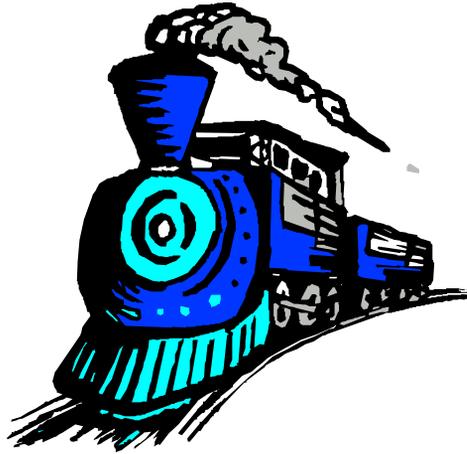


# No Such Thing As a Bad Kid



Understanding and Responding to Students with  
Emotional & Behavioral Challenges Using Positive  
Strength-Based Theories and Techniques  
&  
Creating a Positive, Strength-Based Culture in Our  
Classrooms and School

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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 behavior change.

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

Educators maximize the potential of the students 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.

“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.

Three Universal Truths from Kids at Hope (KidsatHope.com), 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; Community and Service; Hobbies and Recreation.

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

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 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 Core* 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

*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

*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.*

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

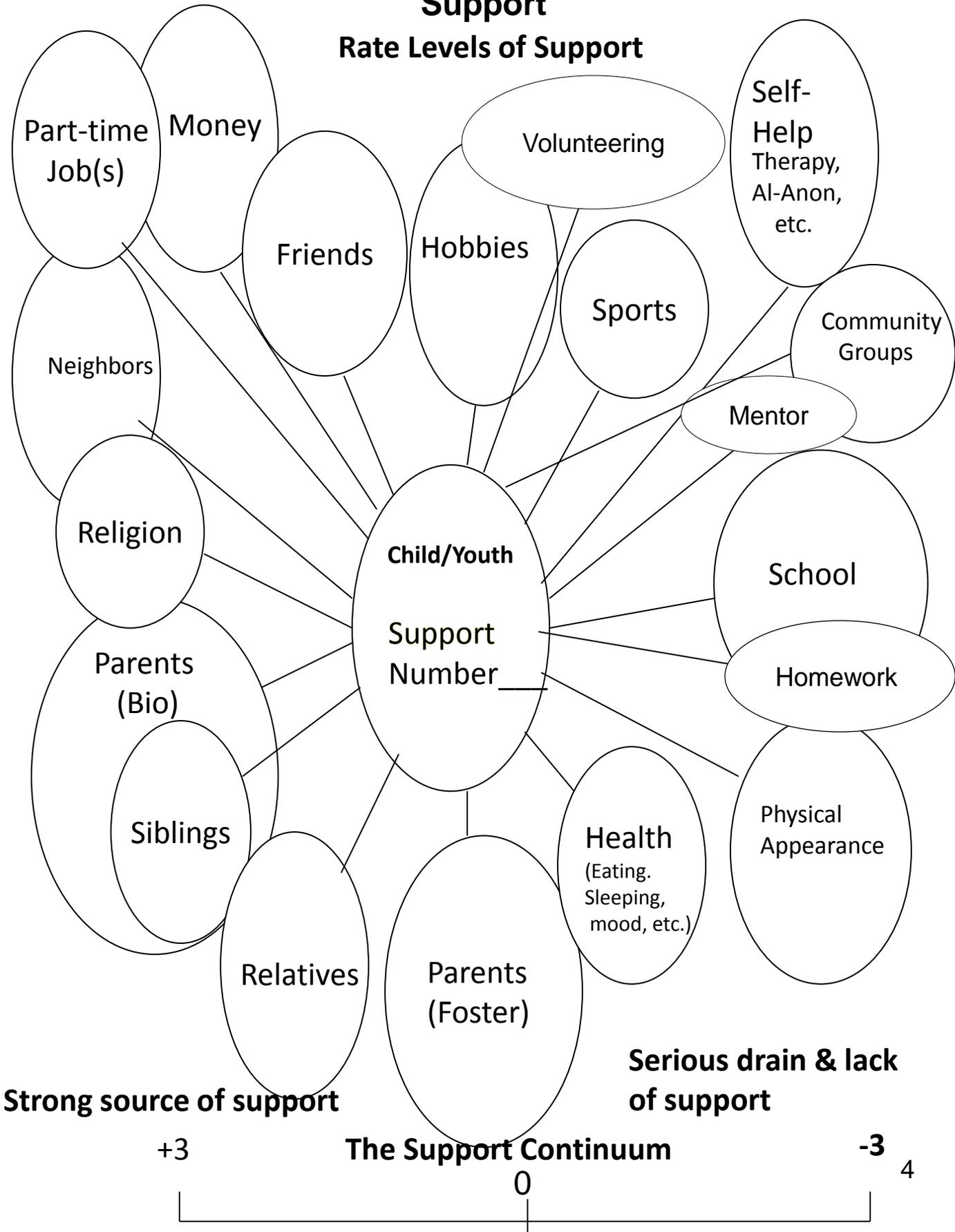
Children and youth with post traumatic stress disorder – traumatized children – have been neurologically rewired to shut down (i.e. become protective) when confronted by an adult who approaches too fast, too high, and/or with a stern or angry expression. Such approaches will prompt fear, flight, or fight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

# The Connections Map - Building & Maintaining Support

## Rate Levels of Support



## 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 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

### Strategies for Motivating At-Risk Students

- Greet each student with a smile
- Send positive notes home
- Call a student’s home and/or program after a good day or accomplishment
- Get to know the strengths and interests of each of your students. Take an interest in these strengths
- Use self-deprecating humor (e.g. Don’t look at me if the 49ers lose on Sunday!...and then let them give you a hard time after a loss.)
- Play a game (e.g. basketball, cards, computer, etc.) – try, but lose on purpose and pretend to be ticked off: “Don’t tell anyone that you beat me!”
- Ask their advice whenever possible (i.e. Empower!)
- Regularly post their work on a wall for all to see. Periodically celebrate successes.
- Let them know on a regular basis how much you enjoy working with them.
- Unexpectedly celebrate good days and/or accomplishments
- Keep things neat (Sends the message that you take the job seriously)
- Use humor liberally. Play music during free time and/or weave it into the content.
- Frequently talk about their future in positive terms.



## 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.”

*The Gus Chronicles, Appelstein, 1994*

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](http://www.massadvocates.org)

## Understanding and Decoding Problem Behavior

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

<b>Pejorative Label</b>	<b>Positive, Hope-Based Reframe</b>
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

### **Responding to Misbehavior:**

Understand (behavior is always a message) > Reframe > Squeeze

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

Avoid creating *stereotype myths* (entrenched, negative self-perceptions that inhibit achievement possibilities). "Why try I'm a *lousy* student."

