

Support for Challenging Behavior

KARA BRATTON, PHD
SPECIAL EDUCATION DIRECTOR
LUTHERAN SPECIAL EDUCATION
MINISTRIES
KBRATTON@LUTHSPED.ORG





Can you help me, Mrs. Martin? This wasn't covered in any of my education courses.

Positive Behavior Support

- “If a child doesn’t know how to read, we *teach*.”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we *teach*.”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we *teach*.”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we *teach*.”
- “If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we.....
.....*teach?**punish?*”
- “Why can’t we finish the last sentence as automatically as we do the others?”
- *Tom Herner (NASDE President) Counterpoint 1998, p.2*

Process of Positive Behavior Support

- Step 1: Establishing a collaborative team and identifying goals
- Step 2: Gathering information (functional assessment)
- Step 3: Developing hypotheses
- Step 4: Designing behavior support plans
- Step 5: Implementing, monitoring, and refining behavior support plan

Process of Positive Behavior Support

- **Behavior Hypotheses/Function of Behavior** - Purpose of the behavior, your best guess about why the behavior occurs
- **Prevention Strategies** - Ways to make events and interactions that trigger challenging behavior easier for the child to manage
- **Replacement Skills** – New skills to teach throughout the day to replace the challenging behavior
- **Responses** - What adults will do when the challenging behavior occurs to ensure that the challenging behavior is not maintained and the new skill is learned

Changing Our View of Challenging Behavior

- Understand why challenging behaviors happen and what purpose they serve
- Take the problem away from the child and ask:
 - Why is this behavior occurring?
 - What changes can I make to prevent the problem from occurring and teach the child new skills?

Functional Behavioral Assessments

- Behavior is a means of communication; undesirable behavior satisfies some kind of need for the student
- Behavior leads to response
- Every behavior is an attempt to obtain a response and gain something
- This is determining the reason and function of the undesirable behavior
- Behavior will not change unless the student's need (function of behavior) is determined and more appropriate way to meet that need is found
- Behavior learned over time and through experiences, shaped by what happens before and after behavior takes place
- How we respond to actions has a significant effect on what child does next time he/she is in a similar situation

Cycle of Coercion

- Slot machine= random reinforcement
- Slot machines WORK because they are consistently random
- Payoff/jackpot is meaningful (\$\$)
 - Wouldn't work if payoff was fruit
- Payoff for kids is meaningful
 - Getting out of work
 - Attention
 - Getting what they want



Cycle of Coercion

- Not always prepared for child's behavior (tantrum in store)
- Not being prepared = inconsistent responses
- Inconsistent responses = random reinforcement (JACKPOT!)
- Child exhibiting challenging behavior = pulling lever on the slot machine
 - Gambling on adult's response
- Consistency is the kryptonite to coercive cycles of behavior



Functional Behavioral Assessments

- ABC's of FBAs
 - Antecedent: factors in the environment present before the behavior occurs
 - Physical environment, instructional factors, subject, activity, size of group, who is/is not present, noise, location, time of day
 - Anything specific to that student such as level of fatigue, hunger, etc.
 - Behavior: what the student does, and/or does not do
 - Consequence: what happens after the behavior
 - Includes actions of teachers, peers, things the student avoids or obtains, changes in the environment

Functional Behavioral Assessments

- What happens after behavior occurs; what is helping the behavior persist and maintaining the behavior/making it a tool for the individual
- What do you typically do to get the child to stop engaging in the behavior? Is your response allowing the behavior to continue/child getting what they want?

