



**STUDIO III TRAINING SYSTEMS**

# **Managing Challenging Behaviour**

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*For staff working with children and young  
people*

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## **Introduction**

The information contained in this document aims to provide you with an outline of a training course which has been developed specifically to aid staff in managing challenging behaviours of children and young people, often with emotional and behavioural difficulties, in an effective and socially acceptable manner. You will already be aware that the 1989 Children Act has made the management of difficult behaviours an area of great concern for service providers.

## **Studio III Background**

Studio 3 Training Systems is a company that specialises in the management of difficult behaviours in residential, community based and educational settings. The courses are specific for each of these environments to make allowance for applicable legislation and the structure within which the young people are living and/or being educated. The central aim of the organisation is to provide training which promotes a non-violent, non-confrontational philosophy of care. All training is developed using an applied research model. Studio 3 provides a fusion of skills between academic researchers, applied clinicians, psychologists (educational and clinical), speech and language therapists, lawyers, doctors, teachers, nurses with RMN and RMNH qualifications and specialist movement skills teachers.

This particular course was developed in close co-operation with a major service provider for children with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the North of England and is designed to pragmatically address the issues of the defusion and management of difficult behaviours for staff. Studio 3 currently provides on site training for many respected organisations throughout the UK. Another major area of Studio 3's activities is the provision of training courses in the management of challenging behaviour for children and adults with learning disabilities, older adults and for those who work in psychiatric environments. In all cases, Studio 3 provides a non aversive approach to challenging behaviour. Studio 3 is not a provider of generic physical intervention strategies as the majority of our work is designed to promote the management of challenging behaviour in a totally non-violent, gentle and dignified way by the use of 'low-arousal techniques and gentle physical skills.

## **Introduction to the Course**

The three-day training course aims to promote a non-confrontational approach to managing difficult behaviours. The aim on the first day of the course is to introduce a non-violent philosophy. A major focus of the first morning is an examination of legal issues, particularly regarding the use of physical restraint procedures, with an emphasis on the implication of the Children Act and in educational settings, Section 550(A) of the 1997 Education Act. The implications of the European Convention of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, which becomes law in October 2000, are also examined.

Some of the main causes of difficult behaviours are also discussed on the first day. Additionally, debriefing staff after incidents and an examination of 'feelings that surround the aftermath' are explored. Finally, a non-confrontational model for defusing difficult behaviours termed the 'low-arousal approach' (McDonnell, McEvoy & Deardon 1994) is presented to the participants.

The second day of the course introduces the development of non-physical reactive plans and non-confrontational physical skills. It is

our view that the use of physical skills in the management of difficult behaviours is very much the last resort and no matter how gentle they are, we would still prefer not to use them at all. However, being practical there are times when they may be necessary. It is a common misconception that harsh (and sometimes painful) physical procedures are needed to manage violent and aggressive behaviours. Fortunately, this is not the case.

On the Studio 3 course a number of physical techniques are taught, however these are based on current applied research and are specifically designed for use in this area and do not involve the use of pain or locking of joints in any way. These techniques include non-violent methods of avoiding being punched and/or kicked, hair pulling (front and rear) and airway protection. In the afternoon participants demonstrate non-physical de-escalation skills by use of role-play and group discussion. The acceptability of physical restraint procedures is also examined. Course participants are strongly encouraged to discuss their own personal experiences of implementing restraint procedures.

The final day allows time for practising the 'low arousal approaches' and gentle physical skills together. The last element of the course is learning the restraint procedure. This comprises participants learning to walk a young person around in a safe way, allowing them time to calm down. This technique of using movement to defuse a situation has the added benefit of not employing any form of immobilisation which in itself can be highly arousing. We want to emphasise that the philosophy of the course is to use restraint as little as possible and that often, if we know what to do, we can back off and defuse an incident. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that, realistically, there may be occasions when restraint may be needed. This method of restraint allows carers to talk to the young person who can then choose to calm down and so be let go, giving the young person some choice and control.

Finally, course members are expected to demonstrate the use of this skill by role-play. Participants are then given time to debrief at the end of the training course.

## **After training**

Studio 3 does not advocate one person restraint methods, however, issues around 'holding' young children are normally addressed 'in-house' by Studio 3 Trainers. This normally takes the form of a visit to the service when local issues can be discussed with the staff team. Studio 3 also provides advice on the construction and amendments of policies in the area of challenging behaviours.