## Reframing

Reframing involves taking a seemingly negative behavior and "reframing" it in a positive way. For example, a youth who appears hyperactive could be told: "Billy, you have a lot of energy. You can probably do more things in an hour than most of us can. I wish I could move like you."

Try and reframe the following behaviors exhibited by troubled students.  
Write down the reframe you might utilize:

1. A student who is always looking for attention:
2. A student who won't talk about his/her feelings:
3. A student who acts rudely:
4. A student who makes funny noises at the wrong time:
5. A student who acts in a stubborn manner:
6. A student who tattles:
7. A student who frequently swears:
8. A student who's bossy with peers:

## Reframing II

1. A student 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 student 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 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 student 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 student 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 student 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. 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 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 your.”



“Learning is my ticket to a great Life!”

## 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...”  
“When we recover the onside kick....”



## 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.”

## The 2014 Edition



“Cars improve every year. People get better every day. You’re the 2014 Steven. You don’t over-heat as much as the 2013 Steven...have a sleeker design, follow the road signs better. Don’t give me this bull: ‘Same old me.’ You get better every day...wiser, more experienced, more mature.

## Strength-Based Practice

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

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 student – not “believing is seeing”  
(Unconditional support – “Seeing is Believing”)              (Standard Behavior Man.)

...which produces **Optimism** – *which feeds possibility, and motivates coping and adaptive behavior, even in the face of difficult odds. Hope is humanity’s fuel.*

### The Goal:

*Change* rather than *insight* and *awareness*

### The Work:

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

Devoted to helping students *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.

## Solution-Focused Questions

A model of questions that help students recognize and build upon inherent strengths. It's the language of hope and possibility.

### **Explorative Historical:**

"I can't do this assignment! It's too hard!"

"How many difficult assignments have you been given that made you nervous just like this one? Quite a few, right. And how many did you get done? Just about all of them, right? So what are the odds you'll get this one done? Go back to any one of the difficult assignments you received – that you did well on. How did you get it done? Did you ask for help? Break it down? So, I guess you could do that this time, eh?"

"I'll never make it at that new school!"

"How many kids in Canada, a year ago, where in your same shoes...nervous about attending a new school? How many of them adjusted okay and are doing well today? So if most of them are doing okay, why can't you?"

### **Qualifiers:**

"I hate this class!" > "So you're saying you're really upset with this class *right now*."

### **Past Tense:**

"I'm stupid!" > "So you haven't been feeling real smart lately."

### **When & Will:**

"I'll never pass this class!" > "When you do, what will it be like?"

### **Scaling Questions:**

"On a scale of one-to-ten, ten being that you'll make lots of friends at the new school – zero, you won't make any...what number are you at now. When it's higher in a month, how will you feel?"

### **Identifying In-Between Change**

"What will be the first sign that you've turned the corner."

### **Amplifying Change Using Speculation**

"You've had some great weeks. Do you think the reason you're doing so well has something to do with you figuring out that doing better gets you more of what you want?"

Or: "You're getting older and more mature...Perhaps you've outgrown some of your younger-type behaviors?"

### **Changing Perspective Question:**

"How come you're not doing worse?"

Visit: [www.bobbertolino.com](http://www.bobbertolino.com)

### **Exception questions:**

"Have there been times recently when the problem did not occur?"

## Activities & Self Esteem Building

(Doing vs. Understanding)

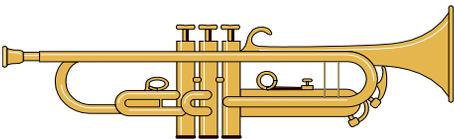
To help students enhance self esteem, provide tasks and activities that offer a:

### Universal Opportunity for Individual Success

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."

#### Examples:

- Modify or devise sporting endeavors that facilitate success, such as a basketball game where the ball has to be passed three times before it can be shot.
  - Academic tasks they understand and can accomplish
  - Physical fitness pursuits (e.g. create a lap chart for walking/running)
  - Art work that is doable; music & dance
  - Special chores and/or work opportunities (e.g. helping in the office, cafeteria, with the maintenance staff)
  - Games, often of chance, they can all win
  - Helping or mentoring younger kids or those less fortunate
  - Community projects
  - Volunteering (e.g. mentoring a younger student)
  - Animal care
- Every student needs his/her own special niche!*



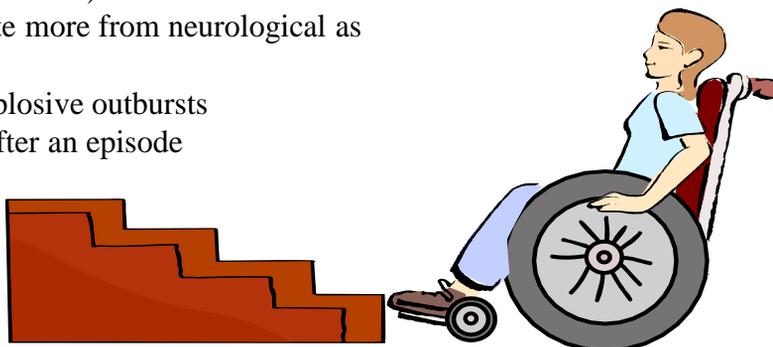
### *Trumpet Success*

- Call home or mail a congratulatory postcard when a challenging student has a good day.
- 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:

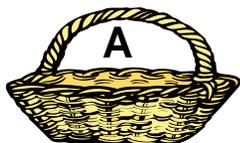
- Create *user-friendly* environments to *clear the smoke* (take the air out of the balloon)
- Determine which behaviors need to be addressed and how best to respond. Categorize behaviors and responses into one of three baskets:

A = Non-negotiable

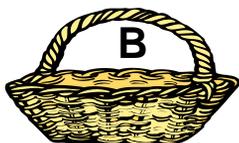
B = Compromise & Negotiation

C = Ignore

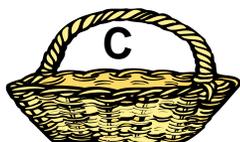
- As kids *meltdown* and approach *vapor lock*, immediately *distract*, *empathize*, and offer aid. Help them to downshift into a calmer state (i.e. make the *cognitive shift*).



