

**What's Next?
Series**

**The Child
Who Acts
Aggressively**

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**Book chapter and webinar on
Frustration and Aggression**

14

The Child Who
Acts Aggressively

**reclaiming
our
students**

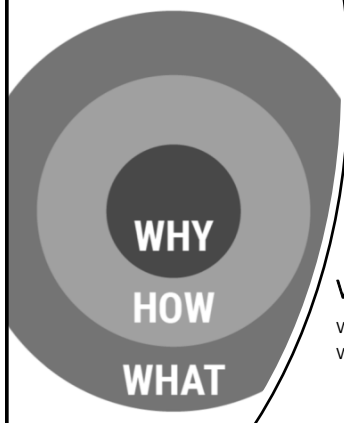
Why Children Are More Anxious,
Aggressive, and Shut
Down Than Ever and What
We Can Do About It

reclaiming
aggression
as an
emotional
problem

Gooden Nsouli, Ph.D.
Clinical & Developmental Psychologist

The child who ACTS AGGRESSIVELY



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rd5NTrmlQB8&t=16s>



**Start with the
WHY**

Simon Sinek - *Golden Circle*

WHY: the purpose
what is your cause?
what do you see?


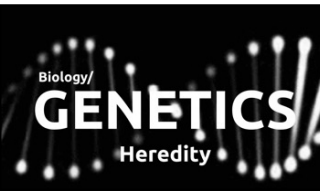
KEY INSIGHT #1

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




KEY INSIGHT #2

Children's behavior is based on development and emotional maturity. We cannot push and pull to get what's expected.





KEY INSIGHT #3

Some children are more at-risk towards developing emotional and behavioral problems.

SHIFTING OUR LENS

To gain perspective and insight



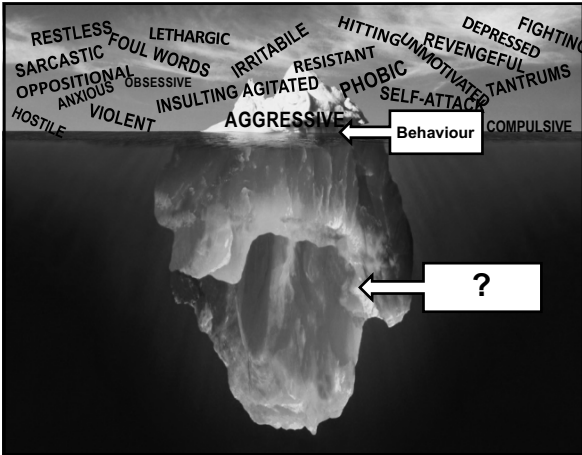
What we SEE influences what we do

When we understand what is behind the behaviour we then:

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

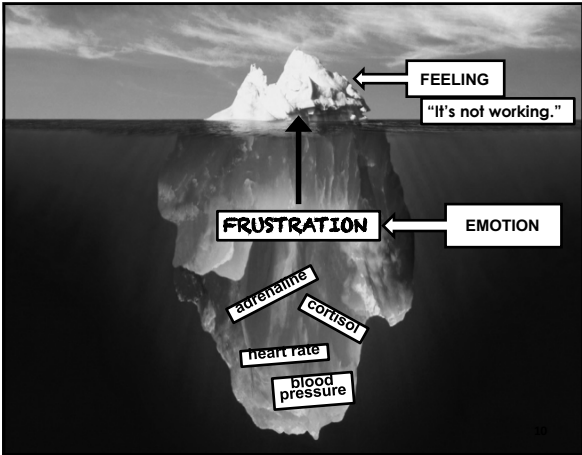
What are the behaviours we see?

In the Classroom:	In the School/On the Playground:
<input type="checkbox"/> Impatient with peers	<input type="checkbox"/> Invades personal space
<input type="checkbox"/> Abrupt in tone and demeanor	<input type="checkbox"/> Plays too roughly
<input type="checkbox"/> Rude, screaming, verbal threats, swearing	<input type="checkbox"/> Rude, screaming, verbal threats, swearing
<input type="checkbox"/> Easily irritated, whines, complains	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical outbursts with objects
<input type="checkbox"/> Tapping with objects – gets louder as frustration increases	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical outbursts towards peers
<input type="checkbox"/> Frustrated with daily routine	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical outbursts towards adults
<input type="checkbox"/> Reactive to simple requests	<input type="checkbox"/> Ignores rules when playing games/creates own rules to win at games
<input type="checkbox"/> Work refusal	<input type="checkbox"/> Imposes self into games with others
<input type="checkbox"/> Physical outbursts with objects, towards peers and/or adults	<input type="checkbox"/> Takes or destroys other's possessions or creations
<input type="checkbox"/> Shut down	<input type="checkbox"/> Disrupts others' games when not invited to play
<input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficult to transition back indoors
<input type="checkbox"/> Flat affect/depression	
<input type="checkbox"/> Retreats to small enclosed areas	
<input type="checkbox"/> Storms out of the room	
<input type="checkbox"/> Can be extremely difficult to manage by substitute teachers	



Behaviours

?



FEELING

"It's not working."

EMOTION

FRUSTRATION

adrenaline

cortisol

heart rate

blood pressure



FRUSTRATION

=

the experience of something not working for you

Frustrations in a child's day

- Time to get up!
- Let's go, we're going to be late!
- Chores, homework
- Sibling interactions
- "No" really means "no"
- Not winning all the time
- Not getting one's way
- Not being the best at everything
- Etc.

aggression

↑

frustration

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.




