



Promoting Mental Health in Schools

SSBL Conference: April 5, 2019

My Thoughts In Preparation

- A short presentation
- Many possible directions
- PD sessions offer chance for systems level change
- What key points do I want you to leave with?





Key Takeaways.... hopefully

1. That what the classroom teacher does is vitally important
2. That many of our struggling students may be struggling cognitively and emotionally
3. That relationship matters
4. That behavioural principles need to be understood and applied



Context

- Presence of psychiatric disorders in school aged children is approximately 13% at any given time (Costello, Mustillo, Erkanli, Keeler, & Angold, 2003; Fleitlich-Bilyk & Goodman, 2004; Forness, Freeman, Paparella, Kauffman, & Walker 2012)
- Prevalence is 37% across the span of childhood (Costello et al., 2003)

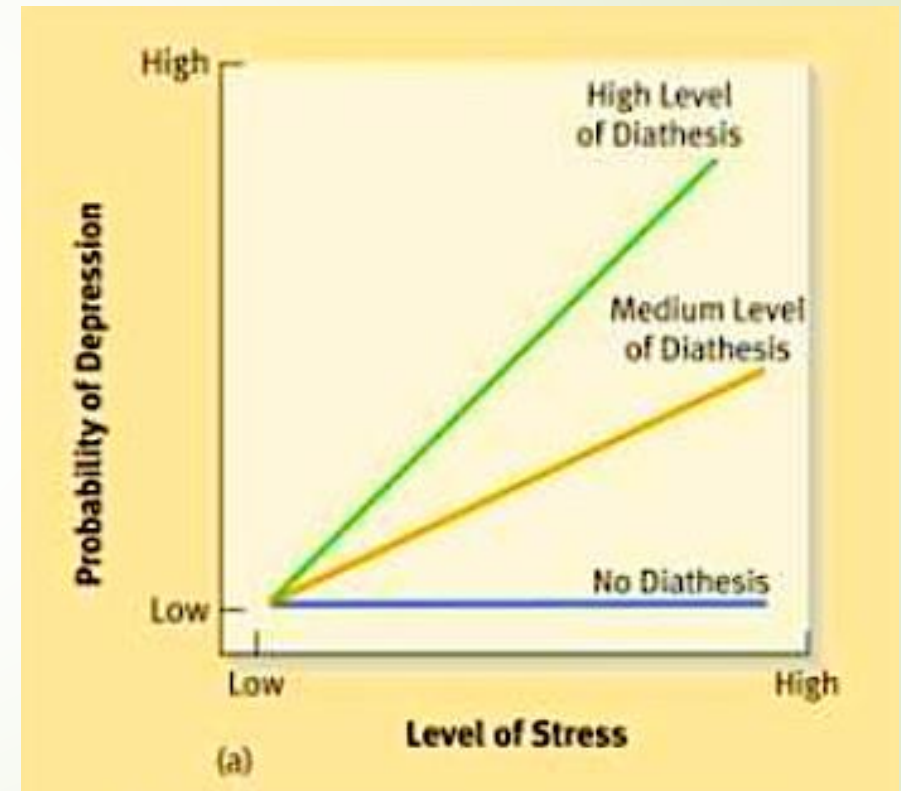


Context

- Children with these conditions are susceptible to learning challenges and disruptive behaviours (Garruto & Rattan, 2009; King, Reschly, & Appleton, 2012; Lane, Oakes, Menzies, & Germer, 2014)
- Approximately 6% engage in behaviours that are disruptive enough to require intervention (Little, Hudson, & Wilks, 2000)

Diathesis-Stress Model

- Psychological theory that explains the development of disorders
- A predisposition to a disorder interacts with life events
- If the combination of the two exceeds a threshold a disorder will develop



ACEs Study (Felitti, et al., 1998)

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Adverse Childhood Experiences Study
- Mid 1990s
- Over 17,000 adult participants completed surveys regarding childhood experiences and current health status and behaviours



ACEs Study

Abuse

- Emotional
- Physical
- Sexual

Household Challenges

- Mother treated violently
- Household substance abuse
- Mental illness in household
- Parental separation or divorce
- Criminal household member