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



*B = Room for compromise & negotiation*



*C = Ignore*

## Strength-Based Practice: Principles

**Seeing is Believing**  
= Unconditional support

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!*

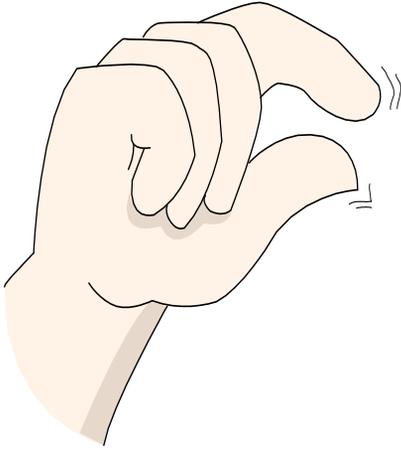
“We’ll treat you nicely once you put that slingshot down, lose some weight, and get rid of that ridiculous hat!”

#### **Seeing is believing examples:**

Have lunch with a troubling student; 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.*”

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

## The Millimeter Acknowledgement



Admitting guilt is very difficult for some kids, especially trauma victims. Here's an effective approach to helping kids accept more responsibility:

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

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

## Honoring Hellos and Goodbyes

*SB goal: Change rather than insight and awareness*

Yet, behavior is always a message, and oftentimes the message of misbehavior can be rooted in an unresolved or faulty hello or goodbye.

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

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

### Examples:

Goodbye to: Previous relationship(s)

Hello to: New ones

Goodbye to: Home

Hello to: School

**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.



Life and a classroom is a series of hellos and goodbyes. Take them all seriously – from daily transitions to the loss of a family or staff member. Older teenagers often struggle with saying goodbye to the childhood they wish they had enjoyed.

## Working with Families



### Key Principles, Terms and Concepts

“The more the relationship between families and the school is a Real partnership, the more student achievement increases. When Schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, Students make greater gains. When families are engaged in positive ways, rather than labeled as problems, schools can be transformed from places where only certain students prosper to one where all children do well.” Excerpt from Into, p.1, *Beyond the Bake Sale*

School personnel and parents form *Interlocking Partnerships*

Teachers s view parents as *Collaborators*

Family work is *Cultural rather than Compartmental\**

\* All school personnel can reach out and make a difference with a family

### 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. Create parent centers for collaborative learning and support
3. Empowerment
  - Actively seek their advice when there are important issues/questions regarding their children
4. Graduation

## What is a Family School Partnership Supposed to Look Like?

Rate how your school measures up in this area:

1 = Never      3 = At times      5 = Most definitely

1. Home visits are made to every new student\_\_\_\_\_
2. Home visits are often made to the home of a struggling student\_\_\_\_\_
3. Activities honor families' contributions\_\_\_\_\_
4. Building is open to community use and social services are available to families\_\_\_\_\_
5. Most family activities connect to what children are learning\_\_\_\_\_
6. School staff, families, and community members share recreational time together (e.g. holiday party, bingo, movie night, etc.)\_\_\_\_\_
7. Parents and teachers look at student work and test results together\_\_\_\_\_
8. Community groups offer tutoring and homework programs at the school\_\_\_\_\_
9. Students' work goes home every week, with a scoring guide\_\_\_\_\_
10. Translators are readily available\_\_\_\_\_
11. Teachers use books and materials about families' cultures\_\_\_\_\_
12. PTA includes all families\_\_\_\_\_
13. Local groups help staff reach parents\_\_\_\_\_
14. There is a clear, open process for resolving problems\_\_\_\_\_
15. Teachers contact families each month to discuss student progress\_\_\_\_\_
16. Student-led parent-teacher conferences are held three times a year for thirty minutes\_\_\_\_\_
17. Parents and teachers research issues such as prejudice and tracking\_\_\_\_\_
18. School personnel assist families in seeking essential social, economic, medical and therapeutic resources\_\_\_\_\_
19. Parents can use the school's phone, copier, fax, and computers\_\_\_\_\_ \
20. Staff work with local organizers to improve the school and neighborhood\_\_\_\_\_

## Respecting Roots & Cultural Diversity

The search for and *healing identification* with ancestors, people of the same race, color, gender, and/or religion. People who INSPIRE and provide HOPE!



Franklin D. Roosevelt



Big Papi  
David Ortiz



Jennifer Lopez



Martin Luther King



Cesar Chavez



Lebron James

### Explore: Customs, Traditions, Holidays, & History.

- Have youth explore their roots. Help them to learn about and hang pictures of inspiring heroes.
- Read stories aloud of inspiring historical (or current) figures who overcame great odds to make a difference.
- Bring in foods, art, and other items that are endemic to a particular culture. Attend a concert. Bring in a movie, etc.

Other ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

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SB Principle: Big problems don't always require big efforts for solutions

## **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...easy as 1-2-3! NBD...easier than 1-2-3! NO BIG DEAL!

Breathe in, breathe out...stay calm - no shout. Let it Go. 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! Here's some advice, talk real nice.

Stay in control, that's the goal. I can, I will, I gotta chill.

### **Anxiety**

Don't be in a hurry to worry.

### **Encouragement/Affirmations**

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

Learning is your (my) ticket to a good life. It's my turn to learn.

Done it before, will do it again. I'm great, just you wait!

I can make it if I choose. Only I can make me lose.

If it is to be, it's up to me!

If you lose hope, don't do dope!



**Use Bongos!**

### **Organization & Distractibility**

Inch by inch life's a cinch. Yard by yard life is hard.

Make a list, it will assist. Stay on track, Jack. Hocus, Pocus, Focus!

Like a King on a throne I can do it on my own. Step after step, that's the prep.

Don't move all over the place, sit and learn with a happy face.

No need to groan, I can start (do it) on my own. Sit and relax, learn to the max!

Here's the fact, don't distract. Little by little, play the fiddle.

### **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.

Think how they feel...that's the deal. Stop and think, don't be a dink.

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

Stay arms lengths away...today. It's wise to look folks in the eyes.

Always remember to say "thanks" and "please"...and cover the cheese!

Think about *you* thinking about *me*...it's as easy as 1,2, 3.

## Externalizing & Naming Negative Behaviors

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

Examples:

A student who needs to do things perfectly:

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

A student who is prone to behavior outbursts:

*“Get out of here Mr. Fitz!”*

A student who talks rudely:

*“Get lost Rudy! You’re nothing!”*

A student who argues incessantly:

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

A student who is reluctant to write:

*“Get out of town, Mr. No Write!”*

A student who skips school or is frequently tardy:

*“Are you going to let I.B. Truant/Tardy get you into trouble next week?”*

A student who is often provocative:

*“Why are you letting I.B. Provokin get you in trouble?”*



Create your own: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Try externalizing and naming to reinforce desired behaviors:

Examples:

*“Hey, you brought Mr. Flexible today. I like that. You’re going with the flo, bro!”*

*“Oh, Mr. Cool is here. I like that. No over heatin’ today!”*

*“Yes, Mrs. Ontime has entered the house!”*

# 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 students, keep charts in a private place. Be discreet!
- Award incentives in a private manner.
- If other students complain. "Why don't I get checks and rewards?" be honest with them, explain that every student is unique and that some have special needs. Ask for *their* help in getting the student back on track.
- Slowly raise expectations for incentives – but don't act too fast.
- In general, the more troubled a student appears, the greater the frequency he/she should be rated and rewarded. As students 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.

