

Strategies for Eliminating Points and Levels: Lessons Learned



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Promising Path to Success

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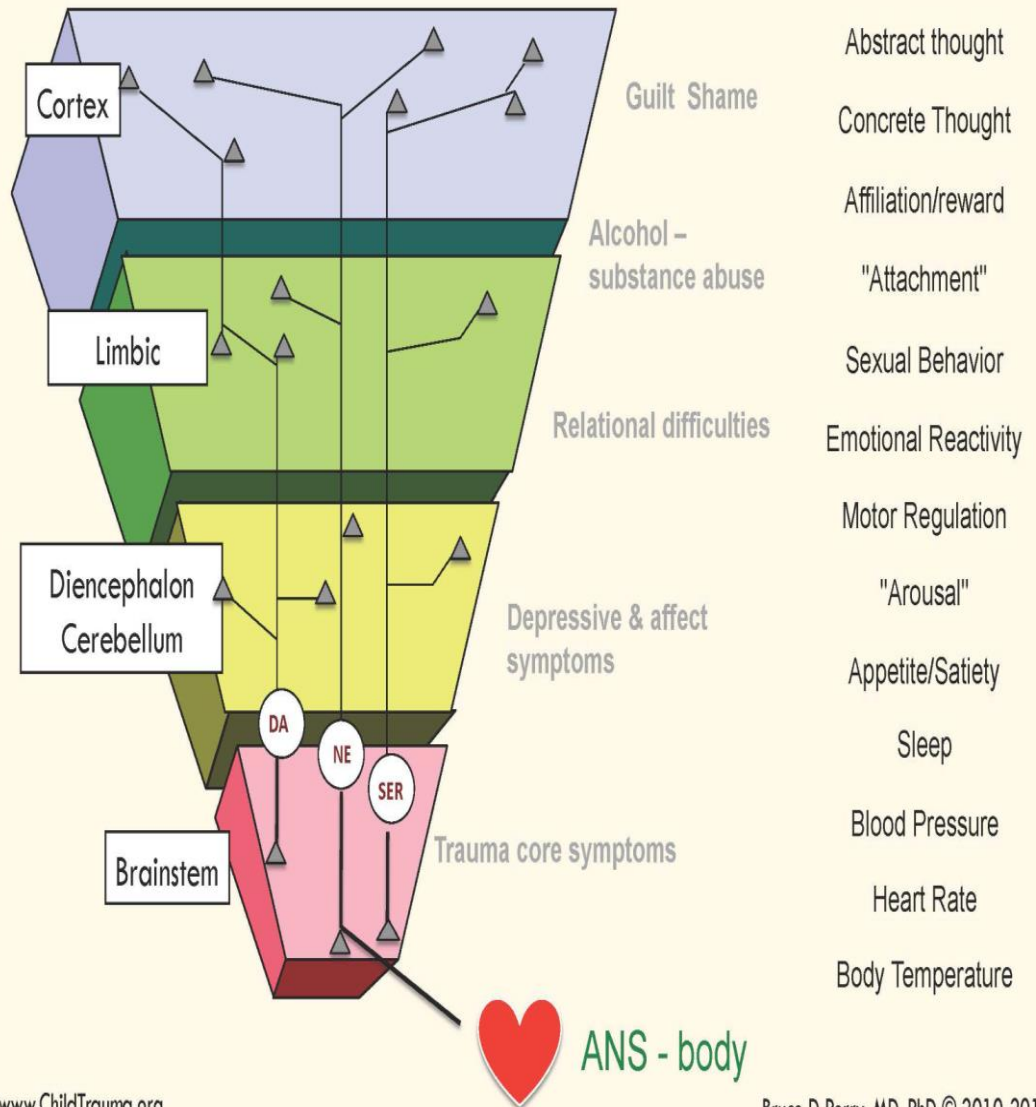
Developed with Barbara Wilson LCSW

