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# Trust Building Tools for Talking with Youth During Times of Conflict

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# Trust Building Tools for Talking with Youth During Times of Conflict

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**National Youth at Risk Conference**

**Savannah, GA**

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“The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult. These relationships provide the personalized responsiveness, scaffolding, and protection that buffer children from developmental disruption.

They also build key capacities—such as the ability to... regulate behavior—that enable children to respond adaptively to adversity and thrive.”

(Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2016)

# Life Space Crisis Intervention

A therapeutic skill  
that enables us to  
make the best out  
of a stressful  
student incident  
when we get the  
worst of it.

“With most kids, a crisis is a **predictable** and **repetitive part** of a **cycle** of ineffective behavior. For young people to be able to **change** a pattern of behavior into something more effective and socially acceptable, they **must see that pattern**. The best way to show them that pattern is for a **caring adult** to [enter] into the middle of a crisis with them.”

(Nawrocki, 2007, p. 8)

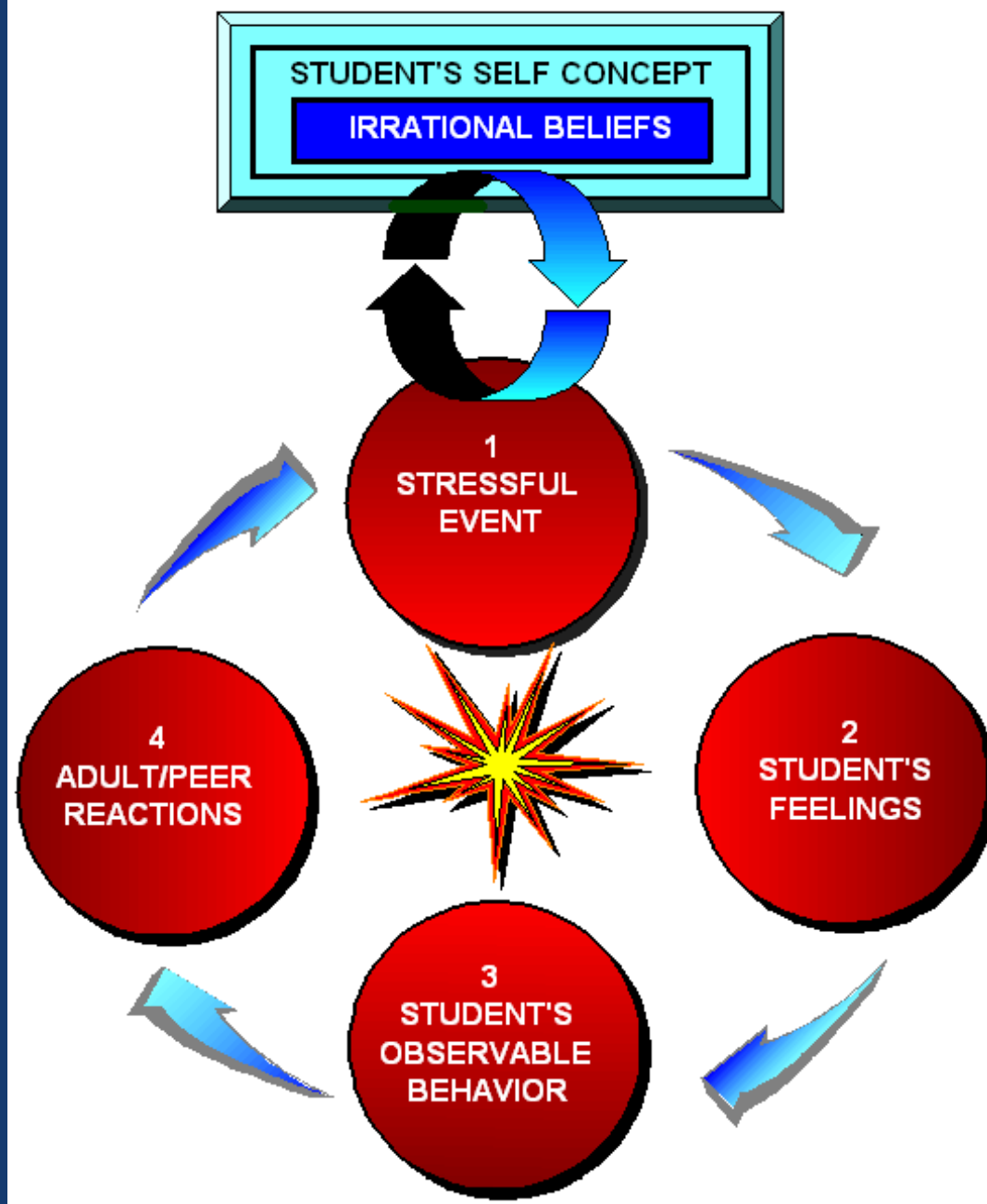
# Punishing vs. Teaching

Traditional School Punishment	LSCI-inspired Discipline
Based on a system of punishment & reward	Based on teaching & helping kids solve a problem
Rote b=c formula	Gives misbehavior a context; students see how their actions impact others.
Makes the school culture adversarial	Cultivates community, working together & mutual respect
Supports the labeling of children into “good” and “bad.”	Focus is on the behavior as a ‘bad choice’ , not on the student as a ‘bad kid.’
Bandage approach with few lasting effects; Students learn little	Children develop new skills and apply them to future situations
<b>PUTS CHILDREN DOWN</b>	<b>BUILDS CHILDREN UP</b>

# Today we will explore skills to Transform adult responses to troubling behavior

- ◆ **Fine tune listening skills** that foster relationships and resiliency
- ◆ **Clarify destructive patterns of behavior** that block youth from social emotional progress
- ◆ **Structure constructive dialogue** following a significant behavioral incident
- ◆ **Successfully deescalate** extreme behavior through verbal skills that build relationship