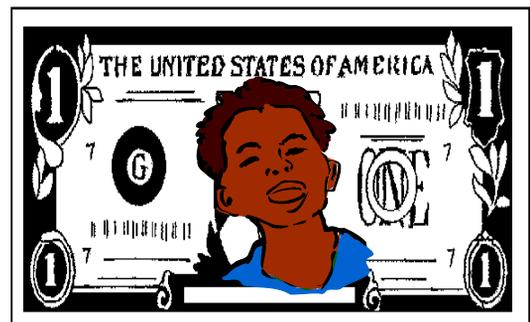
If material items need to be used as incentives, here are some options:

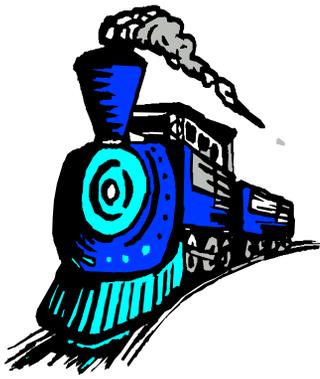
- Bus passes, iTune cards, pens and pencils, games, art supplies, puzzles, candy, gift certificates, money, food, cassettes, CDs, DVDs

## **The Medium of Exchange**

Younger -and sometimes - older 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
I. B. Truant and/or I.B Tardy stays away.						
Show each teacher respect. It will have the right effect.						

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Daily Tracking Form

Class	On time?		Prepared?		Homework Assigned?		Behavior			Teacher's Initials
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Excellent	Fair	Off-Track	
	<input type="checkbox"/>									
	<input type="checkbox"/>									
	<input type="checkbox"/>									
	<input type="checkbox"/>									
	<input type="checkbox"/>									
	<input type="checkbox"/>									

**Key for Behavior:**

**Excellent**

1. Consistently follows classroom rules.
2. Actively listens.
3. Volunteers in class discussions/activities.
4. Speaks respectfully to others.

**Fair**

1. Follows classroom rules most of the time.
2. Listens at least 75% of the time.
3. Participates when called upon.
4. Speaks respectfully to others some of the time.

**Off-Track**

1. Chooses not to follow classroom rules
2. Chooses not to listen to the teacher.
3. Chooses not to participate in class-room discussions/activities
4. Chooses not to be respectful to others.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Bills's Good Choices Plan

	Sit and Relax, Learn to the Max	Let it Go, Joe I Can you Know	Outside the Room Bring JOY, not Doom	
<b>Bonus Checks</b> ↓	Stays in room more often, takes breaks inside of class, focuses on work without involving others	Controls anger, make good decisions, respectful to kids and adults)	Good transitions, uses proper language at all times, trustworthy. Acts Properly in hallways and lunchroom.	<b>Daily Totals</b> ↓
<b>M*</b>	am			
<b>T</b>	pm			
<b>W</b>				
<b>TH</b>				
<b>F</b>				

✓ = Did some of my homework at home – 1 bonus point

✓ + = Completed all of my homework at home – 3 bonus pts

Total for week \_\_\_\_\_

Monday am

- 3 = Great choices in this area
- 2= Okay choices
- 1= A few good choices
- = Train off track

**Incentive:**

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

# Bill's Road to Reading

## Strength-Based Mission Statement

We believe there is no such thing as a bad kid or bad parent; just bad luck and bad choices.

We believe that all of our students possess core strengths that can be utilized to help them make good choices and be effective learners.

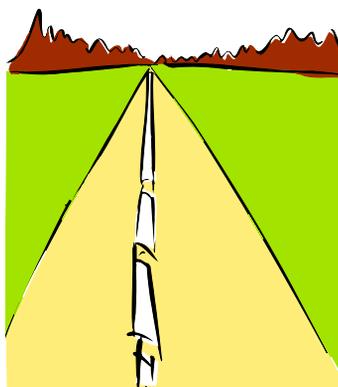
We strive to help students help themselves.

Our approach involves mutually identifying, developing, encouraging, practicing, and maximizing the inherent strengths in every student we welcome through our doors.

To accomplish our academic goals we establish a positive, upbeat, and safe environment that instills hope, provides multiple opportunities for success, and, at all times, adheres to the golden rule.

We believe a good life is all about making good choices.

Although we have deep respect and empathy for those students who have encountered difficult circumstances in their lives, our focus is on the present and the road ahead.



# 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 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

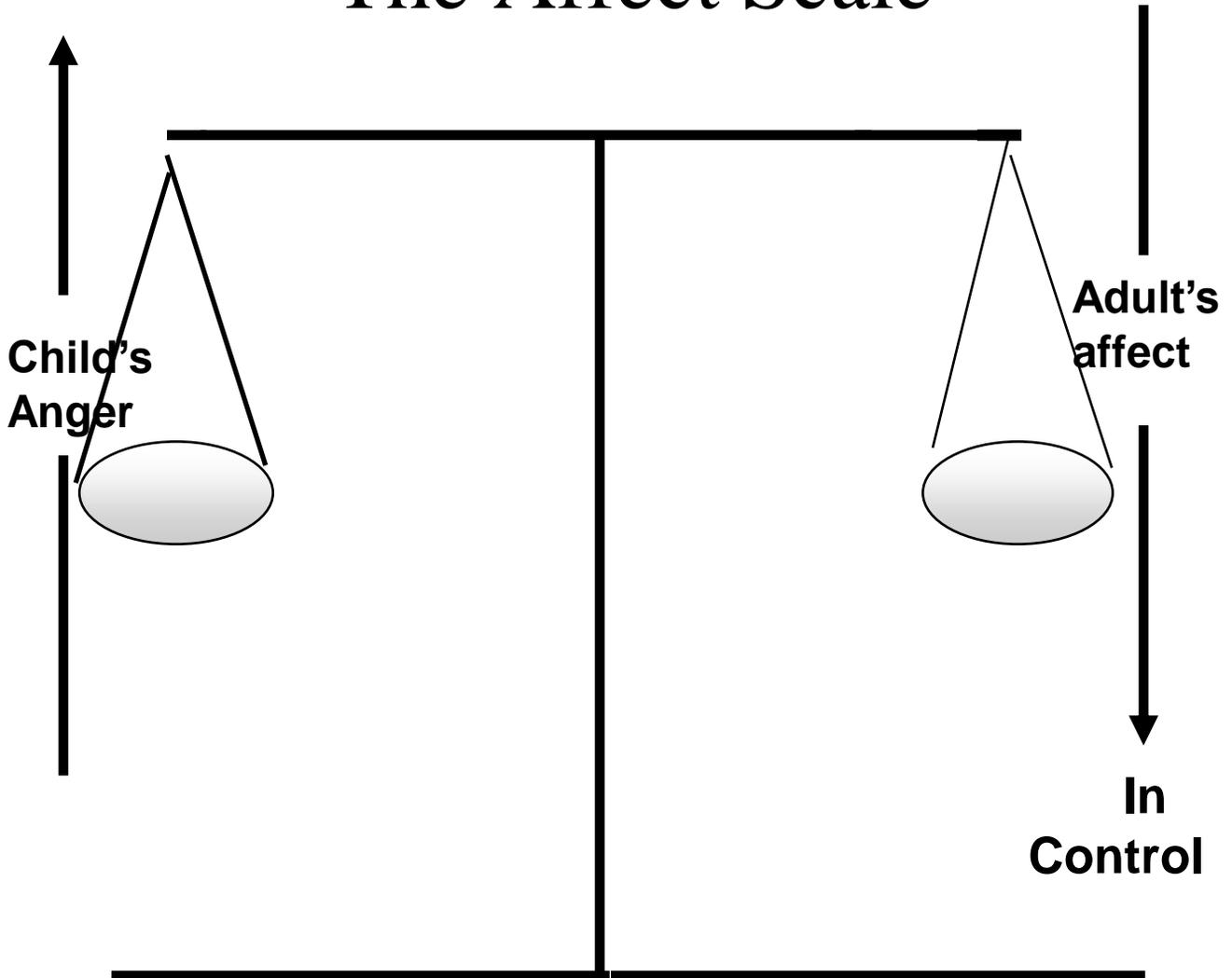
Self esteem is fragile even when it’s good!

