Decider Skills in the world of Oral and Dental Health

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Background

The Decider Skills use Cognitive Behavioural Therapy to teach children, young people and adults skills to recognise their own thoughts, feelings and behaviours, allowing them to monitor and manage their own emotions and mental health. The skills were designed to enable participants to make effective changes to help manage distress, regulate emotion, increase mindfulness, promote effective communication and help to live a more skilful, less impulsive life.

The skills are taught in 4 main themes -

1. Distress Tolerance -

Help us to live in the here and now and to focus outwards, rather than inwards. **2. Mindfulness** -

Help us to accept situations and understand things can and will change.

3. Emotional Regulation -

Help us to identify and manage emotions to remain in control of our feelings.

4. Interpersonal Effectiveness - Help us to appropriately express beliefs, needs, setting limits and finding solutions when communicating. The skills are taught using visuals, music, demonstrations and a hint of humour! On hearing about the Decider Skills during an introductory session, a Senior Dental Officer expressed an interest in attending the training. This was then used as a test for use within the dental clinic, particularly with anxious children.

Results

The SDO immediately started to use the approach with children attending the clinic with great success. However, the use of the skills expanded into day to day life, at both work and home.







NHS

Grampian

BREATHE

with a really active child who attended the clinic but wasn't really engaging. I explained we had some work to do, and I couldn't do it if he wasn't listening. I was aware that he knew about Decider skills so I asked him, which skill he could use to help? He chose **OPPOSITE ACTION** –

As a dentist, I was working



help? He chose **OPPOSITE ACTION** – he was still and co-operative! Together with **BREATHE** - worked a treat.

OPPOSITE ACTION

As a colleague, I have used the skills to support staff with communication. We have reflected on talking with parents where their children have high levels of needs. The ease of use, simple language and imagery of The Decider Skills has allowed us to take a step back and look at how we provide effective communication. The use of the skill **STOPP** As a dentist, an anxious child required treatment. I knew the child had been taught Decider skills and so I asked what skills would work for him at that moment – he chose **'IT WILL PASS'** and **'BREATHE'** – it was a much smoother and quicker process for both myself and the child.



IT WILL PASS

As a friend, I have found the skill **DO ONE THING – 20 MINS** has been an effective tool to offer friends who are going through tough times. It's a useful way to move focus and ease anxiety.





For more information on this training programme check out the website

www.thedecider.org.uk/

As a Mum, the skill **RIGHT NOW (54321)** has proved to be a really effective grounding technique, providing the space for the young person to regulate their emotions and not act on impulse, resulting in a much safer and healthier outcome for all.

54321 RIGHT NOW

DO ONE THING -20 mins