# THE CONFLICT CYCLE



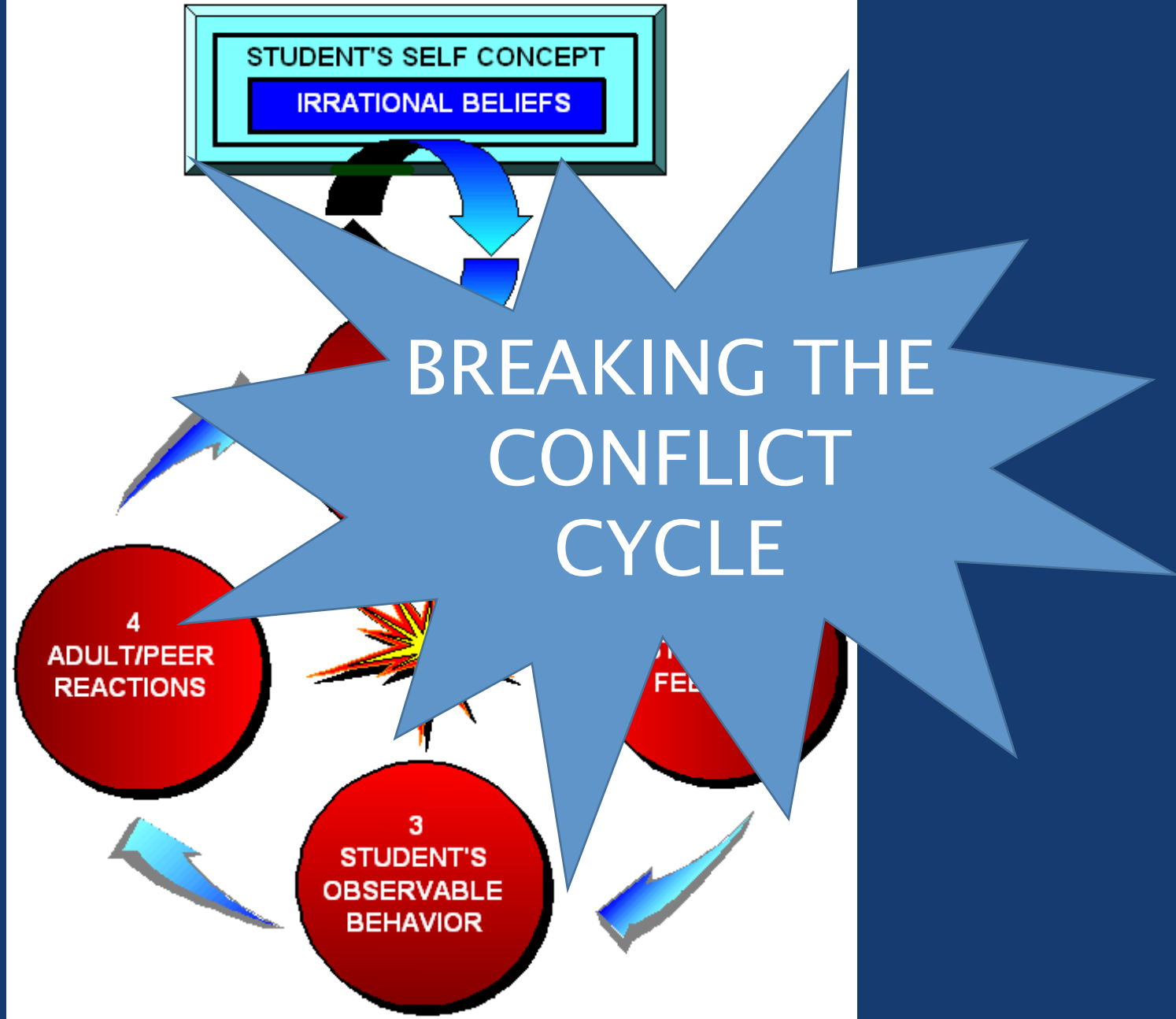


A black Panasonic television with a silver stand is shown from a front-facing perspective. The screen is dark gray and displays the title 'The Captain and the Lighthouse' in a large, white, sans-serif font. The text is centered and occupies the middle portion of the screen. The television's bezel is black, and the Panasonic logo is visible on the bottom center of the bezel. The background is white.

