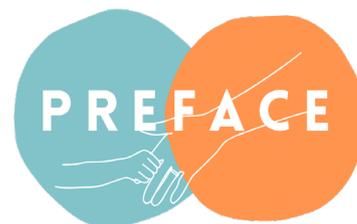


# A NON-VIOLENT EDUCATION FOR EVERY CHILD

Tool for school professionals to raise  
awareness of so-called ordinary  
educational violence



Co-funded by  
the European Union

# FOREWORD

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Thanks to all our partners on the project, especially the members of the PREFACE support committee for their invaluable advice.

This project has been made possible thanks to financial support from the European Union's "Citizenship, Equality, Rights and Values" programme.

The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union, which cannot be held responsible. The European Commission accepts no responsibility for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

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Document filed with the Royal Library of Belgium. Filing number: D/2024/14.312/2

Défense des Enfants International Belgique – [www.dei-belgique.be](http://www.dei-belgique.be) - Company no: 0447.397.058 - RPM: Brussels

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# INTRODUCTION

This tool was written jointly by Defence for Children International - Belgium (DCI-Belgium) and the Observatoire de l'Enfance, de la Jeunesse et de l'Aide à la Jeunesse (OEJAJ). It has also benefited from the advice and direct suggestions of more than 25 teachers, other school professionals, psychologists, and educators.

This document is largely based on the work of Emmanuelle Bousman, whom we would like to thank for her expertise and contribution. This work will be published in 2024 in a book titled "MERCIE DE RESTER ZEN-Et d'éviter les Violences dites Educatives Ordinaires (VDEO)". ("Stay cool and avoid so-called educational violence")

This guide aims to raise awareness among school professionals of the concept of so-called Ordinary Educational Violence (SOEV). More specifically, it invites professionals to take a step back from their own practice and experience, taking into account the context and situations encountered. It is intended to be practical, offering 'tips and tricks' for responding directly to the problems they encounter and enabling them to act differently when appropriate. We hope they will find these tips useful in their day-to-day work.

This awareness-raising tool does not claim to offer a rigid framework or an unrealistic magic formula that ignores the challenges faced by professionals in their practice. Anyone can feel overwhelmed when faced with managing a group of children or a particularly confusing situation. Nevertheless, we hope that these tips and clarifications will be of assistance in their daily work.

In order to help readers grasp the concepts developed, they will be given the opportunity to reflect on them at various points.

Happy reading!

# ROLEPLAY

During our childhood, we may have been confronted with painful moments when a teacher, youth worker or educator used a **violent teaching or educational method**. The violence may have been physical (slapping, getting rapped on the knuckles, etc.) or more psychological (humiliation, bullying, etc.). As this tool is intended to tackle a sensitive issue, we will first encourage you to share your own views on the subject, before adding elements from scientific literature and professional expertise.



So, for just a moment, we invite you to return to your childhood...

Give an example of a violent teaching or educational method that you witnessed or suffered at the hands of a teacher or educator when you were a pupil:

.....

.....

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.....



In the same way, you can certainly think of some **inspiring** teachers or educators, those who dealt with difficulties in a non-violent and caring way. Once again, draw on your memories.

Give an example of a non-violent teaching or educational method of conflict/behaviour management that you experienced as a child and that inspired you:

.....

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# PART I

## RAISING AWARENESS

### 1. WHAT IS SO-CALLED EDUCATIONAL VIOLENCE?

#### 1.1. Definition

In this guide, we will define **educational violence** “*any act of physical, verbal or psychological violence that adults use against children often with an educational intention, but always in an educational setting*”.<sup>1</sup>

Let's take a closer look at the different elements that characterise the concept of SOEV.

The term “**educational**” is very important because we are talking here about behaviour carried out with a sincere intention to educate, i.e. to make the child understand or learn something. We therefore exclude from SOEV all acts of violence that do not have an educational purpose. For example, violent behaviour adopted in response to intense stress, or to remove a child from danger, does not fall within the scope of SOEV. This last point will be developed in more detail in the next section.

The term “**so-called**” before “educational” asserts that no form of violence has any real positive effect on a child. In other words, although violence may be used with educational intent, it never actually teaches anything.

Finally, the term “**ordinary**” indicates that this violence is regular, even daily, and is also considered commonplace, normal and tolerated.

#### 1.2. SOEV or emotional outburst?

In contrast to the “ordinary” nature of SOEV, we call “emotional outbursts” crisis situations that lead to violence out of weariness, fatigue or irritation. The distinction between these two distinct concepts will be discussed later in this guide.

#### 1.3. Legal framework

To date, only **65** states have explicitly banned corporal punishment and **27** more have committed to reforming their laws to achieve a complete legal ban.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.4. Does that ring a bell?

