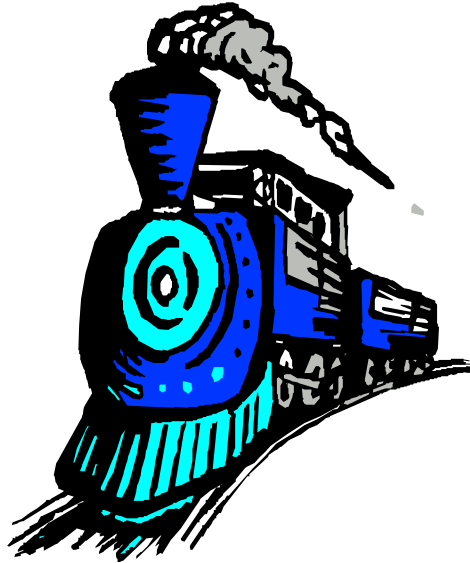


“No Such Thing As a Bad Kid!”



Understanding and Responding to Students
with Emotional & Behavioral Challenges Using a Positive,
Trauma-Informed, Strength-Based Approach
&
Creating a Positive Strength-Based Culture in Our School
Parts I & 2

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The Power of a Positive, Strength-Based Approach

What is it?: An emerging approach to guiding students that is exceptionally positive and inspiring. It begins with belief that all young people have or can develop strengths and utilize past successes to mitigate problem behavior and enhance social and academic functioning. It continues with practice methods that identify and marshal these strengths for necessary changes.

Strength-based practice is essentially about two words: Attitude & Actions

Educators & caregivers maximize the potential of the students they serve when they convey an attitude to each and every one that says: *I believe in you. I know you will succeed this year and beyond and I am absolutely thrilled to be part of your life. Let's go!* And then, through their daily actions - show that they mean it.

"I was successful because you believed in me."

- Ulysses S. Grant in a letter to Abraham Lincoln

Genuine believing helps kids to feel better about themselves, attacks self-doubt ("Self-doubt kills ability." – Degas), and, most importantly, provides hope – which is humanity's fuel.

Strength-based practice is, to a great extent, about the power of positive relationships.

Research has shown that a student entering high school with a history of committing aggressive acts is not likely to commit further acts of aggression (at his/her school) if the student believes there is at least one educator at the school that thinks "I'm terrific!"

- James Garbarino, Ph.D.

"Countless studies have found that social relationships are the best guarantee of heightened well-being and lowered stress, both an antidote for depression and a prescription for high performance."

- Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage*, p.14

Have you ever watched an actor in a bad mood? If you're in a bad mood, it might be prudent to fake that you're not. Actors entertain for a few hours; educators save lives.

Attitude is a choice. A positive attitude sends the message: I want to be here. I care about you. I believe in you. And I know you will succeed. Which all leads to hope, happiness and success!

"The research has been absolutely clear for a long time: Students in all grades have a greater chance of success if the adults in the school believe in them, are available not only as teachers but also as caring human beings who understand that the relationship between teacher and student extends beyond the academic. Equally important, children need to understand that education is an exciting adventure not to be feared, but to embrace as strategies that will help them realize their goals throughout their lives. These simple *Common Care* standards need to be part of any education strategy. "

Almost two decades ago, Yale psychiatrist James Comer said, ‘No significant learning happens without a significant relationship.’ Today, our studies reveal that 43 percent of students in grades 5-12 lack a sense of engagement with their schools.” - Rick Miller, KidsatHope.com

According to Achor, what do all happy people have in common?

Meaningful Social Connections

Strong Social Support Networks



Broken Window Theory

A smile and a warm greeting is the face’s way of giving an emotional hug. (Welcome to Moe’s!) Do the “little” things right (e.g. greet warmly, maintain a neat and appealing environment, etc.) and big problems diminish. This is what we call the: *Broken Window Theory* (“How are you?” “Fantastic!” “All the better for seeing you!” “I’m living the dream, and you?”)

“Countless studies have found that social relationships are the best guarantee of heightened well-being and lowered stress, both an antidote for depression and a prescription for high performance.”

- Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage*, p.14

At-risk youth often struggle to create and maintain healthy and meaningful peer relationships due to excessive egocentrism and under-developed social skills often related to adverse developmental factors (i.e. failure to socially accommodate & subordinate) and/or neurological deficits.

New research in psychology and neuroscience finds: “We become more successful *when* we are happier and more positive. Students primed to feel happy before taking math achievement tests far outperform their neutral peers. *It turns out our brains are literally hardwired to perform at their best not when they are negative or even neutral, but when they are positive.*”

- Shawn Achor, *The Happiness Advantage*, p. 14

“Recent research shows that the *broadening effect* (how positive emotions broaden the amount of possibilities we process, making us more thoughtful, creative, and open to new ideas), is actually biological. Positive emotions flood our brains with dopamine and serotonin , chemicals that not only make us feel good, but dial up the learning centers of our brains to higher levels. Positive emotions help humans to organize new information, keep that information in the brain longer, and retrieve it faster later on. And they enable us to make and sustain more neural connections, which allows us to think more quickly and creatively, become more skilled at complex analysis and problem solving, and see and invent new ways of doing things. Brain change, once thought impossible, is now a well-known fact, one that is supported by some of the most rigorous and cutting-edge research in neuroscience.”

(Achor, P. 29)

Happiness is not the belief that we don’t need to change; it is the realization that we can.

Achor, *The Happiness Advantage*, p.24

Hope is Humanity’s Fuel

The Brain & Resilience

All young persons have strengths and with positive support can change the course of their lives. They have resilient brains that can be “rewired” by positive learning experiences.

Resilience is the ability to thrive in spite of risk or adversity. The term comes from physics: a resilient object bends under stress but then springs back rather than breaks. A resilient child not only springs back from adversity but can become stronger in the process. The feeling of accomplishment that comes from solving life problems is the core of resilience.

Resilience is a natural trait in all humans. Human brains are specifically wired to cope with problems. However, humans cannot survive and thrive alone – they require support and encouragement from others.

Resilience is a combination of inner strengths and external supports. All youngsters need supportive families, peers schools, and mentors to optimally sustain and develop their potential strengths.

Recent advances in resilience science find that the human brain is designed to be resilient. The brain is structured to overcome risk.

The brain is not like a computer, but more like a resilience library. It stores information bearing on survival and well-being and discards most other data. Problems can either be treated as occasions for punishment or opportunities for learning and growth.

Neuroplasticity refers to the reality that the brain is malleable and can therefore change throughout its existence. Positive, and frequently occurring experiences, can create new neural pathways that enhance functioning and produce growth.

Conversely, negative emotional experiences like rejection activate pain centers in the brain just as physical stress does. Brain scans indicate that being excluded or rejected triggers feelings of distress and a burst of activity in the area of the brain that also reacts to physical pain. Destructive or defensive reactions (fight, flight, fright) can be triggered by such negative emotional states. Thus, being able to think about problems, talk them over with others, or even write about feelings or express them creatively can be helpful.

(Much of this information was excerpted from
the paper: *The Resilient Brain*, by Brendtro & Longhurst)

The brain has three major parts with different functions:

- **The Logical Brain** (prefrontal cortex) handles language, reasoning, and emotional control so Humans can intelligently solve problems and make meaning of life events. This area of the brain does not fully develop until adulthood.
- **The Emotional Brain** (limbic brain) triggers emotions that motivate behavior. The *amygdala* scans for stimuli for cues of danger or interest, triggers emotions, and stores important events in long term memory.
- **The Survival Brain** (brain stem) reacts to danger by triggering fight or flight mechanisms. These reflexive behaviors insured survival in the wild but are not geared to the threats faced by humans in modern life.

Psychiatrist Bruce Perry (2004) has found that children traumatized by neglect and abuse overuse more primitive brain systems. Their survival brains are chronically stimulated, and they are at high risk of engaging in behaviors which hurt themselves or others.

These destructive emotional impulses can only be regulated by mature capacity in the higher brain centers. But many of these youngsters have not had the nurturance and learning experiences to fully develop brain pathways for self –control. Thus their heightened impulsivity, frustration, and motor hyperactivity combine with an underdeveloped capacity to accurately perceive situations and problem solve. This unfortunate combination severely limits the child’s ability to maximize his or her potential.

