

NZCF 165

LIFE SKILLS MANUAL



**THIS LIFE SKILLS MANUAL IS NOT TO BE ALTERED IN ANY WAY
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COMMANDANT NEW ZEALAND CADET FORCES.**

(Original Signed)

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Any proposals for amendment or additions to the text of this publication should be made through the Area Office.

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Introduction

This manual is for the use by Regular Force Staff of the three Cadet Force Training and Support Units and for NZCF Officers at Cadet Unit level.

Its purpose is to standardise information concerning Life Skills for Cadets in the New Zealand Cadet Forces.

This is a ***living*** document. There will be regular amendments to ensure that the training is both safe and as up-to-date as possible. It is the responsibility of all users to note and advise any errors or inconsistencies that may be detected, or any changes that maybe required to the provisions of the manual because of changes in procedures. Generally, any recommendation for change should be advised to the respective Area Co-ordinator who will pass it on to the Staff Officer Training and Development, HQ NZCF.

CHAPTER 1 – Time Management

SECTION 1 - Overcoming Procrastination

1.1 If you've found yourself putting off important tasks over and over again, you're not alone. In fact, many people procrastinate to some degree - but some are so chronically affected by procrastination that it stops them achieving things they're capable of and disrupts their careers.

1.2 The key to controlling and ultimately combating this destructive habit is to recognise when you start procrastinating, understand why it happens (even to the best of us), and take active steps to better manage your time and outcomes.

1.3 Why do we procrastinate? In a nutshell, you procrastinate when you put off things that you should be focussing on right now, usually in favour of doing something that is more enjoyable or that you're more comfortable doing.

1.4 Procrastinators work as many hours in a day as other people (and often work longer hours) but they invest their time in the wrong tasks. Sometimes this is simply because they don't understand the difference between urgent tasks and important tasks, and jump straight into getting on with urgent tasks that aren't actually important.

1.5 They may feel that they are doing the right thing by reacting fast. Or they may not even think about their approach and simply be driven by the person whose demands are the loudest. Either way, by doing this, they have little or no time left for the important tasks, despite the unpleasant outcomes this may bring about.

1.6 Another common cause of procrastination is feeling overwhelmed by the task. You may not know where to begin. Or you may doubt that you have the skills or resources you think you need. So you seek comfort in doing tasks you know you're capable of completing. Unfortunately, the big task isn't going to go away - truly important tasks rarely do.

1.7 Other causes of procrastination include:

- a. Waiting for the "right" mood or the "right" time to tackle the important task at hand;
- b. A fear of failure or success;
- c. Underdeveloped decision making skills;
- d. Poor organisational skills; and
- e. Perfectionism ("I don't have the right skills or resources to do this perfectly now, so I won't do it at all").

1.8 How to overcome Procrastination? Whatever the reason behind procrastination, it must be recognised, dealt with and controlled before you miss opportunities or your career is derailed.

Step 1: Recognise that you're Procrastinating

1.9 If you are honest with yourself, you probably know when you're procrastinating.

1.10 But to be sure, you first need to make sure you know your priorities. Putting off an important task isn't procrastination; it's probably good prioritisation. Use the Action Priority Matrix to identify your priorities, and then work from a Prioritised To Do List on a daily basis.

1.11 Some useful indicators, which will help you pull yourself up as soon as you start procrastinating, include:

- a. Filling your day with low priority tasks from your To Do List;
- b. Reading an e-mail or request that you've noted in your notebook or on your To Do List more than once, without starting work on it or deciding when you're going to start work on it;
- c. Sitting down to start a high priority task, and almost immediately going off to make a cup of coffee or check your e-mails;
- d. Leaving an item on your To Do List for a long time, even though you know it's important; and
- e. Regularly saying "Yes" to unimportant tasks that others ask you to do, and filling your time with these instead of getting on with the important tasks already on your list.

Step 2: Work out WHY you're Procrastinating

1.12 Why you procrastinate can depend on both you and the task. But it's important to understand what the reasons for procrastination are for each situation, so that you can select the best approach for overcoming your reluctance to get going.

1.13 Common causes of procrastination were discussed in detail above, but they can often be reduced to two main reasons:

- a. You find the task unpleasant; or
- b. You find the task overwhelming.

Step 3: Get over it!

1.14 If you are putting something off because you just don't want to do it, and you really can't delegate the work to someone else, you need to find ways of motivating yourself to get moving. The following approaches can be helpful here:

- a. Make up your own rewards. For example, promise yourself a piece of tasty chocolate cake at lunchtime if you've completed a certain task;
- b. Ask someone else to check up on you. Peer pressure works! This is the principle behind slimming and other self-help groups, and it is widely recognised as a highly effective approach;
- c. Identify the unpleasant consequences of NOT doing the task; and
- d. Work out the cost of your time to your employer. As your employers are paying you to do the things that **they** think are important, you're not delivering value for money if you're not doing those things. Shame yourself into getting going.

1.15 If you're putting off starting a project because you find it overwhelming, you need to take a different approach. Here are some tips:

- a. Break the project into a set of smaller, more manageable tasks. You may find it helpful to create an action plan; and
- b. Start with some quick, small tasks if you can, even if these aren't the logical first actions. You'll feel that you're achieving things, and so perhaps the whole project won't be so overwhelming after all.

1.16 Key points: To have a good chance of conquering procrastination, you need to spot straight away that you're doing it. Then, you need to identify you're procrastinating and taken appropriate steps to overcome the block.

1.17 Part of the solution is to develop good time management, organisational and personal effectiveness habits, such as those described in "Make Time for Success!" this helps you establish the right priorities, and manage your time in such a way that you make the most of the opportunities open to you.

SECTION 2 - Activity Logs

Finding Out How You Really Spend Your Time

1.18 How long do you spend each day on unimportant things; things that don't really contribute to your success at work? Do you KNOW how much time you've spent reading junk mail, talking to colleagues, making coffee and eating lunch? And how often have you thought, "I could achieve so much more if I had another half hour each day."

1.19 And are you aware of when in the day you check your e-mail, write important articles or do your long term planning?

1.20 Most people find they function at different levels of effectiveness at different times of the day as their energy levels fluctuate. Your effectiveness may vary depending on the amount of sugar in your blood, the length of time since you last took a break, routine distractions, stress, discomfort or a range of other factors.

1.21 Activity logs help you analyse how you actually spend your time. The first time you use an activity log you may be shocked to see the amount of time that you waste! Memory is a very poor guide when it comes to this, as it can be too easy to forget time spent on non-core tasks.

How to Use the Tool

1.22 Keeping an Activity Log for several days helps you to understand how you spend your time, and when you perform at your best. Without modifying your behaviour any further than you have to, note down the things you do as you do them on this template. Every time you change activities, whether opening mail, working, making coffee, gossiping with colleagues or whatever, note down the time of the change.

1.23 As well as recording activities, note how you feel, whether alert, flat, tired, energetic, etc. do this periodically throughout the day. You may decide to integrate your activity log with a stress diary.

Learning from Your Log

1.24 Once you have logged your time for a few days, analyse your daily activity log. You may be alarmed to see the amount of time you spend doing low value jobs.

1.25 You may also see that you are energetic in some parts of the day, and flat in other parts. A lot of this can depend on the rest breaks you take, the times and amount you eat, and quality of your nutrition. The activity log gives you some basis for experimenting with these variables.

1.26 Your analysis should help you free up extra time in your day by applying one of the following actions to most activities:

- a. Eliminate jobs that your employer shouldn't be paying you to do. These may include tasks that someone else in the organisation should be doing, possibly at a lower pay rate, or personal activities such as sending non-work e-mails;
- b. Schedule your most challenging tasks for the times of the day when your energy is highest. That way your work will be better and it should take you less time;
- c. Try to minimise the number of times a day to switch between types of task. For example, read and reply to e-mails in blocks once in the morning and once in the afternoon only; and
- d. Reduce the amount of time spent on legitimate personal activities such as making coffee (take turns in your team to do this - it saves time and strengthens team spirit).

Key Points

1.27 Activity logs are useful tools for auditing the way that you use your time. They can also help you to track changes in your energy, alertness and effectiveness throughout the day.

1.28 By analysing your activity log you will be able to identify and eliminate time-wasting or low-yield jobs. You will also know the times of day which you are most effective, so that you can carry out your most important tasks during these times.

SECTION 3 - Action Plans

Small Scale Planning

1.29 So, you know that you need to produce a newsletter, organise a team-building session, put together a bid for a new piece of work, or organise moving Jenny's team to the second floor. Exactly what do you need to do to achieve this?

1.30 None of these are major projects. In fact, you can probably think of all the steps in your head right now. But how do you ensure that you really have covered everything? Would anyone else know where you'd got to with the work if you were unexpectedly off sick for a few days? And are you quite clear about when you need to start if everything is to be done and dusted by the deadline.

1.31 An Action Plan is a simple list of all the tasks that you need to carry out to achieve an objective. It differs from a To Do List in that it focuses on the achievement of a single goal.

How to Use the Tool

1.32 Whenever you want to achieve something significant, draw up an Action Plan. This helps you think about what you need to do to achieve that thing, so that you can get help where you need it and monitor your progress.

1.33 To draw up an Action Plan, simply list the tasks that you need to carry out to achieve your goal, in the order that you need to complete them. This is very simple, but is still very useful!

Tip:

A useful mnemonic that you can use to help you check that you've remembered all the types of task that might be needed to meet your goal is SCHEMES. This stands for:

- Space
- Cash
- Helpers/people
- Equipment
- Materials
- Expertise
- Systems

You may not need all of them to meet some goals; a small internal project to streamline the format of your team's reports, for example, only requires "people", "expertise" and "systems."

1.34 Keep the Action Plan by you as you carry out the work and update it as you go along with any additional activities that come up.

1.35 If you think you'll be trying to achieve a similar goal again, revise your Action Plan after the work is complete, by changing anything that could have gone better.

Perhaps you could have avoided a last minute panic if you'd alerted a supplier in advance about when and approximately what size of order you would be placing. Or maybe colleagues would have been able to follow up on the impact of your newsletter on clients if you have communicated with them about when it would be hitting clients' desks. (If you're doing the job often, it can be incredibly powerful to turn your Action Plan into an Aide Memoire).

Tip:

Action Plans are great for small projects, where deadlines are not particularly important or strenuous, and where you don't need to co-ordinate other people.

As your projects grow, however, you'll need to develop project management skills. This is particularly the case if you need to schedule other people's time, or complete projects to tight deadlines.

SECTION 4 - To Do Lists

Your First Step in Beating Work Overload

1.36 Do you feel overwhelmed by the amount of work you have to do? Do you face a constant barrage of looming deadlines? And do you sometimes just forget to do something important, so that people have to chase you to get work done?

1.37 All of these are symptoms of not keeping a proper "To Do List". To Do Lists are prioritised lists of all the tasks that you need to carry out. They list everything that you have to do, with the most important tasks at the top of the list, and the least important tasks at the bottom. And starting to keep a To Do List effectively is often the first personal productivity/time management breakthrough that people make as they start to make a success of their careers.

1.38 By keeping a To Do List, you make sure that you capture all the tasks that you have to complete in one place. This is essential if you're not going to forget things. And by prioritising work, you plan the order in which you'll do things, so you can tell what needs your immediate attention, and what you can quietly forget about until much, much later. This is essential if you're going to beat work overload. Without To Do Lists, you'll seem dizzy, unfocused and unreliable to the people around you. With To Do Lists, you'll be much better organised and much more reliable. This is very important!

1.39 Whilst To Do Lists are very simple, they are also extremely powerful, both as a method of organising yourself and as a way of reducing stress. Often problems may seem overwhelming or you may have a seemingly huge number of demands on your time. This may leave you feeling out of control and overburdened with work.

Preparing a To Do List

1.40 The solution is often simple. Start by writing down the tasks that face you, and if they are large, break them down into their component elements. If these still seem large, break them down again. Do this until you have listed everything that you have to do, and until tasks are will take no more than 1 - 2 hours to complete.

1.41 Once you have done this, run through these jobs allocating priorities from A (very important) to F (unimportant). If too many tasks have a high priority, run through the list again and demote the less important ones. Once you have done this, rewrite the list in priority order.

