

IMMUNIZING CHILDREN WHO FEAR NEEDLES

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Goal: To prepare nurses to immunize children who fear needles.

Learning objectives:

1. To identify practice issues when immunizing children who fear needles.
2. To explore ethical actions to guide the process and facilitate child cooperation.

Agenda



- ❖ Problem definition
- ❖ Stress response
- ❖ Problem solving process
- ❖ Guiding principles and interventions
- ❖ Evaluation



Problem Background



- Fear of needles is one of children's' top 3 fears. Up to 10% of children feel anxious and helpless before immunization. (Bowen & Dammeyer, 1999)
- Actual pain appears to be less important than fear of pain.
- Temperament, previous experience, environment and adult behaviour influence child coping and distress behaviour (Cohen, Manimala, Blount, 2000)



Background – from literature

- Much variability in effectiveness of interventions.
- Distraction is a reliable tool (Duff, 2003).
- Adult coaching can help children with painful medical procedures (Cohen, 1997).
- Topical anesthesia results are equivocal (Martin, Ramsay, Whiney, Fiset & Weinstein, 1994).



Problem definition (Ives, 2007)

1. Immunizing resistant children is stressful for nurses.
2. Child resistance and certain adult behaviours create an ethical dilemma for nurses.
3. Adult behaviours can make the situation more difficult and even unsafe.
4. Resources to support best practice are needed.

Relevance



Best immunization practice

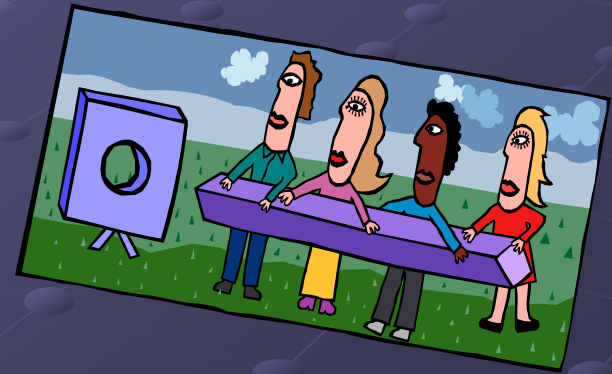
Stress Response

- Children under stress often react in an undisciplined way.
- When a person is overstressed the brain has limited ability to process information.
- A person cannot be stressed and relaxed at the same time.



PROBLEM SOLVING

- Understand/define the problem
- Brainstorm possible solutions
- Choose and apply a solution
- Evaluate
- Adapt as needed
- Understand the problem may not be solvable at this time

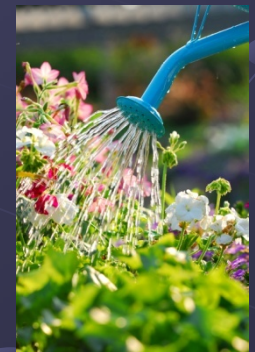


Guiding Principles/Beliefs

- Nurses respect the intrinsic dignity of each person (CNA code of ethics).
- Nurses provide safe, compassionate, competent and ethical care (CNA code of ethics).
- Honest interactions foster trust.

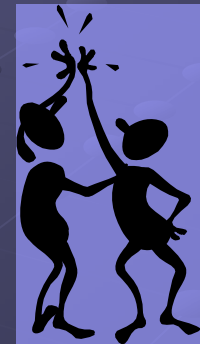
Guiding Principles/Beliefs

- Children do well if they can, not just if they want to (R.W. Greene).
- Children do better when they feel better, not when they feel worse (Jane Nelsen).
- People need encouragement like plants need water (Rudolf Dreikurs).



Approach and Interventions

1. Model empathy and respect.
2. Structure the environment.
3. Use distraction and calming tools.



1. Model Empathy and Respect

- Acknowledge feelings
- Ask about previous experiences
- Give permission to cry
- Use fantasy to acknowledge wishes
- Do not give false reassurance
- Do not tolerate threats, shaming or manipulation from adults
- Encourage effort
- Remain firm and respectful



2. Structure the environment

- Generally, start with the most anxious first
- Prepare the immunization out of sight
- Give information about what you plan to do
- Involve the parents and the child
- Provide limited choices
- Manage the time and set limits
- Provide an option to rest or defer



3. Use calming and distraction

➤ Promote slow deep breathing



➤ Encourage positive self-talk



Use bubbles for distraction





- Allow opportunity for nurses to debrief after challenging situations



- Communicate policy of least restraint
- Develop resources for parents



Access presentation and materials at:

<http://immunizingchildren.wordpress.com/>

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