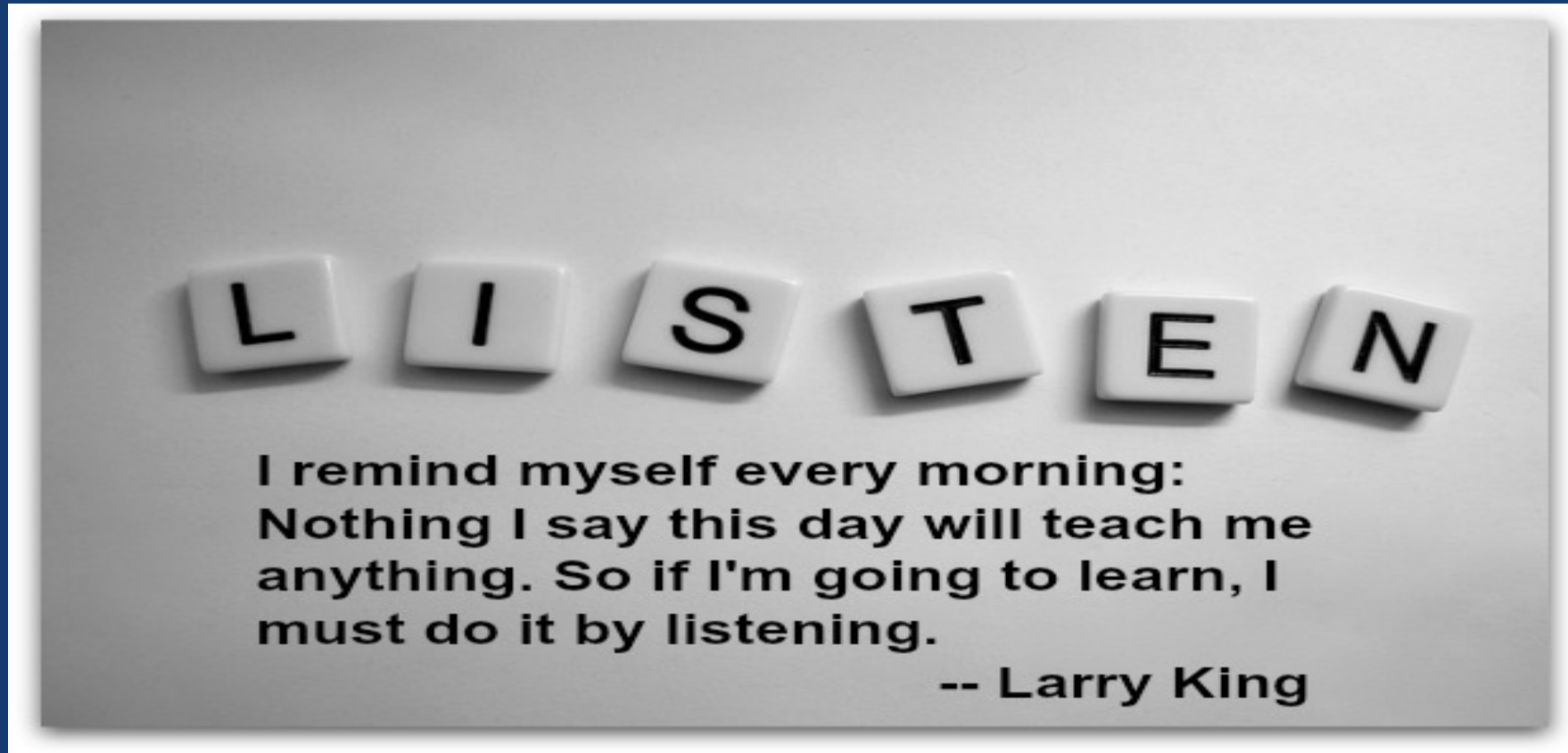
# The Captain and the Lighthouse



# THE CONFLICT CYCLE



# Breaking the Conflict Cycle



**Be a Listener not a Lecturer**

# The Art of Listening

The path to self-regulation for troubled children and youth

- **Emotions** are processed in the right hemisphere, and done so nonverbally & subconsciously
- **Language** to communicate about emotions is processed in the left hemisphere
- Learning to “**link**” the two hemispheres through interaction with a caring adult provides the first step towards effectively understanding and **self-regulating** feelings and behaviors
- When kids learn how to communicate positively about their needs and emotional experiences, they are able to develop **empathy and compassion**

- They will not remember what we said.
- They will not even remember what we did.
- But they will never forget how we made them feel.



Maya Angelou

A black Panasonic television is shown from a front-facing perspective. The screen is dark gray and displays the text 'Listening Skills' in a large, white, sans-serif font. Below it, the word 'Davon' is displayed in a slightly smaller, white, sans-serif font. The television has a black bezel and a silver stand. The Panasonic logo is visible on the bottom bezel.

# Listening Skills

## Davon



# Effective Listening Involves Five Skills

Attending

Reassuring

Affirming

Validating

Decoding





# Attending Skills

- Being **fully present** with the student
- Attending to **verbal and non-verbal** communication
- **Managing** counter-aggression
- **Being aware** of one's own verbal and non-verbal messages to the student
- **Establishing “resonance”** with the student, so that he senses at a subconscious level that you “feel his feelings”

