



# TBM

## Therapeutic Behavior Management

# TBM/HighSchool

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Part 1: TBM Decision Making Model</b>	
“What Would YOU Do?” Survey.....	2
TBM Model .....	4
<b>Part 2: Dealing with Deliberate Misbehavior</b>	
Social Needs Model .....	6
Skill 1: Friendly Reminders .....	7
Skill 2: Fair Warnings of Consequences.....	8
<b>Part 3: Understanding Emotional Problems</b>	
Emotional Conflict Cycle .....	10
Impact of Childhood Trauma .....	12
Escalation Model .....	13
<b>Part 4: De-Escalating Emotional Issues</b>	
Skill 1: Giving Space .....	15
Skill 2: Active Listening .....	16
<b>Part 5: Staying Professional in Crisis</b>	
Adult Anger Traps .....	20
Things to Remember.....	21
Key Points .....	22

“Therapeutic Behavior Management for Middle & High Schools” (TBM/HighSchool) is written and owned by Steve Parese, Ed.D. It is intended to be delivered ONLY by certified trainers. TBM/HighSchool consists of a trainer manual, workbook, and PowerPoint CD, no portion of which may be copied for any purpose without the express written permission of the author. TBM/HighSchool is based on the “Therapeutic Aggression Control Techniques v.2” (TACT2) program, in use since 1997 in group homes, alternative schools, residential treatment centers, etc. around the nation.

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# 'What Would You Do?' Survey

## **SITUATION 1. Jesse and Ronnie**

Jesse is a new 14-year-old student in your 7th grade class, and has had a hard time fitting in. He lives in a very poor home and often comes to school dirty. This makes him an easy target for teasing and bullying, especially from Ronnie. As a result, Jesse relies heavily on staff for encouragement and reassurance.



Today, Jesse slips into class 10 minutes late while the other students are completing an independent assignment. He glances anxiously at you as he finds his seat.



Ronnie, who often looks for laughs at Jesse's expense, grins and whispers loudly: **"Holy s---! What's that SMELL? Oh, never mind. It's just Junkyard Jesse!"** The class erupts in laughter as Jesse's face turns bright red.

### 1. What would be your initial intervention with Ronnie?

- Physically remove Ronnie from the classroom for profanity.
- Confront Ronnie's rude comments (either during class or privately).
- Provide counseling to improve Ronnie's empathy for kids who are "different."
- Ignore his behavior, hoping to draw less attention to it.

Jesse quickly sits down at his desk. He puts his hoodie up, hiding his head and ignoring the laughter. He shoves the work waiting on his desk to the floor, and puts his headphones on, tuning you and everything else out.

### 2. What would be your initial intervention with Jesse?

- Remove his hoodie/headphones so he can pay attention to class.
- Give Jesse consequences for being late to class and disregarding his work.
- Counsel Jesse on his hygiene issues and social skills.
- Offer quiet encouragement and give him time to calm down on his own.

# 'What Would You Do?' Survey



## **SITUATION 2. DeAnne and Elizabeth**

DeAnne is a popular, middle class 16-year-old in your science class. She is a capable student but has a serious mean streak. When confronted on her bullying, DeAnne often justifies: **"I only pick on my friends. We're only playing. Get a sense of humor!"**

Her latest so-called 'friend' is Elizabeth, a sullen new "Goth Girl" who lives with a foster family nearby. You're not sure about her background, but from the scars on her arms and the haunted look on her face, you can see that she has been through a lot.

Today, DeAnne and her pal Camille are taunting Elizabeth about her loose-fitting black clothes. **"What's the matter, Lizzy? Did Goodwill run out of your size? There's a dumpster out back -- maybe you can dive for a new pair of shoes after school today!"**

3. What would be your initial intervention with DeAnne?
- Physically escort her from the room.
  - Warn DeAnne about the consequences of taunting others.
  - Mediate the issues between DeAnne and Elizabeth.
  - Let the two of them figure it out.



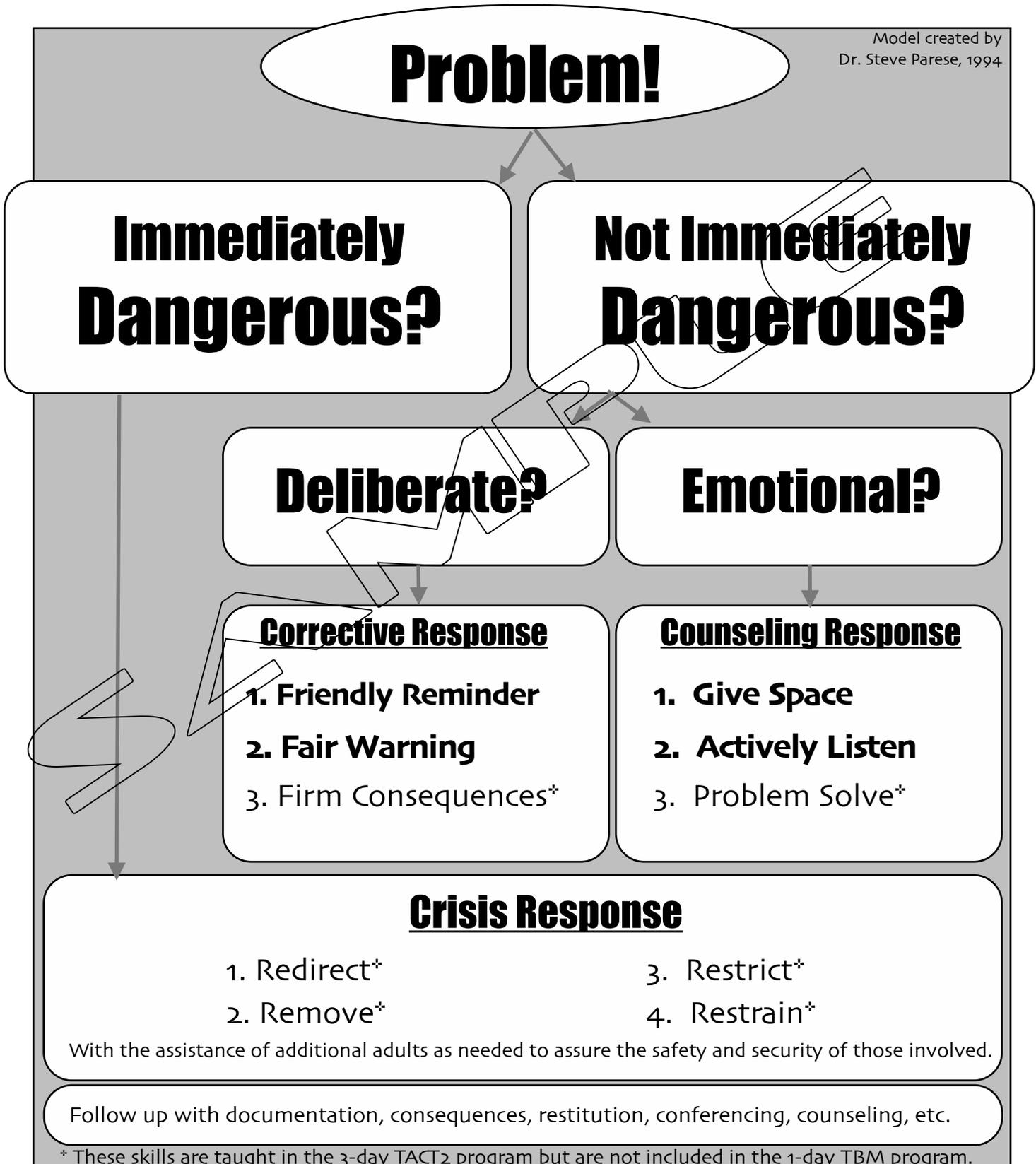
Elizabeth stares back at DeAnne, her voice filled with hate: **"Maybe I'll give you a red smile from ear to ear, b---. What do you think?"**

