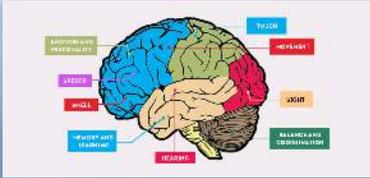


**NOFASD Australia Presents:
The Human Elements of Implementing the
Neurobehavioral Approach to Parenting**

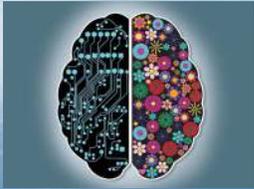
*Eileen Devine, LCSW
FASD Northwest*

**“Behavior Belongs in the Brain”
Dr. Ira Chasnoff**



The diagram shows a lateral view of a human brain with several regions highlighted in different colors and labeled with terms. The labels include: 'SOMATOSENSORY RESPONSIBILITY' (top left), 'EMOTION' (top center), 'MOTOR' (top right), 'FUNCTIONAL ORGANIZATION' (middle left), 'LANGUAGE' (middle right), 'SKILL' (bottom left), 'EMOTIONAL' (bottom center), and 'LANGUAGE' (bottom right).

Primary Characteristics



Behavioral symptoms associated with differences in brain structure and function.

Strengths are also primary characteristics.

Source: Ann Streissguth, 1996

Secondary Behaviors



- Defensive behaviors
- Normal reactions to pain and discomfort
- Preventable
- Develop over time due to "poor fit"

"Children exhibit challenging behavior when the demands being placed upon them outstrip the skills they have to respond adaptively to those demands. The same can be said of all human beings."

- Dr. Ross Greene

Values, Behaviors, and Our Emotional Response



It is as hard as you think it is.

And remember: curiosity is the death of
shame and criticism.

Values: Deeply Held Beliefs

- Values are deeply held beliefs about what is good, right, and appropriate.
- An individual's values may be derived from society, religion, family of origin or self.
- Beliefs are internal feelings that something is true, even if that belief may be unproven or seen as irrational.

Emotions

Where do our strong feelings about behaviors come from?



The Sounds of Our Values Playing in to Our Parenting

- "Stop arguing and asking why...because I am the parent, that's why."
- "I should only have to tell you once."
- "You need to look me in the eyes when I am talking to you."
- "You're 12 - you should know better."
- "Act your age and take some responsibility for your actions."
- "What do you mean you can't do it today? You did this perfectly yesterday..."
- "I've told you what I expect a million times now and do not want to have to tell you again."
- "Stop doing that! It's inappropriate. You know that. We JUST talked about this."
- "Sit down now and listen to me. We are not going anywhere until we talk about this."

Age-Based Expectations

<p style="text-align: center;">"Act your age" at 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie your shoes • Play nicely with others (share, take turns) • Learn numbers, letters, start to read • Sit still and listen for 20 minutes • Follow 3-step directions 	<p style="text-align: center;">"Act your age" at 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive • Be <i>responsible</i> (part-time job, manage money, manage schedule/time) • Social life • Independent • Planning for the future
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Age-Based Expectations & Dysmaturity

<p style="text-align: center;">"Act your age" at 6 → 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tie your shoes • Play nicely with others (share, take turns) • Learn numbers, letters, start to read • Sit still and listen for 20 minutes • Follow 3-step directions 	<p style="text-align: center;">"Act your age" at 16 → 8</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drive • Be <i>responsible</i> (part-time job, manage money, manage schedule/time) • Social life • Independent • Planning for the future
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The Intersect of Behaviors, Values, and Brain Function

1. Primary characteristic	2. Values, expectations	3. Interpretation <i>Feelings</i>	4. Interventions	5. Secondary characteristics	6. Accommodations <i>Build on strengths</i>
Dysmaturity	Act your age	Being a baby, Lazy, not trying <i>Frustration</i>	Punish, take things away	Anxiety, anger	Think younger, adjust expectations.
Difficulty following more than one direction at a time	Follow 3-5 step instructions, listen and then do, listen the first time	Impossible, doesn't care, doesn't want to follow instructions <i>Frustr, anger</i>	Talk, reason, threaten, shame	Anger, denial	Recognize brain dysfunction, keep it simple and concrete
Memory problems	Good memory, Expect to have to teach only once	Unmotivated, lazy <i>Frustration, anger</i>	Lecture, withhold information, refuse to reteach (some/quarters)	Anger, frustration	Accept need to reteach, based on learning strengths
Slow processing pace	Learn fast—think fast	Not trying, doing it on purpose, stupid <i>Anger, frustration</i>	Spend up, talk louder, embarrass	Shut down, fear, avoidance, withdrawal	SLOW DOWN Use rich language to help illustrate, but take more time
Difficulty generalizing, gets the piece, not the picture	Learn and remember rules in different settings	Breaking the rules, on purpose Should follow rules? <i>Anger, frustration</i>	Talk, ground, other punishments	Frustration, confusion, fear, anger	Show don't just tell, show. Repeat in different settings. Accept need to reteach

SELF-REGULATION

“Keeping the accelerator and brake (of our emotions) in balance.”

