Using CPR (The Child-Parent Relationship) to Open the Window to Your Child’s Heart

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Goals of this Presentation

• To EMPOWER parents and decrease feelings of guilt, helplessness and frustration.
• To strengthen the parent-child relationship by facilitating personal growth and change in both parent and child, thus increasing overall wellness within the family.
• All while returning control to you and increasing self-esteem and fostering a healthy self-concept within your child
How does this happen?

- By being willing to take a risk and do things differently.
- Looking at the world through your child’s eyes
- By learning to recognize your child’s emotional needs
- By learning how to convey acceptance, empathy and encouragement to your child
- By separating the child’s qualities from their behaviors and building on their strengths
- By mastering the skills of effective limit and boundary setting
20 years from now, what would you and your child remember about your child-parent relationship as it is today?
Fundamental Tasks of a Parent

Love Your Child FOREVER
“There is nothing you can ever do/say that will change the way I feel about you”

Keep Your Child Safe

Guide Him/Her
Parenting Styles

From: Joanne E. Carlson’s Book: “The Parent Effect”

My House, My Rules Parents (Controlling)
Cool Parents (Permissive)
Your Life Is My Life Parents (Enmeshed)
Not Now, I’m Busy Parents (Neglectful)
Easygoing Parents (Balanced)
Parenting Styles:
My House, My Rules Parents (Controlling)

- Primary Focus= having your child maintain the understanding that the parent holds all the control in the family, including how the child thinks and feels.
- Parent directs the child’s behavior with strict rules and expectations with the end goal being compliance.
- In these families, children tend to feel that the only way that they can be appreciated or have their parents approval is if they are performing “perfectly”.
- Controlling parents tend to:
  - Set high expectations for their child
  - Be overly involved and micromanage their child’s life
  - Use emotional manipulation to maintain control over their child.
  - Use punishment to control their child
  - Focus on the issues of respect and miss the issues that the child is trying to communicate
Parenting Styles: Cool Parents (Permissive)

- Primary Focus = enjoyment rather than active parenting.
- There are very few rules, expectations and consequences. They give their child a great deal of freedom and may genuinely believe that their child has the maturity to make decisions for themselves.
- Permissive parents tend to:
  - Be their child’s friend with the need to be liked and approved of by their child
  - Strive to be a part of their child’s social circle
  - Be less particular about the types of friends their child associates with
  - Prefer to be a resource to their child instead of a disciplinarian
  - Be more relaxed and child-centered and encourage a close, open relationship with their child
  - Be uncomfortable with saying “no” and setting limits/boundaries
Parenting Styles: Your Life Is My Life Parents (Enmeshed)

- **Primary Focus= “Over-Involvement”** The parent maintains control by being overly involved in all aspects of the child’s life.
- There are two types of parents in this category:
  - Parents who are overly demanding and push their children relentlessly.
  - Parents who believe that their child can do no wrong and instill a sense of entitlement in their child.
- **Enmeshed parents tend to:**
  - Be overly involved in their child’s life (micromanage)
  - Will rescue their child and then often times excuse any inappropriate behavior exhibited by their child.
  - Place high expectations on their child academically, socially & through extra-curricular activities.
  - Over-protect and over-indulge their child.
  - Be overly concerned about appearances: the parent wants to “brag” about their child.
Parenting Styles: Not Now, I’m Busy Parents (Neglectful)

- Primary Focus= Task-oriented vs. relationship-oriented
- Spectrum falls between parents who are trying to manage so many different things that they are just not able to do more with their child, to those that do not want to be a parent but as circumstances happened, they are one
- Neglectful parents tend to:
  - Be dealing with life circumstances that prevent them from being able to spend as much time with their child
  - Not have enough resources available to them to be as active in their child’s life
  - Struggle to balance work and home and often feel guilty about their lack of involvement in their child’s life
  - Be overextended, discouraged, or unavailable to their child
  - View their responsibility of parenting as providing structure and the basic needs of their child
  - Have unrealistic expectations that their child can do many things for themselves: monitor their own behaviors, manage their own educational & social needs
Parenting Styles: Easygoing Parents (Balanced)