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



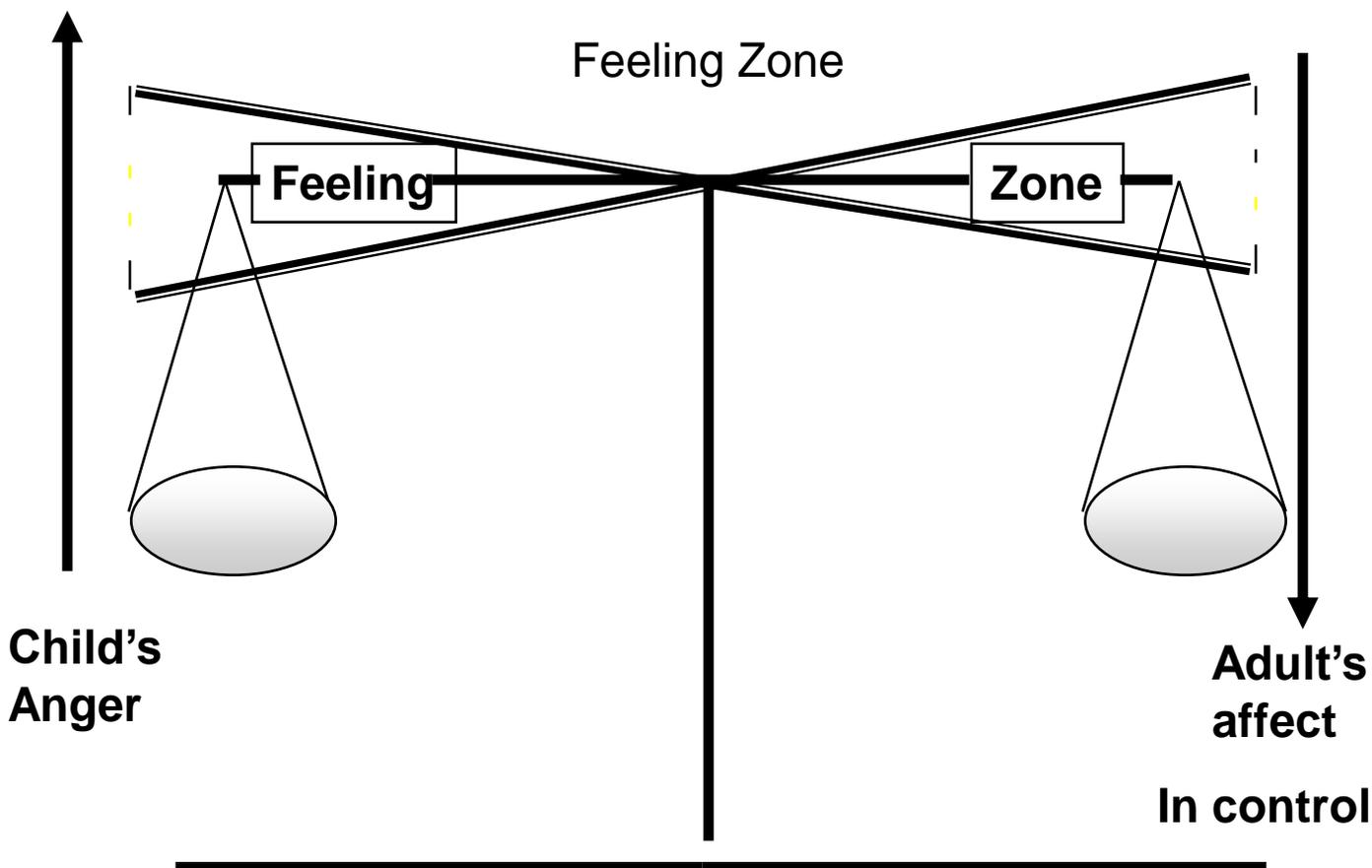
**Key: Establish inverse relationship**

*As they get louder, you become more quiet*

Safety is the only exception

# The Affect Scale

Loss of Control



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 student 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 students 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.”



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## Body Messages

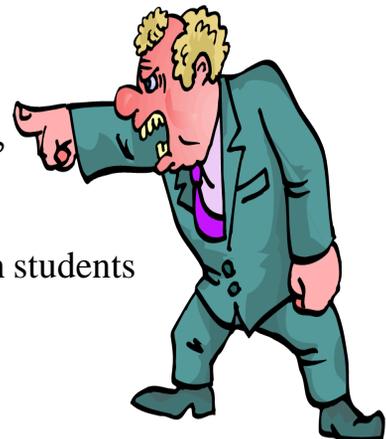
“C’mon dude...let’s get it done, and then we can boogey. NBD brother.”

NBD = No Big Deal!

