THE MAKING AND UNMAKING OF



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Jack Hirose Seminars

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BULLIES: their making and unmaking

a fresh look from an attachment-based developmental perspective, shedding light on the dark side of human nature

Gordon Neufeld, Ph.D.

Developmental & Clinical Psychologist Vancouver, Canada

FOUR PREVAILING EXPLANATIONS

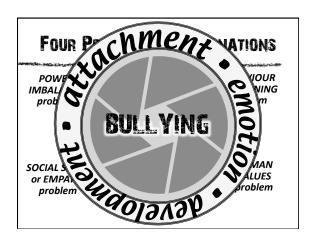
POWER IMBALANCE problem

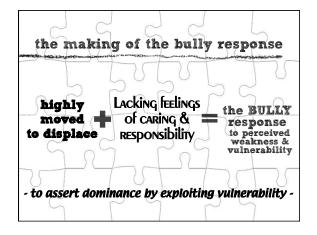
BULLYING

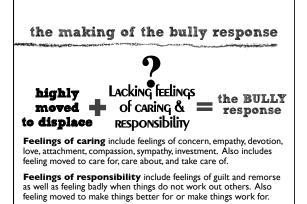
SOCIAL SKILLS or EMPATHY problem

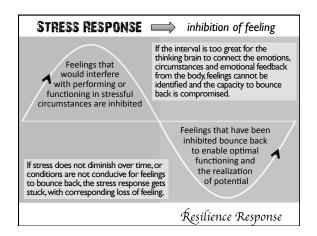
BULLYING

HUMAN VALUES problem









Feelings more likely to be defensively inhibited feelings of woundedness (hurt feelings, anguish, pain) feelings of dependence (emptiness, neediness, missing, loneliness, insecurity) feelings of embarrassment including blushing feelings of shame (that something is wrong with me) feelings of futility (sadness, disappointment, grief, sorrow) feelings of alarm (apprehension, unsafe, anxiety and fear) feelings of caring (attachment, concern, empathy, devotion, investment, compassion, sympathy, love) feelings of responsibility (feel badly, guilty, sorry... feel like making things better or making things work for)

BULLYING

• an <u>emotional problem</u> characterized by being stuck in the stress mode where feelings are defensively inhibited

the making of the bully response

highly to displace

Lacking feelings of caring & the BULLY response response defended against feeling

Examples of common displacement instincts

- to take charge, to take over, to take the lead
- \bullet to command attention, to take centre stage
- to talk louder, to talk over, to talk for another
- to be first, to be the best, to be on the top
- to demand deference, to give the orders, to take command
- to give the directions, to provide the meanings
- to trump interaction, to have the last word
- to be in the know / to be the most knowledgeable

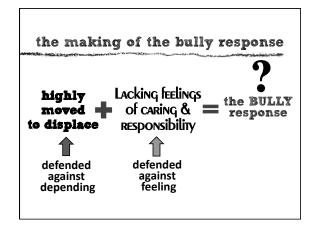
MOVED TO DISPLACE

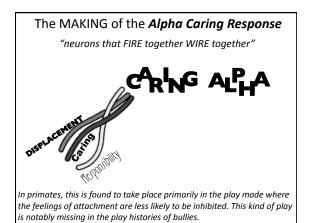
- an attachment-based emotion/instinct that is meant to move us to take charge, to lead, and to protect those who depend upon us
- this 'alpha response' should NOT be characteristic of a person but rather a characteristic of situations where one senses the neediness or vulnerability of another
- displacement should alternate with being moved to depend when in the presence of someone who could 'answer' our attachment needs
- the displacement response can also be part of a stress reaction when it does not feel safe to depend
- when the stress response is STUCK , this becomes a **defense against depending** and can become characteristic of a person

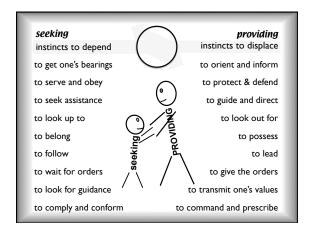
BULLYING

- an <u>emotional problem</u> characterized by being stuck in the stress mode where feelings are defensively inhibited
- an <u>attachment problem</u> characterized by being stuck in the alpha mode where *dependence* is *defended against*

