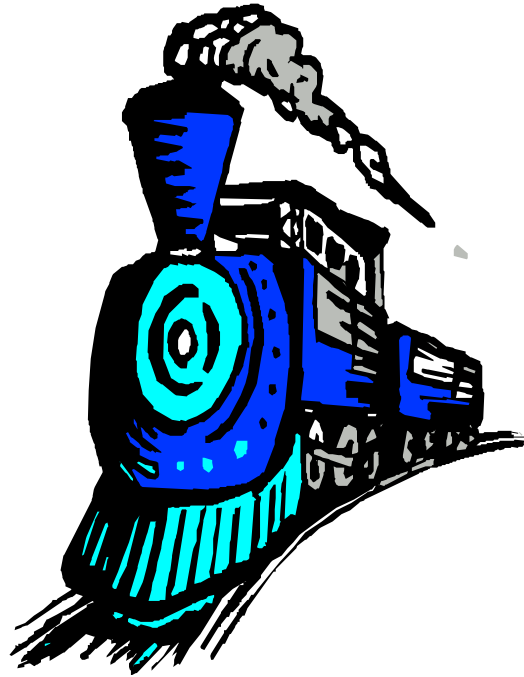


Responding vs. Reacting to Your Kids



Key Strength-Based Principles and Techniques for Effective Parenting

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The Power of a Strength-Based Approach

Strength-Based Practice: It's all about *Attitude & Actions*

Parents maximize their children's potential when they convey an attitude to each and every one that says:

I believe in all of you and I am *thrilled* to be your parent.

And then, through their daily actions...show that they mean it.

Genuine believing attacks self-doubt, makes kids feel better about themselves and provides hope – which is humanity's fuel.

“I was successful because you believed in me.”

- Ulysses S. Grant in a letter to Abraham Lincoln

When children and youth feel better about themselves they are more likely to use and cultivate strengths.



“Self-doubt kills ability.”

- Degas

“A smile is the face's way of giving an emotional hug.”

Research has shown that a student entering high school with a history of violence, is not likely to commit an act 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 Garborino, Ph.D.

*Twenty years from now your kids won't remember
much of what you said to them, but they'll all
recall how you made them feel.*

Have you ever watched an actor in a bad mood? If you're in a bad mood, there are times you should fake that you're not. Most parents have the strengths to do this.

The Power of Believing & A Strength-Based Approach



“He’s a little horse, but he doesn’t know he’s a little horse. He thinks he’s BIG!”

And sometimes when a little guy doesn’t know he’s a little guy, he does great BIG things!”

Charles Howard, Owner

When children sense deep inside that their parents truly believe in them, it is a gift of great hope and promise.

Seabiscuit

Tips: Think about the implications of saying “Yes” vs. “No.”
Encourage kids to find their own strengths and passions.

Trumpet difficult accomplishments!

Strength-Based Beliefs and Terminology

Response to problem behavior: Understand > Reframe > Squeeze

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!

Tip: Avoid using negative labels with your children

Reframing

Seeing and praising the positive, self-protective value in “negative” behaviors

1. A child who is always looking for attention:

R: I think it's great you look for attention – good or bad. It means you haven't quit on yourself. 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 argues:

R: You'd be a great lawyer. You really have great skills at arguing a point. If I was in trouble, I'd want you arguing my case. But a lawyer argues in the courtroom. This is the kitchen!

3. A youth who acts rudely:

R: You have an amazing ability to affect people! Or, “I think you're pretty good at pushing people away. Maybe getting close to people makes you nervous?”

4. A student who makes funny noises at the wrong time:

R: You're a very creative kid. What range, pitch, resonance! These are great noises. How about saving them for the end of the day. You can put on a show for five minutes.

