

## **\*Strategies to Help Avoid or Minimise Oppositional Behaviour\***

### **1. Don't Argue**

Discussions may deteriorate into a verbal battle. Children with ODD will seize the opportunity to continue the negative interaction.

### **2. Defer Control / Externalise the Control Factor**

Rename who or what is in control. (For example, "the timetable" says it is time for maths, or "the clock" says it is time to leave.) This is less likely to provoke a personal attack.

### **3. Offer Choices**

Limited choices can provide an acceptable way for a child to take control.

### **4. Anticipate Problems / Flag Changes**

It can be helpful to warn or prepare the oppositional child for any changes to routines or activities. Allow time for the child to adjust to the change.

### **5. Provide Opportunities to Release Anger and Let Off Steam**

Non-competitive physical activities and sensory calming activities can be helpful.

### **6. Use Non-Confrontational Reminders**

Verbal and nonverbal reminders for undesirable behavior should be provided in a regular and consistent manner

### **7. Use Subtle Positive Reinforcement**

Positive reinforcement is the most effective behaviour management tool for children, but it may backfire with oppositional children who see every interaction as an opportunity for confrontation. To avoid confrontation, use "walk by" reinforcement, where a quick tap on the shoulder and positive comment is made while walking past the student. There is no eye contact and no opportunity to engage. Rewards can be provided in the same low-key manner.

### **8. Provide an Option to "Save Face"**

While maintaining a firm, consistent environment, also allow opportunities for the student with ODD to "save face." Backing students into a corner with threats of punishment can lead to an escalation of oppositional behaviour.

*The key to successfully managing difficult behaviour is to decrease the emotional component and allow for a **rational, consistent, calm and almost detached approach** (as if you are dealing with any kind of unacceptable behaviour from any of your students).*