

# EMOTIONS ARE EMOTIONS

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1

1

## WHY DO WE NEED TO KNOW WHAT IS BEHIND THE BEHAVIOUR?

What we see on the outside is telling us something about what is happening on the inside.



What we see influences what we do.

When we understand what is behind the behaviour we can then:

- choose interventions that will make a difference
- avoid interventions that risk making things worse

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2

## STUDENTS WITH CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS ARE JUST TRYING TO TELL US THAT THEY NEED US TO HELP THEM.

Calvin and Hobbes by Bill Watterson

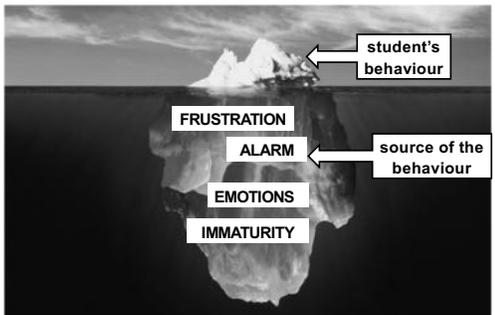


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## Gaining perspective

Children's behavior isn't always what it seems, we need to dig deeper and look at what's happening beneath.



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## NEUFELD DEVELOPMENTAL PARADIGM

**Maturation**

**Vulnerability**

**Attachment**

**Emotions**

5

5

## What are Emotions?

**Emotions** are psychological states brought on by neurophysiological changes (Wikipedia)\*  
stemming from the Limbic system

**Primary emotions** are limbic system driven  
Frustration, Alarm, Pursuit

**Secondary emotions** – mediated by the cortex  
– usually assigning blame or a reason for the primary emotion  
e. g. Anger, Guilt, Shame, Anxiety

\*There is currently no scientific consensus on a definition. 6

6

### Emotions and Cognitive Impairment?

All humans experience emotions.  
Emotions are universal.  
The limbic system is rarely affected when there are cognitive impairments.  
Primary emotions are evident non-verbally.

7

7

### Where do Emotions come from?

**LIMBIC SYSTEM - EMOTIONAL BRAIN**

8

8

### SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM the system of ACTIVATION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cortisol</b> – increase blood sugar – suppress immune system</li> <li>• <b>Adrenaline</b> – increases heart and respiratory rate</li> <li>• <b>Norepinephrine</b> – responsible for vigilant concentration</li> <li>• <b>Growth Hormone</b> – increases glucose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Constricts blood vessels</li> <li>• Suspends “rest &amp; digest”</li> <li>• Sharp Increase in Breathing &amp; Heart Rate</li> <li>• Blood diverts to Muscles</li> </ul>
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### Why do we have Emotions?

To ensure our survival  
What is it that AFFECTS us the MOST?

## SEPARATION OR FACING SEPARATION

EXPERIENCING OR FACING  
THE LACK OF OR THE LOSS OF CLOSENESS  
WITH THOSE TO WHOM WE ARE ATTACHED  
or WITH WHAT WE ARE ATTACHED

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### What happens when we are FACING SEPARATION?

The brain is moved to fix the problem  
=  
**E-MOTION**

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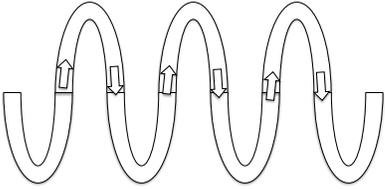
### THREE PRIMARY EMOTIONS EXPERIENCED IN THE FACE OF SEPARATION

12

12

### How do Emotions work?

The action potential of EMOTION has energy that seeks **EXPRESSION**



Once it is activated, it needs to "find a way out".

13

### EMOTIONS AND BEHAVIOUR

Emotions can be expressed in many ways:

- Non-verbal
- Verbal
- Physical

Emotions can be identified

- Change in skin colour
- General agitation
- Dilation of eyes etc.

14



What signs does your student give that emotions are "rising"?

Verbal:

Non-verbal:

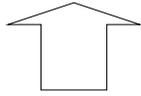
Paraverbal:

Physical:

Other:

15

# Aggression



## ***FRUSTRATION***

The experience of something **NOT** working

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List all the frustrations your student could have that morning prior to coming to the classroom.

What frustrations are added in the classroom?

What frustrations are added in a learning situation?

