



ELHAP's Policy On Working With People Whose Behaviour Challenges the Service

1. Introduction

ELHAP has developed this policy as guidance for staff who work within ELHAP. The majority of ELHAP users do not behave in violent or aggressive ways. ELHAP is committed to promoting safe practice within the context of respect and dignity, the core values which underpin all our work. The guidelines within this document stress the need to plan effectively, to identify strategies and actions to pre-empt or avoid episodes of behaviours that challenge the service. Where such episodes do occur, there is practical advice for staff on how to deal effectively with the situation, keeping everyone safe within a context of dignity and respect.

2. Our Ethos

ELHAP has a long and proud history of supporting many users who can challenge services. Our setting and philosophy often translates into users not needing or wanting to behave in challenging ways because of the respect, space and freedom of ELHAP. ELHAP is committed to providing the best quality support to all our users, regardless of ability, disability and behaviour. Whilst we train staff each year in positive behaviour management and physical interventions (NAPPI Level 2) we maintain extremely low levels of physical interventions usage because we are committed to preventing behaviours rather than simply reacting to them. We believe that the use of physical interventions should never be 'normal' or part of the 'everyday' and that we are committed to ensuring physical interventions remain at the very lowest of levels.

3. What we think about challenging behaviours

Working with people's difficult feelings and the behaviour generated by them can seem like a complex affair, but it can be reduced to two straightforward aims:

- 1) Cope with the way the person behaves at present
- 2) Help the person to progress and change (Hewett, 2005)

At ELHAP, we use the term 'challenging behaviours' to describe any behaviour that makes it more difficult for us to work with users or for the users to work with us or other users. The Challenging Behaviour Foundation state that: "Characteristically, challenging behaviour puts the safety of the person or others in some jeopardy or has a significant impact on the person's or other people's quality of life" (McGill, 2003)

Below is a list of common terms used when describing challenging behaviour and a short explanation of their meanings:

BEHAVIOUR

Behaviour is anything a person does that can be seen/heard/felt.

A WARNING SIGN / INDICATOR

A warning sign is an indicator which may signal the onset of challenging behaviour, these would be individual to each person and may not always be accurate. Each individual may have several indicators noted.

TRIGGER

A trigger is something that happens that can cause a challenging behaviour to occur. If we are good at spotting indicators and avoiding triggers then we have a good chance of defusing incidents.

PHYSICAL OR VERBAL AGGRESSION

Physical or verbal aggression is any behaviour which may cause an individual to suffer fear, distress, pain or actual physical injury. It can include self-harm where a user directs the physical or verbal aggression towards themselves.

PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

A way of responding to the challenging behaviour of people which involves some degree of direct physical force which limits or restricts the movement or mobility of the person concerned.

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT PLAN

These are written to help people working with users to be consistent and to know what to do in situations. Behaviour management plans should be written alongside others involved in the users life, and where ever possible the user should be involved in the process.

The plan should outline warning signs, triggers, possible behaviours, preventative measures and other key information.

3.1 Causes of challenging behaviours

The reasons why people may behave in ways that challenge will vary from person to person. Here are some possible causes:

- rooms that are too hot, cold or badly ventilated
- noise
- pain or ill health
- medication and changes in medication
- confusion
- lack of activity or too much activity
- too much activity
- too many rules or not enough structure
- changes in routine
- the presence or behaviour of others
- too many or inappropriate demands and requests
- mental health issues
- difficulty in understanding others or being understood themselves

Challenging behaviours are not generally 'curable' over night, change can take some time (especially if the behaviour is well established), and will almost certainly require changes in the way other people behave and can tend to reoccur at a later time (McGill, 2003).

3.2 ELHAP users are entitled to expect:

1. That the way such behaviour is managed ensures the safety and dignity of everyone;
2. That they will be treated fairly and with courtesy and respect;
3. That even in the most difficult circumstances, ELHAP staff are able to cope with the emotions such incidents can arouse in them and manage incidents in a calm and professional manner.
4. That ELHAP staff will attempt to understand and empathise, to avoid blaming them for their behaviour or holding them solely responsible for it.