-Dr. Daniel Siegel, Executive Director of Mindsight Institute

What is Trauma?

An event, usually a non-ordinary one, that harms the body, self or spirit.

Trauma is the result of extraordinary stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless and vulnerable.

Symptoms experienced as a result of trauma:

- Feelings of helplessness
- Intrusive thoughts
- Disabling anxiety/fear
- Depression
- Hypervigilance

Symptoms are compounded by:

- Lack of sleep
- Medical/social services system
- School experience
- Isolation

Trauma and Self-Regulation

- Our history matters: self-regulation is something we develop as infants and toddlers through repeated co-regulation with a regulation adult.
- At all ages we need others to help us co-regulate the most intense emotions – we are all wired for connection. It is a biological imperative.
- When we experience emotional pain, only goal of the mind is seeking safety. If we don't have relationships where we can find this, our nervous system can not calm down (the brake doesn't work well).
- When we have solid self-regulation/coping skills, our window of tolerance for our accelerator ramping up is a nice, healthy width.
- When we experience toxic stress, it decreases window of stress, so smaller stressors will knock us out of our window of tolerance.
- Do you hyperactivate or deactivate? When does this happened/what has informed this?

Requirements for Solving Problems:

- First we must be regulated
- Then we must be relating/connecting with the other person
- Only then can we reason



“Invisible” Elements of Environments

- Values
- Control (top down, power struggles, inflexible, decreasing range of options)
- Social norms for appropriate behaviors
- Timelines
- Expectations
- Teaching technique, e.g., language-based
- Grouping by age
- Personal history, culture



The Sounds of Judgment

1. Manipulative, conning
2. Unmotivated, lazy
3. Intentional, deliberate, on purpose
4. Doing it to me
5. Acting like a baby
6. Shows no remorse
7. Controlling
8. Selfish, intentionally ruining everything



Sounds of Understanding Differently

1. Doesn't understand
2. Forgets easily and needs to be re-taught
3. Shut down, overwhelmed, exhausted
4. Doesn't get it
5. It's not personal or on purpose
6. Is developmentally young for his age
7. Has history of chronic frustration
8. Rigid, has difficulty shifting gears

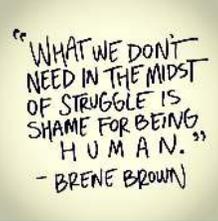


Self-Compassion

- Self-compassion involves acting the same way towards yourself when you are having a difficult time, fail, or notice something you don't like about yourself.
- Instead of just ignoring your pain with a "soldering on" mentality, you stop and acknowledge how difficult it is and then take steps to comfort yourself.
- Honoring and accepting your humanness, especially in very difficult and challenging circumstances or situations
 - Dr. Kristen Neff – Self-Compassion Researcher

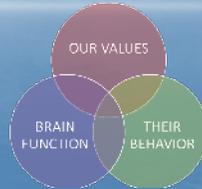
How to be Reflective Without Beating Yourself Up

- It is as difficult as you think it is.
- Reflective functioning (Dan Siegel) : the ability to monitor one's own and other's beliefs, intentions, hopes, etc. with curiosity, not with judgement, holding room for lots of possibility about what is informing mood, motivation, actions.
- Anytime we are CERTAIN of another's intentions, we are not practicing reflective functioning ("the stories we tell ourselves" – Brene Brown). This happens more frequently as we are more dysregulated.
- Parental/caregiver reflective functioning – added element of intensity because of the nature of relationship between parent and child, due to the strong feedback loop involved between parent and child. When we are off, kids get off in more exaggerated way, then we get off even more (intensified loop).



Reflecting on Our Response to Challenging Behaviors

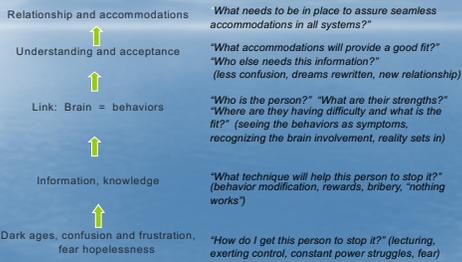
- What behaviors are most triggering?
- What can we do to slow down our reaction and regulate ourselves?
- Have we talked about our challenge with these particular behaviors with those who are helping us parent?
- How can I practice self-compassion in these moments when I 'lose my cool' and don't stay in a NB mindset?
- How can I circle back with my child to do any repair and conciliation that may be needed?



Importance of Observation

1. Step back, depersonalize, deescalate
2. Learn to see without judging
3. See patterns of behaviors
4. Understand where the fit is poor
5. Identify points of intervention
6. Build on strengths
7. Prevent problems, improve outcomes

Developmental Stages of Parenting from a Neurobehavioral Perspective



Thank you!

- **Eileen Devine, LCSW:**

- www.fasdnorthwest.com
- Blog Posts & Newsletter
- Facebook & Instagram

- *Trying Differently Rather Than Harder* –
Diane Malbin (www.FASCETS.org)