

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

Common Situation

Area 1 – the area of difficulty

Area 2 – quality of life of the individual

Area 3 – walking through the 9 destinations

1. Aggression

In the face of aggression, our approach within the Gentle Teaching framework is centered on promoting safety, connection, and positive engagement. When confronted with a person attempting to hit, we implement a set of strategies to de-escalate the situation and foster a sense of security:

1. **Protect Yourself Unobtrusively:**
 - In the event of a potential hit, discreetly shield yourself, perhaps by using your arm to block the aggression. The aim is to ensure personal safety without escalating the confrontation.
2. **Maintain Emotional Restraint:**
 - Avoid verbalizing negative reactions to the aggression. Keep your emotions in check, refraining from magnifying the situation with confrontational language.
3. **Encourage Participation:**
 - Actively encourage the person to engage with you in a warm and inclusive manner. If necessary, temporarily step back for a few moments to allow emotions to settle.
4. **Assist with the Activity:**
 - Collaboratively participate in the activity alongside or for the person, valuing a sense of shared involvement. This can redirect their focus from aggression to positive interaction.
5. **Continue Dialogue:**
 - Maintain open communication (skills of engagement) throughout the encounter. Dialogue serves as a tool to understand the person's perspective and to foster a connection even in challenging moments.
6. **Provide Strong and Authentic Valuing:**
 - Emphasize genuine appreciation and value for the individual. Acknowledge their worth and contributions, valuing one sense of self-worth and sense of belongingness during and after this difficulty.
7. **Ensure Day Filled with Valuing and Sharing:**
 - As a preventive measure, structure the person's day to include consistent moments of valuing and sharing. This ongoing positive engagement serves to minimize the likelihood of future area of difficulties.

Recognizing Aggression as a Lagging Skill within the Framework of Gentle Teaching

In the context of Gentle Teaching, aggression is understood not as a deliberate and maladaptive behavior but as a manifestation of lagging skills. Drawing from the insights of experts like Ross Greene, we acknowledge that individuals, particularly those with dual diagnoses, may exhibit aggression when faced with challenges related to unmet needs or underdeveloped skills.

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

Our approach to aggression is rooted in compassion and understanding, refraining from punitive measures that only address the surface of the issue. Instead, we recognize the aggression as a communication of an unmet need or a lagging skill. Rather than reacting negatively, we strive to decode the underlying message and create an environment that fosters security and support.

Understanding that aggression often serves as a coping mechanism for unaddressed challenges, we embark on a journey of providing a secure and supportive space. The goal is to identify what we represent to the person during these challenging moments and, through intentional efforts, signal safety and security. This approach aims to break the cycle of aggression by addressing the root causes rather than merely responding to the symptoms.

The predictability of aggressive behavior allows us a unique opportunity to identify early signs. In doing so, we can find the meaning and value by connecting with the person's energy and emotions, prioritizing the core values of Gentle Teaching – value, connection, and companionship. Rather than using rewards or consequences to modify inappropriate behavior, our focus lies in creating an environment that meets the individual's needs and fosters a sense of security (the feeling of being safe and loved unconditionally).

Moving forward, we actively engage in the implementation of creating this culture of gentleness with teachable strategies. These strategies are designed to diminish the occurrence and intensity of aggressive episodes. By understanding aggression as a lagging skill, we shift our approach from reactive to collaborating, emphasizing respect and understanding even in challenging moments.

In summary, Gentle Teaching's perspective on aggression as a lagging skill reframes our understanding of challenging behaviors. By addressing the underlying needs and providing a safe and unconditionally loving environment, we aim to build a foundation of trust, respect, and genuine connection, ultimately fostering the individual's social and emotional well-being.

In understanding aggression as a lagging skill involves recognizing the specific areas of difficulty that may contribute to such behaviors. Here are examples of lagging skills related to aggression:

1. Self-Regulation:

- *Difficulty Managing Frustration:* The individual may struggle to cope with frustration or disappointment, leading to aggressive outbursts as a way to express their distress.
- *Impulse Control Issues:* Challenges in controlling impulses may result in impulsive and aggressive reactions to stressors.