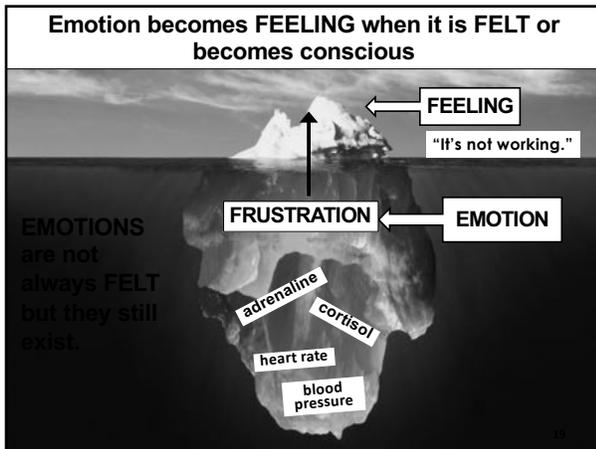
What Attachment frustrations are present, or have been present, in this student's life?

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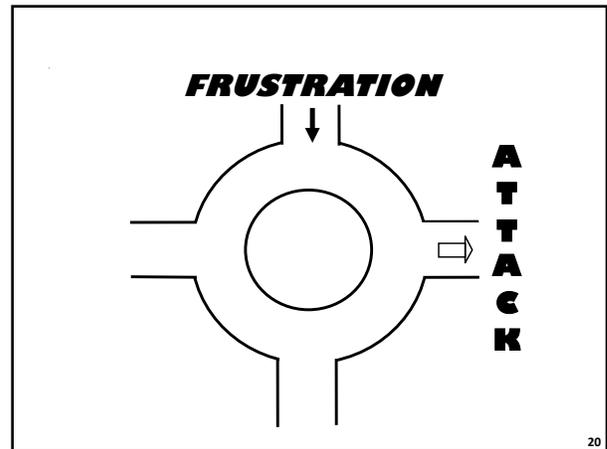
### SOURCES OF FRUSTRATION

- having to do things you don't want to do
- not being able to do the things you want to do
- always depending on others to have needs and wants met
- a body that doesn't co-operate
- sensory overload
- school work is hard
- not being the same as the others
- not being accepted by peers
- challenges with communication
  - not being able to let others know
  - not being understood
- environment that prevents access to activities
- etc. etc. etc. - other individual frustrations

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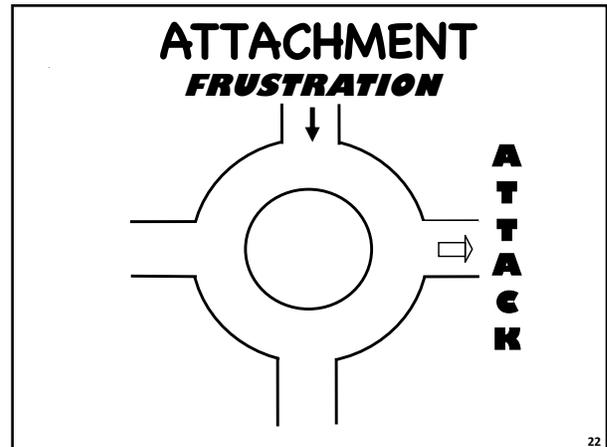
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**ATTACHMENT FRUSTRATION**

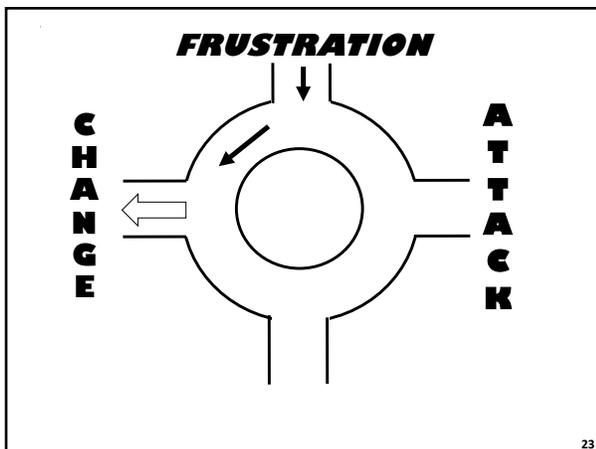
Arises when separated from those who are meant to care for us.  
One of the most fundamental sources of frustration.