Neglect

- Emotional
- Physical



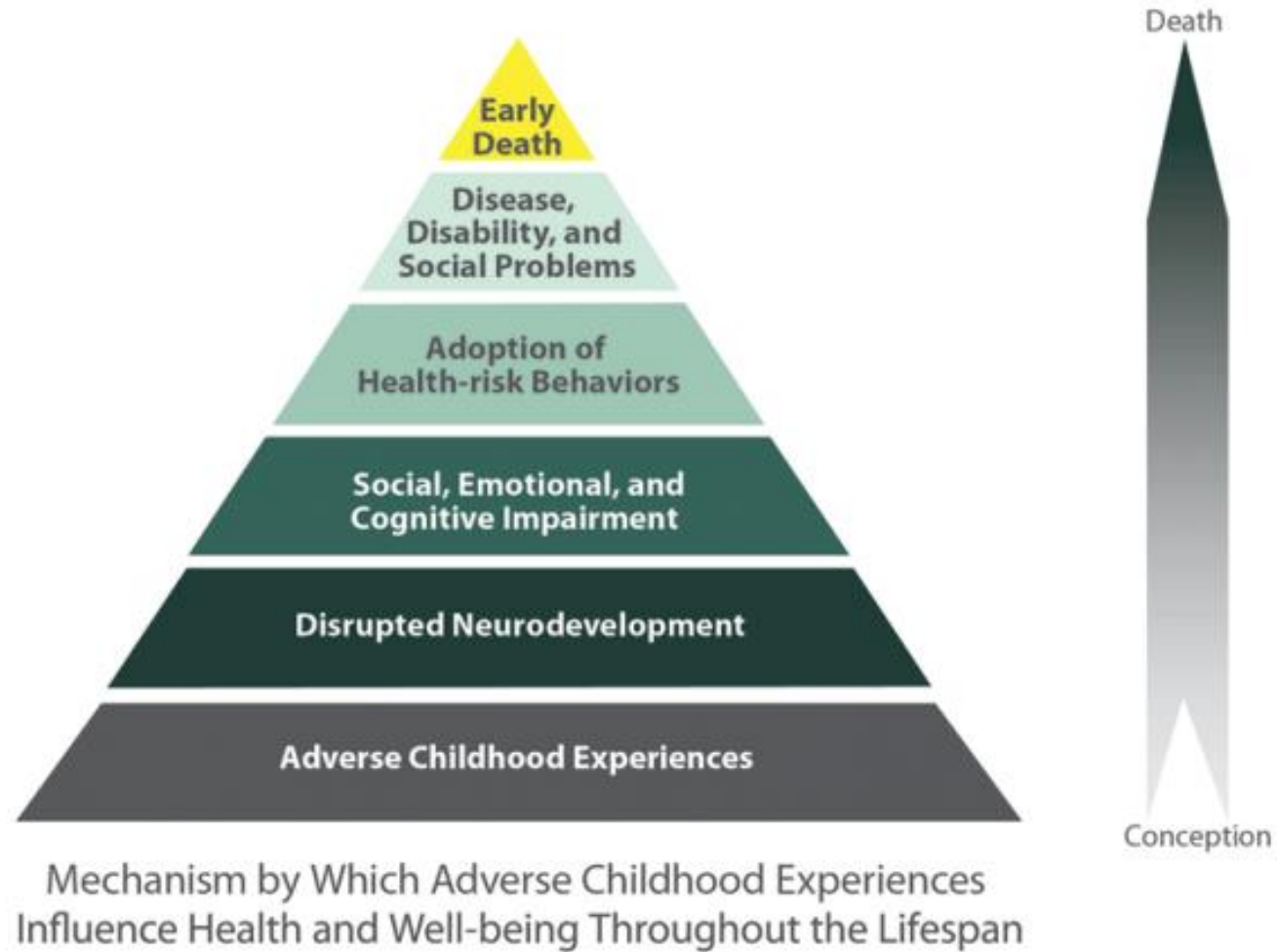
Aces study: Findings

- ACEs are common
 - 28% reported physical abuse
 - 21% reported sexual abuse
- 40% of the sample reported at least two ACEs
- 12.5% reported four or more
- The number of ACEs was strongly correlated with a number of health risk behaviours:
 - Smoking
 - Alcohol and drug abuse
 - Promiscuity
 - Severe obesity

ACE Study: Findings

- ▶ ACEs also correlated with:
 - ▶ Depressions
 - ▶ Cancer
 - ▶ Heart disease
 - ▶ Stroke
 - ▶ Chronic lung disease
- ▶ ACEs were negatively correlated with life span
- ▶ Four ACEs when compared to none – 7x more likely to develop alcoholism, 2x risk of developing cancer
- ▶ Six ACEs – 30x the risk in attempted suicide

ACEs Study



WHO

- ➡ “Mental health is produced socially: the presence or absence of mental health is above all a social indicator and therefore requires social, as well as individual, solutions” (Friedli, 2011)



WHO

- ➡ “Taking action to improve the conditions of daily life ... provides opportunities both to improve population mental health and to reduce the risk of those mental disorders that are associated with social inequalities” (WHO, 2014)





1. What the Classroom Teacher Does is Vitally Important

- ▶ Research indicates that amongst all school-related factors, what teachers do in the classroom has the biggest impact (Sanders, Wright, & Horn, 1997)
- ▶ Ex: The inconsistent student

Discussion

- “Tell me about this teacher.”
- What do you think are the characteristics of the teacher who is able to help the challenging student have a good year?





What do we know about effective classroom managers?

- ▶ They have clear expectations
- ▶ They spend a lot of time recognizing positive behaviours
- ▶ They have consistent routines and procedures
- ▶ They spend more time focusing on prevention
- ▶ They are perceived by their students as fair
- ▶ They are calm
- ▶ They have solid relationships with their students
- ▶ They go out of their way to recognize positives in struggling students

