

The four mistaken goals

'It is impossible to understand a person correctly unless one recognises the purpose of their behaviour.'
(Dreikurs, R, 1982)

According to Dreikurs, there are four mistaken goals of behaviour:

1. To seek **attention**
2. To seek **power**
3. To seek **revenge**
4. To display **inadequacy**



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Attention

Teachers may say that they feel frustrated or worn out by frequent minor inappropriate behaviours. Some teachers may feel that they are spending too much time dealing with one pupil and have little or no time left with the others. The following 'learned' behaviours may give concern:

- Shouting out, tapping or whistling during class teaching
- Off-task behaviour
- Failure to comply with class rules
- Fidgeting
- Distracting others

These behaviours can leave adults feeling annoyed, irritated and frustrated. They may try to coax children into more positive behaviours or apply frequent consequences. In response, the pupil's behaviour is often reinforced and may continue, and they are likely to repeat the inappropriate behaviours to gain attention again.

Basic strategies

- ✓ Increase praise for appropriate behaviour: 10 positives for every negative
- ✓ Adopt low level interventions which last less than 20 seconds
- ✓ Timetable periods of one-to-one attention for approximately 10 minutes each day

Effective management strategies for pupils who need **attention**

- Praise
- 'The teacher look'

- Shake head
- Use privately agreed non-verbal signals eg four on the floor, back to seat, close lips, turn the volume down, etc.
- Call pupil by name and pause while using appropriate body language. Give rule reminder or simple direction eg *'Lee (pause), what's our rule about getting my attention?'*
- Redirect by asking a simple question without using the word 'why?' eg *'Kate, what should you be doing/where should you be?'*

Feedback/reinforcers

As a general rule, any feedback which involves 1-1 adult attention is usually the most successful and other members of staff like caretakers, office assistants and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) are often popular with students.

'Well done' notes or 'good news' phone call/ email to home on a regular basis.

If the whole class is either: rewarding the attention seeking behaviour or, enjoying the 'time-wasting' effects, a special whole-class reward for helping the pupil achieve his or her targets may be successful.

Consequences

Withdrawal of your direct attention 'thinking time' is often effective as a consequence. The warning is often enough to change the behaviour at the time. Withdrawal of adult attention can affect the strength of the relationship unless the adult is quick to catch the first opportunity the child is back on task/ complying with positive non-verbal or spoken praise.

Power

Teachers may say that they feel powerless, challenged and/or inadequate as professionals when faced with students who display a need for control. Some teachers may feel that they are in frequent confrontations with certain students which they want to win, but always lose. Most teachers express anger. The following 'learned' behaviours may give concern:

- Refusal to complete work
- Refusal to comply with simple requests
- Answering back. Having the last word
- Refusal to listen when being reprimanded
- Hiding under tables
- Leaving the class/running out of school
- Climbing something and refusing to come down
- Bullying others



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Entering into a power struggle can escalate the problem and intensify the power struggle.

Passivity may also encourage pupils to intensify their behaviour.

Basic strategies

- ✓ Anticipate potential conflict situations and plan responses in advance
- ✓ Avoid confrontation and give choices whilst remaining firm
- ✓ Always negotiate boundaries
- ✓ Respond to the primary behaviour only
- ✓ Give choices (positive and negative)
- ✓ Provide opportunities for the pupil to exercise legitimate power

Effective management of pupils who need **power**

- Praise all appropriate behaviour and use non-verbal signals to correct when possible.
- Use *when/then* statements to advertise positive choices, eg ***'when you have finished, then you can ...'***
- Respond to the primary behaviour and tactically ignore the secondary behaviour.
- Use partial agreement, for example:
'James, start your work, thanks'
'but I wasn't talking ...'
'Maybe you weren't, but I'm asking you to start your work'
- Avoid chasing, persuading or cajoling a pupil who has run out of the class, hidden under a table or refused to comply.
- Give a warning and a choice.
- Give 'take up time'. If the pupil chooses not to comply, remove the group from the pupil.
- Give a further warning and choice.
- If the pupil does not comply after 'take up time' then a logical consequence must be applied.
- Delayed logical consequences are often more successful with pupils who need power.
- To ensure a teacher can 'save face' and avoid dealing with particular behaviours in the public arena the following statement can be useful:
'This behaviour (describe it) is not acceptable in our classroom because it affects other pupils rights to ... be safe/learn etc. I will discuss it with you later'

Feedback/reinforcers

As a general rule, any positive consequence which involves minor classroom/ school-based responsibility and opportunities to practise social communication skills can be helpful. Some pupils prefer to collect tokens or points towards individual, group or class activities.

