# Differentiating for Students Displaying Challenging Behaviours Secondary

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November 29, 2021

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# **Outline of Session**

- 1. Where does behaviour come from?
- 2. How does behaviour change?
- 3. Why should we differentiate for behaviour?
- 4. How can we differentiate for behaviour in the classroom?
- 5. What else can be done to help our challenging students?

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# Using a Developmental and Trauma-Informed Lens

- 1. Attachment-based developmental paradigm of Dr. Gordon Neufeld
- Research on the development of the human brain – Jay Giedd, Laurence Steinberg, Iain McGilchrist, etc.
- Trauma research Reggie Melrose, Bruce Perry, Bessel Van der Kolk, McCrory, Edmiston, Jackowski, et al.

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# Gaining perspective Behaviour isn't always what it seems, we need to dig deeper and look at what's happening beneath. Behaviour isn't always what it seems, we need to dig deeper and look at what's happening beneath. Source of the behaviour TRAUMA

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# NEUFELD DEVELOPMENTAL PARADIGM Three keys for understanding youth



# the **Maturation** Key



the Vulnerability Key



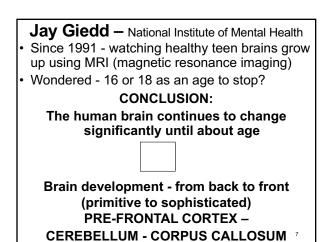
the Attachment Key

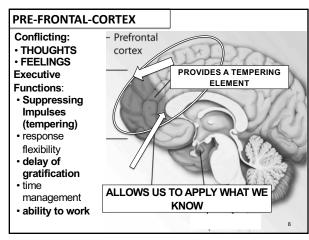
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## **MATURATION - PRINCIPLES**

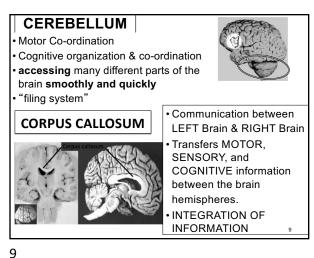
- Natural process that unfolds according to a plan
- 2. Cannot be rushed
- 3. Can become stuck
- Potential continues throughout the life span
- 5. Based in neuroscientific research

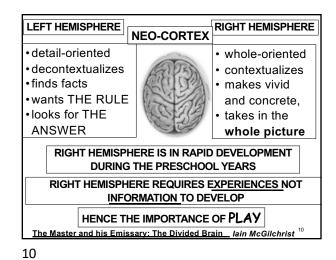
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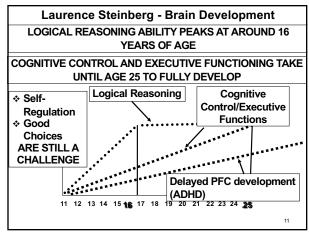


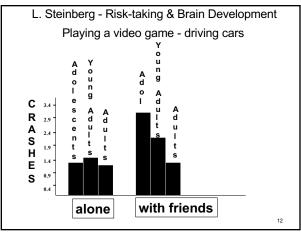


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L. Steinberg - Risk-taking and Brain Development

- The emotional centre of the teen brain is more easily aroused
- · Peers increase emotional arousal
- Emotional arousal decreases the ability of the teen to consider long-term effects, consequences etc.
- That is why so much adolescent risk-taking drinking, reckless driving, delinquency - takes place when teens are in groups

Risk of death for teenagers driving alone increased by 44 percent per mile when traveling with one peer, & quadrupled with three peers in the car. Tefft 2012

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## The IMMATURE (even teens) struggle with:

- Seeing the "WHOLE" picture (immature Corpus Callosum Developing Right Hemisphere)
- <u>Finding</u> information efficiently and quickly (developing Cerebellum)
- Applying what they know in all circumstances, especially when emotions are high (immature Prefrontal Cortex)

Behaviour changes as the brain matures

We can nurture the soil but cannot really speed up the development.

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#### **NEUFELD DEVELOPMENTAL PARADIGM**

Three keys for understanding youth



the Maturation Key



the Vulnerability Key



the Attachment Key

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# **Vulnerability Principles**

- Growth requires softness which means being vulnerable.
- When the brain senses it is too vulnerable, it protects itself (B. Van Der Kolk)
- 3. When the brain is **protecting** itself, it cannot be growing.