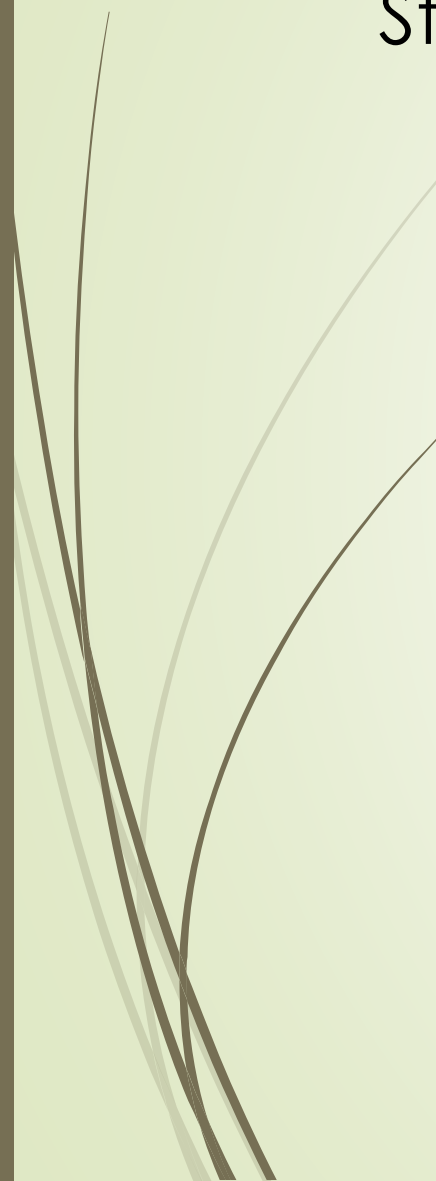


Effective Classroom Managers

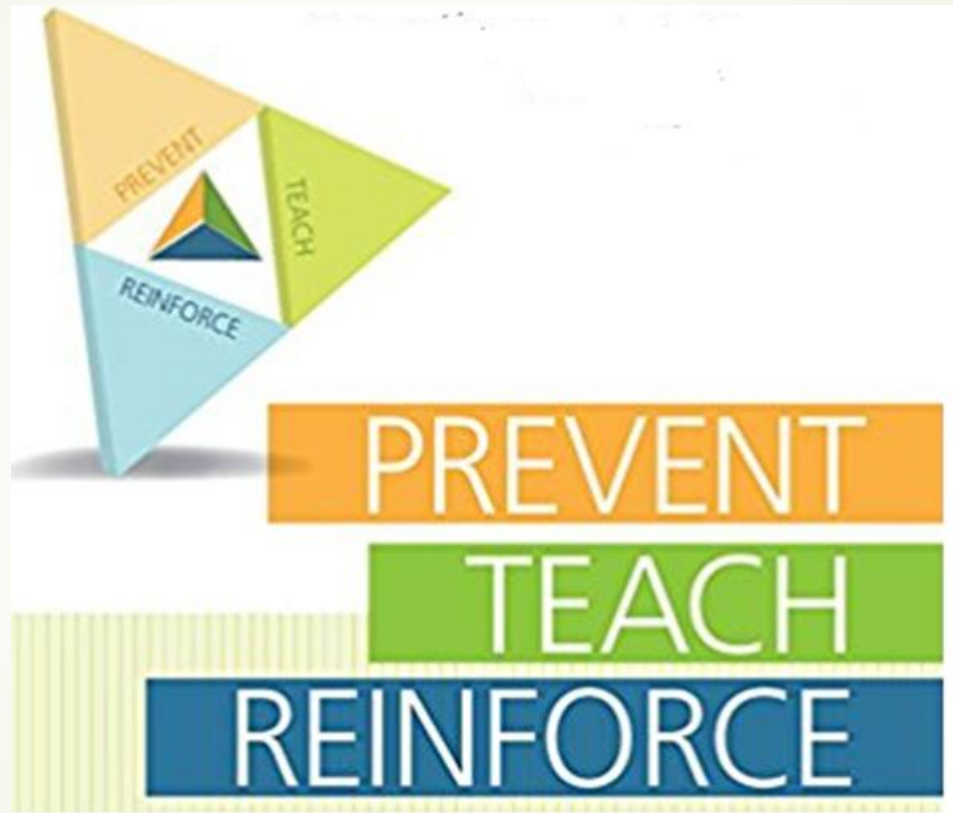
- “Effective classroom managers are known not only by what they do when misbehavior occurs, but by what they do to set their classrooms up for academic success and **prevent** problems from occurring.” (pbissmissouri.org)



Evidence Based Practice: 8 Classroom Management Strategies [\(pbissmissouri.org\)](http://pbissmissouri.org)

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1. Classroom Expectations
 2. Encourage Expected Behaviour
 3. Explicit Procedures and Routines
 4. Active Supervision
 5. Opportunities to Respond (OTRs)
 6. Sequencing and Choice
 7. Task Difficulty
 8. Discouraging Inappropriate Behaviour

PTR



(Dunlap, Iovannone, Kincaid, Wilson, Christiansen, & Strain, 2019)



Evidence Based Practice: 8 Classroom Management Strategies (pbissmissouri.org)

Prevent

- ❖ Explicit Procedures and Routines
- ❖ Active Supervision
- ❖ Opportunities to Respond (OTRs)
- ❖ Sequencing and Choice
- ❖ Task Difficulty

Teach

- ❖ Discouraging Inappropriate Behaviour
- ❖ Classroom Expectations

Reinforce

- ❖ Encourage Expected Behaviour



Discussion

- In your experience how often are teachers using proactive strategies in comparison to reactive strategies?
 - Do you notice anything about the teachers who use a lot of reactive strategies?
- 

2. That Struggling Students May Be Struggling Cognitively and Emotionally

- EF Deficits
- Anxiety



The Stanford Marshmallow Study

- A series of studies in the late 60s and early 70s
- Psychologist Walter Mischel
- Children given choice of a small reward immediately or a larger reward if they could wait 15 min



The Stanford Marshmallow study

- ▶ Children who waited used several strategies to resist the urge:
 - ▶ Turning their backs
 - ▶ Covering their eyes
 - ▶ Kicking the desk
 - ▶ Pulling their own hair
 - ▶ Stroking the marshmallow



