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### Tips on Getting Children to Appointments

- Discuss openly your concerns and reasons for the appointment. e.g. “Anger seem to be bothering you lately and I am worried about you. Lets try getting some help with this”.
- Try a, “let’s give it a go” approach and see what you think. e.g. “Lets book in for one appointment, then we can review how it went.”
- Acknowledge that it’s difficult to see someone new for the first time, and discuss how they feeling about this.
- Do some positive role modelling. Parents need to acknowledge they need help too. e.g. “I don’t know what to do about this, I am hoping they can give me some tips too”.
- If helpful, you could even allow a choice between two professionals they can see for support. e.g. “This counsellor here, or this one here. Who would you like me to book an appointment with and try?”
- If appropriate, allow your child to be part of the process of booking the appointment at some level e.g. “Ok when I call to book the appointment today, do you have any questions you want me to ask them?”.
- Arrange a “drive by” or visiting the office prior to the first appointment to allow the child to become familiar with the environment. You could even request a time for a very quick “hi” prior to the first appointment.
- Find out what will happen during the appointment and discuss this with your child. This will often help relieve any worry or anxiety about what will happen during an appointment. i.e. “Do I go in alone or with a parent?”
- Discuss that the professional is there support and help them – giving them tools and strategies to improve things. You could also mention, “You may want to start thinking of what you want to talk about with them”.
- Discuss privacy and confidentiality. Find out how the professional works with children around these issues. Be clear that sessions away from school are private and will not be discussed with anyone else unless agreed or required by legal, risk or safety issues.
- Remember, each child is different. Allow time for information to be processed and questions to be asked.
- Don’t make threats or judgements about getting help - discuss things calmly when they can be understood.
- Keep in mind: The goal is about getting your child some support, reducing their anxiety about it, and **normalising that getting help is a good thing**. You will have to adapt these strategies for what works for your child.

#### After the Appointment:

- Be real. Sometimes you don’t find the right professional the first time, or it takes a while to get to know each other. If at all possible, try and stick with one professional for a few sessions before moving on.
- Allow and encourage open discussion about what they liked and disliked about the appointment. Remember: **Just listening** to the child is crucial!