

FOSTER & KINSHIP CARE EDUCATIONS PROGRAM

College of the Redwoods

Positive Parenting and Communication



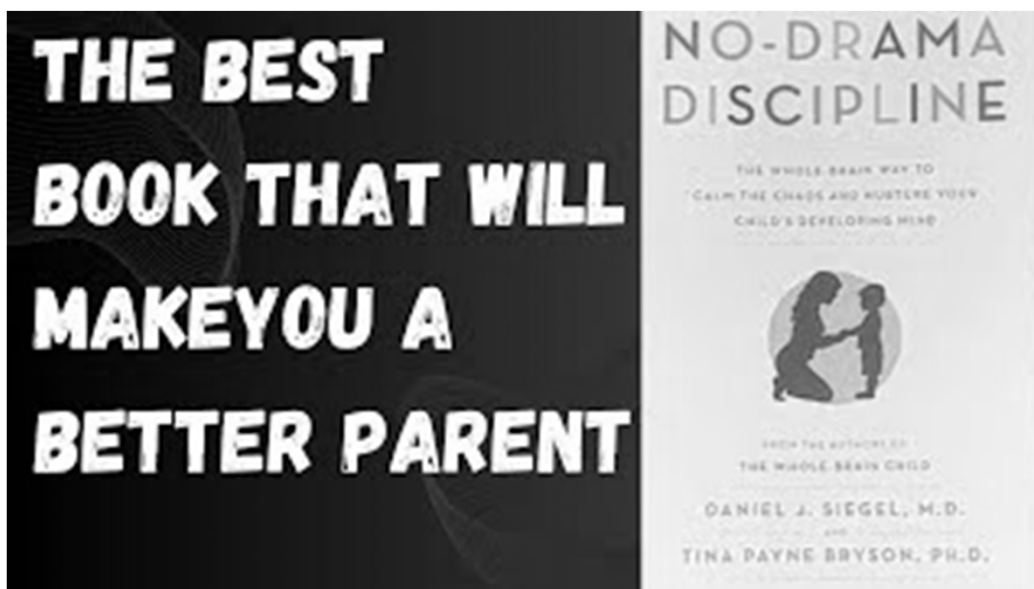
Anne Rodriguez \ Master Coach and Trainer

Say hello and share one way
you deal with stress or difficult
situations. For instance, how do
you handle conflict?



Positive Parenting and Communication...

- How our own past can affect the way we parent
- Positive and healthy ways to parent and cope
- Positive Communication and Listening



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jlDXNFM2j0g&t=2s>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uV87Bg3SLfM&t=3s>

Definition of positive parenting:

Positive parenting is an approach to parenting that emphasizes respectful communication, non-punitive discipline, and promoting healthy relationships and social skills. It focuses on building a supportive and nurturing environment that encourages positive behavior and fosters positive self-esteem and self-worth.



The importance of positive parenting for foster youth:

Foster youth have often experienced trauma and disruptions in their early relationships, which can have a significant impact on their development and behavior. Positive parenting can help provide the stable and supportive environment that foster youth need to develop healthy relationships, regulate their emotions, and build positive self-esteem.



Definition of trauma and its impact on brain development:

Trauma refers to an experience that overwhelms a person's ability to cope and leaves them feeling helpless and vulnerable. Trauma can have a significant impact on brain development, particularly in the areas of emotional regulation and behavior.



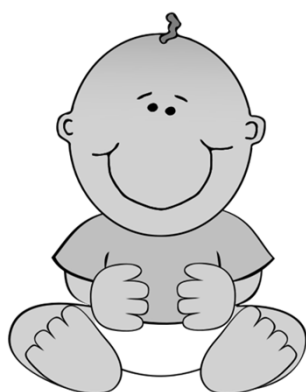
Simple Trauma
(PTSD)

vs

Complex Trauma
(CPTSD)



Baby A



Baby B



What are these two children learning about the world, their physical and emotional needs? What are they learning about relationships? What are they learning about coping mechanism and or how to handle stress?