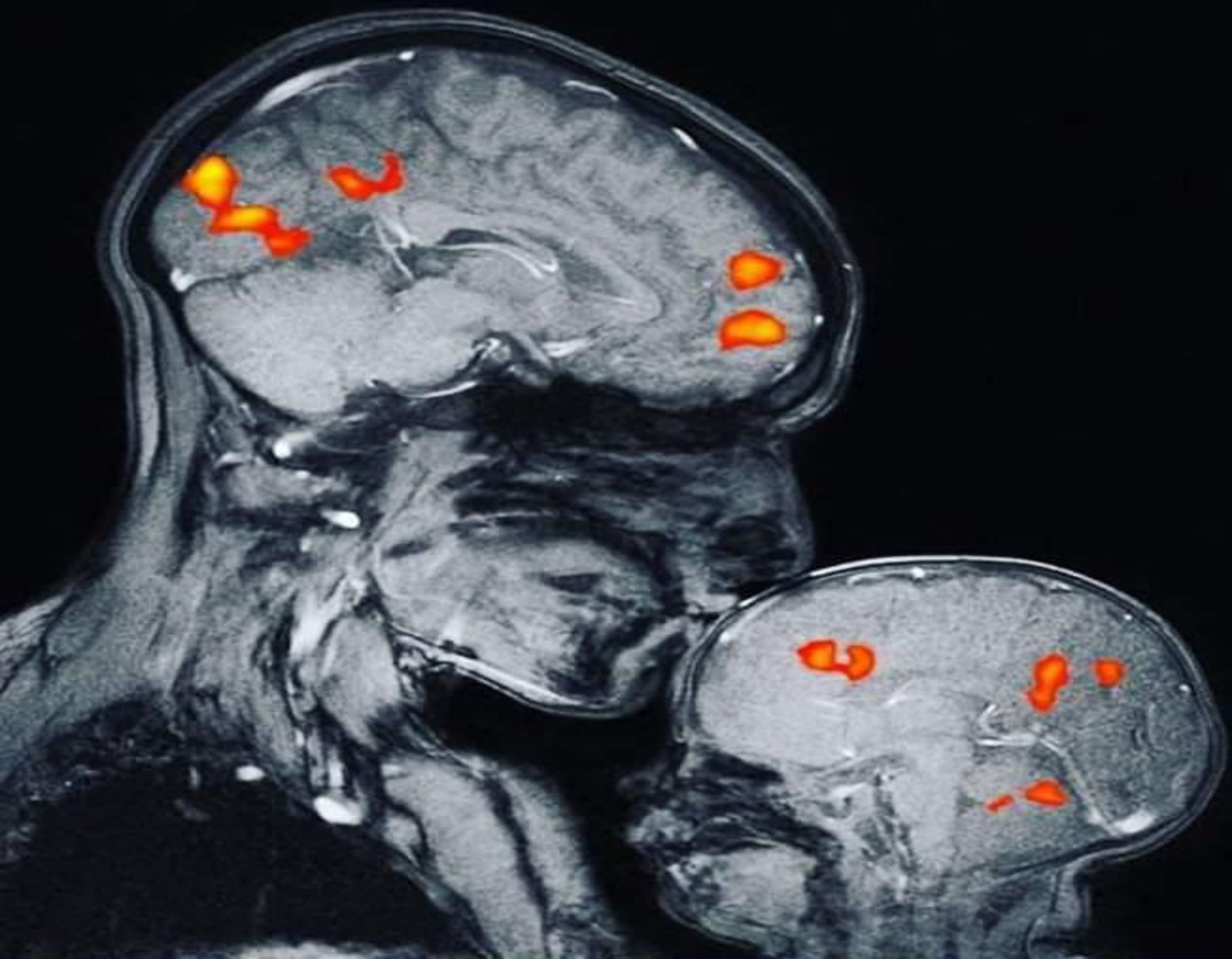
Disclaimer

This is not a debate on scientific evidence.

