

FACT SHEET 5: Behaviours of Concern (Challenging Behaviour)

WHAT ARE BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN ?

Behaviours of concern are sometimes called challenging behaviours.

Behaviours of concern are words that describe a kind of behaviour. They are behaviours people do that may be a problem for them or others.

Behaviours of concern can be when someone does things that hurt themselves, other people or things.

This behaviour can stop them from doing things that other people do. These things may be going to work or seeing their friends.

These behaviours can seriously hurt people.

These behaviours can be very stressful and upsetting.



It is helpful to understand a few things about behaviours of concern.

- > It is the behaviour that is a problem and not the person
- > These behaviours are not uncommon
- > It is not a disease.

WHAT DO BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN LOOK LIKE?

There many different behaviours of concern. Below is a list of the main kinds:



Hurting themselves.

For example, a person may hurt, hit or scratch themselves.



Hurting others.

For example, a person may hit, pinch or bite someone else.



Breaking things.



Refusing to do things.

For example, a person may not eat or take their medicine. They may refuse to do activities they used to enjoy.



Doing the same thing again and again.

For example, a person may say the same thing over and over again.



Doing things that others don't like.

For example, a person may scream, swear or take their clothes off.



Hiding away from people

For example, not wanting to be with other people.



Remember, many people may behave in these ways at times. It is only a behaviour of concern when it is causing problems for the person and/or those around them.

WHY DO BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN OCCUR?

All behaviours of concern happen for a reason.
The reasons may be

1. SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE PERSON'S BODY

For example the person may show behaviours of concern because...



They are in pain.



Their medicine isn't agreeing with them.



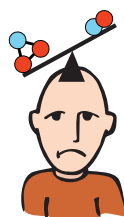
They are sick.



They have a condition such as Autism or Prader Willi Syndrome.



They are not eating well.



Their hormones are not working properly.
Hormones are chemicals in our body.

2. TO COMMUNICATE

For example, the person may show behaviours of concern to communicate a message such as...



They are hungry or thirsty.



They want to go somewhere.



They want to do something.



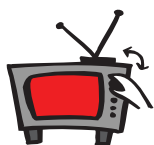
They are lonely.

3. TO GET SOMETHING DESIRED

For example, a person may show behaviours of concern so...



They can spend time with someone.



They can get something they want.



They can get out of doing something they don't want to do.



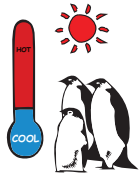
They get a good feeling on their body. The feelings can be from touching, moving, seeing, smelling or hearing.

4. TO CHANGE SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR ENVIRONMENT

For example, a person may show behaviours of concern because...



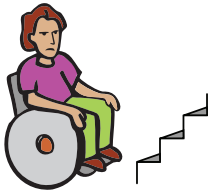
It is too noisy or quiet.



It is too hot or too cold.



There are bad smells around.



They can not get somewhere or reach something.



They don't have choices.



They are bored.



They don't know what is happening next.



There are too many or too few people around.

5. TO SHOW THEY ARE FEELING UPSET

For example the person may show behaviours of concern because...



Something traumatic has happened to them.



Somebody died or has left them.

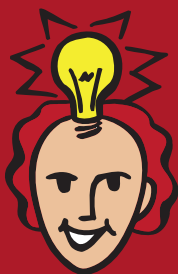
Somebody is dying or is leaving them.



Somebody has yelled or screamed at them in an angry way.



They are being picked on. Sometimes this is called bullying.



Remember that the reason for everyone's behaviour of concern is different.

Remember, a behaviour of concern is not usually because of one reason but because of many reasons.

BEHAVIOURS OF CONCERN AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Sometimes behaviours of concern may be a person's response to a mental illness. This is more likely when someone is unable to understand or communicate what they are experiencing.

DEPRESSION

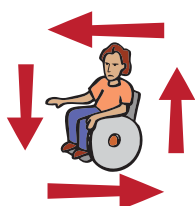
Some of the behaviours that people might show when they are DEPRESSED are listed below:



Hiding away from people.



Stopping doing things they enjoy.



Not sitting still.



Hitting out at others trying to help.

BIPOLAR DISORDER

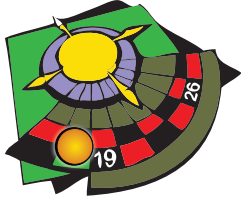
Behaviours that may occur with BIPOLAR DISORDER are sometimes the behaviours that occur when someone is depressed and then at other times the following behaviours:



Walking away from important relationships.



Behaving in a frantic way. Feeling unstoppable.



Acting on impulse and not thinking of the consequences.

Behaviours that may occur with PSYCHOSIS include:

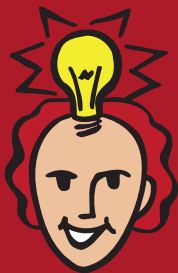


Aggression that seems to come for no reason.



Behaviours that seem that the person is seeing or hearing things that are not there.

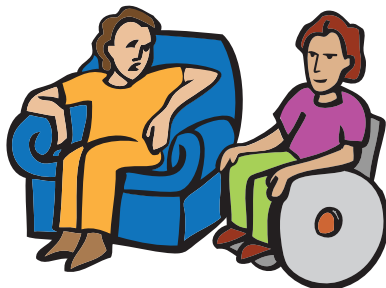
There are many types of mental illnesses and these are just 3 or them. You can find more information in the Mental Health Fact Sheet of the Bridging Project.



Remember, behaviours of concern are not the same as a mental health problem. A mental health problem may exist and this should be looked at by an appropriate professional.

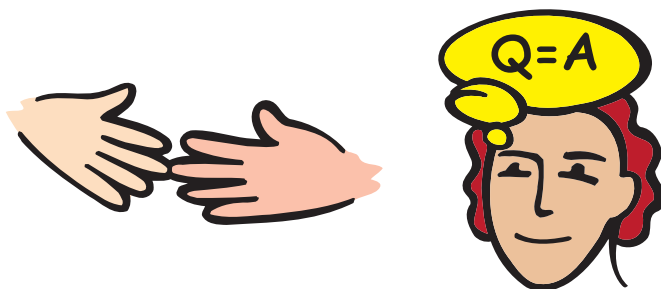
TYPES OF HELP

People with behaviours of concern can be helped in the following ways:



Assessment

- > The assessment asks a lot of questions about the person and their environment.
- > The assessment aims to understand what the behaviours of concern are and their purpose .
- > The assessment is usually called a functional analysis.
- > The assessment gives information on how to best support the person.



Behavioural Support

- > Give the person better ways to meet their needs - eg ways of communicating so everyone can understand.
- > Provide the person with the medical help they may need.
- > Change the environment to help meet the person's needs – eg. hanging curtains to make the room darker.
- > Teach the person more effective coping skills.



This Fact Sheet is linked to the work of the Bridging Project. The Bridging Project is being undertaken by Scope in collaboration with the Centre for Developmental Disability Health Victoria, Monash University. The mission of the Bridging Project is to progress the knowledge and resource base to ensure that people with complex communication and mental health needs have access to quality services. The project has two complementary streams, Building Evidence (increasing the evidence base in relation to individuals with complex communication and mental health

needs through research and related activities) and Building Capacity (building the capacity of services to address the mental health needs and preferences of individuals with complex communication needs). The project is designed around the needs of people who are 18 years or older.

More information regarding The Bridging Project can be found at the Scope Web Page, <http://www.scopevic.org.au>