

## Questions regarding behavioural patterns.

At the end of this document there will be two different list of questions that you can use to help present any issues you or a loved one has to your doctor, therapist or mental health worker.

When we are worried about our own or someone else's behaviour, we have a tendency to focus on one aspect of that behaviour and can easily miss important information that can be beneficial for the professionals mentioned above to know in order to gain the help we are looking for.

So, what are behavioural patterns?

Patterns of behaviour start prior to the episode or behaviour that you are concerned about and continue after the behaviour episode has concluded. These episodes will be ongoing with breaks in-between them. Image the waves rolling into shore. Each crested wave being the episode. Some waves are calm whilst others are bigger. When we see behaviour that we wish to be addressed in ourselves or others this behaviour is like the bigger waves. We can see them in the distance and brace ourselves for the impact.

There are many reasons for behavioural patterns, sometimes these are learnt behaviour, sometimes these are our bodies way of controlling one aspect of our lives when we feel like we have no control and sometimes these are the result of not being able to communicate our needs and feelings to others.

However, it is also important that we know with the correct help we can regain control of our lives and stop the unwanted behaviour. Where loved ones are concerned if we understand the before, during, after behaviour we can help them get the help they need. It is important to note that the people we love may not want us to help them as they may not see they have a problem. Where our children are concerned the questions at the end of this document can help identify any special help they may need, yet this does not mean our children will engage in any therapy or help given. This becomes the old adage of you can take a horse to water, but you can't make it drink.

Anger issues, self-harming, over or under eating, binge drinking, depression, mania, or partaking in risky behaviours are just a few of the behaviours that this document is designed to help find patterns of behaviour with. This document can also help people who are victims of domestic abuse keep a diary of events. It is also important to point out that some patterns of behaviour stem from emotional or mental health where others are seen by the person suffering as a release of pressure or something they have no control over. Gaining the correct help with these or other issues will help you or the person you love regain their lives. Please remember that if you are trying to help someone you love for example a child, you can not force a child into therapy. Nor does understanding an issue negate the issue or give that person a free pass for the behaviour. Most emotional or mental health issues can be managed with either medication or therapy, managing an issue is not the same as getting a free pass for the issue. When we manage our issues we have taken ownership of our behaviour and we are trying to change or lower the impact that the issues cause.

When we are trying to help a loved one who has issues it is easy to fall into the they have X,Y,Z and allow them to continue the behaviour without taking responsibility for their own behaviour. How many times have you heard someone say something like "They can't help it, they have ....." This is called enabling and is prevalent where drugs and alcohol are concerned. However, there seems to

be an increase of enabling behaviour from parents where behaviours such as bullying, screaming, tantrum throwing etc are concerned in children. The flip side of this is when parents control their child's behaviour so much that the child has no freedom to explore and can cause issues with the child when they become teenagers or adults.

There are also adults who control their own behaviour to the extreme which can cause outbursts of unusual behaviour outbursts. For example the co-worker in the office who everyone goes to for help as they have an easy-going manner who suddenly snaps when you ask for assistance.

Basically, we all have a breaking point. There is a difference between hitting your breaking point and a pattern of behaviour. Finding the difference between the two can be difficult and hopefully the questions at the end of this document will help you work out which category you or a loved one falls into.

Just as there are many different types of patterns of behaviour and results of those patterns. There are also many reasons these patterns and issues arise. Things like bullying at school, a friend moving, change of school or job, stress from external factors, the death of a loved one, alcohol or drug usage, body dysmorphia or even low self-esteem to name but a few. Some triggers can be easily identified, whilst others can seem impossible to predict.



Initial questions.

1. Are you filling this out for yourself or a loved one? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is / are the behaviour/s you are concerned about.

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3. How often does this behaviour happen?

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4. Has anyone else noted this behaviour or spoken to you about this behaviour?

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5. How often do you / they get in trouble at school/work?

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6. Is this behaviour only seen at school / work/ home etc?

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7. When did this behaviour first start?

