

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING



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# AGENDA

- Understanding Challenging Behavior
- What to look for in the school
- What to teach and reinforce at home
- Resources
- Questions
- Feedback

# OUTCOMES

**PARENTS WILL** have a deeper understanding of the root of challenging behaviors

**PARENTS WILL** increase their knowledge in strategies that can be used in school buildings to address challenging behaviors and increase student engagement.

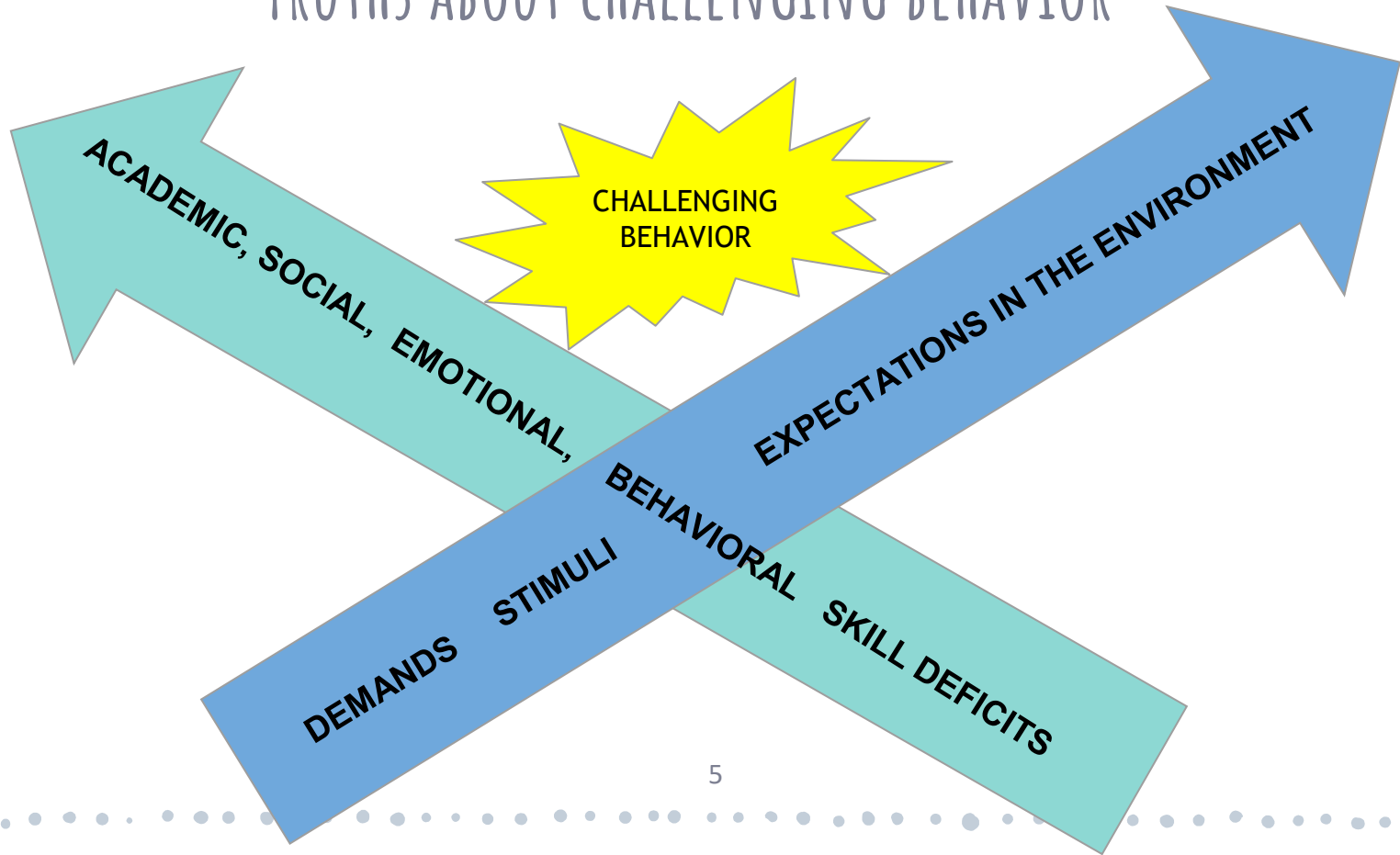
**PARENTS** will increase their ability to incorporate SEL into their home and will gain resources to do so

**CHILDREN WILL** increase their emotional engagement thus will increase their cognitive engagement, learning, and achievement

# THE CORRECT LENS OF CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR



# TRUTHS ABOUT CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR



# WHAT SKILL DEFICITS?

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, BEHAVIORAL SKILL DEFICITS



Communicates that the child doesn't have the skills to do it better

If he could he would!

