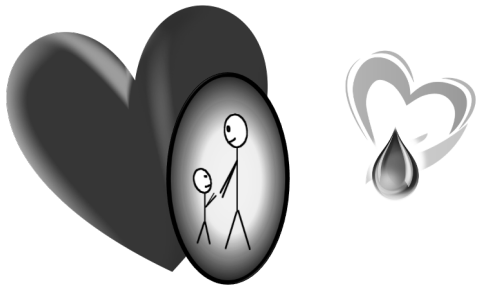


ATTACHMENT IN A TIME OF ADAPTATION



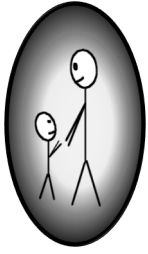
Eva de Gosztonyi, Neufeld Institute - Valérie Fortin, FNEC - Sarah Cleary, FNEC

1

When the world feels unsafe what do our children need?

THEY NEED THE ADULTS IN THEIR LIVES


*"The most important message our kids need to hear right now is not about **what** co-vid19 is, but about **WHO THEIR ADULTS ARE** – the people who will care for them and carry them through this storm." Dr. Deborah MacNamara*



2

When the world feels unsafe what do our children need?

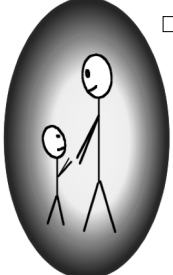
- They need to know that we will take care of them and get through this difficult time
- Information doesn't make a child feel secure – relationships do.
- Safety is about human attachment and we can provide this.



3

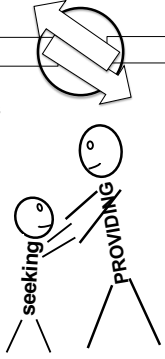
Attachment

What attachment does ...	enables adults to...
Arranges hierarchically	Take charge of them, take care of them
Creates a sense of home	Provide comfort, rest and a place of retreat
Creates a compass point	guide & direct them and transmit our culture



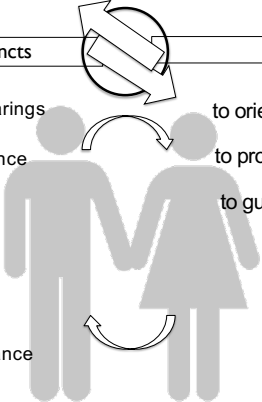
4

seeking dependent instincts	providing alpha instincts
to get one's bearings	to orient and inform
to seek assistance	to protect & defend
to look up to	to guide and direct
to belong	to look out for
to follow	to possess
to look for guidance	to lead

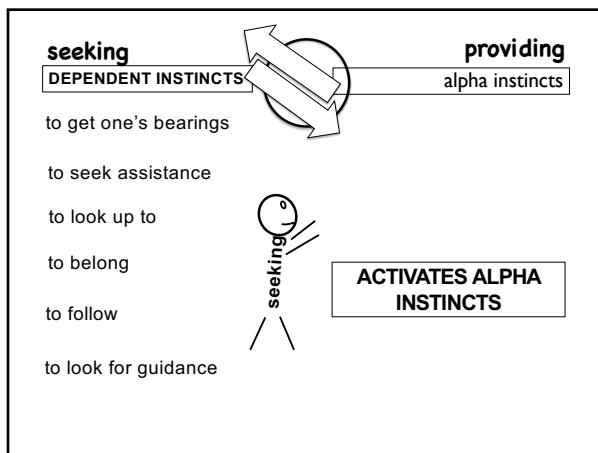


5

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6



7

BEING the one IN CHARGE (CARING ALPHA)**... TAKE THE LEADER ROLE**

step into the leadership role and take charge of the situation; act as if you are the one who "knows"

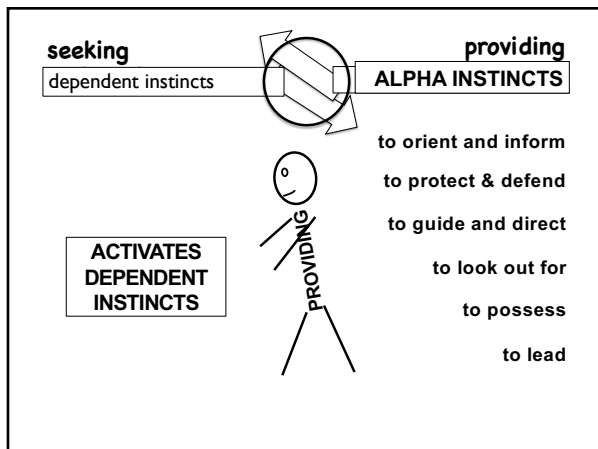
... ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY

to **make things work**, to make sacrifices for but also to feel guilty

... CARE FOR AND TO CARE ABOUT

to **be concerned about**, to help, to bear the burdens of, to **meet the needs of**, to provide what is needed

8

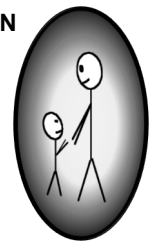


9

TAKING THE CARING ALPHA ROLE**CONVEY A STRONG ALPHA PRESENCE**

When you **DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO**

- Act **CONFIDENT**
- Try **NOT** speak of your concerns **IN FRONT OF THE CHILD**



