

One-on-one Affective Interactions: Past, Present, Future

One-on-one affective interactions are an effective way to help children understand their actions, express their feelings, and work towards making amends. This method involves guiding children through a process of reflection and resolution by discussing the past, present, and future. Here's how parents can use this approach effectively at home.

The Process: Past, Present, Future

1. Past (What Happened?)
2. Present (How Do You Feel?)
3. Future (How Do We Repair the Harm?)

Step-by-Step Guide

1. Past: What Happened?

Goal: Understand the incident or behaviour in question.

Questions to Ask:

- "Can you tell me what happened?"
- "What led up to this situation?"
- "What were you thinking at the time?"

Example:

- **You:** "I heard there was an argument with your sibling. Can you tell me what happened?"
- **Child:** "We were arguing about whose turn it was to use the tablet. I got angry and took it from them."

Approach: Listen without interrupting. Show empathy and avoid judgment. This helps the child feel heard and understood.

1. Present: How Do You Feel?

Goal: Explore the emotions and feelings surrounding the incident.

Questions to Ask:

- "How do you feel about what happened?"
- "How do you think others might feel about what happened?"
- "What do you think the impact has been on others involved?"

Example:

- **You:** "How do you feel about what happened with the tablet?"
- **Child:** "I feel bad. I didn't want to make my sibling cry."
- **You:** "How do you think your sibling felt?"
- **Child:** "They probably felt upset and hurt."

Approach: Encourage the child to express their feelings honestly. Acknowledge their emotions and validate their experiences.

1. Future: How Do We Repair the Harm?

Goal: Develop a plan for making amends and preventing future issues.

Questions to Ask:

- “What do you think needs to happen to make things right?”
- “How can you repair the harm that has been done?”
- “What can you do differently next time to avoid this situation?”

Example:

- **You:** “What do you think you can do to make things right with your sibling?”
- **Child:** “I should apologise and let them have a turn with the tablet.”
- **You:** “That’s a good start. How can you avoid this in the future?”
- **Child:** “I can ask them nicely and take turns instead of grabbing it.”

Approach: Collaborate with the child to create a plan of action. Focus on constructive solutions and emphasise learning and growth.

One-on-one affective interactions using the past, present, and future framework are a powerful tool for addressing behavioural issues in a restorative and empathetic manner. By helping your child reflect on their actions, understand their feelings, and develop a plan for making amends, you can foster a sense of responsibility and promote positive behaviour changes. This approach not only addresses the immediate issue but also equips your child with valuable skills for resolving conflicts and maintaining healthy relationships in the future.