LSCI

Life Space Crisis Intervention

Life Space Crisis Intervention Training

Turn Crisis Situations into Learning Opportunitites

The non-physical intervention trainings that empower professionals to intervene effectively with youth

Participant's Manual

Developed by the Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute
www.lsci.org

Turning Down the Heat
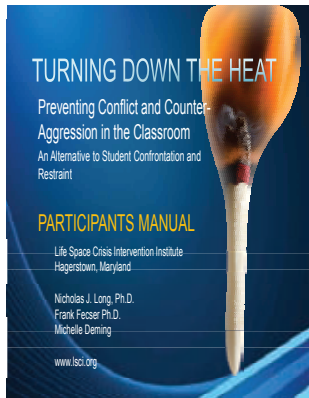
Preventing Conflict and Counter-Aggression in the Classroom

TURNING DOWN THE HEAT

Preventing Conflict and Counter-Aggression in the Classroom

An Alternative to Student Confrontation and Restraint

PARTICIPANTS MANUAL

Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute
Hagerstown, Maryland

Nicholas J. Long, Ph.D.
Frank Fecser Ph.D.
Michelle Deming

www.lsci.org

The LSCI Institute is announcing a new one-day, field tested course called *Turning Down the Heat; Preventing Counter-Aggression and Conflict in the Classroom.*

Most teachers are irritated by the behavior of select, challenging students. This is to be expected. Few teachers are trained to understand and acknowledge these normal counter-aggressive feelings. Problems develop when competent teachers stay angry at a student. When a conflict develops, teachers are less likely to perceive accurately, think clearly, and reason coherently. Though competent teachers rarely initiate conflicts with students, they often keep them alive though their unintended, counter-productive reactions.

Turning Down the Heat documents four of the most common reasons that teachers become counter-aggressive with select students. This unique training program also offers specific skills to manage conflict in the classroom. Teachers will learn how to manage their counter-aggression when it is manageable, simmering, boiling and even when it boils over.

Turning Down the Heat is a unique opportunity and the missing piece of most professional training programs. This course is about you and not your students. It leads to powerful insights which will change the way you think and behave when you are angry.

LSCI Refresher Course

LSCI
Life Space Crisis Intervention

Life Space Crisis Intervention Refresher Course
For Certified LSCI Practitioners

Advanced, verbal skills for professional staff working with challenging children and youth.

Participant's Manual

Developed by the Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute
www.lsci.org

The LSCI Refresher Course curriculum is designed for those who have successfully completed the certification course and who have already been using LSCI for at least six months. It is not intended as a preview or substitute for those who have not completed the certification course. The *Refresher Course* provides a forum to discuss the highlights and challenges of implementing LSCI in the real-world and as a laboratory to practice and sharpen interviewing skills.
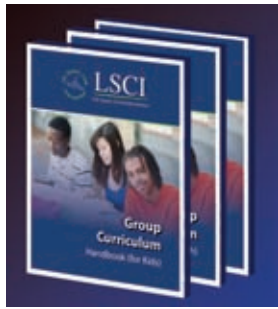
The *Refresher Course* curriculum begins with an overview of the self-defeating pattern of each Reclaiming Intervention along with a review of the Conflict Cycle and Timeline. Also included is a discussion about short term vs. long term RI's. Next, the course turns to a more detailed review of the RI's, including the central issue, process, and unique outcome goals for each. Participants are given extensive opportunities to role play and diagnose LSCI crisis situations.

The LSCI Refresher Course is one-day course. 6 CEU's for eligible licensed social workers and professional counselors are available through successful completion of the course.

For more information on the courses described here or to purchase any of the featured items, please visit www.lsci.org

LSCI Group Curriculum
CONFLICT in the Classroom
The Angry Smile Course

LSCI Group Curriculum

The eight-session *LSCI Group Curriculum* is designed to teach child and adolescent students and clients the basic concepts of Life Space Crisis Intervention. The social-emotional curriculum helps kids learn about self-defeating behaviors and how to avoid falling into these troublesome patterns.

The *LSCI Group Curriculum* is sold as a three-piece set, including:

1. The Facilitator's Guide that walks group leaders step-by-step and session-by-session through eight unique aspects of LSCI for Kids.

2. The Group Handbook for Children, designed for participants with more limited capacity for self-reflection and/or writing skills.

3. The Group Handbook for Youth, designed for participants who are able to engage in some self-reflection and independent writing.

The *LSCI Group Curriculum* is available to participants of the LSCI certification course at a special, discounted rate. Please ask your LSCI Trainer(s) for the promotional code, to be entered at checkout.

CONFLICT in the Classroom
The Education of At-Risk and Troubled Students
5th Edition
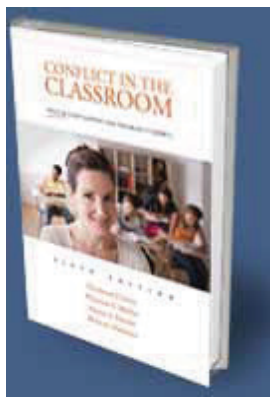
Gone are the days when educating at-risk and troubled students are solely the responsibility of the Special Educator in a designated Classroom. Presently, Conflict exists in every Classroom and each student's adversity comes in varying degrees — depression, defiance, violence, poverty, abuse, neglect, etc. For the staff member involved, theories from a textbook rarely provide the assistance and support their students need in effectively coping with the daily trials and tribulations.

The fifth edition of Conflict in the Classroom provides this much-needed reality-based support. It's filled with practical strategies and advice from teachers, authors, and colleagues who have first-hand real life experience with the troubled student. Each meaningful chapter is woven together by the humanistic beliefs of psychoeducation, a concern for both the inner life and external behavior. It's a fusion of current and effective educational and mental health practices.

The Angry Smile Course

The Angry Smile course is designed for anyone who lives, works, or interacts with a passive aggressive student and wants to better understand and manage the often-troubling dynamics.

The Angry Smile takes an in-depth look at the roots of passive aggressive behavior in children, exploring masked anger at five distinct and increasingly pathological levels. The course features the Passive Aggressive Conflict Cycle as well as eight specific skills that professionals (and anyone interacting with a passive aggressive person) can use to respond effectively to the troubling behavior.

The Angry Smile course trains participants in a six-step process for confronting and changing passive aggressive behaviors in the long-term, using extensive discussion, video examples, and role play.

The Angry Smile is one-day course. 6 CEU's for eligible licensed social workers and professional counselors are available through successful completion of the course.

The Angry Smile:
The Psychology of Passive-Aggressive Behavior in Families, Schools, and Workplaces (*2nd Edition*)

Learn the Powerful Skills of Benign Confrontation!

What is passive-aggressive behavior? The authors of this three-part book have studied the psychology of this behavior for over four decades in both clinical and educational settings. They offer real-world examples and empowering, practical strategies for working with or when confronted with individuals who exhibit any of the five levels of passive aggressiveness.

LSCI Poster
Poster illustrates the conflict cycle.

Perfect for school classrooms and hallways or residential and group home common areas, the LSCI Conflict Cycle Poster is a great visual reminder and cue for staff and students alike.
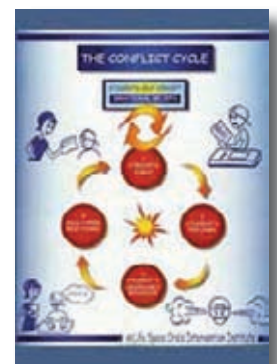
Register as an LSCI-certified participant with the LSCI Institute

Welcome to Life Space Crisis Intervention training! As an LSCI-certified participant, you will learn and demonstrate competency in an advanced set of skills for reclaiming children and youth involved in self-defeating patterns of behavior. You will also be eligible for a free, one-year online subscription to the Reclaiming Children and Youth Journal.

In order for the LSCI Institute to maintain a database of all of its certified participants and for you to begin to receive the journal, we ask that you fill in the brief form below and hand it in to your LSCI Trainer(s) prior to the end of the course.

Your completion of the information below will be used in the following two ways ONLY:

1. First, the LSCI Institute will update its database of all of its certified professionals.
    a. From time to time, the LSCI Institute may send you news of upcoming trainings or events.
    b. In the future, LSCI-certified professionals may have exclusive access to LSCI-related training materials (e.g. new courses, texts), but the LSCI Institute will not sell or share your contact information.

2. Secondly, as a certified LSCI professional, you are entitled to a free, one-year online subscription to the Reclaiming Children and Youth Journal. Your e-mail address will be shared with Reclaiming Youth International, in order to provide this free subscription.
    a. If you do not want to receive the journal, please indicate this to your LSCI Trainer(s).
    b. You are still asked to provide your information so that the LSCI Institute has a record of all of its trained professionals.

When entering your information into our database, you will be assigned the default password **LSCI**. Though you do not currently need a password to access the site, future exclusive offers may become available. Assigning and notifying you of this password now will ensure easier access in the future. Please keep this form with your Participant manual, so that you will have the password for the future.

- -
(Detach here)

First Name: _____   Last Name: _____

Home Address: _____   Home Phone: _____

_____   Home E-mail: _____

Agency Name: _____

Agency Address: _____   Agency Phone: _____

_____   Agency E-mail: _____

Register as an LSCI-certified participant with the LSCI Institute

Welcome to Life Space Crisis Intervention

You are about to participate in a training experience unlike most others. The techniques used in delivering the skills of LSCI have been developed over decades of experience and practice with professionals across the United States, in Europe Canada, and Australia.

You will be challenged and supported, and by the end of the program, you will have gained walk-away skills that will serve you well in your work with troubled and troubling children and youth.

The authors are interested in your feedback and suggestions, and we invite you to share your comments. Information can be forwarded through the web site, www.lsci.org.

We hope you enjoy the training.

Nicholas J. Long

Frank A. Fecser

LIFE SPACE CRISIS INTERVENTION INSTITUTE
Readings for Five-Day Certification Program

Text: *Life Space Crisis Intervention:*
Talking with Students in Conflict.
Nicholas J. Long, Mary M. Wood & Frank A. Fecser.
Pro-ed, Austin; 2001.

	TEXT	MANUAL
DAY ONE	Part I: Chapters 1-4	Introduction to LSCI Study Questions "The Conflict Cycle" (located in the Appendix)
DAY TWO	Part II: Chapters 5-6 Part III: Chapter 8	Introduction to LSCI Study Questions Red Flag
DAY THREE	Part III: Chapters 7, 9, 11	Reality Rub New Tools Symptom Estrangement
DAY FOUR	Part III: Chapters 10, 12, 13	Massaging Numb Values Manipulation of Body Boundaries
DAY FIVE	No Readings–Practice, Practice	Complete Evaluation Form

Note: We understand that most participants will not be able to complete all of the reading during the five consecutive days of training. We refer you to these sections as an advance organizer for information presented during training and for review following your completion of the LSCI course.

CORE COMPETENCIES OF
LIFE SPACE CRISIS INTERVENTION

SELF-RATING GUIDE

Life Space Crisis Intervention is a competency-based certification course. It demands much of its students in terms of knowledge development and skill practice. In return, it offers a set of competencies that enable certified practitioners to reach and teach troubled children and youth across an extensive range of problem situations.

Below, you will find a self-rating guide that lists the most important competencies to be developed during this course. Please use this guide throughout the training to monitor your own progress. You may find it helpful both in determining current strengths and identifying ongoing needs for skill development. Be sure to call upon your LSCI Trainer(s) throughout the course if you identify an area(s) in which you feel you need significant help.

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

Competency	I understand this concept(s)	I can apply this with youth	I need ongoing study
1. Knowledge of the psychological differences between professionals and youth during periods of intense stress or conflict			
2. Knowledge of how stress and traumatic memories are stored in the brain			
3. Knowledge of the effects of toxic stress on brain development in early childhood			
4. Knowledge of the stages of child development and how our perceptions are formed			
5. Knowledge of defense mechanisms and how they are used by youth in stress			
6. Knowledge of the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle			
7. Knowledge of counteraggression and its destructive impact on helping relationships			
8. Knowledge of positive and negative communication practices (e.g. I messages vs. You messages, Verbal vs. Nonverbal communication)			
9. Knowledge of Interviewing Skills (e.g. Listening, Attending, Responding, Decoding)			

10. Knowledge of the six stages of the LSCI process			
11. Knowledge of the LSCI textbook			

INTERVIEWING SKILLS

Competency	**I understand this skill**	**I can apply this with youth**	**I need ongoing practice**
1. Ability to deescalate youth during periods of intense stress or conflict			
2. Ability to establish an accurate Timeline			
3. Ability to determine the central issue of a youth's crisis			
4. Ability to carry out a Reality Rub Reclaiming Intervention (*Organizing Reality*)			
5. Ability to carry out a Red Flag Reclaiming Intervention (*Imported Problems*)), including the Carry In, Carry Over and Tap In types			
6. Ability to carry out a New Tools Reclaiming Intervention (*Teaching New Social Skills*)			
7. Ability to carry out a Symptom Estrangement Reclaiming Intervention (*Justifying Harmful Behavior*)			
8. Ability to carry out a Massaging Numb Values Reclaiming Intervention (*Building Values for Self-Control*)			
9. Ability to carry out a Manipulation of Body Boundaries Reclaiming Intervention (*Exposing Personal Exploitation*) including the False Friendship and Set Up types			

Course Introduction

Life Space Crisis Intervention

Life Space Crisis Intervention
Three Possible Outcomes of a Crisis

Staff- Child Relationship Improved

CRISIS

Staff- Child Relationship Unchanged

Staff- Child Relationship Damaged

CRISIS

If managed well, crisis can become an opportunity for positive change.

LSCI can help an adult take a bad situation and make something good of it.

LSCI can help the student and the staff build a relationship based on trust which leads to changes in perceptions, feelings, and behaviors.

The skills of
Life Space Crisis
Intervention
are important
because the acts of
violence by children
and youth are not by
appointments.

Life Space Crisis Intervention

A therapeutic skill
that enables us to
make the best out of
a stressful student
incident when we get
the worst of it.
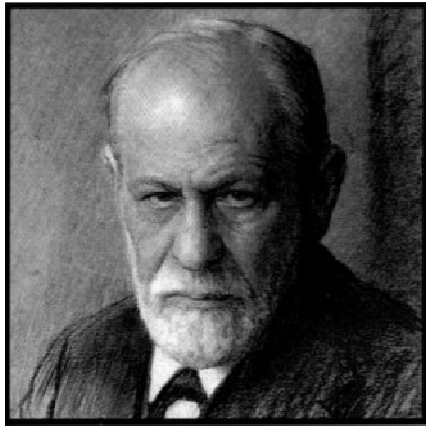
Sigmund Freud

Anna Freud

Fritz Redl
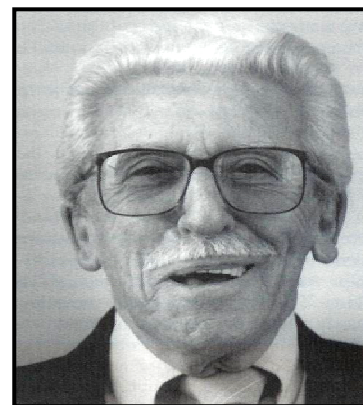
David Wineman

William Morse
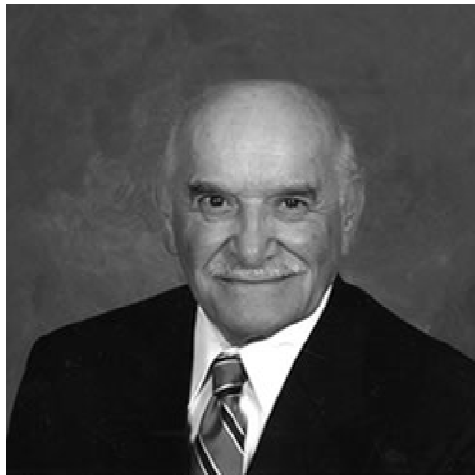
Nicholas Long

The Six Reclaiming Interventions

Red Flag:	Symptom Estrangement
Imported Problems	Justifying Harmful Behavior
Red Flag:	Massaging Numb Values
Errors in Perception	Behavior Driven by Guilt
New Tools:	Manipulation of Body Boundaries
Poor Social Skills	Exploitation of Peers

Red Flag

Stress in a person's life space is carried to another setting where it sparks conflict.

- Over-react to normal rules and procedures with emotional outbursts

- Attempt to create a no-win situation by engaging staff in a power struggle which ultimately results in more rejection and feelings of alienation.

Reality Rub

Distorted perceptions and thinking errors lead to chronic emotional and behavioral problems

1. Have blocked perceptions of reality due to intense feelings

2. Misperceive reality due to triggering of personal emotional sensitivities

3. Have a restricted perception of reality due to perseveration on a single event leading to the crisis

4. Privately reconstruct their own reality as events are interpreted through rigid perceptual filters derived from personal history

5. Manipulate reality to test limits

New Tools

Problems are caused by an inadequacy in social skills and self-management competencies

1. Has the correct attitude and behaviors but lacks the appropriate social skills to be successful

2. Experiences confusion, frustration or shame by the failures experienced

Symptom Estrangement

Person may be comfortable with bullying or delinquent behavior and show little conscience
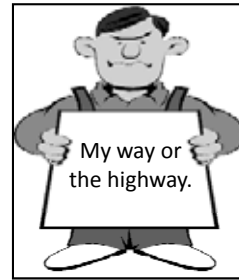
1. Do not seem motivated to change.

2. Justify their verbally and physically aggressive behavior.

3. Perceive themselves as victims and respond aggressively

4. Receive secondary pleasure from the pain they cause to others

5. Appear to be very comfortable in their approach

Massaging Numb Values

Feelings of worthlessness, guilt and lack of self-respect result in self-destructive acting-out

1. Act out impulsively, then feel guilty about their behavior.

2. Are burdened by intense feelings of remorse, shame, or inadequacy and seek additional punishment to cleanse their guilt

3. Internalize their anger and assume responsibility for all that goes wrong in their life

4. Make self-abusive statements and may engage in self-injurious behaviors

Manipulation of Body Boundaries

Youth entangled in destructive peer relationships are vulnerable to manipulation

1. A naïve student has been *set up* by a false friend or a manipulating peer and doesn't see it

2. A neglected, isolated, or loner student develops a self-defeating & *false friendship* with an exploitive classmate

3. A manipulative student takes pleasure in taking advantage of vulnerable peers.

The children of today are too much in love with living. They have terrible manners, mock authority, and have no respect for their elders. . . . I can only fear what kind of awful creatures they will become.

--Socrates
369 B.C.

Introduction to LSCI
Course Objectives

You will learn:

1. How stressful and traumatic memories are stored in the brain

2. The importance of learning how to express feelings through language

3. Unconscious forces that protect us from overwhelming stress

4. The dynamics of conflict

Introduction to LSCI
You will learn:

5. The importance of creating a sense of safety

6. How to listen to young people in stress

7. How to drain off a young person's intense emotions

8. How to help a young person express thoughts and feelings about a stressful event

9. How to develop a good Timeline

10. How to apply all of these skills in the Red Flag Reclaiming Intervention

11. The importance of changing our approach as adults towards responding more supportively and effectively to troubled children.

Summary

1. LSCI is a verbal strategy that helps adults work with children and youth to build a trusting relationship which leads to real changes in overcoming self-defeating patterns and learning to make better choices in life.

2. LSCI is a psycho-educational strategy that traces its roots to the work of such professionals as Bill Morse, David Wineman, Fritz Redl, and even Anna Freud.

3. The skills of LSCI can be used to address six of the most common patterns of self-defeating behavior.

Differences in Psychological Worlds:

Children in Stress &
Helping Adults

The Difference in Psychological Worlds
between a Student in Stress and a Helping Adult

	Staff Reactions	Student Reactions
Perceptions	Diverse Multi-dimensional	Concrete One-dimensional
Thoughts	Logical Cognitively-Based	Illogical Omnipotent Irrational Cognitive Traps
Feelings	Accepts & controls	Flooded Explosive
Behaviors	Accepts responsibility for behavior	Does not accept responsibility for behavior

LSCI Institute

What is interesting about this photo of a vase?

Notice that you can see only one image at a time.

One image is always the foreground, the other, the background.
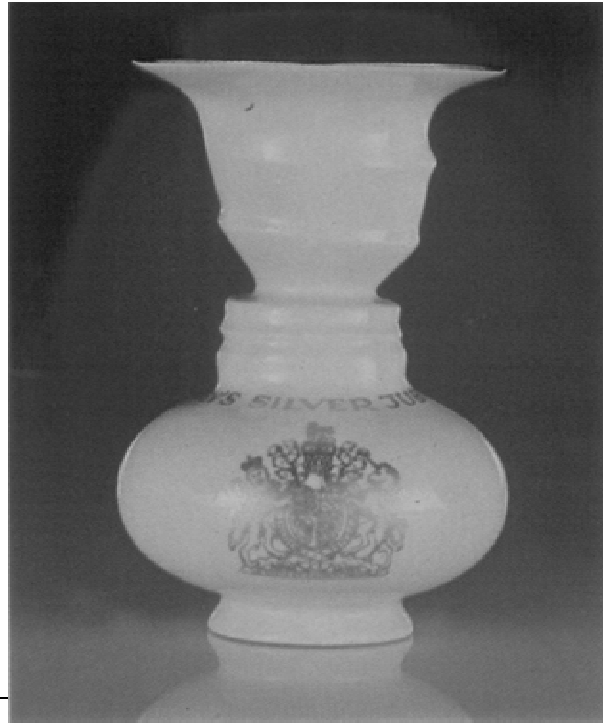
The Difference in Psychological Worlds between a Student in Stress and a Helping Adult

	Staff Reactions	Student Reactions
Perceptions	Diverse Multi-dimensional	Concrete One-dimensional
Thoughts	Logical Cognitively-Based	Illogical Omnipotent Irrational Cognitive Trap
Feelings	Accepts & controls	Flooded Explosive
Behaviors	Accepts responsibility for behavior	Does not accept responsibility for behavior

Summary

1. LSCI takes into account key differences in the psychological worlds of helping adults and students in stress .

2. Kids are often concrete in their perceptions. Under stress, they have difficulty considering things from alternate points of view.