**vs.**

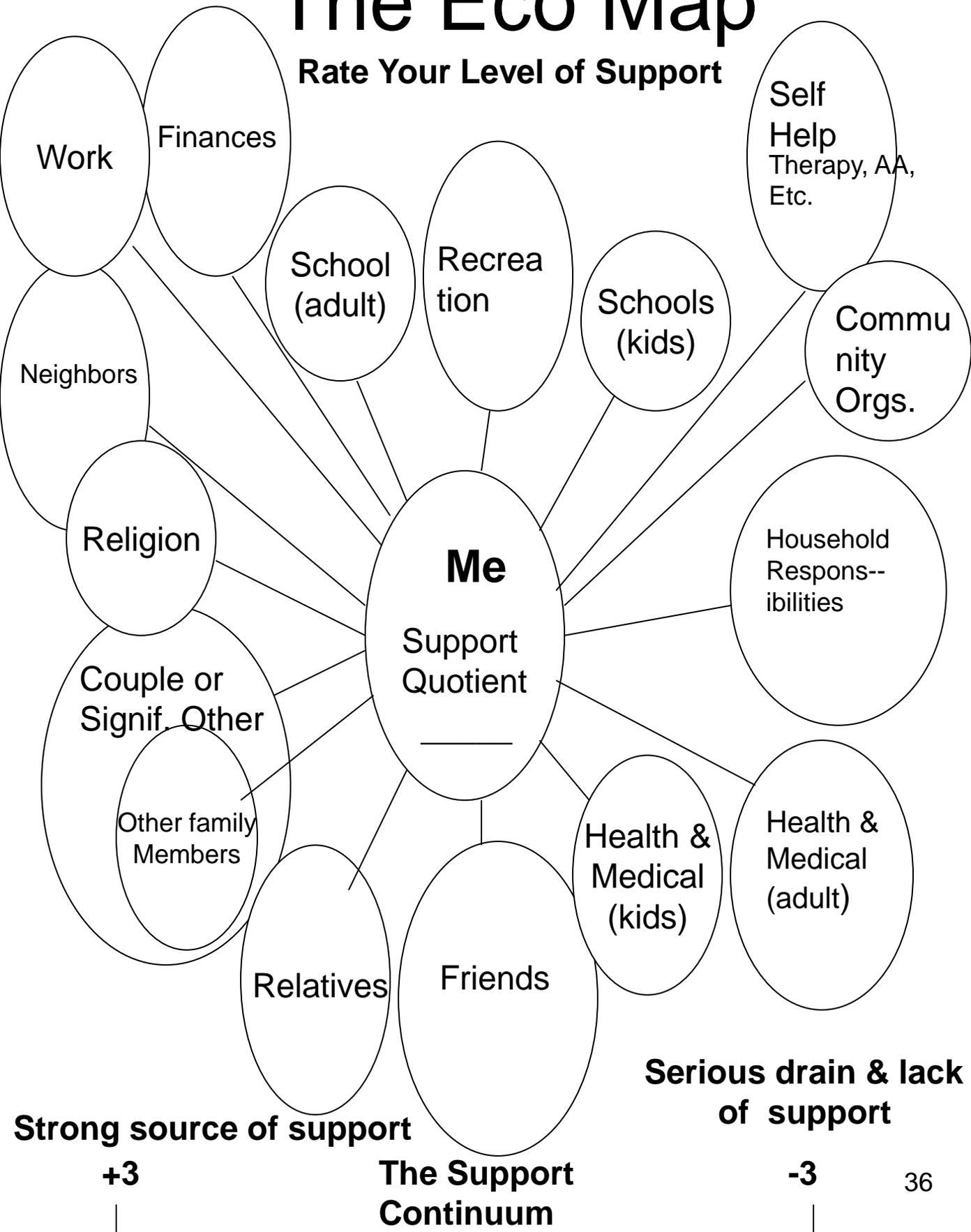
“You need to get it done now!”

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



# The Eco Map

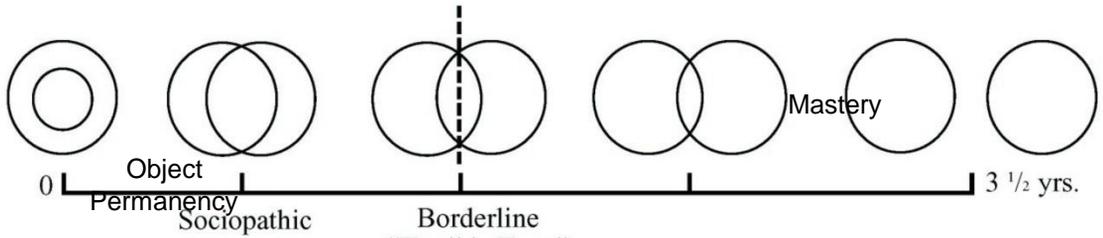
Rate Your Level of Support



# THE HOLDING ENVIRONMENT

## "A Total Environment Provision"

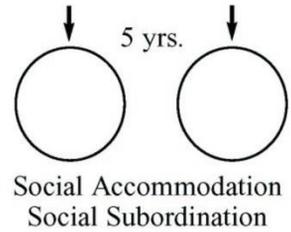
TASK: "good enough parenting"



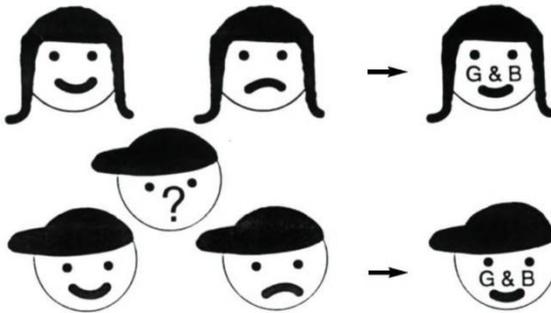
Borderline  
"Terrible Twos"  
Separation-Individuation

SPLITTING MECHANISM  
Good mother/Bad mother

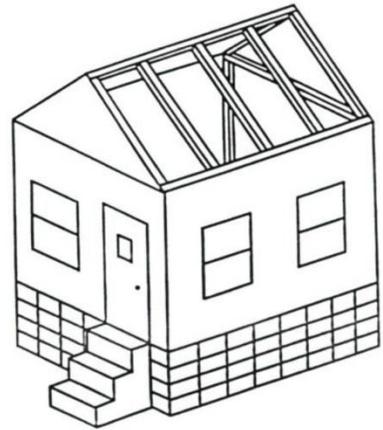
OBJECT  
CONSTANCY  
cohesive self  
sense of self



TASK:  
merge the good  
and bad introjects

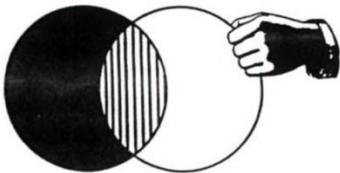


Foundation



GOAL:  
Filling in the emptiness

Effect of Separation



FILLERS VS. TALKERS  
DEFICITS VS. CONFLICT



## Pre-Talk Considerations

When approaching an agitated student or group:

Number One Goal: Engage

Listen, empathize, paraphrase, offer help, 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 student.  
Think PIE (i.e. everyone deserves an equal slice) An unpopular student receives equal respect/treatment
- Practice the talk in your head. Longer discussions generally have a beginning, middle, and end phase.

