



UNDERSTANDING YOUR TEENAGER'

RUNNING A SOLIHULL APPROACH PARENTING GROUP SPECIFICALLY FOR PARENTS OF TEENAGERS

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Why?

As Parent Support Advisers covering clusters of both primary and secondary schools, we had been running the 'Understanding Your Child's Behaviour' group for parents and carers for about 5 years. These groups were (and continue to be) very popular with parents of primary aged children, but there was a low take up rate by parents of secondary aged children. We were running alternative groups for parents of teenagers, but these were courses grounded much more in behaviour management strategies, and were also not well attended by parents. We were very keen to offer the Solihull group in a way that encouraged attendance by parents of older children, as we had seen such good results from parents of primary school aged children. It was clear that parents of secondary aged pupils had slightly different

How?

The content and order of the sessions remained unchanged, which maintained the fidelity of the Approach. We made the following changes in order to meet the needs of our particular target range of parents:

- The name of the group was changed to 'Understanding Your Teenager's Behaviour'
- Changing group times from mornings to evenings
- Targetted advertising to parents of pupils in Y6 – Y11 (aged 10 -16)
- Use of 'Teenage Brain Development' powerpoint, alongside 'Baby It's You' DVD in sessions one and two
- All role-plays and examples were centered on teenagers. Some home activity sheets and hand-outs were slightly reworded to make them more focused on teenage behaviour

The Groups

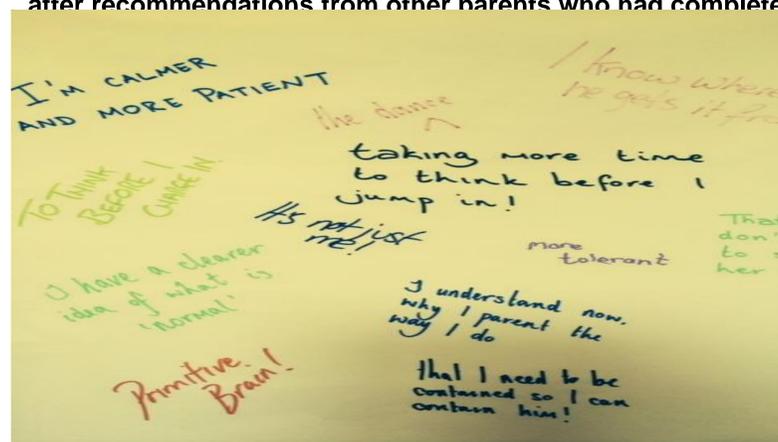
We have run six teenage groups over the past two years, and are currently running for the seventh time. We have started a new group each academic term, and have run these alongside 'Understanding Your Child's Behaviour' groups which have been run the following morning for parents of primary school aged children.

- Every group has run for 12 parents – so 72 parents have started the group
- The completion rate has been very high (96.4%) with only 5 parents in total not completing from the 6 groups
- Take up is extremely high. All groups have been oversubscribed and we have operated waiting lists.
- All available places on all groups have been filled within 48 hours of advertising.

Differences

By running Teenage groups on Thursday evenings and Primary groups simultaneously on Friday mornings, significant differences between the two groups have been noticed.

- Parents and carers in the teenage group tend to be older, with more couples attending
- These groups appear to be more willing to challenge ideas, and ask for research and evidence more often
- The social/economic demographic of these groups appears to be considerably broader
- Parents who have completed the course tend to be far more proactive than parents in the younger group with extolling the virtues of the course to their friends and communities. By our third group, around half the parents attending were doing so after recommendations from other parents who had completed



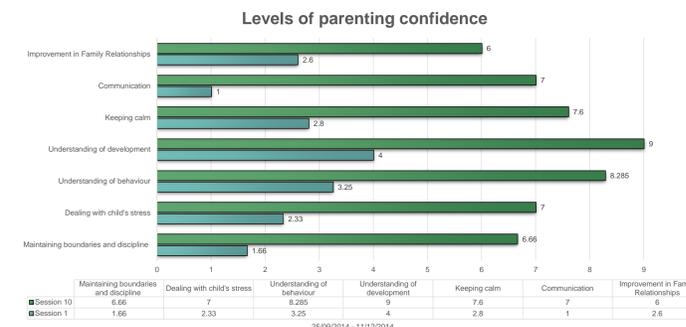
Evaluation

In addition to using the weekly evaluation sheets in each session, we wanted to measure outcomes for parents completing the course. We chose to use **Goal Based Outcomes** for several reasons:

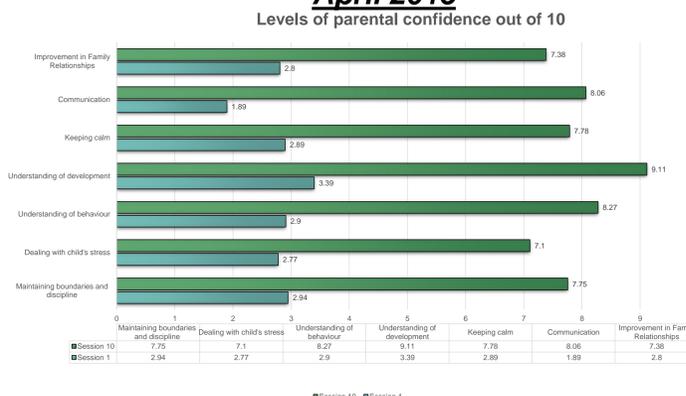
Parents were able to identify their own goals without being told what they 'should' be trying to change. The parent's chosen goals had to be goals for themselves only, rather than goals for their children.

We felt that this method of evaluation complimented the ethos of the Solihull Approach very well. Parents were able to decide for themselves what their priorities were, and were encouraged to begin thinking about the changes that they would like to make. Parents chose a wide range of goals for themselves, which included 'Staying calmer with my kids', 'Being able to communicate more effectively with my child', 'Not giving in', 'understanding why they are so angry' and 'having more fun together'. These goals were grouped together into categories by us. Parents identified their goals and rated how close they felt they were to those goals in session one. They were then asked to score themselves again in session 10 (before they were shown where they had scored themselves in session one). All parents stated they were amazed by how much closer they were to their goals by the end of the group.

Results



Data taken from parents attending "Understanding your teenager's behaviour" April 2015



Data taken from 72 parents attending 6 "Understanding your teenager's behaviour" groups over the last 2 years

Conclusions

- There is a significant demand in our clusters for a teenage parenting course more focused on understanding behaviours rather than the traditional "strategy based" courses previously being offered.
- Parents of teenagers are much less worried about being labelled as "struggling" by attending such groups and are far more willing to give feedback, share their experiences and recommend the group to their peers.
- Parents' feedback strongly suggests that from greater understanding of the behaviours comes better communication and improvement in all family relationships.