In Safe Hands: 
Having Difficult Conversations with Parents

with

Shari Doherty, Program Director
Aaron Ivchenko, Senior Case Manager

Ohio Head Start Association : Social Work Conference
March 14-16, 2018
Presentation Goals

PART 1 : Corporal Punishment and Other High Risk Parenting Choices

Learning Outcome – Familiarization with parenting styles and research on punishment

PART 2 : The Impact of Family Conflict on Children

Learning Outcome – Understand healthy vs. unhealthy conflict, build skill sets, identify safety risks

PART 3 : Speaking to Parents Respectfully and Effectively

Learning Outcome – Learn ways to engage parents, discover mediation tenets
Child Find was founded 38 years ago in 1980 by the mother of a missing child in upstate New York following a contentious custody battle.

There was limited law enforcement response to missing children and no laws about parental/family abduction.

*Little was understood about the devastation these abductions perpetrate on children and their families.*
Child Find - Parent Help offers families in crisis:

• Crisis Intervention
• Exploring Legal Options
• Building Conflict Skills
• Mediation
• Information and Referrals
• Parenting Education
• Location

...as well as consultation services to allied professionals and agencies.
• The vast majority (90%) of missing children are runaways / thrownaways, lost, or miscommunicated their location. (In 2017, of the 25,000 runaways reported to NCMEC, 1 in 7 were likely victims of child sex trafficking; 88% of those were in the care of social services).

• About 120 (under 1%) are widely reported stranger kidnappings, ½ of whom return home.
• **About 10% are victims of a family abduction.** Over half of parental abductions are known to co-occur in the context of domestic violence (which has a co-occurrence relationship with child abuse). Others are often motivated by high conflict, low communication parenting apart situations.

*The Brookings Institution estimates that 44% of parental abductions go unreported*, bringing the actual number to approximately 300,000 annually per the US Dept of Justice Nismart 2 OJJDP study utilizing 1999 numbers.
Child Find offers callers free, confidential:

- Crisis intervention
- Exploration of legal Options
- Conflict skill building
- Mediation when appropriate and safe
- Information and referrals
- Parenting education
- Location

As well as consultation to allied professionals and agencies (without confidentiality breaches)
Part 1:
High Risk
Parenting Choices
If you suffered from headaches and could give your child a magical pill that eases your headache immediately, what would you do?
How is physical (corporal) punishment defined?

“...physical punishment is defined as the use of physical force with the intention of causing the child to experience bodily pain or discomfort so as to correct or punish the child’s behavior.”*

“Most involves hitting ("smacking", "slapping", "spanking") children, with the hand or with an implement – whip, stick, belt, shoe, wooden spoon, etc. But it can also involve, for example, kicking, shaking or throwing children, scratching, pinching, biting, pulling hair or boxing ears, forcing children to stay in uncomfortable positions, burning, scalding or forced ingestion (soap or hot spices).

In the view of the Committee, corporal punishment is invariably degrading. In addition, there are other non physical forms of punishment which are also cruel and degrading... for example, punishment which belittles, humiliates, denigrates, scapegoats, threatens, scares or ridicules the child.”
Do we want our children to:

- Be good problem-solvers
- Do the best they can academically
- Have only positive vital relationships
- Be empathetic
- Be safe
- Be as medically, physically, emotionally and mentally healthy as is possible and thrive in all aspects of their lives?
Do parents give reasons for their parenting choices?
Reasons to Use Physical Punishment

If I don’t smack him, he’ll wind up in jail.

I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.

It’s a race or cultural thing.

Spanking teaches respect.

They know I do it because I love them.

That’s how children learn.

Spare the rod...

It does the job.
If someone has a REASON, that person should be respected as REASONABLE.

Therefore conversations with parents are best when informed and respectful.
It’s a race or cultural thing.
Who spanks in America?
The 2014 General Social Survey was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago. The survey conducted in-person interviews from March 31 to October 13, 2014 among a random national sample of 2,538 adults in the United States. Results for the question on spanking are based on 1,671 respondents in 2014 with an error margin of roughly plus or minus three percentage points.
Figure 2

Percentage of Adults Who Agree that it is Sometimes Necessary to Give a Child a "Good Hard Spanking," by Race and Hispanic Origin, and Sex: 2014

The percentage of adults who agree or strongly agree that it is sometimes necessary to give a child a “good, hard spanking” has dipped only slightly in almost thirty years.

“Were you spanked as a child?”

- **Echo Boomers (18-36):** 77%
- **Gen Xers (37-48):** 87%
- **Baby Boomers (49-67):** 92%
- **Matures (68+):** 88%

Source: Child Trends’ original analysis of the General Social Survey 2012
Education, Race and Spanking

Most Americans, regardless of background, agree that it is sometimes necessary to give a child a “good, hard spanking.”

**Difference by Education Attainment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma or GED</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational/technical or some college</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Difference by Race and Origin**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/Origin</th>
<th>Females</th>
<th>Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black, non-Hispanic</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaskan Native</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Child Trends’ original analysis of the General Social Survey 2012
Who Was This Child’s Father?

“He didn’t spank us...Daddy might sit us down and explain things.

‘This is why you shouldn’t do that, son.’ He would...try to get us to understand why things were. You felt like his equal, almost, like he was bringing you up in the world to his level, not like he was coming down to you. He was soothing to listen to, authoritative you knew, because he was Daddy, but also deliberate, precise; when he spoke, you listened.”
If I don’t smack him, he’ll wind up in jail.

I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.

Spanking teaches respect.

They know I do it because I love them.

It does the job.

It’s a race or cultural thing.

That’s how children learn.