This is our experience with eliminating points and levels as part of the Promising Path to Success Initiative.

“And so it is with human relationships: we can both create and destroy, nurture and terrorize, traumatize and heal each other”
(Bruce Perry)





Behavior Management to Healing Centered Environment



Healing Centered Environments

- *Behavioral Management ... Trauma Informed Care
- *Advice Giving ... Compassionate Attunement
- *Negative Consequences Identifying strengths
- *Problem Solving ... Involving Youth and Family voice in decision making
- ***Goal: Creating a Trauma Competent Healing Environment**



Coercion



The Behavior Room

Level	Points Needed
Level 1	25
Level 2	50
Level 3	100
Level 4	150
Level 5	200
Level 6	250
Level 7	325
Level 8	400
Level 9	475
Level 10	550



"Kids with trauma history
dont need more punishment.

And, quite frankly, they dont
need more stickers."

- Dr. Ross Greene -

Moving from Points and Levels to Healing Environments

Points and Levels

Behavior Management Framework
Behavior needs to be corrected
Control
Discipline
Points and Levels
Verbal Interventions

Healing Environment

Neurobiological Framework
What is the Function of Behavior
Connection
Relationship
Regulation , Co-regulation
Somatosensory Interventions-
NonVerbal Interventions ,Body
Based Movement Based, and
Sensory Based Interventions

