

OVERWORLD

POSITIVE INTERACTIONS POLICY & PROCEDURES

SEPTEMBER 2023

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INTRODUCTION

Overworld AMP Ltd aims to be an all-encompassing facility to engage & support individuals with SEND (special education needs & disabilities) who cannot access full-time mainstream education.

The Organisation has always championed neurodiversity; seeking to nurture the capability of individuals through mutual respect & a shared passion for gaming. Gaming not only offers visually stimulating virtual environments; a safe fantasy world to many but it has been proven to build on the strengths many neurodivergent people have such as visual-spatial reasoning, pattern recognition, attention to visual detail, creativity, ability to think creatively etc.

The Organisation understands that many children & young people (CYP) who attend have been traumatised by their experiences of school; many struggle to take adult direction & some may not have been able to leave the house &/or main carer for weeks, months, years even. As such there must be great understanding, sensitivity & skill when interacting with CYP.

In addition to supporting cognition & learning, communication, & interaction, we recognise that many neurodiverse people have significant sensory differences & our centre has rooms available for sensory integration & other forms of Occupational Therapy or just to chill out if things get overwhelming.

This policy is written with reference to the PDA Society www.pdasociety.co.uk & publications from well-known figures in the SEND Community such as Clare Truman author of "The Teacher's Introduction to Pathological Demand Avoidance: Essential Strategies for the Classroom" www.spectrumspace.co.uk/book/

POLICY STATEMENT

The behaviour & social/emotional development of the CYP at the Organisation is an essential factor in facilitating positive access to their experience, their learning, the likelihood of re-integrating back into education, to access work & their overall quality of life.

The Organisation will not use compliance-based behaviour techniques e.g. ABA. Rewards based strategies will only be used if this is the wish of an individual CYP as intrinsic motivation will always be the goal.

The Organisation staff & volunteers will use the PANDA acronym from the PDA Society as a base to positively interact with CYP. We feel that this is the most effective strategy for all the CYP in our care & it allows CYP to upscale the demands they can manage e.g. taking one of our certificated courses & accept rather than push against boundaries, as the relationships grow in trust.

- ✓ **P**ick battles
- ✓ **A**nxiety management
- ✓ **N**egotiation & collaboration
- ✓ **D**isguise & manage demands
- ✓ **A**daptation

AIMS

The Organisation recognises that outward behaviours are usually underpinned by emotional, social & sensory overload. This Policy will support staff to

- ✓ Empathise with the way neurodivergent CYP experience the world
- ✓ Understand the CYP needs based on their EHCP (Education Health & Care Plan)
- ✓ Identify sensory challenges
- ✓ Identify signs of overwhelm
- ✓ Divert long before crisis point is reached
- ✓ Putting in place proactive & positive plans for when things go awry.

NEURODIVERGENCE

People are described as neurodiverse when their thought patterns, behaviours or learning styles fall outside of what is considered "normal," or neurotypical. Autism & the profile of Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA), Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder (ADD, ADHD) & other neurological conditions are dimensional – this means that approaches need to be tailored for each individual CYP, applied flexibly & reviewed regularly.

ANXIETY

The most important starting point is to understand & accept that most CYP's behaviours are underpinned by anxiety & for CYP with PDA this is extreme & involves an extreme need to feel in control. Anxiety can be expressed in many ways including avoidance, anger, shouting, crying, laughing, not talking, restlessness, boredom, fidgeting, rocking, tics, repetitive actions, obsessing, skin picking, swearing, hiding, running off, withdrawing, masking, throwing things & lashing out at others.

In addition, any or all the following may be present ...

