De-Escalation Training
Handbook

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Reducing the need for high risk intervention

No Physical Restraints

These procedures are considered high risk and dangerous to children and the adults who apply them

Using restraints to prevent harm often results in injury or worse

There is no empirical evidence to support the therapeutic use of physical restraints

The research suggests that restraints may be physically, psychologically and emotionally risky

Potential risks to children: further trauma, injury, death, suffering, and humiliation

Therapeutic Home= Crisis Prevention

A stable, caring and predictable home provides structure for the severely disturbed child or adolescent who lacks adequate self-control, emotional regulation skills, and the ability to form relationships

Provides an opportunity for the child or young person to learn better more adaptive coping skills, and more positive relationship skills

The way we set up the environment can contribute to, or detract from, the possibility of a crisis

> Messy, disorganized living spaces, loud noises, lack of routine= not likely help a young person maintain a sense of self-control
>
> Too rigid an environment= does not allow a young person to play and to be comfortable.

Activities and Routines

When children and young people are engaged in interesting and challenging activities, they have opportunities to learn, develop relationships, build a sense of belonging to a group, be creative, and problem-solve.

When they are participating in daily routines and activities, they are contributing and their self-worth and self-efficacy are enhanced

> Ex. If a child is unable to successfully meet the expectations of an activity, we can adjust the activity so that the child can be successful. This can reduce the child's frustration and stress and lower the risk of acting-out behaviors.

Setting Conditions (activity)

Setting conditions are anything that makes challenging behavior more or less likely to occur

When we identify and modify setting conditions, we can avoid situations that may result in challenging behaviors.

> Home- routines, adults, activities
>
> Environment- Hot, cold, too loud, too crowded, the lights

Personal- illness, needs, trauma, medicines

The child and young person

Safety and security are at the top of the list and are essential if children and young people are to grow and develop in positive ways

Trusting relationships and attachments promote feelings of security and give children the courage to try out new skills

Effects of trauma

Exposure to trauma affects how children think, feel, behave, and regulate their biologic systems

This damage may result in problems with self-regulation, aggression, impulse control, attention and dissociative problems, physical problems, and poor interpersonal relationships

Traumatized children tend to re-enact trauma by exhibiting challenging behaviors

Ex. of pain-based behaviors- Impulsive outbursts, aggressive acts, running away, self-injury, defiance, and inflexibility.

Co-regulation and self-regulation

Co-regulation- Children develop their abilities to regulate their emotions through interactions with adult caregivers who calm and soothe them

Children who have not learned to manage their emotions with need adults to help them co-regulate (identify and manage) emotions

This is one of our primary responsibilities and is our best tool to de-escalate and prevent crises.

The fastest way to dysregulate a child is to be dysregulated yourself

Importance of supportive relationship

The most valuable tool we have in a trauma informed interventions with children and young people is ourselves.

When we encourage young people to develop relationships with us, we have an increased ability to influence their lives and to help them when they face difficult situations

Young people choose the adults they are close to as their role models and helpers

Emotional competence

Understanding our own feelings, strengths, and limitations can help us manage our emotions in stressful situations such as crises

We need to have the skill to self-regulate our own emotions if we are going to be able to successfully resolve potential crisis situations

Personal experience can enhance or detract from our ability to be empathic and objective

We have to make sure we have addressed these issues so that they do not get in the way but rather add to our ability to work with young people and families

CRISIS AS OPPORTUNITY
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A child does well when they want to? NO
A child does well when they <u>CAN</u>!

</div>

The stress model of crisis
Crisis is an integral part of change; it is the catalyst that disturbs old habits and evokes new responses, charting new growth and development
When we are faced with a young person in crisis there is always the potential for danger and the opportunity for positive change
When in crisis, a person's usual or normal function breaks down and an individual's coping abilities are not capable of managing the stress.
The stress response prevents a child from thinking clearly and responding appropriately, often resulting in the "fight, flight or freeze" response.

