

Attachment Informed De-Escalating Interventions

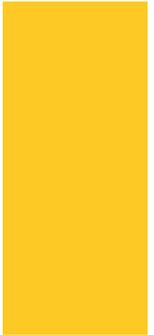
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+ Attachment Informed

De-Escalating Interventions

- Goal: to prevent and reduce escalation/crisis behavior through attachment-informed interventions and by monitoring our own responses.
- Identify triggers and warning signs of behaviors.
- Analyze proactive and “in the moment” behavioral interventions.
- Prepare and plan responses to behaviors of children who have experienced trauma.
- This philosophy is most productive in reducing escalation/crisis behavior and establishing attachment in the context of a permanent parent-child relationship.





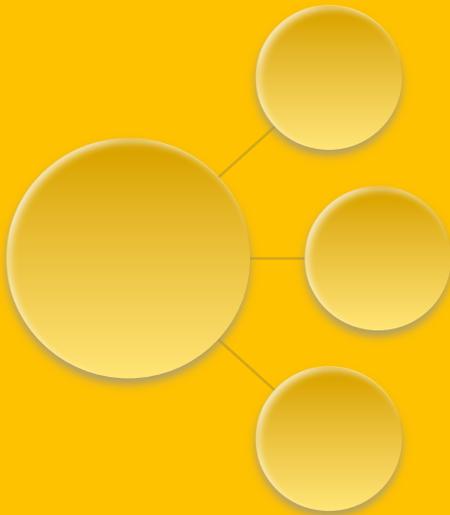
What brings us here?

Interpreting Behaviors

Children who have experienced complex trauma

Symptoms

Address causes, not symptoms, to facilitate healing.



Adaptations

Kids are Survivors!

Past behaviors that kept them safe may now be problematic.

Need **TIME** to understand safety and permanence in family .

Communication





- Re-Parenting
- Infant/toddlers need parent's help to regulate

Attachment Cycle

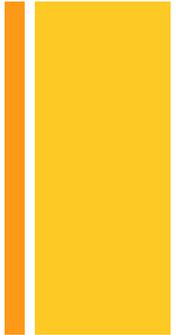


(Regina Kupecky, Parenting the Hurt Child)



How to: Manage and Heal

(Regina Kupecky, Parenting the Hurt Child)



DON'T:

- Anger Parenting
- Lecture
- Isolation or withhold love
- Deprivation
- Control battles
- Equality

DO:

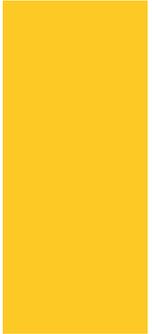
- Nurture: re-parent
 - Attachment Cycle
- Natural/Logical Consequences
- Give Choices
- Use humor

“Angry Parenting will keep the mean child mean, the wild child wild, the scared child scared, and the hurt child hurt.” -Regina Kupecky



De-escalation

Self Regulation Basics



- Self-Regulation is NOT self-control
- Self-Regulation is not compliance.
- Self-Regulation is how we manage the stress we are under.
- Self-Regulation makes self-control possible.
- Self-Regulation is influenced by:
 - Environment
 - Interactions with others
 - Temperament
 - Abilities



Developing emotional self-regulation skills is hard work



De-escalation

Self Regulation Basics



- When at your wits end with a child...

“What is this really about?”

“What am I missing?”

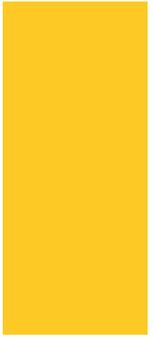
“How do I reduce their stress?”

“How can I stay calm?”



Co-Regulation

Respond not React



- It takes two!
 - Parents/Caregivers STAY CALM

Warm, responsive interactions provide support, coaching and modeling (feedback to the brain) = reduction in stress.



NEXT...

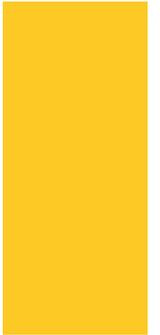
- Help child to identify what is causing the stress
- Help child to understand the “feeling of calm”
- Help child learn what restores them to a regulated state (re-regulation).



Co-Regulation

Curiosity

- Just as we become curious about the root of a child's behavior, we must also get to the root of why some of these behaviors are so difficult for us to manage as parents.
- Could certain behaviors be triggering our own traumas or something central to our identity as “good parents”?
- We must ask ourselves what button a behavior might be pushing for us, so we can get to a place where we can meet stress with calm.

