Structure vs. Discipline

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Course Goals

We expect to help participants:

- Appreciate the four broad styles of parenting as adapted to describe ways educators discipline students
- Develop a personal philosophy of effective discipline
- Appreciate the differences between fear-based/anger-based discipline and respect-based discipline
- Create an intentional strategy for motivating parents to be receptive to information on effective discipline
- Appreciate reasons discipline can be difficult
- Understand, appreciate and adapt the Nurture/Structure Highway
Course Goals

We expect to help participants:

- Become clearer if they need assistance being more confident, particularly related to discipline techniques and situations.
- Embrace the concept of their responsibility to act in an executive capacity as needed with children and thereby become relaxed and calm about being an executive.
- Develop “don’t” sensitivity and practice reframing common “don’t” phrases.
- Eliminate typical unhealthy attitudes, beliefs and behaviors that are ineffective, unhealthy or toxic for children.
Four Broad Styles

- Developed by researcher Diana Baumrind to describe healthier and less healthy parenting styles.
- Especially helpful in describing ways that parents discipline children.
- Can also be adapted to describe ways educators discipline students (as we have done here).
- **Neglectful, uninvolved and distant style**: describes educators who walk away when children are misbehaving and would benefit from adult intervention. Often they do not know what to do or are afraid that if they do get involved it will be an out of control angry reaction.
Four Broad Styles

- **Overindulgent, highly permissive and non-assertive style**: describes educators who use bribes to control a child who is misbehaving or who quickly cave into a child’s demands in order to placate them, often out of fear that child will disapprove of them or that the child’s anger will escalate.

- **Authoritarian, rigid, overbearing, highly controlling style**: describes educators who insist on immediate obedience and compliance, who often use threats, angry outbursts, harsh punishment and other fear tactics to intimidate child into behaving well.
Four Broad Styles

- **Authoritative, calm, confident, in charge and yet very nurturing style:** describes educators who combine healthy nurture with healthy structure and discipline that invites a child to grow and mature, to become respectful and responsible.

- Educators are encouraged to keep these four styles in mind because each of the three less healthy styles (neglectful, overindulgent and authoritarian) require separate and unique attention with regard to ways to address the problems and needs of the educators who use each.
Philosophy of Effective Discipline

- It can be helpful and enlightening for educators to establish a philosophy of effective discipline.
- Consider what you believe to be true and important about effective discipline; what your personal values and approaches are with regard to leadership.
- Create a written statement that defines that philosophy or a list of values/principles that guide a discipline event.
- We also encourage educators to create a written list of strategies and approaches to help them when parents are resistant or defensive during discussions on the subject of discipline.
Educators as Advocates and Ambassadors for Effective Discipline

- We encourage all educators to be highly intentional, self- and other-aware, and well-equipped with fundamental information about the principles, attitudes and skills necessary to discipline effectively.
- Students are much more likely to remain emotionally and relationally healthy and are much more likely to be attentive and capable of learning and much less likely to express anger in unhealthy ways.
- If and when they do, educators who are able to immediately employ principles and processes of effective discipline manage that anger expression quickly and in safe and healthy ways.
- The degrees to which children are disciplined effectively in their home situations can greatly influence their behaviors in the classroom. We encourage educators to be advocates and ambassadors for effective discipline with all adults who interact with children.
- There may be opportunities for educators to present critical concepts and skills as a way of promoting improved disciplining in the home situation.
Motivating Others to be Receptive to Information

- It can be helpful for educators to have ways they can intentionally motivate others to be receptive to receiving information on effective discipline.

- Examples of statements educators could make to others to help them be more receptive about receiving information on effective discipline follow:
  - We believe Effective Discipline is critical information for all adults who have significant relationships with children because very few of us have formal training to be effective and intentional when we discipline.
Motivating Others to be Receptive to Information

- If the adults who interact with children do not take the time to get clear about their philosophy of disciplining, they tend to be more reactive and can potentially be either very ineffective and/or destructive.

- When the adults who interact with children become clearer and more intentional, interactions in general, and specifically when they involve disciplining, is more satisfying, are more confident and calm and children have the safe structure they need.

- When adults discipline effectively children tend to behave in more appropriate ways.
Motivating Others to be Receptive to Information

- When adults discipline effectively, children tend to behave in more appropriate ways and are also more likely to be emotionally healthy.
- We assume that authoritative educating is the healthiest approach adults can use in school settings.
- Overly permissive educational behaviors and authoritarian educational behaviors result in children who do not do as well in school and in life.
- Authoritative educating is an effective blend of nurture and structure that meets the emotional and relational needs of each child.
- This information is important because it can help adults who work with children become clearer, more intentional, and more effective.
Importance of Repetition

- It can be helpful for educators to appreciate that responding to adults with acceptance, appreciation and understanding when they gently but firmly, repeat information and new ideas can help move adults toward acceptance.