- ✓ **Difficulties in processing language** – may have good expressive language but may not be able to process verbal communication quickly enough to keep up during a conversation & may be confused by non-specific questions or instructions & take things literally. They may use language as a defence mechanism, to shock & disgust. They may easily lose their train of thought so it's best not to interrupt!
- ✓ **Rigid thinking** – they might get stuck in a way of thinking & find it difficult to accept when the idea or plan cannot take place. If they want a take-away, they need a takeaway & may die without it!
- ✓ **Sensory needs** – it's very likely they will have a heightened sensory perception, which can contribute to anxiety, avoidance & eventually overload. They might have poor interoception so do not often feel hunger, thirst, extremes of temperature or need for the toilet until its urgent; which can trigger an anxiety response
- ✓ **Boundaries** – due to sensory processing differences they might like to be physical with people & pets regardless of whether there is mutual consent. They may can

get rough or hurt people by accident & have limited understanding of keeping their body private

- ✓ **Difficulties with social interaction** – may not always understand the ‘unwritten rules’ of social interaction or non-verbal communication including body language, eye contact & tone of voice. They might like to shock because they receive positive stimulation from the reaction. Sharing or losing might be an excruciating experience
- ✓ **Confusion about emotions** – may not be able to understand or accurately ‘label’ emotions in themselves or other people or may feel overwhelmed by their own & others’ emotions. Despite what may be thought, they are likely to be hyperempathetic so feel much more acutely than neurotypical people
- ✓ **Intolerance of uncertainty** – may struggle with all the ‘what ifs’ of life, not knowing how things might ‘play out,’ what might be expected of them, where a situation might lead, when a situation might end & whether they will be able to cope with whatever may come along. Waiting may be incredibly difficult
- ✓ **No concept of hierarchies** - CYP may not see the difference between themselves & any adult nor differences with positions of authority
- ✓ **Poor Executive function** – most if not all neurodivergent people find it very hard to plan, monitor & successfully execute activities they find mundane or demanding, even if others find the task easy e.g. doing up buttons

ADJUSTING YOUR MINDSET

Our own mindset & mood are key factors in developing a toolkit of helpful approaches. Some key pointers are:

- ✓ **Meltdowns are not tantrums** – they are panic attacks
- ✓ **Look beyond surface behaviours** – outward behaviours are just the tip of the iceberg with many contributory factors lying below the surface as explained above
- ✓ **Re-balance your relationship** – a more equal relationship between CYP & adult, based on collaboration & respect, builds trust. Try to aim for win: win solutions
- ✓ **Keep calm & carry on** – try not to take things personally; model desired behaviours; pick your battles; treat every day as a fresh start
- ✓ **Focus on the long-term** objective of building a CYP’s ability to cope rather than short term compliance.
- ✓ **Be flexible** – helpful approaches require creativity & adaptability
- ✓ **See the positives** – whilst supporting our CYP’s challenges, try not to lose sight of their many positive qualities

PANDA

Please see below for the infographic from the PDA Society which we follow to promote positive interactions with all our CYP

Helpful approaches for a PDA profile of autism

Conventional support strategies, including those often recommended for autism, are often ineffective and counter-productive with a PDA profile. In place of structure, routine, firm boundaries, praise, rewards/consequences, is a person-centred approach based on negotiation, collaboration and flexibility.

The PDA PANDA symbolises the need to tailor the environment to meet needs and our P A N D A mnemonic is a simple reminder of helpful approaches.

For more information please visit www.pdasociety.org.uk

Pick battles

- Minimise rules
- Enable some choice & control
- Explain reasons
- Accept that some things can't be done

Anxiety management

- Use low arousal approach
- Reduce uncertainty
- Recognise underlying anxiety & social/sensory challenges
- Think ahead
- Treat distressed behaviours as panic attacks: support throughout & move on

Negotiation & collaboration

- Keep calm
- Proactively collaborate & negotiate to solve challenges
- Fairness & trust are central

Disguise & manage demands

- Phrase any requests indirectly
- Constantly monitor tolerance for demands & match demands accordingly
- Doing things together helps

Adaptation

- Try humour, distraction, novelty & roleplay
- Be flexible
- Have a Plan B
- Allow plenty of time
- Try to balance the amount of "give and take"

Central diagram labels: P (Pick battles), A (Anxiety management), N (Negotiation & collaboration), D (Disguise & manage demands). Inner text: See the person, Explore interests, Engage positively.

