

Group Management

...for less discipline and more fun!



Management

What is it?

Management is the time a leader spends gaining attention, organizing participants, keeping their attention, and transitioning from one activity to another.



Efficient management = less behaviour problems, more participant “active time”, easier organization, and increased “flow” during and between activities.

Management can be one of the most challenging areas of working with groups of children and youth. Read the following questions and write down your first reaction to each one.

How do you get people’s attention?

How do you keep their attention?

What are the signs that people are paying attention?

What disruptions can interrupt attention (of both participants and leaders)?

Do leaders have any control over these disruptions?

Think back to a time when you were in a participant role. What signals, strategies, and techniques did the leader employ to GAIN and KEEP your attention, TRANSITION the group to between activities, and COMMUNICATE directions and orders.

Gaining & Keeping Attention

Transitioning

Communicating (directing)

Look at the list above and put a + sign beside all techniques that involved POSITIVE communication or encouragement. Put an - sign beside any techniques that were negative or ineffective. Put a N beside any that were neutral (not positive or negative). Do you notice any trends?

This workshop will introduce tools to proactively and effectively GET and KEEP attention, ORGANIZE groups, and COMMUNICATE with participants. The final page is a TOOLBOX for you to write down ideas that you want to remember or take with you on your leadership journey.

Hey You!

What are the most common techniques people use to get others' attention? This section will introduce you to a wide variety of SIGNALS and SIGNS to use in capturing and keeping people's attention on a certain stimulus. But first, some interesting facts about attention itself....

I'm Listening!

Moving while listening can actually help some people take in more information. For some people, making eye contact and "being still" are prerequisites for NOT hearing what you are saying!



Ka BOOOM!

The brain is TUNED to pay attention to:

- novelty (new things in the environment)
- high contrast or intensity
- emotion and movement

2,4,6,8....

Children who are 5 years old will usually be able to retain 2 (plus or minus one) items in short term memory when you are giving directions. This increases roughly by one item every TWO years as they grow. Age 7 = 3 items. Age 9 = 4 items. Age 11 = 5 items.



Pay Attention to ME!

Between the ages of 6 and 11 children often pay attention to TOO MUCH information in their environment. They slowly develop the ability to SELECT the most important information from their environment.

15 seconds and counting

People can only hold information in their short term memory for 18-20 seconds (shorter for kids) before it disappears. If an instructor gives directions for longer than 20 sec. without having the listeners review, repeat, and think about the information...

it's as good as gone!



It's All in the Brain

Attention is LESS about the signals you see from your listeners and MORE about what is going on in their brain. Things like dehydration, getting "stuck" on one side of the brain, too much stimulation (light, sound, distractions), and fatigue will affect children's ability to focus attention.

Creative Attention Getters n' Keepers

- **Count Down.** 10...9...8...7...6...etc.
- **Present a sound.** Siren, whistle, bell, etc.
- **Pass it on.** Tell one person "meet in the circle, pass it on". They tell another person, etc.
- **Rhymes and rhythms.** E.g. clap a rhythm until everyone is clapping the same beat.
- **Incorporate movement into explanations.** E.g. spinning, tapping, cross-lateral, etc.
- **Ask questions. Ask for repetition.** Ask for clarification (not just "do you understand"?)
- **Use signals.**



T with arms. Time out; everyone freezes

Respect. Stand tall and make eye contact briefly with leader.

Circle. Draw circle with arm; everyone makes a circle

Hit the Deck. Arms up then down suddenly; everyone must fall to the ground

Sizzling Bacon. Wiggle fingers in the air; everyone runs on the spot...FAST!

Home. Stand with arms in a roof over your head. Everyone returns to a "home" spot.

Dead Bug. Shake arms up high. Everyone lies on their backs, shaking arms and legs in the air.

Make a Chain. Grab each wrist with the other. Everyone finds a partner or two.

Turn lights on/off. "Freeze!" or Iceberg. Wave a flag. Everyone stops and is quiet.

Yo Rules!





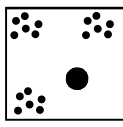





Magic # 3
Values not Behaviours
Involve Participants



Organization

In Line

Formations are shapes used to group people. Below are some examples. The black circle in each diagram represents the leader. In what situation do you think each formation would be most (and least) useful?

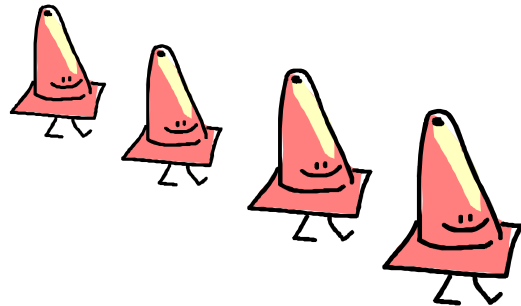
<p>Circle</p> 	<p>Lines</p> 	<p>Corners or Home (in a predetermined area)</p> 	<p>Crowd</p> 
<p>Semi Circle</p> 	<p>Snake (single file then turn sideways)</p> 	<p>Star (groups of 4 or 5)</p> 	<p>Find a Cone (pre-set by leader)</p> 

Limits

Every activity has a BOUNDARY, or limit. Sometimes we use natural boundaries like playground areas, gymnasiums, fields, trees, walls, and so on. However, depending on the activity, safety, and age of your participants you may need to create your own boundaries. For example, are the boundaries of a full soccer field appropriate for engaging 6 year olds in the game? Will a gym space offer optimal limits for both sport and craft stations for 12 year olds?

