Parents and Kids and Teens Oh My!
Establishing a Peaceful Home,
Maintaining a Peaceful Life
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Learning Objectives

1. Participants will learn ways to help build parent coping skills.
2. Participants will learn quick tips to teach parents how to effectively manage their children’s misbehavior.

Disclosure

- No conflict of interest.
- Not receiving any commercial support.
- No endorsement of products.
- This is a guide for clinical care.
- Important to consult with other medical and behavioral health professionals for the standard of care that is appropriate for your profession, practice, situation, and clientele.

Important Reminders

- Focus on positive behaviors.
- Focus on positive time with the child.
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First Things First

Building Parent Coping Skills:

- To have an enjoyable and productive relationship with their children, parents need healthy and helpful coping skills.
- Parents need to have the skills to deal with the everyday emotions (frustration, disappointment, anger, anxiety, irritation) that are part of being a parent.
- Coping Skills: one’s ability to maintain composure and avoid anger or any other negative emotion when the child is unpleasant, noncompliant, or confrontational.

Triggers & Coping Skills

- Child distress
  - T: 8-month-old baby crying in the crib at 0200
  - C: Let the baby cry it out
- Child demands
  - T: 5-year-old throwing a tantrum over a candy
  - C: Count to 3, then place child in time-out
- Child confrontation
  - T: Teen arguing about a curfew
  - C: Stand by your rule, ignore, don’t engage
Coping Skills & Challenges

- When a child is in distress, parents instantly want to rescue the child from their distress or give in and relieve themselves from their own distress.
- Easier to pick up the baby to relieve parent’s distress, but it doesn’t teach the baby self-soothing skills.
- Easier to buy the candy to get the child to stop embarrassing you, but now you have reinforced a negative behavior.
- Easier to let your teen stay out later, but now you have taught the teen they will eventually get what they want if they nag/argue long enough.

Coping Skills: Self-Talk

- “Hurtful Thoughts” refer to things we say or think to ourselves that do not making coping with the situation any easier, but frequently make it more difficult. They are often a distortion or misreading of the situation. Makes us doubt our competency as parents. They are not helpful.
  - Example: “My child hates me, because I told her ‘no’” [an unrealistic generalization based on a limited and temporary situation]

- “Helpful Thoughts” are things we say or think to ourselves that “help” rather than “hurt” our ability to cope with the situation.
  - Example: “I know my baby cries when he gets an immunization, which is distressing to me and my baby, but he will be permanently protected from a serious illness. I am a terrific parent for keeping up with my child’s immunization schedule.”

Improving Self-Talk

- Stop the hurtful thoughts [Thought Stopping]
- Challenge the hurtful thoughts
- Replace with at least 1 or 2 helpful thoughts
- Act on the helpful thoughts
  - Will become easier when you start identifying, stopping, and challenging hurtful thoughts

Infants: Stop-Challenge-Act

- Scenario: Baby has been played with, fed, changed, put to bed. Now, she is crying in bed.
  - Thought: “She will think I have abandoned her.”
  - STOP!
  - CHALLENGE: “She will probably be unhappy for a few nights, but I can stand it. She will learn great self-quieting skills.”
  - ACT: Don’t go in to pick her up.
  - Important to discipline yourself to be able to put up with your own discomfort so that your child can learn important self-soothing and self-quieting skills.

Toddlers: Stop-Challenge-Act

- Scenario: He will not eat his lunch.
  - Thought: “He is such a picky eater. He will fail off the growth curve and I will look like a bad mother.”
  - STOP!
  - CHALLENGE: “He usually eats a lot of food at breakfast and dinner and is growing fine. I take good care of my son.”
  - ACT: Give him a healthy choice he will eat, make eating fun, fix a preferred food at every meal.
Children: Stop-Challenge-Act

Scenario: Family is leaving for an event and the child is stalling and then has a tantrum.

Thought: “She knows we need to leave in 5 minutes. She has no respect for me.” STOP!

Challenge: “Most kids do not have the same concept of time as parents, nor do they place the same importance on time. I will teach her better ways to help her manage her time.”

Act: Practice “beat the clock”, implement a chore/behavior chart, make a desired activity contingent on the completion of a less-desirable activity.

Teenagers: Stop-Challenge-Act

Scenario: You are not allowing your teen to stay out past her curfew.

Thought: “I am such a terrible parent. All of her friends stay out late.” STOP!

Challenge: “I know I will have to make decisions my daughter will not always like. It is my responsibility as her parent to establish appropriate boundaries.”

Act: Stand by your decision. Don’t engage in a back-and-forth argument or discussion.

Understanding Behavior

Your job is to recognize and eliminate what is underneath the behavior.

Pay close attention to what happens before and what happens after the behavior.

Pay attention to how you interpret the behavior (are you taking your child’s behavior personally?)

To understand how to change a behavior, we have to understand the function of the behavior.

Quick Parenting Tips

Praise!

The behaviors that are paid attention to are the behaviors that will continue (even if the attention is negative). To counteract this effect, we must praise exponentially more than we scold.

Be specific with the praise.

Praise often!

Quick Discipline Tips

Ignore

• For minor misbehaviors (whining, tantrums, badgering), actively ignore

• Avoid verbal and non-verbal reactions (no eye contact, facial expressions, or any other form of communication)
Quick Discipline Tips

- **Counting (1-2-3)**
  - Use for any behaviors you want your child to STOP doing.
  - Use for everyday behaviors (whining, tantrums, yelling).
  - Once you get to 3, use time-out.

- **TIME-OUT**
  - Purpose of time-out is to interrupt the child’s undesirable behavior and to provide an undesirable consequence for that behavior.
  - Purpose is to deprive the child of attention.
  - Should occur in an under-stimulating room and should last for 1 minute for every year of age.

Quick Discipline Tips

- **CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT**
  - Serves to decrease undesirable behavior while increasing desirable behavior.
  - Behavior chart can serve this function.
  - Select one behavior at a time for change.
  - Discuss with child how the system will work.
  - Involve the child in what the rewards will be.
  - Give stars, chips, points consistently.

Parent Resources

- 1-2-3 Magic (2010) by Phelan (Video/Book)