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An approach based on negotiation, collaboration & flexibility tends to work better for our CYP.

- ✓ **Balancing tolerance & demands** – a CYP's ability to cope with demands will vary from day to day & from hour to hour, so try to control the 'input' of demands accordingly. Demands can include Laws, expectations, questions, menus, relationships, self-care needs, star charts. Demands can be direct e.g. instructions, indirect e.g. needing to eat, self-imposed e.g. wanting to complete a Lego set or implied e.g. to wear a coat because someone else has put one on. Each one can cause a serious level of anxiety to our CYP & plenty of 'downtime' needs to be built in to give space for anxiety to lessen & tolerance levels to replenish.
- ✓ **Agreeing non-negotiable boundaries** – for some, the barest minimum of non-negotiable boundaries may be needed when anxiety is extremely high, but they may be increased over time. Rules need to be as few as possible but then maintained using techniques such as passing over responsibility (e.g. 'I'm sorry but it's a health & safety requirement'), de-personalising (through the use of imaginary characters, visual clarification etc) & giving choices that allow the CYP a feeling of autonomy
- ✓ **Allowing plenty of time** – time is an additional demand, so it is helpful to build in plenty of time. Always try to plan, anticipate potential challenges, & allow some flexibility to accommodate fluctuating anxiety levels.

- ✓ **Having an exit strategy** – knowing how to extract yourself from a situation can help with reducing anxiety (for instance, you might agree a quiet zone where a CYP can retreat to or provide reassurance that if something cannot be done today it can be tried again tomorrow)

MAKING DEMANDS LESS DEMANDY

- ✓ **Always speak in a friendly manner**; it's important that the CYP knows you like them & that you genuinely want to get to know them – remember they are perceptive to the general vibe of a person/room
- ✓ **Speak politely as you would to someone of authority**. Never underestimate the use of PLEASE before & again after a request & never speak down to a CYP. “because I said so” or “because I’m in charge” is a sure fire way of breaking relationships
- ✓ **Saying SORRY also cannot be underestimated**. If a CYP has not understood or seems confused by what you are proposing, apologise for not making it clear. Even if you have not made a mistake by accepting some responsibility for a miscommunication, you will find the CYP will be more able to meet you in the middle. You have formed a collaboration based on trust
- ✓ **Using declarative language** (statements, comments, or observations), or rephrasing things to talk about an object rather than a person e.g. “by unplugging it from here, the system wont do a full shut down so it’ll take longer to re-boot” rather than “you must never pull this out without shutting down properly, as you’ll break it”
- ✓ If the CYP has not had a drink all day you might just place the drink alongside them & say, “Here’s a drink.” Similarly, phrases such as “I wonder whether ...” & “Let’s see if ...” & including words that suggest an element of choice, such as “maybe we could ...” or “a possible idea could be” or “I’m not sure if ...” all reduce the perception of demands.
- ✓ **Where possible, avoid trigger words like “no”, “don’t” or “can’t”** – put on your best Customer Service hat e.g. “I’m afraid it’s not possible right now”, try to also explain the reason & offer alternatives e.g. “I’m afraid it’s not possible to go to use the VR right now because it has run out of charge. I will see if the other one is available & plug this in but shall we play Fortnite instead?”
- ✓ Indirect communication includes
 - **Use physical prompts** like placing their shoes near them to signify the transition back home;
 - **Use visual prompts** like step by step pictures, checklists to independently tick off, post-it notes or communicating via instant messenger apps
 - **Use eavesdropping** e.g. allowing the CYP’s to hear you say something demandy “Please remember the rules about not eating in here” when you know that they know the rules already
 - **Leaving posters/leaflets ‘lying around’** for our CYP to pick up out of natural curiosity
 - **Communicating positive attributes & life skills** using the content of the video game e.g. multiplayer games give opportunity to build strong collaboration

skills, all give opportunities to discuss creativity, time-management, tolerance, problem-solving & emotional regulation skills