# Reassuring Skills–Helpful Statements

- “I am here to help.”
- “I want to understand exactly what happened.”
- “I want to understand things from your point of view.”
- “I’m sure we can figure this out together.”
- “We’re going to work this out.”
- “It takes courage to talk about what you are thinking and feeling.”
- “The more I hear things from your point of view, the better I’ll be able to help

# Affirming Skills

## Helpful Statements

- “I like the way you’ re using words.”
- “You’ re doing a great job settling down and getting ready to talk about this.”
- “Thank you for telling me that.”
- “Thank you for being patient.”
- “You are handling a difficult situation really well.”
- “I can see that was hard for you to say.”
- “You are really trying to get yourself together.”



## Validating Skills

Validating statements convey to the student that you non-judgmentally accept their thoughts, feelings and behaviors as important, real and understandable. You really hear them.

# Practice



# Validate! Validate! Validate!

# The Art of Decoding

On his first visit to kindergarten, while mother was still with him, Bruce, age five, looked over the paintings on the wall and asked loudly, “Who made these ugly pictures?”

Mother was embarrassed. She looked at her son disapprovingly and hastened to tell him, “It’s not nice to call the pictures ugly when they are so pretty.”

The teacher, who understood the meaning of the questions, smiled and said, “In here you don’t have to paint pretty pictures. You can paint mean pictures if you feel like it.” A big smile appeared on Bruce’s face, for now he had the answer to his hidden question, “What happens to a boy who doesn’t paint so well?”