Moving from Points and Levels to Healing Environments

Points and Levels

Points Cards & Level Charts

Attention Seeking

Consequences, Punishment, Isolation

Extrinsic Motivation

At Risk Youth

+ Healing Environment

Regulation Plans

Attachment Seeking

Mastery, Competence, and Agency

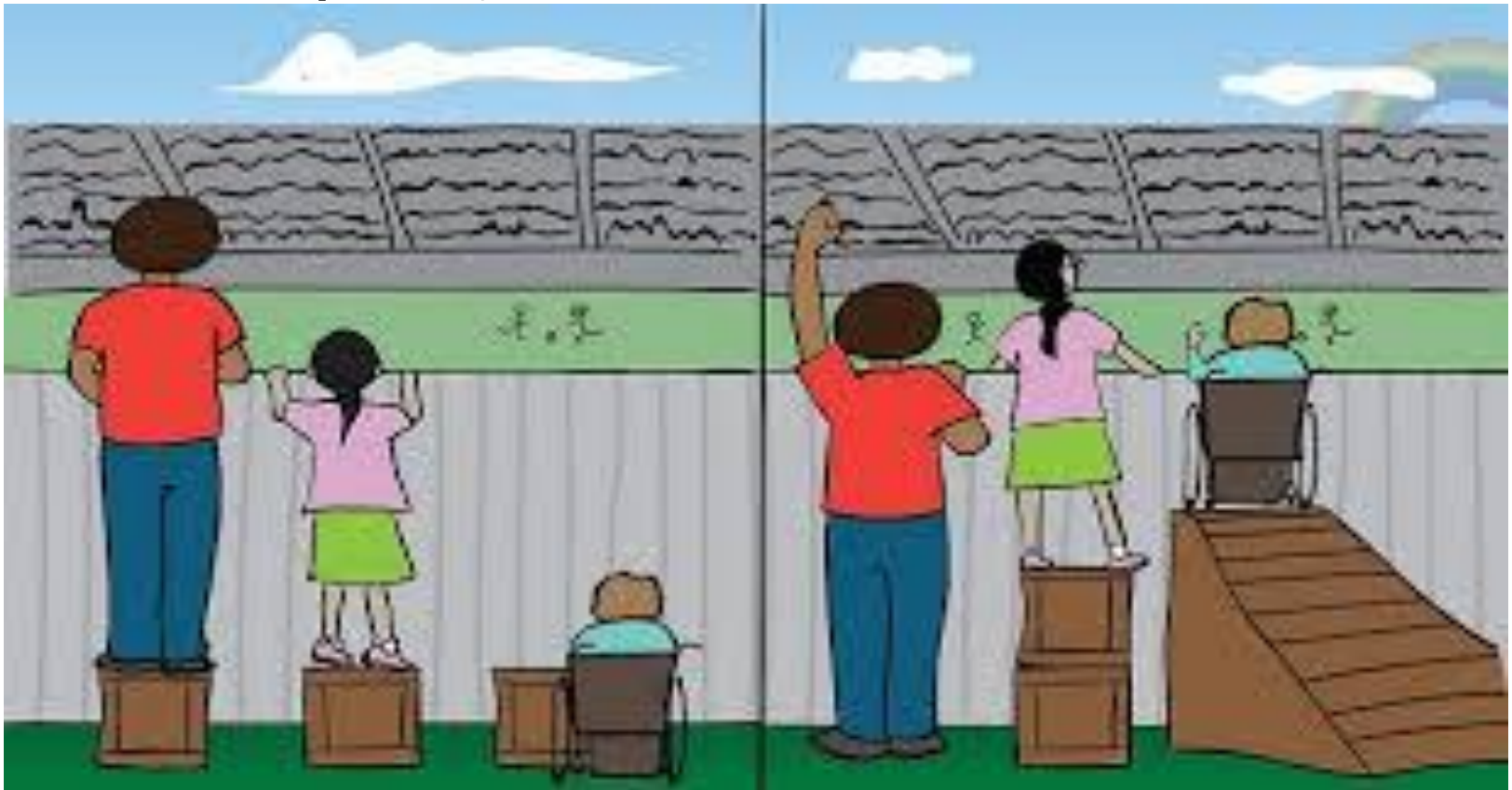
Intrinsic Motivation

At Promise Youth

Why Systems of Equality (levels, points, etc.) fail our youth

Equality

Equity



Why Points and Levels Don't Work

- * No empirical evidence supporting efficacy of points and levels for youth with behavioral health needs
- * No evidence of sustainable outcomes outside of restrictive setting
- * Organized around needs of staff reinforcing control and maintaining order

**Massachusetts Department of Health, Creating Positive Culture of Care
Resource Guide**

Moving Away From Points and Levels

Why Points and Levels Don't Work

- * Punishing youth for behaviors that brought into a treatment setting
- * Timeliness of award/not award
- * Withholding is inconsistent, arbitrarily assigned and usually results in conflict between staff and youth
- * “Punitive in nature” (tone, posture, prosody, inflection)

**Massachusetts Department of Health, Creating Positive Culture of Care
Resource Guide**

Moving Away From Points and Levels

When you know Levels aren't working and change is happening

- * “Our levels don't work anymore. We want the kids to go out on Friday night”.
- * “ These levels are getting in the way”
- * “ The consequences don't make sense, and everybody thinks they can give out the consequences”
- * “They're off level more than they're on”
- * “ Our system is too complicated”
- * “ We don't all follow the same rules for dropping levels”

What to Expect Along the Way

- * This is the way we always did things
- * The kids will have no consequences. They will get away with whatever they want to do
- * Peer Reactions
- * Use of Safety Protocols
- * Staff frustrations and core beliefs

- * Staff may quit
- * Caregivers may want consequences
- * If you remove things too quickly and do not replace the motivation system or behavior management system with something else there will be chaos.

Where to Begin and How

- * Organizational commitment (Restraint and Seclusion reduction, eliminate Coercive Practices)
- * Ongoing Process of Culture Change
- * Trauma Informed Approaches to Care
- * Youth Guided
- * Family Driven
- * Individualized Care Plans designed to succeed
- * Bringing staff on as a Performance Improvement Team

Trauma Informed Lens

- * Everyone will utilize a trauma-informed lens when interacting with youth.
- * Staff need a basic understanding of complex/developmental trauma
- * Staff need training the triune brain and ask why is the child doing this, what problem are they solving, how is this adaptive for the child?
- * Staff will ask youth to develop Regulation Plans/How to Deal Plans and focus on using those strategies daily to avoid crisis.
- * Secondary Traumatic Stress, Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue and burnout will be addressed in supervision and staff self-care and their own regulation strategies.

