

**British Columbia Foster Care  
Education Program**

**CARING FOR CHILDREN:  
GUIDING BEHAVIOUR OF  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**(6 Hours)**

**Ministry of Children and Family Development**

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## **About the Author**

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# **INTRODUCTION**

# Introduction

## A. RATIONALE

Each child has unique experiences of the world. Being able to appreciate how a child might view himself, other people, and the world is important to providing guidance and nurturing. Many children in care have experienced separation and loss as well as other difficulties. Their ability to trust and to form meaningful relationships may have been impacted, particularly if they have experienced abuse or neglect at the hands of someone they believed was supposed to take care of them. Children need to experience warmth, affection, and respect, while at the same time experiencing limits and structure.

Finding the balance between establishing “...parental authority to introduce and enforce reasonable limits while gradually giving freedom to children by encouraging them to be appropriately responsible for themselves” (National Extension Parent Education Model, p. 7) is a challenge for all parents. When guiding children or youth who may not have experienced limit setting or who may not feel very good about themselves, the challenge is even greater. That challenge is “...about not taking behavior at face value, it is about trying to interpret the behavior and looking at what the child/youth might be feeling or trying to tell us” (James, p. 168). There may be times when the child tests all the limits and when caregivers wonder why they ever got into this. Those are the real tests of a caregiver’s ability to balance limits with the child’s needs.

Many of us parent the way we were parented. As caregivers, it is important to explore our own beliefs, values and ethics related to caring for children and youth, and to consciously develop guiding practices that “...communicate values, nurture self-control and respond to misbehavior.” (National Extension Parent Education Model, p. 7).

This module addresses practices that research has identified as being effective in guiding behavior of children and youth as exemplified by the National Extension Parent Education Model: These practices include:

- observing and interpreting children’s behavior and adjusting parenting behaviors
- modeling appropriate desired behavior
- establishing and maintaining reasonable limits
- providing children with developmentally appropriate opportunities to learn responsibility

- conveying fundamental values underlying basic human decency
- teaching problem-solving skills
- monitoring children’s activities and facilitating their contact with peers and adults (p. 7).

Publications referred to in the “Foreword” support the preceding research. It is important that trainers be familiar with the legislation, policies, and standards that direct the work of caregivers and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

## **B. LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The caregiver can:

- identify and explore her own beliefs, values, ethics, and parenting styles in relation to guiding the behaviour of children and youth.
- describe possible ways to make sense of at the behaviour of children and youth.
- describe the major elements of positive parenting.
- describe elements necessary for an effective caregiving environment.
- describe how to support the development of positive self-esteem and pro-social behaviour in children and youth.
- describe how anger and aggression develop in children and youth and can articulate strategies to help children and youth manage these feelings and behaviours.

## **C. PREPARATION**

Guiding Behavior consists of two 3-hour modules, which could be delivered in the same day.

Trainers should be familiar with the material in this module. Read it thoroughly and imagine yourself going through the exercises. Think of examples you might share with the group. Make notes for yourself to supplement the Trainer’s Instructions.

The training is a joint initiative of the British Columbia Federation of Foster Parent Associations and the Ministry of Children and Family Development. Explain the educational institution's role in delivering the training.

There are numerous videos, books, courses, and groups for support in guiding the behaviors of children and youth. It is important to emphasize that the caregiver should respond to the immediate behaviors, feelings, and needs of the child or youth. The manner in which the caregiver responds is foundational to developing a relationship with the child. Any response should be able to meet the standard of "How does what I have done nurture and support the development and needs of this particular child?"

## 2. BELIEFS, VALUES, ETHICS, AND PARENTING STYLES)

### **Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can identify and explore her own beliefs, values, ethics, and parenting style in relation to guiding the behavior of children and youth.

### **Materials:**

Handouts

- Handout #5 Beliefs, Values, Ethics
- Handout #6 What's Important
- Handout #7 Parenting Styles
  
- Handout #8 Discipline and Punishment

Overheads

- Overhead #5 Beliefs, Values, Ethics
- Overhead #6 Parenting Styles

**Exercise:**

Think back to a time in your childhood when an adult was correcting their behaviour. Answer the following questions.

- What was happening?
- What did the adult do to guide your behaviour? (Provide examples if needed.)
- What did you feel about yourself and the adult? What did you say to yourself about what was happening?
- What did you do as a result of the adult's actions?
- As a child, did you think the adult was fair?

**Summary Remarks:**

How our parents raised us, how we responded to our parents, and how we felt about our experiences influence how we care for children. Appreciating the impact on a child of what a caregiver may see as a minor incident can help us to understand the importance of guiding behaviours in ways that nurture and empower children rather than punish and neglect them.

We learn about parenting from our experiences as children. Our beliefs and values about children are reflected in how we interact with them. In the past, children were seen as property and as inferior beings to be controlled and bent to the will of adults. Today, our society has decreed that children are unique individuals with rights of their own. The power and control dynamic in which many of us were raised can change.

The past does not have to be repeated. The manner in which we guide children's behaviour will help determine their view of themselves and has the potential to affect how they will guide their own children.

Barbara Coloroso (1995) suggests that in deciding how to guide behaviour we might ask ourselves "Would I want it done to me?" (p. 15).

Refer participants to Handout #5, "Beliefs, Values, Ethics," and using Overhead #5, "Beliefs, Values, Ethics," explain the following concepts.

- Beliefs are what we hold to be true about something.
- Values are what we think is important.
- Ethics are the rules or standards under which we operate. The "shoulds," "musts," "ought to's."

Some examples:

- Belief: "Children are born without a sense of right and wrong."
- Value: "It is important that children be given moral guidance."
- Ethic: "Adults must provide moral guidance to children."

## TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

The underlying concepts of beliefs, values, and ethics are connected to behavior (what we think, feel, and do). You can identify areas in the Rights of Children in care, the Child, Family and Community Service Act, and specific parts of the Standards for Foster Homes, Practice Standards for Guardianship that support these beliefs and values.

### **Exercise:**

Refer to Handout #6, "What's Important." Answer each of the questions.

It is important to remember that our beliefs, values and the rules we operate under influence our parenting styles.

### **Summary Remarks:**

Remember discussions about parenting styles in Pre-Service Training.

Review Handout #7, "Parenting Styles". The Foster Parent Handbook describes in detail the differences between discipline and punishment. These are summarized in Handout #8, "Discipline and Punishment."

Discipline comes from the word "disciple," which means to teach. Our goal as caregivers is to guide, to coach, and to teach as children develop their own self-discipline. Coloroso (1995, p. 29) suggests that discipline:

- shows kids what they have done
- gives them ownership of the experience
- gives them options for solving the problem
- leaves their dignity intact.

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One of the beliefs guiding this module is that children usually try to do the best they can in situations that may overwhelm them. Given developmental stages, their skills may be limited, even though some of their behaviours are not what we would hope for. Another belief is that the relationships that we form with children provide a foundation from which we can guide and coach them.

Close by emphasizing that we are involved in the care of children and the manner in which we do this is crucial to nurturing and guiding their development. Remind participants of the "Child and Youth Development" module. Ask them to ask themselves how the guidance model that we are looking at fits with the developmental needs of children and youth.

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### 3. MAKING SENSE OF THE BEHAVIOURS OF CHILDREN AND YOUTH

**Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can describe possible ways to make sense of the behaviour of children and youth.

**Materials:**

Handouts

- Handout #9 Caregiver Experiencing Difficulty and Caregiver Experiencing Joy
- Handout #10 The Functions of Behaviour
- Handout #11 Looking at Behaviour
  
- Handout #12 Questions for Decoding Behaviour

Overheads

- Overhead #6 Impact of Negative Personal Theories of Behaviour
- Overhead #7 Impact of Positive Personal Theories of Behaviour

#### A. Context For Behaviours

**Instructions:**

In order to respond to children and youth in caring ways, we need to look at possible reasons for their behaviour. This section will focus on looking at the behaviour of children and youth by considering:

- what influences behaviour of children and youth
- effects of children's behaviour on caregivers
- a way to look at behaviours and their possible meanings
- the impact of labeling behaviours on children and youth.

If a caregiver can figure out what the meaning is behind a behaviour she may be able to make sense of it and find ways to support the child in growth and development. You may want to use the analogy of a jigsaw puzzle and relate it to caring for children. If a child is unable to communicate needs verbally, then she finds another way to do it—through behaviour. That leaves caregivers trying to figure out the

TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

meaning of the behaviour. Share the notion of the Four H's. "...caregivers begin with a little History, a few Hunches, some Hope, and a few Helpful ideas" (Straus, p. 131).

**Exercise:**

Answer the question "What factors influence the behaviour of children and youth?" Record your responses on a sheet of paper, using the instructional strategy of mind mapping or webbing if you are familiar with this technique. Ensure that factors such as heredity, temperament, family, neighborhood, peer group, school, ability to form attachments, developmental level, and ability to communicate with others are included.

Identify any themes that occur from the notes or mind map. Refer to the "Child and Youth Development" module as a reference point when determining the capabilities of children and youth.

Behaviour is influenced by many factors and as caregivers it is important to consider the context in which behaviours occur.

When behaviours happen and caregivers have to immediately respond there is not much time to look at what might influence the child's behaviour. Take some time now to explore situations you have experienced with children or youth, and to put to use an approach to help in understanding what may have been happening for a particular child or youth.