Spare the rod...
It does the job.
Punishment /ˈpəniSHmənt / noun*
The infliction or imposition of a penalty as retribution for an offense

Discipline /ˈdɪsəplən / noun*
to train somebody, especially a child, to obey particular rules and control the way they behave

*Oxford English Dictionary
What is the common goal of both Punishment and Discipline?
COMPLIANCE

/kəmˈplɪəns/ noun*

The state or fact of according with or meeting rules or standards

*Oxford English Dictionary
The meta-analysis of 88 scientific studies over 62 years found a 94% consensus that spanking is associated with the following:

**Spanking**

**Positive outcomes**
- Immediate compliance

**Negative outcomes**
- Decreased mental health
- Increased risk of being physically abused
- Decreased ability to understand another's perspective
- Decreased ability to monitor own actions
- Decreased moral internalization

- Increased child & adult aggression
- Increased delinquency & less verbal

The Psychology of Spanking
Key Points: *Physical Punishment of Children: Lessons from 20 Years of Research*

- Numerous studies have found that physical punishment increases the risk of broad and enduring negative developmental outcomes.
- No study has found that physical punishment enhances developmental health.
- **Most child physical abuse occurs in the context of punishment.**
- A professional consensus is emerging that parents should be supported in learning nonviolent, effective approaches to discipline.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) does not endorse spanking under any circumstance. It's a form of punishment that becomes less effective with repeated use, according to the AAP; it also makes discipline more difficult as the child outgrows it.*

*The Long-Term Effects of Spanking: A multiyear study shows spanking kids makes them more aggressive later on, Time Magazine Based on Tulane University Study, published by AAP
What Type of Parenting Style is Physical Punishment?

“...physical punishment is defined as *the use of physical force with the intention of causing the child to experience bodily pain or discomfort so as to correct or punish the child’s behavior.”*  

Parenting Styles

* Based on the work of Developmental Psychologist Diana Baumrind (1972)
Child Outcomes of Parenting Styles*

- **Authoritative (Positive)**: Socially adept, emotionally healthy, academically skillful and show resourcefulness.

- **Authoritarian**: Inferior social skills, more likely than others to suffer from anxiety, depression and poor self-esteem.

- **Indulgent (Permissive)**: More likely to get involved in problem behavior (like drug use). Tend to achieve less academically and have trouble with self-regulation.

- **Uninvolved (Neglectful)**: Children suffer in all categories. Tend to lack self-control, have low self-esteem and are less competent with their peers.

* “Parenting styles: A guide for the science-minded” © 2010 Gwen Dewar, Ph.D.
If I don’t smack him, he’ll wind up in jail.

I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.

They know I do it because I love them.

It works.

Spanking teaches respect.

That’s how children learn.

Spare the rod...

Reasons to Use Physical Punishment
If I don’t smack him, he’ll wind up in jail.
“As recently as 20 years ago, the physical punishment of children was generally accepted worldwide...However, this perspective began to change as studies found links between ‘normative’ physical punishment and child aggression, delinquency and spousal assault later in life.

Virtually without exception, these studies found that physical punishment was associated with higher levels of aggression against parents, siblings, peers and spouses.”
American Psychological Association on Bullying

Parent's Use of Physical Punishment Increases Violent Behavior Among Youth*

Adolescents who were more likely to engage in fighting, bullying, and victimization of others reported that their parents engaged in corporal punishment as a disciplining method. These findings suggest that perceived parental disapproval of violence may serve as a protective factor against violent behavior among adolescents. Alternatively, parental use of corporal punishment may pose a risk for violent behaviors among youth.

“What is spanking associated with? Aggression. Delinquency. Mental health problems. And something called ‘hostile attribution bias,’ which causes children, essentially, to expect people to be mean to them.

This bias makes the world feel especially hostile. In turn, children are on edge and ready to be hostile back. Over time, across cultures and ethnicities, the findings are consistent: Spanking is doing real, measurable damage to the brains of our children.”*

*Based on Gershoff, E.T. in re: What Research Tells Us About Its Effects on Children

So who will be unlucky enough to trigger the mines that CP has planted?
CHRIS CARTER ON ADRIAN PETERSON - VIDEO
If I don’t smack him, he’ll wind up in jail.

Spanking teaches respect.

I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.

They know I do it because I love them.

That’s how children learn.

Spare the rod...
They know I do it because I love them.
Does a parent’s **INTENT** matter?

“Children cannot always understand the difference between unacceptable physical aggression for which they get punished, such as hitting and shoving, and the physical aggression they receive as punishment.”*

*www.livestrong.com/article/213859-long-term-effects-of-physical-punishment-on-a-child/

“I believe spanking genuinely confuses children. I believe they think to themselves something like, ‘OK, let me get this right. You are supposed to love me, nurture me and protect me from harm, and now you are standing there, five times my size, and hitting me and inflictng physical pain?’”  

*2009 Dr. Phil | Turning Point: The Official Dr. Phil Blog*
“One is not permitted to hit one's spouse or a stranger; these actions are considered domestic violence and/or assault. Nor should one be permitted to hit a smaller and even more vulnerable child. Hitting a child elicits precisely the feelings one does not want to generate in a child: distress, anger, fear, shame, and disgust. Studies show that children who are hit will ‘identify with the aggressor,’ and they are more likely to become hitters themselves...”

* Paul C Holinger M.D., Psychology Today, August 2009
Son, this is going to hurt me more than it's going to hurt you...
“Parents tend to use a number of euphemisms to refer to punishment that involves striking their child, including spank, smack, slap, pop, beat, paddle, punch, whup or whip, and hit.”

“When researchers at Southern Methodist University, in Dallas, asked adults – 481 parents and 191 without kids – to judge a child’s misbehavior and the punishment that followed, the study participants were more accepting of the same violent punishment when it was called a ‘spank’ versus terms like ‘slap,’ ‘hit’ or ‘beat.’”
Why do we need to accurately LABEL things?

Consider what would happen if a bottle of salicylic acidic wart remover was mislabeled as eye drops?
Can these definitions be applied to the act of Physical Punishment?

1. *use superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone), typically to force him or her to do what one wants*

2. *to come roughly against, so as to injure or hurt*

3. *do violence to (violence = behavior involving physical force intended to hurt)*
According to the Oxford English Dictionary:

1. **Bully** *verb* /ˈbɔli/  use superior strength or influence to intimidate (someone), typically to force him or her to do what one wants

2. **Assault** *verb* /əˈsɔlt/ to come roughly against, so as to injure or hurt

3. **Abuse** *verb* /əˈbyʊəz/ do violence to† (violence = behavior involving physical force intended to hurt)
I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.

Spanking teaches respect.

They know I do it because I love them.

That's how children learn.