This tool was produced following a series of meetings that DCI and the OEJAJ held with teachers, psychologists and educators. The following list presents a series of examples of corporal (and psychological) punishment reported by professionals.

Among these examples, think of those that you yourself have observed or practised with educational intent as part of your profession:

- Derogatory comments in the presence of the child
- Acerbic comments in the class journal
- Physical intimidation
- Picking up on comments circulating on social networks
- Physical violence (slaps, bites, blows, etc.)
- Other



<sup>1</sup> Definition developed during work carried out by a group of experts responsible for supporting the Préface project and/or designing an awareness-raising campaign on SOEVs, and including academics, experts from ONE, Yapaka (French Community), OEJAJ and DCI.

<sup>2</sup> End Corporal Punishment, <https://endcorporalpunishment.org/countdown>

# 2. HOW VIOLENCE IS REPRESENTED IN EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS TODAY

## 2.1. The importance of setting a framework

**It is important to distinguish between education without violence (without corporal punishment or psychological violence) and education with no boundaries or disciplinary tools.** In fact, a non-violent education *must* be the overarching framework. Taking rules and limits into account is not in conflict with the non-violent nature of education. This importance of the '*positive concept of discipline*' is also reiterated by the Committee on the Rights of the Child.<sup>3</sup>

Paying attention to the way we act towards children with an educational aim, by preventing educational violence from occurring, means taking a benevolent approach to children. Nevertheless, a "caring" or non-violent education can sometimes be perceived as an absence of supervision or discipline, for example with noisy classes and pupils left to their own devices.

In this document, we take a radical stand against the idea of education as lax, without frameworks, boundaries or rules. **The absence of frameworks and boundaries**, by leaving students to their own devices, denies them their right to a quality education, and can go so far as to **represent a form of violence in itself**.



## 2.2. New forms of violence

During the teacher consultation conducted by DCI and OEJAJ, one teacher explained: "*When I was a child, I was hit with a ruler, for example. That's no longer the case, I think, or at least I hope... It's more likely to be verbal abuse, humiliation, that sort of thing. Well, maybe you wouldn't be locked in a cupboard or hit with a ruler anymore.*"

A number of the educational workers we consulted - we met around thirty of them - believe that there has been a change between the violence of today and the one practised in their childhood. Today, violence is more *psychological and/or verbal than physical*. Physical violence belongs to a bygone era, when teachers were hitting pupils' fingers, when the 'old-fashioned' discipline of our parents or grandparents was used.

However, this impression is not always borne out in practice. Some professionals still use physical violence such as spanking or hitting.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of psychological violence, the word '**humiliation**' comes up most often. Examples include disparaging comments made to the child or to someone else in the child's presence.

These humiliations can also take other, very different forms: opening a window and ostensibly stating that a bad smell is due specifically to a pupil, isolating a pupil at the back of the class, reusing mocking nicknames from social networks, etc.



Based on your experience, observations and knowledge, what are the different forms of violent education still present today?

<sup>3</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, General Comment No. 8, §13

<sup>4</sup> Bousman, Emmanuelle. La prise en compte de la dimension pédagogique dans le traitement de la violence éducative. Regard sur ce qui se joue dans les classes maternelles. Faculté de psychologie et des sciences de l'éducation, Université catholique de Louvain, 2020. Prom. Letor, Caroline.

### 3. CHALLENGING FIGURES

Defence for Children International - Belgium commissioned a study of Belgians' opinions and behaviour on the subject of so-called ordinary educational violence.<sup>5</sup>

The results of this study present some interesting figures:

- **7 out of 10 people** have been **spanked**
- **More than 1 in 5 (22%)** of respondents consider **corporal punishment** to be beneficial (and 17% consider psychological punishment to be beneficial)
- **1 child in 10** has been a victim of **physical or verbal violence**, either in school and/or out of school, or within the family.

Another study was carried out by a Belgian parents' federation.<sup>6</sup> 510 adults (parents of pupils, former pupils and teachers) responded.

- **Over 75%** of those questioned said that they had been subjected to or witnessed teasing about their appearance, ear tugging, objects being thrown at them, or school bags being searched... Slaps were even mentioned.
- **Almost all (91%)** of those polled believe that so-called ordinary educational violence has a **negative impact on a young person's development**. **Almost 80%** believe that **it should be banned** in the private sphere as well as at school.



### 4. CONSEQUENCES OF SOEV

SOEV is a subject that may turn out to be more extensive than it first appears. Below is a diagram summarising some of its consequences:



<sup>5</sup> La recherche est disponible à l'adresse <https://www.dei-belgique.be/index.php/nos-publications/rapports>

<sup>6</sup> Schéma synthétique basé sur les recherches du groupe 'End corporal punishment', ainsi que les recherches antérieures de DEI

## PART I: RAISING AWARENESS

Here we divide the diagram into two parts, depending on whether the negative consequences affect the **child** directly or **society** as a whole more indirectly. Thus, the acceptance of violence as socially legitimate has a real impact on the attitudes of all members of society.