Think of an experience with a child in which you had a real problem with what the child was doing. Using Handout #9, "Caregiver Experiencing Difficulty and Caregiver Experiencing Joy," jot down brief responses to each question under the heading "Caregiver Experiencing Difficulty."

Next, think of an experience with a child in which you as the caregiver felt really good about what the child was doing. Under the heading on Handout #9, "Caregiver Experiencing Joy," jot down brief notes.

**Summary Remarks:**

What similarities and differences did you notice about the two experiences. Record your comments on paper. Taking time to consider the context of the behaviour (who else is around, where the behaviour occurs, when the behaviour occurs, and what seems to trigger the behaviour) can help us when we work with a child.

Recognize that behaviour happens within the context of the child's experience.

**B. Understanding Behaviours**

**Instructions:**

Review the functions of behaviour, using Handout #10, "The Functions of Behaviour". Think of some examples from your own experience.

When trying to figure out what function a behaviour may be serving it can be helpful to consider what happens before and after a behaviour. Refer to Handout #11, "Looking at Behaviour."

Using one of the behaviours from earlier in the module, walk through the questions in the handout.

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Behaviour has a purpose. When thinking about what we might do to guide or coach the behaviour, we need to remember the context in which the behaviour takes place and the perspective of the child. Fox's (1987) analogy of seeing assists in making the point:

*"It's as if some children's sense of self is similar to damaged eyes: people who need glasses to see the board cannot see the board without their glasses. It's not that they refuse to see the board; it's not that they are unwilling; they are unable! We could threaten, bribe or take away privileges all day, demanding that they read the board without their glasses, to no avail" (p. 44).*

If children have not had a chance to figure out who they are in relation to other people and the world, they may not be able to see things as we would like them to. It is not that they are unwilling to, it is that they have a distorted and damaged sense of who they are and, based on their experiences, are often hostile toward and suspicious about adults. After all, many adults have let them down and betrayed them in the past. One of the major tasks when guiding children is to find a way to grow and develop as a result of our interactions.

The question for us as caregivers is to be creative and to actively engage children and youth who are behaving in ways that we find difficult to handle rather than to isolate, ignore, or punish them. If these young people knew how to do something else that would connect them with other people in positive ways, they would do it. Guidance isn't something you do to someone. Instead, it is a way of exploring together ways to meet the child's needs and our needs.

Remember the importance of descriptive language rather than evaluative language when observing and recording behaviours.

Negative labels and those that pathologize children lead caregivers to avoid, punish, or coerce children. Words that build esteem and show empathy lead to caregivers nurturing, empowering, and encouraging children. Refer to Overhead #6, "Impact of Negative Personal Theories of Behaviour," and Overhead #7, "Impact of Positive Theories of Behaviour".

Taking the time to observe what happens before a behaviour, what the child actually does, and what happens after the behaviour gives us information to decode the behaviour. These are the A-B-Cs of behaviour (the antecedents, behaviours and consequences).

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Refer to Handout #12, "Questions for Decoding Behaviour."

A primary motivating force for many behaviours is to maintain a sense of self and to protect that sense. Children and youth who are trying to make sense of the world and themselves need help to:

- distinguish feelings from one another.
- integrate those feelings. (That is, realize that a person can have more than one feeling at a time about someone or something.)
- develop affect tolerance - the ability to tolerate feelings.
- learn how to put words to the feelings and thoughts the child is having.

By decoding the needs of children and youth, caregivers can often respond in ways that prevent the expression of the needs in ways that annoy or threaten others. Remember that if needs are unmet, a child's behaviour may become so troubled that we begin to label it in negative ways and a downward spiral may begin.

#### 4. ELEMENTS OF POSITIVE PARENTING

##### **Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can describe the major elements of positive parenting.

##### **Materials:**

Handouts

- Handout #13 Models for Children and Youth
- Handout #14 Standards for Foster Homes
- Handout #15 Positive Parenting
  
- Handout #16 Guidelines for Relationship Building

Overhead

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•Overhead #8 The Role and Goals of Positive Parenting

**Instructions:**

What adults do is a very powerful model and has a huge impact on children and youth. You may want to think of one of your own experiences about finding a child who is close to you modeling a behaviour of yours or an example from a TV show like *The Simpsons*. Children watch and listen to us more than we may think. So, it shouldn't be too surprising for us to find children resolving conflict, walking, or talking like us.

Positive parenting involves being worthy role models for children and youth.

**Exercise:**

The next exercise invites participants to consider a relationship with a child for whom they have recently provided care and to look at how they have modeled a positive parenting approach. The exercise is about growing as caregivers and learning from what we do.

Think about a child or youth for whom you have provided care in the last month. Refer to Handout #13, "Models for Children and Youth," and briefly jot down a few points.

Respond to the following:

- how you supported the development and growth of the child, and
- what you would like to do differently in the relationship.

**Summary Remarks:**

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Positive parenting is caregiving that creates a healthy environment and supports the growth and development of children.

Our actions and words determine the kind of relationships we have with children. If we believe that the role of caregivers is to control and change children, then the focus is on who has the power. If, instead of fighting over who is the boss, caregivers create opportunities for learning and demonstrate a genuine liking for the child, positive parenting occurs.

Review the definition of positive parenting in Handout #14, "Standards for Foster Homes," and take some time to review the standards. Positive parenting involves being a role model for children and youth and using skills that help children and youth "...feel safe, accepted, nurtured, engaged, challenged, and supported in assuming more responsibility and self-control" (CYC On-line, p. 3).

Review Overhead #8, "The Role and Goals of Positive Parenting," in order to explain how the Ministry sees the role and goals. Read Handout #15, "Positive Parenting," and Handout #16, "Guidelines for Relationship Building," for details.

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## Session II

### Learning Outcome:

The caregiver can describe elements necessary for an effective caregiving environment.

### Materials:

Handout

- Handout #17 Components of the Core of Care

Overhead

- Overhead #9 A Good Place to Be

### Instructions:

We introduce the topic by reviewing the contexts or environments in which human beings live (family, neighbourhood, community, society). This section explores what an effective caregiving environment is and some ideas for creating one. Research indicates that the one of the first things a child in care wonders when the door to a caregiver's home opens is, "Will this be a good place to be?"

### Exercise 1:

Refer to Overhead #9, "A Good Place To Be," and draw a similar grid on a sheet of paper. Brainstorm specific examples for each column.

**Exercise 2:**

Think of a time in your life when you received nurturing care or when you had the sense that you really counted at that particular moment. Take a few minutes and jot down what gave you that sense of being personally cared for and cared about.

Personal experiences reflect what have been called the “components of the core of care.” For children who are experiencing care, both the physical setting and relationships within that setting make up the components of the core of care.

Refer to Handout #17, “Components of the Core of Care.” The components are interrelated and all of them are necessary to the nurturing care of children.

**Summary Remarks:**

Effective caregiving environments create conditions in which children feel safe and nurtured, provide opportunities to take risks and to learn, buffer stress, and create a climate of reliability and trustworthiness. These environments involve all members of the caregiving family, including natural children. If a child experiencing care senses that he is somehow in the way or unwanted, it may be difficult to establish a relationship.

There are a number of ways to establish and maintain effective caregiving environments, many of which participants know and practice. Think of ways you have worked to create a “core of care” in your environment and refer to Handout #17.

**3. SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-ESTEEM AND PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR)**

**Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can describe how to support the development of positive self-esteem and pro-social behaviour in children and youth.

**Materials:**

Handouts

- Handout #18 Encouragement
- Handout #19 Self-Image, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem
- Handout #20 Constructive Feedback
- Handout #21 Pro-social Behaviour
- Handout #22 Strategies for Positive Parenting
- Handout #23 Guidance Strategies

Overheads

- Overhead #10 Self-Image, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem

Other

- IALAC sign (I Am Loveable and Capable)

**A. “I Am Loveable and Capable”**

**Instructions:**

There are many tools and strategies for guiding children. Positive parenting focuses on developing self-esteem, promoting positive relationships and pro-social behaviours, as well as preparing children for responsibility.

**Exercise:**

Depending upon their backgrounds and experiences, some participants may find this exercise upsetting. Advise participants of this and let them know that there will be an opportunity to debrief the exercise.

Ask for a volunteer to come up and hold the IALAC sign (they don't have to say anything).

Use Sidney Simon's IALAC (I am Lovable and Capable) and write this down on a sheet of paper.

**Scenario:**

Brian (or any name that is appropriate), age 11, woke up one school morning and looked at his pajama top. He saw a neon sign. It flashed on and off, IALAC. Brian knew at once that this meant "I Am Lovable and Capable." He dressed and went off to the kitchen. He was looking forward to his day.

Before Brian could speak, his sister, Molly, said, "You pea-brain (rip off a corner of the sign) what did you do with my jacket?"

"Nothing," Brian said.

"Man," whined Molly, you're such a jerk." (rip)

"Brian, where is your backpack?" asked his mom.

"Oh no, I left it at school," said Brian.

"Brian," said his unhappy mother, "You ought to know better. Why can't you use your brain?" (rip)

"But Mom," Brian said "I...."

"Don't sass me back," said his mom. "You are such a smart mouth." (rip)

Brian saw his sister smirking and whispering "Smart mouth, smart mouth." (double rip)

By the time Brian left for the school bus, half of the IALAC was ripped. On the bus, Missy Burns said, "Brian you're dumb (rip) and a cry baby." (rip). Jenna, who Brian thought was his best friend, laughed each time. (triple rip).

