

The Alternative No

Each time you say 'no' to a person you're sending a message: you don't want to help and refusing their request. Even if something can't be done, there's always a **positive way** to communicate it. We all use the word 'no' so easily, because:

- It can be so easy to say and requires no thought
- It can be a 'knee jerk' reaction
- But... It can be a trigger...



Why is this? We all take denial seriously and it can cause a childlike response in us all. In the book "Effortless experience" Matthew Dixon, Nick Toman, and Rick DeLisi noted that when we were toddlers and one of our parents said NO, we had three options:

- Ask the other parent (we might get another chance of a yes)
- Accept 'No' as the answer (but who wants to do that?)
- Cry, scream and kick, hoping our outburst will change the decision!

You probably think that you outgrew this, but for most of us, these reactions are still evident. We might not kick and bite as much, but we still scream and pout. Some common responses to the word 'No' from the service users we support can be:

- Become agitated and emotional or argumentative in order to get their viewpoint across
- Try to go to another staff member or other service users
- Threaten staff and others. Especially if the reason is not understood or there is no other option

The Alternative to 'No' is a Primary Prevention Strategy in PBS and has 3 elements:

1. Y/C – "Yes" with a Contingency.

The person wants to buy the Take That DVD which was £15 and they only had £12. You could say:

- a) No, you can't have that one because you only have £15 (NO). **OR**
- b) Yes, you can have it next week when you have the extra money (Y/C)?

2. A/C – Alternative Choice

Let's say a person asks for a specific drink and you don't have it. You might say:

- a) You can't have a Diet Coke as we don't have any here (NO). **OR**
- b) We haven't got any Coke, but we do have Pepsi or a Milkshake - you choose (AC).

3. Y/CO – "Yes" with the Consequence

If the person has capacity and is aware of the risks and consequences to their actions, you can remind them of this. So, if a the person asks for a packet of toffees but, the last time, he complained of them hurting his teeth, you might say:

- a) No, you can't have those (NO), **OR**
- b) Yes, you can have them. Just remember thought that the last time they hurt your teeth (YCo).