Elizabeth reaches into her oversized purse, and pulls her hand halfway out. Though you cannot see a weapon, DeAnne pales and the whole class gasps.

4. What would be your initial intervention with Elizabeth?
- Physically restrain her to prevent a dangerous assault.
  - Verbally separate the two by asking one of them to leave the room.
  - Acknowledge Elizabeth's feelings and try to de-escalate her in the classroom.
  - Ignore the situation, since Elizabeth is probably bluffing.

# TBM Model

The TBM Model suggests that decisions in crisis should be made by first assessing the level of imminent danger, then determining the psychological source of the issue. Deliberate or intentional problems can often be handled with RULES (corrective behavior management), but emotional crises require interventions based on RELATIONSHIPS (counseling and de-escalation).



# Deliberate vs Emotional

## IMMEDIATELY DANGEROUS:

Def'n: Situation which places S \_\_\_\_\_ or O \_\_\_\_\_ at risk of serious H \_\_\_\_\_.

### Crisis Response

1. Redirect
2. Remove
3. Restrict
4. Restrain

## DELIBERATE MISBEHAVIOR:

Def'n: I \_\_\_\_\_ behavior which meets a youth's S \_\_\_\_\_ needs at others' E \_\_\_\_\_.

### Corrective Response

1. Friendly Reminder
2. Fair Warning
3. Firm Consequences

## EMOTIONAL CRISIS:

Def'n: I \_\_\_\_\_ reaction due to overwhelming S \_\_\_\_\_ or pre-existing I \_\_\_\_\_.

### Counseling Response

1. Give Space
2. Actively Listen
3. Problem Solve

Diagnostic Cue	Deliberate	Emotional
<p><b>BEHAVIOR</b></p> <p>How typical is this behavior under normal conditions?</p>		
<p><b>EXPRESSIONS</b></p> <p>How much stress is visible in face, voice, body language, etc?</p>		
<p><b>THINKING</b></p> <p>How clear and rational is the youth's state of mind?</p>		
<p><b>ISSUES</b></p> <p>Are there other stressful issues occurring at the same time?</p>		

# Part 2

## Misbehavior and Social Needs

Dr. William Glasser suggests that all people are drawn to activities and relationships which meet four basic social needs. Most youth have adopted healthy, socially acceptable ways to meet these needs, but those from harsh environments may have learned unhealthy, illegal, or socially unacceptable behaviors instead. Managing deliberate misbehavior is easier when schools offer students prosocial ways to meet their social needs without violating rules or others' rights.

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Negative activities:	Positive alternatives:				
Negative activities:	Positive alternatives:				

### DeAnne's Deliberate Misbehavior

DeAnne and her pal Camille are taunting Elizabeth about her loose fitting black clothes. **“What’s the matter, Lizzy? Did Goodwill run out of your size? There’s a dumpster out back – maybe you can dive for a new pair of shoes after school today!”** The rest of the class erupts in laughter. Elizabeth turns red as the teacher tries desperately to regain control of the classroom.

Which social needs are being met by DeAnne’s misbehavior?

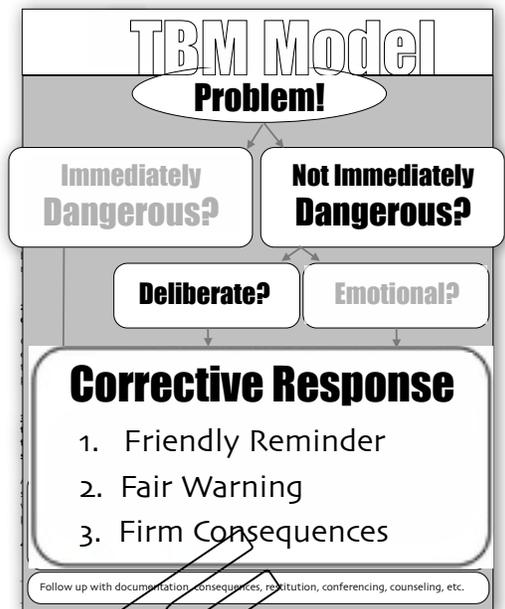


# Deliberate Problems

Some behavior problems are **DELIBERATE**. These require interventions based more on **RULES** than relationships.