Functional Behavioral Assessments

| Date | Time | Antecedent | Behavior | Consequence | Comments |
|------|------|------------|----------|-------------|----------|
| | | | | | |
| | | | | | |

Functions of Behavior

- Escape
 - Desire to get away from a person, activity, or setting
 - Example: Student runs out of the classroom
- Attention
 - Desire for attention from others; may or may not be a specific person or group
 - Example: Student making jokes while teacher is talking
- Sensory
 - Desire to obtain or get away from a particular sensory experience
 - Example: Student has trouble in the crowded lunchroom
- Tactile
 - Desire for a specific item
 - Example: Student pushes or hits to get a particular classroom item

Functions of Behavior

- Take a step back and consider why a child may be behaving in a certain way-first step in understanding and learning how to help; also consider potential physical/medical factors
- Helpful to think of an individual's actions as a response rather than a pre-determined or willful behavior

Practice

| Behavior | Possible Function |
|----------|---|
| Yelling | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Escape lunch room•Gain attention•Escape gym class (motor activities) |
| Hitting | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Gain access to desirable item•Get help from parent•Gain sensory stimulation•Escape activity |
| Swearing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Avoid peer interaction•Gain attention from adults•Escape demands (academic) |

Replacement Behaviors

- Three essential characteristics of replacement behaviors
 - Same function as the problem behavior
 - Easier to do than the problem behavior
 - Socially acceptable

Replacement Behaviors

- Replacement behaviors meet the same need/have the same function as undesirable behavior
 - Meet the need/function in a more appropriate way
 - Intervention should increase the use of the replacement behavior
- Consider whether the student needs to be taught how to perform the replacement behavior, or whether the student knows how to perform the desired behavior

Replacement Behaviors

- When the function is appropriate but the form is not appropriate
- What can I teach as a replacement behavior for the challenging behavior that addresses the same outcome?
- Choosing a replacement behavior
 - Find a behavior that serves the same purpose or function as the challenging behavior
 - Teach a behavior that helps the child achieve the purpose easier, quicker, and better than the challenging behavior
 - Reinforce the replacement behavior and make sure challenging behavior is not being reinforced

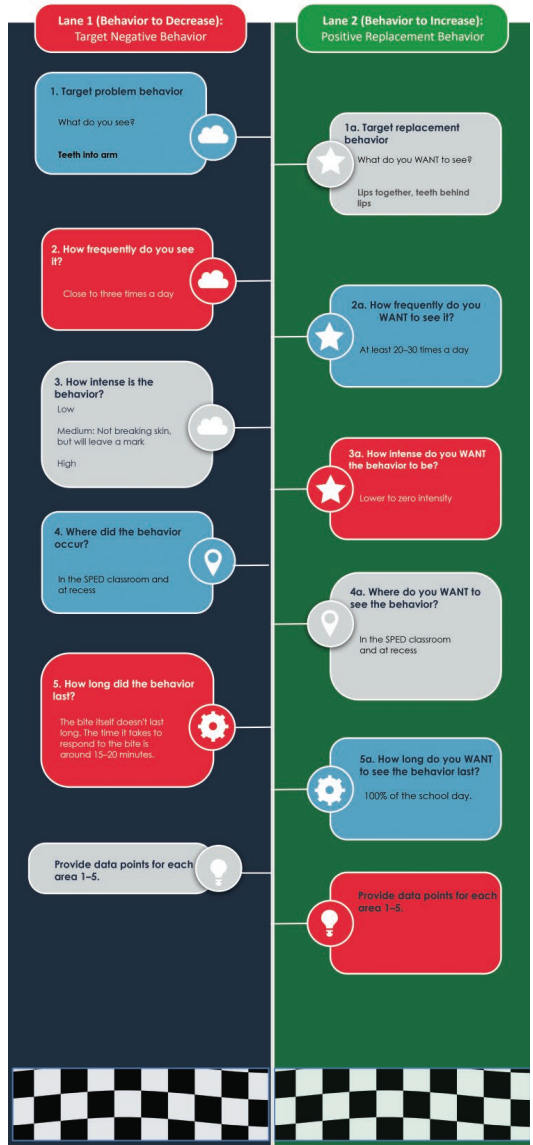
Replacement Behaviors

- Don't assume child has skills needed to do something "the right way"
- Use instruction, motivation and reinforcement to build new abilities
- Teach new skills in a positive learning situation, not while behavior is occurring