As mentioned, Brendtro writes that human brain is like a library. Individuals who have suffered trauma remember everything. It’s as if they have wings of pain, shame, and humiliation in the lower regions of their brains. And they can’t afford to add any new books! A positive, safe, strength-based culture diminishes the fear that many traumatized kids live with. It replaces the wings of pain and shame with wings of accomplishment and pride. Positive, safe environments allow these individuals to venture outside their circles of protection (survival brain) and access (utilize) the higher regions of their brains – enhancing decision making, complex thinking, creativity, success and happiness.



The (survival) brain of a traumatized individual

Three Universal Truths from Kids at Hope (KidsatHope.org), an evidence based, strategic-cultural model which reverses the youth at risk” paradigm by establishing a holistic methodology that engages an entire school, youth organization and/or community:

1. Children succeed when they are surrounded by adults who believe they can succeed no exceptions.
2. Children succeed when they have meaningful and sustainable relationships with caring adults.
3. Children succeed when they can articulate their future in four domains rather than one, which is generally: Education and Career; Family; Community and Service; Hobbies and Recreation.

The Power of Motivation

“As teachers, let us commit to learning why “unmotivated” kids are unable to find their drive and inspiration on playing fields, on skateboard courses, in poolrooms, in video arcades, on mall concourses...or at nine thousand feet. What do these settings provide that we do not provide in the classroom?

We constantly search for ways that we can “change the child.” Perhaps the first significant change should come from us. Perhaps we should first analyze and change our policies, procedures, and practices when dealing with hard-to-reach kids. “

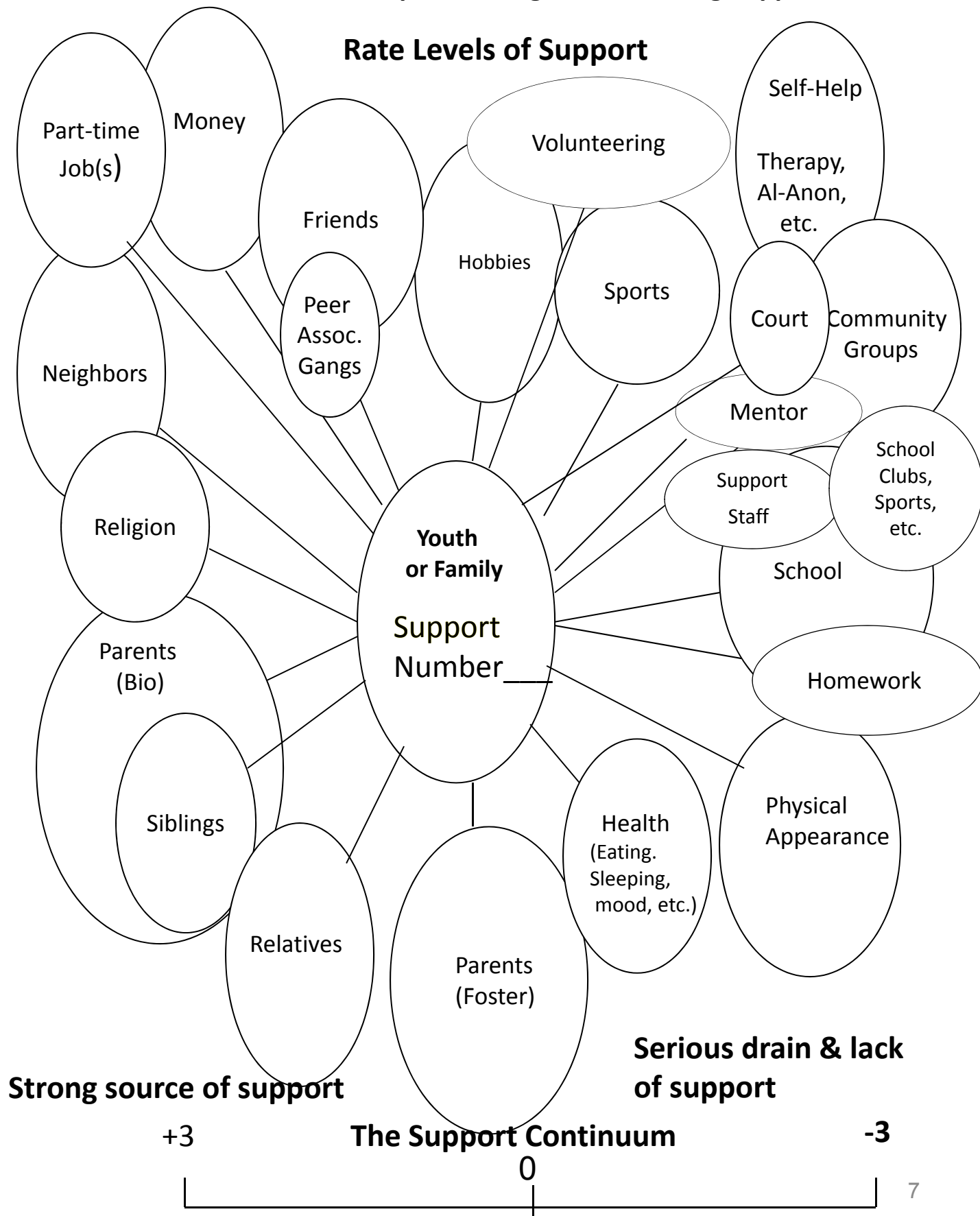
-Richard Lavoie, *The Motivation Breakthrough*,
Preface XIX

“Most teachers and parents recognize that motivation is the key to learning. Reflect for a moment on your favorite teacher in high school. The chances are that he was an effective motivator. He inspired you. He was not merely a teacher, he was also a leader.

He did not necessarily make learning fun, but he made learning attainable and purposeful. Whether you serve children as a teacher, parent, coach, or instructor, you will multiply your effectiveness immeasurably if you learn how to motivate your charges and maintain that motivation throughout the learning process.”

- Richard Lavoie, *The Motivation Breakthrough*, p.5

The Connections Map - Building & Maintaining Support



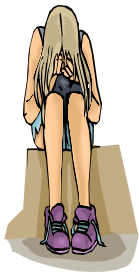
Connecting & the Power of Human/Physical Contact!

To touch can be to give life.”

-Michaelangelo

From the frontier of touch research, we know thanks to the research of neuroscientist Edmund Rolls, that touch activates the brain’s orbitofrontal cortex, which is linked to feelings of reward and compassion.





Gus on Pejorative Labeling



Look, I know some of us can be quite difficult. I was a hellion my first six months, considered quite obnoxious. But it was simply defensive posturing. (Can you say defense mechanism?) Kids aren't bad. They're just screwed up. The kid who's pushing you away the most is probably the one who needs you the most.

I think every residential center would be better off if they never used words as manipulative, lazy, un-invested, controlling, and obnoxious. They're pejorative adjectives. When you label one of us in such a way, you contaminate the waters and no one wants to swim with us any more.

"Manipulative kids aren't fun to work with."

"They're a pain in the ass."

"Boy, is that kid manipulative!"

Every time we get blasted for being "manipulative" (or any other such term), our self-concept suffers. We take on that word – we internalize a sense of badness. Yet the kid you call "manipulative" might have come to your facility with a history of manipulating his way out of getting beaten. So, maybe manipulating ain't so bad. Maybe it simply needs to be understood in the context of a child's situation. Maybe people don't need to use these words anymore.

P. 24 "I had been an excellent math student, but the day she told me I was "spacey" and unfocused was the day I stopped connecting to math."

Note: Throughout this handout will be references to the manuscript:
*Helping Traumatized Children Learn produced by Massachusetts Advocates
For Children* www.massadvocates.org.

Excerpt from *The Gus Chronicles*, Appelstein, 1994

Decoding Problem Behavior

Response to problem behavior: Understand > Reframe > Squeeze

Behavior is always a message

Pejorative Label	Positive, Hope-Based Reframe
Obnoxious	Good at pushing people away
Rude, arrogant	Good at affecting people
Resistant	Cautious
Lazy, un-invested	Good at preventing further hurts, failures
Manipulative	Good at getting needs met
Just looking for attention	Good at caring about and loving yourself
Close-mouthed	Loyal to family or friends
Different, odd	Under-appreciated
Stubborn & defiant	Good at standing up for yourself
Tantrum, fit, outburst	Big message
Learning disability	Roadblocks

Life isn't what you see, it's what you perceive!