Diagnostic Cues of Deliberate Misbehavior:

1. **BEHAVIOR** is \_\_\_\_\_
2. **EXPRESSIONS** are \_\_\_\_\_
3. **THINKING** is often \_\_\_\_\_
4. **Outside ISSUES** are \_\_\_\_\_



**Brainstorm specific DELIBERATE misbehaviors common to your youth. E.g.:**

Making rude comments

Leaving a mess in the cafeteria

---



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## Skill 1: Friendly Reminders

Use a friendly reminder to verbally or non-verbally encourage a youth to abide by rules or expectations, **WITHOUT** mentioning consequences.

E.g.: DeAnne and Camille are exchanging mocking comments about Elizabeth's clothing while they should be working on an assignment.

VERBAL REMINDERS

- "Ladies? Focus on your work please."

- \_\_\_\_\_

NON-VERBAL REMINDERS

- **Raised eyebrows**

- \_\_\_\_\_



# Three Types of Consequences

A warning of consequences can help students make better choices, and often deters deliberate misbehavior. But if consequences seem like “threats,” they often lead to more resistance and resentment. Understanding different types of consequences helps us use them most effectively.

DEFINITION	Jesse played video games till 2:00 AM and is falling asleep in class:
<p><b>NATURAL</b> consequences occur on their own, without staff involvement. Feelings are natural.</p>	<p>He is embarrassed when other kids notice.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_____</li> </ul>
<p><b>LOGICAL</b> consequences are applied by adults, and make sense b/c they are directly tied to behavior.</p>	<p>Jesse has to make up class work during lunch.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_____</li> </ul>
<p><b>PUNITIVE</b> consequences are also applied by adults, but do not match the behavior or go to extremes.</p>	<p>He gets 3 days of after-school detention.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>_____</li> </ul>

## Ronnie's Consequences

Your school has clear rules about phones: “All electronics must remain in bags or lockers during class time. Otherwise, teachers may confiscate them until a parent meeting is scheduled.” Despite this, Ronnie sneakily slips his iPhone out of his back pocket, glances around, then shows it to another student.

Categorize each consequence below as Natural, Logical, or Punitive.

- [N] [L] [P] 1. Ronnie's phone gets confiscated for the rest of the day.
- [N] [L] [P] 2. He has to do an extra 2 hours of homework.
- [N] [L] [P] 3. Ronnie is banned from Friday's football game.
- [N] [L] [P] 4. Ronnie's parents must meet with staff before the phone's return.
- [N] [L] [P] 5. Ronnie feels anxious about a parent meeting.
- [N] [L] [P] 6. His father gets angry with him.
- [N] [L] [P] 7. Ronnie has to do 200 push-ups to get his phone back.
- [N] [L] [P] 8. He misses important content and does poorly on the test.



**Choose one of your brainstormed DELIBERATE MISBEHAVIORS. List three (3) possible consequences, one of each type.**

Behavior: \_\_\_\_\_

[N] [L] [P] 1. \_\_\_\_\_

[N] [L] [P] 2. \_\_\_\_\_

[N] [L] [P] 3. \_\_\_\_\_

# Skill 2: Fair Warnings

Use a fair warning to inform a deliberately misbehaving youth of impending consequences if a misbehavior continues.

To give a Fair WARNING: **Ronnie is taking his seat just before class begins. He is pulling out his cell phone, calling another student over.**

**Step 1: ASK TO TALK** "Ronnie, come here, please."

**Step 2: "IF/THEN"** statement of consequences  
 a. "If you don't <CHANGE>, then <NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCE>."  
 b. "If you want <POSITIVE CONSEQUENCE>, then <CHANGE>."

**Step 3: REQUEST CHANGE** "So save it for after class, understand?"

## Avoiding Power Struggles

Problematic students will often respond to warnings of consequences with some sort of angry retort. It can be exceptionally challenging to remain professional in moments like these!

**Good Response or Not?**

"That's not fair! You didn't say anything to Pete yesterday. You're playing favorites! And you're not my parent, so you can't tell me anything. I know my rights!"

"It's a good thing I'm NOT your parent, or I'd..."

"I do NOT play favorites! I'm just as tough on Peter as you."

"I tell you what: they don't pay me near enough to put up with crap like this every day!"

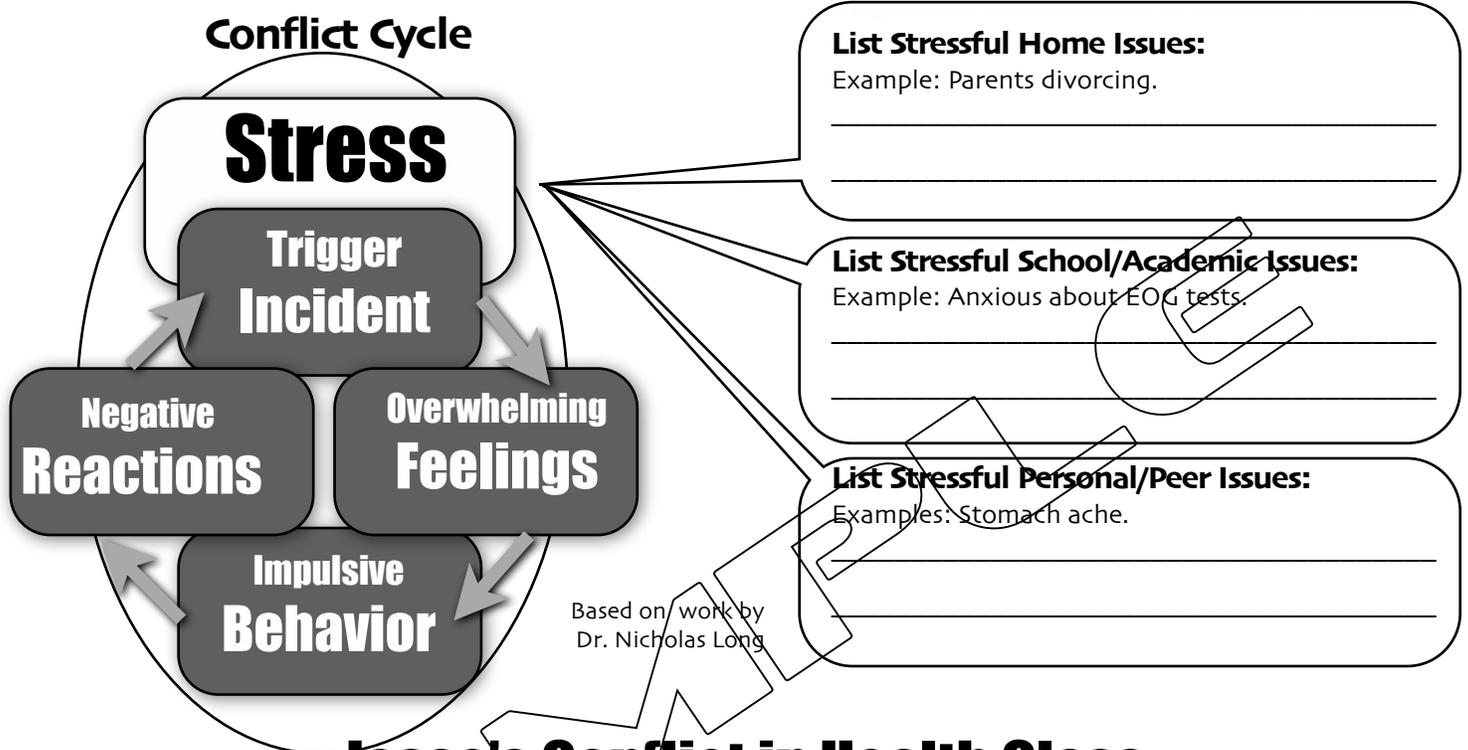
### Good Tactics When Students Argue About Consequences