Goals of crisis intervention
When children or young people are in a crisis, there is a sudden change in their behaviors indicating that the child or young person may be running out of effective, rational, and constructive ways of coping with the situation
When we intervene in the crisis, our goals are to
      SUPPORT: environmentally and emotionally to reduce stress and risk
   TEACH: children better ways to cope with stress
We can help children regulate their emotions and quickly return to baseline by staying calm and providing emotional support
The outcome of a crisis is greatly influenced by our actions and the perceptions, attitudes, and techniques we use when responding to the child or young person

Stress Model of Crisis
Can help us develop strategies to assist children and young people though the crisis in a way that will help to make it a learning experience for both the child and adult

Stress Model of Crisis

THE STRESS MODEL OF CRISIS: A TYPICAL CRISIS 11
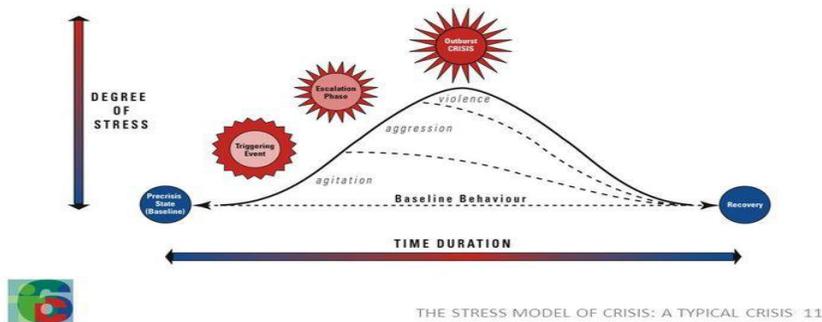
Baseline (Pre-Crisis)
How the child behaves when not stressed
Knowing how the young person acts "normally" is the key in identifying the first phases of crisis, intervene early, and prevent the situation from going to the outbursts phase.

Triggering event
Conditions are present that make it more likely that the child will escalate when there is a triggering event
Adults who are self-aware, have good relationships with the children, and who understand the young people and the environment can help prevent these situations from escalating into crises
Gentle reminders, encouragement, and support are often enough to help young people regain control of their frustrations and anxieties
When to baseline again, there is an opportunity to discuss what triggered the increase in stress and how the young person might employ more adaptive coping skills the next time.

Escalation phase
Some obvious signs of increased anxiety and failure to cope effectively with the stressful situation
Young person may be showing signs of loss of control, such as yelling or withdrawing, demanding or destroying property.
Young person may be threatening or behaving in ways that are recognizable signs of escalation
Early intervention techniques, such as behavior support techniques and active listening to de-escalate the situation and return the child or young person back to baseline.

Outburst phase
During this phase the child or young person may explode in a manner that could be dangerous to other children and adults.

We must not only continue to try to de-escalate the upset child, but also provide for the safety and protection of the child, the other children, and adults
It is not always possible to intervene before the situation reaches the outburst phase, but it is much preferred

Recovery phase
The goal of crisis intervention should always be to intervene in a way that is beneficial to the young person- to keep the young person safe and to help in the recovery process
An opportunity to help the child or young person learn and grow from the crisis experience
Sometimes the child looks fatigued or there may be feelings of guilt or they may stay defiant and rude in order to save face because of guilt or embarrassment

Recovery Phase

Recovery Phase → Higher (Educateur)
Recovery Phase → No Change (Fire Fighter)
Recovery Phase → Lower (Abuser)
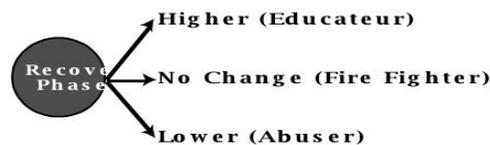
TCI TRAINING [6]

Three possible outcomes in all crisis situation
1. <u>Lower outcome</u>- the young person was damaged by the crisis or by the way in which it was handled or ignored

The adult's role in this outcome is that of "abuser"
The result is the child or young person has a decreased ability to handle stressful situations and may have been re-traumatized by the event
2. <u>No change</u>- The crisis was handled and the intervention took place by reducing the stress and risk of the situation

Unfortunately, the child did not learn from the situation
"The firefighter"= putting out fires
There is not increase in the young person's ability to deal effectively with these stressful situations
3. <u>Higher outcome</u>- An intervention occurred in a therapeutic manner.

