CONFLICT CYCLE PARADIGM
Teacher/Student Power Struggles and the Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Understand the Stages of the Conflict Cycle
- Understand Our Role in the Conflict Cycle

Re-EDUCATION PRINCIPLES

- Trust between a child and adult is essential, the foundation on which all other principles rest, the glue that holds teaching and learning together, the beginning point for Re-Education.
- Self-control can be taught and children and adolescents helped to manage their behavior without the development of psychodynamic insight; and symptoms can and should be controlled by direct address, not necessarily by uncovering therapy.
- Feelings should be nurtured, shared spontaneously, controlled when necessary, expressed when too long repressed, and explored with the trusted others.
STAGE THREE: ACTIVE RESISTANCE

Typical Behaviors

- Creates Conflict Cycles
- Personal Attacks
- Overtly or Passively Aggressive
- Projects Blame

Helping Behaviors

- Avoid Power Struggles
- I Messages
- Decode Behaviors
- Use Effective Behavior Modification Strategies
- Teach Personal Responsibility

CONFLICT

- A mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands
  Merriam-Webster.Com

CRISIS

1. a stage in a sequence of events at which the trend of all future events, esp. for better or for worse, is determined: turning point.
2. a condition of instability or danger, as in social, economic, political, or international affairs, leading to a decisive change.
3. a dramatic emotional or circumstantial upheaval in a person's life.
  Dictionary.com
THREE OUTCOMES OF A CRISIS

- Staff-Student Relationship is Improved
- Staff-Student Relationship is Unchanged
- Staff-Student Relationship is Damaged

MIRROR, MIRROR—NEURONS “NEURAL WI-FI”

- Cause & Effect, Logic are “High Road” aspects of social interaction
- The frontal lobe does not fully develop until the mid-twenties
- Fight, Flight, or Freeze and Mirroring are “Low Road” aspects of social interaction

STAGE 1: STUDENT’S SELF CONCEPT

Formed by repetitive interactions of significant adults and peers in his life who give him on-going feedback about his behavior and character.

IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

Beliefs about self
Beliefs about world and people
Characteristic way of thinking, feeling, behaving in new situations

Rational psychotherapy and individual psychology, Albert Ellis

ADVANTAGES OF IRRATIONAL BELIEFS

- Provide troubled students with a sense of security and control bringing psychological order to an unstable and chaotic world making it predictable and manageable.
- They know in advance what will happen to them in new relationships.
- Protect them from feeling helplessness and rage.
Students arrive believing things ARE the way they perceive them to be.

- Everyone is always out to hurt me!
- I'm ugly!
- I can never learn this!
- Everybody hates me!
- Adults are never fair!

Self Fulfilling Prophecies are the troubled student’s ways of validating irrational beliefs by getting others to act them out.

We are often unaware of the student’s covert goal and end up acting out the student’s SFP about himself and others.

Something occurs which ACTIVATES these irrational beliefs.

- Low grades
- An accidental bump or push!
- Stressful Incident
- Name Calling
- Consequences
- Laughter
- Laughter

DIRECTORS OF PLAY—YOU’RE THE STAR!
Once a student event is thought of as a stressful incident, a natural biological reaction follows:

The body releases a series of hormones into the bloodstream activating the autonomic nervous system which controls the involuntary muscles, alters blood pressure, respiration, and digestive system.

Fight or Flight Response

- Developmental
- Economic/Physical
- Psychological
- Reality

Inherent in the normal developmental stages from birth to death

- Toilet trained
- Learning to read
- Learning to be part of a group
ECONOMIC/PHYSICAL STRESS

- Felt by millions of families in our society living on the brink of economic disaster.
  - Poor diet
  - Lack of sleep
  - Lack of opportunity to participate in social and school related activities

PSYCHOLOGICAL STRESS

- Result of an unconscious or deliberate attempt by parents, individuals, groups, and institutions to destroy the self-esteem of a student.
  - Fails an exam
  - Racially depreciated
  - Deliberately scapegoated or rejected by peers

REALITY STRESS

- Unexpected frustrating events that occur in everyone’s life.
  - Lends algebra book to friend who forgot to bring it back the next day.
  - Couldn’t get locker open and is late for class.
These negative thoughts determine and TRIGGER feelings.

I knew it!

I’m gonna get hurt!

Whatever!!

It’s always my fault!

They’re laughing at me!

STAGE 3: FEELINGS

“You feel..... the way you think.”

David D. Burns, Cognitive Therapist

3 Ways of Expressing Feelings

Act Them Out
Deny or Defend
Accept and Own
These feelings DRIVE inappropriate behavior

Yelling

Observable Behavior

Threatening

Refusals to speak or move

Running

Sarcasm

STAGE 4: OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOR

Inappropriate behavior can be analyzed in 4 categories:

1. Difficulty with staff
2. Difficulty with peers
3. Difficulty with learning
4. Difficulty with school rules

STAGE 5: TEACHER/PEER REACTIONS

Counter-aggressive Ways
Counter-Indulgent Ways
Rigid and Unrealistic Staff Expectations
Caught in a Bad Mood
Prejudging a Student in Crisis
You Messages
Others feel a need to respond and often end up MIRRORING the same behaviors.

- Yelling
- Threatening
- Power
- Sarcasm
- Physical Response

When will it stop?

“We can help children by understanding that the problems children cause are not always the causes of their problems”

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Stressful Incident

Student's Thoughts

Student's Observations

Stressful Incident

Student's Feelings

Student's Observable Behavior

Opportunity for New Self-Concepts & Beliefs

Adult/Peer Reactions

Student's Self Concept & Irrational Beliefs

Nicholas J. Long Ph.D.

Courtesy of WA Re-Education Association

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Nova Special on Mirror Neurons:
  - http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/body/mirror-neurons.html
- Link to Conflict Cycle Paradigm on website:
- Life Space Crisis Intervention Institute
  - www.lsci.com
- Washington Re-Education Association: www.warea.org