The Heart versus the Head in Parent Child Relationships
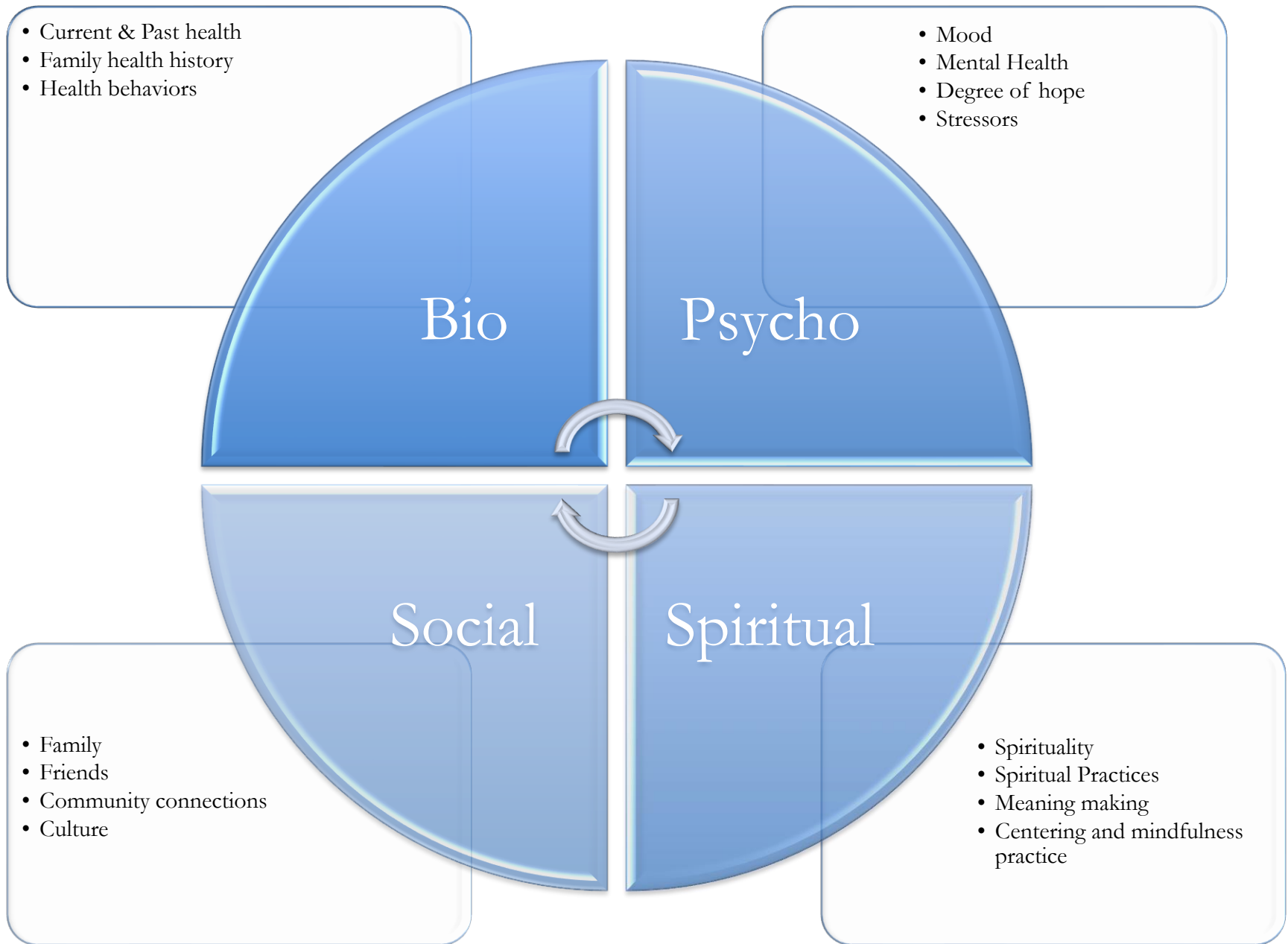
BH Webinar Series
Brittany Schaffner IMFT-S, LPCC-S
BH Education & Training

Objectives

- Identify impact of relationships on behavior/symptoms and behaviors on relationships

