

Operational Debriefing

Benefits of debrief

The debriefing process has many benefits and is vital in ensuring positive change within the working environment. It provides opportunity to ensure staff consistency where staff know and follow policies and procedures and that their responses during a crisis are consistent with the training provided and with the school/service vision. It provides a platform to learn from challenges and success, to build trust between staff, to promote teamwork, to support staff and pupils to reflect, to support analytical thinking around reasons for incidents and helps to prevent future incidents.

Aims of debrief (CALM)

East Dunbartonshire Council provides training through CALM – Crisis and Aggression Limitation and Management. Their aims of debriefing are highlighted below.

- Value staff through support
- Decrease pathological reactions
- Increase workplace safety
- Maintain standards
- Promote organisational learning
- Reduce restrictive interventions
- Promote positive changes in behaviour
- Relationship repair

Importance of Debrief

Head teachers/managers have a duty of care to all and should ensure procedures are in place to support staff and pupils' psychological and physical wellbeing and to address even the smallest of concerns to avoid compassion fatigue or burnout. Debriefing is an essential element in this process of support and should not be seen as a stand-alone solution but should be supportive and effective in maximising learning and reflection with a view to making alterations and improvements. Following any incident, staff and pupils should have the opportunity to debrief by having protected time to talk through events; to review facts, to correct misconceptions, and to consider observations with the aim of preventing further incidents.

Debrief Process

Where?

The debrief process should be supportive and should take place in a safe, controlled, non-judgmental environment to best enable a reflective discussion based on unconditional positive regard.

When?

Support and discussions (hot debrief) can take place immediately after an incident, but it is recommended that the debriefing process should take place 24-48 hours after an incident to enable staff and pupils time to process and recover. However, if an incident happened just before the weekend or a holiday period then it may be advisable to debrief earlier rather than have an extended period of time between the incident and the debrief discussion.

Debrief formats

Hot debriefing - immediately after an incident would focus on the following:

- Facts
- Feelings
- Future

High level structure – more detailed and focused and after a period of recovery and reflection (Appendix 1)

The aims of the session should be openly shared and the person leading the debrief should be aware of emotional distress and personal attributions which may impact the discussion. The discussion should focus on the following:

- Description of the incident – What happened? Why?
- Reflection – Why intervened? What trying to achieve? What worked? Consequence of actions? Thoughts and feelings of self and others
- Influencing factors – What factors may have influenced thoughts, feelings, responses? How does environment impact – sensory overload?
- Changes – Other choices available? How may this have changed situation? Different response if happened again? How can reduce risk of reoccurrence?
- Learning – feelings, insights, changes

Barriers to debrief

If a member of staff is reluctant to engage in the process, alternatives should be considered such as the debrief discussion being conducted by a different member of staff or in another location.

Any changes to practice required following the debriefing discussion should be addressed at a later date.

Pupil debrief

Debriefing with a pupil (if appropriate) should follow the same process and aims to support the pupil to recognise/accept responsibility for their actions. This process works best when pupils have had time to regulate and may happen days after the event. This is most effective when pupils are relaxed and receptive and can be supported to reflect. Use of visuals/prompts (Appendix 2) may help support some pupils, for others it may be a conversation where staff then update pupil plans to reflect these discussions.

Core conditions

Throughout any debriefing session the following core conditions are crucial in ensuring a positive experience for all.

- Congruence – be genuine and real, need to build trust, be present - eye contact/active listening, needs to be element of challenge to enable growth and change. Actions and words need to be authentic
- Unconditional positive regard – genuine concern, give guidance but not judgement
- Empathy – see others experiences and feeling in accurate and compassionate way, build trust

Debrief Checklist

- Ensure fully prepared for meeting
- Read up on the incident – speak to staff and pupils involved
- Create questions based on incident report
- Ensure staff/pupils are emotionally ready for discussion
- Select environment carefully
- Ensure time is protected for meeting
- Consider future implications from meeting

Staff Debriefing Form

Please use black ink and block letters if not typed

This form should be completed within 24-48 hours after the incident or as soon as practically possible.

Details

Name of staff member:

Date of discussion:

Debriefing conducted by

Names of all involved -

Description of Incident

What happened? Why?

Reflection

Why did you intervene and what you were trying to achieve? Did you follow agreed strategies in Pupil Plan?

How were you feeling, why? How were others feeling, why?

Impact of actions - What worked? What wasn't effective?

Influencing Factors

What factors may have influenced the way you were feeling, thinking and responding? – personal, environmental, organisational?