Spare the rod...
That’s how children learn.
Fear and Anxiety Affect the Brain Architecture of Learning and Memory

**Prefrontal Cortex**
Center of executive functions; regulates thought, emotions, and actions. Especially vulnerable to elevation of brain chemicals caused by stress.

**Amygdala**
Triggers emotional responses; detects whether a stimulus is threatening. Elevated cortisol levels caused by stress can affect activity.

**Hippocampus**
Center of short-term memory; connects emotion of fear to the context in which the threatening event occurs. Elevated cortisol levels caused by stress can affect growth and performance.

*National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, Harvard University*
Corporal punishment causes aggression as a response to fear and stress by increased levels of the stress hormone *cortisol*.

This is the same way aggression is developed in dogs. "If you use aggression in training your dog, you’re likely to elicit aggression back."

*NYU Science, Health and Environmental Reporting Program - www.scienceline.org*
Who are higher baseline levels of cortisol commonly associated with?
“Cortisol is a stress hormone emitted in low levels among healthy individuals.

Chronically elevated levels of cortisol can become toxic to sensitive regions in the brain involved in decision-making, and in understanding and expressing emotions.

Sadly, children who come from emotional ‘war zones’ may ultimately develop neurochemistry akin to that of Viet Nam war veterans.”

*Creating Safe Places for Our Children, Karyn Purvis, Ph.D. & David Cross, Ph.D., Institute of Child Development†, Texas Christian University, December 10, 2007
“...because corporal punishment uses physical force, its use by parents constitutes an external source to which children can attribute their compliance; corporal punishment does not promote internalized reasons for behaving appropriately."

*MORE HARM THAN GOOD: A SUMMARY OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON THE INTENDED AND UNINTENDED EFFECTS OF CORPORAL PUNISHMENT ON CHILDREN, ELIZABETH T. GERSHOFF
Brain scans of young adults who were spanked at least 12 times a year for 3 years showed less grey matter than young adults who were not spanked.

Decreased ability to understand another person’s perspective

Decreased ability for one to monitor their own actions

Decreased ability to pay attention and retrieve memories

Spanked young adults scored an average 10 points lower on IQ scores than non-spanked participants

The Psychology of Spanking *
Reasons to Use Physical Punishment

I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.

Spanking teaches respect.

That’s how children learn.

Spare the rod...
Spanking teaches respect.
“A New York City gang member was asked why he carried a gun. He replied, ‘Before I had this gun, I didn’t get no respect. Now I do.’”*
Fear vs. Respect
Respect //rɪˈspekt// noun*

1. a feeling of admiration for somebody/something because of their good qualities or achievements

2. polite behavior towards or care for somebody/something that you think is important

*Oxford English Dictionary
Fear /ˈfɪr/ noun*

1. An unpleasant emotion caused by the belief that someone or something is dangerous, likely to cause pain, or a threat

2. A feeling of anxiety concerning the outcome of something or the safety and well-being of someone

*Oxford English Dictionary
X-BOX VIDEO
Do we want our children to

Fear Parental Authority

or to

Respect Parental Authority?
I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.
I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.
About that bottle of pills...
Physical Punishment May Cause:

Childhood AND adulthood: Depression / Unhappiness / Anxiety / Feelings of Hopelessness / Aggression / Mental Health Problems / Antisocial Behavior

Disruptions in parent-child attachment resulting from pain inflicted by a caregiver

Increased levels of cortisol chemical disruption of the brain’s mechanism for regulating stress

Slower cognitive development, reduced vocabulary, adversely affected academic achievement

Reduction in the volume of the brain’s grey matter associated with IQ

Increased vulnerability of drug abuse associated with alterations in the dopaminergic regions

Decreased moral internalizations of norms and empathy

Increased bullying & other behavior problems / defiance

Increased risk of serious injury and physical abuse
Activity

Make a list of stuff we’ve historically done to kids that we learned to stop doing.
“... when I was a child, there were no seat belts in cars. Do I think I turned out OK because my parents didn't put me in a seat belt? No. I think I turned out because we didn't get in an accident.”

Elizabeth T. Gershoff, Research Associate — Ph.D., The University of Texas at Austin
Reasons to Use Physical Punishment

I was spanked as a child and I turned out fine.
Spare the rod...
The Pastor’s Wife

“But one day when her son was four or five, he did something that she felt warranted a spanking – the first time in his life. And she told him he would have to go outside and find a switch for her to hit him with. The boy was gone a long time. And when he came back in, he was crying. He said to her, ‘Mama, I couldn’t find a switch, but here’s a rock you can throw at me.’

The mother took the boy onto her lap and they both cried. Then she laid the rock on a shelf in the kitchen to remind herself forever: never violence. Because violence begins in the nursery – one can raise a child into violence.”

*From a 1978 peace prize acceptance speech by Astrid Lindgren, author of Pippi Longstocking*
Spare the rod...

www.nospank.net/church2.htm
www.nospank.net/bible1.htm

http://www.parentinginjesusfootsteps.org/articles.html

www.religioustolerance.org/spankin4.htm


www.umc.org/what-we-believe/discipline-children-without-corporal-punishment

www.gundersenhealth.org/upload/docs/NCPTC/Vieth-(2014)-From-Sticks-to-Flowers.pdf

http://nospank.net/ncp.pdf
Reasons to Use Physical Punishment
Reasons to Use Physical Punishment
So.
Will spanking help our children:

- Be good problem-solvers
- Do the best they can academically
- Have only positive vital relationships
- Be empathetic
- Be safe
- Be as medically, physically, emotionally and mentally healthy as is possible and thrive in all aspects of their lives?
In generations past, when those pills were given to children, the side effects were unknown.

**Directions:** Give to child when you have a headache. Repeat as needed. Increase dosage as tolerance builds.

Now we are learning the possible side effects, but the information is difficult to believe.