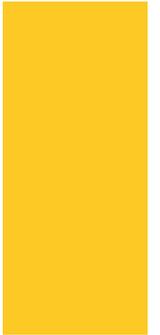




Co-Regulation

Regulate Self to Regulate Others

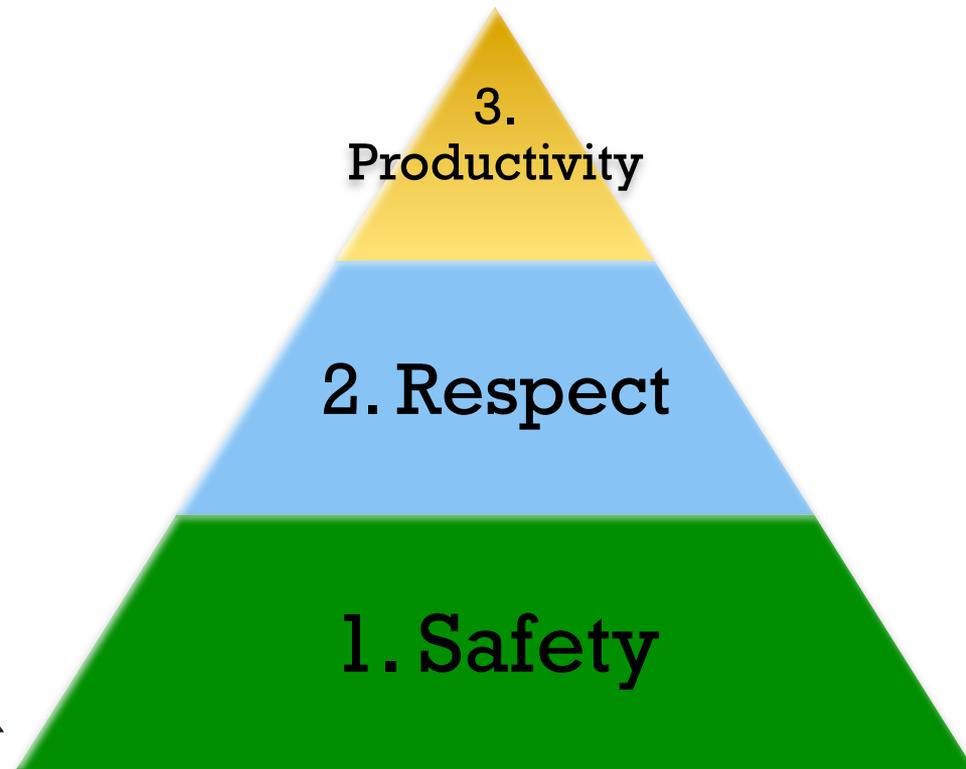
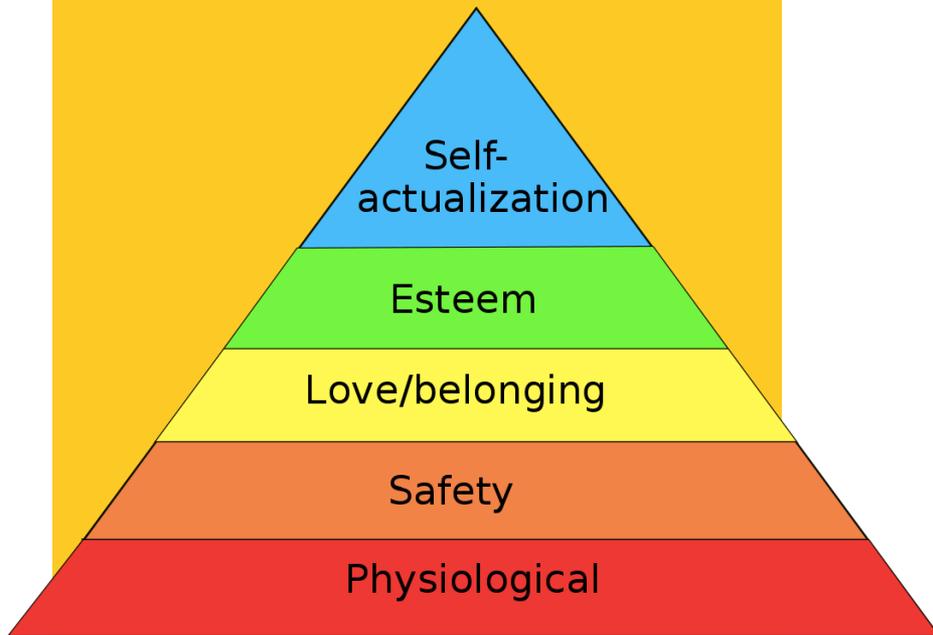
- Our mental and physical health is central to nurturing our child's mental and physical health.
- We must give ourselves time to recharge and care for our mental and physical health.
- Our own regulation tools will allow us to calm a child and model a positive and healthy self-care regimen.
- As we use our own healthy coping skills, we can both communicate these skills to the child and provide a positive model for managing strong emotions.





