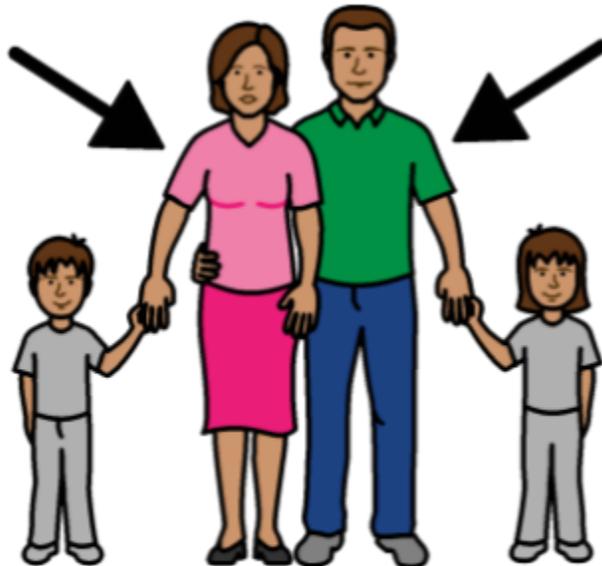




States of Guernsey
Children and Family
Community Services

Behaviour Support Advice for Parents



Developed by:

**Positive Behaviour Support (PBS)
Team**

Introduction

In this difficult time everyone is dealing with challenges and changes outside what they are used to. It is understandable that adults and children alike may be finding this time challenging. Although we're all in this together, we aren't all affected in the same way.

We have put together this booklet with advice and guidance to some of the common issues that parents, guardians and even people themselves have raised with us during the last lockdown. This booklet is aimed at those supporting people with Learning Disabilities/Autism/Other Developmental Disabilities. We hope you find some value in this.

Topics included:

- Parental Coping Strategies
- Structure & Predictability
- Physical & Mental Activities
- Managing Behaviour Escalation
- Emotion Regulation
- Sleep Hygiene
- Food Regulation
- Social Distancing
- Visual Supports



Parental Coping Strategies

Self-care is key so that we have the ability to care and support others.

Acceptance

It is okay to feel stressed, anxious or scared during uncertain times. You are doing the best you can and in times of uncertainty, try to find the things that you can do, for you. Sometimes by accepting the situation for what it is and realising that others are also experiencing similar feelings, helps us to normalise the experience.

Routine

Establishing a routine that involves exercise, regular meals and healthy amounts of sleep are important for regulating our moods and our worries as much as it is for those we support. If your old routine is no longer possible, look for ways to be flexible and start a new routine. Do things that are meaningful to you. Remind yourself that life is still continuing, and ground yourself by doing things like making agendas and setting goals. It is okay if the routine isn't perfect. Too much structure can be stressful for some, find a balance that's right for you.

Be aware of social media/news

While we should make sure we are informed about how best to keep our families safe, we should also be thoughtful about what we are reading online to make sure it's actually helpful. Consider putting a limit on the number of articles you read, or for how long you will read about covid-19 each day. If you're consuming media that is making you anxious — pictures of lines at stores, people hoarding supplies, celebrities getting diagnosed — take a break. Being informed is one thing; being overexposed is another.

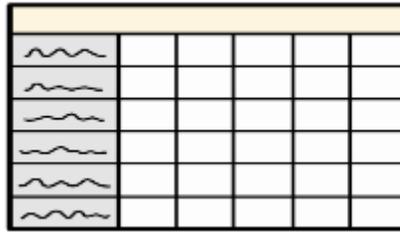
Stay Connected/Seek Support

It is important to stay connected with family and friends during times of isolation for our wellbeing. – E.g. Phone/Face-time/Letter. Talk to someone such as family member or friend if you are feeling over-whelmed. If needed, contact an appropriate professional for further guidance and support for you and/or your family.

Structure & Predictability

Why is it important?