- ✓ **Lower your own tone.** A softer, lower-pitched tone of voice is less likely to provoke a reaction.
- ✓ **Check your body language.** Stay alert, but relax your body to appear less defensive. Avoid angry facial expressions or gestures, such as finger pointing.
- ✓ **Refocus on the issue.** Don't get distracted by defending your decision against accusations of favoritism. Refuse to argue, and restate your request.
- ✓ **Let other staff assist.** Ask for/allow staff with better relationships to step in and persuade the student to comply.
- ✓ **Let them have the last word.** As long as they are complying, allow a small face saving gesture or comment without giving additional consequences.

# Part 3

# Emotional Conflict Cycle

Dr. Nicholas Long’s “Conflict Cycle” illustrates how minor incidents can quickly turn into major problems. This is especially true when students (1) Are under high situational stress; (2) Struggle with low self-esteem; or (3) Have experienced prior trauma. If staff use consequences instead of counseling during these moments, conflicts can easily escalate to crises.



## Jesse's Conflict in Health Class

Jesse is a withdrawn 7th grader from a very poor, dysfunctional family. As a result, his clothes are often dirty and his hygiene is poor. A few hours after being teased by Ronnie, Jesse was in Coach Taylor’s Health class, trying to avoid his teacher’s attention. His previous experiences with Coach Taylor in PE class made him nervous around the man, so he was hoping to stay under the radar this morning.

**“So today, we’re talking about personal hygiene. Who knows what the word ‘hygiene’ means?”** Coach asked the class. Ronnie’s voice yelled out: **“Don’t ask Jesse. He don’t know squat about hygiene!”**

The classroom erupted with laughter, and even Coach Taylor chuckled. Jesse suddenly felt his face go red with shame and embarrassment. He glanced toward Ronnie and mumbled under his breath: **“Leave me alone, you frikkin’ a-hole...”**

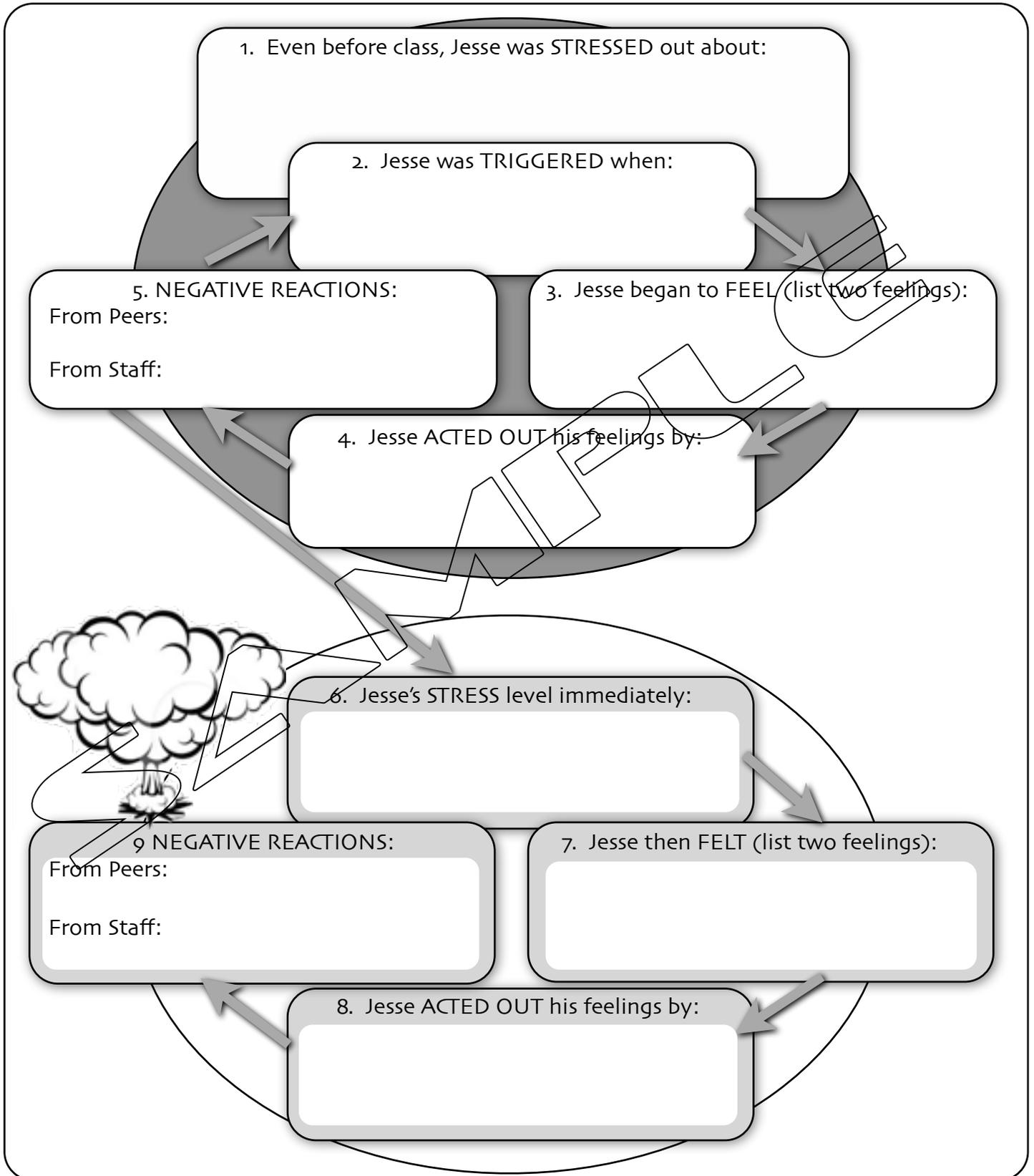
Several of the other students overheard the comment, and Ronnie said: **“Ooooooh! Did you hear that? He just called Coach Taylor an @\$shole!”** In a loud voice, Coach confronted Jesse: **“Did you just curse me out, son?”**

