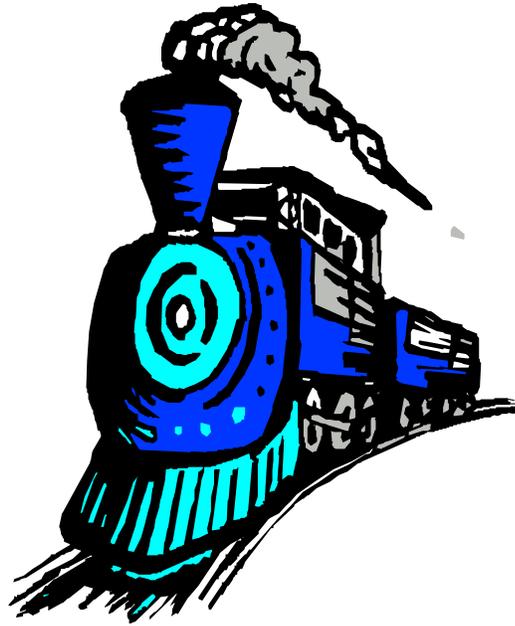


The Glass Ain' t Half Full;
Heck it' s Overflowing!



Understanding and Responding to Kids
with Emotional & Behavioral Challenges
Using a Positive, Trauma-informed,
Strength-Based Approach

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The Power of a Positive, Trauma-Informed, Strength-Based Approach

What is it?: An emerging approach to guiding children & youth 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 behavior change.

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

Professionals & parents maximize the potential of the children they serve when they convey an attitude to each and every one that says: *I believe in all of you. I know you will succeed this year and beyond, and I am absolutely thrilled to be part of your life.*

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

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; youth care professionals 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!

"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.

Twenty years from now, the children you currently guide won't remember much of what you said to them, but they'll all recall how you made them feel.

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.

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. 15

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.

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)

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.

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, wings of shame, wings of humiliation in the lower regions of their brains. And they can’t afford to include 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 venture into (utilize) the higher regions of their brains – enhancing decision making, success and happiness.



The (survival) brain of a traumatized individual

The Power of Connecting!

“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

“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

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

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 and the big problems diminish: *Broken Window Theory*

“How are you?” “Fantastic!” “All the better for seeing you!” “I'm living the dream, and you?”

Children and youth with post traumatic stress disorder – traumatized children – have been neurologically rewired to shut down (i.e. become protective) when confronted by an adult who approaches too fast, too high, and/or with a stern or angry expression. Such approaches will prompt fear, flight, or fight reactions. Such children are 24/7 hyper-vigilant to environmental cues.

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; youth care professionals save lives.

