puzzles so that he can finish it on time.
- A “sensory diet” is a carefully designed by an occupational therapist. It is a personalized activity schedule that provides the sensory input a person needs to stay calm, alert, focused and organized throughout the day. The benefits of a sensory diet are usually immediate AND cumulative. Activities that perk up your student or calm him down are not only effective in the moment; they actually help to restructure your student's nervous system over time so that he is better able to:
  - tolerate sensations and situations he finds challenging
  - regulate his alertness and increase attention span
  - limit sensory seeking and sensory avoiding behaviours
  - handle transitions with less stress

Throughout the day provide Tim with opportunities to do the following whole body actions involving carrying, pushing (.e.g pushing his bag in a trolley to the bus, pushing a mountain), pulling, lifting, wearing a weighted vest while doing passive sitting activities, jumping on a trampoline, lying on a scooterboard, climbing, hanging on things, body deep massage and fit ball activities. This resistive input obtained through these heavy work activities is generally organizing and can improve attention, arousal level, body awareness and muscle tone, as well as decreasing defensiveness.

- Jenny has difficulties with transitioning from home to school as well as coping with ending a favourite activity. Use the following strategies to help ease her transitions.
  - *Home – school transition:* In the morning when she enters the classroom assist her to put her bag on the table and then take her outside of the classroom for 5 minutes. After 5 minutes bring her inside and ask her to put her lunch box in the fridge. Once she has done that guide her to her ‘green chair’.
  - *Ending a favourite activity outside the classroom -* 2 minutes before the outside activity finishes inform her by signing ‘finished’ and then show her the box of reinforcing sensory toys. Guide her to the classroom where she can engage with the toys for a few minutes.

## CASE STUDIES 4 → REASONS RELATED TO THE STUDENT → COMMUNICATION FACTORS

**Sam has difficulty with transitions. Below is a summary of the various strategies that were used to assist him.**

- Inform Sam of the upcoming activity immediately before the activity is going to commence (i.e. at the last minute) as he has difficulties with delaying gratification (waiting).
- While Sam is waiting for his turn make sure you talk to Sam regularly so that he doesn't feel ignored/bored/lonely.
- Whilst Sam is learning how to wait engage him with 'filler neutral activities' so that he is physically and mentally engaged while waiting. Write out a list of activities he can engage in whilst waiting.
  - Play with a squishy toy (attached to his wheelchair – ensure you change the toy regularly so that he doesn't get bored of it)
  - Watch the Wiggles on the whiteboard

To help Sam learn how to patiently wait we need to provide him with opportunities to gradually develop his ability. Use a timer to inform Sam how long he needs to wait for. Initially, teach him how to wait in the listed activities. Gradually introduce the timer in other activities.

Mealtime (Monday /Tuesday /Friday)	Prepare Sam's lunch (hot meal) before everybody gathers for lunch. Place a timer next to him and set it for 10 seconds. Highlight the timer to Sam. When it rings praise him for 'good waiting' and provide him with his meal immediately. Gradually increase to 20 secs, 30 secs, 40 secs etc.
Waiting between songs	Set the timer between songs so that Sam knows how long he has to wait for.

## CASE STUDIES 4 → REASONS RELATED TO THE STUDENT → COMMUNICATION FACTORS

- Konig has difficulty coping with the unstructured time that occurs when an activity has finished and the next activity has not yet commenced. Incorporate the following ideas in your day:

Play Corner Choices – Create a visual that shows the choice of play activities



Chores – Identify chores that Konig could do. For example in the morning after he has finished unpacking his bag, he could assist other students in unpacking their items. After he has finished lunch he could help with the packing up etc.

Work tasks – Create worksheets that Keenan can complete whilst waiting for an activity to commence.

- Touch is a very powerful medium of communication which assumes greater importance when a learner has difficulty accessing information from her environment in more conventional ways i.e through sight, hearing and motor skills. Touch cues are signals made on a learner's body to give a specific message. Used consistently they give the learner a way of understanding about frequently occurring events in her environment. This preparation can help to reduce startle or anxiety responses which occur because the learner is unaware of what is going to happen to her.

Some examples:

- Stroking down the learner's arm, saying "I'm going to move you"
- Tapping beside the learner's mouth, saying "It's time to eat"
- Squeeze and shake thumb, when saying 'Time to finish'.

Touch cues support a learner's communication and participation in familiar routines e.g. the partner gives the touch cue, pauses and waits for the learner to indicate readiness or anticipation of the next step in the routine which prepares the student with transitions.