Healing Environments

- * Using the relationship to build hope
- * Interacting in an attuned manner
- * Using modern brain science to direct the milieu and individual interactions
- * Using and understanding the adaptive role of behavior to create change
- * Designing unit structure and programming to promote healing relationships
- * Individually responding to problem behaviors based on this understanding
- * Applying principles of restorative justice to treatment settings

Points and Levels

Points and level systems can teach basic skills, provide external motivation, and yield immediate compliance, but they “react to behavior rather than respond to needs” (Brendtro, 2004), and don’t yield long term enduring outcomes. Emphasis becomes placed on negative consequences for challenging behaviors rather than the shaping of pro-social behaviors through the use of carefully managed reinforcement schedules.

Good Intent

HELP



♥ FB/JOYOFMOM ♥

The kids who
need the most
love will ask
for it in the
most unloving
of ways.



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REFRAME THE BEHAVIOUR

"KIDS DO WELL IF THEY CAN"

~ ROSS GREENE

WON'T



CAN'T

YET

• JUDGMENTAL



- WILLFUL
- DEFIANT

HE'S LAZY
SHE JUST WANTS
ATTENTION
...RUDE!

• REWARDS &
PUNISHMENTS

- FRUSTRATION
- GUILT/SHAME

ADULT'S
MINDSET

VIEW
OF
CHILD

THOUGHTS

RESPONSE

CHILD'S
EXPERIENCE

• CURIOUS



- TOO MANY
STRESSORS
- SKILLS DEFICITS

WHAT'S GETTING IN
THEIR WAY?
HOW CAN I HELP?

• FIND & REMOVE
BARRIERS

- SUPPORTED
- STRENGTHENED

"SEE A CHILD DIFFERENTLY, YOU SEE A DIFFERENT CHILD"

~ Dr. Stuart Shanker

When kids exhibit challenging behaviour we can be
"STRESS DETECTIVES"...finding and removing barriers.

- FIND STRESSORS → REDUCE THEM
- FIND UNMET NEEDS → MEET THEM
- FIND SKILLS DEFICITS → TEACH THEM

@kwiens62

He isn't giving
me a hard time.

He's having a
hard time.

Breathe & repeat.

Be the light.



Sample Regulation Plan

How to Deal Plan

Things that upset me!

Things changing at the last minute

When you tell me NO

Asking me to talk about my trauma

People not keeping their promises

Moving from one place to another

How people can tell I'm upset:

I yell and curse

I get quiet sometimes

My face gets red

I don't want to look at you

I go to my room and slam the door

Sample Regulation Plan

How to Deal Plan

When I 'm having a hard time controlling my anger please don't do this:

Follow me around and lecture me

Come into my room right away before I can get it together

Threaten me with loss of privileges or rec.

Please do this:

Ask me what I need

Offer to go for a walk without talking

Offer me something to drink

Leave me alone

Sample Regulation Plan

How to Deal Plan

Things that help me to calm down when I'm upset:

Listening to music

Going for a walk

Calling my mom

Calling my friend

Writing in my journal

Coloring

When I am feeling low or not motivated I can do these things to increase my energy.