Jesse felt his throat close up with panic. Terrified, he tried to explain, but no words came out. With nowhere to hide, he shut down and stared down at his health book. The other students whispered **“Watch out!”** as Coach Taylor snatched the textbook out of Jesse’s hands. He squatted down in front of him and growled: **“Answer me, son, and don’t you dare lie to me. Did you curse me out or not?”**



# Conflict Mapping

Conflict Mapping can help us track how small problems transform into major crises. Use the details from Jesse's story on the previous page to complete the Conflict Map below.



DISCUSSION: What could a more effective staff member have done to: (1) Reduce Jesse's background stress before class; (2) Defuse the triggering situation in class; or (3) De-escalate Jesse's behavior?

# Impact of Childhood Trauma

Some of our most difficult children and youth are those who have experienced childhood trauma. Many children are resilient enough to bounce back from even extreme adversity, but about 25% of those exposed to severe physical or sexual abuse, chronic neglect, or family violence develop a psychological disorder, and experience lifelong physical, emotional, and behavioral problems.

Drawn in part from research by Dr. Gordon Hodas (2006) "Responding to childhood trauma: The promise and practice of trauma informed care."

## Results of Childhood Trauma may include:

**Physical Injuries**  
**Physical Changes**  
**PTSD Symptoms**

Bruises, broken bones, scarring, malnutrition, head injuries  
Physical and developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, hormonal changes  
Dissociation (dazed unresponsiveness), hyperarousal, re-experiencing (flashbacks)

**Emotional & Behavioral Issues** Hopelessness, powerlessness, and shame are prevalent in almost all victims. Depending upon their personalities, circumstances, and/or gender, abused children may internalize these feelings as withdrawn depression, or externalize them as aggressive anger.



### Trauma-Linked Behavior in Middle/High School (age 12-18):

**Internalizing behaviors:**

**Externalizing behaviors:**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In addition, victims of sexual abuse:

Often exhibit either complete \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

## Jesse and Elizabeth's Childhood Traumas



Jesse shares a tiny bedroom with his 6-year-old sister Tammy in a small trailer with his substance-abusing mother and her latest live-in boyfriend, John. Because of his mother's drug issues, they have moved many times during his childhood. Jesse has been responsible for both his own and his sister's well-being since he was 5 or 6 years old. He lives in constant fear of his mother's drunken boyfriends, and has watched her get beaten up many times. For the past 3 months, he has slept with a kitchen knife hidden beneath his pillow, just in case.

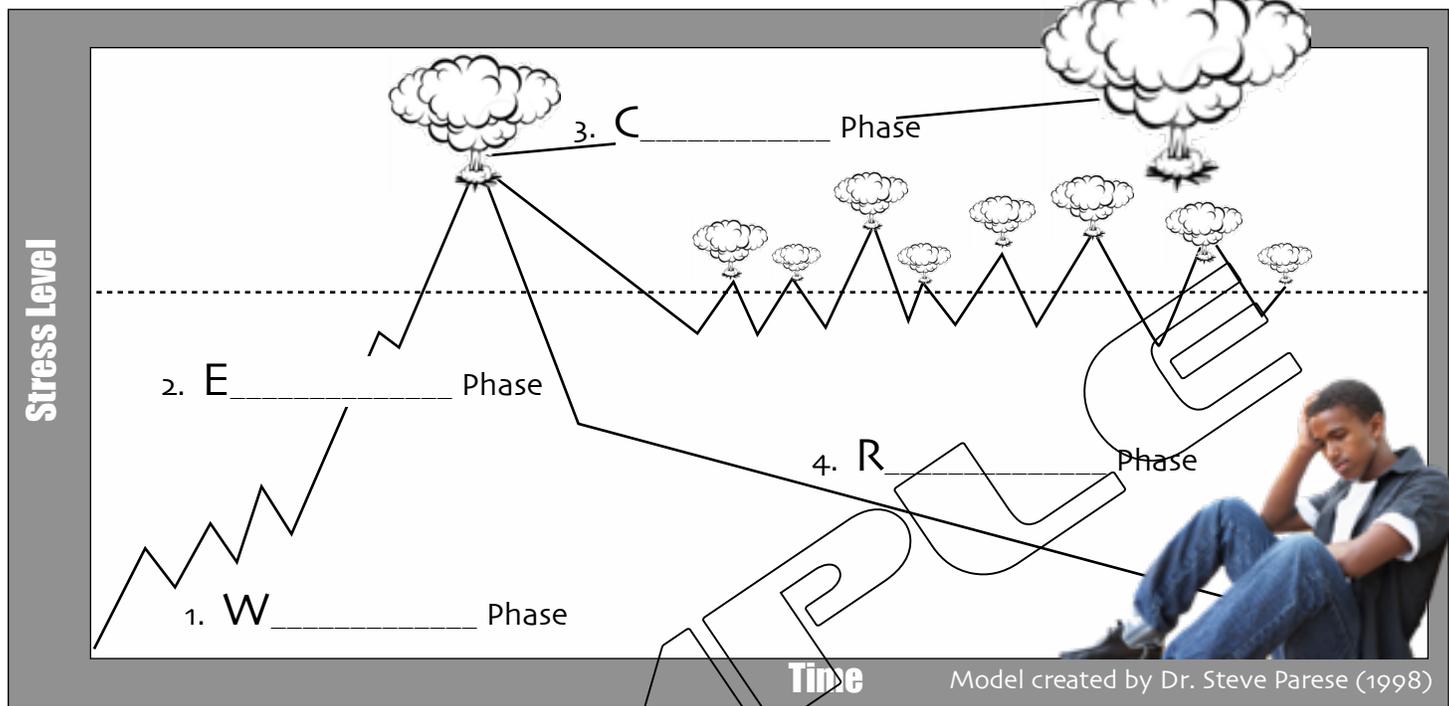
When Elizabeth was just 8 years old, a Child Protective Services worker removed her from her crack-addicted mother's home in the middle of the night. The CPS report indicates that she was malnourished, and had been sexually molested many times. Elizabeth has spent most of the past 8 years being bounced from one foster or group home to the next, seldom spending more than 6-8 months in one place. She sleeps poorly at night and often cuts her arms in stressful situations.