Next Bruce picked up a broken fire engine and asked self-righteously, “Who broke this fire engine?” Mother answered, “What difference does it make to you who broke it? You don’t know anyone here.”

Bruce was not really interested in names. He wanted to find out what happened to boys who break toys. Understanding the question, the teacher gave an appropriate answer. “Toys are for playing. Sometimes they get broken. It happens.”

Bruce seemed satisfied. His interviewing skill had netted him the necessary information: “This grownup is pretty nice. She does not get angry quickly, even when a picture comes out ugly or a toy is broken. I don’t have to be afraid. It is safe to stay here.” Bruce waved good-bye to his mother and went over to the teacher to start his first day in kindergarten.



# Helpful Decoding Statements

- “Throwing the book told me that you were frustrated with the assignment, and that’s really important information for me – it’s OK just to tell me next time.”
- “It made you sad when no one picked you to play during recess and cursing at me was a way to show me that something was bothering you.”
- “Saying I’m stupid is a way to ask for help when you don’t understand the directions, I understand, but I want you to know that it’s my job to help clarify whenever students don’t understand something – I do that for students all day long.”

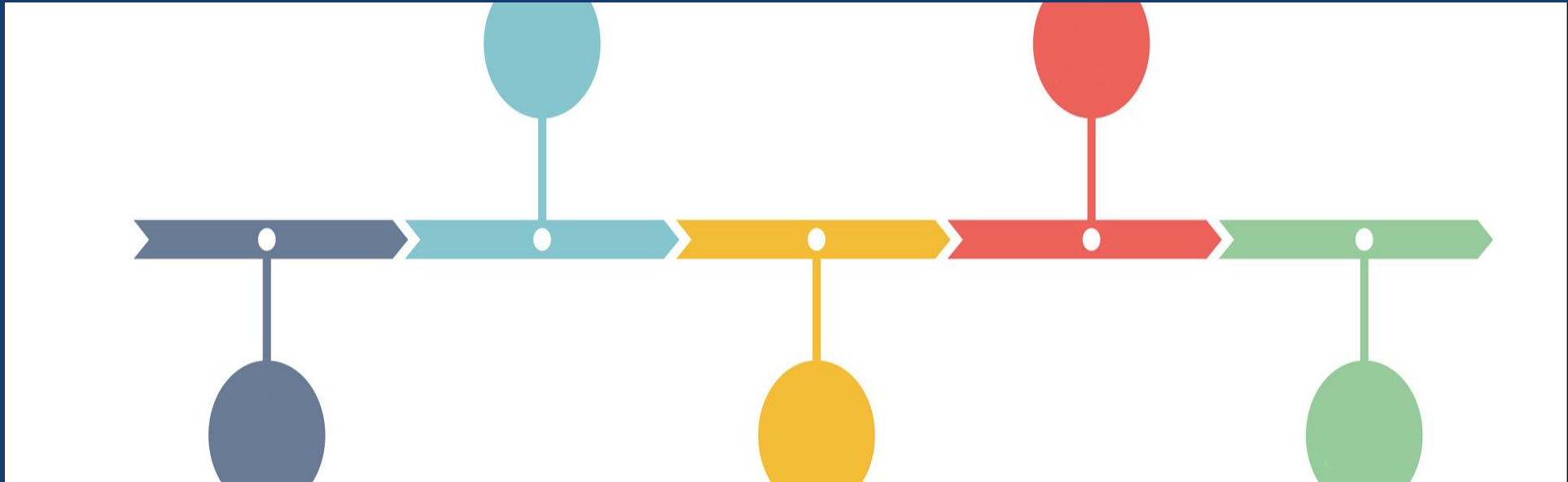


When little people  
are overwhelmed by  
big emotions, it's our job  
to share our calm,  
not to join their chaos.

-L.R. Knost



# Breaking the Conflict Cycle



**The Timeline**

# Timeline: The 7 Essential Questions

Where?

When?

Target?

Duration?

Frequency?

Intensity?

Contagion?



# The Timeline

## WHAT HAPPENED?

Where? When? Target? Duration? Frequency? Intensity? Contagion?

## WHAT THOUGHTS WENT THROUGH YOUR MIND?

What were you saying to yourself?

## HOW DID YOU FEEL?

How strong were your feelings on a scale of 1 – 10?