FRUSTRATION INVENTORY

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?

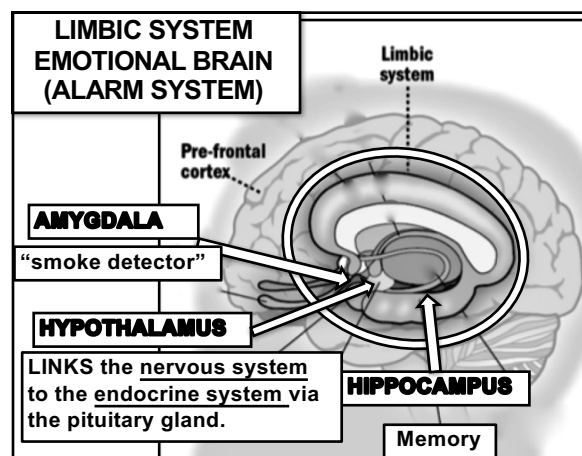
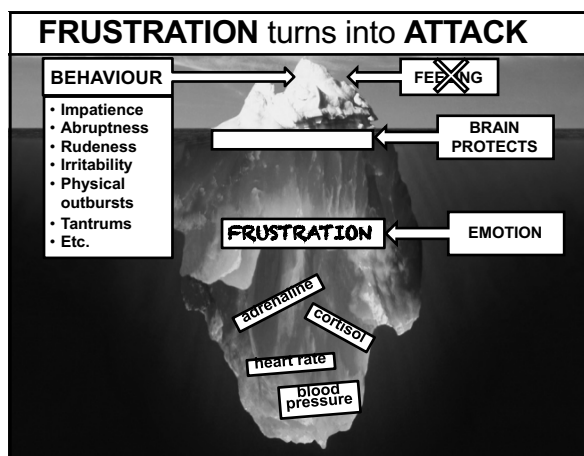
Impact of Sensitivity and Emotional intensity on frustration-aggression



Greater children are hypersensitive and emotionally intense:

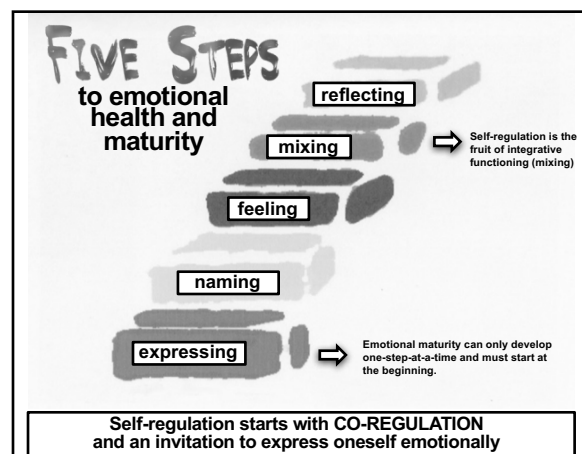
- More easily they are affected and moved by their emotions
- More easily they are overwhelmed by their emotional experience
- More likely they are to be "stuck" emotionally:
 - Emotional intensity evokes more defenses
 - Intellectualization of experiences (escape of emotions)
 - Loss of tears necessary for adaptation
- More adults attempt to calm the child in order to avoid emotional eruptions, which doesn't help the situation

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/sensitivity>

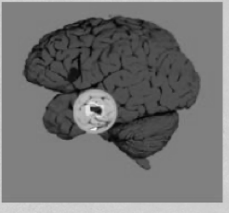


Understanding the true NATURE of Emotions


1. Emotions happen to us as opposed to being a choice or being under our control:
 - ✓ They are meant to move us in ways that would serve us. E.g. frustration drives us to persist and not give up.
 - ✓ Although seemingly irrational, the brain has its reasons.
2. Achieving emotional health and maturity relies on the following:
 - ✓ Emotions need to be EXPRESSED to preserve healthy functioning and well-being.
 - ✓ Emotions have a job to fulfill and need to be FELT in order to realize their designed destiny.
 - ✓ The capacity for self-control and consideration must be nurtured, as opposed to a set of skills to be taught.



