

Working Collaboratively With Youth At Risk... Or Anyone At All!

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Things to Consider...

- The Prefrontal Cortex
- Brain Development
- Qualities of Character Important to Adolescent Development
- Skills Teens Need to Have in Today's Society
- Five Goals of Adolescent Behaviour
- Control vs. Influence

The Prefrontal Cortex:

Impulse control

Regulating Emotions

Empathy

Considering Consequences

Self Awareness

Morality

Decision making

****The last brain structure to reach maturity****

Brain Development

Brain development can be enhanced through experiencing engaging and stimulating activities

Choices teens make influence the brain's development in healthy or unhealthy ways;
“Use It or Lose It”

Trauma greatly influences brain development and can cause a “stuck” effect in development

Qualities of Character Important for Adolescent Development

Courage

Responsibility

Cooperation

Respect

Self Esteem

Skills Teens Need To Succeed

Leadership

Negotiation

Goal Setting

Motivation

Creative Thinking

Problem Solving

Effective Communication

Five Goals of Adolescent Behaviour

Belonging

Power

Protection

Withdrawal

Challenge

How Teens Approach the Five Goals of Adolescent Behaviour

Positive Approach	Teen's Goal	Negative Approach
Contributing	Belonging	Undue Attention-Seeking
Independence	Power	Rebellion
Assertiveness	Protection	Revenge
Appropriate Avoidance	Withdrawal	Undue Avoidance
Safe Adventures	Challenge	Thrill Seeking/ Dangerous Risk Taking

CONTROL

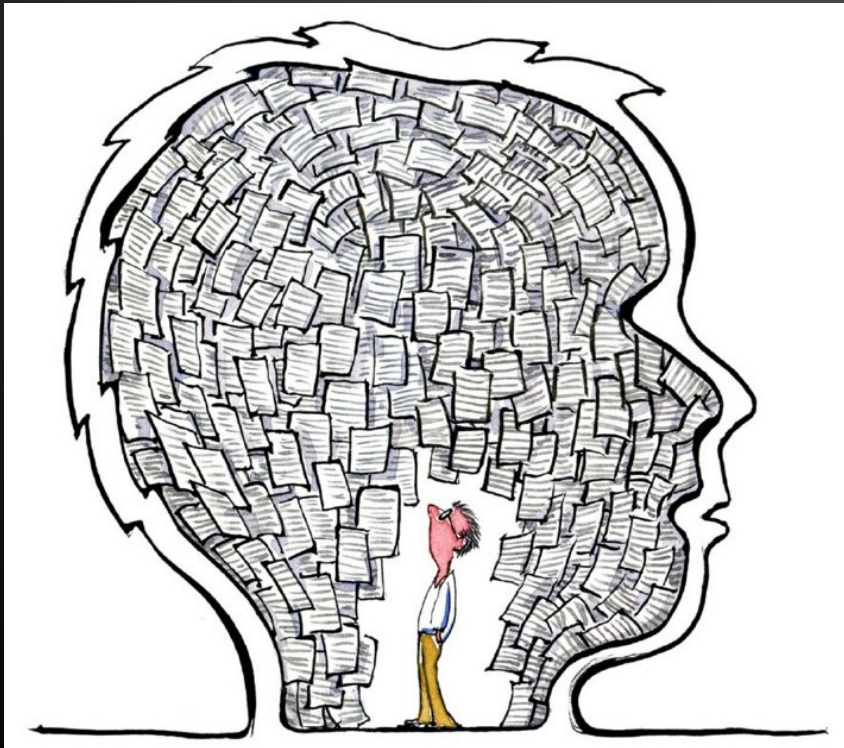
vs.

INFLUENCE

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What is your philosophy when working with youth?



Your philosophy
will guide your
actions...

