Challenging Behaviour / Violence & Aggression

Challenging behaviour and violence & aggression are phrases that can provoke different responses in different people:

They may feel fear, anxiety, it may remind them of a negative experience or they may not be able to explain how they feel.

**What is challenging behaviour?**

Behaviours that people find challenging can:
- put a persons safety at risk
- disrupt home life
- stop a person taking part in ordinary activities (social, educational, leisure etc.)
- affect a persons development and abilities

Problems can be caused as much by the way a person is supported – or not supported – as by their disabilities. People often behave in a challenging way if they have problems understanding what’s happening around them or communicating what they want or need.

Caring for a person whose behaviour challenges can put families under pressure and often restrict what you are able to do. That’s why its essential to have the right support in place. Services should support parents and other family members in their caring role, and to have a life of their own alongside caring

**What we know? (From research)**

- Challenging behaviour can usually be reduced or avoided with good support.
- Teaching new communication skills is a key way to reduce challenging behaviour.
- Support should be flexible & personalised to the needs & circumstances of each individual and their family carers.
- Every person whose behaviour challenges should have a clear plan setting out the support they need.
- Families of people whose behaviour challenges are at risk of high levels of stress and often have emotional or physical health problems of their own.
Developing a Coping Strategy

Triggers

People who need care/support (at different levels) in order to live a ‘normal’ life can often experience a range of emotions; frustration, bereavement, low self esteem, depression, they may have an illness that causes them pain, discomfort, mental health condition. These may all be factors that could lead to challenging behaviour or violence and aggression. These factors do not excuse the behaviour but should be considered when developing a coping strategy (care plan where social care staff are involved).

It’s important to know what these are for any one person. Trying to reduce the ‘trigger’ factors should help cut down the numbers of occasions / incidents.

Triggers may relate to the person themselves:
- Too hot / cold
- Excited
- Upset / anxious

They may relate to what’s going on around them:
- noise levels
- people / relationships

Finding out the triggers takes careful observation; it’s useful to record this information (care plan).

Notes
**De-escalation**

The effective handling of a challenging or aggressive situation is very demanding. This is one area where good interaction and communication skills are required.

Communication is about listening, hearing and speaking as well as the non verbal body language and interaction.

De-escalation techniques:

- Defuse the situation
- Stay calm, appear confident
- Create some space
- Lower your voice
- Avoid confrontation, threats or ultimatum
- Negotiate, use open questions
- Remove yourself from the situation / provide time out for the person

Notes
Additional Information and Support

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) is an independent charity that promotes good practice in social care services for adults and children throughout the UK. They recognise the central role of people who use services and carers and they aim to ensure that their experience and expertise is reflected in all aspects of their work. They have written a briefing for carers in partnership with the Challenging Behaviour Foundation National Strategy Group.

Useful contacts:

Challenging Behaviour Foundation
www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk

Carers UK
www.carersuk.org

Mencap
www.mencap.org.uk

National Autistic Society
www.autism.org.uk

Princess Royal Trust for Carers
www.carers.org

Social Care Institute for Excellence
www.scie.org.uk
Take a moment to note what your own feelings are about challenging behaviour / violence & aggression:

How would you define challenging behaviour?

How would you define Violence & Aggression?

Think about your own experiences:
Triggers:

Think about the person that you care for. What are some of the triggers you are aware of?

Note

How can you reduce the trigger factors?

Note

Are you aware of any triggers that affect your own behaviour / emotions?

Note