*But we’re getting there...*
WARNING: Physical Punishment May Cause*

Childhood AND adulthood: Depression / Unhappiness / Anxiety / Feelings of Hopelessness / Aggression / Mental Health Problems / Antisocial Behavior

Disruptions in parent-child attachment resulting from pain inflicted by a caregiver

Increased levels of cortisol chemical disruption of the brain’s mechanism for regulating stress

Slower cognitive development, reduced vocabulary, adversely affected academic achievement

Reduction in the volume of the brain’s grey matter associated with IQ

Increased vulnerability of drug abuse associated with alterations in the dopaminergic regions

Decreased moral internalizations of norms and empathy

Increased bullying & other behavior problems / defiance

Increased risk of serious injury and physical abuse

*Physical Punishment of Children: Lessons From 20 Years of Research by Joan Durrant PhD and Ron Ensom, MSW RSW - Sept. 4, 2012 CMAJ
“He didn’t spank us...Daddy might sit us down and explain things. ‘This is why you shouldn’t do that, son.’ He would...try to get us to understand why things were. You felt like his equal, almost, like he was bringing you up in the world to his level, not like he was coming down to you. He was soothing to listen to, authoritative you knew, because he was Daddy, but also deliberate, precise; when he spoke, you listened.”

- Dexter Scott King, son of Martin Luther King

Growing Up King
A Vow to My Child

I will guide you wisely, calmly, compassionately.

I will role model what I want to see in you.

I will not use physical force, as I do not want you to use physical force.

I will tend to your natural, developmental efforts to learn and integrate our family values and rules.

I will continue to be a student of life, open to learning more about how to be a good person, a good parent.
Part 2:
The Impact of Family Conflict on Children
“As conflict is here in the world, as we cannot avoid it, we should, I think, use it. Instead of condemning it, we should set it to work for us.”

- Mary Parker Follett, 1925

American intellectual, social worker, management consultant, pioneer of organizational theory/behavior
What does **Healthy Conflict** Look Like?

- There’s a relationship-appropriate balance – *or* – *imbalance* (parent-child/employer-employee)

- There is no intimidation

- It does not engage “proof” or “evidence” or “witnesses”
What does **Healthy Conflict** Look Like? *continued*

- Capacity is high enough for motivation and self-determination to represent the needs (vs. substance abuse or mental health impaired decision-making)

- Clarifies the parties’ values, transforms the future for the better

- Moves parties from empowerment to add recognition, as well

- Allows for emotional expression
How do parents go from this...
...to this?

- Parenting Styles Differences
  - (authoritarian / authoritative / neglecting / permissive)
- Communication Styles
- Brain Differences
- Cultural Differences
- Learning Styles
- Religious Beliefs
- Core Values
- Extended Family
- Politics
- Substance abuse
- Unaddressed mental health needs
- Changing Interests
- Changing Goals
- Age / Maturity
### Verbal, focusing on words, symbols, numbers
- Analytical, led by logic
- Process ideas sequentially, step by step
- Words used to remember things, remember names rather than faces
- Make logical deductions from information
- Work up to the whole step by step, focusing on details, information organized
  - Highly organized
- Like making lists and planning
- Likely to follow rules without questioning them
- Good at keeping track of time
- Spelling and mathematical formula easily memorized
  - Enjoy observing
  - Plan ahead
- Likely read an instruction manual before trying
  - Listen to what is being said
- Rarely use gestures when talking
- Likely to believe you're not creative, need to be willing to try and take risks to develop your potential

### Visual, focusing on images, patterns
- Intuitive, led by feelings
- Process ideas simultaneously
- 'Mind photos' used to remember things, writing things down or illustrating them helps you remember
- Make lateral connections from information
- See the whole first, then the details
- Organization tends to be lacking
- Free association
- Like to know why you're doing something or why rules exist (reasons)
- No sense of time
- May have trouble with spelling and finding words to express yourself
- Enjoy touching and feeling actual objects (sensory input)
- Trouble prioritizing, so often late, impulsive
- Unlikely to read instruction manual before trying
  - Listen to how something is being said
- Talk with your hands
- Likely to think you're naturally creative, but need to apply yourself to develop your potential

### Logical
- Sequential
- Rational
- Analytical
- Objective

### Random
- Intuitive
- Holistic
- Subjective

### Left Brain
- Looks at parts
- Reality-based

### Right Brain
- Looks at wholes
- Fantasy-oriented
Healthy conflicts can easily become unhealthy simply due to different CONFLICT STYLES

The Conquerer
I WILL have my way!

The Avoider
PROBLEM?? What problem?

The Accommodator
THAT'S OK, you’re right, we’ll do it your way.

The Quick-Fixer
DONE! let’s move on to the next thing…

The Problem Solver
LET’S BRAINSTORM so we’ll both be happy with the outcome.
The Conquerer

*I WILL have my way!*

**Benefit**

*When getting your way is more important than the relationship*

**Risk**

*Loss of the relationship*
The Avoider

PROBLEM??? What problem?

Benefit

*When there is an essential imbalance of power (employer - employee)*

Risk

*Ongoing internal conflict, loss of motivation, loss of loyalty*
The Accommodator

DONE! let’s move on to the next thing...

Benefit

One party’s needs have been met.

Risk

Ongoing resentment that the accommodator's needs have not been met.
The Quick Fixer

Benefit

*Speedy, most obvious solution is reached.*

Risk

*Short-term benefit only.*
*More complex issues are not resolved.*
The Problem Solver

LET’S BRAINSTORM so we’ll both have our needs met.

Benefit

The parties have a long-term resolution, the relationship reaps the benefits.

Risk

Insulting the necessary power imbalance, or there are critical safety concerns
ACTIVITY: WHERE DO I STAND?
HOW WOULD YOU HANDLE THE FOLLOWING CIRCUMSTANCES:

1. Your co-worker has taken credit for something you did.

2. Your elderly relative has given your child something you do not allow in the home.

3. Your sibling is demanding you chip in for a gift you believe is way too expensive.

4. The counterperson in the sandwich shop is texting and you’re in a rush to get food.

5. A neighbor you are friendly with has been playing loud music at 11:30 p.m.

6. Your boss has asked you to stay late, but you had plans with an old friend.
Productive Conflict vs. Unhealthy Conflict

Conflict is disharmony. All ongoing, meaningful relationships will experience conflict in one or many forms.

Conflict can be very useful in that is has transformative properties; it can clarify needs and interests.

However, exposure to patterns of Unhealthy Conflict can result in harm.
TOXIC STRESS - VIDEO
What are Adverse Childhood Experiences?

An Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) is defined as experiencing any of the following categories of abuse, neglect, or loss prior to age 18:

- Physical or emotional abuse by a parent
- Sexual abuse by anyone
- Growing up with an alcohol and/or substance abuser in the home
- Experiencing the incarceration of a household member
- Living with a family member experiencing mental illness
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Death of a parent
- Emotional or physical neglect

Ace Response - http://www.aceresponse.org/
A.C.E.s may cause:

Inability to make healthy bonds or trust others
Poor coping / stress responses
Anxiety / Phobias
Hyper-Startling / Hyper-Vigilance
Shame / Self-Blame
Verbal Delays / Cognitive Delays
Motor Delays / loss of new skills
Pain / Heart disease / Diabetes
Digestive problems / Obesity
Eating Disorders
Autoimmune diseases
Skin conditions
Restlessness / Irritability / Impulsivity
Clinginess, Separation Anxiety
Repetitive behaviors
Insomnia / Nightmares / Excessive sleep
Mental health disorders
Depression
Self-harm / Low sense of self
Aggression / Bullying / Violence
Compromised conflict skills
Inhibited, withdrawn behavior
Substance Abuse
Academic failure
Repeated abusive partnering
Criminal behaviors
Promiscuity / STDs
Adolescent or Teen pregnancy
American Humane Association defines emotional abuse of a child as a pattern of behavior by parents or caregivers that can seriously interfere with a child’s cognitive, emotional, psychological or social development.

- Rejecting – putting down child’s worth/needs
- Ignoring – failure to interact / respond
- Terrorizing – intimidating/threatening, exposing to violence
- Isolating – keeping child away from safe family/friends etc.
- Corrupting – encouraging child in illegal/harmful activities
- Exploiting – inappropriate responsibilities/ using child for profit
Side Effects of Emotional Abuse

**Physical Effects**
- speech problems
- lags in physical development
- failure to thrive (especially in infants)
  - facial tics
  - eating disorders
  - substance abuse
- self-harm - burning, cutting
- attempts at or completed suicide

**Behavioral Effects**
- low self-worth
- irritability
- overly reactive
- sleep disorders
- inability to trust others
  - depression
- inappropriate behavior for age
  - withdrawal
  - profound sadness
- habit disorders - sucking, biting, rocking
  - aggression
  - stealing
  - lying
  - self-harm
  - prostitution
- engaging in risky behaviors
- attempts at or completed suicide

**Emotional Effects**
- inability to control emotions
- questioning of religious beliefs
Factors that May Impact Side Effects:

The child’s:

- Age
- Developmental Level
- Severity, Proximity, Duration, Frequency
- Mental Health
- Gender
- Role in the Family
- Personal Characteristics
Promising Treatments

- Stability & Responsiveness of Staff and Systems
- Early Intervention
- Wraparound Services for Family Members in Need
- At Least One Safe, Nurturing Caretaker
- Trauma-Informed Intervention
- Protective Factors Framework
- Promoting Authoritative-Democratic Parenting
- Conflict Resolution Skills
IMPORTANTLY:

If there are indications - or a disclosure - of Domestic Violence the victim MUST NEVER BE PUSHED to:

➢ discuss the issue in detail unless s/he wants to
➢ reach out for services
➢ get a restraining order
➢ leave the abuser
➢ call law enforcement
➢ feel challenged or judged
Where there is **Domestic Violence**, we **NEVER**

- **REACH OUT TO THE PERPETRATOR**
  - Discuss the issue with *anyone else without permission*
  - Contact the victim without planning a safe method
  - Intervene during an “incident”
  - Pull the victim aside in front of the abuser
  - Question the child
  - Provide information to the abuser that may result in harm
- *Hand over literature that may be discovered by the abuser*
What we **CAN** do:

✓ provide the victim **SAFELY** with the phone number for the Nat’l DV Hotline

    —or—

✓ offer to provide the number upon request

✓ contact the Nat’l DV Hotline (without providing names) for guidance

1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

Or check out www.thehotline.org
However, there are situations **without safety concerns** and these can be excellent opportunities to utilize good conflict resolution skills, particularly TRANSFORMATIVE ones.
Who is Buffy?
What is Mediation?

“Mediation is a process in which an impartial third party facilitates communication and negotiation and promotes voluntary decision making by the parties to the dispute.”*

*2005 Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators prepared by the American Arbitration Association, the American Bar Association’s Section of Dispute Resolution, and the Association for Conflict Resolution
What are the types of *Mediation*?

**EVALUATIVE**

This method focuses on the legal rights of the parties rather than their interests. The mediator's role is to hear the different points of view and speculate on what a judge and jury would decide if this case were brought to court.
What are the types of Mediation?

**FACILITATIVE**

The disputing parties maintain control over most of the mediation process. The mediator does not give an opinion about the outcome. Instead, the mediator searches for underlying interests and helps find and analyze options for resolution. In facilitative mediation, the emphasis lies on making sure the disputing parties come to an agreement.
What are the types of Mediation?

TRANSFORMATIVE

Despite conflict's potentially destructive impacts, people have the capacity to change the quality of their interactions through *empowerment* and *recognition*.

As conflict dynamics feed into each other, the interaction can regenerate and assume a constructive, connecting, and humanizing character. This model assumes that the transformation of the interaction itself is what matters most to parties in conflict - even more than settlement.