In an ever changing world, sometimes our lives can lose structure and predictability for a variety of reasons. For people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism, this can affect them on a larger scale. Lack of structure and predictability in simple day to day tasks/activities can lead to stress and anxiety and result in behaviours of concern. Therefore, it is important that we try make the world of those we support as structured and predictable as they need.



How do we do it?

Creating regular daily routines – keep these as structured as possible so there is limited uncertainty about what is happening in the moment and throughout the day/week.

Visual schedules

A visual schedule will help demonstrate what activities will occur and in what order. Using visual or written schedules can help show a person what is happening throughout the day/week in a more concrete way and reduce stress/anxiety.

(See Visual Schedule Template at the end of the booklet)

Physical & Mental Activities

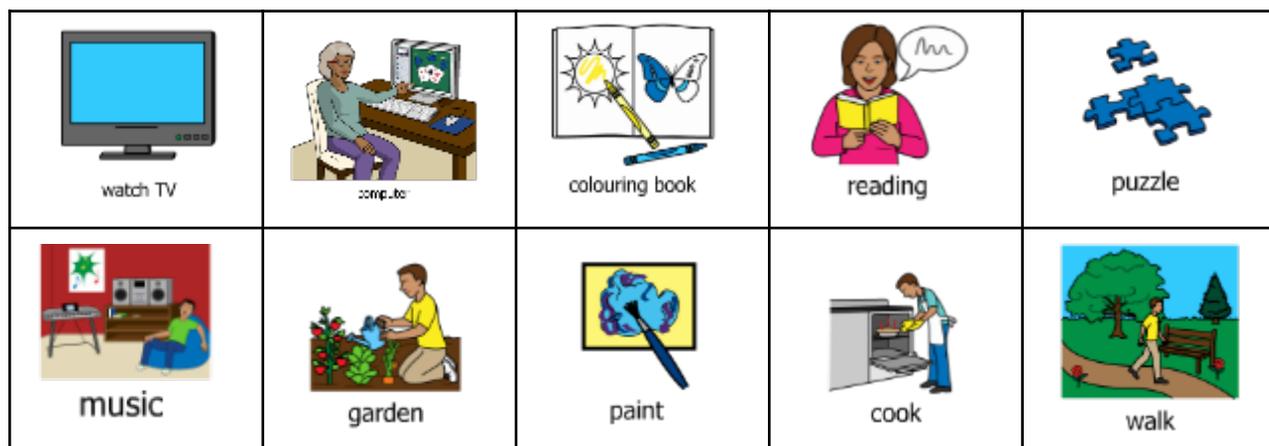
During this period it is important that people are both physically and mentally engaged. This helps to make sure people aren't at home bored, potentially reducing behaviours of concern and improving sleep.

Physical activities and Engagement

- Going for a walk,
- Going outside in the garden e.g. Football, Trampoline
- Riding a bike
- Going to the beach
- Building a fort,
- At home obstacle course.
- Cooking/Baking/Household Chores

Mental activities

- Arts & crafts,
- Sensory/water play,
- School subjects/homework,
- Puzzles, word searches
- Board Games and Computer Games
- Dot to dot pictures, spot the difference
- Virtual Tours/Events Online



Managing Behaviour Escalation in the Home (General Strategies)

Primary Strategies

The key objective of Primary Strategies is Prevention. We want to meet a persons needs to prevent them from escalating their behaviour. Identify potential triggers (things that upset the person) and remove these where possible.