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8. Were there any life changing issues prior to the first incident? i.e. death in the family, change of school / work, ill health, new baby/home etc

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9. Do you / they take illegal drugs or alcohol?

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10. Are you / they being bullied at school or work?

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11. Is domestic violence / child abuse a factor?

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12. Do you / they find it easy or difficult to make friends and socialise?

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13. Does this behaviour directly affect you/ them, or does it include others? i.e. do you / they hurt other people or just yourself/ themselves?

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14. Have you / they ever hurt a family pet or animal?

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15. Do you / they still socialise with family, friends?

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16. Have you / they joined any on-line groups or forums with others with the same ideas or behaviours?

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17. Have you / they ever fantasised / spoken / written about harming others or harmed others?

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18. Have you / they ever thought / said it would be better if you weren't here, dead or just want to disappear?

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19. Do you / they feel heard?

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20. If you / they could wave a magic wand and change the life you live how would that look?

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Please use an extra sheet of paper if needed.

The next list of questions is designed to cover each incident of this behaviour. This to help you keep a diary of events. Feel free to print as many of these as you need to help you and or the professionals gain a better understanding of your difficulties, issues etc.

Incident specific questions.

1. Date of incident

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2. How long did this incident last?

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3. Is there anything specific that happened just prior to the incident? i.e. bullied at school / work, issue at home, birth of a baby, death in family etc.

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4. How were you feeling before the incident?

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5. How did you feel during the incident? This will probably sound like a daft question, however it is important.

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6. How did you feel after the incident? i.e. shame, relief etc

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7. Did you talk to anyone about the incident prior, during or after the incident?

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8. Did you feel heard?

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9. Were you the only person involved in the incident?

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10. Looking aback at the last incident, can you identify any point where you or someone else could change the outcome of the incident? How could this incident be avoided in future.

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11. Were illegal drugs or alcohol involved in this incident?

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12. Did you feel in control prior to, during or after the incident?

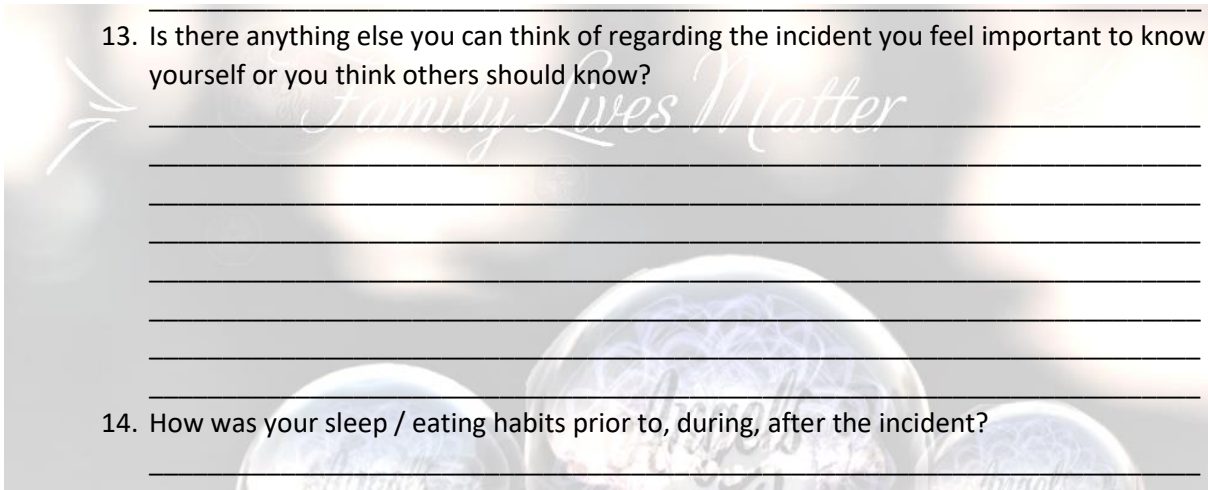
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13. Is there anything else you can think of regarding the incident you feel important to know yourself or you think others should know?



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14. How was your sleep / eating habits prior to, during, after the incident?

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Please feel free to continue on extra pages if needed.