### **CASE STUDY 5—REASONS RELATED TO THE STUDENT—COMMUNICATION FACTORS**

Bibliotherapy consists of the selection of reading material, for an individual that has relevance to that person's life situation. Bibliotherapy can assist the student in overcoming problems by having them read stories about characters who have successfully resolved a dilemma similar to their own. Identification with a character can help to:

- Identify and validate the student's feelings
- Realise that others have problems similar to their own
- Stimulate discussion
- Foster thought and self awareness
- Discover possible coping skills and solutions; and
- Decide on a constructive course of action.

Prem loves Toy Story which is computer-animated film released by Walt Disney Pictures. A story was written using the Toy story characters to help Prem learn how to request a break. The following 'requesting a break' subskills that were covered in the bibliotherapy included:

- Recognising the need for a break
- Benefits of asking for a break
- Steps involved in requesting a break

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8





Bo says if you feel angry:

- Think 'STOP'
- Take 5 big breaths
- Raise your hand
- Ask your teacher for a break by saying 'I need a break'

9



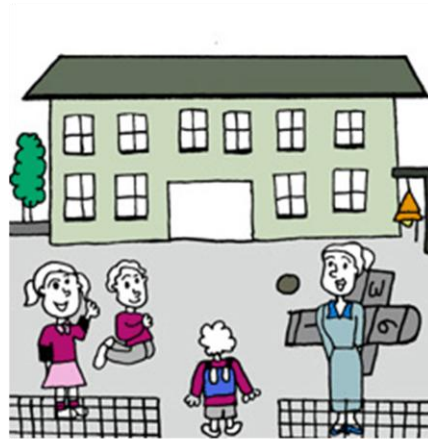
Everyone is happy if you ask for a break

10

## Activity Characteristics

### Reasons related to the environment

Inside the classroom



Outside the classroom

### **CASE STUDY 1 → REASONS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT → ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS**

Some students may have 'obsessions' i.e. strong, repetitive interests with one or more of the following:

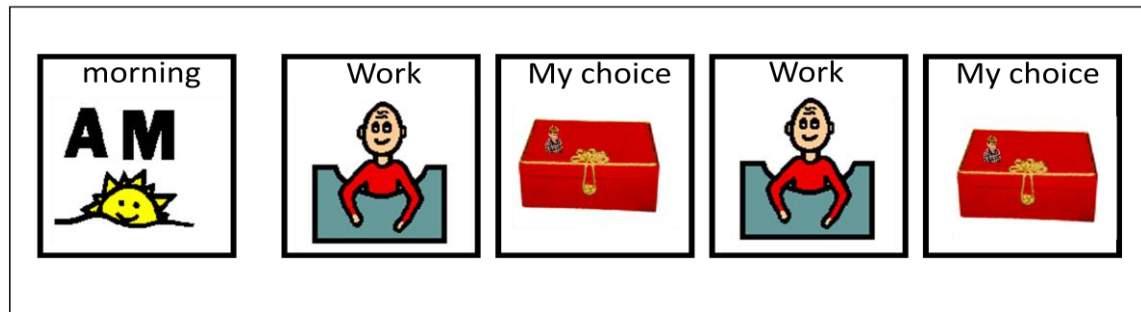
- Attachments (to a specific object);
- Crafts (including painting, drawing, play-doh, knitting, and models);
- Everyday life (including routines and tidiness);
- Facts (including non-fiction books, and memorizing facts);
- Food (including dietary habits, types of food, restaurants, menus, etc., )
- People (i.e., being obsessed with a particular person);
- Sports or games (including playing or watching); and
- TV/audio (including films, videos, cartoons, listening to tapes, etc.

Peta's obsession is playing with buttons. She engages in her obsession as a way of calming herself and creating predictability in her day. The following visual strategies were used to help create boundaries surrounding her obsession.

- Create a button box with various types of buttons. Help Peta learn that she can only engage with buttons in the button box. Place her photo on the box.



- Timetable in Peta's schedule times when she can have the 'button box'.



- Label a specific area in the classroom where Peta can engage with the button box.
- Use a timer to help Peta understand how long she can spend engaging with the button box.



## CASE STUDY 2 → REASONS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT → ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS

Active participation is defined as the nature and extent of a student's involvement in activities of self-care, mobility, socialization, academic, recreation, and community life. Active participation in activities is the context in which the student develops skills and competencies. The aim is to gradually increase the student's level of active participation in everyday activities.