Consequences

'Time out/thinking time' is not always successful as it can often be another opportunity to gain power. Delayed logical consequences or loss of privileges (pre-agreed and with appropriate warnings) can be more successful. Generally it can be more effective to increase the number of quality rewards before using sanctions.

Revenge

Teachers may say that they feel disappointed/ angry that a pupil has hurt another 'innocent' child in an 'unprovoked attack'. It's important to reflect on why some pupils fail to show remorse. The following 'learned' behaviours may give concern:

- Apparently 'unprovoked' attacks on other children usually in the playground or on the way home
- Hitting/kicking/punching others in front of adults
- An inability/refusal to show remorse or apologise

It's important to recognise that some children who need revenge can be misunderstood as perpetrating bullying and are at risk of receiving sanctions which can exacerbate the situation. It's important to gain a comprehensive understanding of the situation. Pupils often feel they are being treated unfairly and this often reinforces the behaviour.

Basic strategies

- ✓ listen and respond to the child's views at fixed 'check in' times to avoid a positive consequence. Observe/research possible antecedents discreetly.
- ✓ Use the 'support group' approach* to deal with incidents of bullying
- ✓ Set up a safe person/safe place
- ✓ Model and rehearse behaviour expected
- ✓ Encourage the use of a problem solving approach
- ✓ Provide a pass card and a reward
- ✓ Set up preventative approaches to bullying.

Recognising pupils who may seek revenge

If a pupil has a high risk of being bullied then he/she may also feel that retaliation is the only solution. These pupils may :

- be new to the class or school;

- have coordination difficulties;
- be different in appearance, speech or background to other pupils;
- have low self-esteem;
- demonstrate 'entertaining' reactions when bullied;
- be nervous or anxious.

Dealing with incidents of bullying

*Information can be found on the schools Info link website at:

<https://schools-secure.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Anti-bullying/Pages/Anti-bullying.aspx>

Feedback/reinforcers

Listen to the child's feelings about friends and peer relationships.

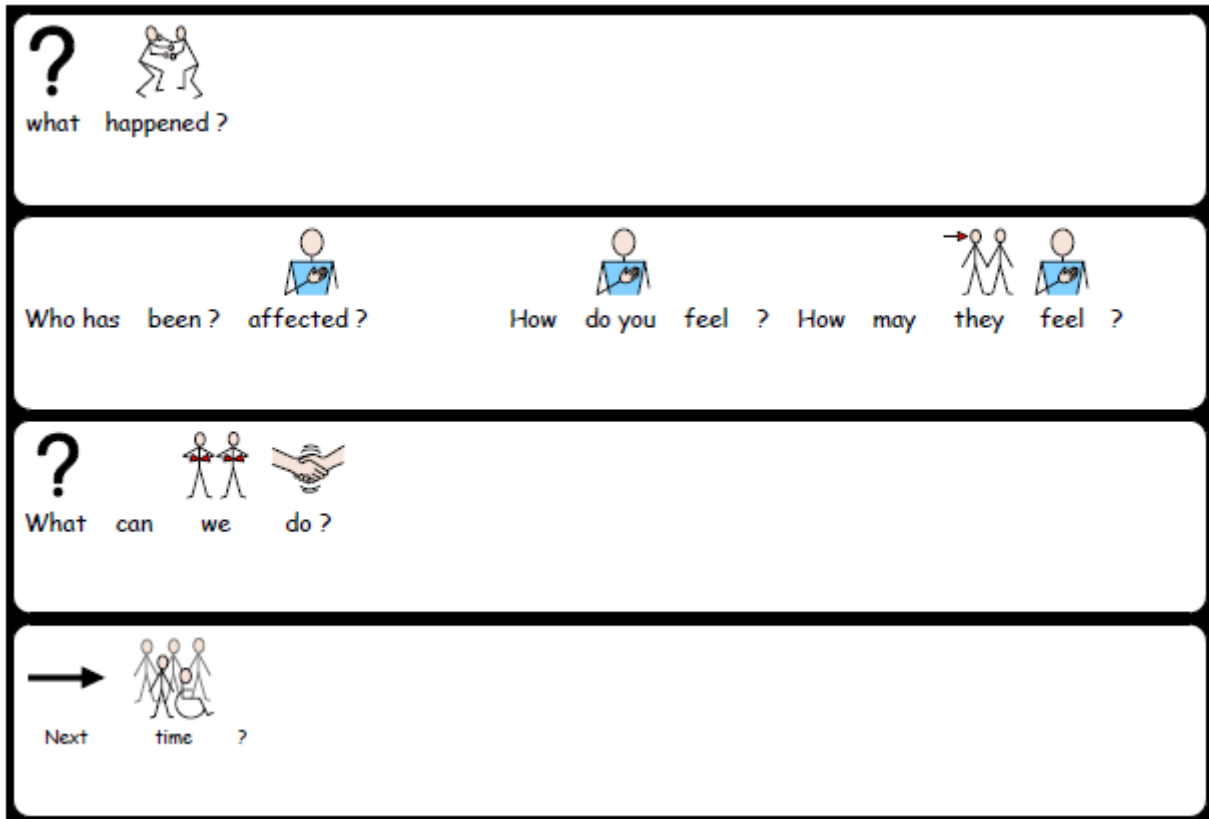
Explore ways to resolve differences if possible/appropriate. See the resource: [Managing Incidents](#).