## SEB Skill Deficits

- Self-Awareness Skills
- Self-Management Skills
- Responsible Decision Making Skills
- Relationship Skills
- Social-Awareness Skills

# WHAT CAUSES THE SEB SKILL DEFICITS?

## #1 Lack of opportunity to learn appropriate behavior

- Sheltered from experiencing uncomfortable emotions (e.g. frustration, boredom, sadness, disappointment, yearning, rejection) and naturally learning coping strategies and skills to work through feelings
- Lack of emotional muscle creation that is capable of enduring a failure or not getting what they want and seeing that they can live through it
- Limited Models of appropriate behavior

# WHAT CAUSES THE SEB SKILL DEFICITS?

## #2 Trauma Exposure

- **The trauma (acute or chronic) impacts brain structures and pathways:**
  - The thinking center of the brain is under activated and developed
  - The emotion regulation center of the brain is under activated and Developed
  - The fight or flight center of the brain to be over activated and over developed
- **Classroom Impacts of brain under/over activation:**
  - Learning and Executive function struggles
  - Lagging emotional regulation and cognitive flexibility skills
  - Hypervigilance
  - Dissociation
  - Relationship skill deficits



## WHAT CAUSES THE SEB SKILL DEFICITS?

#3 Biological/Genetic makeup that impedes a students ability to learn and use these skills incidentally or intuitively

- Mental health diagnosis [autism, anxiety, depression, ADHD...]
- Lead exposure
- Neurological abnormalities

SEL SKILLS ARE THE  
FOUNDATION TO  
STUDENT COGNITIVE  
ENGAGEMENT

### COGNITIVE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Devoting out-of-school  
time to studying and  
completing homework

Arriving ready to work  
(with necessary supplies  
and materials),

Paying attention and  
participating in class

Regularly attending class

### EMOTIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Developed Social, Emotional, and Behavioral Skills

**CHALLENGING  
BEHAVIOR**

**LOW EMOTIONAL  
STUDENT  
ENGAGEMENT**

Lagging  
Social,  
Emotional, and  
Behavioral  
Skills

**LOW COGNITIVE STUDENT  
ENGAGEMENT**

Failure to devote out-  
of-school time to  
studying and  
completing homework

Not paying attention  
and participating in  
class

Struggles to arrive ready  
to work (with necessary  
supplies and materials),

Doesn't regularly attending  
class

WHAT CAN PARENTS LOOK FOR IN THE  
SCHOOL SETTING?



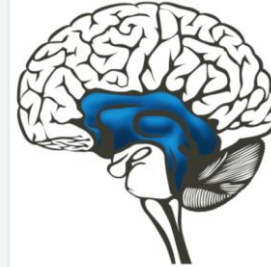
ASSURE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT MAKES THE STUDENT FEEL SAFE AND CONNECTED

**NOW I can learn!**



Executive State

**I feel connected**



Emotional State

**I feel safe**



Survival State

## WHAT CREATES A SAFE AND CONNECTED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

- A school team that is using correct lens (addressing skill deficits and environmental demands your child does not have the skills to met-YET!)
- A predictable classroom
- Schedules are presented visually
- Structured Routines in the classroom
- A classroom with clear expectations and boundaries that are set and enforced
- Assignments broken down into small chunks with steps visually presented (especially in writing)
- Calming strategies taught and reinforced
- Calming breaks allowed



WHAT CAN PARENTS TEACH AT HOME?