1.42 You will then have a precise plan that you can use to eliminate the problems you face. You will be able to tackle these in order of importance. This allows you to separate important jobs from the many time-consuming trivial ones.

Using Your To Do List

1.43 Different people use To Do Lists in different ways in different situations: if you are in a sales-type role, a good way of motivating yourself is to keep your list relatively short and aim to complete it every day.

1.44 In an operational role, or if tasks are large or dependent on too many people, then it may be better to keep one list and 'chip away' at it.

1.45 It may be that you carry unimportant jobs from one To Do List to the next. You may not be able to complete some very low priority jobs for several months. Only worry about this if you need to - if you are running up against a deadline for them, raise their priority.

1.46 If you have not used a To Do List before, try them now: They are one of the keys to being really productive and efficient.

Key Points

1.47 Prioritised To Do Lists are fundamentally important to efficient work. If you use To Do Lists, you will ensure that:

- a. You remember to carry out all necessary tasks;
- b. You tackle the most important jobs first, and do not waste time on trivial tasks; and
- c. You do not get stressed by a large number of unimportant jobs.

PRIORITISED TO DO LIST

Task	Priority	Completed Y / N

THINGS TO DO..... **TODAY**

PRIORITY

DATE _____

COMPLETED

	1.	
	2.	
	3.	
	4.	
	5.	
	6.	
	7.	
	8.	
	9.	
	10.	
	11.	
	12.	
	13.	
	14.	
	15.	
	16.	
	17.	

The Eight Principles of Time Management

1. Create a daily To Do list.
2. List goals and set priorities. A, B, C.
3. Concentrate on your daily objectives.
4. Do A's first.
5. Focus your energy on the priority objectives
6. Handle each piece of paper only once.
7. Do it NOW!
8. What is the best use of my time right now?

SECTION 5 - Effective Scheduling

Plan Your Time. Make Time for Yourself

1.48 So far we have looked at your priorities and your goals - these define what you aspire to do with your time. Scheduling is where these aspirations meet reality.

1.49 Scheduling is the process by which you look at the time available to you, and plan how you will use it to achieve the goals you have identified. By using a schedule properly, you can:

- a. Understand what you can realistically achieve with your time;
- b. Plan to make the best use of the time available;
- c. Leave enough time for things you absolutely must do;
- d. Preserve contingency time to handle 'the unexpected'; and
- e. Minimize stress by avoiding over-commitment to yourself and others.

1.50 A well thought-through schedule allows you to manage your commitments, while still leaving you time to do the things that are important to you. It is therefore your most important weapon for beating work overload.

How to Use the Tool

1.51 Scheduling is best done on a regular basis, for example at the start of every week or month. Go through the following steps in preparing your schedule:

- a. Start by identifying the time you want to make available for your work. This will depend on the design of your job and on your personal goals in life.
- b. Next, block in the actions you absolutely must take to do a good job. These will often be the things you are assessed against. For example, if you manage people, then you must make time available for dealing with issues that arise, coaching, and supervision. Similarly you must allow time to communicate with your boss and key people around you. (While people may let you get away with 'neglecting them' in the short term, your best time management efforts will surely be derailed if you do not set aside time for those who are important in your life).
- c. Review your To Do List, and schedule in the high-priority urgent activities, as well as the essential maintenance tasks that cannot be delegated and cannot be avoided.
- d. Next, block in appropriate contingency time. You will learn how much of this you need by experience. Normally, the more unpredictable your job, the more contingency time you need. The reality of many people's work

is of constant interruption: Studies show some managers getting an average of as little as six minutes uninterrupted work done at a time. Obviously, you cannot tell when interruptions will occur. However, by leaving space in your schedule, you give yourself the flexibility to rearrange your schedule to react effectively to issues as they arise.

- e. What you now have left is your “discretionary time”: the time available to deliver your priorities and achieve your goals. Review your Prioritised To Do List and personal goals, evaluate the time needed to achieve these actions, and schedule these in.

1.52 By the time you reach step 5, you may find that you have little or no discretionary time available. If this is the case, then revisit the assumptions you used in the first four steps. Question whether things are absolutely necessary, whether they can be delegated, or whether they can be done in an abbreviated way.

1.53 Remember that one of the most important ways people learn to achieve success is by maximising ‘leverage’ they can achieve with their time. They increase the amount of work they can manage by delegating work to other people, spending money outsourcing key tasks, or using technology to automate as much of their work as possible. This frees them up to achieve their goals.

1.54 Also, use this as an opportunity to review your To Do List and Personal Goals. Have you set goals that just aren’t achievable with the time you have available? Are you taking on too many additional duties? Or are you treating things as being more important than they really are?

1.55 If your discretionary time is still limited, then you may need to renegotiate your workload. With a well thought through schedule as evidence, you may find this surprisingly easy.

Key Points

1.56 Scheduling is the process by which you plan your use of time. By scheduling effectively, you can both reduce stress and maximise your effectiveness. This makes it one of the most important time management skills you can use.

1.57 Before you can schedule efficiently, you need an effective scheduling system. This can be a diary, calendar, paper-based organiser, PDA or a software package like MS Outlook. The best solution depends entirely on your circumstances.

Scheduling is then a Five Step Process

1.58 The Five Step process is:

- a. **Step 1** - Identify the time you have available;
- b. **Step 2** - Block in the essential tasks you must carry out to succeed in your job;

- c. **Step 3** - Schedule in high priority urgent tasks and vital “house-keeping” activities;
- d. **Step 4** - Block in appropriate contingency time to handle unpredictable interruptions; and
- e. **Step 5** - In the time that remains, schedule the activities that address your priorities and personal goals.

1.59 If you have little or no discretionary time left by the time you reach step five, then revisit the assumptions you have made in steps one to four.

SECTION 6 - Personal Goal Setting

Find Direction. Live Your Life Your Way

1.60 Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn this vision of the future into reality.

1.61 The process of setting goals helps you choose where you want to go in life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you have to concentrate your efforts. You'll also quickly spot the distractions that would otherwise lure you from your course.

1.62 More than this, properly set goals can be incredibly motivating, and as you get into the habit of setting and achieving goals, you'll find that your self-confidence builds fast.

Achieving More with Focus

1.63 Goal setting techniques are used by top-level athletes, successful business-people and achievers in all fields. They give you long-term vision and short-term motivation. They focus your acquisition of knowledge and help you to organise your time and resources so that you can make the very most of your life.

1.64 By setting sharp, clearly defined goals, you can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals. You can see forward progress in what might previously have seemed a long pointless grind. By setting goals, you will also raise your self-confidence, as you recognise your ability and competence in achieving the goals that you have set.

Starting to Set Personal Goals

1.65 Goals are set on a number of different levels: First you create your "big picture" of what you want to do with your life, and what large-scale goals you want to achieve. Second, you break those down into smaller and smaller targets that you must hit so that you reach your lifetime goals. Finally, once you have your plan, you start working to achieve it.

1.66 We start this process with your Lifetime Goals, and work down to the things you can do today to start moving towards them.

Your Lifetime Goals

1.67 The first step in setting personal goals is to consider what you want to achieve in your lifetime (or at least, say, 10 years in the future) as setting Lifetime Goals gives you the overall perspective that shapes all other aspects of your decision making.

1.68 To give a broad, balanced coverage of all important areas in your life, try to set goals in some of these categories (or in categories of your own, where these are important to you):

- a. **Artistic:** Do you want to achieve any artistic goals? If so, What?
- b. **Attitude:** Is any part of your mindset holding you back? Is there any part of the way that you behave that upsets you? If so, set a goal to improve your behaviour or find a solution to the problem.
- c. **Career:** What level do you want to reach in your career?
- d. **Education:** Is there any knowledge you want to acquire in particular? What information and skills will you need to achieve other goals?
- e. **Family:** Do you want to be a parent? If so, how are you going to be a good parent? How do you want to be seen by a partner or by members of your extended family?
- f. **Financial:** How much do you want to earn by what stage?
- g. **Physical:** Are there any athletic goals you want to achieve, or do you want good health deep into old age? What steps are you going to take to achieve this?
- h. **Pleasure:** How do you want to enjoy yourself? You should ensure that some of your life is for you!
- i. **Public Service:** Do you want to make the world a better place? If so, how?

1.69 Spend some time brainstorming these, and then select one goal in each category that best reflects what you want to do. Then consider trimming again so that you have a smaller number of really significant goals on which you can focus.

1.70 As you do this, make sure that the goals that you have set are ones that you genuinely want to achieve, not ones that your parents, family, or employers might want (if you have a partner, you probably want to consider what he or she wants, however make sure you also remain true to yourself).

Starting to Achieve Your Lifetime Goals

1.71 Once you have set your lifetime goals, set a 25-year plan of smaller goals that you should complete if you are to reach your lifetime plan. Then set a 5 year plan, 1 year plan, 6 month plan, 1 month plan of progressively smaller goals that you should reach to achieve your lifetime goals. Each of these should be based on the previous plan.

1.72 Then create a daily To Do List of things that you should do today to work towards your lifetime goals. At an early stage these goals may be to read books and gather information on the achievement of your goals. This will help you to improve the quality and realism of your goal setting.

1.73 Finally review your plans, and make sure that they fit the way in which you want to live your life.

Staying on Course

1.74 Once you have decided your first set of plans, keep the process going by reviewing and updating your To Do List on a daily basis. Periodically review the longer-term plans, and modify them to reflect your changing priorities and experience.

1.75 An easy way of doing this is to use the goal setting software like GoalPro 6 on a daily basis.

Goal Setting Tips

1.76 The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective goals:

- a. **State each goal as a positive statement:** Express your goals positively - 'Execute this technique well' is a much better goal than 'don't make this stupid mistake'.
- b. **Be precise:** Set a precise goal, putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. If you do this, you will know exactly when you have achieved the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.
- c. **Set priorities:** When you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by too many goals, and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.
- d. **Write goals down:** This crystallises them and gives them more force.
- e. **Keep operational goals small:** Keep the low level goals you are working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward. Derive today's goals from larger ones.
- f. **Set performance goals, not outcomes goals:** You should take care to set goals over which you have as much control as possible. There is nothing more dispiriting than failing to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control. In business, these could be bad business environments or unexpected effects of government policy. In sport, for example, these reasons could include poor judging, bad weather, injury, or just plain bad luck. If you base your goals on personal performance, then you can keep control over the achievement of your goals and draw satisfaction from them.
- g. **Set realistic goals:** It is important to set goals that you can achieve. All sorts of people (employers, parents, media, society) can set unrealistic

goals for you. They will often do this in ignorance of your own desires and ambitions. Alternatively you may set goals that are too high, because you may not appreciate either the obstacles in the way, or understand quite how much skill you need to develop to achieve a particular level of performance.

SMART Goals:

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART mnemonic. While there are plenty of variants, SMART usually stands for:

S – Specific

M – Measurable

A – Attainable

R – Relevant

T – Time-bound

For example, instead of having “to sail around the world” as a goal, it is more powerful to say “To have completed my trip around the world by 31 December 2015.” Obviously, this will only be attainable if a lot of preparation has been completed beforehand.

Achieving Goals

1.77 When you have achieved a goal, take the time to enjoy the satisfaction of having done so. Absorb the implications of the goal achievement, and observe the progress you have made towards other goals. If the goal was a significant one, reward yourself appropriately. All of this helps you build the self-confidence you deserve.

1.78 With the experience of having achieved this goal, review the rest of your goal plans:

- a. If you achieved the goal too easily, make your next goals harder;
- b. If the goal took a dispiriting length of time to achieve, make the next goals a little easier;
- c. If you learned something that would lead you to change other goals, do so; and
- d. If you noticed a deficit in your skills despite achieving the goal, decide whether to set goals to fix this.

1.79 Failure to meet goals does not matter much, as long as you learn from it. Feed lessons learned back into your goal-setting programme.

1.80 Remember too that your goals will change, as you get older. Adjust then regularly to reflect growth in your knowledge and experience, and if goals do not hold any attraction any longer, then let them go.

