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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

Bonnie Springer, Ph.D
Andrea Criste, M.Ed.
National Youth at Risk Conference
Savannah, GA
March 5, 2018
“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)
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)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traditional School Punishment</th>
<th>LSCI-inspired Discipline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Based on a system of punishment &amp; reward</td>
<td>Based on teaching &amp; helping kids solve a problem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rote b=c formula</td>
<td>Gives misbehavior a context; students see how their actions impact others.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Makes the school culture adversarial</td>
<td>Cultivates community, working together &amp; mutual respect</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supports the labeling of children into “good” and “bad.”</td>
<td>Focus is on the behavior as a ‘bad choice’, not on the student as a ‘bad kid.’</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bandage approach with few lasting effects; Students learn little</td>
<td>Children develop new skills and apply them to future situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PUTS CHILDREN DOWN</td>
<td>BUILDS CHILDREN UP</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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 Captain and the Lighthouse
BREAKING THE CONFLICT CYCLE
Breaking the Conflict Cycle

Be a Listener not a Lecturer

I remind myself every morning:
Nothing I say this day will teach me
anything. So if I’m going to learn, I
must do it by listening.

-- Larry King
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
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 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!
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.

-I.R. Knost
Breaking the Conflict Cycle

The Timeline
Timeline: The 7 Essential Questions

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

WHAT HAPPENED?

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?
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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage 1: Drain Off</th>
<th>Staff de-escalating skills to drain off the student’s intense feelings while controlling one’s counter-aggressive reactions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stage 2: Timeline</td>
<td>Staff relationship skills to obtain and validate the student’s perception of the crisis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 3: Central Issue</td>
<td>Staff diagnostic skills to determine if the crisis represents one of the six LSCI patterns of self-defeating behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 4: Insight</td>
<td>Staff clinical skills to pursue the student’s specific pattern of self-defeating behavior for personal insight and accountability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 5: New Skills</td>
<td>Staff empowering skills to teach the student new social skills to overcome his pattern of self-defeating behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage 6: Transfer of Training</td>
<td>Staff consultation and contracting skills to help the student re-enter the classroom and to reinforce and generalize new social skills</td>
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</table>
How to use a youth’s crisis as an opportunity for personal insight and social skills learning

## Stage 1: The Drain Off

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Stage</th>
<th>Staff Stage</th>
<th>Staff Skills</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crisis Stage</td>
<td>De-Escalation Stage</td>
<td>De-Escalation Skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| I’m upset and out of control!| I need to drain off the youth’s intense feelings and help him control his inappropriate behavior | - Understanding the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle  
- Listening  
- Attending  
- Reassuring  
- Affirming  
- Validating  
- Decoding |
How to use a youth’s crisis as an opportunity for personal insight and social skills learning

### Stage 2: The Timeline

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<th>Youth Stage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Timeline Stage</td>
<td>Relationship Stage</td>
<td>Interviewing Skills</td>
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</table>
| This is what happened to me as I remember it. | I need to encourage the youth to tell his story; to feel heard and understood. I need to validate the youth’s perceptions, thoughts and feelings about the crisis. | • Understanding the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle  
• Listening  
• Attending  
• Reassuring  
• Affirming  
• Validating  
• Decoding |
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:

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 1997, 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 training 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:

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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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