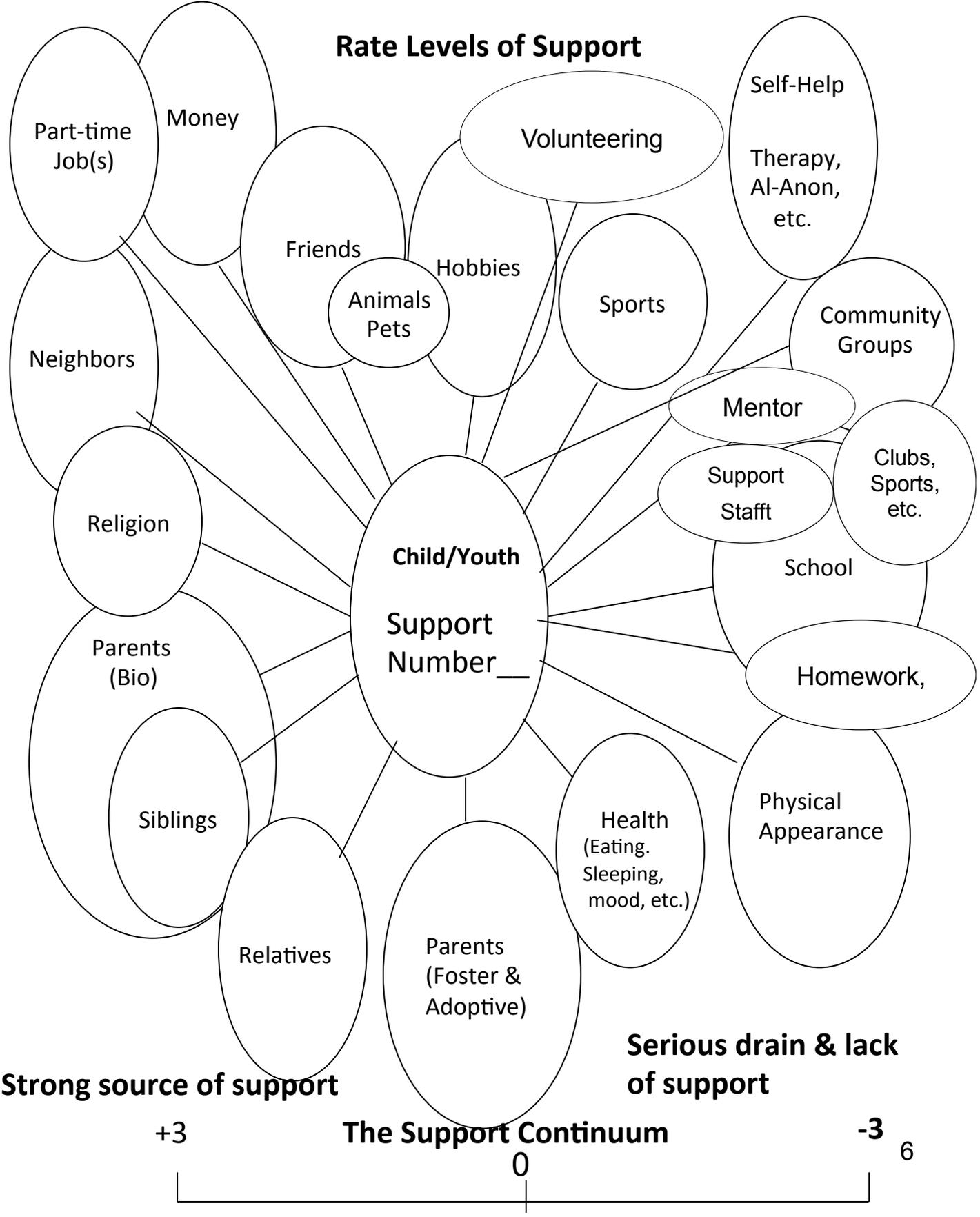
Attitude is a choice!

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!

Hope is Humanity's Fuel

The Connections Map - Building & Maintaining Support

Rate Levels of 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 child ...the child 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

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

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 youth 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 youth 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 youth who acts in an obnoxious manner:

R: You're good at pushing people away. And maybe that's kept you safe. But the problem is: You're a great kid and I'm a great staff member and if you keep pushing like this – choosing to act in what some people might call an “obnoxious” manner:...we'll never get to see how truly great you are, and you'll never learn that some of us are okay and can be trusted.

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 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 youth who frequently swears:

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

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.
- Smart means _____

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?

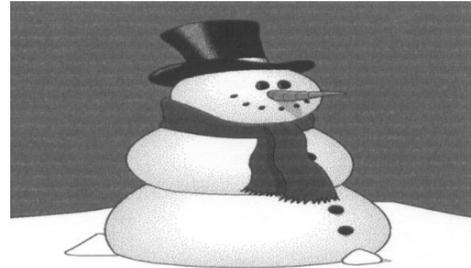
Providing Hope & Possibility Through Metaphors & Positive Predicting

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 2016 Edition



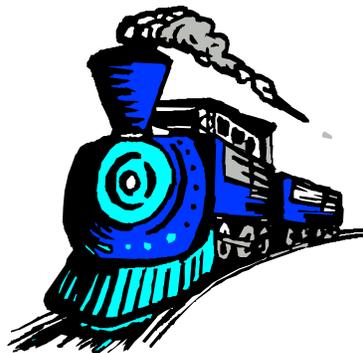
“Cars improve every year. People get better every day. You’ re the 2016 Steve. You don’ t over-heat as much as the 2015 Steve...have a sleeker design, follow the road signs better. Don’ t give me this bull: ‘Same old me.’ You get better every day, man... wiser, more experienced, more mature.”