<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/-8s84iGxMx8>

Are we capable of positive parenting and being a role model to the youth we are caring for? Let's take a look at our own trauma and see if this affects our parenting. We cannot teach a child a skill we ourselves cannot master or do.



What's In the ACEs Quiz?

For each “yes” answer, add 1. The total number at the end is your cumulative number of ACEs.

Before your 18th birthday:

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...
Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often...
Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever...
Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?

4. Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
5. Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
7. Was your mother or stepmother: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?

8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?

9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?

10. Did a household member go to prison?



What's Missing from this Quiz?

- Stressors outside the household (e.g., violence, poverty, racism, other forms of discrimination, isolation, chaotic environment, lack of services)
- Protective factors (e.g., supportive relationships, community services, skill-building opportunities)
- Individual differences (i.e., not all children who experience multiple ACEs will have poor outcomes and not all children who experience no ACEs will avoid poor outcomes—a high ACEs score is simply an indicator of greater risk)



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GgkKnDoe0A0&t=1s>

How does your past affect your current parenting style?



A **trauma response** is a learned **coping mechanism** developed in response to distressing or traumatic experiences. When an individual encounters a threat, whether physical or emotional, the body and mind instinctively react to protect themselves. These responses can become **ingrained patterns** if the traumatic experience is ongoing or repetitive. For example, **social withdrawal, lashing out, freezing up, overworking, or fawning** may develop as adaptive strategies to navigate or survive challenging situations. These **learned responses**, while initially serving a protective purpose, may persist even when the immediate threat has passed, shaping how an individual copes with stressors in the long term. **Recognizing** and **addressing** these learned coping mechanisms is crucial for fostering healthier responses and promoting **emotional well-being**.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgLKMvB93hE>

- Why might a foster youth be afraid of trusting his new foster parents or family?
- Why might a child not respond to you giving direction?
- Why might a child not respond to regular consequences after being removed for physical or emotional abuse?
- Why might a child be on high alert and emotionally dysregulated most of the time, even when in a safe space?



Confabulation is the act of filling in gaps in one's memory with fabricated or distorted information, often **without the intention to deceive**. In contrast, lying involves intentionally giving false information with the purpose of deceiving someone.

Confabulation often occurs as a result of brain damage or other neurological conditions, where a person's memory becomes impaired, leading them to generate false memories. In some cases, individuals may also **confabulate** to make sense of a confusing situation, particularly when there is pressure to provide an explanation.

Foster youth who have experienced abuse and trauma may use confabulation as a coping mechanism. They may not have clear memories of their experiences or may have experienced such significant trauma that their brain struggles to process the events accurately. As a result, they may fill in gaps in their memories with imagined details or fabrications that make sense to them. This behavior can be seen as a way to cope with the trauma and provide a sense of control in a situation where they may have felt powerless.

It's important to note that confabulation is not the same as lying, and individuals who confabulate may not be aware that they are providing false information. It's crucial to approach individuals who confabulate with sensitivity and understanding, as they may require specialized support and care to help them process their experiences accurately.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaYSiWl1qgE&t=1s>

What are the opposite traits of emotionally immature?



Traits of emotional immaturity:

- highly defensive/reactive
- blame others for feelings
- rarely look inwards
- highly controlling
- no accountability

Signs you were raised by EIP:

1. Parent was reactive/explosive
2. Parent was emotionally unavailable
3. All focus was on them
4. They're obsessed with appearance

What coping mechanism have you learned from childhood events or have seen your youth display?

- social withdrawal
- lashing out
- overworking yourself
- freezing up
- fawning
- Other (there are lots!)



What's the opposite of these coping mechanisms?

What are you modeling and teaching?

What do you do when you don't feel so positive?

What coping mechanism do you have ?

Do you know your own triggers?

Do you understand what causes triggers?

Do you take things personally?

Do you take feedback well?