3. In stressful situations, a child's thinking may become illogical. LSCI helps kids challenge their irrational beliefs and illogical thinking.

4. In a crisis, kids can become explosive and flooded by their feelings. Helping adults can show kids how to accept and control overwhelming emotions.

5. For some kids, accepting responsibility for behavior is like admitting failure. It is a painful process and one that benefits from adult support.

The Brain:
Stress & Memory

Thalamus

Visual cortex

Auditory cortex

Basolateral amygdala

Central amygdala

Pons

Central gray area of midbrain

Medulla

Spinal cord

Neo-cortex

Limbic system

Reptilian
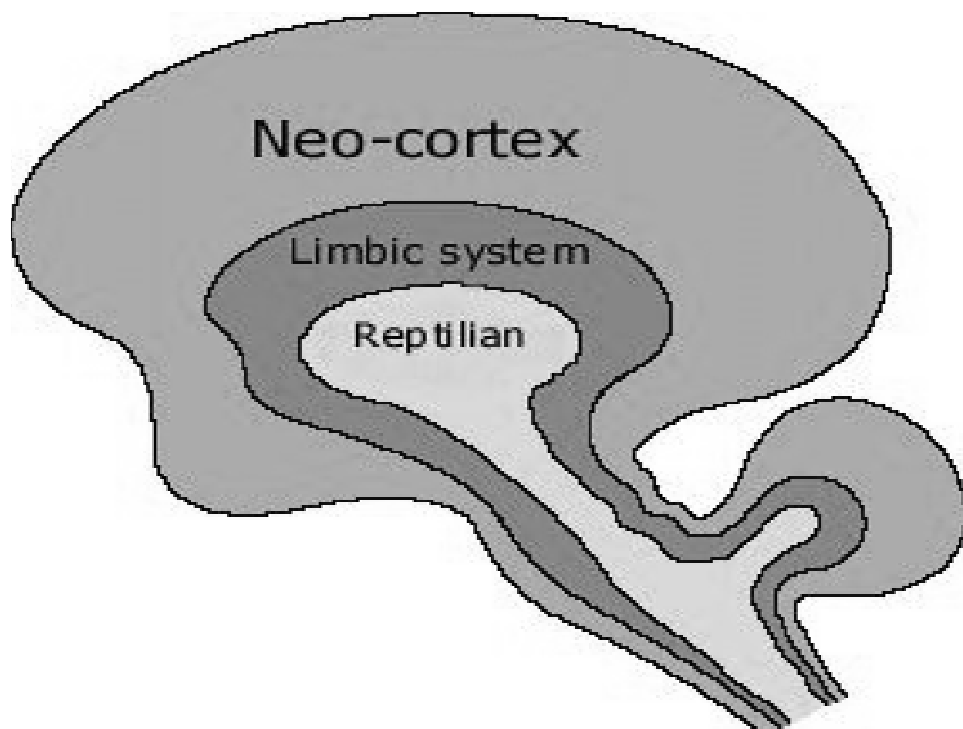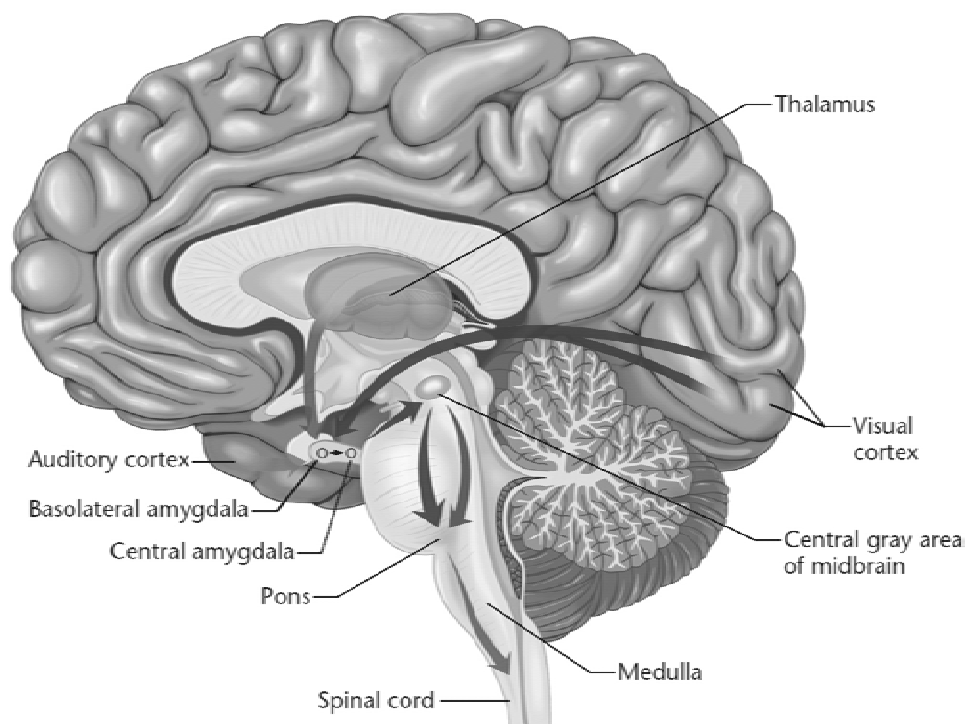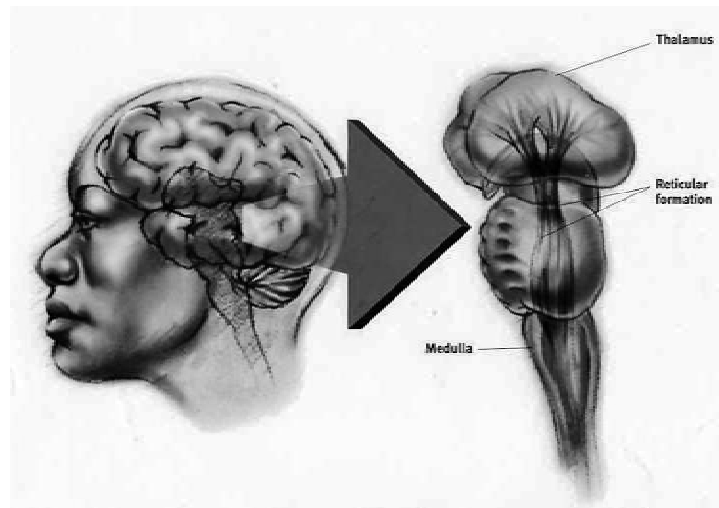
The Brainstem
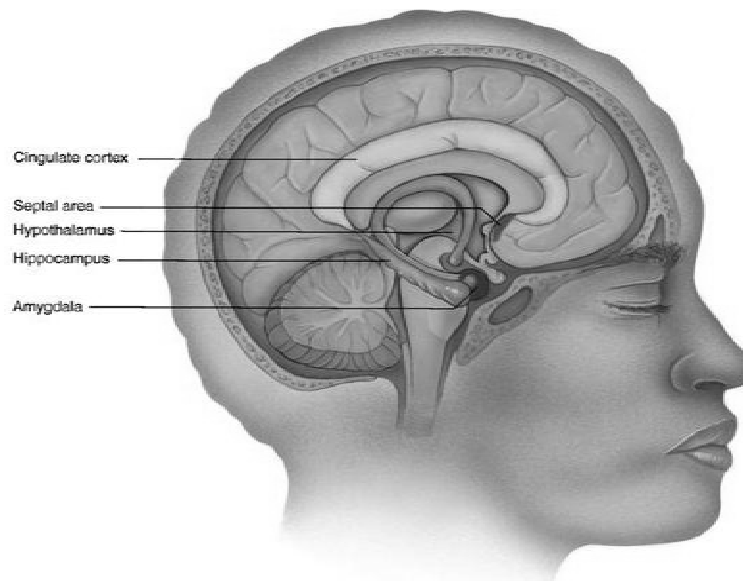
The Limbic System
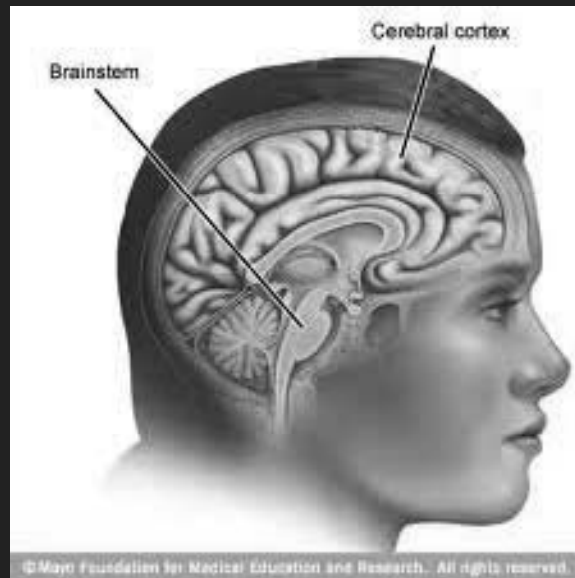
The Neocortex

Types of Stress

Positive Stress
- Adverse experiences that are short-lived
- Part of the normal developmental process

Tolerable Stress
- More intense but relatively short-lived
- With adequate support, unlikely to cause long-term problems

Toxic Stress
- Sustained adversity
- Children are unable to manage toxic stress by themselves
- Can lead to permanent changes in brain development

Effects of Toxic Stress on Brain Development in Early Childhood

1. Impairs connection of brain circuits and in extreme cases, results in smaller brain development.

2. May cause development of low threshold for stress, resulting in over-reactivity (chronic hyperarousal).

3. High levels of stress hormones, including cortisol, can suppress body's immune response.

4. Sustained high levels of cortisol can damage the hippocampus, responsible for learning and memory. Cognitive deficits can continue into adulthood.

Summary

1. The **brain stem** is responsible for survival functions, such as heart rate and respiration. "State" memories are stored in the brain stem and can be triggered during periods of stress (e.g. why your heart beats faster when you are nervous).
2. The **limbic system** is the emotion center of the brain. It plays the major role in the body's response to stress. "Sensory" memories are stored in the limbic system. This part of the brain has no language.
3. The limbic system houses the Amygdala, which is responsible for the fight, flight, or freeze reaction.
4. The **neocortex** is the executive functioning center of the brain, where planning, problem-solving, reasoning, and abstract thought all take place. This is also the storage area for facts, figures, dates, numbers, etc.

Summary (continued)

5. The memories of a child who lives in chronic stress, or who has suffered trauma, are stored largely in the limbic system, where there is no language. Without language and the ability to "time stamp" a troubling event, the difficult memories are always live and playing in the background.

6. These kids operate at a constantly high state of arousal—at toxic stress levels--and experience many events in their environment as safety threats and emotional triggers.

7. The goal of LSCI is to bring language to emotion—to interrupt repetitive trauma and crisis re-enactment patterns.

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Stages of
Child Development:

How Our Perceptions are Formed

Stages of Child Development

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Developmental Stage	Existential Question	Irrational Belief if Not Resolved
Abandonment	Is the world a safe place?	I can't trust anyone but myself—I'll do whatever it takes to meet my needs!
Inadequacy	Can I measure up to my parents' expectations?	I'll never measure up, so why try?
Guilt	Can I measure up to my own expectations?	I'm no good so I deserve to be punished!
Conflict	Can I measure up to my peers' expectations?	I'm an outcast so screw them all!
Identity	Do I have what it take to be the kind of adult I want to be?	I don't have what it takes to make it; I'm lost!

Developmental Anxieties & Stress

Stage 1: Abandonment

Is the world a safe place?

Reality Stress	Physical Stress
Will someone care for me? *Will my basic needs be met?*	*Comforted, held, and kept warm, dry & full* *vs.* *Lacking nurturing touch, and left cold, wet, hungry*

Developmental Anxieties & Stress

Stage 2: Inadequacy

Can I measure up to my parents' expectations?

Reality Stress	Physical Stress
I can't seem to do anything quite right.	*Complete dependence on caregivers for nutrition, rest, exercise, hygiene*

Developmental Anxieties & Stress

Stage 3: Guilt

Can I measure up to my own expectations?

Reality Stress	Physical Stress
Compared to others, my weaknesses and failures become realities.	*Conforming to the demands of school: sitting still, managing bodily demands*

Developmental Anxieties & Stress

Stage 4: Conflict

Can I measure up to my peers' expectations?

Reality Stress	Physical Stress
I must compete for acceptance.	*Hormones, growth, body type, personal appearance*

Developmental Anxieties & Stress

Stage 5: Identity

Do I have what it takes to make it as a self-sufficient adult?

Reality Stress	Physical Stress
Intellect, finances, opportunities, expectations, uncertainties	*Adjustment: demands of work, school, independence*

Summary

1. A child's perceptions and beliefs about the world are heavily influenced by how the existential questions of each developmental stage are resolved.

2. The perceptions a child forms from his earliest stages can become the operating principles that drive the way he approaches life.

3.

Stage	Existential Question
Abandonment	Is the world a safe place?
Inadequacy	Can I measure up to my parents' expectations?
Guilt	Can I measure up to my own expectations?
Conflict	Can I measure up to my peers' expectations?
Identity	Do I have what it takes to make it as a self-sufficient adult?

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How Children & Youth Manage Intense Emotions Under Stress

Life Space Crisis Intervention

Types of Memory

Implicit Memory

- Associated with stress and trauma
- Stored in the limbic system
- Sensory, not language-based

Explicit Memory

- Available to language
- We think about them in words
- How we think about them influences how we feel

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WE HAVE CHOICES IN HOW FEELINGS ARE EXPRESSED

- Perceptions drive thoughts

- Thoughts drive feelings

- Feelings drive behaviors

Three Choices in Managing Personal Feelings

- Act them out

- Deny and defend

- Accept and own

Most troubled students are not motivated to seek self-improvement programs, but to seek ways of justifying their faulty thinking.

Seven Defense Mechanisms

Denial
- Denial
- Rationalization
- Projection

Substitution
- Displacement
- Sublimation

Escape
- Conversion
- Regression
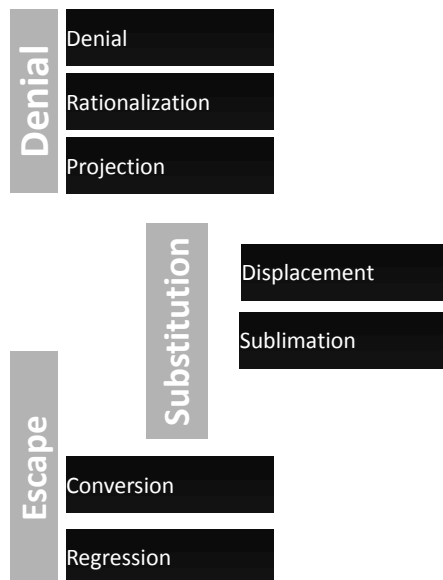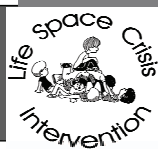
Summary

1. Implicit memory is stored in the limbic system. It is the kind of memory associated with stress and trauma. Implicit memory is sensory, and not language-based.

2. Explicit memories are language-based. We can think about these memories in words and how we think about these memories leads to how we feel about them.

3. One of the goals of LSCI is to move "raw" memories and thoughts form the part of the brain that doesn't have language to the part of the brain that does, so that kids come to realize they have choices in the way they express their feelings.

4. We have three choices when it comes to expressing our feelings: we can act them out, deny and defend them, or accept and own them.

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Language & Thinking

Types of Memory

Implicit Memory

- Associated with stress and trauma
- Stored in the limbic system
- Sensory, not language-based

Explicit Memory

- Available to language
- We can think about them in words
- How we think about them influences how we feel

COGNITIVE THEORY

- **Stream of Consciousness:**
  Continuous flow of observation and thought in the present.

- **Perceptual Set:**
  Fundamental beliefs based on personal history.

- **Active Self-Talk:**
  Conscious internal dialogue filtered by the Perceptual Set.

Stream of Consciousness

Kids may be wordless, but they are never thoughtless.

They are flooded with "consciousness."

Kids may become confused or silent as they sort through their many thoughts in search of an acceptable response.
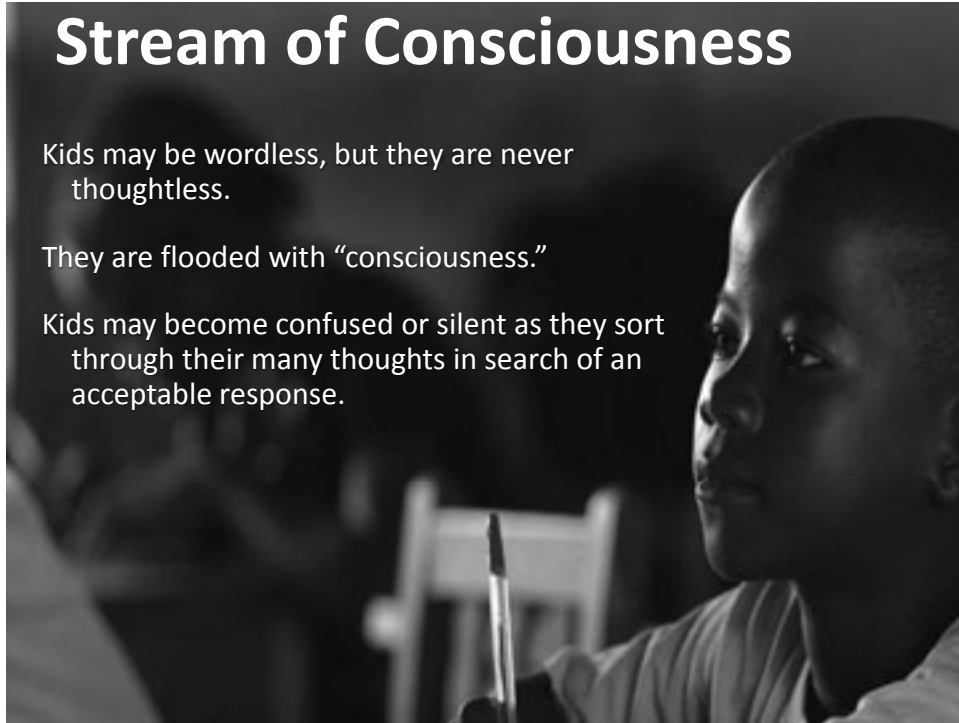
Perceptual Set

- Pre-disposed mindsets (beliefs based on personal experience) influence the stream of consciousness.

- All experiences are filtered through our Perceptual Set and shape our feeling about events:

- Reading aloud
- Running a mile
- Doing a math problem
- Socializing during lunch
- Any everyday event

Mental Images: (Personal Meaning)

Everyday Events

- Reading aloud
- Running a mile
- Doing a math problem
- Socializing during lunch
- Handling disagreements
- Accepting correction

Tags can be changed

Thoughts & Ideas

Feelings & Emotions

Perceptual Set – Your Reality

Subconscious Mind Memories

Cognitive Memory Tags

Filter of personal experiences and cultural meanings

Affective Memory Tags
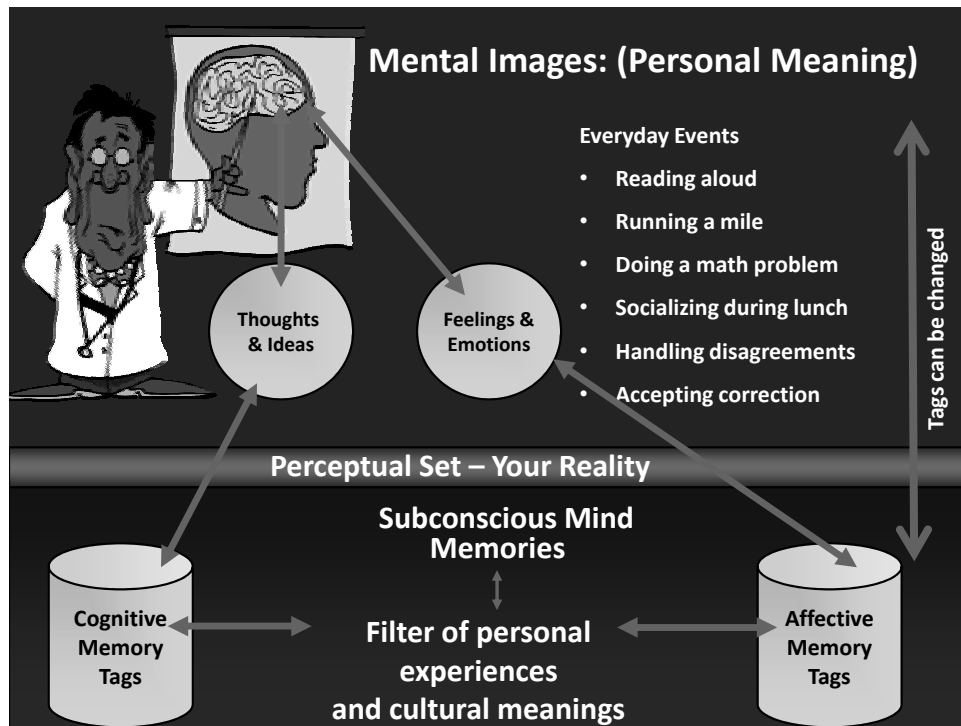
- They will not remember what we said.

- They will not even remember what we did.

- But they will never forget how we made them feel.

Maya Angelou

Active Self-Talk

- Our Perceptual Set triggers an interpretation of an event and influences what we say to ourselves; our internal dialogue.

- Self-talk generates associated feelings; it's not the event which causes the feeling, it's how we think about it.

- Some self-talk is irrational.

LSCI Institute

It's not the event which causes the feeling…

It's HOW you think about it.

Darrell suspected someone had once again slipped him a spoon with the concave side reversed.

Common Irrational Beliefs of Children and Youth

- I must be good at everything I do (otherwise, I am a failure).

- Everyone must like me (otherwise, I am a loser).

- If people do things I don't like, they are bad people
(and they must be punished)!

- Everything must go my way all the time (otherwise, I am unimportant).

- Everyone must treat me fairly all the time (because I am entitled to it).

- I never have any control over what happens to me in my life (and therefore I am
not responsible for my problems).

- When something bad happens to me, I can never forget it (and I must think about
it all the time).

