

EAST BRUNSWICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Understanding the Emotional Needs of Learners AND Staff AND PARENTS

November 14, 2018

Interpretation Drives Intervention









EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN

How do our children tell us they need us?

EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF CHILDREN

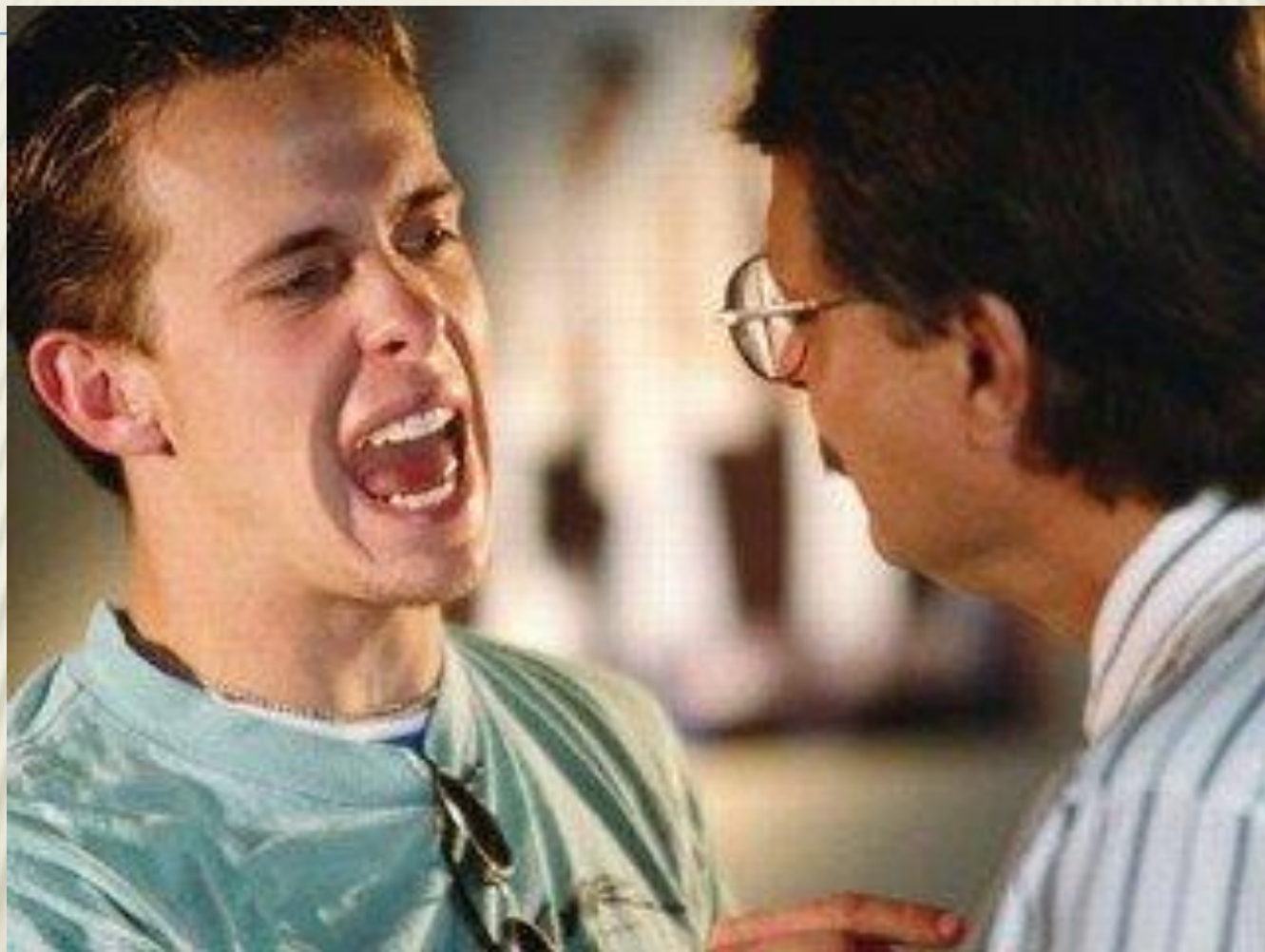
How do our children tell us they need us?