Key Points

- 1.81 Goal setting is an important method of:
- a. Deciding what is important for you to achieve in your life;
 - b. Separating what is important from what is irrelevant, or a distraction;
 - c. Motivating yourself; and
 - d. Building your self-confidence, based on successful achievement of goals.
- 1.82 If you don't already set goals, do so, starting now. As you make this technique part of your life, you'll find your career accelerating, and you'll wonder how you did without it!

CHAPTER 2 – Conflict Resolution

SECTION 1 - Conflict Resolution

Conflict Resolution

2.1 Problems with other students may be the result of ineffective conflict resolution approaches. Help your kids learn better alternatives.

2.2 How do you kids approach social conflicts? Their conflict style may have a huge influence on the outcome of their disagreements, as well as on the quality of their social relationships in general. Try to identify which of these three main styles your students use, and help them learn more effective strategies, if needed. The three styles are:

- a. **The Passive Approach:** These teens are likely to have trouble communicating and advocating for their needs. They may be afraid to stand up for themselves, either because their self-worth is low or because they lack good communication skills. As a result, other kids realize early on that these kids can be pushed around with little repercussion. These students may be more likely to have problems making friends or to be bullied. The relationships that they do have are often unfulfilling because they allow their "friends" to treat them badly, yet they don't know how to change this dynamic.
- b. **The Aggressive Approach:** Students who use this style are often confrontational and intimidating in their personal interactions. They can use threatening verbal or body language and often don't seem to care about the other person's needs. Their sole goal is to get what they want. Cooperation may be difficult for them, and their approach to other people may be abrasive. They may resort to name-calling or threats to get their way. These kids are more likely to be the bullies, causing other students to fear or avoid them. If they use this same approach with authority figures, they may wind up with discipline and other problems.
- c. **The Assertive Approach:** These kids know how to get their needs met while respecting the needs of others. They know how to cooperate and compromise, and their goal is to achieve a win-win outcome. Their verbal approach is respectful and solution-oriented. These kids have learned effective communication and problem-solving skills. They listen to others, but are able to make their own needs and ideas known in an assertive manner. This is the ideal approach to use in most situations so that everyone comes out a winner.

What Can You Do?

2.3 Model assertive problem solving. Make sure kids see you handling conflicts respectfully yet assertively. You can even verbalize the steps as you go to enhance

learning. For example, you might make a comment such as, "I want to make sure he hears what I am saying, but I don't want to come on too strong."

2.4 Role-play how to handle conflicts. Kids need guided practice in developing respectful yet productive responses to conflict situations. They also often have a hard time recognizing and interpreting the subtleties of feelings and intent in spoken language. Help them process these, as well.

2.5 Work on communication skills. When a teen verbalizes how they feel during a conflict, not only does it help the other person understand their point of view, it helps the teen clarify their own feelings, as well. Help teens learn to use "I messages," reflect the other person's perspective back to them, and use good listening skills.

SECTION 2 - Bullying

2.6 Bullying is a hot button issue in our culture. Find out what kids need to know, and how you can support them in dealing with this difficult issue.

Joking vs. Bullying

2.7 Caught red-handed, kids will often claim they were just "joking." That's a common cop-out, but the reality is that a joke has to go both ways. If only one person thinks its funny, it isn't a joke. In reality, bullying is a power issue: one person is intentionally using hurtful words to humiliate and gain power over another. A quick way to tell the difference? Try this two-question test:

- a. **Consent:** Does the comment or behaviour bother the other person?
- b. **Intention:** Is your goal to embarrass or humiliate them?

2.8 If the honest answer to either of these questions is yes, then bullying is probably occurring.

Creating Boundaries

2.9 Everyone has the right to decide what behaviour they are comfortable with. Being accused by a bullier of being "too sensitive" is just another example of a bully not wanting to take responsibility for their actions. We need to support kids in their efforts to stand up for themselves and say when someone is treating them in a way they find unacceptable.

Types of Bullying

2.10 Bullying behaviour that fits the above criterion falls into three major categories. It's important that kids are aware of all of these possibilities; otherwise they may not recognize bullying behaviour when they see or experience it. You can use the following lists as a springboard for discussion. See what examples kids can generate.

- a. Visual bullying (Something you see). Examples: gestures or mimicking, faces, pictures, graffiti or notes; and cyber bullying (utilizing MySpace, Email, IM or other internet means to harass).
- b. Verbal bullying (Something you hear or is said). This includes name-calling, cruel "jokes", spreading rumours or gossip, verbal threats, excluding, and offensive sounds.
- c. Physical bullying (something that is done to your body). Examples: throwing things, poking, touching, grabbing or pushing, blocking someone's way, hitting or punching, intimidating.

2.11 Physical bullying, depending on the severity, can also escalate into assault, which has legal consequences. Likewise, if the above behaviours have a sexual

component to them (think sexual comments or touching), the behaviour is considered sexual harassment, which is also illegal.

Repercussions of Bullying

2.12 Those who are bullied can experience a wide range of emotional responses, including confusion, embarrassment, powerlessness, anger, isolation, and fear. Left un-addressed, these responses can contribute to anxiety or depression. For the bullies, a history of bullying and a related inability to solve conflicts can lead to police involvement as well as difficulty maintaining employment and relationships.

What Can You Do?

2.13 Educate kids about the realities and consequences of bullying. Don't accept kids' mistreatment of each other: address bullying each and every time. Model respect and tolerance of others. Work with kids on developing skills to solve problems and communicate with each other.

SECTION 3 - Teen Community Safety Tips

Introduction

2.14 Unless your teens are total strangers to the Internet, they know about web sites like myspace.com, facebook.com or xanga.com.

2.15 What's the allure of these and hundreds of other free online communities? Teens flock to them to socialize the same way they do to a school dance or local hangout. These sites also let teens create a personal web page and decorate them just like they adorn their bedroom walls or school lockers.

2.16 When teens join an online community such as myspace.com they create and post personal profiles that can include their photos, age, city, school, song clips or favourite books and movies. Then they invite their offline friends — or even people they don't know — to join their contact list or so-called friends list. Photos of these "friends" then appear on your kid's profile page, too.

2.17 Teens also interact within popular online communities by swapping messages with friends, posting diary-like blogs or creative writing, and sharing photos. Beyond their profiles, they can search through message boards and blogs about various topics like sports, relationships or music. Many teens are now even using online communities to organize around social or political issues. Some just like to show off their web design skills by customizing their profiles.

2.18 Despite the positives, though, a lot of dangers lurk in these communities, too: sexual predators, identity thieves and cyber bullies. Unfortunately, you can't always chaperone your teens to make sure they're safe online. But you can arm them with knowledge about the darker side of online communities so they can spot trouble and avoid it. Here's how.

a. **Educate yourself:**

- (1) You can't teach your kids the ways of the Internet - especially online communities - unless you know the lay of the land.
- (2) "It's very important for parents to understand the technology themselves," says Danielle Yates, spokesperson of the 'Internet Education Foundation'. "If your child is using MySpace, you should know how it functions, what's on there and who they're talking to."
- (3) By exploring online communities, you'll get a sense of how people are interacting on these sites and what kind of content they're posting. You don't need to register first. For example, to check out myspace.com, just click Browse in the main menu. Or on xanga.com, click through the links under Featured Content.

b. **Protect your kids' personal information:**

- (1) You'll notice that teens often post a lot of personal information on these sites. This is where your kids can run into trouble. Anyone can join an online community and pretend to be someone they're not. So predators posing as teens can easily forge friendships with trusting kids in online communities.
- (2) These sites even allow visitors to search for people based on age, city and gender. Also, identity thieves could dupe your teen into revealing information and use it to obtain credit cards in your teen's name.
- (3) "Kids can post information about their school or pictures of themselves or information about their sporting events, which seems harmless," says Amber Lindsay, spokesperson for 'www.netsmartz.org', a part of the National Centre for Missing & Exploited Children. "But they don't understand that predators can piece information together. Predators can then know where to find kids, what they look like and how to identify them."
- (4) If your teens hang out in online communities, ask them to show you their profiles and give you a tour of the site. Explain the dangers of posting personal information, and make sure your teen's profile doesn't offer any clues about whom she really is.
- (5) Myspace.com, for example, allows teens to block anyone who is not a trusted friend from seeing his or her profiles. To make sure strangers can't see your teen's profile, have them log in to myspace.com. From their profile page, go to Account Settings and then select Privacy Settings to explore your options.

c. Explain the dangers of meeting "friends" offline:

- (1) Your kids can never be 100% certain of who they're interacting with in online communities. Even so, some kids try to add as many friends as possible to their contact list - meaning thousands of people they don't really know can message them directly.
- (2) For these reasons, you should advise teens not to trust a stranger who approaches them outside of an online community and seems to know details from their online profile. Most important, tell your teens to never, under any circumstances, agree to meet up with someone they met online. You can find plenty of stories about meetings like this in the news — and they sometimes have tragic endings.
- (3) To stave off such encounters, Yates advises that you tell your teens: "Don't give out any personally identifiable information, such as where you go to school, what sports teams you're involved with or who your friends are."

d. **Remind teens that their profiles are public – forever:**

- (1) One unintended consequence of online communities is that teens are posting material that can be used against them later. Sometimes they bully other kids from school by posting mean messages on their profiles. Or they tell tales of breaking the law or other unsavoury activities. And once posted online, these musings are out there for the world to see.
- (2) "A lot of people are worried now about when these kids grow up and whether future employers can find this material," Yates says, adding that schools are clued in to these communities, too. "Anything you post there - pictures of drinking, partying - they can see that and use that against you."
- (3) Ask your kids what kind of content they think is appropriate to post in online communities. Offer some examples of what might come back to haunt them. Then set some guidelines together.

e. **Keep the lines of communication open:**

- (1) As with any other aspect of your relationship with your kids, open communication is 'key'. Tell your teenagers they should alert you when something going on in an online community makes them feel scared or uncomfortable.
- (2) "Kids are often scared to report something because they're scared their Internet privileges will be taken away," Lindsay says. "But if you're talking about it, they'll feel comfortable that you'll understand and not limit their access."
- (3) Together, become familiar with the online community's safety policies and reporting mechanisms. Parry Aftab, executive director of wiredsafety.org, also says that kids who regularly talk with parents about these issues are better prepared for online communities.
- (4) "Parents have to educate the kids and communicate with the kids so that the teens can look out for themselves and each other," she says.

SECTION 4 - Cyber Bullying

Cyber-Bullying

2.19 Teens often lack the maturity and social judgment necessary to act responsibly in the unsupervised, anonymous free for all of the Internet. Help them protect themselves. What are some of the inherent problems that exist with this new technology, and how do the developmental issues kids are grappling with impact and exacerbate these issues?

Lack of feedback

2.20 Interactions don't occur in a vacuum, but on the Internet, they often feel as if they do. Written exchanges lack verbal and social cues such as tone of voice, facial expressions, and body language. Emoticons are a poor substitute for the usual signals that accompany verbal communication. The result: accurately assessing the intention and meaning behind the words becomes difficult. Misunderstandings are common. Assumptions are made and acted upon without verification, and situations can quickly escalate into hostility.

Disinhibition

2.21 You can't see me, and I can't see you. This dynamic prevents users from receiving crucial feedback about how their words and actions impact others. This is especially problematic for kids, whose ability to see another person's perspective is still developing. The ability to post material without fear of identification, along with the diluted sense of responsibility that comes with going along with the crowd in harassing or hateful activities, allows kids to avoid the natural consequences of their behaviour. Over time, this behaviour becomes normalized on the Internet, and eventually spills over into real life interactions.

Aura of Safety and Anonymity

2.22 Kids disclose huge amount of personal information, oblivious to who might see it and how quickly it can be disseminated to large numbers of people. Because of immature thinking processes and a sense of immortality, they underestimate how dangerous this is. On the contrary, in our tell-all society, the sharing of private, even sexual information and images has become the norm.

Vulnerability

2.23 Kids without positive personal relationships may be at increased risk. They may be looking online for what is missing in their own lives, and not have the judgment necessary to avoid unhealthy Internet relationships. Teens who use Internet postings as a journal to share their pain with the world may attract like-minded individuals who encourage extreme or dangerous behaviour, or online predators who use a teen's vulnerability to their advantage.

