

○ ○ ○ | **Preventing Placement Disruptions**

Parenting Youth Who Push Caregivers Away

○ ○ ○ | **Today's Agenda**

- Effects of Disruption on Youth
- Interventions for Preventing Disruption
- Why Youth Engage in Behaviors that Lead to Disruption
- Managing the "BIG" Behaviors:
 - Lying
 - Stealing
 - Manipulation
 - Aggression

○ ○ ○ | **Disruptions Occur Frequently**

- Studies indicate that up to 50% of youth in foster care disrupt annually.
- Disruptions are generally due to behavior problems with physical aggression leading to the greatest risk of disruption.

○ ○ ○ | **Disruptions Create a Vicious Downward Spiral for Youth**

- Decreased likelihood of permanency
- Increased mental health issues
- Increased likelihood of greater behavioral problems

○ ○ ○ | **Disruptions Leave Long Lasting Scars**

- Disruptions lead to feelings of profound loss
 - Loss of power over personal destiny
 - Loss of school and friends
 - Loss of personal belongings
 - Separation from siblings
 - Loss of self esteem

○ ○ ○ | **Disruptions Create a Period of "Shutting Down"**

- Youth feel like "giving up".
- In the period after a disruption, youth feel disconnected, detached or withdrawn.

○ ○ ○ | Memories of Caring Adults

- Memories of caring adults are long lasting.
- These memories provide hope for the future.
- Memories of caring adults create resilience.
- Guide future desires for their own families.

○ ○ ○ | Some Youth Have “Guarded Optimism”

- Leaving a “bad placement” can bring relief.
- Some view disruptions as a chance to start over.

○ ○ ○ | Long Lasting Effects of Disruptions

- Trust Issues
- Some report learning “life lessons” from moves.
- Some gained individual strength from moves and were regarded as resilient.
- Exposed to differences.

○ ○ ○ | Disruptions Can be Prevented

- Work closely with caseworkers:
 - Daily phone calls
 - Increase visits to at least weekly
 - Use the 24/7 on call system
 - Brainstorm solutions

○ ○ ○ | Interventions that Work to Prevent Disruptions

- Effective Therapy
 - Trauma Informed Therapy
 - Foster Parent Involvement in Youth’s Therapy
 - Intensive In-Home Therapy
 - Therapy Combined with Effective Psychiatric Services

○ ○ ○ | More Interventions That Work

- Additional Options:
 - Day Treatment
 - After School Programs
 - Community Involvement in Activities
 - Volunteer Service

○○○ | When Aggression Occurs

- Juvenile Court Involvement
 - Communicates seriousness behavior
 - Offers the services of an additional system

○○○ | Foster Parent Care

- Ask for additional education on the specific issues creating problems.
- Get additional respite
- Join a support group
- Get a mentor

○○○ | IMPORTANT!!!!

- Learn to better deal with the tough issues: lying, stealing, manipulation and aggression.
- ALWAYS ask:
 - "What can be done to prevent a disruption."

OUR YOUTH DESERVE THIS...

○○○ | Abuse and Neglect Negatively Impacts Brain Development

- All of our experiences change the brain.
- Neural systems become sensitized by repeated stress and MORE sensitive to future stressful events.
- This can permanently alter neurochemical systems in the body

○○○ | Survival is Key

- With repeated trauma, the frontal lobe of the brain, which is the key to learning and decision making, is underdeveloped.
- The body's resources are diverted from growth to survival.

○○○ | The Brain Controls Decision Making

- One response to trauma is poor impulse control. The parts of the brain that control decision making do not function typically.
- Emotions overwhelm the person and logical thinking does not occur.
- Behavior is "stuck" in ineffective patterns of response.

○ ○ ○ | **Poor Decision Making Leads to Manipulation, Lying and Stealing and Aggression**

- Manipulation, lying, stealing and aggression have sometimes been necessary for survival.
- At times, these behaviors allow a person to falsely feel they have control over their world.