How can we reduce the risk of it happening again?

What alternatives were available? How may these have altered the outcome? What would you do differently if it happened again? What can be done to reduce the risk of reoccurrence?

Moving Forward

How do you feel now? What changes would you make? How will changes be implemented and evaluated?

Action Points

Staff training/Supports/Review Pupil Plan

What happened?



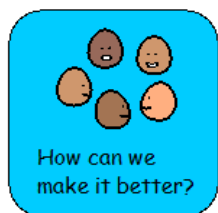
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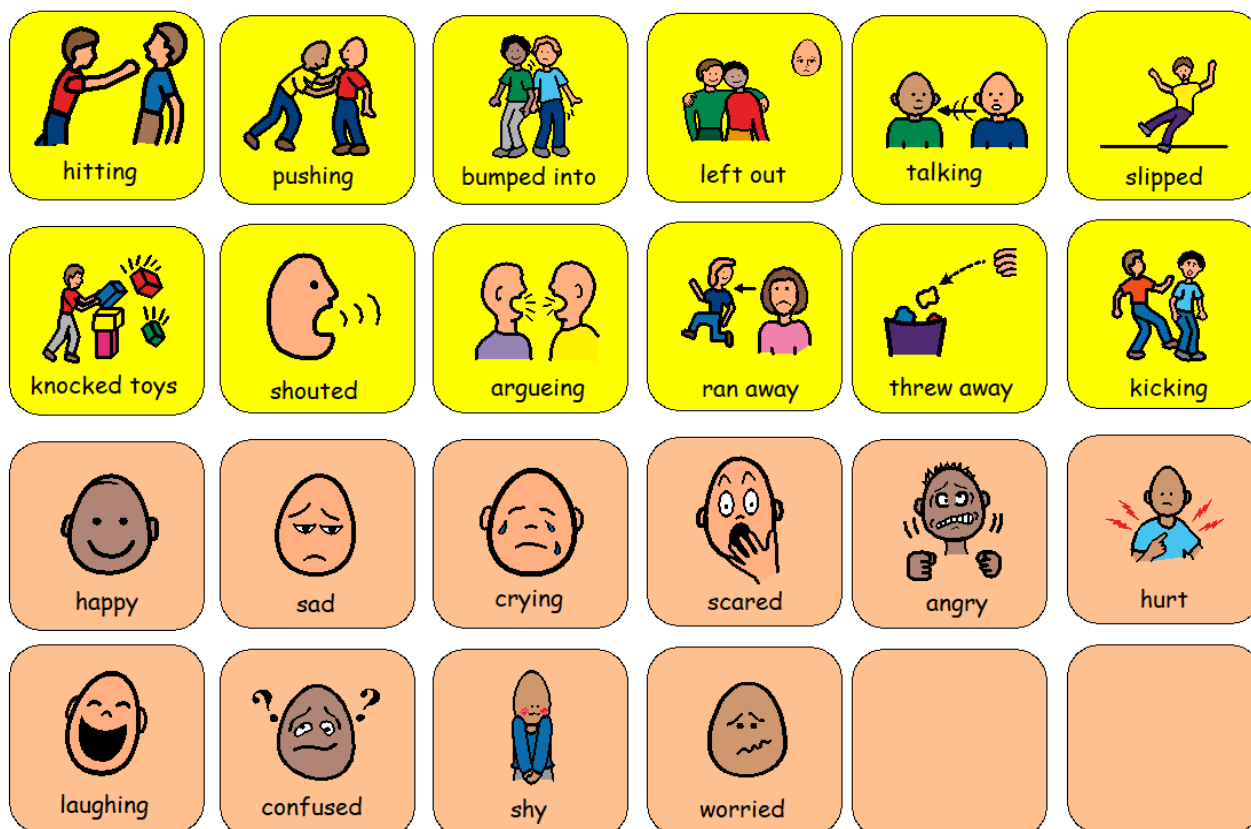