- It takes as many as 6-10 repetitions of information for recipients to assimilate the information.
Typical Ways Educators Disciplined in the Past

Sample List:

- Humiliation
- "Guiltling"
- Lectures
- Shaming
- Yelling
- Sending to principals office
- Taking away recess
- Increasing workload
- Giving Detention
- Taking privileges away
- Calling parent(s)
- Timeouts
Reasons Why Disciplining Can Be Difficult

- Kids are egocentric.
- It can be so difficult to be an executive.
- Adults can be afraid to say no and/or worry about harming a child’s self-esteem.
- Some children are so persistent.
- Other people’s judgment hurts; parents, caregivers and adults who care for children can feel so responsible for children’s behavior.
- It can be exhausting - takes more time to be a conscious disciplinarian and to persist.
- Adults can be ambivalent - not clear about values, expectations.
- There can be disagreements among the adults in charge regarding ways to discipline.
- Different adult/child combinations set up different issues.
- It is an awesome responsibility.
- There are no guarantees that what you are doing is right.
- Adults need to consider each child’s temperamental differences.
Fear, Anger, and Respect-Based Discipline

- Fear-based discipline comes from the belief that children must be intimidated, punished, shamed, forced into submission and overpowered.

- Respect-based discipline honors that fact that students are children and therefore works in progress who need the guidance and structure from adults around them, even as the dignity and rights of the student are protected.

- We encourage all adults who care for children to embrace the idea that discipline and anger should be kept separate; discipline involves creating and enforcing healthy structure while anger needs to be assessed and, if expressed, done so in healthy ways in which the angry person takes responsibility for his or her feelings.
Structure Highway

- Jean Illsley Clarke’s “Structure Highway” provides a demonstration of the continuum presented in her book *Growing Up Again*.
- This demonstration may help educators understand, appreciate and remember the concept.
- It is the balance of nurture and structure that leads to the healthiest forms of disciplining.
# Nurture Chart

## Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abuse</th>
<th>Conditional Care</th>
<th>Assertive Care</th>
<th>Supportive Care</th>
<th>Over-indulgence</th>
<th>Neglect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Involves relating to a child by assault, physical or psychological invasion, direct or indirect “don’t be” messages. Abuse negates the child’s needs.</td>
<td>Requires the child to earn care or pay for care in some way. Care adult gives is based on the adult’s needs and expectations, not child’s needs.</td>
<td>Recognizes the child’s needs. Adult nurtures in this way because it is helpful to the child, responsive to child’s needs and appropriate to the circumstance</td>
<td>Recognizes the child’s needs. Care the child is free to accept or reject. Offers help, comfort and love. Stimulates child to think and do what they are capable of doing for themselves.</td>
<td>Promotes continuing dependence on adult and teaches child not to think independently and not to be responsible for self or to others.</td>
<td>Lack of emotional or physical stimulation and recognition by adults who are unavailable or ignore the needs of the child.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Structure Chart

**Characteristics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rigidity</th>
<th>Criticism</th>
<th>Non-Negotiable Rules</th>
<th>Negotiable Rules</th>
<th>Marshmallow</th>
<th>Abandonment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Springs from fear. Rules “written in concrete” that often ignore developmental tasks. Threatens abuse or withdrawal of love.</td>
<td>Labels the person with bad names rather than setting standards. Negates children and tells them how to fail. Humiliates.</td>
<td>Rules that must be followed. Provide safety and security, help children make decisions and build own self-esteem. Firm but not rigid and can be rewritten for welfare of classroom.</td>
<td>Teach children how to think clearly and solve problems, raises self-esteem. Children learn to be increasingly responsible for themselves</td>
<td>Grants freedom without demanding responsibility in return. Discounts child’s ability and gives permission to be irresponsible</td>
<td>Lack of rules, protection and contact. Tells children adults are not available for them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Structure Highway

- Center lanes (Non-Negotiable and Negotiable) are healthy lanes where we want to remain.
- Next lanes of the highway (Criticism and Marshmallow) are shoulders indicating we don’t want to drive there, but everyone can sometimes get off track.
- Outer lanes (Rigidity and Abandonment) are equivalent to driving off the highway and into the ditch. Definitely unhealthy, dangerous and need to be avoided.
- If we go into the ditch, outside help may be needed to get out.
Clues You May Need Confident Classroom Management

- Educators can ask themselves to consider if they frequently feel one or more of the following:
  - out of control
  - angry
  - that you are often bargaining
  - defensive
  - often in power struggles
  - that you must argue your point
  - manipulated by child
  - in need of child’s approval
  - fearful of child’s anger, power, disapproval

Source: *How to Discipline Without Feeling Guilty* by Mel Silberman
Clues You May Need Confident Classroom Management