The Stanford marshmallow study

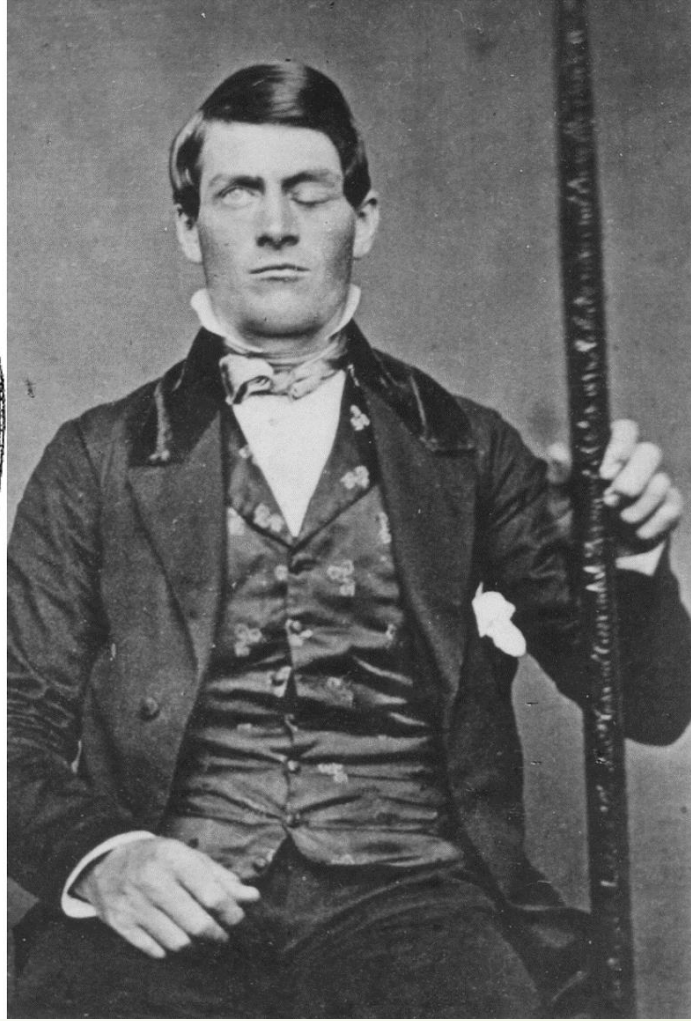
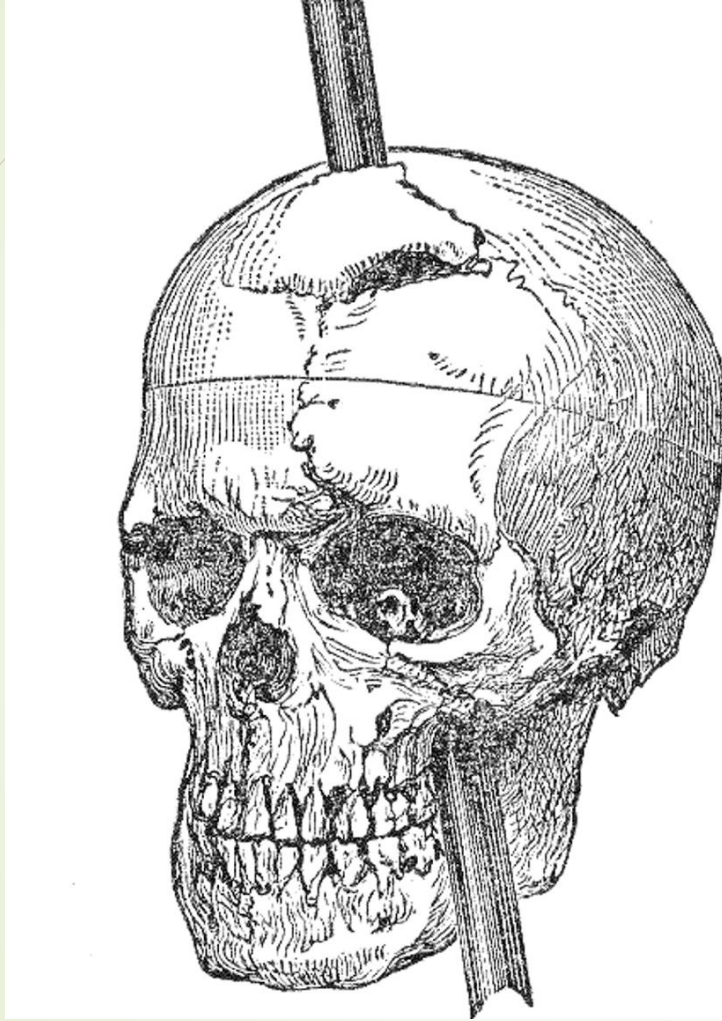
- Follow up showed that children who were able to defer their gratification tended to have better life outcomes:
 - Better SAT scores
 - Higher educational attainment
 - Healthier BMI
 - Neuroanatomical differences at midlife



The Stanford marshmallow study

- Why is this study of interest to us?
- What do you think is going on with the children who are not able to (or chose not to) wait?
- What was happening with the children who did wait?