Are you good at communicating and getting your needs met?

Are you happy and calm most of the time or angry and chaotic?

Are you good at listening to others, even if you don't agree?

How do you repair after conflict?



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Let's watch a few video clips on how toxic parenting can affect the way we handle stress and learn coping skills. We will then discuss the opposite of toxic, which is positive parenting.



https://www.youtube.com/shorts/W9JL17ls_zU



<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/SF9ObT3dk9M>



<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/32P6tXEppnQ>



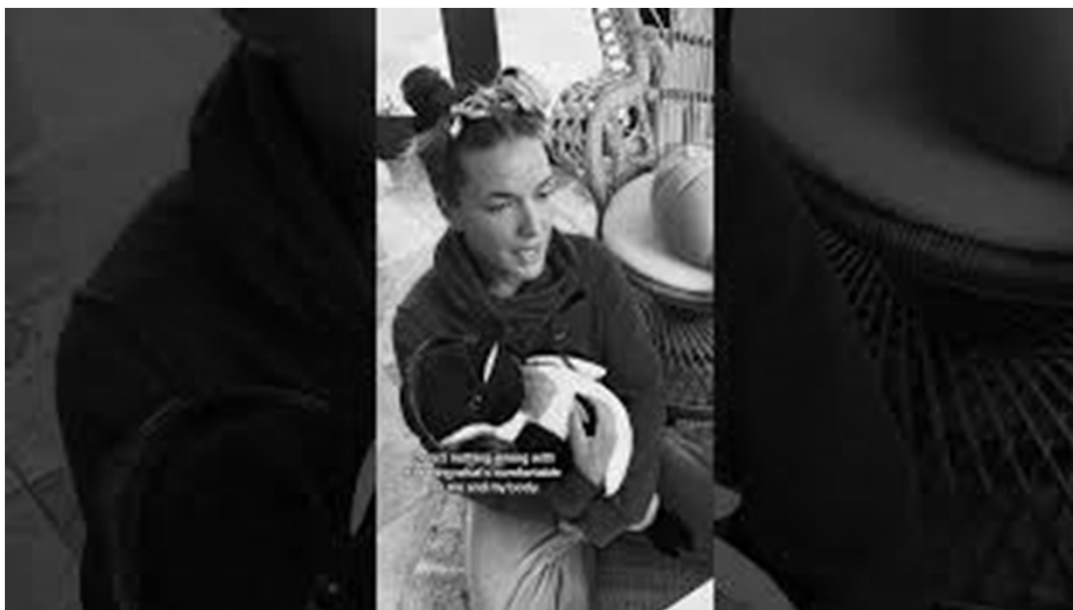
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<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/jCrLH122AgM>



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<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/fBIDZFdWwbM>



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https://www.youtube.com/shorts/6b_sGZgUkAI



<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/F5R4ILFr23E>



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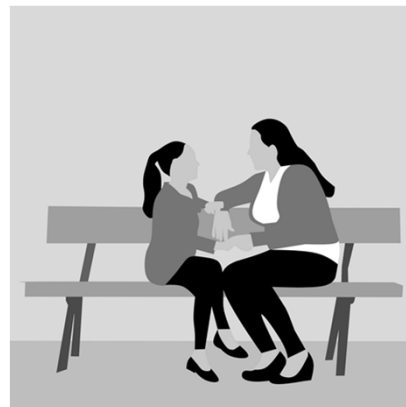


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yYdYbN6pvM8>

Core Principles of Positive Parenting

Respectful communication:

Respectful communication involves listening actively, using positive language, and being empathetic and understanding towards the child's perspective.



Non-punitive discipline:

Non-punitive discipline emphasizes positive reinforcement and teaching problem-solving and conflict resolution skills rather than using punishment or shaming.



Consistency and predictability:

Consistency and predictability in parenting provide a stable and supportive environment that fosters positive relationships and healthy development.



