

Looking Ahead

Use This:

At the conclusion of treatment for conduct problems to review and prepare for termination.



Goals

- The parent will think about behaviour problems that might arise in the future and how his or her existing skills can be used to address them
- The parent will plan how to adjust, maintain, and generalise his or her newly acquired skills
- The parent will consider whether or not to continue a reward system if one is in effect
- The parent will feel prepared for the termination of treatment

Materials

- **Relapse Prevention** worksheet (p. 332)
- Paper and pencils for written exercises
- **Checklist of Strategies** (p. 391)
- **Weekly questionnaires** and **Monitoring sheet** (see pages 277-293)
- **Therapist Note Taking Sheet** (p. 276)

⌚ If time is tight: Review with the parent the new skills he or she has learned during treatment, and assist in thinking of ways to generalise these new skills to other behavioural concerns that might arise in the future.

Main steps

<input type="checkbox"/> Set an Agenda	Remember to start by setting an agenda together and reviewing any practice assignments.
<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain Weekly Ratings	Review Weekly questionnaires and Monitoring sheet in detail, and review the strategies, what strategies are working well/what aren't working as well.

<input type="checkbox"/> Review Programme	<p>Review with the parent the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which specific skills and strategies covered in treatment the parent is likely to find most useful for handling the child's misbehaviour at home • Some of the most challenging behaviours to which the parent will need to apply those skills • The "high risk" situations that the parent will need to watch out for in order to continue to apply these new tools consistently and effectively (e.g., family stressors, the child's move to a new school, the parent's own personal characteristics that influence the way he or she addresses the child's behaviour).
<input type="checkbox"/> Manage Expectations	<p>Tell the parent that it is normal to expect some challenges ahead, both in terms of the parent's attempts to apply these new skills consistently and effectively and also in terms of possible re-emergence of the child's challenging behaviours. Remind the parent that it is easy for both child and parent to slip into old habits, especially after things have been good for a while.</p> <p>Reassure the parent that this is all very common, and that almost no one can expect to handle his or her child's behaviour perfectly all of the time. Instead what are needed are good skills and strategies to use when the parent begins to recognise either misbehaviour on the part of the child, or reliance on prior strategies for parenting (i.e., yelling at the child instead of using time out). Remind the parent that by using the tools and skills learned in treatment, he or she can have more control over the child's misbehaviour than before, and fix problems more quickly when they arise.</p>

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- Discuss Lapse and Relapse** It might also be helpful to discuss with the parent the distinction between a “lapse” and a “relapse” (*if you do not think this terminology is appropriate to use with the family, you can use the alternate wording below, i.e. ‘small setbacks’ vs ‘going back to square one’*). Explain that lapses are natural and involve minor steps backward, for either parent or child, whereas a “relapse” is having everything go back to square one. Remind the parent that if lapses occur, these can be tackled by reviewing the handouts given by the therapist and practising the skills again. Children’s lapses may be more common during stressful times, and it is perfectly normal for stressful situations to make it difficult to address the child’s behaviour in a consistent and effective fashion. Emphasise to the parent that “lapses” are perfectly natural, and if handled carefully are unlikely to become “relapses.”

Example script

If you start to find that some of your child’s disruptive behaviours have returned, it’s important that you do not jump to the conclusion that you are back at square one. At these times you need to remember that all of the skills you learned during treatment will always be there for you to call on. All you need to do is use them when you start to notice problem behaviours.

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- Review Relapse Prevention worksheet** Review and complete the **Relapse Prevention** worksheet with the parent/s.