In the first period, Mrs. Smartzolla asked Brian to put a homework problem on the board. Brian forgot a division sign in the formula. "Brian," Mrs. Smartzolla moaned, "how can you be so careless? I've told you a thousand times." (rip)

In language arts, Mr. Thomas barked at Brian for getting the lowest score on the vocabulary quiz. (rip)

By the end of the day, Brian went home with a very small IALAC sign. He was very upset.

The next day, Brian woke up to find IALAC on his pajamas, but it was very small. He hoped today would be better. He wanted to keep his IALAC so much.

Make a list of what you can do or say to increase children's sense of IALAC.

The examples are ways of encouraging the development of self-esteem in children. Refer to Handout #18, "Encouragement."

## **B. Self-image, Self-concept, and Self-esteem**

### **Instructions:**

Use Handout #19, "Self-Image, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem," and Overhead # 10, "Self-Image, Self-Concept, and Self-Esteem," to define terms.

Competence or a sense of mastery comes from doing something successfully. Success comes from working towards something, from seeking challenges, and from trying to solve problems. It does not come from praise for doing well and criticism for not doing well. It comes from an internal sense of mastery rather than from evaluations of accomplishment from others.

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Control or a sense of power comes when the child has a sense that she has some influence on what happens in her life. This involves a sense that "I am capable."

Worth or significance to others happens when children like themselves and have a sense that others like and accept them for who they are. "When a child feels good, valuable, and well-liked, the child develops positive self-esteem."

Research about resilient children -you may want to refer to work by Wolin, S.. [www.projectresilience.com](http://www.projectresilience.com).

In addition to guiding and supporting children to develop a sense of self, caregivers also need to encourage them to care for and about other people. Developing a concern for others is called "pro-social behaviour."

Describe categories of pro-social behaviour using Handout #22, "Pro-social Behaviours."

In order for a child or youth to develop these behaviours he must be capable of:

- cognitively telling the difference between how he is feeling and the feelings of other people.
- emotionally responding to another person.
- behaving in helpful, cooperative, and generous ways.

The "Child and Youth Development" module can be referred to for information about the cognitive, emotional and behavioural development of children and youth.

Very young infants pick up on the emotional states of caregivers and research indicates that children can demonstrate pro-social behaviours at two years of age. The attachment to a primary caregiver seems to have an effect on the development of pro-social behaviours.

Having the cognitive, emotional, and behavioural abilities to do something does not mean that a child will do it. Caregivers must teach a child to behave pro-socially as many children and youth-in-care may be developmentally delayed in this area due to missed or interrupted opportunities to acquire such behavioural skills.

**Exercise:**

Refer to Handout #22, "Strategies for Positive Parenting". The three categories presented—promoting positive relationships, promoting self-esteem, and preparing for responsibility.

What pro-social behaviour does each parenting strategy support. For example, demonstrating constructive conflict resolution supports cooperating.

It is important for caregivers to model the behaviours that we want children to do; to coach by telling children what we want, rather than what we do not want; and to provide opportunities for children to develop these behaviours through cooperative games and activities. Review Handout #23, "Guidance Strategies," which provides another listing of appropriate guidance strategies for you to consider.

**I A L A C**  
**“I Am Loveable and Capable”**

#### 4. WORKING WITH ANGER AND AGGRESSION

##### **Learning Outcome:**

The caregiver can describe how anger and aggression develop in children and youth and can articulate strategies to help children and youth manage these feelings and behaviours.

##### **Materials:**

Handouts

- Handout #24 The Stress Response Cycle
- Handout #25 Self-Talk
- Handout #26 When a Child is Angry
- Handout #27 Aggression
- Handout #28 Addressing Aggression
  
- Handout #29 Defusing Yourself

Overheads

- Overhead #11 Coaching Strategies When Aggression is an Issue

##### **A. Stress and Anger**

##### **Instructions:**

People often have problems working with anger and aggression because of their own past experiences, concerns for their own safety and that of the child, or because anger often occurs unexpectedly and they are not prepared for it.

Consequently, we do not take the opportunities presented when children have been angry or aggressive to explore ways to de-escalate situations and to coach children in alternative ways to express themselves.

Prevention is a crucial part of working with anger and aggression. Caregivers have a responsibility to be aware of factors that may contribute to children and youth becoming angry. For example, deaf children may become angry because they don't understand what is being said to them. Some children may have poor emotional and/or behavioural control because of organic brain damage or other factors beyond their

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control, so the focus needs to be on managing or minimizing the outbursts.

**Exercise:**

Think of a time when you felt angry. Observe your facial expressions, body posture, etc. when thinking of the situation.

**B. The Stress Response Cycle**

**Instructions:**

Refer to Handout #24, "The Stress Response Cycle," and review the phases below in relation to supporting children when they experience anger.

1. The **trigger phase** is the event that sets things off; a child feels threatened and his body goes into action to meet the threat.

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2. The **escalation phase** is when the child's body prepares to fight, flee, or freeze. The breathing rate and heart rate increase, blood pressure rises, muscles tense, voice gets louder, and eyes change shape (steely look, brows fall). Restraint, at this juncture, is usually not a good idea.

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3. The **crisis phase** is when we take action. Collaboration responses may not be effective because the child's ability to reason decreases. This is not the time to try to problem-solve with a child.
4. The **recovery phase** happens when the child has done something and her body starts to recover. This takes time.
5. The **post-crisis depression phase** occurs when we start to process what happened. The child may feel guilty or depressed.

Anger is just a feeling and feeling angry is OK. What is not OK is abuse and violence. We have a choice about what we do with our anger; the feeling of anger does not have to be acted on.

You may want to use the following anger rule in your homes:

It's OK to feel angry, but it is not OK to hurt others, yourself or property. It can be very scary for children to feel out-of-control, so it is important to let them know that you will intervene to help them. Remember that the intervention is about safety and self-control.

Refer to Handout #25, "Self-Talk," and remember we sometimes

re-experience the incidents in which we experienced anger by the way we replay it in our heads. Our bodies don't know if the event is a replay or reality, so we often respond in ways that keep us stuck in the anger.

Forming a relationship with a child in ways to process the underlying feelings is crucial to working with aggression. Caregivers need to be able to "stand beside children" as they learn new ways to manage their feelings and behaviors. Getting angry or insulting the self-esteem of a child only serves as a wedge in your relationship. It is a feeling and is normal. It is when it gets bottled up that it can become a volcano and explode into aggression towards self, others, and property.

**Exercise:**

What strategies have you used to de-escalate a young person's anger? Write responses on a piece of paper.

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Refer to Handout #26, "When a Child is Angry," for additional ideas.

**C. Aggression**

**Instructions:**

Aggression will be considered next. Have someone in mind as you go through the material.

Refer to Handout #27, "Aggression."

Aggression or "being mad" comes out of feeling frustrated and experiencing an impulse to attack. If we can see the child as being frustrated and lacking impulse controls, then we can respond in supportive ways that coach appropriate behaviour. The frustration most often occurs because attachments to other people are not working. The resulting feelings are rejection, a sense of loss, and feeling put down. If we respond by isolating the child through time-outs, expulsions from school, or withdrawing love, then we risk making the situation worse. With aggressive children we need to find ways to walk beside them as they find ways to move from being stuck in their frustrations with life.

Children who show aggressive behaviours tend to have a difficult time expressing their feelings of loss and grief, often do not have the words to describe what they are feeling and do not seem to have a sense of self and what is happening inside for them.

So what does a caregiver do? Refer to Handout #28, "Addressing Aggression."

## TRAINER'S INSTRUCTIONS

It is important to form a relationship with the child and to coach in words that don't insult the child. It is OK to feel frustrated. You are modeling how to handle it. You are putting a name to what is happening. This is the time to use the skills you looked at in the "Communication and Self-Awareness" module, such as active listening and open questions. Create opportunities in which the child can feel safe enough to be vulnerable.

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The North Wind and the Sun were arguing over who was the stronger. They decided to settle their dispute by seeing who could be the first to get a traveler to shed his cloak. The North Wind tried first. With all the gust he could muster, he blew down so furiously upon the man that the man swirled around like a leaf spinning through the air. But all the while the man held onto his cloak all the tighter.

Next it was the Sun's turn. He cast some gentle rays at the man, causing him to feel just the slightest bit too warm. The man soon unfastened his cloak. Then the Sun gradually increased his rays, causing the man to hang the cloak loosely across his shoulders. The Sun continued to gradually increase the warmth until the man, with a great sigh of relief, threw his cloak off and continued on his journey in great comfort. (Source Unknown)

Conclusion: warmth brings down defenses.

It is important to address the sources of frustration. This is where guiding strategies such as managing the environment can help. Perhaps the situation is beyond the child's developmental coping capacities.

Review Overhead #11, "Coaching Strategies When Aggression is an Issue."

Caregivers need to coach children in ways to handle frustration. This involves looking at what the child is experiencing and encouraging the child to use words to express what is happening. This may also mean inviting the expression of sadness. Children who are in care have experienced a number of losses. They may use anger and aggression as ways to protect themselves. Expressing sadness may leave a person vulnerable. Sometimes "coaching" is better done after the emotions have been defused. Coaching in the moment is best done when the coaching technique(s) have been explained to and accepted by the child prior to the incident. Physical closeness (if invited and appropriate) can be helpful.

