

## **TRANSCRIPT: Intensive Support Centre: Addressing socially unacceptable behaviours**

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If their lives are closing down because they're restricted in terms of the environments and the opportunities available to them, that's got a knock-on effect in terms of their mental health and their overall well-being. So, we think it's very important that we're able to give them the skills to go out and be part of the community, their family and their peer group and experience all the things that other young people would do.

If they're using aggression or if they're constantly removing their clothes or self-harming or smearing saliva - any of those behaviours - they're going to restrict the opportunities that are available to them. So, it's our job trying to figure out what's the function of these behaviours and then trying to teach them another way of achieving that function, but in a way that's acceptable.

With one student who plays with his saliva constantly, we try and replace that with playing with a set of beads that he likes to do because he likes the feeling of playing with something in between his hands. If somebody's using aggression to indicate that they don't want to do something or to gain attention, we can teach them a more appropriate way of doing that by giving them a sign or a PECS symbol or even teach them the language to request it.

Dean, for instance, gets very obsessed about particular things so, if he continues to get agitated, we've got to teach him a way that he can calm himself down and move on. So, at the moment, we're escorting him out and going for a walk with him. Ultimately, we want him to be able to take himself out, go for a walk, calm down, come back in again. That's quite a long way off with Dean but that's the sort of direction we're going in.