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the making of a 'caring alpha response'

- moved to take care of the vulnerable and needy -

the making of the bully response

- a perversion of alpha -

highly moved to displace Control of Caring & Car

- to assert dominance by exploiting vulnerability -

BULLYING

- an <u>emotional problem</u> characterized by being stuck in the stress mode where feelings are defensively inhibited
- an <u>attachment problem</u> characterized by being stuck in the alpha mode where dependence is defended against
- an <u>alpha perversion</u> that evolves when stuck in elevated displacement instincts while devoid of the feelings of caring and responsibility that are meant to accompany
- \bullet a $\underline{\text{deep-seated}}$ drive to assert dominance by taking advantage of the weak and by exploiting the vulnerability of others

the bully response

- to assert dominance by exploiting vulnerability -

- can be physical, through the senses, emotional or psychological
- can be experienced, expressed, vicarious, or fantasized
 - through fear and intimidation
 - through put-downs, shaming & humiliation
 - · through exposing and embarrassing
 - through tricking and conning

the making of a bully

- a perversion of alpha -

highly moved to displace Caring & The BULLY response Responsibility

defended against depending defended against feeling

- to assert dominance by exploiting vulnerability -

the UNmaking of a bully

- a perversion of alpha -

highly moved to displace Lacking feelings of caring & the BULLY response responsibility

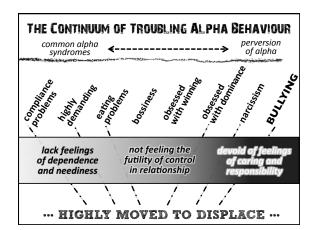


to assert dominance by exploiting vulnerability -

SESSION 2

The Alpha Perversion Model of bullying explains ...

- the relationship to other alpha syndromes
- the co-existence with other emotional problems
- the relationship to attachment problems including peer orientation
- how the bullied can become bullies
- the existence of a bully syndrome that can mask the true personality

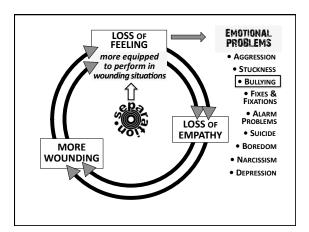


ie, an ALPHA child who is cued by their own felt needs - is bossy, assertive, prescriptive, controlling, and cannot let go; insists on fairness, rights, and getting what is deserved - holds other responsible, feels angry when things don't work RESULT: both parties experience this interaction as confusing, highly frustrating, exhausting, and ultimately unfulfilling

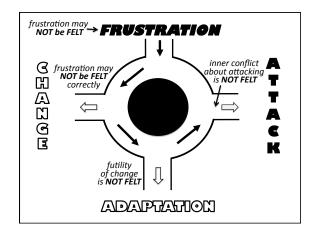
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PROBLEMS OF NON-ADAPTATION · fails to recover Encounters • fails to realize from loss and lack the futility of with futility controlling others · fails to develop the ability to deal with limitations · fails to learn from and restrictions, including consequences as not getting one's way well as negative experiences · fails to transcend learning disabilities eelings of futilit frustration turns and handicaps foul and seeks to erupt in aggression · fails to develop and self-attack resilience to handle adversity



SESSION 2

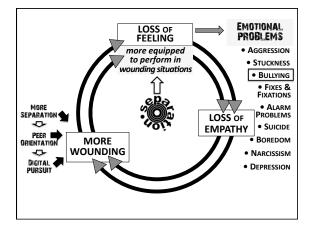
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STRESS 8



- Attachment = survival (for mammals) and is thus our preeminent need. Attachment is the context, and provides the drive, for taking care of each other.
- 2. Given that attachment is our *preeminent need*, separation is our greatest threat and therefore the essence of stress.
- 3. Given our ability to anticipate and project separation, it is not only the actual experience of separation but the subjective experience of 'facing separation' from what and whom we are attached to, that triggers a stress response when the separation seems too much to bear.