Other considerations: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Core Verbal Interventions

## Helpful & Supportive Interventions

"You seem really upset!" "What's going on?" "Can I help?" "Man, I'd be upset, too if..."

## Repeating or Paraphrasing w/qualifiers

Youth: "I hate doing this."

Teacher: "You're saying you're really upset about doing this *right now*." (Use qualifiers: yet, at the moment, right now, etc.)

## Feelings Identification and Exploration

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

## Sandwich Approach

"You made a bad decision to throw the paper, 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 colors 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 teacher let her students..."

## 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) & Millimeter Acknowledgement

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

"Do you think there's a one percent chance that you might have...?" "Could you possibly be a little less correct about this?"

## Explorative Responses (historical)

"Have you ever completed such a difficult assignment?"

"Have you ever got this angry and not hit someone?"

## Explorative (reflective)

"Is that behavior working for you?"

## Plan Making

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

## Proactive Considerations Assessment

Rate yourself from 1-5:

5 = Excellent in this area    3 = Okay    1 = Serious room for improvement

**Suggestion:** Do this exercise every month. Chart your progress. Pick one or two areas a week that were rated low and give them extra attention. Keep track of what you're working on with the training journal sheets at the back of this handout.

1. Rules and consequences are clear and posted in my class. \_\_\_\_\_
2. Students were empowered to help create the rules and consequence progression. \_\_\_\_\_
3. Rules were taught and practiced during the initial 2 weeks of the year. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Considerable effort is devoted to *teaching* and *practicing* "good" behavior on an ongoing basis (i.e. following the rules). \_\_\_\_\_

Use role-plays, modeling, scripting, games, quizzes, cues, and direct communication to repetitively teach expected behavior (i.e. good choices). Current best practices in secondary education dictate that it is essential for teachers in conjunction with their students to create 4 or 5 class rules and consequences that are clear and unambiguous and actively practiced by the students during the first weeks of school.

The following rules are more clear and enforceable:

- Come to class on time with proper materials
- Hands and feet to yourself - Raise your hand and get up when called
- Be respectful to teachers and classmates. (No put downs, rudeness, mean comments and improper body language...no talking when the teacher is speaking)
- Complete and bring in homework when it is assigned .

Each class should have a consequence progression posted – based on a host of factors (e.g. The age and nature of your students, size of the room, etc.).

Sample progression:

1. Helpful advice (e.g. warnings, humor, voluntary seat change, teacher body signal, distraction, teacher meeting, ask a student to move his/her seat, etc.)
2. Final warning (e.g. "Okay, I've tried to help you out, but you've continued to make the same bad choice, either do what I've asked or stop the inappropriate behavior... or you know what happens next , you know the rule ( next stage in progression). For defiant behavior: "Three, two, one...(continued refusal).
3. "Would you please take a break in the back of the room to reflect upon the choices you've made. Come back when you're ready to make better choices.

Continued refusal:

"Three, two, one..."

4. "If you can't do what I've asked or stop the behavior, I'll need to call your parents/keep you after class. Make a good choice."
5. "Would you please head to (alternative setting – another classroom, guidance office, etc.) and I'll need to call your parents

Continued refusal. "Three, two, one"

6. Office is called – After school detention or suspension.
5. I set limits are set in a calm and predictable manner.. I practice the Affect Scale.  
*As they get louder, I become more quiet).*\_\_\_\_\_
6. All requests to students are made using the words "Please" and "Thank you." and  
"I or "We" instead of "You" .\_\_\_\_\_
- 7.. Behavior is a message, a call for help: I actively explore possible underlying  
reasons why a student and/or group might be struggling .\_\_\_\_\_
8. Overall, I am doing a good job setting limits with my students.\_\_\_\_\_
9. Transitions to and from my class are structured and orderly.\_\_\_\_\_
- a. Students are warned about upcoming transitions (i.e.pre-correction):  
*"In a few minutes the bell is going to ring. Juan, remind the class what the expected  
behavior is when the bell rings. Thanks."*
- b. Elementary students line-up quietly. If they are loud and rambunctious during  
transitions, they should be asked to return and try again. Students are well  
monitored in hallways.
10. (For MS & HS teachers) I properly monitor the hallways during transitions (i.e.  
I get to the hallways promptly and actively compliment and address hallway  
behavior).\_\_\_\_\_
11. My seating assignments maximize student learning.\_\_\_\_\_.  
a. Challenging students could be separated during key academic periods. (First,  
give them a chance to sit together.)  
b. Students who often need "breaks" could be sitting closer to the break **area(s)**.
12. The physical lay out of my class room is *most conducive* to learning.\_\_\_\_\_

For example, a horizontal classroom with 2-3 rows of seats situated in a semi-circle will provide a teacher better access to each student than a vertical classroom with six rows of seats. Depending on the make-up of one's class, it might be optimal to have desks lined up so that each student is facing the front.

13. My classroom appears colorful, neat, stimulating, and warm.\_\_\_\_\_

(Desks are lined up in a neat, structured manner, there are no papers on the floor, tabletops and shelves are tidy, there are no ripped papers on walls, etc.)

14. My students desks and lockers aren't messy. \_\_\_\_\_

15. My students' work is posted on the classroom walls. \_\_\_\_\_

16. There is a non-stimulating "safe" place (or two) for disruptive/agitated students to "take a break" within the room. \_\_\_\_\_

a. At times it is helpful to have educational material and/or self-help material available for students in break time.

17. I enthusiastically *welcome* students when they enter my classroom and begin each class with a brief conversation about current events, how they're doing, or subjects of interest to them. \_\_\_\_\_

18. I make it a priority to connect with all of my students. I explore, learn and use their strengths and interests to enhance the work we do. \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: A student who excels in sports could have certain academic principles explained using sports metaphors. Students with hands-on strengths could learn by "doing" vs. listening.