Furthermore, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated in 2016 that violence in any form “*causes stress that is associated with disruption of early brain development. Extreme stress can affect the development of the nervous and immune systems*”<sup>7</sup>. At the same time, it points out that SOEV increases aggression in children, and the likelihood of delinquent or anti-social behaviour once they reach adulthood.

A study carried out in Canada on more than **4,129 children** aged between 2 and 5, and continued on the same children 8 years later, showed that children who had been physically and/or verbally abused suffered more anxiety and were less altruistic.<sup>8</sup> An American study (Felitti, 2010) also showed that “*the main determinant of health at the age of 55 is having suffered violence in childhood. (...)The more serious and frequent the violence, the greater the impact on health.*”



Are you surprised by these consequences?

<sup>7</sup> OVEO, 'Consequences of ordinary educational violence on physical and psychological health', stopoveo.org, 27 November 2020

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*

## PART 2

# TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### INTRODUCTION

Now that you're better informed on the subject, we're going to share some tips and tricks on how best to manage behaviour that can cause problems.

As we said in the introduction, we're going to distinguish between tips aimed at preventing SOEV and those aimed at limiting violent behaviour in the event of an emotional outburst.

As a reminder, **so-called ordinary educational violence** is defined as "any act of physical, verbal or psychological violence that adults use towards children with **the intention of educating them**". This intention distinguishes SOEV from emotional outbursts, which we will look at later in this guide.



Do you remember any memorable examples of SOEV?



## 1. MANAGING SOEV THROUGH PREVENTION

### 1.1. General considerations

A major difficulty in preventing SOEV is that violent practices are often not considered as such by the individuals who practise them.

That's why, although the following tips can help you tackle the issue more or less directly, they cannot be considered without ongoing awareness-raising work.

### 1.2. Tips and best practice

All the advice and tips that follow are designed to help you prevent SOEV.

#### 1.2.1. 'Strategic' tips (prevention of SOEV)

##### \* Co-creation of class rules

A good way of ensuring that a rule or sanction does not harm one or more students is to establish rules of conduct in consultation with them.

It is best when School Rules are drawn up jointly with the pupils. This ensures that the rules are respected more effectively. We advise you to consult the pupils as regularly as possible (every year or even every 2 years) about the content of these rules.

Don't forget that the class rules should be based on the School Rules. So make sure that they are **identical from one class to the next**. All children should have the same rights and the same rules. Discuss this together, in staff

## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

meetings for example.

In addition, remember to ensure that pupils are reminded of these rules, using simple words and images.



### \* Create meaningful and restorative sanctions (*prevention of SOEV*)

The search for pedagogical meaning in education is a major concern, both for teaching and educational staff (teachers, educators, etc.) and for pupils. The very term 'punishment' - which we'll use here for the sake of clarity and understanding, and because it's so widespread - is questionable in this respect, since it overlooks the educational and benevolent aspect that teaching should adopt.

Punishment should make pupils question themselves and their behaviour. Reflection should be at the heart of the punishment, allowing the child to express themselves.

As a result, giving pupils pages to copy rather than inventing a punishment adapted to each behaviour only postpones the problem, as it is highly unlikely that the pupil will have really understood anything in this way.

Here is an example of a reflection sheet to be given to pupils as a disciplinary action, taken from the French 'Prof Innovant' website<sup>9</sup>. The pupil is asked a series of questions:

- 1) Explain what happened
- 2) Why did you act this way?
- 3) Put yourself in the shoes of the person you mocked. How would you have felt in their place?
- 4) Can you think of anything that will help you to not repeat that behaviour?
- 5) How will you repair any harm or damage you caused?:

### \* Taking account of learning disabilities

Dyslexia, dyscalculia... Some learning difficulties can be frustrating when they are ignored or forgotten. We need to be able to qualify our interpretation of certain actions by the pupil in light of this type of difficulty. And don't forget to provide reasonable accommodation for them.

In the case of a dyspraxic child, for example, this problem needs to be taken into account and the child offered a different way of writing, such as on a computer.

### FICHE DE REFLEXION - insulte, moquerie

Prénom : \_\_\_\_\_ Nom : \_\_\_\_\_ Date : \_\_\_\_\_

1) Explique ce qu'il s'est passé.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2) Pourquoi as-tu agi de la sorte?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3) Mets toi à la place de la personne que tu as insulté ou dont tu t'es moqué, qu'aurais-tu ressenti?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4) Ecris ici une idée pour l'aider à ne plus recommencer.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5) Comment vas-tu réparer ton geste.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signatures:		
Elève:	Parents :	Enseignant(e) :

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.profinnovant.com/fiches-de-punition-scolaire-a-imprimer>

## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### \* Knowing what students really experience

At the same time, remember not to make inappropriate remarks about the social realities of certain students. They can sometimes be radically different from those you know. What's more, they can sometimes affect their health, create difficult family situations, etc.