○ ○ ○ | **Relationships with Parental Figures are Scary**

- To deal with fear, youth push foster parents away.
- Manipulation, lying and stealing work well because they lead to disruption.
- These behaviors allow a youth to control when the placement disrupts.
- This is easier than rejection.

○ ○ ○ | **Some Reasons Youth Try to Manipulate Caregivers**

- Manipulation helps a youth feel in control during difficult situations.
- It works to get their way.
- Manipulation has been a survival technique during times of fear.
- Fear is so strong that logical thinking doesn't occur.

○ ○ ○ | **Keys to Helping Youth Learn New Behaviors**

- Change takes A LONG TIME.
- Solid relationships with caring adults are crucial.
- Relationships should not be used as consequences.
- Discuss, but don't argue.
- Keep negative discussions short.
- DON'T TAKE IT PERSONALLY!!!!

○ ○ ○ | **Types of Manipulation**

- "The Comparer" – My sister didn't have to do it...! You always pick on me!
- "Subject Changer" – I was feeling fine until...! You (parent) did...!
- "Badgerer" – Works to wear parent down...
- Provocative Language – Swearing and etc.

○ ○ ○ | **Maintaining and Giving Control**

- Maintain positive relationships by not arguing.
- Use words and phrases like: Regardless, Nevertheless, "Uh-huh", Whatever, I heard you, Anything else, You already said that...
- Keep an even tone and avoid sarcasm.

Give Choices That Make the Parent Extraordinarily Happy!

- o Areas for choice:
 - What to wear
 - Chores to do
 - What to have for dinner
 - Activities
 - Decorating Room
 - Music, TV, Video Games

Lying

- o Except for "crazy lying", lying is usually a way to cover up inappropriate behavior.
- o Lying helps a youth feel in control during difficult situations.
- o It works to get their way.
- o Lying has been a survival technique during times of fear.
- o Fear is so strong that logical thinking doesn't occur and lies happen.

Parenting Techniques for Handling Lying

- o Don't argue about a lie.
- o Deal with the underlying behavior.
- o Use the same types of words as used in managing other types of manipulation.
- o Let natural consequences occur!

More techniques

- o After dealing with the behavior, be curious about why the youth chose to lie – desperate for approval, different values.
- o Emphasize that honesty leads to trust.
- o Reward honesty.
- o Consider granting immunity.
- o Practice what you preach.

Stealing

- o Stealing makes victims feel as bad as the youth who has been abused.
- o The risk of stealing can be a thrill.
- o Stealing can be addictive.
- o Peer pressure is influential.

Ways to Know Stealing is Happening

- o Unexplained new possessions
- o Defensiveness about personal belongings
- o Items disappear from your home or others
- o Youth seems secretive and sneaky
- o Overhear bragging about stealing or admires friends who steal

○ ○ ○ | Consequences for Stealing

- Let natural consequences take effect
 - Lose contact with friends
 - Banned from stores
 - School suspension
 - Court charges
 - Return stolen items to stores

○ ○ ○ | More Consequences

- Confiscate stolen items and try to find the owner
- Write letters of apology
- Additional supervision and structure are necessary
- Talk about how manipulation, lying and stealing make you feel

○ ○ ○ | Controlling OUR Responses

- Act as an adult – calm, patient, determined
- Take a deep breath, exhale slowly, repeat as long as necessary
- Count backwards from 10, thinking of a favorite movie, favorite thing to do and etc. for each number

○ ○ ○ | Staying Calm Under Pressure

- Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a serene setting
- Make positive self statements such as, "I can handle this calmly...", "I've handled much worse...", "This will be OK..."
- Ask your partner or a friend to help you calm down

○ ○ ○ | More Self Control Techniques

- Take a break and listen to music, visit a favorite website, eat a dessert
- Remember a time when an adult harshly screamed or criticized you. How did it make you feel? Did it help?
- Remember that the brain is not working typically. Fear is controlling youth behavior.
- At another time, teach your foster child these techniques!