2. Communication:

- *Limited Verbal Expression:* Difficulty expressing oneself verbally may lead to frustration, as the individual may feel misunderstood or unable to communicate their needs effectively.
- *Lack of Communication Skills:* Inability to use appropriate language to convey feelings and emotions, resorting to aggression as a means of communication.

3. Understanding and Befriending One's Negative Emotions:

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

- *Emotional Regulation Challenges:* Difficulty in recognizing, understanding, and regulating negative emotions may result in using aggression as a way to cope with overwhelming feelings.
 - *Limited Problem-Solving Skills:* Insufficient skills in problem-solving and conflict resolution may lead to frustration, contributing to aggressive behaviors instead of seeking alternative solutions.
4. **Social Skills:**
- *Poor Peer Relationships:* Difficulty in forming positive relationships with peers may result in feelings of isolation or rejection, triggering aggressive behaviors as a response to social challenges.
 - *Limited Empathy:* Challenges in understanding others' perspectives and feelings may lead to difficulties in resolving conflicts peacefully.
5. **Sensory Processing:**
- *Sensory Overload:* Individuals who struggle with sensory processing issues may become overwhelmed by environmental stimuli, leading to aggressive behaviors as a way to cope with sensory challenges.
6. **Flexibility and Adaptability:**
- *Rigidity in Routine:* Difficulty adapting to changes or unexpected events may result in frustration and aggression, especially when routines are disrupted.

Understanding these lagging skills allows us to tailor interventions that address the root causes of aggression. Instead of punitive measures, the focus shifts to teaching and supporting the development of these skills, fostering a more positive and constructive response to challenging situations.

2. John's Quality of Life

John's present quality of life is intricately woven into the fabric of Gentle Teaching, emphasizing the eight human values within the Quality of Life Model. Each facet of John's existence is a testament to his pursuit of a fulfilling life, guided by the principles of gentleness, companionship, and respect

Bodily Integrity:

As the sun rises, John's day begins with a gentle walk to the park, a routine that keeps him physically and mentally strong. The swish of the basketball net at the YMCA is his personal anthem, echoing the joy he finds in self-expression. Yet, within this melody, there are quieter notes of struggle. John sometimes tries to avoid taking his medication, weaving a complex dance between his desire for autonomy and the challenges posed by his mental health. During these moments John hears voices of judgment and persecution.

Feeling Safe:

In the art of planning his day, John finds a canvas for collaboration and shared decision-making. The daytimer becomes a roadmap, guiding him towards a sense of autonomy and security. Yet, the unspoken language of his eyes tells a different story. The avoidance of eye contact or downward glances reveals the shadows of insecurity that lurk within, shadows shaped by the

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

intricate dance between autonomy and vulnerability. This is also a sign of John not taking his medication for over a week or two.

Feeling Self-Worth:

Within the walls of his apartment, John crafts a masterpiece of self-worth. Every meticulously placed item tells a story of pride and accomplishment. Basketball, a symbol of his intrinsic value, becomes a battleground at times. In moments of aggression, he seems to fight not only for personal space but also to assert his worth in a world that sometimes feels challenging due to his unique struggles.

Having a Life Structure:

The schedule is John's superhero cape, providing a sense of structure and empowerment. Collaborative planning with caregivers creates a fortress against the chaos that mental health challenges can bring. However, when the threads of medication adherence unravel, the fortress weakens. Routines crumble, and the vulnerability beneath the structure is exposed, a painful reminder of the delicate balance needed to navigate daily life.

Sense of Belongingness:

Purdue basketball is more than a pastime for John; it's a lifeline to belongingness. His memorabilia is a gallery of shared identity and community. Yet, during intense moments, the game's passion changes into obsession, fueled by the unpredictable twists of schizophrenia. The belongingness becomes a tightrope walk between community and internal conflict.

Social Participation:

Conversations and shared activities are John's social treasures, building bridges to companionship. Yet, the shadow of paranoia, a companion of schizophrenia, sometimes distorts these connections. His fear of exploitation transforms laughter into arguments, and shared experiences into isolated struggles. The tapestry of social engagement bears both vibrant hues and muted tones.