Five Cognitive Traps

- **Mental Filter**

- **Discounting the Positive**

- **Jumping to Conclusions**

- **Emotional Reasoning**

- **"Should" Statements**

LSCI Institute

Cognitive Restructuring

In order to change perceptions and feelings we must tap into the student's self-talk.

- Requires excellent *listening skills* *including:*
  - *Attending skills*
  - *Decoding skills*
  - *Responding skills*

You can change the student's self-talk!

LSCI Institute

People are disturbed not by things, but by the view which they take of them.

--- Epictetus,
1st Century A.D.

The Use of Cognitive Restructuring with Kids:
Miss Schmidt & The Circus Tickets

Miss Schmidt was planning to take her group of ten 5th/6th grade special education kids to the circus. Being a program for handicapped kids, she often got a lot of free stuff, including free tickets to things. On the morning of the trip to the circus, Miss Schmidt came to the awful realization that she never received the tickets in the mail. She had a bunch of kids excited to go to the circus, but no tickets.

She called the box office and she talked to the woman there who said, "Well, I'm terribly sorry; there must have been some mistake. Next week we have space available on Wednesday. Would you like to come then?"

Miss Schmidt said, "Great, but will you please do me a favor? Will you accept a phone call from one of my students? Don't let the student know that you and I have already solved this; let the student think they're solving it. Would you mind?"

 The woman said she would be glad to do that.

Later, the kids came in and Miss Schmidt said, "Okay, everybody, let's get in a circle for a group meeting." The kids were all excited because they thought they were going to go over the rules for going to the circus.

Miss Schmidt knew a lot about the dynamics of working with groups and one of the things she knew is that if you've got bad news to deliver, you don't deliver that bad news yourself. You find somebody else in the group to deliver the bad news.

So she said to the group, "Well, group, I have some really bad news for you this morning."

Darrell, who's always looked on the dark side of things, said, "We ain't goin', right?"

Miss Schmidt said, "Darrell, that's right. How did you know?"

All of the students were upset and saying things like, "Oh, rip-off! That's not fair. What happened? This is a lot of bull!" Miss Schmidt said "Yeah, it's really disappointing."

Knowing a lot about working with the group, she knew it was important to acknowledge the feeling tone of the group.

She allowed the kids to express their feelings and aligned herself with them, saying, "Yes, it is disappointing. I'm disappointed too. Tom, I see you brought your camera. What were you going to take pictures of?"

Tom said, "I was going to take pictures of the elephants."

She asked Sally, "Sally, is that a new dress?"

Sally nodded, "Yeah, my mother got it for me yesterday."

Miss Schmidt said, "So, we're all disappointed. What are we going to do? How are we going to solve this problem?" By purposefully saying this, she put some control into the hands of the kids

The kids said, "Well, let's buy the tickets." Bu they knew they had no money.

"Well, let's ask the principal," someone suggested.

Miss Schmidt said, "Well, how much will we be asking for?"

The students looked in the newspaper and discovered the tickets were $10 each.

Miss Schmidt said, "Do you think the principal's going to give us $100?"

The kids agreed that no, he was too cheap.

Next, the kids considered a bake sale and a car wash--the usual ways kids extort money from staff. They figured out how long it would take them to earn $100 from a bake sale and a car wash. And they decided it would take too long. One kid came up with the idea to call the circus and see if they could get free tickets for another day. Everybody thought that was a wonderful idea.

Miss Schmidt said, "Okay, well, who's going to call?"

The kids said, "Well, you are. You're the teacher. You should be making the call."

Miss Schmidt said, "Well, the person at the box office and I didn't have a very positive interchange this morning. I was pretty mad when I found out they didn't send the tickets. So if I call, I don't think they're going to be real happy to talk to me. Somebody else is going to have to do it."

Darrell says, "Yeah, well, give me the phone. I'll call 'em and I'll tell 'em we need those free tickets."

The rest of the group says, "No, no, we need somebody who's going to be patient."

They decided to have Mary call because she was very mature and could handle the call. All of the kids went down to the counselor's office where there was a phone with a speaker. Miss Schmidt brought her lesson plan book with her. They helped Mary practice what she would say.

Mary made the call and said, "This is Mary from Miss Schmidt's class. There was a misunderstanding and we didn't get the tickets for the circus today and I'm just wondering if there's an opportunity for us to have another time to go to the circus for free. The woman said, "Well, you know, the circus is very popular. I'll have to put you on hold and see if we have any openings."

The suspense was building and the kids were saying, "If she says no, ask her for half price."

The woman came back and said, "Well, it just so happens that next Wednesday at 10 in the morning I have exactly 10 tickets to the circus and they're yours if you can use them."

The kids all looked at Miss Schmidt, who opened her lesson plan book and said, "Oh, we've got reading, math and science. We can't possibly go next Wednesday."

One of the kids says, "Well, since we're not going today, can't we do that stuff now?"

Miss Schmidt said, "Well, group, what do you think? Do you want to do it now?"

They said, "Yeah, yeah, yeah!"

Miss Schmidt said, "Okay, Mary, tell her we'll take the tickets."

Mary concluded the conversation and everybody goes back to their room, all excited about going to the circus next week and ready to do their reading.

What kids believe about themselves is more important in determining their behavior than any facts about them.

Summary

1. Stream of consciousness refers to the continuous flow of thoughts going through our minds. It is our awareness of what is happening in the moment and is always ongoing.
2. Our perceptual set is our fundamental beliefs about the world, based on our life histories. All of our experiences are filtered through our perceptual set.
3. Active self-talk is the constant internal dialogue we have with ourselves. It is heavily influenced by our perceptual set. What we say to ourselves generates how we think.
4. It's not the event that causes the feeling; it's how we think about it.
5. LSCI uses this understanding of the link between perceptions, thoughts, and feelings to help the child create lasting changes in behavior.

Summary (continued)

6. Under stress, kids often experience irrational self-talk that drives self-defeating behavior. LSCI helps kids examine and change their irrational self-talk, in order to bring about real changes in behavior.

7. Kids engage in five rigid patterns of perceiving and thinking known as Cognitive Traps. Each of these thinking errors contributes to a negative operating mind-set and distances the student from taking responsibility to improve his behavior.

8. Cognitive re-structuring uses good listening, responding, attending and decoding skills to change a child's operating mindset and self-talk.

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How Stress Can Drive Behavior

The Conflict Cycle
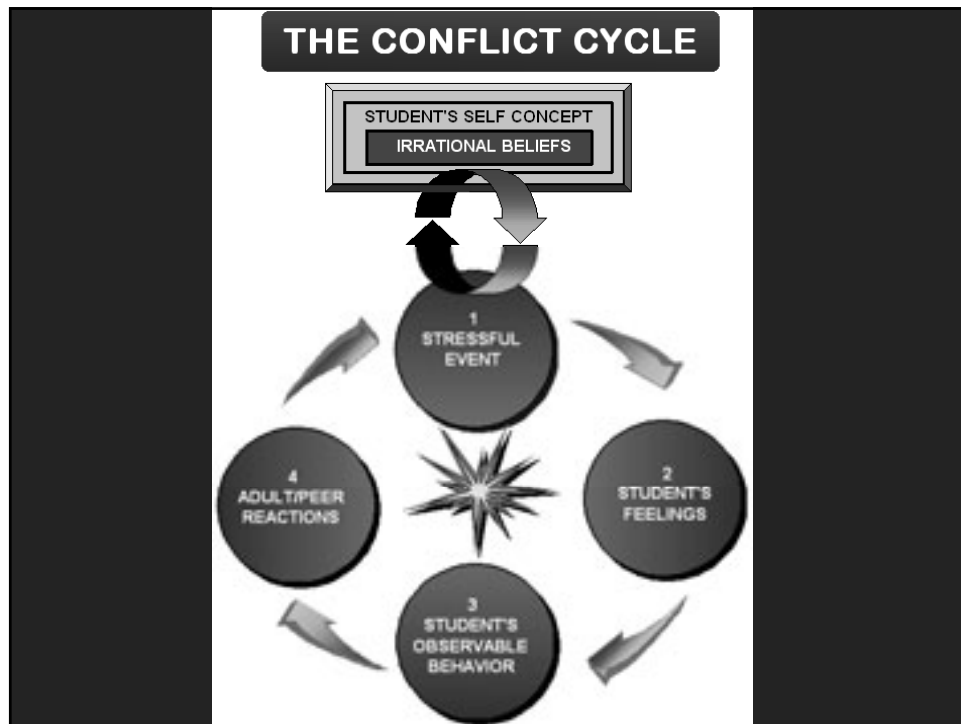
THE CONFLICT CYCLE

STUDENT'S SELF CONCEPT
IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

1 STRESSFUL EVENT
2 STUDENT'S FEELINGS
3 STUDENT'S OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOR
4 ADULT/PEER REACTIONS

Kids in stress create in adults their feelings,
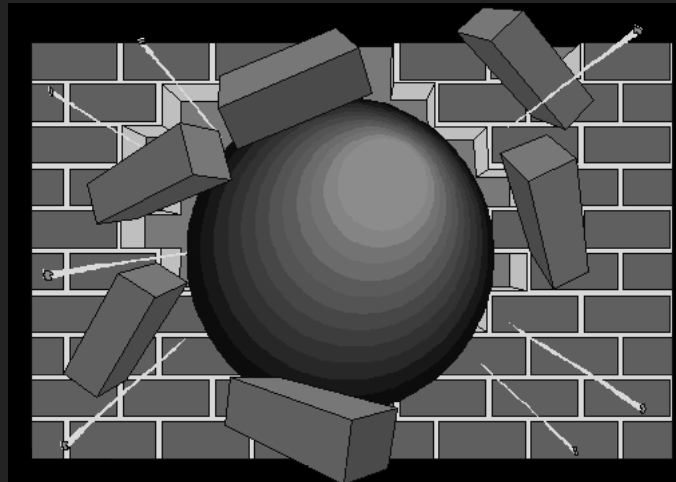
and if not trained,
the adults will mirror their behavior.

THE CONFLICT CYCLE PARADIGM

- A *STRESSFUL EVENT* occurs which activates a troubled student's irrational beliefs.

- These *NEGATIVE THOUGHTS* determine and trigger feelings.

- *FEELINGS*, not rational forces, drive inappropriate behaviors.

- Inappropriate *BEHAVIORS* incite adults.

- Adults take on the student's feelings and may *MIRROR* his behaviors.

- This negative adult *REACTION* increases the student's stress, escalating the conflict into a self-defeating power struggle.

- The student's *SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY* (irrational beliefs) is *REINFORCED*; the student has no motivation to change thinking or behavior.

Unbroken, The Conflict Cycle Spirals Into Crisis

LSCI Institute

Unbroken, the Conflict Cycle spirals into crisis

Cycle 3 – The teacher puts the saw away.

Cycle 2 – The teacher asks Trenton to put the saw away

Cycle 1 - Trenton breaks the saw blade
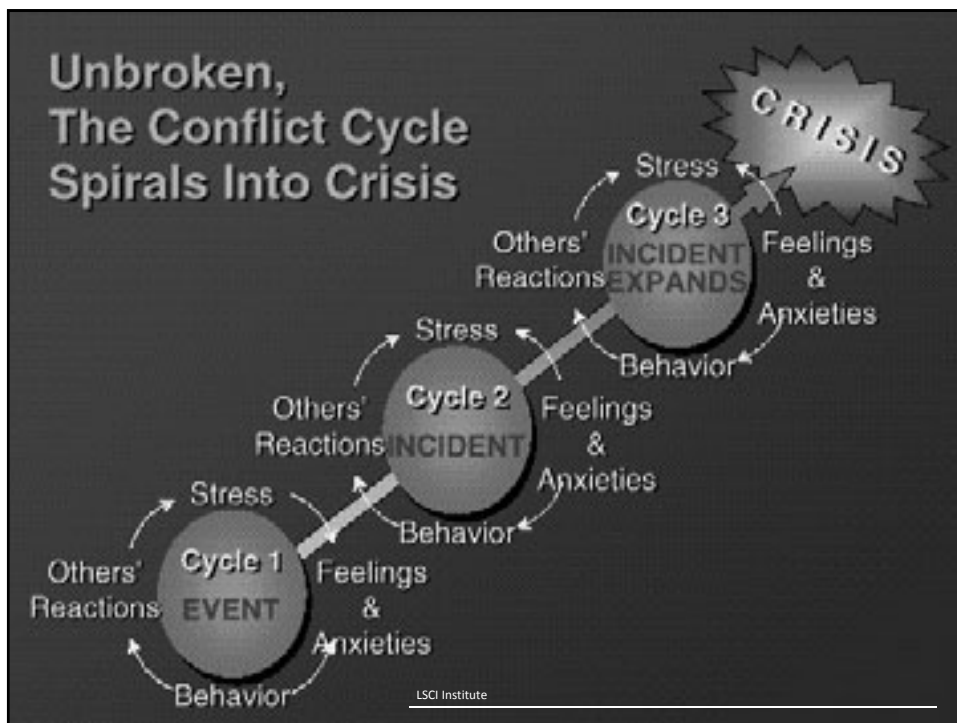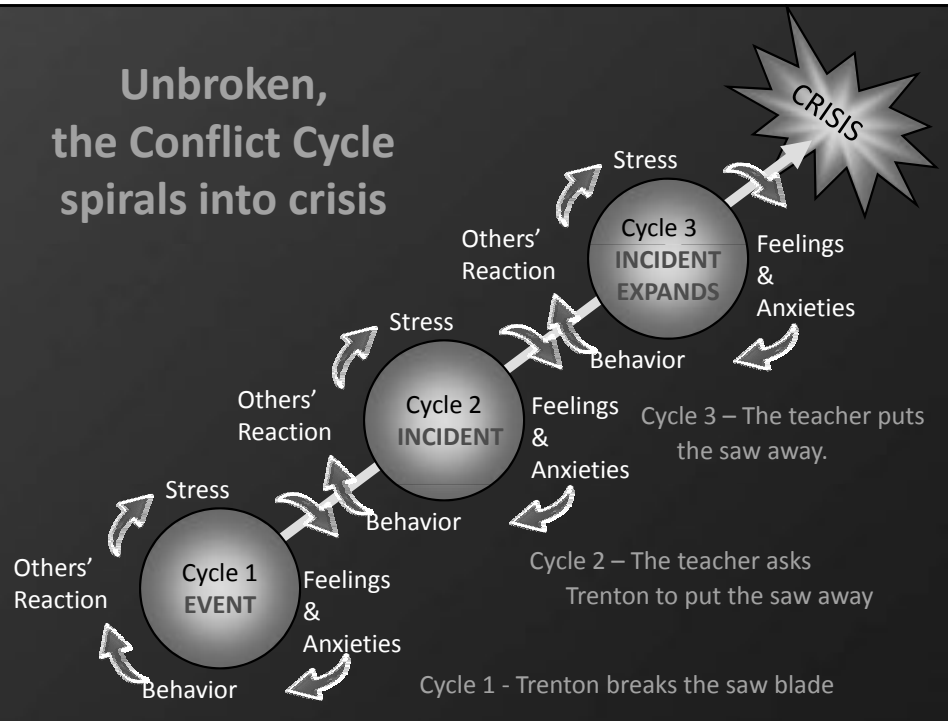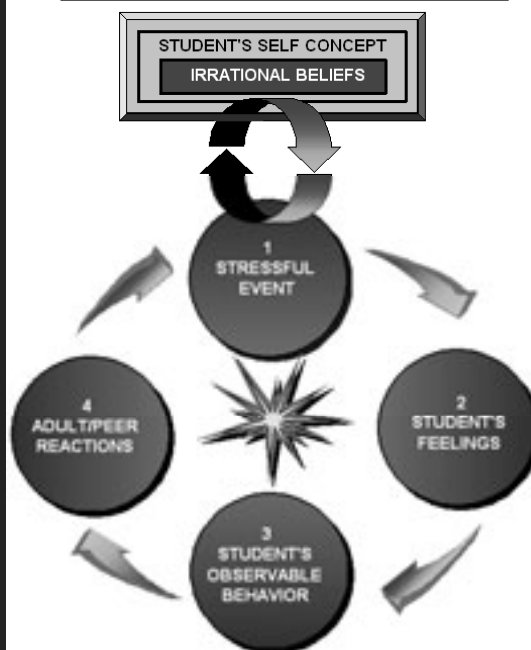
THE CONFLICT CYCLE

Remember, during crisis act like a thermostat, not like a thermometer!
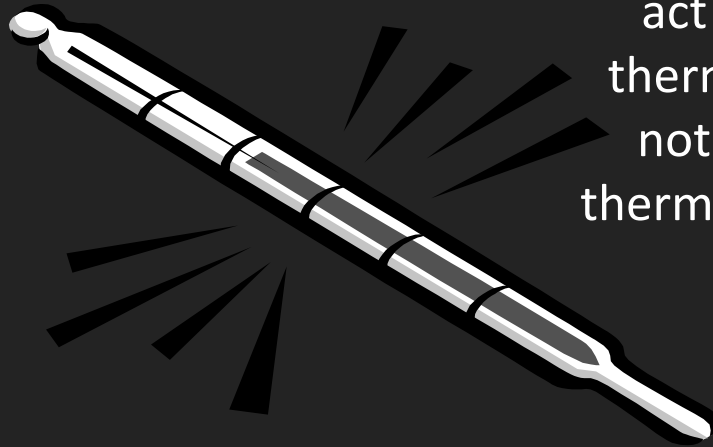
"You Messages" which Escalate the Conflict Cycle

- Can't you do anything right?

- With your attitude you'll never amount to anything.

- You are a disappointment to me, your friends, and your family.

- You apologize immediately!

- Don't you dare use that language with me!

- Why do you have to be so disgusting?

- You better start acting your age!

- You have no respect for anyone or anything!

- You don't listen to anyone, do you?

- You never use your head.

- You're more trouble than you're worth.

LSCI Institute

"I Messages" Are…

- **Less likely to provoke more aggression.**

- **Less threatening to others.**

- **A model of honest exchange between people.**

- **Likely to open up communication**

- **Helpful in interrupting a power struggle.**

- **Helpful in releasing adult stress in a healthy way.**

LSCI Institute

"I messages" model healthy coping behavior and respect.

Students are more inclined to listen.

"You messages" rob students of their dignity.

Anger, resentment, and disrespect are the result.
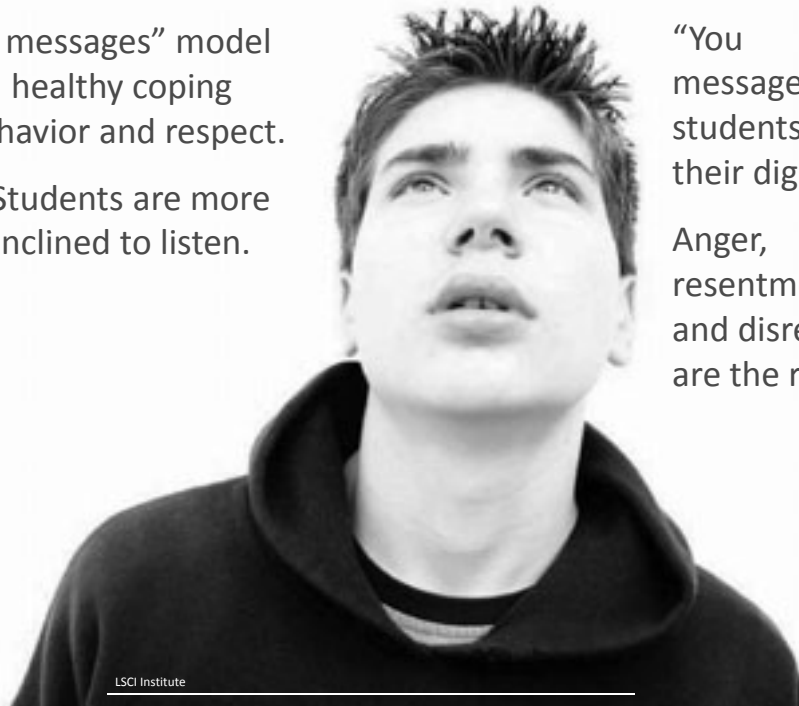
LSCI Institute

I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am
the decisive element in the classroom. It's my
personal approach that creates the climate; it's my
daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I
possess a tremendous power to make a child's life
miserable or joyous.

I can be a tool of torture, or an instrument of
inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.
In all situations, it is my response that decides
whether a crisis will be escalated or
de-escalated or a child humanized or
de-humanized.

--Haim Ginott

Summary

1. The Conflict Cycle is LSCI's major paradigm for understanding the dynamics of the interactions between students in stress and staff who work with them.
2. Kids in stress create in adults their feelings and if not trained, the adults will mirror their behavior.
3. Understanding the Conflict Cycle is the first line of defense against reinforcing the student's irrational beliefs and self-fulfilling prophecies.
4. To make a difference, we must do what's best for the student, not act on our feelings. In effect, we must act like a thermostat, not a thermometer.
5. "You messages" fuel conflict cycles.
6. "I Messages," in contrast, model a healthy way to cope with stress and build trust between the student and the adult.

Listening Skills

The Art of Listening

The path to self-regulation for troubled children and youth

- Emotions are processed in the right hemisphere, and done so nonverbally & subconsciously

- Language to communicate about emotions is processed in the left hemisphere

- Learning to "link" the two hemispheres through interaction with a caring adult provides the first step towards effectively understanding and self-regulating feelings and behaviors

- When kids learn how to communicate positively about their needs and emotional experiences, they are able to develop empathy and compassion.

Effective Listening Involves Three Skills

Attending

Responding

Decoding

He had bottled up his feelings over many years.

Attending Skills

Entering the Dialogue

- Being fully present with the student
- Attending to verbal and non-verbal communication
- Managing counter-aggression

Deepening the Dialogue

- Remaining fully present
- Being aware of one's own verbal and non-verbal messages to the student.
- Establishing "resonance" with the student, so that he senses at a subconscious level that you "feel his feelings."