Strength Based Approach

A strength-based approach is a manner of doing things rooted in the belief:

- that people (and groups of people) have existing competencies
- that people have resources and are capable of learning new skills and solving problems
- that people can use existing competencies to identify and address their own concerns
- that people can be involved in the process of discovery and learning
- that individuals can build on the successes in their past

“Kids Do Well If They Can...”
~ Dr. Ross Greene



**Kids that aren't doing well are lacking
in the crucial cognitive skills of:**

Flexibility

Adaptability

Frustration Tolerance

Problem Solving

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YOUR JOB

Not Motivated



Give Incentives

Skills Deficit



Teach Skills

Building Your Relationship... Working Collaboratively

**“Respect is something you have to give in order to get.”
~Author, Bernard Malamud**



MUTUAL RESPECT...

Easier Said Than Done

Ways Adults Disrespect Youth:

- Yelling
- Demanding
- Name Calling
- Using Terms Like “Those kids”/ Categorizing Them
- Being Dismissive/ Devaluing Their Experiences
- Being Over Protective
- Making Assumptions Based on Friends/Family
- Not Allowing Youth To Solve Their Own Problems
- Never Compromising
- Using Language That is Beyond Their Understanding
- Using Sarcasm
- Making Assumptions Based on Educational Success (or Lack Thereof)

The Prefrontal Cortex:

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The last brain structure to reach maturity

Building **relationships** is key!



“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

-John C. Maxwell

Who Owns The Problem?

**Supportive Adult
Owned**



Provide Discipline



Less Structured
Discipline Approaches



More Structured
Discipline Approaches

Shared



Provide Discipline and
Support

Teen Owned



Provide Support



If appropriate allow
natural consequences
to occur



Let the teen handle
the problem but offer
support through
active communication

“I” Statements

- Tells the youth how you feel without blaming or demanding the youth to change
- Helps you state what is true for you while respecting the youth
- Increases self-esteem by taking ownership of your part
- Engages the youth in problem solving

Example of an “I” Statement

Step 1: State what's important to you

“It's important to me that you and I get along and...”

Step 2: Describe what you are reacting to in neutral terms

“...when you're aggressive toward me...”

Step 3: Explain your feelings without attacking/ blaming

“...I feel really upset...”

Step 4: Explain your interests and why you feel the way you do

“... because it prevents me from being able to help you the best I can.”

Step 5: Ask for help in solving the problem

“Can we spend some time talking about how we can deal with anger and frustration in a way we're both comfortable with?”

FLAC Method

Listen for **FEELINGS**. Showing empathy will allow a teen who previously saw you as an enemy to start thinking of you as an ally.

Remind teen of **LIMITATIONS**.

Look for **ALTERNATIVES** together. This teaches the valuable skill of creative thinking.

Set **CONSEQUENCES** if needed/appropriate. Once you have taught skills you might need to reinforce by giving consequences that logically fit the situation. They don't need to be harsh.

“I understand why you don’t want to come in by your curfew. It sounds like it is embarrassing for you to have to leave your friends when they get to stay out later than you. Sometimes it’s not safe to be out late at night though and you have to get up early for school in the morning. I know some of your friends are using drugs and it’s not helpful for you to be around that. Even if you’re not doing those things, it can be a dangerous situation or you could be exposed to harmful experiences. I understand you need to try new things and be more independent but I’m sure you can do those things in a safer way. Let’s think of something you can do that will make coming in by curfew more appealing OR let’s think of a curfew that is acceptable to BOTH of us... So what do you think should happen if you don’t come in by curfew? ...Great idea! Ok, what if we say you’ll have to come in at 10pm on the weekends and if you continue staying out past curfew, you’ll have to be in at 9pm weekdays AND weekends for 2 weeks? I’m glad we can agree on this.

CIRCLE “listening for feelings”
and “showing empathy”.

UNDERLINE limitations.

Draw a **RECTANGLE** around
“looking for alternatives”.

Draw a **CLOUD** around
consequences.

