

# TRIGGER

## NOTICE SIGNS

The athlete is becoming agitated or avoiding a situation.

- Withdrawal – sitting alone; not responding to their name
- Full of energy and unable to sit still (appear silly or wiggly)
- Inattentive or hyper-focused
- Having trouble communicating
- Emotional outbursts (may be saying “I’m bored, I’m not doing that, or I hate it here”)
- Expressing worry
- Physical reactions – appears agitated, sweating, trembling, choking, dizziness, falling asleep, toilet accidents, echolalia, stimming

## PLAN AHEAD

- Establish Ground Rules at Challenger Baseball
- Define a safe place to go for breaks
- Ensure fidget toys and visuals are available at all times
- Learn about likes, dislikes, allergies and medication



# RESPOND

## **SELF-CARE**

- Check your own assumptions and body language
- Stay calm and take a deep breath

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- Offer a safe, quiet place to go or remove the stimuli that is bothering the athlete
- Allow extra time for the athlete to regulate
- Offer the athlete a drink, food or cool place to sit
- Offer fidget toys

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Utilize visuals if already in place
- Avoid talking loudly, decrease distance between self and athlete
- Model deep breathing, avoid saying “breathe/breath”
- Use a calm, reassuring voice
- Reduce demands, give clear instructions (1 to 2 choices at a time)
- Change your voice tone and gestures to offer encouragement
- Avoid repeating yourself, calling their name or trying to negotiate
- Model visual cues for calming. Refer to visuals for making choices
- Avoid reprimands or threats
- Offer a preferred activity or transition item
- Avoid demanding eye contact and respect personal space
- Don't try to reason or give direction
- Offer a physical outlet

# ESCALATION

## NOTICE SIGNS

The athlete is having trouble identifying emotions and communicating their needs. The athlete may be feeling over or under stimulated.

- Loss of some control (especially language)
- Yelling, name calling
- Refusing to follow directions
- Running away from the group
- Not thinking clearly or unable to make decisions
- Appears mad, angry, or frustrated
- Doesn't want to be near anyone, walks away when you approach them
- Physical reactions - sweating, trembling, choking, dizziness, falling asleep, toilet accidents, echolalia, stimming



# RESPOND

## NOTICE SIGNS

### SELF-CARE

- Check your own assumptions and body language
- Stay calm and take a deep breath

### ENVIRONMENT

- Offer a safe, quiet place to go or remove the stimuli that is bothering the athlete
- Allow extra time for the athlete to regulate
- Offer a drink, snack, or cool place to rest
- Offer fidget toys

### COMMUNICATION

- Utilize visuals if already in place
- Avoid talking loudly, decrease distance between self and athlete
- Model deep breathing, avoid saying “breathe/ breath”
- Use a calm, reassuring voice
- Reduce demands, give clear instructions (1 to 2 choices at a time)
- Avoid reprimands or threats try to switch the situation to something fun
- Offer a preferred activity or transition item
- Avoid demanding eye contact and respect personal space

**REMEMBER: Challenging behaviour is a way of communicating with you!**

# EXPLOSION

## NOTICE SIGNS

Sometimes even when triggers are recognized and strategies are put into place, athletes may escalate to an explosion phase, and at times it cannot be avoided.

- Repeating phrases
- Swearing, yelling, growling, noises
- Running away
- Throwing objects
- Attempting to harm self or others
- Head banging
- Biting
- Scratching
- Kicking
- Unable to communicate
- Irrational thought
- Unable to answer simple questions
- Unable to respond to name being called
- Appears hyper focused on an act (i.e. wanting to go home)



# RESPOND

During this time the ability to cope is still compromised. The athlete may easily express more challenging behaviour. Talking about what went wrong or even trying to fix it can reignite emotions. Save recovery for when the athlete has had a few hours to recoup (if they have gone home, offer recovery next time).

## **DEBRIEFING**

- Talk about how hard it must have been for them, let them know things they did that went well
- Try to figure out what triggered the challenging behaviour and discuss what can make it easier in the future for both the athlete and yourself
- Remember your own self-care. Take some time to talk about the situation with your Challenger Baseball Coordinator or Provincial Coordinator
- Review your plan. What needs to be changed? What worked well?

# RECOVERY

Recovery is very important – this is the opportunity to work through what happened once everyone has returned to a calm state.

Recovery cannot happen when an athlete is still upset. The effects of the explosion state can last for many hours after the situation is over and at times, the athlete may need to go home before recovery between the athletes and the coach/other athletes take place.

## **NOTICE SIGNS**

- Scared
- Apologetic
- Crying
- Intense emotions
- Embarrassed/ashamed
- Regret
- Physical and mental exhaustion
- Thirsty, hungry, tired



# RESPOND

## **SELF-CARE**

- Check your own assumptions and body language
- Stay calm and take a deep breath
- Let the athlete know that this will pass and everything will be okay. If you're not feeling calm enough to do this, ask someone else to help

## **ENVIRONMENT**

- Offer a safe, quiet place to go or remove the stimuli that is bothering the athlete, offer soothing items
- Allow extra time for the athlete to regulate
- Offer the athlete a drink, food or cool place to sit
- Protect yourself by decreasing distance, if possible

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Eliminate all demands. Stop talking altogether
- Avoid talking loudly, use calm reassuring voice
- Model deep breathing, avoid saying "breathe/ breath"
- Ensure only ONE person is trying to help and calm the athlete
- Ask bystanders to step away to give you and the athlete space
- Avoid repeating yourself, calling their name or trying to negotiate
- Avoid reprimands or threats
- Avoid demanding eye contact and respect personal space
- Don't try to reason or give direction
- Contact Challenger Baseball League Coordinator, Caregiver, or 911 if part of your athlete's plan