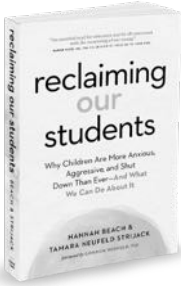



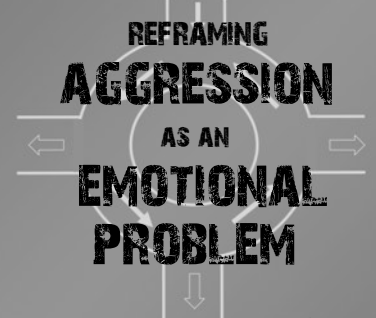


<b>CHAPTER 14</b> <b>THE CHILD WHO ACTS AGGRESSIVELY</b>	
<b>RECLAIMING OUR STUDENTS</b>	
<b>ON-LINE BOOK STUDY</b>  <b>FACILITATED BY</b>  <b>CATHERINE KORAH</b>  <b>EVA DE GOSZTONYI</b>  <b>MARTINE DEMERS</b>	 <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;">   <b>HANNAH BEACH</b> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">   <b>TAMARA STRIJACK</b> </div> </div>
 <b>CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT</b>	

1



**REFRAMING  
AGGRESSION  
AS AN  
EMOTIONAL  
PROBLEM**



Gordon Neufeld, Ph.D.  
*Clinical & Developmental Psychologist*  
Vancouver, Canada


2

Frustration = Something NOT working how we intended or expected it to





3

When we see aggression...it tells us the child is frustrated




Sometimes the frustration is mild – more like an irritation




Sometimes the frustration is so intense – it's as though we don't even have control of our body

4

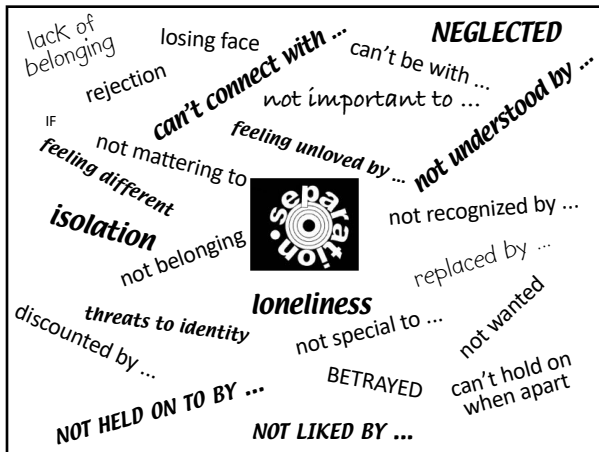


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When there's too much pressure in the emotional system the energy can overflow into outbursts of attacking energy



6



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### COVID-19

As students head back to school during this turbulent time, we need to expect that they will be arriving to us with their emotions stirred up.

- ✓ **Alarm** – will I be safe?
- ✓ **Frustration** – why can't I do it?
- ✓ **Worry** – how will I know what to do?
- ✓ **Excitement** – I am looking forward to seeing my friends and teachers
- ✓ **Disappointment** – there will be no graduation...
- ✓ **Sadness** – will things ever be the same?

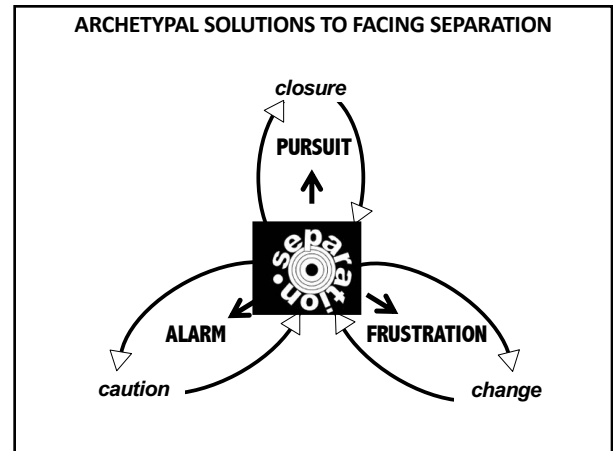
8

Some children experience more frustration....