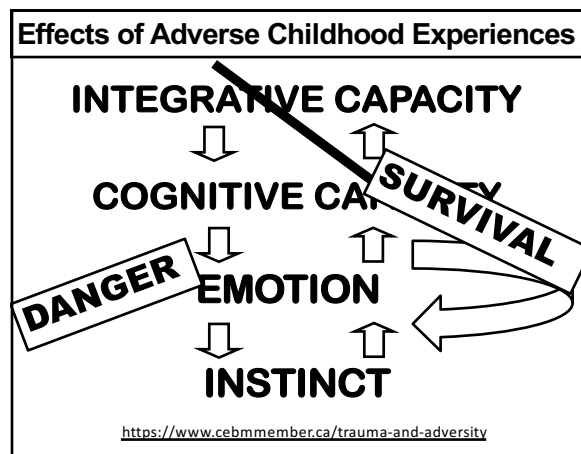
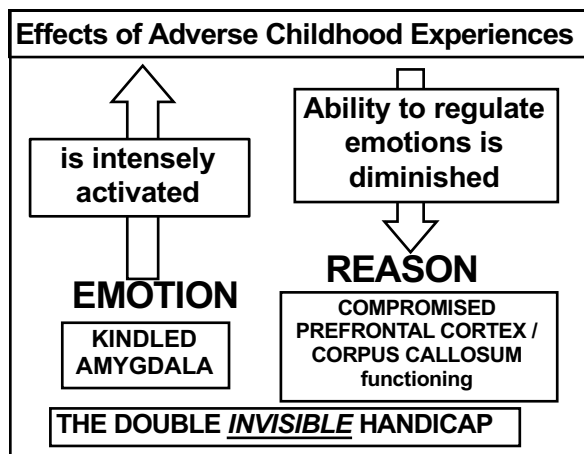
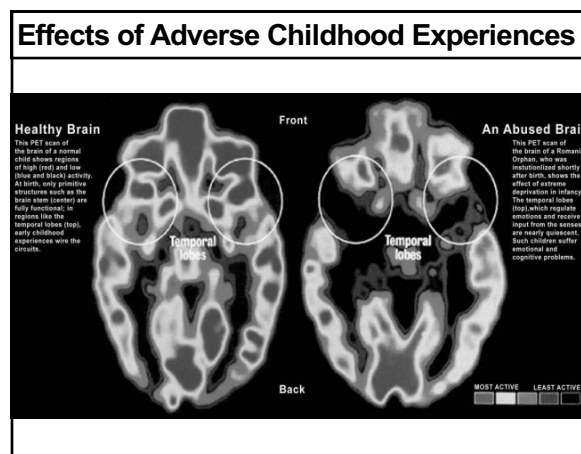
SELF REGULATION requires Prefrontal cortex development



Youth rely more on the **Amygdala** (limbic system)



Adults rely more on the **Prefrontal Cortex**



WHAT DOESN'T WORK


REASONING, TALKING especially about CONSEQUENCES

- Talking keeps them in high arousal – flight or fight mode – intensifies the agony.
- When the child 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.”

WHAT DOESN'T WORK

Conventional Classroom Management and Problem Behaviour Centered Intervention



- Rewards/Consequences
- Behaviour management tracking systems
- Being sent to the Principal's office
- Detention/Reflection Room
- Student behaviour contract
- Zero tolerance discipline measures
- Suspensions

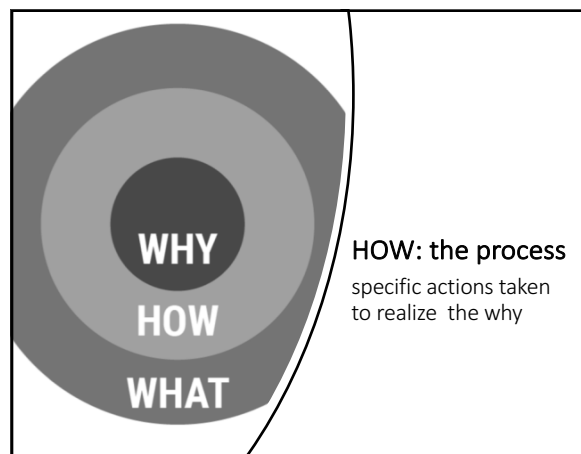
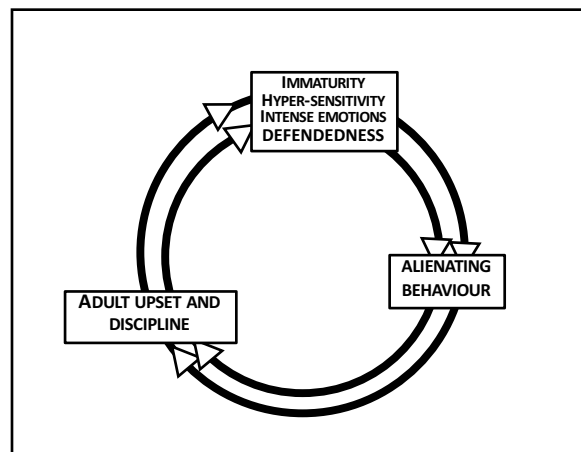
It doesn't help change or improve student behaviour and it exacerbates the problem with troubled students

WHAT DOESN'T WORK

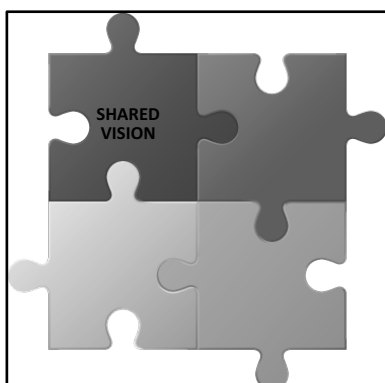
- ❑ **Time Outs** - Increase separation alarm and frustration, which can lead to 'disengagement' *'I don't care'*
- ❑ **Consequences** - in times of high emotions integrative capacity diminishes. Giving consequences directly increases frustration for a child who already struggles with managing frustration
- ❑ **Behaviour Management Systems:** Incentive charts, rewards and behavior contracts
 - ✓ Focuses on child's struggles rather than their good intentions and efforts
 - ✓ May increase disengagement
 - ✓ Make the relationship contingent on performance

For more details please see:

<https://www.cebm.ca/common-practices-to-avoid>



BEST PRACTICES Key Principles



Shared Vision

- **Common expectations** for student behaviour (types of behaviour and their degree)
- **Common direction** for the intervention measures
- **Pyramid of interventions:** universal, targeted and individualized measures
- **Intervention flowchart** from the classroom to the Principal's office
- Priority on **prevention measures**
- Focus on creating a **'safe' environment**

BEST PRACTICES


Key Principles



BEST PRACTICES

Gaining insight to inform practice

From: What's wrong with you? This behaviour has to stop.