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!¹²

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.



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Joshua
Future
Engineer

The Arizona Board of Regents
by virtue of the authority vested in it by law and
on recommendation of the University Faculty does hereby confer on
Joshua M. Hatsey
who has satisfactorily completed the Studies prescribed therefore
the Degree of
Bachelor of Science
Computer Science
in the
Ira A. Fulton School of Engineering
with all the Rights, Privileges and Honors thereto appertaining
this fifth day of August, two thousand and five.

John N. Rupp
Governor of Arizona



Michael Crow
President of the University

Suggestion: Create business cards for the students 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?

Strength-Based Practice

SB practice is powerful combination of the strength-building model and solution-focused therapy

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*

P. 57 “Lacking the words to communicate their pain, they may express feelings of vulnerability by becoming aggressive or feigning disinterest in academic success *because they believe they cannot succeed.*”

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.

Activities & Self Esteem Building

To help youth 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.

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 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



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

Every kid needs his/her own special niche!

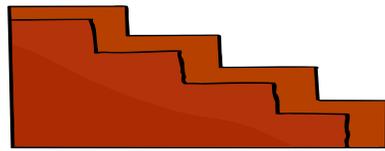
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Call parents with good news....keep a scrapbook....hang pictures, etc.

Helping Inflexible/Explosive Children & Youth

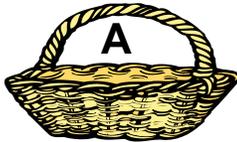
Characteristics of Such Kids:

- 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

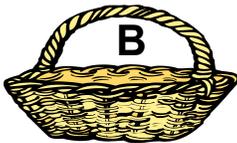


How to Help:

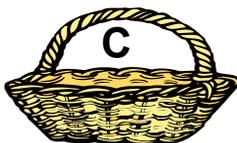
- Create *user-friendly* environments to *clear the smoke* (take the air out of the balloon)
- Determine which behaviors need to be addressed and how best to respond. Categorize behaviors and responses into one of three baskets:
A = Non-negotiable B = Compromise & Negotiation C = Ignore
- As kids *meltdown* 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

Strength-Based Practice: Principles

Seeing is Believing

Unconditional support
(Non-contingent reinforcement)

If you visit the home of family that has a toddler or two what do you see everywhere? Toys. Did the children need to earn them? No. They were offered unconditionally. This act of unconditional love and kindness strengthens bonds, facilitates object constancy (my parents are always there for me), and enhances self-image (“I’m someone of value!”)

vs.

Believing is Seeing

Standard behavior management
(If I do well, I am rewarded. If I don’t, I am not)

Seeing is believing produces **Optimism** – which feeds possibility, and motivates coping and adaptive behavior, even in the face of difficult odds

Seeing is Believing

“Butch, you D’ a man! We’re excited that you’re here!”



NOT: *Believing is Seeing!*

“We’ll treat you nicely once you put that slingshot down, lose some weight, and get rid of that ridiculous hat!”

Seeing is believing examples:

Have lunch with a struggling youth; Do something fun with a group that is struggling; bring in a special snack; give the group extra recreation time even if they haven’t earned it. “You don’t always have to behave great for me to treat you great. I love working with you guys and I care about you –regardless of your behavior. Of course, I like good choices and fine acting – but I’m behind you either way.”

Behavior Modification: Strategically Using Incentive Plans

- 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. Ask for *their* help in getting the child back on track.
- Slowly raise expectations for incentives – but don't act too fast.
- In general, the more troubled a kid appears, the greater the frequency he/she 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:

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

Ideally, the best pay-off for a child or youth 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.