peer orientation

- a phenomenon of attachment where peers **DISPLACE** the adults in a child's life, resulting in the child revolving around other children or the peer group instead of the adults responsible for the child
- using one's peers to get one's bearings and for the cues as to what matters most as well as how to act, talk and dress
- for peers to matter more; to prefer the company of one's peers over that of the adults in one's life
- where attachments to peers **COMPETE** with the attachments to adults (eg, the child does not seek for his peers and adults to be together)

peer orientation and the making of bullier

- I. When peers become attached to each other, the attachment brain must arrange them hierarchically, placing some over others but without a corresponding role of responsibility for care-taking.
- Peer interaction is the major source of wounding for children, regardless of whether they are peer attached or not. The more peers matter to each other however, the more they can get hurt by each other, often leading to a vulnerability too much to bear.
- 3. In the peer pop culture, vulnerability is shamed and invulnerability is venerated, even in the early grades.

peer orientation and the making of victims

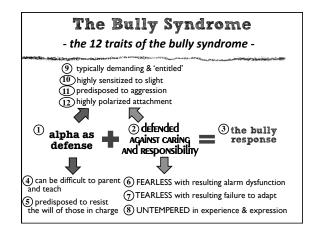
- I. Some are predisposed to defer to and to depend upon their peers, rendering them highly vulnerable to the insensitive relating.
- The highly dependent will be instinctively moved to expose their fears and their vulnerabilities in order to elicit care-taking and protection. This is highly provocative to bullies, creating natural prey.
- 3. The vulnerability of being peer oriented is typically too much to bear, leading to defenses that create blind spots, either drawing them into harm's way or rendering them unable to stay out of harm's way.
- 4. The emotional hardening renders them less resilient and adaptive, unable to handle adversity and unable to learn from their failures in keeping clear of the bullies.
- 5. Their peer orientation cuts them off from adult support, protection and shielding.

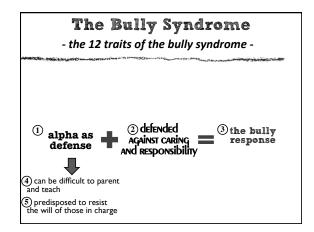
how the BULLIED can become BULLIES Lacking feelings highly the BULLY moved . of caring & response to displace RESPONSIBILITY not safe not safe to depend to feel repeated wounding bullied at home rendered vulnerable or at school by peer orientation

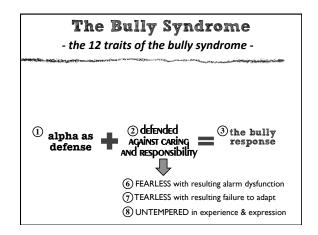
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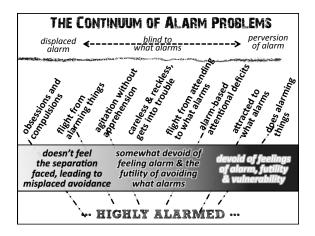
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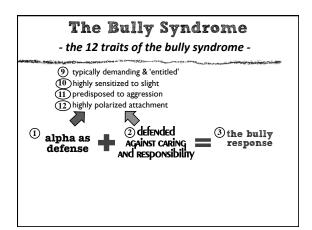
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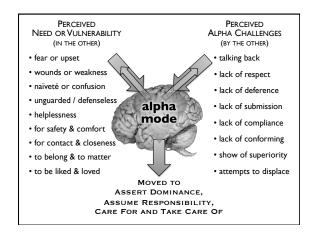


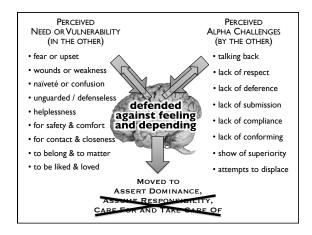












positive polarity	negative polarity	
seeks to be with	shies away from	
makes contact	resists contact	
endears	alienates	
looks up to	looks down upon	
attends & listens to	ignores & disregards	
imitates & emulates	mocks & mimics	
possesses	disowns	
is loyal to	opposes & betrays	
holds dear	holds in contempt	
attempts to find favour	ridicules and derides	
makes things work for	spoils things for	
seeks to matter to	discounts as not mattering	
seeks to please	annoys and irritates	
befriends	eschews	
loves	loathes	
shares secrets with or keeps the secrets of	keeps secrets from or creates secrets about	