10

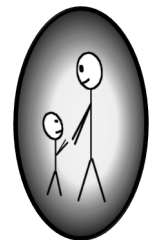
TAKING THE CARING ALPHA ROLE

- COMMUNICATE OFTEN and **PROVIDE REASSURANCE**
 - This will get better
 - Solutions are being found
 - We are all working together
- **TALK ABOUT EMOTION: ALARM** and/or FRUSTRATION
 - Yes, this is **scary** and it is normal to be worried
 - Yes, it is **frustrating** not to be able to do things we want to do – this is normal
 - It's OK to feel upset and angry

11

**TAKING THE CARING ALPHA ROLE
IN THE HOME**

- CREATE a few "anchor" points in the day – "routine" "schedule"
 - Meals
 - School (online)
 - Games
 - Play
 - Outdoors together



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TAKING THE CARING ALPHA ROLE IN THE HOME

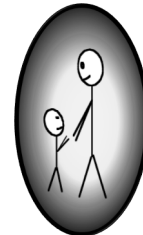
- **PROVIDING** and/preparing food
 - Making food available
 - Making “comfort” foods
 - Preparing treats
- **PROVIDING** comfort items:
 - Blankets / Stuffed animals
- **CREATING opportunities** for:
 - Play
 - Board games / family games / music / dance
 - Getting outside the home

13

TAKING THE CARING ALPHA ROLE IN THE HOME

ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

HELP YOUR CHILD TO FIND
SADNESS AND TEARS



14

ADAPTATION

The **EMOTIONAL PROCESS** whereby we are changed by that which we cannot change

TRANSFORMATION

The journey of adaptation is a journey of
SADNESS and TEARS

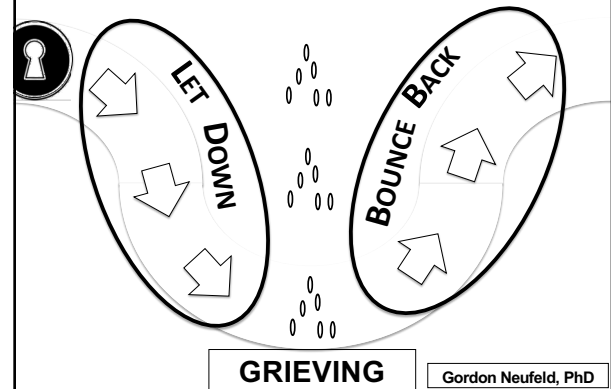
COPING IS NOT ADAPTATION

Coping is about MANAGING in the situation (Powering through)

Adaptation is an **EMOTIONAL JOURNEY** that results in
RESILIENCE

15

The Healing Power of TEARS



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Fruits of Adaptation RESOURCEFULNESS RESILIENCE

- The confidence that we will be able to handle things even when it is not what we thought would happen
- The growing confidence in one's ability to cope with challenging situations

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Adaptation requires a soft heart and a safe place to cry

**a soft heart = able to tolerate
feelings of vulnerability**

**a safe place to cry = someone
who will keep you safe while
you are vulnerable**

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In a child, TEARS are the best indicator of an emotional system that is functioning well.

When we communicate to our children that there is something wrong with them for being sad, we stop both their tears and the opportunity to become resilient.

One of the best gifts we can give our children is to value their sad tears and make room for them to flow.

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HELPING THE TEARS TO FLOW

1. 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."
 - ii. ALARM: "That was scary." "You weren't sure what was going to happen".
 - iii. SEEKING/PURSUIT: "You really wanted her/him to like you."
2. MATCH THE EMOTION.
3. THEN: Move subtly towards SADNESS by allowing a tinge of sadness in your voice.

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HELPING THE TEARS TO FLOW

4. When the child starts to cry:
 - ❑ DON'T ASK WHY
 - ❖ If the child gives a reason, don't MINIMIZE. If it seems trivial it is because the child can't bear to name the true reason for their sadness.

"When you understand that tears lie waiting to be expressed, it is easier to come alongside seemingly trivial incidents that help them get their tears out."
D. MacNamara

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HELPING THE TEARS TO FLOW

- ❖ When the tears start: SIT QUIETLY with compassion
 - ❖ Trust in the "bounce back"
- 
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 – IF needed

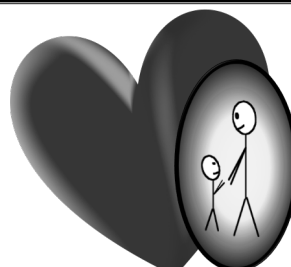
22

HELPING THE TEARS TO FLOW AN OLDER CHILD

1. SAD BOOKS, MOVIES, YOUTUBE etc.
2. IN A DARK ROOM – IN A DARK CAR
3. SHOULDER TO SHOULDER (walk – working together)
4. SLIGHT TINGE OF SADNESS IN VOICE
5. NORMALIZE SADNESS AND TEARS
6. Once tears appear, if resistant, CHANGE THE TOPIC BUT REJOICE IN THE SADNESS

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ATTACHMENT IN A TIME OF ADAPTATION



TAKING THE
CARING ALPHA
ROLE



GIVING SPACE
FOR SADNESS
AND TEARS

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