- Primary Focus: nurturing and supportive while providing appropriate supervision and guidance.
- Balanced parents tend to:
  - Be warm, accepting and playful, even when the child is being standoffish or difficult.
  - Display a genuine “fondness” of their child (unconditional positive regard).
  - Let their child know that they are loved and respected.
  - Offer support and encouragement.
  - Show an interest in their child’s life and find them enjoyable to be around.
  - Make an effort to spend time with their child and to understand what their child finds important which validates the child and shows acceptance.
  - Set clear expectations and rules and will enforce consequences.
  - Focus on the behaviors, not the person when they need to correct a behavior.
Case Example of Parenting Styles

Aaron, a 12 year old boy in 6th grade, is refusing to attend school today.

**Controlling Style Parental Response:**

- Aaron, you WILL attend school every day or you will never play on the computer again. Don’t you realize that you will be a complete failure in life if you do not work hard at school?

**Permissive Style Parental Response:**

- Aaron, I think you should go to school today, but if you insist that you are going to stay home, I will write a note to the school saying that you are sick today.

**Enmeshed Style Parental Response:**

- Aaron, that sounds like a good idea. I will email your teacher’s and tell them that you are not feeling well today and then I will stay home from work as well and we can go to the movies together, it will be lots of fun!

**Neglectful Style Parental Response:**

- Aaron, I do not have time to argue about this with you, I have a million things that I need to do and I cannot spend my morning debating this. You know that school is required and you need to go.
Case Example of Parenting Styles

**Balanced Style Parental Response:**

- **Mom:** Aaron, I love you. I hear that you really don’t want to go to school today. Tell me more about that.
- **Aaron:** There are some kids at school that are calling me names and I am tired of feeling sad at school all the time.
- **Mom:** Oh, you feel hurt by these kids calling you names and that makes you not want to go to school.
- **Aaron:** Yes! I’m tired of that and I don’t want to go.
- **Mom:** I understand you don’t want to go, but our family rule is that you go to school everyday unless you are sick.
- **Aaron:** I am sick! Sick and tired of these kids.
- **Mom:** Aaron, I can hear how hard this is for you. I wonder if you would be willing to go with me to the school and we can talk about this with your counselor? Maybe we can come up with a solution all together?
- **Aaron:** Yes, I am willing to do that. Thank you mom for being so supportive and listening to me. I love you.
- **Mom:** I love you too and I am always here if you want to talk.
Which parenting style do you identify with?

How is your parenting style impacting how your child views him/herself?
Gifts of Parenting

• One of the most precious gifts you can give to your child is to study his/her temperament and once you’ve learned it, work to accept it.

• If children are loved for their own sake, *unconditionally*, regardless of their achievements they are more likely to reach their true potential.

• If they sense that you respect them for the qualities they’ve been given, they’ll gain confidence to truly shine.
Imperfect Parents

• Parents are imperfect, they make mistakes too!
  – If parents have the courage to be imperfect and allow their children to be imperfect, growth and progress will take place

• The most important thing may not be what you do... but what you do *after* what you have done

• The responsibility for repairing the parent-child relationship lies within you.
Relationships and Attachment

• Secure attachment is an essential foundation for psychological development across the lifespan
• It is developed from predictable relationships in which a child feels understood, connected and protected by their primary caregiver
• Parents who are emotionally available and responsive, perceptive and flexible facilitate this process, thus setting the foundation for healthy relationships in the future.
Mirror Neurons and Self-Concept

• How you see your child is how the child will see him/herself.
• A child’s behavior is a projection of their view of self.
• To change the way a child behaves, you have to change the way they see themselves by creating a positive self-concept.
Connecting Feelings and Behavior

• There is a direct connection between how children feel and how they behave.
• Children will make good choices when they feel good about themselves.
• How do we help them to feel good?
• We accept them as they are, including all of their thoughts, feelings and behaviors.
You’re Wanting Change?

Children will not change, until they are free \textit{NOT} to change

“Until you accept me as I am, I will keep defending who I am”
A Shift in Attitude

We challenge you to begin focusing on the donut and NOT the hole!

