



Confident Parenting Group Ages 13 to 17

Delivered by CASA's Core team

How to Use this Workbook

This workbook will help you follow the sessions in CASA's Confident Parenting series, and help you reflect on your own experiences. The workbook includes sections for you to take notes and write down questions.

“Pause and Reflect”

There are times when the facilitator will encourage you to pause and reflect: either in your workbook, or by taking a moment to think. You can also write down questions you might have when you follow up with a CASA staff member.

Session One: Sleep and Development

Sleep is important because it:

- Helps our brain rest and grow
- Promotes our physical health
- Helps us control our emotions and actions
- Affects our moods, brain development, family relationships and behavior

It's best if a bedtime routine:

- Is stable and consistent
- Has calming activities
- Is the same time every night

Sleep in Adolescents

On average, adolescents require eight and a half to nine hours of sleep per day. This is a period of intense brain maturation.

Changes in Circadian Rhythm

Circadian Rhythms change as adolescents move into puberty - they shift two to three hours backwards. A shift in bedtime may be required, and they will tend to be sleepy in the morning. Do better with cognitive tasks in the afternoon.

Adolescents have a shift in their melatonin production (this is the hormone that helps regulate circadian rhythms).

Adults: Melatonin begins to produce at 9 p.m.; peaks at 4 a.m.

Adolescents: Melatonin begins to produce at about 11 p.m.; peak production continues to 7 a.m.

Helping Your Adolescent Get Enough Sleep

- Parents matter! Relationships matter!
- Consistent sleep habits (parents and adolescents!)
- Screens off at least one hour before bed
- Watch the snacking
- Bed for sleeping only
- Exploring the advantages and disadvantages with your youth



Pause and Reflect

What does your youth's bedtime routine look like?

What time is bedtime?

How long does it take them to fall asleep?

Do they wake in the night?

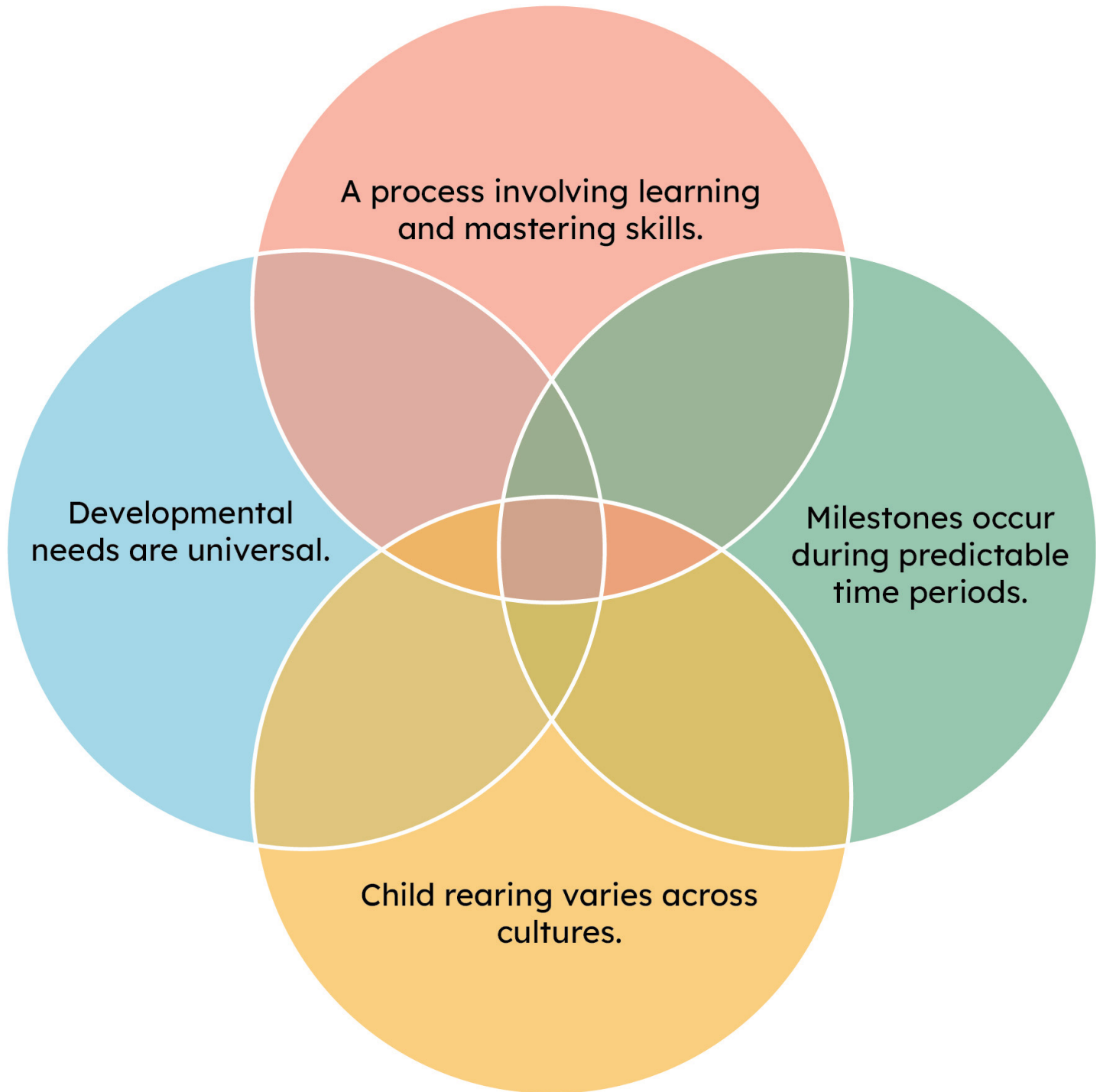
What time are they awake in the morning?