Phineas Gage: Before and After

Before

- Was a foreman
- Reports that he may have been an independent contractor
- Hard working
- Responsible
- A shrewd smart business man
- Capable of executing all plans of his operations
- persistent

After

- Described by his physician as:
 - Fitful
 - impatient of restraint or advice when it conflicts with his desires
 - Could not carry out plans
 - Irreverent
 - Grossly profane



The Executive Functions: Early Evidence

- Noted in early 1900s that damage to the frontal lobes (PFC) resulted in difficulties with the execution of goal directed behaviour
- Over the next 30-80 years several other functions became apparent:
 - Difficulties initiating tasks
 - The inhibition of automatic reactions
 - The evaluation of one's goal directed actions relative to the environment
 - Emotional regulation
 - Frustration tolerance



Defining EF

- By mid 1990s there were as many as 33 different functions associated
- No agreed upon definition but there is consensus that EF comprises a number of separate yet related functions

- Self awareness
- Time management
- Inhibition (impulse control)
- Sustained attention
- Task initiation

- Planning
- Organization
- Self monitoring
- Emotional control
- Motivation

Defining EF: Russel Barkley

- EF is “self-regulation across time for the attainment of one’s goals (self-interests), often in the context of others (Barkley, 2011)



EF and Motivation

- These students often appears to have a motivation deficit
- Appear unmotivated by tasks that might serve them well later down the road



GRIT, Conscientiousness, or EF?

- Grit
- EF and IQ as predictors of academic success
- Conscientiousness as a predictor of occupational success



"Grit is living life like it's a marathon, not a sprint."

- Angela Lee Duckworth, Professor,
Psychology, Univ. of Pennsylvania

TEDTalks
EDUCATION

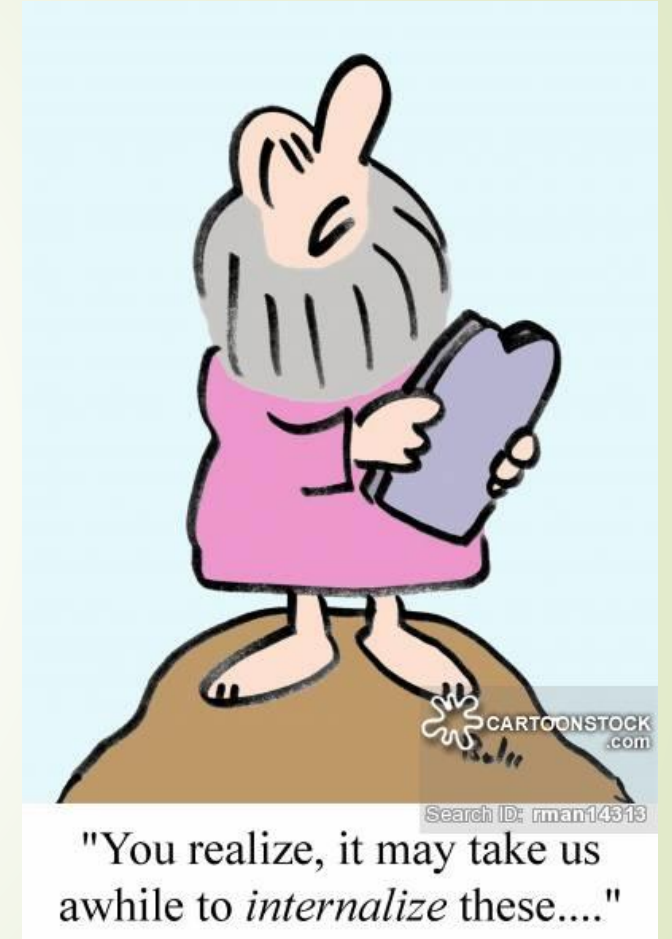
[PBS.org/TEDTalks](https://www.pbs.org/tedtalks)