- frequent hospitalization
- parents arguing – especially about the stress of caring for
- rejected by parent / being a burden
- Never feeling “good enough” - focus on fixing – going from specialist to specialist – too many “strangers”
- parents not living together and not getting along
- rejected by siblings
- parent having a new partner or multiple partners
- birth of a sibling
- separation from biological parents (foster care or adoption)
- adverse family conditions (ACES study – trauma)

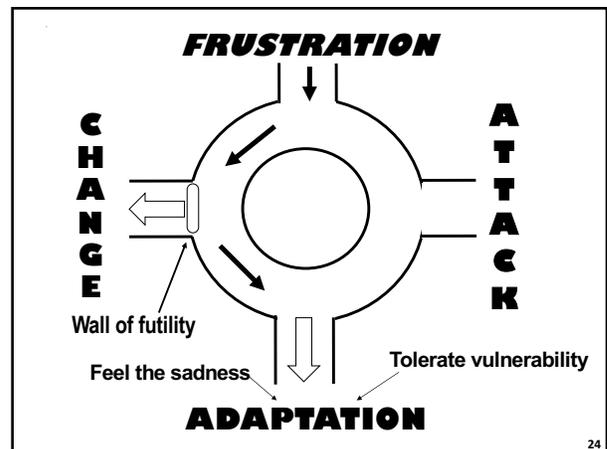
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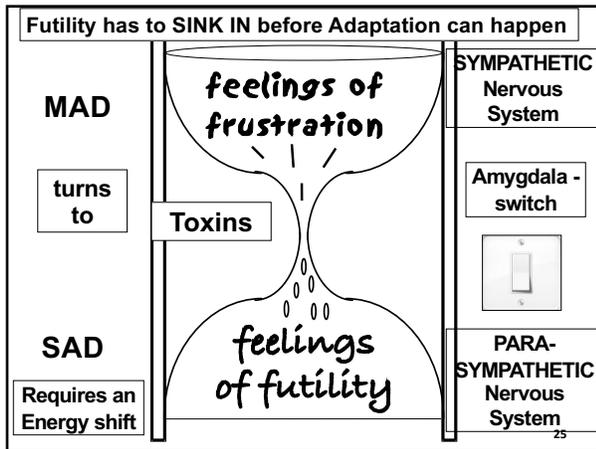