Is your current sleep routine a good fit for your family?

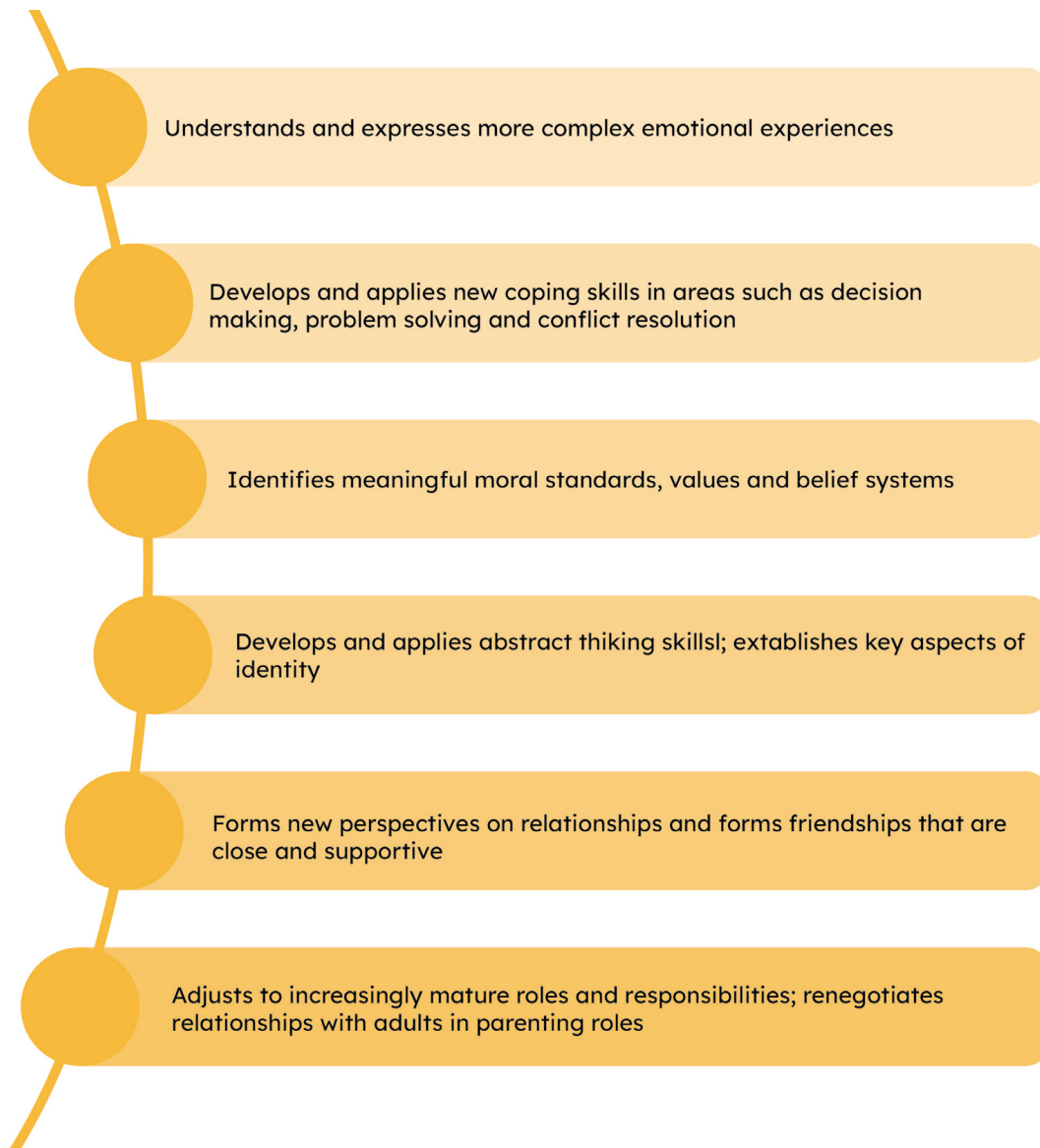
Handouts found here:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1N1TVguWYJMnuIL79UeVaNBvXo2TGeNpd?usp=sharing>

What is child development?