HAPPY KIDS DON'T PUNCH YOU IN THE FACE

THE REPLACEMENT BEHAVIOR RACE

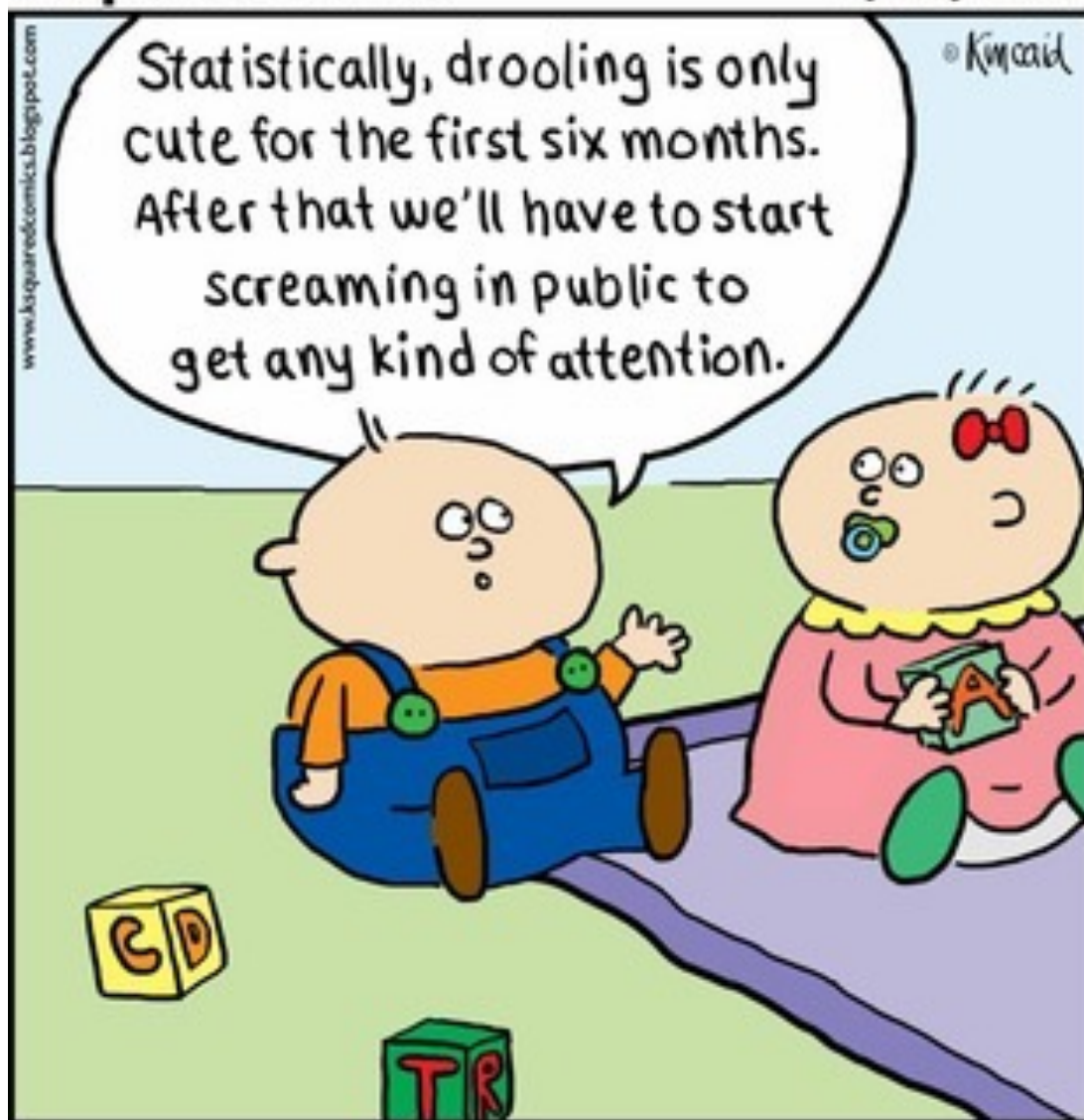
The CORE of your behavior intervention plan will rely on how well you set up "Lane 2" to win the race.