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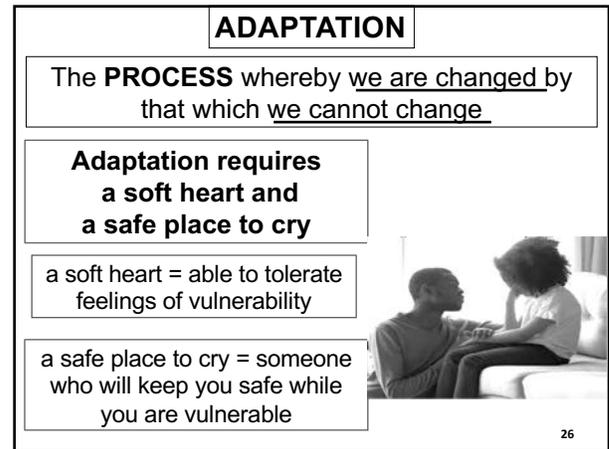
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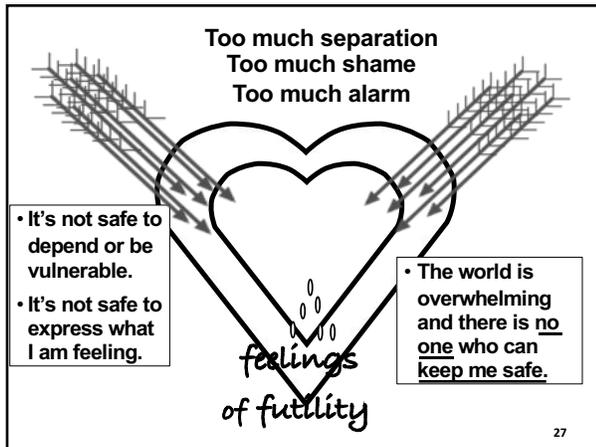
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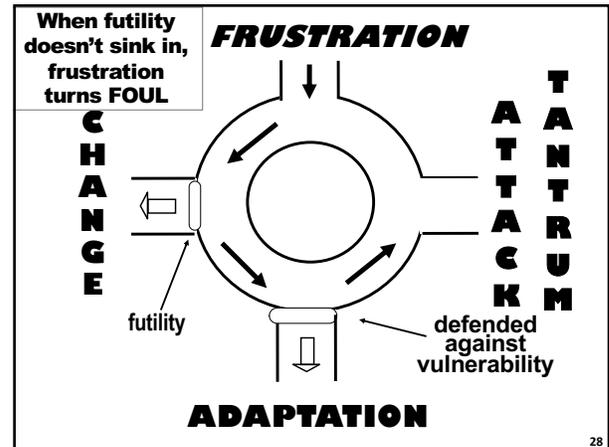
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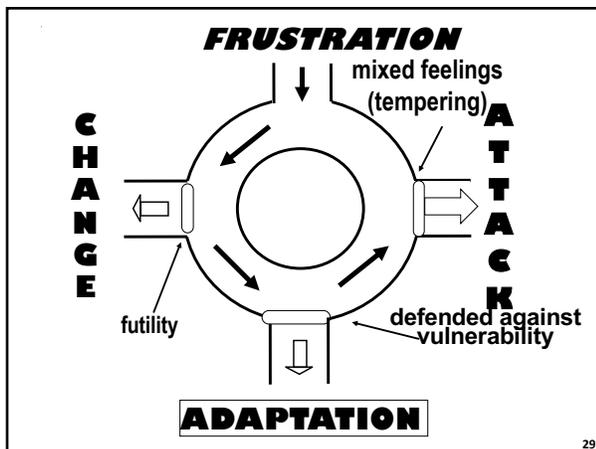
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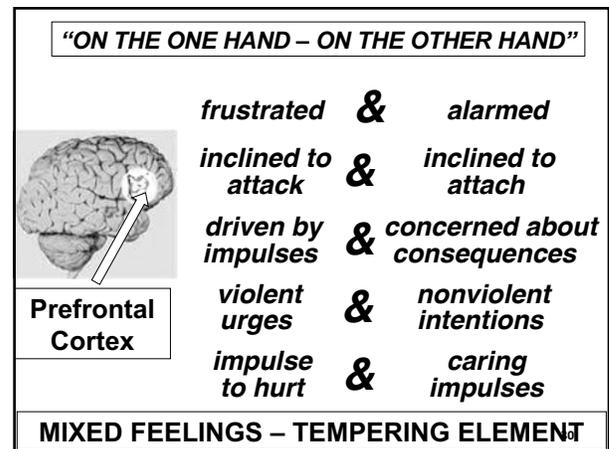
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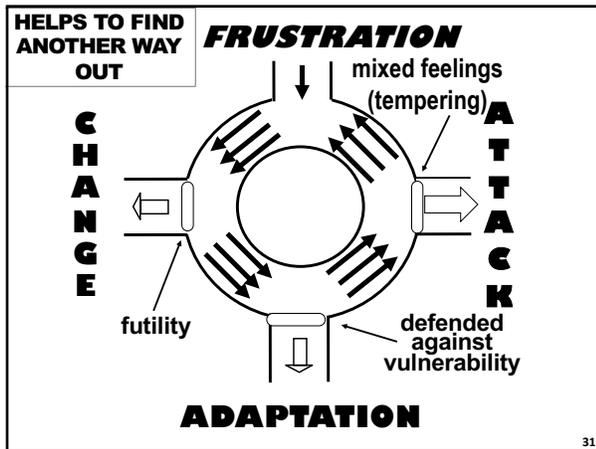
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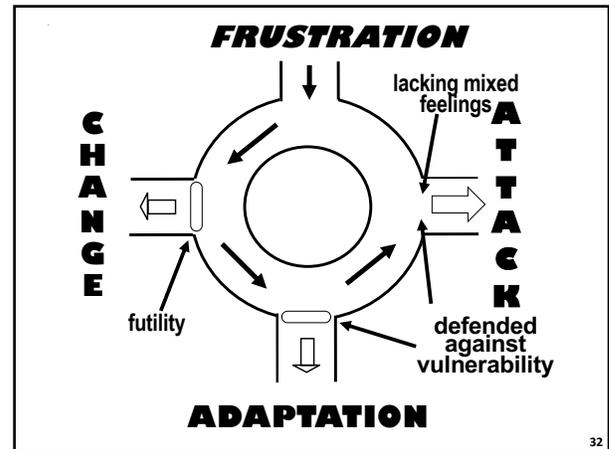
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30