# TEACH CHILDREN ABOUT EMOTIONS AND HOW TO LABEL FEELINGS

- **Kids who have an emotional vocabulary are less likely to use actions (aggression, temper tantrums, defiance) to express themselves**
- **Teach your child feeling words and help them understand how feelings feel in their body, how to communicate those feelings, and what to do with those feelings**

[Feelings and Emotions workbook](#)

[How to teach kids about feelings](#)



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“

*When an emotion is named  
the amygdala starts to  
calm and cortex (thinking  
part of the brain) resumes  
functioning.*

—••—

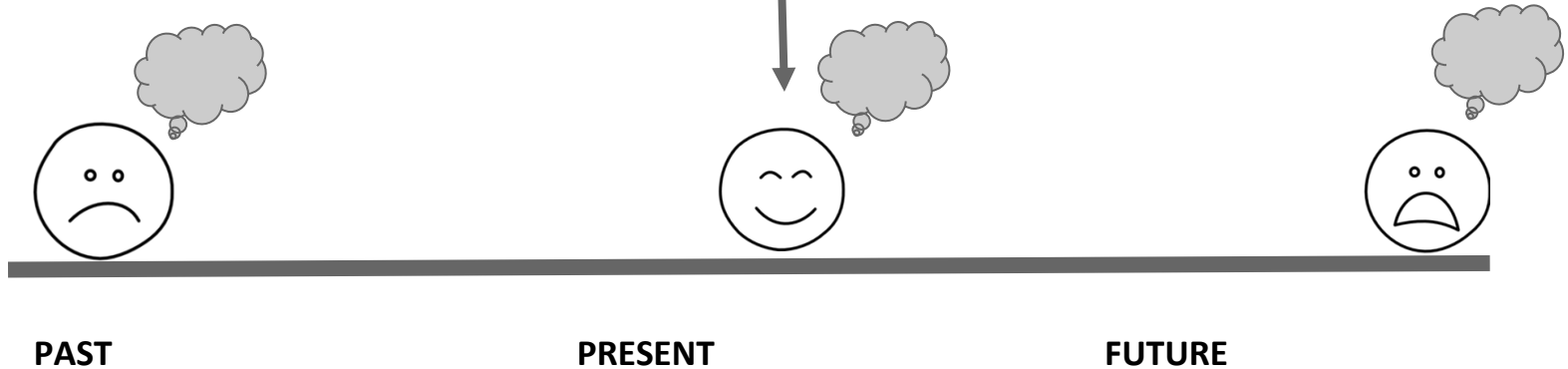
# TEACH YOUR CHILD TO TOLERATE UNCOMFORTABLE FEELINGS

- **Do not fully remove emotional triggers or rescue your child from feeling uncomfortable**
- **Role play situations that make your child feel uncomfortable and expect them to tolerate those situations (their anxiety) and function as well as they can, even when they are feeling anxious and uncomfortable.**

[Anxiety Management Strategies](#)

# REDIRECT KIDS TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT MOMENT:

MINDFULNESS

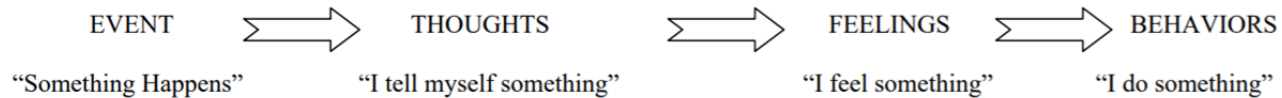
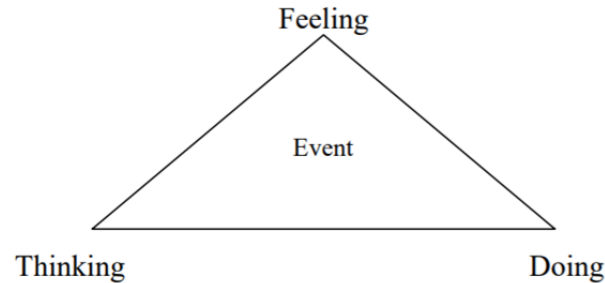


Keep thoughts around what needs to be done or is happening in present moment;  
Over 90% of what we worry about doesn't happen anyway!



# TEACH YOUR KIDS THAT THEIR FEELINGS ARE CONNECTED TO THEIR THOUGHTS

## Cognitive Triangle Worksheet



[Unhelpful and helpful thoughts](#)  
[Helpful Anxiety Worksheets](#)

## RESPECT THEIR FEELINGS BUT DO NOT EMPOWER THEM

- **Validate your child's fears and do not belittle their feelings**
- **Tell your child that the feelings are OK and that you will help them get through the feelings.**

Examples:

I can see that you are very (upset, sad, frightened, scared)

Here's what I'm hearing you say (summarize with fact checking).

