

Visual Communication Keychain Cards

15th Lethbridge – Chinook Council

Critical Shift: Sections are equipped to welcome and include all youth.

Our Story:

Youth with exceptional needs (most commonly ADHD) were struggling to focus and follow program structure in a group setting. The Scouters were finding that the youth were requiring processing time or a couple of minutes to themselves to regroup but didn't know how to communicate that, and thus were behaving in distracting ways. The Group identified that they didn't have the appropriate resources to best support these youth to be able to successfully follow along with the program and structure.

The Problem:

Lacking resources to support youth in the Group/Section with exceptional needs and youth feeling overwhelmed by overstimulation and too much verbal output.

Our Solution:

The importance of visual cues was realized as when triggered, verbal speech is the first to go and being asked questions or given direction in this state can be further triggering. Implementing visual communication cards on a keychain at Section meetings to help youth effectively communicate their needs to their Scouters, and have their needs met in a calm, casual, supportive and respectful way.

How It Works:

- The Visual Cards provide a peaceful system of communication and structure to youth who don't respond successfully to overstimulation of sounds and directions to follow during Section meetings.
- Scouters feel better equipped to simultaneously support various learning styles and are less overwhelmed with having to constantly manage unexpected behaviours.
- Youth develop social and emotional regulation skills.



What Success Looked Like:

- Youth are using the Cards to engage and communicate their needs to Scouters.
- Youth are better focused and thriving in a safe and respectful environment. Unexpected behaviours in youth have significantly decreased.
- Scouters have access to a calmer environment, and a program structure that effectively supports youth with exceptional needs.

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Give it a Try!

Step-by-Step

1. Have Beaver Behaviours Code of Conduct discussion with youth for “Expected Behaviours” (Green) and “Unexpected Behaviours” (Red).
2. Create Beaver Behaviours Handprint Promise
3. Post and share Code of Conduct for youth, Scouters and families to refer to.
4. Print, laminate and assemble sample visual keychain cards to show and share with youth.
5. Make keychain cards available for all youth who may respond well to visual communications.
6. Model Expected Behaviours by using positive reinforcement, and respecting requests within predetermined time boundaries, asking youth what they need as opposed to telling them what is needed of them.
7. Check in with youth after agreed upon timelines by showing them the “?” visual card. The thumbs up card means they are ready to return, and the clock symbol card means they require more time.
8. Review keychain cards with the youth who are using them, and customize the card set to their needs (adding in an itinerary to follow along with to know what to expect, images of the opening ceremony, a “more time?” card etc.).
9. Celebrate and share the youth’s success and increased engagement with family members.



Promote Positive Behaviour

- Beaver Behaviours Handprint Promise: youth post their promise on a big visual board along with Green Behaviours and Red Behaviour consequences.
- Practicing emotional regulation.
- Increasing non-verbal communication for an emotionally safer environment.

What Do I Need?

- Beaver Behaviours youth handprint cutouts and decorating supplies.
- Code of Conduct Visual Board with Expected and Unexpected Behaviours: Poster board, Glue and Markers.
- Visual Communication Cards printed and laminated and placed on keychain lanyards to be available for use by youth at each Section meeting or gathering.

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