Depending on your student's abilities (e.g. attention span, physical abilities) the level of support staff need to provide to assist the student participate in an activity will vary. Also, activity characteristics can impact on the student's motivation to participate in an activity (e.g. how motivating / difficult/ long etc. it is)

Level of active participation in an activity can be categorised into three levels:

1. Observer participation– The student does not participate in the activity but observes the activity being carried out.
2. Partial participation - *The student participates in one or more steps in the activity but does not necessarily do all the steps. Gradually increase the length of time/number of steps the student does in the activity. Initially you may need to make it into a game e.g. you take a turn and then the student takes a turn at participating in the activity.*
3. Complete participation - The student participates in the entire activity with minimal support.

This is Kerrie's first year at school and she is learning how to participate in activities i.e. from being an observer participant →partial participant →complete participant in all activities.

To build her level of participation initially she participated in the following activities by:

- Morning routine (before morning circle) – putting her lunchbox in the fridge
- Morning tea / lunch– getting her lunchbox from the fridge
- After morning tea /lunch – packing away the lunch box
- Home time – stacking her chair before she goes to the toilet and then goes on the bus.

Once she started doing these tasks with minimal guidance and redirection, she was expected to complete 2 steps .....3 steps ....4 steps.....etc. in each of those activities.

**CASE STUDY 3 → REASONS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT → ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS**

To help Anita express why she doesn't want to engage in an activity and help her understand what she can do to address the problem.

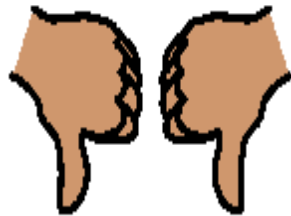


## Why don't I want to do the task?

Too hard



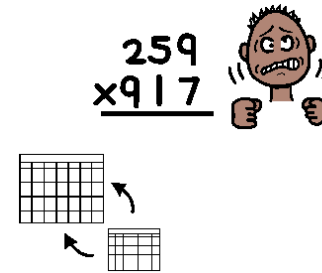
Not good at it



Don't know how to do it



Have had difficulty the last time I did it



I have done this before. Why do I have to do it again?

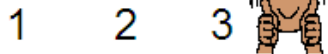


## Good choices that solve the problem

My teacher can show me how to do it



Practising 3 times makes me good at it



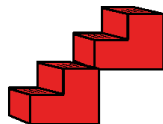
It's OK if I don't get it right. Have a go!!!



Do it together with your teacher



Teacher can break it down into steps



## Bad choices that don't solve the problem

Give up



Don't have a go



### CASE STUDY 4 → REASONS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT → ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS

The TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication related handicapped Children) approach was being used in the classroom for a group of students with Autism. A TEACCH classroom is usually very structured, with separate, defined areas for each task, such as individual work, group activities, and play. Students sit at a work station and are required to complete certain tasks. The following visuals were designed to help them understand what the expectations were and how they could approach a problem if it arose during the activity.





## What is TEACCH time?

1. Quiet time



2. Time to work by yourself.



3. If you have a question

a. Have a go

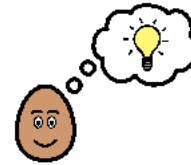
b. Try your best

c. Your teacher is proud of you for trying



d. If you still have a question raise your hand





When I doing my TEACCH work I must remember to:

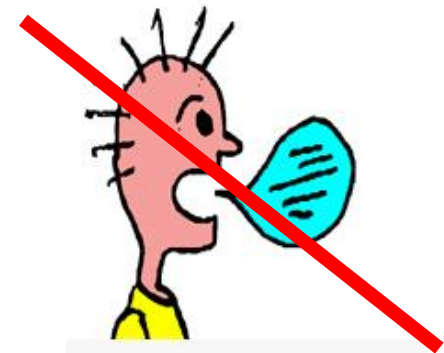
Not get distracted by noise



Not get distracted by people



Not talk to others



Follow the schedule 1 -5

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Don't give up



I sometimes get distracted when I am working. To STEAM through the problem I need to:

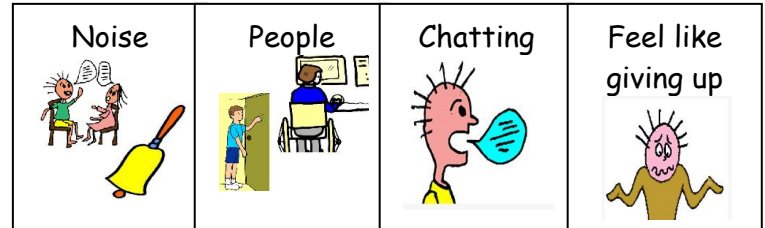
1. Stop



Breathe



Describe the distraction

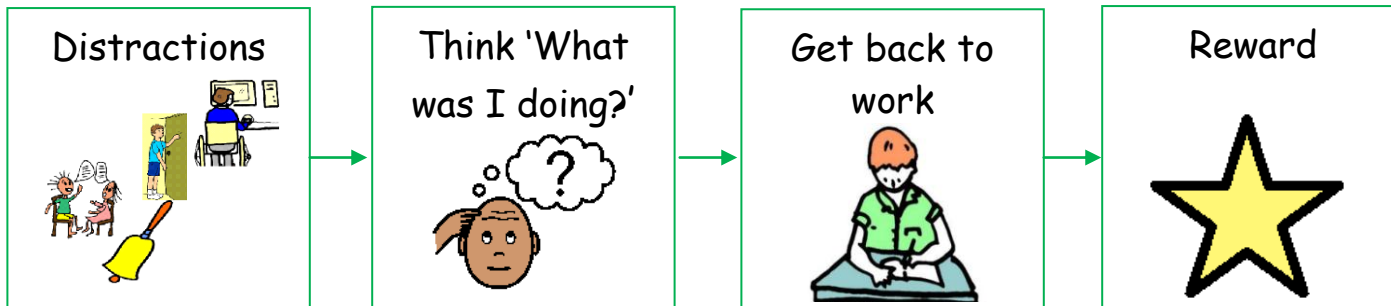


2. Think of possible ways of dealing with the solutions.

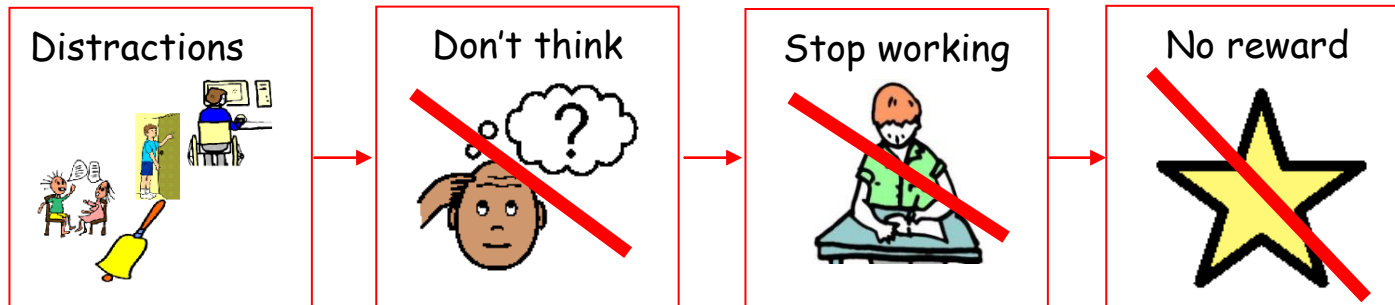
3. Evaluate all the solutions!

4. Act out the best solution!

SMART  
SOLUTION



NOT A  
SMART  
SOLUTION



5. Make changes as necessary!

**CASE STUDY 5 → REASONS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT → ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS**

Tarryn had been participating in the same morning circle routine for over 6 months and was able to participate in it competently. She had started getting bored with morning circle and was beginning to misbehave in the activity. For example, she would not follow instructions and run away from the activity. The rule of thumb to prevent boredom is 'repetition with moderate differences'. Hence, a morning circle card was made to make the morning circle activity a little bit more challenging. She was expected to fill out the card as the responses were being discussed in the group. When the card was introduced Tarryn stopped misbehaving in the activity.



## Morning Circle Card

(circle your answers)

My name is: Peter Lucy Jack John Tarryn

Today is:

SMTWTFS

Monday

SMTWTFS

Tuesday

SMTWTFS

Wednesday

SMTWTFS

Thursday

SMTWTFS

Friday

The weather is:



cloudy



rainy

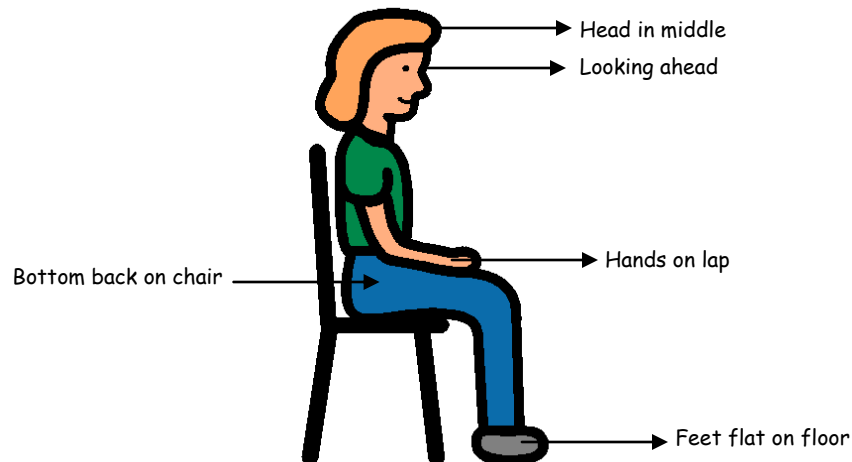


sunny



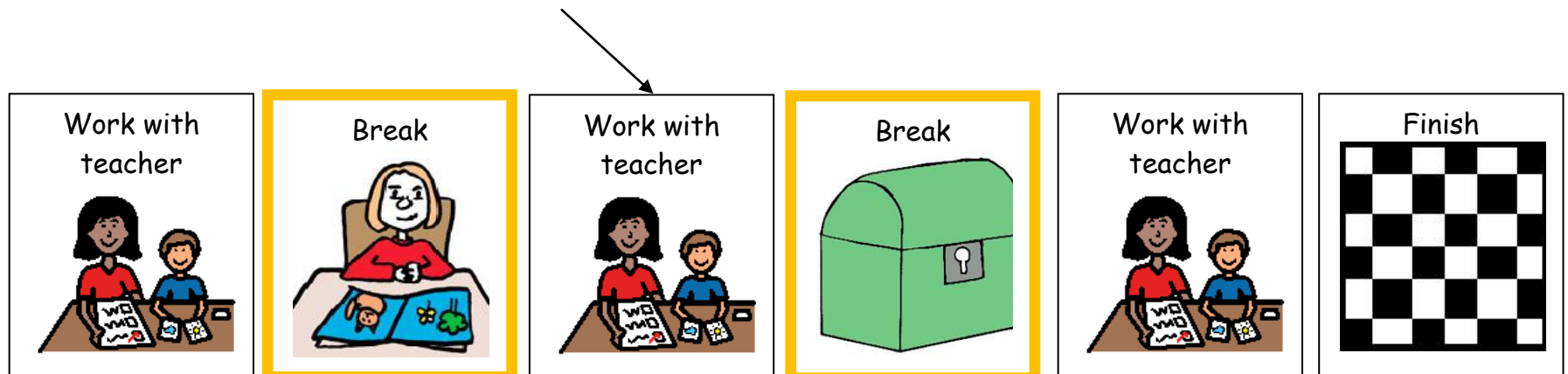
windy

Position Check:



## CASE STUDY 6 → REASONS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT → ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS

Based on the challenging behaviour assessment it was hypothesised that the reason why Sally was engaging in challenging behaviour after a minute of doing work was because she wasn't ready to focus on a work task for that long. Hence, to help Sally achieve the long term goal of sitting and completing an entire 5 min work task it was broken down into small steps. She was given 20 sec break where she can look at her favourite book/play with buttons in her special button box after she has completed each step in the activity (e.g. written her name, written a number 3 times). As she developed her ability, she was then given a break after completing 2 steps...3 steps....entire activity. A visual schedule was used to help Sally understand the routine.



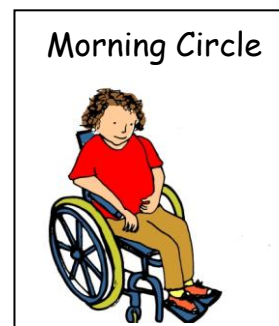
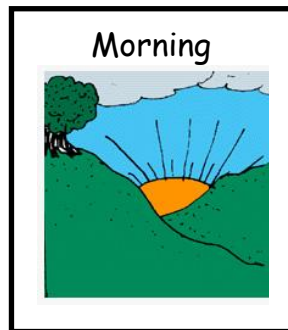
## CASE STUDY 7 → REASONS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT → ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS

Todd would arrive at school by 8am. He would then remain seated in his wheelchair till 10:30am when he could get out of his wheelchair, sit and play in the sandbox. Often by 9:30am he would get agitated during the morning circle activity and vocalise loudly. Based on the challenging behaviour assessment it was hypothesised that the reason why the student is engaging in challenging behaviour is because he has been sitting in the one position for a long time which makes it difficult for him to stay alert and pay attention in the morning circle activity.