- ✓ **De-personalising:** explain that the requirement is made by some other, higher authority than you – for instance that “it’s the law for me to take regular breaks from the PC, especially to have a lunch break”
- ✓ **Distracting/turning things into a game:** the idea here is to focus on something else other than the demand, “I bet you can’t have completed that task, by the time I get back from the loo?”
- ✓ **Using humour/novelty:** humour is a great way to make everyone feel more relaxed & to help reduce the perception of demands. The CYP in our care are often very funny with a great sense of humour. Sometimes however, they may use outlandish ways to avoid demands & it’s important to recognise the difference. Many of the CYP in our care get bored easily, novelty, therefore (provided the change in direction feels like a bonus/benefit for the CYP) can also work well. There are masses of opportunity for fun & novelty within the world of gaming.
- ✓ **Asking for help:** saying that you do not know or cannot remember how to do something can be a great way of making a demand more indirect e.g. “agh I’ve forgotten how to……?” or “How have you found is the best way to defeat this….?”
- ✓ **Offering choices:** the idea here is to give a CYP some control without losing all control as the adult, by offering limited choices “shall I carry your shoes to the sofa for you to put them on or are you comfortable to do it here?”. “I’ll make a start on editing the first sequence, do you want to design this or this” but accepting they will choose another element to work on that still keeps them on task
- ✓ **Casually model behaviours or apply demands to yourself** without expectation e.g. you might say “I’m feeling a bit stressed from this game now so I’m going to take a break & get a drink.” It’s suggested you don’t follow it up with, “are you coming?” just accept they may or may not join you

BEING CAUTIOUS WITH REWARDS/PRAISE/SANCTIONS

Rewards

Create an additional demand on top of the demand itself so are best avoided. If a reward for completing something is offered e.g. 15 mins on the VR for completing a learning task, it’s likely to feel condescending & be a big red button to our CYP so they’ll need the reward immediately & some trust will be lost. Computer games offer a quick positive feedback loop with plenty of reward. CYP can opt in to the Organisations learning programmes & receive certificates of achievement if they wish.

Praise

May be perceived as a demand to repeat or improve on previous performance, & **encouragement** can feel like a demand as it increases the sense of expectation. Gaming offers praise indirectly with levelling up, gaining rewards etc but gaming does give the CYP the opportunity to receive direct praise from us in a something they really enjoy e.g. “Oh nice one, you’ve achieved that level without losing any hearts!”. This might be the first time they have received direct praise since school, where it will have been very demand e.g. “well done you have completed a page

of cursive handwriting, see you can do it, keep up the good work". We find our CYP give us more opportunity to praise them & join in their celebration as time goes on "look at the Minecraft world I've built" or "I've got seven shinies since I last came here, is that good?".

When offering encouragement, providing choices & exit strategies can be effective e.g. "It would be great if you'd like to go to the gym today but if it feels too much at any point, we can come back".

Imposed sanctions or consequences

May feel unjust when behaviours are a question of "can't" not "won't," & may appear controlling & arbitrary when not directly related to the behaviours in question e.g. losing VR time because they kicked over a chair & they tend to lead to confrontation & escalation. Natural consequences which flow from behaviours e.g. the keyboard now doesn't work because you threw it on the floor or your friends don't want to play because you swore at them, enables lessons to be learned in a more realistic way. When everyone is calm, discussing ways to avoid demanding situations from arising in future is another way for natural consequences to unfold.

SUPPORTING SENSORY NEEDS

Our children may be **hyper**-sensitive (seeking to avoid the sense) or **hypo**-sensitive (seeking out more of the sense) to any of the senses listed below:

- Auditory
- Visual
- Oral (gustatory)
- Smell (olfactory)
- Tactile
- Vestibular (the sense of movement & balance)
- Proprioceptive (the sense of 'position' of your body in space & the input from muscles & joints to the brain)
- Interoception (Internal senses from your body, such as hunger, thirst, pain & needing to use the toilet)

It is possible to be both hyper & hypo sensitive to the same sense (for instance, someone may enjoy their own noise (e.g., their voice or choice of music) but find others or background noises intolerable) & it is important to remember that sensory perception & sensitivity can also vary depending on levels of anxiety, illness, the type of surroundings & so on.

