

National Center on  
Early Childhood Development, Teaching, and Learning

5/15/2024

Developing Strategies to Restore Calm for Adults

Host  
Joyce Escorcia

Host  
Sarah Basler

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### Presenters for Today



Joyce EscorciaSarah Basler



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### Guest Expert

Lise Fox, Ph.D.  
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University of South Florida



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### Viewer's Guide

Download, take notes, and follow along!

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### Agenda for today...

- Discuss factors that impact how adults respond when challenging behavior occurs.
- Define neutralizing routines.
- Discuss ways coaches can develop neutralizing routines and support adults to use them.

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### Responding to Behavior that Challenges Adults

When adults remain calm during challenging moments, it can help prevent child behavior from escalating.



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### Reflecting on Behaviors that Challenge Coachees

- What child behaviors upset your coachees or push their “buttons”?
- How do these behaviors make coachees feel?
- How are coachees responding to these “hot button” behaviors?



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### The Behaviors and Adult Response Can Impact...



- The adult’s relationship with:
  - the child
  - the family
  - other education staff
- The child’s relationship with their peers
- The quality of instruction
- The stress level and mood of the coachee or family

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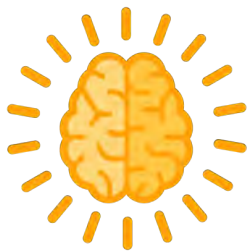
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Mindful Moment



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 Mindful Moment

What are some factors that impact how adults respond to child behavior?

Implicit bias

Vulnerable decision points

Deficit thinking vs. strengths based thinking about behavior

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 Mindful Moment


Implicit Bias

Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, decisions in an unconscious manner (Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, 2018).

Unconscious

Influences our response to children

Awareness of bias decreases biased responding

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 Mindful Moment

Support adults to...

- Become aware of when and how they respond to challenging behavior.
- Pause to reflect on their response
  - *Do I respond the same way with each child?*
  - *Did I expect the child's behavior to be challenging?*
  - *When is my response different?*
  - *How am I feeling?*
- Identify what the behavior is really trying to communicate.
  - If needed, develop a plan to address their response.

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**Mindful Moment**

Vulnerable Decision Points




**Situation Elements:**

- Time of day
- Location of the incident
- The activity or routine that is occurring
- Who is present

**Decision State:**

- Thoughts
- Feelings: tired, hungry, frustrated, stressed

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**Mindful Moment**

Deficit Thinking	Strengths Based Thinking
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Can be an outcome of negative and incorrect attributions about children or their families.</li><li>• May be the result of unexamined bias.</li><li>• Often is directed at children of color.</li><li>• Reinforces adult perception that the child and/or family is responsible for any perceived problems.</li><li>• Negatively impacts what attributions are given to behavior.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All children have strengths and abilities.</li><li>• Children grow and develop from their strengths and abilities.</li><li>• The problem is the concern - the child is not the problem.</li><li>• When children and those around them (including educators) appreciate and understand the child's strengths, then the child is better able to learn and develop.</li></ul>

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Dray, Barbara J. and Debora Baster Wisniewski. "Mindful Reflection as a Process for Developing Culturally Responsive Practices." *Teaching Exceptional Children* 44.1 (2011): 28-36.

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**Mindful Moment**

What happened before	The adult response	What happened after

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**Mindful Moment**

What Steps Could the Coachee Take?

What happened before	The adult response	What happened after
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delilah has interrupted the story at the rug 4 times today.</li> <li>This is the second week in a row Delilah has done this and the teacher is losing patience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher asks Delilah to sit at a table in the back until she can stop calling out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delilah becomes visibly upset and begins crying for a prolonged time. The longer she is at the table, the more intense the crying.</li> </ul>

What strategies could the teacher try?

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**Mindful Moment**

A Different Outcome For Delilah

What happened before	The adult response	What happened after
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delilah has interrupted the story at the rug 4 times today.</li> <li>This is the second week in a row Delilah has done this and the teacher is losing patience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The teacher reminds Delilah to raise her hand and wait to hear her name before offering her answer. She showed her the visual prompt associated with the rule.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delilah starts to yell out again but sees the visual. This time Delilah raises her hand but still yells out. The teacher thanks her for raising her hand and reminded her to wait to hear her name next time. Delilah nods and smiles.</li> </ul>

How might those changes impact the teacher's response to Delilah's behavior?

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**Mindful Moment**

What do you recommend a coach do to support a coachee to respond differently?



Neutralizing Routine:

- An instructional vs. reactive response
- Quick, clear, doable action
- Interrupts the chain of events so behavior doesn't escalate
- Plan for neutralizing routines before the behavior occurs

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**Mindful Moment**

Five Components of a Neutralizing Routine

1	2	3	4	5
If-Then statement	Brief	Clear steps	Doable	Interrupts chain of events



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**Mindful Moment**



- P – Pause and Reflect**
  - Take a deep breath.
  - Think about what happened before the behavior occurred.
- A – Ask**
  - What is this child trying to tell me?
  - Do they want something? Do they need something?
  - What do I know about this child that will help me figure out the reason for the behavior?
- R – Respond**
  - When I respond, I ensure the child feels validated, listened to, understood, and safe.
  - I guide the child to use an appropriate alternative behavior.



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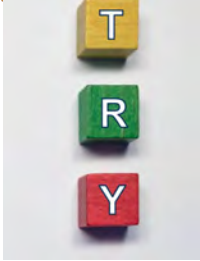
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**Mindful Moment**



When I feel stressed by behaviors that push my buttons, I will:

- T – Take a deep breath.**
- R – Reflect on my emotions, reflect on the meaning of the child's behavior.**
- Y – I will think, "You got this. You can be calm to support the child to be calm."**



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Coaching and Practice



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Coaching and Practice

Coach Yejin and Sonya



- What are the elements of the situation?
- What is Sonya's decision state?
- Develop a neutralizing routine
  - If/then statements
  - Brief
  - Clear steps
  - Doable
  - Interrupts the chain of events and power struggle



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Coaching and Practice

Think back to your coachee's hot buttons...



- Could a neutralizing routine be

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<https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/about-us/article/mypeers-social-network-early-childhood-professionals>



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We Want To Hear From You!

Please take some time to complete the session evaluation. ,

For more information contact:  
[ecdtdl@ecetta.info](mailto:ecdtdl@ecetta.info)  
(Toll-free 1-844-261-3752)

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Thank You!

Join Us in October 2024!



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