- Educators can ask themselves to consider if they frequently feel one or more of the following:
  - compromised or helpless
  - need to convince/cajole child to get compliance
  - resentful
  - like you are “walking on eggs”
  - unsure of your right and duty to be final authority
  - that child’s needs are more important than yours
  - your own self-esteem is tied up with child’s expression of acceptance
  - that you must battle to get your way with child
  - that you need child to appreciate what you are doing
Executive Role

- It is important that educators embrace the concept of their responsibility to act in an executive capacity when needed.
- Being in-charge involves the “4 C’s”:
  - Calm (body language, voice tone, eye contact)
  - Clear (specific descriptions)
  - Confident (assertive attitude)
  - Compassionate (feelings of sympathy with desire to help)
- *Adults to not have to be mean to be in charge.*
Executive Role

- Effective discipline helps educators avoid:
  ~ Power struggles
  ~ Intimidation
  ~ Confusion

- Adults who discipline effectively continue to care for and respect the children while they take charge.

- It is okay to be firm, even unmovable.
Executive Role

- Discipline is effective only if educators consider and set reasonable expectations for children based on each child’s”
  - Age and developmental stage
  - Developmental tasks
  - Uniqueness
  - Maturity
  - Situational factors
  - Temperamental characteristics, learning styles
  - Ability levels
  - Needs
Executive Role

- Assertive, confident leadership involves:
  ~ Embracing an overall attitude of confidence
  ~ Knowledge of appropriate techniques and skills
Four Basic Skills of Being a Confident and Assertive Executive

- Consider the degree to which you know when and how to:

  1. Be Clear
  2. Be Direct
  3. Give Reasons Freely
  4. Show Interest
Underlying Beliefs

Consider the degree to which you know/believe each statement is true for you:

~ It is your right and duty to act in an executive role.
~ Kids don’t have to like rules and decisions.
~ You are a benevolent authority; classroom is not a democracy.
~ You can do all the things that promote and maintain a child’s positive self-esteem AND maintain your executive authority.
~ You can have confidence in your judgment.
~ Children do not have to approve of your decision.
Underlying Beliefs

- Consider the degree to which you know believe each is true for yourself:
  - It is okay for children to momentarily feel hateful, angry, rebellious, upset, mistreated and express those feelings if done so respectfully.
  - It is okay to be flexible, to change your mind, even allow yourself to be swayed at times from a position of strength.
  - No matter what your decision, the bottom line is that the ultimate power to be the executive is yours.
“Strings Attached” Approach

- Educators are often unaware they employ the “Strings Attached” approach.
- Educators sometimes secretly hope that if they are nice to children, children will act nicely in return.
- Most children are not mature enough to respond to the concept of fair giving and receiving.
- With less mature children it is more appropriate and fairer to do things and give things freely, without strings attached.
“Strings Attached” Approach

- Involves believing you can get the executive job done through caring and understanding alone.
- Involves a lack of awareness of the nature of children.
- Involves feeling betrayed by children because unrealistic expectations are not being met.
- Children may comply to gain approval or may rebel.
- None of these outcomes promotes self-esteem, self-respect, self-discipline or preserves a positive adult/child relationship.
“Don’t” Sensitivity

- It may help educators to appreciate that using “don’t” statements may sometimes actually increase the possibility of a child misbehaving.
- There are three steps to responding to a “don’t” statement.
  - First the child has to picture or think about what he or she is NOT supposed to do.
  - Then he or she has to add the command to NOT do it.
  - Third, he or she has to know or decide what to do instead.
Behaviors to Avoid

- These behaviors are defined as less healthy and potentially harmful for children, yet they are often typical methods used to get children to behave or comply.
- Each has the potential to damage a child’s self-esteem, confidence or emotional intelligence.
- None maintains a child’s dignity or sense of self-worth.
- Many of these may be familiar because when we were children many were used on us.
Behaviors to Avoid

- It may take awhile to eliminate any of these less healthy forms of discipline.
  ~ Speaking and behaving in an angry, out of control way
  ~ Warning or threatening
  ~ Preaching, moralizing
  ~ Blaming, shaming, accusing
  ~ Ascribing motives, interpreting, analyzing
  ~ Competing with the child
  ~ Scare tactics, prophecies, magic spells
  ~ Broad generalizations
  ~ Name-calling, mocking, using sarcasm
  ~ Emotional punishment
  ~ Physical/corporal punishment
“Think About” Homework

- Educators are invited to consider the four broad styles of parenting as applied to classroom management techniques.
- Educators are encouraged to consider the Nurture/Structure Highway analogy and the balance between the two.
- Educators are invited to consider how discipline information would benefit parents and opportunities they may have to share this information with them.
- Educators are encouraged to adapt this information to enhance classroom management skills.
Recommended Reading