Many of the CYP in our care will have had an assessment by an Occupational Therapist who will have created a 'sensory diet' for their EHCP. It may be necessary for us to host OT sessions or be trained in the delivery of some portions of the EHCP outcomes.

CYP must never be discouraged from using any auxiliary aids they may need to support their sensory needs, as these have the same impact as glasses, hearing aids & wheelchairs. Some CYP may need:

- ✓ **Chewy toys** for those who seek oral sensory input – we have ice lollies in the freezer too

- ✓ **Headphones, in ear sound reducers or hoodies** for those who become easily overstimulated by noise & crowded places
- ✓ **To carrying an object with a favoured scent** (e.g., candle, soap, pillow or spraying a sleeve or handkerchief) for those who become distressed by unfamiliar or unpleasant smells
- ✓ **Hugs or never to be touched** as some CYP are sensitive to touch & equally some CYP may like the comfort of deep pressure & may feel well-regulated using **weighted blankets** or similar
- ✓ **Wearing tinted or sunglasses** for those who are oversensitive to light
- ✓ **To eat specific foods** due to avoidance of certain foods/textures
- ✓ **Access to a fidget toy** for those who seek tactile input
- ✓ **Plenty of opportunity for movement** to feel where their body is in space; they may need to jump for strong feedback or bounce on a gym ball

SUPPORTING SOCIAL COMMUNICATION & INTERACTION

Many of the CYP in our care will have had an assessment by a speech & language therapist (SaLT) to can assess their communication & interaction skills & make detailed recommendations. These may have been written in their EHCP. As with OT, it may be necessary for us to host SaLT sessions or be trained in the delivery of some portions of the EHCP outcomes. In any case, these tips should be followed:

Communication

- ✓ **Allow extra processing time** so that your CYP can make sense of what you have said & have time to think about how to respond – it can be helpful to count to 5 in your head following a statement or request.
- ✓ **Chunk questions or requests** (space them out one at a time) rather than saying or asking many things in one go. Allow time for your CYP to answer your first question or respond to your first request before adding any follow-ups.
- ✓ **Be clear & precise whilst being indirect** – for example “I wonder if you could help me open this trapdoor. I need you to move that block from near the lava & put on the table whilst I jump on this lever”

Social Interaction

- ✓ **Role playing via gaming** can help our CYP understand other people's perspectives, how someone's actions can make another person feel & how this can affect relationships
- ✓ **TV/books/gaming** can be an effective way to learn about emotions, relationships, & social dynamics, & enable our CYP to develop understanding & skills, in a more indirect way.

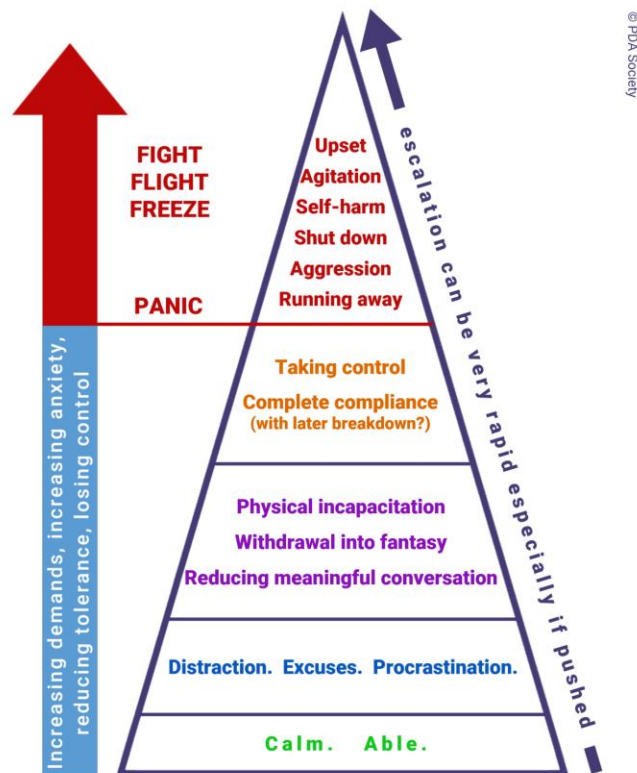
SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Many of our CYP have poor self-esteem from their experience of life so far. It is important to remember to try & support our CYP's emotional well-being by