The course is designed to help staff cope with the vast majority of difficult behaviours but there will always be incidents that fall outside the remit of the basic course. When there are individuals who are so challenging that additional support is needed, we offer to make our trainers available to visit the service and work with the young person alongside the staff team. A major part of this work will include putting together reactive plans to manage these behaviours.

Every nine to twelve months it is important to undergo a refresher day to renew and update skills. This also provides an opportunity to discuss post course experiences.

## **References**

McDonnell, A.A. (1996). Training Care Staff To Manage Violent Incidents: A Report On A Three Day Training Course (Paper submitted for publication).

McDonnell, A.A., McEvoy, J. Deardon, R.L. (1994) Coping With Violent Situations In The Caring Environment. *In T. Wykes (Ed) Violence and Healthcare Professionals* Chapman & Hall.

## **The Objectives of the Course:**

1. To increase staff confidence in the management of challenging behaviour
2. To instil in staff the principles and benefits of working within a non-aversive framework and adopting a non confrontational philosophy
3. To demonstrate to staff the importance of understanding how their own behaviours can effect others
4. To provide staff with the skills to defuse challenging situations with the aim of negating the need for physical intervention
5. To provide staff with an understanding of some of the causes of challenging behaviour to help view young people in a more positive way
6. To make staff aware of the importance of working within the law and the need for and use of policies
7. To emphasise the importance of de-briefing after incidents
8. To provide staff with a range of physical intervention skills which are safe and acceptable to both staff and young people alike.

# Managing

# Challenging Behaviour

## Course Timetable

### Day One

09.30 - 10.00	Introduction to the day
10.00 - 10.45	Legal issues and the implication of the Children Act (1989) Part 1 and the European Convention of Human Rights
10.45 - 11.00	Tea/Coffee
11.00 - 11.30	Implication of the Children Act Part 2 and/or (depending on the service) Section 550(A) of the 1997 Education Act and the importance of whole service policies
11.30 - 12.00	Behavioural tolerance exercise and reaching a consensus
12.00 - 12.30	Causes of challenging behaviour
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 14.00	An introduction to the 'low-arousal' approaches
14.00 - 15.00	Coping with difficult behaviours: debriefing exercise
15.00 - 15.15	Tea/Coffee
15.15 - 16.30	Managing versus changing behaviours

# Managing Challenging Behaviour

## Course Timetable

### Day Two

09.30 - 10.45	Group participation exercises and an introduction to physical skills
10.45 - 11.00	Tea/Coffee
11.00 - 12.30	Positive approaches to challenging behaviour
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 14.30	Non-physical de-escalation skills
14.30 - 15.15	Non-physical and physical 'low-arousal' skills in practice
15.15 - 15.30	Tea/Coffee
15.30 - 16.00	Role play: Defusing skills
16.00 - 16.30	The acceptability of physical restraint procedures

# **Managing Challenging Behaviour**

## **Course Timetable**

### **Day Two**

09.30 - 10.45	Recap of non-physical de-escalation skills
10.45 - 11.00	Tea/Coffee
11.00 - 12.30	An introduction to physical restraint: The 'walk-around' procedure
12.30 - 13.30	Lunch
13.30 - 14.30	Physical restraint
14.30 - 15.45	Role play of skills learned on course
15.45 - 16.00	Tea/Coffee
16.00 - 16.30	Consolidation and Plenary

## **STUDIO III TRAINING SYSTEMS**

### **Physical skills which may be taught on the three-day course**

- Release from wrist grabs – single
- Release from wrist grabs – double on one wrist
- Release from wrist grabs – both wrists
- Release from hair grab – hair pulled from front
- Release from hair grab – hair pulled from back
- Protection of the airways
- Avoidance of and release from biting
- Avoiding punches/blocking
- Managing service user who drops to the floor
- Restraint – ‘walk-around’ procedure
- Chair restraint (not a generically taught procedure)
- Other specialist skills as prescribed in an individual’s behaviour management plan

## **STUDIO III TRAINING SYSTEMS**

### **The Training Trainers Scheme**

Studio 3 Training Systems offers a scheme through which services can nominate members of staff to be trained to provide in-house behaviour management training for their organisation. The aim is to develop individuals to become high quality trainers who are capable of delivering both behaviour management training and providing 'state of the art' knowledge about the development and implementation of specialised behaviour management plans.

The scheme is criteria based. Trainees achieve competency by assisting on courses and being assessed on their ability to deliver each element of the training. A final assessment takes place when they are ready to deliver the full three-day course by themselves. There are a number of mandatory workshops for scheme participants and these cover topics such as: legal perspectives, advanced movement skills, principles of reactive planning, staff perceptions about managing behaviours, dual diagnosis and psychopharmacology.