May 7 at 10/9c on PBS

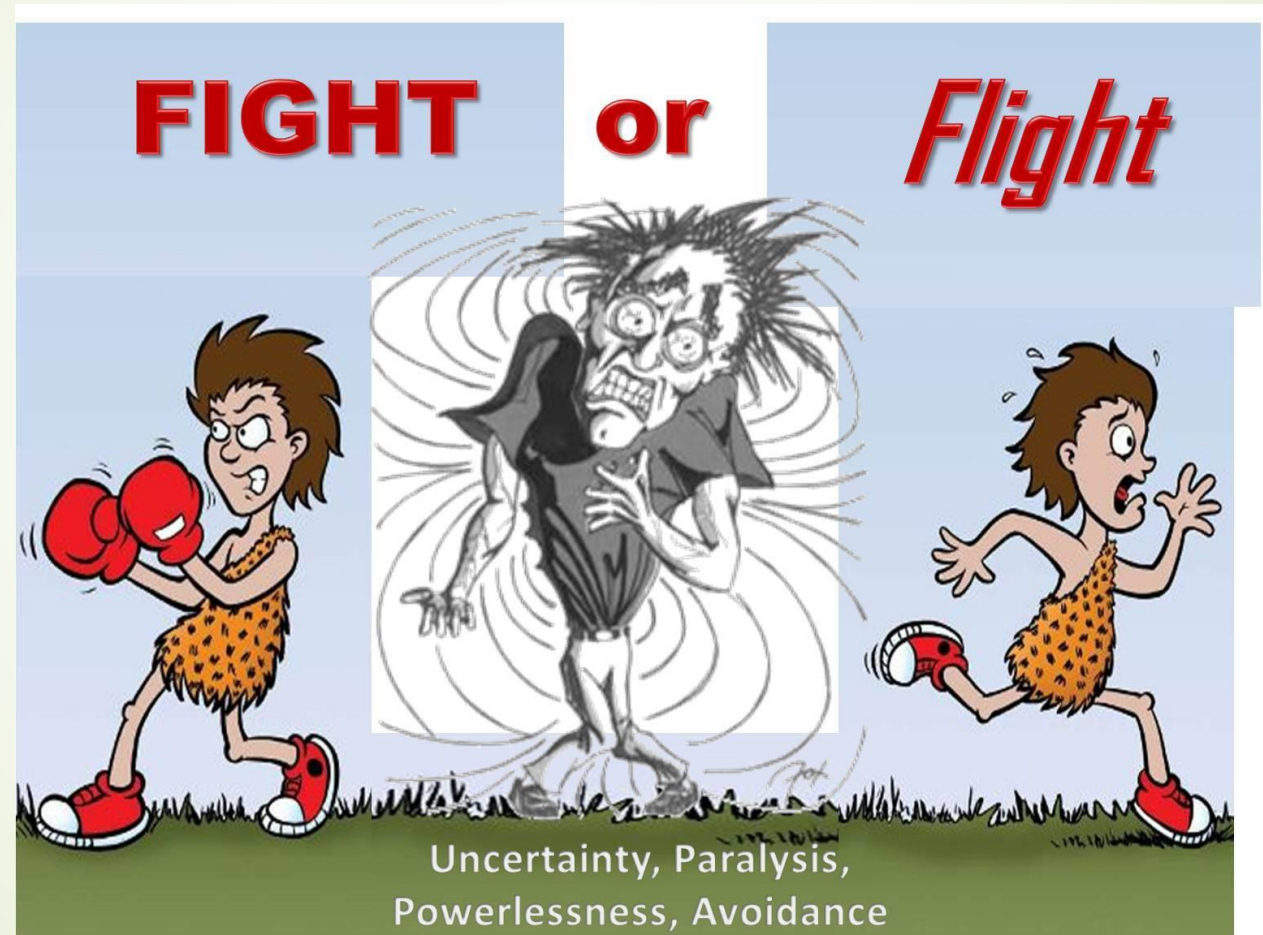


How to intervene

- Analyze
- Externalize
- Teach them to internalize



Manifestations of Anxiety: Fight or Flight



Manifestations of Anxiety

- Avoidance
- Often seeking clarification
- Perfectionism
- Seeking control
- Significant outbursts





How to Intervene

- Predictability
- Structure
- Choice
- Anticipate the anxiety
- Address the source



3. That Relationship Matters

- What were some of the characteristics of the best leaders you've worked for/with (bosses, principals, superintendents, teachers/coaches, etc.)?
 - Why did you see them as a good leader?
 - How did they make you feel about yourself and your work?
 - How did they interact with you?
 - What did they do to motivate you?
 - What impact did they have on you?



How do we typically deal with rule breaking behaviours?

- In the community?
 - As parents?
 - As teachers?
-
- you see any potential problems with a reactionary approach?

An Evolutionary Perspective

- Why has the human race been so successful?
- What has this meant for who we are?



Basic Needs

- All of us want to feel:
 - Connected
 - Protected
 - Respected
- ... And we need to feel productive





Unfortunately...

- Whitted, K.S. & Dupper, D.R. (2008). Do teachers bully students? Findings from a survey of students in an alternate setting. *Education and Urban Society*, 40(3), 329-341.
 - Alt ed students surveyed
 - 86% reported at least one incident of adult physical maltreatment in school
 - 88% reported at least one incident of adult psychological maltreatment in school
 - 64% reported that an adult rather than a peer was involved in their worst school experience

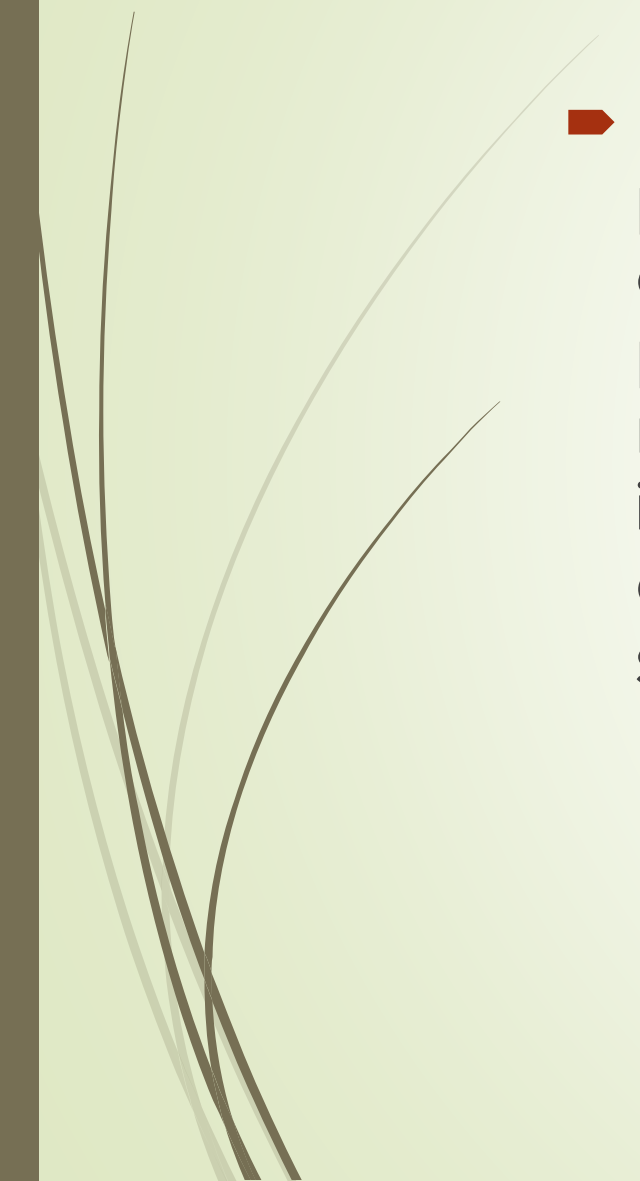


Unfortunately...

