

# Introduction to Behavior as Communication

Solana Beach School District  
Parent Education  
December 4, 2024



# Introductions

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## School Counselors



## SBSD Licensed Clinical Social Worker



# Introductions

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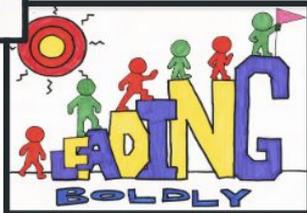
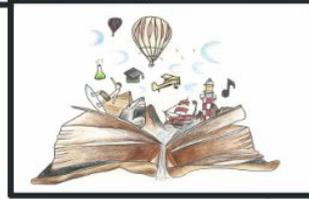
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Where learners  
find their voice,  
share their  
gifts, and  
advance the  
world



Inspiring  
wonder and  
discovery in  
learning and life

# Purpose & Outcomes

**Purpose:** To bridge the home to school connection in supporting student social emotional needs, including periods of escalation

## **Outcomes:**

- To build connections on the topic of behavior with educational partners
- To develop understanding of behavior as communication
- To increase awareness of specific strategies to address some common behaviors that may occur in the home setting
- To provide take home resources and parent workshop opportunities

# “Mindful Me”



# Group Agreements

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- Be kind.
- Learn.
- Have fun.



# Social and Emotional Learning Competencies



## **SELF-AWARENESS**

Understand one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior across contexts.



## **SELF-MANAGEMENT**

Manage one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations and to achieve goals and aspirations.



## **SOCIAL AWARENESS**

Understand the perspectives of and empathize with others, including those from diverse backgrounds.



## **RELATIONSHIP SKILLS**

Establish and maintain healthy, supportive relationships and effectively navigate settings with diverse individuals/groups.



## **RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING**

Make caring and constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions across diverse situations.

# Unexpected Behaviors (Think, Pair, Share)

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What is an unexpected behavior that you have seen recently at home with your student?

1. Think to yourself
2. Think as a pair
3. Let's share



# Unexpected Behaviors (Word Cloud)

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# Behavior as Communication

What could this behavior be communicating?

(check out the copy of the *Mistaken Goal Chart* in your packet for guidance)



# Flipped Lid/Connection before Correction

## Dr. Dan Siegel's Hand Model of the Brain

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Our four fingers are the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC), the logic centre of the brain

Regulation  
Self-control  
Logic



Our thumb is the limbic system, the primary emotion centre of the brain

Our palm and wrist represent the cerebellum and brain stem, responsible for our basic instincts.

Cerebellum & brain stem

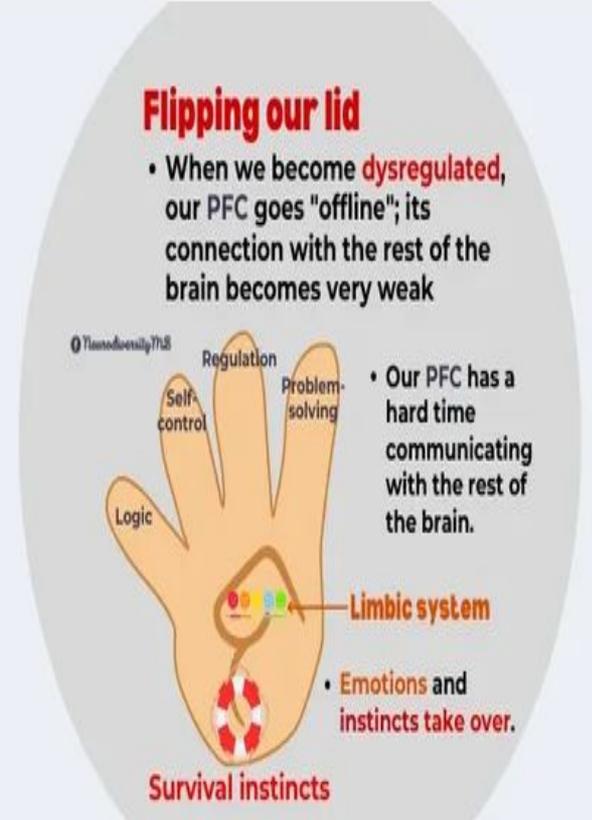


PFC  
Limbic system

Brain stem

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When we are **well-regulated** and feeling safe, there is a strong connection between our PFC and limbic centre, meaning our logic & reasoning are fully online.



## Flipping our lid

- When we become **dysregulated**, our PFC goes "offline"; its connection with the rest of the brain becomes very weak

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Regulation  
Self-control  
Problem-solving  
Logic

- Our PFC has a hard time communicating with the rest of the brain.

Limbic system

- Emotions and instincts take over.

Survival instincts

# Supportive Approach

Supportive communication is key to supporting the person and preventing escalation.

## VERBAL

- Acknowledge their feelings
- Ask open questions
  - Offer to help
- Keep sentences short, simple and clear
- Convey respect and phrase words positively

## PARAVERBAL

- Use caring, supportive tones
- Keep volume appropriate to the situation
- Deliver your message at a speed the person can process

## NON-VERBAL

- Eye contact
- Maintain a respectful distance to provide personal space



# Limit Setting Examples

**1**

## **Interrupt and Redirect**

“You sound upset. Let’s take a breath and tell me what happened.”

“I understand and am here to help. Have a seat and let’s see what we can do.”