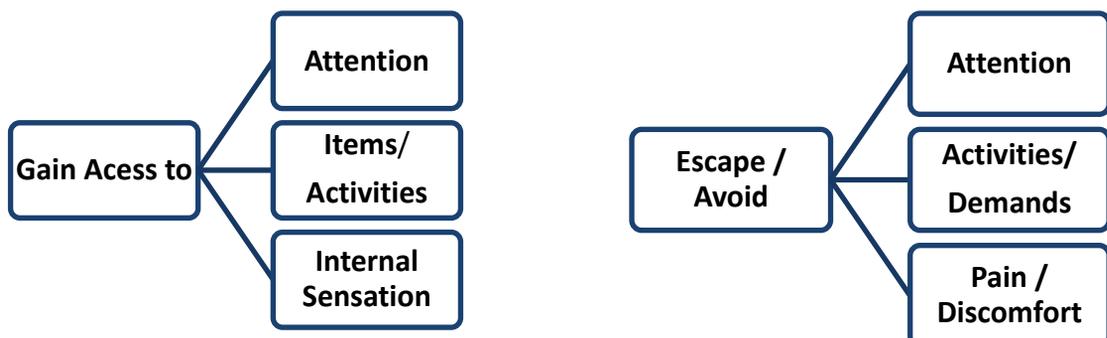
E.g. A Person becomes overwhelmed with too much noise. Strategy: Reduce noise in environment (Radio, TV, iPad, People).

E.g. A Person struggles with not knowing what's happening. Strategy: Visual Schedule of activities.

Understand the behaviour – What message is the person trying to communicate when they escalate their behaviour:

1. Want Attention? “Give me attention”
2. Wants an Item or Activity? “I want that now”
3. Wants to Avoid/Escape something? (e.g. Chores) “Get me out of here”
4. Feels good/not good from sensory feedback. “I like/don’t like how that feels”

When we understand the message of the behaviour – it makes it easier to meet the person needs proactively so the person doesn’t have to escalate and we don’t have to react.



Secondary Strategies

But sometimes it is not always possible to remove triggers or give a person what they want...

- Redirection – redirect the person to a quiet room within the house. If not possible, redirect others out of the room.
- Distraction – find something of interest that will take the persons attention off the trigger and refocus them.
- Reduce Communication – Limit the amount of words we are using. Keep it clear and simple. As we escalate, we find it hard to process information.
- Space & Time – Give the person some space to calm down if this helps.
- Calming Strategies – Identify what helps the person to calm down (e.g. soothing activity, deep breaths, countdown).

Crisis Management

Safety is key here

- Remove any items that could be a danger to the person or others
- Safe Space – ensure there is a safe distance between you and the person if required.
- Change of face – if possible it might be best to remove yourself so someone else in the house can take over.

Emotion Regulation

If the individual is demonstrating behaviour of concern (e.g. crying, tantrums, lashing out, destructive behaviours) then take time to explain to the individual that what they're attempting to express is a certain emotion (e.g. sad, angry, scared) once they have become calm.

Stress/Anxiety Scales can help people identify how they are feeling at different stages. Typically on a scale of 1-10, but you can shorten this to 1-5 if you feel it would be more appropriate for the individual. The scale is divided into 3 sections; the number rating (usually colour coded), 'how it feels/what it looks like', and 'strategies to help me feel better'. This can be worked through with the individual and provides a great opportunity for them to discuss how they feel and what they find helps them when they're feeling a certain way. You may need to practice this as it can be quite demanding on the individual due to its reflective nature.



Mood Rating	Looks Like (What does the behaviour look like?)	Feels Like (How do I feel?)	I can try to (What can I do?)
10			
9			
8			
7			
6			
5			
4			
3			
2			
1			

Sleep Hygiene

Tips for achieving good sleep

With the big changes in routines happening at the moment, good sleep can be a challenge for people. The key to good sleep is establishing a routine whenever possible so the same wake up and bedtime; if you can keep as close to the schedule the individual was used to prior to lockdown. This predictability can help people to get to sleep easier as their bodies are more likely to naturally begin to wind down at this is a set time once they are used to it. An example of this kind of predictable routine to bed time could be bath, story/quiet play, sleep.

The same idea of a routine should also be used with waking up, i.e. same time, breakfast, wash, teeth, dress. In the evenings, bedrooms should be tidy, dark or minimal light, with no technology and if preferred with a favourite scent, smell so this can be associated with bedtime. If there are no favourite smells, a certain toy could also be used for this association however if possible it should not be one that the person can play with instead of sleeping during the night.