3.3 ELHAP staff are entitled to expect:

1. That clear guidance and behaviour management plans are in place;
2. That they have access/input into up-to-date risk assessments;
3. That they have access to support from colleagues and employers when dealing with such incidents

4. Preventative Strategies

'Every day good practice' implies the necessity for staff to put a great deal of thought and energy into developing positive attitudes and acquiring good interpersonal skills for managing people's challenging behaviour effectively. Hand-in-hand with everyday good practice should be attention to needs such as making the environment appropriate, having good programmes of work for matters such as communication and relationships, helping people progress, develop and move forward, as well as team work and documentation of their work. If these basics are properly addressed, challenging behaviours can feel less challenging and most people will be less challenging.

POINTERS TO ACHIEVING GOOD PRACTICE (Hewett, 2005)

- Accepting that challenging behaviour occurs – it is normal.
- A focus on much more than the negative behaviour – there is a dedication to improving the lifestyles and therefore the behaviour of the people we work with.
- A quest for understanding: viewing challenging behaviour as a manifestation of complex inner state interacting with what is happening around the person.
- Emphasis on developing communication and relationship abilities.
- Emphasis on coping – positive, pragmatic incident management practices.
- Attending to all of the basic details of our practice.
- Collaboration, reflection and documentation.
- Teamwork and team practices.
- Constant thought on balancing users' rights with staff duty of care
- Interest and enjoyment

Experience tells us that if individuals are involved in activities that are meaningful to them and in which they are interested they are less likely to present difficult behaviours. If clear indicators are recognised by staff, attempts to diffuse the situation by breaking the behavioural pattern can be attempted. Many causes of violence such as overcrowding, noise, poor communication can be avoided if they are recognised.

Certain features can serve as warning signs to indicate that a service user's behaviour may be escalating. These may include:

- Facial expressions, i.e. wrinkled brow, clenched teeth, flushed complexion
- Prolonged eye contact / avoidance of eye contact
- Increased and prolonged restlessness, body tension and pacing

- Increased breathing, muscle twitching, dilated pupils
- Increased or decreased volume of speech, erratic movements
- Delusions or hallucinations with violent content
- Reporting anger or violent feelings
- Threats

It is important that staff recognise the early stages of each service user's sequence of behaviour that is likely to develop into violence or aggression, at this stage it may be possible to defuse a potentially violent situation using de-escalation techniques.

It is equally important that staff recognise the fact that sometimes there are no recognisable indicators or identifiable triggers to challenging behaviours.

Clear guidance, behaviour management plans and risk assessments should be in place for each service user who may present challenging behaviours. It is the responsibility of each member of staff to be aware of the guidelines and implement them. Wherever possible guidance and consultation should be sought from the appropriate team involved in the service user's care.

5. Managing Incidents

The key to managing incidents is knowing individual users behaviour management plans and team work. However ELHAP also has a key set of principles by which all staff can refer to in new or unfamiliar situations. ELHAP promotes a non-confrontational and low-arousal approach to managing behaviours. It must be emphasised that using principles of non-confrontation is not about not doing anything or not intervening, instead it is about ensuring that interventions are effective and avoid needless conflict. If it is deemed appropriate for particular users to be restrained then this will be considered on a case by case basis by Project Workers and/or the Manager. Staff would receive the correct training in order to do any procedures safely.

