

Expressing Our Needs

From *Reclaiming Youth At Risk: Our Hope for the Future*

When the needs of humans are met, they generally work, play and love well.

<i>Belonging</i>		
<i>Natural</i>	<i>Distorted</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Attachment	Attention seeking	Alienated
Friendship	Clinging	Withdrawn
Cooperation	Craves approval	Affectionless
Intimacy	Promiscuity	Rejected
Trust	Gang involvement	Suspicious
<i>Mastery</i>		
Achievement	Overachiever	Underachiever
Successful	Workaholic	Inadequate
Problem solver	Cheating	Unmotivated/lazy
Creative	Delinquent skill	Avoids risks
Resilient	Perseverative	Gives up easily
Motivated	Over competitive	Failure oriented
<i>Independence</i>		
Autonomy	Rebellious	Lacks confidence
Self control	Overly controlled	Lacks control
Assertiveness	Manipulative	Easily misled
Responsible	Reckless/macho	Irresponsible
Leadership	Bully	Powerless
<i>Generosity</i>		
Altruism	Selfish helping	Narcissistic
Caring	Over involved	Hedonistic
Compassionate	Overindulgent	Hardened
Empathic	Self-abasing	Psychopathic
Unselfish	Servitude	Anti-social

Emotional Intelligence

Anyone can become angry. That is easy. But to be angry with the right person, to the right degree, at the right time, for the right purpose, and in the right way, that is not easy. Aristotle

Emotional Intelligence (from the work of Peter Salovey)

- Knowing one's emotions, self-awareness, recognizing a feeling as it happens
- Ability to manage one's emotions
- Being able to recognize emotions in others and feeling empathy
- Being able to motivate one's self
- Being able to handle relationships

All emotions are impulses to act. Emotions lead to a physical response:

- In anger, blood surges into the hands, making it easier to grasp a weapon
- In fear, blood is pumped to the legs, making it easier to run. At the same time, the body freezes allowing time to gauge whether hiding might be a better reaction.
- In happiness there is increased activity in a brain center that inhibits negative feelings and offers rest
- In love parasympathetic arousal happens which is just the opposite of fight or flight.
- In surprise there is a lifting of the eyebrows allowing a human to take in a larger visual sweep in order to get more information
- In disgust the upper lip curls to the side as the nose wrinkles slightly

Emotions play out in our brains in one of two ways:

1. The major route for emotion is sensory input (we see, hear, smell and touch things) goes through the thalamus. This sensory information is then generally distributed to the corresponding sensory part of the brain. These parts are connected to our frontal lobes that are responsible for thinking and deciding what our emotional/rational response will be.
2. When the amygdala (two almond sized parts of our brain) determines there is an emergency the brain goes into immediate action sending out signals to the physical body to either fight or flee. This all happens before the frontal lobes (the thinking brain) have a chance to fully understand what is happening, let alone decides what action to take. This quick reaction serves our need to survive. It is a good thing. But the alarms from the amygdala can be sloppy. The alarms can go off for lots of different reasons, some of which are really quite insignificant (example: a rabbit jumps in front of you while on a walk and it startles you causing you to jump back and curse the rabbit). Even if the "emergencies" are insignificant those who haven't learned to control their emotions, may have a significant reaction (example: you run after the rabbit, trap it and kill it).

The Differences in Psychological Worlds
Adapted from the work of Long, Fecser and Wood

Humans do these things:	Helping Humans	Hurting Humans
Perceive	Diverse, Multidimensional	Concrete One dimensional
Think	Logical	Illogical
Feel	Accepts and controls	Doesn't accept or control
Behavior	Accepts responsibility for behavior	Does not accept or control behavior

Explanation: When children and adults are in control of their perceptions, feelings, thoughts and behavior, they are helpful to one another. On the other hand, when humans aren't in control of perceptions, feelings, thoughts and behavior, we often times hurt self and others.

Protecting Ourselves from Emotional Pain

How humans defend against emotional pain	Definition	
Denial	The ability to defend against painful feelings by not recognizing them	"I was not asked to do that! It never happened!"
Rationalization	A conscious effort to defend an action by giving a "good reason" for the behavior instead of facing the real reason	"I only took one comb. It was a small thing. It wasn't very expensive. No one will miss it."
Projection	Shifting the blame to someone or something else	"I was late this morning because my friend kept me on the phone for a long time."
Displacement	Transferring an emotional reaction to a substitute	You get yelled at because the student had a bad night with the boy friend.
Conversion	Transferring emotional pain into physical pain	"I feel sick today and don't want to go to school to take the test."
Regression	Returning to safer time or place	Rocking and thumb sucking. Party time!

Discipline Compared to Punishment

Discipline

Proactive

Natural consequences

Social responsibility taught

Control through inner values

Psychological & physical
punishment is not used

Punishment

Reactive

Arbitrary, adult consequences imposed

Obedience to authority figures

Control by external rule & threat

Psychological & physical
punishment is used

The Conflict Cycle

Learning how to deal with troubled children can become a way of life not a bag of tricks. That way of life recognizes fair play, goodness, concern, respect for others and property and a sense that I can help a child grow.

How the Conflict Cycle works

1. A stressful situation occurs.
2. The stress creates feelings and thoughts in a child that are affected by the child's sense of self and possible irrational thinking patterns - "adults are always picking on me."
3. The feelings and thoughts often lead to coping behaviors that are seen as negative: lying, cheating, hitting, swearing, and rationalizing.
4. The child's behavior creates stress in an adult.
5. A stressed and untrained adult begins to mirror the child's feelings and thoughts and eventually many of the child's behavior: demanding, scolding, yelling, swearing, and displaying rancor.
6. The adult's behavior creates additional stress for the child.
7. The cycle begins again but increases in intensity. Eventually there may be a "blow-up".

Breaking the conflict cycle

- Know that adults are the ones who should take the responsibility to disengage
- Be in touch with your own feelings
- Understand how the child's feelings and behavior can be mirrored by the adult
- Verbalize your feelings with *I messages* rather than *you messages*
- Decode and affirm the student's feelings, not the inappropriate behavior
- Know something about the psychological defenses that humans use
- Know the child
- Know yourself
- Get help when needed

Feelings are OK when you have them. Don't be had by them.

Explanation: The conflict cycle has many names: power struggle, emotional reaction, neural high jacking, tit for tat. This handout is adapted from the work of Nick Long, Frank Fecser and Mary Wood.

Why Adults Become Counter Aggressive

- They get trapped in the conflict cycle and don't know how to get out of it
- The student violates our personal value system
- Personal irritability
- Embarrassed for not meeting our professional expectations
- The student triggers our own unfinished psychological business

Adapted from Life Space Crisis Intervention, Nick Long and others

Managing Behavior

Remember, managing behavior is not the same as changing behavior but sometimes we can do simple things just to keep things sane in the classroom:

- Planned ignoring: don't pay attention to those things that don't matter
- Proximity control: move into the child's space in respectful ways
- Signal interference: cue the child
- Redirection: find something new to focus on
- Support from routine: security in routine
- Support from restructuring: motivation through creative effort
- Direct appeal to values: state the value; ask the child for cooperation
- Support through humor: laughter is good medicine

From Life Space Crisis Intervention, Nick Long and others