## WHAT DID YOU DO?

How did you show your feelings?

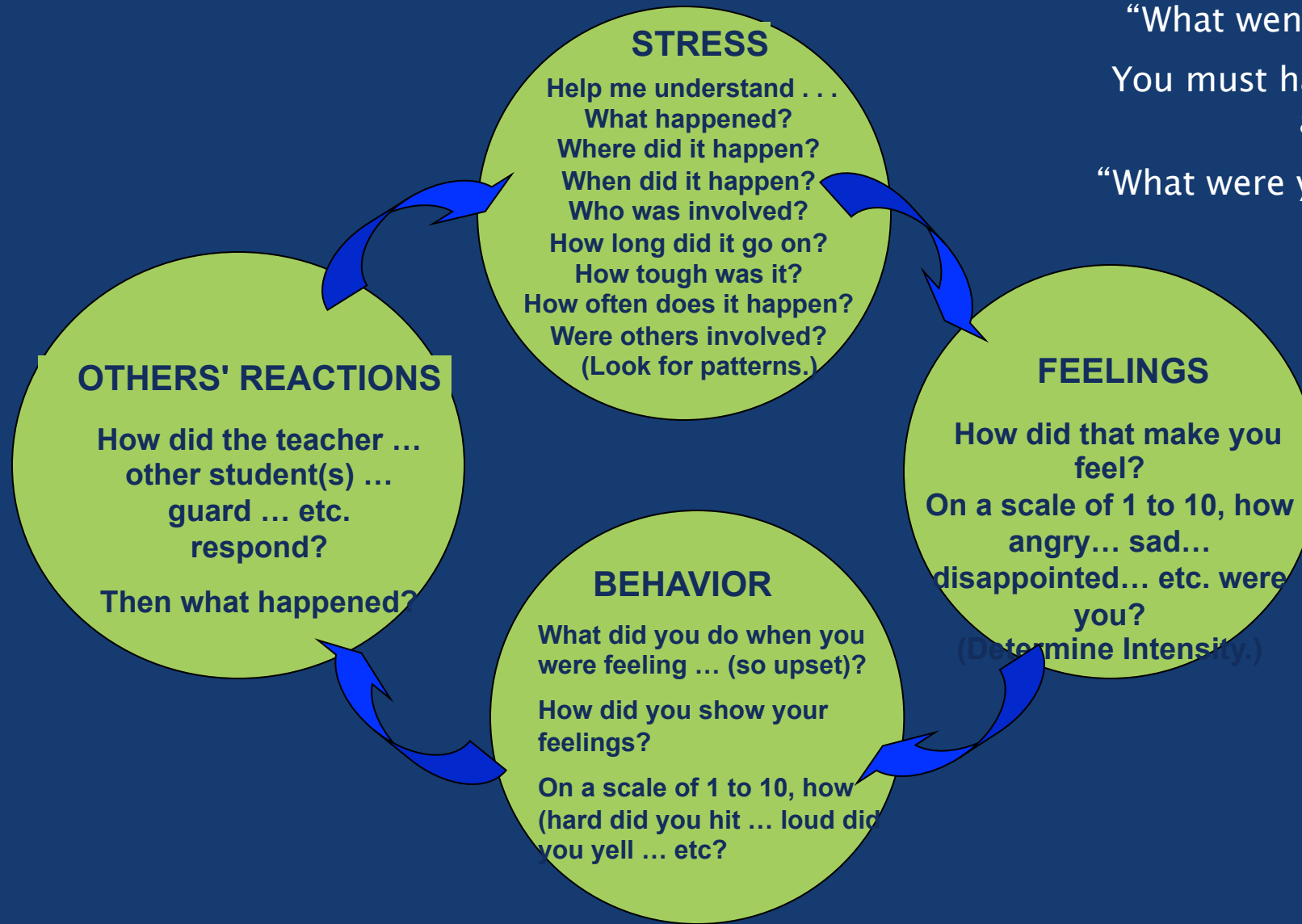
## HOW DID OTHERS REACT?

Did the end result of this situation make things better or worse for you?

# Questions to Ask to Obtain a Good Timeline

## SELF CONCEPT & IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

## THOUGHTS



“What went through your mind?”

You must have had some thoughts about that.”

“What were you saying to yourself at this point?”