Meaning, let’s begin to focus on your strengths as a parent, your child’s strengths and
NOT the problem.
The world through a child’s eyes

- Can feel scary
- They experience high expectations and demands
- They are searching for structure, boundaries and guidance, to help them feel more safe
- They need to be seen
- They want to feel understood
  - The more you try to push away unhappy feelings, the more your child will become stuck in them
  - If you can comfortably accept their unhappy feelings, it will be easier for your child to let them go
- They need to know you care
- They need to experience unconditional love and acceptance
Parenting and the Child’s Brain

from the book, *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*, by Siegel and Bryson

• By understanding a few things about how your child’s brain works, you will be better able to understand your child, respond to difficult situations more effectively and build a foundation for social, emotional and mental health!
Brain Basics
from the book, *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*, by Siegel and Bryson

- Everyday parenting challenges come from the lack of integration within your child’s brain.
- The brain doesn’t fully develop until a human is in their mid-twenties.
- The not so good news...
  - You have to wait for your child’s brain to develop.
- The good news...
  - You can influence how your child’s brain grows using everyday moments.
Brain Basics
from the book, *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*, by Siegel and Bryson

- The brain is plastic or moldable. It physically changes throughout the course of our lives through experience.
- Our brain is constantly wired and re-wired
- What you do matters!
  - Parents can directly shape the growth of their child’s brain by the experiences they offer.
Brain Basics
Integration vs. Dis-Integration

from the book, *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*, by Siegel and Bryson

- How do I tell if my child is in a state of Dis-Integration?
  - Children are overwhelmed by their emotions.
  - This can feel confusing and chaotic.
  - They lose the ability to respond calmly.
  - One extreme is chaos (a total lack of control) the other is rigidity (too much control).
    - When we’re closest to chaos or rigidity, we are farthest from our mental and emotional health.
  - Leads to tantrums, meltdowns, aggression and difficulty with problem solving.
Brain Basics
from the book, *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*, by Siegel and Bryson

• We want to focus on integration!
  – Wiring and re-wiring
  – Providing experiences that create connections within the brain
  – The more they become integrated the more they will be able to use their mental resources to full capacity. This means they will thrive emotionally, intellectually and socially.
  – An integrated brain leads to improved decision making, better control of one’s body and emotions, increased self-understanding, healthy relationships and success in school.
The Brain in the Palm of Your Hand

from the book, *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*, by Siegel and Bryson

- Make a fist with your thumb tucked inside your fingers
  - Fist = brain and your wrist/forearm is spinal cord
  - Thumb tucked inside is the midbrain
    - Where emotions and memories are created/processed
    - Our “emotional brain”
  - Back of hand and fingers is the cerebral cortex
    - High functioning, logical thinking, empathy, problem-solving abilities
    - Our “rational brain”
- Fingernails
  - Logic and reasoning, problem solving
The Integrated Brain
• Sometimes our emotional brain and rational brain don’t communicate so well.
  – Emotions become too overwhelming and we “flip our lids”
  – Now take all four fingers and stand them straight up! You’ve just “flipped your lid”
Flipping Your Lid

from the book, *The whole-brain child: 12 revolutionary strategies to nurture your child's developing mind*, by Siegel and Bryson

• When we “flip our lids” our rational brains have poor connection with our emotional brains
  – Feelings are intense, problem-solving decreases and we’re not able to access the logical part of our brain
  – To restore this, we need to calm our anger, ease our fears and close our fingers back over our thumb again

• Both children and adults can flip their lids
  – The way to move forward is learning how to reconnect the rational brain with the emotional brain... aka calming down and learning how to respond to strong emotions.
The Dis-Integrated Brain
The Dis-Integrated Brain
What to do Now?

• Focus on calming the upstairs brain (fingernails) to make good choices to help calm the big feelings from the downstairs brain
  – Positive time-outs
    • Take a few minutes alone to calm down
  – Hugs
    • The brain picks up on this chemistry and becomes calm
  – Focus on Solutions
    • Not what can I do now to teach a lesson
  – Apologize
    • Helps to reconnect with your child
    • The most important thing may not be what you did but what you do after what you have done.
Keeping the Emotional Tank FULL

Can help to decrease tantrums and meltdowns!