Meaningful Daily Activities:

John's daily activities are strokes on the canvas of fulfillment. Each brush of routine brings joy and purpose. But when the symphony of schizophrenia plays, the notes transform into secret messages, turning the familiar into the unknown. What once brought joy now carries the weight of imagined threats, a challenge woven into the fabric of his daily life.

Inner Contentment:

Basketball is a refuge for John, a place where caregivers join in the dance of understanding. Yet, when the mind's storm brews, the dance becomes a struggle. The frustration and distorted perceptions become not just individual battles but a war within, waged against the instability that comes with unmanaged schizophrenia.

In John's life, the beauty lies not just in the daily joys but also in the resilience and courage with which he faces the unique challenges brought by his intellectual disability and schizophrenia. It's a story of complexity, where every triumph and struggle contributes to the rich tapestry of his

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

existence. Understanding and appreciating this story requires both empathy for the beauty and acknowledgment of the shadows that dance alongside it.

Here are example goals for each of the identified lagging skills:

1. Self-Regulation:

- *Difficulty Managing Frustration:*
 - Goal: The individual will learn alternative coping mechanisms, such as deep breathing exercises or taking a break, to manage frustration without resorting to aggression.
- *Impulse Control Issues:*
 - Goal: The individual will practice and develop strategies, like counting to ten before reacting, to enhance impulse control and prevent impulsive and aggressive reactions.

2. Communication:

- *Limited Verbal Expression:*
 - Goal: The individual will engage in regular verbal expression exercises, including journaling or participating in group discussions, to improve communication and reduce frustration associated with feeling misunderstood.
- *Lack of Communication Skills:*
 - Goal: The individual will participate in communication skills workshops or therapy sessions to acquire effective language tools for expressing feelings and emotions, reducing reliance on aggression.

3. Understanding and Befriending One's Negative Emotions:

- *Emotional Regulation Challenges:*
 - Goal: The individual will undergo emotional regulation training, including identifying and labeling emotions, to develop healthier coping mechanisms instead of resorting to aggression.
- *Limited Problem-Solving Skills:*
 - Goal: The individual will engage in problem-solving activities and conflict resolution exercises to enhance problem-solving skills and minimize reliance on aggression as a response to challenges.

4. Social Skills:

- *Poor Peer Relationships:*
 - Goal: The individual will participate in social skills groups or activities to improve peer relationships, fostering positive interactions and reducing aggression stemming from feelings of isolation or rejection.
- *Limited Empathy:*
 - Goal: The individual will engage in empathy-building exercises, such as perspective-taking activities, to enhance understanding of others' feelings and reduce conflicts through peaceful resolutions.

5. Sensory Processing:

- *Sensory Overload:*

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

- Goal: The individual will work with sensory therapists to develop coping strategies and sensory regulation techniques to manage environmental stimuli, decreasing the likelihood of aggressive responses.
6. **Flexibility and Adaptability:**
- *Rigidity in Routine:*
 - Goal: The individual will participate in activities that gradually introduce changes to routines, helping them adapt more flexibly to unexpected events and reduce frustration and aggression associated with disruptions.

These goals emphasize skill-building and proactive strategies to address the root causes of aggression, aligning with the principles of Gentle Teaching.

The reason why in John's quality of life

In the intricate tapestry of John's life, the journey toward enhancing his quality of life involves an approach that addresses the lagging skills he navigates. Each facet of his daily experience is a canvas upon which we aim to paint strokes of growth, empowerment, and genuine connection.

Bodily Integrity: As the sun rises, John's routine of a gentle walk to the park and the rhythmic sound of the basketball net at the YMCA are essential components preserving his bodily integrity. In this symphony of self-expression, we recognize a quieter struggle. The dance around medication adherence reflects a delicate balance between autonomy and mental health challenges. To further empower John, we aim to develop self-regulation skills, fostering an understanding that managing frustration and impulsivity positively contributes to his well-being.

Feeling Safe: Within the collaborative art of planning his day, John's daytimer serves as a roadmap to control and security. However, the unspoken language of his eyes reveals shadows of insecurity shaped by the dance between autonomy and vulnerability. To address this, our goals include enhancing communication skills, with a focus on expressing feelings effectively and fostering emotional regulation. Through this, we strive to create an environment where John feels not only in control but also emotionally secure.