To: He's experiencing too much **frustration** – too much that is not working in his life.

How can I help to release and reduce the frustration?

BEHAVIOUR CHANGES WHEN...

Maturation

Behaviour changes as the brain matures

Emotions

Behaviour changes when emotions are felt

Vulnerability

Behaviour changes when vulnerability is protected

Attachment

Behaviour changes when students are attached to adults

Insight Driven

Insight about the **student**:

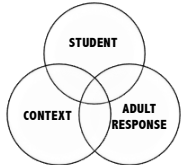
- Age and developmental maturity
- Inherent sensitivity
- Life stressors/trauma
- Attachment depth

Insight about the **context at hand**:

- Environmental triggers
- Child emotional state/intensity
- Instinct driven to defend and protect
- Engagement/receptivity to the adult

Insight about the **adult response**:

- Adult stress level
- Reflective vs. Reactive
- Type of verbal and non-verbal responses



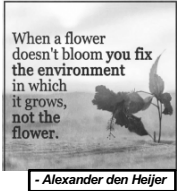
BEST PRACTICES

Key Principles



Adult-centered goals

- **Scaffolding** orchestrated by the adults to help the student succeed:
 - ✓ Compensate for the student's immaturity
 - ✓ Shield the student from overstimulation/overwhelm
 - ✓ Safeguard the student from getting into further trouble
 - ✓ Soften the student's defenses
- **Coming alongside** the student's emotional experience by acting as a CO-REGULATOR and by inviting emotional release in a safe way.
- **Protect** the vulnerability by taking a step back to diffuse the situation and by avoiding to trigger the student further.
- **Preserving** the attachment relationship.



BEST PRACTICES
Key Principles

TEAMWORK

Power of teamwork

- **Sharing the responsibility** of the student and class group (each adult having a complementary role to the other).
- **Sharing the weight** of the challenging students (ex. 'You've Got Mail' intervention, Foster Classrooms, Nurturing Support Centre, etc.)
- **Communicating** with one another so all involved are in the 'know' of certain student profiles and relevant situations that have come up.
- Receiving the **collaboration and support** of school board personnel and outside services.

WHY
HOW
WHAT

WHAT: the result
what do you do to reach the desired outcome?

Challenge: Frustration & Aggression
Making Sense of What is Unfolding and Mapping Interventions to Support a Student

What are the behaviors that you see?	Suggested Interventions	Understanding 'What/for' this might be coming from:	Practices to AVOID and WHY
In the Classroom: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Interacts with peersAligns in time and dominanceRuns, screaming, verbal threats, swearingExcessively vocal, whines, complainsYelling with adults - gets louderDoes not listen to requestsFrustrated with daily routineResists or omits requestsWork refusalPhysical outbursts with adults, towards peers and/or adultsShut downFatigueFlat affect/DepressionRetreats to small enclosed areasStares out of the roomCan be extremely difficult to manage by substitute teachers	Tiers 1 & 2 practices: In the Classroom: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Maintain a calm demeanor; don't take the behavior and language personally. Keep calm and steady - the child can pick up much information when 'tipped' or upsetWork at nurturing a significant attachment with this student - be clear opportunities to make it consistentEstablish and follow structured routines - predictability helps them feel safe and know what to expect of themHave additional work supplies readily available - provide with generosity when they are missing itemsOffer alternate seating options and alternate workstations to provide opportunity for choiceInsert additional break activities for the group when students struggle with attention or managing their bodiesNotice, name and recognize efforts - focus on small stepsWhen emotionally charged, direct & redirect away from the situation. Presently, better students, those on one or two-stepAssign a 'job' that the student is capable of doing, and is beneficial for them and the groupOrganize a Personal Box with the student - include items they enjoy touching, feeling or doing when they need a break. Include a fine motor activity. Change items periodically to maintain engagement	Understanding 'What/for' this might be coming from: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Facing too much frustration - numerous things in their life are not workingFacing too much frustration from caregiversMaterial and overstimulation with school experienceToo much is happening or being asked of themInformation is being given 'too much too fast' - student struggles to processLack of secure attachments with adults at schoolInsecurity in emotional development due to pastInsecurity in emotional development due to pastAdverse family conditionsLearning difficultiesDiagnosed conditionsHypersensitivity, hypersensitivitySensory issues, ASDToo much sensory input, caffeine, overstimulationToo much social stimulation	Practices to AVOID and WHY <ul style="list-style-type: none">Time Out - increase separation stress and frustration, which can lead to disengagement 'I don't care'Consequences - in times of high emotions integrative capacity diminishes. Doing consequences already increases frustration for a child who already struggles with managing frustrationHumorous charts, rewards and behavior contractsFocus on child's struggles rather than their good intentions and effortsMay increase disengagement contingent on performance

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/frustration-and-aggression>

Maximizing the use of the "Challenges Placemats". A tool to help prime observation, reflection, discussion and sound intervention strategies to support students with challenging behaviors


