Disruptive Behavior
“Changing the Negative Into Positive”

Barbara L. Fountain, LPC-S
Lifeline Family Enrichment
©2004
Whose in The Audience?
Expectations

- What did you come to this session expecting to receive?
Goals

- To understand misbehavior
- To redirect misbehavior
- To understand how to meet the needs of children
- To understand how to build meaningful relationships
Change begins with a thought

- There must be a **paradigm shift** in the way we think;
- Our old thoughts or ways of doing things **must pass away** to allow us to think creatively with the children we serve; and
- Engagement is essential to bring about change; and
- You must **believe** change is possible!
Remember

- You must be able to separate the child from their behavior;
- The behavior is a part of the child’s actions and can change;
- Never tell a child “you are bad,” instead tell them their behavior is unacceptable and you know they are much better than the behavior being displayed.
Why misbehave in school?

- Low self-esteem;
  - The child does not value themselves and if life is not valuable or significant, neither is school

- An inability to grasp the subject being taught;
  - Too far behind to express what they don’t understand
  - Pride/ashamed
  - Fear of being humiliated

- Attention seeking
How Do I Determine What the Student Needs?

- **Ask the child what they need**
  - Develop cue cards at the beginning of the year and every time you get a new student. (See Appendix A)

- **Relationship Building**
  - Relationships make life worth living
  - Children need to have a relationship with at least one caring adult
What Every child needs

Seven identified needs:

- Trust
- Love
- Security
- Purpose
- Someone to listen
- To be appreciated
- To be supported
8 Key Elements to Healthy Youth Development

Healthy Development requires every child & adolescent:

- To feel physically & emotionally safe
- To experience belonging & ownership
- To develop self-worth
- To discover self
- To develop quality relationships with peers & adults
- To discuss conflicts in their values and form their own
- To feel competent and accomplish mastery
- To expand their capacity to enjoy life and know success is possible
Does this remind you of someone?

- I don’t have time to build a relationship I have 30 kids in my class!
- I barely accomplish the task I set for myself now you want me to take more time to build relationship, that’s impossible!
Don’t Give Up, Help is on The Way!

It’s not as difficult as you might believe! Its all in the tools you will be given and the process!
The Process

Your Goal:
- To reach out so the child has a feeling of belonging;
- Understand and empathize;
- Listen; and
- Get the child on track to learn.
Behaviors that Sabotage & Cultivate Frustration in Building Student Relationships

The Following Behaviors Build Frustration not Relationships:

- Being Judgmental
- Being sarcastic/using put-downs;
- Placing a higher level of expectation on the child than you do adults;
- Belittling their feelings;
- Not being present or staying current with what is going on “if it worked last time it should work this time theory”
Three Levels of Students

- **Level 1** - The independent student; a leader; requires little to no relationship building
- **Level 2** - Independent but may require some attention from time to time if they get off track;
- **Level 3** - Relationship Hungry
Relationship Levels

- **Level One Child**
  - Self-sufficient
  - A greeting everyday as they enter classroom
  - Remembering their birthday
  - These children can be developed to be leaders and provide assistance to the level 2 children while you spend more time with level 3.
Level Two
- Tend to get off track every now and then
- Need a little talking to or praise
- Watch for changes (quieter than usual, withdrawn; off task)
- Check-in with them from time to time to see if everything is going well. The fact that you took time to notice something different about them will make all the difference!
Relationship Levels

- Level Three
  - This program was designed for Level three children;
  - The chronic misbehaving;
  - All attention-seeking
  - “You are not going to teach today” students
Step One: Relationship Building 101

Building Trust

- Requires repetitive action & visual demonstration
  - Modeling what you want to see
- Involves risk and failure
- Don’t think you have failed when all your Level 3 kids don’t respond the right way
- Your message “I trust you, I believe you can do it!”
- Trust is demonstrated in two ways: “given” and “earned”
An Expression of Love

- Ask the class “what would make you feel cared for and valued in my classroom?”
- Place responses on a chart along with your suggestion of what would make you feel cared for and valued
- Explain these are the classroom rules that demonstrate valuing one another
- The process demonstrates you value your students because you asked their opinion and their voice was heard.
Seven Keys to Reaching the hard to reach child:

