

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT BEHAVIOURS

People’s behaviour is goal-directed. We look for ways to be secure, feel significant, to belong, and to protect our sense of identity. When a person feels threatened, a downward spiral may begin. The person may substitute other goals, in the belief that this is a way to gain security, significance, belonging and identity. How we respond to these behaviours and beliefs will, in turn, affect the person’s future behaviour.

The secret is to break out of the spiral by supporting the person’s real needs without supporting the difficult behaviours and beliefs.

Difficult Behaviour: Goals & Unconscious Beliefs	The Downward Spiral	Better Alternatives
<p>Gaining Power “I only feel sure when I am in control, when no-one can boss me!”</p>	<p>You feel provoked or threatened and react by fighting or giving in. Their aggression is intensified or they comply defiantly.</p>	<p>Disengage from the struggle. Help them to use power constructively by enlisting co-operation. Support their self-worth and autonomy.</p>
<p>Gaining Attention “I only feel significant when I am being noticed.”</p>	<p>You feel annoyed and react by coaxing. They stop briefly, and then resume behaviour and demands, perhaps in a new way.</p>	<p>Avoid undue attention. Give attention for positive behaviour especially when they are not making a bid for it. Support their real contribution and involvement.</p>
<p>Appearing Inadequate “I won’t be hurt any more, if only I can convince others not to expect much from me. If they look after me, I’ll feel I belong.”</p>	<p>You give up, overwhelmed, or take over the task for them. They respond passively, show no improvement, and stay “victim”.</p>	<p>Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small. Focus on assets. Provide bite-sized learning experiences they can succeed at. Support how they feel as a starting place for self-improvement.</p>
<p>Seeking Revenge “You’ve hurt me. I’ll make you hurt as I am hurting. I have my sense of identity by standing against you.”</p>	<p>You feel hurt by them, and retaliate. They seek further revenge more strongly or with another weapon.</p>	<p>Convince them that you respect their needs. Build trusting relationships. Support their need for justice and fairness.</p>

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