When you change the way you look at a challenging youth ...the youth changes.

Pejorative labels lead to the creation of *stereotype myths* (entrenched , negative self-perceptions) – Gladwell, *Outliers*

Dweck (Mindset): Encourage *Growth* vs. *Fixed* Mindsets

Growth: Value and encourage effort, trying, failing (trying again)

Fixed: Discourage fixed self-perceptions (e.g. I'm smart, I'm the best, etc.)

Reframing II

1. A child who is always looking for attention:

R: I apologize to you for anyone who has ever put you down for looking for attention. I think it's great you look for attention – good or bad. It means you haven't quit on yourself. You probably haven't received enough attention in your life and you're looking for it now. Are there better ways to seek it? Sure, and we can talk about them. But I don't want you to spend another minute of your life thinking that there's something wrong with looking for attention!"

2. A child who won't talk about his/her feelings:

R: You're a real loyal daughter. I think you hold everything in to protect your family and I think that's quite admirable. Your mom is very lucky to have a kid like you. But this isn't us against your family, we're on the same side (connecting statement –see page).

3. A child who acts rudely:

R: You have an amazing ability to affect people! Or, "I think you're pretty good at giving to others what you've received."

4. A child who acts provocatively:

R: I think you're pretty good at getting me to experience how you're feeling right now. Maybe you could use your words?

5. A child who acts in a stubborn manner:

R: You're good at standing up for yourself and what you believe. Some of the greatest people in the world were quite stubborn about their causes: Martin Luther King, Mother Theresa. But the great ones all new when to give in a little.

6. A child who seems unmotivated:

R: You're pretty good at protecting yourself. If you don't try you can't be embarrassed. But you're a bright kid and if you just take it step by step you'll probably have success.

7. A child who frequently swears:

R: You're very expressive! You've got words I never heard before. Might use a few at the Patriot's game. How about saving the expressive language for times your alone with one of us, not in front of the other students. Thanks.

8. A child who's bossy with peers:

R: You've got great leadership skills. You're a natural.

Changing Mindsets

“For twenty years, my research has shown that the view you adopt for yourself profoundly affects that way you lead your life.”

Carol Dweck (2006) *Mindset*

- Encourage *growth* vs. fixed mindsets.
- Encourage effort and trying...normalize failing and making mistakes.
- Explain that failing opens up an opportunity to learn something new! Discourage fixed self-perceptions: “*I’m smart*, I’m the best, I always do good at this,” etc.



Be the EAGLE: “The harder I try, the higher I fly!”

“What’s a mistake? A chance to learn something new.”

“An opportunity to take!”

“If you don’t win, just grin!” “If you lose, don’t get the blues!”

If it’s stinkin’, change the thinkin’!

Consenting view: What is the message we might be sending kids if we never call them smart?

What does it mean to be smart?

- Smart means that you’re smart enough to know that you’ll make mistakes from time to time and sometimes fail at something. But these will all be opportunities to learn!
- Smart means that if you don’t know something it’s okay to ask for help.
- Smart means you’re capable of learning and using new information every day!
- Smart means you can use your brain to be very successful in life!
- If I don’t know how to do something, check out how others are doing it.

Thomas Edison's teachers said he was "too stupid to learn anything." He was fired from his first two jobs for being "non-productive." As an inventor, Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. When a reporter asked, "How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?" Edison replied, "I didn't fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps."

"I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times I've been trusted to take the game winning shot ... and missed. I've failed over and over and over again in my life. That is why I succeed." -Michael Jordan

Stinkin’ Thinkin’

I’m not good

It’s good enough

I can’t make this any better.

This is hard.

I don’t understand.

Replacement (Eagle) Thought(s)

I’m on the right track

Is this really my best work

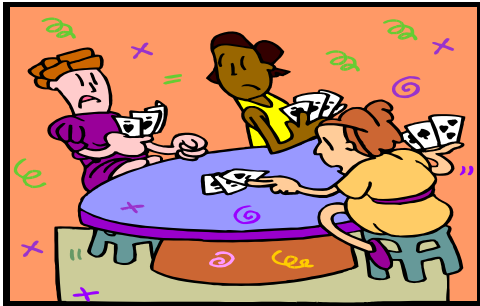
I can always improve. I’ll keep trying

This might take more time and effort.

What am I missing?

Providing Hope & Possibility Through Metaphors & Positive Predicting

Poker



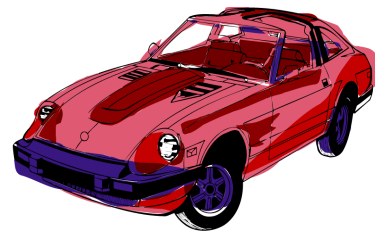
“Life is like a poker game. Even if you’re dealt a bad hand, you can still win the game. Prison is full of people who blame their upbringing for why they broke the law. But for every one person in prison who blames his/her family, there are 100 folks on the outside who were raised in similar circumstances but *chose* to be good citizens.

The Melting Snowball



“See your fears and worries about (pending issue/loss/transition) as a big snowball in the middle of your chest, and understand that as each day goes by, it’s going to melt a little. It may stay forever...but it will become so small that you can build a great life around it.”

The 2019 Edition



“Cars improve every year. People get better every day. You’re the 2019 Steve. You don’t over-heat as much as the 2018 Steve...have a sleeker design, follow the road signs better. Don’t give me this bull: ‘Same old me.’ You get better every day, man...wiser, more experienced, more mature.”

The Roadblock



“It’s not a learning disability, bipolar, Asperger’s; it’s a roadblock. All big cities have them, but people get to work on time every day. Why? They find away around it. You can to. Many successful people have roadblocks similar to yours.”

The Train



“You’re big and powerful...but you’ve gotten off track. All great trains get off track. What can we do to get to get you back on the rails? You *will* get to a good place.”



“Learning is my ticket to a great life.” You can’t get any where without a ticket!

Enact Sudden Bursts of Positivity!

Positive Predicting

When you talk about the future in positive terms, you make any desired outcome more possible. And when it's more possible, it becomes more probable!

"How should we celebrate when..."

"Twenty years from now, when you're an amazingly successful businessman and family guy...which staff member from the school (Me!) do you need to come back and find and thank for always having your back?"



"Who should we call to let them know what a great job you did..."

James Garbarino postulates that a child's inability to articulate one's future may be a clue to why some children succeed while others fail.



Suggestion: Create business cards for the youth in your care.....or hang their future diploma!

Three Universal Truths from Kidsathope.com:

Children succeed when they are surrounded by adults who believe they can succeed no exceptions.

Children succeed when they have meaningful and sustainable relationships with caring adults.

Children succeed when they can articulate their future in four domains rather than one: Home and Family; Education and Career; Community and Service; and Hobbies and Recreation.

Ask your students future oriented questions that fall into one of the four domains:

1. Do you think you'll attend a trade school, junior college or four year school?
2. What professions are you leaning towards?
3. Do you think you'll travel a lot when you're older? Where?
4. Big family or small? Will you help your kids with their homework?
5. Would you prefer to live in a big city or small town?
6. What kind of hobbies will you have when you're older?
7. Will you be generous, and give your time and money to those in need?

Activities & Self Esteem Building

To help kids enhance self esteem, provide tasks and activities that offer a:

Universal Opportunity for Individual Success

Example: A basketball game where the ball must be passed 3 times before it can be shot.

Every kid needs his/her own special niche!

Create and/or modify tasks and activities to maximize success opportunities & *draw out and amplify existing strengths and talents*

Self-Esteem Building Options:

- Professional & amateur sports
- Games: Board, video, bingo
- Special events (food drives, car washes, bottle-collecting, walk-a-thons)
- Karaoke & music (concerts, kazoo bands, shows, music videos, lip-syncing, etc.)
- Employment opportunities (Key: cultivate relationships with local employers)
- Volunteering (w/handicapped, elderly, younger students, animals, in the office or with maintenance)
- Sports (bowling, karate, roller-skating, soccer, etc.)
- Fitness (create fitness charts, aerobics, jogging/walking, meditation, rope and obstacle courses, etc.)
- Hobbies (art, theater, music, crafts, pottery, card and/or coin collecting, carpentry, photography, magic, etc.)
- Animals (pets, therapeutic horse-back riding, fish, etc.)
- Building repair jobs (painting, landscaping, repairing, etc.)