- Recognize the impact of caregiver trauma on parenting

- Identify 2 strategies for families to support the parent-child relationship

- Identify referral considerations and resources

- Current & Past health
- Family health history
- Health behaviors

- Mood
- Mental Health
- Degree of hope
- Stressors

Bio

Psycho

Social

Spiritual

- Family
- Friends
- Community connections
- Culture

- Spirituality
- Spiritual Practices
- Meaning making
- Centering and mindfulness practice

Resource: Adapted from The SAGE Encyclopedia of Marriage, Family, and Couple Counseling: Contributors W. David Robinson & Nathan Taylor

Relationships Across Lifespan

Infancy & Early Childhood
- Depend solely on relationships
- Foundation for physical and mental health
- Relied on to regulate effects of stress
- Importance of other caregiver relationships with the mother

School Age
- Numerous transitions in development
- Shift in parental control
- Conflict commonly increases, time together commonly decreases
- Parent serve as model

Transition into Adulthood
- Cultural, family, financial, spiritual, resources…
- Hierarchal changes
- Healthy communication and boundaries

Protective Factors

- Affectionate parenting styles
- Parental involvement
- Home environment & Family relationships
- Spirituality
- Cultural heritage
- Sense of belonging or connection
- Family resilience
- Intrinsic factors

Risk Factors

- Parental stress
- Parental mental health
- Harsh parenting styles
- Parent-child conflict
- High conflict environments
- Parenting relationship issues
- Insecure attachments
- Adverse experiences
- Economic hardship
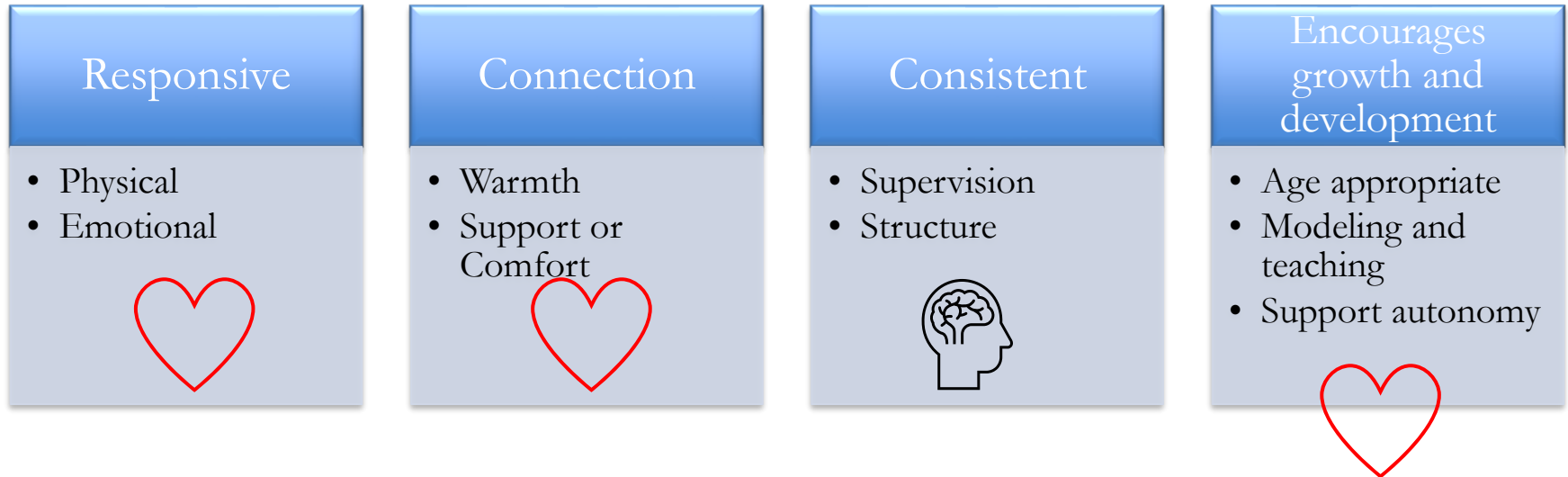- Racial discrimination

Relationships and Child Mental Health

- Internalizing disorders
  - Contributing factors: genetics and family environment
  - Goal often to relieve symptoms and improve family functioning