19. I have each student fill out a student questionnaire at the beginning of each year. \_\_\_\_\_

20. I preview the class ahead, stating goals and objectives. In elementary schools, the daily schedule is posted and reviewed. \_\_\_\_\_

21. My students aren't hungry. \_\_\_\_\_

22. I regularly circulate throughout the classroom. \_\_\_\_\_

23. My student accomplishments are recognized, trumpeted and/or displayed. I employ a 4:1 ratio between praise and negative comments. \_\_\_\_\_

24. I periodically call or write parents when a challenging student has had a *good* day! \_\_\_\_\_

25. I periodically send complimentary postcards to my students' homes to trumpet success. \_\_\_\_\_

26. I create a "user-friendly" environment in my classroom (e.g. I generally keep a good pace, provide short, stimulating breaks that serve to recharge my students; I teach my content in segmented time frames; I break down all long-range assignments and projects, etc. \_\_\_\_\_

27. I make the content I am teaching *relevant* to my students. I periodically explain and demonstrate its value. \_\_\_\_\_

According to Sprick (*Discipline in the Secondary Classroom*), the two key components for keeping students motivated are: 1. Do they all believe they can do the work? 2. Do they feel the work is relevant to them?

29. Teachers, parents, and other collaterals have established systems for communicating with one another (e.g. homework assignment books, regular phone contact, email, established meeting times, etc.).\_\_\_\_\_

Regular or *as needed* class meetings often improve communication and relationships between teachers and students.

30. In elementary school classrooms, a weekly chore chart can add structure and be both an empowering and self-esteem building vehicle.\_\_\_\_\_

A great chore to create: The Class Comedian (Have a student tell a joke or two)

31. I regularly use and promote humor (but not sarcasm) in my class. \_\_\_\_\_

32. My requests to students are usually *specific* vs. *general*\_\_\_\_\_.

Yes: "Please do problems 1-4." No: "Get your math done."

33. I consistently maintain good whole class vision\_\_\_\_\_.

34. Each of my classes has its own *routines* and *traditions* that help make it special. \_\_\_\_\_

For example: Oldest student writes and reads a note of "thanks" on Thanksgiving; bring in a six-foot sub to celebrate the Super Bowl; write a funny poem for students on their birthdays; have a special class greeting or handshake, etc.

35. From time to time I use *inspiring metaphors* to motivate my students.\_\_\_\_\_

Examples: Train, learning is your ticket to a good life, road block, etc.

36. I occasionally use *solution-focused questions* with my students.\_\_\_\_\_

Example: "So you're saying this is really difficult *right now*."

37. I periodically *reframe* negative behavior.\_\_\_\_\_

Example: "You're good at expressing yourself. But if..."

38. I am good at *not* using *pejorative adjectives* with my students.\_\_\_\_\_

Examples: I do not call students: rude, lazy, attention seekers, etc.

39. I, at times, use the *millimeter acknowledgement* to help students take responsibility for their actions. \_\_\_\_\_

Example: "Do you think there's a 1 % chance that the reason..."

40. I am working hard to use more sensitive and engaging verbal interventions with my students. \_\_\_\_\_

Example: Connecting Statement – "This isn't me against you guys..."

41. I use cues (i.e. one-line raps with my students). \_\_\_\_\_

Examples: "Let it go, Joe." "If it is to be, it's up to me." "I'm smart, it's in my heart."

42. I occasionally externalize and name a problem or desired behavior. \_\_\_\_\_

Example: "Tell Mr. R. Gue not to come tomorrow. Or his friend, I.B. Tardy!"

43. I do a good job of using incentives to motivate my students. (e.g. handout out tickets, candy, "dollars", award points for better efforts). \_\_\_\_\_ .

44. I routinely develop individual incentive plans with students who are struggling to succeed in my class. \_\_\_\_\_

45. I actively encourage my students to help others – practice altruism and model this myself \_\_\_\_\_ .

## 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 student 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 student 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 student’s input and develop a plan. Example: If one or more students are continuously sleepy, inattentive, and/or performing poorly in class – talk with them about what you are seeing. If the problem persists, contact the student’s parents or guardians.

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

Behavior experts suggest that students 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.

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

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 student 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 students decide the appropriate consequence(s). Base decisions on frequency and severity.

Practice progressive discipline

## 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 student(s) recite the rule that might be compromised or broken. Better yet: Have the student(s) 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 student (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). For example, for an unruly class, play an age-appropriate game with the students that is related to the teaching content.

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 student 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 class do some exercises)

Hold an impromptu meeting....Play a music box every time the class gets off track. Reward them if the box still has music to play at the end of the day

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 students 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 from class to class until you've earned back some trust.”

When a student 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

Students 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 this assignment? 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 student is not responding to supportive interventions, a teacher – 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 educator, for instance, could ask a disruptive student to join her outside the class for a minute. Oftentimes, by giving a student 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.

Educator: “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 an educator 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 educator 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 student visits inappropriate websites during school.

**Response:** The student is restricted from using the school computers for a determined period of time – based on severity and frequency.

**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 student is caught bullying others:

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

**Problem Behavior:** A student throws food in the cafeteria:

**Reparation:** Require the youth to help out in the cafeteria.

**Problem Behavior:** A student is caught texting during class

**Reparation:** The student loses the right to use his/her cell phone for a determined period of time – based on severity and frequency

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 student or group decide the consequence

### **Breaks (Time-Out)**

Students 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 students 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.*

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

**Set Amounts** = Established time-out lengths and progressions

*Example:* 2 minutes > refusal > student must leave the room > refusal > administrator called & a call home is placed > processing.

**Open Ended** = No set amounts of time for breaks

## **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.

## **How are Breaks Conducted?**

Students should always be allowed to sit comfortably to complete breaks. A break should be conducted in a quiet and respectful manner. The student should not be facing a corner or wall. If using set amounts (e.g. 5 minute break) "Time" counts when the child is sitting quietly. Do not start break time over if the student begins to escalate. Give him/her credit for time already served. Do not have the student stand to do a break. Don't keep adding time if the youth continues to misbehave:

*"Please let me know when you're ready to begin."*

## **Office Referral**

## **After-School Detention**

**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.)

## Self-Management Options for Children & Youth



Teach students how to control their anger. Suggest the following techniques:

1. Stop and count to 5 or 10 (or 100!).
2. Take a deep breath. Breathe calmly. Take a step back from the scene.
3. Decide what the problem is? Suggest that a youth ask him/herself:  
*“Who (or what) am I really mad at?”*
4. Think Rap! (*NBD – easier than 1, 2, 3! - No Big Deal, Walk or talk, Don’t be a fool – stay cool, Stand tall - make the right call, etc.*)
5. Think about alternative options (choices) – instead of acting inappropriately:  
Walk away (ignore)      Try and talk it out in a friendly manner  
Ask for help              Give a reason for the person to stop
6. Think about the consequences of making a good vs. a bad choice:  
*If I hit him, I could be suspended.*  
*If I walk away, I go to the Mall tonight and no hassles from home.*  
*If I hit him, no electronics for a week.*
7. Avoid stinkin’ thinkin’ (Life isn’t what you see – it’s what you think!)
8. When getting angry try and replace negative thoughts (stinkin’ thinkin’) with more positive thoughts.

# 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.)																			