The child has explored and is learning additional coping skills to prevent or handle the stressful situation more constructively

"Educateur"= teacher of life skills
The young person learns from this experience and has an increased ability to handle
stress

Skills Building: Self-Awareness
Self-awareness refers to an understanding of how our values, beliefs, perceptions, and thoughts influence our interactions with young people.

Four questions we ask ourselves in a crisis situation
1. What am I feeling right now?
2. What is the child feeling, needing or wanting?
3. How is the environment affecting the young person?
4. How do I best respond?

1. What am I feeling right now?
Am I angry? Calm? Afraid? Ready to help in the crisis?
A normal reaction to stress is to become angry or afraid.
If we respond to the child out of fear or anger, the response will more than likely increase
the stress and risk of the situation
When people are angry their emotional energy is high, and their coping or thinking ability is
low "When people are at their angriest, they are at their stupidest"

2. What is the child feeling, needing or wanting?
Lead us to a discovery of what the child's goals are or what purpose the aggression or
challenging behavior serves for the young person.
It can help us avoid misinterpreting the child's intentions or concluding that "she's just bad"
or "he's just out to give me a hard time"
Lead to greater empathy and understanding of the young person
Examples of the need:
A need to feel safe
The desire to be treated fairly
Need for comfort
An expression of emotional pain
The desire to feel important or to be accepted
Examples of Pain-Based behaviors
Impulsive outbursts   Aggression
Running away   Self-injury
Defiance   Inability to regulate emotions
Trauma re-enactment

3. How is the environment affecting the young person?
The environment that surrounds the children and young people has a profound influence on
their behavior.
Aggression is often the result of frustration caused by environment factors.

Ex. not having enough materials necessary to conduct a scheduled activity, equipment that does not work properly, hungry child waiting in line to get their meal

Many times potential crises can be prevented or diverted by changing those things in the environment that might be contributing to the stressful situation

Some physical environmental influences are:

Crowded/too many people, bright or harsh lighting, noise level

How other children and adults are affecting the situation is important to consider

Someone in the room agitating the child, the presence of a stranger of family member

Removing possible "people triggers" from the area or inviting trusted friends and allies to provide support

4. How do I best respond?

It is our response that will help de-escalate and defuse a volatile young person in most cases

In dealing with potentially volatile and destructive children the goals are:

Manage the environment to neutralize potential triggers (environmental support)

Engage the young person and defuse the pain-based behavior (provide emotional support)

Exercise self-control over feelings the situation evokes

DE-ESCALATING THE CRISIS- ACTIVE LISTENING

When children are upset and in crisis they will run to people they trust for support, understanding, and protections.

Being empathic, communicating understanding, validating feelings and being respectful are all ways to build caring relationships.

Understanding can be defined as empathy or the sincere desire to know or perceive what a young person is going through- what the world is like for that person right now.

Active listening means "to listen for meaning"

The ability to identify what young people are feeling and then to communicate that understanding back to them

Nonverbal Techniques

Nonverbal skills include the use of silence, nods, physical closeness, facial expression, and eye contact to convey meaning and understanding to a young person.

Silence

There are times when more can be communicated by remaining silent than by speaking.

They need silence as they take in information and process

By being silent and supportive, we are communicating respect and understanding

Facial expression

The face is marvelously expressive
A raised eyebrow or frown is worth a hundred words
Meaning= 55% facial expression + 38% tone of voice + 7% words
It is not always what is said, but how it is expressed that convers the most information
Showing interest through facial expressions is important

Eye contact
Establishing eye contact at the beginning of an interactions conveys interest and undivided attention
It is important also to be aware of the effect of prolonged eye contact, since it is a physical and emotional stimulator.