LSCI Institute

Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication

The meaning transmitted from any interaction is the result of:

Facial Expression 55%

Tone of Voice 38%

Words 7%

100% Communication

Responding Skills

Entering the Dialogue

- Keeping the dialogue going

- Reducing stress

- Remaining non-judgmental

- Building trust

- Verbal and nonverbal messages MUST be congruent

Deepening the Dialogue

- Affirming

- Checking for understanding

- Creating a sense of mutual experience and problem-solving.

LSCI Institute

Decoding Skills

Entering the Dialogue

- Searching for the meaning behind the message

- Listening to what is not being said

- Linking emotions to words (left and right hemispheres)

- Helping the student to calm down, feel supported, and access the frontal lobe or "high road."

Deepening the Dialogue

- Connecting feeling and behavior

- Adding more meaning

- Leading student to insight

LSCI Institute

The most important listening skill is to listen to what is not being said!

The Art of Decoding

On his first visit to kindergarten, while mother was still with him, Bruce, age five, looked over the paintings on the wall and asked loudly, "Who made these ugly pictures?"

Mother was embarrassed. She looked at her son disapprovingly and hastened to tell him, "It's not nice to call the pictures ugly when they are so pretty."

The teacher, who understood the meaning of the questions, smiled and said, "In here you don't have to paint pretty pictures. You can paint mean pictures if you feel like it." A big smile appeared on Bruce's face, for now he had the answer to his hidden question, "What happens to a boy who doesn't paint so well?"

Next Bruce picked up a broken fire engine and asked self-righteously, "Who broke this fire engine?" Mother answered, "What difference does it make to you who broke it? You don't know anyone here."

Bruce was not really interested in names. He wanted to find out what happened to boys who break toys. Understanding the question, the teacher gave an appropriate answer. "Toys are for playing. Sometimes they get broken. It happens."

Bruce seemed satisfied. His interviewing skill had netted him the necessary information: "This grownup is pretty nice. She does not get angry quickly, even when a picture comes out ugly or a toy is broken. I don't have to be afraid. It is safe to stay here." Bruce waved good-bye to his mother and went over to the teacher to start his first day in kindergarten.

Between Parent & Child, Haim Ginott, 1958

Decoding

If you connect a feeling to a student's behavior, and if the student accepts it, the student is less likely to act out this feeling in destructive behavior.

Listening Skills

Entering the Dialogue

Attending
- Being fully present with the student
- Attending to verbal and non-verbal communication

Responding
- Keeping the dialogue going
- Reducing stress
- Remaining non-judgmental
- Building trust

Decoding
- Searching for the meaning behind the message
- Listening to what is not being said

Listening Skills

Deepening the Dialogue

Attending
- Remaining fully present
- Being aware of one's own verbal and non-verbal messages to the student.

Responding:
- Affirming
- Checking for understanding
- Creating a sense of mutual problem-solving.

Decoding:
- Connecting feelings and behavior
- Adding more meaning
- Leading student to insight

Summary

1. Learning to link the left and right hemispheres of the brain through interaction with a caring adult provides the first step towards understanding and self-regulating feelings and behavior
2. When we are listening to kids, we are always trying to link emotions with words
3. It's difficult for many kids to sit down and dialogue with an adult. It's up to the adult to create the right conditions for making a child feel heard and understood
4. Attending, responding, and decoding skills are critical to effectively listening to a child and encouraging him to link emotions and language.
5. Non-verbal communication is an essential component of good listening; studies show that the majority of meaning in communication comes from body language and tone of voice.

The Structure
of LSCI

The Six Reclaiming Interventions

Reality Rub	Symptom Estrangement
Errors in Perception	Justifying Harmful Behavior
Red Flag:	Massaging Numb Values
Imported Problems	Behavior Driven by Guilt
New Tools:	Manipulation of Body Boundaries
Poor Social Skills	Exploitation of Peers

Cognitive Map of the Six Stages of LSCI

Stage 1: Drain Off
Staff de-escalating skills to drain off the student's intense feelings while controlling one's counter-aggressive reactions

Stage 2: Timeline
Staff relationship skills to obtain and validate the student's perception of the crisis

Stage 3: Central Issue
Staff diagnostic skills to determine if the crisis represents one of the six LSCI patterns of self-defeating behavior

Diagnostic Stages

Stage 4: Insight
Staff clinical skills to pursue the student's specific pattern of self-defeating behavior for personal insight and accountability

Stage 5: New Skills
Staff empowering skills to teach the student new social skills to overcome his pattern of self-defeating behavior

Stage 6: Transfer of Training
Staff consultation and contracting skills to help the student re-enter the classroom and to reinforce and generalize new social skills

Reclaiming Stages

Summary of the Six Stages of a Successful LSCI

How to use a youth's crisis as an opportunity for personal insight and social skills learning

Stage 1: The Drain Off

Youth Stage	Staff Stage	Staff Skills
Crisis Stage	De-Escalation Stage	De-Escalation Skills
I'm upset and out of control!	*I need to drain off the youth's intense feelings and help him control his inappropriate behavior*	• Understanding the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle • Listening • Attending • Affirming • Responding • Decoding

Stage 2: The Timeline

Youth Stage	Staff Stage	Staff Skills
Timeline Stage	Relationship Stage	Interviewing Skills
This is what happened to me as I remember it.	*I need to encourage the youth to tell his story; to feel heard and understood.* *I need to validate the youth's perceptions, thoughts and feelings about the crisis.*	• Understanding the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle • Empathy • Listening • Attending • Affirming • Responding • Decoding

Summary of the Six Stages of a Successful LSCI

How to use a youth's crisis as an opportunity for personal insight and social skills learning

Stage 3: The Central Issue

Youth Stage	Staff Stage	Staff Skills
Central Issue Stage	Diagnostic Stage	Diagnostic Skills
So this is the central issue of my crisis!	*I need to determine:* 1. *Is this crisis characteristic of how this youth perceives, thinks, feels, and behaves during a crisis?* 2. *Is this crisis best managed by a short-term intervention, in order to get the youth back into the program?* 3. *Is this crisis best managed by using one of the six LSCI's?*	• Understanding the youth's history and current stressors • Knowing the six LSCI's and selecting the right one • Stating the central issue in developmentally-appropriate language

Summary of the Six Stages of a Successful LSCI

How to use a youth's crisis as an opportunity for personal insight and social skills learning

Stage 4: The Insight

Youth Stage	Staff Stage	Staff Skills
Insight Stage	Clinical Stage	Counseling Skills
Now I understand how I contribute to my crisis and make it worse.	*I need to facilitate the youth's insight into his pattern of self-defeating behavior*	Carrying out the most appropriate LSCI

Stage 5: New Skills

Youth Stage	Staff Stage	Staff Skills
New Skills Stage	Empowering Stage	Cognitive & Behavior Modification Skills
These are the social skills I need to improve my interpersonal relationships.	*I need to teach specific skills that will help the youth improve his self-concept and interpersonal relationships*	• Pro-social skills • Self-monitoring skills • Self-control skills • Role-playing skills

Summary of the Six Stages of a Successful LSCI

How to use a youth's crisis as an opportunity for personal insight and social skills learning

Stage 6: Transfer of Training

Youth Stage	Staff Stage	Staff Skills
Transfer of Training Stage	Transfer & Follow-Up Stage	Transfer & Follow-Up Skills
This is how I need to behave to get more of my needs met when I return to class.	*I need to prepare the youth to return to his program.* *I need to reinforce his new insights and social skills.*	• Understanding group dynamics of the program • Collaboration with significant staff • Assisting co-workers in developing positive reinforcement programs

Cognitive Map of the Six Stages of LSCI

Stage 1: Drain Off
Staff de-escalating skills to drain off the student's intense feelings while controlling one's counter-aggressive reactions

Stage 2: Timeline
Staff relationship skills to obtain and validate the student's perception of the crisis

Stage 3: Central Issue
Staff diagnostic skills to determine if the crisis represents one of the six LSCI patterns of self-defeating behavior

Stage 4: Insight
Staff clinical skills to pursue the student's specific pattern of self-defeating behavior for personal insight and accountability

Stage 5: New Skills
Staff empowering skills to teach the student new social skills to overcome his pattern of self-defeating behavior

Stage 6: Transfer of Training
Staff consultation and contracting skills to help the student re-enter the classroom and to reinforce and generalize new social skills

Diagnostic Stages

Reclaiming Stages

Summary

1. LSCI includes six Reclaiming Interventions; each of the RI's follows the same basic six-stage structure.

2. Drain Off, Timeline, and Central Issue are considered Diagnostic Stages. The helping adult carries out the stages and then makes a decision about whether or not to complete a full RI.

3. The six-stage LSCI process is used when the conflict is characteristic of the child's pattern of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behaving and can help him gain insight into his self-destructive pattern of behavior.

4. Stage 1 is used to help drain off some of the child's hyper-arousal and get him to a place where he can connect language with emotion.

5. The Drain Off stage requires good de-escalation skills, abundant affirmations, and a good understanding of the Conflict Cycle so that the adult avoids getting drawn into a conflict
6. In the Timeline stage, we encourage the child to tell the story from his point of view and gain an understanding of his perception of the events
7. In the Insight stage, we use the information from the Timeline to re-frame the child's perception of the issue
8. Role-playing and rehearsal are important in Stage 5, so that kids can try out new skills.
9. The stages of LSCI do not usually progress "neatly" from one stage to the next, but rather flow together and allow flexibility in moving back and forth between stages, as necessary.

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The Timeline

Timeline: The 7 Essential Questions

Where?

When?

Target?

Duration?

Frequency?

Intensity?

Contagion?

The Timeline

WHAT HAPPENED?

Where? When? Target? Duration? Frequency? Intensity? Contagion?

WHAT THOUGHTS WENT THROUGH YOUR MIND?

What were you saying to yourself?

HOW DID YOU FEEL?

How strong were your feelings on a scale of 1 – 10?

WHAT DID YOU DO?

How did you show your feelings?

HOW DID OTHERS REACT?

Did the end result of this situation make things better or worse for you?

Questions to Ask to Obtain a Good Timeline

SELF CONCEPT & IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

THOUGHTS

"What went through your mind?"

You must have had some thoughts about that."

"What were you saying to yourself at this point?"

STRESS

Help me understand . . .
What happened?
Where did it happen?
When did it happen?
Who was involved?
How long did it go on?
How tough was it?
How often does it happen?
Were others involved?
(Look for patterns.)

OTHERS' REACTIONS

How did the teacher … other student(s) … guard … etc. respond?

Then what happened?

FEELINGS

How did that make you feel? On a scale of 1 to 10, how angry… sad… disappointed… etc. were you? (Determine Intensity.)

BEHAVIOR

What did you do when you were feeling … (so upset)?

How did you show your feelings?

On a scale of 1 to 10, how (hard did you hit … loud did you yell … etc?

Most troubled students want to tell their story but lack the necessary skills and trust.

LSCI helps the student and staff build a relationship based on trust which leads to changes in perceptions, feelings, and behavior

Summary

1. In the Timeline stage, the adult helps the child recount the events of the crisis situation by asking key questions.

2. In the Timeline, the adult uses the sequence of the Conflict Cycle to find out about the child's unique set of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and to learn about others' roles in the conflict.

3. Adults use the Timeline to understand the child's active self-talk and to understand how he perceives things.

4. Most troubled students want to tell their story but lack the necessary skills and trust. The LSCI process helps a child build trusting relationships with adults and develop skills to bring language to his emotions.

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

The Red Flag

Reclaiming Intervention

A Red Flag Crisis is explosive and difficult to manage because the student is actively resistant to help and is his own worst enemy.

Like a student drowning emotionally, he uses his last breath to push his head underwater.

When you jump in the water to rescue a drowning student, frequently you end up struggling with him.

Nothing comes
from nothing.

Nothing is so small that it can't be
blown out of proportion.

The
Need
for
Drain Off

The Red Flag
Reclaiming Intervention

Use with students who:

- Over-react to normal rules and procedures with emotional outbursts

- Attempt to create a no-win situation by engaging staff in a power struggle which ultimately results in more rejection and feelings of alienation.

Student's Perception:
"Everybody is against me. No one understands what's going on with me and no one cares. I can't take it!"

Process of the Diagnostic Stages:

1. Recognize that the student's behavior is different today.

2. De-escalate self-defeating behaviors and determine the source of the intense feelings and behaviors.

3. The adult controls personal counter-aggressive feelings toward the student while working through multiple layers of resistance.

The Role of Trauma
In a Red Flag Crisis

- Children who withhold emotional expression until they reach a safe setting demonstrate a degree of emotional control not available to seriously traumatized children.

- Their fight or flight reaction is under some level of modulation, though it is likely not conscious.

- Yet, children who wait to express their anger, resentment, or fear have a paradoxical problem; the real life struggles that are the source of their stress require support systems, but their unleashing of abusive or violent behavior upon "safe" individuals alienates the would-be supporters. In that way, the child's underlying belief that he is unworthy is validated.

- The LSCI process helps adults avoid furthering the child's self-fulfilling prophecy and helps him gain self-awareness and insight into his self-destructive pattern.

The Sequence of a Red Flag
Reclaiming Intervention

- The student experiences a stressful situation at home (e.g. is beaten, over stimulated)

- The experience triggers intense feelings of helplessness, anger, guilt, etc.

- These feelings are not expressed to the abusive person for fear of retaliation.

- He contains the feelings until he boards the bus or enters the school building.

LSCI Institute

The Sequence of a Red Flag
Reclaiming Intervention (continued)

- Rather than ask for help, he acts out his feelings in the safer environment by creating intense conflict with staff.

- He over-reacts to normal requests.

- He actually wants to fight with staff.

- His interpretation of interactions is illogical.

- He quickly creates massive counter-aggressive feelings in staff .

THIS IS THE DYNAMIC OF DISPLACEMENT

LSCI Institute

Outcome Goals:

- To identify the source of the Red Flag problem:
  - Carry-In: Problem occurs early in the day. Has source in other setting.
  - Carry-Over: Frustration occurs in one setting (e.g. classroom) and is carried over and acted out in the next class.
  - Tap-In: Problem occurs during a discussion or task which triggers personal issue. Student is overwhelmed and acts out.
- To identify the dynamics of displacement and to acknowledge that the problems kids cause are not the causes of their problems.

- To practice new ways of managing the thoughts which arouse intense feelings and drive problem behavior.

Student's New Insight:

- Someone does understand my personal pain and can read beyond my behavior.

- I need to talk to staff about my real problems and not create new ones.

- I need to stop this self-defeating pattern of behavior.

The problems kids cause are not the causes of their problems

Summary

1. The Red Flag is the most frequently used Reclaiming Intervention.
2. In a Red Flag crisis, the child:
   - Over-reacts to a minor request with a huge and uncharacteristic emotional outburst
   - Tries to engage an adult in a no-win power struggle, resulting in more rejection and alienation
   - Displaces his anger onto an unsuspecting person
3. The key to managing a Red Flag situation is the Drain Off.
4. The helping adult must also:
   - Recognize that the child's behavior is different than usual
   - Identify the dynamics of displacement
   - Control counter-aggression and avoid getting caught in the Conflict Cycle
5. There are 3 types of Red Flag crises: Carry In, Carry Over & Tap In

NOTES:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

OUTLINE FOR A SUCCESSFUL RED FLAG CRISIS INTERVENTION

1. Realize that the student's behavior is an *overreaction* to a reasonable staff request. The student becomes *too* angry, sad, fearful; but wants to fight with you.
2. Student will need extensive drain off. Tell yourself to be a thermostat and not a thermometer; i.e. control counter-aggressive behaviors. Say, I hear how stirred up you are--I can feel your anger, but your words and behavior don't tell me why you are so upset. Let's cool down--take a walk, etc.
3. Once the student is in control, obtain a Timeline. Determine if the student was:
   - OK prior to school?
   - If not, and the crisis happened within the first 45 minutes, consider a Red Flag Carry-In Intervention.
   - If so, consider a Red Flag Carry Over or a Red Flag Tap-In Intervention.
   - Was OK prior to returning to your class.
   - If not, consider a Red Flag Carry-Over Intervention.
   - If so, consider a Red Flag Tap-In Intervention.
4. Look for an Insight Nugget. Provide abundant affirmation.
5. After the student feels supported, ask:
   - Who are you really mad at?
   - Who received your anger?
   - Did he/she really deserve it?
   - Yet, he/she got your anger.
6. Teach the concept of Displacement.
7. Ask, Is this a pattern? Has something like this happened to you before?
8. If the student acknowledges that this is a pattern, indicate that we've learned something very important.
9. Now, define both his private problem and the problem he created in school.
10. Involve the appropriate school staff to guarantee his safety and well-being (in cases where outside agencies must be involved.)
11. Help the student understand that a similar problem may occur again. Instead of creating a new problem, discover who in the setting the student trusts and can talk to. Help the student select the staff person with whom he is most comfortable.
12. Address programmatic consequences, if any, for inappropriate behavior.
13. Set up a behavior modification program which will reinforce this new solution to a Red Flag Crisis.

Emotions typically seen in the Drain Off stage:

_____

_____

Information you need to obtain during the Timeline stage:

_____

_____

Central Issue:

_____

_____

Insight:

_____

_____

New Skills to be taught and modeled:

_____

_____

Unique considerations during Transfer of Training:

_____

_____

Strategies for Red Flag

Drain off

•Student will need extensive drain off. Tell yourself to be a thermostat and not a thermometer; i.e. control counter-aggressive behaviors. Say, I hear how stirred up you are--I can feel your anger, but your words and behavior don't tell me why you are so upset. Let's cool down--take a walk, etc.

•Realize that the student's behavior is an *overreaction* to a reasonable staff request. The student becomes *too* angry, sad, fearful; but wants to fight with you.

•De-escalate intense feelings. This will be difficult as the student wants to keep the conflict going.

•Maintain reassuring communication, acknowledge feelings, use plenty of affirmation

Timeline

•   Work backward in time to a point before the stressful event occurred.

•   Move forward, discovering how he perceived, thought, felt, and acted.

•   Discover his "videotape" of the event.

•   Remember the Seven Degrees of Behavior: where, when, target,

       duration, intensity, frequency, contagability.

Central Issue

Look for an Insight Nugget that indicates the displacement of feelings

•Carry In: Conflict occurred in another setting, e.g., home or community.

•Carry Over: Conflict occurred in current setting, but not in the current classroom or group.

•Tap In: Event in the current setting triggers emotional baggage.

Insight

•Review the Timeline carefully reconstructing events beginning well before the current crisis took shape.

•When the student reveals the true source of the problem, acknowledge him for sharing it with you. Point out that you are impressed the student is able to be at school given the nature of the problem.

•After the student feels supported, ask:

       --   Who are you really mad at?

       --   Who received your anger?

       --   Did he/she really deserve it?

•Teach the concept of Displacement.

•Ask, Is this a pattern? Has something like this happened to you before?

•If the student acknowledges that this is a pattern, indicate that we've learned something very important.

•Help the student see that by lashing out at friends and helping adults, he is weakening his support system to deal with the real problem.

•Often the problem appears overwhelming and the student needs some hope

 that it can be resolved. Assure the student that there is help and that you will support him.

New Skills

•Help the student understand that a similar problem may occur again. Instead of creating a new problem, discover who in the setting the student trusts and can talk to. Help the student select the staff person with whom he is most comfortable.

•Acknowledge that real problems come with intense emotions. Establish a "check-in" procedure with an adult with whom the student feels comfortable. Consider ways to recognize and check rising anger. Cognitive-behavioral strategies are useful.

•Set up a behavior modification program which will reinforce this new solution to a Red Flag Crisis.

Transfer of Training

• Prepare the student to join the ongoing activity. Follow up with other staff and begin to strategize how to address the fundamental issues driving the student's feelings.

•Address programmatic consequences, if any, for inappropriate behavior.

•Involve the appropriate school staff to guarantee his safety and well-being (in cases where outside agencies must be involved.)

Red Flag Reclaiming Intervention
SUMMARY REVIEW

Emotions typically seen in the DRAIN OFF stage:

_____
_____
_____

Information you need to obtain during the TIMELINE stage:

_____
_____
_____

CENTRAL ISSUE:

_____
_____
_____

INSIGHT:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

NEW SKILLS to be taught and modeled:

_____
_____
_____

Unique considerations during TRANSFER OF TRAINING:

_____
_____
_____
_____

Home for the Holidays:

A Red-Flag, Carry-In, Reclaiming Intervention

John W. Hill and Nicholas J. Long

Art by Joseph W., age 17, a student at Lawrence Hall Youth Services in Chicago. Used with permission.

In the terminology of Life Space Crisis Intervention, a "Red-Flag Carry-In Crisis" occurs when a youngster overreacts because of stress he or she brings in from another setting (see Note). For example, many students bring problems from home or the street into the school. This article describes the diagnosis and resolution of such a carry-in problem when a student's fear of abuse at home triggered major dysfunctional behavior at school.

Although our students come to our learning disabilities clinic after school, we greet them as though they were just beginning the school day. This decision helps us to be ready to identify any significant problems brought from home and school. Brandon is a 9-year-old third grader who was diagnosed as having emotional disturbance and a reading disability. One day, prior to coming to our clinic, Brandon received a letter from Robert, his physically abusive 16-year-old brother. Brandon was convinced this letter was a statement that Robert was coming home for the holidays.

Background

Brandon has been hospitalized twice over the past year for violent and uncontrollable emotional outbursts. He lives at home with his mother; he has two older brothers who do not live with them. Robert resides in a distant court-mandated residential ranch treatment program. David, age 13, lives in a court-ordered community-based group home for youth.

Brandon attends a general education public school. He has remedial reading activities that take place in the resource room, but he is included in regular classroom activities throughout the remainder of his school day. At our clinic, Brandon usually is well motivated, even when reading tasks are difficult for him, and he enjoys teacher praise that focuses on his accomplishments. Aside from his rare emotional rages, Brandon would be considered a gentle, vulnerable student. Recently, Brandon began taking violin lessons, and he is demonstrating pleasure and pride in his new violin and his ability to play it.