- Neurodevelopmental disorders
  - Increase risk for caregiver stress and financial hardships
  - Consistent findings impact of high-level behavior on parental wellbeing, sibling relationships/conflict and marital relationship
  - (ADHD) family functioning, caregiver MH, hostile p-c relationships impact outcomes

- Behavior disorders
  - Environmental factors high correlations with diagnosis

Relationships and Child Mental Health

- Bipolar disorder
  - High expressed emotion level in family 2-3x more likely to deteriorate into a manic or depressives states or have more prolonged states

- Eating disorders
  - Families can organize or re-organize around an eating disorder
  - Impact sibling relationships, partnerships, the home-food environment, family cohesion, & parent-child attachments

- Trauma
  - Relationships are the most powerful buffer to experiences and recovery of experiences

NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.℠

7

Positive Parenting Practices

Relationship as a secure base

Responsive	Connection	Consistent	Encourages growth and development
• Physical • Emotional	• Warmth • Support or Comfort	• Supervision • Structure	• Age appropriate • Modeling and teaching • Support autonomy

- Reduce coercive parent-child interactions (dysregulation)

Health

Social Stressors

Economic Stressors

Coping

Family Issues: Divorce

Family Life Cycle

Knowledge & Attitude

Beliefs & Values

Ethnic or Racial Minority Status

Trauma

Family Dynamics

Intergenerational Trauma

- The impact of an experience, not on one generation, but on subsequent generations

- Individual, family, cultural, or community experience that can impact multiple areas:
  - Thoughts, feelings, behavioral adaptations
  - Values
  - Communication
  - Connection w/ child & others
  - Stigma surrounding getting MH support
  - Place in society
  - Built into cultural norms
  - Parenting

Parenting Impact

- **Safety and how keep kids safe**
  - Over
  - Under

- **Discipline and how set limits**
  - Over
  - Under

- **Difficulty with regulating emotions**
  - Over
  - Under

- **Supportive relationships and connections**
  - Over
  - Under

Fear of failing (children, themselves, partner)