The scheme aims to provide participants with a broad knowledge base of behaviour management so that they can become a valuable in-house resource beyond that of just delivering the training. We limit the intake to 30 nominees per year and seek the opportunity to meet with potential participants prior to their acceptance onto the scheme.

For full details of the scheme, please contact Graeme Brady  
Telephone 01225 334111, Fax 01225 334416 or e mail:  
[info@studio3.org](mailto:info@studio3.org)

## **STUDIO III TRAINING SYSTEMS**

### **Equal Opportunities Statement**

Studio 3 Training Systems draws to the attention of all its customers and employees, legislation which affects the rights of every person to equal opportunities at work including: The Equal Pay Act, The Sex Discrimination Act (1975), The Race Relations Act (1976) and The Disability Act (1995)

It is also recognised that useful guidance is contained in:

- The Equal Opportunities Commission Code of Practice for the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex or marital status and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment.
- The Commission for Racial Equality's Code of Practice for the elimination of racial discrimination and the promotion of equality of opportunity in employment
- The Department of Employment and Education Code of Practice issued under the Disability Discrimination Act.

Studio 3 is committed to the active pursuit of equal opportunities in all its dealings with services, service users and employees.

So far as is reasonably practicable and within the law, no one shall receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of sex, marital status, sexual orientation, age, family circumstance, disability, colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins, religious or political beliefs, or be disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable.

## **Issues regarding Gender, Ethnicity, Religion, Disability, Sexuality and Sexual Orientation which may be reflected in training**

Studio 3 Training Systems recognise that due to the nature of their work, staff may often be exposed to abuse related to gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality or sexual orientation. Although your employer is legally obliged under the Race Relations Act (1976) S.71 to protect employees from this kind of abuse, in practice it is very difficult to prevent. Racially abusive behaviour is an offence under the Race Relations Act and possibly the Public Order Act (1986) as well. However, it is very difficult to secure a conviction against a service user if you were racially abused.

Issues such as gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexuality or sexual orientation are highly emotive and are often discussed on courses. Studio 3 is committed to the open debate of these issues and course participants need to be aware that trainers may use language and behaviour of an offensive nature when such issues are being discussed on courses and during role plays. Studio 3 will only adopt this approach when it is intrinsically linked to the course aims and objectives. Course participants are advised to speak to the trainers if they believe that the use of language and behaviour is not applicable to the course setting.

### **For Further Information**

Please contact Graeme Brady at our Head Office on 01225 334111 or e-mail: [info@studio3.org](mailto:info@studio3.org) or visit our web site: [studio3.org](http://studio3.org)



T R A I N I N G

S Y S T E M S

## CLIENT LIST

**To date we are providing training and clinical support to over 100 statutory, voluntary and private organisations including:**

Autism West Midlands	Association of Teachers and Lecturers
Barnardos	(Including teaching staff from many schools throughout the UK who have attended the ATL/Studio III courses)
South Birmingham Primary Care Trust	Borders Regional Council
Birmingham Specialist Comm. NHS Trust	BUPA
Bolton Social Services	Cerrig Camu
Bradford Health Authority	Devon and Cornwall Health Authority
Brothers of Charity - Galway	Downe Residential Project – Downpatrick
Coln House School	Enfield and Haringey Health Authority
Dyfed and Powys Health Authority	Gwent Health Authority
Edgware Community Hospital	Hull & East Riding Community NHS Trust
Gloucestershire Autism Services	Kingscrest
Gheel Training Group - Dublin	Leicester City Social Services
Harrogate Health Care	Loddon NHS Trust
Knowsley Social Services	Mount School
London Borough of Waltham Forest	Middlesbrough Social Services
MENCAP	National Autistic Society
MCLS	Neath & Port Talbot County Borough
National Federation of City Farms	North Merseyside Health Trust Services
Northern Life Care Council	Portsmouth & SE Hants Health Authority
Redbridge & Waltham Forest Health Authority	Ruskin Mill
Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust	St Helens and Knowsley Health Authority
Richmond Social Services	St Michael's House - Dublin
Shaw Homes	South Sefton Social Services
Shropshire Health Authority	Stepping Stones
Sisters of Charity	Triangle Housing Association
South Warwickshire Social Services	TRACS
Stroud Court Community Trust	Western Care - Ireland
Swansea Social Services	West Glamorgan Housing Consortium
Vista	
Westminster Social Services	

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