

QUICK THERAPY SOLUTIONS PROVIDED BY COUNSELLING IN FRANCE

DIFFICULT BEHAVIOUR

The package comprises:

1. Introduction to tackling difficult behaviour
2. Worksheet 1 - Faces and feelings – the child's worksheet
3. Worksheet 2 - For the child and grown-up to do together
4. Worksheet 3 - Questions for the child
5. Worksheet 4 - Questions for the grown-up
6. Bullying and how to deal with it

Please continue with the worksheets that you have printed from the package. These are designed to be completed at your own pace and, ideally, never more than one a day. The reason for this is that the worksheets are designed to help you process what is going on for you and you need time to think and work on the issues that the worksheets may bring up for you. Everyone is different and it is up to you what pace you set yourself. The control is always yours.

Tackling bad behaviour

If your child often displays bad behaviour i.e. being rudely loud, naughty and disruptive, you may both be feeling exhausted by trying to deal with it. Remember that it is the bad behaviour you need to deal with and that the child is not 'bad'. Behaviour can always be modified and sometimes situations can be avoided if there is a trigger point. Avoidance is not always bad!

These are the "4 Rs" for dealing with bad behaviour:

REWARD:

Positively reinforce good behaviour by praising, giving rewards and giving good attention.

REDUCTION:

Negatively reinforce with quick and clear punishment i.e. removing privileges, stopping pleasurable activities. You need to be consistent and follow through with threats i.e. "if you don't stop kicking that ball at the windows, I will take the ball and you won't get it back for a day".

ROUTINE:

Children feel safe if they have a good structure to work to and those children who are acting out by behaving badly will find it easier to conform if their routine is clear. Try to get them up on time, eat a good breakfast and have a clear night-time routine i.e. a bath, a story and bedtime at an appropriate hour.

RULES:

Set the boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The rules can be quite simple:

1. Simple rewards for good behaviour, not too big and not too small but right for the behaviour
2. Simple and specific rules for behaviour i.e. you can watch TV, play on the computer or play outside but ONLY after homework is done or a meal is eaten
3. Stick to the rules. They won't work if you keep changing the goal-posts. If the child breaks the rule, stick to the punishment.
4. Agree rules with your child beforehand and even put a list up on the fridge so that everyone is clear.

IF YOU FIND IT DIFFICULT TO DISCIPLINE YOUR CHILD

Here are a few pointers:

1. Make sure the punishments are not too harsh but are quick to use and easily enforced
2. Mean what you say so that your child learns that you mean it
3. Get their attention with eye contact and speaking calmly and clearly, no shouting
4. Do not get into long and involved discussion. Mean it and carry it out

CONSEQUENCES

Finally, your child will learn that bad behaviour has undesirable consequences. The consequences of behaving well should make your child feel good:

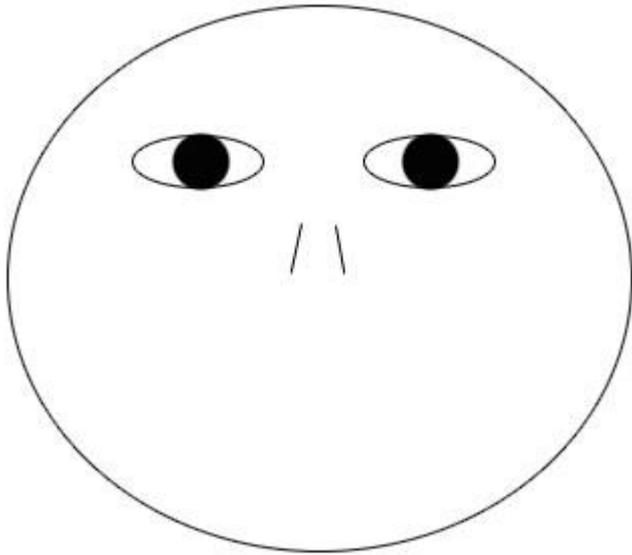
- ◇ giving your time and attention
- ◇ money or material things
- ◇ they get to do things they enjoy

The punishment may fail if:

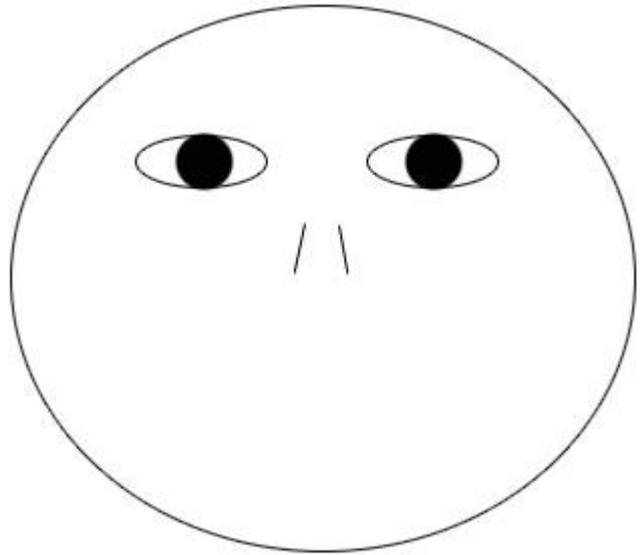
- ◇ it's too harsh
- ◇ if it isn't immediate
- ◇ if you aren't consistent, you must mean what you say

QUICK THERAPY SOLUTIONS

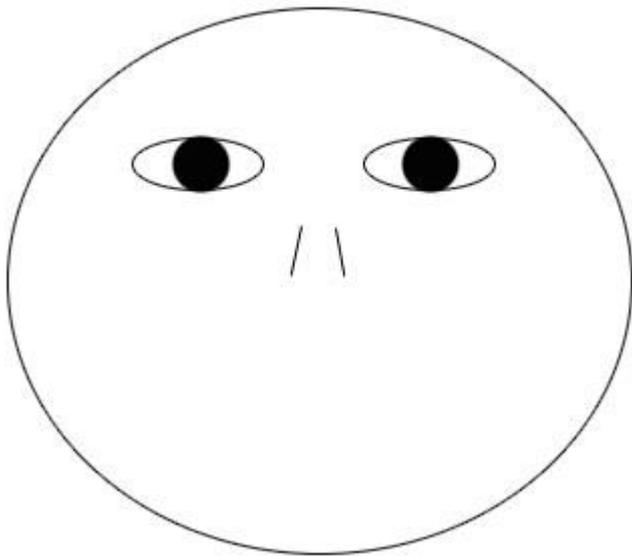
FOR THE CHILD TO FILL IN



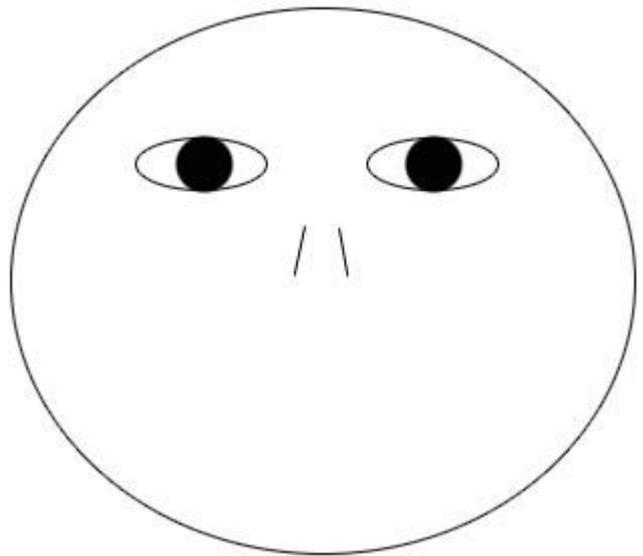
Draw an angry mouth



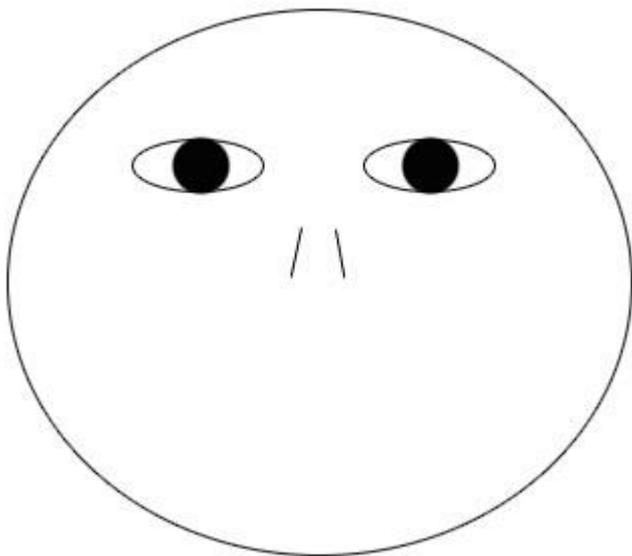
Draw a happy mouth



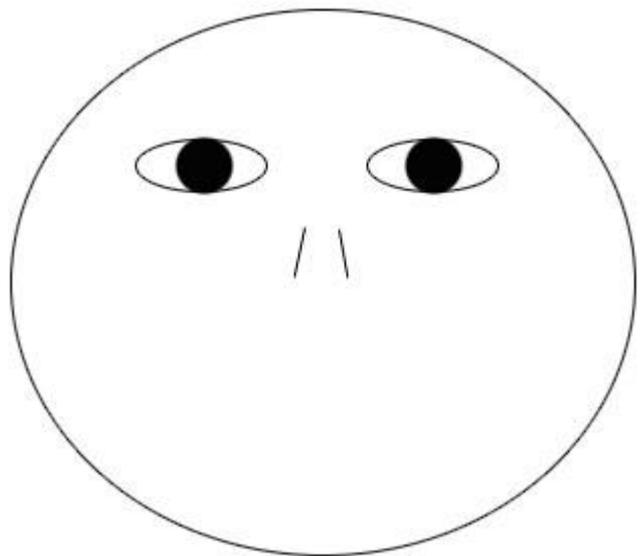
Draw a sad mouth



Draw a frightened mouth



Draw a surprised mouth



Draw a worried mouth

FOR THE CHILD AND GROWN-UP TO DO TOGETHER

Make sure that you and your child are in a quiet room where you will not be interrupted and where you cannot hear the rest of the family or neighbours talking or playing. This is so that your child will be able to concentrate on the worksheets without any distractions. Have a soft drink to hand and sit in comfortable chairs at a table.

Please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. You should both feel able to say what you think and feel so explain this to your child, that the idea of the exercise is to help you both get on better and to do that, you both need to be truthful. This will give the child a safe structure and it is imperative that you do not show any reaction during the exercise that will make the child feel guilty or ashamed in any way.

Here are the rules to tell your child:

1. Once we start, we need to concentrate on what we are doing and we must listen properly to each other. If we can't do that today, we will choose another time.
2. We both need to be truthful. I don't want to hurt your feelings and I'm sure you don't want to hurt my feelings but if we are truthful, we can both understand how each other feels about things and then we can sort out any problems.
3. Whatever is talked about between us today will stay between us, we won't tell anyone else unless we both agree that it's OK to tell someone else. That way, we will both find it easier to say what we think.
4. Each exercise will take about 30 minutes. After that time, we will check if we are getting tired and want to stop for today.