Personalizing

Misunderstanding behavior or situations

Emotional Numbness

Shift in Boundaries

Role
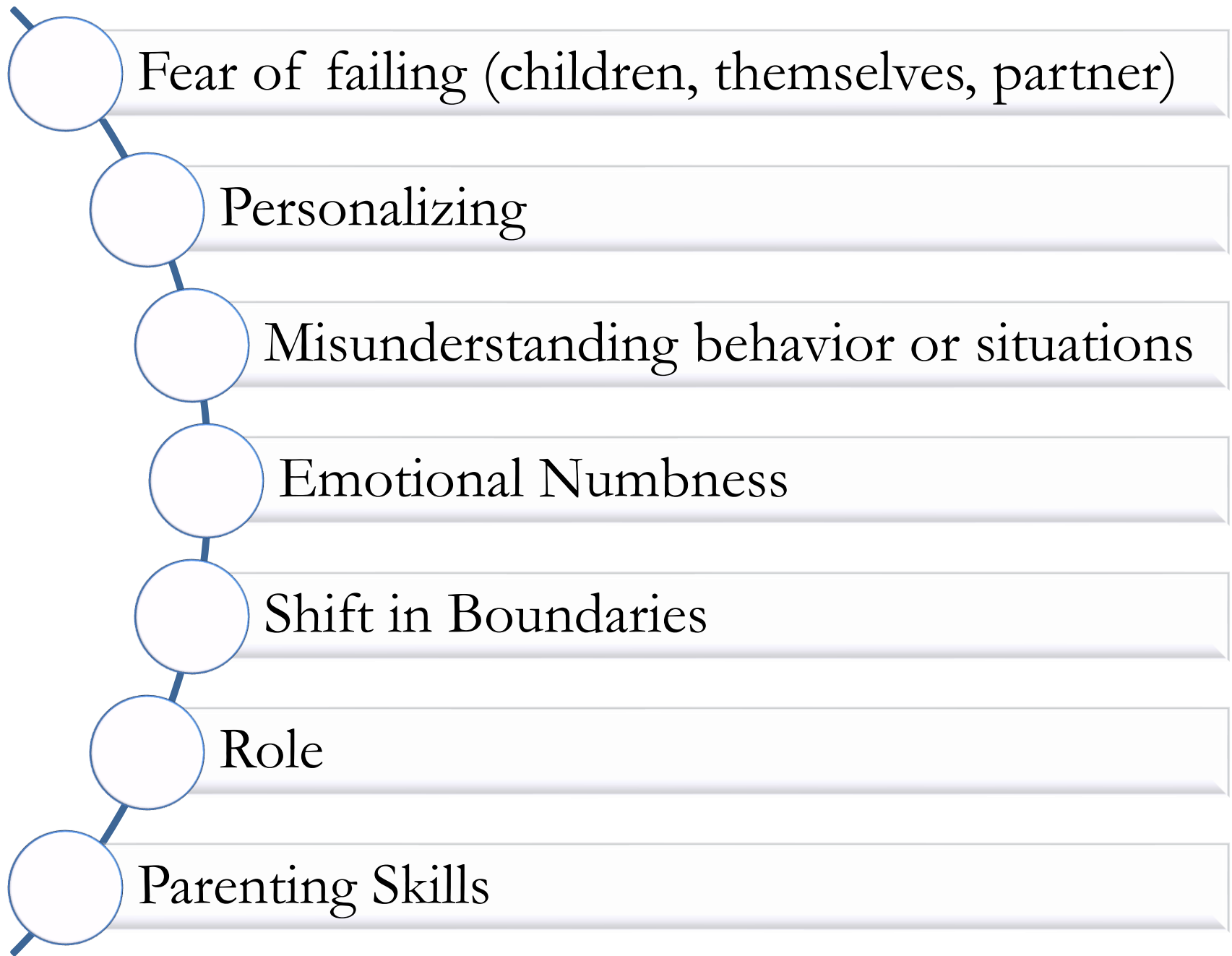
Parenting Skills

Supporting the parent child relationship

Parent Programs

- Relationship building skills and quality of relationship
  - Parental confidence
- Prevention and treatment
  - Positive Parent Program (Triple P)
  - Child Adult Relationship Enhancement
  - Incredible Years (IY)
  - Chicago Parent Program (CPP)
  - Parent Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT)

Strategies & Skills

✓ Developmental language of children and adolescents

✓ Quality of time and activities that promote positive interaction

– Tuned in, imitation, paraphrasing, open

✓ Praise

– Recognize behavior

– *"Nice idea on how to fix the car."*

– *"Thank you for coming to talk to me about this."*

✓ Emotional validation

– Labeling

– Validation

- *"It is sad and frustrating when…"*

- *"That must have been really hard."*

- *"I can see you are making an effort."*

Strategies & Skills

✓ Reduction in negative strategies

✓ Predictability

✓ Clear expectations
  – Age-appropriate limit setting
  – Clearly stated
  – Only when necessary
  – Before rather than during