Making Boundaries: Material List

- cones or 1/2 tennis balls
- signs, posters, visuals
- rope, string, or marking tape
- bags, water bottles, or other gear
- rocks, sticks, or other natural items
- folding chairs
- mats
- Other _____



Communication

The Basics

People communicate in many different ways. E.g. eye movements, gestures, body orientation (angle of body, space between people), facial expressions, tone of voice, dress, physique, posture, body tension, para-language (oooo, ahhhh, hmmm, ohHHH!, etc.)

Between 65 and 95% of “social messages” are communicated NON VERBALLY.

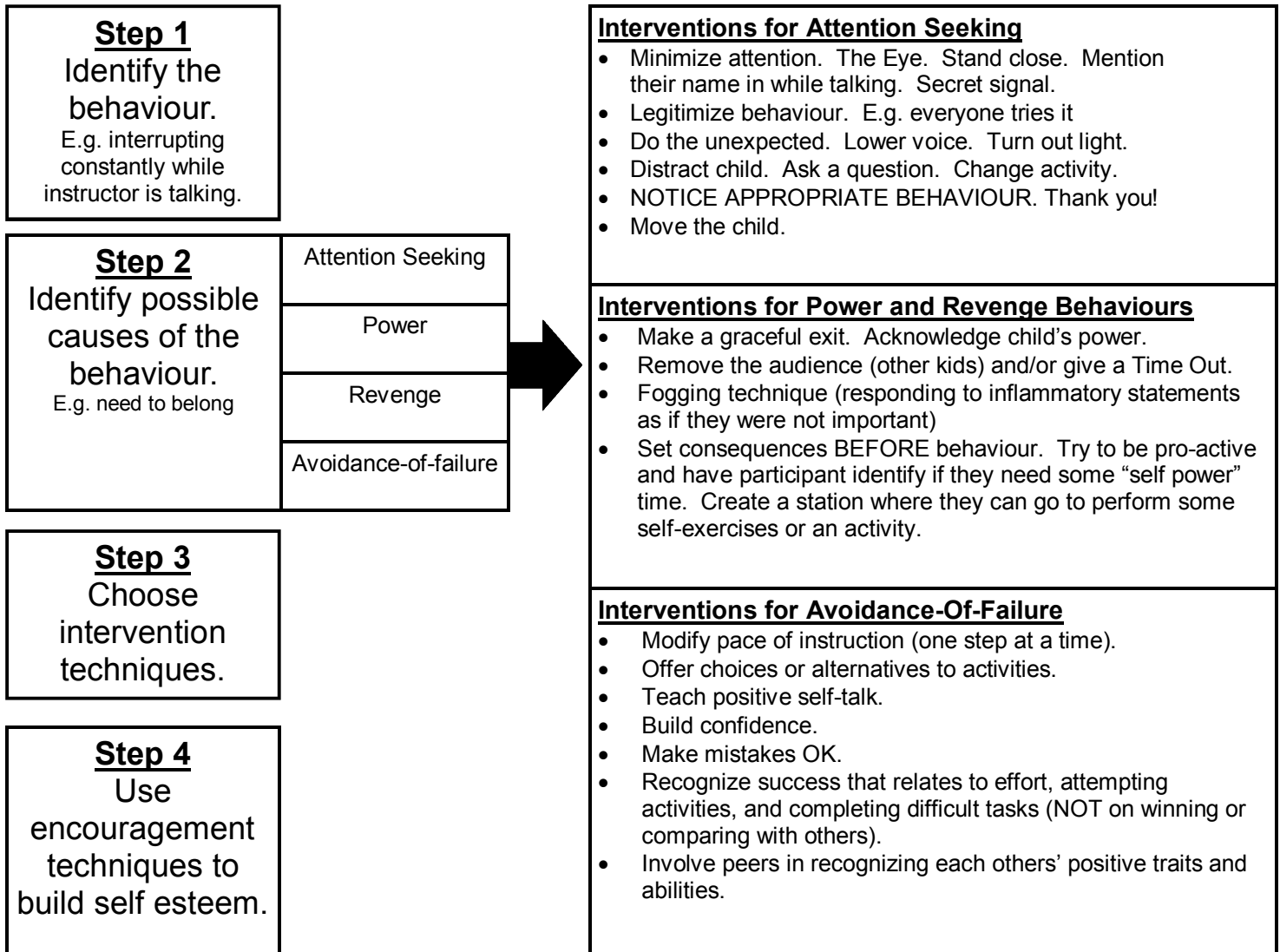
Actions are worth 1,000,000 words.

1. Listen 2. clarify 3. Talk

Be positive.