Adolescence: 13+ Years



Executive Functioning (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LIT73VpSEUA&t=39s>)



Executive functioning helps us take in and organize information, think flexibly, prioritize tasks, find ways to manage stress and manage our self-control. It is key for learning!

When a youth struggles with executive functioning, it can look like difficulties staying organized and completing school work, having trouble following directions or take a long time to complete simple tasks, being easily distracted and more disorganized, and being easily frustrated.

Executive Functioning video: My notes, observations, and questions:

Tip: Alberta Family Wellness has many resources about executive functioning on their website: <https://www.albertafamilywellness.org/what-we-know/the-brain-story>

Your Role

You are your youth's guide. Your role is to provide a nurturing environment, support positive social interactions, be a role model and continue to build into your relationship with them. Though they need you differently, you still play a vital role in your youth's life.

Relationships Matter

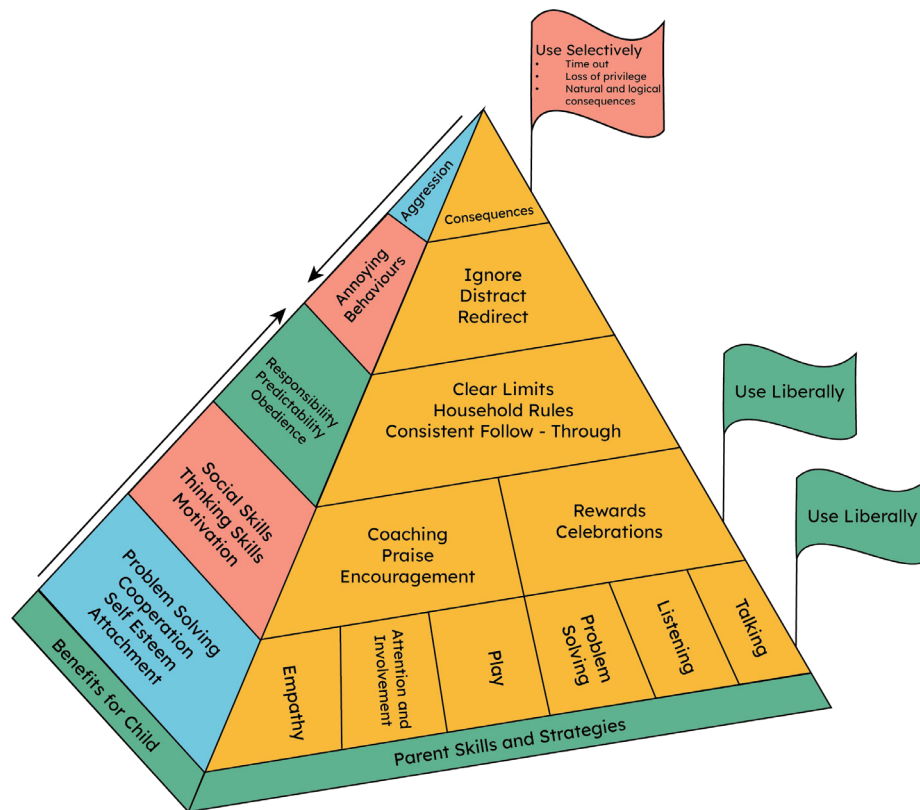
Your relationship with your child provides the foundation they need to grow and develop. Back-and-forth interaction impacts social and emotional development; we call this "Serve and Return" (Alberta Family Wellness Initiative).

The role of all caring adults in your child's life is to build positive foundations.

Pause and Reflect

Who are the caring adults in your child's life?

What do you want them to know about your child?



Parenting Pyramid®

The ways you communicate with your child affects their foundation (bottom row). The foundation must be established before you can move up to work on the other rows (setting limits, consequences, etc).

Pause and Reflect

What are you doing to engage with your child in positive ways?

What would you like to do more of to connect with your child?

Homework: What positive activity would you like to do with your child this week? Make a plan for what you'd like to do and when! Start with something simple that you both enjoy.

Example: Dishes

You have asked your youth to do the dishes repeatedly, and they are not listening. There may be many reasons for this.

What does it look like when they are not listening? Are they doing something else? What else is going on?

What does it sound like when you ask your child to clean up? Loud or distracting noises? Did they hear you?

Household chores can be a struggle, and the struggles can be connected to multiple developmental or mental health challenges.

What can you do?

- Teach your child the tasks
- Break down the steps
 - Start small
- Create a visual schedule or list
 - Many apps provide this feature!
- Do the task together
- Provide a positive reward
- Use praise
- Give choices

End of session one!
See you next week!