5. A youth 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 student 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 youth who frequently swears:

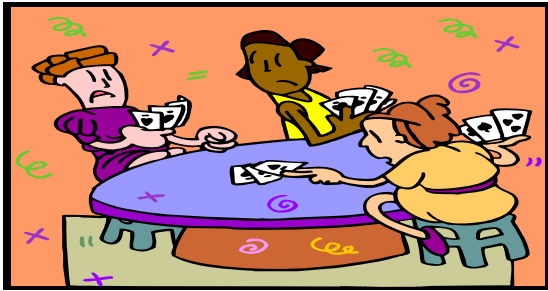
R: You're very expressive! You've got words I never heard before. Might use a few at the Patriot's game. How about saving the expressive language for times your alone with one of us, not in public situations. Thanks.

8. A child who's bossy with peers:

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

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.”

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.”

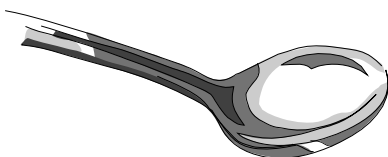
The Roadblock



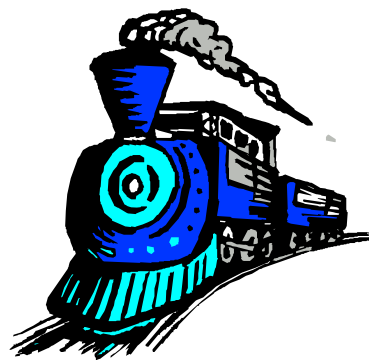
“It’s not a learning disability; it’s a roadblock. All big cities have them, but people get to work on time every day.”

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!



The Train



“You’re Big and Powerful...but a bit off track. All trains get off track from time to time.”

The 2010 Edition



“Cars and people improve every year. You’re the 2010 Ricky. You don’t over-heat as much...have a sleeker design, follow the road signs better...”

Strength-Based Practice

What is it?: Emerging approach to helping people that is exceptionally positive and inspiring.

Begins with the belief that all children have or can develop strengths, and utilize past successes, to enhance well-being.

It's considered a powerful combination of the strength-building model and solution-focused communication

Emphasis is on:

Strength-building rather than flaw-fixing

Doing rather than understanding

Believing in every youth unconditionally - See and believe!– Not “Believing is seeing” (positive responses are earned)

..which produces *Optimism* – which feeds possibility, and motivates coping and adaptive behavior, even in the face of difficult odds: *Hope is Humanity's Fuel*

Continues with practice methods that identify and marshal these strengths for necessary behavior change.

The Goal:

Change rather than *insight* and *awareness*

The Work:

Problem-driven not problem-focused (solution-focused):

Devoted to helping kids *initiate actions* to dispense presenting problems

Primarily *short term*

Goal-oriented and focused on *resolving the identifying problem*

Assumptions (or lack thereof)....

Strength-based practice does not assume that ownership of guilt is somehow automatically curative....Does assume that change is inevitable, not uncertain

Strength-based practice does not assume **LARGE** problems require **LARGE** efforts for solutions....Does assume that **SMALL** changes can ripple out to bring resolution. 7

Activities & Self Esteem Building

To help your kids enhance their self esteem, encourage & provide tasks and activities that offer a:

Universal Opportunity for Individual Success

Create and/or modify tasks and activities to maximize success opportunities

Example: A basketball game where the ball must be passed 3 times before it can be shot.
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 kids, animals, etc.)
- 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.)
- Home repair jobs (painting, landscaping, repairing, etc.)
- Religious endeavors



Every kid needs his/her own special niche!

Trumpet Success

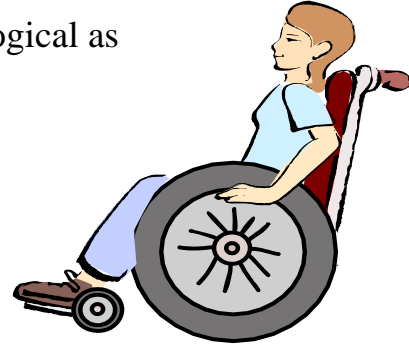
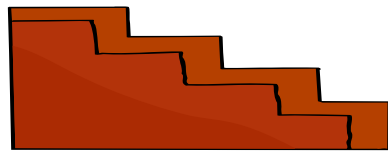


Call friends and relatives with good news....keep a scrapbook, post pictures, etc.