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## **Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences**

#### Erin E. Edmiston et al., Yale Univ. 2011

Self-reported scores on the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ) show that experiences of

physical abuse, physical &/or emotional neglect can decrease the volume of the PREFRONTAL CORTEX

MALES = IMPULSE CONTROL FEMALES = EMOTIONAL REGULATION

A.P. Jackowski et al., 2008

Children with PTSD had reduced volume in the Corpus Callosum. 17

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#### Adverse Childhood Experiences Study With an ACE score of 4 or more the student is at risk for having significant behavioural and mental health issues loss of parent emotional abuse o separation/divorce o parent and/or o absence sibling o multiple step-parents physical abuse o Illness o parent and/or o death sibling o adoption sexual abuse witness domestic violence lack of family support ☐ familial substance abuse physical neglect familial mental illness family member in prison

# Other possible Adverse Experiences ☐ Frequent hospitalization (parent or child) Death of a sibling Sibling with special needs Adoption □ Foster care ☐ Multiple changes in parental or guardian ☐ Caregivers/parents who are at odds with each other

Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences

Eamon McCrory et al. U College, London, 2011

Children exposed to family violence

show the same pattern of activity in their brains as

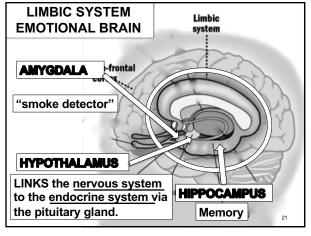
SOLDIERS EXPOSED TO COMBAT.

Exposure to family violence was associated with increased brain activity

in the AMYGDALA

when they were shown **pictures** of angry faces.

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# SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM the system of ACTIVATION

- Cortisol increase blood sugar suppress immune system
- Adrenaline increases heart and respiratory rate
- Norepinephrine responsible for vigilant concentration
- **Growth Hormone** increases glucose

- Sharp Increase in **Breathing & Heart Rate**
- · Blood diverts to Muscles
- Constricts blood vessels
- · Suspends "rest & digest"

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# Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences

#### The amygdala is "kindled". The amygdala continues to fire as though DANGER is always imminent

# RAPID ESCALATION:

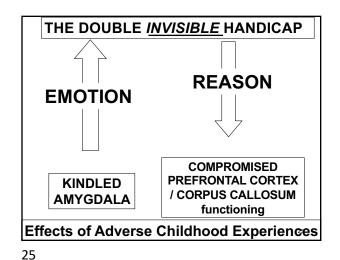
feeling terrorized feeling threatened

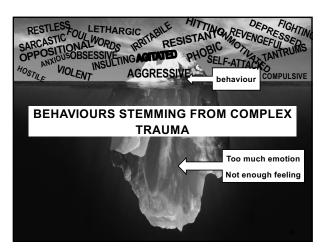
mildly anxious

**Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences** 

- HYPER-VIGILANCE –Scanning the environment = difficulty paying attention
- FOCUS is on the NON-VERBAL
  - Tone of voice
  - Body language
  - Facial expression
  - Inability to understand words
  - Becomes a being of "sensation"

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#### Behaviours that result from Complex Trauma

- •Attention problems the student is paying attention to what could be a possible threat instead of paying attention to the adults.
- Agitation and hyperactivity because of an overactive alarm system.
- •Refusal to listen to adults feeling too vulnerable or attached to peers and taking cues from them.
- •Seeking attention, being first, being "too good" trying hard to be worthy of being loved.

Behaviours that result from Complex Trauma

- Bossy, a bully, refusing to listen needs to be in charge of him/herself for protection
- **Lashing out, screaming, hitting, kicking,** full of foul frustration and attacking energy and unable to cry.
- Pushing adults away, ignoring, shutting down - feeling overwhelmed by too much vulnerability.

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# WHAT DOESN'T WORK

# REASONING, TALKING especially about CONSEQUENCES

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

Waiting to hear: "And I've had it with you."

# NEW LEARNING INCREASES THE FEELINGS OF VULNERABILITY

Stuck students have trouble learning because they...

- avoid taking risks in their learning: "It's boring."
- have little desire to look at their mistakes.
- are reluctant to ask for help.
- are hypersensitive to humiliation.
- have difficulty talking about their problems and concerns.
- detach when faced with vulnerable situations: "I don't care ...".

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# Vulnerability and Resilience

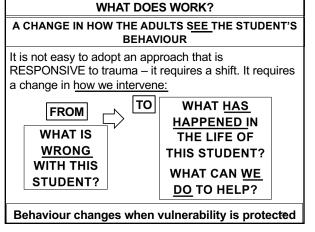
- Defending against a sense of vulnerability (protecting) prevents growth.
- Growing requires softening and results in adaptation and resilience.
- The process needed for softening is feeling the sadness about what does not work.



Tears are essential to **ADAPTATION**.

Tears only can happen when a youth feels safe.