The Incident

Before the incident, Brandon had attended the learning disabilities clinic for 5 months for intensive reading and decoding instruction. Students attend clinic classes from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. On the evening of the incident, Brandon completed his regular school day and spent time at home before getting a ride from his mother to our clinic. When Brandon arrived for class, he was visibly upset, lying in the back seat of the car with tears streaming down his cheeks and refusing to leave the car. Thirty minutes later, Brandon finally got out of the car and walked to the classroom. When his teachers asked him if he was ready to begin his reading activities, Brandon stiffened, folded his arms over his chest, and began shaking his head from side to side, saying, "No! Reading sucks! This school sucks! You suck!" At this point, his teacher became concerned about the possibility of prolonged confrontation and escalation. She asked if I would talk with him because Brandon and I have a comfortable relationship. I agreed.

Drain-Off Stage

Kneeling next to Brandon's desk to establish eye contact, I waited several minutes in silence. When Brandon finally looked at me, I asked him if he would please come with me to the back of the room for a drink of water. Without comment, Brandon stood up, arms still folded tightly across his chest, and walked to the fountain. I thanked Brandon for coming with me and found two chairs so we could face each other.

INTERVIEWER: Brandon, it is clear you are upset today. I see your tears, but I don't know what is causing them.

BRANDON: I don't want to read.

INTERVIEWER: Okay, I hear you. But I'm also concerned because usually you come to class ready to read. Today seems different for you. Can you share with me what you have been thinking about?

BRANDON: It's just different today. You don't know anything.

INTERVIEWER: (*ignoring the personal comment*) By different, do you mean you are having different feelings today than usual?

BRANDON: Yes!

INTERVIEWER: So you are feeling different today, but you still got out of the car and came to class all by yourself. That must have been difficult to do when you were upset.

BRANDON: Yes, I did!

INTERVIEWER: And now you are talking and not fighting with me.

BRANDON: Yes, I am!

Brandon then unfolded his arms from around himself and asked me if he could get another drink of water. After sitting together a few more minutes, Brandon dried his eyes on his shirtsleeve and gave a weak little smile, seeming more relaxed.

Timeline Stage

INTERVIEWER: So, how was school today?

BRANDON: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Did you wake up this morning in time for breakfast?

BRANDON: Yes. Then my mom drove me to school.

INTERVIEWER: Did you have to do a lot of reading today?

BRANDON: I read and wrote stuff, and I also got to play my violin. Then I went home to get my snack.

INTERVIEWER: So, it sounds like you had a pretty good day.

BRANDON: Yes. (*pause*) But guess what. I got a letter.

INTERVIEWER: (*I recalled from my Life Space Crisis Intervention [LSCI] training the importance of exploring any new object about which a student displays emotion.*) Tell me about this letter.

BRANDON: Do you want to see it?

INTERVIEWER: I sure do!

Brandon jumped up from his chair and went over to his jacket, removing an envelope from the pocket.

BRANDON: Here it is.

INTERVIEWER: So this is the letter you want me to see.

BRANDON: Yes. (*frowning*) It's from my brother Robert.

INTERVIEWER: It is addressed to you—your very own letter. Did you read it?

BRANDON: No. I can't. But my mom read it to me before I left home to come here. Do you want to read it?

INTERVIEWER: This letter seems very important to you. Do you want me to read it to you?

BRANDON: Yes!

INTERVIEWER: Okay. Here goes.

Dear Brandon,

How are things going for you there? There's not much to do here. I have to go to class. They have horses here, but I'm not sure when I can ride them. I can't come home for the holidays. Tell Mom to buy me a cheap camera, and I will send you some pictures of this place.

(signed) Robert

BRANDON: Read the part about coming home again.

INTERVIEWER: "I can't come home for the holidays."

BRANDON: Oh.

INTERVIEWER: Are you disappointed that Robert won't be coming home?

BRANDON: No way!

INTERVIEWER: "No way!" You said that in a strong way. Tell me about Robert.

BRANDON: I'm glad he won't be coming. He hurts me. He hits my mother and he steals cars.

INTERVIEWER: You're glad your brother won't be coming home because in the past he hurt you and your mom. How has he hurt you?

BRANDON: He takes my stuff from my room and hits me hard until I cry. Mom too. That's why he's gone.

INTERVIEWER: So Robert is very aggressive and hurtful to his family, and you feel better knowing that he won't be coming home.

BRANDON: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Safer?

BRANDON: Yes. (After a long pause) Do you think Robert is safe, too?

INTERVIEWER: Robert is away and won't be coming home. You are safe now. He can't hurt you from far away. He is safe, also, because he can't hurt you and is getting help with his anger. You were brave to tell me what you really felt. Let's read this letter together out loud so you can learn the words and read it to yourself any time you want.

We read the letter twice.

BRANDON: Thanks. Guess where I'm going to keep my letter?

INTERVIEWER: Where? Do you have a special place in mind?

BRANDON: Yes. In the inside compartment of my violin case.

INTERVIEWER: That's a very special and safe place for your letter. Safe and in control, just like you are now. Do you want to put your letter in the violin case now?

BRANDON: Yes.

Central Issue and Insight Stages

Clearly the letter from Robert tapped into Brandon's fear of his brother, which he displaced onto his mother and teacher as refusal to come to class and to read. Once Brandon understood that his older brother was not coming home, he began to feel safe and more in control, even deciding to put the object of his crisis, the letter, in a symbolically contained and "safe" place. Reviewing the timeline in my mind, I selected a Red-Flag, Carry-In, Reclaiming Intervention to help Brandon understand his pattern of self-defeating behavior.

INTERVIEWER: Before returning to reading lessons, can you tell me again what upset you?

BRANDON: My brother coming home and hitting me.

INTERVIEWER: That's right, but who had to deal with your upset?

BRANDON: My mom and my teacher.

INTERVIEWER: So let's review this sequence. You were actu-ally upset with your brother, but you got upset with your mother and teacher instead. Is that the way it was? Did that help your problem with the letter?

BRANDON: No. Reading the letter helped.

INTERVIEWER: And now that your private worry about your brother coming home is over and you are safe, how will you behave in class?

BRANDON: Okay.

INTERVIEWER: Sure, because once you talked about your problem, you were able to solve it, so now you are ready to return to class.

New Skills Stage

INTERVIEWER: What can you do the next time you're upset or afraid of a letter from your brother?

BRANDON: Tell my mom.

INTERVIEWER: That sounds like a good idea. Now let me ask you a question. What will you say to your mom or to your teacher in order to get help next time you receive a letter from your brother?

BRANDON: Read the letter to me.

INTERVIEWER: That is very clear. Can you tell your mother or teacher that so they can talk with you?

BRANDON: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you for talking with me. I also think you learned something important from this problem. Are you ready to go back to reading class?

BRANDON: Yes. Do you think my teacher will let me play my violin for the class?

INTERVIEWER: I don't know, but it sounds like a good idea. Let's ask her.

During snack break, Brandon played his violin for the class, thus ending his afternoon on a very positive note.

Transfer of Training Stage

I talked with Brandon's mother about this incident. Brandon will continue family therapy to deal with his brother's abuse and his own explosive episodes. Brandon's teachers agreed to listen to his attempts to tell us his feelings because Brandon's self-defeating behaviors may occur again if he receives mail from his brother. It also was agreed that Brandon should "check in" at the beginning of each class session with his teacher, whom he trusts and is the most comfortable in talking to.

Instructional Comments —Nicholas J. Long

I selected this Red-Flag, Carry-In Crisis because not only is it an excellent instructional example, but it also offers an

opportunity to respond to some common and significant criticisms regarding using LSCI in public schools.

Criticism 1

"The determination of the student's pattern of self-defeating behavior is too ambiguous a concept to be valid and reliable. Many of the students I have seen in a crisis could fit at least two of six proposed patterns of self-defeating behavior. It appears to me the diagnosis is more a function of the staff than the behavior of the student."

Response to Criticism 1

This criticism reflects only partial understanding of the LSCI diagnostic process of identifying any one of the six student patterns of self-defeating behaviors. The confusion begins whenever a staff person has difficulty distinguishing between the student's presenting pattern of self-defeating behaviors and the precipitating source of his or her problem. A differential diagnosis of a student's pattern of self-defeating behavior is based on an analysis of the student's presenting behaviors, not on his or her underlying issues. Let me explain.

The diagnostic pattern of a Manipulation of Body Boundaries–Crisis Type 1 is based on the dynamics of "false friendship." The presenting pattern involves a relationship in which a manipulative student offers his or her friendship to a student who is emotionally needy only if the latter carries out the wishes of the former. Ultimately, this friendship is not in the best interest of the student with emotional problems, because he or she will end up being exploited and in trouble for acting out the suggestions of his or her "friend." Once this pattern of behavior is identified, the diagnosis of the Manipulations of Body Boundaries–Crisis Type 1 can be made during the timeline stage, followed by specific reclaiming interventions to alter this destructive relationship.

A second look at the behavior of the two students in this example, however, may cause some persons to wonder if the correct diagnosis was made. For example, the manipulative student may appear to be too comfortable with his or her devious behaviors and perhaps could benefit from a Symptom Estrangement Intervention. Likewise, the student who is emotionally needy may appear to lack adequate social skills for making friends and perhaps could profit from a New Tool Intervention. These conclusions are logical, but there are secondary issues. The primary diagnostic issue is the presenting behavior of "false friendship," not these students' underlying issues, which are addressed during the reclaiming intervention, not during the diagnostic process.

To clarify the distinction between a student's presenting behaviors and his or her underlying concerns, I will

review the diagnostic process Brandon's behaviors took. Brandon's presenting behaviors were (a) his initial refusal to get out of the car and (b) his continued negativism once he was in the classroom. The staff members who knew Brandon realized his behavior was unusual and out of proportion to the situation. This was the diagnostic behavior or clue that Dr. Hill needed to consider. After draining off Brandon's intense feeling and obtaining his story about his brother's letter, Dr. Hill was able to confirm his diagnosis of a Red-Flag, Carry-In Crisis. A staff member could argue, however, that Brandon's crisis was also an example of a Red-Flag, Tap-In Crisis and/or a Reality Rub Crisis. The evidence justifying these diagnostic interpretations is as follows:

- This is a Red-Flag, Tap-In Crisis because Brandon's belief that his abusive brother was coming home tapped into Brandon's unresolved feelings of fear, and this sequence triggered massive feelings of anxiety in Brandon, resulting in his subsequent dysfunctional behavior.
- This is a Reality Rub Crisis because Brandon misperceived what he had heard when he listened to his mother read Robert's letter. This distortion triggered his fear of Robert and drove his subsequent dysfunctional behavior.

Both of these interpretations are correct, but they became secondary issues once Brandon carried his problem from home to the remedial reading clinic. Brandon's presenting pattern of self-defeating behavior, which was unusual and an overreaction to a reasonable situation, determined that this was a Red-Flag, Carry-In Crisis and not a Red-Flag, Tap-In Crisis or a Reality Rub Crisis. These additional underlying issues—distortion of reality and unresolved fear of Robert—would be addressed during the reclaiming interventions and not during the diagnostic process.

Evaluating a student's pattern of self-defeating behavior to determine if it represents one of the six LSCI diagnostic crises is a learned skill. Based on my experience, a correct or valid diagnosis will emerge if a staff person is certified in LSCI, has a positive relationship with the student, is able to obtain a complete and honest timeline of the crisis, and concentrates on the student's presenting pattern of self-defeating behaviors.

Criticism 2

"I'm confused about the relationship between the six steps of the LSCI process and the six LSCI diagnostic crises and reclaiming skills."

Response to Criticism 2

Much of this confusion is legitimate and is due to our ongoing refinement of LSCI. Over the past 3 years, we have

expanded and improved the teaching and skills of LSCI, which caused us to add and change some terms and concepts. Unfortunately, not everyone interested in LSCI is aware of these changes, so let me review the major ones:

Developing a Cognitive Map of the Six LSCI Stages. To help staff members know where they are during an LSCI, a cognitive map was developed for each stage, delineating student's role, staff person's role, and specific skills needed to complete each of the six sequential stages. The stages are as follows:

1. The Student Crisis Stage
2. The Student Timeline Stage
3. The Student Central Issue Stage
4. The Student Insight Stage
5. The Student New Skills Stage
6. The Student Transfer of Training Stage

The first three stages will contain the information needed in the diagnostic process to determine if the student's presenting pattern of self-defeating behavior fits one of the six LSCI diagnostic crises:

1. The Red-Flag, Carry-In, Tap-In, or Carry-Over Crisis–Imported Problems
2. The Reality Rub Crisis–Errors of Perception
3. The Symptom Estrangement Crisis–Delinquent Pride
4. The New Tools Crisis–Limited Social Skills
5. The Massaging Numb Values Crisis–Impulsivity and Guilt
6. The Manipulation of Body Boundaries Crisis: Type I or II—Vulnerability to Peer Influence

The last three stages of the LSCI process, consisting of the Insight stage, the New Skills stage, and the Transfer of Training stage, represent the LSCI reclaiming intervention. For each LSCI diagnostic crisis there are corresponding reclaiming interventions to turn the problem into an opportunity for insight, change, and responsibility. The LSCI process consists of determining the proper diagnosis (Stages 1, 2, and 3) and then determining the appropriate reclaiming interventions (Stages 4, 5, and 6).

Criticism 3

"We are not a fancy therapeutic school, loaded with clinical staff who have the time to talk with a student in a crisis. As a counselor, I see 10 to 15 problem students a day. If I spend more than 15 minutes with them, I cause more problems for the staff because my services would not be available to them. LSCI may be great, but it would never work in our school. We have too much to do, and LSCI is too complicated and takes up too much time!"

Response to Criticism 3

This criticism of LSCI is wrapped in a rigid, ironfisted rationalization that prevents and depreciates any new behavior management strategy from ever being considered. This rationalization usually is based on staff member feelings of being overworked and underappreciated, which leads to a sense of helplessness about their situations. Once this type of thinking settles in, any hope that life in this school will get any better is squashed. There is no easy way to penetrate such self-reinforcing rationalization, but some common misperceptions about LSCI can be identified and clarified.

Example 1: LSCI Is an Add-On and Not a Replacement Strategy. LSCI is designed as an advanced, specific strategy for students involved in chronic self-defeating school behavior patterns. It is not a panacea for all student problems. Just as we would not put out a match with a fire extinguisher or give antibiotic medicine when fluids and rest would be effective, we would not engage a student in the LSCI process unless his or her behavior was severe. In general, we believe less-demanding behavior management techniques would be appropriate in 85% of student problems.

Example 2: Successful Implementation of LSCI Practices in a School Does Not Involve Great Expense or School-wide Commitment. With all of the demands on staff members, many times we suggest it is better to begin LSCI quietly and slowly, without any fanfare. One plan we have found successful is to have two staff persons (one must be a counselor, school psychologist, social worker, or administrator) become certified in LSCI during the summer. These two people need to be volunteers. Once school starts in the fall, they will have the skills and the enthusiasm to work effectively with difficult students in a crisis. Inevitably, their success with these students will attract other teachers' interest in LSCI. This is what we call our "build a better mousetrap" philosophy of change.

Example 3: LSCI Can Save Staff Member Time and the School's Reputation. Student crises cannot be scheduled. Once they occur, staff members *have* to respond. In our study of school crises in District 75 of the New York Public Schools, we found that staff members did not start or initiate the majority of student conflicts, but they often responded to the crisis in a way that fueled it and kept it going. They thus escalated the crisis into an explosive situation where the student ended up attacking a staff member, injuring him or herself, and having to be restrained. Occasionally the crisis involved calling the police, which often generated television and newspaper stories about more student violence in the public schools.

Example 4: LSCI Is Not Complicated or Time-Consuming if One Is Trained. LSCI is not easy, but once you learn it, the skill will allow you to participate in more rewarding

and more diverse life experiences. Dr. Hill was trained in LSCI, and the example in this article illustrates the effectiveness of his training. The entire LSCI took no more than 15 minutes, but its impact on Brandon was a significant and meaningful life experience, which I believe he will never forget. Instead of feeling rejected, punished, and/or alienated, Brandon walked out of his crisis having new insight into his pattern of self-defeating behavior and feeling respected and cared for by adults in the school. Life got better for Brandon because Dr. Hill had the necessary skills to turn Brandon's crisis into an opportunity for personal growth, responsibility, and a more trusting relationship with him.

*John W. Hill, PhD, is a professor in the department of special education and communication disorders at the University of Nebraska in Omaha. He has also served as director of the Learning Disabilities Clinic there for the past 24 years. He can be contacted at: Kayser Hall 115-B, University of Nebraska, Omaha, NE 68182. **Nicholas J. Long** is president of the Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute, professor emeritus of American University, and co-editor of this journal. He can be reached at: 226 Landis Road, Hagerstown, MD.*

EDITORS' NOTE

Life Space Crisis Intervention is the focus of this regular journal feature, "Problems as Opportunity." This issue marks the 29th consecutive LSCI instructional article. Each was written to enhance skills in talking with a student during a crisis. For our new readers, some instructional comments may be confusing because these build on previous examples. One solution would be to read any or all the previous 28 issues of *Reclaiming Children and Youth*. An alternative is to become certified in LSCI at one of our many regional conferences.

The following is an example of a typical club session. Social workers chose to use the lesson **"Don't Judge a Book by Its Cover."** Club members decided whether or not to admit a new person to their club and, in the process, learned how appearance can influence their decisions. Youngsters were given a picture of a child and general information about the child's interests. Half of the youngsters were given a picture of a child who was dirty, whereas the other half were given a picture of a child who appeared neat and clean (see Figures 5 and 6). They were asked if they would admit that child to the club. Decisions were recorded using a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *definitely admit*, 2 = *probably admit*, 3 = *probably not admit*, 4 = *definitely not admit*). Youngsters overwhelmingly selected the neat, clean child and rejected the dirty child, even though the two children had the same interests. Social workers used this discovery as an opportunity to discuss first impressions and how the children "sized up" strangers who approached them on the streets. A debate about whether or not people should make first impression decisions followed.

Conclusion

The Amazing Discoverers' Club offers a viable option for extended-day and after-school programs. Program evaluation data have indicated that students—including youngsters with behavioral and learning difficulties—*like* participating. What's more, they develop important science knowledge and social and academic skills.

***Tanis Bryan** and **Cynthia Warger** are educational consultants with the Foundation for Exceptional Innovations in Reston, Virginia. They can be contacted at: 1648 Bennington Hollow Lane, Reston, VA 20194.*

AUTHORS' NOTES

REFERENCES

Bryan, T., & Warger, C. (1998). *Amazing discoverers' club*. Reston, VA: Exceptional Innovations.
Carnegie Corporation. (1992). *A matter of time: Risk and opportunity in the non school hours*. New York: Author.

I Can't Hold it in Forever:
Connecting with a Youth in Pain

Mark Freado

Much troubled behavior results as youth "import" problems that originate in the family or community, thus displacing conflicts on neutral parties. Such outside stressors can overwhelm a youth and contaminate relationships with well-meaning persons. LSCI is designed to deal with such situations through a "red-flag intervention." This article shows how the helping adult can calm turbulent relations, listen carefully to what really is bothering the student, and work with the youth to resolve the problem and restore harmony. In contrast, the simplistic application of consequences often fails to either identify or solve the problem, thus escalating stress and stirring turbulent emotions.

It was obvious from a glance into the room that Brandon was very upset about something. A few minutes later the commotion in the classroom spilled out to the hall. There was the loud voice; part growling, part yelling. Then there was the sound of furniture banging. Brandon came out of the classroom with a very aggressive posture. Soon several staff members formed a semicircle around Brandon, who was threatening harm to anyone who came near him. From some distance away, I asked his teacher, Miss Nancy, if it would be all right if I tried to talk with Brandon. She readily agreed and there was no objection from the others.

I waited a few minutes and let the other adults in the area recede before I approached and asked Brandon if there was anything I could do to help him relax. He quietly but firmly suggested that I could leave him alone. I told him I would stand back and check back with him shortly. He was not quite ready as he paced around in a small area of the hall talking, mostly to himself, about how someone was going to "get f---d up." Stage One, The De-escalation Stage, of the Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI) had begun. After just a couple minutes, I told him that it was clear that he was very upset about something and I hoped he would be able to talk with me or someone rather than letting things get more out of control. I told him, as I often say to young people in this first stage of involvement in their crisis, "I can see you're very angry, but I have no idea what you're so angry about. I'd really like to understand what is going on with you." Then it was important for me to be quiet so he could consider his choices. Letting silence happen is an important skill that many adults find difficult to embrace without training and support. Giving him some space and time was made easier since all the other students had now settled in their classrooms and the adults had gone back to their primary tasks. Two of them stayed within range but out of sight of Brandon in case things escalated again.

The setting was a small, private, non-profit agency in California providing residential services in group homes in the community. The organization also provided educational and mental health services in another setting that was part of the program. The program served 20 adolescents considered very troubled and at risk in the rating system used by the state. My involvement in the program was as a trainer and consultant, and I had been there several times over a period of a few months. A principal part of the training was Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI). As a consultant I spent time in the program

settings observing, teaching, and building relationships. During my previous visits, I had established a good rapport with Brandon and believed he would talk with me once he was able to compose himself.

Brandon is thirteen years old, tall, overweight, and of mixed racial background. He has no direct knowledge of his father and, until placement, lived with his mother and younger sister. He is considerably larger than the other young men in his group, giving him a menacing appearance when he is angry. He has been aggressive with peers and adults prior to and during the earlier parts of his placement in this program. In recent months, however, he has been working with the program, gaining new trust, more responsibility, and additional privileges. His nature seemed to me to be much gentler than his reputation would have one believe. We talked about that on other occasions, and he acknowledged that he gets really mad sometimes and uses his size and strength to be threatening.

After approximately 3–5 minutes (those intervals always seem longer than they are), I approached Brandon again to let him know I appreciated his taking some quiet time and hoped it helped him settle

"Unhappy Girl"
Art by Olyosha. St. Petersburg, Russia.
Used with permission

enough to talk with me. He did not say anything, which I interpreted as evidence he was more settled. I walked to the doorway of a room adjacent to the classroom and asked him to come in and sit down with me if he was ready. He walked in slowly and sat across from me at a small table. After thanking him for trusting me to talk with him about this problem, I asked him if it would be all right with him if two program staff members, Heather and Ron, sat in the room while we talked. I explained that the way I was going to talk with him was what I was teaching staff to do and, if he let them sit in and listen, he would be giving them a great learning opportunity. Together we could help the staff get better at what they do. He said it would be all right with him if it was only him and me that talked. We all agreed and were able to proceed.