General principles (Adapted from Hewett, 2005):

1. Stay calm and show this via your behaviour. Do not over-react to behaviour that poses a challenge.
2. Avoid contributing to the seriousness of the incident with your behaviour
3. Get your priorities right:
 - I. Manage the incident
 - II. Work for an effective outcome rather than a winner and a loser
4. Attempt to see the situation from the other person's point of view
5. Assess and keep assessing the situation
6. Tune in and stay sensitive to the other person's signals of arousal
7. Maintain control of your own communication style and physical presence
8. Try to minimise your reaction to a behaviour (without ignoring the person)
9. Make sure other users are safe by either asking them to leave the immediate environment or asking the person involved to go somewhere quiet.
10. Seek support from other colleagues if needed, or from office staff
11. Use reflective practice within the team to develop approaches and learn from each incident
12. Keep accurate and thorough records of incidents
13. Use team work, don't be afraid to ask for help if needed
14. Don't expect to manage all incidents successfully

6. What to do after an incident

It is essential that all incidents are recorded and reported. This will help to learn about triggers, indicators and warning signs. Patterns may also be noticed through thorough recording. If any injury has been sustained then an accident/incident report must be filled in. Behaviour management plans should be reviewed regularly, and risk assessments kept up to date. Project Workers should review all records kept regularly and see if they can identify any useful information. For example is there a pattern in timings, people involved, have issues been addressed by other agencies

Good communication within the ELHAP team is essential in working with challenging behaviours. However we must also maintain good communication with parents and carers about incidents. It is likely that they will also be facing similar incidents, and will need to know if there have been incidents when users have been at ELHAP. Likewise ELHAP needs to know if users have been agitated before they've come to ELHAP. Being honest and open with others involved will ultimately help to learn about behaviours and develop constructive plans.

If behaviours seem to be getting worse or increasing in frequency advice should be sought from other agencies. If the service user has involvement from other agencies such as Behaviour Support Team, Community Nursing, Social Services, Psychology or Psychiatry it is then advisable that a care planning meeting should be held to discuss these changes and the reasons for them.

There may be occasions where ELHAP staff refer incidents as a safeguarding concern or when the police may have to be informed, for example when there has been a major injury. These occasions must be discussed with ELHAP senior staff, who will contact social services and the police.

On some occasions it may be necessary to ring for external support, this should be done by contacting a ELHAP manager, who will assess the situation and contact the relevant people.

If it has been identified in behaviour management plans that users may require restraint, then this will be discussed on a case by case matter. It is not ELHAP policy to train all staff in using restraint, and it may be the case that ELHAP cannot meet the individual's requirements. However arrangements may be made such as the service user being accompanied by staff who are trained in the appropriate responses, behaviour management plans being adapted for whilst people are at ELHAP, or certain ELHAP staff being appropriately trained in the procedures. ELHAP senior staff will discuss individual cases with all those involved.

THE USE OF PHYSICAL INTERVENTIONS

7. Physical interventions which are not restrictive/based on the use of force

All staff should be aware of the distinction between physical contact or touch used appropriately in everyday situations to support, encourage, guide or comfort a user, and the use of force to restrict movement or to disengage from users whose behaviour presents a clear risk of injury.

Most of our users will benefit from staff physically interacting with them as part of the way we supervise and support users. The kinds of physical interactions which are routine, will include a range of physical prompts:

- Holding a user's hand.
- Guiding a user by linking arms, placing a hand on their shoulder, on their back or on their elbow.
- If a user is distressed, it may be appropriate to place an arm around their shoulder to comfort them.
- Supporting a user who requires physical support for movement or personal hygiene.

Any physical intervention should avoid contact that might be interpreted as sexual or inappropriate. Staff must act in accordance with other ELHAP policies, in particular relating to Child and Vulnerable Adult Protection. Staff must ensure that any physical intervention is clearly witnessed by a second member of staff – this is intended to both protect users and staff.

8. Physical Interventions

Physical Interventions are defined by the DfES as interventions which:

“involve the use of force to control a person’s behaviour and can be employed using bodily contact, mechanical devices or changes to the person’s environment.”

Examples of Physical Interventions include:

- NAPPI holds
- Pushing or Pulling (only pushing/pulling a user away from imminent risk of harm to themselves or others).