**What behaviors might you expect from these youth if they were in your school?**

# TBM Escalation Model

Emotional crises frequently follow a predictable pattern of escalation, and can often be de-escalated if staff use the right strategies at the right times. It is also helpful to understand how externalizers and internalizers behave differently during each phase of the crisis.



Signs and Symptoms of Each Phase	Staff Goals & Helpful Strategies
<p><b>Phase 1. WARNING PHASE:</b>                      Externalizers show early signs of _____                      Internalizers show early signs of _____                      - while doing their best to cope with the problem.</p>	<p>Staff Goal is to: P _____ the crisis                      Helpful Strategies:</p>
<p><b>Phase 2. ESCALATION PHASE:</b>                      Externalizers become more _____                      Internalizers become more _____                      - as the problem overwhelms their coping skills.</p>	<p>Staff Goal is to: D _____ the crisis                      Helpful Strategies:</p>
<p><b>Phase 3. CRISIS PHASE:</b>                      Externalizers often _____ up                      Internalizers often _____ down                      or _____ down                      - as they verbally and/or physically lose control.</p>	<p>Staff Goal is to: P _____ self/others                      Helpful Strategies:</p>
<p><b>Phase 4. RECOVERY PHASE:</b>                      Externalizers blame _____                      Internalizers blame _____                      - before taking responsibility for the problem.</p>	<p>Staff Goal is to: R _____ the problem                      Helpful Strategies:</p>

# Jesse's Phases of Escalation



Jesse lives in a small trailer with his mother, her alcoholic boyfriend John, and his 6-year-old sister Tammy. Jesse did his best to be “the man of the house,” but he couldn’t always protect his mom from John’s drunken rages.

One of the few good things in Jesse’s life was his relationship with his ‘Big Brother’ Tim. It had taken a long time to learn to trust Tim, but in the past year, they had gotten very close. The two of them planned to work on Jesse’s Social Studies project for a few hours on Saturday morning, then go to a college football game in the afternoon.

On Friday night, however, Jesse’s mom and her boyfriend got into a violent fight. When Jesse tried to get in the middle, John grabbed him by the throat and shoved him roughly out the trailer’s front door. Hours later, John was gone, his mom was in the hospital,

and Jesse was standing guard over his little sister... just in case.

Jesse’s mom had just gotten back home from the hospital when Tim arrived to pick him up at 9:00AM the next morning. Jesse was exhausted after staying up most of the night. He was hungry, irritable, and still sore.

**“Hey champ! What do you say? Got your homework packed up and ready to go?”** Tim asked, wrapping Jesse in an affectionate headlock. They’d horse-played like this many times before, but this time, Jesse flinched away.

**“Whatever,”** Jesse mumbled cynically. He was being unusually rude.

**“‘Whatever’? C’mon kiddo, let’s go. I’ve got all the arts and crafts stuff at my place. We’ve only got a few hours before we have to leave for the game.”**

**“I don’t know. I’m kinda tired...”** Jesse said nervously, not meeting Tim’s eye. He felt guilty lying to his Big Brother, but he couldn’t leave his mom alone, and he was too ashamed to tell Tim the truth.

**“Well, you shouldn’t have spent all night playing ‘Gears of War’ then!”** Tim teased with a smile.

Jesse’s face got tight, his eyes narrowed, and his jaw clenched with sudden anger. He screamed: **“You know what? You don’t know sh—, so maybe you should just keep your stupid mouth shut!”**

Tim was shocked. He’d only been joking! He knew that Jesse could be difficult, but this was too much! His face got hard, and in a stern voice, he said: **“You know what? Maybe I should see your mother!”** He started walking toward the trailer.

Jesse suddenly couldn’t think straight. An explosion of panic and shame rushed through him as he pushed Tim back, staggering him. Tears were pouring down his face as he shouted furiously, **“No, you can’t! She’s sick! Just go away! Go away!”** Jesse ran to the trailer and slammed the door.

Tim’s heart pounded as he leaned against his car. **‘What the @#%\$ was THAT all about?’** he thought. He felt as frustrated as Jesse, wondering what was REALLY going on in that home.



1. Underline three specific events that contributed to Jesse’s crisis with Tim.
2. Underline three physical warning signs that Tim missed during Jesse’s Warning Phase.
3. Circle five (strong emotions) Jesse experiences.
4. Put a large **“E”** where Jesse crosses into the Escalation Phase.
5. Put a large **“C”** where he crosses into the Crisis Phase.



# Skill 2: Active Listening

Use Active Listening when an emotional youth is **CALM ENOUGH** to begin talking things out, but is not yet ready to problem solve.

One of the most powerful crisis intervention tools is good LISTENING. Open-hearted listening allows a highly emotional child to vent to someone who cares, while offering us an opportunity to gather information and (later) offer helpful advice. There are three levels of Active Listening:

- 1. Attending      2. Decoding      3. Reflecting**

## Active Listening Level 1: ATTENDING

Good listening is more than just waiting our turn to talk. We communicate our concern and willingness to help both by what we DO and by what we SAY when kids are upset.