Encouraging and eliciting techniques
Verbal techniques that encourage a young person to talk can help the young person calm down and verbally express feelings and concerns
It also can assist us in understanding what the young person is experiencing.

Tone of voice
The ability to speak in a calm, respectful, nonthreatening tone is critical to de-escalating a situation by reducing stimulation
The voice can carry the warmth of intimacy or the coldness of a command.

Minimal encouragements
Brief statement that urge young people to continue speaking
    (ex. "uh-huh," "go on", "I see")
The goal of using encouraging techniques is to keep upset children talking and help them express in words what is going on with them

Door openers
Are invitations for young people to speak
    (ex. "I'd like to hear more" "Tell me about that" "What's up?")

Why questions
It is best to avoid asking "Why?"
It can elicit a defensive response
They may be perceived as calling for a justification

Closed Questions
Ask for specific short answer responses such as "Yes", "No", "Tomorrow"

Appropriate for gathering factual information
May result in young people feeling defensive, angry or resistant to further probing if overused

Open Questions
Encourage young people to explain further, to provide more information, and to express their feelings
Broadens the discussion
Generally begin with "How?" and "What?"
"How do you feel about that?", "What happened next?"

Understanding Response
They help young people sort out what is happening to them and help de-escalate potential crises

Reflective responses
Mirror what the young person is saying or feelings
Reflect the content of the message and the feelings back to the child
Communicate "I hear how you feel," and they indicate the desire to understand the child's feelings, thoughts, and actions without judging, advising, agreeing, or criticizing.
They are statement; they are not questions

Summarization
Helps both parties understand the meaning of what has been said
Helps the listener clear up any confusion about what the young person is trying to say
EX. "OK, let me see if I understand…."

Behavioral support techniques
Quickly "interfere" at the first sign of distress as a way of helping children manage their stress and emotions
Behavior support techniques provide the environmental support to reduce the stress and risk in the situation
Our goal is to provide support at the first signs of stress in order to stop the escalation process and help the young person return to baseline
The more closely we match the technique to the needs of the child the more effective the results

Managing the environment
Being aware of and using the environment to prevent and de-escalate crises is a non-aversive and unobtrusive behavior support technique

Managing and structuring the environment in a way to avoid setting conditions that increase the likelihood of challenging behaviors is an extremely useful strategy

> EX. Sit or stand during a conversation, sit down beside a child, placing ourselves between two impulsive children, moving other young people away, dimming lights, turning down the volume of the T.V.

Prompting

Signaling to the young person to either begin a desired behavior or to stop an inappropriate action

Prompting is a supportive, non-threatening way to help children focus and remember what is next

Reminding children of how successful they were previously

> EX. Gentle reminder "Dinner will be ready in 10 minutes", "Lights out in 15 minutes", "What happens at 5:00?", "Do you realize how loud the music is?"
>
> We may ask the young person to repeat an expectation or agreement "What is the expectation about doing homework?", "Do you remember the agreement you made with Karen yesterday?"

Caring Gesture

If young people have difficulties regulating their emotions, they need a calming and caring adult, not a threatening one

It is not dependent on the child doing something positive or right

It's a gesture that communicates, "I care about you and you are important to me (even when you are being difficult).", "I care about what happens to you"

Non-verbal expression can be a pat on the arm or a quick hug and making a special treat or sharing a snack with the young person

Hurdle help

Provide help by assisting the child with the task at hand, overcoming the roadblock rather than laying down the limits and insisting on cooperation

Children are not always aware of the abilities and strengths they possess and need to be told when they are making good decisions and positive gains

Redirection and distractions

It involves turning a young person's attention away from an undesirable or inappropriate activity to one that is neutral or more socially appropriate