1	2	3	4	5
				
take a bath	brush teeth	put on pyjamas	bedtime story	light off
				
tick	tick	tick	tick	tick

Bedtime Fading

If your child is still struggling after following a usual routine and requires reassurance from you to get to sleep. Gradually reducing your presence over time may be helpful. Below is a step by step Bedtime Fading Strategy. Once your child is coping with one step, then move onto the next step.

Step	Tick when step completed
1. Parent sat on bed next to child for 15 minutes, verbal reminder to child that they need to go to sleep, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat on bed next to child for 10 minutes, verbal reminder to child that they need to go to sleep, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat on bed next to child for 5 minutes, verbal reminder to child that they need to go to sleep, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat on bed next to child for 5 minutes, no verbal reminder, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat next to bed for 5 minutes, no verbal reminder, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat 30cm away from bed for 5 minutes, no reminder, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat 1m away from bed for 5 minutes, no reminder, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat 2m away from bed for 5 minutes, no reminder, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat in doorway for 5 minutes, no reminder, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat in doorway for 3 minutes, no reminder, say goodnight.	
1. Parent sat in doorway for 1 minute, no reminder, say goodnight.	
1. Parent not in room but available, say goodnight.	
1. Parent not present.	

Food Regulation

Being eaten out of house and home?

To reduce the amount of snacking occurring throughout the day and to teach the value of exchanging something for something you want.

Use of tokens:

1. Determine how many times the individual asks for a snack throughout the day.
2. Provide the equivalent amount of tokens (e.g. 10) - these can be anything, and you can also make them with the individual to increase their motivation to use them.
3. Explain to the individual that they can have a snack in exchange for a token.
4. When the individual brings you a token, no matter when in the day exchange it for a snack.

To reduce the consumption of snacks over time reduce the number of tokens available per day. Do this gradually as the individual gets used to the system. If the individual struggles with using the tokens over a full day, you can split the tokens across the day e.g. 5 tokens available in the morning and 5 in the afternoon. The individual can exchange all their tokens in one go if they wish, or spread their tokens out across the day. If they exchange all the tokens in one go don't provide any more later in the day.

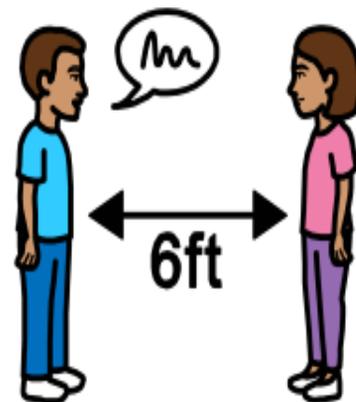
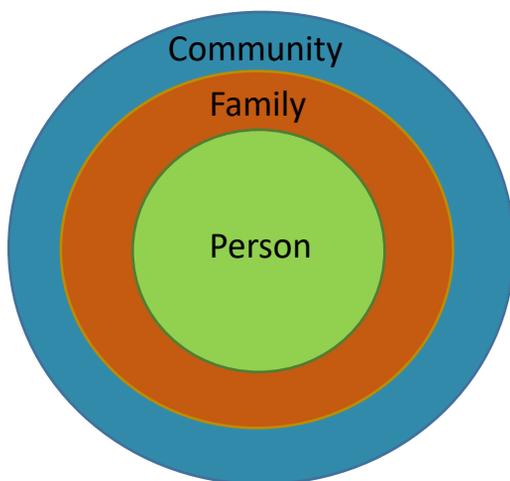


Social Distancing

Exercise and getting out during the day is important but social distancing - 6ft/2m away from others who don't live with you. People with Learning Disabilities/Autism may not understand this. Before going out parents should practice social distancing so that children understand how far to stay away from others. If you can avoid busy areas and pick areas that are less popular. When possible parents should hold their children's hand to help guide them outside.