We invite you to try and discover these realities with your students. One way of doing this might be to take a walk around the neighbourhoods where they live. Another way is to talk to them in a more informal but regular way. For example, during a 'What's new' moment when they can talk a little more about their personal lives. They're sure to have a lot to tell you.



### 1.2.2. "Work mode" tips (*prevention of SOEV*)

#### \* Teamwork and team charter

One of the main problems with SOEV is identifying it in advance. Since they are **well-intentioned** - given that their aim is to educate - it is difficult to know which of our practices really constitute violence.

In this context, a team approach is essential. We propose two tools for this purpose: a team charter and team discussions.

The **team charter** has two major advantages. On the one hand, it helps to cement team spirit between colleagues, and even brings together education professionals who don't always get to talk to each other as much as they would like (teachers, educators, psychologists, etc.).

Secondly, it provides an objective benchmark for what is and is not accepted within the teaching team. In the event of misbehaviour or non-compliance, the charter provides a solid basis for addressing sometimes complicated issues, without resorting to inappropriate judgements.

**Team discussions**, whether formalised or not, are also moments, that we advise you to have from time to time, in particular to reflect on the violent behaviours that can arise in your work, sometimes unconsciously. Once again, the charter can be used as a guide for this kind of constructive, caring discussion.



Furthermore, class councils are particular situations that may be quite conducive to outbursts and inappropriate language. They are sometimes a kind of 'decompression chamber' where teachers forget to exercise restraint in their comments. While moments of release are not necessarily a bad thing in themselves - as long as they take place with respect for each other and the pupils - class councils are certainly not the place for them.

In this context, the work of a council supervisor is essential. They must ensure that the council runs smoothly and with respect for both pupils and adults. In many respects, school management can take on this supervisory role.

#### \* Best practice for discussions

When you've got your nose to the grindstone, it's sometimes difficult to take the time to see what's being done elsewhere. You might think about what's being done in your own school, but sometimes it's worthwhile asking questions of professionals working in other establishments. And don't hesitate to seek advice from people in other professions. Educators, psychologists, etc. You can help each other.

## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### 1.2.3. Self-help tips (*prevention of SOEV*)

#### \* Avoid labels and stereotypes

We also recommend that you avoid, as much as possible, allowing yourself to be influenced by any preconceived opinion you might have about a particular student.

In particular, we would like to draw your attention to the student's file. It is important to be very clear about the information you enter in the file, and above all to ensure that it does not reflect negatively on the student. As the reader of this document, try to take into account all the useful information about the student's background, so that you can understand his or her difficulties and avoid any inappropriate words or gestures for a student with a specific background.

Similarly, don't be afraid to change your judgement throughout the year. Your pupils are at an age when they are constantly evolving. Don't let a negative first impression define your relationship with a child for the rest of the year. To do this, try to see your classes as new every day, or every week. The pupils are the same, but their behaviour can be completely different from one day to the next.

#### \* Asserting yourself as a professional

This tip is for those who spot problematic behaviour in a colleague whose professional status is different from your own.

Workers from other specialities (psychologists, teachers, educators, etc.) come to mind first. But there is also the case of **trainees**, who may observe problematic behaviour in their training supervisor, but feel unqualified to question him or her. This consideration can also be applied more generally to young professionals vis-à-vis more experienced ones.

As said earlier, SOEV is often well-intentioned and stems from essentially benevolent educational habits. So feel not only allowed, but also entitled, to talk about it with your training supervisor or colleague. However, if direct confrontation proves too complicated, talk about it with your school's management. Failing that, speak with a colleague you trust can act as an intermediary.



*Have you ever experienced this type of situation? Are you currently experiencing it? How did you overcome it/are you planning to overcome it?*



## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### 1.2.4. Communication tips (*prevention of SOEV*)

#### \* **General considerations: adultomorphism**

When it comes to managing relationships with children, effective and appropriate communication is often a first-choice tool for preventing conflict. Children do not have the same communication rules as adults.

A common mistake, therefore, is to interpret a child's reactions as if they had the same meaning as those of an adult. This is known as **adultomorphism**. For example, children sometimes smile at adults when they are scolded. It can be tempting to see this as a form of provocation, to interpret the child's smile as taunting or hostile.

In this situation, it is entirely possible that the smile is a reflection of the embarrassment and discomfort that the child is feeling following the adult's reproach, just like how smiles are a common facial expression when feeling ashamed in a social interaction.