Stage Two of the LSCI intervention, The Timeline, provides opportunity to build trust with a young person through effective listening. One of the goals of this stage is to assist the young person in telling his or her story. In *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, Steven Covey writes that we should seek first to understand, then to be understood (1989), and so it is with Stage Two of the LSCI process. Our task at this point is to listen to the story from the youth's point of view, to understand their perceptions and thoughts, and assess their experience for patterns of behavior that get them in and keep them in trouble.

Interviewer: "Brandon, things were really tense as soon as you came to school. Did something happen earlier this morning that caused you to be so upset?"

Brandon: "I don't want people on my back all the time. People just need to leave me alone."

Interviewer: "Someone was bothering you this morning?"

Brandon: "Miss Heather came in to get us up like every morning and kept yelling at me to get up so I could get breakfast and get to school on time."

Interviewer: "She yelled at you like that in a loud and angry sounding voice?"

Brandon: "No, but she kept saying 'get up, Brandon, get up, Brandon'." He said that with a sneering voice.

Interviewer: "Brandon, I have to ask, did she say it like that with that tone?"

Brandon just smiled slightly and looked at Miss Heather, who was in the room with us.

Interviewer: "So she said it in her normal voice but she said it a few times?"

Brandon nodded affirmatively.

Interviewer: "Do you think she really just wanted you to get up on time for breakfast and school or do you think she was trying to get you angry?"

Brandon: "She was just being nice but I didn't want to get up so I yelled at her and said some really bad things."

Interviewer: "What did Miss Heather do then?"

Brandon: "She just said I should make a good choice and she would be in the kitchen waiting for me."

Interviewer: "So she gave you some space. Did you get up then?"

Brandon: "Yea, but all I got for breakfast was an apple and some toast to eat in the van."

Interviewer: "So you were late but she made sure you had something to eat anyway?"

Brandon nodded affirmatively and looked sideways in Heather's direction.

Interviewer: "Were you upset about something before Miss Heather came in to wake you?"

Brandon: "I was mad the whole weekend."

Interviewer: "The whole weekend? Was there something going on in the house that you were having a hard time with?"

Brandon put his head down. I could see tears dripping from his eyes.

Interviewer: "Brandon, it looks like something happened that really has you upset. It could be lots of things, maybe with the other boys or the staff. Whatever it is really seems like it's important to you. Please give me some idea about what happened if you are okay talking about it with me."

Brandon continued to sit in silence with his head down.

Interviewer: "We don't have to talk about it if you don't want to. I can see it is something important to you."

Brandon: "It's my mother again."

Interviewer: "Again? I don't know what you mean when you say that."

Brandon: "She was supposed to bring my sister and come to visit me on Friday but she didn't come."

Interviewer: "I'm really sorry to hear that, Brandon. I can see that really was upsetting to you.

Anyone would probably be upset in a situation like that. What happened that she didn't come to visit?"

Brandon: "I don't know."

Interviewer: "You don't know? You weren't able to talk with her?"

Brandon: "No, she didn't call and she doesn't have a phone."

Interviewer: "You still don't know what happened, through the whole weekend?"

Brandon shook his head no.

Interviewer: "No wonder you're upset. You said *again*. This has happened before?"

Brandon: "She hasn't come for visits before but she called. This time she didn't call so I'm mad but I'm also scared something happened."

Interviewer: "If she doesn't have a phone, how do you usually talk with her?"

Brandon: "My aunt lives down the street and she has a phone."

Interviewer: "Did you call your aunt's house?"

Brandon: "Yeah, but nobody answered the phone."

Interviewer: "Did the staff working this weekend try to help you find out what happened?"

Brandon: "They let me keep calling and they let me call my therapist and she said she will try to find out, too, but she never told me anything. I told her she better find out something or she'll be sorry."

Interviewer: "Three days must seem like a really long time when things like this happen."

Brandon: "It's really long. It was her birthday. I got dressed up and had a present for her. I made a cross from wood and painted it for her."

Interviewer: "Oh, Brandon. No wonder you're so upset. Did you have problems with other people over the weekend?"

Brandon: "I didn't really do anything. I yelled at the other guys and the staff but it was no big deal."

Interviewer: "You held all those upset feelings in pretty much all weekend but this morning they just came flying out. What happened this morning that made it harder to control?"

Brandon: "I can't hold it in forever, you know! First Miss Heather was on my back in the house then Miss Nancy started on me as soon as I came in to school. My mother didn't come to visit me and these women are on my back."

Interviewer: "If I understand this right, you weren't very pleasant with anyone since this happened Friday but you were a little harder on the women you talked with than the other guys or male staff. Is that right?"

Brandon nodded.

Interviewer: "This kind of thing gets in your way a lot, doesn't it?"

Brandon nodded again.

In Stage Three, The Central Issue Stage, of LSCI we decide what kind of intervention to use, based on what is the most important issue for the young person and the pattern of self-defeating behavior we discern from listening to their story. In this case, we used a Red Flag Tap-In Reclaiming Intervention. When his mother didn't show up for this visit, Brandon's long-held painful feelings about his family were stirred up again. He took out his anger in increasing doses with the people in the house, his therapist, Miss Heather, and then Miss Nancy.

I asked Brandon if it would be all right if we went to work on making sure his mother is all right and finding out what happened last Friday. He said that would be good.

I then asked him if he would change anything if he could do any of this over again. Initially, he said he didn't know what he could do. During Stage Four, The Insight Stage of LSCI, we try to help the young person gain some situational insight. In *The Troubled and Troubling Child*, Nicholas Hobbs writes, "Self-control can be taught and children and adolescents helped to manage their behavior without the development of psychodynamic insight; and symptoms can and should be controlled by direct address, not necessarily by an uncovering therapy" (1984, p. 261). Situational insight is one way we teach self-control using LSCI. We try to help the young person recognize that in many of these crisis situations, they have some responsibility for how things turn out. But it is also important that we help them realize they also have some control and power to make things turn out differently.

Many adults talk with young people in trouble about being responsible. Helping them understand that they can also have control about choices and behaviors and power to change outcomes can be a powerful experience. It is most useful if we lead the young person to insight rather than give it to them,

as is typical for helping adults who might say, "All you have to do...." Leading them to insight works through effective questioning.

Brandon: "If I could change things, do you think I would be here?"

Interviewer: "I understand that you'd like things to be different with your family, that it is a really big thing in your life. That may be something that's too big for you to change and I know that could be really frustrating. Is there anything else that happened in this that you could make be different?"

Brandon: "I tore up papers in the classroom, do you mean that?"

Interviewer: "That's something you might have some control over, do you think? What could you have done differently?"

Brandon: "I could have just told Miss Nancy to give me some space because I was upset about my mom."

Interviewer: "That's a good example. Anything else?"

Brandon: "I said some really bad things to Miss Heather this morning."

Interviewer: "That's another good example. What could you have done differently about that?"

Brandon: "I could have just got up." Then, looking at Heather, he said, "Miss Heather, I'm really sorry I said those things to you. You were just trying to help me, but I was so mad about what happened with my mom, I just didn't care about anything."

Heather: "Thank you for apologizing, Brandon. I think I understand how badly you felt about what happened with your mom and now I know you're still worried. Maybe I can help find out if she's all right and what happened."

Brandon: "Okay."

Interviewer: "Do you have any ideas how we can help you so things don't get worse for you when you get so angry about things?"

Stage Five of the LSCI process, The New Skills Stage, is another opportunity for us to teach practical skills or support skills the young person already has. In this case, I was assessing Brandon's ability to see alternative behavior choices. If he has ideas that will be positive alternatives, we can help him through practice and on-going support with reminders of his plan to

keep events from getting out of control. If the idea of what to do comes from the young person and if he has some of the skills already, there is a much greater likelihood that we will be successful in helping him because he is personally invested in the solution.

Brandon: "I could let people know when I'm mad, but they probably already know that. Staff can remind me that I don't want to make things worse. But when I'm like that, I just don't care."

Interviewer: "Not long after things like this happen, though, you do care, Brandon. Now you're able to see how some of your choices made a situation that was already really hard for you even worse. Can we say or do something that will help you remember that you will care again soon?"

Brandon: "Maybe they can just say that and then give me some space."

Interviewer: "Let's make that our plan, then. We'll ask the staff to remind you to think ahead about how you'll feel if you handle things better rather than just act on the bad feelings and then give you some space. Then maybe you can talk things out. Are there people here you can talk with like you just did with me?'

Brandon: "I would if they listened like you did!"

Interviewer: "That's what we're working on, Brandon, and you just became the best teacher for Heather and Ron since you let them sit here with us. Good work! (Brandon smiles broadly.) What needs to happen now so we can move on, besides finding out about your mom?"

Brandon: "I need to apologize to Miss Nancy and my group and fix the things I messed up. I'll probably lose privileges or something."

Interviewer: "Let's start with that apology and getting things back to normal. This program is working on letting the learning and making things right be the consequence rather than adding punishment on top of other problems. Let's get back with Miss Nancy and check in with the group to see where we go from here. We'll let you know what's going on about finding your mom, so you don't worry that anyone forgot that important thing."

The sixth and final stage of the LSCI process, The Transfer of Learning Stage, is the time to move on from the problem or crisis and get back to some balance and regular functioning. In this case, we checked with his teacher, Nancy, to be sure she was ready to accept Brandon's apology and assess the readiness of the group to have him back. We found that we could proceed and help Brandon get closure with his teacher and his peers.

Brandon's mother is developmentally handicapped and diabetic. She experienced some medical problems that required a brief hospitalization earlier on Friday. The aunt who usually provided the communication link between Brandon and his mother was out of town. His sister stayed with a neighbor for the weekend. Brandon was able to talk with his mother later that day to know she was all right and wish her a happy birthday. A visit was set up for the following weekend.

What we learn from incidents that happen with young people like Brandon is that superficial behavioral approaches to dealing with problems are not enough and they may even make things worse. Brandon did make poor choices and acted in disrespectful and irresponsible ways and that needs to be addressed. Programs that react to such behavior with rewards or punishment fail to address the baggage, painful thoughts, and feelings that troubled young people carry around with them. It is reasonable that there should be accountability for the actions of troubled youth. When that accountability includes trusting relationships with significant adults, as well as understanding and restorative responses, more learning will occur resulting in meaningful growth and change.

Mark Freado, MA, is Director of Re-EDucation Training and Consultation with the Pressley Ridge Institute, Executive Director of the American Re-EDucation Association, and Vice President/CFO of Reclaiming Youth International. He is a senior trainer with the Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute and a senior trainer of Response Ability Pathways (RAP). He can be reached by phone: 1-614-783-6314 or by e-mail: mfreado@pressleyridge.org.

REFERENCES

Covey, S. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people.* New York: Free Press.

Hobbs, N. (1984). *The troubled and troubling child.* Cleveland, OH: AREA.

Long, N., Wood, M., & Fecser, F. (2001). *Life Space Crisis Intervention.* Austin, TX: PRO-ED.

Appendix
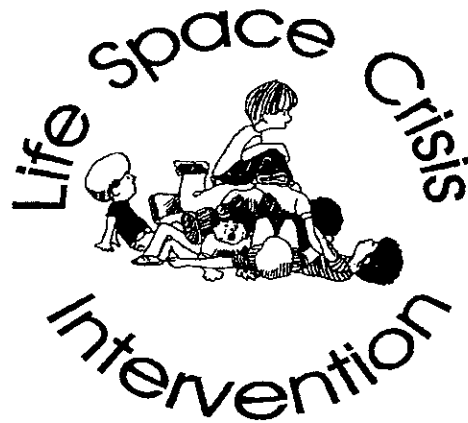
THE CONFLICT CYCLE PARADIGM:
How Troubled Students Get Teachers Out of Control
Nicholas J. Long, Ph.D.

(Reprinted from Conflict in the Classroom, Sixth Edition, by Long, Morse, Fecser & Newman, Pro-Ed, 2007)

THE next selection deals with the fascinating concept of how troubled students can get reasonable teachers to behave inappropriately during a student–teacher conflict.

THE CONFLICT CYCLE PARADIGM: HOW TROUBLED STUDENTS GET TEACHERS OUT OF CONTROL

Nicholas J. Long

The Conflict Cycle is a paradigm that describes the circular and escalating behavior of a student–teacher conflict.

Figure 6.2–1 presents the student's Conflict Cycle and its five interacting parts:

- Student's self-concept
- Stressful incident
- Student's feelings
- Student's observable behavior
- Adult/peer reactions

To help readers understand the dynamic nature of the Conflict Cycle Paradigm, I provide a detailed overview of the circular sequence of the Conflict Cycle (see Figure 6.2–2).
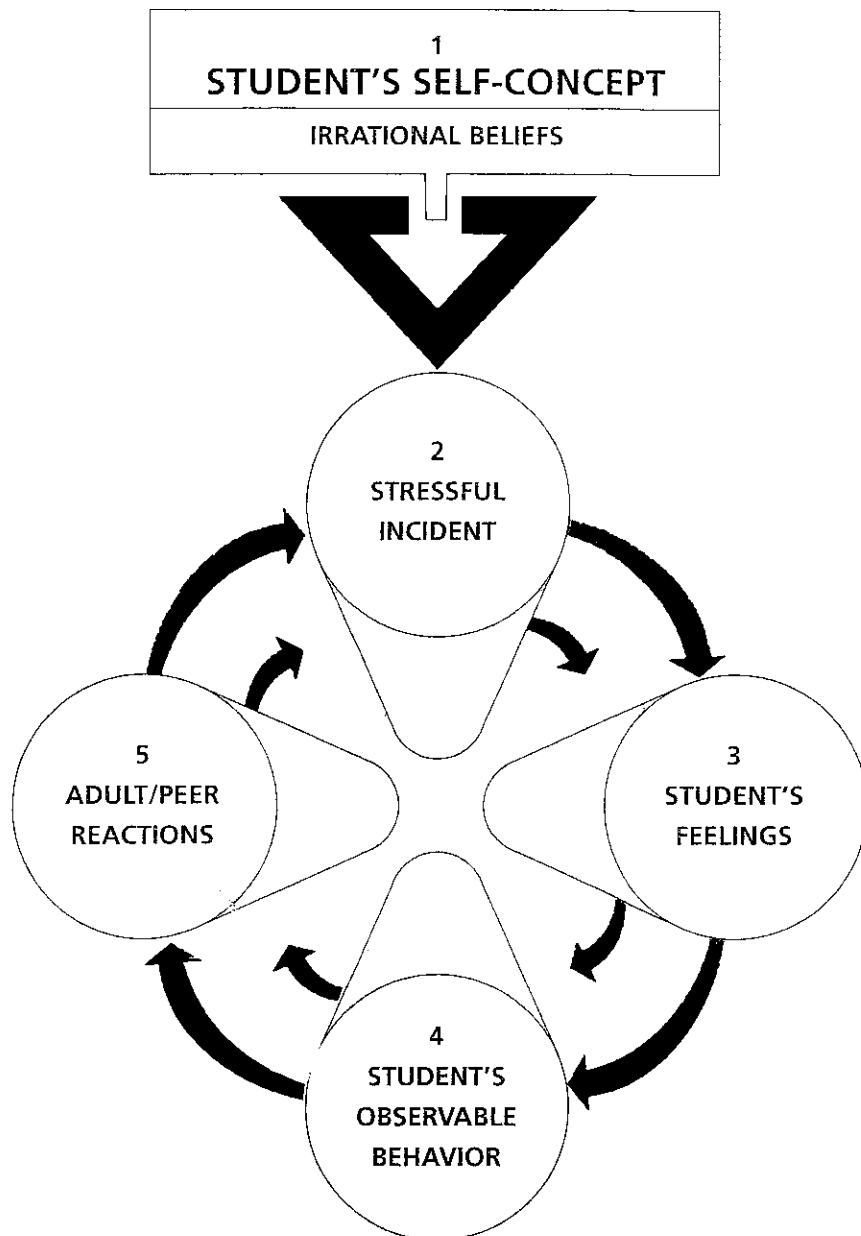
PART 1: STUDENT'S SELF-CONCEPT

The student's self-concept plays a central role in determining how he thinks about himself, how he relates to others, and what he believes will happen to him in the future (i.e., his self-fulfilling prophecy).

Developmentally, a child's self-concept is formed by the repetitive interactions of significant adults and peers in his life who give him ongoing feedback about his behavior and character. If a child receives clear and positive reinforcements, such as that he is lovable, curious, happy, smart, attractive, and strong, he will internalize these experiences and statements and slowly begin to attribute these characteristics to himself. If, however, he receives negative feedback and is told he is fearful, aggressive, sad, stupid, ugly, and rude, over time, the child will internalize a depreciating view of himself. As a result, how a child learns to think about himself is critical in determining his subsequent feelings and behaviors. For example, a student may score in the average range of intelligence, but if he thinks he is dumb, then his feelings and behaviors will be consistent with his thoughts about himself, regardless of the test results.

IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

In addition to developing a unique set of personal beliefs, the child concurrently develops a personal set of beliefs about her psychological world and the people in it. If the adults in her life are hostile, rejecting, negligent, depressed, helpless, ambivalent, perfectionistic, or inconsistent,

Figure 6.2-1. The Student's Conflict Cycle.

the child will learn to mistrust and to avoid interpersonal closeness with them. These negative beliefs about others in her world become the second active part of her self-concept. By early elementary school age, her beliefs about herself and her beliefs about others merge and become the major

THE SEQUENCE OF THE CONFLICT CYCLE

or

How a troubled student creates counteraggressive feelings in staff, which frequently leads to a mutual, self-defeating power struggle and reinforces the student's irrational beliefs (i.e., self-fulfilling prophecy).

1 A stressful incident occurs (i.e., frustration, failure), which *ACTIVATES* a troubled student's irrational beliefs (i.e., "Nothing good ever happens to me!" Adults are hostile!", etc.).

2 These negative thoughts determine and *TRIGGER* the student's feelings.

3 The student's negative feelings and not his or her rational forces *DRIVE* the student's inappropriate behavior.

4 The student's inappropriate behaviors (yelling, threatening, sarcasm, refusing to speak) *INCITE* staff.

5 Staff not only pick up the student's negative feelings but also frequently *MIRROR* the student's behavior (yelling, threatening, sarcasm and refusing to talk to the student).

This adverse staff *REACTION* increases the student's stress, triggers more intense feelings, and drives more inappropriate behaviors, thus causing even more staff anger and denunciation. Around and around it goes until the Conflict Cycle becomes a self-defeating power struggle.

Although the student may lose the initial battle (i.e., is punished or rejected), he or she wins the psychological war! The student's self-fulfiling prophesy (i.e., irrational belief) is *REINFORCED*, and therefore the student has no motivation to change or alter the irrational beliefs or inappropriate behaviors.

Figure 6.2–2. The Conflict Cycle Paradigm.

motivating force of her emerging personality. This solidification of her self-concept results in the child's developing a characteristic way of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behaving in all new situations. The child now has a predictable and functioning way of responding to most current

and future life events. For example, just as a primitive tribe will explain a tidal wave or an exploding volcano as something the tribe had done to offend the gods, troubled children will explain why they were abused, neglected, or rejected. Their search for an explanation does not take place in reality, but in their irrational beliefs about their painful life experiences. This means all their life events are filtered by their thoughts, which are activated by their personal belief system.

RATIONAL VERSUS IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

How do we as helpers determine if a child's beliefs are rational or irrational? Irrational beliefs are not based on true reality conditions and operate to the detriment of the child's mental health. The distinction between rational and irrational beliefs becomes vague for troubled children who have experienced chronic abuse, neglect, and rejection. Initially, their negative beliefs about others are an accurate reflection of their life experiences.

What causes these reality-based beliefs to become irrational is the psychological process called *overgeneralization*. This is a specific way of thinking, which allows a troubled child to perceive any new relationship or experience in a negative way. This thinking is achieved by using the words *always* and *never* whenever an individual thinks about this person or event. For example, a troubled student neglected by his parents would say, "My parents always neglected me [fact]. I could never count on my parents to meet my needs [fact]. Therefore, I think all adults I meet in the future also will neglect my needs [irrational belief]."

The following lists describe some of the irrational beliefs commonly held by troubled students.

Irrational Beliefs About Self

- I should never express my anger openly and if I do I will be punished.
- I should be perfect at everything I do.
- I am stupid if I make mistakes.
- I am a terrible person.
- I am unworthy of love.
- I never have to listen to anyone except me.
- I have to be in control to survive.

Irrational Beliefs About Others

- Never depend on adults to meet your needs. They will always let you down.
- This world is filled with dangerous people and situations.
- People are too helpless and depressed to care about me.
- People will take advantage of me every time they can.

THE ADVANTAGES OF IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

Why are irrational beliefs maintained when they interfere with everyday, interpersonal relationships and psychological comfort? What are the internal rewards for holding on to pathological and self-defeating irrational beliefs? One explanation is that irrational beliefs provide troubled students with a sense of security and control. Irrational beliefs bring psychological order to the students' unstable and chaotic world. Irrational beliefs make their world predictable and manageable. Irrational beliefs allow students to know in advance what will happen to them in new relationships. Such beliefs also protect troubled students from moving beyond their feelings and becoming responsible for their behavior. Most important, irrational beliefs protect them from experiencing the dreaded and underlying feelings of helplessness and rage. As a result, troubled students feel there is no reason to change. In fact, they reinforce their irrational beliefs by projecting their belief system on others. They do this by engaging adults and peers in endless and absurd power struggles. This psychological process almost always guarantees the adult will confirm the student's self-fulfilling prophecy.

THE STUDENT'S SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

The self-fulfilling prophecy is the troubled student's way of validating irrational beliefs by getting staff or peers to act them out. Most staff and peers are unaware of this covert goal of a troubled student and end up fulfilling the student's prophecy about others. The following three examples demonstrate the effectiveness of students' self-fulfilling prophecies.