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Provide Discipline



Less Structured
Discipline Approaches



More Structured
Discipline Approaches

Shared



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Five Steps of Active Communication


Listen Actively

Listen for Feelings

**Look for alternatives and evaluate
consequences**

Offer Encouragement

Follow Up Later

A large blue glass bowl is the central focus, filled with water. To its left is a smaller, identical bowl, also filled with water, which is captured in the middle of a splash, with a spray of water droplets rising from its rim. Above the smaller bowl, a small, stylized orange fish is depicted in a swimming pose. The background is a solid, bright white.

“Courage is the
confidence to
take
a known risk for a
known purpose.”

Four Ways We ***DISCOURAGE*** Youth

Focus on
Mistakes

Expect Too
Little

Expect Too
Much

Become Over
Protective

**Being a Know-
It-All**

Sarcasm

Judging

Interrogating

Giving Advice

Distracting

Commanding

Placating

Moralizing

Phrases NOT to use...

“It’s not so bad. Let’s go get an ice cream...”

“You know what I would do if I were you?”

“You know what I think is happening right now?”

“And how’s THAT workin’ out for ya?”

“I can’t believe you just said/did that...”

“Why would you do that?”

“I told you so.../not to.../ it wouldn’t work...”

“You know better than that...”

“I would have never done that when I was your age...”

Ways To Build Relationships Through Communication



Use Interest Exploring Questions:

- What is it about ____ that is so important to you?
- What concerns you about _____?
- What do you value about _____?
- What do you worry will happen if _____?
- What would that accomplish for you?
- What would that do for you?
- What is it that bothers you most about that?

YOUTH: "I can't go to that school"

ADULT: "What is it about going to that school that concerns you?"

Y: "They're a bunch of losers"

A: "What do you worry will happen if you go to that school?"

Y: "I'm worried I won't find anyone I like and I won't have any friends."

A: "What concerns you about not having any friends at the school?"

Y: "I'm concerned I will lose my old friends because I don't see them as much and I won't make any new friends at the new school and I'll be all alone and then I'll be a loser too."

A: "What do you value most about having friends at school?"

Y: "It's important to have friends! You'll look like an idiot if you're walking around by yourself all the time and then you'll get picked on. If you have friends at school at least you have someone to stick up for you sometimes."

A: "It sounds to me like your reputation is really important to you and having friends there to support you is important too. Does that sound about right?"

Y: "Yeah I guess"

A: "How can we ensure you don't lose your old friends? What ways can we think of that can ensure you find at least someone at the new school you have something in common with? What can we do to make sure you don't feel like a loser your first few days at school while you're meeting new friends?"

Invite **participation** into
problem-solving!



The Method of Choice

When people are empowered to make decisions that affect their lives their self esteem rises, they feel better about the authority figure giving them choice, they feel more responsible for the outcome, they make better decisions in the future.

Either/ Or Choices
Open Ended Choices

Oh I'm sorry. I didn't realize that
you're an expert on my life & how I
should live it. Please
continue while I
take notes.

somee cards
user card





Working Collaboratively With Youth

Develop empathy for youth by understanding :

- 1) The development of their brains
- 2) Their needs/goals for successful development
- 3) They are the experts in their own lives

Working Collaboratively With Youth

Develop your Strength Based Philosophy:

- 1) Kids do well when they can
- 2) If kids are not doing well, they are lacking important {cognitive} skills
- 3) If they are lacking {cognitive} skills, we need to teach them skills

Working Collaboratively With Youth

Build a healthy relationship with youth by:

- 1) Showing mutual respect
- 2) Understanding who owns the problem & what to do about it
- 3) Discipline: “I” Statements & FLAC Method
Support: Natural Consequences & Active Communication
- 4) Avoid pitfalls in communication & discouragement
- 5) Interest Exploring Questions & Choice

Resources

“The Explosive Child” – Dr. Ross Greene

www.livesinthebalance.org

Active Parenting Publishers

www.activeparenting.com

One Circle Foundation

www.onecirclefoundation.org

Center for Collaborative Problem Solving

www.ccps.info