- Time
- Commitment
- Touch
- Purpose
- Praise
- Reward
- Support
Set aside 5 minutes of class time to spend with your Level 3 children

- Tell them something positive
- Tell them you appreciate the opportunity to have them in your class
- Encourage them
- Tell them how valuable they are
- Offer extra help after school if possible
Commitment

- Simply means you can be counted on
- You do what you say
- You consider their needs
Just like adults children need loving touches throughout life:

- Stand at the door every class period and greet each child shake their hand or touch their shoulder
- During class walk past the child and smile to show that you acknowledge their individual presence
Purpose

- Encourage your students
  - Remind them they are destined for greatness
  - You will not allow them to live below their potential
  - Identify a student that may need a mentor and provide a referral
Praise

- Point out the good
  - Remember it takes 6 positive statements to remove 1 negative
- Look for ways to recognize the child’s accomplishment
- Praise the baby steps (the minimal progress efforts)
- Praise any and all movement in the right direction
- Ask their opinions
Rewards

- Utilize rewards as a love key to express a child’s value
- Give as an expression of caring not to influence or manipulate
- Just a little something that says I appreciate your efforts
  - Pencils
  - Bookmarks
  - Assistant for the day
  - Computer time
  - Pad
  - Stickers
Support

Support is a sign of love, it is “I am here for you consistently!”

- Calling them on the carpet with love
- Praising for not only a job well done but when effort is made
- Noticing when something may be troubling them
- Being there to listen when they want to share and understanding when they don’t feel comfortable sharing.
Step Three: Relationship Building 101

Security:
- Establish classroom boundaries where respect for self and others is top priority
  - No degrading other students by name calling
  - No putting down ideas of others
  - No calling another student’s question stupid
  - No taking property of others without permission
  - No touching or hitting others
- Mirror to your children what respect looks like for you (respect looks different, remember we are individuals some parents allow children to curse where you may view it as disrespect)
- It should be common knowledge that rules/boundaries are in place to keep the class safe
- Remember to include the children in setting the rules/boundaries
Step Four: Relationship Building 101

Purpose:

- We each have our own individual purpose
- Life is about our search for purpose
- Purpose is simply a meaning for one's life
- 3 H's
  - Hurried
  - Hushed
  - Hostile
Step Five:  
Relationship Building 101

Someone to Listen:

- Children want to be heard and their opinions valued even if you disagree;
- Listening is a part of affirmation;
  - Your opinion/ideas are considered and taken seriously;
- **When we listen to children**
  - We communicate their value;
  - Help them to feel significant and important;
  - We make a personal investment of our time, a deposit;
  - We model acceptance a right to individual thoughts and beliefs without agreeing;
  - We make a connection to the person;
Step Five: Relationship Building 101

Key steps to remember about listening:

- Avoid distractions that could keep you from hearing what the student is saying
- Listen with the intent of making an emotional connection (go beyond the surface) allow yourself to hear the heart of the child
- Repeat what you think you heard the child say to allow the child to know you were listening and to make sure you heard them correctly
- Listen without judgment
- Listen without interruption
- Watch for what is not being said
Step Six: Relationship Building 101

- **Showing Appreciation:**
  - Treat each child with value
  - Unconditional acceptance (all humans deserve this)
    - “You matter to me” can be the most powerful statement you make to a child
  - Praise them for making an effort
  - Consider the child’s needs, feelings and opinions
  - Mirror respect (if you would not say it if you were in front of the school board or television camera, don’t say it to a child in your classroom)
  - Model acceptance and individuality
  - Learn the child’s strengths (focus on and emphasize the strengths rather than spotlighting their weaknesses)
  - Encourage the child every chance you get
Step Seven: Relationship Building 101

- Be A Support:
  - Be present
  - Listen without trying to fix the problem (*ask the child, "what would you like me to do?")
  - Provide direction and advice when “asked”
  - Motivate (allow the child to make mistakes and learn from them without criticism)
Barbara L. Fountain, LPC-Supervisor
PO Box 203993
Austin, TX 78720-3993
www.lifelinefamily.com
barbara@lifelinefamily.com
512/779-3539
Questions

©2004 Lifeline Family Enrichment