CONFESSIONS OF A SCHOOL BULLY

I hated everyone. I was the kid who knew that one thing that I could say or do to make you cry in front of everyone. If you were a prep I knew that if I embarrassed you in front of everyone then you would break down in tears. If you were poor I would point it out and watch as others laughed at you. If you were overweight I would tell you that you were fat enough and didn't need that extra burger. I was a horrible person to everyone except the handicapped children and for them I was a hero. They all loved me. I spent my spare time helping them in their classes and was suspended on three separate occasions for fighting others who were picking on them. I didn't understand why I did this back then but I get it now. I didn't bully those who were weaker than me. I bullied the people who thought that they were better than me. The poor kids thought that they were tougher, the preps thought that they were richer, the geeks thought that they were smarter, and the jocks thought that they were stronger. I needed to prove to myself that they were weaker than me in some way and I found it no matter who the person was. I always found their weakness and exploited it. The strangest thing back then was my lack of fear. The jocks that I embarrassed would be mad and come after me but not once did I ever run. I would smile widely and tell them to give me their best shot. They would and I would go home bruised or bleeding. I didn't care back then. I had hurt their pride and image more than they had hurt me physically.

SNAPSHOT OF A 78 YEAR OLD BULLY

Pierre's daughter took her father to visit his wife in a nursing home. Taking a break, he went to play cards with some men he knew in the seniors complex. Upon returning, he found his wife visiting with another woman in the nursing home - about the same age and suffering from Alzheimer's. He had been told by his wife previously that this woman sometimes forgot that her husband had died and would often ask for him or go looking for him. Upon being asked by this woman where he had gone, Pierre replied that he had just been playing cards with this woman's husband. It amused him immensely to see the look of excited anticipation in this woman's eyes.

A CASANOVA SNAPSHOT

You will laugh when you learn that I thought nothing of deceiving idiots, scoundrels and fools when I needed to do so. As for my deception of women, these are not the sort to be tallied, since when love has a hand in things, each party usually dupes the other. Fools, however are another matter entirely. I always take great delight in remembering those I have lured into my traps, for fools are insolent and their presumptions insult the mind. Thus we avenge intelligence when we deceive a fool, and the victory is worth the trouble, for he is protected as if with armor, and we do not know where to strike him. Deceiving a fool, in short, is worthy of a man of wit. What has instilled in me, since my birth, an invincible hatred of this breed, is that I feel like a fool whenever I find myself in their company.

from an autobiography of Giacomo Casanova, 1725-1778

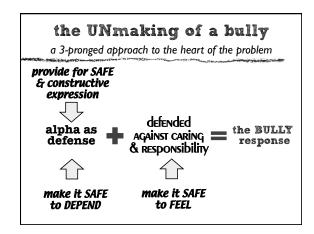
The UNmaking of a bully

changing the bully's heart and mind

SESSION 3

- an overview of a 3-pronged approach to intervention
- addressing societal conditions that give rise to bullies
- retreating from a futile battle against symptoms
- providing for safe and constructive expression of alpha

the making of a bully - a perversion of alpha -Lacking feelings highly the BULLY moved of caring & = response to displace **RESPONSIBILITY** defended defended against against depending feeling - to assert dominance by exploiting vulnerability -



What is happening to our children?

- Many are losing their attachments with the adults who care for them and teach them, revolving around their peers instead.
- Many are evolving into alpha children, no longer depending upon the adults who care for them and teach them.
- Many are in a flight from vulnerability, losing the feelings that would render them fully human and humane.

What is happening in our society?