31



32

**Reasons for the LACK of MIXED FEELINGS**

1. IMMATURITY

INADEQUATE PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX FUNCTIONING

- Age - natural immaturity
- Developmental Delay
- Adverse Childhood Experiences which cause DELAYS in Pre-Frontal Cortex development

33

33

**Reasons for the LACK of MIXED FEELINGS and/or**

2. EMOTION OVERWHELMS TEMPERING ELEMENTS

- Intense or Built-up frustration
- Kindled Amygdala due to Adverse Childhood Experiences

34

34

**Kindled Amygdala**

The **amygdala** continues to fire as though **DANGER** is always imminent - **HYPERVIGILANCE**

**RAPID ESCALATION:**

feeling terrorized

feeling threatened

mildly anxious

FOCUS is on the **NON-VERBAL**

- Tone of voice
- Body language
- Facial expression
- Inability to understand words
- A "being of sensation"

35

35

**WHAT DOESN'T WORK**

**REASONING, TALKING** especially about **CONSEQUENCES** or **REWARDS**

- When the student is in "survival" mode they cannot hear our words, just our tone.
- Talking keeps them in high arousal – flight or fight mode – intensifies the agony
- They can't process language (words we are using) just keep hearing the TONE
- They can't remember the future (what will happen if they do or don't stop) – **only feel the intensity of the present moment.**

36

36

### WHY CONVENTIONAL DISCIPLINE BACKFIRES

**Sanctions and Consequences** are chosen to be **deliberately frustrating**

*“Since you have such a difficult time handling frustration in a civilized manner, let me give you even more frustration to handle.”*

These may have to be imposed to send the message to others that: **“THIS BEHAVIOUR IS BEING TAKEN SERIOUSLY”.**

37

### WHY DO CONSEQUENCES AND REWARDS WORK SOMETIMES?

THESE EMOTIONS ARE INTENSE AND USUALLY FELT ONE AT A TIME

**PURSUIT**

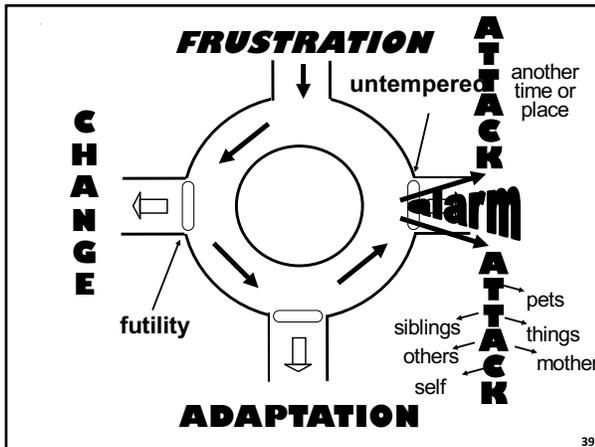
**ALARM**      **FRUSTRATION**

THESE EMOTIONS CAN DISPLACE ONE ANOTHER, BUT THEY STILL ARE THERE.

**THEY WILL BE EXPRESSED, BUT AT ANOTHER TIME AND PLACE**

G. Neufeld, PhD. 38

38



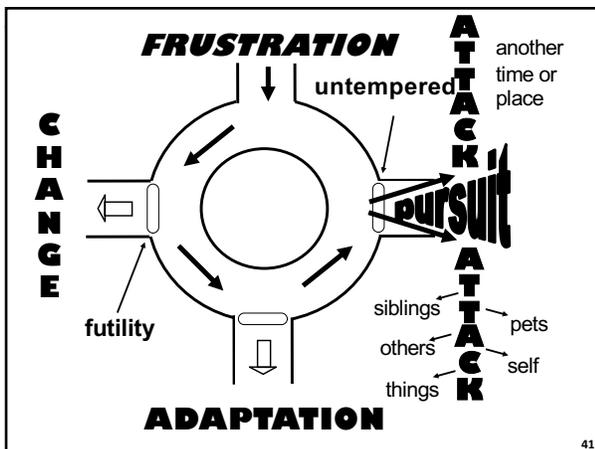
39

### The Problem with Consequences and Time out

1. May provoke Alarm – which displaces Frustration
2. The student “holds in” the frustration to avoid separation or losing what he holds dear.
  - “Do you want me to call...?”
  - “I will take that away.” or “You won’t get the reward.”
  - “You need to go away until you ‘decide to behave’.”
3. This can change the behavior in the moment but the frustration :
  - a. will likely erupt someplace else
  - b. will likely happen over something “trivial”