Three Hundred Friends

2.24 Teens are in the process of forming their identities, exploring social relationships, and trying out different roles in society. "Popularity" is often determined by the number of "links" or "friends" a teen has. In an effort to increase this number quickly, kids often post questionable content, highlighting provocative, unhealthy, or illegal behaviour, in an effort to gain attention and status.

What Can You Do?

2.25 Knowledge is power. Talk with kids about the above dangers, and explain to them why you have concerns about their Internet behaviour. Provide a sounding board for kids dealing with difficult situations, so they won't feel the need to turn to the Internet for attention and support. For more ideas, please see Cyber Safety Tips for Teens.

SECTION 5 - Sexual Harassment

Sexual Harassment

2.26 Sexual Harassment is unwanted attention of a sexual nature that makes a person uncomfortable or embarrassed.

Who is Being Harassed?

2.27 Fifty-eight percent of 8th -11th grade girls report being sexually harassed often or occasionally. Thirty nine percent of them report daily harassment. (Stats from Stats and Facts: Sexual Harassment). Though sexual harassment is typically thought of as something that happens to women and girls, boys are increasingly becoming targets as well.

2.28 Anytime sexual behaviour or comments is intended to humiliate someone, anyone, or continues despite requests to stop, its sexual harassment.

How Did This Become Such A Big Problem?

2.29 One theory is that our hyper sexualised culture exposes kids to age-inappropriate images and behaviours they may not have the maturity or skills to properly process. This incompatibility between environment and developmental level can cause confusion among young people regarding appropriate limits and sexual expectations. Kids may feel pressured into certain behaviours because of what they see around them. Many incidents may be labelled sexual harassment that are actually disconnects between the ability to form the intent to harm someone and a lack of understanding about the impact of one's behaviour. Kids see sexually charged images all the time, so they often don't understand why their behaviour is a problem. And the images they see are getting more and more provocative all the time.

What Kinds of Behaviour are we Talking About?

2.30 Sexual Harassment can be broken down into three categories. These categories and some common examples are listed below:

- a. **Visual Harassment** includes dirty pictures, sexual gestures, suggestive letters or email, obscene graffiti;
- b. **Verbal Harassment** includes sexual names and jokes, comments about one's body, rumours about sexual activity, sexual intimidation, sexual noises or sounds; and
- c. **Physical Harassment** includes touching, groping, and pulling on clothes, shanking, blocking, rubbing up against someone and hugging.

Things Kids Generally Don't Realize About Sexual Harassment

2.31 The things that kids don't realise are:

- a. Sexual Harassment isn't about feelings, sex, or liking someone. It's about holding power over someone and not respecting their decisions and limits;
- b. Kids can sexually harass others of the same sex. Whenever, for example, a girl calls another girl "ho" or "slut", or a guy calls another guy a "fag" or yanks down his pants to embarrass him, that's sexual harassment; and
- c. Being friends with someone doesn't preclude the possibility of sexual harassment. Sexual boundaries can still be disregarded, even between friends.

Not Just Flirting

2.32 Flirting is welcome behaviour that goes both ways, and usually makes someone feel flattered. Sexual harassment, on the other hand, is unwanted behaviour that is one-sided and uses the power of words and actions to make someone feel humiliated or dirty. Intent and reciprocity are two key clues that teens need to consider in deciding whether behaviour is sexual harassment or not.

Setting and Respecting Healthy Boundaries

2.33 Kids need to learn how to set sexual boundaries they are comfortable with, and to stick to them. Giving mixed messages through words and behaviour only adds confusion to what may be an already murky situation. Kids also need to learn to respect boundaries: no means no. Those who purposely violate those boundaries need to be reported to the appropriate authority. Kids need to know that sexual harassment is against the law, and that severe consequences exist in both schools and in the workplace for this type of behaviour.

SECTION 6 - Depression

Depression

2.34 Depression is on the rise among our youth. Learn about the risk factors and signs of teen depression, and how you can help.

Who is at Risk for Depression?

2.35 Depression can happen to anyone, but there are certain risk factors that should be recognized. These include attention problems; learning problems, conduct disorders, and a family history of depression. In addition, significant stressors, like a recent or sudden loss, family problems (especially divorce or death in the family), or financial problems make a teen more vulnerable. Those students who have been abused, are already involved in drug or alcohol use, or have experienced the suicide of a close friend or relative are of particular risk.

2.36 Even relatively "minor" problems, such as conflicts with parents or the break-up of a romantic relationship, can lead to depression. Remember, events that may seem insignificant to adults can be extremely important from the perspective of a teenager.

What are Some Other Contributing Factors?

2.37 All students experience stress at one time or another. But teens who lack coping skills to manage difficult life events are certainly more vulnerable to depression. For students who have poor social skills, low self-esteem, or a pessimistic worldview, stressful events may be more likely to trigger depression.

What Does Depression Feel Like?

2.38 Traditionally, depression is often thought of as primarily a condition of low mood and unhappiness. Other symptoms may include decreased frustration tolerance, lethargy, irritability, and problems concentrating or making decisions. Kids may lose interest in activities they once enjoyed, or experience feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness, or guilt. There may be observable changes in eating or sleeping patterns, and teens may experience thoughts of suicide.

What Does Depression Look Like?

2.39 Those close to a teen suffering from depression may notice frequent school absences and declining academic performance. Students may begin to have an increased level of conflicts in their relationships, or may isolate themselves from friends and family altogether. They may seem hostile or angry, and engage in risk-taking behaviour. Be alert for vague physical complaints, as well as morbid themes in writing and drawing. Kids in pain may attempt to use alcohol or drugs to self-medicate, so watch for this, as well.

What Can You Do?

2.40 Beware of responses that block communication, and learn how to talk to kids in a way that encourages sharing. Only doctors and therapists are qualified to treat depression, so share your worries with parents right away. Be able to share specific, observable information that backs up your concerns: this is much more helpful to the diagnostic process than a vague sense of “something isn’t right.” Use the above as a guideline for mapping out particular areas where a teen may be exhibiting unusual behaviour.

2.41 If a teen verbalises thoughts or plans of suicide, no matter how offhand, these statements must be shared with a parent immediately. In a situation such as this, confidentiality must be breached in order to protect the safety of the child. Your agency may have specific protocols in place for this; be sure you follow them. If not, communicate with the parent and enact a plan to keep the child safe until he can be seen by a trained mental health professional. In serious cases, an assessment at a local hospital or mental health facility may be required.

SECTION 7 - Problem Solving Skills

Problem Solving Skills

2.42 Kids often shut down when faced with a problem or obstacle. How can you help them develop the skills to face challenges confidently?

The Problem

2.43 As discussed in my blog Overcoming Obstacles, many kids today don't have solid problem solving skills. Faced with a challenge, teens often lack the ability to generate and evaluate options for change. They often wait for adults to point them in the right direction, or worse, to solve problems for them. This does little for their personal growth or maturity. Learning to problem solve, on the other hand, encourages numerous related skills that empower kids and foster independence.

Teaching a "Problem-Solving" Model

2.44 There are six basic steps to any decision making model, though you can certainly tweak the steps to fit a particular circumstance or population. Some simpler problems may allow you to streamline the process, while more complex issues can benefit from the structure that this model provides:

- a. Define the problem and set a goal for change. This is the opportunity to verbalize what you would like to see happen. Try to be as clear as possible. The best goals are specific and measurable: For example, "Raise my Math grade to an 80" is much more helpful than "Do better in Math." Write it down so you have a constant reminder of what you are working towards;
- b. Brainstorming options. Come up with as many different ideas for attacking the problem as you can. This is the time to think outside the box. Don't stop to evaluate or criticize suggestions: the purpose of this step is to generate a free flowing exchange of suggestions. Ideas for the above goal might include things like: Get extra help from the teacher. Get a math tutor. Increase studying time. Get a study partner. Ask for study guides. Put all of the choices down on paper;
- c. Evaluate options. Go back over each suggestion and take a second look. Is this idea feasible? What would I need to do to make this happen? Are there constraints (time, resources, etc.) that limit the possibility of this working? For example: the family budget might not allow for a tutor, but what about a study partner? Are there ways to broaden, tweak, or combine good suggestions to make them better?;
- d. Making a plan of action. Choose the options you think will work best and formulate an action plan. Include the specific steps you will take for each choice. For example, if one piece of the action plan is "Increase studying to one hour a night," making a targeted plan about when, where, and how you will study might be helpful. Include a timeline with

your action plan so you know when its time to evaluate how things are going; and

- e. Evaluation and Modification. Assess how things are going. Is there steady progress towards your goal? Do changes need to be made in the plan? This is the time to revise the plan, if necessary. Cut out things that aren't helping, and possibly revisit the list made in the brainstorming step to see if you want to add anything new. Continue to evaluate and modify until the goal is reached.

SECTION 8 - Overcoming Obstacles

Overcoming Obstacles

2.45 Why do kids lack problem-solving skills? I'm not sure, but I have some thoughts. First, it's not often something that we actively teach. It should be. In homes and in schools, we should teach even the littlest kids to think about possible options and support them as they implement possible solutions. Having a grounding in the basic process and the practice working through relatively simple problems helps give kids the confidence and skills to tackle bigger issues further down the road.

2.46 Second, I fear that often, in our attempts to help kids, adults often wind up solving problems for them. While good intentioned, this is problematic for several reasons. It does nothing to empower kids to solve their own problems. It gives kids the message that they are incapable of coming up with their own ideas and solutions. And it doesn't teach them anything about taking responsibility. Instead, it encourages kids to take a passive role while someone else does all the work.

2.47 Often in my work, I will find myself saying to kids, "Well, what are your options for fixing this?" It could be something as simple as losing a binder or something a little more complicated, like failing a class. Many kids are able to brainstorm some good ideas. But a surprising number of kids shrug their shoulders and look at me blankly, as if they have no idea how to even get started to get around this hurdle.

SECTION 9 - Communication Skills / Builders

Communication Skills / Builders

2.48 Communicating effectively with kids is tough. Here are communication techniques to explore feelings, identify problems and move kids to problem solving.

2.49 In Communication Blockers: Mistakes to Avoid When Talking to Teens, we discussed several common mistakes adults often make when trying to support kids. Here are some more productive options.

Reflective Listening

2.50 Listen to what is being said, then try to reflect back both content and feelings underneath. “It sounds like with everything going on, you’ve been really overwhelmed lately,” or “You studied really hard for that test. That grade must have come as a real disappointment.” Give kids the chance to correct you if you’re wrong. The purpose of this is twofold. One, it helps kids identify and label their feelings. Two, it demonstrates that you empathize with them, which helps develop trust. Kids are more likely to want to continue the conversation when they feel heard.

Questioning

2.51 Ask pointed questions to help kids explore certain ideas further. Skilled questioning helps kids develop insight and self-awareness. Some examples, “What was different about this time that made you so angry?” or “Why do you think it was so hard for you to speak up for yourself?” The goal is to get kids to get a better understanding of why they are choosing certain actions and behaviours.

Goal Setting

2.52 Kids are empowered by forming their own goals about changes they want in their lives. Try to keep your agenda out of the equation. Ask questions like, “What would you like to be different?” or “What is one small change we could make that would help the situation.” When kids define the goal, they take ownership of both the problem and finding the solution. When goals seem too big, help kids break them down into smaller steps to make them more manageable.

Problem Solving

2.53 Many times, kids have dealt with similar problems before. Help them identify skills they already possess and apply them to new situations. Some examples, “How have you managed your anger with friends in the past?” or “What have you done before in similar situations? Would something like that work here?” If not, work together to help kids brainstorm creative solutions and evaluate options. It’s a good idea to start by making a list, talking about the possible consequences of each option, and then letting the teen select the solution they want to try.

Evaluation

2.54 Follow up after the solution is implemented. Ask, “How did your solution work out?” or “Has anything changed since we last talked?” Use reflective listening skills again to encourage the teen to share his experience with you. Be prepared for frustration if the problem still isn’t solved. If necessary, refine the solution, or help him choose something else to try if things haven’t worked out as hoped. For persistent or serious problems, bring parents into the loop as appropriate. For situations that cannot be changed, such as certain family issues or disappointments, help the student work on developing coping skills.