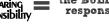
- I. We are losing the customs and the scripts that foster and preserve healthy child-adult attachments.
- 2. Our schools have drifted outside of our children's villages of attachment, creating conditions that foster peer orientation and bullying.
- 3. The loss of child-adult attachments and the resulting peer orientation have created a vulnerability too much to bear for our children.

the UNmaking of a bully

involves reversing the conditions that give rise to bullies

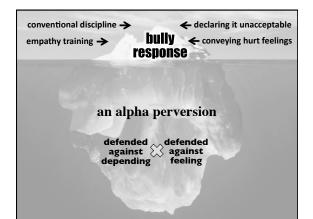
defended alpha as AGAINST CARING AND RESPONSIBILITY defense

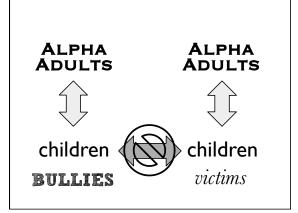
the BULLY response

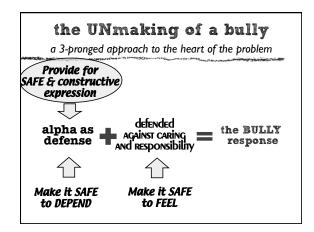




- dependence is often an aversive state for children
- adults seem to be having difficulty assuming alpha roles
- ncept of hierarchy has little support today
- ientation is escalating and largely unrecognized







Provide for SAFE and CONSTRUCTIVE expression of alpha

- MATCHMAKE with younger children or with those in need of being taken care of (where the bully's superiority is not threatened)
- appeal to bully's 'SUPERIORITY' to enroll and engage them in caring alpha activities and roles (eg. cooking, supervising, in charge, teaching, helping, policing, acting as a resource)
- use **PLAY** as a safe medium for displacing and expressing the bully's need to win, to dominate and to come out on top

competitive play and caring

- games of competition and conquest are often mistakenly assumed to be antithetical to caring (and even a cause of bullying) and therefore to be eliminated or at least not encouraged
- the ancient Greeks believed that playful competition provided a harmless outlet for the alpha instincts, rendering individuals more civilized and peaceful in real life
- some play theorists (eg, Johan Huizinga) argue that the loss of playing out the displacement instincts is what sets the stage for the insidious bullying on the world stage and the unmitigated quest for supremacy in real life
- the current science of play would confirm the ancient Greeks that playful competition and conquest take the raw displacement instincts out of real life and place them in a context where they can be tamed thus rendering us more likely to be caring and civilized

play as a safe outlet for alpha expression

- alpha play is one of the most common forms of play for young mammals, sometimes mistaken as 'play fighting' or 'mock aggression' although usually no aggression is involved
- alpha play includes games or fantasies of being a superhero, person or animal in charge (boss, owner, parent, lion), the most important person (king, prince, princess), the most famous person, and so on
- displacement play includes games of competition but involves anything where one displaces another (including in fantasy & stories) in attention, in placement, in word, in knowledge, in strength, in space, in importance, in focus, etc
- \bullet most sports revolve around the theme of displacement in one way or another
- playing the alpha roles include playing the doctor, rescuer, teacher, parent, boss, fireman, policeman, leader, conductor, etc

competitiveness vs ballying

- both are driven by elevated displacement instincts, but competitiveness alone does not indicate the existence of a bully response
- competitiveness in not indicative of a deeper alpha perversion if it only occurs in situations where one is NOT responsible for taking care of others (a game, a competition, sports, academics, etc)
- competitiveness is indicative of a deeper alpha problem if involves competing for care, or when it involves exploiting the vulnerability of others in order to win
- competitiveness is exacerbated in our society by our practice of treating children (including siblings) as 'equals' as well as by placing children with their 'equals' instead of in more natural hierarchical arrangements where they would be more naturally inclined to take care of each other

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The UNmaking of a bully

changing the bully's heart and mind

SESSION 4

- make it safe to depend
- make it safe to feel

the UNmaking of a bully

a 3-pronged approach to the heart of the problem

Provide for SAFE & constructive expression

alpha as defended Against Caring and Responsibility

the BULLY response

Make it SAFE to DEPEND

Make it SAFE to FEEL

Make it SAFE to DEPEND

about the CHALLENGE

- getting a bully to depend upon us (or anyone for that matter) is a daunting challenge because of the deep systemic (and thus selfevident) defense against depending
- while daunting, softening the defenses against depending is absolutely pivotal to changing the heart and mind of the bully
- winning the bully's trust will typically require first winning the bully's heart. While many bullies are incredibly charming and endearing, this is not always the case, especially when the bullying behaviour is rather offensive and off-putting.

