

Using 'What's The Message?'

During the early part of 2017 an individual we support (who has a diagnosis of Autism, limited verbal communication and learning disabilities) was beginning to have an increase in the problem behaviours. This started with him biting his hand, then scratching his hand, slapping his face and escalated over a period of 2 months to banging his head off walls.

Myself (Stephen Gell, Team Co-ordinator) and Jimmy Williamson (Shift Leader) attended the 2 day What's the Message training with Simon Carnall. During the session he coached us with a range of PBS topics including ABC charts, behaviour recording templates such as scatterplots and a series of prevention strategies such as social stories and different communication methods.

When we returned to the service we implemented the use of ABC charts and scatter plots to identify the function of the behaviour. We also discussed the issue at supervisions, team meetings and through observations. It became quickly evident the behaviour was driven by a very specific type of Social interaction (as explained below).

The social story was put in place and read on "base line" along with the pictorial cue card.

This had an almost immediate impact. The service user began to interact with the staff in a more positive note. After 2 weeks of using the methods the behaviour stopped completely and this has been long term.

15 months later, using Social Stories once more, the gentleman took his first ever flight and did not have any issues! This was only possible by using the preventative measures outlined in the training we were given.