https://resources.corwin.com/sites/default/files/the_replacement_behavior_race.pdf

Reinforcing Behavior

- Example:
 - Child hitting to avoid cleaning up toys- escape function
 - Putting child in time out reinforces desire to escape and avoid the task
 - Likely the child will continue hitting
 - If removal is necessary for safety, child still has to come back to task so escape is not reinforced
 - Kicks every time it's time for circle time
 - If reason for kicking was to avoid circle time, putting in time out reinforces kicking
 - Child likely to use same form of communication unless and until he/she is taught a better way of approaching situation



Punishment vs. Reinforcement

- Short term consequences of punishment may stop behavior in the moment
- Research shows that punishment is ineffective in the long run, especially when not used with positive and preventive approaches
- Punishment promotes emotional responses (crying) and aggressive behavior; also promotes desire for escape and avoidance of person or situation

Punishment vs. Reinforcement

- Punishment does not teach what *to do*, but teaches what *not to do*
- Reinforcement consistently changes behavior and builds desired responses
 - Reinforce immediately and in connection with desired behavior
 - Learn what is reinforcing to each child, may change frequently

Punishment vs. Reinforcement

- While positive, reinforcement-based strategies are most effective in creating long term behavioral changes, immediate responses are still needed to maintain safety and/or minimize disruption
 - Ignoring the behavior (when not threatening and behavior is being used for attention)
 - Redirection to appropriate behavior with reinforcement
 - Removal from situation
- Positive practice or do-overs rather than punish to teach appropriate behavior



"I'm behaving well. Are you sure you wouldn't like to positively reinforce it?"

| | Tantrum | Meltdown |
|----------------------|--|---|
| What It Is | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An angry or frustrated outburst. • A child might yell, cry, lash out, and hold his breath. • A child typically has some control over his behavior during a tantrum. • The behavior tends to stop when he gets what he wants. (But tantrums can become overwhelming and evolve into meltdowns.) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A reaction to feeling overwhelmed. • A child might yell, cry, lash out, run away and/or shut down and withdraw. • Meltdowns are out of a child's control. • The behavior tends to stop when he wears himself out or when there's a change in the amount of sensory input he is experiencing. |
| What Triggers It | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A desire to get something, avoid something or elicit a specific reaction. • Frustration. • Not being able to communicate needs and wants. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensory, information or emotional overload. • Intense frustration. • Sudden changes in routine or expectations. • Not being able to communicate needs and wants. |
| Signs You May Notice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You know what your child wants or is reacting to. • Your child is choosing to engage in the behavior. • He's able to pay attention to what's going on around him. • He watches other people's reactions and adjusts his behavior to match it. • He may be trying to bargain for a solution while he's yelling. • Behavior ends once when he gets what he wants or realizes he <i>won't</i> get what he wants by acting out. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You may not know what your child wants or is reacting to. • Your child doesn't seem to have control over his behavior and appears panicky. • He is shutting down or trying to escape. He's not able to process what's going on around him. • He doesn't respond to people's reactions or attempts to talk to him. • He loses his ability to problem-solve and negotiate solutions. • He needs time to calm down and recover, even after a situation has been resolved. |

Behavior Interventions

- Effective interventions shift the payoff so that it occurs for positive behaviors, and no payoff happens for negative behaviors
 - Achieved through teaching replacement behaviors
- Behavior Intervention Plans typically fail either because the function has not been properly identified or the plan was not implemented completely and consistently
 - Expect a decrease in frequency of behavior, but then a slight increase
 - Over time, undesirable behavior will decrease and positive behavior will increase but it does not happen overnight