SECTION 10 - Communication Blockers

Communication Blockers

2.55 Our response to kids in crisis can determine whether they will continue to talk with us. Here are four common responses that tend to get in the way of good communication.

2.56 Anyone who spends any amount of time talking to teens has been in this situation. You've worked hard to develop a relationship, and now a teen in crisis has decided they trust you enough to share their experience with you. Depending on the topic, you may be confident in your ability to respond professionally and appropriately. But there may be situations where you are unsure of what to say that will help move the child along to healing. Unfortunately, we often unknowingly fall back on stereotypical responses that may make the adult feel better without really helping the child at all. Despite good intentions, many of these types of comments do not make kids feel understood, which may lessen the likelihood of further communication and ultimately may damage the relationship.

Don't Minimize the Problem

2.57 Some typical examples: "It isn't really that bad, is it?" or "In five years you won't care about any of this stuff." You may think you are putting things in perspective, or pointing out that others are "worse off" in an attempt to get the student to see their issue in relation to the larger world. But kids often perceive that you're "blowing them off" or that you "don't get it." Minimizing makes teens feel misunderstood and isolated.

Don't Tell Kids How They Should Feel

2.58 Examples of this are "You shouldn't let this bother you," or "You know you don't really feel that way." Imagine how disrespected you would feel if you shared personal feelings with someone and this was the response you got! Invalidating their feelings and perspective makes it unlikely that teens will share more with you. They may also wind up feeling guilty or depressed for having the "wrong" feelings.

Don't Offer False Reassurance Regarding Things Beyond Your Control

2.59 How many times have you heard someone say, "Everything will work out for the best!" or "Your mom will come around," or something along those lines? Though the person may feel that they are modelling hopefulness and a positive attitude, no real plan for problem solving is made. Instead, this type of response promises a simplistic and unrealistic "quick fix" which minimizes the problem and leaves the child without any options.

Don't Blame Them for the Problem

2.60 Some examples of this are, "You must have done something to make him say that to you," or "What can you do to change this?" True, students may have some responsibility in the problem, but be careful about jumping to this step too

soon. In the initial stages of the disclosure, the teen is expressing their feelings in an attempt to find understanding and empathy. Moving to problem solving which may involve the student taking some ownership comes afterwards. Putting that out there too early can be perceived as blaming, which is one of the quickest ways to shut down communication.

SECTION 11 - Expressing & Labelling Their Feelings

Expressing & Labelling Their Feelings

2.61 Learn how to use modelling, reflective listening, scaling techniques and "I messages" to help teens accurately label the type and intensity of their feelings.

2.62 Teens who are skilled in managing emotions have insight into their own experience, feel understood by others, and are empowered to find their own solutions. On the other hand, teens lacking in these skills often have little self-awareness, feel alone and helpless, and have few coping resources.

Avoid Fixing

2.63 When children experience messy feelings, our natural response is often to try to make the pain go away as quickly as possible. We rush to downplay the experience ("It's really not so bad.") or offer false reassurance ("Everything will be okay."). Often we attempt the quick fix by offering solutions, or worse, taking on the problem as our own and solving it for them. These responses often make things worse. They give kids the message that they are overreacting, their experience is trivial, and they are incapable of solving their own problems.

2.64 Instead, the goal should be to validate a young person's experience by helping them to recognize, express, and cope with all of the feelings they experiences. A few simple strategies can help facilitate this process.

2.65 The first step is helping kids develop the skills to identify and express their feelings. Kids often lack the verbal skills to label what they are experiencing. Help them develop a rich vocabulary of feeling words to label the type and intensity of their feelings.

Modelling

2.66 Teens watch how you deal with your feelings and take their cues from you. Get into the habit of using "I messages." When you do, you take ownership of your own feelings, explain yourself clearly, and keep the lines of communication open. Comments such as, "I'm feeling overwhelmed at work," or "I get scared when you drive like that," are more helpful and productive than, "My boss is a pain in the neck," or "You're being a jerk!"

Use Reflective Listening Skills

2.67 When talking with teens, listen closely for both the content (what is being said) and the feeling behind the content. Paraphrase what you hear back to check for accuracy. "It sounds like you're frustrated because you didn't do as well on the test as you would have liked." Offer your observations tentatively to give her permission to correct you. Avoid the impulse to rush to solve the problem!! The most important part here is for her to feel heard. She will not be ready to talk about solutions until that happens.

Scaling Technique

2.68 When a child feels understood, he's more likely to feel safe exploring the issue further with you. Ask him to 'rate' the level of his feelings on a 1-10 scale. Explain that these different intensities have different names, too. If he's mad and feeling '3', he may be annoyed. If he says 9 or 10, 'enraged' might be a better word. Help him learn to match the right words with how he's feeling. Also help him look at what's underneath his feelings. Anger is often the emotion we see, but it is usually a secondary feeling for something else, such as embarrassment, fear, or frustration.

I Messages

2.69 Kids often act out when experiencing intense feelings because they don't have the skills or the vocabulary to express themselves orally. Teach her to say, "I feel overwhelmed by all the homework I have this week." or "I feel angry about what happened yesterday."

2.70 Getting feelings out and feeling heard and understood takes time and practice, but the payoff is worth it. Conflicts are avoided, relationships are strengthened, and kids are empowered.

SECTION 12 - Frustration

Frustration

2.71 It's become popular in our culture to "protect" kids from bad feelings. But these experiences are necessary learning tools, and managing them requires critical skills.

The Problem

2.72 At some point, we became a society that felt children were better served if we shielded them from upsetting situations. We may have mistakenly believed that it helped their self-esteem, or that it was our job as parents and educators to "protect" them. But the reality is that by preventing kids from facing and dealing with these issues, we are depriving them of the opportunity to practice coping skills and develop attitudes and beliefs that will help them deal with problems in the adult world.

Coping with Frustration

2.73 True learning involves making mistakes, which often leaves children frustrated. Frustration requires a level of determination to see the problem through. Unfortunately, many children lack a sense of resolve and give up on a task immediately if they don't get it the first time, thinking that it's too hard, or worse, that they're "stupid". Why is this? One theory is that our "drill and kill" methods have eliminated the development of creative problem solving; teaching children that there is one and only one answer to most problems. Unable to get the one "right" answer, they lack the motivation to try alternate strategies. Another idea is that children who are accustomed to a steady stream of positive reinforcement, often for insignificant accomplishments, are paralysed when faced with something they cannot do immediately. Because they perceive things as coming to them easily, it is a threat to their ego to find something that challenges them. It is less threatening to give up.

Coping with Disappointment

2.74 Closely related to coping with frustration is coping with outright disappointment. Many people erroneously believe that for children, disappointment should be avoided at all costs. Everybody makes the team, everybody gets the same grade, and everybody is included. There are several problems with this attempt to make everyone "feel good about themselves". First of all, it isn't fooling anyone. Telling someone they've done a great job when they clearly haven't is not only insulting, but it tends to set a tone of low expectations. Self-esteem is built through mastery, not through pretence. Second, it isn't grounded in reality. Giving kids false expectations about their abilities and skills is not only dishonest, but also unethical. Lastly, letting kids face the let-downs of childhood, however painful, is necessary for emotional growth. Kids who haven't had practice developing coping skills for disappointment fall apart later on when no one is standing there ready to rescue them. Though the pains of childhood are heart-breaking, they are learning experiences that, when faced with the loving support of a trusted adult, help prepare kids to deal with later life.

How Can You Help?

2.75 Keep this in mind when dealing with your kids. Don't rush to protect them from every little frustration and disappointment, for fear of upsetting them or letting them "feel bad." Instead, help them work through the situation and their feelings by offering them support.

SECTION 13 - Clarifying Feelings

Clarifying Feelings

2.76 Learn how to use modelling, reflective listening, and scaling techniques and "I messages" to help teens accurately label the type and intensity of their feelings.

2.77 Teens who are skilled in managing emotions have insight into their own experience, feel understood by others, and are empowered to find their own solutions. On the other hand, teens lacking in these skills often have little self-awareness, feel alone and helpless, and have few coping resources.

Avoid Fixing

2.78 When children experience messy feelings, our natural response is often to try to make the pain go away as quickly as possible. We rush to downplay the experience ("It's really not so bad.") or offer false reassurance ("Everything will be okay."). Often we attempt the quick fix by offering solutions, or worse, taking on the problem as our own and solving it for them. These responses often make things worse. They give kids the message that they are overreacting, their experience is trivial, and they are incapable of solving their own problems.

2.79 Instead, the goal should be to validate a young person's experience by helping them to recognize, express, and cope with all of the feelings they experiences. A few simple strategies can help facilitate this process.

2.80 The first step is helping kids develop the skills to identify and express their feelings. Kids often lack the verbal skills to label what they are experiencing. Help them develop a rich vocabulary of feeling words to label the type and intensity of their feelings.

Modelling

2.81 Teens watch how you deal with your feelings and take their cues from you. Get into the habit of using "I messages." When you do, you take ownership of your own feelings, explain yourself clearly, and keep the lines of communication open. Comments such as, "I'm feeling overwhelmed at work," or "I get scared when you drive like that," are more helpful and productive than, "My boss is a pain in the neck," or "You're being a jerk!"

Use Reflective Listening Skills

2.82 When talking with teens, listen closely for both the content (what is being said) and the feeling behind the content. Paraphrase what you hear back to check for accuracy. "It sounds like you're frustrated because you didn't do as well on the test as you would have liked." Offer your observations tentatively to give her permission to correct you. Avoid the impulse to rush to solve the problem!! The most important part here is for her to feel heard. She will not be ready to talk about solutions until that happens.

Scaling Technique

2.83 When a child feels understood, he's more likely to feel safe exploring the issue further with you. Ask him to 'rate' the level of his feelings on a 1-10 scale. Explain that these different intensities have different names, too. If he's mad and feeling '3', he may be annoyed. If he says 9 or 10, 'enraged' might be a better word. Help him learn to match the right words with how he's feeling. Also help him look at what's underneath his feelings. Anger is often the emotion we see, but it is usually a secondary feeling for something else, such as embarrassment, fear, or frustration.

I Messages

2.84 Kids often act out when experiencing intense feelings because they don't have the skills or the vocabulary to express themselves orally. Teach her to say, "I feel overwhelmed by all the homework I have this week." or "I feel angry about what happened yesterday."

2.85 Getting feelings out and feeling heard and understood takes time and practice, but the payoff is worth it. Conflicts are avoided, relationships are strengthened, and kids are empowered.

SECTION 14 - Good Listening

Good Listening

2.86 Make sure kids are familiar with these six steps for gathering spoken information.

2.87 Good listening skills are crucial not only for academic success, but for social interaction, too. By sharpening their receptive language skills, kids can prevent misunderstandings, get clear information, and maximize time. Teach them the following components and characteristics of a good listener.

Set Your Purpose

2.88 Why are you listening to this person, anyway? Is it a teacher giving a lecture to a class? A person giving you directions to a party? Someone who is angry because they think you have slighted them? Knowing the purpose of the communication helps you know what cues to listen for, and helps you determine which parts of the communication are most important to remember.

Remembering

2.89 Depending on the topic and situation, you might need to take notes. This can range to jotting down a phone number or a couple sets of instructions to taking lengthy notes during a lecture. Isolate the key parts, and make sure you write them down somewhere that you can access later. Reread your notes occasionally while you're taking them to ensure that they make sense.

Body Language

2.90 Your body language lets the speaker know that you are attending to them. Make sure you are facing the speaker, maintaining eye contact, and focusing your attention. Show your understanding by nodding your head at appropriate times. Don't fiddle with your materials, clothes, or other distracting items; you may miss important points, and you are likely to send the message that you aren't listening. Try to focus your concentration on the speaker and what they are saying. Likewise, use cues about the speaker's body language to gauge things like mood and content importance.