It is also important to coach the child to accept responsibility

for his actions.

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**Summary Remarks:**

One of the first things we must do when we are in a caregiving relationship with children who are displaying angry or aggressive behaviour is to defuse ourselves. It is important that we move emotionally toward children rather than away. Refer to Handout #29, “Defusing Yourself.”

**5. CLOSURE**

**Materials:**

Handouts-Review the following:

- Handout #30 Guiding Behaviour Summary
- Handout #31 Suggested Resources

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## **APPENDIX I: HANDOUTS**

**HANDOUT #1**

**British Columbia Foster Care  
Education Program**

**CARING FOR CHILDREN:  
GUIDING BEHAVIOUR OF  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH  
(6 Hours)**

Ministry of Children and Family Development

*July 2000*

## **HANDOUT #2**

### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The caregiver can:

1. identify and explore her own beliefs, values, ethics, and parenting styles in relation to guiding the behaviour of children and youth.
2. describe possible ways to make sense of the behaviour of children and youth.
3. describe the major elements of positive parenting.
4. describe elements necessary for an effective caregiving environment.
5. describe how to support the development of positive self-esteem and pro-social behaviour in children and youth.
6. describe how anger and aggression develop in children and youth and articulate strategies to help children and youth manage these feelings and behaviours.



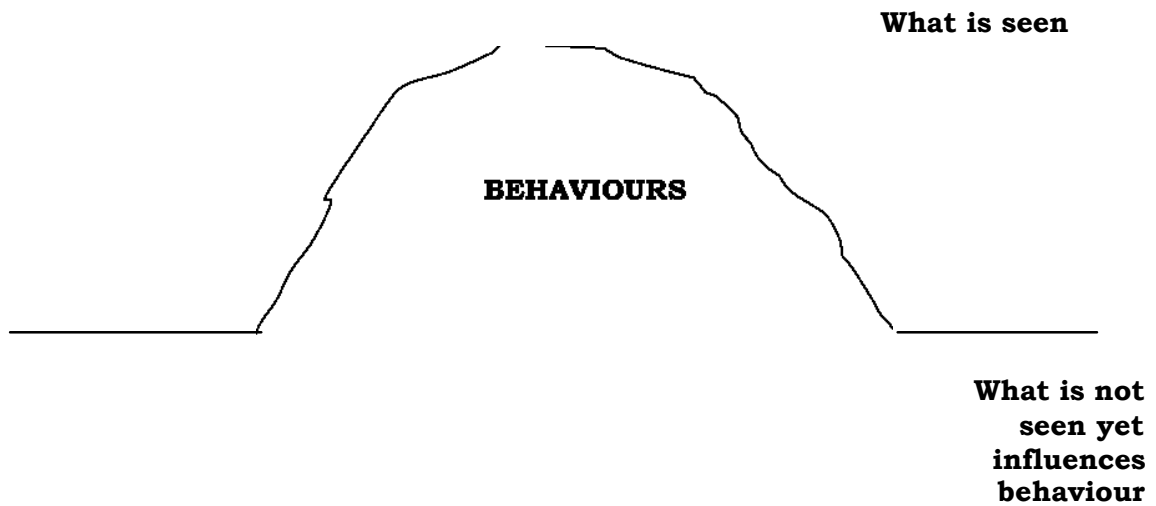
**HANDOUT #4**

**PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES**

- ***Honesty:*** Be as honest as possible and express yourself as you really think and feel.
- ***Respect***
- ***Confidentiality***

**HANDOUT #5**

**BELIEFS, VALUES, AND ETHICS**



**BELIEFS - what you hold to be true**

**VALUES - what is important to you**

**ETHICS - the rules or standards you operate by**

**HANDOUT #6**

**WHAT'S IMPORTANT**

1. What does guiding the behaviour of children mean to you?
2. What is important to you about guiding their behaviour?
3. Why is that important?
4. What rules do you operate under when guiding a child's behaviour?

## HANDOUT #7

## PARENTING STYLES

STYLE	CHARACTERIZED BY	WHAT CHILD LEARNS
<b>GIVING ORDERS (Authoritarian)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lots of rules</li> <li>• Parents are the boss</li> <li>• Rewards and punishments used to “keep children in line”</li> <li>• Children not consulted and decisions are made on behalf of children</li> <li>• Challenging behaviours may be punished by yelling, blaming, shaming, threats, bribes, extreme consequences,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• how to please in order to avoid conflict and punishment</li> <li>• to expect rewards and payments for “being good”</li> <li>• to fear, resent, or lack respect for their parents</li> <li>• to feel helpless</li> <li>• that what they think is not important and that they must comply with external authority</li> <li>• that one solves problems through bullying, yelling, or hitting</li> </ul>
<b>GIVING IN (Permissive)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• few rules or constantly changing rules and limits</li> <li>• little consistency and parents often give in or indulge child</li> <li>• no expectation for respect or contribution to the family</li> <li>• parents may feel angry or resentful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ to do as they please without consideration of others</li> <li>▪ to expect that others will do things for them</li> <li>▪ to be demanding, inconsiderate, irresponsible, uncertain</li> <li>• lack of responsibility and respect for others</li> </ul>
<b>GIVING CHOICES (Democratic or Authoritative)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• creation of conditions that promote the healthy development of children</li> <li>• respect for the child, relationships the child has, and building new relationships with the child</li> <li>• continuity and consistency</li> <li>• stability and fairness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to become competent</li> <li>• to build relationships and to respect others</li> <li>• to have a sense of self-worth, self-responsibility, and self-control</li> </ul>



**HANDOUT #8****DISCIPLINE AND PUNISHMENT**

<b>DISCIPLINE</b>	<b>PUNISHMENT</b>
Can occur before and/or after an event	Occurs only after an event
Is based on respect for children and their capabilities	Relies on power and control to make children change.
Purpose is to focus on development of internal controls	Purpose is to inflict pain, often in an attempt to vent frustration or anger
Can lead to a generalized learning pattern	Usually relates only to a specific event
Can strengthen interpersonal bonds and recognizes individual worth	Usually causes deterioration of relationships and is usually a dehumanizing experience

Source: Ministry for Children and Families (1999). Pre-Service Training for Foster Parents, p. 4-6. Victoria, BC: Province of British Columbia.

**HANDOUT #9**

**CAREGIVER EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY AND  
CAREGIVER EXPERIENCING JOY\***

<b>DIFFICULTY</b>	<b>JOY</b>
What is the child doing?	What is the child doing?
When does it happen?	When does it happen?
Where does it happen?	Where does it happen?
Who else is around?	Who else is around?
What seems to trigger the behaviour?	What seems to trigger the behaviour?
What seems to keep the behaviour going (reinforces it)?	What seems to keep the behaviour going (reinforces it)?

\*Think about these questions for an Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal child, a male or female child. A child:

- 4 to 6 years old
- 9 to 11 years old
- 13 to 15 years old

**HANDOUT #10**

**THE FUNCTIONS OF BEHAVIOUR**

Attention

Power

Revenge

Avoidance Of Failure

“It Feels Good”

**HANDOUT # 11**

**LOOKING AT BEHAVIOUR**

The behaviour: \_\_\_\_\_

When is the behaviour most likely to happen?

Where is the behaviour most likely to happen?

Who is around when the behaviour happens?

What events seem to trigger the behaviour?

What seems to happen as a result of the behaviour?

**HANDOUT #12**

**QUESTIONS FOR DECODING BEHAVIOUR**

1. Is there something that happened earlier that may have triggered the behaviour or is it something that has happened in the home?
  
2. Is this incident typical for the child or youth or is it out of the ordinary?
  
3. Is there something new in the environment today that may be contributing to the child's behaviour?
  
4. Could the behaviour be seen coming or is the child suddenly out of control?
  
5. Given the emotional state the child is in now, is there anything I can do to calm him down without confrontation?
  
6. Is the child or youth's behaviour really directed at me or am I just a convenient target?



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**HANDOUT #14****STANDARDS FOR FOSTER HOMES****CARING FOR CHILDREN****STANDARD D.1. Positive Parenting Children Receive Positive Parenting****Commentary**

While children have the responsibility to adhere to a reasonable standard of behaviour, they have the right to know the standard of behaviour expected of them by their caregiver as well as the consequences for not meeting the caregiver's expectations. It is expected that caregivers will apply reasonable consequences sensitively and fairly, according to the child's level of development. In order to develop positive behaviour and social skills, children need to grow confident in their own ability to distinguish right from wrong. One way children learn positive behaviour and social skills is by observing and imitating adults who are worthy behaviour models.

**Results for Children**

- D. 1.1 Children confirm that they receive the same quality of care as other children in the placement, including the caregiver's own children.
- D. 1.2 Children confirm that the caregiver is interested in and cares about them as individuals.
- D. 1.3 Children confirm that the caregiver assists them with issues which arise from daily living and developing appropriate behaviour.
- D. 1.4 Children confirm that the caregiver does not use prohibitive behaviour management methods.
- D. 1.5 Children confirm that they have been informed of the standard of behaviour expected by the caregiver and the consequences for not meeting the caregiver's expectations.

**Caregiver Practices**

- D. 1.6 The caregiver ensures to the fullest extent possible that the child receives the same quality of care as other children in the placement, including the caregiver's own children.
- D. 1.7 The caregiver ensures that the caregiver practices are consistent with the child's individual needs.