P.57 "Every child has an area of strength in which he or she excels, Whether it is in academics, art, music, or sports. When educators can identify and focus on a child's strength, they afford the child the opportunity to experience success, with all the emotional implications of doing something well. This is an important starting point in mastering academic content and social relations, which in turn serve as a basis for success at school."



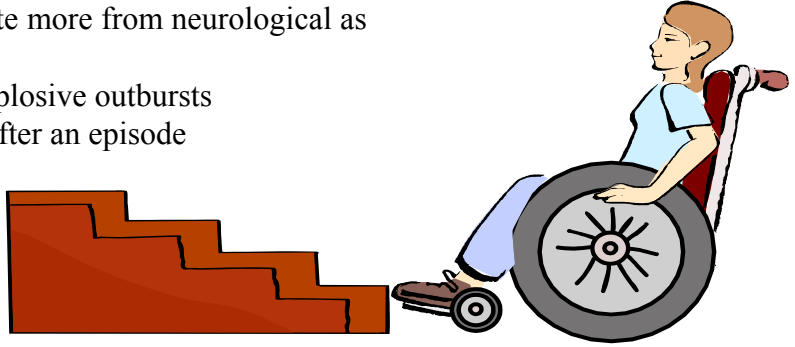
Trumpet Success

- Call home to deliver a good progress report. Send a postcard!
- Have school personnel write congratulatory notes to a student who accomplishes a significant feat.
- Post accomplishments on walls

Helping Inflexible/Explosive Children & Youth

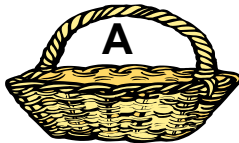
Characteristics of Such Kids:

- Display deficits in frustration tolerance
- Generally do not respond well to consequences and rewards (i.e. traditional motivational approaches)
- Symptoms are thought to emanate more from neurological as opposed to psychological factors
- Prone to stubborn, inflexible, explosive outbursts
- Often display genuine remorse after an episode

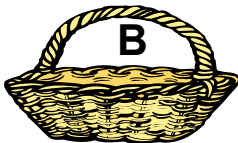


How to Help:

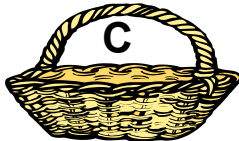
- Create *user-friendly* environments to *clear the smoke* (take the air out of the balloon)
- Determine which behaviors need to be addressed and how best to respond. Categorize behaviors and responses into one of three baskets:
A = Non-negotiable B = Compromise & Negotiation C = Ignore
- As kids *meltdown* and approach *vapor lock*, immediately *distract*, *empathize*, and offer aid. Help them to downshift into a calmer state (i.e. make the *cognitive shift*).



A = Non-negotiable, often a safety concern. Consequences could be issued.



B = Room for compromise & negotiation



C = Ignore

Tip: Have the “differences” talk with your students on a regular basis. Explain to them why some students are treated differently based on their circumstances/wiring. Use the fifty-yard dash metaphor (e.g. They’re not receiving favoritism. They are behind you in this area.) Encourage them to help the student(s) in question.

Most of this material is from *The Explosive Child* by Ross Greene, Ph.D.¹⁶

The Differences Talk

“We are consistent. But consistent doesn’t mean we treat you the same. If one of you has asthma, you get to use an inhaler, you don’t need it. If one of you breaks a leg, we get you crutches, you don’t need them. If one of you has a learning disability – a roadblock – in math, we modify our academic expectations. We treat you for what you need. You will see kids here who don’t have to do what you do; get rewarded for doing things you don’t get rewarded for. It’s not that they’re getting favoritism – it’s what they need at the time. And in most cases it would be great if you reach out to the kid who needs a little help to get to where you are.

Every person is wired differently. Some very successful adults, like kids, have ADD, bi-polar disorder, Asperger’s...a different kind of wiring. And they became successful probably because the people around them knew that they needed to be treated in a certain way – a little bit different from the others.

But, that said, we are pretty consistent: We don’t yell at you . We have great activities. We keep a really clean and neat place. We have pretty good food. We tell corny jokes. That’s consistency. It’s not treating you all the same.”

Cues to Use (Coping Thoughts/One-Line Raps) The Power of Self-Talk

Encourage kids to create and practice coping thoughts - in the form of cues or one-line raps – to diminish or eradicate problem behaviors (i.e. bad habits). Cues are more successful when they rhyme, are rhythmic, humorous and repeated often. Practice makes perfect!

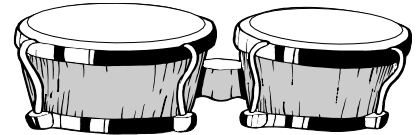
The brain is designed to change in response to patterned, repetitive stimulation.

Anger Control

NBD...easier than 1-2-3! NO BIG DEAL! Let it go, Joe (Just stay cool no need to blow)
Let it go...So (So I can be happy or earn things, etc.)
When you get mad...don't do bad (or don't get sad)...just talk or walk.
Talk, walk, or squawk! Stay in control, that's the goal. I can, I will, I gotta chill.
If you lose, don't get the blues. If you don't win, just grin!

Respectful

Don't talk rude, cause I'm the dude!
Don't talk mean, keep it clean!
Here's some advice, talk real nice



Use Bongos!

Self-Harm

If you hurt number one, it's never better when you're done.

Following Through/ Being Independent/Organization/ADD

Don't quit, take it bit by bit. Inch by inch, life's a cinch. Yard by yard, life is hard.
Take it little by little and play da fiddle! Write things down, Charlie Brown.
Organize and be wise. Prepare for tomorrow and avoid the sorrow!
Like a king on a throne, I can do it (start) on my own.
Step after step, that's the prep. Take it inch by inch...it's a cinch! Sit and relax, learn to the max!
Make a list, it will assist. Don't call out, share the air. Arms length away, today.
Don't move all over the place, sit and learn with a happy face!

Anxiety/Sadness

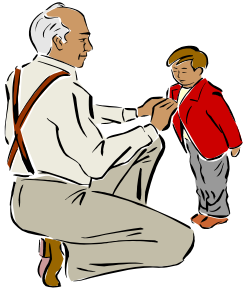
Don't be in a hurry to worry. Breathe in, breathe out...little by little the stress goes out
Stop and listen, cause you don't know what you're missing.
Count to ten and then do it again. Take a break for goodness sake.
Lose the stinkin' thinkin'. Rethink the situation add relaxation
I should, I must ...causes too much stress and fuss
If you're feeling blue, make some new choices to get you through

View more cues
at www.charliea.com

Encouragement/Affirmations

The harder I try, the higher I fly!
Learning is your (my) ticket to a good life.
I can make it if I choose...Only I can make me lose. If it is to be, it's up to me!

Working with Families



Key Terms and Concepts

Goals of Family-Centered Work:

Facilitation of family connections
Fantasy Deflation
Enhanced information gathering
Reunification
Earlier discharges
Mutual Acceptance



The Continuum of Parental Involvement*

1. Engagement
 - Focus on the strengths and passions of each family member
 - Understand & appreciate resistance (i.e. cautiousness)
 - Take an active interest in who they are.
 - Assist with socio-economic support.
2. Participation
 - Invite parents into their children's schools & programs. Create parent centers for collaborative learning and support.
3. Empowerment
 - Actively seek their advice when there are important issues/questions regarding their children
4. Discharge/Graduation
5. Aftercare > Supportive Services
 - Court personnel and parents form *Interlocking Partnerships*
 - Professionals view parents as: *Collaborators*
 - Family friendly work is: *Cultural rather than Compartmental*

Humor in the Classroom

Role of Humor

- Forms a bridge between adult/child world (i.e. counters resistance)
- De-mystifies individual persona/reduces power messages
- Enhances relationship building
- Tension reducer
- Provides effective modeling
- Improves self-esteem
- Enhances identity formation (e.g. niche theory)
- It's FUN!
- It's reflective of the environment
- Demonstrates caring

Rules:

- Try! But give up quick
- Do not view the use of humor as an *extra*; it should be an integral communication technique.
- Make no assumptions about who can or can't be humorous – for everyone is capable!
- Avoid sarcasm

Forms:

- Self-Deprecating
- Slapstick
- Joke Telling
- Grandiose Praise
- Humorous Games
- Musical Expression
- Poetry

Transitional Objects & Humor

Sustain "humorous" moments via:

The written word Photos Recordings Videos



Humor needs to be taken seriously!