- Delfabbro et al. (2006)
 - 1,284 secondary students from southern Australia
 - 10% of the boys and 7% of the girls claimed they were “often” picked on by teachers
 - 9% said they were “often” picked on by other kids (same for both males and females)
 - Over 40% reported at least some bullying from teachers
 - “...the strongest predictors of victimization by teachers were variables relating to social and academic adjustment. Students who were academically or socially alienated were significant more likely to be bullied by teachers” (p.84)



Unfortunately....

- "...students who feel ridiculed, mistreated, verbally or physically attacked, and/or ignored by the school staff can develop feelings of victimization and alienation, potentially resulting in various psychological manifestations ranging from lags in emotional and intellectual development, to behavioral, social, emotional and academic problems, to attempted suicide."
 - Hyman, 1990; Hyman et al., 1997; Hyman, Zelikoff, & Clarke, 1998; Vargas-Moll, 1991; Zelikoff, 1990 all as cited in Whitted & Dupper, 2008
- 



On the Other Hand

- Data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Resnick et al., 1997) found that when students felt more connection to teachers they had:
 - lower rates of emotional distress,
 - Lower rates of suicidal ideation and suicidal behavior,
 - Lower rates of violence,
 - Lower rates of substance abuse,
 - Lower rates of early sexual behavior



Relationship Matters

- What were some of the characteristics of the best leaders you've worked for/with (bosses, principals, superintendents, teachers/coaches, etc.)?
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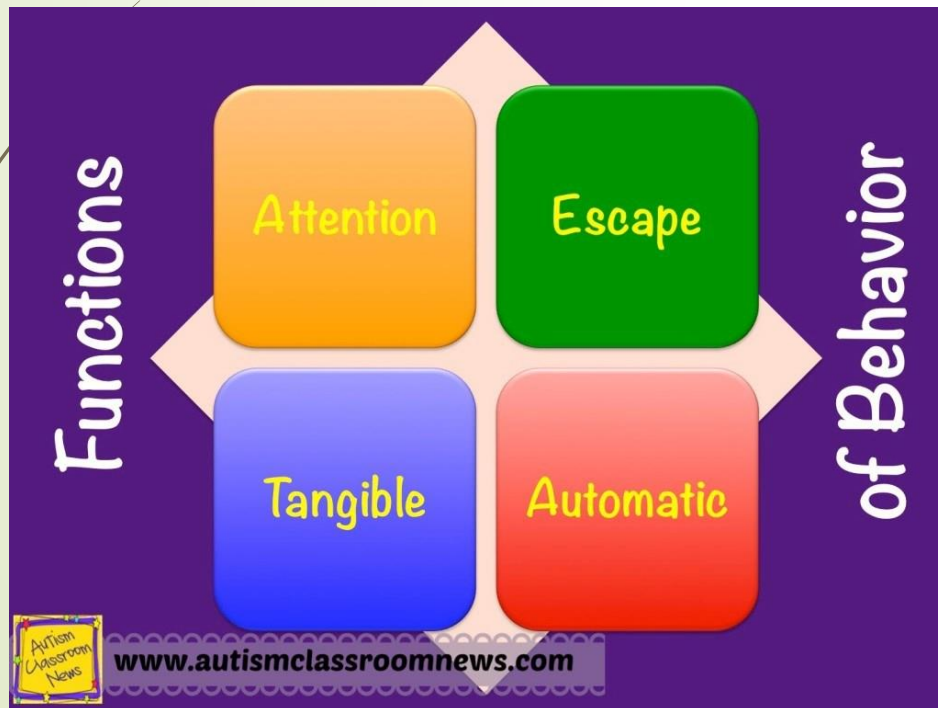


4. That Behavioural Principles Need to be Understood and Applied

- Behaviours are communicative
- Behaviours are maintained by consequences
- Behaviours occur in context

Functions

- What is it that is being communicated?
- What is maintaining this behaviour?