• Assess for HALT
  • Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

• Be a thermostat not a thermometer
  • Help to regulate the environment
  • Learn to RESPOND rather than react.
    – Your child’s feelings are not your feelings, so you do not need to escalate with them
Four Ways to give First Aid to a Child in Distress

• Listen with FULL attention
  – Quietly and with genuine interest

• Acknowledge his/her feelings with a word
  – “Oh”, “Uh-huh”, “I see”

• Name the feeling
  • “That feels scary” or “You feel mad”

• Grant his wishes in fantasy
  – “I wish you could go swimming right now too!”
Reflective Responding

• A way of following your child
• You begin to reflect behaviors, thoughts, feelings, needs and wishes
• Helps you to understand your child and helps your child to feel understood

“You felt ____________ (insert feeling word) when ________________ (insert event/circumstance).”
Focus on Your “Be With” Attitude

From the manual, *Child-parent-relationship therapy (CPRT): A 10-session filial therapy model* By Gary Landreth and Sue Bratton

“Be With” Attitude

- I am here; I hear you
- I understand
- I care

NOT

- I always agree
- I must make you happy
- I will solve your problems
How does this help?

• Attitude is more important than any words we use. When our words are infused with our real feelings of empathy they will speak directly to a child’s heart.

• By giving your child a vocabulary for their inner reality, they will have words to communicate what they are experiencing and can begin to help themselves.
Why *not* Questions?

• It’s much easier to talk to a parent who accepts your feelings, rather than one that questions them or asks for explanations
  – “Why do you feel that way?” or “What happened?”
• All you can do is attempt to understand your child’s feelings, even as irrational as they may seem.
• You are more helpful when you HELP them rather than lecturing them
• Being listened to raises self-esteem and helps one to explore the things that both cause *and* reduce anxiety
Talking WITH them, not TO them

• One of the biggest struggles in child-parent relationship is absence of communication
• Can you respect your child/teen, even when you disagree?
• Does not mean we cannot guide him, but we also cannot FORCE him into our mold
• When we rebuke, criticize or find fault in thinking patterns, communication decreases and children lose willingness to expose themselves
Talking WITH them not TO them

• We are often inclined to assume that we know how a child feels
• If our child feels differently, we close the door to communication
• Their ideas and viewpoints are important
• *Listening* helps to discover their logic, *guiding* can help to see a different viewpoint
• Children will not be open with us if we tell them how wrong we think they are
Eliminating Criticism

• Our emphasis on mistakes is disastrous!
  – When we direct attention from the positive to the negative, children become fearful and discouraged, thus leading to more mistakes.
  – Criticism does not “teach”, it discourages
  – We cannot build on weakness, only on strength!

• Putting the emphasis on the positive
  – Centering attention on what our children do well expresses confidence in their abilities, they feel encouraged and mistakes/faults dwindle
Separating the deed from the doer

• Children need to be recognized as good children who misbehave

• When we label a child, we see him as we have labeled him. This is how the child will also see himself

• Separating the behavior from the person will show a distinction between having faith in the child for making a poor choice
Shame

• When constantly corrected, the child gets the feeling that he is always wrong or may become fearful of making a mistake
• This communicates that unless you are perfect, you have no value
• This can create a negative view of self
  - “Who I am is not okay”
Power Struggles

• Are you trying to “win” or create change?
• You cannot control your child
  – You really can’t make your child do anything
• It is your fundamental task to GUIDE them
• Learn how to lead and stimulate!
Choice Giving

• If all of the child’s life he/she is told what to do, when will he learn to make a choice and learn self-responsibility?

• If an adult intervenes, solves the conflict or uses punishment, what has the child learned?
  • Mom or Dad will stop me if I get out of hand

– We want children to learn how to make their own choices and for them to become self-controlled and self-responsible
Choice Giving

• Free will is an attribute that will define your child’s life
  – Choice giving lasts all day
  – How they make choices and decide between right and wrong will directly influence everything else
• Providing children with age appropriate choices provides opportunity to make decisions and take responsibility for their decisions.
• By giving chances to mess up, they can learn from mistakes and make a different choice in the future
Guidelines for Choice Giving

Get their attention!