**2**

## **Desired Behavior, Desired Outcome**

“When you lower your voice, then I’ll be able to address your concern”

“If you wait here, then I can go get the information you need.”

**3**

## **Fail Safe Choice**

“Would you like to talk about this now or later?”

“Which task would you like to complete first?”

# Finding Calm Through Play

## PLAY IS CHILDREN'S WORK

WHEN CHILDREN PLAY THEY ...

DEVELOP  
COMMUNICATION  
SKILLS



LEARN SELF-  
REGULATION  
SKILLS



DEVELOP  
COGNITIVE  
SKILLS



LEARN NEW  
INFORMATION



LEARN AND  
PRACTICE  
SOCIAL SKILLS



EXTEND THEIR  
THINKING



RESOLVE  
CONFLICTS

PROBLEM  
SOLVE

CO-OPERATE  
WITH OTHERS

LEARN ABOUT  
THEMSELVES

EXPLORE ROLES, INTERESTS,  
SKILLS, AND RELATIONSHIPS



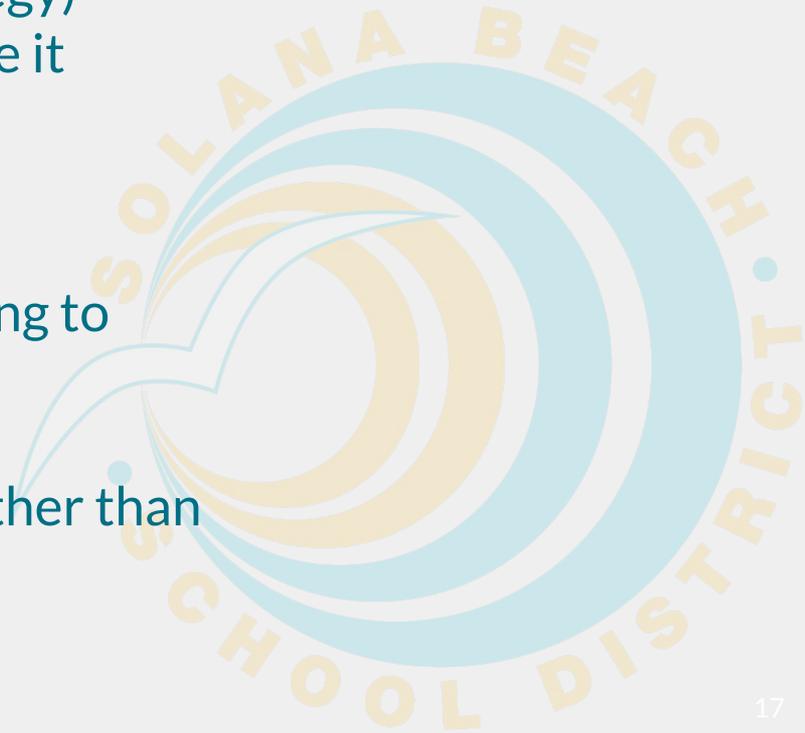
# 5-2-1 Strategy

- **Five deep breaths**- while noticing what's going on with your child... “Pop mental popcorn”
- **Two wonder questions *in your head*** -- get curious (what’s going on in this child’s body/mind, what happened to them this morning)
- **One response (playful mindset, model calm, assimilate)-- Keep learning and breath...** Silliness and play can deescalate a situation



# Try.....

1. Check in with yourself (5-2-1 strategy)
2. Validate the feeling/Name it to Tame it
3. Supportive Approach
4. Limit Setting Examples
5. Less is more
6. Be curious what the behavior is trying to communicate.
7. To not take the behavior personally.
8. To respond to your child's needs, rather than reacting.



# Example



*Use your checklist in your folder for this next activity!*



**What supportive communication techniques did you notice the adult use when interacting with the child ?**



# Let's Practice

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Scenario: It's dinnertime. As the parent, you walk up to your student to let them know that in 5 minutes they need to stop what they are doing and get ready to join you at the table. The student ignores your verbal requests. What do you do next?

Person 1: Student  
Person 2: Parent

then

Person 2: Student  
Person 1: Parent



# Let's Practice

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What strategies felt most comfortable for you?

Is there at least one strategy that you can commit to trying next time your child is dysregulated?



# Online Resources

- [The Zones Book Nook](#)
- [Calm Down Cards](#)
- [Zones of Regulation Feelings Chart](#)
- [Coping Strategies Visual](#)
- [Dan Siegel - "Flipping Your Lid:" A Scientific Explanation](#)
- [SCAN - Positive Communication with Kids](#)
- [SCAN - You can handle STRESS](#)
- [Go Zen Poster](#)
- [SDCOE Virtual Wellness Center](#)
- [SDCOE A Young Person's Guide to Wellness](#)
- [BrightLife Kids](#)



# Free Parent Workshops (in person and virtual)

De-escalating Challenging Behaviors: Parent/Caregiver Training from Crisis Prevention Institute ( April 18, 2025, 9:00-3:00 at the North County Regional Center)--see flyer in your folder for more details

Parenting the Love and Logic Way- Live Online Course  
(January 8, 15, 22, 29, February 5, 12 from 4:30 - 6:30 PM)  
-see flyer in your folder for details



# Optimistic Closure

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What is one strategy from today that you may be able to use right away?



# Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Supports

- Calm Corner Sample
- Fidgets
- Coloring page



Thank you!

We appreciate  
your continued  
partnership.