# Practice



# Wrap UP!

## Today we explored

- ◆ **Fine tuning listening skills** that foster relationships and resiliency
- ◆ **Clarifying destructive patterns of behavior** that block youth from social emotional progress
- ◆ **Structuring constructive dialogue** following a significant behavioral incident
- ◆ **Successfully deescalating** extreme behavior through verbal skills that build relationship

# Cognitive Map of the Six Stages of LSCI

## Stage 1: Drain Off

Staff de-escalating skills to drain off the student's intense feelings while controlling one's counter-aggressive reactions

## Stage 2: Timeline

Staff relationship skills to obtain and validate the student's perception of the crisis

## Stage 3: Central Issue

Staff diagnostic skills to determine if the crisis represents one of the six LSCI patterns of self-defeating behavior

## Stage 4: Insight

Staff clinical skills to pursue the student's specific pattern of self-defeating behavior for personal insight and accountability

## Stage 5: New Skills

Staff empowering skills to teach the student new social skills to overcome his pattern of self-defeating behavior

## Stage 6: Transfer of Training

Staff consultation and contracting skills to help the student re-enter the classroom and to reinforce and generalize new social skills

Diagnostic Stages

Reclaiming Stages

# Summary of the Six Stages of a Successful LSCI

How to use a youth's crisis as an opportunity for personal insight and social skills learning

## Stage 1: The Drain Off

Youth Stage	Staff Stage	Staff Skills
Crisis Stage	De-Escalation Stage	De-Escalation Skills
I'm upset and out of control!	I need to drain off the youth's intense feelings and help him control his inappropriate behavior	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle</li><li>• Listening</li><li>• Attending</li><li>• Reassuring</li><li>• Affirming</li><li>• Validating</li><li>• Decoding</li></ul>



# Summary of the Six Stages of a Successful LSCI

How to use a youth's crisis as an opportunity for personal insight and social skills learning

## Stage 2: The Timeline

Youth Stage	Staff Stage	Staff Skills
Timeline Stage	Relationship Stage	Interviewing Skills
This is what happened to me as I remember it.	<p>I need to encourage the youth to tell his story; to feel heard and understood.</p> <p>I need to validate the youth's perceptions, thoughts and feelings about the crisis.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understanding the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle</li><li>• Listening</li><li>• Attending</li><li>• Reassuring</li><li>• Affirming</li><li>• Validating</li><li>• Decoding</li></ul>



# LSCI Certification Training [www.lsci.org](http://www.lsci.org)

- **IDENTIFYING THE SOURCE OF STRESS:**

The Red Flag Reclaiming Intervention

**LEARNING NEW WAYS TO UNDERSTAND:**

The Reality Rub Reclaiming Intervention

**BUILDING PRO-SOCIAL SKILLS:**

The New Tools Reclaiming Intervention

- **FOSTERING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY:**

The Symptom Estrangement Reclaiming Intervention

**NURTURING SELF-REGULATION:**

The Massaging Numb Values Reclaiming Intervention

**FINDING POSITIVE FRIENDS:**

The Manipulation of Body Boundaries Reclaiming Intervention

# Next Steps:

# LSCI

Life Space Crisis Intervention

—ONLINE—

*Check out why over 12,000 professionals rated LSCI as their best in-service training experience!*



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## ***The advanced skills of LSCI are available online!***

Since 1991, The LSCI Institute has been providing Educators, Counselors, Psychologists, Social Workers, Youth Care Professionals, and parents with interactive, therapeutic strategies for turning crisis situations into learning opportunities for children and youth with chronic patterns of self-defeating behaviors.

Given the ever-increasing constraints on time, travel, and continuing education funding, we now offer you the option to complete three of our trainings online, using our video-based training modules, presented by LSCI master Trainers, you can gain advanced skills for helping kids from the comfort of your home or the convenience of your office – on your own schedule!

## ***The online programs available from LSCI include:***



### **Introduction to Life Space Crisis Intervention:**

***Advanced, Verbal Skills for Professional Staff  
Working with Challenging Children and Youth***



### **The Angry Smile:**

***The Psychology of Passive Aggressive  
Behavior in Families, Schools & Workplaces***



### **LSCI Refresher & Advanced Certification Courses, Levels 2-4**

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