It is therefore important to always be vigilant about interpreting these visible signs, which can reflect any number of feelings.



#### \* **Emphasise the skills acquired in the class journal**



As is often the case with SOEV, negative comments will often stem from a positive intention, such as prompting a reaction, forcing people to work harder, pointing out shortcomings to encourage future improvements, etc.

However, the effects of such comments are often very damaging to a child's self-esteem, and consequently to their development. Inadequate work is sufficiently reflected through a low mark. There's no need to rub it in with negative comments. Try not to use negative language in your comments either. We will provide you with examples of positive comments at the end of this guide.

In short, focus more on the skills acquired and the progress made by the student.

#### \* **Keeping students' grades secret**

The purpose of the mark is to situate the child in relation to his or her own knowledge, and not in relation to his or her classmates. There is no point in announcing it out loud. All this will do is undermine the least-achieving students' self-confidence and humiliate them. Also avoid the practice of giving pupils their marks in ascending or descending order. Once very common, these practices have demoralising effects that can be absolutely terrible for self-confidence.

#### \* **Discreet communication about the student**

Whether as a distraction or - even more seriously - to get a message across to the pupil indirectly, we sometimes talk about a child in their presence, without addressing them directly.

Such behaviour should be avoided at all costs. The humiliating aspect of it can be all the more hurtful for the child as they will feel excluded from a conversation of which they are the subject. The public nature of the conversation also increases the humiliation they may feel.

## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

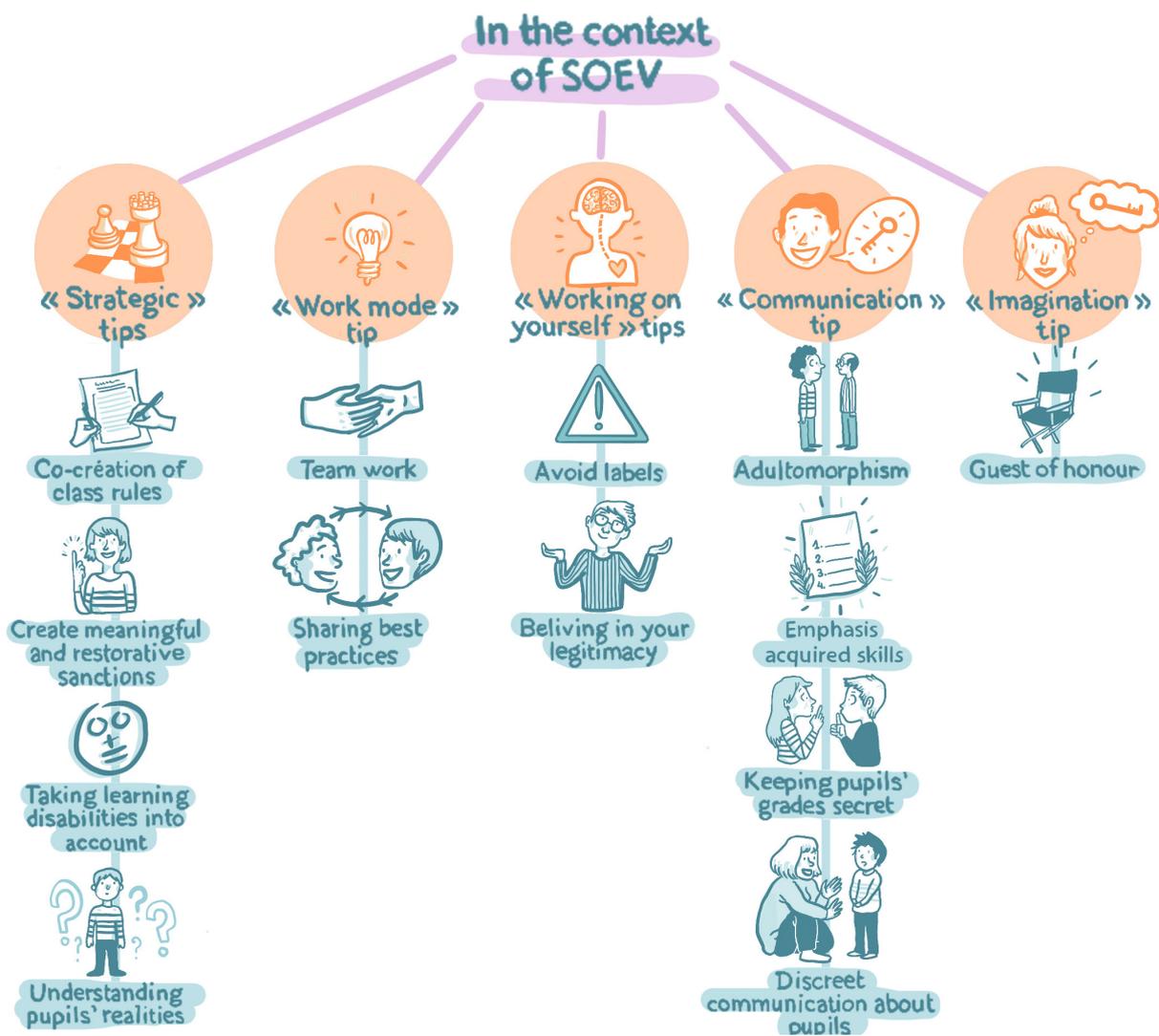
### 1.2.5. Imagination tips (*prevention of SOEV*)