- D. 1.8 The caregiver provides care and supervision appropriate to the child's age, level of development and ability to accept independence and responsibility.
- D. 1.9 The caregiver uses positive parenting methods. Positive parenting methods include those actions that:
- a) are based on praise, encouragement, and structuring the setting for success;
  - b) are motivated to assist the child to learn responsibility and self-control;
  - c) teach or model appropriate ways of behaviour;
  - d) are reasonable and directly related to the child's behaviour; and
  - e) respond to the child's behaviour as soon as possible.
- D.1.10 The caregiver, if authorized, assists the child's family to understand and use positive parenting methods.
- D. 1.11 The caregiver does not use the following prohibited behaviour management methods which are expressly forbidden:
- a) deprivation of a child's or youth's basic rights or needs (for example, food, clothing, shelter, bedding);
  - b) physical discipline (for example: spanking, shaking slapping, hitting);
  - c) degrading actions (for example: humiliation, ridicule);
  - d) restraint, other than for the immediate physical safety of the child or youth, other children or youth, the caregiver or others;
  - e) seclusion (not including time-out) or confinement;
  - f) assignment of unreasonable exercise or work that may be excessive or harmful to the child or youth;
  - g) threats of removal from the care setting in order to manipulate or coerce the behaviour of the child or youth;
  - h) arbitrary or unauthorized denial of visits, telephone contact or correspondence with family members or guardians;
  - i) application of consequences in situations where it is not certain that the individual's behaviour has warranted them;
  - j) being disciplined by another child who has not been designated as temporary caregiver; and
  - k) coercive behaviour by the caregiver regarding their religious or personal beliefs.
- D. 1.12 The caregiver informs the child of the standard of behaviour expected by the caregiver and the consequences for not meeting the caregiver's expectations.
- D. 1.13 If having difficulty managing the child's behaviour, the caregiver consults with the child's worker as soon as possible, and with the child's parents if authorized.

**HANDOUT #15****POSITIVE PARENTING**

“Positive Parents” seek to:

1. understand and respect the child, the child’s experiences, feelings, needs, and the situation.
2. understand themselves and how they react and respond to certain behaviours or situations.
3. build a respectful and positive relationship with the child.
4. understand the reasons for a child's behaviour.
5. create the conditions for a child to learn.
6. set appropriate limits and consequences.
7. give children choices within those limits.
8. provide daily care for the child with a view to the child's long-term best interests.

The goals of Positive Parenting are to:

1. create a healthy environment for the child and the caregiver.
2. help children develop and learn self-discipline and responsibility.
3. support attachment, continuity and stability.

**Understanding a Child**

Before we can set limits and give choices, we need to understand the child and what can reasonably be expected. Consider the following points.

1. Temperament or the child's unique style of behaving. This refers to the unique qualities a child is born with, e.g. some are active, others calm; some like to be around people, others prefer to be alone.
2. Developmental ages and stages. As we have discussed, each child develops at his own rate and life experiences may have a dramatic impact on his development. Therefore it is important to understand where a child is at developmentally so that we understand what we can expect the child to do and what we might do to attend to the child's developmental needs. For young children, it is important to create a baby- or child-friendly environment so that the risk of harm is reduced.
3. Life experiences. The child's life experiences may have a significant impact on his view of himself and his view of others. Developing an understanding of the child's experience and how the child has made sense of it and responded to it assists us in determining how best to parent the child, what can be expected, and what can be worked on.

To develop your understanding of the child along these dimensions, you must gather information by talking to people who know the child (including natural family members if appropriate), observe the child, listen to the child, talk with the child, and try to put yourself in the child's shoes. You are engaged in a process of continuous learning.

### **Understanding Yourself**

When you develop self-awareness and understand how you react and respond to certain behaviours or situations, you are better able to take control of your own feelings and your responses.

### **Building Relationships With a Child**

All of us need and want to belong. Many children who must come into care have had experiences where they haven't belonged, where the people who they had a right to expect would care for them are unable or unwilling to do so. Trust and relationships have been violated. This presents a challenge to caregivers as the children in their care may understandably be reluctant to trust or allow for a relationship with them. There are different levels of relationship and, in most cases, it will take time to build up a significant and healthy relationship with a child placed in your home. Positive relationships are key to promoting a child's healthy development, competence, and self-esteem.

Positive relationships embrace the following:

1. Mutual respect and acceptance
2. Trust
3. Consideration
4. Support and encouragement
5. Desire to communicate
6. Willingness to resolve conflict constructively.

Relationship-building strategies include:

1. Spending time together
2. Showing respect
3. Giving help and encouragement
4. Using play, humour, fun and special times
5. Creating a home environment that is safe, supportive, accepting, and nurturing.

## **Creating the Conditions for a Child to Learn**

We all learn best in a climate of support, encouragement, stimulation, and assistance. Our learning is supported when we are clear about expectations and consequences. These expectations and consequences are realistic for us and we have access to or are provided with the necessary information, tools, and guidance to proceed with learning. The role of the caregiver is to create these conditions for learning so that the child can tap into and access their innate capacity and potential to develop knowledge, skills, and abilities.

## **Setting Appropriate Limits and Consequences for a Child**

Some caregivers think that they must control their children and establish strict rules. They fear that without this, the children will control them. But children want and need to have some control also. Having some control, in a positive way, helps children to develop responsibility and competence. A more appropriate and effective alternative to having control over the child is to set limits.

Children need limits. They need a flexible sense of order and will grow anxious without it. Appropriate limits help children to:

1. feel safe and secure.
2. know how far they can go.
3. learn how to be self-limiting and to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
4. try out new ways of behaving within a safe frame of reference.

As the child grows, develops, and gains skill and competence, the limits or boundaries will expand. The child's readiness determines how the limits or boundaries expand. Some limits can be negotiated. Others cannot be negotiated, typically for value, safety, or health reasons.

Effective limits:

1. are consistent with the developmental stage and capacity of the child.
2. are communicated so that children understand what is expected and what the consequences of not operating within the limits will be.
3. have consequences that are focused on the child's behaviour and not on the worth of the child.
4. assist the child to learn how to be self-responsible and self-managing.

### **Giving a Child Choices Within Those Limits**

Within the appropriate limits, you may give a child choices. Having a choice helps the child to have some positive control and grow to be more responsible.

1. When two children are playing loudly in the living room where other family members are trying to have a conversation, you may say, “This room is not a loud play room and we are trying to have a conversation. You may settle down and stay with us in this room or you may take your roughhousing outside; you decide.”
2. When a 13-year-old wants to go to evening events three nights in a row, you may say, “It is important to us that you be involved in some family activities as well as activities with your friends. You may choose which two of the events with your friends you would like to go to and stay home with us on the other night.”

### **Providing Daily Care for the Child with a View to the Child's Long-Term Best Interests**

As a Foster Parent you will be responsible for the daily care of a child or children. This daily care involves the provision of basic goods such as shelter, food, and clothing as well as the essentials of acceptance, nurturing, support, education, and guidance. Through daily care and activities, there are opportunities to promote the child's long-term best interests, including healthy development, the promotion of attachment, continuity and stability, development of a sense of self-worth and self-responsibility.

Regardless of the age and developmental level of the child, the daily care that you provide should seek to:

1. accept the child for who they are and where they are developmentally.
2. demonstrate respect for the child.
3. model your values.
4. respond to the problem rather than react negatively to the child.
5. provide guidance or assistance for learning.
6. promote your and the child's learning, including learning from mistakes.
7. emphasize and encourage a child's achievements.
8. emphasize co-operation.
9. be flexible and adaptable. Learn new approaches and be willing to seek the child's views and adapt your response based upon their input.

Positive parenting is particularly important for children in care. It is crucial to realize that while our tendency as adults is to treat a child in care “like any other kid,” there are some important differences. The child's previous life experiences affect his understanding of everything that happens—even what we may consider innocuous talk and behaviour. Our own children grow up with us and instinctively, know what we mean, what the rules are, and how we will respond to most

situations. They tend to know when we are “blowing off steam” and when we “mean business.”

No new adult in a child in care’s life can begin to understand how shouting, depriving freedom (e.g., time-out or grounding), or removing privileges can affect a child. Individualized, tailored-to-fit caring and discipline are essential. Children in care can and should be cared for in a way that addresses their individual and unique needs. Caregivers cannot assume that children in care will understand and react to the world around them in the same way their own children do. It is helpful if Foster Parents have a range of flexible responses that give them a chance to understand how children respond and how they perceive the world.

**HANDOUT #16**

**GUIDELINES FOR RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**

1. Relationship is an action, not a feeling.
2. Crisis is an opportunity.
3. Separate the child from the behaviour.
4. Disengage from the conflict cycle.
5. Earn the trust of children.
6. Relationship building is an endurance event.
7. Work in the moment.
8. Respect receives respect.
9. Teach joy.
10. Extend an invitation to belong.

(Source: Brendtro, L. et al (1990). Reclaiming Youth at Risk. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service).