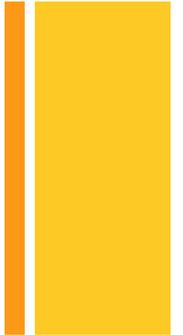
“Big Deal” or
“Small Deal”?

- Choose wisely what you insist upon
- Pick your battles!
 - Food battles are not worth it!





Family Values (House Rules)



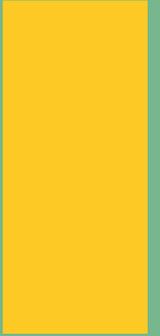
- We keep ourselves and others safe from harm.
 - *Physical, emotional and sexual safety.*
 - *We have a right to privacy.*
 - *Parents protect children. Children follow parent's directions.*
 - *We take care of ourselves.*
 - *(Personal hygiene, healthy food, self care, therapy, coping skills, etc)*
- We are responsible.
 - *(For our belongings, our school work and chores)*
- We know there are consequences for our choices.
 - *(We make amends when we hurt someone)*
 - *Truth builds trust*



De-escalation

Preventative Interventions

- Consider the structure of the day
- Are certain times more challenging for children or yourselves?
- Build in time for:
 - physical activity,
 - down time
 - connection



Identify Triggers

- Yelling or loud noises
- Being told No
- When things don't go according to plan
- Home work
- Memories of the past
- Birthdays or holidays
- Dark places
- Bed time
- Showers/hygiene activities
- Getting ready for school
- Physical Affection
- Chaos / Structure
- Hungry/Thirsty
- Change/ transition
- Inability to express self (language barrier)
- Smells
- “Trauma-versaries”
- Hidden Stressors
 - Cognitive delay
 - Sensory needs
 - Implicit memories



- Physical
Warning Signs
of Escalation

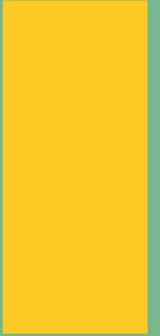
- Change in eye contact
- Clenching hands
- Feeling dizzy
- Somatic complaints



De-escalation

Preventative Interventions

- Talk to child when they are calm- they are listening
- Identifying the positive things they do.- Islands of competency-
- Both parents must be on the same page and discuss plan together.
 - Present as a “united front” and support your spouse in front of the child. Do not interrupt, contradict spouse in front of the child.
 - Affirmations for child, spouse and even self. Spouse affirmations give support, show united front

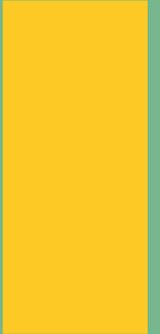




De-escalation

Preventative Interventions

- Support Group
- Buddy System- another adoptive family
- Life books





De-escalation

Preventative Interventions

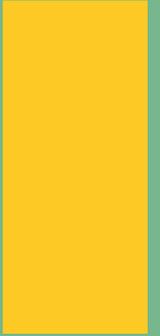
- **Sensory and Physical**

- (List in handout)

- “80% of children who have trauma history will have challenges in processing sensory data. Can I adjust sensory world to allow wider window of tolerance?” –(*Robyn Gobbel*)

- Provide many opportunities for movement and play every day.

- Physical activity improves affect regulation, focus, retain information





De-escalation

Preventative Interventions

- Have a Plan
 - *(Therapist/social worker can facilitate plan. Engage other caretakers in developing plan)*
 - Child assists in developing plan (if possible)
 - Crisis Plan, Safety plan
 - Child triggers and coping skills added to crisis plan. (with child input)
 - Adapt and change plan regularly. Is this working?