#### \* The guest of honour

SOEV can occur when, with habit taking over, we forget to treat the child as a special being, vulnerable by nature. One tip is to simply imagine the child as an equal. Would you behave in the same way towards a colleague or parent who was fully capable of defending themselves?



### Summary: prevention of SOEVs



### 2. EMOTIONAL OUTBURSTS

#### 2.1. General considerations

**Emotional outbursts** are defined as “any act of physical, verbal or psychological violence used by adults towards children with **no** educational intent, which is carried out as a result of weariness, fatigue or irritation”.

It is *the intention* that distinguishes this concept from SOEV. Let's take the example of an adult who slaps a child. If he does it out of self-control, with the sincere - and well-intentioned - aim of making the child learn a lesson, it's SOEV. If, on the other hand, the slap is given because the adult is very angry, at the end of his tether, and doesn't know how else to react, it's an 'emotional outburst'.



Can you recall any challenging examples of emotional outbursts?



While managing SOEV is mainly preventive, with a view to raising awareness of other educational methods, management following an emotional outburst can take place in three stages, depending on the situation:

1. Upstream prevention
2. On the spot, with a view to reacting
3. Downstream with a view to restoring calm

#### 2.2. Structure

This section on 'emotional outbursts' is based on a temporal model. Unlike SOEV, which we are looking at solely in terms of prevention, separating the following tips according to chronology is more useful in discussing outbursts. Some tips relate to prevention (avoiding crises - before), others to reaction (managing crises - during) and still others to restoration- after crises.

#### 2.3. Upstream: prevention

##### 2.3.1. 'Strategic' tips (*emotional outbursts: before*)

###### \* Room for manoeuvre

A crisis often occurs when a child feels frustrated at not being able to decide for themselves. One trick to avoid this frustration is to offer the child a minor choice, detached from your main intention.

For example, if you want your pupils to line up 2 by 2, and one pupil doesn't follow the instructions, you can ask him: "Would you prefer to line up in the right-hand row or the left-hand row?" You will have given him a choice that will motivate him to follow the instructions.



## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### 2.3.2. Communication tricks (*emotional outbursts: before*)

#### \* Formulate one instruction at a time

"Sit down, take out your notebooks, write the date, draw a margin, and please be quiet!" Now that's a compact set of instructions. If a child is given a large number of instructions in quick succession, there is a risk of confusion, and therefore of possible disobedience and easily avoidable conflict. Formulating a single instruction at a time will make it easier for children to follow instructions, even if it means taking more time.

Think about writing down your instructions. That way, not only will they be easier to assimilate, but you'll be less tempted to write too much.



### 2.3.3. Self-help tips (*emotional outbursts: before*)

#### \* Taking mimicry into account

This phenomenon of mimicry means that we are more affected by children's behaviour that recalls our own experience. You've probably experienced it yourself: if you're absent-minded, you'll be more sensitive to your pupils' absent-mindedness; if your own parents have always insisted on politeness, you'll find it harder to bear impertinence in class, etc.

In practical terms, we advise you to take a calm moment to list the student behaviours that annoy you the most. Ask yourself if these behaviours relate to your own experience.



Can you think of any behaviours that remind you of your own experience?

### 2.3.4. 'Understanding the child' tips (*emotional outbursts: before*)

#### \* Children's need for attention

Children have a real need for attention from adults, which they will try to get by various means. Although they are well aware that it is better to behave correctly to receive a compliment, they will generally prefer to be scolded rather than simply ignored.

As a result, certain behaviours that may seem irritating to you are sometimes just there to get your attention. Know how to show children how important they are to you and, if you feel that they are simply looking for attention, don't hesitate to say to them: "I'm paying attention to you now. What do you want to tell me?"



## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### 2.4. In the moment: reaction perspective

#### 2.4.1. 'Strategic' tips (emotional outbursts: during)

##### \* A 'quiet' space

Sometimes a crisis situation just needs a little time to defuse itself. With this in mind, a space can be set aside in the classroom to prevent this.

A 'calm' space allows the child to settle down in a small, pleasant place (at the back of the room, for example) so that they can recover their composure and come back calmer, rather than letting their emotions explode in the moment.