Session Two: Supporting Emotional Regulation

Responding to Emotions

There is not one right way to handle youth's emotions. It depends on the situation, your child and their abilities, and your thoughts and feelings. Our first instinct is often to want to make the negative emotions go away. What can we do instead?

Validation

Acknowledge and accept your youth's emotions, whether positive or negative. All emotions are acceptable. When emotions are invalidated, it tends to make those feelings more intense.

Though all emotions are acceptable, not every behavior is an appropriate reaction. You can help your youth by accepting their feelings, even if you don't feel the same way.

As children grow, they are learning about emotions. We also have individual differences in how we express emotions, some people internalize and others externalize. Over time, we learn about expressing emotions from the people and environments around us.

Validation involves acknowledging and accepting your child's emotions. All emotions are acceptable - when our emotions are invalidated, it tends to make those feelings more intense. Though all emotions are acceptable, not every behaviour is an appropriate reaction. You can help your youth by validating, even if you don't feel the same way. Throughout our lives, we learn about emotions from the people around us - what they are and how to express them.

Invalidation is a style of communication, and it doesn't mean a parent has bad intentions. Our styles of communication often come from what we experienced in childhood. Validating your child doesn't necessarily mean you agree with what they are feeling or doing, and validation is most effective when it's genuine and realistic. Validation doesn't negate change, in fact it's actually the first step in making change! Validation models health social behaviours for your youth.

How to Validate:

- Active listening
- Consider verbal and nonverbal reactions
- Observe their feelings and reflect them without judgement
- Show tolerance and acceptance of the youth and their experience
- Send the message that you take them seriously (both verbally and non-verbally)

Inside Out video: What did you notice? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT6FdhKriB8>

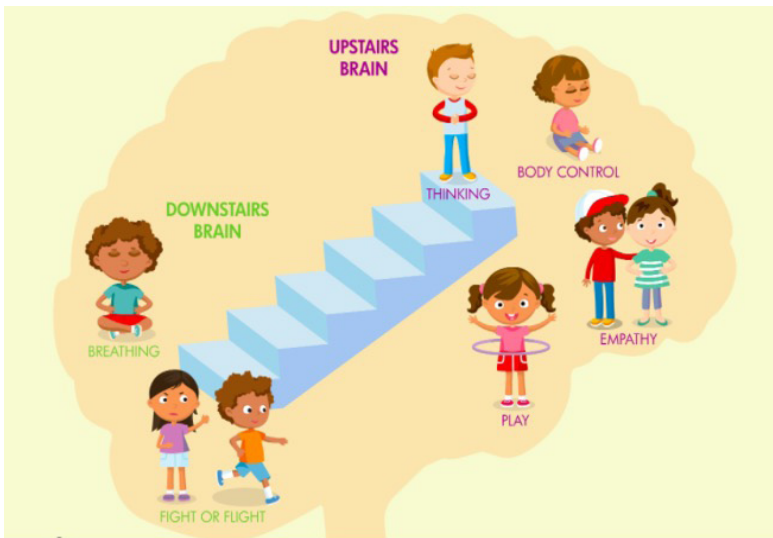
Pause and Reflect

Take a few minutes to think about your youth's emotions.

- How do I feel when my feelings are validated?
- What are some ways I can provide validation for my youth?
- How does my youth express their emotions?

Brain Development (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CIJ74Oxw>)

"Upstairs brain" helps us make sense of our feelings, and helps us think and plan ahead. "Downstairs brain" produces our feelings.