**HANDOUT #17****COMPONENTS OF THE CORE OF CARE**

1. Bodily comfort: being on eye level when talking with child, the physical arrangements of rooms, provision of a private space, presence of a toy or blanket.
2. Responding to the differences in children's temperaments: their styles of relating.
3. Rhythmic interactions: looking for opportunities to be in tune with children by playing games or developing rituals
4. Predictability: providing a sense of continuity. The child can experience that if certain behaviours happen, then a certain outcome happens.
5. Dependability: that you will be there for the child. There is a base from which the child can take risks, develop, grow, and move towards independence.
6. Personalizing how you guide behaviour: recognizing that each child has different needs. The guidance of behaviour is dependent on establishing a relationship with each child.
7. Caring for the caregivers. Caregivers have the energy and resources available to them to be involved in interactions with children.

Source: Maier, H. W. (1987). Developmental Group Care for Children and Youth: Concepts and Practice. New York, NY: Haworth Press.

## **HANDOUT #18**

### **ENCOURAGEMENT**

The tools of encouragement:

- focus on effort and improvement
- focus on strengths and assets.

The language of encouragement implies faith and respect:

“I think you can do it.”  
“What do you think?”  
“I could use your help.”  
“What can we do to solve the problem?”

Books like How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk have more information on encouragement.

**HANDOUT #19****SELF-IMAGE, SELF-CONCEPT, AND SELF-ESTEEM**

**Self image:** what you see and feel when you look in the mirror. The image you think others perceive when they see you.

**Self concept:** what you believe you possess in terms of skills, talents, gifts, character abilities, and strengths.

**Self esteem:** how much you prize or despise aspects of your self-concept.

Healthy self-concept includes awareness that each attribute is developing and that each will have limits.

Self-esteem is a personal evaluation or a judgment that may be faulty or accurate resulting in the eventual feelings and perceptions you hold about your right to exist and to express yourself with confidence.

Improving self-esteem means learning ways to more fairly appraise your potential. It usually results in more positive feelings about yourself.

**The Role of the Caregiver**

Children need support from others to develop a belief in themselves that they are worthy and capable. By supporting them and encouraging the development of life skills, caregivers can nurture self-esteem.

Caregivers can:

- provide positive feedback
- be involved in the child's life
- communicate in ways that promote clear communication and problem-solving rather than blame and putdowns and involve really listening to children
- accept the child for who he is
- support the child by using challenges or mistakes as learning opportunities
- support the child by recognizing that he is responsible for successes
- support the child to develop the talents he has
- attribute positive behaviours to the child's actions and not the medication he may be taking.

Adapted from Bloomquist, M. (1996). Skills Training for Children with Behavioural Disorders. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

## HANDOUT #20

### CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK

Feedback is communication that gives information about how behaviour affects situations or individuals.

#### Some Guidelines

1. Balance: look for positives. It is easier to hear feedback that couples what is going well with what needs improvement.
2. Agreement: it is important that there is an agreement by everyone that feedback is wanted rather than imposed, that a time is set aside for it, and that there is a clear format for delivering it.
3. Timing: feedback is best shared at the earliest opportunity after the behaviour or situation occurred. This depends on the situation, the person's willingness to hear it, and time available.
4. Specific rather than general: be specific about what the person was doing: "When I was talking with you, I noticed that you were looking off and later you interrupted me," rather than "You never listen to me when I'm talking to you."
5. Descriptive rather than judgmental: describe your own experience of something rather than evaluating and blaming.
6. Direct the feedback only to behaviour that can be modified. Giving feedback over something that a child has little control over is not helpful.
7. Take into account the needs of the receiver. Feedback is most useful when it can be understood and used by the receiver. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only the needs of the sender.
8. Ensure clear communication. Ask the receiver to outline her understanding of what you said.

Source: North Island's Women's Services Society (1984). Working Together for Change. Campbell River, BC: Ptarmigan Press.

**HANDOUT #21**

**PRO-SOCIAL BEHAVIOURS**

- providing comfort/showing compassion
- sharing/ donating
- cooperating
- helping

Source: Marion, M. (1995). Guidance of Young Children. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall

**HANDOUT #22**

**STRATEGIES FOR POSITIVE PARENTING**

<b>Promoting Positive Relationships</b>	<b>Promoting Self-Esteem</b>	<b>Preparing for Responsibility</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• model appropriate expression of feelings</li> <li>• express appreciation to those you care about</li> <li>• teach how to empathize</li> <li>• encourage participation in situations where cooperation and teamwork can be practiced</li> <li>• recognize child's friendships</li> <li>• model trust, openness, commitment</li> <li>• demonstrate appropriate affection</li> <li>• give constructive feedback about child's interactions with others</li> <li>• involve child in decision making</li> <li>• demonstrate constructive conflict resolution</li> <li>• involve yourself in activities child likes</li> <li>• acknowledge child's contributions around house</li> <li>• support child helping with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• avoid criticism</li> <li>• acknowledge accomplishments</li> <li>• provide opportunities for success</li> <li>• encourage interests and completion of tasks</li> <li>• spend time with child</li> <li>• acknowledge child's efforts with physical appearance and hygiene</li> <li>• recognize and nurture child's individuality</li> <li>• show an interest in events in child's day</li> <li>• encourage perseverance</li> <li>• provide positive reinforcement ("You can do it.")</li> <li>• celebrate special occasions (birthdays, holidays, graduations)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage initiative and eagerness to take responsibility</li> <li>• acknowledge completion of manageable tasks</li> <li>• provide choices and allow children to make decisions for themselves</li> <li>• let children know their contributions to home life are important</li> <li>• encourage and support learning of adult skills</li> <li>• discuss relevant topics such as sexuality, drugs, and alcohol</li> <li>• assist in resolution of value and ethical dilemmas</li> <li>• involve children in household chores help</li> <li>• children learn to budget money balance</li> <li>• limits with freedom to be responsible and competent</li> <li>• assist youth in identifying and pursuing educational/vocational goals</li> </ul>

## **HANDOUT #23**

### **GUIDANCE STRATEGIES**

Managing the environment

Setting predictable routines

Modelling the behaviour that is wanted

Listening actively

Using open questions

Providing natural and logical consequences

Distracting (mostly for infants and toddlers)

Redirecting

Using problem-solving approach

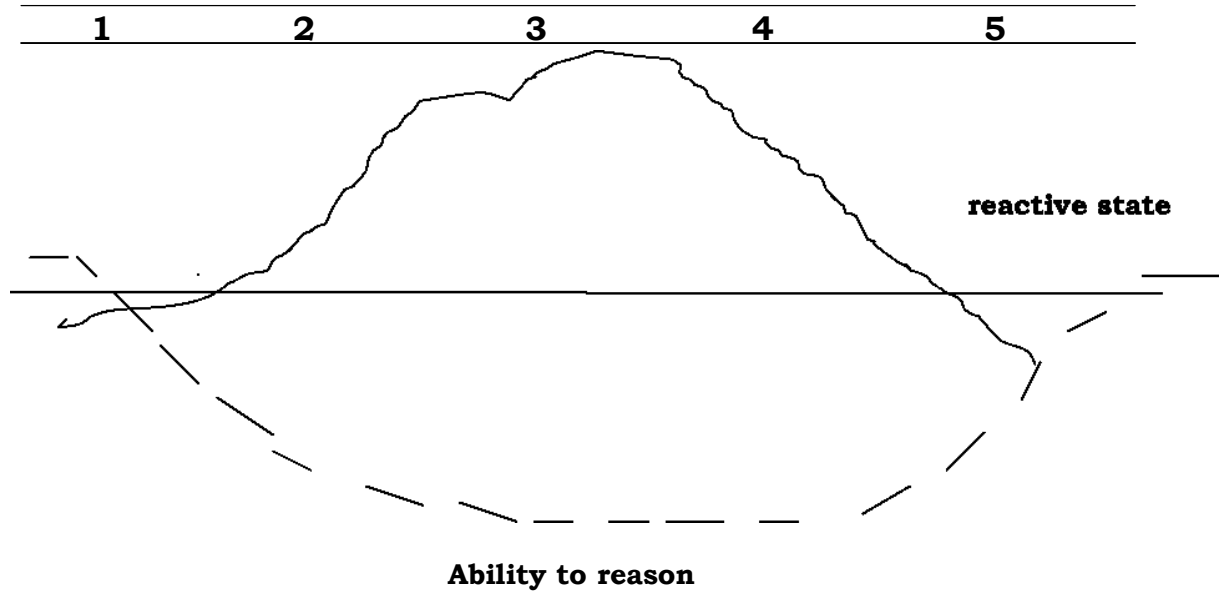
A caregiver's tool kit has in it strategies for:

- designing environments and schedules that are helpful and minimally frustrating
  - taking a snapshot of what's happening and using initiative to determine what led up to the situation
  - stopping situations from escalating beyond a child's tolerance and control
  - soothing situations when tempers are frayed
  - offering choices, alternatives, and ideas to support children in regaining a sense of control and well-being
- 
- developing plans of care Source: CYC On-

line. No. 5, July 1999, p. 12

**HANDOUT #24**

**THE STRESS RESPONSE CYCLE**



1 Trigger Phase	2 Escalation Phase	3 Crisis Phase	4 Recovery Phase	5 Post-Crisis Depression Phase
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**HANDOUT #25****SELF-TALK**

1. Check out what your impulse is.
2. Acknowledge your feelings.
3. Pay attention to your body by deep breathing and relaxing.
4. Remind yourself to stop and calm down by using self-talk (“I can do this” or whatever fits for you); imagine a “Stop” sign.
5. Tell yourself that:
  - “I can make it.”
  - “I have choices about what I do.”
6. Stop triggering yourself with what you are saying to yourself about the other person (“He’s such a jerk!”) or the situation. (“Oh no, the last time this happened I really screwed up!”) Remember to be curious about the other person and the situation. (“I wonder what’s happening.”)
7. Do something:
  - Defuse the situation by trying to understand the other person’s situation.
  - Confront the situation by setting limits on destructive or inappropriate behaviour.
  - Disengage by taking a cool-down time and then problem-solving when people can hear one another.

