



# Real Solutions

Strategies to Develop Positive Coping Skills  
to Build Social and Emotional Capacity in Youth

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# Developmental Context

- The more things change, the more they stay the same





# Developmental Context

Adolescent brains experience an increased drive for reward  
(changes in dopamine release)

- ▶ Impulsiveness – Act first! Reflect later
- ▶ Susceptibility to addiction – higher levels of dopamine released
- ▶ Hyperrational thought – bias toward the pros, minimize the cons

Seigel, 2013

# What is a protective factor?

## **Any condition**

(environment, people, resources)

## **or attribute**

(personal characteristics, skills)

**that enhances one's ability to handle stressful, traumatic or challenging experiences.**





# Protective Attributes and Skills

- Positive self concept
- Ability to self regulate
- Positive coping skills
- Positive social skills

*Breton, J.J., et al. (2015); Dumont, M., & Provost, M.A. (1999); Hall-Lande, J.A., et al. (2007)*



# Protective Conditions and Resources

- ▶ Engagement/connection in 2+ areas outside of family
  - ▶ School, peers, art, athletics, religion, employment, etc.
- ▶ Supportive family relationships
- ▶ Parent involvement in child's school, activities
- ▶ Consistent family environment
  - ▶ Knowing what to expect regarding behavior and values
- ▶ Consistent and Age Appropriate limits, monitoring, structure
- ▶ Physical and psychological safety
- ▶ Healthy physical development, free of disease and injury

*Breton, J.J., et al. (2015); Dumont, M., & Provost, M.A. (1999); Hall-Lande, J.A., et al. (2007)*



The Key Ingredient to Creating  
Protective Factors...



Relationship



# Positive Self Concept

Parents and caregivers feed a child's self regard.

When we emphasize **product over person**, we feed their conditional valuing

- “Did you study enough? I want to see an A on that test”.....”I’m valuable **if** I get an A.”
- The more likes I get, the more valuable I am.

When we emphasize **person over product**, we feed their unconditional valuing

- You are such a supportive friend.
- That’s hard work for you, but you’re determined to figure it out.





# Self Regulation

- Emotional regulation is supported and developed through relationships characterized by empathic attunement

<https://youtu.be/apzXGEbZht0>

Siegel, 2013; Landreth & Bratton, 2006

# Supportive Family (and Adult) Relationships

- ▶ Getting into child's world
- ▶ Seeing through child's eyes
- ▶ "Feeling felt"

Landreth & Bratton, 2006; Siegel, 2013



# Parent involvement in child's school, activities



Encourage parents to participate in social media apps and online gaming (**for connecting**)

- Join, watch, play, participate, get to know their online world!

# Positive Coping Skills

Facilitate Reflection on Positive vs Negative use of SM

- Negative Uses
  - “oversharing”
  - “stressed posting”
  - “triggering posts”
  - Comparing self to others
  - Cyberbullying
  - Sharing risky behavior
  - Interacting with strangers
  - Being involved in negative interactions



# Positive Coping Skills

Facilitate Reflection on Positive vs Negative use of SM

## ► Positive Uses

- Social connection with friends
- Connect with peers with shared experience
- Distract with humor content
- Engagement with creative content
- Content creation
- Identity expression

Radovic et al., 2017





# Knowing What to Expect About Behaviors and Values

- ▶ Helping parents develop plan for setting limits on social media and online activities that are:
  - ▶ Consistent
  - ▶ Age appropriate
  - ▶ Discussed in advance
  - ▶ Focus on the child's choices
  - ▶ Connected with clear, relevant, short term consequences
  - ▶ Match parents' behavior!

Landreth & Bratton, 2006



# Knowing What to Expect About Behaviors and Values

- ▶ Helping parents identify areas to allow freedom for child to:
  - ▶ Encounter situations
  - ▶ Make choices
  - ▶ Experience the consequences
  - ▶ Seek support and guidance
  - ▶ Discover new strategies to cope
- ▶ Communicates capability and trust



# What's the plan for social media / online activity?

- ▶ What do you consider age appropriate...
  - ▶ Limits
  - ▶ Structure
  - ▶ Monitoring

Age 9... 11... 13... 15... 17?

**Choose an age and brainstorm at your table!**





# Healthy Physical Development

## Sleep

- ▶ How much is enough?
  - ▶ 6-12 yr olds need 9-12 hours per day
  - ▶ 13-18 yr olds need 8-10 hours per day

## Quality sleep is important!

- ▶ Screen light in the evening lowers melatonin levels, inhibits sleep
  - ▶ Avoid screens in the later evening
  - ▶ At least use a blue filter



# The Blue Whale Challenge



Together, we create the world our children experience.

It is up to US to...

- engage in (and disengage from) social media and the online universe in ways that are life affirming, connecting, compassionate, creative, fun, and inspiring
- Help our parents and children find ways to do the same!



What is one new way  
you can contribute to  
a child's protective factors?