Please note that ELHAP does not use any form of ‘floor holding’ at any time. Staff are not trained in this type of Physical Intervention.

All Physical Interventions must be recorded on a challenging behaviour report and given to the ELHAP Manager. A copy of this report will be given or sent to the user and their parents/carers as soon as possible. The ELHAP Challenging Behaviour Report contains a feedback form for parents/carers to ensure that ELHAP has remained transparent, professional and appropriate at all times.

The use of physical force that is unwarranted, excessive or punitive is never acceptable. In emergencies or unforeseen circumstances, the use of force must be reasonable and appropriate. Failure to comply with this principle will be dealt with under ELHAP’s disciplinary procedures.

9. Who may use Physical Interventions and when

Only staff who have been trained to NAPPI Level 2 can use physical interventions, but untrained staff can use reasonable force in order to immediately protect themselves or others in order to then seek support and help from NAPPI trained staff. Users who have a history of behaviours that challenge the service should always, whenever possible, be allocated NAPPI trained staff to support them

Restrictive physical interventions should only be used in the following circumstances:

- To prevent or stop a user harming themselves
- To prevent or stop a user harming anyone else
- To prevent or stop a user causing significant damage to property
- To prevent or stop an offence being committed

Staff must always attempt non-physical strategies first, i.e. defusion, distraction etc. The use of physical interventions must always be a last resort unless the user or others are in immediate and significant danger.

10. Post-incident support

Incidents that require use of physical interventions can be upsetting to all concerned and result in injuries to the user or staff. After incidents have subsided, it is important to ensure that staff, volunteers and users are given emotional support and basic first aid treatment for any injuries.

For many users it is important, if not essential, that they are provided with emotional support and debriefing regarding what happened and why. This needs to be conducted post-incident and when the user and staff have fully calmed/recovered.

A list of qualified first aiders is displayed throughout ELHAP. In the event of any other medical concerns, medical practitioners should be contacted. Immediate action should be taken to ensure that medical help is accessed for any injuries requiring more than basic first aid. This should be done by ringing for an ambulance. ELHAP will report any injuries to staff or users in accordance with RIDDOR regulations and ELHAP policies.

With any significant challenging incident, all the staff involved will meet at the end of the day to debrief and review all aspects of the incident. This would normally be led by a Team Leader, Project Worker or the Manager. A post-incident meeting enables ELHAP to better support its staff and volunteers, but also considers how ELHAP can better support the user and what lessons can be learnt.

11. Responding to concerns and complaints

The use of physical intervention can lead to allegations of inappropriate or excessive use. In the event of a complaint being received by ELHAP in relation to use of force by staff, the matter should be dealt with in accordance with agreed procedures for handling allegations against members of staff (please refer to ELHAP's Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults policies).

12. Staff training

ELHAP aims to train as many experienced staff in the NAPPI approach to positive behaviour management and physical interventions. This approach is accredited by BILD.

FURTHER READING

BILD (2005) *Easy guide to being held safely*. BILD.

BILD (2005) *Easy guide to physical interventions for people with learning disabilities, their carers and supporters*. BILD.

Hewett, D. (2005) *Challenging Behaviour, principles and practices*. London: David Fulton Publishers

McGill, P. (2003) *Basic information about challenging behaviour*. Chatham: The Challenging Behaviour Foundation

MENCAP Fact Sheet (2007) *Understanding challenging behaviour in adults with a learning disability*.

USEFUL CONTACTS

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| Ann Craft Trust: | 0115 9515400 |
| British Institute of Learning Disabilities: | 0121 415 6960 |
| Care Quality Commission: | 03000 616161 |
| Challenging Behaviour Foundation Family Support Line: | 0845 602 7885 |
| Children's Legal Centre: | 08088 020008 |
| MENCAP Direct: | 0808 808 1111 |
| OFSTED General Helpline: | 0300 123 1231 |