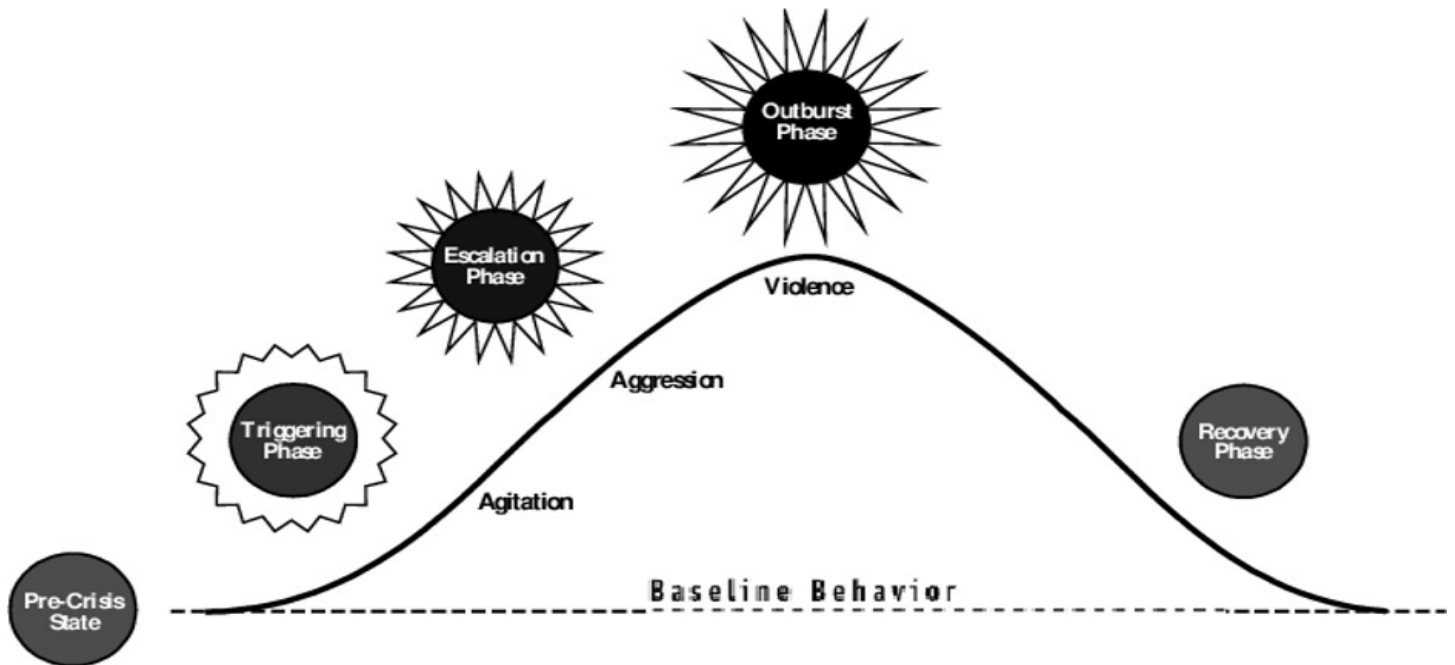
Flipping Your Lid Video: My notes, observations and questions:

Brain Development

Adolescence is a time of great brain development. Youths become more aware of themselves. They can think about life in more conceptual and abstract ways, and explore deeper meaning.

These developments can be overwhelming, and can cause changes in behaviour and emotions. This can be confusing for parents as well, but there can be many benefits!

Stress Model of Crisis

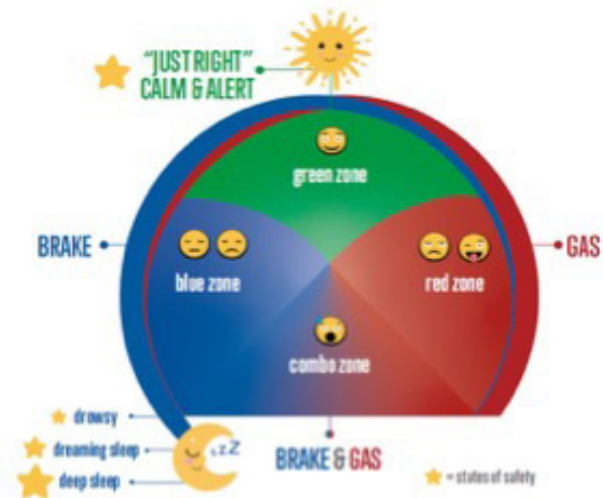


Pause and Reflect

- What does it look like, day to day, when your youth is in the pre-crisis state (green zone)?
- What are you already doing to maintain that baseline behavior?
- What are the things that trigger your youth to move to the escalation stage?
- What does it look or sound like when your youth is in the escalation stage?

How does my child respond to stress?

Individuals cope with stress in a variety of ways.



Impact of Stress on the Brain

When your youth is in a stress state, they are in their “downstairs brain” and any “upstairs brain” function is offline. They’ve “flipped their lid.” In this downstairs brain state, youth may lose skills, become much more reactive and may be less receptive to words and strategies.

Pause and Reflect

- What are some triggers than can cause a stress response for your youth?
- What does it look like or sound like when your youth is under stress? How intense is it? How long do they spend in the different states? How do they get back to green?
- What are the things that can happen to move them into the different states? What happens before and after? Did something change in their schedule? Did they skip a meal?

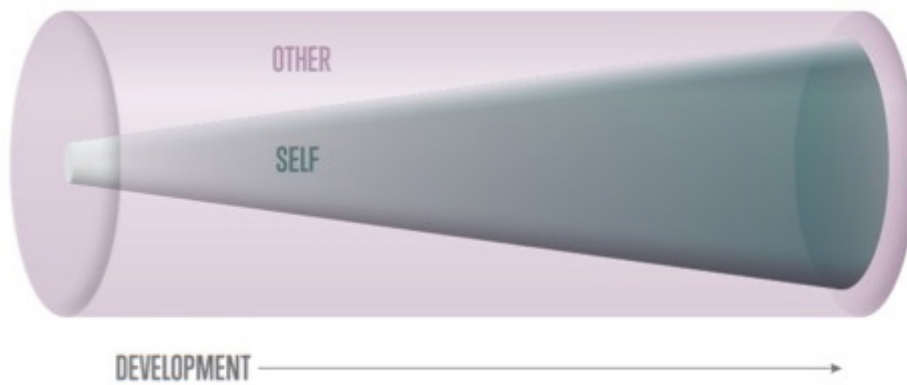
Temperament

- Intensity
- Persistence
- Sensitivity
- Perceptiveness
- Adaptability
- Regularity
- Energy

