

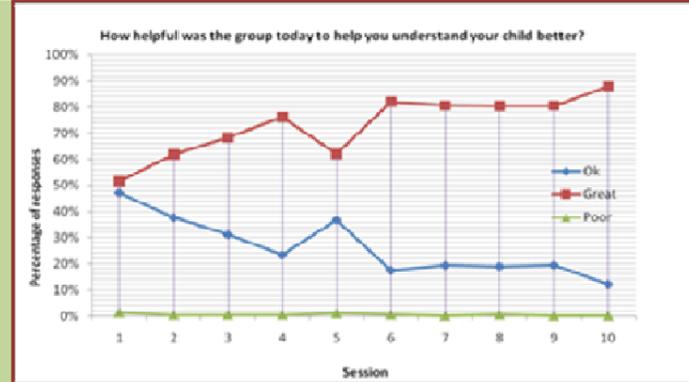
# Parents' views of Understanding your child's behaviour: a Solihull Approach Group for Parents



Understanding Your Child's Behaviour (UYCB) is a 10-week parenting programme based on the Solihull Approach, which has previously been shown to reduce problematic behaviour in children. This study examined the views of 236 parents of all literacy levels who attended 37 UYCB programmes provided by the Solihull Borough's children's workforce between 2005 and 2010. Simple weekly evaluation forms were used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data.

## METHOD

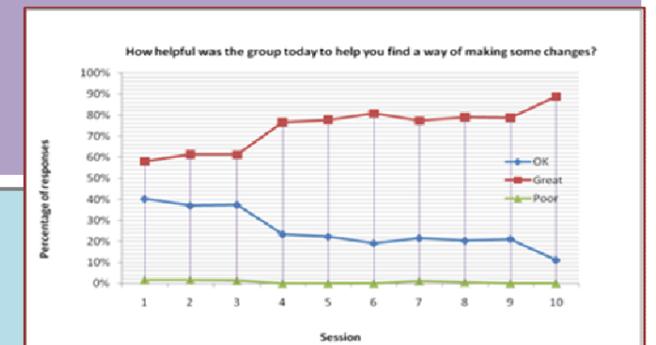
- Weekly, visual 3 point likert scale. Completed by parents at all 10 sessions  
*Analysed with descriptive statistics*
- Additional (qualitative) questions at session 10:  
What do you feel has changed as a result of you being in this group?  
What do you feel you have learned in this group?  
Any other comments  
*Analysed with Content Analysis*



Theme name	Description	Examples	Percentage of all comments (n=)
Making Changes	References to changes of attitude, behaviour or routine. Indications of more time given to children, references to becoming more confident.	"My outlook and attitude towards parenting have changed. My understanding of my daughter and the way I deal with situations. I have re-evaluated everything and made changes for the better." "I feel I have changed the way I manage my life and my child's life." "I personally am a lot calmer." "I have more empathy for my child." "Lots of things have changed like my son's sleep routine and the way I ask the children to do something." "I'm a better me."	29.5% (119)
Increased Knowledge (of Strategies, Solutions, and Children's Development).	Accounts of parents learning new strategies for managing behaviour or solutions when their children show challenging or emotive behaviour. References to learning about children's developmental stages, and learning parts of the Solihull Approach.	"It's made me step back and look at the situation and relate it to the child's age." "It has made me step back and look at how I am sometimes, i.e. occupied with something else and not noticing the frustration building up in the child." "I try to deal with problems in a different way." "I've been able to look at different ways to approach things and look at ways how others feel."	25% (101)
Feelings	References to the feelings of either the child or parent. References to parents' experience in the group of not feeling alone as a parent, and to their support network.	"I can link into my child's emotions and vocalise them." "I feel I have learnt a great deal about understanding feelings, my own as well as my child's." "I have learned to listen to my child and respect their feelings." "I have learned that anger is ok and that you can repair situations rather than leaving them up in the air." "I'm more self aware of my own feelings."	16.8% (68)
Improved Understanding	Indications that the parent thought to see things from a child's perspective, understand the behaviour, and can think how to help their child in particular.	"I feel I have learned more about understanding a child and looking at everything from a child's perspective." "I feel I can listen and understand them better." "My behaviour towards [child] has started to change as a result of understanding more about why she is behaving in a certain way." "My understanding of my child's behaviour is better. My child's tantrums are shorter and less often."	15.3% (62)
Improved Interactions	Interactions between parents and children, references to relationships at home, including partners, or interactions with other mothers and the group.	"I have learned how to communicate with my child effectively. I'm more relaxed playing with the kids and I feel calmer and more organised." "Taking a step back and thinking first about what and how to say to a child." "I definitely listen to my child more and spend more time with them in terms of playing and 'quality time'. "Playtime with the children has changed. If I want to do something I play with them first."	13.4% (54)
<b>Total comments</b>			<b>100% (404)</b>

## RESULTS

- 37 groups, 345 attendees, 236 respondents (68.4%)
- From the very first session the vast majority (82%) of parents reported finding the group relaxing and felt it was a place they could share experiences. The number of parents reporting 'great' steadily increased across the ten sessions and by the end of the group this reached an impressive 95%.
- The extent to which the programme helped parents to understand their child is shown in the graph on the left. Only 52% scored this as 'great' in session one but this increases session by session reaching a consistently high level (81-82%) in the latter half of the group (sessions six to nine) finishing at 88% by the last session.
- Of note is a 'dip' at session five. The content of session five focuses on parenting styles and intergenerational patterns of parenting, and thereby purposefully shifts the focus away from the child. It is considered by facilitators to be a powerful session, usually involving a great deal of self-reflection, and is often the first time parents share emotionally vulnerable content with other group members. Interestingly there is no such reduction in the percentage of parents reporting session five as 'great' at helping them make changes (see graph below), suggesting that *a focus on parents themselves here, rather than their children's feelings and behaviour, does not diminish the likelihood of change occurring.*
- The percentage of parents who gave the highest rating in response to whether the group helped them to make changes rises only slightly between session one and three, when it might be assumed that something is being established, such as group dynamics or an understanding of the principles behind the Solihull Approach model. However this leaps from 61% in session three to 77% at session four. The content of this session builds on the previous topics, which are all aimed at helping parents to see things from the child's perspective, but begins to focus on how parents can respond to this increased awareness. The graph clearly shows that from the fourth session onwards parents increasingly report that the group helps them make changes, with 89% of parents scoring this as 'great' by session 10.



## CONCLUSION

UYCB is very well regarded by parents. The vast majority of participants (95%) found the UYCB parenting group highly satisfactory as defined by how relaxed they felt in the group. By the end of the group 88% of parents reported that it had been very helpful at helping them understand their children and 89% said it was highly effective at helping them make changes to their parenting. In addition 100% of the remaining parents rated the group neutrally, with no parents rating it poorly on any of the evaluation questions by the end of the group.

Themes emerging from parents' comments demonstrate that parents leave the group having: made changes; increased their knowledge of strategies and solutions for responding to behaviour and of what to expect at different ages and stages of childhood; improved their understanding of their children's behaviour; improved their interactions with children and others, and enhanced their ability to recognise and respond to feelings in themselves and in their children. The length of UYCB is compliant with NICE guidelines that effective parenting programmes should be 8-12 sessions long and this study supports the view that parents need time to understand the issues before they change, plus time to consolidate change.

**Parents' evaluation of 'Understanding Your Child's Behaviour', a parenting group based on the Solihull Approach**  
Johnson, R & Wilson, H  
*Community Practitioner*.  
2012 May;85(5):29-33.