Questioning

2.91 Ask related or follow up questions at the proper time. Get clarification on things you don't understand. You can make subject-related comments, but only if it's appropriate to the situation. Steer clear of off-topic remarks; they signal disinterest or an attempt to change the subject at an unsuitable time. Proper questioning helps you make sure you have the information correct, and reinforces to the speaker that they've been successful at getting their message across.

Ending

2.92 What cues signal that the speaker is finished? Look for phrases that signal a natural stopping point, such as “in closing,” “that’s all,” or “we’re done.” Resist the urge to stop attending before you’re sure that all of the information has been given.

Summarising

2.93 Develop the ability to sum up what was said in a few sentences. Focus on what you perceive as the most important parts. If a lot of information was given, try to verbalize one or two key things that you heard. If you’re unsure, try reframing the content of the communication back to the speaker for verification.

SECTION 15 - Huffing

Huffing

2.94 Inhalant use is on the rise. How much do you really know about this popular and dangerous trend among youth?

Who Is Doing It?

2.95 One in five students in America has used an inhalant to get high by the time he or she reaches the eighth grade.” (National Inhalant Prevention Coalition, “What is NIPAW?”). Among younger kids, inhalant use is more prevalent than other drug use because of easy accessibility. Unfortunately, many of the items used for huffing are common products that kids can easily get their hands on at home and at school.

What Are They Using?

2.96 Though most any chemical that can gives off breathable vapours can be used for huffing, the following are among the most common:

- a. Spray paint and paint thinners;
- b. Correction fluid and felt tip markers;
- c. Glue;
- d. Gasoline;
- e. Furniture polish and air fresheners;
- f. Dry cleaning fluids;
- g. Deodorant sprays and hairsprays;
- h. Fabric protector sprays;
- i. Vegetable cooking sprays;
- j. Propane gas;
- k. Degreasers;
- l. Dry cleaning fluids;
- m. Tape head cleaners; and
- n. Aerosol whipped cream propellants.

What are the Signs and Symptoms?

2.97 Huffing can cause anxiety, excitability, dizziness, paranoia, or nausea. Kids may lose their appetites, laugh strangely or seem drunk. You may notice runny eyes or sores around their mouths, or paint or other stains on their clothes or skin. Kids who use inhalants may sweat excessively and have a chemical smell on their breath. Finding markers in pockets or plastic bags of cotton balls or rags soaked with chemicals are also red flags. You may also notice a withdrawal from family and friends, and a general apathy about things that were once important. Kids who use inhalants and other drugs are at increased risk for depression.

How Dangerous are Inhalants?

2.98 Very. Inhalants slow down bodily functions and produce a feeling of euphoria that lasts only a few minutes. This short duration effect can encourage repeated and more concentrated episodes. Sudden Sniffing Death can occur during any huffing episode, even the first time. In addition, teens who use bags to inhale or do so in smaller spaces are at increased risk of death by suffocation. Because much inhalant use happens when kids are alone, there is often no one around to help them in an emergency situation. Kids also risk long-term damage to the brain, liver, and kidneys, as well as hearing loss, bone marrow, brain, and central nervous system damage.

Get Kids Involved

2.99 Go to National Inhalant Prevention Coalition for information on how to sign up to be a partner for National Inhalants and Poisons Awareness Week. You will receive a Local Coordinator's kit and weekly updates about NIPAW events around the country. Your kit will include educational materials and campaign activity suggestions, as well as sample PR materials. It's a great way to get kids involved with this issue in a proactive, leadership role.

SECTION 16 - Ready to Drink (RTD's) / Alcopops

Ready to Drink (RTD's) / Alco-pops

2.100 Call them what you want: malternatives, alcopops, clear malts, or RTD's. How and why are kids getting their hands on these sweet, trendy drinks?

Hard Lemonades, Colas, Iced Teas, and Ciders

2.101 In the past several years, these sweet-tasting “malternatives” have been gaining in popularity, mostly among young people. In fact, brand recognition for these drinks is much higher among teens than among adults. “Teens are three times as likely to be aware of “alcopops” and nearly twice as likely to have tried them.” (What Teens and Adults are saying about “Alcopops”, Alcohol Policies Project, May 2001). Why is that?

Easy Access

2.102 Alcopops may be easier for teens to purchase than traditional beers, wine, and liquors. In fact, as many as “1 in 4 underage people are able to buy “alcopops” at convenience stores.” (ibid.) This statistic suggests that carding practices for youth attempting to purchase these drinks are not as stringent as for other alcoholic beverages. In addition, alcopops are often strategically placed near juice beverages and other items likely to appeal to teens.

Sweet Taste, Cool Names

2.103 Made to taste like favourite colas or fruit drinks, Alcopops provide a viable alternative for teens that don't like the taste of other alcoholic beverages. Malternatives have an alcohol content comparable to (or even more than) that of beer; however, the flavouring lessens or completely eliminates the alcohol taste, allowing kids to drink larger amounts more quickly. In addition, hip sounding names like Rick's Spiked Lemonade, Hooper's Hooch, and Sky Blue appeal to teen sensibilities. Beverages come in six packs and cases, and if that isn't enough, some are even available in kegs.

Advertising Opportunities

2.104 With the exception of beer, the alcohol industry is banned from advertising their products on broadcast television. Because alcopops are technically classified as beers, the addition of these malt-based options to an existing liquor product line is an attractive option to companies. This allows them to skirt the restrictions and get their brand names and logos out frequently in front of a much larger and wider audience.

Friends for Life

2.105 The fact that many kids don't like the taste of liquor, beer, or wine helps in the fight against underage drinking. Enter alcopops; the perfect option for teens who haven't yet developed the taste for more “adult” liquors. Young drinkers are introduced to a yummy “starter drink” at an early age, starting a relationship between

the child and the brand that can lead to experimentation with and possible regular usage of the parent liquor. And a lifelong customer is born.

The Problem with Alcopops

2.106 The mix of teens and any alcoholic beverage is dangerous. "Alcohol kills more than six times as many teenagers as all illicit drugs combined and is a major factor in the four leading causes of teen death-motor vehicle crashes, unintentional injuries, homicides, and suicides." (George A. Hacker, Press Conference on the Marketing of "Alcopops" to Teens, May 9, 2001.) Sexual activity and sexual violence are also correlated with alcohol use. In addition, early drinkers are more likely to wind up abusing alcohol or other drugs later in life. "Training wheel products" that may encourage kids to start drinking earlier and more only serve to add to the risk.

SECTION 17 - Tobacco / Smoking

Tobacco / Smoking

2.107 Learn a variety of strategies you can use right away to help kids stay tobacco free many kids experiment with tobacco in their early teens, sometimes even younger. Tobacco advertising, peer pressure, and poor coping skills often contribute to the likelihood that a teen will pick up that first cigarette. This experimentation, however, can turn into a nicotine addiction that a child could battle for the rest of his life.

2.108 Drug and alcohol use among teens gets a lot of attention and press, while tobacco use is often presented as less serious or important. But the reality is quite different. According to the Centres for Disease Control, almost four thousand kids start smoking every day. More than 6 million children under 18 will have their lives cut short by a smoking-related illness.

2.109 How can you prevent the kids you work with from becoming part of these chilling statistics? Here are several suggestions for developing healthy lifestyles and opening a dialogue about tobacco.

Practice Refusal Skills

2.110 Teach kids how to offer alternatives, give reasons, or leave the situation. Help them practice being assertive. Role-play different situations so they can be ready with a variety of responses when cigarettes enter the picture.

Promote Positive Coping Skills

2.111 Many smokers use cigarettes as a way to deal with unpleasant feelings. Instead, help kids discover more healthful stress relievers, such as walking, painting, writing, etc.

Promote Healthy Lifestyles

2.112 Encourage kids to maintain a sensible diet and exercise regularly. Let them see you doing the same. Involvement in a sport can also be a strong motivator to stay tobacco-free.

Set a Good Example

2.113 If you smoke, try to quit. Talk to teens often about the dangers of smoking and your feelings about tobacco use. Don't assume they already know.

Keep Kids Busy

2.114 Many teens experiment with tobacco out of boredom. Involvement in healthy activities provides alternatives to smoking and other negative behaviour.

Help Kids Develop Leadership Skills

2.115 Sites like Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and Kick Butts Day provide tons of ideas to help your kids become active in the fight against Big Tobacco.

Examine Media Messages

2.116 Look at and discuss tobacco ads. How are teens targeted by these ads? What images do they project? How does the message differ from the reality? Help teens challenge what they see and hear.

Acknowledge Their Struggle

2.117 It's tough to resist the cultural and social pressures to smoke. Commend kids on their ability to stay true to themselves in spite of those pressures.

SECTION 18 - Promoting How To Cope

Promoting How To Cope

2.118 Help kids learn how to cope with everyday issues by developing skills in communicating, problem solving, and relaxation.

2.119 Everyone faces problems and stressors. The question is how we respond to these issues. Kids who don't have an available repertoire of coping skills can easily turn to rage, violence, or self-harm when upset and vulnerable. On the other hand, when we work to help kids develop a full toolkit of positive coping skills, we give them alternatives that can help them turn problem situations into positive outcomes.

Talking it Out

2.120 Once you've helped kids learn how to express themselves, be sure to give them ample time and attention to do so. Unfortunately, many kids don't get this at home. In the rush of everyday life, it's easy to forget to make time to just "talk". Often, that is exactly what kids are craving, though they usually won't come out and ask for it. Talking gives kids practice in verbalizing feelings, helps them feel validated, and can serve as a springboard to problem solving. Help kids identify several people they feel comfortable discussing problems with. For kids who aren't yet comfortable airing issues out loud, journaling can provide another outlet for confusing feelings. Sharing specific sections with you can help bridge the gap to verbal sharing.

Problem Solving

2.121 Another necessity for the toolkit is the ability to find solutions for his own problems. Problem solving can be as simple as sitting down together and brainstorming a list of possible solutions to the given situation. Ask kids what they've tried before in similar situations, and what outcomes they experienced. Ask them to predict likely consequences, both positive and negative, for each possibility. Make a list of options together, and then let teens choose the one they'd like to try. Check back frequently to process how the solution is or isn't working, and help modify as necessary. The goal here is for kids to learn to feel confident about solving their own problems.

Stress Relievers

2.122 You can also help kids find ways to relax that fit their personality and interests. Teens who have positive stress relievers are less likely to turn to activities like overeating, smoking, drinking, and sex to self-medicate or mask their pain. Some kids like quiet, relaxing activities like listening to music, drawing, or journaling. Others may prefer to be active – running, bicycling, building things. Different activities may be appropriate in different situations, so help them develop back up plans, as well. Help them try new things to see which work best for them, and put these in the toolkit as well.

SECTION 19 - Building Trust

Building Trust

2.123 A trusting relationship takes time and dedication. What can you do to enhance the process?

Show Respect

2.124 Never ridicule or humiliate a child. Recognize each child's differences, and adjust expectations accordingly. Don't play favourites or otherwise allow a child to perceive that you don't like him. Be careful with sarcasm.

Be Patient

2.125 With some kids, building strong rapport can seem to take forever. That's okay. Kids need the freedom to develop relationships at a pace that's comfortable for them. Take your cues from their timeline.

Stay Professional

2.126 Don't let kids overhear you talking about other students. Most organizations have confidentiality rules that prohibit this. Besides, it's just plain rude. Show respect to other adults as well, in how you address them and how you refer to them.

Establish Clear Boundaries

2.127 Many youth workers make the mistakes of trying to be too "friendly" with kids. Make sure roles are well established and that it is clear that you are the adult. Don't discuss your personal life or ask for advice from a child. Avoid with ambiguous physical contact.

Be Genuine

2.128 Don't pretend to be something you're not. Kids respect adults who are authentic, and see right through those who try to act like kids themselves in a misguided effort to be perceived as "cool." We want kids to be proud of who they are and stay true to themselves: why should they expect any different from us?

Stick to Your Word

2.129 If you say you'll do it, do it. No questions asked. Kids often need to see your integrity in action before they can develop trust. Plus, you are setting a wonderful example of strong character. Kids need to know they can depend on you, whatever the circumstances.