Teacher
Support Staff
Administrator

- At the start of the school year, as you prepare for your new group - review the different areas of your room, do you have different spaces that will meet the needs of your diverse group?
- You'll be welcoming a student whose challenges you're not sure how to address - the placemat can be a starting point for recommended intervention resources and interventions.
- Reach out to your support staff and Complementary Services Team members for support when needed.
- During the year, you have a student whom you find challenging and need new ideas to help them - see what you have in place, what can be added or used differently.
- At the start of the school year, as you prepare for the new students that you'll be supporting - review the placemats and do an inventory of the tools and strategies that you have at your disposal for intervention. Prepare & create new tools to add to your existing resources.
- When faced with challenging students, take the time to observe their behaviors, hear their needs and frustrations, speak with the other adults working with them and together decide on interventions and support that you can put into place - the placemats can provide a common ground, which to start the discussion - everyone has a role to play to support this student.
- At the start of the school year, review and share the placemats with your teachers, support staff and daycare staff - they provide a wide range of insights on different challenges along with recommended intervention strategies within the classroom, the school and the playground.
- Have a team discussion, review which strategies are in place, which could be added to best meet the needs of your students.
- When faced with complex and challenging situations - refer to the placemats as a tool to bring each member of the team together to identify what they are already doing, what is working, what is not working and decide together what will be the next INTERVENTION strategies to be put into place to support this student.
- Invite your Complementary Services Team Member(s) to join in the conversation when you feel the need for additional support.
- At the start of the school year, review and share the placemats with your school teams. There is great benefit in a 'yeholter' to support them as they prepare for new students. People often repeat past intervention strategies because they were familiar. They can benefit from brainstorming and discussions to improve the services and the support which they offer, particularly to their students with behavior challenges.
- When asked to support specific students - the placemats can be a tool to help take inventory of the strategies being implemented, assess what is working and not working. From there it becomes easier to see in which direction new interventions should be considered, discussed, decided upon and then implemented.
- As an additional support for Complementary Services Team members, please see the *Intervention Planning: Moving From Observation, Reflection, to Intervention: Supervision to Implement Document*.

All of the Challenges placemats and other intervention planning documents can be found here: <https://www.cebmmember.ca/intervention-planning-and-meeting>

TIER 1 – UNIVERSAL Practices in the Classroom

- Classroom interventions to benefit the whole group, evidence-based practices
- Daily practices lead by the Homeroom Teacher and the Specialists
- Focus is on **PREVENTION**:
 - ✓ Minimizing exposure to additional frustration (avoiding conventional discipline practices that create more frustration)
 - ✓ Offering an array of support measures to answer to a variety of student needs and challenges
 - ✓ Helping students find ways to express their emotions and release their frustration



**TIER 1 – Universal Practices
in the Classroom**

- ❑ Maintain a calm demeanor, don't take the behavior and language personally. Keep cues short and simple – the child can't process much information when triggered or upset.
- ❑ Work at nourishing a significant attachment with this student : Increase opportunities to make 1:1 connections
- ❑ Establish and follow structured routines – predictability helps them feel safe and know what is expected of them
- ❑ Have additional work supplies readily available – provide with generosity when they are missing items
- ❑ Offer alternate seating options and alternate workstations to provide opportunity for choices
- ❑ Insert additional Brain Break activities for the group when students struggle with attention or managing their bodies
- ❑ Notice, name and recognize efforts – focus on small steps
- ❑ When emotionally charged, distract & redirect away from the situation. Prevents further escalation, issues can later be managed
- ❑ Assign a 'job' that the student is capable of doing, and is beneficial for them and the group
- ❑ Organize a Personal Bin with the student – include items they enjoy touching, looking at and doing when they need a break. Include a fine-motor activity. Change items periodically to maintain engagement.
- ❑ Consider alternate arrangements when substitute teacher is present.


Creating a SAFE Environment


- Keep child-adult relationships strong
 - ✓ 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
- Come alongside the student's emotions
 - ✓ Accept their existence regardless of how irrational and unreasonable they may seem
 - ✓ Normalize the feelings rather than treat their existence as a problem
 - ✓ Make room for the feelings and their expression rather than try to get rid of them

Creating a SAFE Environment

- Anticipate potential problematic situations and take charge by compensating to help the child behave successfully
- Provide structure and predictability
- Offer a variety of intervention options
- Aim to soften the defensive armour through emotional expression and play
 - ✓ Self-regulation begins with CO-REGULATION
 - ✓ Provide safe and dignified outlets for emotional expression so energy can be released, not suppressed
 - ✓ encourage the expression of sadness and tears

Setting the conditions for success





<https://www.cebmmember.ca/frustration-and-aggression>

Classroom "Quiet Corner"





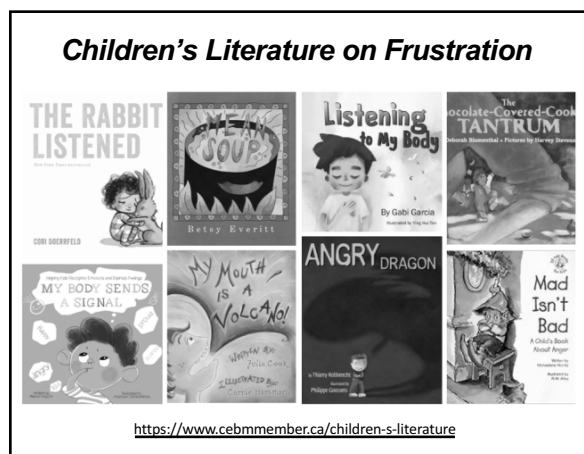

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/cocoon-area>

Classroom Emotional Release Activities






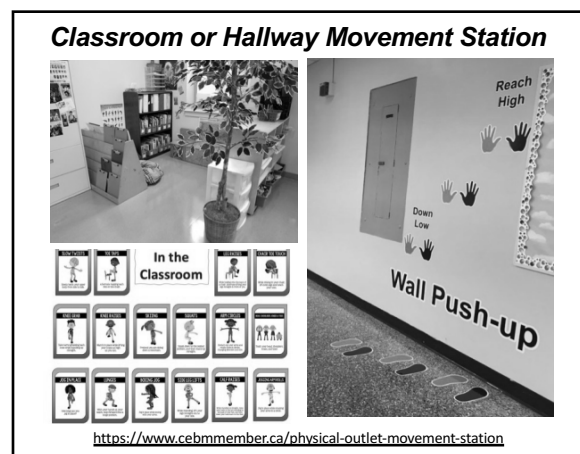

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/emotions-intervention-area>