✓ Problem solving
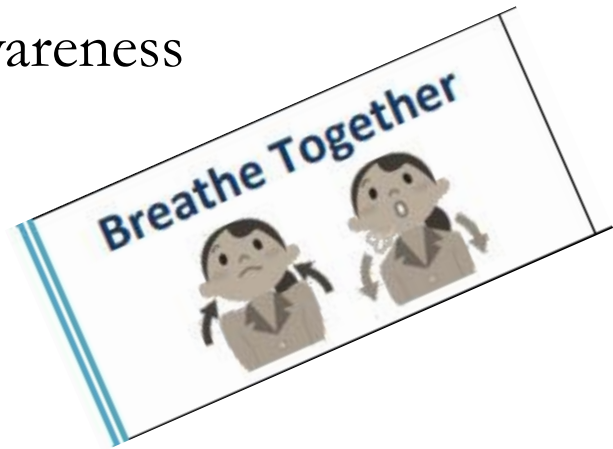 – Modeling & Practice
  – Options
  – *"What do you think?"*
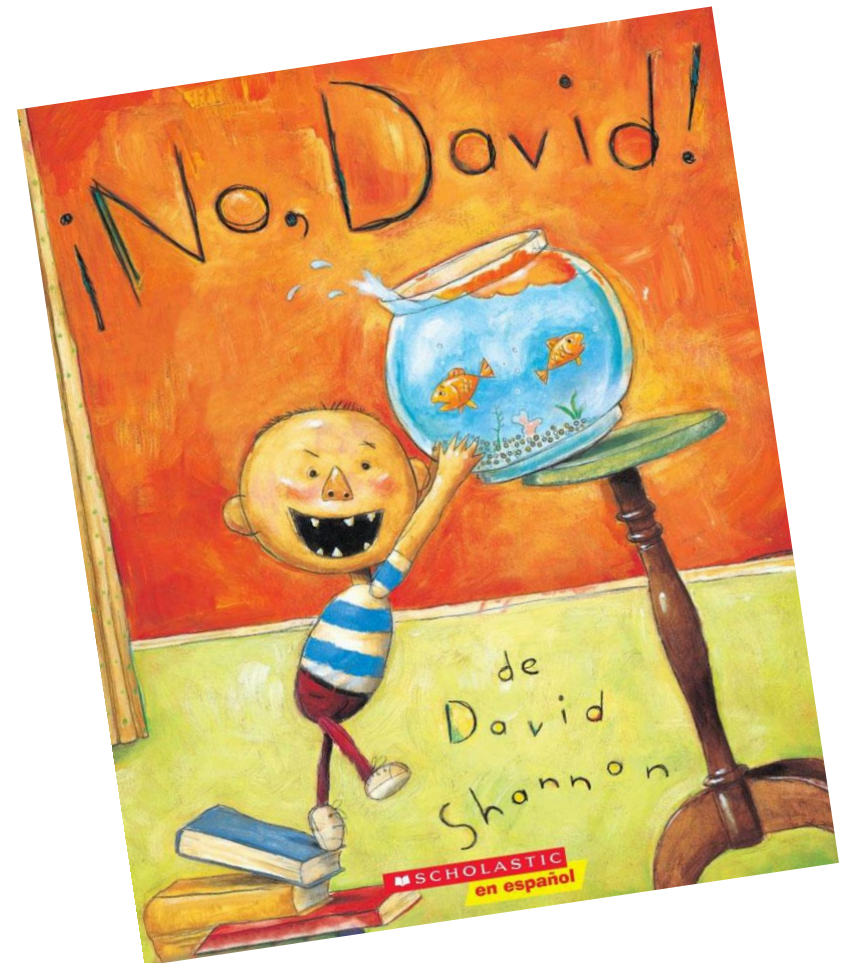
Strategies & Skills

✓ Stress management & Emotional awareness

– Coaching & modeling

– Coping

– Responsive

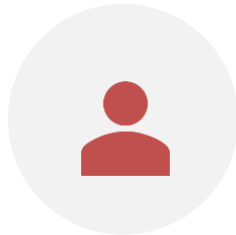– Resources

– Taking care of you as the parent

✓ Building on strengths

Family Dynamics

- Patterns of interactions between family members that influence family structure, hierarchy, functioning, roles, values, and behaviors.
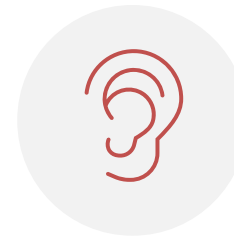
Developmental Stages & Considerations

Subsystems & Roles

Flexibility

Communication

Cohesion

Clinical Attention

- Social and environmental factors that impact health
  – Affect the diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment of disorder
  – Impaired functioning

Relational Problems

- Parent-Child Relational Problem
- Child Affected by Parental Relationship Distress
- Disruption of Family by Separation or Divorce
- High Expressed Emotional Level Within Family

NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.℠

Family Therapy

- Understanding the presenting symptoms or behaviors within the context of family interactions and relationships
- Treatment designed to address specific issues affecting the heath and functioning of the family
  - Assessing and addressing complex relationship patterns and interactions
  - Help family members better understand each other
  - Work through key issues that block support and connection
- Varying levels
  - Family
  - Parent relationship
  - Parent-child relationship
 - Siblings