Helping Extremely Inflexible 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



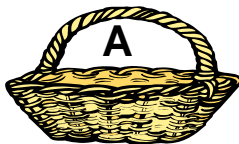
How to Help:

- 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.

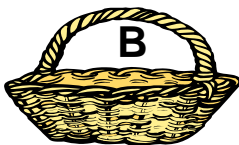
Categorize behaviors and responses into one of three baskets:

A = Non-negotiable B = Compromise & Negotiation C = Ignore

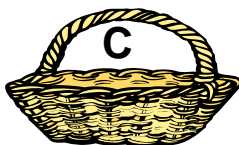
- As kids *meltdown* and approach *vapor lock*, immediately *distract*, *empathize*, and offer aid. Help them to downshift into a calmer state (i.e. make the *cognitive shift*).



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



B = Room for compromise & negotiation

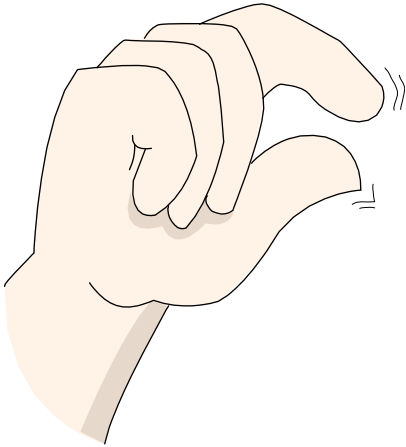


C = Ignore

Strategic Verbal Interventions

The Millimeter Acknowledgement

Strength-based practice does not assume that ownership of guilt is somehow automatically curative



“Do you think it’s slightly possible that perhaps, maybe....”

“Could, maybe, 1% of this have something do with...”

Honoring Hellos and Goodbyes

“You can’t say hello until you have first said goodbye!”

Stages of grief: Shock & Denial, Anger, Sadness, Acceptance

Examples:

Goodbye to: Parents’ marriage

Hello to: New relationships

Goodbye to: Loss of idealized childhood

Hello to: What was real, the good that can be remembered, and life ahead.



Tip: Replace cognitive distortion (stinkin’ thinkin’)

Example: Angry that staff member is leaving, but feeling lucky that we got to work together for so long.

Cues to Use (Coping Thoughts/One-Line Raps)

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!

Stop and think, don't be a dink!

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're 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.

Social

Take turns when you talk, if you don't the kids will walk.

Give kids their space, it's their place.

Don't poke, it's not a joke.

Stop and think, don't be a dink.

Stay arms lengths away...today.

Following Through/ Being Independent

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!

Like a king on a throne, I can do it 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.

Drugs and Alcohol

I can make it if I choose, time to quit the drugs and booze.

If you lose hope, don't do dope.

Anxiety

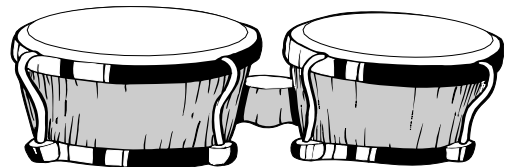
Don't be in a hurry to worry.

Stop and listen, cause you don't know what you're missing.

Encouragement/Affirmations

I'm smart. It's in my heart. 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!



Use Bongos!

View more cues
at www.charliea.com

Externalizing & Naming Negative Behaviors

Giving life to a problematic issue or “bad habit” by naming it (i.e. externalizing) can help kids rid themselves of problematic tendencies/habits/compulsions.

Examples:

A child who needs to do things perfectly:

“Get lost Mrs. Perfecto! Get out of here. Get off my back, you loser!”