I guess that must have been hard for you.

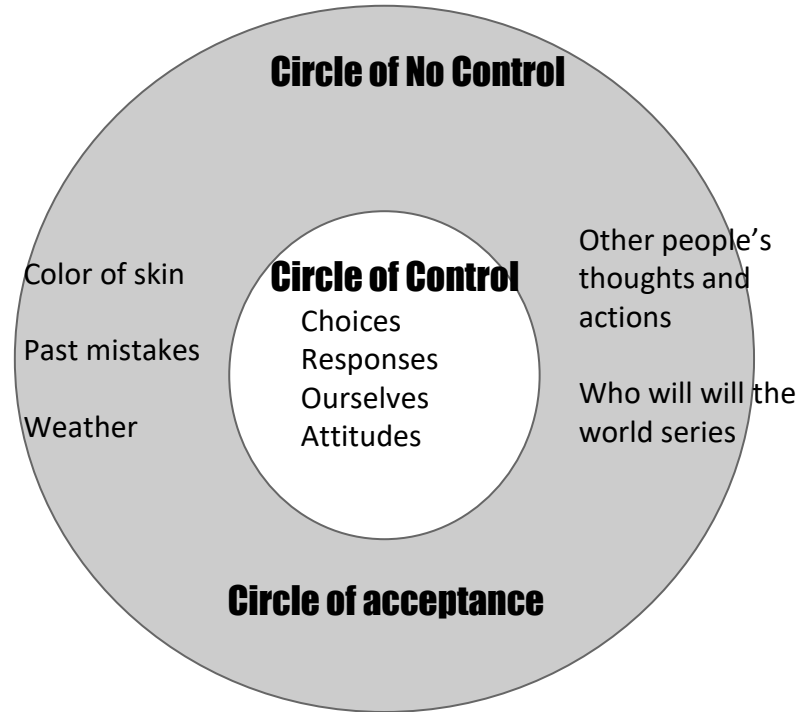
I can see you are making an effort.

I can see this is important to you.

**“Listening to your child means far more than collecting data with your ears.”**

**Empathetic listeners use their eyes to watch for physical evidence of their children’s emotions. They use their imaginations to see the situation from the child’s perspective. They use their words to reflect back, in a soothing, noncritical way, what they are hearing and to help their children label their emotions.”**

# TEACH KIDS TO FOCUS ON WHAT IS IN THEIR CIRCLE OF CONTROL



## DO NOT ASK LEADING QUESTIONS

- **Ask open-ended questions opposed to leading questions:**

**Are you anxious about the chemistry exam?**

**Vs.**

**How are you feeling about the chemistry exam?**



## DO NOT REINFORCE A CHILD'S FEARS

- **Do not send messages with body language or tone that indicates the child should be afraid of what they are fearful of**
- **Downplay the situation and assure them that they are able to manage their feelings; prompt strategies to do so**

## KEEP ANTICIPATORY PERIODS SHORT

- **Provide reasonable amount of notice for upcoming events.**
- **E.g. If a child is anxious about going to the doctor do not launch into a big discussion about the doctor's appointment 2 weeks before the appointment.**

### Calming Anticipatory Anxiety

## MODEL APPROPRIATE WAYS TO HANDLE ANXIETY

- **Do not pretend that you don't have stress and anxiety.**
- **Let kids hear or see you managing it calmly, tolerating it, feeling good about getting through it.**
- **[How to Avoid Passing Anxiety on to your Children](#)**

**“Sometimes parents try to compensate for their fear of losing control by being “super-parents,” hiding their emotions from their children... The irony is that by hiding their emotions, these parents may be raising youngsters who are even less capable of handling negative emotions than they would have been if their parents had learned to let their feelings show in an adaptive way.**

**The children need role models to teach them how to handle difficult emotions effectively; If you act like you have no emotions they will feel like something is wrong with them that they do have emotions”**

# RESOURCES

[How to talk to your kids about anxiety](#)

[Anxiety Management Skills](#)

[Create a Relaxation Plan](#)

[Mindfulness Activities](#)

[Think Good Feel Good](#)



THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR ATTENDING!

**Any questions?**

**Please Provide Feedback**

Click [here](#)