- ✓ **focusing on their many positive qualities** & supporting them with the self-narrative. It's important to recognise, some CYP may brag & seem overly confident as a way of overcompensating for their negative inner-monologue
- ✓ regularly reminding them that they are **valued for who they are** & that it is ok to be different
- ✓ regularly **reminding them that they are well respected** through whichever medium works best for them
- ✓ **supporting them with the things that they are interested in** rather than trying to impose on them what you feel they should be doing; they have often had enough of this at school!
- ✓ **speaking about them in positive terms to other people** e.g. "M has an amazing imagination; her Roblox obbies are incredible", "I'd want L on my team during the end of the world as their ability to slay Zombies is outstanding" or "J really makes me laugh, he's such good fun to be with."

When anxiety rises

"People do well if they can" (Dr Ross Green) – our CYP often do not have the skills yet to manage their emotions & articulate their experiences before they become overwhelming. The adults around them will need to be attune to their needs & vigilant in spotting the signs that anxiety is escalating, see the infographic from the PDA



Society below for the common signs to look out for:

Staff may use de- escalation techniques effectively throughout the day. **Offering a break away from the task** usually allows time to reset & hopefully reengage once they are in a more positive frame of mind. Such strategies can reduce areas of conflict, this is a negotiation not a demand or point of argument, the emphasis being

on the CYP to make a positive choice & for them to recognise their feelings & emotions while remaining in control

Transition times can be particularly tricky for our CYP - it's likely the CYP will be engrossed in their game or creative task & resent being asked to finish. These strategies may support our CYP

- ✓ **Consistency & Predictability** – follow the same routine, patterns, driving routes, etc. The consistency & predictability will lessen the stress during the transitions.
- ✓ **Do not rush the CYP** – it's suggested to give them a 15min & 5min transition warning that they will be collected/transitioned using calm, friendly verbal prompts & then lots of time to process & come to the transition when they are ready. We find the CYP are likely to have a clear idea of the final activity they need to complete to feel able to transition calmly & we will encourage this communication.
- ✓ **Offer a Break** – build in short breaks throughout the CYP's time at the centre to support their regulatory needs & addressing their sensory & emotional needs will lessen stress during transitions.
- ✓ **Use Redirection** – use the CYP's affinity to engage them just before a transition. This offers redirection away from the anxiety & stress of the transition focusing instead on something enjoyable.
- ✓ **Provide a Transition Object** – many of our CYP use a device whilst being transported to lessen the stress & boredom of the journey. You may need to ensure this is charged & ready but as the CYP develops, you can encourage the CYP to take responsibility

PHYSICAL INTERVENTION & THE LAW

- ! The use of a physical intervention may become necessary when, a CYP is at risk of harm to themselves & others or when behaviour is unsafe.
- ! A physical intervention must be a **last resort practice**; only used if the CYP request it or if there is imminent danger
- ! Any circumstances that require staff to place their hands on CYP can compromise everyone involved unless these situations are managed professionally & there is effective training & planning in place
- ! **The Best Interest Principle** where CYP are concerned states “the welfare of the child should be the paramount consideration” (Children Act 1989). Paramount in this context means it should be the first consideration & should take precedence over all other issues. For that reason, staff who act in good faith in the best interest of the CYP will always have the best defence if their actions are questioned. A focus on the best interest of the child also encourages more productive discussions & debriefs between staff & CYP, as staff explain that their actions are motivated by a genuine concern for the CYP.
- ! Any use of physical intervention will be based upon the principles of being Proportionate, Reasonable & Necessary.

