

## 'Different' Behaviour

It's dangerous to stereotype groups of people too much, but if you are aware of some of the behaviours that people may display, you can be calmer in your dealings with clients. Here are some behaviours you might encounter, and suggested approaches to make the situation more manageable for everyone.

**People who have not felt confident in a long while**, or who don't have much confidence in their own abilities, will often have many many questions. They may have more questions than you can answer in the situation you are in. Not feeling they are getting answers may lead to frustration and rudeness.

**Approach:** Signpost to other places, liaise with their keyworker later, explain the reality that you don't have time, make another appointment, get them to write their questions down, throw back the question: "what do you think?"

**People who have been through some big events** or overcome obstacles such as recovering addicts may wish to explain their story, and may be quite familiar with you.

**Approach:** Make sure all your questions focus on what you can do for the client today. State how familiar you'd like them to be with you – where you'd like them to sit etc – and explain if anything they are doing makes you feel uncomfortable.

**Different cultures deal with one-to-one situations differently.** Some people don't like to make eye contact, some find it upsetting if you don't. Some people actively want to shake hands, others would hate to.

**Approach:** take all your cues from the client, and do anything you feel comfortable with. Explain why you aren't doing things you feel uncomfortable with. Keep smiling – very few people can be offended by a genuine, open smile.

## Appointment situations

### Stopping people talking

- Use gestures to show that you've heard enough
- Do other things while they are talking to help them to see that we have a finite amount of time, and enable you to manage time more effectively
- Explain the limits at the beginning: "We have half an hour, and in that time you'll complete a form and I'll share some ideas with you."

### Moaners

- Combat with positivity. Try to get the client turn the obstacle into an opportunity. Or – ignore it!

- Keep focused on the reason they are here: “You’ve told me a lot about the things that you can’t do which is giving me a good picture of some of the roles you’re less interested in. Could you now think of three things that you’d enjoy doing?”

### Shyness

- Use lots of open questions, with a quiet tone of voice.
- Make sure your body language is open and very smiley.
- Go the extra mile if you think it will work and break the ice with other conversation, or a cup of tea...

## **Challenging Situations**

Ask yourself the following questions about any situation that has happened recently:

What is the person doing that presents a challenge?

How do you feel about it?

Who else is around?

How are you responding to the behaviour?

## **Challenging Someone Effectively**

- Give people an opportunity to explain or change behaviour – don’t ignore
- Find out about them first – listen. Work out why they might be doing what they’re doing
- Explain the impact of what they’re doing and ask them to stop
  - Clear, but sensitive, statement of how you feel
    - “I don’t like it when...
- Focus on solving the problem/why they’re here

**First: Accept how important your own actions and behaviour are**

**“Gill never speaks her mind at staff meetings”**

Gill is perceived as a person who doesn't care about the direction of the organisation, and having a part in it.

*The real story is that Gill is shy of large groups but worries terribly about how to do right by the organisation and the decisions she makes within it.*

**People will judge you by what you do, even if it's totally different to how you are actually feeling.**

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**Second: Be aware of your behaviour**

- Ask for feedback;
  - examples of specific behaviour if someone is being very vague
- Have a contrasting action
  - **NO:** I've *got to stop* getting scared in staff meetings!
  - **YES:** Next time I will say x, or y, or z.
    - Prepare the sentence. Prepare when you will say it. Tell a colleague what you are going to do.

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**Things to avoid:**

- Generalisation
- Doomsdaying
- Labelling
- Mind reading
- Filtering
- Personalising

How? Watch yourself from a distance, and learn from the way you behave.

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## Techniques

- Broken record
  - Work out what it is that you really want to say to the other person. Make sure you keep saying it, calmly and slowly, until it is received.
- Body Language
  - Smiling, friendly, relaxed.
- Take criticism
  - Be aware of who is giving it to you, get other opinions if you're not sure
- Sandwich the criticism you give to others with positivity
  - Be honest about the positive, be clear and specific about the negative
- Disagree, but carefully.
  - There is a process, and it begins with a yes!
- Use 'I' statements.
  - Very direct and come from your point of view.
- Say No if you mean it, say Thank you if you mean it
- Say When, not If!

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## Saying No

A volunteer has been in your organisation for three months, but has volunteered intermittently and hasn't always been reliable. He is starting to look for work, and has come to ask you for a reference. You don't think he has been present enough to warrant one and are going to say no.

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## Broken Record

You have been volunteer co-ordinator for 6 months and have started to put in place a new supervision schedule. A long term volunteer is resistant to this and insists that it never has been, and never will be necessary.

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## Verbal and Non Verbal Assertiveness

<p><b>Verbal openers</b></p> <p>I would like you to I feel that I think that I don't want to I will not I cannot</p>	<p><b>Co-operative statements and questions</b></p> <p>Lets see what everyone else thinks What do you want How can we resolve this Let's discuss Shall we negotiate Have you any suggestions Can you tell me a time that would be good for you to talk about...</p>
<p><b>Empathetic statements</b></p> <p>I appreciate that this is difficult for you I can see that you seem worried You may be too busy now, but I understand that this may not be something which is very important to you, but</p>	<p><b>Non verbal accompanying behaviour</b></p> <p>Calm purposeful walk Weight evenly balanced, upright posture Relaxed hands and legs – not clenched, or crossed Direct eye contact – but don't glare!! Strong, clear, steady voice Expressive face and gestures – but don't fidget Relaxed, non- manipulative smiling, as appropriate</p>

*Gael Lindenfield, The Positive Woman*

## How to Say 'No'

**"I want you to work late tonight to finish preparations for the Volunteer induction"**

<p>Start with an <b>affirmative statement</b>. Agree with something they are saying or feeling.</p>	<p><b><i>"Yes, I can understand that..."</i></b></p>
<p><b>Softening statement:</b> show recognition, empathy or understanding</p>	<p><b><i>We have been short staffed all week and I know it has been difficult...</i></b></p>
<p><b>Indicate process</b></p>	<p><b><i>But I have to tell you something...</i></b></p>
<p>State <b>reasons</b> for your position</p>	<p><b><i>I have not seen my children much this week and tonight I promised to take them to the park...</i></b></p>
<p><b>Disagree</b> – finally! Use strong language – don't be tentative. And start with "so..." it makes the whole thing seem logical</p>	<p><b><i>So I cannot work overtime tonight...</i></b></p>
<p><b>Compromise</b> – optional, but useful if it will help you get what you want.</p>	<p><b><i>Would it be helpful if I stayed tomorrow?"</i></b></p>

*Max Eggert, The Assertiveness Pocketbook*