5. The first lot of questions are for you, the child. The second set are for me, the grownup. We need to listen carefully to each other and only when we are finished, we can talk about how we feel about what we both wrote.

If your child is too young to do this on their own, do it with them but it is important that you don't guide or influence them. The child's answers must come from the child as this exercise is designed to help children identify their own emotions and make sense of them in context. Your contribution will be the most valuable if you can help them to understand what the exercise wants them to do. If you prompt them or make suggestions, it will be a useless exercise. Children gain the most from this by being in control and making their own decisions based on what *they* feel, they shouldn't be thinking about pleasing you by giving the answer they think you want. If you don't consider that you cannot do this successfully, it may be more helpful to ask a friend or other family member to do this with your child instead.

If there is friction or difficult issues between a particular adult and child, then that adult should be the one to do the grown-ups questions in the exercise, but both adults can join in if the child wants that. Just print out two "Grown-ups questions" worksheets.

Please read the questions to your child if they cannot read and you may need to write exactly what they say if they cannot write. Don't analyse this as you go, wait until the child has finished the exercise and then it would be helpful to both of you to talk about what answers have come up and what they might mean. The idea is that you both learn from what is written.

QUESTIONS FOR CHILD

1. Who is in the family who live in your house, the grownups, the children and the animals? Draw them below:

Talking about the grown-ups in your house:

What things do they get angry about? (not always to do with the child)

Grownup 1:

Grownup 2:

How do they behave when they are angry?

How does that make you feel?

3. What makes them sad? (not always to do with the child)

Grownup 1:

Grownup 2:

How do you know they are sad?

How does that make you feel?

QUESTIONS FOR CHILD

4. Say three things that make you angry

1)

2)

3)

How do you behave when you are angry?