Decide what is most important and work on one choice at a time

Give little choices to little kids and bigger choices to bigger kids

Limit the emotion in your voice
A three year old is clutching a large handful of cookies and plans to eat them

Choice: You may *choose* to eat one cookie and put the rest back or you may *choose* to put them all back. Which do you choose?

If the Child Objects: I know you’d like to have two cookies, but that’s not part of the choice. You can *choose* to have one cookie or you can *choose* to put them all back. Which do you *choose*?

If the Child Objects Again: If you do not *choose*, you *choose* for me to choose. Do you *choose* to have one cookie or do you *choose* to put them all back? (Wait patiently)
I see that you have *chosen* to for me to *choose*. I *choose* for you to put all of the cookies back.
Issue: Parents are frustrated that their children repeatedly do not put away their toys after playing with them

Instead of: listening to each child’s perspective about what happened, mediating, and attempting to solve the problem

Get their attention: We are about to institute a new and significant policy and the policy is:
Choices Given as Consequences
from the video Choices, Cookies & Kids: A Creative Approach to Discipline by Garry Landreth

When you *choose* to clean up your toys in the family room, you *choose* to watch your favorite TV show this evening.

When you *choose* to not pick up your toys in the family room, you *choose* to not watch your favorite TV show this evening.
The Four Anchors of Boundary Setting

From Dr. John Townsend’s Book: “Boundaries With Teens”

Anchor 1: Love
Anchor 2: Truth
Anchor 3: Freedom
Anchor 4: Reality
Anchor 1
Love: I Am on Your Side

• First and foremost, start with love when you set a boundary.
• Love opens your child up so they can hear what you are saying and accept the boundary that is set.
• Love allows your child to see that the behavior is the problem, NOT an out of control parent or the child herself.
Anchor 2: Truth: I Have Some Rules & Requirements

• Truth is found in the rules and expectations and teach your child what she needs to do or needs to avoid.

• If you feel as though you are being a mean parent because you have rules and expectations, this is a problem.

• Instead of getting mad, get clear with your expectations.
Anchor 3: Freedom: You Can Choose to Respect or Reject the Rules

• Freedom is absolutely necessary!
• Though scary to think about, you really have no control over your child choosing the right thing. There are very few things that we can truly force our children to do.
• The freedom to choose poorly is needed in order for your child to learn to choose well.
• Freedom does have limits, mainly centered around safety for your child and others.
Anchor 4: Reality: Here Is What Will Happen

• In order for your child to learn that acceptable behavior brings positive results and unacceptable behavior brings uncomfortable results, they need consequences.

• Consequences need to be said and done: in other words, the parent needs to follow through on the consequences or your child will be taught that they do not need to follow your rules/expectations.
Your Next Boundary Setting Conversation Should Look Like This:

1. “I love you and am on your side.”
2. “I have some rules and requirements for your behavior.”
3. “You can choose to respect or reject these rules.”
4. “Here is what will happen if you reject these rules.”
Closing Thoughts

• By using the skills that we have discussed today, we hope that you will find yourself much more EMPOWERED when it comes to parenting your child, which will decrease your feelings of guilt, helplessness and frustration.

• While using these skills, you are building a solid, healthy relationship with your child, which fosters personal growth in you the parent, as well as your child and even further on to your grandchildren's lives.

• These skills are designed to allow you to regain control in the parent-child relationship while at the same time, growing the amount of self-esteem and the healthy self-concept of your child, which is one of the top priorities parents have for their child.

• Your child’s emotional health will flourish as they begin to possess:
  – a positive self-concept
  – increased emotional vocabulary
  – self-control
  – increased self-esteem
  – increased personal accountability
  – Increased healthy relationships that you have modeled/taught to them by giving them the love, support, acceptance and structure that a child needs to feel secure in him/herself.

• Ultimately, these are the skills that will help you open the window to your child’s heart
So, we ask you again...

What do you want your kids to remember 20 years from now about your relationship?

How do you begin a new role as a leader? How do you keep your children safe? How do you show them that nothing they ever do or say will change how much you love them?

What do you decide to start doing differently today to build them up and create emotional health for tomorrow?
References


How to Contact Us!
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