A study by Stanford reported that students learn 700% more in a classroom when humor is an active part of the teaching.

Creating Group & Individual Incentive Plans

Key Principles for using incentives:

- Reward Improvement.
- Create an incentive system that's easy to administer, and follow through!
- Make incentive systems time-limited unless they are part of an ongoing plan.
- If used for one or two kids, keep charts in a private place. Be discreet!
- Award incentives in a private manner.
- If other kids complain. "Why don't I get checks and rewards?" be honest with them, explain that every kid is unique and that some have special needs (i.e. use the differences talk)
. Ask for *their* help in getting the kid back on track.
- Slowly raise expectations for incentives – but don't act too fast.
- In general, the more troubled a kid or group appears, the greater the frequency he/she /they should be rated and rewarded. As kids improve, frequencies should decrease.
- Be flexible! Incentive systems frequently need to be changed and modified. Kids often tire of the same rewards. A great deal of creativity and effort often needs to be put forth to successfully maintain systems.
- Make incentive charts and/or document forms colorful (but age-appropriate) and easy to read.

Suggested Rewards:

Educators must provide rewards based on available resources (i.e. "best possible").

Ideally, the best pay-off for a student is *individual time with an adult*. *Allowing the youth to invite a friend is even more motivational*. If circumstances and/or resources do not allow for kids to earn one-to-one time, than earning computer time or time doing something else that's enjoyable is preferred to paying-off with material items.

Other non-material rewards include:

- Special activity trips, additional free or recreational time, additional time at a favored activity, earning a special chore or activity, watching a video or having preferred music played.

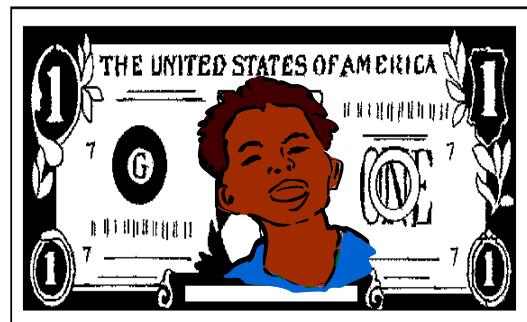
If material items need to be used as incentives, here are some options:

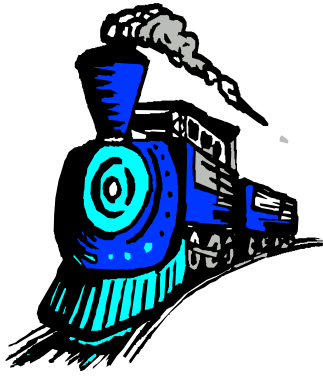
- Bus passes, iTunes cards, pens and pencils, games, art supplies, puzzles, candy, gift certificates, money, food, cassettes, CDs, DVDs

The Medium of Exchange

Younger -and sometimes - older students are motivated by earning chips, tokens, "gold" coins, tickets, stickers, etc. which they can trade-in for the items or privileges listed above. These symbols of success are called the *medium of exchange (MOE)*. A very popular MOE occurs when you place the picture of a kid on a dollar bill and make photocopies (i.e. create "Billy" dollars).

The Billy Dollar





Staying on Track, Jack!

Name _____

Dates _____

Goal(s) for the week:

	M	T	W	Th	F	Total
Think before I act, that's the fact!						
Be more respectful to the adults in my life (Here's some advice, talk real nice!)						

Total _____

2 points = Excellent effort in this area

1 point = Okay effort in this area

-- = Train off track

Bill's Road to Reading

Good Effort at Reading Buddies	Read 3 pages of Dr Seuss	Listened to Read-Aloud very well
Good Job With phonics		

9 bricks =
Lunch with a friend
and my teacher

The Observing Ego

"I'm REALLY ticked...I could just - it's okay. Stay cool...ALL feelings are normal. Learn from this. I'm suffering a bad self-esteem injury, but in a little while it will heal.

Respond instead of **React**.

Use the Force, Betty!

...I mean, Luke."

Lack of support leads to punitive actions.

Strategies to use in order to keep your cool:

1. Think about the principle of lack of support being related to punitive actions – and don't go there. Think:
I can do anything for ___amount of time.
Think: *I have the audacity to compare my life...*
2. Visualize yourself walking to your car at the end of a brutal shift with a BIG smile on your face *thinking "I kept my cool all during the shift. I didn't "react" like some of others. I did good!"*
3. Think about tomorrow: *If I respond instead of react to the end of the shift, my relationships will grow stronger...and the job will get easier.*
4. Think about a M.A.S.H. Unit: *When I'm at my worst, I need to give it my best!*
5. **Use the Force, Luke!** Don't succumb to the Dark Side.

Respond =
The Golden Rule

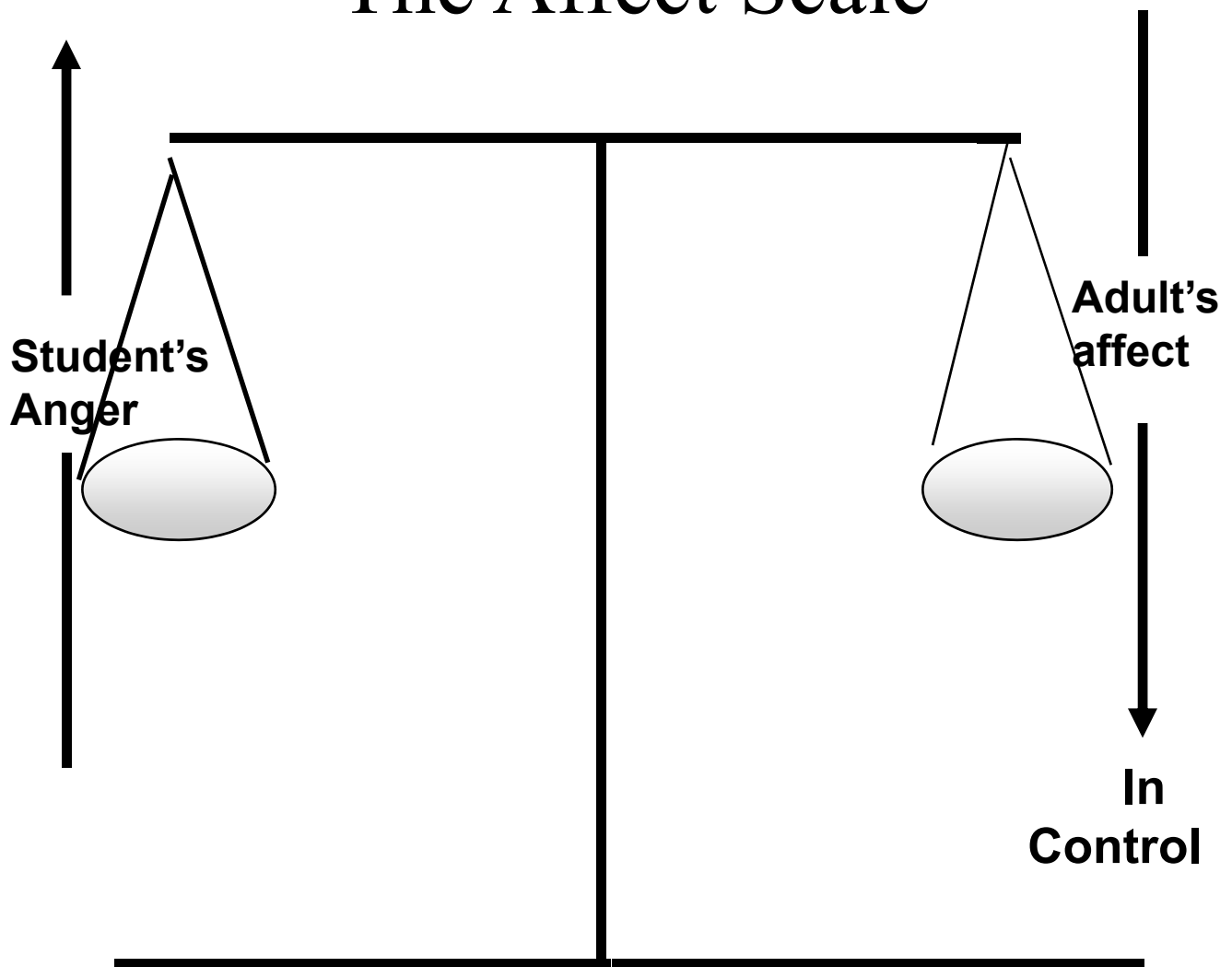
Self esteem is fragile even when it's good!