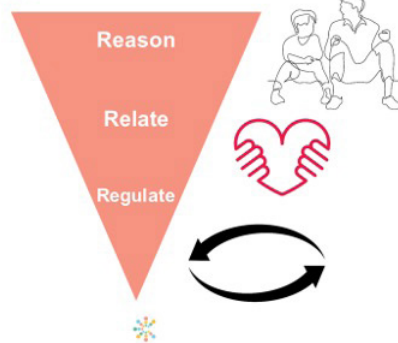
Adult Impact

- The importance of staying regulated
- Co-regulation
- The calmer we stay - the easier it is for our children to calm down

Coregulation and Self-Regulation



Regulate First!



End of session two!

See you next week!

Supporting Transitions

Youth might need additional support during transitions, especially when moving from a preferred to a non-preferred task.

Some things that can help:

- Pre-warnings
- Individual warnings
- Limit number of transitions
- Visual warnings
- Individual to child
- Sensory items
- Helper tasks
- First/then language

Whole Brain Strategies

Integrating the left and right brain

Connect and redirect: When your youth is upset, connect first emotionally (right brain). Then, once your youth is more in control and receptive, bring in the left-brain lessons.

Name it to tame it: When big, right-brain emotions are raging out of control, help your youth tell the story about what's upsetting them, so their left brain can help make sense of their experience and they can feel more in control.

Pause and Reflect

- What strategies have you already tried?
- Are there any strategies from today you'd like to try?

Modeling Emotional Regulation

Youth learn by watching you express your emotions to them and others, and by how you react to other people's emotions. Your child will benefit from seeing you using strategies to manage your own emotions. Take care of yourself in order to be present for your child.

Identifying and Labelling Emotions

You can teach your youth to identify, label and understand their emotions. You can be an “emotional coach” as you develop awareness of your youth’s emotions, provide validation and acceptance for emotions, and help them to label their feelings.

Youth develop a stronger awareness of their own emotions, and are able to identify and communicate more complex emotions in a more sophisticated and abstract way. There is a lot of variability in the ways youth express emotions, especially when they have executive functioning challenges, and they can benefit from guidance around emotional expression.

Emotion Coaching

1. Observe your youth’s emotions.
2. Pause before responding instead of reacting to your youth.
3. Coach when calm.
4. Connect with your youth.
5. Listen to your youth, empathize with their emotions and avoid judgment.
6. Ask before giving advice.

Resource: <https://www.cdc.gov/parents/essentials/teens/pdf/essentialsParentingTeens-EmotionCoachingActivity.pdf>

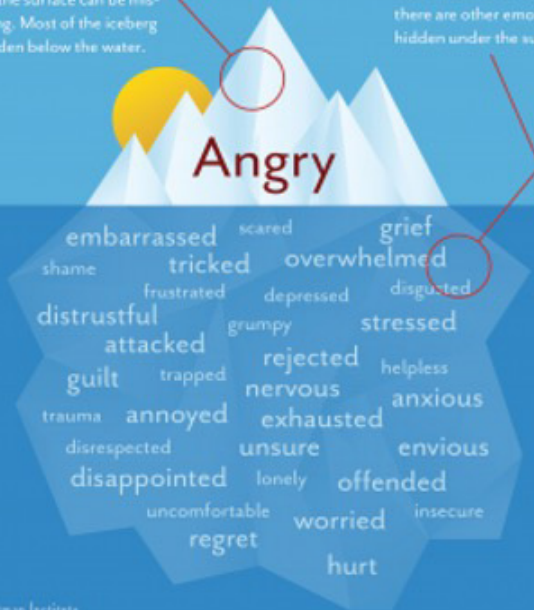
Emotion Coaching video: What stood out to you?

<https://youtu.be/zs6RqUluEVU>

Anger Iceberg

Icebergs are large pieces of ice found floating in the open ocean. What you can see from the surface can be misleading. Most of the iceberg is hidden below the water.

This is how anger works. Often when we are angry, there are other emotions hidden under the surface.



The German Institute

Pause and Reflect

- How do you tend to respond to your youth's emotions?
- How would you like to respond?

End of session three!