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# What works

Lincoln HS in Walla Walla, Washington:

Based on Adverse Childhood Experiences

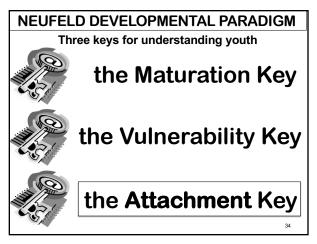
(ACE) Study decided the following:

Rule No. 1: Take nothing a raging kid says personally. Really. Act like a duck: let the words roll off your back like drops of water.

Rule No. 2: Don't mirror the kid's behavior. Take a deep breath. Wait for the storm to pass, and then ask something along the lines of:

"Are you okay? Did something happen to you that's bothering you? Do you want to talk about it?" "PAPER TIGERS"

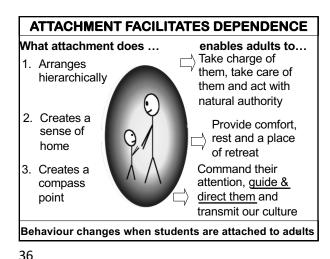
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# ATTACHMENT PRINCIPLES

- 1. Attachment is the primary need of a developing being.
- 2. Growth takes place in the context of a safe Attachment.
- 3. A "safe" Attachment figure both cares about and cares for - takes charge of - the dependent being.
- 4. Being dependent requires the ability to tolerate vulnerability.



# Differentiating for Behaviour

- Recognizing the student's limitations and meeting the student's needs based on:
  - Level of MATURITY (due to age or being "stuck")
  - Having the "Double Invisible Handicap" kindled amygdala and under developed Prefrontal Cortex – easily overwhelmed
- 2. Accepting that
  - not all students will be given the same "consequences" – at least "privately"
  - Some students need more support from us to be able to handle the demands of school

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# **Differentiating for Behaviour**

Why should we differentiate for behaviour?

Because by providing what the student needs it:

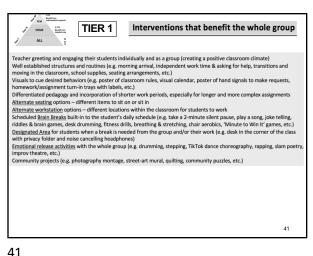
- · increases chances of success
- decreases sense of shame and worthlessness
- increases likelihood the student will stay attached to adults so they can be guided by us.

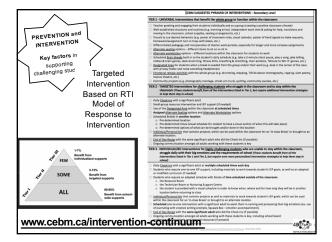
## **DEVELOPMENTAL INTERVENTIONS**

- 1. Maximize **ATTACHMENT** (with adults)
- Compensate for **IMMATURITY** and the effects of TRAUMA
- 3. Build a VILLAGE OF ATTACHMENT (focus on adults)
- Allow for EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION and TEARS

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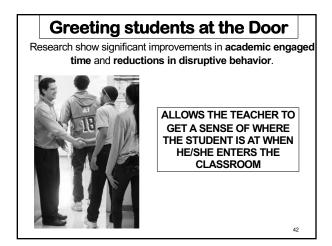
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#### **ENGAGING the Attachment Instincts**

- 1. Get in their face (or space) in a friendly way - collect the eyes, a smile and a nod.
- 2. Provide something to hold on to -SIMILARITY, delight, INTEREST, warmth (not praise as praise is conditional upon performance).
- 3. Invite the student depend on you
- 4. Act as the student's compass point



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# **ENGAGE THE ATTACHMENT INSTINCTS**

#### **COLLECT BEFORE YOU DIRECT**

Get the eyes - a smile - a nod

How can I get the student to look at me and smile?

- Speak softly
- ·Say name with warmth and kindness

**DOES THIS** STUDENT GIVE ME **PERMISSION TO EXIST IN HIS/HER** PRESENCE?



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#### KNOW YOUR LIMITS AND WORK WITHIN THEM

If you are starting to "reach your limit" with a student:

#### **Use Time Away instead of Time Out**

- 1. Send the student TO SOMEONE with a "task"
  - a book or an envelope
    - > Another adult Behaviour technician, Guidance Counsellor, secretary
    - Nurturing Support Centre
    - > Another place in the school with adult supervision
- 2. Always go to the student and let them know that the relationship is still intact and that you will take care of them the next day.