Don't say or do anything to a youth or group that you wouldn't want said or done to you.



**Out of
Control**

The Affect Scale



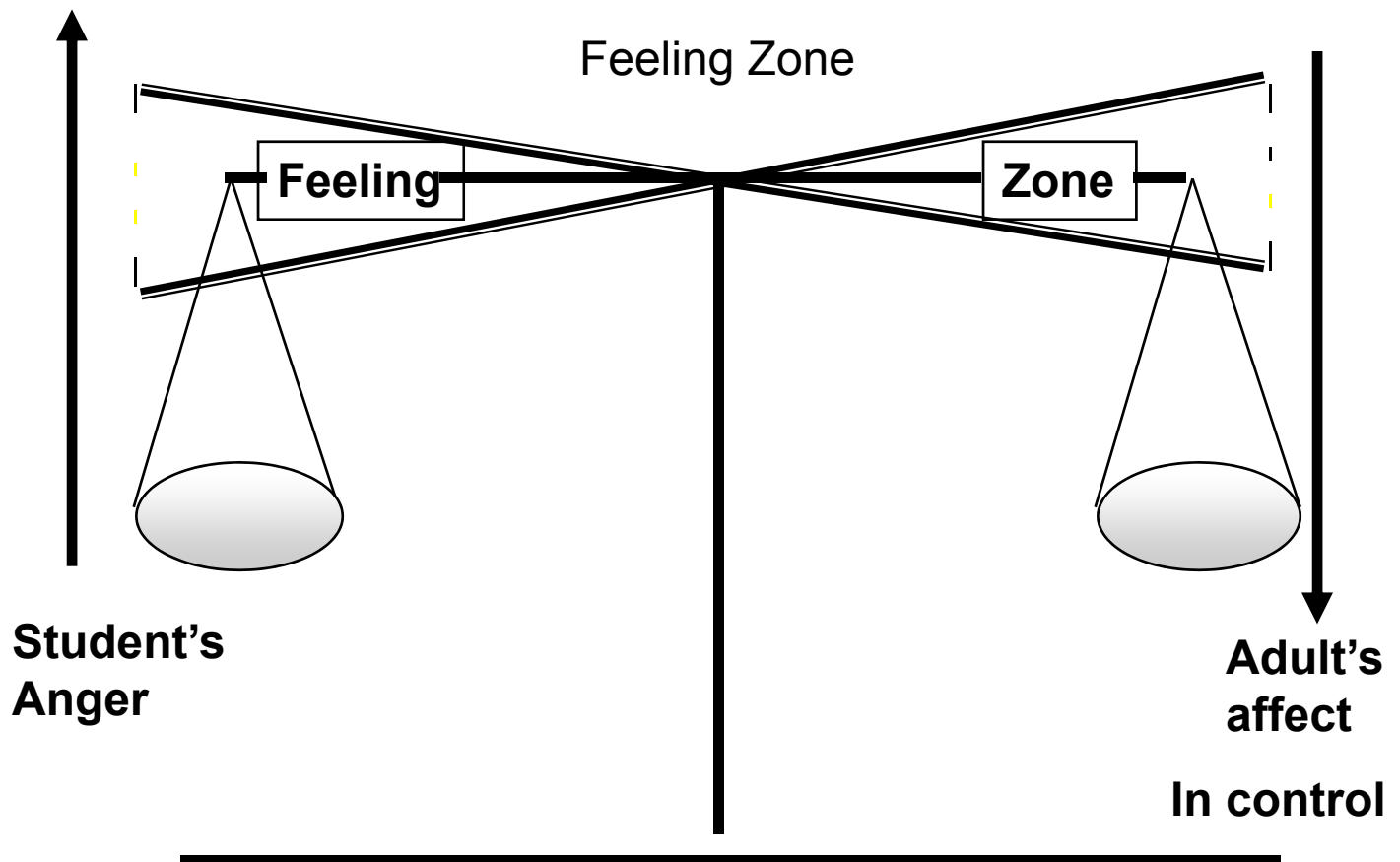
Key: Establish inverse relationship

As they get louder, you become more quiet

Safety is the only exception

Loss of
Control

The Affect Scale



Inside the “feeling zone” there is room to model affect-laden content.

Said in a controlled, but somewhat expressive manner:

“John, I’m upset about the choice you just made.”

“Mary, I’m angry about ...”

(Anger at the choice(s) – not student)

Key: If the kid escalates through the zone, the adult’s affect should grow more muted.

Content vs. Message

All verbal communication consists of two components: the *content* and *message(s)*. The content is the actual information being relayed. The message refers to how it is perceived based on the manner it was conveyed. At-risk kids (trauma victims) are hypersensitive to the messages adults send.



“You won’t be around next week?”

2 weeks later...

“*You*...won’t be around next week.”

Use “I” or “We” instead of “You” when making requests, and try and start requests with “Please” and finish with “Thank you.”

“Could you please put that away, thanks.”



Body Messages

“C’mon dude...let’s get it done, and then we can boogey. NBD brother.”

NBD = No Big Deal!

vs.

“You need to get it done now!”

Speak to your kids at eye level or below. Approach them in a calm manner at a 45 degree angle. Be careful about your pace, posture, facial expression, hand movements and body position.



Core Strength-Based Verbal Interventions

Non-Judgmental Explorative Intervention

“What up?”

“What’s going on?”

“What’s happening?”

Supportive Interventions

"You seem really upset!" "This stinks!" "How can I help?"

Repeating or Paraphrasing w/qualifiers

Youth: "I hate this place."

Foster Parent: "So you're saying you're pretty upset with this place *right now*." (Use qualifiers: yet, at the moment, right now, etc.)

Feelings Exploration:

"How do you feel about that?" "I'd be pretty angry if that happened to me."

Sandwich Approach

"You're really good at letting people know how you feel. But using that kind of language – swearing – makes everyone feel uncomfortable and I think we need to stay around the house for a while. But I'm *really pleased* about how you're working this out with me."

Praise and Encouragement

"Way to go!" "That was fantastic!" "I like the steps you took to get this done" (praising the action versus the child. Tip: Be specific with praise). "Hey, you've done this before and you can do it now. Be the man!"

Humor

To a fifteen-year-old: "You're acting just like a teenager!"

Apologizing

"I'm sorry for raising my voice to you."

Reasoning Responses

"What if we let every kid...."

Connecting Statements

"It's not me against you. I'm on your side. I don't like having to keep you back."

Empowering Interventions

"What could you have done differently?" "What do you think we should do?"

Surface Clarifications

"Let me make sure I know why you're upset."
"What exactly is getting you upset?"

Explorative Response (psychological)

"You don't usually get this upset. Could something else be bothering you?"

Exploration of Control

"So what can you control?" "What steps can you take?"

Explorative Response (historical)

"Have you ever completed such a difficult assignment?"
"Have you ever got this angry and not hit someone?" "How have other kids got through this?"