Challenging Behaviour

How do you deal with challenging behaviour as a leader? First, we have to look deeper at what might be the CAUSE of the behaviour. Most management strategies deal directly with the behaviour “in the moment”. More effective strategies target the CAUSE of the behavior. Prevention is always the best medicine and the more you get to know the participants, the better able you will be to circumvent challenging behaviours BEFORE they happen.

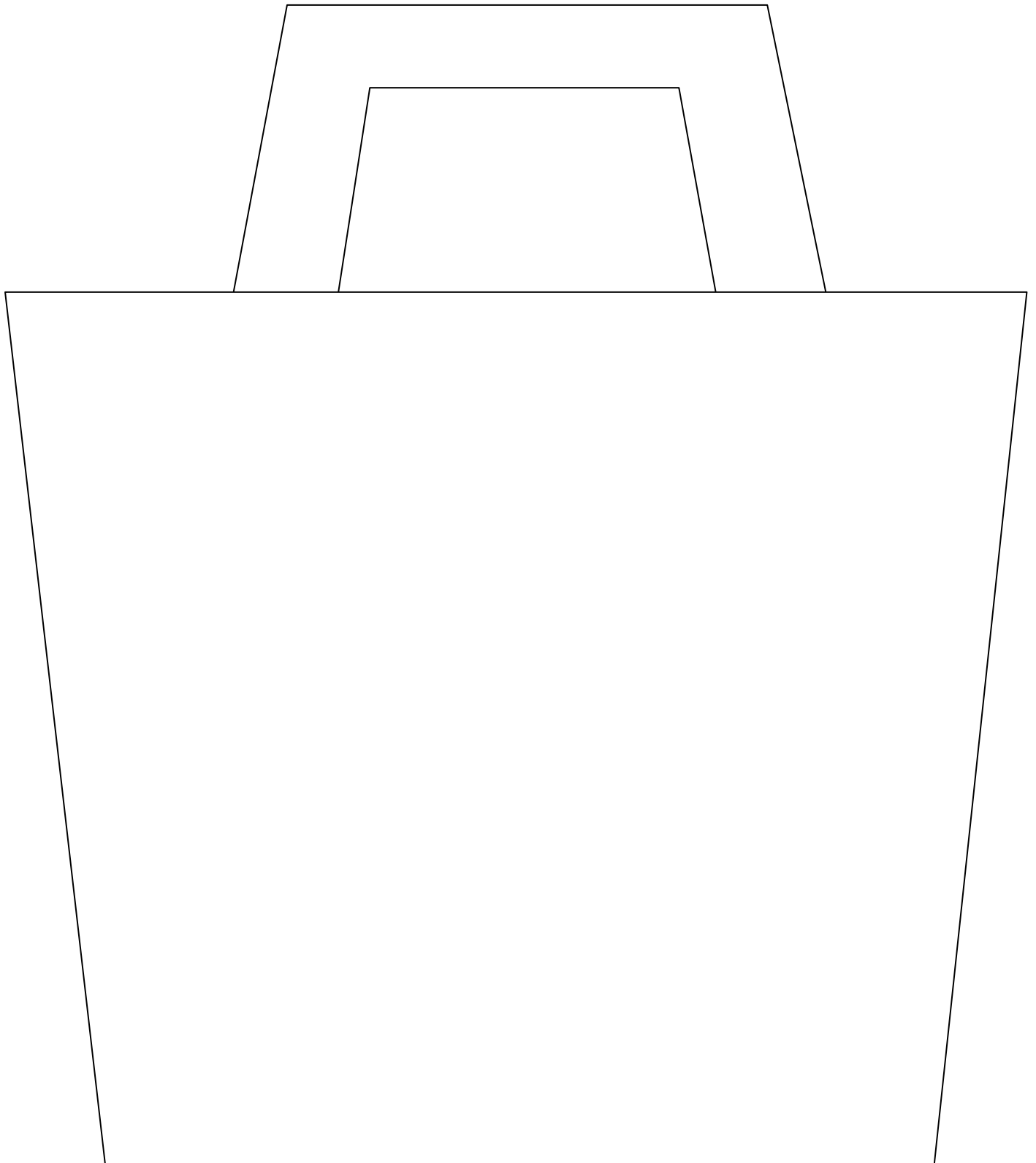


Spin It: Positive and Proactive Communication

- 1. Traditionally “NO, don’t do that” is one of the first reactions many leaders have to behaviours. Taking a positive approach to communication may take longer at first, but it has far more success in in the long term.**
- 2. Tell them what you WANT them to do
(not what you DON’T want them to do)**
- 3. Listening = emotions first. Talking = facts first**
- 4. Allow negotiation. Communication = 2 way**

Management Toolbox

In the space below, write or draw "best ideas" from the workshop. Keep this page handy when you are working in a leadership position so you can refer to the methods often. Constant practice and integration of new ideas will help you gain experience and improve your skills over time.

A large, empty trapezoidal shape representing a toolbox. The top edge is shorter than the bottom edge, and the sides are slanted outwards. On the top edge, there is a smaller, centered trapezoidal shape representing a handle, also with a shorter top edge and slanted sides. The entire shape is outlined in black and is intended for writing or drawing ideas.