

“Do You Know How To Help Someone With Mental Illness?”

A Message For Family Services Staff

I am going to steer away from making a thorough translation of this advice into a family services worker experience in the field. The advice basically speaks for itself. There are several ways that this can show up in young and troubled people's lives though.

1. There are some mentally ill young people and clients with borderline tendencies and some out right crisis as well.
2. Just being adolescent trying to figure life out could be considered a “[mental health challenge](#)”.
3. Dealing with inappropriate behaviour is still dealing with young person or troubled adult who has a rational side they are much more comfortable in, and a side of their mind that wants to push the limits all the time.

In all of the above situations being **“black and white”** is a tremendous asset to you and you can really help a student “[snap the line](#)” inside of themselves between healthy thinking and negative tendencies.

If anything, young people should be treated like this as a rule of thumb because learning to [snap the line](#) inside of themselves can be made a habit while they are growing, and then they will become so much more resilient in their adult years.

An important catch is this:

You don't have to be a “big meanie” to do this. This isn't always about being rude or rough with people. It can be, but it doesn't have to be. It is about being “**clear**” in a very **black and white manner**. Army generals can be very clear, so was Ghengis Khan when building his empire and leading his soldiers. Jesus Christ was pretty cut and dry with his detractors too, and Ghandi left nothing to the British imagination.

You will have to feel each **situation out** for yourself. The only thing that will never vary is the value of being **black and white**.

Call to action:

1. Make sure you read the call to action on the parenting newsletter.
2. Think of a couple other staff in your agency, show them this newsletter, and team up to approach a struggling client or staff member and have a positive plan to support them, and a couple of boundaries to resist foolishness. Then present it to that person in **black and white** terms. Decide for yourself if this should be an assertive conversation or gentle one.

Contact me for a strategy session and I will give you more real life examples, and an action plan for what to say and what to do. With your students or your family.

Contact Tom tom@streetsmartcounselling.com

or

403-391-4184

To learn about Tom's program and strategy for agency staff, their clients, parents and young people.

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