

## Coping with Difficult Behaviour: Do's and Don'ts<sup>1</sup>

### *Inactivity, not feeling like doing anything*

6-12 months after a “breakdown” or relapse:

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Leave them alone if they want to do nothing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Don't insist on them doing much or going out.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ If they say they are bored, offer or suggest some simple activity, e.g. watching TV, washing dishes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Don't overwhelm them with too many suggestions at once.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Experiment with different activities to find out what they would enjoy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Don't suggest activities or taking in anything too complicated.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ At first try activities that are passive, e.g. that involve either listening or watching something.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Don't nag or criticize them.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Try to have a regular daily routine so that things are predictable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Don't give too many instructions at the same time.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Encourage them to join in or follow this daily routine.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Don't label them as lazy – this does not help either of you.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ When they start getting better give them daily simple chores to do.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Don't expect things to be done perfectly.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Break chores into small steps if they are difficult.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Don't expect them to do things that they are afraid of (i.e. going out to a party) or find too confusing (e.g. writing letters or how to rearrange the room).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Try and make allowances for people that need to do things at unusual times (e.g. eating at irregular hours – healthy snacks can be left available in the refrigerator).</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Offer rewards and praise for the times when your relative does the chores even when they are not perfect.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Remember they can be distracted and may make mistakes or find it hard to keep on doing a long job.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Talk with your relative's case manager or doctor about a communication programme.</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Get advice about when they are ready to do various things and how to encourage this.</li> </ul>	

<sup>1</sup>Schizophrenia: A Self-Help Guide for Relatives and Carers by Olga Piatkowska and Maria Visotina (1989)