TIER 2 – TARGETED Practices in the Classroom and School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interventions for challenging students who struggle in the classroom (situational, for a short period of time) • Practices lead by the Homeroom Teacher and the Specialists with the help of Support Staff and Resource Teacher • Interventions based on DATA monitoring and evidence-based practices • Student continues to benefit from T1 interventions in addition to supplemental T2 measures

	TIER 2 – Targeted Practices in the Classroom and School
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Set-up and use Physical Movement Stations – Inside and Outside <input type="checkbox"/> Use 'You've Got Mail' to have the student leave the group for a short break for a quiet or physical movement break. <input type="checkbox"/> Visits to Foster Classroom – provide a break from the classroom <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ It's essential that this be set-up as an intervention prior to its use, that the student and parents are informed of this intervention strategy <input type="checkbox"/> Provide student with passes to visit the Technician Room, to work, to talk, to have supervised 'alone time' <input type="checkbox"/> Organized games during recess and lunchtime <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in 'interest clubs' with adult supervision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Orchestrate the schedule to 'divide & conquer' clusters of students who struggle together <input type="checkbox"/> Sheltered recess and/or sheltered lunch in a predetermined location – small group 	

Instead of a time-out, use TIME AWAY
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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 <u>always up to the adult</u> to restore and maintain the relationship with a student.



Physical Outlet - Movement Corner

Having an area dedicated to *Physical Movement*



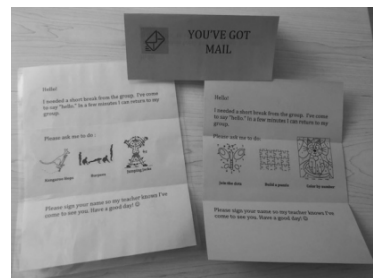
<https://www.cebmmember.ca/physical-outlet-movement-station>

**"You've Got Mail"
Transition with a Destination**

"You've Got Mail" letters provide something tangible for a student to hold as they head to a pre-determined destination for a short period of time.

Two types of letters are available:

- Active movement
- Quiet activity



<https://www.cebmmember.ca/practices-outside-the-classroom>

Emotions Corner

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/emotions-intervention-area>

Having an area dedicated to *Emotions Intervention*

**Elementary Emotions Folder**

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/emotions-intervention-area>

Individual Bin and Personal Choice Board

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/personal-bin>

Taking Frustration into *PLAY***Playing out the impulses to make things work**

- Making things perfect – puzzles
- Building – Lego, blocks, mazes etc.
- Constructing and crafts
- Organizing and orchestrating
- Games like Jenga

Playing out the impulse to attack or destroy

- Bouncing a ball against the wall - Throwing a Velcro dart onto a target
- Clapping and/or drumming to music
- Kicking & stomping
- Play fighting – pool noodles
- Destroying and demolishing cardboard boxes

FRUSTRATION MONSTER

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

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



<https://hannahbeach.ca/the-frustration-monster/>

Foster a relationship with *frustration*

- Shift the focus to towards the emotion of **FRUSTRATION**, rather than targeting the behaviour directly
- 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**.

TIER 3 – INDIVIDUALIZED Practices

with the help of Support Staff and/or Professionals

- Interventions for highly challenging students who are unable to function well within the classroom and/or the school
- Collaboration between the school team, the board consultants/professionals, the parents, as well as outside partners if involved
- Interventions based on close DATA tracking - Referral for further investigation on the root of the problem
- Adaptation-Accommodations – Student specific needs, remediation (pull-out 1 on 1), evidence-based practices
- Student continues to benefit from T1 interventions in addition to supplemental T3 measures

**TIER 3 – Individualized Practices**
with the help of Support Staff and/or Professionals

Schedule intervention time based on the needs of the student – daily, bi-weekly, weekly:

- ☐ Check-Ins/End of Day Recap
- ☐ Safe place to express big emotions
- ☐ Emotional expression activities
- ☐ Personalized Project a venue for building, creating, trying things out
- ☐ Introduce sensory materials
- ☐ Create a personalized tool kit that will support student's efforts in expressing and managing his/her emotions
- ☐ Share information with other members of the school team, including daycare team

<https://www.cebm.ca/emotions-intervention-area>

Suggestions to help big emotions come out:

Pre-set schedule for:


- ☐ Physical movement breaks during the school day
- ☐ Break from the classroom – intervention with support staff
- ☐ Targeted emotional release activities
- ☐ Additional outdoor time
- ☐ Additional physical education classes
- ☐ Assign a job within the school – recycling – tearing boxes
- ☐ Bringing chairs down in classroom
- ☐ Mail messenger for secretary
- ☐ Woodwork projects
- ☐ Carrying equipment for outdoor games