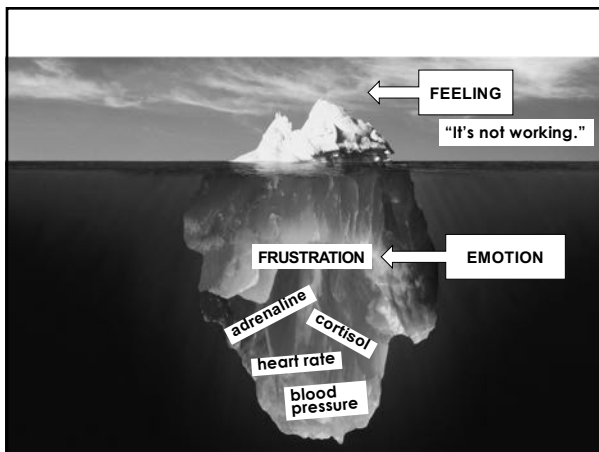


- Children of separation and divorce
- Foster children/removed from their families
- Being apart from caregivers for periods of time:
  - hospitalization
  - work
  - travel
  - prison
  - peace-keeping missions
  - other life events.

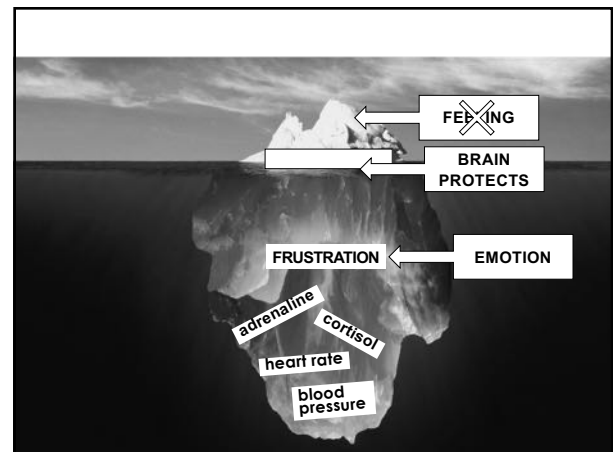
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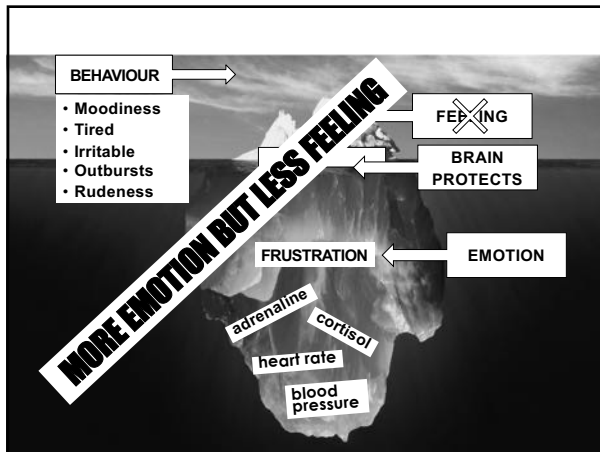
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### AGGRESSION IS AN EMOTIONAL PROBLEM

- *aggression is a natural (although not the only possible) outcome of frustration that is evoked primarily by thwarted togetherness*

- explains the higher incidence of aggression in populations facing more separation and why most aggression occurs in the context of attachment

- *persistent aggression is the probable outcome of a stuck stress response where the emotion of frustration is elevated but the feelings necessary to resolve and manage the frustration are missing*

The increasing aggression among today's children would suggest that:

- a) *their attachment needs are more frustrated*
  - or b) *they are less likely to feel the pivotal emotions*
- or both

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### Primary Challenge: to read aggression correctly ...

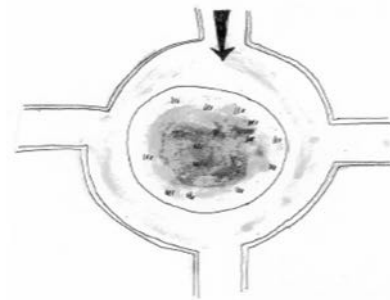
- as **emotionally-driven** behaviour rather than as intended or instrumental behaviour (ie, done on purpose to get a result)
- as an **emotional reaction** rather than as a **value failure** (not knowing right from wrong), as a **learning failure** (not learning one's lesson), as a **sensitivity failure** (not considering impact), or as a **socialization failure** (not knowing what is unacceptable)
- as rooted in **natural frustration** that happens to one, rather than as caused by **ANGER** which involves blame, is a secondary emotion, and as such, is a product of the mind

*... and to come alongside the underlying frustration*

15

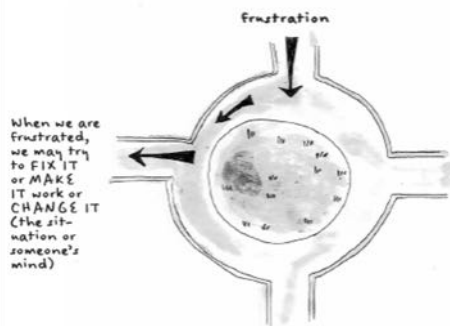
Frustrated energy can take different pathways