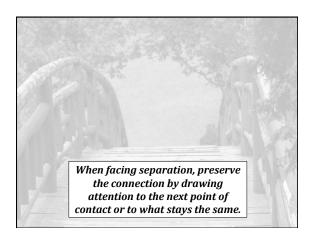
Make it SAFE to DEPEND

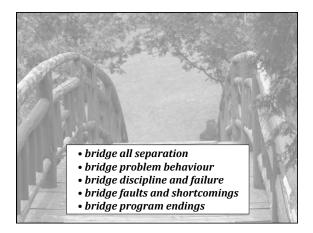
about the construct of DEPENDENCE

- we need to see through the 'fierce independence' of the bully to realize that it is not a healthy individuated type of independence but rather a defense against dependence that paradoxically renders them stuck in dependency needs
- we may need to get past society's love affair with independence that only serves to eclipse the true nature of the bully's problem
- we may need to get past our own reticence regarding inviting dependence, lest in giving it the proverbial inch, it might take a mile

Make it SAFE to DEPEND

- I. Invite into relationship by **CAREFULLY COLLECTING**, using play as a primer when needed, or by 'playing' to their 'superiority' to get to first base.
- Make the relationship safe by **BRIDGING** anything that could divide.
- 3. **DEPERSONALIZE** any discipline used so that it doesn't threaten the relationship.





the UNmaking of a bully The use of consequences: a dilemma

imposing consequences can fuel the bully problem



alpha as defended Against Caring and Responsibility

the BULLY response

However, not imposing consequences can sabotage social justice, erode social values, undermine alpha posture, and inadvertently convey a lack of support for the violated.

Make it SAFE to DEPEND

- Invite dependence by assuming and preserving an ALPHA STANCE that is not at the expense of the bully.
 - find your best alpha presentation and posture before entering into interaction where bullies are around
 - don't show any fear of bullies and don't come across as a victim
 - playfully 'invite the inevitable' when necessary
 - win the alpha challenges you can without being a bully oneself
 - avoid or escape the alpha challenges that you may not win
 - don't set the stage for revealing one's own impotence (eg, making demands they can foil, saying 'I won't let you do this', or giving threats that you cannot fulfill)

Make it SAFE to DEPEND

- 4. Invite dependence by assuming and preserving an **ALPHA STANCE** that is not at the expense of the bully
- Invite dependence by assuming the ALPHA ROLES in the relationship - home base, compass point, provider, advocate, protector, defender, comforter, anchor, refuge, etc
- Invite dependence by conveying the message "I will take care of you".
 - that is, have your back, be your advocate, protect & defend, stand up for you, make things work for you, find my way to your side
 - demonstrate this concretely if necessary and possible

Make it SAFE to DEPEND

- 7. Invite dependence by acting as an **ANSWER** to their basic attachment needs: sameness, belonging, loyalty, significance.
 - read the bully's needs and take the lead in being the answer
 - provide a 'touch of proximity' for them to hold on to and depend upon
- 8. Arrange scenarios in which there is no real option except to depend upon the adult in charge
- Matchmake with caring alpha adults who are not easily threatened.

the UNmaking of a bully a 3-pronged approach to the heart of the problem Provide for SAFE & constructive expression



Make it SAFE to DEPEND



Make it SAFE to FEEL

- REDUCE wounding as well as the separation the bully faces and thus the need for emotional defenses.
 - eg, peer interaction, separation-based discipline, shaming and put-downs, harsh criticism, character judgements, aversive consequences
- 2. **SHIELD** the bully's heart with safe emotional connections to caring adults (also the answer for potential victims).
- Draw into EMOTIONAL PLAYGROUNDS in order to reverse the inhibition of feelings (also the answer for potential victims).