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of an Aggressive Student

This student believes he has the right to meet his needs regardless of the rights of others and to get back at any adult or peer who interferes with

his pleasures. Concurrently, he believes adults are hostile and ultimately will reject and punish him. The question is, How can he maintain these irrational beliefs about all adults when his new teacher is kind, compassionate, skilled, and caring? Like a director of a play, his solution is to cast the teacher into the psychological role of a hostile adult, regardless of the teacher's personality, and to look for opportunities when he can accuse the teacher of being unfair and rejecting. The following classroom observation clearly highlights this process.

> Earl, a large 12-year-old boy, is sitting at his desk, completing his morning work. He raises his hand and asks for permission to get a drink of water. The teacher approves. Earl stands up, but instead of leaving the classroom, he walks over to Carl's desk and starts talking to him. Carl responds and Earl pats Carl on the head, laughs, and grabs his paper. Carl grabs it back and shouts, "Your sister!"
>
> The teacher intervenes and says, "Earl, you are more interested in causing trouble than getting a drink, so just forget it and return to your desk."
>
> Earl reacts as if he had been slapped, shouting, "What a gyp! You can't even get a damn drink in this school. This is not a school. It is a prison! I could die of thirst and you wouldn't care!" He walks back to his desk, slams a book closed, and looks sullen, and believes his teacher is hostile and rejecting like all the adults in his life.

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of a Passive–Aggressive Student

A passive–aggressive student believes the direct expression of anger is dangerous so she must hide and disguise her aggressive feelings and thoughts. It is common for a passive–aggressive student to say, "If adults ever found out how I really feel about them, terrible things would happen." Consequently, a passive–aggressive student learns to express her normal feelings of anger in indirect ways. She doesn't hear, see, or remember anything the teacher asks her to do. If she has to do something she doesn't want to do, she does it in a way that frustrates the teacher. If she is really angry with the teacher, she will get back at him by hiding some objects he needs, or by messing up the room without his knowledge. For example, Devon's indirect and subtle "drip- by-drip" frustrating behaviors begin to overwhelm the teacher. Over time he becomes emotionally loaded but

psychologically unaware of his accumulated anger toward Devon. At the end of a difficult classroom lesson, Devon falls out of her chair, makes the teacher ask her three times before acknowledging him, and accidentally rips the teacher's newly designed bulletin board. This is the straw that breaks the camel's back, the spark that lights the fuse. The teacher explodes, yells, and threatens Devon. He has a 20-second intense temper tantrum.

Devon appears shocked, "Gee, it was an accident. I didn't really mean to do it." The teacher is also shocked by the intensity of anger he expressed. He begins to think, "Perhaps it was an accident. Perhaps I did overreact. This is not like me. After all, Devon is not the most difficult student in my class." He feels guilty and decides to apologize. "Devon," he says, "I'm sorry I yelled at you." Devon replies, "It's okay," but thinks: "Wow! Look at how crazy people get when they express their anger. It's a good thing I don't express my anger. My teacher needs to change, but I don't."

The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy of a Withdrawn, Abused Student

Mary, a 13-year-old student, believes she is a terrible person, unworthy of anyone's love. Her family consists of an alcoholic, abusive father; a subservient mother; and two younger sisters. Mary has been sexually abused since age 7. Her mother knew about it but never said or did anything to stop it. It was a family secret never to be told. Mary believes if she were a better person, these sexual assaults would not happen. Her irrational beliefs include, "I deserve what happened to me, and if others found out what I was really like, they would know how terrible I am and reject me." Mary's self-fulfilling prophecy is to avoid all meaningful relationships and attachments since she believes they would only cause her more pain, shame, and rejection. Mary's classroom teacher reports that Mary has no friends and appears to be uninterested and unresponsive to any peer and teacher who attempts to reach out to her. She is a loner, and if there were one word to describe her relationship with others, it would be "ignored." Clearly, Mary has created a social reality in school that maintains her irrational beliefs that she is unworthy of being a friend.

To understand and help a student, staff need to recognize the troubled student's self-fulfilling prophecy or pattern of self-defeating behavior.

PART 2: STRESSFUL INCIDENT
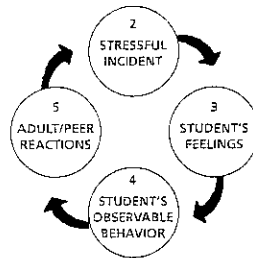
The second part of the Conflict Cycle is a stressful incident, defined as an external event that threatens the well-being of a student or activates his irrational beliefs. For example, a teacher may ask two students to come to the front of the class to read from a textbook. Gary thinks this request is a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate his reading skills and dramatic voice, believing it will improve his social status among his peers. Jason, however, thinks this same request is a disaster. He thinks he will mispronounce the words, stutter, and make a fool of himself in front of his peers. Whether this incident was stressful or not for each student depended on the specific meaning each student gave to the request to read aloud. In Jason's case, it triggered his irrational belief that "nothing ever works out for me," so it became a stressful incident for him. Gary, however, perceived it as a manageable challenge, so it became a positive experience for him.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS

Once a student perceives an event as a stressful incident, a natural biological reaction follows: This response is automatic, unconscious, and predictable. Stress prepares the body for action. It does this by releasing a series of hormones into the bloodstream that activate the autonomic nervous system. This system controls the involuntary muscles and alters the blood pressure, respiration, and digestive systems. Anthropologically, stress has functioned as a personal alarm system enabling a person to survive a physical attack. During this stress state, all bodily senses are intensified. The person has an abundance of energy, creating increased levels of strength, agility, and endurance. The person can either attack a foe with new ferocity or escape by running great distances without tiring.

For primitive humans, stress served a very useful, specific, and important purpose. In many cases, it was the basis of life or death.

In today's complex society, however, there are many rules against attacking others or running away. Students must learn to control what their bodies are urging them to express. They must learn to manage a stressful event instead of acting out. Because self-control takes considerable skill and maturity, even "normal" students will behave inappropriately during a stressful event.

There are four types of student stress: developmental stress, economic/physical stress, psychological stress, and reality stress.

1. Developmental Stress

Developmental stress refers to the normal developmental stages from birth to death. For example, to be born is stressful. To be weaned from the breast or bottle is stressful. To be toilet-trained is stressful. To leave one's parents and home to go to school is stressful. Learning to read can be stressful. Learning to understand sex differences between boys and girls can be stressful. Learning to be part of a group can be stressful. For adolescents, there are numerous developmental stresses: watching one's body change, becoming independent, developing personal values as opposed to group values, understanding the excitement and confusion of one's own and others' sexuality, developing career courses, graduating from high school, and so on. Each of these developmental events can be stressful for all students regardless of races, ethnicity, creed, or socioeconomic level.

2. Economic/Physical Stress

Economic/physical stress is felt by millions of families in our society who are living on the brink of economic disaster. Not all of these families come from slums, ghettos, or disadvantaged groups. Many striving middle-class families are living beyond their financial resources and have extended their credit lines to the breaking point.

For chronically poor families, economic stress shows itself in poor diet and food; poor health habits; greater susceptibility to illness; lack of acceptable clothes; lack of privacy; lack of sleep; lack of opportunity to participate in social and school-related activities; and greater parent exhaustion, joblessness, and helplessness.

3. Psychological Stress

Psychological stress consists of an unconscious or deliberate attempt by

parents, individuals, groups, and institutions to destroy the self-esteem of a student. For example, many students are told they are a financial and psychological burden to the family and the primary source of their parents' problems. They are told life would be better if they were not around. They are destroying the family and neighborhood because of their demanding and ungrateful behaviors. They are stupid, inconsiderate, mean, and useless to themselves and others. For some students, the stress does not come from open rejection but from trying to meet unrealistic parental standards. Students are told they must be successful to be loved. Whatever they do is not good enough. For other students, psychological stress is related to specific adults who are emotionally troubled—for example, the seductive parent who stimulates excessive sexual awareness and fantasy by showing unusual interest in sexual topics; the psychotic parent, who is suffering from a major mental illness and is not capable of carrying out adult responsibilities; the alcoholic or drug-abusing parent who creates a home where there is little emotional stability. In these homes children never know if their parents will care for them or expose them to more shame or terror. Other students must cope with overprotective or depressed parents. Moreover, any sibling, relative, or significant friend who is emotionally disturbed and active with these students will have a stressful impact on the mental health of these students and their ability to focus on classroom learning.

4. Reality Stress

Reality stress occurs when events happen to students that should not happen to them. These unplanned events are frustrating. They happen spontaneously and not from an organized attempt to frustrate the students. Reality stresses for troubled students seem to happen at a higher frequency than for regular students. Students begin to believe the world and the people in it are against them. The following are examples:

- A boy looks forward to wearing his favorite sweater only to discover that his brother wore it yesterday and spilled syrup on it.
- A girl lends her algebra book to a friend who forgets to bring it to school the next day.
- Two classmates are fooling around in class. One pushes the other into a third girl's desk, tearing her English composition, which is due in a few minutes.
- A teacher warns the class that the next student who talks will

ARTICLE 6.2

be given a detention. The student next to Jason whispers to a friend, and the teacher points to Jason as the offender.

• A teenage boy is asked by a girl to go to the high school basketball game. At the game he discovers she has broken up with the school bully, who is staring at him.

In other words, things go wrong that should not go wrong. It is not anyone's fault, but the stress is very real, frequent, and intense.

For most troubled students, stress comes not from one source but from multiple sources. For example, a student may have the normal developmental stress of a final exam. The evening before the test, his parents have a violent argument, and he is unable to study or sleep. On the way to school, a hostile group of boys call him various racial and ethnic names. As he enters the classroom, a friend greets him by slapping him on the back, causing his glasses to fall and break. Finally, the teacher announces a new school policy that no exam can be taken over, regardless of the circumstances.

Teachers need to acknowledge that a student in a crisis needs to talk. Through mutual conversation, a greater appreciation of the students' stresses and a broader perspective of his or her behavior can be achieved. When teachers understand these multiple cycles of stress, they are more willing to help students rather than blame and punish them for their misfortune.

The following list represents some common classroom stresses.

Developmental Stress

• Student experiences group pressure to conform to their norms.
• Student experiences sexual attraction to a classmate.
• Student wasn't called on or selected for a group game.
• Student is teased by her peers.

Economic/Physical Stress

• Student is too tired to concentrate on the assignment.
• Student is too sick to concentrate on the assignment.
• Student is too hungry to concentrate on the assignment.
• Student has a handicapping condition that prevents him from competing with his peers.

Psychological Stress

- Student fails an examination.
- Student is racially depreciated.
- Student believes others have a higher expectation of her performance than she does.
- Student is deliberately rejected or scapegoated by peers.
- Student is too conflicted by his home problems to concentrate on classroom assignments.

Reality Stress

- Student is blamed for something she didn't do.
- Student doesn't have the appropriate textbook for class.
- Student doesn't understand the content of the assignment.
- Student doesn't understand the teacher's directions.
- Student cannot get his locker to open, which contains a report that is due next period.
- A friend accidentally tears the student's favorite shirt.

PART 3: STUDENT'S FEELINGS
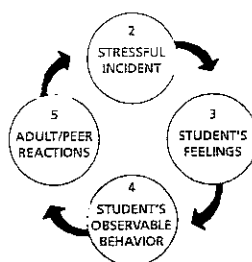
There is considerable confusion among teachers and other helping professionals concerning the origin, awareness, accuracy, and expression of students' feelings. The following questions reflect the quandary many helping professionals have in determining how to work with the feelings of troubled students: What is the relationship between thinking and feeling? Are they independent of each other? Isn't it healthy for students to express their feelings and to get them out in the open so they can be understood? Is it accurate to describe feelings as "good feelings" and "bad

feelings"? Should negative feelings be controlled? If feelings are swallowed or blocked, don't they come back as psychosomatic illnesses? Because feelings are real, are they an accurate assessment of the precipitating incident or are they an assessment of the student's current emotional state? Is there a difference between acknowledging feelings and expressing them? If the same feeling can be expressed in different ways are some expressions healthier than others? These questions corroborate the uncertainty, ambivalence, and fogginess that have developed around the concept of understanding and managing students' feelings.

THINKING CREATES FEELINGS

David Burns (1999), a cognitive therapist, wrote, "You feel the way you think." The source of feelings starts with thoughts and not with personal frustrations. It is how one *thinks* about an external event, and not the event itself, that triggers feelings. Positive thoughts about an event trigger positive feelings, and negative thoughts about an event trigger negative feelings, as in the previous example of the two students who were asked to read aloud. The process of thinking and feeling does not follow an independent path but is a continuous circular process. Thoughts trigger feelings, and negative feelings influence the way a person thinks about an event, creating a new cycle of negative feelings.

If the same external event happens frequently, the child will develop feelings that affect his or her thinking. For example, if a child is chronically yelled at by an adult, the child not only will have negative feelings such as anger or fear but also will be conditioned to respond automatically to all future acts of yelling. This will occur without the child's being aware of his thinking. For example, I once went to listen to a new student talk about a fight he just had with a classmate. Without saying a word, I entered the room and sat in the corner to observe the process. After 10 minutes I stood up and took off my jacket since the room was warm. Simultaneously, the student looked at me, panicked, and dove under the desk. The student was convinced that when the principal, or a man of authority, took off his jacket, the adult was preparing to hit the student. This reaction is called automatic thinking and explains the rapid negative behavior many troubled students demonstrate during conflict.

THE USEFULNESS OF FEELINGS

All feelings are real and powerful, and add excitement to life, but they are not always an accurate assessment of a situation. Emotions are not facts; they are feelings that are triggered by rational and irrational thoughts. If the feelings are triggered by irrational thoughts, then the subsequent feelings are real but self-defeating. When students act on these feelings, their behavior only makes the situation worse. However, if the feelings are triggered by rational thoughts, then the feelings are an accurate assessment of the situation and need to be accepted. This involves a complicated process of distinguishing between acknowledging one's feelings and learning to express these feelings in proper behavior. For example, it is healthy to feel upset and angry when one has been psychologically depreciated or discriminated against, but it is not acceptable to assault the offender. It is healthy to experience fear when someone threatens to hurt or abuse you, but it is not helpful to encourage it to happen. It is healthy to experience intense feelings of sadness when someone you love dies or moves away, but it is not healthy to withdraw from all relationships. It is healthy to feel guilty when you behave in an unacceptable way, but it is not useful to behave so others will punish you. It is normal to experience anxiety when you are anticipating a new experience or a new relationship, but it is not healthy to handle this anxiety through drinking or drug abuse. It is normal to feel happiness when you are in love, but it is not helpful to express blatant sexual feelings in front of others. The existence and importance of accepting one's feelings are irrefutable. The question is, How do students learn to express these feelings?

THREE WAYS OF EXPRESSING FEELINGS

The three ways children learn to express their feelings are to act them out, to defend against them, and to accept and own them.

Act Out Feelings

Many immature, impulsive, and unsocialized children express their feelings directly. There is no attempt to modify the direct expression of their feelings in behavior. If they are angry, they hit; if they are sad, they cry; if they are frightened, they run; and if they are happy, they giggle and

laugh. There is an obvious one-to-one relationship between their feelings and behaviors. When students express their feelings directly in spontaneous classroom behavior, they almost always create more problems for themselves. Some students cannot distinguish between feeling angry and smashing a chair. For these students, the feeling and behavior are one response and not two.

Defend Against Feelings

Many children are socialized to believe that certain feelings, such as anger, sadness, or jealousy, are unacceptable for them to show. When these feelings occur, they create in the children a state of anxiety, discomfort, and inner conflict. The psychological goal for these children is to learn ways of avoiding or blocking these unacceptable feelings.

Anna Freud (1937) described these strategies of avoiding the pain of anxiety as defense mechanisms. This concept of defense mechanisms provides teachers with valuable insights on how children defend against anxiety. Children learn three ways of using defense mechanisms: (1) by denying these feelings, (2) by escaping from these unacceptable feelings, and (3) by shifting or substituting the unacceptable feelings to another person or object.

The most common defense mechanisms using denial are repression, projection, and rationalization; the most common defense mechanisms using escape are withdrawal and regression; and the most common defense mechanisms using substitution are displacement, compensation, and sublimation. Although defense mechanisms are successful in diminishing anxiety, they also use up the student's psychological energy, deny the real problem, and usually create new interpersonal problems with adults, peers, learning, and rules. This is like the adolescent driver who is concerned about running out of gas. His solution is to drive to the nearest gas station as quickly as possible, but in the process, he gets a speeding ticket, becomes frustrated, and also runs out of gas.

Accept and Own Feelings

Students who have learned to accept and own their feelings can use them to enrich their lives and to develop coping skills to manage their inevitable frustrations. These students have learned to distinguish between having the full range of feelings and being had by their feelings. When students are flooded by their feelings, their behavior is driven by their emotions and not by rational thought. If this pattern happens often, these students

are labeled "emotionally disturbed" because their emotions drive their behavior. However, when students learn to own their feelings and think about them rationally, then the resulting behaviors usually are appropriate, logical, and realistic. Accepting one's feelings and learning how to be friends with them, including the unpleasant feelings such as sadness, anger, jealousy, envy, and rejection, is one goal of mental health.

PART 4: STUDENT'S OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOR
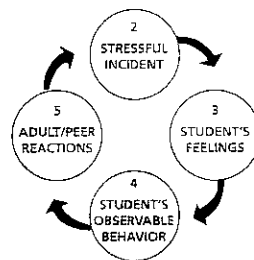
When students express their feelings directly or defend against them, they usually create additional problems for themselves. Inappropriate behaviors, such as hitting, running away, becoming ill, stealing, teasing, lying, becoming hyperactive, fighting, using drugs, inattention, and withdrawal, cause students to have difficulty with teachers, peers, learning, and school rules. For example, when a student displaces his feelings of hostility he has for his father on his teacher, an inevitable teacher–student conflict develops. When a student becomes depressed because her mother is ill or battered, the student may not be able to complete her assignments, and her grades drop. When this interpretation of behavior is accepted, one grasps the concept that the problems students cause in school are not always the causes of their problems. More accurately, the problems students cause in school are the result of the way they have learned to express their feelings.

Many professionals describe a student's behavior in general terms, such as "Jason hit Sam" or "Jason tore up his assignment." These are beginning statements, but to pinpoint the significance of a student's behavior, it needs to be described by answering the following questions: Where did the behavior occur? When did it happen? Who or what were the targets of this behavior? What was the duration of this behavior? What was the intensity of this behavior? What was the frequency of this behavior?

ARTICLE 6.2

Notice the difference in meaning between these two statements:

Jason spit on Sam.

Jason and Sam were on the playground during recess playing tag. Sam tagged Jason by hitting him on the side of his face. Jason reacted by spitting on Sam's face, chest, and hands at least three times over a period of 2 minutes. The spits were intense and involved large amounts of saliva. This is the third time Jason has spit on another peer this week.

This second description of Jason's behavior provides a much clearer sense of the hostility Jason is expressing by spitting. The incident was not a simple, spontaneous act, but part of a destructive pattern of behavior he uses when he becomes angry.

PART 5: ADULT/PEER REACTIONS
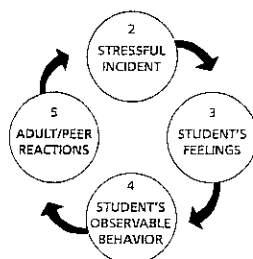
CATEGORIES OF INAPPROPRIATE STAFF RESPONSES

How a teacher reacts to inappropriate student behavior is the most critical part of the Conflict Cycle. Although a teacher does not have control over the student's thinking, feelings, and behaviors, a teacher does have complete control over how he or she reacts to the student's behavior. Unfortunately, staff members escalate too many student–staff conflicts when they respond in emotional, impulsive, and counteraggressive ways. An analysis of over 600 student–staff Conflict Cycles documented four categories of inappropriate staff responses to student behavior: (1) reacting in counteraggressive ways, (2) having rigid and unrealistic teacher expectations, (3) being caught in a bad mood, and (4) prejudging a troubled student.

Reacting in Counteraggressive Ways

One of the most important insights a teacher can gain from learning about the Conflict Cycle is awareness of how a troubled student can create negative feelings in a teacher. If the teacher is not trained to accept these negative feelings, he or she will act on them and mirror the troubled student's behavior. For example, when a student yells at a teacher, "I'm not going to do it," the normal impulse of a teacher is to shout back, "Yes you will!" Once the teacher behaves like the student, the Conflict Cycle is escalated into a self-defeating power struggle. Generally, an aggressive student will always create counteraggressive feelings in others, a depressed student will always cause others to feel sad and helpless, and a hyperactive student will always create feelings of impulsivity in others.

Staff do not start most Conflict Cycles; however, without training they keep the cycle going by reacting inappropriately. Initially, a teacher has no thoughts or intentions of yelling, threatening, or depreciating a troubled student, but once the cycle of teacher counteraggressive behavior begins, it is extremely difficult for the teacher to stop or to acknowledge his or her role in escalating the conflict. Usually, a teacher feels unjustly attacked and becomes flooded by feelings of righteous rage. These feelings seem to justify the teacher's retaliatory reaction or counteraggression. Reacting in counteraggressive ways account for 68% of school-based Conflict Cycles in our sample.

Having Rigid and Unrealistic Teacher Expectations
Regarding Normal Developmental Student Behavior

Some teachers carry their own psychological luggage with them into the classroom. They are mean spirited, rigid, narrow minded, critical, and exacting about what kinds of behavior they will tolerate in their classrooms. These teachers believe students should be obedient to authorities, remain attentive to instruction, be motivated to excel, and use proper language and manners at all times. Problem behavior for them is defined as a discrepancy between what they expect and what they observe in their classrooms based on their personal histories. If there is a difference, it is because the student has a problem and needs to be disciplined. These teachers are unaware of how their forked tongues can become instruments of pain and how this contributes to escalating the crisis.