Frustration  
(the emotion enters the traffic circle here)



16

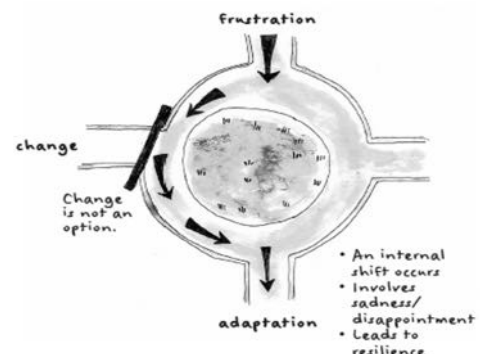
At first we want to make things 'work'  
OUR way, change the circumstances....



When we are frustrated, we may try to **FIX IT** or **MAKE IT work** or **CHANGE IT** (the situation or someone's mind)

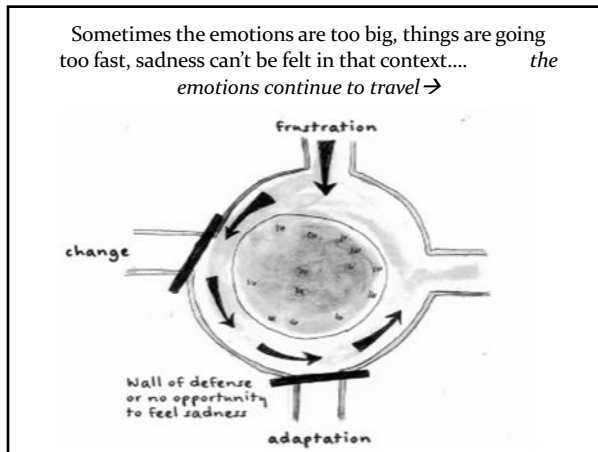
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When we can't change what is going on, on the OUTSIDE there should be a shift in us on the INSIDE

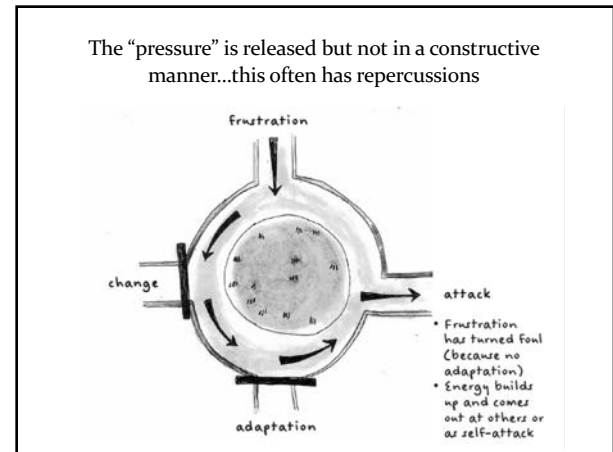


- An internal shift occurs
- Involves sadness/disappointment
- Leads to resilience

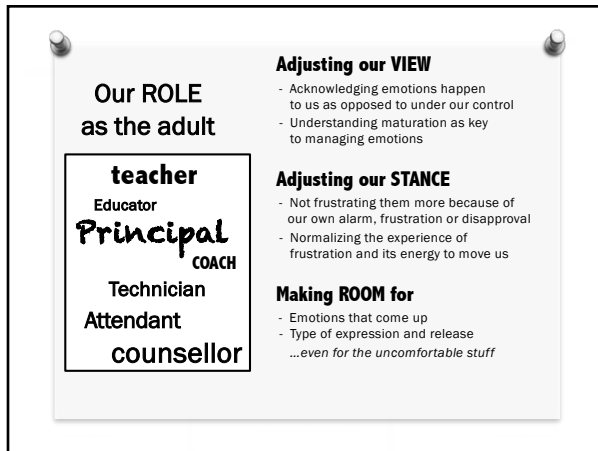
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**Primary Challenge: to read aggression correctly ...**

An eruption of attacking energy informs us that:

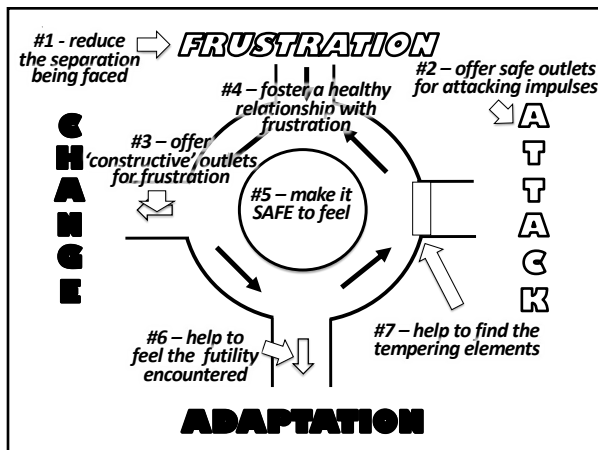
- something is NOT working for them
- they have NOT yet felt the futility that they have encountered
- the attacking impulses were untempered, at least at the moment the eruption occurred

A persistent aggression problem informs us that:

- they are full of unresolved frustration
- they have not yet adapted to their life circumstances
- they lack integrative functioning, and if over age 7 or 8, they are stuck in emotional immaturity
- they are likely facing more separation than they can bear

**... and to come alongside the underlying frustration**

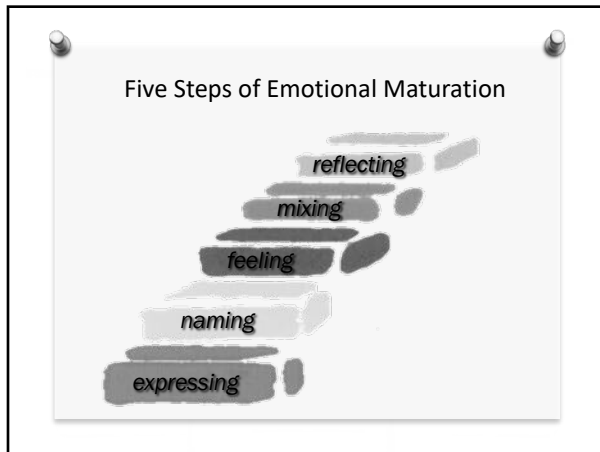
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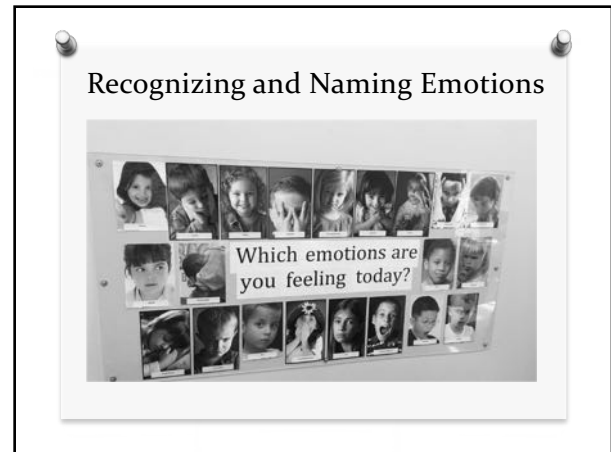
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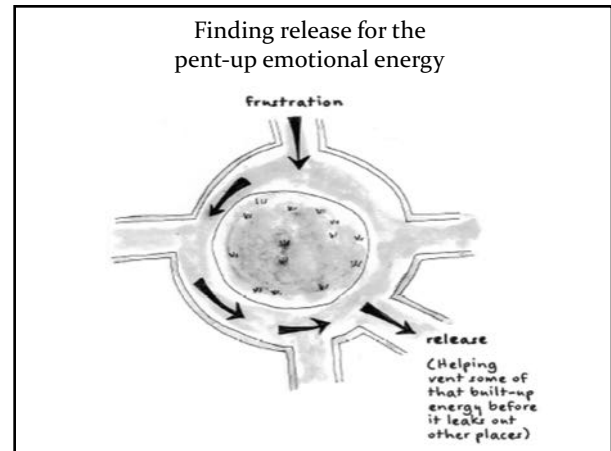
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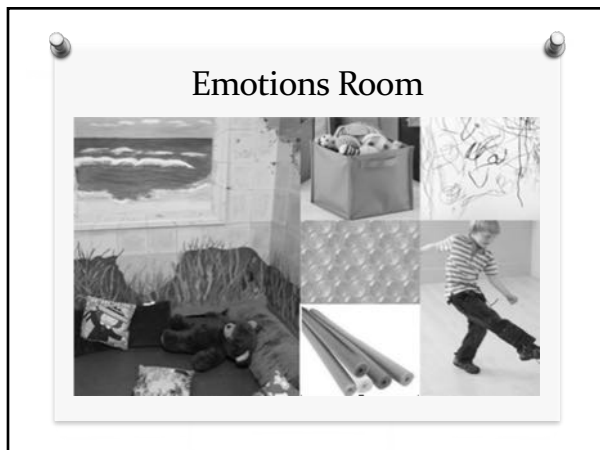
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### ***Some tips for bringing aggression into PLAY***