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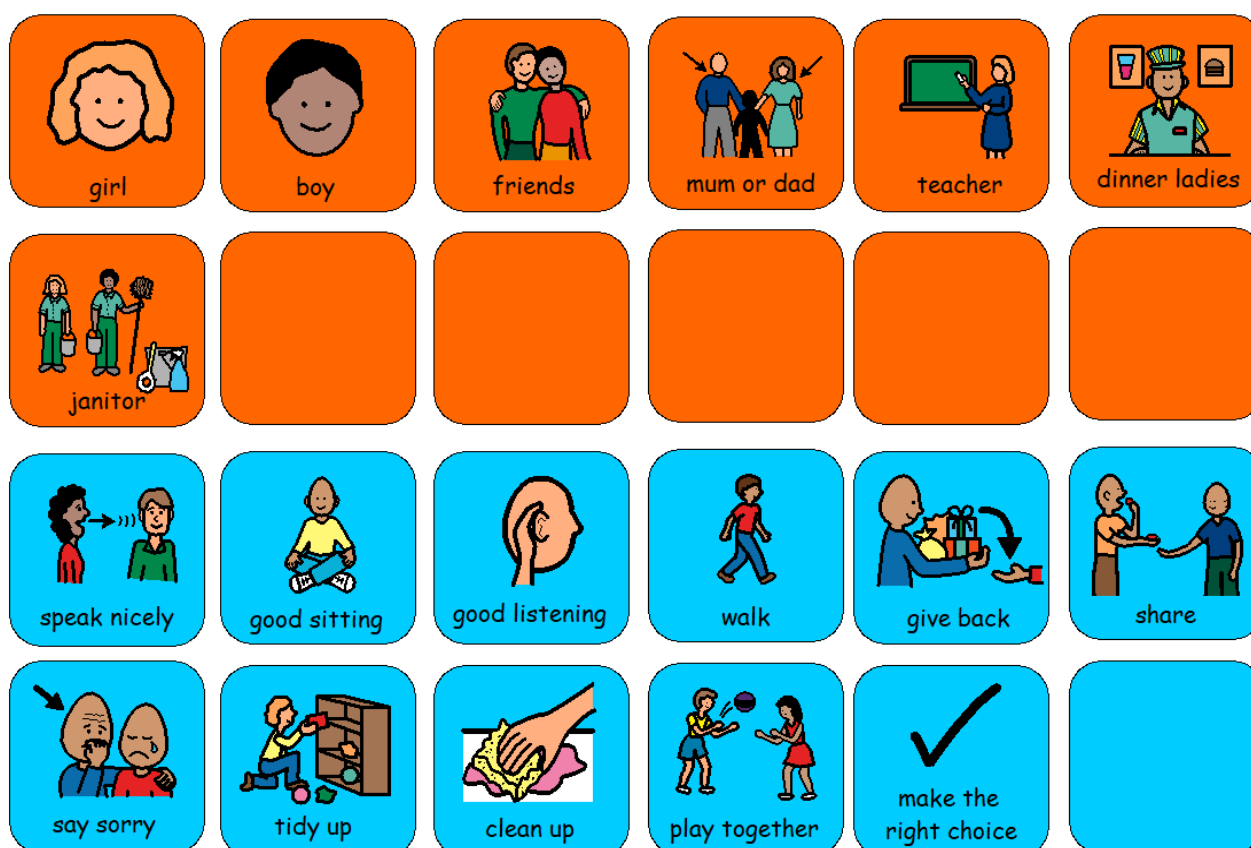