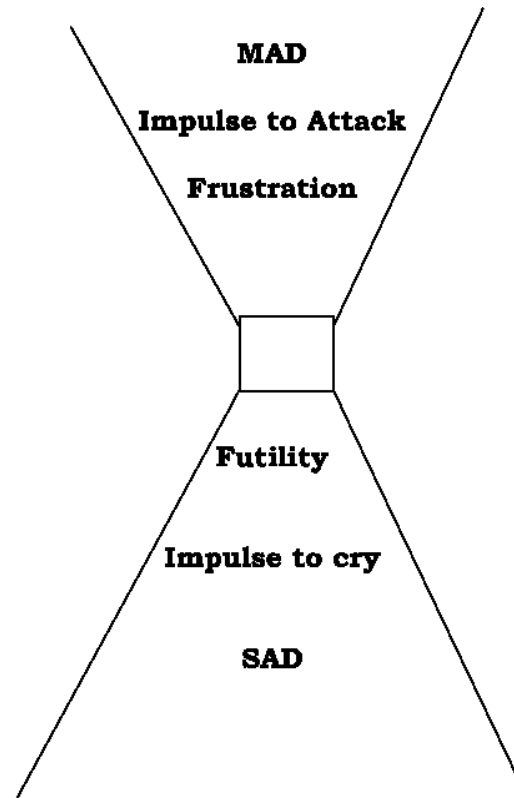
**HANDOUT #26**

**WHEN A CHILD IS ANGRY**

1. When a child is angry, avoid escalating the situation. Wanting to “get even” or showing “who is the boss” tends to escalate angry or aggressive behaviours. Additionally, such actions on the part of a caregiver model the very behaviours that a caregiver doesn’t want from a child. Focus on modeling what you do want a child to do when angry. Your actions will be the most powerful teacher.
2. An example of demonstrating empathy is saying to a child, if he is angry about being sent home from school, “This must feel pretty unfair to you.”
3. Model what you want the child to learn.
4. Leave problem-solving until the child has worked his way through the arousal cycle.
5. Check out the child’s intent. “Was what happened what you wanted to happen?”
6. Problem-solve alternatives.
7. Requiring that a child apologize, especially if she does not sincerely feel remorseful about what has happened, may create situations in which a child feels that simply saying “Sorry” resolves a situation. Accepting responsibility for one’s actions is different from apologizing.

**HANDOUT #27**

**AGGRESSION**



Source: Neufeld, G. (1998). Notes on presentation. Believe in the Healing Conference.  
Victoria, BC.

## **HANDOUT #28**

### **ADDRESSING AGGRESSION\***

1. Many children who exhibit aggressive behaviours have been hurt by adults.
2. Children use aggression as a way to protect their vulnerability to being overwhelmed by fear and anxiety.
3. Children who have been hurt do not want to tell the story of what happened over and over again. It keeps them stuck. Look at what is happening now.
4. Forming a relationship with the child is essential to reducing aggression. If a child can trust and depend upon a caregiver, then he may be able to risk vulnerability and feel the sadness that has been bottled up.
5. Support a child to develop an ability to handle frustration.
6. Pace the work that you do; that is, do not rush the child. The behaviour did not develop overnight and it will not change overnight.

\*It is important to remember that some children have organic brain or mental illness factors that they cannot control that may result in angry, aggressive behaviour. It is recommended that specialist advice be obtained regarding helpful strategies for understanding, interpreting and managing the child's angry, aggressive behaviour.

Source: Neufeld, G. (1997). Notes from a presentation. Believe in the Healing Conference. Victoria, BC.

**HANDOUT #29****DEFUSING YOURSELF**

1. Consider whose problem it is.
  - Is it the child's? For example, the child forgot her lunch at home.
  - Is it yours? For example, the child's room is too messy for your liking.
  - Is it a relationship problem? Something between you? Is your ability to communicate with one another a difficulty.
2. Working with children who are experiencing difficulties is based on the belief that children do develop and grow. It is hard and sometimes slow work for which there is no bag of tricks, instead there is a relationship based on mutual respect.
3. When there is a conflict, it is the caregiver's responsibility to disengage and not to intensify it. How?
  - be aware of your own feelings
  - recognize whose problem it is and avoid taking on the child's feelings and behaviours
  - figure out what is happening for the child
  - separate the child from the behaviour
  - acknowledge the child's feeling
  - verbalize your own feelings (the child can see and hear when you are upset).

## **HANDOUT #30**

### **GUIDING BEHAVIOUR SUMMARY**

- Develop a positive relationship with children that is based on respect, warmth, genuine caring, and relating to the child’s emotional frustration or mood.
- Develop an understanding of child development and the needs of children.
- Use effective communication skills.
- Commit to a positive parenting model that uses positive guidance strategies including using and teaching a decision-making strategy.

### **DECISION-MAKING STRATEGY**

1. Identify what the issue is. “What’s the problem?”
2. Brainstorm for solutions. “What are some ways of working this out?”
3. For each solution ask:
  - “Is it safe?”
  - “How might people feel?”
  - “Is it fair?”
  - “Will it work?”
4. Choose a solution and use it.
5. Evaluate “Did it work?”
6. If it doesn’t work, try another of your solutions.

Caregivers are reminded to refer to other modules in the training series for details on child development and communication skills.

**HANDOUT #31**

**SUGGESTED RESOURCES**

Coloroso, B. (1995). Kids Are Worth It: Giving Your Child the Gift of Inner Discipline. Toronto ON: Somerville House Publishing.

Crary, E. (1990). Pull Up Your Socks and Other Skills Growing Children Need. Seattle, WA: Parenting Press.

Faber, A. and Mazlish, E. (1982). How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk. New York: Avon Books.

Gordon, T. (1970). P.E.T.: Parent Effectiveness Training. New York: Van Rees Press.

Marshall, P.(1992). Now I Know Why Tigers Eat Their Young. Vancouver: Whitecap Books.

Seligman, M. (1995). The Optimistic Child. New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.

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## **APPENDIX II: OVERHEADS**

OVERHEAD # 1

**British Columbia Foster Care  
Education Program**

**CARING FOR CHILDREN:  
GUIDING BEHAVIOUR OF  
CHILDREN AND YOUTH**

**(6 Hours)**

Ministry of Children and Family Development

*July 2002*

**OVERHEAD #2****LEARNING OUTCOMES**

The caregiver can:

1. identify and explore her own beliefs, values, ethics, and parenting styles in relation to guiding the behaviour of children and youth.
2. describe possible ways to make sense of the behaviour of children and youth.
3. describe the major elements of positive parenting.
4. describe elements necessary for an effective caregiving environment.
5. describe how to support the development of positive self-esteem and pro-social behaviour in children and youth.
6. describe how anger and aggression develop in children and youth and articulate strategies for helping children and youth manage these feelings and behaviours.