40

40



41

### THE PROBLEM WITH REWARD SYSTEMS

1. In order to earn a check mark or star, Pursuit displaces Frustration.
2. The student “holds in” the frustration to earn the point/reward.
3. This can change the behavior in the moment but:
  - a. either the frustration will erupt someplace else
  - b. or the student “loses it” when not getting a point/reward.
4. The student can end up feeling shame or in a vicious cycle of “negative behavior”.
5. A reward cannot help a student’s brain to mature, nor does it recognize how “powerful” emotions are.

For more info: “Managing Behaviour without Rewards”:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BNAXC8HU4Tg>

42

42

## Addressing Aggression

Focus on the **AGGRESSION PROBLEM,** not on the **AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR**

43

43

### FRUSTRATION and AGGRESSION

#### UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE SEE

From: This behaviour has to stop.




To:  
He's experiencing too much **frustration**.  
Too much is **not working** in her life.

How can I help this student to deal with **overwhelming frustration**?

44

44

45

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### REDUCE FRUSTRATION

#### ANTICIPATE

Adjust the circumstances:

- Take charge of decisions
- Prevent problematic situations
- Limit time with peers

**Directing Traffic vs Policing prevention vs consequences**

46

46

#### Don't use the Relationship against the student by using a Time Out

1. When a student is sent away from us, their desire to restore the relationship (Pursuit or Alarm) moves them to want to "behave".
2. This works, if the student can feel their sadness and if they have the pre-frontal cortex capacity to temper their behaviour.
3. If not, and if the student spends a lot of time in Time Out, they start losing hope and usually start defending even more against vulnerability
4. Once they become defended it becomes even harder to manage them.

47

47

#### Instead use TIME AWAY

1. If necessary, use TIME AWAY.
2. Send the student TO SOMEONE or to a Nurturing Support Centre (NSC).
3. Use a dignified way to have the student leave
  - a) Send the student on an 'errand'
4. If no other adult is available create a "safe spot" or "quiet corner". Let the student know you will be there shortly.
5. Always go to the student and let them know that the relationship is still intact.
6. It is always up to the adult to restore and maintain the relationship with a student.

48

48



**CREATE A QUIET CORNER**  
<https://www.cebmmember.ca/cocoon-area>  
**SENSORY ROOM**

49

**Shielding Agent**

**FOSTER A RELATIONSHIP WITH FRUSTRATION**

- shift the focus to **FRUSTRATION**
- normalize frustration, including the impulses to attack
- help uncover frustration in their own lives
- Teach the language of frustration
  - “You’re frustrated.”
  - “This isn’t working for you.”
  - “This isn’t what you had in mind.”
  - “You tried so hard, and it didn’t turn out for you.”

Once the student starts using this language, **honour** the emotion by acknowledging and accepting it.

50

**Supporter of emotional journey**

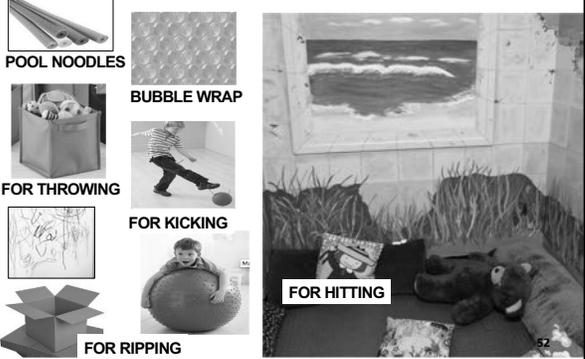
**FACILITATE SAFE ERUPTIONS and ALLOW FOR VENTING**

- find the student’s natural bent for relieving foul frustration
- come alongside when the student’s frustration is mild and suggest nonviolent ways of relieving the frustration
- Encourage times for venting
- find ways of relieving some foul frustration together – **PLAY**
- model or **SCRIPT** nonviolent ways of relieving foul frustration
- use times of strong connection to **LEAD** the student to ideas and good intentions regarding nonviolent eruptions