Reversing the inhibition of feelings

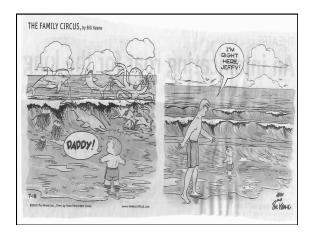
SAFETY is the KEY

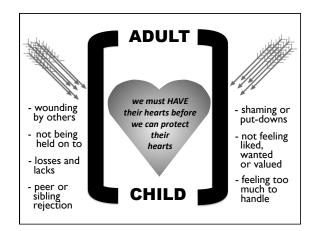
Nature affords us two places where we can **FEEL SAFE** despite not necessarily being safe, for the sake of emotional health and well-being.

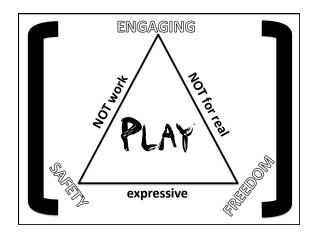




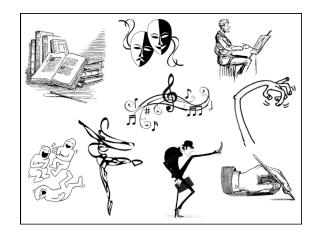
SAFE RELATIONSHIP TRUE PLAY

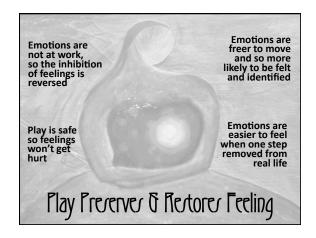


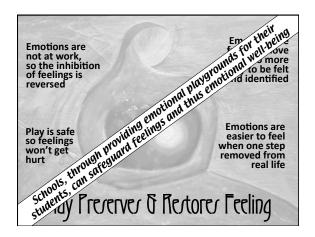












How play can move us to tears

futility >

- by rendering defenses unnecessary and thus making it easier to feel
- by playing directly to our emotions as in melancholy music, poetry, or a sad story
- by giving something to cry about that is one step removed and thus not too much to bear
- by removing the impediments to tears, or making them easier to address
- by setting the stage with fantasies that reveal the futility

- by removing the self-consciousness, shame, fear, and social sanctions around tears
- by shifting the locus from the HEAD to the HEART, from thinking to feeling, from doing to being, from secondary to primary emotion
- by providing safe release for stuck emotion, thus making it easier to fall into our tears in the wake of intense expression

Review: using **PLAY** to tame bully instincts

- provide emotional playgrounds to soften the heart (eg, music, drama, theatre, dance, art, stories)
- use play that invites dependence and makes it easier to trust and depend upon others
- \bullet use games of competition and conquest to safely vent their drive for dominance and supremacy
- \bullet use playful interaction to invite the inevitable (eg, having to come out on top or have the last word) while remaining in charge
- use drama and theatre to draw them into acting out caring alpha characters and assume caring alpha roles
- using playful activities to appoint into leadership and caring dominance

the UNmaking of a bully

a 3-pronged approach to the heart of the problem

Provide for SAFE & constructive expression





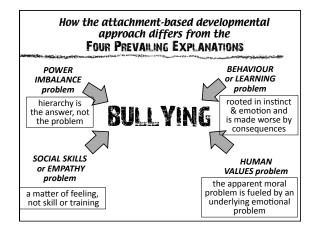




defense



Make it SAFE to DEPEND Make it SAFE to FEEL



the UNmaking of a bully

- RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS
- SOFT HEARTS

BULLIES: their making and unmaking

a fresh look from an attachment-based developmental perspective, shedding light on the dark side of human nature

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Supplementary Slides

'power' thesis

Bullying is an abuse of power or a 'power play' made possible by an imbalance of power

Assumptions

- the quest for power is the preeminent human drive and accounts for our striving for dominance
- striving for dominance is 'bad' and should not be indulged or allowed