This can take a variety of forms, such as a corner in the classroom, a teepee facing inwards, a closed chair with a rounded shape, etc.

The space doesn't have to be large. A simple chair, for example, can be used for this purpose.

##### \* Wait 5 seconds

Just as a child needs time to calm down, you too sometimes need a little time to regain control of yourself.

If you feel that a crisis is imminent, take the time to slow down and count to 5 in your head. Breathe calmly, and only then react. You'll be in a much better position to avoid any outbursts.

#### 2.4.2. 'Imagination' tricks (emotional outbursts: during)

##### \* The reality TV show

We never react the same when we know we are being watched. Our words are more carefully considered, our actions more carefully thought out and controlled. In this context, violent behaviour is much less likely to occur.

In cases where you feel that emotion is about to get the better of you, imagine yourself on the set of a reality TV show. How would you react if you knew you were being watched by hundreds of viewers? Would your reaction be the same? How would you regain the upper hand?



##### \* If it were my child

While it's highly likely that you want the best for your pupils, it's quite natural that you don't view them the same as your own children.

Nevertheless, when a crisis arises, it can be useful to draw on your experience as a parent to avoid violence. At such times, ask yourself: 'If this were my daughter or my son, how would I react?'

##### \* How will they grow up?

A little time spent looking ahead can always help you take a step back from a child's actions and behaviour. Imagine what the child will become. They may be the next pilot of your plane, your next doctor or your next nurse. How can you help them shape their future? What impact will your actions have on them?



## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### 2.4.3. Communication tricks (emotional outbursts: during)

#### \* Principles of non-violent communication

Non-violent communication (NVC) is a simple method that works well with both children and adults. It has 4 stages:

- 1) Describing the facts in dispute without passing judgement
- 2) Expressing your feelings
- 3) Expressing your needs
- 4) Making an achievable request

Take the example of a pupil who hasn't done their homework. Instead of saying "You're lazy!", you can say: "This is the third time you haven't done your homework (step 1). I'm worried (step 2). I need you to do it to check your knowledge (step 3) Do you need help (step 4)?"

#### \* Lower the volume

During a crisis, tempers often flare quickly. When a child is particularly exasperating or loud, the temptation to follow suit is great. Both the adult and the child then run the risk of shouting, leading to a form of violence.

To avoid this problem, rather than speaking loudly to make yourself heard, trying to lower the volume can have a very beneficial soothing effect.

Note that this tip works in both small and large groups. Curiosity about what you're saying will win out, and allow the situation to calm down.

#### \* Position yourself at the child's level

Communication often goes more smoothly when you can look each other in the eye. Putting yourself at the child's level to talk to them will help them feel more reassured, and better able to absorb your message.



#### \* Prioritise 'STOP' over 'NO'

This little trick is easy enough to make communication with a child go more smoothly in a crisis. When inappropriate behaviour occurs, we often reflexively use the interjection 'NO'!

Unfortunately, that message can be ineffective. It is mainly one of disapproval, undefined and unclear in nature, rather than a real need for the behaviour to stop. The interjection 'STOP!' is therefore clearer and more unambiguous.



## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### 2.4.4. 'Work mode' tips (*emotional outbursts: during*)

#### \* Passing the baton

It can be useful to rely on a trusted colleague to help you manage a crisis that is beginning to overwhelm you. We recommend that you have someone you trust to play this role if necessary.

#### \* Regulate stress by connecting with your senses

There are different ways of regulating stress in a crisis situation. But most of them have something in common: concentrate on your breathing; close your eyes briefly; name your emotions in your head; listen to your surroundings. Then make your decisions once you've calmed down.



What advice has made the biggest impact on you?

## 2.5. Downstream: restoration

Once the crisis has passed, it is important to re-establish proper dialogue with the pupil, whether or not the adult has had an emotional outburst. This stage should not be neglected, especially as it will help you to be better prepared for similar situations.

### 2.5.1. General advice (*emotional outbursts: after*)

- 1) Explain your expectations to the child
- 2) Identify their expectations
- 3) Trust children and tell them
- 4) Explain the consequences of their actions without making them feel guilty
- 5) Invite them to fix their 'mistake' whenever possible
- 6) Adopt non-violent communication



### 2.5.2. A civic-minded school (*emotional outbursts: after*)



There are many practices for integrating a form of civic democracy into a school. Involving peers in the disciplinary redress of transgressions can really help to improve understanding.

For example, get students who have committed relatively serious transgressions to talk to each other during break time. Consider occasionally getting a mediator from outside the conflict to talk to the pupil who has misbehaved. The head teacher could play this role, for example. Ask the students to explain how the conflict happened in writing...

Many schools have their own methods for managing serious conflicts, which you can also develop, in the spirit of civic-mindedness.

