Algorithm for Approaching Possible Harsh Punishment

Do you often feel your child is difficult to take care of?
- Yes
  - It sounds like taking care of ___ isn’t easy?
  - It can be tough to be a parent, and a kid.
- No
  - I am concerned that what’s happening is not good for ___ and not for you.
  - Can we discuss some other things to try?

Do you wish you had more help with your child?
- Yes
  - What behavior is MOST difficult for you?
  - How do you handle this? How’s it working?
- No
  - May I suggest a few things? We’ve learned good ways to teach kids.
    - no hitting contract
    - praise - power of positive reinforcement
    - prioritize - clear, simple rules for dangerous or damaging behavior
    - consistency - all caregivers
    - active ignoring - not sweating small stuff
    - patience - won’t change overnight

Do you sometimes find you need to slap or hit your child?
- Yes
  - If slapping/hitting, how often? With what?
  - How’s it working? How do you feel after you’ve slapped ___?
  - What else have you tried?
  - How’s that working?
- No
  - Would you like (more) help?

What kind of help would you consider?
- e.g., partner/spouse, family, a mental health professional, child’s daycare or teacher, parenting classes, religious group
- Offered help
  - Gave parent handout
  - Made referral
    - in-house or community
  - F/U
- What might be the benefit of getting help?
  - Encourage getting help
- What makes it hard to get help?
  - Suggest barriers, address them
- What would make it easier to get help?
- Supported parent’s choice
  - Reassured
  - Gave parent handout
  - F/U
  - No action needed
Harsh Punishment - Addressing Possible Barriers

Barrier: I’ve tried talking to my child. It doesn’t work

Response:

- I hear you that you’ve tried things that didn’t work
- I have some other ideas to try. Can we discuss these?

Barrier: I don’t know where to get help

Response:

- Yes, it’s often hard to know where to go
- I’m happy to help you. Would you like me to suggest some things that should help?
- I can also recommend other professionals that help parents like you
- Here’s a handout with useful info on good helplines, websites and other nearby places that help

Barrier: It’ll get better with time

Response:

- I hear you that you feel that “time will fix things”
- While some things do get better with time, how long do you want to wait before things are better?
- Your child could be doing much better. And, you could be feeling better too
- Would you like me to suggest some things that should help?

Barrier: It’s not that bad

Response:

- I’m glad you don’t feel the problem is that bad
- But, how bad does it need to be to get help?
- Would you like me to suggest some things that should help?
Barrier: **I was hit as a kid, and I turned out OK**

Response:

- Lots of people were hit as kids, but we’ve learned about better ways to teach kids
- Would you like me to suggest some things that should help?

**If the problem is more than the PCP can address and a referral is needed**

Barrier: **Costs too much**

Response:

- I think I can help you. This should be covered by your insurance
- Would you like me to suggest some things that should help?

**If outside help is needed:**

- Insurance for counseling has gotten better
- Also, some professionals/clinics accept what you’re able to pay and some are free
- Would you like me to check what you’re eligible for?

Barrier: **I don’t have childcare**

Response:

- Yes, childcare is often tough to find
- Perhaps family or a friend can provide childcare
- Home visiting may also be an option – someone can come to your home
- What do you think?

Barrier: **I don’t have transportation**

Response:

- I see transportation is a problem
- Unfortunately, this is so common
- Would you like me to see if there’s something close to home or on a bus route?
- Home visiting may also be an option – someone can come to your home. What do you think?
Barrier: I don’t think counseling or parenting classes work

Response:

- I hear you that you’re not sure counseling or parenting classes work
- Have you had a bad experience with these before? I understand that must be discouraging
- Do you think this could be different if you had someone different?
- Would you like me to recommend professionals I think you’ll find helpful?
- This is so important. Would you like me to try to find someone?