



Praise

praise

n. - The act of expressing approval or admiration; commendation; laudation

Praise is an essential part of Touch Trust's ethos and practices. We feel that modern society puts more time and attention into negativity than positivity. As an example, more emphasis is put upon what people can't do rather than what they can. Paying attention to negative behaviour, whilst merely 'expecting' positive behaviour is a flawed practice in our opinion. We use positive behaviour management techniques, drawing attention to, and rewarding the positive with praise, rather than focusing on the negative. In life everyone needs some kind of praise whether verbal or non verbal. The benefits of praise are generally linked to increased self esteem but the benefits beyond this are numerous.

Touch Trust acts as a haven for Guests to feel appreciated for their participation and contribution to the world, no matter how small or large; a place where they are cherished for what they *can* do. Through praise Guests can be encouraged to develop, but always at their own pace.

In session we praise individually and as a group, and, where appropriate, the support staff. It is important in Touch Trust to create an atmosphere of equality where everyone is appreciated for their contribution. The ways we praise are:

- Clapping – predominantly this is how we praise everyone
- Cheering – a fun and vocal way of praising someone
- Smiling – a smile approval can emphasise the good work of a guest
- Eye Contact – reaffirms the commitment to the praise
- Verbal – a comment on **how** and **why** we are praising
- Sign language (thumbs up) – can substitute clapping for deaf and/or those adverse the clapping sound or action

Clapping

In society we clap in praise for many reasons, whether it is for someone's speech or acceptance of an award, or as appreciation of performance. Clapping is utilised for many reasons in Touch Trust:

1. In praise of someone's contribution to the session through:
 - a. performance (share and show),
 - b. positive behaviour (see 'Accentuate the Positive' below),
 - c. being there!
2. It has become a clear (and positive) welcome for Guests upon their arrival at Touch Trust;
3. It can raise the energy if needed, e.g. from massage to percussion;
4. It acts as part of the 'ritual' and safe circle;
5. It is used as an expected or reliable symbol to say hello or goodbye;
6. It creates clear distinctions or 'chapters' of each section;
7. Because of point 5 this can be used as a tool to 'break' negative behaviour.



Intention

It is important to understand the intention behind your praise. All praise **must** be authentic and meaningful. It should come from a place of gratitude and love and never from a purpose of manipulation. This means that we praise because we want the receiver to know we appreciate them for whatever the reason. We want to create a nurturing environment.

We each have a need or deep desire to *belong* in life. If we can understand that some, due to communication or behavioural issues, may express this desire in ways that may initially appear negative, then our intentions are honourable and we can find reasons to praise genuinely.

It may be the case that praise in the conventional sense is not appropriate for some Guests. This needs to be appreciated and adapted to suit, e.g. someone who dislikes clapping may prefer clicking fingers, or a simple 'thumbs up'. Make sure that you are able to praise on a level that suits the group or individual to make sure that there is no patronisation.

“Accentuate the Positive”

Positive behaviour may arise in many ways and will often be specific to the individual e.g. relaxing in the appropriate section of the session for one Guest may be a development, while for another Guest not falling asleep and being able to wake themselves could be the development.

It is your duty as a Session Leader to notice and pick up on these positive behaviours and be ready to praise at any point. The hope is that by praising the behaviour the Guest can recognise this and develop through encouragement.

Negative behaviour in session is not uncommon by any means, but we always try to turn the negative into a positive. A few examples may be: turning a negative action into a dance, maybe using fabrics or feathers and with the Session Leader mirroring (thus it turning it positive); or a desire to bang the floor or wall mirrored on a drum, with the development being for the Guest to bang the drum themselves.

When negative behaviour has been successfully transformed into positive it **must** be praised.

Too much negative behaviour in session will cause problems within a group session. It must be recognised that the individual is more likely to find benefit from the Programme by having a one to one session. This session can be adapted to suit their needs; often a regular but shorter session can help.

Key Points

- For most Guests **you cannot praise too much!**
- Be equal in your praise.
- When praising always adjust yourself to be in the Guest's view to make eye contact if possible.
- Be authentic when praising.
- Adapt your praise if necessary.