Daily multiple student "Check-Ins"**Nurturing Support Centre**
Tier 3 Intervention


Personalized & adapted schedule

Individualized support


EMOTIONS ROOM




POOL NOODLES




BUBBLE WRAP




FOR THROWING



FOR KICKING




FOR RIPPING



FOR HITTING

A PLACE TO LET IT OUT

'calming down' will come naturally once the emotion has been released



<https://www.cebm.ca/emotions-room>

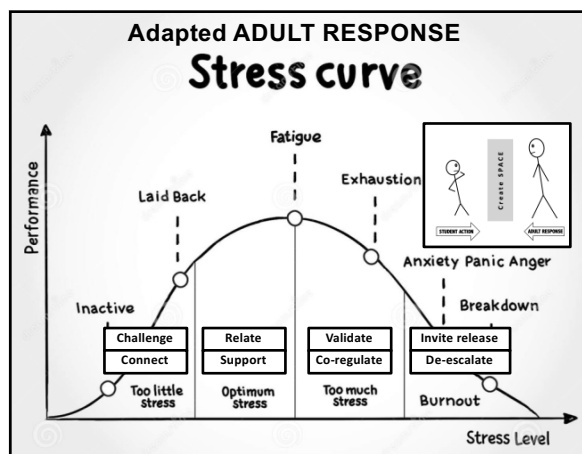
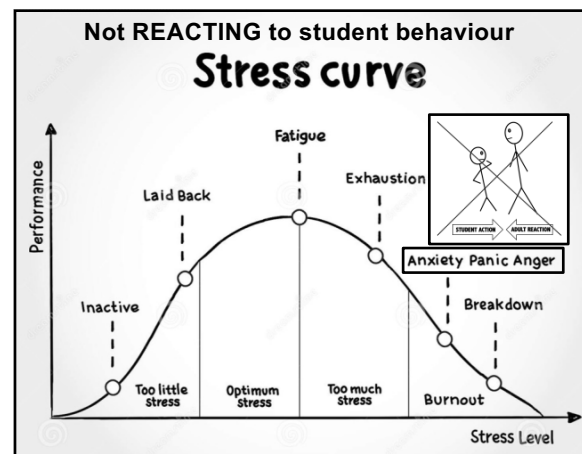
Facilitate **SAFE ERUPTIONS** and allow for **VENTING**

- 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

Action Plan with adult-centered goals

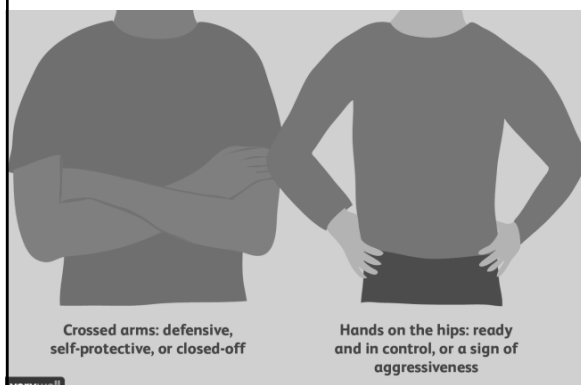
PLANNING WITH THE EXPLOSIVE AND CHALLENGING STUDENT IN MIND Name of student: _____ Age: _____ Grade: _____ Teacher: _____ Date: _____		Student: _____ Date: _____ page 1
ANALYSIS WHEN: _____ WHERE: _____ WITH WHOM: _____ PRECIPITATORS: _____ WARNING SIGNS: _____ TRIGGERS: _____ SOURCES OF FRUSTRATION: _____ POTENTIAL SOURCES OF FRUSTRATION: _____ OTHER FACTORS: _____ SAFE ATTACHMENT: _____ PERSONS FOR INTERVENTION: _____ PLAN "B" FOR A DIFFICULT USE OF AGGRESSION: _____		PLAN "B" FOR A DIFFICULT USE OF AGGRESSION • Allowable behavior • Allowable activity ALLOWING FOR EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION • Frustration • Anxiety • Fear OTHER INTERVENTIONS NOTES: TO AVOID: • IMPOSING OTHER CONSEQUENCES (EXCEPT FOR "SOCIAL JUSTICE") • USING ISOLATION AND CHASTISEMENT • USING REINFORCEMENT SYSTEMS • USING AGENCIES TO REPORT ON THE STUDENT'S DAY TO DO: • CHASE THE STUDENT • CHASE THE STUDENT INTO PLAY • STAY ONE PERSON "ON THE LINE" FOR THE STUDENT AFTER AN ERUPTION: • Go to a quiet place • Refresh themselves and/or • Sleep in bed and/or • Provide reassurance MODIFY PLAN "B" FOR FUTURE INTERVENTIONS → PLAN "C" 1. IDENTIFY CHANGES REQUIRED (WHAT DID NOT WORK) 2. DECIDE ON CHANGES TO BE IMPLEMENTED 3. ENSURE THAT ALL STAFF WORKING WITH THIS STUDENT ARE AWARE OF "PLAN C" <small>©2008 by the Canadian Psychological Association. All rights reserved. (Published with permission. Please see CEbm.ca)</small>

<https://www.cebmmember.ca/intervention-planning-and-mapping>



ADULT RESPONSE: Elements to consider

- Immediate priorities:** Safety first, focus on listening and being reflective rather than reactive, aim to de-escalate the situation rather than getting one's way, put the emphasis on the student's emotions rather than their behaviours.
- Body positioning and physical proximity:** give the student lots of room and honor their need for personal space. Being side-by-side rather than face to face can help put the other person at ease.
- Non-verbal responses:** be aware of your body language (facial expressions, eye gaze, eyebrow movement, mouth expressions, arm and leg positioning, breathing pattern, etc.) as it can send signals that speak louder than words. For example, constant eye contact can be quite triggering.
- Posture and body movements:** avoid sudden gestures, walking fast towards the student, or appearing intimidating/threatening.