Practice techniques:

1. Arms stretched out - parent and child practice distance
2. Game with a large Hula Hoop - can't touch anyone else's hoop or person.
3. Guessing game of the right distance - small rewards for correct distances.
4. Circles of Support – Use a Visual to identify appropriate forms of communication in a persons immediate family and the community.



Other Visual Supports

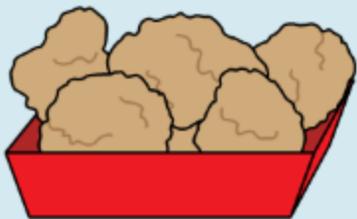
Now-Next Boards

For some people, knowing what's happening too far ahead can be overwhelming, therefore we can use visuals/words to show them what is happening now and what is happening next. (E.g. Now you are cleaning your room – Next you are having lunch). Scheduling in a preferred activity following a less preferred activity can help increase motivation. (See Now-Next Template at the end of this booklet).

Choice Boards

Maximising choice and control in a person's life is recommended. For some people, too much choice is overwhelming, for others too little choice is frustrating – it is about getting the balance right. Start by incorporating small choices into a person's day (e.g. choice of food at mealtimes) before asking people to make bigger decisions. This can be done by having a menu of visual choices on a board that people can choose from. (See choice board example and blank template).

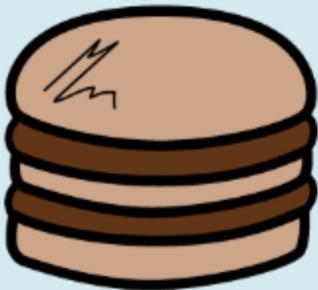
Choice Board



chicken nuggets



hot dog



burger



pasta

Choice board template

This is an example of a reward chart.

I am working for

<input type="checkbox"/>				
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<input type="text"/>	<input type="text" value="choice 2"/>	<input type="text" value="choice 3"/>
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These are examples of now – next cards.

<p>Now</p>	<p>Next</p>
 <p>work</p>	 <p>play</p>
<p>Now</p>	<p>Next</p>
 <p>vegetable</p>	 <p>cake</p>
<p>Now</p>	<p>Next</p>
 <p>walk</p>	 <p>home</p>

This is an example of a visual schedule.

 TO DO	 FINISHED
wash hands 	
snack 	
writing skills 	
exercise outside 	
wash hands 	
lunch 	
wash up 	
watch TV 	

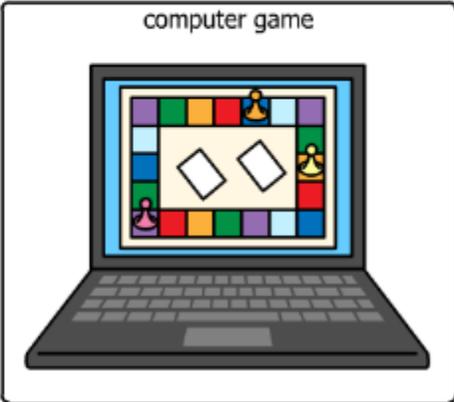
Example of a visual timetable

 <p>9:00</p>	—	 <p>9:45</p>	 <p>maths counters</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>9:50</p>	—	 <p>10:45</p>	 <p>art</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>10:50</p>	—	 <p>11:40</p>	 <p>reading app</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>11:45</p>	—	 <p>12:30</p>	 <p>lunch</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 <p>12:45</p>	—	 <p>1:40</p>	 <p>watch DVD</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Example of a weekly reward chart

My goal of the week is ...

computer game



Did I reach it ?

M	T	W	Th	F

This is an example of a comment board.



Read it to me.



Turn the page.



I don't understand.



What does that mean?



I like this book.



I don't like this book.



This is funny.



That's silly.



It's sad.



This is boring.



This book is scary.



I like that picture.



This reminds me of something.



Let's read it again.



I want to read a different book.



Let's stop.