Behavior Interventions

- New skills take time to develop
- In some cases, especially when ignoring behavior, behavior may become more intense or more frequent before it improves
- Prioritize which behaviors to address and be realistic about outcomes

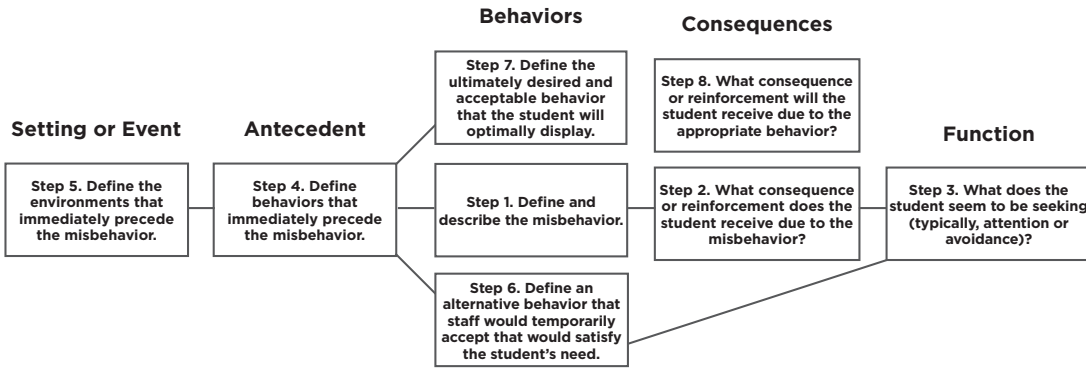
Behavior Strategies- Proactive Interventions

- To develop an intervention ask yourself...
 - What can I do to change the behavior?
 - How can I modify or change the factors that contribute to the behavior?
 - What can I teach the child to use as a replacement behavior that addresses the same purpose or outcome?
 - How will I teach the replacement behavior to the child?
 - How can I make sure that I am NOT reinforcing the outcome of the challenging behavior?
 - How can I reinforce the replacement behavior so that it matches the function of the challenging behavior?

Functional Behavioral Assessments

Behavioral Analysis Protocol

REPRODUCIBLE | 121



page 1 of 3

Simplifying Response to Intervention © 2012 Solution Tree Press • solution-tree.com
 Visit go.solution-tree.com/rti to download this page.

Functional Behavioral Assessments

- Resources from <https://www.solutiontree.com/free-resources/rti/srti> and <https://www.solutiontree.com/free-resources/rti/b>
 - Use Behavior Analysis Protocol and Summary Form for Functional Behavioral Analysis
 - Put together Behavioral Support Plan
- FAST form (handout) helpful to identify function of behavior
- Simplified versions of these also available in handouts

Functional Behavioral Assessments

Functional Behavioral Assessment Form

| Date, Time, and Name of Person Collecting Info | Antecedent (What led up to the event?) | Behavior (Describe exactly what the behavior looked like.) | Consequences (What happened after the event occurred?) |
|---|---|--|--|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

| | Escape an unwanted activity/demand | Gain attention of peers and/or adults | Gain access to a tangible item | Experience sensory stimulation |
|---|---------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Provide evidence for the proposed function. Remember, the behavior could have multiple functions. | | | | |

https://resources.corwin.com/sites/default/files/functional_behavioral_assessment_form.pdf



Example 1

Jared talks out at least two times per class. He smiles, and other students snicker, when his teacher reminds him to raise his hand. Since the beginning of the year, the problem seems worse.

- Do the reminders reinforce or punish him? How do you know?
- What might be the function of this behavior?



Example 2

Colleen has an argument with someone in the cafeteria at least 3 times per week. The consequence is to stay in at recess and read or work on the computer with the teacher.

- Is the consequence serving as a reward or punisher?
- What might the function of Colleen's behavior be?