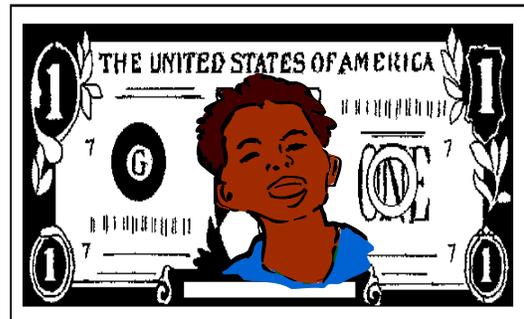
If material items need to be used as incentives, here are some options:

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

The Medium of Exchange

Younger -and sometimes - older kids 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

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 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? 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) based on two key factors: severity and frequency

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, explore historically, ask youth to state the rule, etc.)

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.)

Selective ignoring

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, would you please sit next to me, thanks?”

“Carla, we're going to walk side-by-side to the doctor's office.”

“Billy, you will need to stay in sight of one of us until dinner, and then we'll talk.”

Other option: Move the higher functioning kids away from where a challenging kids is having difficulties

When a youth begins to improve his behavior, he can earn the incentive of gaining more freedom, with respect to his 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

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, an adult – 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.

An adult, 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.

Foster 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 foster parent is becoming angry with a youth or group, the other parent should be empowered to step in and take over for the person. Some homes and 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. 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 throws food in the kitchen:

Reparation: Require the youth to help out preparing and cleaning up after meals.

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

Foster 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)

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*, thanks?”

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

“Sara, would you please take *break*, thanks. You can choose where to do it.”

There are two forms of Breaks: **Set Amounts** and **Open Ended**

Set Amounts = Established time-out lengths and progressions

Example: 2 minutes > refusal > loss of points > refusal > contextual decision > completion of original 5 minutes > processing.

Open Ended = No set amounts of time for breaks

Examples: “Could you please go sit on the couch for a while and chill out.” > refusal
> “The longer it takes you to move, the less likely it becomes for you to get involved with the activities coming up.”

2 warnings (i.e. supportive interventions) > “Could you please take a break. Please return when you think you are ready to calmly join the group.”

2 warnings (i.e. supportive interventions) > “Could you please take some space? I’ll come and talk to you when you are sitting quietly.”

Where are Breaks Conducted?

Best place: A non-stimulating area; a natural part of the room. You don’t necessarily have to have specific time out areas. Give kids a choice about where to take their break.

How are Breaks Conducted?

Youth should always be allowed to sit comfortably to complete breaks. A break should be conducted in a quiet and respectful manner. The youth does not have to be facing the corner or wall

Extended Separation (i.e. a Breaks longer than one hour)

For violent and ultra-serious behavior it is often helpful to have the youth who has offended to be away from the group for an extended period of time to regroup and work through the issue. During extended separations youth should not be bored and uncomfortable. It is not a punishment.

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

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.
- Recollect if they have been in similar situations and acted more appropriately?
If yes, what skills did they use?

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 the milieu (i.e. review expectations, logistics, etc.

Strength-Based Tools Checklist

Unflinching Positive Attitude																			
Reframing Understand>Reframe>Squeeze																			
Inspirational Metaphors: Poker, Melting Snowball, Roadblock, Train, Car (“We get better every Day.”)																			
Solution-Focused Questions: Explorative Historical, Repeating w/ Qualifiers, When & Will, Scaling Questions, Identifying In-Between Change, Amplifying Change Using Speculation, Exception Questions, Changing Perspective Questions																			
Provide Multiple Opportunities for Individual & Group Success & Trumpet Successes																			
Create a “User-Friendly” Environment for Cognitively Inflexible Young People. Use the A,B,C, baskets																			
Respect & Explore Cultural Diversity																			
The Millimeter Acknowledgement																			
Honoring Hellos & Goodbyes																			
Being Family Friendly																			
Using Seeing is Believing vs. Believing is Seeing (Standard Behavior Man.)																			