Explorative (reflective)

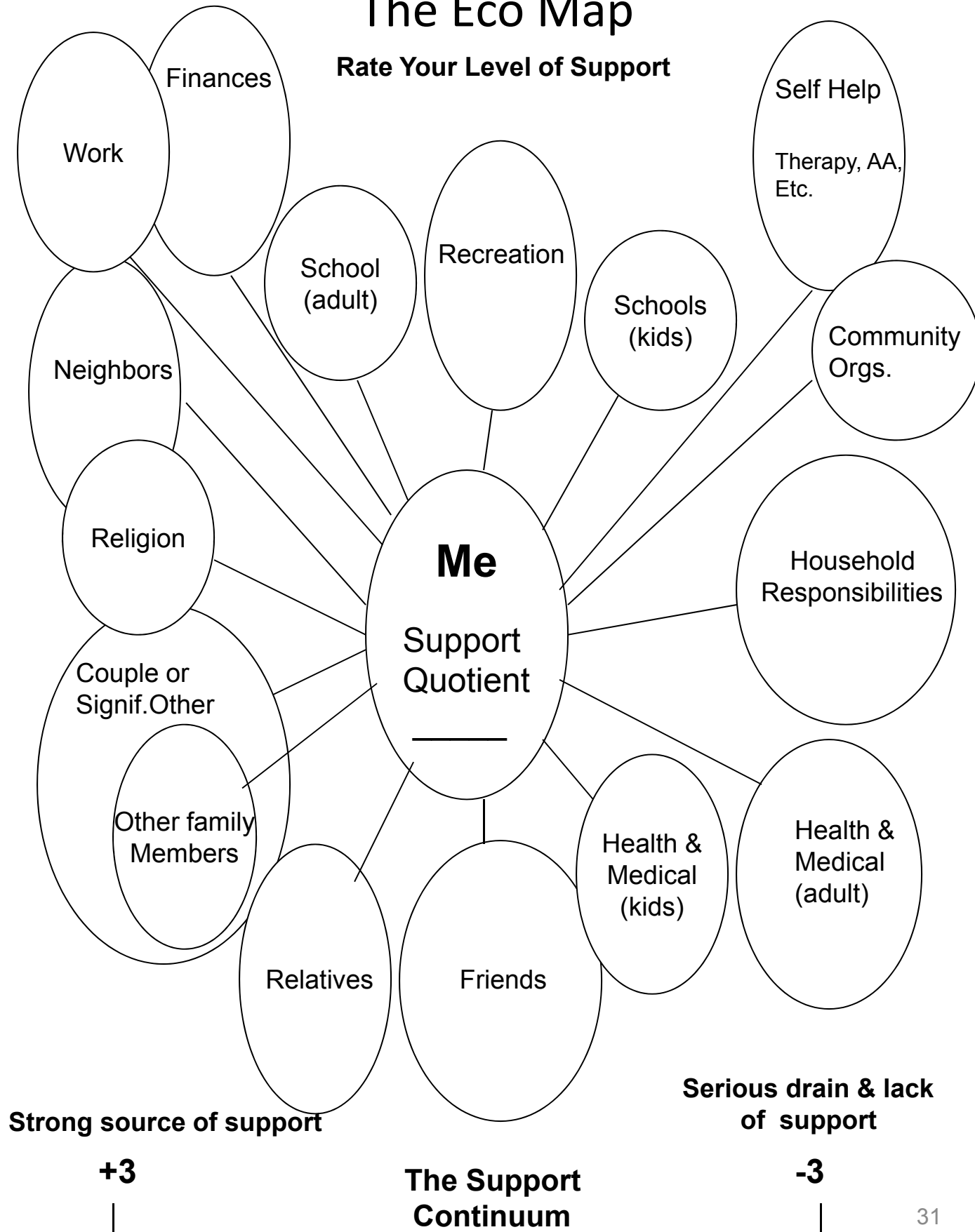
"Is that behavior working for you?"

Plan Making

"Can we make a plan to handle this situation better next time?"
"What's our plan for the rest of the day?"

The Eco Map

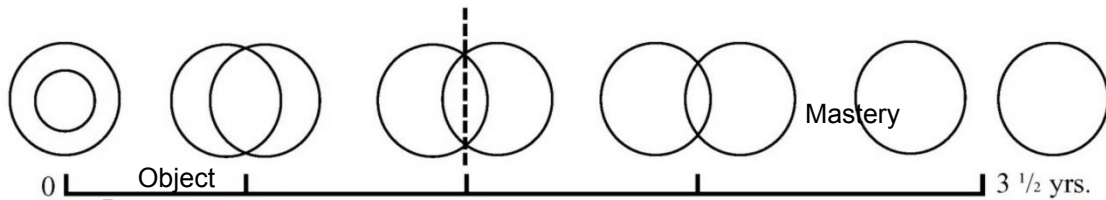
Rate Your Level of Support



THE HOLDING ENVIRONMENT

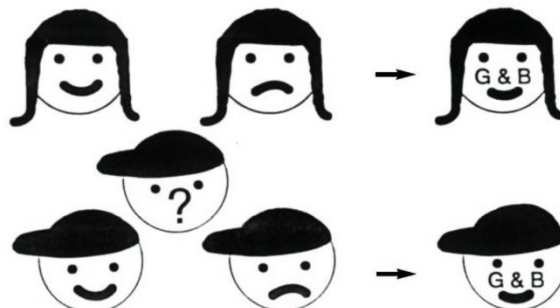
"A Total Environment Provision"

TASK: "good enough parenting"

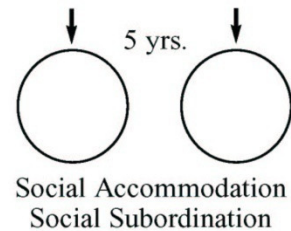


SPLITTING MECHANISM
Good mother/Bad mother

TASK:
merge the good
and bad introjects

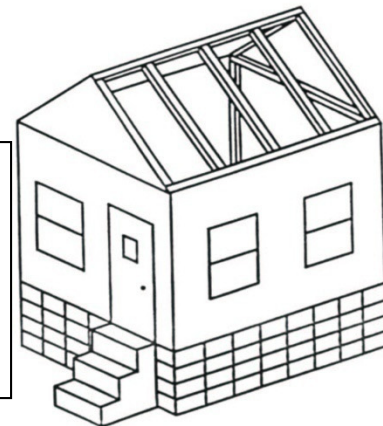


OBJECT
CONSTANCY
cohesive self
sense of self



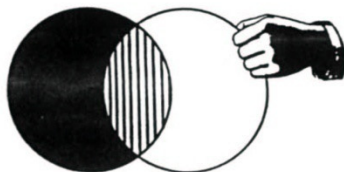
13-17 years old = Second Phase of Separation-Individuation
In other words: "I'm moving on. I'm separating from my parents. I'm thinking about:

- Who I am?
- Where I'm going?
- What I'll be?
- Where do I fit in?
- Changes in my body?
- Sexuality?

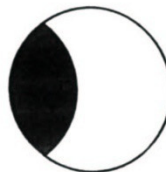


GOAL:
Filling in the emptiness

Effect of Separation



FILLERS VS. TALKERS
DEFICITS VS. CONFLICT



Pre-Talk Considerations

Number One Goal: Engage!

Listen, empathize, paraphrase, offer help, apologize, repeat, offer hope...HOOK 'EM in!

- Don't be defensive. Anticipate negative comments – don't take them personally...

"It's an injury and it will heal."

- Expect *displacement* (i.e. anger directed at you that is meant for someone else.)
- Assess your relationship and feelings toward the youth. Think PIE (i.e. everyone deserves an equal slice)

"The kid who is pushing you away the most, is probably the one who needs you the most" (The Gus Chronicles I, Appelstein)

- Practice the talk in your head. Longer discussions generally have a beginning, middle, and end phase.

Other considerations: _____

Behavior Management: Understanding, Prevention, and Principles

View misbehavior as a message: “*Something is wrong. I need help.*” Try to *respond* instead of *react* to difficult behaviors. In other words, don’t say or do anything to a youth or group that you wouldn’t want said or done to yourself. Practice the *Golden Rule*

Use your observing ego (e.g. “It’s an injury and it will heal. Respond instead of React”)

Practice *pattern identification*. Note if a youth or group act out in a predictable manner (i.e. at the same time each day, over the same issues, etc.). Once a pattern is identified, investigate your (or the setting’s) role in contributing to the problem(s). What can you change, modify or practice? What new skills does the youth or group need to practice? How can you make the environment more *user-friendly*? Next, seek out the youth’s input and develop a plan.