Scenario #1

Tisha, a three year old with ASD, is building a block structure during work time. Her teacher tells the group that work time will be ending in 5 minutes. Tisha is not finished with her structure. When work time is over the teacher reminds the kids to clean up their work and put their materials away. Tisha starts kicking and screaming, hitting anyone who is near her. She hits the teacher who comes to tell her it is time to clean up. The teacher takes the blocks and puts them in the container, leaving a few for Tisha to put away. Tisha continues to kick and scream. This happens each time Tisha is reminded to clean up her work.

| Antecedent | Behavior | Consequences | Reinforcement or Punishment | Function of Behavior | Replacement Behaviors |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| | | | | | |

Your classroom scenario

- Think of a student in your classroom with undesirable behavior
- Complete as much of the ABC chart as you can to determine the function of the behavior
- After you have determined the function, identify some potential interventions and replacement behaviors that may be effective at decreasing the undesired behavior

| Antecedent | Behavior | Consequences | Reinforcement or Punishment | Function of Behavior | Replacement Behaviors |
|------------|----------|--------------|-----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| | | | | | |

Positive Behavior Supports

- Celebrate and build strengths and successes
 - More positive than negative feedback
- Respect and listen to child
 - Verbal as well as other communication from child
- Validate child's concerns and emotions
 - Do not brush aside fears or simply say "don't worry"
- Provide clear expectations with visual supports

Positive Behavior Supports

- Set child up for success with accommodations
- Ignore challenging behavior
- Interact at the child's level to avoid frustration
- Give choices as appropriate
- Provide access to breaks
 - Teach child to request break
- Use a safe, calm down space as a positive strategy, not punishment
- Utilize reinforcement

Positive Behavior Supports

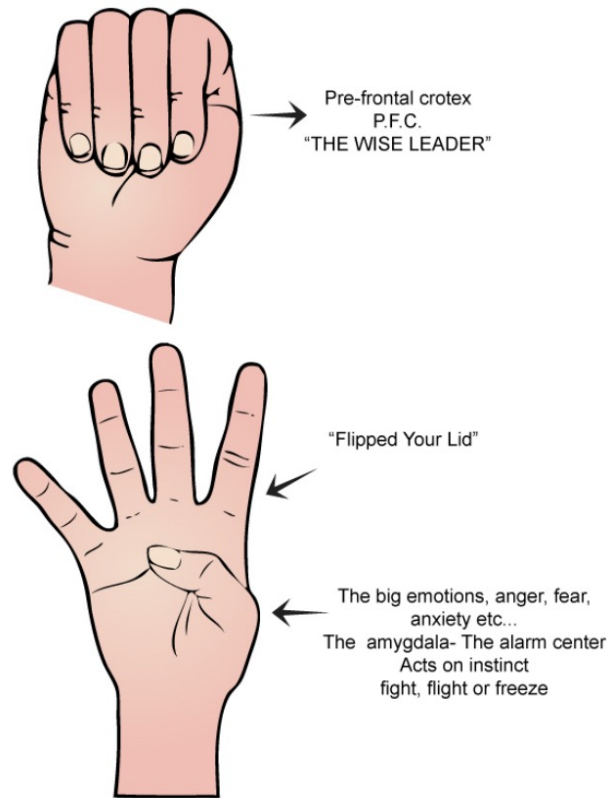
- Pick your battles
- Use positive proactive language (avoid “don’t”)



Dr. Dan Siegel- Upstairs Brain, Downstairs Brain



Dr. Dan Siegel- Flipped Lid



Credit: Daniel Siegel, M.D. is the creator of this metaphor and expression "Flipped Lid"

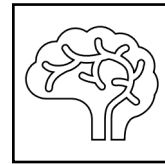
Upstairs Brain, Downstairs Brain Strategies