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# Keep student-adult relationships strong

Despite the chronic and difficult behaviours displayed by these students

- Don't let the behaviour cause a break in the relationship with the adults
- Don't take the behaviour personally
- Find ways to reassure the student that adults will continue to care for him/her even when it has been a difficult day or a difficult week
- Find ways to bridge to the next point of connection

"Deep relational safety is certainly the means through which children who have suffered abuse and violence come to settle and find the comfort and love they need to recover from its traumatic effects." Australian Childhood Foundation

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#### **BRIDGE ALL THAT CAN DIVIDE**

### **❖ PROBLEM BEHAVIOUR**

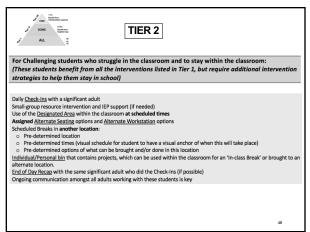
- "I am looking forward to seeing you tomorrow."
- "We'll find a way to make things better.'



The message we want to give our youth is that NO MATTER WHAT they DO or how they BEHAVE

ADULTS WILL CONTINUE TO CARE FOR THEM.

BRIDGING gives the youth HOPE.



ANTICIPATE

& PREVENT

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#### COMPENSATE FOR IMMATURITY

#### PROVIDE EXTRA ORGANIZATION

- Organize tasks and materials
- Time management chunk tasks
- Daily schedule provide prompts next class
- Homework keep to the essential
- Assignment sheets to help parents, homework aides and tutors
- Provide time and help for organizing assignments and studying for tests

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## COMPENSATE FOR IMMATURITY

**CHANGE THE CIRCUMSTANCES that control the** youth

- Recess/Breaks
  - Under supervision
- Hallways
  - o Away from other students
- Bathrooms
  - Under supervision
- - In a quieter space
- Substitute teacher

FEW THE THE

SOME SOME

ALL :

- Make introductions
- Send to someone the student knows

TIER 3

or Highly challenging students who are unable to stay within the classroom, struggle daily with their big emotions and the requirements of school: (These students benefit from all the interventions listed in 1 I and Tier 2, but require even more personalized intervention strategies to help them stay in school)

School Team

Daily Check-ins with a significant adult at multiple scheduled times each day
Students who require one-to-one IEP support, including materials to work towards student's IEP goals, as well as an adapted or modified curriculum (if needed)
Students who require an adapted schedule with blocks of time scheduled outside of the classroom:

o the Resource Room
of the Technician Room or Nurturing Support Centre
o the student is provided with a visual schedule in order to know when, where and for how long they will be in another location before returning to subschedule in order to know when, where and for how long they will be in another location before returning to askedule in order to know when, where and for how long they will be in another location before returning to aske break or brought to an alternate location.
Scheduled one-to-one intervention with a significant adult to assist them in naming and processing their big emotions (ex. use of journaling with reactive writing prompts, Squawk Box — emotion accompaniment).

Find of Day Recag with the same significant adult who did the Check-ins (if possible)
Ongoing communication amongst all adults working with these students is key, including school board

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## **Managing Circumstances**

If the student continually gets into difficulty in a situation or with an object, you can take charge of that,

# BECAUSE IT IS IN THE STUDENT'S **BEST INTEREST**

NOT because you want the student to change his or her behaviour.

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#### **BUILD A VILLAGE OF ATTACHMENT**

- Surround the youth with as many caring adults as possible
- 2. Help youth form attachments to adults and adults to form relationships to the youth.
- 3. Create a positive relationship with the parents
  - Positive phone calls/notes home
  - · Welcome parents warmly even when there is "trouble".

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Build a team of interveners

#### Create or use your existing a school team to

Ongoing communication amongst all adults working with these students is key, including school board professionals/consultants and external resources (if present)

- Plan regular meetings to discuss challenging students and how best to help support them so they can handle being in school
- Put together a team of adults to share the responsibility of caring for challenging students
- Use adult resources in the school creatively

"Children come to feel themselves as being safe through their experience in relationship with a caring and protective adult." Australian Childhood Foundation

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#### **ALLOW FOR EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION**

- Encourage ARTS, MUSIC, DRAMA, WRITING, SINGING, RAP – These are all EMOTIONAL PLAYGROUNDS
- 2. Create a SAFE SPACE to
  - a. Provide students with time for venting
  - b. Allow students to cry (be sad)

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#### Differentiating for Behaviour in Real Life

Try one thing different:

- Give the student: a pencil calculator piece of paper - generously
- Make a quiet comment recognizing emotion "This is hard for you." "You're having trying day."
- Let another adult know the student may need extra help.
- For a student who is hard to get to know try "2 x 10" - say a quick "hello" every day for 10 days when you meet the student in the hallway.

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

Calvin and Hobbes

IM IN A VERY CRABBY MCOD, SO EVERYBODY JUST LEAVE ME ALONE? I HATE EVERYONE!

Bill Watterson 1995

Differentiating for Behaviour in Real Life

Struggling with a messy emotional world

Having a brain with the double invisible

Just seeing differently will change your face and can give the student the message "I see YOU"

Make 1 small change See the student as

handicap

Hurting or in distress

Immature

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