What do grownups do when you are angry?

5. Say three things that make you sad

1)

2)

3)

How do you behave when you are sad?

What do grownups do when you are sad?

5. Say three things that make you feel frightened

1)

2)

3)

How do you behave when you are frightened?

Can grownups always tell how you feel when you are frightened?

6. Final question:

What would you like to change in your life?

1.

2.

3.

QUESTIONS FOR THE GROWN-UP OR GROWN-UPS

Children may not understand the difference between their power and the grown-up's power but psychologically, it is very powerful if the grownup and child meet on a 'level playing field' and that the child is listened to and is able to express feelings. Very often, adults follow the script that they grew up with, perhaps with messages saying "do as you are told, don't question me" or "behave as I expect or I will withdraw my approval and love temporarily" etc which they may have had said to them. This exercise is powerful because it takes the controlling parental messages out and puts them to one side. It helps build trust between the adult and child as long as it is not abused in any way.

It is important that you share the questions and answers with your child. If they are very young, it may not be appropriate but adults can often find it healing for them as well:

What makes me angry? (not always to do with the child if possible)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How do I behave when I'm angry?

What would be a better way to behave?

Agree a sign for when you are so angry that you feel out of control, like a hand gesture in a T, saying "I need some time out". Explain this to the child, that when you are really angry, you will do this so that there is a break in the argument or situation where you can both cool off. Ask the child to agree to this.

What things make me feel sad or depressed?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Agree with your child that if either of you feel sad or upset, that you will talk about it if you can (only discuss age-appropriate issues with your child)

What would be a good way for you and your child to look after each other? Agree one thing that you can do for your child this week that will make them happy and one thing that the child can do for you. If it works, give yourselves a reward together. Make sure that time together is a valued thing, however difficult it may be to find time in busy lives. Plan an outing together and make sure you do it. If you have other children, arrange for another grown-up to have them for an hour at least so that you and your child can spend quality time together.

IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH BULLIES

1) Look the bully in the eye, try not to look away and keep your face as expressionless as possible. Keep very calm by taking some deep breaths and by telling yourself 'I can deal with this'. Always keep eye contact with the bully, trying not to show him or her that you are intimidated. Your body language will show the bully how you are feeling, so keep your fists unclenched and relax your face and your shoulders. Try to keep your voice calm and confident even if you are feeling tense and frightened. Bullies do not like assertive eye contact and may back down if they sense that you are not afraid of them. The sense of power that bullies get is from your frightened expression and the feelings of inadequacy that they can make you feel.

2) If you are being beaten up or are being physically hurt in some other way by one person or by a group of bullies, it is important to tell an adult, either your parents or a teacher, even if you are going to be accused of 'grassing'. No-one should ever have to put up with being physically abused and you will usually find that it is the bullies who don't want you to tell. They would lose their power!

3) If you are being verbally abused, find your own way to deal with this, perhaps by calmly walking away or by ignoring it. This will have the effect of making the bully feel small and that the threats that usually work don't work any more. The bully is losing his/her power and you are gaining it. If you can show that you are calm and controlled while he/she is abusive, the bully may react by shouting more abuse or getting really angry. If this happens, remember that you have the upper hand and it may get worse before it gets better. If you can cope with this part, you are winning and the bully is losing. You may want to practise things to say back, for example "whatever" or "Really? How fascinating!". Try not to be aggressive or to shout back as, again, this will give the bully power over you - the power to upset you and get under your skin. Bullies can usually pick exactly the right things to make you feel terrible. It may help if you remember that:

- Bullies are usually frightened people who need to make you feel frightened to make themselves feel better
- They may have chosen bullying as a way of being bullied themselves, by others of their ages, their brothers or sisters and sometimes their parents
- They are often as frightened of being powerless as you are but they hide their fear by using aggression
- Remember that there is nothing wrong with you whatever the bully or bullies say. It's very hard to deal with the bullying and most adults have had some experience of it in their lives so it's not just you
- You may feel very alone and feel unable to cope with it, but however you choose to handle it, find understanding friends or adults for support and to help you find the way to deal with it that is right for you and that works
- If you find that you often make others angry and that you keep being picked on or bullied, try to develop your listening skills. This will give you an understanding of how others think. It will help you to deal with difficult situations
- We may know our own world and sets of rules but you need to listen and take an interest in others people to develop an understanding of other people's rules and worlds.