WORKING WITH OUR CLIENTS & PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATED WITH THE CYP

- ✓ Our relationship with our clients e.g. parents/ carers, placing schools or Local Authorities is central to our success & we will always work closely to ensure a consistent approach
- ✓ We provide opportunity to discuss how best meet a CYP's needs as frequently as possible
- ✓ We make regular reports to share the positive aspects of CYP's time with us as well as any areas we've noted as challenging
- ✓ we will honestly discuss how a placement is working out & any issues we have encountered
- ✓ We also appreciate any information that helps us to develop our practices from educational psychologists, occupational therapists, & any attached social workers
- ✓ As an independent alternative provision, we will always work toward being as inclusive as possible. However, certain criminalised behaviour will never be accepted & could, if felt necessary, result in a CYP not having access to this facility. This would only be done after serious review of our ability to meet need &/or in context of the safety of staff & other centre users.

APPENDIX 1. PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING DISTRESSED BEHAVIOURS

Using information from the PDA Society, Spectrum Gaming, Studio 3 & Dr Ross Greene

What are distressed behaviours?

“Distressed behaviours arise when our life experiences; sensory, emotional, social, demands etc exceed our capacity to cope & we feel overwhelmed & lose control” (PDA Society)

Distressed behaviours in neurodivergent individuals may include:

- ! **meltdowns** – an ‘out of control’ state which may include shouting, crying, throwing, or breaking things
- ! **physical or verbal aggression** directed towards others
- ! **self-injurious behaviours**
- ! **shutdowns** – individuals may hide or curl up in a ball, withdraw to a space that feels safe or stop communicating/moving. Shutdowns can sometimes be for a prolonged period (please see info on [autistic burnout](#) & [catatonia-like breakdown](#) for more information)
- ! **taking flight** – running from the source of distress

Distressed behaviours are not under the individual’s control or something that they choose to do, this is a survival response – One CYP described meltdowns as “I feel like I’m floating in the void, I cannot control my actions & every object around me feels like it needs to be destroyed. I feel like I could **die**.”

Usually, once things have reached this point of distress it is impossible for others to intervene, so the priority is then to keep everyone as safe as possible.

Supporting steps

1. Distressed behaviours are **not a ‘battle’ to be lost or won, but a crisis to be managed**. As the adult, you need to back down.
2. **This is not a ‘learning opportunity’** - the threat of sanctions or offer of rewards will be ineffective at this time; you cannot ‘teach a drowning person to swim’
3. **How you manage distress makes a difference** - separate your relationship with the person from the behaviours; & try to remember that anything that gets broken or damaged during distressed episodes can be replaced & words cannot hurt you however, insulting they may be
 - ! **Always keep calm & level**. Shouting or getting angry will not help either of you, keep your facial expressions & body language as neutral & non-confrontational as possible to allow the CYP an opportunity to mirror your behaviour & override their survival mechanism
 - ! **Offer active listening** & acknowledge what you think they are trying to communicate.
 - ! **Don’t make jokes or laugh**, as this could make it look like you don’t care about their distress. You are their emotional stability
 - ! **Swearing, defamatory or shocking words** will not normally be socially acceptable or indeed tolerated (if racist, homophobic etc) but

commenting or focusing on what the person is saying whilst they do not feel in control may be likely to escalate the situation

4. Call for back up

- ! Request the support of Steve Mitchell, Head of Pastoral Care, Mark Pickering, Designated Safeguarding Lead &/or a senior manager
- ! Telephone for assistance if lone working; follow Appendix 2 - Lone Working Policy within the Health & Safety Policy & Procedures document

5. Protect yourself & others in as calm a way as possible:

- ! Try to stay at least 2m away, forward facing/sideways on, unless that person requests/shows they need physical touch/ comfort from you;
- ! Slow down & be as predictable as possible to show a sense of calmness, as fast movements can appear threatening;
- ! If you feel approaching a young person is really important e.g. due to self-injurious behaviour, let the person know in advance & approach them in a calm & slow manner;
- ! Clear the area of any objects that could be thrown & cause harm (ideally in advance) whilst having other soft objects available;
- ! It is usually better to remove others rather than try to move a person in distress but it may be necessary to place yourself between the individual & others to protect them

