

Getting Behaviour Management Right for Deeply Hurt and Troubled Children and Teens: A Triple-A Approach

Step 1: Think of a child or young person in your care, or one that you work with. Write down their name.

Step 2: Now, think of a behaviour they exhibit that you, or others, are concerned about. Write it down.

Step 3: Now, in relation to the same child or young person, consider the following questions:

1. If the child or young person could or would, how would they truthfully describe themselves, others, and their world? Write down your answers.
2. How fast does their internal motor run? That is, how activated is their nervous system? Write down your answers. (If you are not sure, consider the following : Are they typically restless? Do they have trouble sleeping? Are they anxious? Do they tantrum easily? These can be signs of a nervous system running too fast?
3. What do they appear to have learnt about how to get their needs met? Write down your answers. (If you are not sure, are they more or less trusting and accepting of adult care? Are they particularly demanding of your accessibility and responsiveness, or do they appear to accept that you are there for them and will respond to their needs as they arise? Are they overly self-reliant?).

Step 4: Returning to the behaviour of concern, and your answers to the previous three questions, what do you consider might be the real reasons for the behaviour? Write these down. (If you are not sure, consider the following:

- What purpose does the behaviour serve?
- What is the child or teen's intention when engaged in the behaviour?
- What need does the behaviour meet?)

Step 5: Now, in consideration of all of your previous responses, how do you think the behaviour should be responded to? Write down your answer.

Step 6: What can you do to respond to the real reasons for the behaviour? Write down your answer.

Step 7: What, do you think, will be the outcome of responding in this way? Write down your answer.

Step 8: How might the child or young person approach life and relationships differently when you respond in this way? Write down your answer.

Final Reflection: How might you respond therapeutically to a behaviour of concern in an adult?