The following strategies were trialled to provide Todd with the opportunity:

- To participate in an activity (e.g. do a job) that required him to be in a different position before the commencement of morning circle
- To be in a different position mid way during morning circle (e.g. instead of sitting – standing)

A visual schedule was used to help Todd understand his routine:




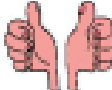
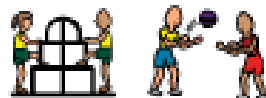






### CASE STUDY 8 → REASONS RELATED TO THE ENVIRONMENT → ACTIVITY CHARACTERISTICS

Based on the challenging behaviour assessment it was hypothesised that the reason why the Rusty was engaging in challenging behaviour in the playground was because he didn't understand what he could and couldn't do in the playground.

The following visual strategies were trialled to provide Rusty:

- Information on what he could and could not do in the playground.
- Consequences of breaking the rules.
- Playground journal so that he can reflect on his behaviour in the playground.



In the playground..... 	
I can 	I cannot 
 Share equipment	 Go behind the water tank
 Play in the play area	 Go outside the play area
 ?  Talk to the teacher if there is a problem	 Hit  Push



Playground Journal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Today when I played in the playground

☐

Went behind the water tank

☐

Went outside the play area

☐

Hit

☐

Push

Other environmental strategies that can be put in place to promote the student's sense of well being:

### **Key Location Activity Areas**

These are well defined areas with clear boundaries that delineate the different spaces for specific activities. It should be organised and structured in such a way that it should clearly inform the student of what activity takes place in that particular area. By doing the activity in the designated area it will allow the student to make associations between the activity and the specific area. This will help them recognise and anticipate the activity which will enhance the student's ability to participate as an active learner. Examples of the different key location areas that might feature within a classroom include a quiet reading corner, computer area, music area, relaxation area, arts and crafts area, mealtime area and an student work area. You can use signs to label the different key location activity areas. You can also highlight clear activity boundaries by using different coloured rugs, different coloured tapes, bookshelves, partitions, room dividers and the arrangement of tables. These will help the student understand where each activity area begins and ends. There should be adequate space to allow for easy movement within and between the activity areas. The materials and equipments needed for the activity need to be organised and positioned so that they are easily accessible to the student. Materials should be stored in a consistent location and containers. All these strategies can eliminate delays, disruptions, and confusion as the student prepares for activities and reduce waiting time (e.g. waiting for help, waiting because they can't find something).

### **Seating**

It is important that the student is able to sit comfortably and securely in order to concentrate on other activities such as eating, dressing or writing. If the student is not sitting comfortably their concentration and attention will be spent primarily on their position instead on what they are doing. So make sure they are well positioned. You may need to seek advice from your occupational therapist or physiotherapist. Consider the setting to identify optimum seating. For example, for a student with a hearing impairment seating is crucial for facilitating attention and participation. For example, sitting in the front of the room where the student can easily view the teacher, blackboard, overhead screen and other students. During discussions the student should sit close to the teacher and interpreter as appropriate). If the student gets easily distracted (e.g. peers, noise, movement) then you need to consider their seating arrangement.

**Temperature**

It is important to be aware of the student's temperature preference and encourage them to dress accordingly. Temperature preferences vary dramatically, and if it's either too cool or too warm they may find it difficult to concentrate.

**Lighting**

All of us need to have adequate lighting as it influences learning, emotions and our behaviours. It is important to work out the right type of lighting for the student by considering their needs, abilities and preferences. For example, individuals who have a visual impairment it is vital that they have glare free lighting or desk lamps or task lighting to focus light where it's needed). Whereas for students with autism the wrong type of lighting can be annoying, distracting and even painful.

**Minimising visual and auditory distractions**

It is important to create a space which is neat and tidy, uncluttered and ordered to minimise distractions. Blank walls may be better than walls filled with posters and other visual distractions. Some individuals have difficulty screening out background noise and concentrating on what they are doing. Auditory distractions can be minimised through the use strategies such as carpeting, seating arrangements, using headphones for specific activities. It is important to consider the effect not only of obvious sounds such as people talking, but also subtle sounds such as florescent lights, hum of electric motors, birds, etc.

**Other sensory aspects of the environment**

It is important to consider other sensory aspects such as olfactory (smell), gustatory (taste), proprioceptive (sense of body in space) and vestibular (movement) and how all of these impact on the student.

**Relaxation area**

It is important to have a relaxation area where the student can relax.

**Type of activities**

It is important that the student has opportunities to engage with interesting materials and activities that are motivating for them. Activities or materials that are too difficult or not challenging enough or not motivating may cause the student to be frustrated. Therefore, you may need to make modifications and adaptations to the task so that it matches their needs and abilities and maximises opportunities for success.

