

You Can... Overcome apprehension

It is normal to feel apprehensive about an inspection. When we are faced with a new or unfamiliar situation we usually go through a range of different feelings and reactions. Our first response is often negative, even shock. We may then have feelings of self-doubt and panic until we come to accept the situation and look for ways to respond. Finally we come through it and discover that we have grown because of the experience.

Thinking points

- Inspectors give judgements not opinions. These are based on the evidence you provide and what they see and hear.
- Try to be as organised as possible. Is your documentation, such as files, records, plans and data up to date and accessible?
- Remember that the inspector's comments and feedback are given to help you to improve your practice, not to distress you.
- Few settings achieve perfection – there are always areas that can be improved. Recognise this and learn from the inspection, in order to raise standards and quality.
- Know that feelings affect behaviour and your inner thoughts affect your feelings. Talk positively to yourself, inside your head, and take control. Do you ever allow your feelings to take control and you find that you have behaved in a manner you later regretted?

General requirements

- It is counter-productive to spend too much time discussing the negatives or complaining about them. Focus on the present rather than what 'might' happen. Make sure the inspection runs smoothly by being well prepared.

Tips, ideas and activities

- Think solutions, not problems.
- Write down how you feel about an inspection. Know that, when faced with a new situation, most of us will often exaggerate the outcome, generalise or make illogical assumptions, and have unrealistic expectations.
- Assess the situation and ask yourself, *What is the worst thing that could happen?* Be realistic: what is the probability of it happening? Explore this idea and see how with that outcome there could be advantages or opportunities.
- Put yourself in control by visualising yourself handling the situation. Use statements such as, *I can...* and, *I will...*
- Make an achievable plan. See photocopiable page 55.
- Write a list of what needs to be done. Make it realistic and achievable, not dauntingly long. Ensure a task is displayed where all staff can see it and set deadlines. Use praise when each one is completed to foster a feeling of achievement and success.
- Talk with settings that have undergone an inspection. Concentrate on the positive benefits they got.