They TELL us with their words...









Or they SHOW us with their behavior.









Interpretation Drives Intervention

HOWEVER, we do not always UNDERSTAND..

**IN THE ABSENCE OF TRUE
UNDERSTANDING, HUMAN BEINGS
SUFFER...AND SOMETIMES DIE:**

IN THE ABSENCE OF TRUE UNDERSTANDING, HUMAN BEINGS SUFFER...AND SOMETIMES DIE:

- × Ingesting Lead
- × Tobacco Use

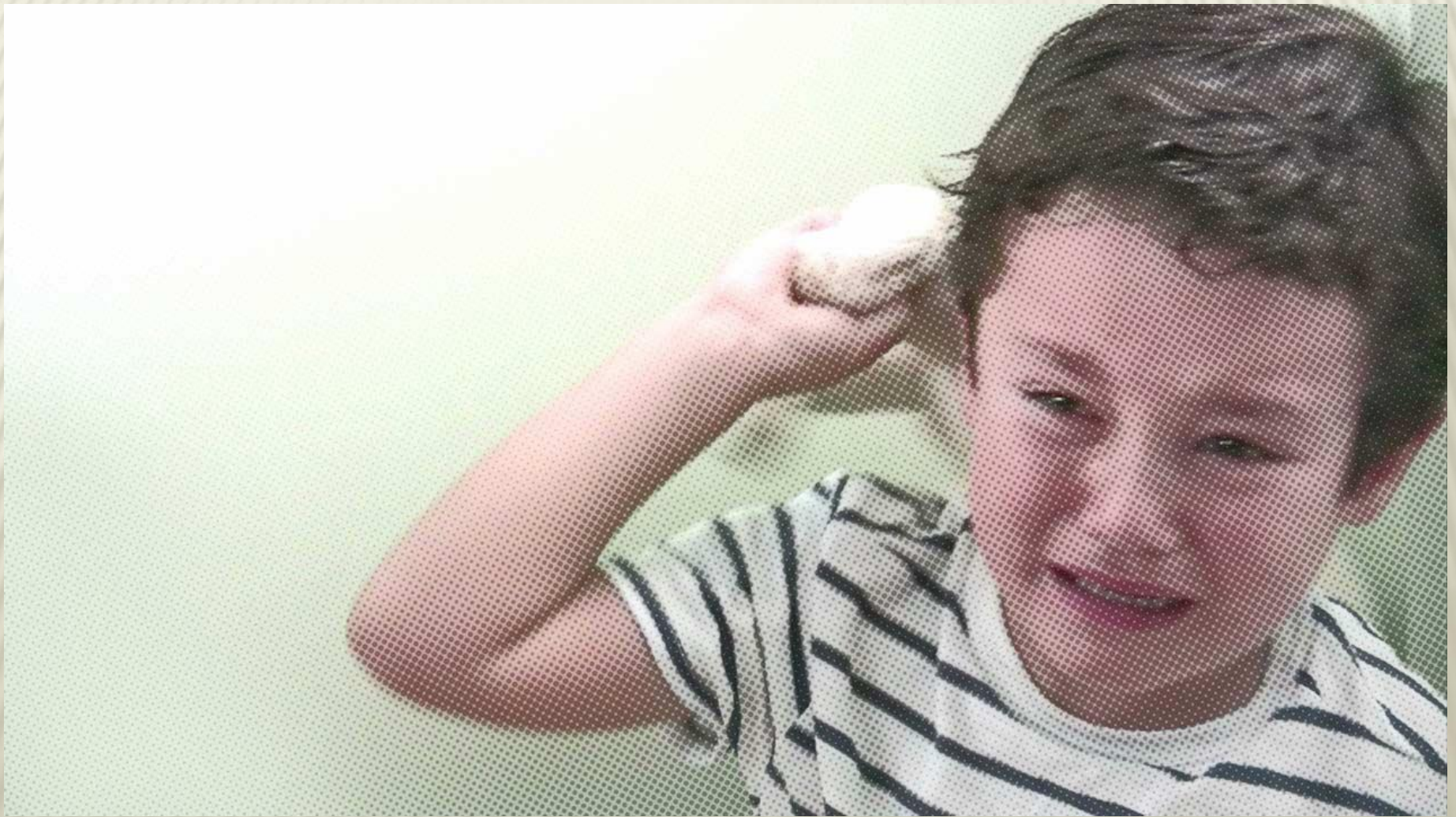
IN THE ABSENCE OF TRUE UNDERSTANDING, HUMAN BEINGS SUFFER...AND SOMETIMES DIE:

- × Ingesting Lead
- × Tobacco Use
- × Inhaling Asbestos
- × The Effects of Toxic Stress

What about the effects of toxic stress
on the brains, bodies and the overall
wellbeing of the children, and of you,
as adults?

In the absence of adult (parent and educator) understanding of toxic stress, the lives of some of our children dramatically change direction...











And for some, the toxic stressors begin very early in life...



But wait, there is more to the story of stress and
our **STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEMS...**

A Story About a BEAR...



Not this BEAR...



But this BEAR

The story goes like this...



That's IF, you come across the BEAR
in the woods.

But what if the BEAR....lives in the child's HOME?



Remember this?



But what about this?



TOXINS, TOXIC EVENTS, TRAUMA

So, what are these toxins, and what are the effects?

TOXIC EVENTS

- × Neglect
- × Emotional, physical and sexual abuse
- × Domestic Violence
- × Addictions in the family
- × **Harsh and demeaning language**
- × Exposure to suicide attempts and deaths
- × Lack of appropriate supervision
- × Being a bully and being bullied

**WHY DO SOME OF OUR CHILDREN
GROW UP AND LIVE LIVES THAT LOOK
LIKE THIS?**



Drinking and Drugging to Numb Their Pain



Cutting and Burning to Relieve Their Hurt



Failing In Spite of Immense Potential



Unable to Regulate Emotion Easily..



Unable to Regulate Emotion Easily..At Any Age



Isolating, Avoiding and Shutting Down



Inflicting Harm on Others

Wanting and even trying to end their lives.



And, as young as 10, dying by suicide.

In the absence of understanding, human beings suffer...and sometimes die.

LET'S LOOK AT THE EFFECTS OF ACES (ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES)

Following are 10 questions for you to consider about your own growing up.

For each that applies to you, you will give yourself a score of 1.

In the privacy of your own mind, consider the following:

ASK YOURSELF

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...swear at you, insult you, put you down or humiliate you? **Or...**act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

-
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? **Or...**ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever...touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? **Or...**attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

4. Did you **often or very often** feel that...no one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? **Or**...your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

-
5. Did you **often or very often** feel that...you didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? **Or...**your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?

6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?

7. Was your mother or stepmother, (grandmother):

Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? **Or...**

sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? **Or...**

ever repeatedly hit at for least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill,
or did a household member attempt suicide?

10. Did a household member go to prison?

Got an ACE score of 4 or more?

Got an ACE score of 4 or more?

There is likely to be an increase risk of:

- poor academic performance,
- violations of classroom rules,
- increases in discipline including detentions and suspensions,
- disruptive classroom behaviors.

Got an ACE score of 4 or more?

In the child's lifetime, there will be:

- twice the likelihood of developing cancer
- an increase likelihood of developing pulmonary illness,
- immune system illnesses like MS and Lupus
- an increase struggle with personal and work-related relationships.

Got an ACE score of 4 or more?

- A child's risk of developing depression is 46 times greater than if there is a score of 0.

Got an ACE score of 4 or more?

A child's risk of suicide increases 1200%

OTHER ACES FACTORS:

- ▶ the death of a parent
- ▶ the death of a sibling
- ▶ poverty
- ▶ community violence
- ▶ Peer rejection and lack of healthy friends;
- ▶ Peer victimization

Common Stress Responses of Children or Teens

- + Inability to focus or concentrate
- + Failing or declining grades
- + Incomplete or poor quality work
- + Increased absences or refusal to go to school
- + Forgetfulness, memory loss
- + Inattentiveness
- + Daydreaming

Children who have been traumatized, or have lived in chaotic circumstances, “need to be in environments that restore their sense of safety, control, and predictability...”