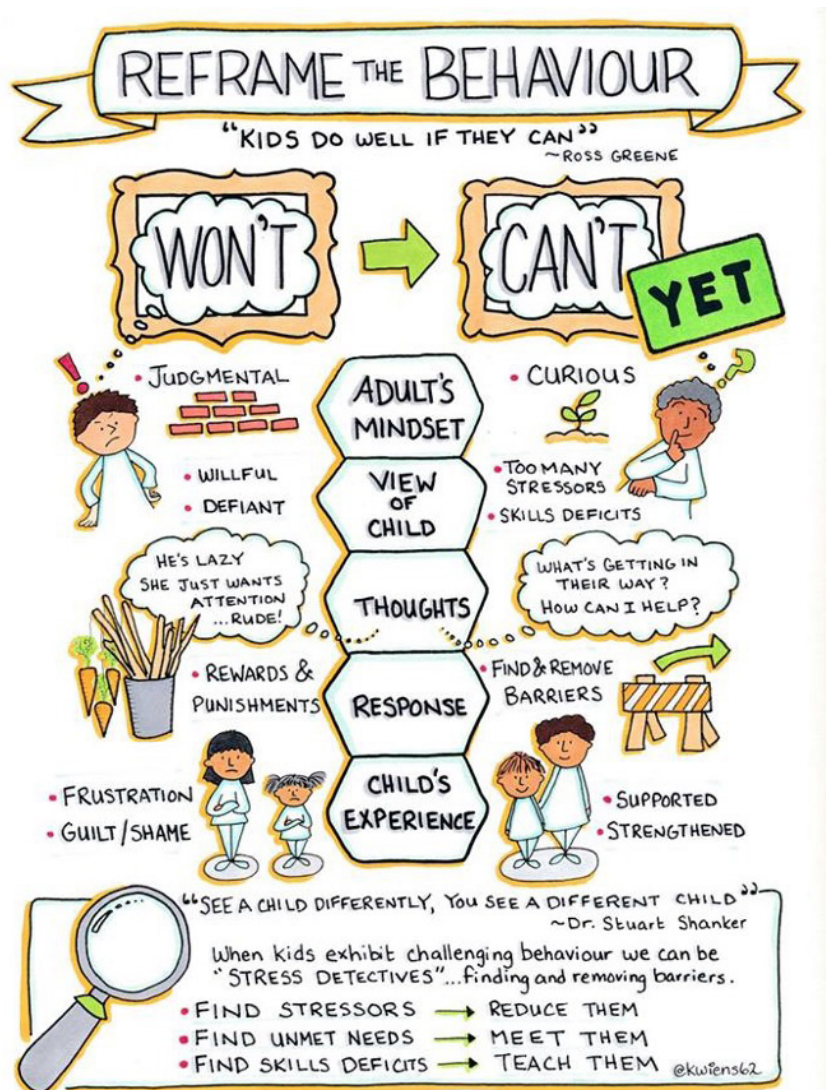
See you next week!

Session Four: Proactive Parenting

Being a Collaborative Parent

Doing well is preferable. Kids do well if they can. According to Dr. Ross Greene, kids are challenging because “they’re lacking the skills to not be challenging.”

Common lagging skills are flexibility, adaptability, frustration tolerance, problem solving and social skills. They’re not challenging every second or every waking hour - they’re challenging sometimes.



Collaborative and Proactive Solutions

Focus on the skills your youth lacks and when these occur. Focus also on collaboration vs. unilaterally ‘solving problems’ (imposing our will onto the youth).

Once you know what to look for, you can begin to implement solutions proactively (rather than reactively).

Being proactive:

- Produces more effective solutions
- Simultaneously teaches skills
- Saves time later

The Role of Adults

As an adult, you:

- Promote a relationship that can be trusted to help solve problems
- Identify lagging skills and unsolved problems
- Engage youth as active participants in solving the problems that affect their lives

Pause and Reflect

- What might be some lagging skills for my youth?
- What are some ways I could be more collaborative with my youth?

Being a Balanced Parent



Pause and Reflect

Think for a few minutes about your parenting approach.

- How do you tend to parent?
- Are you better at being consistent or being flexible? If you have someone co-parenting with you, what are their strengths?
- What are the rules in your house? Do you have too few or too many rules?
- Are your rules spoken or unspoken?
- How does your cultural background impact your parenting?

The Five Basics of Parenting Youth

Love and Connect

- Key Message
 - Most things about their world are changing. Don't let your love be one of them.
- Strategies for Caregivers
 - Watch for moments
 - Acknowledge the good times
 - Expect increased criticism
 - Spend time just listening
 - Appreciate and acknowledge
 - Provide meaningful roles
 - Spend time together

Monitor and Observe

- Key Message
 - Monitor your youth's activities. You still can, and it still counts.
- Strategies for Caregivers
 - Keep track of your teen's whereabouts and activities
 - Keep in touch with other adults
 - Involve yourself in school events
 - Stay informed of your youth's progress
 - Learn and watch for warning signs
 - Seek guidance if you have concerns
 - Monitor your youth's experiences
 - Evaluate the challenge