Empathy and understanding:

Empathy and understanding are crucial components of positive parenting, as they help foster youth feel heard, validated, and supported.





Promoting positive self-esteem and self-worth:

Positive parenting involves promoting positive self-esteem and self-worth through positive reinforcement, praise, and validation.

Promoting healthy relationships and social skills:

Positive parenting emphasizes building healthy relationships and social skills through modeling, teaching, and reinforcing positive behavior.



Sometimes you can be doing everything right parenting wise and it still may not work. Then what?



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t9bH5eyiiPI>

P- Present with Child

A- Attune to the child and their inner world

R- Resonate with child and their feelings

T- Trust

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Help your child feel safe, seen, soothed and secure
2. Connect to your child's inner world
3. Feel your child's feelings
4. Build trust

Definition of Empathic Listening:

Empathic listening is a communication skill that involves fully understanding and appreciating the thoughts, feelings, and perspectives of another person. It requires putting oneself in the shoes of the other person, listening attentively to their words, and reflecting back to them what they are saying. It doesn't mean you have to agree, it just means you care enough to try to understand the other.



The importance of empathic listening

Empathic listening is important when parenting foster youth because it allows caregivers to build trust and rapport with these children who have experienced trauma and may have difficulty trusting others. By truly listening and empathizing with foster youth, caregivers can help them feel heard, understood, and validated, which can promote healing and healthy emotional development. Additionally, empathic listening can help caregivers understand the unique needs and challenges of each child, allowing them to provide individualized support and care. Overall, empathic listening is a powerful tool for building strong, positive relationships with foster youth and promoting their well-being.



Here are some key elements and techniques associated with empathic listening:

- **Being Present:** Empathic listening requires your full attention. It means putting aside distractions, such as smartphones or other thoughts, and concentrating on the person who is speaking.
- **Nonverbal Cues:** Use nonverbal cues like maintaining eye contact, nodding your head, and using open body language to show that you are engaged and receptive to what the other person is saying.
- **Reflective Listening:** Reflective listening involves paraphrasing or summarizing what the speaker has said to ensure that you've understood correctly. It can involve statements like, "So, what I hear you saying is..." or "It sounds like you're feeling..."

- **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Encourage the speaker to share more by asking open-ended questions that require more than a simple "yes" or "no" response. For example, "Can you tell me more about that?" or "How did that make you feel?"
- **Avoid Judging or Interrupting:** Empathic listening involves suspending judgment and avoiding interruptions. Let the speaker express themselves fully before responding.
- **Empathy:** Try to put yourself in the speaker's shoes and understand their emotions and perspective. Show empathy by acknowledging their feelings and experiences.
- **Validation:** Acknowledge the speaker's emotions and experiences, even if you don't necessarily agree with their viewpoint. Validating their feelings can help them feel heard and understood.
- **Resist the Urge to Offer Solutions:** Empathic listening is about providing emotional support and understanding, not necessarily about solving the speaker's problems. Avoid jumping to solutions or advice unless the speaker spe

Are you using Empathic Listening Skills ?
Let's ask some reflective questions and see
if you are or not...



10 Reflective Questions to ask yourself regarding Empathic Listening

- Do you actively listen to your foster child, without jumping to conclusions or assumptions about what they are saying?
- When your foster child is upset or emotional, do you make an effort to understand their feelings and perspective, rather than dismiss their emotions?
- How do you respond when your foster child expresses a differing opinion or belief than your own?
- Do you acknowledge your foster child's feelings and emotions when they share with you, even if you disagree with their perspective or behavior?
- When your foster child shares a personal story or experience, do you make an effort to show empathy and validate their emotions?

- Do you make a conscious effort to use active listening techniques, such as summarizing and reflecting, when speaking with your foster child?
- How do you respond when your foster child is hesitant to share their thoughts or feelings with you?
- Do you provide a safe and non-judgmental space for your foster child to share their thoughts and emotions with you?
- When your foster child shares something difficult or traumatic with you, do you respond with compassion and understanding?
- How do you handle situations where your foster child's behavior is challenging or frustrating for you, while still showing empathy and understanding towards them?