We look toward true sustainability.
Conflict Pitfalls

or

“How to Escalate a Conflict Without Really Trying”
Conflict Pitfall

1. Looking for Universal Values

BETTER: Look for each party’s values, brainstorm ideas everyone can live with.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Accomplishment</th>
<th>Control</th>
<th>Flexibility</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability</td>
<td>Coolness</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>Legacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
<td>Frankness</td>
<td>Lightheartedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activeness</td>
<td>Courage</td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>Logic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Friendliness</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>Friendship</td>
<td>Loyalty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressiveness</td>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Frugality</td>
<td>Making a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apologies</td>
<td>Decisiveness</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Manners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambition</td>
<td>Dependability</td>
<td>Generosity</td>
<td>Masculinity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approachability</td>
<td>Devotion</td>
<td>Gentleness</td>
<td>Maturity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Discretion</td>
<td>Hard work</td>
<td>Mellowness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Diversity</td>
<td>Health</td>
<td>Mercy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>Drive</td>
<td>Honor</td>
<td>Moderation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being the best</td>
<td>Duty</td>
<td>Hospitality</td>
<td>Modesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calmness</td>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Humility</td>
<td>Money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career</td>
<td>Efficiency</td>
<td>Humor</td>
<td>Mysteriousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Hygiene</td>
<td>Nutrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charm</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Idealism</td>
<td>Obedience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheerfulness</td>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Openness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleverness</td>
<td>Excitement</td>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>Optimism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
<td>Extravagance</td>
<td>Integrity</td>
<td>Originality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Justice</td>
<td>Outrageousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Keeping promises</td>
<td>Passion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Fearlessness</td>
<td>Keeping secrets</td>
<td>Patience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Fame</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Patriotism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Fashion</td>
<td>Lawfulness</td>
<td>Perceptiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Fearlessness</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Perfection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consideration</td>
<td>Femininity</td>
<td>Lawfulness</td>
<td>Perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency</td>
<td>Financial stability</td>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Persuasiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fitness</td>
<td></td>
<td>Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Piety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Playfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Popularity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Preparedness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Public service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Punctuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Quiet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Refinement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relaxation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reliability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Resilience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reverence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Role Modeling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Romance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Scheduled time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Selflessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Serenity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Seriousness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Serendipity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sexuality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Solidarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Solitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Stability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Success</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thankfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thoroughness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tradition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>True to yourself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Variety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Vision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Winning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Wisdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work ethic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Youthfulness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Zenfulness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conflict Pitfall

2. “Calm down!”

BETTER: Work THROUGH their emotions without judging how they communicate.

Listen to the MESSAGE to find the core values.
Conflict Pitfall

3. Having a ready answer (vs. deep listening)

Do you recognize when you’re not being heard?
Conflict Pitfall

4. Compromise or 50/50 Solutions

Have ya heard the one about the orange...?
Conflict Pitfall

5. Telling Someone What They Want or Need

“You want the blueberry calf’s brain pot pie with creamed fish and cinnamon sauce...”
Conflict Pitfall

6. Seeking the Truth When It’s Not Helpful

Is it always necessary?
Conflict Pitfall

7. Settling on one *Winner*

*Seek a creative integration, a.k.a. collaboration*
Mary Parker Follett:

The Dilemma

“In the Harvard Library one day, in one of the smaller rooms, someone wanted the window open. I wanted it shut...”
Mary Parker Follett

The Collaboration

“We opened the window in the next room, where no one was sitting. This was not a compromise because there was no curtailing of desire; we both got what we really wanted. ..

I simply did not want the north wind to blow directly on me...(he) merely wanted more air in the room.”
Conflict Pitfall

8. Describing conflict as *drama* or another person as *dramatic*

“...involving conflicts and emotions through action and dialogue and typically designed for theatrical performance.”

*In other words, not organic, exaggerated, unreal, not legitimate.*
13 - VIDEO
How Can We Have a Positive Impact on Conflict?
Conflict Skill Building TECHNIQUES

1. Retelling

Repeating the facts and checking in:
“Did I get that right?” “Is this what happened...?”

2. Reframing

Working to understand the value:
“It looks like you want Alex to enforce homework rules, and that education is important to you.”
Conflict Skill Building TECHNIQUES

3. Clarifying Questions
   When you say “annoying,” what does that mean?
   Can you give me an example?

4. Avoiding Yes/No Questions
   Can you explain why you want to do it that way?

5. Unloading Questions
   Why can’t you just...? shows that you have a bias and shuts down opportunity for the parties to do the brainstorming
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POSITION</th>
<th>AGENDA</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
<th>EMOTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the statement?</td>
<td>What is the topic (noun)?</td>
<td>What is the value (interest)?</td>
<td>What is the emotion?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You never listen, I don’t want you dressing like that, you can’t go...</td>
<td>Religion, wardrobe, friends, car, work, grades...</td>
<td>Trust, safety, loyalty, honesty, respect, friendship...</td>
<td>Hurt, betrayed, isolated, stressed, judged, shocked, helpless...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGENDA ITEM:</td>
<td>Car</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VALUE:</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMOTION:</td>
<td>Worried</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGENDA ITEM:</th>
<th>Car</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VALUE:</td>
<td>Socializing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMOTION:</td>
<td>Frustrated, Angry</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Head home by 9 p.m.

Stay at friend’s house overnight

We’ll pay for car service

Call from a landline before you leave, put cell in glove compartment

Have friends over, we’ll be out

We’ll drive

We’ll buy gas for older sibling’s car

Car pool with a friend

Take a specific route home

Increase curfew at age 17

Brainstorming Collaborative Solutions that **Honor Values**
STIRRING CONVERSATIONS

✓ What else?

✓ What would that look like to you?

✓ Good other ideas?

✓ What options work for you?

✓ How would you change that?

✓ How would you like things to look one year from now?
HOW CAN WE HELP?

• Mentally, emotionally and physically healthy parents are more interested and able to be highly-skilled parents. *We look for ways to build parents up.*

• **If there are no safety issues, we don’t take sides.** It limits the possibilities and de-values the other parent. Chances of success are severely minimized.

• **We remain as judgment-free as possible.** Short of safety concerns, people have the right to name their own values.

• **Parents who set their own goals and priorities** see longer-term improvements and resolutions.
HOW CAN WE HELP? continued

• **We never assume we know more** than the parent does about his/her own situation.

• **We’re available to listen without offering advice**, just options. *We don’t really have the power to fix other people’s problems.*

• **We never talk about what WE would do** under the circumstances. We allow parents to own their own situations without bringing in our relationships and experiences.

• **We bring in all types of skill sets** and freely admit our limitations when working with families.
Can you...?
“We may be angry and fight; we may feel kindly and want peace—it is all about the same. The world will be regenerated by the people who rise above both these passive ways and heroically seek, by whatever hardship, by whatever toil, the methods by which people can agree.”

