

Sue Corbett

Operations Manager,
Bedfordshire Youth
Offending Service

Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service Preventative Strategy

The principle aim of the Youth Offending Service is to prevent offending by children and young people.

In order to fulfil this aim work is undertaken in both statutory and voluntary sectors with young people who may be causing concern but have not yet committed offences.

The aim is to intervene at an early stage to prevent an escalation of problematic behaviour.

Areas of work:

In schools:-

Citizenship and Crime Programmes

Peer Mentoring Projects

Positive Futures

In the Community:-

E – Male Project

Video Project

Black History Project

With Parents:-

Parenting Groups

With Colleagues:-

Protective Behaviours Training

NB A Protective Behaviours approach underpins much of the work.

PROTECTIVE BEHAVIOURS

**An internationally acclaimed
programme**

which offers skills and strategies to
prevent and interrupt violence and
abuse wherever they occur.

The skills and strategies are
universal and
suited to all people regardless of
age, ability, culture, race or
religion

Protective Behaviours: An Introduction

Protective Behaviours (PB's) is an internal process where each person using the ideas applies them to their own unique experience. It teaches specific strategies to help face challenges with confidence and without sacrificing the right to feel safe. It encourages people to take responsibility for their own feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

Protective Behaviours is based on a feelings, thinking and behaviour model which is underpinned by two themes:

We all have the right to feel safe all the time

&

There is nothing so awful we can't talk about it with someone

The process focuses on developing our individual internal awareness of external threat, recognising that 'feeling unsafe' is an individual response to a particular event or situation. It helps people to develop a variety of strategies to deal with any situation which does not feel safe.

The process promotes adventurousness, confidence, self esteem, communication, problem solving and risk taking. It gives choice and control to the individual as well as developing a sense of moral and social responsibility.

The PB's framework is used in many places and by a variety of people - schools, residential care services, domestic violence services, mediation practitioners, the police, probation and social workers, disability services and counselling services.

The process is used in many ways - abuse prevention, crisis intervention, anti-bullying strategies, managing challenging behaviour, crime prevention, assertiveness training, parenting support work, staff development, restorative justice, mediation, citizen education programmes and conflict resolution.



Protective Behaviours - Outline of Training

Protective Behaviours (PB's) is an internal process where each person applies the ideas to their own unique experience. The process can also be used as a programme if needed. The name 'Protective Behaviours' is somewhat misleading but, with its origins in child abuse prevention, it is understandable why the process received this name. Over the years, as applications of PB's have broadened, the name seems to have remained with us. This paper looks at what Protective Behaviours is and some of its uses. It is intended as an information paper with the hope that the reader will see its relevance to their specific interests and will then attend training.

A typical introductory training day consists of exploring the following ideas which (are presented here as separate sections. In practice, all interact and support each other. To take one section out leaves the others incomplete.

Unwritten Rules of Society

We see how certain rules of society have a powerful influence on our choices of behaviour. Whilst these rules can be positive and help to guide our interactions, many of them tell us we should, ought or must behave in a particular way. For instance, children should do as adults tell them; professionals should always have the answer; men should not show their feelings and women should behave in a ladylike manner. These rules are not written down, are often contradictory and do not seem to fit with our own experience. During training we look at their function, how they develop, their effects and how to change them if necessary.

Feelings, Thoughts and Behaviour

During this session we look at the interaction between our feelings, thoughts and behaviour. We see that feelings are feelings, neither right nor wrong, good nor bad. Some people seem to mask one feeling with another or use behaviour as a way of avoiding or covering feelings. We look at how behaviour is a choice with an effect, usually involving others as well as ourselves. Sometimes we do not know what our choices are or they may be limited by factors we cannot change. Once we are in touch with our feelings it helps free us to use our thinking. Our thinking influences both our feelings and behaviour.

Theme 1. 'We all have the right to feel safe all the time'

We explore this theme in detail, carefully looking at the connection between rights and responsibilities. We also take the concepts of blame and punishment out of commonly held ideas associated with responsibilities. Instead, we focus on the 'ability to respond' contained within the meaning of the word. The difference between having a responsibility for ourselves and to others is also examined. Next we discover for ourselves the difference between feeling safe, fun to feel scared (adventurousness), risking on purpose (which may not feel like fun but we still have choice) and feeling unsafe. These differences are manifested by what we call our 'Early Warning Signs' (EWS), specific bodily responses which tell us when we do not feel safe. It is these universal body signs which mean that Protective Behaviours is accessible to all people, irrespective of age, gender, nationality, ability or belief system.

Theme 2. 'There is nothing so awful we can't talk about it with someone'

This theme is also explored in detail. In particular we focus on the ideas and effects of 'talking', and what might happen if we do not believe this theme. We encourage everyone to develop their personal networks of support, those people they could turn to if in need. Desired qualities of network people are identified and we examine how we would know if someone has these qualities. Types of networks and ways of letting people know we need to talk with them are also explored.