Feeling Self-Worth: John's apartment is a canvas of self-worth, each item a testament to pride and accomplishment. Yet, aggression becomes a battleground, a struggle for personal space and assertion of worth. To support John in feeling self-worth, goals involve building social skills such as empathy and conflict resolution. This aims to minimize moments of aggression, fostering an environment where John's intrinsic value is consistently acknowledged.

Having a Life Structure: The schedule acts as John's superhero cape, providing structure and empowerment. However, when medication adherence falters, the vulnerability beneath the structure is exposed. Goals here focus on flexibility and adaptability, allowing John to navigate changes without compromising his sense of structure. This entails developing skills to manage rigidity in routine and adapt positively to unexpected events.

Sense of Belongingness: Purdue basketball is John's lifeline to belongingness, a shared identity and community. However, the passion sometimes changes into obsession, straining the tightrope

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

walk between community and internal conflict. To address this, our goals involve fostering social skills such as building positive peer relationships and deepening empathy. This aims to enrich John's sense of belongingness and create more harmonious connections within his community.

Social Participation: Conversations and shared activities are John's social treasures, but the shadow of paranoia distorts these connections. Goals focus on improving communication skills and understanding negative emotions. This seeks to create an environment where shared experiences are not marred by internal struggles, fostering vibrant hues in the tapestry of social engagement.

Meaningful Daily Activities: John's daily activities bring joy and purpose, but the symphony of schizophrenia sometimes distorts these experiences. Goals center on self-regulation and emotional regulation, ensuring that John can navigate daily life without the weight of imagined threats. This aims to transform his daily routine into a source of fulfillment and reduce the impact of distorted perceptions.

Inner Contentment: Basketball is a refuge, a dance of understanding. Yet, when the mind's storm brews, the dance becomes a struggle. Goals revolve around enhancing emotional regulation and problem-solving skills, allowing John to find inner contentment even amidst the challenges of unmanaged schizophrenia. This involves providing tools to manage frustration and conflicts effectively, fostering a more harmonious and fulfilling experience in his refuge.

3. Navigating the Heart Through Stormy Weather

Situation

John came home from work around 4 pm when his staff informed him that he needed to start cleaning his room. Without saying anymore to John his staff walked into the kitchen where John followed him and grabbed his caregivers shirt and started hitting him on his back.

Destination 1: Structured Life Plan And Activities With Value:

- 1. What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - The demand to clean his room without collaborative planning disrupts John's structured life plan, potentially making him feel unsafe. The lack of consideration for his preferences and autonomy may contribute to a sense of being unloved.
- 2. How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - John's physical response of grabbing his caregiver's shirt and hitting him on the back signifies his frustration and a perceived violation of his sense of being safe and valued. His actions communicate a need for a more collaborative and respectful approach to his daily routines.
- 3. How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?**
 - In this destination, caregivers must actively involve John in planning activities, ensuring they hold personal value. By incorporating his preferences into the

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

routine and valuing his input, the goal is to create companionship through meaningful activities that contribute to a structured and purposeful life.

Destination 2: Sense of Self-Worth:

- 1. What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - John's aggression might stem from a perceived threat to his self-worth. Being told to clean his room without considering his contributions and preferences could make him feel undervalued and unloved.
 - 2. How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - The physical aggression and frustration signify John's struggle with feeling undervalued. His love for work, cleaning, and basketball indicates activities that contribute significantly to his sense of self-worth.
 - 3. How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?**
 - Gentle Teaching emphasizes continuous engagement in meaningful activities that value the individual. By recognizing and appreciating John's contributions to work, cleaning, and basketball, caregivers can validate his self-worth and build a positive relationship.
-

Destination 3: Sense of Belongingness:

- 1. What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - The demand to clean his room without considering his connection to meaningful activities, like basketball, may disrupt John's sense of belongingness. This lack of understanding might make him feel disconnected and unloved.
 - 2. How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - John's physical reaction may indicate a struggle with feeling disconnected. His love for Purdue basketball and the desire to share these interests suggest a need for a shared sense of belonging.
 - 3. How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?**
 - Caregivers must actively engage in shared activities related to John's interests, like basketball, fostering a sense of companionship. Recognizing his connection to Purdue basketball contributes to his overall sense of belonging and feeling loved.
-