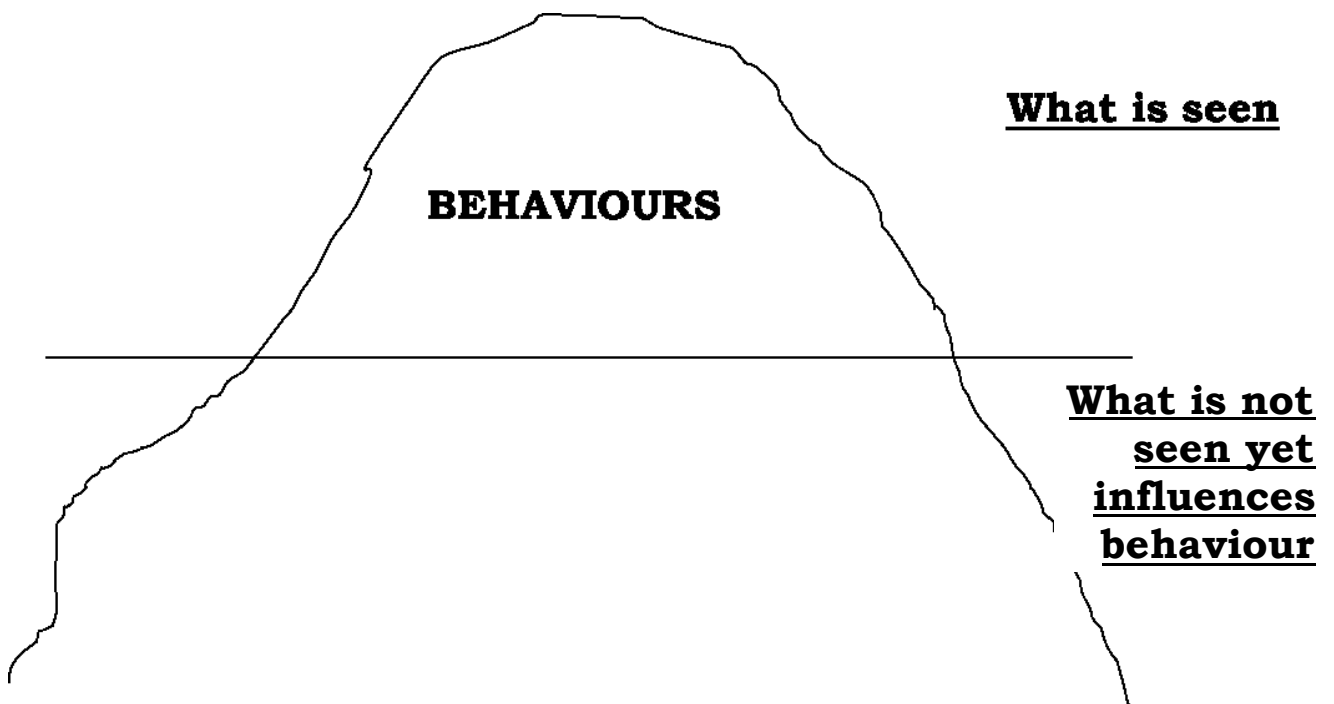
APPENDIX II: OVERHEADS

**OVERHEAD #4 PARTICIPATION GUIDELINES**

**HONESTY**

**RESPECT**

**CONFIDENTIALITY**



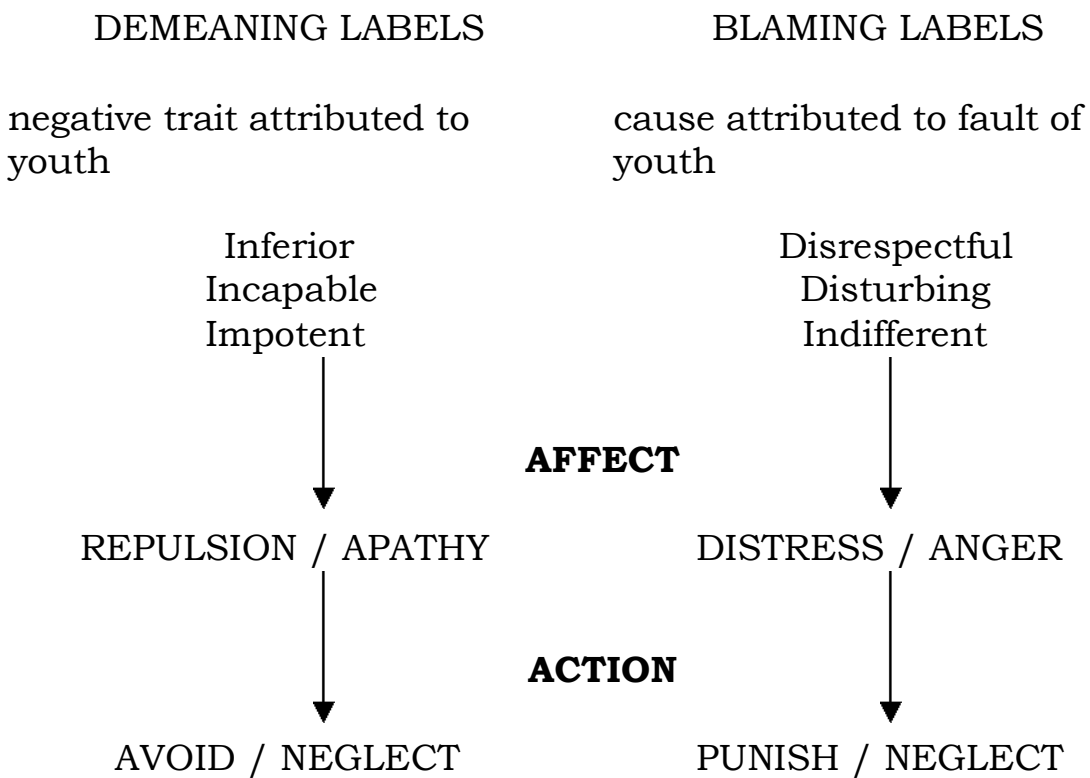
**BELIEFS - what you hold to be true**

**VALUES - what is important to you**

**ETHICS - the rules or standards you operate by**

**OVERHEAD #6**

**IMPACT OF NEGATIVE PERSONAL THEORIES  
OF BEHAVIOUR COGNITION**

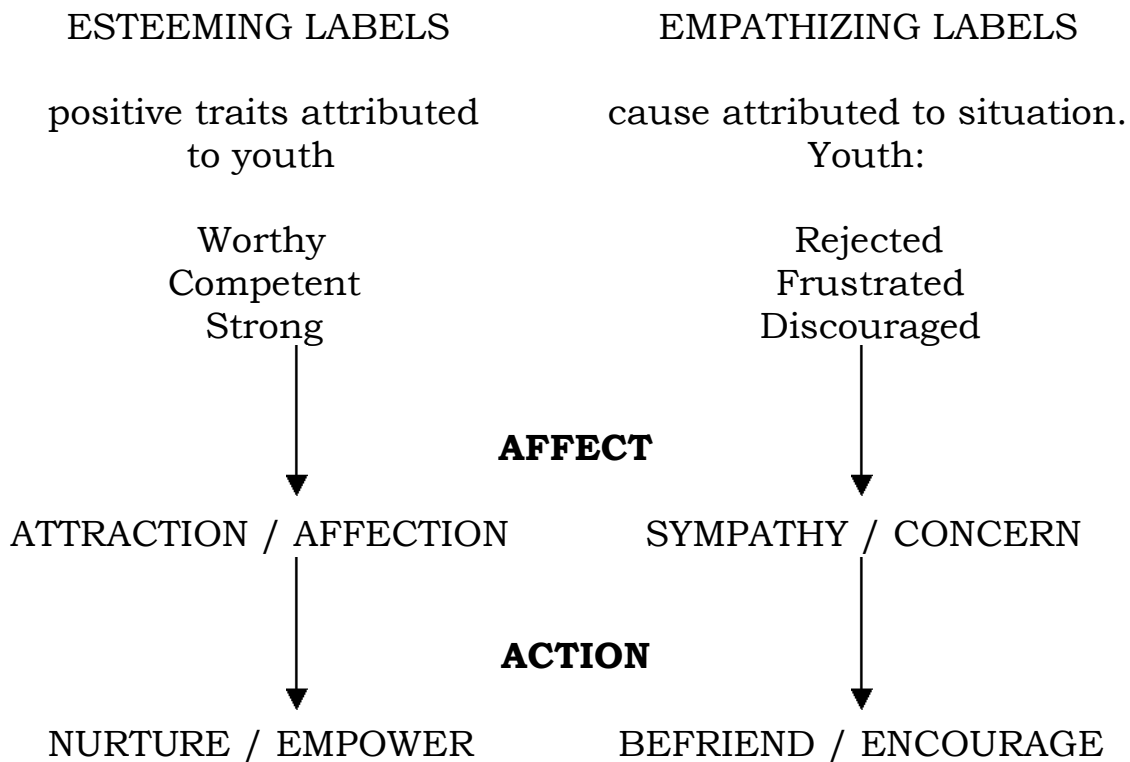


Brendtro, L. et al (1990). Reclaiming Youth at Risk. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service. Permission pending

## OVERHEAD #7

## IMPACT OF POSITIVE PERSONAL THEORIES OF BEHAVIOUR

### COGNITION



Brendtro, L. et al (1990). Reclaiming Youth at Risk. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service. Permission pending

**OVERHEAD #8**

**THE ROLE AND GOALS OF POSITIVE PARENTING**

**Role of positive parenting:**

To model and guide children as they grow and develop in their ability to self-discipline

**Goals:**

To assist child to learn responsibility and self-control

To model appropriate ways of behaving

**OVERHEAD #9**

**A GOOD PLACE TO BE**

looks like	sounds like



**OVERHEAD #10****SELF-IMAGE, SELF-CONCEPT, AND SELF-ESTEEM**

**Self -image:** what you see and feel when you look in the mirror. The image you think others perceive when they see you.

**Self-concept:** what you believe you possess in terms of skills, talents, gifts, character abilities, and strengths.

**Self-esteem:** how much you prize or despise aspects of your self-concept

Healthy self-concept includes awareness that each attribute is developing and that each will have limits.

Self-esteem is a personal evaluation or judgment that may be faulty or accurate resulting in the eventual feelings and perceptions you hold about your right to exist and express yourself with confidence.

Improving self-esteem means learning ways to more fairly appraise your potential. It usually results in more positive feelings about yourself.

**The Role of the Caregiver**

Children need support from others to develop a belief in themselves that they are worthy and capable. By supporting them and encouraging the development of life skills, caregivers can nurture self-esteem.

Caregivers can:

- provide positive feedback
- be involved in the child's life
- communicate in ways that promote clear communication and problem solving rather than blame and putdowns, really listening to children
- accept the child for who he is
- support the child by using challenges or mistakes as learning opportunities
- support the child to recognize that he is responsible for successes
- support the child to develop the talents he has
- attribute positive behaviours to the child's actions and not the medication he may be taking

Adapted from Bloomquist, M. (1996). Skills Training for Children with Behavioural Disorders. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

## OVERHEAD # 11

**COACHING STRATEGIES WHEN AGGRESSION IS AN ISSUE**

Coach the child in early identification of feelings of frustration and/or situations where the child will likely feel frustrated. (i.e. before the situation arises).

Coach the child in ways to handle frustration.

Coach the child to accept responsibility for actions.