A child who is prone to behavior outburst:

“Get out of here Mr. Fitz!”

A youth who talks rudely:

“Get lost Rudy! You’re nothing!”

A youth who argues incessantly:

“Go far Mr. R!” “You’re through Mr. R Gue!”

A child who is reluctant to write:

“Get out of town, Mr. No Write!”

A youth who is often late to school, or truant:

“Tell Mr. I.B. Tardy/Truant not to get you in trouble next week.”



Rudy

Create your own:

Bad Habit

Name

Humor in the Lifespace

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

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 90 more minutes!"*
2. Visualize yourself going to bed at the end of a brutal day with a BIG smile on your face thinking: *"I kept my cool pretty good today. I didn't "react" like some other parents would have. Like I have before. I did okay!"*
3. Think about tomorrow: *If I respond instead of react to the end of every day, 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

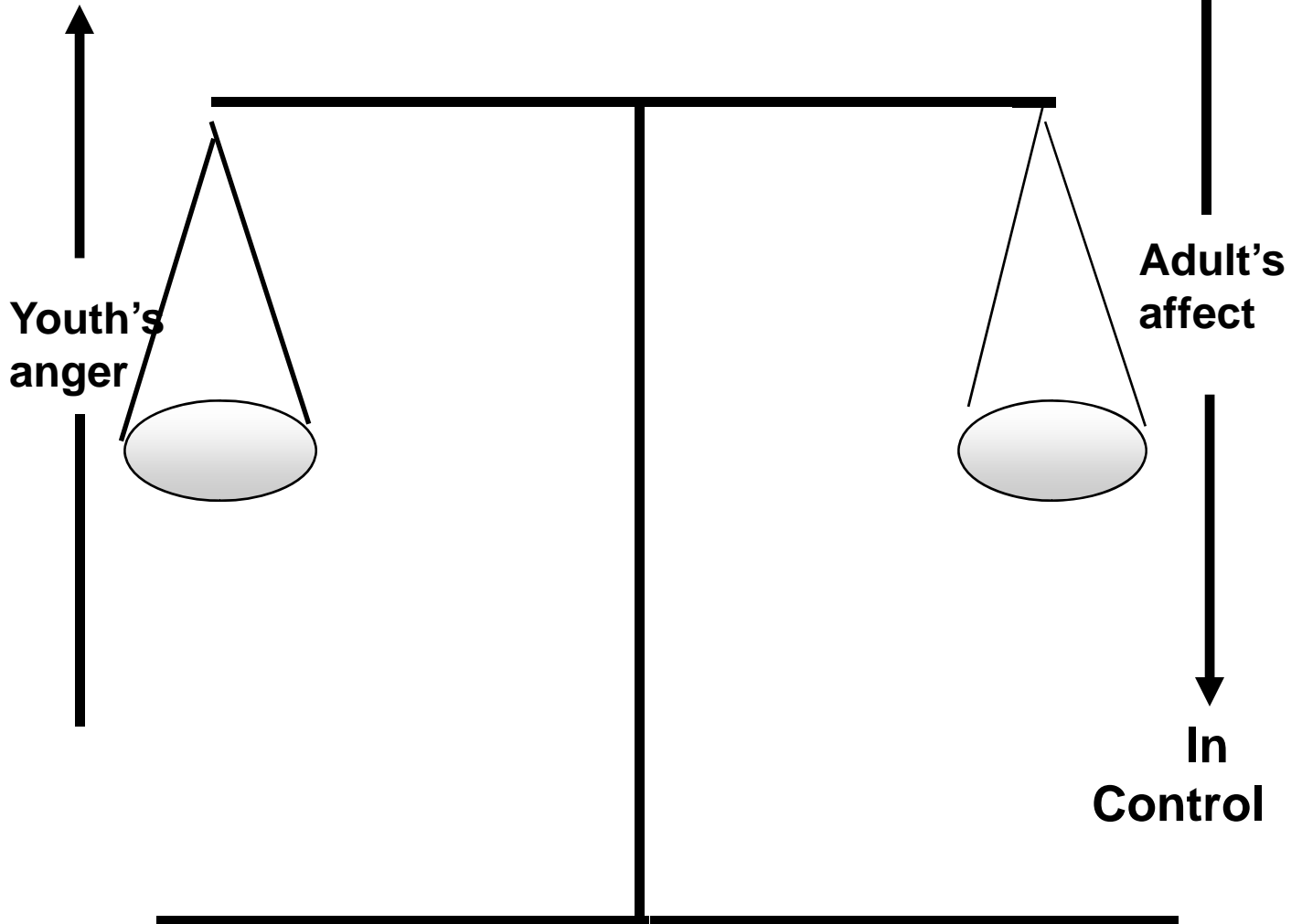
Self esteem is
fragile even when
It's good!