Be Consistent

2.130 Kids do best within a regular structure. Knowing what to expect helps reduce anxiety and gives kids a sense of control over their environment. Also, be consistent

with implementing limits. The consequence for misbehaviour should be a function of the misbehaviour, not of external factors like mood, time constraints, or patience level.

Strive for Balance

2.131 Not wanting to be a pushover can cause you to keep too tight a reign on kids. On the other hand, fear of being perceived as too “mean” could result in letting kids get away with too much. Try to find a reasonable middle ground. Recognize that you can be firm without sacrificing either your relationship or opportunities for growth.

Listen

2.132 Many kids don’t have caring adults in their lives who take the time to pay attention to them and hear what they have to say. Genuinely listening to a child’s concerns, ideas, and dreams does wonders for relationship building. Avoid giving advice; instead, develop questioning skills that help kids solve their own problems.

Show a Little Faith

2.133 Kids need strong advocates. Often, they doubt themselves and what they can do. Having an ally in the form of a caring, supportive adult can help kids achieve things they never dreamed. Letting them know you believe in them is the first step to teaching them how to believe in themselves.

SECTION 20 - Avoiding Gender Bias

Avoiding Gender Bias

2.134 Do you unknowingly convey different expectations for kids based on their sex?

2.135 When asked, most people would probably say that they treat boys and girls equally. However, we may not be aware of subtle differences in what we say and how we act; differences that may send powerful messages to kids. These messages give kids cues about how we expect them to feel, act, and think based on their sex rather than on who they are as individuals. How can you avoid putting unfair limitations on kids when you might not even be aware that you're doing it?

2.136 It's time to get tough with yourself by examining the following issues.

Language Choice

2.137 Though saying words like "police officer" rather than "policeman" or "flight attendant" instead of "stewardess" may seem trivial, your choice of words speaks volumes. Speaking in gender-neutral terms helps broaden the possibilities for kids by normalizing choices. Other easy flubs: using the pronoun "she" automatically when referring to a teacher, and "he" when referring to a doctor. If you don't know, ask. Don't make assumptions.

Taking Out the Trash vs. Washing the Dishes

2.138 Are you more likely to assign chores and tasks according to stereotypical gender lines? It may seem like a small thing, but what it does is reinforce outdated beliefs about what girls and boys can and can't do. Instead of empowering kids, these kinds of assumptions tell kids that you don't think they are capable. Divvy up jobs by interest, ability, or at random; not based on sex.

You Want To Do What?

2.139 Be sure you don't convey surprise if a teen shows interest in a hobby or career that may be considered "non-traditional" for their gender. Instead, use this as an opportunity to support their choices. Likewise, make sure you are exposing all kids to different kinds of activities and opportunities regardless of their gender.

Eye Of The Beholder

2.140 What kinds of expectations do you reveal regarding appearance? Do your comments demonstrate that less attractive girls and women are less valuable? Or that boys who are smaller in stature are somehow weaker or less manly? Even comments veiled as jokes send clear messages and serve to define boundaries between what is "acceptable" and what isn't. Keep in mind too that not only do kids hear you, but they emulate you, too. Especially if you are in a position of trust and respect, make sure you are setting a good example.

Why Is This So Important?

2.141 As an important adult in the life of a teen, you have tremendous power to influence their thinking. Kids are watching you all the time for how you act, what you say, and how you treat people. When you ask the girls to help you carrying heavy boxes, or ask the boys to assist with caring for or playing with younger children, you aren't just teaching them about equality. You are showing them that their possibilities are limitless, and that they can be true to themselves rather than adhering to a rigid set of expectations based on their gender.

CHAPTER 3 – Cadet Welfare

SECTION 1 -

3.1

CHAPTER 4 - UNCROC

SECTION 1 - International Humanitarian Law

What is International Humanitarian Law?

4.1 IHL is a set of rules, which seek, for humanitarian reasons, to limit the effects of armed conflict.

4.2 IHL protects persons who are not or are no longer participating in the hostilities and restricts the means and methods of warfare.

4.3 IHL is also known as the Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), which is the term used by the New Zealand Defence Force.

4.4 IHL is part of international law, which is the body of rules governing relations between States.

4.5 International law is contained in agreements between States, in treaties or conventions and in customary rules, which consist of State practice considered by them as legally binding, and in general principles.

4.6 IHL applies to armed conflicts. It does not regulate whether a State may actually use force; this is governed by an important, but distinct, part of international law set out in the United Nations Charter. IHL includes both humanitarian principles and international treaties that seek to save lives and alleviate suffering of combatants.

4.7 IHL is different from Human Rights Law, but they complement each other. Both seek to protect individuals from harm and maintain human dignity but they address different circumstances and have different core documents. IHL applies in times of **armed conflict** to limit the suffering caused by war and protect those who have fallen into the hands of an adverse party - to safeguard the fundamental rights of wounded, sick and shipwrecked combatants, POWs and civilians. Human rights law applies in times of peace or war to protect people against government violations of their internationally recognized rights, and are contained in different treaties.

4.8 The principal legal documents of IHL are the **Geneva Conventions** of 1949, four treaties signed by every nation in the world, which define fundamental rights for combatants removed from the fighting due to injury, illness, or capture, and for civilians.

4.9 The 1977 **Additional Protocols**, which supplement the Geneva Conventions, further expand those rights.

4.10 **Other conventions** prohibit the use of certain weapons and military tactics and protect certain categories of people and goods. These include:

- a. The 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, plus its two protocols;
- b. The 1972 Biological Weapons Convention;
- c. The 1980 Conventional Weapons Convention and its five protocols;
- d. The 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention;
- e. The 1997 Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel mines; and
- f. The 2000 Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

A Brief History

4.11 Henry Dunant was a Swiss businessman who happened to be travelling through Europe and ended up observing the aftermath of the Battle of Solferino in 1859 where he watched 40,000 dead and dying on the battlefield.

4.12 Dunant was so deeply disturbed by what he saw in terms of the agony of the injured and the lack of facility for the victims of war, he returned to Switzerland and founded the Red Cross in 1863.

4.13 In 1864 the first Geneva Convention was produced amongst signatories in Europe. It was the world's first real singularly humanitarian organisation. It emphasised at the outset the "neutral" status of the Red Cross, and its commitment towards the wounded during war, on both sides of the conflict.

4.14 Over the years, however, the impact of the Geneva Conventions grew and grew. They were reviewed and enhanced in 1929, 1949, and again in 1977. The review of the Conventions followed on from every major world conflict in the 20th Century. The First World War, the Second World War, and the Vietnam War.

4.15 One of the most important developments occurred in 1977. Recognising the fact that the Vietnam War was to a large extent an "internal conflict"; the Conventions were expanded to include protections to participants and victims in certain internal conflicts. This is of major significance, given the huge number of internal conflicts now occurring around the world.

4.16 The Nuremberg and Tokyo tribunals after WWII, the Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone tribunals, all have heard cases of war crimes.

4.17 The Nazi War criminal Herman Goering convicted and sentenced to hang at Nuremberg. He committed suicide by swallowing a cyanide capsule the day before he was to be hanged.

4.18 The Japanese War criminal General Yamashita convicted and sentenced to hang at Tokyo. He was the commander in Manila when his soldiers committed wide scale war crimes against civilians, which he did not prevent.

More Recent History

4.19 Today, a permanent International Criminal Court sits in The Hague, and deals with all war crimes or crimes against humanity. It is fully supported by New Zealand and it is an offence for **any** New Zealander, anywhere, at anytime, to commit war crimes or crimes against humanity.

4.20 The Congolese militia Colonel Thomas Lubanga is charged with war crimes for enlisting and conscripting children under the age of 15 to fight in the Congo between 2002 and 2003.

4.21 Radovan Karadzic, the former Bosnian Serb leader is one of the world's most wanted men, was captured by Serbian security services in July 2008. He faces trial at the International Criminal Court at The Hague. Karadzic is accused of organizing the 1995 massacre of more than 7,500 Muslims in Srebrenica and other atrocities during the Bosnian war.

Brief History - New Zealand

4.22 As far back as 1860 the basic purpose of IHL was seen in the efforts of those taking part in the New Zealand Wars, raging amongst colonial and British forces and various Maori tribes who supported or opposed the colonial government.

4.23 The Reverend Wilson explained to the warring parties the need to think about the consequences of their actions on the future. He was reminding people that the purpose of fighting by "rules" has greater consequences than just regulating activities on the battlefield of the day. Rules were set out and complied with by Maori forces at the battle of Gate Pa in 1864. The following are the 'Rules' written by Terea Poimanoka in 1864:

"March 28, 1864

"To the Colonel

"Potirioki, District of Tauranga.

"Friend, - Salutations to you. The end of that. Friend, do you give heed to our laws for regulating the fight.

"Rule 1. If wounded or captured whole, and the butt of the musket or hilt of the sword be turned to me, he will be saved.

"Rule 2. If any Pakeha, being a soldier by name, shall be travelling unarmed and meets me, he will be captured, and handed over to the directors of the law.

"Rule 3. The soldier who flees, being carried away by his fears, and goes to the house of the priest with his gun (even though carrying arms) will be saved. I will not go there.

"Rule 4. The unarmed Pakehas, woman and children, will be spared.

"The end. These are binding laws for Tauranga.

*“By Terea Poimanoka,
Wi Kotiro,
Pine Amopu,
Kereti,
Pateriki,*

“or rather, by all the Catholics of Tauranga”

The Purpose of IHL

4.24 The Purpose of IHL is to:

- a. **To Protect** persons who do not take a direct part in the conflict;
- b. **To Reduce** as much as possible the suffering, loss and damage caused by armed conflict;
- c. **To Safeguard** the fundamental human rights of all persons, including those who fall into captivity, particularly Prisoners of War; the wounded and shipwrecked; and civilians; and
- d. **To Facilitate** the restoration of peace by not resorting to treachery or other prohibited methods of warfare.

Why IHL is Supported by NZ

4.25 NZ supports and reaches International Humanitarian law because it has agreed to do so under International Law Treaties:

- a. Geneva Conventions 1949;
- b. Additional Protocols I & II 1977 (to the 1949 Geneva Conventions);
- c. Additional Protocol III (Additional Emblem 8 Dec 2005); and
- d. Rome Statute 1998 (for the International Criminal Court).

4.26 We also have NZ local or domestic law that supports IHL. Those local or domestic laws that supports IHL are:

- a. Geneva Conventions Act 1958;
- b. Geneva Conventions Amendment Act 1987;
- c. Chemical Weapons Prohibition Act 1996;
- d. Anti-Personnel Mines on Prohibition Act 1998; and
- e. International Crimes & International Criminal Court Act 2000.

Why NZDF has IHL Training

4.27 NZ respects the “Rule of Law”. Knowledge and obeying IHL enhances our war-fighting capability, and it protects military personnel at all levels. Knowledge of IHL enables recognition and the reporting of violations. Applying IHL is essential to the maintenance of discipline and violations can prolong a conflict with opponents continuing to resist. There would be adverse public opinion if the NZDF acted unlawfully.

The Basic Principles of IHL

4.28 Although the nature of warfare is always changing, there are seven basic principles of IHL, which remain constant.

4.29 These principles form the basis from which many of the more specific rules and laws are found. A war crime can be easily identified as a crime because it offends one or more of these principles.

4.30 The Seven Principles are as follows:

- a. **Military Necessity.** There are recognised limits to the use of military force - no more than is necessary to completely overpower the enemy in the shortest possible time to achieve legitimate military objectives, with the least number of casualties and minimal amount of collateral or incidental damage.
- b. **Humanity.** “Unnecessary suffering” - that which is not necessary for overpowering the opponent is not be permitted. “Unnecessary suffering” occurs when a weapon causes injury or suffering that is disproportionate to its military effectiveness. The principle of Humanity includes the concept of immunity of the civilian population or personnel not party to the conflict are not lawful combat targets and may not intentionally be killed. Specific prohibitions have evolved in relation to the use of certain technologically achievable weapons. Weapons such as chemical weapons bacteriological weapons, laser-blinding weapons all of these are now prohibited weapons due to the principle of humanity.
- c. **Proportionality.** This is the balance between having to destroy something and the unnecessary suffering that could occur (or is likely to occur) in doing so. An example: A sniper opens fire on a soldier from somewhere in the crowded market place. Military necessity? Get rid of the sniper. Humanity? Consider the women, children etc in the market place. The soldier should hold fire in the first instance while to assess the situation. In doing the soldier is applying the principle of proportionality, ie balancing the two principles of military necessity and humanity.
- d. **Distinction or Identification.** The next principle is that of distinction or identification. There is a legal obligation to distinguish between

legitimate military targets and civilian targets, to avoid the unnecessary destruction of civilian personnel or objects. Soldiers are to differentiate between combatants and non-combatants. Armed Forces are legally required to have some form of targeting or observation mechanism to ensure they are firing at only legitimate military objectives. They may not simply spray their weapons and pray that they hit their target!