– Mary Parker Follett
Part 3: Speaking to Parents Respectfully and Effectively
These organizations formally oppose CP

American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychology
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Humane Association
American Orthopsychiatric Association
Association for Childhood Education International
Center for Effective Discipline
Child Help International
Child Rights Connect
Children’s National Medical Center
Disability Rights International
End Physical Punishment of Children-USA
Human Rights Watch
International Child Art Foundation
International Assoc. for Adolescent Health
International Federation of Medical Students
International Federation of Social Workers
International Parenting Association
International Pediatric Association
International Society for Social Pediatrics & Child Health
International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect
Justice for Children
Loving Alternatives in Parenting
National Association of Social Workers - US
National Foster Parent Association - US
The Natural Child Project
Parenting for Peaceful Families
Parents Anonymous
The Peaceful Home Foundation
Save the Children
Society for Adolescent Medicine
United Methodist Church
Universal Education Foundation
Village of Child Help

and on....
Organizations and groups are promoting **Authoritative Parenting** as this style sees the best outcomes for children and their families.
Elements of Authoritative* Parenting:

- High and Reasonable Expectations
- Assertive
- Warm & Nurturing
- Highly Responsive
- Highly Communicative
- Highly Supportive
- Safe Levels of Control

*sometimes called “Positive Parenting”, “Attachment Parenting”
What challenges do we, in the United States, face when it comes to guiding parents away from corporal punishment/harmful parenting?
Of the 197 UN member countries, 196 have ratified some or all of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children**

Article 19 views corporal punishment as an act of abuse against children

**What country hasn’t ratified it?**
The United States of America
Why hasn’t the US ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child?  
(and why is it the only UN member nation not to do so?)

“Unfortunately, when it comes to your parental rights...your rights to make those vital decisions for your child too often depend on the good graces of someone—a doctor, a teacher, a social services investigator—who shouldn’t have that kind of power over your innocent family. *

*prenatalrights.org*
Discussion about corporal punishment with parents who utilize this form of discipline are rooted in one’s sense of innate rights.

Therefore, conversations that directly challenge parental rights in the United States are not fully supported should the corporal punishment not lead to child welfare investigations.

Rather, they should be meant to inform, educate, collaborate (rather than compromise).
What direction is she spinning?
Take a Second Look . . .

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDOBfBuge_g
Is it possible that contradictory answers – based on perception - are both correct?
Perceptions are personal.

She is spinning one of two ways, according to YOUR perception.
However...

when a child’s safety and well-being are threatened, perceptions don’t matter.

**Facts matter.**

**Facts = always true**
Emotions connected to opinions and perceptions *do not* impact or change good scientific data.

*But do emotions matter when we are asking parents to process data that contradicts what they believe?*
"Reasoning is actually suffused with emotion."

Not only are the two inseparable, but our positive or negative feelings about people, things, and ideas arise much more rapidly than our conscious thoughts, in a matter of milliseconds—fast enough to detect with an EEG device, but long before we're aware of it." *  

*Science journalist Chris Mooney
INSIDE OUT - VIDEO
CONSIDERATIONS PRIOR TO THE DISCUSSION
Is this a REPORTABLE situation?
It’s Good to Ask Yourself:

- What is my purpose for having this conversation?

- What do I hope to accomplish? What would be an ideal outcome?

- What assumptions am I making about this parent?

- What is my relationship with this parent?

- What are my personal emotions about this?

Adapted from “We Have to Talk: A Step-by Step Checklist for Difficult Conversations” – Judy Ringer
Is this a “Difficult Person”?

“Every person you fight with has many other people in his life with whom he gets along quite well. You cannot look at a person who seems difficult to you without also looking at yourself.”

* Psychologist Jeffrey Kottler, Beyond Blame: A New Way of Resolving Conflicts in Relationships
We recognize what may be happening in their lives

FAMILY MAKE UP:
ONE PARENT HOME /
BLENDED FAMILY/
BIOLOGICALLY DIVERSE...

Exposure to
DV/IPV

Medical Issues /
Physical Disabilities

Parenting Apart
Conflict

Inherited Parenting
Style

Imigration
Challenges

ALCOHOL / SUBSTANCE
ABUSE

FINANCES
(HOUSING, CHILD SUPPORT,
UNEMPLOYMENT.....)

History of
Incarceration /
Incarcerated
Family

FINANCES
(HOUSING, CHILD SUPPORT,
UNEMPLOYMENT.....)

Community
Violence

Child Welfare
Involvement

Teen Parent

Learning Challenges/
IEPs

Mental Health
Diagnoses
Most importantly, we recognize that parents are the experts of their own lives.

We are only spectators who exhibit compassion and offer respectful guidance when appropriate.
Partnering with the Parent

What are the parent’s specific concerns?

Are the parent’s concerns about NOW or the FUTURE?

Will the parent’s needs be met by this conversation?

What family members is the parent concerned about?

What does the parent do well? What is the parent most proud of?

Will the information be best brought forward slowly / incrementally so that the parent can adjust and integrate parenting style changes?
“Parents regard advice-giving as intrusive. They prefer cooperative, respectful communication within the context of reciprocal relationships.”
Respectful adult conversations see a balance of power.
BREAK WOMB ...IF MOMS TALKED TO... - VIDEO
INITIATING THE DISCUSSION
“Starting a difficult conversation (or negotiation or mediation) can feel like opening Fibber McGee’s closet — chaotic, overwhelming, and hope-sucking.”

Tammy Lenski, Mediator, Educator, & Author
REMEMBER!
Begin with an assuring - not alarming - reason you would like to have the discussion.

“There’s some great stuff I’m seeing...”

“Your child is working well on ______.”

“Your child is so (funny / strong / thoughtful...”

“I appreciate your child’s __________.”
ENGAGING THE PARENT

- I need your help with something. Can we schedule a time soon?

- Not an emergency, but I need your help with something that happened today. Do you have some time to talk?

- I’d like to set up some time to brainstorm about how your child is struggling with (working in a group).
ENGAGING THE PARENT \textit{con't}\hspace{1cm}

- I really want to hear your feelings about your child’s (lack of connecting) and share my perspective, as well.

- I could really use your input on your child’s (problems with another student).

- What do you think about putting our heads together to help your child (thrive academically)?
THE
DISCUSSION
How can we respectfully and effectively guide parents towards more productive, less risky methods of discipline that create lasting compliance?
DURING the DISCUSSION

• Speak honestly, genuinely, directly.
• Listen patiently and openly.
• Wonder Together: *I wonder, when do you think Jonathan has the most trouble dealing with a situation?*
• Be aware that criticism must be constructive and remain considerate of the parent’s innate love for the child and personal need to be respected.
• **Remember child’s point of view** and consider *the conflict from his/her perspective.*
• **If the discussion becomes adversarial**, go back to inviting engagement
DURING the DISCUSSION (cont.)