It is asking the child to go to a different activity, not redirecting them back to the activity that was causing the stress

A young person can also be redirected by interrupting the behavior with a distraction

Proximity

Nearness
Often the mere fact of having a caring and supportive adult close by will be calming for a young person.
The use of touch requires knowledge of how the young person will interpret the touch

Directive Statement
When stress and upset increase, stress responses may take over, and the individual's ability to make rational decisions decreases
Tell young people specifically what is expected of them
Request what you would like the young person to do instead of telling them what not to do
A directive statement is more effective when presented as a request, not a command
    EX. "Please go to your room and cool down"
A directive statement is not a question and it is not a conversation
    EX. "It is bedtime!", "Remember bedtime is 9:00. It is 9:00, lights out"

Time away
Sending a child to their room or quiet area when they are upset is a good strategy if the child has good self-regulation skills
Time away means getting away from the stimulus that is provoking the stress
They should rejoin the activities as soon as they are able to participate at their baseline level
If the child is unable to self-regulate their emotions, sending them off to calm down alone may further escalate the situation

Emotional First Aid
The goals for emotional first aid
1. Provide immediate help and support to reduce emotional intensity
2. Resolve the immediate crisis
3. Keep the child in the activity

Drain off emotions
We will need to help them calm down so that they can think rationally, providing a type of emotional hurdle help
Reassuring messages: "It is all right to get upset, things will be better", "That was really scary"

Clarify the events
The child most likely has misinterpreted many of the statement and actions during the incident
Once the child is calm and rational, we can help put things in perspective

EX. "I saw Ray bump into you. It looked like and accident to me…."
"Mrs. Long did raise her voice to get everyone's attention. I do not think she meant to yell at you."

Maintain the relationship and lines of communication
By using active listening skills, sharing perceptions, and being supportive, we can prevent a total breakdown of communication with the child
EX. "I can see how angry you are. I am here to hear your side of the story"
"I would be upset too if I lost a game I had played so hard to win."

Remind the child of expectations and mediate the situation if necessary
When the child is back in control of his or her emotions
Reminders of the expectation or rule for successful participation in the activity
EX. "Remember, we need to finish the chores before we go outside to play."
"When we are in group, we keep our hands and feet to ourselves."

The Conflict Cycle
When situations get stressful and behaviors start escalating, some adults try to take control of the situation by "Correcting" the behaviors of the child through directives statement, threats, demanding compliance or giving consequences.
Demands for compliance will frequently end up in power struggles or conflict cycles
Conflict Cycle- the product of the young person's stress fueled by others' reactions
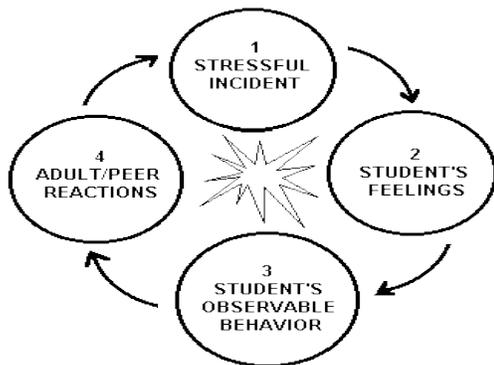
Stressful incident.
Something happens or the young person is in a situation that is stressful

Child's feelings
This stress evokes strong feelings and anxieties in discomfort

Child's behavior
Exhibits pain-based behavior to try to reduce the stress and take control of the situation
Self-protection- a way to defend against the hurtful feelings

Adult's reaction/response
How the adult reacts or intervenes determines whether the child receives the assistance they need to handle the painful feelings or if the stress escalates

Breaking the Cycle
If we can avoid the cycle and focus on the child's painful feelings, instead of their behaviors, we can use techniques to break the cycle

Use positive self-talk
Say positive self-talk statements to yourself
Stay focused on what the child feels and needs

Listen and validate the child's feelings
Use active listening to understand the young person's feelings and what the young person is trying to express