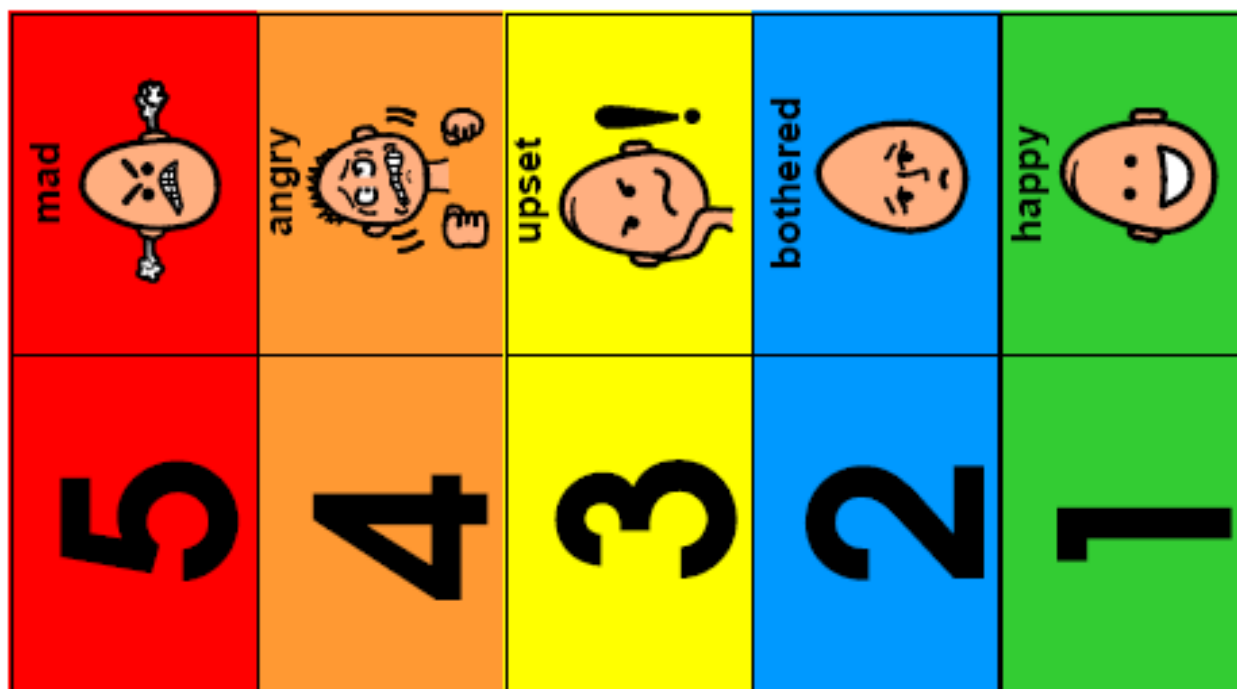
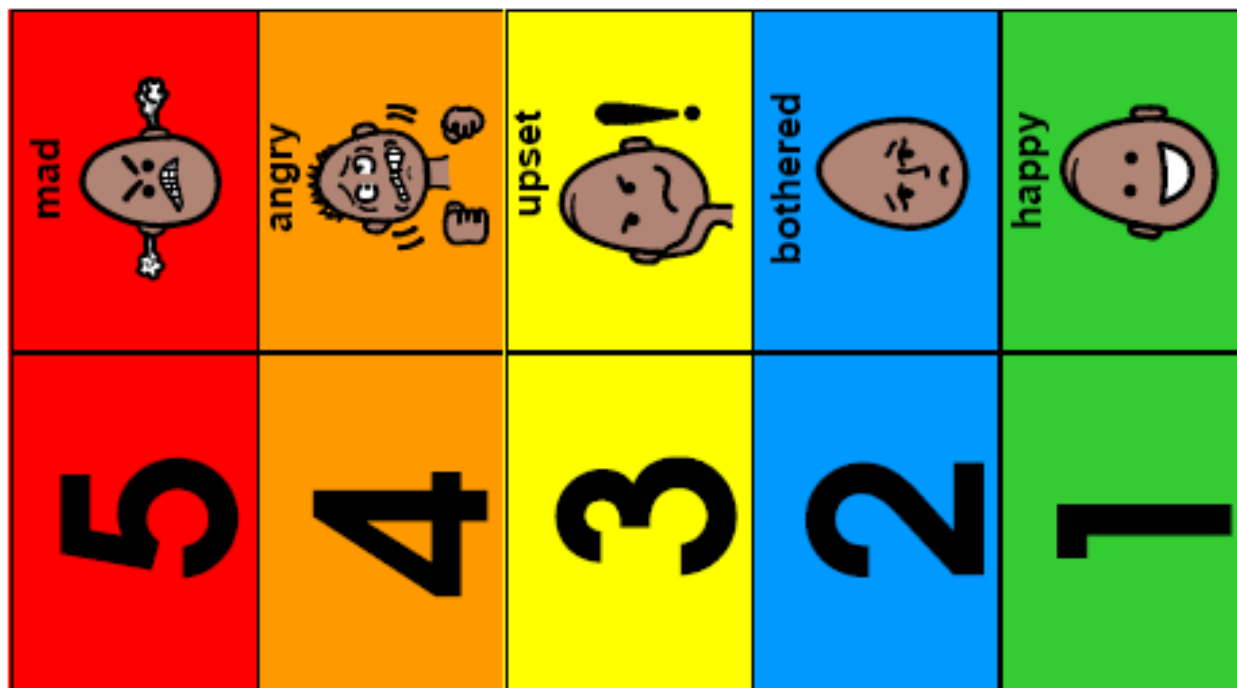
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What happened and how did it feel?



Who was affected and how can we make it better?







What sparked the incident?



What happened next?



Action: What could I have done differently?



Resolve:
What can I do now to make things better?



What will I do the next time this happens?