Body language can speak LOUDER than words

verywell

ADULT RESPONSE: Elements to consider

- **Mood and intensity:** be mindful of your own level of stress, affect, emotional intensity, and type of energy we reflect. Be cautious around your own triggers and pressure points. Keep yourself in check and work as a team to pass along the relay baton when needed.
- **Types of listening:** give priority to active listening, which is focused on understanding the entire message and taking into account the perception and feelings of the speaker, rather than selective listening (only hear what we want to) or listening to reply (only focused on our own message).
- **Verbal responses:** be aware of your attitude, tone of voice, volume, speech rate, and language used – select your words carefully – avoid asking too many questions, keep talking to a minimum and rely on visual cues to communicate.

YOUR WORDS MATTER

Instead of that, try saying this	
Be quiet	I see you are eager to share / this is really important to you.
Stop it / Calm down	I see you need to let it out.
Don't get upset	It's okay to feel mad/sad.
Don't be so defiant	It sounds like you need to follow your instincts and listen to what your body is telling you.
Don't be so bossy	I bet it feels better/safer to know you are the one making the decisions.
Don't speak to me this way	It sounds like you need me to give you space.
Don't be so aggressive	I see how it didn't turn out the way you had hoped / this isn't what you had in mind.
That's enough	How about we take a pause.
How many times do I have to tell you?	I am going to do (...) so that it will be easier for you.
What's wrong with you?	How can I help?
You are impossible!	We will figure this out. I've got you.
If you don't listen to me right now, I will (...)	I see this is tricky for you, we are going to solve this later. How about we go for a walk / a drink of water.
Leave my classroom	How about we go to a quieter place to figure this out.

The power of listening and letting them vent

Sometimes they just need to let it out.

Debriefing

Following an acting-out episode, once the student has calmed down, it is necessary to re-establish contact and process what has happened:

- Use empathetic listening (focus on feelings, not just facts)
- Depersonalize the attack and treat the incident as an accident. *"I can see those hits got away on you"*
- Reframe the incident as a problem of handling frustration. *"This isn't what you had in mind, it just wasn't working for you"*
- Convey that the relationship can take the weight. *"Regardless of what happened today, you're still my student. We're still good"*
- Bridge the problem behaviour. *"Tomorrow is another day. We'll try again"*
- Guide gently towards feelings of sadness and disappointment (retreat if this backfires)
- Investigate potential triggers, as well as alternatives.

Debriefing: things to consider

- Some students need more time to detach themselves from an incident in order to revisit it.
- If the student seems to become tense or frustrated when addressing the issue, it may be wise to revisit the incident at a future time.
- Please note that there is no urgency or need for immediacy when addressing an incident. Timing and connection to the student is key.

Bringing it all together

- Success depends on the active involvement of all stakeholders who are committed to a shared vision, common goals and the ongoing work required in achieving them.
- Schools need to establish clear and explicit expectations and set direction for all members of the school community.
- Staff must be at least made aware of and, perhaps, have participated in the development of the school guidelines and intervention flowchart.
- There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Interventions must be contextualized to the student's profile, needs and challenges.

Bringing it all together

- It is vital to define and clarify the difference between an accidental incident, a conflict and more a serious act of violence/bullying and how to intervene vis-a-vis each situation.
- More serious acts of violence/bullying require the active implication of the school administration, board personnel and perhaps outside services.
- Each School Board has a CVI Agent Pivot (climat scolaire, violence et intimidation) which can help accompany the schools to create their Safe School Policy and their Anti-Bullying Anti-Violence Plan.

Catherine Korah and Martine Demers
Centre of Excellence for Behaviour Management
www.cebm.ca

THE CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT (CEBM)
As a support to the 10 English School Boards of Quebec, the CEBM aims to help boards and their staff to find effective and developmentally friendly interventions for working with students who experience significant behavioural challenges in the school setting.

Also visit the CEBM Resource Center
<https://www.cebm.ca/frustration-and-aggression>

Editorials on Frustration & Aggression

<https://macnamara.ca/portfolio/when-push-comes-to-shove-the-answer-to-childrens-aggression/>

<https://hannahbeach.ca/emotional-safety/>

<https://hannahbeach.ca/kids-need-a-safe-space-to-feel/>

<https://hannahbeach.ca/the-frustration-monster/>

Upcoming Events

FOR ELEMENTARY

reclaiming OUF students
Join us ONLINE Tuesday November 1st, 2022 (part 1) - 3:00-4:00 pm AND Thursday January 20th, 2023 (part 2) - 3:00-4:00pm. Presenter: Hannah Beach. Event is FREE. Registration is for both dates. This series will not be recorded.

What's Next? series: The Child Who is Resistant
Join us ONLINE Wednesday, November 16th, 2022 - 4:00-5:00 pm. Presenter: Catherine Korah. Event is FREE. The session will be recorded and available on the CEBM website.

<https://www.cebm.ca/news-events>