Solutions

- eschew power, eradicate hierarchy & power imbalances, and focus instead on equality and relating with equals
- eliminate competition as it triggers and reinforces impulses to dominate

'alpha awry' model

Bullying derives from natural alpha instincts divorced from their intended purpose

- bullying has its greatest effect when there is an imbalance of power but the powerless can and do engage in bullying as well

- attachment, not power, is the preeminent drive and alpha instincts are a natural part of that drive

- dominance instincts are not 'bad' but can be perverted as is the case in bullying

Solution

 restore natural caring hierarchies and focus on child-adult relationships instead of peer relationships

'lacking empathy' thesis

children become bullies because they lack empathy

Solutions

- teach children to act caring and to be considerate of each other
- help bullies realize that their actions

Developmental Critique

- we cannot teach others **TO** care, only **HOW** to care. If they act as if they care out of self-interest, it is a travesty of caring (ie, narcissism).
- consideration is a fruit of integrative maturation (ie, prefrontal cortex) which in turn requires a fully functioning limbic system (soft heart) and the experience of feeling cared for (right relationships)

'alpha awry' thesis

children lack empathy because of emotional desensitization, which can also result in bullying

- fostering relating between children can increase caring and then backfire because of increasing peer orientation

- can backfire as feedback helps inform the bully instinct

Solution

- restore the instinct to care and create the conditions conducive to the development of consideration by embedding in natural caring hierarchies and reversing emotional desensitization

'lea<u>rned behaviour' t</u>hesis

bullies are mean because they haven't learned their lessons

bullies pick on others because they haven't been taught proper relationship skills

- bullying is instrumental behaviour and can therefore be controlled by consequences

- restore FEELING

'<u>alpha awry' mode</u>l

bullying is instinctive (albeit perverted) and we cannot truly train against the instincts

consequences
- children can be taught to get along - children can be taught to perform in certain situations but this doesn't and to be nice to each other mean their true nature has changed

Solutions

- apply CONSEQUENCES
- teach SOCIAL SKILLS

Solutions

- address ANTECEDENTS

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The *Neufeld Institute* is a world-wide nonprofit organization created for the purpose of putting developmental science into the hands of those responsible for our children. Our way of doing this is through disseminating the more than twenty-five courses that have been developed by Dr. Gordon Neufeld that articulate the attachment-based developmental approach. We have about 25 faculty and over 200 course facilitators delivering our courses in more than 10 languages to parents, teachers and helping professionals.

Our online courses can be taken at anytime and from anywhere. Individuals can take these courses through scheduled online classes or through individual self-paced study. Groups of ten or more can arrange for their own customized support. The online courses consist of much more than the video-material: study guides, discussion forums, supplemental material, as well as access to all the resources on campus.

Our online courses are housed on a virtual campus that is filled with resources, support materials and discussion forums. The online campus is open to anyone who has taken one of our courses, whether it has been delivered live by Dr. Neufeld or a faculty member, as a video-course by a Neufeld Course Facilitator, or as an online campus course. Watching the DVDs alone does not count as a course. Campus membership is \$150 for the initial year and \$120 for renewal. Benefits of course membership include product discounts, access to the campus library, discussion forums, periodic Q&A classes with faculty, and much more. The most significant benefit for many campus members is having continued access to the particular course materials that correspond to the course or courses they have taken. Our campus typically is home to about 2500 subscribers and students on study-passes at any given time.

Our courses are aimed for parents, teachers and helping professionals. The *Power to Parent* series is typically the best way for parents to get immersed in the attachment-based developmental approach. This can be augmented by other courses such as *Discipline*, *Counterwill*, *Alpha Children*, *Anxiety*, *Aggression* or *Adolescence*, depending upon the particular problems they may be experiencing. Educators are more likely to start with the *Aggression* course or the *Teachability Factor* as well as the *Preschoolers* course or *Adolescence* course, depending upon the age of their students. This too can be augmented by the problem-centred courses.

Helping professionals will definitely want to take the *Attachment Puzzle*, *Transplanting Children*, *Science of Emotion*, and *Resilience* courses.

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