

Handout One to Accompany ADHD Training for Teachers

General Classroom Management Strategies

The following strategies are based on general classroom management strategies and are useful for all children not only those with ADHD. Many of them will be familiar to teachers and already in place in most classrooms. They are important to remember for children with ADHD because they, in particular, respond well to positive reinforcement, structure and consistency. **Research shows that teachers make a greater impact on children with positive rather than negative comments, rewards rather than sanctions.** Equally children are more likely to respond to a constructive approach than to punishment for behaviours that they have difficulty controlling anyway. Even if purely punitive approaches extinguish an undesirable behaviour in the short term, they may also foster oppositional/ defiant behaviour in the longer term.

Positive Reinforcement

- Provide frequent, immediate, consistent feedback about acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This helps pupils monitor and regulate it.
- Praise positive achievements and behaviour and be specific (e.g. you were kind to your friends today when you were playing in the play ground” rather than “ well done you were a good boy today”)
- Where possible ignore minor inappropriate behaviour and actively reinforce desired classroom behaviours with positive teacher attention (e.g. acknowledge the positive behaviour of a nearby pupil)
- Use careful reprimands for misbehaviour, ensuring you criticise the behaviour and not the child (e.g. hitting others is wrong” not “ you are being very naughty”)
- Avoid imposing negative consequences in the whole class which are based on one child’s behaviour as is likely to cause harbouring of resentment towards the pupil

Classroom Rules and Routines

- Keep classroom rules few, clear and simple
- Word them positively (e.g. ” Put up your hand and wait quietly” not ‘ No shouting out”)
- Discuss rules, display them on the wall. Stick a personal; copy in pupil’s book or on desk, use symbols if pupils has reading difficulties
- Ensure pupils know what happens when rules are kept as well as broken
- **Be seen to do exactly what you say you will do. Do not make false threats or promises or say things will/ will not happen that you cannot follow through with**
- Establish a daily classroom routine and ensure that it is easy to understand, that it is understood and that it is practised. This is especially important at transition times.

Classroom Layout

- If possible seating in classroom should be flexible and combine several tables together for group work as well as rows or individual desks for independent work
- Ensure that teaching and support staff can move freely between desks and about the room so that they can get to all pupils

Giving Instructions

- Before giving instructions get the class's quiet attention first – do not shout over a noisy class
- Use lots of eye contact when speaking to the class
- Give short sequences of instructions in the order you want them to be carried out
- When necessary give out one instruction at a time
- Get pupils to repeat them back to ensure they have been heard and remembered
- Follow up oral instructions with written and or pictorial/symbolic reminders that pupils can consult if required
- Before commencing a task check key pupils know what to do
- During tasks make frequent checks to ensure that pupils have remembered and understood what to do

Lesson Structure and Presentation

- Review previous lessons on topic before describing the current lesson
- Actively involve pupils in lesson presentation e.g. writing key words on the board, pointing things out
- Use a multisensory approach to lesson presentation – e.g. combine verbal instructions with physical demonstration. Use role-play and computers where possible
- Keep audio and visual teaching aids directly related to the material to be learned otherwise they will be distracting
- Include a variety of activities during each lesson and vary the pace where possible
- State clearly and simply what the pupils are expected to learn in the lesson
- Describe how you expect pupils to behave in the lesson – make this explicit. Be particularly clear about pupil movement and noise
- Identify the materials pupils will need to use in the lesson. Make sure they can get them easily
- Tell pupils how they can get help in the lesson
- Encourage focussed periods of work by building in short breaks for physical activity (depends on age and ability of pupils)
- Allow enough time at the lesson end of review and recap

Worksheets

- Ideally use large, dark print on buff coloured paper
- Keep page format simple avoiding visual clutter – don't put on pictures that are not related to the task
- Avoid any handwritten worksheets
- Put on one or two activities per page with simple clear instructions
- Divide A4 pages into sections and devise a way to cover the sections that have been completed