- assume **RESPONSIBILITY** for helping the child get the foul frustration out safely
- find first the child's natural **BENT** for relieving foul frustration
- come alongside when the child's frustration is **MILD** and suggest playful nonviolent ways of relieving the frustration
- use times of strong connection to **LEAD** the child to ideas and good intentions regarding playful nonviolent eruptions
- find ways of playfully relieving some foul frustration **TOGETHER**
- model or **SCRIPT** nonviolent ways of safely and playfully venting foul frustration

**Caution:** do NOT attempt to do this during an eruption of attacking energy

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### 'Setting the Stage' for Group Release Activities (Providing a venue for emotional expression as a preventive measure- particularly in Covid times)

- o Activities can run smoothly and students are more inclined to follow your lead if you:
- o Collect them before beginning the activity
- o Name the cues that will announce the beginning and end, as this will help them transition in and out more smoothly
- o Join in, build a culture of enjoyment! This will encourage them to join in and follow your lead more readily

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### Drumming

(p.10 In the Inside-Out Handbook by Hannah Beach)

- o Have everyone sit in a circle and hold their drums.
- o You are in the centre of the circle and are the "conductor" of the drumming experience
- o You set the tempo and speed for the drumming. Slowly, quickly, .....very very quickly! Alternate speeds and modify the tempo up and down while your students follow you.
- o Every once in a while, you can even freeze your hands so that the students know to stop drumming . . . and then start waving your hands suddenly and quickly!



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### Be the Conductor/You Are the Music (p. 14 In the Inside-Out Handbook by Hannah Beach – Activity #3 in the Helping Our Students Find Release article)



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### Squeeze Away

(p. 20 In the Inside-Out Handbook by Hannah Beach)



- o Free style water color painting
- o Banner paper
- o Spray bottle for each student
- o Paint & water
- o Can be done to music
- o Can be done in the winter on snow

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### Frustration Monster

(p. 33 In the Inside-Out Handbook and editorial link by Hannah Beach)



- o Remember a time when you felt really frustrated
- o Imagine that your frustration was a monster
- o Draw the monster...is it big? Is it bright? What color(s) is it?
- o This is not meant to be a nice & neat drawing – leave room for lots of expression!

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### ***PLAY and the Displacement Principle***

***Play should be  
the lightning rod for  
the thunderbolts of aggression.***

eg, play fighting, mock aggression, war games, attack games, sword play, attack sports, attacking in fantasy, insult games, as well as attacking energy in art, music, wit, writing and stories

PLAY, if given the opportunity, should naturally and automatically attract any stuck or residual attacking energy

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### Taking frustration into play

Playing out the impulses to make things work



- *constructing and crafts*
- *building – Lego, blocks etc.*
- *making things perfect - puzzles*
- *organizing & orchestrating*

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### Taking frustration into play

Playing out the impulses to ATTACK or DESTROY



- *destroying and demolishing*
- *hitting and throwing*
- *kicking & screaming*
- *war games, attacking games*
- *play fighting*
- *reduces levels of frustration*
- *decreases aggression and violence in real life*

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### Nurturing Support Centre



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### Nurturing Support Centre

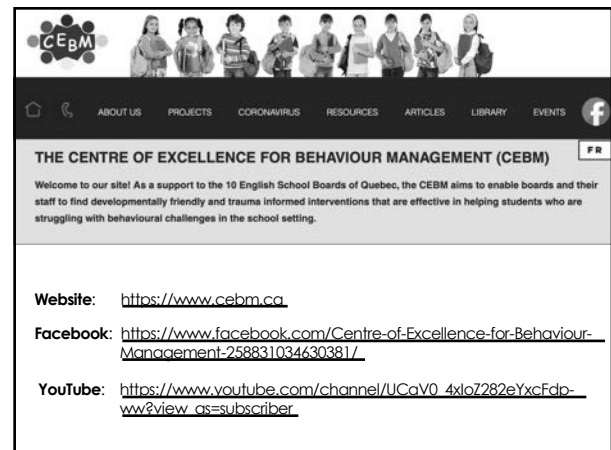


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### Other Resources & Links



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