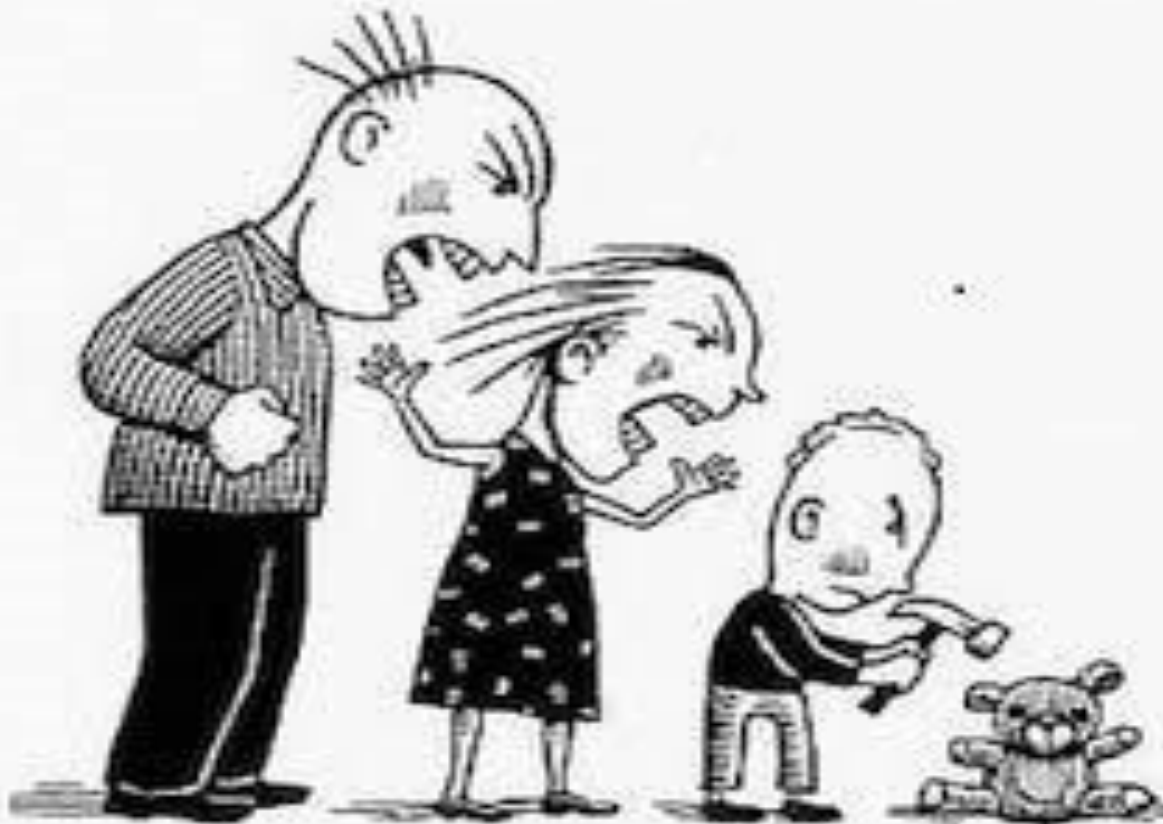
Open the shades and turn on the lights

Have a snack or some juice

Exercise

Take a nap

Dysregulation is contagious



Creating Your Playbook



Leadership

- * Commitment with training, feedback loops, and timeline
- * 6 Core Strategies as the framework
- * Cultural Sustainability
- * Home is a right, not a privilege and is never used as a consequence

Creating Your Playbook



- * Youth Advisory Boards as a partner for rule and handbook review
- * Increased allied therapies (art, music, yoga, drama, pet)
- * Individualized Regulation Plans (alerting and calming)

Creating Your Playbook



- * Supervisors and Administrators vary shifts and on-call to support and model culture change
- * Rigorous debriefing as a teaching tool for repair and restoration

Lessons learned and expected outcomes

- * Take your time
- * Know your champions
- * Hear your staff's voices and concerns
- * Be prepared for setbacks .. “ this will never work”... “these kids have no consequences”.. “ we have no power”
- * Stay the course for healing, not managing... supporting, not policing
- * Engage families along the way to dispel and correct the belief that behaviors need punishment