- e. **Non-Discrimination.** The 5th principle of LOAC is that of non-discrimination. This provides that IHL will be applied equally to all parties involved in a conflict regardless of their race, wealth, ethnicity or any other grounds of discrimination. So for example we cannot decide in the particular conflict that we will not apply IHL in our dealings with people of a particular religion. IHL applies even if the enemy has been at fault - started the conflict, and it does not matter if the enemy has not signed the 1949 Geneva Conventions.
- f. **Prohibitory Effect.** The means and methods of warfare are **NOT** unlimited, and there are limits placed on the amount of force that an armed force can use. There are also prohibitions on the means of warfare, such as poisonous gases and “dum dum” bullets.
- g. **Binding Effect.** Principle number 7 means that IHL has a binding affect on parties, both on the state or country in terms of the obligation under international law to comply with conventions and treaties it has entered into, but also binding on individuals in terms of the requirement for individuals to conduct themselves in accordance with IHL. It is not an optional extra that is applied as and when a country or individual see fit. It is binding at all times. Even if you are losing the battle you must still apply IHL.

IHL Definitions and Status

4.31 A combatant has the legal right to participate directly in armed conflict, and when captured entitled to Prisoner of War (PoW) status.

4.32 A combatant can kill an enemy combatant at any time and in any place and can be killed by the enemy at any time and in any place.

4.33 A non-combatant is any person who is not a combatant member of the armed forces. A civilian is any person who does not belong to the armed forces.

Military Objectives

4.34 Military objectives include:

- a. Armed forces except medical services, religious personnel and objects;
- b. Establishments, buildings etc, where armed forces or their material are located; and

- c. Objects that make an effective contribution to military action and whose destruction, capture or neutralisation, in the circumstances at the time, offer a definite military advantage.

Civilian Objects

4.35 Civilian objects include any object that is not a military objective. These are protected.

IHL Law: Medics & Chaplains

4.36 Medical and religious personnel are non-combatants. Whether military or civilian, they must be respected and protected in order to facilitate the humanitarian tasks assigned to them. They must carry an identity card that confirms their status. They should also wear on their left arm the distinctive emblem of the Red Cross, Red Crystal or Red Crescent.

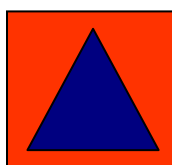
4.37 Although classified as non-combatants, medical and religious personnel are allowed to carry light arms for their own protection and that of their patients. If they take a direct part in the hostilities, they lose their protections.

Protective Emblems, Symbols & Markings

4.38 To identify protected persons, transport, buildings and facilities, internationally recognised symbols and markings are provided.

4.39 The use of the protected symbols is strongly recommended but not compulsory.

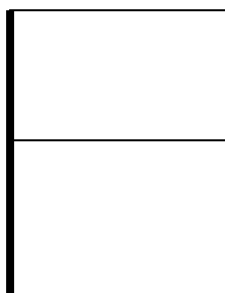
4.40 The misuse of a protected symbol is a war crime, but ruses (lawful tricks) of war are not prohibited. These symbols are:



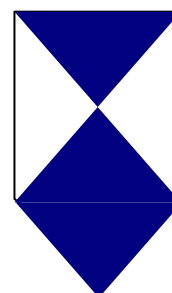
Civil Defence



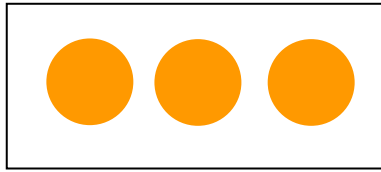
Prisoner of War
(English and French versions)



The White Flag of Truce



Cultural Property



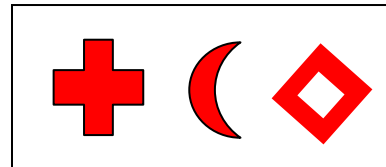
Dams, Dykes, Nuclear Power Plants



Internment Camp
(for civilians)



United Nations



Red Cross, Red Crescent and Red
Crystal

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

4.41 The International Committee of the Red Cross is Geneva based, and is an impartial, neutral and independent organization with an exclusively humanitarian mission to protect the lives and dignity of victims of war and internal violence, and provide them with assistance. It has a protected emblem.

NZDF Basic Rules - Code of Conduct

4.42 NZDF personnel are issued with a Code of Conduct card. It lists ten basic rules, which are as follows:

- a. Fight only Opposing Forces;
- b. Attack only military objectives and destroy no more than the mission requires;
- c. Do not use weapons that are prohibited. Do not alter your weapons or ammunition to cause unnecessary suffering;
- d. Do not harm enemy personnel who surrender; disarm them and treat them as PoW;
- e. Treat all civilians and persons deprived of their liberty humanely, protect them from abuse, and respect their property;
- f. Collect and care for the wounded and sick, whether friend or foe;
- g. Respect medical and religious personnel, cultural objects and places of worship;
- h. Respect the use of protective emblems, symbols and markings;

- i. Do not fight treacherously; and
- j. Uphold the Law of Armed Conflict by preventing and reporting violations.

Special IHL Protection for Children - Specific Protection

4.43 A “child” is any person who has not reached the age of 18 years, but in some cases IHL establishes the age of majority at 15 years. A child must be afforded “special respect”, protected from abuse, and provided with care.

4.44 The 1998 **Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court** gives the court jurisdiction over the war crime of conscription or enlisting children under 15 years into national armed forces or armed groups, or using them to participate actively in hostilities.

Specific Protection Lost

4.45 Members of the Armed Forces may lawfully regard children as ‘combatants’ if participating in the conflict.

4.46 If captured or taken as PoW, a child must not be executed, tried for war crimes and wherever possible be allowed to maintain contact with their families through regular correspondence and visits.

4.47 A child must be held in quarters separate from adults except where families are accommodated as a unit, be given the special treatment having regard to their education, welfare, religion, and fitness needs. A child must not be compelled to work by or for an occupying power.

Special IHL Protection for Children

4.48 These protections are over and above any other rights and protections such individuals might enjoy under IHL as an ordinary protected person or civilian.

4.49 A party to the conflict may establish safety zones and localities to protect children from the effects of war - ICRC monitors.

4.50 A party to the conflict must allow the free passage of medical stores, foodstuffs, clothing intended for children under 15 years.

4.51 A party to the conflict must not evacuate children who are not nationals of that country to a foreign country unless there are good and special reasons.

4.52 It is prohibited to use booby traps which are in any way attached to or associated with children’s toys or other portable objects or products specially designed for the feeding, health, hygiene clothing or education of children.

International Monitoring Agencies

4.53 Monitoring agencies are important in keeping the public informed. Many organisations, with international operations in addition to the Red Cross have worked hard to protect children during armed conflict. These include Human Rights Watch, Action for the Rights of Children, Coalition to stop the use of Child Soldiers and Amnesty International.

Child Soldiers

4.54 With new weapons that are lightweight and easy to fire, children are more easily armed, with less training than ever before. Worldwide, more than half a million children under-18 have been recruited into government armed forces, paramilitaries, civil militia and a wide variety of non-state armed groups in more than 85 countries. At any one time, more than 300,000 of these children are actively fighting as soldiers with government armed forces or armed political groups.

4.55 Children who are used as soldiers are robbed of their childhood and are often subjected to extreme brutality.

4.56 Despite progress achieved over the last decade in the global campaign to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers, large numbers of children continue to be exploited in war and placed in the line of fire.

4.57 The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict - which came into force on 12 February 2002 - is a milestone in the campaign, strengthening the legal protection of children and helping to prevent their use in armed conflict.

4.58 War criminals such as Congolese Colonel Thomas Lubanga are on trial for these crimes.

SECTION 2 - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC)

4.59 The UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCROC) in November 1989. It identifies standards for children and young people to which all governments should aspire. UNCROC is the most universally accepted human rights instrument in history. Every country in the world except two has signed up to it, as the New Zealand Government did in 1993.

4.60 UNCROC is a major milestone for human rights and has **four general principles**:

- a. The right to freedom from discrimination;
- b. The right to survival and development;
- c. The best interests of the child as the primary consideration in all decisions or actions that affect the child; and
- d. Child participation.

4.61 The rights can be divided into five specific groups:

- a. Civil rights and freedoms
- b. Family environment and alternative care
- c. Basic health and welfare
- d. Education, leisure and cultural activities
- e. Special protection measures

4.62 Article 38 makes some provision regarding children and armed conflict.

4.63 States (or countries) promise to respect and obey the rules of International Humanitarian Law which affect children during armed conflict, and do all they can to ensure that children who are younger than 15 years do not take a direct part.

4.64 States must refrain from recruiting any person who is not 15 years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who are over 15 but who are not yet 18 years, priority is given to those who are oldest.

4.65 In keeping with their obligations under humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States or countries must do all they can to ensure the protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.

SECTION 3 - Optional Protocol

Optional Protocol

4.66 An Optional Protocol means a voluntary addition, in this case to an international convention or treaty.

4.67 The full title is The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, which makes it clear the focus, is the involvement of children in armed conflict.

4.68 It was adopted by United Nations General Assembly on 25 May 2000 and agreed to by NZ on 13 November 2001.

4.69 It provides additional protection for children under UNCROC and represents a great achievement on behalf of children - an important step in a process that includes having all countries agree to it.

Protection for Children

4.70 The Optional Protocol raises the minimum age for direct participation in hostilities to 18 years (from the previous minimum age of 15 years specified in the Convention on the Rights of the Child) and previous law.

4.71 It also prohibits compulsory recruitment by government forces of anyone under 18 years of age, and calls on State Parties to raise the minimum age above 15 for voluntary recruitment, and to implement strict safeguards when voluntary recruitment of children under 18 years is permitted.

4.72 In the case of non-state armed groups, it prohibits all recruitment - voluntary and compulsory - under age 18.

NZ Declarations

4.73 The Optional Protocol was agreed to by the New Zealand Government on 13 November 2001, and in doing so set out several conditions:

4.74 The minimum age at which New Zealand will permit voluntary recruitment into its national armed forces shall be 17 years.

4.75 Safeguards, which it has adopted to ensure that such recruitment is not forced, include:

- a. Defence Force recruitment procedures requiring that persons responsible for recruitment ensure that such recruitment is genuinely voluntary;
- b. Legislative requirements that the consent of parent or guardian is obtained for enlistment where such consent is necessary under NZ law.

The parent or guardian must also acknowledge that the person enlisting will be liable for active service after reaching the age of 18 years;

- c. A detailed and informative enlistment process, which ensures that all persons are fully informed of the duties involved in military service prior to taking an oath of allegiance; and
- d. A recruiting procedure, which requires enlistees to produce their birth certificate as reliable proof of age."

4.76 Under the Optional Protocol New Zealand is required to report to the United Nations. One recommendation from the UN was that New Zealand undertake systematic education and training on UNCROC and, in particular for military personnel and that the Optional Protocol be widely known to children.

4.77 As a result the Chief of the NZ Defence Force **directed** that Cadet Forces be trained generally in International Humanitarian Law, including UNCROC and the Optional Protocol.

4.78 The ultimate objective is to end the recruitment and use of children as soldiers.

4.79 There are several key elements that are essential to realizing this objective: close monitoring of, and reporting on, States' compliance with the Optional Protocol, political leadership, and a strong focus on the rights of all children not only during conflict but also after it ends.

4.80 The picture on the left shows a display of protest - a hand to stop using child soldiers, and on the right, young people walking away from their weapons.