Building positive relationships with foster youth:

Building positive relationships with foster youth involves getting to know them as individuals, being empathetic and understanding towards their experiences, and providing a nurturing and supportive environment. Strategies for building positive relationships may include:

- Getting to know the child's interests, preferences, and needs
- Being empathetic and understanding towards their experiences
- Encouraging open communication and active listening
- Providing support and encouragement during difficult times
- Showing affection and care through physical touch or gestures
- Engaging in activities that foster a sense of connection and bonding

Tips for Dealing with Shame, Guilt, and Anger as a Caregiver:

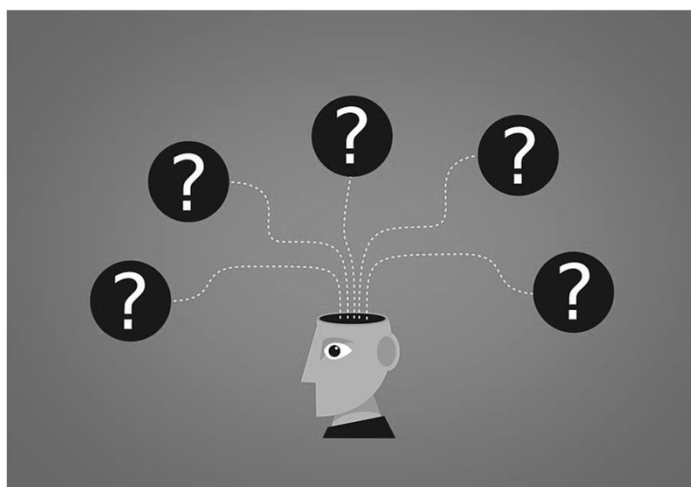
- **Self-Compassion:** Remember that it's normal to experience these emotions. Practice self-compassion by acknowledging your feelings without judgment. Treat yourself with the same kindness and understanding that you aim to provide your foster child.
- **Therapy and Support:** Consider seeking therapy or counseling for yourself. A trained therapist can help you process and cope with the complex emotions that may arise during foster parenting.
- **Journaling:** Keeping a journal can be a helpful way to express and process your emotions. Write down your thoughts and feelings as a way to gain clarity and insight.
- **Take Breaks:** It's okay to take short breaks to recharge. Caring for a foster child can be emotionally taxing, so don't hesitate to ask for respite care or arrange for a trusted friend or family member to help when needed.
- **Reflect and Learn:** Instead of dwelling on feelings of guilt and anger, use them as opportunities for self-reflection and growth. Consider what you can learn from these emotions to become a more effective and empathetic foster parent.

Remember that foster parenting is a challenging and selfless endeavor. It's essential to prioritize your well-being and seek support when needed. Your willingness to provide a loving and stable environment for a foster child is commendable, and with the right resources and strategies, you can make a positive impact on their life, even in the face of challenges.

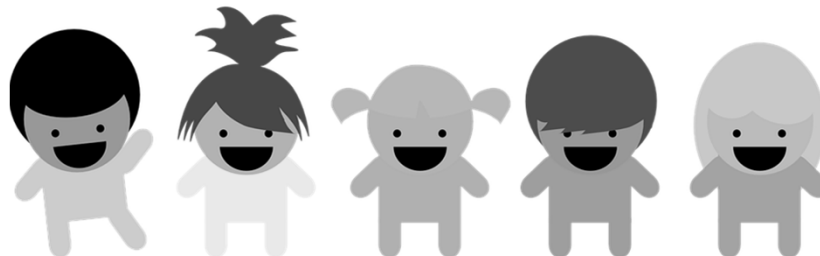


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AJZj1NINxms>

Questions and Answers



Name one thing you learned today.



THANK YOU

for loving, healing and caring for our
children in the Foster Care System