Is that your home, your school, your classroom, in your presence?

PREREQUISITES FOR WELL BEING

1. Attachment/touch
2. Safety/physical and emotional
3. Soothing and calming adult behavior

All important and all necessary for healthy development

.. science now tells us that it is the *reliable* presence of at least one *supportive adult relationship* and multiple *opportunities for developing effective coping strategies* that are the essential building blocks for strengthening the capacity to do well in the face of adversity.

Because most survivors of childhood abuse (and toxic stress) carry an internal sense of defectiveness, they assume (and so do other adults and children) they are simply and inherently crazy or BAD!

Ineffective discipline reinforces those feelings of inadequacy.

SAFETY FOR OUR CHILDREN MEANS

1. Creating safe classrooms, physically and emotionally
2. Nurturing attachments
3. Avoiding shame and embarrassment
4. Avoiding negative judgment and harsh language
5. Being predictable
6. Affirming the value of the children
7. Never giving up
8. Always believing change is possible

IN THE HOME

“The first value to be established is that of safety”

“Healing cannot advance unless there is an environment of safety for all community members.”

IT MAY NOT BE YOU, BUT IT SHOULD BE SOMEBODY

“Children who are more resilient after facing adversity often had an important, reliable adult to turn to in their youth;

a grown-up who stepped in and helped them understand that what was happening wasn't about them and wasn't their fault.”

(Childhood Disrupted, Donna Jackson Nakazawa)

WHAT IS AN ADULT TO DO?

1. Manage your own baggage. Work to make sense of your own story first.
2. Understand that childhood's chronic challenges are different than childhood's chronic stresses.
Challenges build resiliency; constant stressors change the brain system.
3. Offer “facetime” with the child, without a “yuk” face, using a soothing eye gaze.

WHAT IS AN ADULT TO DO?

4. If you lose your temper, apologize—Right Away!
5. Validate and normalize all of their EMOTIONS.
6. Strengthen attachments, secure the bonds between adults and children, and among children.

WHAT IS AN ADULT TO DO?

7. Amplify the good feelings.
8. Make what's happening a safe and open conversation.
9. Consider how to use mindfulness and calming moments in the classroom

WHEN YOU ARE CONCERNED...

- Tell your child, and your spouse/partner you are concerned...
- Call the school counselor for advice...
- Ask for the names of private counselors and agencies, and then make an appointment...
- Speak with your child's physician, express your worries and concerns...
- If your "gut feeling" keeps you concerned, don't ignore the feeling.

WHO IS YOUR SUPPORT TEAM?

We can't do this alone. Often it requires us to partner with others who we TRUST. Consider creating a support team to include:

- School Counselors

- School Child Study Team Members

- Trusted teacher/nurse/administrator

- Pastors, priests, rabbi, imam

- Private Therapist

We can no longer ignore what research now tells us is the truth about child development.

We can no longer expect others to carry on the work alone, without us.

WHAT IS IT THAT OUR CHILDREN NEED?

Because they are HUMAN, all children need soothing and calming attention delivered by adults who are healthy and calm.

Who do you think is going to begin this change?

Unless someone like
you cares a whole
awful lot, nothing's
going to get better.
It's NOT.

-Dr.Seuss

And remember...

**Nothing
CHANGES
IF**

**NOTHING
*Changes***

Following are resources to support
your growth.

Donna Jackson Nakazawa

CHILDHOOD DISRUPTED

How Your Biography
Becomes Your Biology,
and How You Can Heal



"A truly important gift
of understanding—
illuminates the
heartbreaking costs of
childhood trauma and,
like good medicine, offers
the promising science of
healing and prevention."
—JACK KORNFIELD, PhD, author
of *A Path with Heart*

the deepest well



NADINE BURKE HARRIS, M.D.

THIS IS ONLY A BEGINNING.

We must help the
children find their
way.

If not us...
WHO???



George Scott, EdS, LMFT

Center for Counseling Services
and

The Traumatic Loss Coalition

609-915-0684

george.centerforcounseling@verizon.net