Manage the environment
Remove all additional stimulation

Giving choices and the time to decide
Remind the young person of positive choices they have made in the past

Redirecting the young person to another positive activity
Engage in an activity in which they can successfully participate will help them recover

Appealing to the young person's self-interest
Point out the positive outcome that will occur if the young person follows the request
Drop or change the expectation
Make a change if there is no immediate dang

MANAGING THE CRISIS

2 Types of Aggression
1. **Reactive aggression**
2. **Proactive aggression**

Reactive aggression
The most common form of aggression

There is a loss of control and emotions drive the young person's actions instead of reason
Feelings and behaviors increase at the same time

> EX. Fear-induced aggression- the young person feels under serious threat and the "fight or flight" response is triggered
> EX. Fear-induced aggression- A strange adult walks into the room, the child is afraid and starts yelling and waving his fist threatening the adult

Proactive aggression
It is planned and is used to obtain something
Reason dominates not emotions
Most often associated with criminals and socially unacceptable behavior
They have learned to protect themselves from painful feelings by suppressing their emotions and responding to the initial irritation in a planful manner

	REACTIVE AGGRESSION	PROACTIVE AGGRESSION
Facial features	Wide-eyes, red face (pale, if afraid)	Impassive, staring smiling or smirking
Actions	Disorganized, impulsive	Deliberate, methodical
Tone of voice	Angry, loud, shrill	Firm, calm, menacing
Emotions	Highly aroused	Apparently controlled

Types of aggression and crisis management

> Reactive aggression- first consideration is to reduce or remove the stimulus or to help the young
> person cope more appropriately
> Drain off strong emotions; address valid concerns
> Active listening is an important approach to use with this type of aggression

> Proactive aggression- first consideration is containment and negotiation
> Because they have some cognitive control in the situation, engagement and reasoning may be effective
> To teach them we:
> > Make sure that the aggression is not rewarded
> > Reinforce positive behavior

Help the child develop socially acceptable values
The focus of any therapeutic process must be on support and re-education rather than punishment

Crisis Management- Nonverbal communication
In many cases the emotionally aroused young person may not even be listening, but is responding to other cues
Carefully observing the nonverbal cues of the young person provides us with valuable information

Eye Contact
Communicates interest and caring
Make it brief and nonthreatening
In a highly charged situation, it is important to avoid staring at the young person or to demand it of them

Body Language
Our body stance communicates how calm, confident, and in control we feel
A threatening or authoritative stance may escalate the situation and provoke a volatile response from the young person
The more open the body=accepting and nonthreatening
The more close the body= defensive, threatening and rejecting

Personal Space
Everyone has a different need for personal and public space, can be dependent on their cultural.
Avoid touching someone who is upset
Normally 3-4 feet is a comfortable space between people, if it escalates the space needs to be bigger

Height and Gender
Awareness of the height and gender differences between the adult and the young person is important
Communicate at the young person's eye level
Inviting the young person to sit down is often an effective way to equalize a height difference
Children may often react differently to females and males, especially when feeling upset or threatened

Cultural Differences
A responsibility to be aware of cultural differences among ethnic groups represented by the young people in care

Being cued into the dynamics of young people's cultural backgrounds can help us respond in the most timely, therapeutic way.

Elements of a Potentially Violent Situation

Trigger- This is not the same trigger that initiates the escalation, but the trigger that triggers the violence
EX. Invading someone's space, threatening consequences, making ethnic or racial slurs or "Pushing the buttons"

Target- the direction of the young person's violence.
Sometimes highly aroused young people may even turn their anger upon themselves.