Over time, even "normal" students will react to an autocratic and repressive classroom atmosphere and begin to get back by becoming

passive–aggressive toward the teacher. Troubled students in the classroom have even greater difficulties. These students react to the demeaning and critical behavior of the teacher by mirroring the teacher's behavior. In this instance of the Conflict Cycle in action, the teacher initiates the conflict and a student keeps it going. For example, a teacher may threaten a troubled student and say, "You better stop whispering or else!" only to hear him say, "You better stop talking or else!" After the class stops laughing, the student is labeled defiant and is sent out of the room. However, if the student refuses to leave the classroom, swears, or slams the door on the way out, the problem behavior escalates into a student–teacher crisis. The behavior of rigid teachers accounts for 7% of our sample of student–staff Conflict Cycles.

Being Caught in a Bad Mood

School staff are not robots. They have the same stresses as all adults. Occasionally, their personal or family life takes an emotional dip. As their level of stress increases, they become emotionally overwhelmed and exhausted. For example, their level of tolerance drops when they are dealing with their parents who are ill and need special care, when their children are having academic and interpersonal problems and need additional support, when they are having financial difficulties, and when they are angry with their mate or friends.

These teachers usually are competent, dedicated, and supportive of their students, but periodically something occurs that gives them a bitter attitude toward life. They cannot stomach the acid irritation of the normal and annoying developmental behavior of their students and are ready to spew out their exasperation on any student who upsets them. For example, Jamal decided it would be clever and fun if he added a little excitement to the classroom by making "burp" sounds with his armpits. The teacher overreacted to Jamal's attention-getting sounds by becoming punitive, and a crisis developed. Afterward, teachers who are caught in a bad mood usually can acknowledge their role in the crisis and respond positively to supportive confrontation. Teacher stress due to personal life situations accounts for approximately 20% of our sample of student–staff Conflict Cycles.

Prejudging a Troubled Student in a Crisis

In every school, a peer social structure exists in which students are assigned and assume specific group roles such as the leader, jock, nerd, mas-

cot, lawyer, and clown. One group role is the instigator or troublemaker. Everyone knows who this student is. His reputation is acknowledged by the school staff and peers and follows him around like a shadow on a summer day.

If this student is involved in a crisis, and the sounds of trouble are all around him, there is a high probability this student will be prejudged. As the group instigator, he will be judged before all the relevant information is obtained. The staff who intervenes is likely to say, "I knew it would be you!" Call this process faulty clairvoyance or drawing of defective conclusions, but it happens to the nicest of people. Judgments are made that are not true, and the targeted student is accused of some act he did not do. In this sequence, the student becomes upset and the staff is convinced that the student is lying to protect himself. The result is an unfortunate incident that escalates into an ugly crisis. This process of prejudging a troubled student before all the facts are obtained accounts for 5% of our sample of student/staff Conflict Cycles.

These four categories of inappropriate staff reactions during a student–staff Conflict Cycle are helpful in identifying what additional skills adults need in order to break their own pattern of self-defeating behavior. Although the most frequent inappropriate teacher response category was reacting in counteraggressive ways, further analysis of our sample of student–staff Conflict Cycles revealed that staff in all four categories used "You Messages" when they were angry.

FUELING THE CONFLICT CYCLE WITH "YOU MESSAGES"

The following "You Messages" were recorded during student–staff Conflict Cycles that escalated into no-win power struggles:

- Can't you do anything right?
- You apologize immediately!
- Don't you dare use that language with me!
- You better start acting your age!
- You think you know everything. Should I call you Einstein?
- You have no respect for anyone or anything!
- You don't listen to anyone, do you?
- You better shape up because I have had it with you.
- You just never use your head.

The negative and blaming "You Messages" a student receives from a teacher frequently support the student's view of herself and confirm her self-fulfilling prophecy. This feeling creates more student stress, causing the student to feel and behave in more unacceptable ways. As the student's behavior deteriorates, the teacher becomes even more angry and disgusted with the student. As the teacher reacts in a negative, punitive way, this intensifies the student's stress, creating more negative feelings and primitive behaviors. The Conflict Cycle continues around and around until it escalates into a no-win power struggle. Logic, caring, and compassion are lost, and the only goal for each party is to win the power struggle. The teacher views the student as the source of the problem and tells the student to "shape up" and to improve her attitude and behavior. If she doesn't, the teacher labels her as disturbed, delinquent, dangerous, and disgusting. The student is usually suspended, transferred, or referred to a more restrictive, special education setting.

What is important to remember is that there are no winners when the Conflict Cycle reaches the level of a power struggle. Asking immature students to act maturely during intense states of stress cannot break this cycle. If change is going to occur, the staff must accept the first level of responsibility by responding in a more mature, professional manner. This means understanding how students in conflict can provoke concerned, reasonable, and dedicated teachers to act in impulsive, dispassionate, and rejecting ways.

In summary, the Conflict Cycle follows this self-defeating sequence for a troubled student:

1. External events arouse irrational beliefs.

2. These irrational beliefs trigger negative feelings.

3. Negative feelings drive inappropriate behavior.

4. Inappropriate behavior incites others.

5. Staff react in counteraggressive ways and create additional stress for the student, which fuels the student's next cycle of problems.

Example: How an Aggressive Student Successfully Creates Counteraggressive Behavior in a Student Teacher (Ms. Sarah Drue)

I did my student teaching at a city junior high and I was told there were specific rules and regulations that needed to be followed.

This incident occurred because of the tardy policy. When students are late for school without a legitimate written excuse, they must first report to the office to pick up a sign-in sheet, which is carried to homeroom. After the homeroom teachers sign this sheet, the students are required to stay in Tardy Hall from 3:00 to 4:00 P.M. Brian, a 16-year-old learning disabled student came in to my homeroom without his sign-in sheet at approximately 9:30. I had already filled his name in as absent for the day, but he requested that I change it immediately. He did not want to go to the office because he did not want to stay after school. This was my first day of student teaching the class. The regular teacher was in the classroom to observe me. Therefore, everything I did was being evaluated.

Of course, Brian insisted I change his name on my sheet from being "tardy" to "present." "Come on Ms. Drue, it won't hurt anything. I want to go to the game this afternoon and I can't stay in Tardy Hall."

"Well Brian, if I did this for you, I would have to do it for everyone else. Isn't that right, class?" Of course, the entire class agreed with me and began approaching my desk. One of my students had already been to the office because of being late; therefore, she insisted that if his was changed, then so should hers. I replied that I was not going to change anyone's and that Brian had better hurry to the main office before he's late for his first-period class.

Brian replied, "You're not my teacher anyway. I don't have to talk to you. Ms. Shell will do it for me." Ms. Shell was the "real" teacher for the Learning Center and she told Brian it was up to me since I was teaching for the rest of the semester. I had already decided not to make any changes. As much as I wanted to, I just could not.

Brian began raising "hell" after I had made my final decision and threatened he was going to "kick my ass" after school. Of course, I was scared. Brian stands at least 6 feet tall and is huge! Little ole' me was not used to this sort of outrage. He called me all sorts of "bitches" and "MF's," so I told him to wait in the office until I came down. Ms. Shell said I was to report this incident because this behavior cannot be tolerated. Brian again threatened Ms. Shell and me. She got up angrily, grabbed Brian by his collar and escorted him to the main office. "Bitch, you just wait," he continued to

holler. "I'm going to flatten your tires along with your face." Well, I was in hysterics by now, but Ms. Shell told me to continue with the class.

By 10:30 A.M., Ms. Shell returned to the classroom without Brian. She informed me he had been sent home and could not return without his parents. I was very upset, but she informed me there wasn't more that could be done. "You did well! You didn't lose your temper. I'm used to seeing Brian go into these rages every now and then. Why, I am practically the only teacher who can do anything with him."

I tried to make my day go on as usual, but my mind kept thinking about what Brian said. I already had made up my mind to stay after school, so I could get away scot-free. I thought I would be safe. But by the time I checked my name out in the principal's office, I was sweating. I was scared! I proceeded down the hallway and out comes Brian! I should have turned around and gone back to the office, but if he knew I was afraid of him, he would probably provoke me for the rest of the semester. No way. I had to stand up to this kid. If I show him that I am not afraid, maybe he won't bother with me.

"Yea Bitch, I told you not to send my name to the office. Wait until you see your tires," Brian says.

"Aren't you supposed to be home by now? I thought you were sent home until your parents arrived back to school with you."

"Yea Bitch, I can tell, you ole' ho!"

"Okay, I'm a whore and you're a faggot. Now we're even." I continued toward my car.

"Faggot! Does this look like a faggot's dick?"

I wanted to faint. I hope he didn't actually pull his penis out! I surely wasn't going to turn around to find out either. "Brian, I am surprised at you. You have really disappointed me. I thought you were one of my better students. Say what you will, just make sure that you don't touch me. I am here to teach you, not to beat you."

Why did I say that? Brian then began throwing rocks and sticks at me outside of the school. I still didn't turn around, but I did warn him that if any of them hit me, I was going to forget about being his teacher and actually "KICK HIS ASS!" "Bang," a rock hit me in the back of my leg. I stopped and turned around to look at him. He began saying, "Kick my ass, come on, kick my ass." I proceeded toward my car but began telling him that I was going to call his parents tonight. "Bang," this rock hit me in the middle of my back, and I turned around and began walking toward him with full force. By now I had forgotten I was a teacher and I was aiming to kick his tail. When I got to him he looked so much larger than I but I was not going to back down. I began hollering and pointing my finger in his face, telling him that my brothers would love kicking his tail if he hurt me. He kept breathing real hard down on my face, just trying to provoke me even more. By now the assistant principal and

two other teachers came running out of the school and grabbed Brian, dragging him to the office. I began crying and they questioned me about the entire incident. They wanted me to press charges. The school security guard stayed with Brian until his parents picked him up from the police precinct.

This student–staff conflict between Brian and Sara Drue demonstrates, with startling clarity, how quickly a Conflict Cycle can escalate into a no-win power struggle. The incident began with Brian experiencing a reality disappointment (being tardy), moved on to verbal threats, and proceeded to physical threats—throwing stones at Ms. Drue. This pattern of Brian's self-defeating behavior was not new to his regular teacher, Ms. Shell, who said, "I'm used to seeing Brian go into these rages," but it was a new and upsetting experience for Ms. Drue, even though she was commended by Ms. Shell as "doing well" and "not losing her temper."

The more Ms. Drue "thought" about Brian's threats, the more anxious and fearful she became. When she saw Brian, she had two thoughts: "I'll show him I'm not afraid of him" and "I need to walk back to the office and avoid this confrontation." She decided to take him on head to head, one to one, teacher against student. Brian started this new cycle by using sexual language, "Yea Bitch, I can tell, you ole' ho!" and discovered Ms. Drue's emotional panic button. She reacted by using similar sexual language, "Okay, I'm a whore and you're a faggot!" This remark only succeeded in escalating the situation. Brian retorted and started to throw stones at her. This triggered her feelings of righteous rage, and when he urged her to "kick his ass," she couldn't refuse. She threw away her professional skills and started toward him with aggressive intentions. If her colleagues had not arrived in time to rescue her, this situation could have resulted in serious injuries. The outcomes were predictable. Ms. Drue fulfilled her prophecy that Brian was a dangerous student. Brian fulfilled his prophecy that Ms. Drue was a hostile woman, and Brian ended up being totally responsible for this incident and was suspended with no insight into his pattern of self-defeating behavior.

Could this second student–staff incident have been avoided? If Ms. Drue understood the goal of the Conflict Cycle and was aware that Brian was trying to push her emotional buttons and to get her to act in unprofessional and counteraggressive ways, she would have selected her second option: avoiding Brian by walking back to the office. With this rational decision, Ms. Drue could have prevented the second cycle of craziness.

ARTICLE 6.2

SUMMARY

The Conflict Cycle is a paradigm that explains why the management of student behavior begins with the staff and not the student. Unless staff members can control reactions to inappropriate student behavior and have an awareness of their "emotional buttons," staff will escalate the incident and only make it worse, like trying to put out a small fire by throwing gasoline on it. Knowing the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle not only helps staff understand their role in acting out the feelings of students, but also opens an array of new alternatives to school punishment. The skills involved in avoiding a power struggle with students help staff identify and address the important, underlying issues in a student's life rather than simply reacting to the student's annoying surface behavior. These skills give staff the ability to talk with troubled students and learning more about their lives, their struggles, and their beliefs about themselves and others. In this process, staff have an opportunity to teach troubled students better ways of behaving, being accepted, and becoming empowered.

Once teachers are knowledgeable about how troubled students can push their emotional buttons and create counteraggressive feelings in them, teachers can use this insight to accept these feelings. A conscious choice can be made not to engage in a power struggle with these students.

Once staff understand the dynamics of the Conflict Cycle, the next task is to learn the many successful ways of breaking the Conflict Cycle and turning it into a Coping Cycle. Once this occurs, student conflicts are an opportunity for the teacher to teach and for the student to learn.

REFERENCES

Burns, D. (1999). *Feeling Good.* New York: HarperCollins.

Freud, A. (1937). *The ego and its mechanisms of defense.* London: Hogarth.

Life Space Crisis Intervention Training

STUDY GUIDE

Below, please find 67 study questions to guide you through Part 1 of the LSCI Certification. Please use the information from the presentation, handout, and textbook to mark each statement TRUE or FALSE.

At the conclusion of Part 1 of the training, 50 of these statements, worded exactly as written below, will appear on the written exam.

True   False   1. LSCI is a verbal strategy that helps adults work with children and youth to build a trusting relationship which leads to real changes in overcoming self-defeating patterns and learning to make better choices in life.

True   False   2. LSCI is a behavioral strategy that was introduced in the 1990's.

True   False   3. The skills of LSCI address six of the most common patterns of self-defeating behavior.

True   False   4. LSCI takes into account key differences in the psychological worlds of helping adults and students in stress .

True   False   5. Kids are often multi-dimensional in their perceptions. Under stress, they have an increased ability to consider things from alternate points of view.

True   False   6. A child's thinking may become illogical, especially under stressful circumstances. LSCI helps kids challenge their irrational beliefs and illogical thinking.

True   False   7. In a crisis, kids can become flooded by their feelings. Helping adults can teach kids how to accept and control overwhelming emotions.

True   False   8. When stressed out, most kids find it easy to accept responsibility for their poor behavior, while most helping adults tend to view mistakes as evidence of failure.

True   False   9. The brain stem is responsible for executive functions such as planning and problem-solving.

True   False   10. "State" memories are stored in the brain stem and can be triggered during periods of stress (e.g. why your heart beats faster when you are nervous).

True   False   11. The limbic system plays the major role in the body's response to stress.

True   False   12. "Sensory" memories are stored in the limbic system. This part of the brain has no language.

True   False   13. The neocortex connects the right and left hemispheres of the brain.

True   False   14. The memories of a child who has suffered trauma are stored largely in the limbic system, where there is no language.

True   False   15. Toxic stress has to do with short-lived, adverse life situations that are part of the normal developmental process.

True   False   16. LSCI aims to help kids bring language to emotion.

True   False   17. A child's perceptions and beliefs about the world are heavily influenced by how the existential questions of each developmental stage are resolved.

True   False   18. The perceptions a child forms from his earliest stages have very little influence on the way he approaches life.

True   False   19. Developmental stressors are a normal, natural part of life.

True   False   20. Implicit memory is stored in the limbic system.

True   False   21. Implicit memory is associated with stress and trauma

True   False   22. Implicit memory is language-based and easy for kids to talk about in words.

True   False   23. How we think about explicit memories leads to how we feel about them.

True   False   24. LSCI seeks to help kids move "raw" memories and thoughts from the part of the brain that doesn't have language to the part of the brain that does, so that they realize they have choices in the ways they express their feelings.

True   False   25. We have only two choices when it comes to managing emotions: we can act them out or we can accept and own them.

True   False   26. Under intense stress, people sometimes choose to use defense mechanisms as a way of justifying faulty thinking.

True   False   27. Defense mechanisms serve no healthy purpose.   They represent a child's way of being stubborn and rejecting adult authority.

True   False   28. Displacement is a defense mechanism in which a person transfers an emotional reaction to a substitute when it can't be directed at the actual person who caused it.

True   False   29. Rationalization is a defense mechanism that occurs when a person transfers his inner distress to a physical manifestation.

True   False   30. Kids who internalize stress tend to take their pain out on themselves. Kids who externalize stress tend to take their pain out on everyone else.

True   False   31. A goal of LSCI training is to learn to recognize kids' patterns of using defense mechanisms and to help the kids talk about the patterns, in order to understand what is driving their behavior.

True   False   32. Stream of consciousness, perceptual set, and self-talk are the three elements of cognitive theory.

True   False   33. Stream of consciousness refers our awareness of what is happening in the moment and is always ongoing.

True   False   34. Our perceptual set influences our active self-talk.

True   False   35. According to Albert Ellis, events directly cause feelings.

True   False   36. LSCI helps kids examine and change their irrational self-talk, in order to bring about real changes in behavior.

True   False   37. The mental filter is the way a child rationalizes non-violent crimes.

True   False   38. A child calls herself a "loser" because she forgot to buy movie tickets. She thinks that this mistake means that she is worthless. She is engaging in emotional reasoning.

True   False   39. Some kids use "should" statements to avoid taking responsibility for their behavior. E.g. Mrs. Thomas should give me a passing grade even though I only scored a 50% on the test.

True False 40. Cognitive restructuring is the process of telling a child the correct way to think about something and following up with consequences if he does not comply with the better way of thinking.

True False 41. The Conflict Cycle is LSCI's major paradigm for understanding the dynamics of the interactions between students in stress and staff who work with them.

True False 42. Understanding the Conflict Cycle is the first line of defense against reinforcing the student's irrational beliefs and self-fulfilling prophecies.

True False 43. Kids in stress create in adults their feelings. In most conflict situations, it is helpful for the adult to mirror a child's behavior.

True False 44. Statements like, "don't you dare use that language with me," model a healthy way to cope with stress and build trust between the student and the adult.

True False 45. Emotions are processed in the right hemisphere of the brain; language is processed in the left hemisphere

True False 46. Learning to link the left and right hemispheres of the brain through interaction with a caring adult provides the first step towards understanding and self-regulating feelings and behavior

True False 47. Most kids in treatment settings find it easy to trust and to talk with an adult.

True False 48. Studies show that the majority of meaning in communication comes from the words we choose.

True False 49. Decoding skills have to do with reading between the lines and listening to what is not being said.

True False 50. An adult's over-eagerness to help or to jump quickly to a solution can interfere with effective attending.

True False 51. A goal of good listening in LSCI is to help the child realize that when he has angry or overwhelming feelings, he has a choice in how to express them.

True False 52. LSCI includes six Reclaiming Interventions; each of the RI's uses a different interviewing process.

True False 53. Drain Off, Timeline, and Central Issue are considered Reclaiming Stages. They are only used in about 20% of LSCI situations.

True	False	54. The full, six-stage LSCI process is used when the conflict is characteristic of the child's pattern of perceiving, thinking, feeling, and behaving and can help him gain insight into his self-destructive pattern of behavior.
True	False	55. Stage 1 is used to help drain off some of the child's intense emotion so that he is better able to connect language with emotion.
True	False	56. The Timeline is used to gain an understanding of the student's perception of the events.
True	False	57. In the Central Issue stage, we use the information from the Timeline to re-frame the child's perception of the issue.
True	False	58. There is not enough time in an LSCI interview to use role-play or new skill rehearsal.
True	False	59. The six stages of LSCI are always completed in a sequential order without any repetition of stages.
True	False	60. In the Timeline, the adult uses the sequence of the Conflict Cycle to find out about the child's unique set of perceptions, thoughts, feelings, and behaviors and to learn about others' roles in the conflict.
True	False	61. "Why" questions are the best type of questions to use in the Timeline stage.
True	False	62. Timeline questions are highly scripted. It is important for adults to follow precise wording and to memorize question sequences.
True	False	63. The Red Flag is the most frequently used Reclaiming Intervention.
True	False	64. In a Red Flag crisis, the child over-reacts to a minor request and displaces his anger onto an unsuspecting person.
True	False	65. The Drain Off is usually very brief in a Red Flag situation.
True	False	66. The helping adult should attempt to mirror the intensity of a child's emotions in a Red Flag situation.
True	False	67. There are 3 types of Red Flag crises: Carry In, Carry Over & Tap In.

Life Space Crisis Intervention
Certification Course Evaluation Form
Part 1: Introduction to LSCI

Your feedback is very valuable to us.
We appreciate the time you take to provide us with this data.

Course Date: _____   Location: _____
Trainer(s):   _____

Please circle the number most closely representing your opinion on the following:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The presentation style of the trainer(s) was effective	1	2	3	4
The trainer(s) was knowledgeable about LSCI concepts	1	2	3	4
The trainer(s) was responsive to the needs of the participants	1	2	3	4
The trainer(s) was well-prepared	1	2	3	4
The sequence of the training was well organized and logical	1	2	3	4
The video clips were effective	1	2	3	4
The training has equipped me with important skills for my work	1	2	3	4
I would recommend LSCI training to my colleagues	1	2	3	4
I found the training facility and accommodation satisfactory	1	2	3	4

Your additional comments about the Trainer(s):

Please rate how well each course objective was met:

Course Objective	Poor	Good	Excellent
Understand how stressful and traumatic memories are stored in the brain	**1**	**2**	**3**
Articulate the dynamics of conflict cycles which lead to self-defeating behavior.	**1**	**2**	**3**
Demonstrate effective de-escalation, decoding, and counseling strategies for youth in crisis.	**1**	**2**	**3**
Understand how to develop a good Timeline	**1**	**2**	**3**
Demonstrate the ability to apply all of these skills in the Red Flag Reclaiming Intervention	**1**	**2**	**3**
Understand the importance of changing our approach as adults towards responding more supportively and effectively to troubled children.	**1**	**2**	**3**
Understand the importance of learning how to help kids express feelings through language	**1**	**2**	**3**

Life Space Crisis Intervention
Certification Course Evaluation Form
Part 1: Introduction to LSCI

Describe the significant learnings you are taking away from this course:

How do you see yourself using the information and skills you've attained?

What would you change about this course?

What, if anything, would you like to learn as a follow up to this course?

May we have permission to quote you? Please circle:

YES   NO

Optional (please complete this section if you answered YES to the previous question):

Name: _____

Title: _____

Program/Organization: _____