Destination 4: Feeling Safe and Loved:

- 1. What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - The lack of collaborative planning and understanding before directing John to clean his room may compromise his sense of safety and love. Demands without context may contribute to feelings of being unloved and misunderstood.
- 2. How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

- John's physical reaction, grabbing his caregiver's shirt and hitting him on the back, signals a distressful response to demands that do not prioritize his sense of safety and love.
3. **How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?**
 - In this destination, caregivers should focus on creating a foundation of interactions based on meaningful activities. Engaging in activities that hold personal value for John and reinforcing positive connections can contribute to feelings of safety and love.
-

Destination 5: Laying the Foundation for Inner Contentment:

1. **What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - Unplanned demands may disrupt the foundation for inner contentment. Without a focus on meaningful activities and understanding, John's response may indicate a struggle to find peace within himself.
 2. **How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - John's frustration and anger in response to unplanned demands suggest an internal struggle. Inner contentment is compromised when demands are placed without consideration for his schedule and preferences.
 3. **How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?**
 - Building on this destination involves prioritizing interactions that focus on building relationships rather than merely accomplishing tasks. By understanding John's preferences and engaging in activities that bring him joy, caregivers can contribute to his inner contentment.
-

Destination 6: Opening The Door:

1. **What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - Unannounced demands may close the door to a supportive and loving environment for John. Lack of communication and collaboration may make him feel unwelcome and unvalued.
 2. **How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - John's physical reaction may be an attempt to regain control or communicate his dissatisfaction. The aggression might be a way of expressing the discomfort caused by the lack of an open and communicative environment.
 3. **How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?**
 - Opening the door involves creating an environment where John feels welcomed and valued. Caregivers can use their presence and love to establish a connection, assuring John that he is in a safe and supportive space.
-

Destination 7: Being Present to Build on the Foundation:

1. **What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - Lack of caregiver presence and understanding in the face of demands may amplify John's feelings of being unsafe and unloved. A supportive presence is essential for building trust and connection.
2. **How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?**
 - John's physical reaction may be a call for a more present and engaged caregiver. The absence of a supportive presence can intensify feelings of vulnerability.

SAMPLE

A Common Situation for Training in Navigating the Heart / Crisis Intervention

3. How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?

- Being present involves spending time with John, demonstrating reliability and support. By actively engaging in activities and conversations, caregivers can build on the foundation of trust and connection, helping John feel safe and loved.
-

Destination 8: Valuing:

1. What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?

- Lack of acknowledgment and appreciation for John's contributions may diminish his sense of value. Demands without recognition may contribute to feelings of being unloved and unappreciated.

2. How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?

- John's physical reaction might be an expression of frustration at not feeling valued. The desire for caregivers to understand his schedule suggests a need for recognition and appreciation.

3. How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?

- Valuing involves actively recognizing and appreciating each other's contributions. Caregivers should acknowledge John's efforts in work, cleaning, and planning, reinforcing his sense of worth. This mutual appreciation strengthens the relationship, fostering an environment where John feels safe and loved.
-

Destination 9: Safe and Loved with Meaningful Activities to Expand the Foundation:

1. What elements create a feeling of being unsafe and unloved?

- Lack of variety and consideration for meaningful activities may limit the expansion of the foundation for feeling safe and loved. Repetitive demands without incorporating diverse activities may lead dullness and boredom.

2. How does John communicate his feeling of being unsafe and unloved?

- John's frustration with unplanned demands may indicate a desire for a broader range of activities. The need for caregivers to engage in his schedule highlights the importance of meaningful interactions.

3. How do we use our tools to teach John to feel safe and loved?

- Expanding the foundation involves consistently incorporating a variety of meaningful activities into John's routine. Caregivers should actively engage in diverse activities related to basketball, work, and cleaning, ensuring that the foundation remains strong. This ongoing commitment to meaningful interactions helps John feel safe and loved in the context of a well-rounded and fulfilling life.