51

**EMOTIONS ROOM**

**A PLACE TO LET IT OUT, NOT A PLACE TO ‘CALM DOWN’**



POOL NOODLES  
 BUBBLE WRAP  
 FOR THROWING  
 FOR KICKING  
 FOR HITTING  
 FOR RIPPING

52

- Sensory Room
  - used as a preventative measure - scheduled
  - with an adult
  - designed to provide deep muscle release – helps with emotions
- Calming Room (Snoezelen)
  - used to help calm the system to deal with sensory overload
  - child directed
- Emotions Room
  - used to give emotions a safe space to release
  - with an adult
- Isolation Room (student cannot leave)
  - only to be used if the student is of significant danger to self or others
  - not to be used for educative purposes or to teach a lesson<sup>53</sup>

53

**PLAY**

**TAKING FRUSTRATION INTO PLAY**

**Supporter of emotional journey**

Playing out the impulse to “make things work”.

- *constructing and crafts*
- *building – Lego, blocks etc.*
- *organizing things*
- **reduces levels of frustration**
- **enhances constructive outcomes**

**When students can’t make their world work, let’s give them a chance to make other things “work”.**

54

**TAKING FRUSTRATION INTO PLAY**



**PLAY**  
*Supporter of emotional Journey*

Playing out the impulse to  
**ATTACK or DESTROY**

**IDEAS FOR PLAYFUL RELEASE**

- Dancing to “loud” music
- Write/draw frustrations on paper - make balls to throw
- Paper snowball fights
- Pool noodle drumming

- Clapping games
- Stomp dancing
- Drumming on the table
- Play fighting – pool noodles
- Attack games with toys

Use Brain Breaks

Find ways to help the student move their body

55

55

**HELP THE TEARS TO FLOW**



*Agent of Futility*

1. Help Futility sink in
2. Start by talking about and reflecting back the Emotion
  - i. Frustration: “That didn’t work for you.”  
“That was not what you had in mind.”
3. MATCH THE EMOTION.
4. THEN: Move subtly towards SADNESS by allowing a tinge of sadness in your voice.



*Angel of Comfort*

56

56

**HELP THE TEARS TO FLOW**



*Angel of Comfort*

4. When the student starts to cry:
  - i. DON’T ASK WHY
  - ii. If the student gives a reason, don’t MINIMIZE. If it seems trivial it is because the student can’t face the true reason for their sadness.
5. Don’t try to reassure too quickly. Resist the Alpha instincts to make things better.
6. Give lots of space to SADNESS and TEARS.
7. Wait to problem solve until WELL AFTER the tears.

57

57

**SOLICIT GOOD INTENTIONS**



*Tempering Agent*

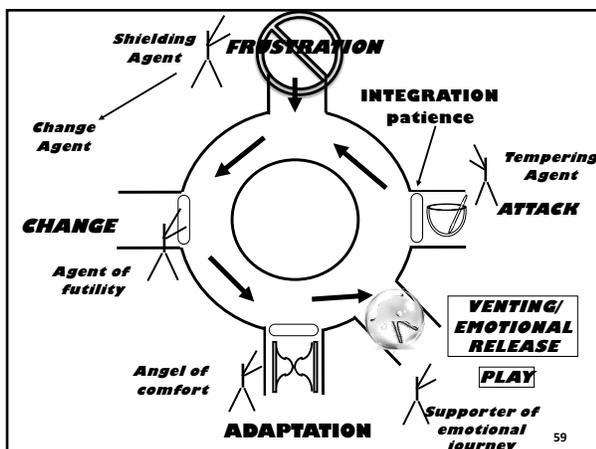
Solicit good intentions involving frustration

- to seek assistance when frustrated
- to communicate their frustration
- to attack in nonviolent ways

- Coach & support the student in the handling of frustration
- Help the student practice alternate behaviours when emotions are less intense
  - Visual supports (This... Then)
  - Social Stories
  - Modeling and Practicing skills

**The ability to “apply what we know” or to “temper” ourselves is a function of Prefrontal Cortex development and can easily be hijacked by Emotion .58**

58



59

**What to do if a student keeps getting into trouble?**

1. If the student continually gets into difficulty in a situation or with an object, you can TAKE CHARGE OF it.
  - a) Limit its use
  - b) Put in structure to prevent problems
  - c) Prevent the student from getting into trouble by taking it away.
2. BUT ONLY BECAUSE IT IS IN THE STUDENT’S BEST INTEREST – NOT because the removal will actually change the behaviour.