Referral Considerations

- Continued difficulty in meeting developmental needs
- Express concerns or difficulty in knowing how to manage or respond to child's behaviors and symptoms
- Family seeking more help or guidance
- Child and/or family identify as a top stressor or worry
- Recent family change or lifecycle transition
- Family conflict or patterns:
  - Maintaining or increasing symptoms
  - Impacting ability for child/adolescent to utilize skills
  - Impact ability to communicate or problem-solve
  - (Adolescent) "can't go" to parents for anything
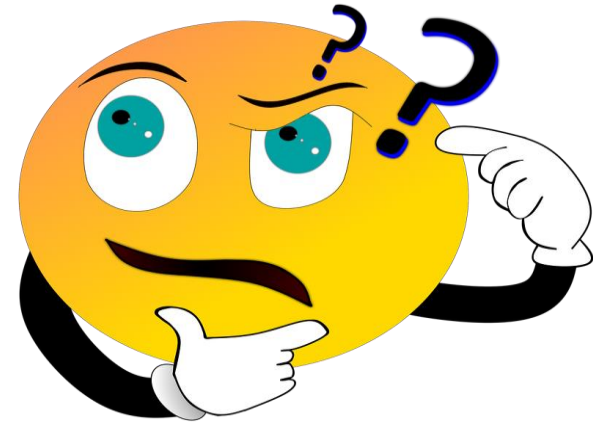
- Collaborative and intentional conversation:
  - Check in on impact to relationship
  - "When experiencing stressors (illness, change, behavioral concerns) it commonly can put a strain on your relationship. There are different supports that we can explore."
  - "When members of families or families go through recent changes it is normal for that to put a level of stress into all the relationships (sibling, parent-child, marriage). You have been doing many things to support your child. It could be helpful to gain support from (X) to gain additional strategies for coping with this as a family."
  - "When someone close to us is going through things it impacts us on many levels. One of those areas is the relationship. There are supports that help enhance relationships and find solutions to best support your child and family."
 - Reframe importance of connections

Practice Considerations
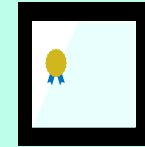
- Population health
  - Visuals & messages
  - Pamphlets, Books
- Parenting = Relationship
- Screening
  - Family strengths & difficulties and parenting strengths & difficulties
  - Add option as parenting or family stress to list of concern
 - Would you like additional parenting resources?

- Parent-healthcare provider relationship
- Family based questions
  - How has this behavior or illness impacted family (routines, relationships.)?
  - How can (family member) support you regarding (x)?
  - What is most stressful to family?
  - Agreements and disagreements
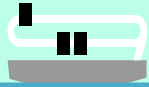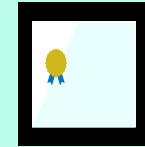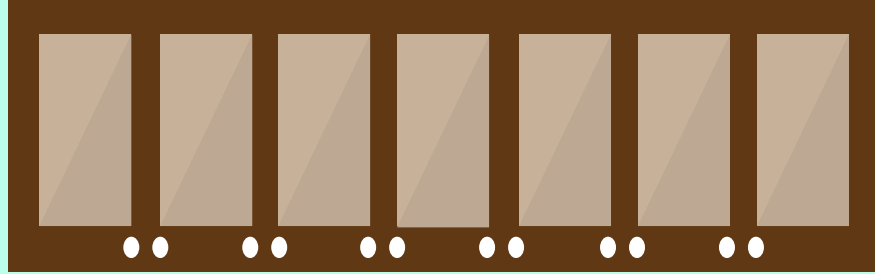
- Psychoeducation and access to resources
  - Simple parenting practices
  - Relationships as a factor in health
  - Wellbeing of parents
- Collaborative health care

- Supports to parents
  - Role of parent
    - "I recommend…" "It is most effective…"
  - Reduce parent blame, stress, and criticism
- Larger community support
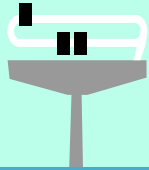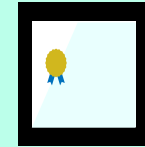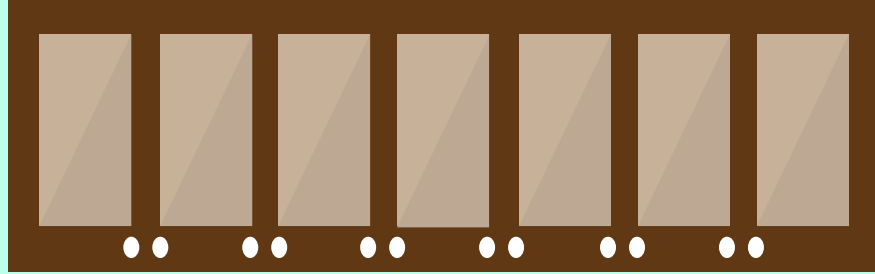
- Normalize
  - "Tantrums can be common at this age."
- Reassurance
- Curiosity
  - "Has your child been having these or experiencing this?"
  - "What is that like for you?"
- Continue to monitor and consider relationships
- Follow up on use and benefit of recommended resources