Mark "G" for good and "B" for bad listening habits. How would these impact a child in crisis?

### THINGS WE DO:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Interrupting constantly</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Making some eye contact</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Nodding at the right times</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Quickly checking a text</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Rolling your eyes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Tapping a pencil</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Leaning in</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Looking at a watch</li> </ul> |
|---|---|



### THINGS WE SAY:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Tell me more about what happened..."</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "That's nothing! You think that's bad?"</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "That must have been upsetting..."</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Here's what you SHOULD have done..."</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "You really need to get over it..."</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "What about HER point of view?"</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "Looks like you've had a hard day..."</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> "I see what you mean..."</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

## Active Listening Level 2: DECODING

Much of a student's real meaning is communicated non-verbally. Good listeners learn to read between lines and interpret what is NOT said.

% of Actual Meaning	Communicated through
%	<b>Facial expressions, body language, posture</b>
%	<b>Tone of voice, inflection, volume, rate of speech</b>
%	<b>Actual words chosen</b>

Tip: Pay attention to and decode discrepancies between verbal messages ("I'm fine, really.") and non-verbal messages (upset expression, tense body language, trembling voice).

## Active Listening Level 3: REFLECTING

Reflective listening paraphrases what we hear students saying and feeling, without attempting to insert our own opinions or give unsolicited advice. Instead, we offer our full attention, decode non-verbal messages, then briefly summarize what we've heard, in our own words.

"It sounds like you feel EMOTION about/because REASON."

"It's so not fair, Mr. J! She took my iPhone after only one warning, but she ignored it when Pete did the same thing yesterday. And my parents are gonna FLIP! My father said I'd lose phone privileges for a month if I used it in school."

"It sounds like you're really upset about losing your phone, Ronnie."

"So you believe your teacher was playing favorites, and you're ticked off about it."

In each statement, circle the FEELING, and underline the REASON.



"You're really nervous about how your father will react to this."

## Feeling Families

Students from harsh environments sometimes lack the emotional vocabulary to express themselves fully when they are upset. It can be immensely validating when staff recognize and accurately reflect their deeper feelings. It can also help them develop greater self-awareness and communication skills.

**MAD words:**

**SAD words:**

**GLAD words:**

**SCARED words:**

# Active Listening with Jesse

Staff: "Jesse, I'm concerned about what happened in Health class earlier today. All I know is that there was a problem with you and Coach Taylor. Can you tell me more about what happened?"



**"I'm so sick and tired of this stupid school! Nobody talks to me, and everyone makes fun of me -- even the teachers! Coach Taylor is soooo mean to me. He yells at me all the time! I'm NOT going back to his class!"**

List Jesse's FEELINGS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

His REASONS for feeling that way:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

It sounds like you're feeling \_\_\_\_\_ about/because/with  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Staff: "I can hear how upset you are with Mr. Taylor. Can you take a deep breath and tell me more about what happened in class today?"

Jesse (upset): **"He asked if anyone knew what HYGIENE meant and Ronnie said 'Don't ask Jesse,' and everyone started laughing -- including HIM!"**

Staff: "So you felt \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling) when a classmate made a rude comment about you. And you felt even worse when it looked like Mr. Taylor \_\_\_\_\_ (situation). What happened next?"

Jesse (calmer): **"I cursed at Ronnie. I know I shouldn't have, but I was just so MAD! But then Ronnie made it sound like I was cursing at Mr. Taylor! And Mr. Taylor got in my face and tried to make me say I called him a bad name, but I didn't do it! I was so scared I couldn't say a thing. So I just ran out! He tried to grab me, but I got away from him and came here."**

Staff: "So you're saying that you got really \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling) and cursed at one of your classmates. But Mr. Taylor thought you'd cursed at him. And when he confronted you, you felt \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling), so you \_\_\_\_\_ (behavior)."

"Jesse, I'm sorry that you've had such a bad morning. Nobody deserves to feel so \_\_\_\_\_ all the time. Stay here and relax for a bit. We'll see what we can do to fix this situation."

# Active Listening with Elizabeth



Staff: "Elizabeth, we need to talk about the threatening statement you made in Ms. Christian's class this afternoon. Your teacher said she thought you were about to pull a knife. Everyone was pretty upset about it. Why don't you tell me what happened, from your perspective?"

**"DeAnne and her evil minion Camille have been trashing me all month -- picking on my clothes, my hair, my make-up, everything. They made a joke about 'dumpster-diving' in class, and Ms. C totally let them get away with it! How am I supposed to feel about that? Nobody ever says anything to them! I know that fake threat went a little too far, but I had to get them to stop!"**

List Elizabeth's FEELINGS:

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Her REASONS for feeling that way:

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It sounds like you're feeling \_\_\_\_\_ about/because/with

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Staff: "I can't support your behavior in class Elizabeth, but I can see why you'd be upset with how they've been treating you."

Elizabeth (frowning): **"And this isn't the first time it's happened in front of staff either. DeAnne gets away with it cuz her father's on the School Board and I'm in foster care. That's not fair, is it? I thought this school was supposed to be Bully-Free."**

Staff: "So you're not just \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling) with DeAnne about the things she's done. You're also \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling) because it seems like staff \_\_\_\_\_ (situation)."

Elizabeth (sad): **"Listen, I'm sorry about the 'red smile' thing. I didn't come to this school TRYING to cause trouble. I just want to be myself and do my work and be left alone. Why do people like DeAnne always mess with me? Every school I go to, it's the same thing... I just don't get it."**

Staff: "You sound \_\_\_\_\_ (feeling) about/that \_\_\_\_\_ (situation)."

Let's figure out how to resolve the classroom issue, then we can talk more about that too."

# Adult Anger Traps

Despite our best intentions, there may be times when we overreact personally to challenging students. A deeper understanding of our own anger traps can help us defend against emotional responses, allowing us to remain clear, calm, and focused when enforcing rules and responding to crises.

## 1. Outside Stress

Leftover stress from other problems makes it easy to overreact to a minor situation, turning exhaustion into anger at a student.

## 2. Embarrassment

We feel helpless or inadequate trying to handle a challenging situation, then turn embarrassment into anger.