A weapon- Something that can cause damage
This might be an object, or the young person's fist, feet or teeth

Level of Stress- Motivation of the young person

Reducing the Risk of Violence
Removing of any of the four elements just listed from the immediate situation will reduce the risk of violence occurring

The trigger to violence
Never touching an angry and potentially violent person
Avoiding any aggressive moves and provocative statements
Avoiding the conflict cycle and counter aggression
Removing others who might trigger the violence

The target
Ask the targeted person to leave
If it's you, reminding the young person of your relationship or leaving the situation and asking a "neutral" adult to manage the incident
the target may shift during the episode

The weapon
Discreetly removing objects
Maneuvering away from weapons
Staying a safe distance away

Level of stress or motivation
Using your relationship
Actively listening to identify feelings
Removing the audience

Using co-regulation strategies (reactive aggression)
Offering alternative, nonaggressive ways to achieve goals (proactive aggression)

Crisis intervention
Our first goal is to lower the stress and risk by providing emotional and environment support.
We need to be in control of our own emotions and actions
It is essential that we stay in control and appear calm

What to think
Ask ourselves the 4 questions
Use positive self-talk

What to do
Take a deep breath
Use protective stance
Step back
Give the situation time
Sit down it appropriate
Remember the importance of body language and facial expression

What to say
Very little
Understanding responses
"I can see that you are anger and frustrated" (Validate feelings)
"When you stop throwing rocks we can talk or you can go on a walk" (Encourage positive behaviors)
"I'm sorry that you don't get to go home" (Offer an Apology)
We should avoid using "calm down" or "but"

TEACHING- SECOND GOAL IN CRISIS INTERVENTION

Have a conversation with the young person
One-on-one conversation
In a private space

Explore the child's perception of incident
Allow the young person to share what happened ("Tell me what happened…")
Use active listening skills ("You were feeling angry with that teacher")
Establish order of events to obtain details ("What happened first, and then…")
Help the young person identify the physical sensations they have while experiencing different feelings

We can share our observations of how events transpired to help correct any distortions or misperceptions

Summarize
Summarize the feelings and content of what the young person has said ("This is what I hear you saying…")
By summarizing and agreeing on what was discussed there is a clear picture and understanding

Connect feelings to behaviors
We must put together what the young person has expressed with personal observations in order to connect the young person's feelings and the triggering event with the outbursts behavior ("I've noticed when you get angry, you...")
Look at past situations in which the young person has used more appropriate coping skills

Different ways to respond
Encourage the young person to consider alternative ways of responding to painful feelings and difficult situations ("If I feel angry with Tina I can walk away to my room and listen to music")
Reminding them of situations where they were successful using appropriate coping skills ("Last week when you got upset at Tine, I saw you walk away and you went to your room to calm down")
Have the young person act out the scenario and use the coping skill they came up with or agreed they would do in a difficult situation