Understand difference
in upstairs and
downstairs tantrums



Engage, don't
enrage: Appeal to the
upstairs brain



Use it or lose it:
Exercise the upstairs
brain


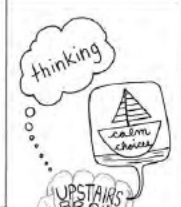





Move it or lose it:
Moving the body to
avoid losing the mind

Dr. Dan Siegel- Upstairs Brain, Downstairs Brain

WHOLE-BRAIN KIDS: Teach Your Kids About Their Downstairs and Upstairs Brain

YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN AND YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN

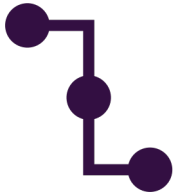
| | | |
|--|---|--|
|  |  |  |
| <p>MAKE A FIST WITH YOUR HAND. THIS IS WHAT WE CALL A HAND MODEL OF YOUR BRAIN. REMEMBER HOW YOU HAVE A LEFT SIDE AND A RIGHT SIDE TO YOUR BRAIN? WELL, YOU ALSO HAVE AN UPSTAIRS AND A DOWNSTAIRS PART OF YOUR BRAIN.</p> | <p>THE UPSTAIRS BRAIN IS WHERE YOU MAKE GOOD DECISIONS AND DO THE RIGHT THINGS, EVEN WHEN YOU ARE FEELING REALLY UPSET.</p> | <p>NOW LIFT YOUR FINGERS A LITTLE BIT. SEE WHERE YOUR THUMB IS? THAT'S PART OF YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN, AND IT'S WHERE YOUR REALLY BIG FEELINGS COME FROM. IT LETS YOU CARE ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE AND FEEL LOVE. IT ALSO LETS YOU FEEL UPSET, LIKE WHEN YOU'RE MAD OR FRUSTRATED.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
|  |  |
| <p>THERE'S NOTHING WRONG WITH FEELING UPSET. THAT'S NORMAL, ESPECIALLY WHEN YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN HELPS YOU CALM DOWN. FOR EXAMPLE, CLOSE YOUR FINGERS AGAIN. SEE HOW THE UPSTAIRS THINKING PART OF YOUR BRAIN IS TOUCHING YOUR THUMB, SO IT CAN HELP YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS CALMLY?</p> | <p>SOMETIMES WHEN WE GET REALLY UPSET, WE CAN FLIP OUR LID. RAISE YOUR FINGERS LIKE THIS. SEE HOW YOUR UPSTAIRS BRAIN IS NO LONGER TOUCHING YOUR DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN? THAT MEANS IT CAN'T HELP IT STAY CALM.</p> |

*Dr. Dan Siegel-
Upstairs Brain,
Downstairs Brain*

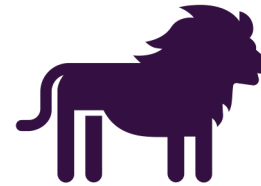


Left Brain, Right Brain Strategies



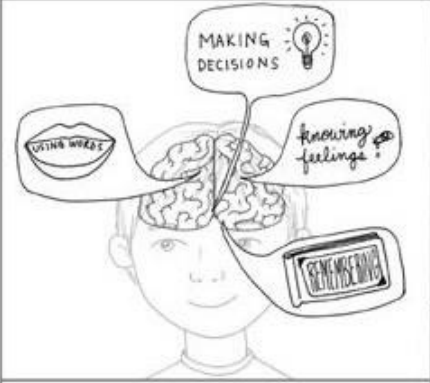
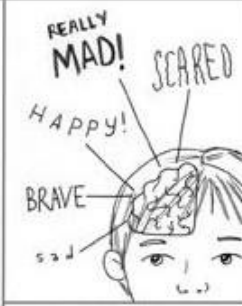
Connect and Redirect


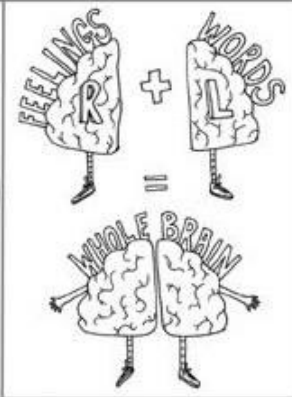
Connect with the Right
Redirect with the Left