**Timing of activities**

It is important to be aware of the student's level of alertness. If the student is feeling drowsy, tired or unwell then concentrating and participating in an activity will be difficult. Thus, it is important to plan ahead and schedule activities according to the student's arousal levels.

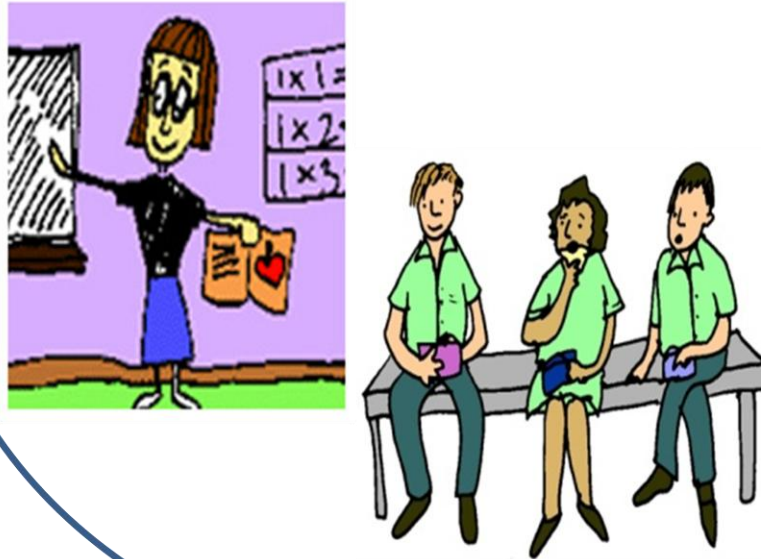
**Routine and predictability**

Routines, structure and familiarity help the student understand what is going on around them, recognise situations, know what is expected of them and ultimately to predict what is going to happen. This creates a feeling of security and understanding which enables the student gain more independence and freedom with the safety of the familiar and the predictable. Routine does not imply rigidity it is important to build in some flexibility and variation to prevent routines becoming too rigid.

**Labelling environment**

Labelling the environment can help maintain structure and organisation of the environment. By labelling shelves, activity areas, storage containers with numbers, colour-coding, checklists, and symbols (e.g. object symbols, picture symbols, and written words), you will support the student's ability to independently access and return materials, keep the environment structured and organised.

## Reasons related to the communication partner



## **Strategies for the communication partner**

Each student has their own unique personality, perceptions, abilities, style of learning and interacting. As communication partners, our attitude, perceptions, beliefs, interaction and communication style can have a huge impact on the type of relationship we have with the student. To build a caring relationships there are a number of communication partner characteristics, variables and strategies that as teaching staff we can use to develop a mutually enjoyable relationship and promote the student's sense of well being.

Caring relationships can be defined as the student's perception of the caring quality of a relationship with a family member, a teacher, a peer or another authority figure. Some of the qualities of a caring relationship involve: feeling comfortable and safe; knowing what is expected; being able to depend on the individuals and situations; comprehending rules and limits. It is also important that in the classroom appropriate supports (i.e. resources and strategies which enable student participation) and accommodations (i.e. changes made in how the student accesses the curriculum) are made.

Caring relationships involves more than simply heaping more praise on the student or being more permissive when conflict arises. It involves interacting with the student in ways that implies acceptance and communicates that they are worthy of being heard, are loveable and capable. Research has shown communicating acceptance or criticism to a student over time has a powerful and direct effect on their self esteem. If more time is spent criticizing a student, it can be harder for the student to develop positive self-esteem, while positive messages can raise their self esteem.

*Students with disabilities have difficulties with developing caring relationships for a number of reasons:*

### *Factors related to the student*

The way family members, teachers and other authority figures view, communicate and treat the student can influence the values, beliefs and ideas the student develops about themselves. Students with high self esteem know they are lovable, capable and worthy. Whereas students with low self esteem often view themselves as unlikeable, unworthy and feel bad about themselves. They may participate in

negative behaviour patterns and treat others in a negative manner which makes it hard for them to develop and maintain caring relationships. For example, they may tear other people down to lift themselves up, dominate them, or view them as less important or less useful persons. They feel that they have to prove themselves by boasting or showing off all the time. The student may refuse to participate in activities he or she feels unsure of which further contributes to their sense of isolation.