Constantly *practice* and *reinforce* the desired behaviors.

Behavior experts suggest that youth should hear four positive comments for every one negative. Catch them doing it right. Positive reinforcement is far more effective than discipline in promoting positive behavioral changes.

Use *consequences* instead of punishment. A consequence is *related* to an inappropriate behavior, a punishment is not. Consequences reinforce the values of your setting/society. Consequences don’t teach – adults do.

Give youth choices regarding the nature of their discipline (e.g. Let a youth decide where he wants to take a break, or a task that will make up for the poor choice he/she made)

In general, the sooner a consequence follows a misbehavior the more effective it will be. Try and avoid delayed consequences except for serious behaviors.

Remember the most important factor, other than safety, when issuing consequences, is the sanctity of the adult-youth relationship.

Issue consequences that have a *high probability* of being accepted. Be careful about using traditional motivational approaches with non-motivational youth (A,B,C Baskets).

Establish a limit setting progression. In other words, everyone should know exactly what happens if a youth refuses to accept a limit.

Use *best possible* interventions but advocate for resources to enhance the learning climate as it relates to the emotional well-being of all concerned.

Whenever possible, and for more serious behaviors, try and let the youth decide the appropriate consequence(s). Base decisions on *frequency* and *severity*.

Practice progressive discipline. Use *severity* and *frequency* to determine more serious consequences. Empower the youth or group to determine their consequences.

Limit Setting

Limit setting progresses in five clearly defined stages:

First:	Supportive
Second:	Logical Consequences
Third:	Physical Intervention
Fourth:	Processing
Five:	Reintegration

First Stage: Supportive Interventions include but are not limited to:

Verbal prompts, reminders, warnings (e.g. have youth recite the rule that might be compromised or broken. Better yet: Have the youth recite the rule and why the group established it.

Redirection, distraction, divide & conquering

Appropriate verbal dialogue (e.g. Compromise, negotiate, reframe, support and help, explore historically)

Hydraulically squeeze (i.e. Find a benign place for the youth (or group) to do the same behavior. Example: A teen who swears is allowed to swear one-on-one with an adult in a private location).

Humor (but not sarcasm).

Non-verbal interventions (e.g. Hand signals, lights out, circulating around the room, rhythmic clapping, standing on a table, lying on the floor, etc.)

“Love the object” If a youth is playing inappropriately with an object – take an interest in it. Follow-up later.

Use the power of a group

Channel (e.g. Have an energetic kid do something physical, have the entire group do some exercises, yoga, etc.)

Hold an impromptu meeting

Vicarious reinforcement (Praise another youth for the behavior you want the youth in question to display.)

Selectively ignore

In general, if two or three supportive interventions don't work in a relatively short time period, a logical consequence should follow.

Logical Consequences

Proximity Manipulation

Levels of supervision can be intensified when kids behave inappropriately:

“John, would you please sit up front for the remainder of the class?”

“Carla, we’re going to walk side-by-side to the gym.”

“Billy, you will need to be escorted throughout the campus until you’ve earned back some trust.”

When a kid begins to improve his behavior, he can earn the incentive of gaining more freedom, with respect to his/her proximity to adults.

Supervision levels can be created to address unsafe, problematic acting out, such as: *In-sight, one-to-one, and close supervision*. These levels – which represent proximity manipulation – can be adjusted as a kid or group regain (earn) their trust.

Re-Doing

Kids who have trouble meeting expectations, such as walking quietly to lunch, not running in the hallways, talking inappropriately, etc., can be asked to **re-do** the specific task:

“Okay John, I’d like you to go back to the door and try walking here again...s-l-o-w-l-y.”

“Could you please try and redo your chore? I don’t think it’s your best effort.”

“Could you please try and say that to me again? Thanks.”

Option: “I think you said I’m a wonderful dude and a sharp dresser, but I’m not sure.”

The Directed Chat

When a kid is not responding to supportive interventions, a worker– if conditions permit – can request a private chat, preferably in a different location. By changing location, it is often easier to approach the issue at hand with more calmness and emotional distance. Going to a neutral location often facilitates conflict resolution.

A worker, for instance, could ask a disruptive youth to join her in a hallway for a minute. Oftentimes, by giving a kid or group such attention, problematic behavior is ameliorated.

Removal of Attention

At times, the best way to deal with negative behavior is to walk away from it and/or switch-off.

Youth worker: “You’re choosing to make me upset. I think I’m going to take a break from being with you now. I’m hoping that later we can work this out.”

If a youth care worker is becoming angry with a youth or group, a fellow staff member should be empowered to step in and take over for the person. Some schools/programs employ a “tag-off” like in professional wrestling.

Natural Consequences

Natural consequences involve discipline that it is a *natural* byproduct of one’s actions.

Examples:

“I think I am going to stop working with you now. I’m uncomfortable with your language. You could make better choices. I’ll check back with you in a little while to see if you can talk with me in a more civil manner.”

If a group is too loud and unruly an adult could just sit quietly and wait for them to calm down. The worker could look towards the clock (meaning they’ll be losing free time) Other consequences could be applied if this intervention isn’t successful.

A youth refuses to do his homework. The natural consequence: He fails the test.

A youth refuses to wear gloves. The natural consequence: Frozen fingers

Loss of Privileges

Restricting a privilege, such as using a computer or going out to recess is generally a *delayed consequence* and should only be used for more serious behaviors or when minor behaviors become problematically repetitive.

However, when students commit serious infractions to school rules...a restriction meted out based on the *severity of the action* and the frequency it has occurred is often the appropriate consequence.

Bettelheim: Taking activities away from a troubled child is like taking cough syrup from a person with a sore throat.

Problem Behavior: A youth is caught visiting inappropriate websites

Response: The youth loses computer privileges

Problem Behavior: Students are caught texting during class.

Response: They lose the right to use their cell phones in school for a determined period of time – based on severity and frequency

Reparation (Restitution, Community Service, etc.)

If a child or youth acts out towards a human being or physical object, it invariably causes psychological and physical damage, respectively. It is, at times, helpful to have the student (or group) that has offended *repair* the damage (within herself, as well). Examples:

Problem Behavior: A youth is caught bullying others:

Reparation: Have the youth apologize to the kids he/she has tormented and require her to help others for a certain duration of time.

Problem Behavior: A youth vandalizes a neighbors property

Reparation: Require the youth to do work projects for the neighbor.

Problem Behavior: A youth destroys property.

Reparation: The youth processes the incident and then jointly plans a corrective action, like helping with the maintenance team, volunteering somewhere, etc.

Another way to frame this consequence is to view the act of repentance as “giving back.”

Principal: “Bill, you took away some of the respect and harmony we feel here by making the bad decision to damage the property. I’d like for you to give something back by coming up with a project that will contribute to the well-being of the school.

You took something away...now give something back

Whenever possible let the youth or group decide the consequence

Breaks (Time-Out)

Kids often react negatively to the term *time-out*. As a result, it is best to use alternative terminology:

“Could you please step outside the room and *chill out*?”

“Jim, I’d like you to sit on the bench, calm down, and think about making some better choices.”

“Sara, would you please walk to Mrs. Brown’s room for a short *break*, thanks.”

“Billy, could you please stay after class for a minute to discuss the choices you’ve been making.”

It’s best to give kids choices where to take their breaks:

“Reggie, could you please take a break. Chill out in the back or take a short walk and return. Thanks.”

The more empowering we are, the less issues students will have with power.

Processing: Upon completion of a consequence, kids and staff members should generally process what occurred. They should be asked to:

- Give their view of what happened.
- Come up with better choices that could have been made – from both parties.
- Recollect if they have been in similar situations and acted more appropriately?
If yes, what skills did they use?
- Make a plan to correct/change issues that may have contributed to the difficulties

Adults should be open to admitting mistakes and taking some ownership for what transpired. Apologizing is a powerful tool.

Reintegration: Review steps for integrating back into class (i.e. review expectations, logistics, etc.)