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

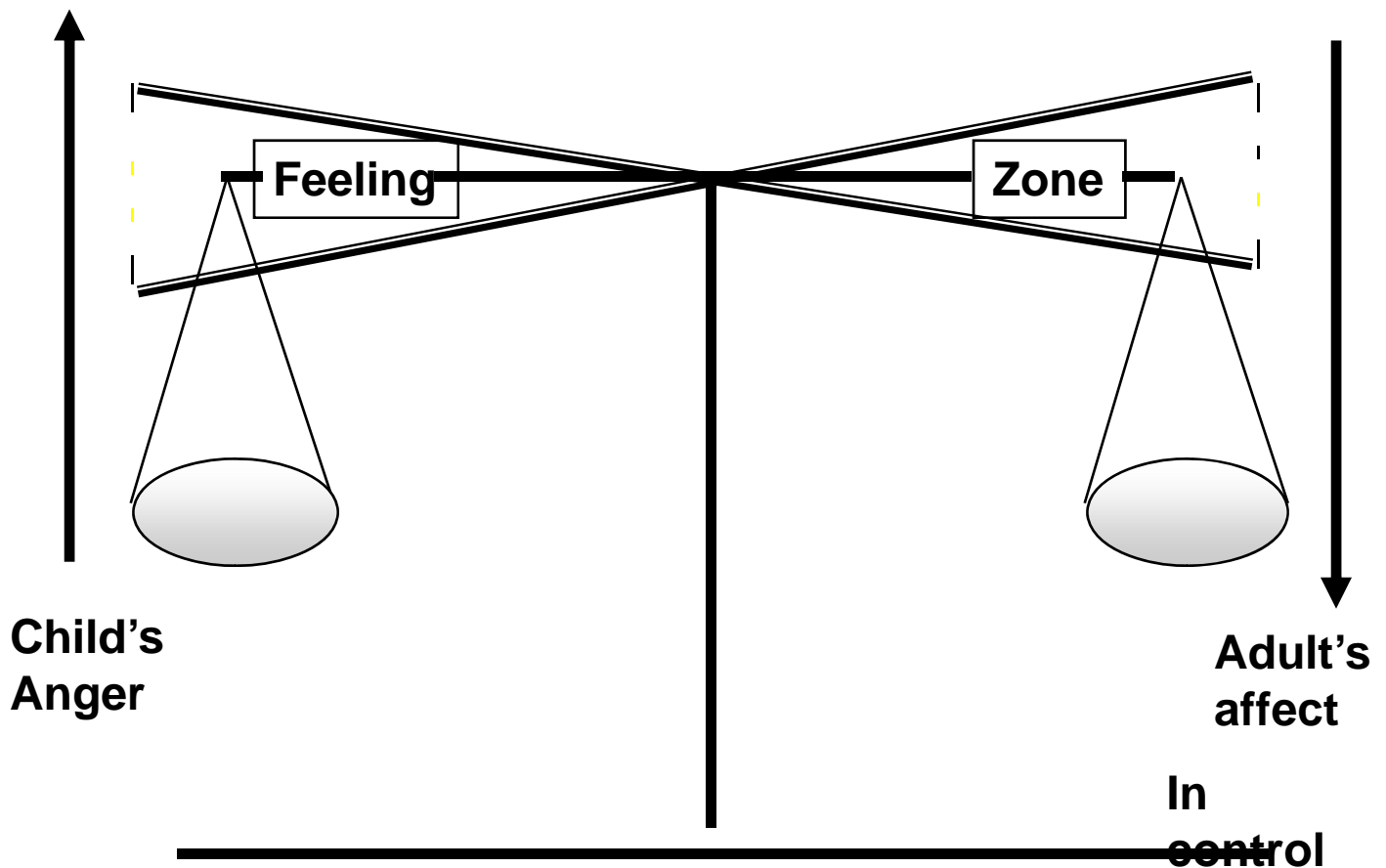


Key: Establish inverse relationship

As they get louder, you become more quiet

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 really upset about the choice you just made.”

“Mary, I’m angry about that...”

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

Content vs. Message



“You won’t be around next week?”

2 weeks later...



“*You...* won’t be around next week.”

Use “I” or “We” instead of “You” and start requests with “Please” and finish with “Thank you.” Proper language sends supportive messages.

Body Messages



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

NBD = No Big Deal!

VS.

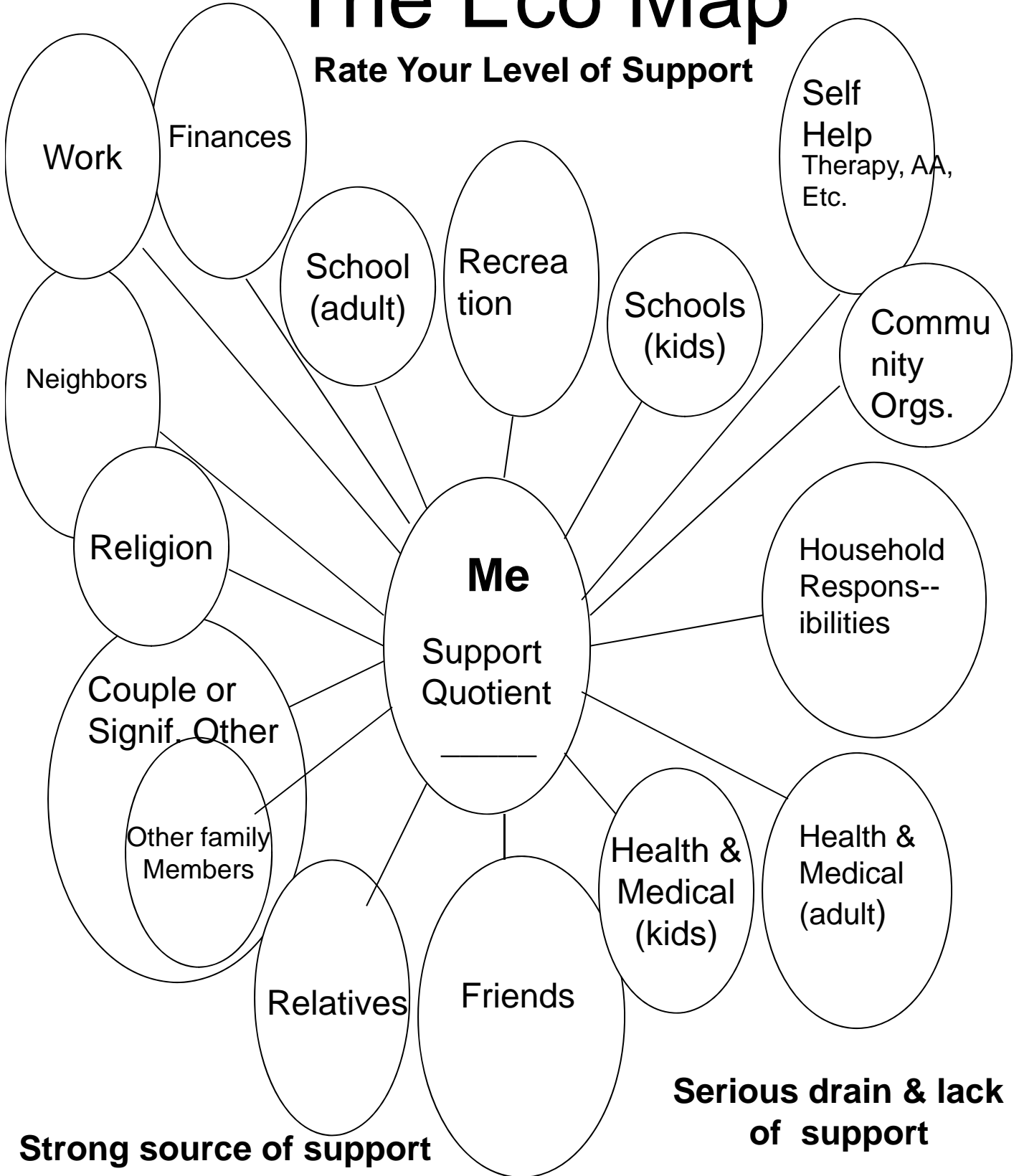
“You need to get it done now!”