### *Factors related to the environment*

All students with disabilities should be a part of caring relationships but some people in their environment may interact in ways that don't promote the development of such relationships. For example a person may:

- Constantly reject the student's ideas, actions and feelings
- Constantly criticise the student without any positive feedback
- Communicate messages to the student that exhibit lack of appreciation of what the student does and who they are
- Not minimise or eliminate the obstacles that prevent the student from succeeding (e.g. making information explicit, giving simple and short instructions, removing distractions)
- Be too controlling – making the student feel like that no one trusts them or that they are incapable of making decisions On the other hand, students who experience little or no control over their lives often feel neglected – that no one cares about them.
- Provide indiscriminate feedback that does not really help the student because it does not tell them which aspect of their behaviour is being reinforced. Moreover, such vague praise does not build self esteem because the student soon realises that terms like 'great' are used widely and without meaning by adults who don't take the time to notice unique and special aspects of an accomplishment.

Developing a student's self-esteem is one of the greatest gifts we can give to the student. These communication partner characteristics are crucial for helping the student feel secure and have the confidence to go out into unfamiliar and challenging situations, try new activities and meet new people. We need to interact with the student by:



*Treating the student at all times with*

- Respect
- Dignity
- Sincerity
- Consistency
- Sensitivity
- Empathy not sympathy
- Acceptance
- Positivity
- Objectivity

*Communicating*

- Using a friendly manner and a warm approach
- Genuine interest
- Unconditional acceptance
- Maintain a comfortable level of eye contact with the student
- Use appropriate amount of smiles, gestures and other non verbal responses (e.g. touch) to show involvement in the conversation.
- Use reflective/active listening

*Encouraging by:*

- Recognising the student's talents, interests and abilities
- Acknowledging their feelings
- Providing positive feedback on effort, perseverance, courage and improvement

- Providing more positive feedback than negative feedback.
- Feedback can be specific (e.g. constructive feedback) or vague (praise, criticism). Feedback should not be too general or vague or focused on the person or their personality or make judgments based on personal opinions or beliefs or feelings. Feedback should be constructive and needs to reflect the following:
  - Content – This refers to what you say. It should contain a description of what the student did, when, how, what etc. Feedback based on what you observed the student do well and still needing to improve on should be provided.
  - Manner – This refers to how it is said. By pairing the fine details of speech with the spoken message such as intonation, volume, stress, facial expression, speed and pauses between you can convey the meaning of your feedback. Use a calm and sincere tone of voice when giving either positive or negative feedback.
  - Timing – This refers to when you say it. Constructed feedback should be provided as soon as possible or as close as possible to when the behaviour was produced.
  - Frequency – This refers to how often you say it. Use constructive feedback regularly to acknowledge when they are doing something well and also when they are not doing it quite right.
- Choosing your words carefully to avoid labelling the student or give them harsh criticisms and putdowns.
- Valuing the student's opinion
- Avoiding comparisons

#### *Providing the necessary accommodations and supports*

- Understanding and realistic expectations of the student's needs and abilities.
- Model what you expect
- Provide specific information on who, what, where, when, why and how of a task to set the student up for success.
- Display clear rules that are short and easy to understand
- Use positive language to emphasize what you want.

- Check for understanding and be prepared to repeat what you have said using different words
- Provide choice making opportunities.
- Safe emotional and physical environment
- Teach in small steps with repetition.
- Speak clearly using uncomplicated language and statements.
- Allow sufficient time for the student to respond and to ask questions.
- Use a wider range of teaching strategies such as illustrations, pictorial systems and opportunities for hands on learning.

The way we react to the challenging behaviour can often give the behaviour 'power'. If the behaviour causes a big reaction then it may reinforce it and the student may learn that the 'behaviour is an effective way to make things happen. It is imperative that the communication partner develops increased self awareness of how the student's behaviours affect their emotional processes and behaviours and how this then affects the student's behaviour. Teaching staff need to have a 'mind set' or a 'mind shift' to effectively cope and respond to challenging behaviours. This involves not taking it personally and staying in control. You can use a variety of relaxation strategies such as taking a deep breath and counting to ten in order to have time to think about how to deal with the situation appropriately. By maintaining composure, staying calm and not responding on impulse you can avoid responding negatively and causing the situation to escalate. Based on your knowledge of how the student responds to different body movements, gestures, tone of voice, facial expressions and words in terms of whether it defuses or escalates a particular situation you will need to incorporate them into your interaction style. For example, some students may respond positively to a calm and firm voice instead of a nervous or a loud voice.

## Chapter 6 - Conclusion



“I’ve come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humour, hurt or heal. In all situations it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or deescalated and a child humanised or dehumanised”.

***Haim Ginott, Child Psychologist and Teacher***