Understanding & Supporting Children through Challenging Behaviours

Defining BEHAVIOUR:

- The way a person acts (or behaves).
  - Every action by a person that can be seen or heard. Such as: Asking, Talking, Yelling, Hitting, Biting, Throwing, Spinning, Jumping, etc...
- Behaviours can occur in response to things that are happening:
  - internally - thoughts and feelings
  - externally - the environment, including other people.
- Behaviour can serve a purpose and has a reason, including:
  - communication - through use of body language, facial expressions, gestures and silence
  - function - to help meet a need, attract attention, gain an internal or sensory sensation, access an item or activity, or get away from something.

The key to understanding behaviour is to understand why it is occurring, what is being communicated or what is needed.
There is always a reason for behaviour... can require digging deeper to explore and understand the reason for behaviours.

5 Tips for Shifting & Supporting Challenging Behaviours

1. **BRING COMPASSION & CURIOSITY**
2. **CONSIDER CAPACITY**
3. **CO-REGULATION**
4. **CONNECT THROUGH PLAY**
5. **CORE NEEDS**



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Misbehaviour VS. Stress Behaviour

The following is based on the work of Dr. Stuart Shanker.

MISBEHAVIOUR

- **mis = bad or wrong**
- **behaviour = action**

**** Child has made a CHOICE and is AWARE of their action**

**** Child was CAPABLE of making a different choice.**

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STRESS BEHAVIOUR

- **stress = strain on the body**
- **stress behaviour = caused by too high stress load**

**** Child in NOT fully aware of what they are doing or WHY**

**** Child has/had LIMITED CAPACITY for making a different choice.**

Based on the above & knowledge of the brain below is my equation of current ability...

SKILL LEVEL or CAPABILITY + **CURRENT CAPACITY** = **CURRENT ABILITY**

CAPACITY can be impacted by... stress, fatigue, nourishment, regulation, attention, time of day, events of the day, mood, amount of tech use, etc...

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5 Tips for Shifting & Supporting Challenging Behaviours

1. BRING COMPASSION & CURIOSITY



Zygmunt Zaradkiewicz
https://www.artymag.ir/en/artists/HdKB/

Some questions to consider:

- What else could be happening?
- What assumptions might I be making?
    - consider different perspectives
- What could my child be trying to communicate?
- What am I assuming?
- What else could be going on?
- What might they need more of?
- What might they need less of?
- Is this a new behaviour or a pattern?
- I wonder how I might support them?
- What's going on "below" the surface, when I DIG deeper?
- Start where you ARE (not where you wish you were)

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2. CONSIDER CAPACITY

Some questions you may consider:

- What stressors or triggers are impacting my child?
- What can I do to help or support my child now?
- I wonder what they are struggling with?
- How can I help my child through this distress?
- How can I shield & protect my child?
- What might they need to learn to BUILD their capacity?

"Kids do well when they ~~want to~~ can." - Ross Greene



"See a child differently & you see a different child." - Stuart Shanker

- Consider stressors... and find ways to reduce them.
- Consider unmet needs... and find ways to meet those needs.
- Consider skill deficits... and find ways to teach those skills.

Finally, consider how to **CREATE <u>SAFETY</u>** - How do we wrap our children up so beautiful they can find their way, make their best choices, and feel calm and safe? (And so we/they don't feel so overwhelmed & exhausted!)

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3. CO-REGULATE

Some questions you may consider:

- What strategies will create more calm?
- What strategies will create more safety?
- What might create more connection?

If **regulation** is the ability to deal with stress and heightened states of emotions and return to a place of connection...consider

- Connection to self (body, heart, brain and breath)
- Connection to others (especially a safe co-regulating adult)
- Connection to the world (and the environment around them).

Consider all 8 senses: (for more support... explore my webinar on Sensory Processing or "Regulate" module in Emotional Explorers course)

Touch



Proprioception



Vestibular



Vision - Eyes



Auditory - Ears



Smell - Nose



Oral - Mouth



Interoception



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4. CONNECT THROUGH PLAY

Even <u>5 minutes</u> a day of unplugged, uninterrupted play with your child can be meaningful and benefits grow over time.

~ Mona Delahooke (Brain-Body Parenting)

- if you explore connecting with your inner child, you may enjoy stress reducing benefits of play too!
- <u>play</u> without agenda
- follow child's lead
- try to resist the temptation to ask questions (especially concrete ones like "what does the animal say, or what colour is it"... explore pretend play & see what theme they bring in







- just 5 minutes of individual attention can also fill a child's cups of connection and "power" to lead and "be in charge" = lots of benefits!

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5 Tips for Shifting & Supporting Challenging Behaviours

5. CORE NEEDS

Each of the following can impact behaviour... and are important to consider their impact on challenging behaviours.

- Eating (and nourishment)
- Play & physical activity
- Sleep - quality and amount
- Time outside and in nature
- Amount of tech / screen time











Looking for tips and support you and your child in any of these areas? You will find lots of resources in the W.I.S.E. Collective!

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Sometimes BIG Emotions can come along with Challenging Behaviours...

Explore the

5 R's of Emotional Explorers

1. **Recognize** emotions
2. **Respond** to emotions
3. **Release** emotions safely
4. **Regulate** big emotions and come back to a place of being calm & grounded
5. **Re-enter** "the world" through at least one of the following...
    - compassionate **return**,
    - **repair** relationships,
    - **reason** and problem solve for next time,
    - **relate** and support safety, connection, belonging and love OR
    - **reflect** on the deeper root for the emotions

Check out all 5 webinars in the W.I.S.E. Collective - this entire course is included as well as tools for breath, body, brain and beliefs to support emotional regulation!

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