Name it to Tame It: Telling Stories to Calm Big Emotions

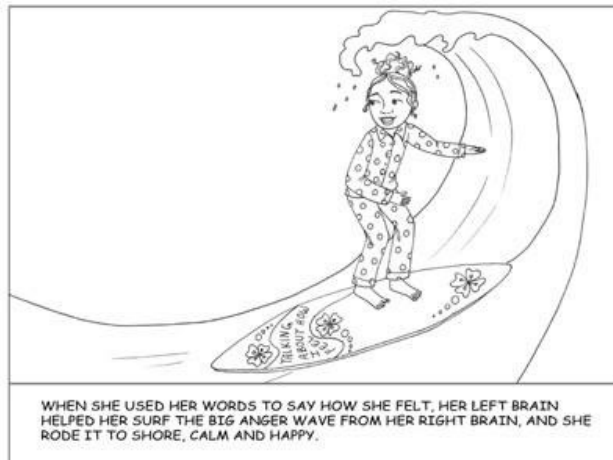
Dr. Dan Siegel- Left Brain, Right Brain

| | |
|--|---|
|  |  |
| <p>DO YOU KNOW THAT YOU HAVE MANY PARTS TO YOUR BRAIN AND THEY ALL DO DIFFERENT THINGS? IT'S ALMOST LIKE YOU HAVE DIFFERENT BRAINS WITH MINDS OF THEIR OWN, BUT WE CAN HELP THEM ALL GET ALONG AND HELP ONE ANOTHER.</p> | <p>OUR RIGHT BRAIN LISTENS TO OUR BODY AND OTHER PARTS OF OUR BRAIN AND KNOWS ABOUT OUR BIG FEELINGS LIKE WHEN WE'RE HAPPY, OR BRAVE, OR SCARED, OR SAD, OR REALLY MAD. IT'S IMPORTANT THAT WE PAY ATTENTION TO THESE FEELINGS AND TALK ABOUT THEM.</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
|  |  |
| <p>SOMETIMES WHEN WE'RE UPSET AND WE DON'T TALK ABOUT IT, OUR FEELINGS CAN BUILD AND BUILD INSIDE US, LIKE A HUGE WAVE THAT WASHES OVER US AND MAKES US SAY OR DO THINGS WE DON'T MEAN.</p> | <p>BUT THE LEFT BRAIN CAN HELP PUT OUR FEELINGS INTO WORDS. THEN OUR WHOLE BRAIN CAN WORK TOGETHER AS A TEAM AND WE CAN CALM DOWN.</p> |

Dr. Dan Siegel- Left Brain, Right Brain

FOR EXAMPLE:



Resources

- Ventura County RtI2 Behavior Interventions Guide
 - <http://www.vcoe.org/rti2-mtss/forms> (individual forms)
 - <http://www.vcoe.org/Portals/7/Curriculum-Instruction/Documents/RtI/RtIHandbook5-7-14.pdf> (entire handbook)
- Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behavior
 - <https://challengingbehavior.cbcs.usf.edu/Pyramid/pbs/TTYC/tools.html>
- Happy Kids Don't Punch You in the Face by Ben Springer
 - <https://resources.corwin.com/happykids>

Sensory Resources

- The Inspired Treehouse:
 - <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/activities-index/>
 - <https://theinspiredtreehouse.com/back-to-school-tips/>
- Sensory Processing 101 Book
 - <https://sensoryprocessing101.com>
- Understood.org
 - <https://www.understood.org/pages/en/learning-thinking-differences/child-learning-disabilities/sensory-processing-issues/>



LSEM

LUTHERAN SPECIAL EDUCATION MINISTRIES

Please contact LSEM and let us know how we can support your ministry!

lsem@luthsped.org

248-419-3390