## 3. Shock or Fear

We feel a natural sense of shock or fear in response to a threatening situation, then turn anxiety into anger at the child.

## 4. Values Violation

We become offended when a student's behavior violates one of our core values or beliefs, triggering feelings of intense righteous anger.

## 5. Authority Challenge

We engage in an angry power struggle with a defiant child, determined to establish control at almost any cost.

Based on work by Dr. Nicholas Long



## Things That Make You Go “Grrrr!”

**Write about a school-related situation that upset you. Focus only on the triggering incident.**

Ms. Christian's Example: "I have a new girl in my class, Elizabeth, that two of the other girls have been picking on. It makes me so angry when they are so abusive to this poor child! And when I try to get them to stop, they completely ignore me, like I'm not even there! It's so frustrating!"

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For discussion: Which Anger Traps were involved in Ms. C's story? In your own incident?

# Things to Remember in Crisis

Keep these things in mind when tempted to engage in a power struggle with a student.

## 1. About YOUTH in CRISIS:

**a. Remember that stress acts like a magnifying glass, making small problems seem larger than they are.** Be aware of the stressors in your students' lives. Avoid putting extra stress on a student whose coping skills are already maxed out.

**b. Remember that a youth's past experiences give him a very different way of perceiving events than you have, especially if he has experienced trauma.** However unreasonable or unfair this perception seems to you, it is very REAL to him. Try to see things through his eyes before reacting to his behavior.

**c. Remember that during conflict, an emotional teen may be her own worst enemy.** She will defend, deny, blame, rationalize, and regress from owning her feelings or taking responsibility for her behavior. Don't try to reason with her when you can see she is highly agitated. Back off, and give her time to cool off first.

**Which one of these reminders about youth is most helpful to you? Why?**



## 2. About US as ADULTS:

**a. Remember that outside stress (such as a bad cold or problems at home) can make it harder for us to tolerate the situational stress of a conflict.** Be aware of the stressors acting on you, and be able to tell what you are reacting to in a crisis. Reduce your stress if possible before entering tense situations.

**b. Remember that everyone has sensitive issues that set them off. Know your hot spots and anger traps before problems occur.** Admit to yourself when you are getting angry or overwhelmed. Take a deep breath and slow down, walk away for a minute, or ask for help from others.

**c. Remember to catch yourself using sarcasm, belittling comments, or accusations when you are angry.** Trying to beat emotional students at their own game lowers us to their level, and reinforces their negative perceptions of adults. Apologize if necessary (without expecting one in return) and make a habit of letting go of grudges. Every day is another chance to start fresh!

**Which one of these reminders about ourselves is most helpful to you? Why?**



# TBM Key Points



**Key Point 1.** Working with challenging students (especially those with emotional and behavioral issues) requires good judgment and sound skills. The TBM Model provides a framework for interventions, based first on assessing the danger level, then the psychological source of the problem. Dangerous situations require us to put SAFETY first. Deliberate problems can often be managed with reasonable RULES, but de-escalating overwhelming emotional crises requires strong RELATIONSHIPS.



**Key Point 2.** Deliberate misbehavior is an intentional choice which meets a youth's short-term social needs, often violating the rules or the rights of others. Deliberate misbehavior can often be prevented when students are given prosocial ways to fill their social needs, or quickly handled with a simple reminder about expected behavior.

Consequences are sometimes necessary to enforce rules, but their only legitimate purpose is to encourage youth to make better choices. A fair warning (especially when using natural or logical rather than punitive consequences) gives students the opportunity to correct their behavior without creating needless power struggles.



**Key Point 3.** Emotional behavior is an irrational, impulsive reaction to high stress. Students in stress may be triggered by a minor problem, then become overwhelmed and overreact impulsively to adults. Those who have suffered childhood trauma are easily escalated and are especially sensitive to shaming and embarrassment.

An understanding of the predictable phases of an escalating crisis can help adults choose the best strategies to calm or manage stressful situations. It is also helpful to understand the differences between youth who externalize their feelings and those who internalize instead.



**Key Point 4.** When students act out because of stressful emotional issues, relationship-based counseling is more effective than giving consequences. Giving space is useful when youth are safe but still too upset to talk. Active listening (attending, decoding and reflecting) encourages them to de-escalate further by venting to a caring adult. Reflective listening is an essential tool for validating students' emotions and guiding them toward problem solving.



**Key Point 5.** Our goal in deliberate situations is to calmly manage intentional misbehavior, preventing further disruption to learning. Our goal in emotional situations is to help overwhelmed students de-escalate and learn to resolve their problems. We can only achieve these goals if we are able to stay calm, focused, and professional, avoiding needless power struggles and personal anger traps.

# Readings and Resources

The following resources have informed or inspired the TBM program, and are recommended for those wishing more information about this content.

Brendtro, L. Brokenleg, M., & VanBockern, S. (1990). Reclaiming youth at risk: Our hope for the future. Bloomington, IN: National Education Services.

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Walker, H., Stieber, S., & Ramsey, E. (1995). Antisocial behavior in school: Strategies and best practices. Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Wolin, S., & Wolin, S. (1993). The resilient self: How survivors of troubled families rise above adversity. New York: Villard.

# Inspirational Quote from Dr. Haim Ginott

**"I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It's my personal approach that creates the climate; it's my daily mood that makes the weather.**

**"As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.**

**"In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated or a child humanized or dehumanized."**



Dr. Haim Ginott (1972). "Teacher and Child: A Book for Parents and Teachers."

This program is part of a larger series of crisis intervention training programs:

Therapeutic Aggression Control Techniques (TACT<sub>2</sub>): For youth care workers serving seriously troubled youth in settings such as alternative schools, shelters, residential treatment centers, group homes, etc.

TBM/Elementary: For educators working with challenging students in grades K-5;

TBM/HighSchool: For educators working with difficult students in grades 6-12;

TBM/FosterCare: For adults caring for foster children in their homes; and

TBM/DD: For staff serving older youth and adults with developmental disabilities.

I welcome your reflections on your experiences as teachers of challenging kids, and your thoughts about this curriculum. If you would like to share your insights, or want information about becoming an instructor in one of these curricula, please contact me:

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