6. **Reduce stimuli** that may add to the sense of overwhelm – for instance, turn down radio volume, ask others to keep quiet, not intervene & leave the area if possible

7. **Keep communication to a minimum:** instructions should be short & simple; speak in terms of what you would like to happen rather than what you would like to stop, e.g., “you may feel calmer if you stand still” rather than “stop running around;” try offering simple reassurance, e.g. “it’s OK.”

8. **Give emotional & physical space.** Take a step backward from the situation, rather than forward into conflict.

9. **Encourage access to a safer place, if possible.** Some people may prefer to hide away in a den or under a table or cover themselves with a duvet or coat. Waiting outside/ close & calmly reminding them that you are there could help them feel safer

10. **Physical intervention should be a last resort** & only to keep the person or others safe.

11. **Be aware of environmental risks**, for instance scissors, knives or objects that may be used as a weapon. Other hazards may include glass doors, moving vehicles or proximity to a road.

12. If someone takes flight whilst distressed, provided there are no immediate safety concerns, **following at a distance is more effective than chasing** after them (because pursuit increases the ‘flight’ response).

Support following episodes of distress

A CYP described the way they felt after a distressing episode as "I feel guilty, upset & shameful."

- ✓ **Recovery time** will be required, ideally in a safe space
- ✓ A **snack or a drink** may help – offer an ice lolly from the freezer
- ✓ Provide **reassurance** - let the CYP know that you understand they did not feel in control at this time & that you are there for them
- ✓ Some individuals may be upset & may express remorse or be angry with themselves; others may not. **Try to move on & start afresh.**
- ✓ Some people find it helpful to talk & this can provide insight into triggers & causes however, this kind of **debriefing** can be too stressful for many & may precipitate further distress or there may need to be some considerable time & space between the distressed episode & any discussion.

APPENDIX 2. REPORTING INCIDENTS OF CYP-TO-CYP VIOLENCE

This form should be used to report all incidents of violence between CYP. Incidents of both verbal & physical assaults & threats of violence should be reported.

Date of incident: Time:

Place:

Employee(s):

Young person(s):

Details of Incident:

Please tick all that apply:

Verbal abuse	Physical assault	Sexual harassment	Religious beliefs	Sexual orientation	Racial harassment	Disability
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Full description of what happened:

Witness Statement(s)

Detail injury/damage/effects:

You can use Skin Map from Child Protection Policy if necessary

Post Incident Action:

e.g. contact with Parent/carer, placing school/LA if applicable, Police Involvement, Child Services RIDDOR form

Further action required:

e.g. missing next session, follow-up with authorities

Any further comments:

Suspension of services if future incidents occur?

[Author Name] _____ Date _____

APPENDIX 3. REPORTING INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE TO STAFF

This form should be used to report all incidents of violence to staff. Incidents of both verbal & physical assaults & threats of violence should be reported. This form should be completed by the person subject to the incident in conjunction with his/her/their line manager.

Date of incident: _____ Time: _____
 Place: _____
 Employee(s): _____
 Young person(s): _____

Details of Incident:

Please tick all that apply:

Verbal abuse	Physical assault	Sexual harassment	Religious beliefs	Sexual orientation	Racial harassment	Disability
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Brief description of what happened:

Witness Statement(s), if applicable

Please detail injury/damage/effects:

Post Incident Action:

e.g. contact with CYP's Parent/carer, placing school/LA if applicable, Police Involvement, RIDDOR form

Further action required:

e.g. CYP to miss next session, CYP to have new mentor, follow-up with authorities, employee requiring recovery time

Any further comments:

Suspension of services if future incidents occur?

[Author Name] _____ Date _____

[Employee Name] _____ Date _____