



# TCI – Module Eight Behaviour Support Techniques



## Behaviour Support Techniques

### **Behaviour Support Techniques: Providing Environmental and Emotional Support**

Children and young people who have experienced trauma have difficulty regulating their emotions and impulses. Through relationships and co-regulation children and young people learn to control and manage their behaviour, emotions and attention (self-regulation).

Using behaviour support techniques at the first sign of distress we can help the child or young person manage their stress and emotions and prevent or de-escalate a potential crisis situation. Each of the below techniques are designed to support the child or young person by addressing the need or meaning behind the behaviour.

When choosing the correct behaviour support technique to use we need to make a quick assessment of the situation and ensure the strategy used matches the needs and level of stress experienced by the child or young person. A technique that is not matched correctly can have the opposite affect and could create an outburst. The eight behaviour support techniques include:

#### **Managing the Environment**

Is about managing the physical environment and social space in a way that avoids setting conditions that could increase the likelihood of a stress response and challenging behaviours.

#### **Prompting**

Is signalling to the child/young person to either begin a desired behaviour or to stop an inappropriate behaviour or action. Prompting can be done verbally (“It’s about time you put the game away”) or non-verbally (glance or nod).



## Caring Gesture

When a child/ young person is experiencing stress and feeling anxious, our presence can increase or decrease their stress. A caring gesture communicates “I care about you and you are important to me” and will only work if the child believes that you care about them. Caring gestures can be verbal (“I care about what happens to you”) and non-verbal (a pat on the arm).

## Hurdle Help

When a child/young person is struggling to keep their emotions and behaviours in check, it does not take much to trigger a “fight, flight or freeze” response. It is better to assist the child/young person to regulate their emotions, self soothe or meet the expectation in the moment rather than laying down the limits and insisting on certain behaviours. Hurdle help means helping the child/young person with the first steps of an overwhelming task.

## Redirection and Distractions

Redirecting or distracting the child/young person or group by changing the activity may be enough to help them return to normal functioning. Using this strategy you are helping the child/ young person regain control of their emotions, switching from the emotional brain to the thinking brain.

## Proximity

Means nearness. Sometimes our presence can have a calming effect on the child/young person if they perceive us as caring and supportive.

## Directive Statements

If there is a trusting relationship that exists between the adult and child/young person then this strategy could be used to provide them with clear guidance on what to do next. Brain function can impair the child/young person’s ability to respond in a stressful situation or when they are upset.

## Time Away

If a child/ young person has good self-regulation skills this technique could be used in order to ask them to go to a quiet area if the environment is too stimulating. If they do not have good self-regulation skills they may need a caring and supportive adult to help them co-regulate in a quiet area.



**Details of this topic are covered in the Therapeutic Crisis Intervention (TCI) Student Workbook 7<sup>th</sup> Edition. Refer to Module Three pages S37 – S43.**