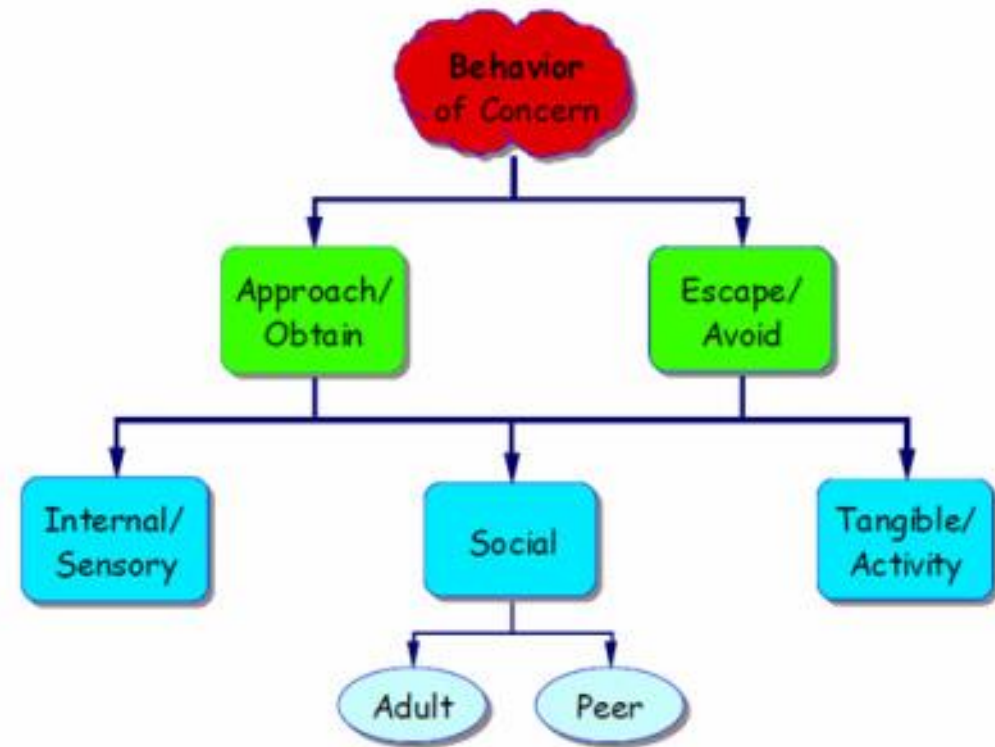


- Attention
- Escape
- Tangible
- Automatic/Sensory

Functions of Behaviour

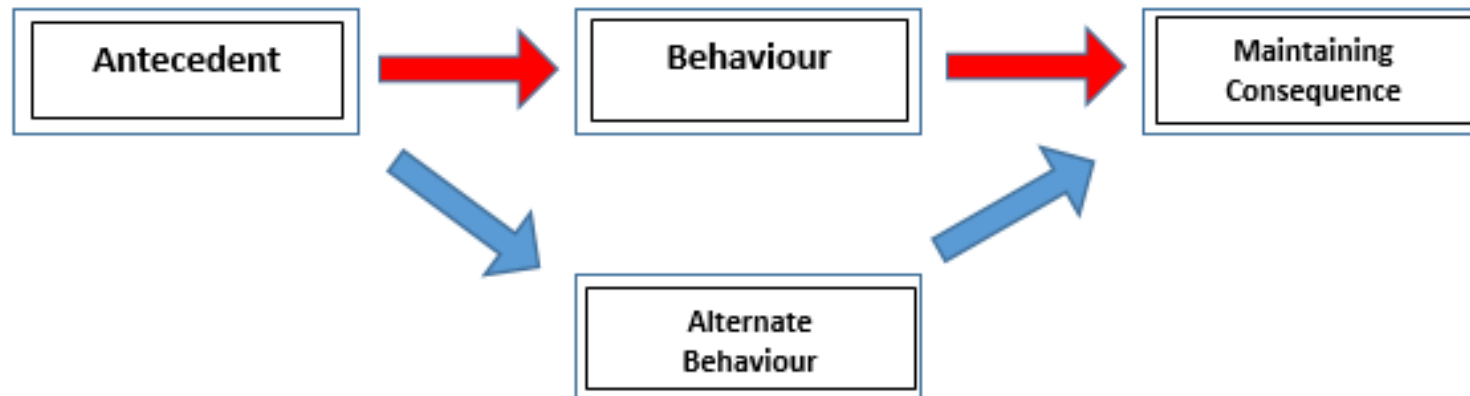
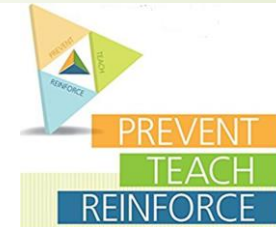
- Attention
- Avoidance
- Tangible
- Internal / Sensory

Function Chart

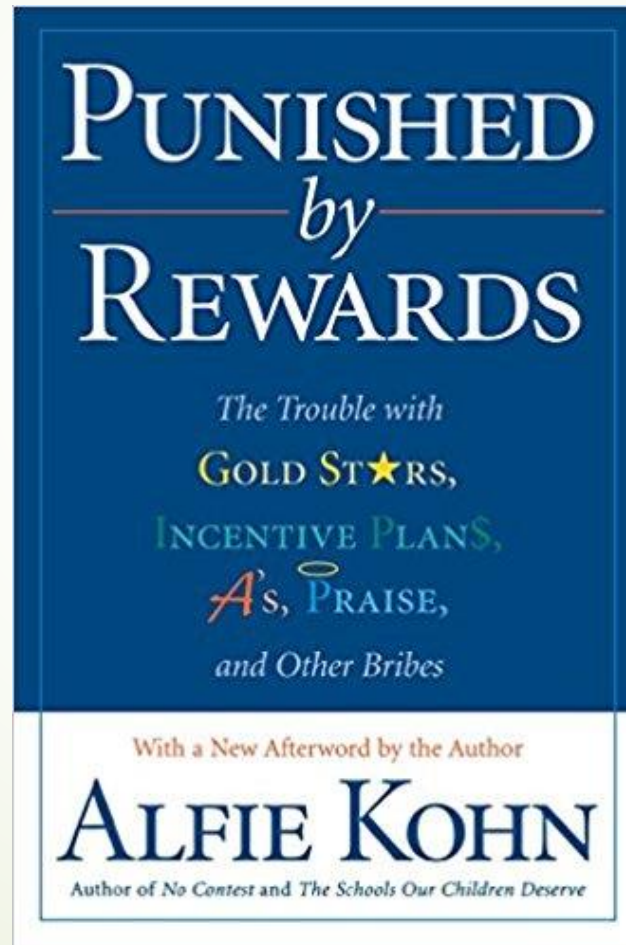


The Competing Behaviour Pathway

The Competing Behaviour Pathway



A Little Bit of Controversy to End



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