- [First Approach Skills Training (FAST) Program - Seattle Children's (seattlechildrens.org)](seattlechildrens.org)

- [Home | Patient Centered Care and Trauma Informed Care for Pediatric Patients - HEALTHCARE TOOLBOX](#)

- [The 5-minute daily playtime ritual that can get your kids to listen better : Life Kit : NPR](#)

- [Sesame Street Caring Communities](#)

- [Parenting as a Survivor - The Mama Bear Effect](#)

- [Parenting with ACEs (acesaware.org)](acesaware.org)

Referral Resources

- **OSU Couple and Family Therapy Clinic**
  - [Services Provided - OSU Couple and Family Therapy Clinic](#)
- **Nationwide Children's Hospital BH**
  - [Behavioral Health Physician Resources For Providers (nationwidechildrens.org)](#)
  - Fax referral form
  - [FAQs BH Intake.pdf](#)
  - [Positive Parenting Program (nationwidechildrens.org)](#)

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Risk and Protective Factors. Accessed February 9, 2023. https://www.cdc.gov/suicide/factors/index.html

- Cobb, K., & Priest, J. (2020). Depression, Anxiety, and Other Internalizing Disorders. The Handbook of Systemic Family Therapy 241-263.

- Frosch CA, Schoppe-Sullivan SJ, O'Banion DD. Parenting and Child Development: A Relational Health Perspective. Am J Lifestyle Med. 2019 May 26;15(1):45-59. doi: 10.1177/1559827619849028. PMID: 33447170; PMCID: PMC7781063.

- Gallus, K.L. (2020). Interventions for Parent-Child Relational Problems That Emerge During the School-Age Years. In The Handbook of Systemic Family Therapy (eds K.S. Wampler and L.M. McWey). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119438519.ch38

- Holtrop, K., Ewing, E.S.K., Topham, G.L. and Miller, D.L. (2020). Prevention of Parent-Child Relational Problems. In The Handbook of Systemic Family Therapy (eds K.S. Wampler and L.M. McWey). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119438519.ch36

- Linville, D. and Blow, A.J. (2020). Systemic Treatment of Eating Disorders Across the Life Cycle. In The Handbook of Systemic Family Therapy (eds K.S. Wampler, M. Rastogi and R. Singh). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119438519.ch96

- Ordway MR, Webb D, Sadler LS, Slade A. Parental Reflective Functioning: An Approach to Enhancing Parent-Child Relationships in Pediatric Primary Care. J Pediatr Health Care. 2015 Jul-Aug;29(4):325-34. doi: 10.1016/j.pedhc.2014.12.002. Epub 2015 Feb 3. PMID: 25661692; PMCID: PMC4478122.

NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.℠

References

- Orr, J. M., Miller, R. B., & Polson, D. M. (2005). Toward a standard of care for child ADHD: Implications for marriage and family therapists. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *31*(3), 191–205. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1752-0606.2005.tb01563.x

- Paradis, A.D., Giaconia, R.M., Reinherz, H.Z., Beardslee, W.R., Ward, K.E. and Fitzmaurice, G.M. (2011), Adolescent Family Factors Promoting Healthy Adult Functioning: A Longitudinal Community Study. Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 16: 30-37. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-3588.2010.00577.x

- Suldo, Shannon & Fefer, Sarah. (2015). Parent-Child Relationships and Well-Being. Research, Applications, and Interventions for Children and Adolescents: A Positive Psychology Perspective. 131-147. 10.1007/978-94-007-6398-2_8.

- Topham, G.L., Messmore, C.P. and Sesemann, E.M. (2020). Systemic Interventions for Problems Emerging in Early Childhood. In The Handbook of Systemic Family Therapy (eds K.S. Wampler and L.M. McWey). https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119438519.ch37

- Youth.gov. Risk and Protective Factors for Youth. Accessed February 9, 2023. https://youth.gov/youth-topics/youth-mental-health/risk-and-protective-factors-youth

NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S
When your child needs a hospital, everything matters.℠

Thank You!