## PART 2: TIPS AND BEST PRACTICE FOR REACTING DIFFERENTLY

### 2.6. List of positive messages to say to children (at any time)

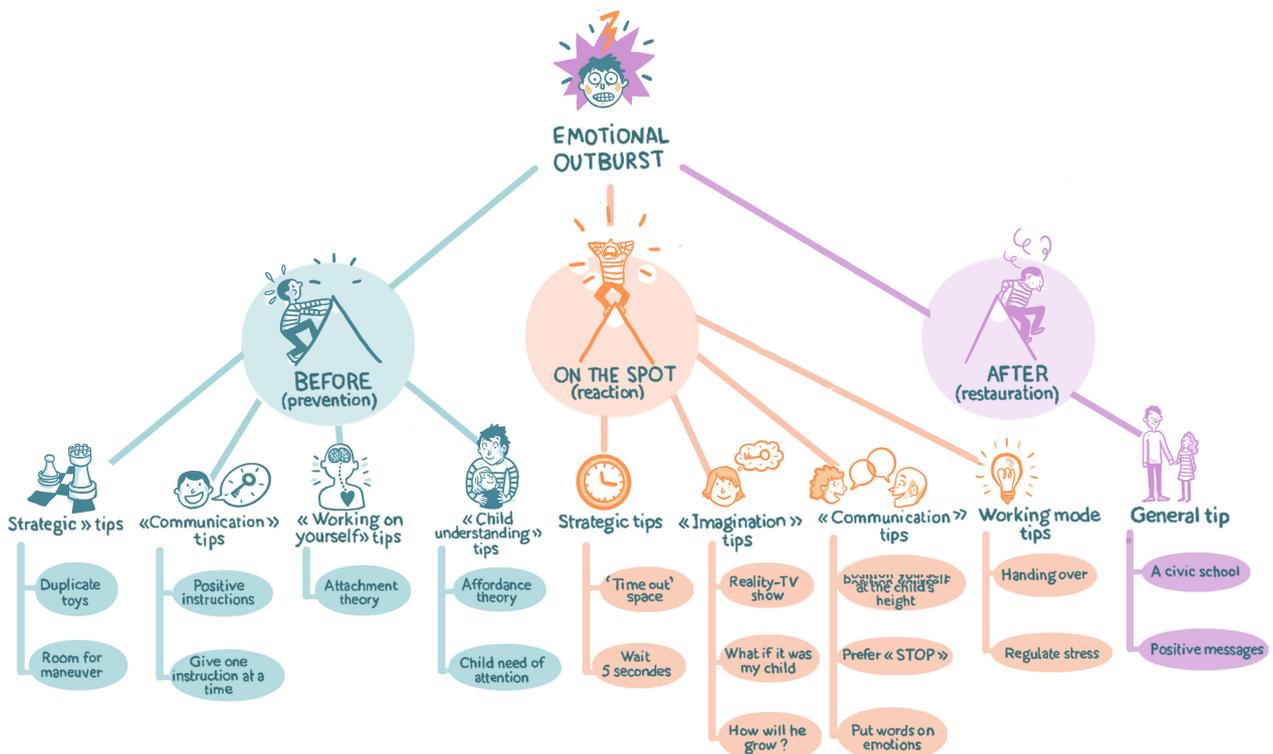
Finding a good way to encourage children can sometimes be complicated in real-life situations. Here is a list of positive messages that you can use in real-life situations (in your classroom, in the class journal, etc.).

- I have faith in you
- You are an essential part of this class
- You have many talents
- You will succeed
- You should be proud of the way you work
- Your efforts are impressive
- Your opinion is always very interesting
- You have some wonderful ideas
- ...



Can you think of any other positive messages? Which ones have you already used?

### Summary of emotional outbursts



## THE NETWORK

Complicated situations should not be solved by you alone. If you are faced with a difficult situation, you can contact:

- Your management
- Your colleagues
- The school psychologist or a specialist psychology clinic or medical centre
- Free hotlines

When faced with a complicated situation of any kind, you're not alone! There is help out there for you and the children you teach.

## TO FIND OUT MORE...

On the DCI website you ([www.dei-belgique.be](http://www.dei-belgique.be)) will find a whole series of tools, videos, posters and training guides (particularly for children) on the subject of SOEV.

You can also find awareness-raising videos on our Defence for Children International (DCI)-Belgium YouTube channel.





FOR MORE INFO VISIT:

 [www.dei-belgique.be](http://www.dei-belgique.be)

 [@DefensesdesEnfantsBelgique](https://www.facebook.com/DefensesdesEnfantsBelgique)

 [@deibelgique](https://www.instagram.com/deibelgique)

 [Défense des Enfants International Belgique](https://www.linkedin.com/company/Defense-des-Enfants-International-Belgique)

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