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- Highlight What Helps** Remind the parent that if formal use of rewards and consequences is required, then administering them *immediately and consistently* is the key to gaining control over any new problem behaviour. Suggest that the parent continue to keep a record of the problem behaviour throughout this time. If the misbehaviour persists, suggest that he or she schedule another appointment with you, being sure to bring any notes along for you to review.
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<input type="checkbox"/> ACTIVITY <i>Stump the Parent</i>	<p>Remind the parent that he or she now has all of the skills necessary to cope with the vast majority of behaviour problems displayed by most children. The goal now is to begin thinking about how to use these skills in managing any future problem behaviours that might arise.</p> <p>Suggest to the parent a game in which you will pose hypothetical behaviour problems to the parent and request that he or she think about how to manage these problems using the skills and methods learned during the treatment programme. Prompt the parent when necessary, but the parent should do the majority of this problem-solving on his or her own. If the parent does need some guidance, use questions to help lead the parent to suggest the correct use of procedure.</p> <p>During this exercise, be sure to watch out for and correct many parents' natural tendency to drift toward punishment methods as the first means of dealing with new behaviour problems that you pose. Continue to stress to the parent the principle of positives before negatives (rewards before consequences) when designing a behaviour change strategy to address their child's behaviour.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Schedule Booster	<p>During this session it is also often helpful to schedule a booster session approximately 1 month in the future for further monitoring of the family's progress with these new techniques. Suggest to the parent that a booster session can be a time for him or her to check in with you about his or her success in applying the tools he or she has learned, ask about any new difficulties that may have arisen, and discuss ways to continue to maintain the gains he or she has made in the long term.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Self-review	<p>Encourage weekly self-review of strategies: As the first booster session will not be for 1 month, encourage the parent to review what has been working well that week and what has not been working so well. This is to ensure strategies are sustained (before the first booster in 1 months' time); try to instigate this weekly for around 10-20 minutes each week.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Say Your Goodbyes and Thank the Family	<p>Thank the parent for his or her help and support during treatment. Let the parent know that you have enjoyed getting to know him or her, and that you are now passing the baton along, as formal treatment is ending. Point out that the progress was due primarily to the child and family's efforts, not to your own. It is important that the child takes responsibility for the success that was experienced and attributes gains to his or her own effort.</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Summarising	<p>Confirm date and time of the first booster session (approx. 1 months' time).</p> <p>Ask if they would like you to summarise the session, if they want to summarise or if you should do it together.</p>

Leave 'Em Laughing

End the session on a positive note with the parent by perhaps talking about things that are unrelated to his or her child, or discussing an area of interest you have in common with the parent. Also, the parent might be feeling overwhelmed by the challenging tasks he or she is undertaking; it can sometimes be helpful to leave a few minutes at the end of the session for the parent to share concerns or the challenges he or she has faced with the child since the previous session. The end of each session should be used to praise the parent's efforts and to convey support and encouragement.

Share with Child (if possible)

At the end of the session, if the child is available, it can be helpful to brief him or her on the materials covered.

<input type="checkbox"/> Review Concepts	Briefly review the successes of the child in the programme. Be sure to emphasise that the child's effort in adapting to the new rules and earning rewards was a major part of that success. Point out that some of the positive things that are happening in the family now that could not have happened previously (e.g., better grades at school, a new friend, a happier family with fewer arguments, or other accomplishments).
<input type="checkbox"/> Say Thanks and Goodbyes	Thank the parent and child for their help and support during the programme. Let the parent and child know that you have enjoyed getting to know them, and that you are now having them take over all the rules and rewards at home, as formal treatment is ending. Point out that the progress was primarily due to the child and family's efforts, not to your own. It is important that the parent and child take responsibility for their success and attribute gains to their own efforts.

Helpful Tips

- The overall tone of this session should be warm and upbeat. The parent should leave feeling pleased with his or her accomplishments and the gains that he or she has made with the child.
- When discussing how to apply the skills and tools that the parent has acquired during treatment to future behaviour problems, emphasise only those skills that you believe are highly likely to work well.
- If this module lasts for more than one session, it is often helpful to assure the parent that he or she can contact you between sessions if problems arise.
- If the family is particularly concerned about ending treatment, you can check in with the parent over the phone approximately once per month following the termination of treatment.

How's Your Style?

- Did you praise often?
- Did you review often, by asking questions?
- Did you simplify the steps as needed?

- Did your pace match that of the child or family?
- Did you stay on track?