Guide and Limit

- Key Message
 - Loosen up, but don't let go.
- Two key parenting principles
 - Combine rules and expectations with respect and responsiveness
 - Combine firmness and flexibility
- Strategies for Caregivers
 - Maintain family rules and values
 - Communicate expectations
 - Choose battles
 - Use discipline as a tool for teaching
 - Restrict punishment
 - Renegotiate responsibilities and privileges

Model and Consult

- Key Message
 - Parents still matter; teens still care.
- Strategies for Caregivers
 - Set a good example
 - Express personal positions
 - Model adult relationships
 - Answer youth's questions
 - Maintain or establish traditions
 - Support youth's educational and vocational training
 - Help youth get information about issues that impact them
 - Give youth opportunities to practice

Provide and Advocate

- Key Message
 - You can't control their world, but you can change it.
- Strategies for Caregivers
 - Network within the community
 - Make informed decisions
 - Offer continual support for decision making
 - Arrange or advocate for preventative healthcare
 - Identify people and programs to support and inform you

Resource: [MIT Raising Teens Resource: https://hr.mit.edu/static/worklife/raising-teens/pdfs/MIT_Raising%20Teens_PDF_FM.pdf](https://hr.mit.edu/static/worklife/raising-teens/pdfs/MIT_Raising%20Teens_PDF_FM.pdf)

Pause and Reflect

Think for a few minutes about your family.

- What are your strengths?
- Is there anything you would like to do differently in your home or with your youth?

Effective Reinforcement and Punishment

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Positive reinforcement is preferable and effective▪ Reinforcer must be motivating - involve child or youth in determining what would be an effective reward/celebration▪ Reinforcers include praise, celebration, and attention▪ If reinforcing with praise, ensure it is genuine▪ Reinforce immediately - more effective the closer it is to the action that is being reinforced▪ Increase positive parenting strategies (spend time together, be involved in child's life)▪ Catch and reward good behaviours▪ DO NOT combine with criticism<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>"good job cleaning your room but you didn't vacuum like I asked you to"</i>▪ <i>"I see you finished your homework today! That's great! Now wouldn't it just be easier if you did that every week?!"</i>▪ When to withhold positive reinforcement<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Escalating maladaptive behaviours<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Assess risk, monitor, ensure safety▪ Do not offer more warm attention and time than usual (e.g. buy something special, give a special dessert, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Prevent the problem behaviour by using reinforcement of desired behaviours▪ Clear and consistent rules are essential▪ Communication expectations consistently and clearly, and check for understanding<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Make sure expectations are developmentally appropriate for that youth▪ Know punishment ahead of time to avoid inconsistency in punishment or punishing from emotional response<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Create a menu for rewards and punishments in advance▪ Can list from minor to severe punishments and match punishment with seriousness of offence▪ Punishments should be:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Immediate (if possible) to improve learning▪ Specific and for a reasonable amount of time▪ Allow natural consequences▪ Parents overly-focused on punishment<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Use punishment ineffectively (e.g. as a way to deal with their own negative emotions)▪ It can lead to teen hiding behaviours▪ It doesn't teach new behaviours▪ Can lead to self-punishment <p>There is a place for punishment when used appropriately and sparingly.</p>
---	--

Congratulations!

You have completed all four sessions of CASA's Confident Parenting Series! Thank you for joining us.

Next Steps

Though the information provided may be helpful for you and your child, it may not fully meet the specific needs you have for your child. You can connect with the CASA staff member who is supporting you about next steps for your family.

Pause and Reflect

Use this space to write any notes that might be important for you.

What new strategies have you found helpful? What do you need further support with?



*We are families and
we serve families.*

Are you looking for help or information about mental health support and services for your child, youth or young adult?

We help children and young people by helping their family and other caring adults. We know children and young people do better when the adults who care about them are supported.

We are here for you and we want to help.

FAMILY PEER SUPPORT FOR CASA FAMILIES

We provide emotional support, information, resources and help in navigating services for all CASA parents and caregivers with a child or youth with mental health challenges.

Our services are free. No waitlist.

The CASA Family Peer Support Workers are:
Lori and **Carley**

To connect with a Family Peer Support Worker
email CASA@familysmart.ca
or call: **780-487-4284**



FamilySmart

Here are some of the ways we can offer support to you and your family:

RESOURCES + VIDEOS

Our website has free resources and videos on topics important to families who are parenting a child, youth or young adult with a mental health and/or substance use challenge.

EVENTS

Every month, we host online events called 'in the know' for parents and caregivers. We watch a video and share experiences and strategies that help in the hard moments and focus on strengthening our understanding & connection with our kids.

WHY WE DO IT?

We've been there ourselves and we have connected with and learned from other families over 20+ years, and we want to share it with you.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE. WE ARE HERE FOR YOU BECAUSE YOU ARE IMPORTANT TOO.

"It helped me to have someone to connect to that was supportive, could relate to my situation, and was empathetic, validating, kind and resourceful. It has helped me to feel less alone." -Parent