• **Try not to “talk down”** to the parent (or tell them what they already know)

• **Be aware of shifts in tone or body language** that indicate disapproval or retreat from the conversation

• **Do not betray the child’s confidence:** “Your child told me...” and share what you notice instead.

• **Recognize what is important to the parent:** Try to identify what the parent (and family) value most – education/honesty/manners/friendliness...
MIRROR NEURONS - VIDEO
We can ask, “What do you see...

When your child is frustrated?

When your child is disappointed?

When your child is angry?

When your child doesn’t get his way?”

... and actively listen.
We can say, “I’ve noticed...

Your child responds best when we are sitting privately at the table and I’m speaking softly.

Your child appreciates when I notice and comment when she’s done something well.

Your child doesn’t want to hurt others when we discuss how he may lose friends this way.

Your child appreciates when I ask her opinion.”
The aim of an argument or discussion should not be victory, but progress.

— Joseph Joubert
EXAMPLES:

We’re learning that “inside” bruises from feeling bad about yourself are as harmful as bruises we can see...

I’m learning more about withdrawn children, and how we can help them build self-esteem...

There’s growing concern because kids who are spanked may be losing their ability to think clearly...

We’re being flooded with articles suggesting that parents who use certain punishments can learn safer, more effective ways to discipline their kids...
Examples:

I’m amazed to learn that countries where parents don’t spank have less violence in their communities and much lower numbers of people in jail.

I’ve seen reports about kids who bully other kids report that their parents are very strict.

Doctors and therapists are suggesting that parents learn about “authoritative parenting” because kids do best that way.

Social scientists worry about the high risks of things like (substance abuse/depression/gang activity) with certain types of kids.
Examples:

“New information is coming out all the time and it’s important to understand what we’re getting from it all…”

“If generations before ours had this information, it’s likely that they would not have spanked us…”

“It looks like this generation will benefit from all the studies…”

“I want to share with you some of the new information we’re hearing about spanking…”
PLAN FOR RESISTANCE IN DISCUSSION
RATIONALE for RESISTANCE

I do not want this discussion because:

• It means I’m a bad parent

• I do not trust those who are asking me to change

• I’ve already got what I need

• I don’t understand what is being proposed

• I’ve got more important things going on

• It is not safe for me to change this way (DV)

• I work hard, I’m crazy busy and underappreciated enough.

I know my child, I love my child, and I care about my child.

What are you trying to say?
PARENTS WANT YOU TO KNOW...

“I’m trying to be the best parent I can be. Give me encouragement and support, not insults about my parenting skills.”

“I’m afraid you’re going to tell me something terrible about my child.”

“I’m the one who knows this child best.”

“Don’t talk in ‘academic’ language when I don’t talk that way.”

“I’m busy and overwhelmed.”

“I care.”

“I love my child.”
Aesop’s Fable *The North Wind and the Sun*
How about a little card game...?
ENDING THE DISCUSSION
SHOW **SOLIDARITY**

**DISCUSS THAT ALL PARENTS EXPERIENCE CHALLENGES GET FRUSTRATED FEEL OVERWHELMED AT TIMES WISH THEY HANDLED THINGS DIFFERENTLY...**

**HUMOR (AT THE RIGHT TIME) CAN WORK!**
BREAK WOMB – PILLOW - VIDEO
Continue to think of yourself as partnering with the parent

Assure confidentiality.

Keep the door open for future discussions:

✓ Are there other things we should go over?

✓ I appreciate your taking time with me.

✓ Can I find resources for you?

✓ Please don’t hesitate to (give me a call or email)

✓ Would it be okay to contact you again if something comes up?

Finish the meeting with a plan. Remain solution-focused.
ENCOURAGE PARENT’S ADAPTABILITY FROM THE DISCUSSION
Thoughts and responses follow the path of least resistance, like flowing water.

It’s possible to rewire the neural pathways to help you think more positively, become more self-aware, focus better, understand social cues, ease your emotional triggers and grow more resilient.

- based on the work of Richard Davidson, Ph.D.  
  *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*
“The brain...can activate long-dormant wires and run new cables like an electrician, bringing an old house up to code... [it] can change its physical structure and wiring long into adulthood.” *

*Train Your Mind, Change Your Brain by Sharon Begley
“We regularly do things that have a profound effect on our brains ... Taxi drivers, famously, have a larger hippocampus, a part of the brain recruited for navigation.”

Tom Stafford, Lecturer in Psychology and Cognitive Science for the Department of Psychology, University of Sheffield, UK
Finding Evidence-Based Programs

Blueprints for Healthy Youth Development provides a registry of evidence-based positive youth development programs designed to promote the health and well-being of children and teens.

http://www.blueprintsprograms.com/

The PPN site features summaries of programs and practices that are proven to improve outcomes for children.

http://www.promisingpractices.net/programs.asp
Childwelfare.gov:
Evidence-based and evidence-informed parenting skills programs


https://www.123magic.com/

https://www.circleofsecurity.net/

http://www.incredibleyears.com/

http://www.nurturingparenting.com/

https://www.generationpmto.org/

https://www.steppublishers.com/
(Free) guidance for parents on positive parenting

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/

These links will help you learn more about your child’s development, positive parenting, safety, and health at each stage of your child’s life.

Children’s Hospital at Vanderbilt Healthy Discipline Program
http://playnicely.vueinnovations.com/

The program utilizes a public health approach and is offered in both English and Spanish in three separate versions for parents, teachers, and healthcare professionals. The program is brief; it lasts 50 minutes, yet offers results in as few as five to ten minutes.
More Great Resources

National Association for the Education of Young Children - http://www.naeyc.org/

ZERO TO THREE: National Center for Infants, Toddlers and Families - http://www.zerotothree.org/

Harvard University – Center on the Developing Child https://developingchild.harvard.edu/
It’s familiar. It’s well-worn. It leads to the same place every time.
What happens when we help to forge a new pathway?