

Advice Sheet 23

LIFE-SPACE INTERVIEW / I-ESCAPE: A REPAIR AND REBUILD TECHNIQUE

This is a specific technique which was originally developed by Fritz Redl and David Wineman and later expanded by Nicholas Long and Mary Wood. It is used as a follow-up / repair and rebuild technique after an incident with a pupil. Generally the staff member who was involved in or witnessed the incident should conduct this interview. It can be a very effective strategy for teaching the pupil self-responsibility and exploring alternative behaviours / replacement skills with the pupil. From the adult's perspective, it enables us to:

1. see the incident from the pupil's point of view
2. help the pupil to see the connection between their feelings and their behaviour and
3. encourage the pupil to take responsibility for their own behaviour / actions.

The LSI should happen as soon as possible after the incident, once the pupil is sufficiently calm to sit down with the adult.

There are seven stages to the process:

I – Isolate the pupil: find a quiet place to talk, decrease external stimuli

E – Explore the pupil's point of view: ask them to tell you what happened and to explain why it happened. It's important to listen carefully (see Advice Sheet 1: *Active Listening..*) and use open questions / encouragers to get the pupil to elaborate. Convey a feeling of support and understanding for the pupil's point of view (even when this is very difficult to do). Try to put an order on the chronology of events – what led to what?

S – Summarise the pupil's feelings and content of what they say: remind the pupil of what they have said in relation to both what happened and how they were feeling during the incident

C – Connect the pupil's feelings with the behaviour: this is the critical step – to make a link between what the pupil was feeling and the behaviour that resulted e.g. *"You were feeling upset because Ann made comments about your clothes (work / Mam / friend) so you went over and thumped her"*. Then check with the pupil if this is an accurate assumption.

A – Alternative behaviours explored: discuss with the pupil what s/he might have done differently – try to get the pupil to suggest these. Some may not be more appropriate so try to direct the pupil to see which behaviour / option might be a more appropriate choice. Sometimes we may need to suggest alternatives for the pupil.

P – Practise new behaviour to be used in future: plan and rehearse what to do the next time a similar situation / feeling begins to develop – perhaps role-play a scenario where the adult acts as the 'other' person and the pupil practises how to respond more appropriately

E – Enter the pupil back into the regular routine: ask pupil if s/he is ready to re-enter and explore what s/he might say or do on re-entering. Encourage the pupil to think and act positively on their return to the class.

For more: http://maxweber.hunter.cuny.edu/pub/eres/EDSPC715_MCINTYRE/LSI.html (gives more information on Life Space Interview & more recent technique: Life Space Crisis Intervention)