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



The Eco Map

Rate Your Level of Support



Strong source of support

Serious drain & lack of support

+3

The Support Continuum

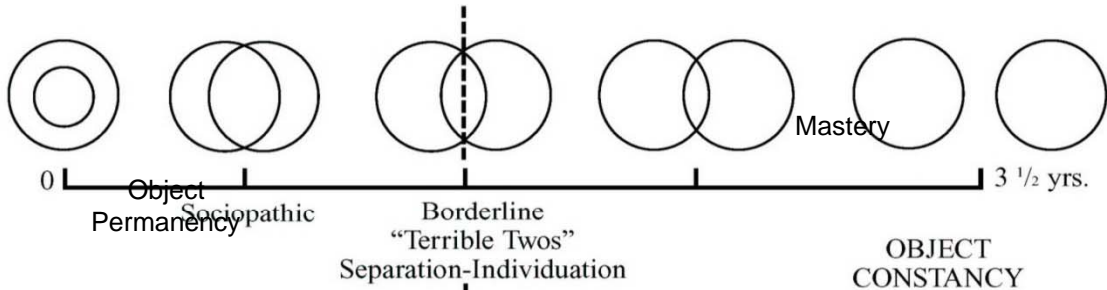
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THE HOLDING ENVIRONMENT

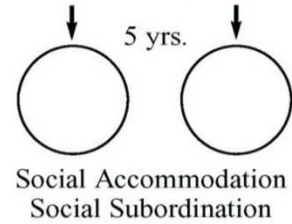
"A Total Environment Provision"

TASK: "good enough parenting"

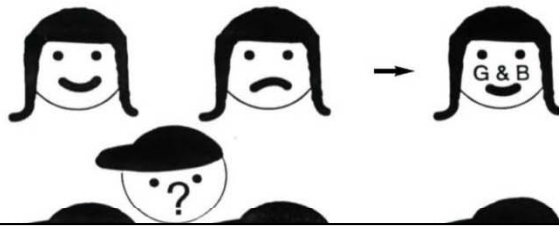


SPLITTING MECHANISM
Good mother/Bad mother

OBJECT
CONSTANCY
cohesive self
sense of self

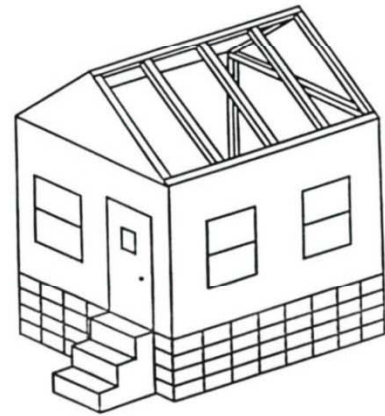


TASK:
merge the good
and bad introjects



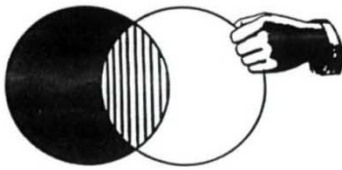
13-17 years old = Second Phase of Separation-Individuation
In other words: "I'm moving on. I'm separating from my parents. I'm thinking about:

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

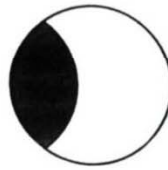


GOAL:
Filling in the emptiness

Effect of Separation



FILLERS VS. TALKERS
DEFICITS VS. CONFLICT



Core Verbal Interventions

Supportive Interventions

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

Repeating or Paraphrasing w/qualifiers

Youth: "I hate that guy!"

Parent: "You're saying that you're pretty upset with him *right now*." (Use qualifiers: yet, at the moment, right now, etc.)

Feelings Update

"How do you feel about that?"

Sandwich Approach

"You made a bad decision to knock over the plant, but I'm *really pleased* about how you walked away from the area."

Praise and Encouragement

"Way to go!" "That was fantastic!" "I like the vocabulary you selected" (praising the action versus the child)

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 every parent let his/her 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."

Explorative Responses (psychological)

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

Explorative Responses (historical)

"Have you ever completed such a difficult assignment?"

"Have you ever got this angry and not verbally lashed out?"

Explorative (reflective)

"Is that behavior working for you?"

Plan Making

"Can we make a plan to handle this situation better next time?"

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 child or youth 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 child 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? 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 individuals should hear four positive comments for every one negative.

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.

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

Practice progressive discipline

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 treatment climate.

Whenever possible, and for more serious behaviors, try and let the youth or group decide the appropriate consequence(s).

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

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 youth who swears is allowed to swear one-on-one with an adult in a private location).

Humor

Non-verbal interventions (e.g. Hand signals, lights out, circulating around the room, etc.)

Use the power of a group

Channel (e.g. Have an energetic kid do something physical)

Hold an impromptu meeting

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

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 children and youth behave inappropriately:

“John, I’d like you to stay in the kitchen until dinner.”

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

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

Re-Doing

Youth 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 living room and try walking here again...s-l-o-w-l-y.”

“Could you please try and redo this 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 youth is not responding to supportive interventions, a parent – 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 parent, for instance, could ask a disruptive youth to join her outside the kitchen for a minute. Oftentimes, by giving a kid such one-to-one 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.

Parent: “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 parent is becoming angry with a child or more, the other parent should be empowered to step in and take over for the person.

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. 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, going off-grounds, or missing an activity, is generally a *delayed consequence* and should only be used for more serious behaviors or when minor behaviors become problematically repetitive.

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

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 youth (or group) that has offended *repair* the damage (within herself, as well). Examples:

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.

A youth is teasing a sibling:

Reparation: Require the youth to do something nice for the sibling.

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

Parent: “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 this place.

You took something away...now give something back

Whenever possible let the youth or group decide the consequence

Breaks (Time-Out)

Children and youth 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 go to your room for a short *break*, thanks.”

Grounding, Restricting, & Taking Things Away

Key tips:

Don't take things away from a child unless what you are taking away is the *source* of the problem.

For example:

You take a radio away because you have repeatedly warned the child about it being played too loud.

When grounding a youth over a specific behavior - remember - the child will most likely repeat the behavior (soon). If you make the original grounding for too long a time (such as a week), what will you do if the child exhibits the same behavior tomorrow?

Groundings, restrictions, etc. should follow a *progression* (i.e., the first time the child does X, he is grounded to the house for X amount of time. The next time he does X, he is grounded for XX amount of time, etc.

Practice: Progressive Discipline and empower the youth to help make these decisions