Consequences

Loss of privileges, logical consequences and restorative approaches are the most effective, eg 'You have hurt someone. What do you think you could do to make them feel happy again?'

Whole class/school activities

- Deal with the feelings created by bullying through PSHE;
- Create a telling school by tackling bullying through the curriculum and involve the pupils in the development of an anti-bullying policy;
- Set up awards for citizenship/friendship;
- Set up a social skills group.
- Allow older pupils to earn the responsibility of being a playleader;
- Encourage the widespread use of a problem-solving approach;
- Use a visual storyboard and role play activities to highlight and practise conflict resolution ([Managing Incidents](#) frameworks)



Example of use of restorative questions in [Managing Incidents](#) resource.

Displayed inadequacy

Teachers may say that they have tried everything with children who display inadequacy and they often feel irritated by the frequent requests for assistance or excuses. Some teachers feel that it is very difficult to meet the needs of these pupils; consequently, they may feel inadequate and resent spending so much time supporting them. The following 'learned' behaviours may give concern:

- Frequent 'whining' about the difficulty of even simple tasks;
- Continuous requests for support when they are quite capable of completing the task independently;
- Task avoidance.

Teachers often feel like 'giving up' with these pupils but usually continue to offer frequent attention either personally or from an LSA. There can be little progress even with 1-1 support unless the tasks are structured appropriately. Conversely, if passive pupils are met with passivity from adults, they will find it more difficult to work hard and raise their levels of achievement.

Basic strategies

- ✓ Relax pressure

- ✓ Agree non-verbal signals eg thumbs up, etc
- ✓ Praise individual attention only when pupil is on task (use hover support strategies)
- ✓ Use visual task sheets
- ✓ Set small targets and record success visually ([Coaching strategies](#))
- ✓ Encourage pupil to self-monitor progress
- ✓ Initially, target structured support from an LSA to ensure task completion

Feedback/ reinforcers

Schedule positive adult attention for the child at adult's convenience. Record every small effort the child makes and discuss with the child why they did well with this, even though it must have been difficult at times. Negotiate rewards with the pupil that can be enjoyed alone, but also can involve an adult. The aim should be to reduce the amount of time the adult spends with the pupil. Pairing the pupil with a different peer each time can be more effective than suddenly removing adult attention. It is helpful if the pupil is motivated by rewards such as taking a message or being responsible for a particular job, as this increases independence.

Consequences

The most appropriate consequence is to remove adult attention for a short period of time.

References:

from:

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