

Introduction

This manual provides information and exercises for persons who want to learn to use time-out. Time-out is a mild but effective punishment procedure that takes the place of nagging and spanking. By studying this book and carrying out the exercises, parents, teachers, employers, and others can learn to use time-out in a systematic way and with consistently favorable results.

Knowing how to use time-out correctly is especially important to persons who dislike using spanking or other forms of physical punishment, persons who find themselves becoming angry and emotional in dealing with misbehavior, and persons who find nagging and reprimanding to be ineffective. Time-out is an important procedure for persons who feel the children they are responsible for are "out of control."

The exercises in this booklet are best used under the direction of a professional who has a background in the behavioral principles and procedures on which time-out is based. The exercises should be completed by the person going through the program. Feedback and discussion about the exercises should be provided by the professional during two or more sessions. In some cases, effective feedback can be given over the telephone.

Some persons will be able to begin using time-out with very little assistance other than the instruction provided here. Others will need more explanation and coaching, as well as attention and approval for their efforts. Some persons find this to be a very difficult program in the beginning, but if they stick with it, they are the ones who usually profit most from using time-out.

This manual is designed to be used mostly with young children, but examples of time-out with teenagers and in business applications are included to demonstrate how the principles generalize to other settings and other problems. Although most of the definitive research on time-out was carried out in the 1960s and 1970s, there are a number of recent texts available, such as that by Kazdin (1994), that give good reviews of token procedures.

R. Vance Hall, PhD, is Senior Scientist Emeritus of The Bureau of Child Research and Professor Emeritus of Human Development and Family Life and Special Education at the University of Kansas. He was a pioneer in carrying out behavioral research in classrooms and in homes. Marilyn L. Hall, EdD, taught and carried out research in regular and special public school classrooms. While at the University of Kansas, she developed programs for training parents to use systematic behavior change procedures and was a successful behavior therapist specializing in child management and marriage relationships.