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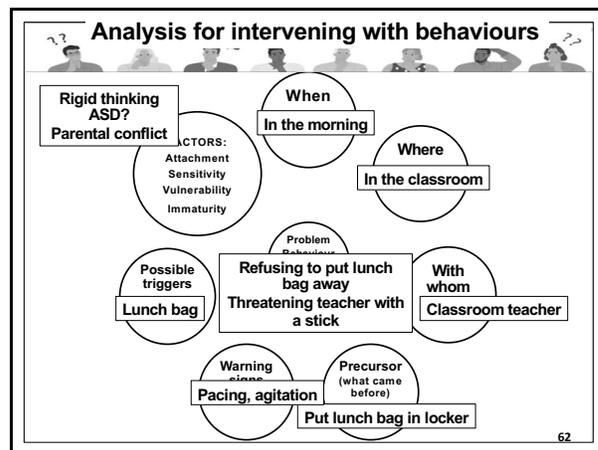
**CASE STUDY**

Greg was a grade 1 student who struggled with reading and writing. He showed signs of an Autism Spectrum disorder, but was not yet diagnosed. He was often agitated, had a hard time following rules. His language skills were poor, he would repeat words and sentences when he became agitated.

When the principal was called, Greg was threatening his teacher with a long pointer stick, insisting that she let him have his lunch bag in the classroom.

61

61



62

**CASE STUDY**

When the principal was called, Greg was threatening his teacher with a long pointer stick, insisting that she let him have his lunch bag in the classroom.

**WHAT DID THE SCHOOL DO?**

Sadly, they had to suspend Greg (School Code of Conduct) to show the other children they were protecting them.

During the team meeting the teacher shared that Greg said that he needed to see his lunch and became agitated when he had to put it away. The teacher decided that she could let him have his lunch in the classroom as long as he did not eat his food until the appropriate time.

Note: Greg was eventually diagnosed with an ASD and an intellectual delay. During his academic career, many such accommodations needed to be made for him. As a young adult he represented Canada at the Special Olympics and won 3 medals.

63

63

**INTERVENTION PRINCIPLES**

1. Preserve and maximize the **Attachment** relationship
2. Respect and compensate for the level of **Immaturity**
3. Protect the **Vulnerability**
4. Come along-side the emotional experience by allowing **Emotional Expression** and encouraging **Play**

**Working with behaviour at its roots for lasting change.**

**For more info: "Managing Behaviour without Rewards":**  
<https://www.cebm.ca/video-recordings>

64

64

**HOW BEHAVIOUR CHANGES**

**Maturation**

Behaviour changes as the brain matures

**Vulnerability**

Behaviour changes when vulnerability is protected

**Attachment**

Behaviour changes when students are attached to adults

**Emotions**

Behaviour changes when emotions are felt

65

65

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Members site password: CEBMmembers

**THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (CEBM)**

Welcome to our site! As a support to the 10 English School Boards of Quebec, the CEBM aims to enable boards and their staff to find developmentally friendly and trauma informed interventions that are effective in helping students who are struggling with behavioural challenges in the school setting.

WELCOME BACK!  
 2021-2022 will be another "interesting" year. Things are still in flux, but we are all better prepared for the unknown than a year ago.

Upcoming Events 2021-2022

**A website that helps schools to use a developmental-trauma-responsive-attachment friendly approach**

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<p>Thank you for your participation.</p> <p>Please complete the <b>evaluation/feedback form</b>.</p> <p>The link can be found in the chat box or on our website <a href="https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Emotions-2022-02-23">https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Emotions-2022-02-23</a></p>
<p>Next online PD session:</p> <p><b>March 10, 2022</b> 4:00-5:00 PM <i>Helping the Student who is Disruptive and Alarmed -</i> General</p> <p><b>April 6, 2022</b> 4:00-5:00 PM <i>Counterwill (opposition &amp; resistance) -</i> Exceptionalities</p>
<p>67</p>

67