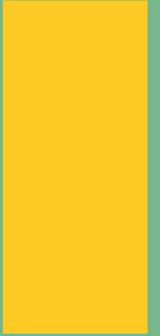


De-escalation

Preventative Interventions

■ Have a Plan

- Can create a plan in small steps, focusing on one time of day or one behavior at a time. Could start by focusing on “one thing” like breathing.
- Could be as simple as phrases or pictures to guide a child toward better choices.
- Could be very specific and discuss each feeling, what each person will do, and provide a list of positive options in several scenarios, depending on the child’s age and unique situation
- A plan may also include brainstorming a change to the day’s or year’s schedule to address times that are particularly challenging.





Ride a Bike
OR SKATEBOARD



ASK FOR HELP



Blow Bubbles



Color
Paint
Draw

CREATE ART!



Listen to MUSIC



PLAY a BOARD GAME



MAKE & PLAY WITH SLIME



Practice Gratitude



WEAVE, KNOT OR CROCHET

Use Kind & Compassionate Self-Talk



Make a SCRAPBOOK OR Collage



PRACTICE YOGA



Hug or Climb a Tree



KICK BOUNCE OR THROW a BALL



JOURNAL OR WRITE A LETTER



Take Slow, Mindful Breaths



Cuddle or Play with Your Pet



Drink Water



Smile & Laugh



EAT Healthy

50 COPING SKILLS for kids



Forgive Let Go Move On



Cook or Bake



Use Aromatherapy (Smell something good)



I am strong. I was made for this challenge.

SAY Positive Affirmations



Get Plenty of sleep



TAKE A SHOWER OR BATH



STRETCH



Go on a Hike, Walk or Run



SING and/or DANCE



Take GOOD CARE of the Earth



Look At or Take PHOTOGRAPHS



Garden or Do Yardwork



Visualize a Peaceful Place



Try or Learn Something New



READ a Book or Magazine



DRINK A WARM CUP OF TEA

USE A STRESS BALL (OR OTHER FIDGET TOOL)



Get a HUG



DO a PUZZLE



Cry



Clean, Declutter or Organize



Create ORIGAMI



EXERCISE



Play Outside

JUMP on a Trampoline



Rest, Take a Break, OR Nap

Do Something Kind



BUILD Something



TALK to Someone You Trust



De-escalation

Responding in the moment

- Remove child from agitating environment, situation or individual. Remove the Audience.
- 1. Remain calm
- 2. Validate. Focus on feelings. (Attunement)
- 3. Offer choices.
 - Simple, clear, only 2-3 options.
 - Offer coping skills
 - Explain consequences
- 4. Give child space, time and provide calm, comforting reassurance.
- When providing space, continue to monitor child to ensure safety and show that you will remain committed despite behaviors.





De-escalation

Responding in the moment

- Re-training ourselves
- Have a “mantra”
 - “Crabby baby” “This too shall pass”
- Take a breath
- Communicate to the child what you (personally) are doing when you feel strong emotions.
- Have verbal and non-verbal responses prepared
- De-brief
 - Once the child is calm, you can work with the child to focus on your relationship and process feelings. (Repair is more important than rupture- TBRI)





De-escalation

Responding in the moment

- Emergency numbers
- The 24-hour NYS Foster Care and Adoption Help Line provided by the Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of New York is available for phone support in crisis: **888-354-1342**
- If the child is a danger to themselves or others call 911 or mobile crisis (explain this is a child of trauma).



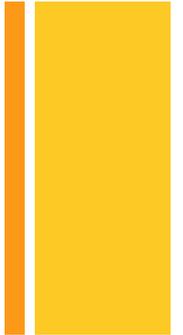
+ De-escalation

Responding in the moment

- What has worked for you?



+ Practice makes perfect



- Brainstorm:
 - 1: the root cause of behaviors for the child (unmet needs/past trauma/fears of abandonment)
 - 2: potential triggers for the parent
- How would you address behaviors in the moment?
- Develop a Plan (preventative strategies for the future)
- Select speaker to discuss your solutions to the group.
- (All children in the scenarios have experienced trauma, have been permanently separated from their birth parents and are now in a foster/adoptive family)

Even when we feel we have “failed”,
remember- each day is a new opportunity to
add to our tool kit and our child’s tool kit and
plant the seeds of attachment.