-It is crucial for young people to feel hopeful and to have confidence that the next time they are faced with a stressful situation there is a better choice to make ("I know it will be difficult, I know you can do it" or "I believe you can walk away when you get angry with someone")
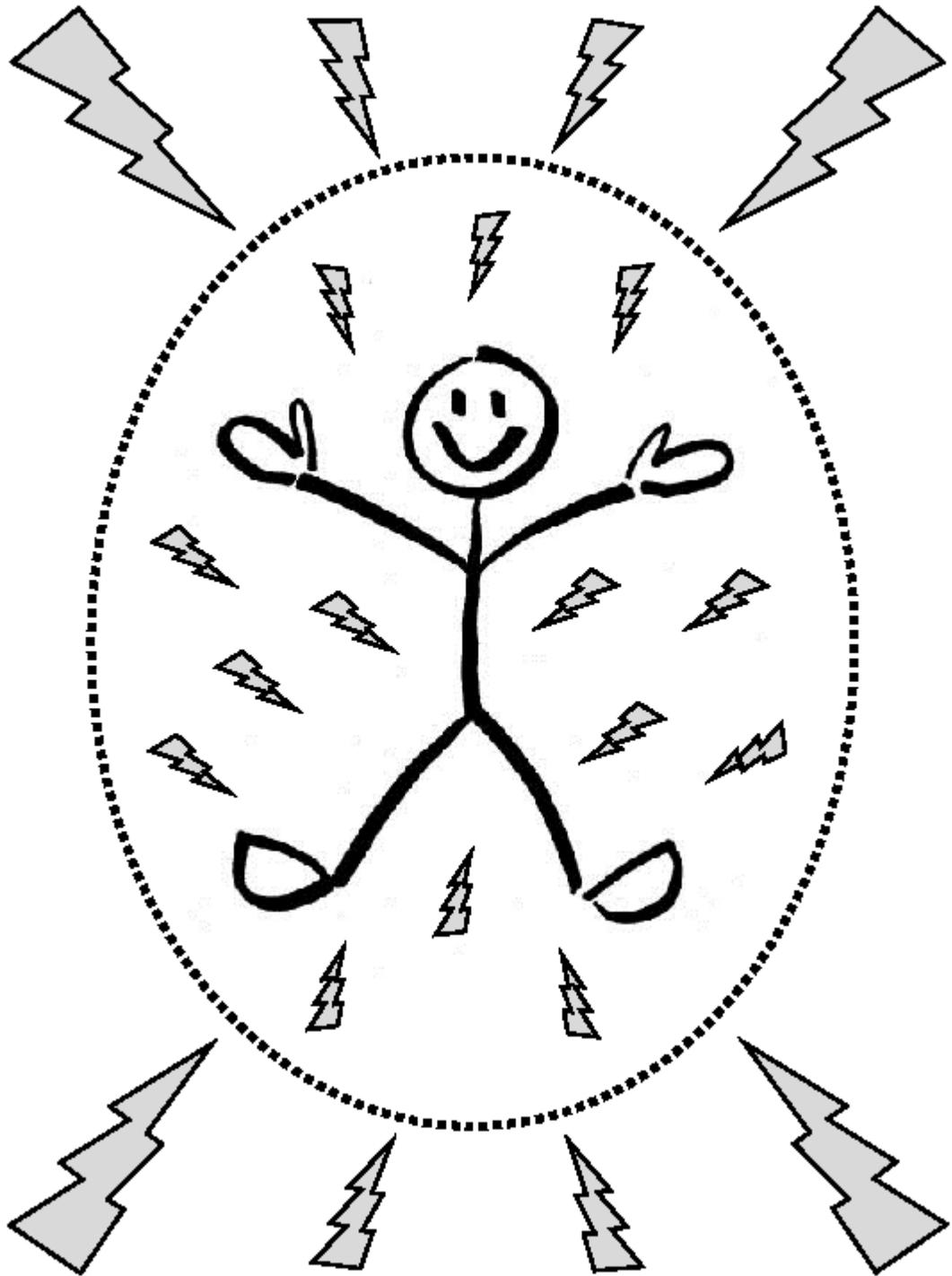
Active Listening Activity

Listen for meaning: listen to what the child says, then identify the emotion behind what they say

Example:
Child: "I hate that bitch, she took my pencil!"
Adult's response: **"It sounds like you are angry at her for taking your pencil"**

Child: "I really wanted to see my mom this weekend"
Adult's response:

Child: "This doesn't make sense! I keep getting the wrong answer"
Adult's response:

Child: "She always has to fuck everything up, now I don't get to go on my visit!"
Adult's response:

Behavioral Support Technique Activity

Read each scenario and decide which would be the best behavioral support technique to use and what would you say

The child is playing a video game and dinner is in 10 minutes.
Behavioral support technique:
What would you say:

Sandy is doing her homework at the dinner table and you see her erasing something on her paper with a lot of force and saying something under her breath.
Behavioral support technique:
What would you say:

You walk into the kitchen and Sally and Nikki are fighting over a broom, each one saying "give it to me!"
Behavioral support technique:
What would you say:

The kids are at the kitchen table and you are in your room putting clothes away. The kids are supposed to be doing their homework but you hear them playing around and they need to get their work done.
Behavioral support technique:
What would you say: