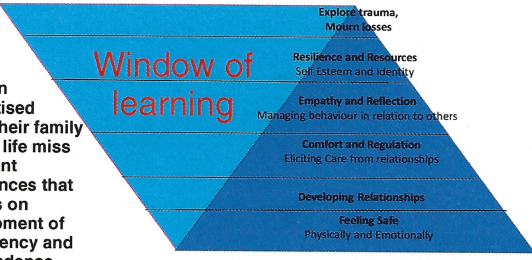


PACE - Supporting behaviours that are challenging



Emma Rutherford
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Emotional Connection for the Future

Children traumatised within their family early in life miss important experiences that impacts on development of dependency and independence





Page 2

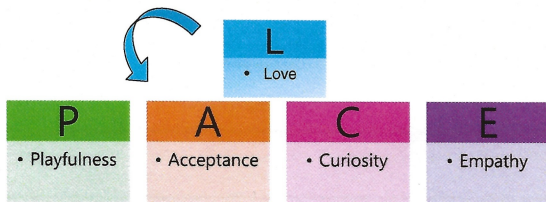
Building Healthy Futures

- If we want children to grow into healthy adults, we need to attend to their emotional life as well as their behaviour.
- Support to build emotional regulation
- Children will not feel safe experiencing adults thinking about their experiences with them. They fear emotional connection.
- Behavioural support is not sufficient without additional attention to helping children overcome their fears of emotional connection.
- We need to attend to **connection** as well as **'correction'**.

Page 3

What is PACE?



Page 4

PACE

- Way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving- makes the child feel safe
- Based on how parents connect with very young infants- positive attachments, with safety the child can begin to explore
- With PACE a traumatised child can start to look at himself and let others start to *see* him, or get closer emotionally. He can start to trust

Page 5



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Page 6

Playfulness

- Creates an atmosphere of lightness and interest when you communicate
- Light voice tone –rather than lecturing
- Having fun and expressing a sense of joy (Not about being funny all the time!)
- Some children don't (can't) want to experience fun, don't like affection or reject hugs. A playful stance allows closeness but without the scary parts
- Traumatized children can find it difficult to regulate any emotions these emotions can sometimes turn to anxiety
- Playfulness allows children to cope with positive feelings. When children laugh they become less defensive or withdrawn and more reflective.
- A playful stance adds elements of fun and enjoyment and can diffuse difficult situations
- Less likely to respond with anger and defensiveness when adults have a touch of playfulness in their discipline
- Such a response may not be appropriate (Downstairs brain!) but when used correctly it can help keep things in perspective

Page 7



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Acceptance

- Unconditional acceptance is at the core of the child's sense of safety
- Actively communicating that you accept the **wishes**, **feelings**, **thoughts**, **motives** and **perceptions** that are underneath the outward behaviours
- Accepting the child's intentions does not imply accepting the behaviour- you can be firm in limiting the behaviour at the same time as accepting the motives
- Child will learn that the behaviour may be limited but this is not the same as criticising them. The child becomes more confident that discipline involves behaviour not relationships
- **Curiosity** is the foundation of acceptance of whatever underlies the behaviour

Page 8



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Curiosity

- Curiosity without judgement helps children become aware of their inner life, reflect on reasons for their behaviour and then communicate it
- Curiosity is **WONDERING** about the meaning behind the behaviour
- Curiosity lets the child know that the adults understand (or want to understand) and want to help them to understand too
- Children often know that the behaviour was inappropriate but do not know why they did it or are reluctant to tell you why
- Curiosity involves quiet, accepting tones that tells the child your desire to understand:
 - 'What do you think was going on?'
 - 'What do you think that was about?'
 - 'I wonder what/ if....'
- Very different to asking 'Why did you do that?' and expecting a reply

Page 9



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Curiosity

- Not interpretation or fact gather- about getting to know the child
- MUST be communicated without annoyance at the behaviour. A light, curious tone can get through to child in a way that anger cannot.
- Might make guesses about what child was thinking/ feeling and say that aloud and keeping it connected to the present- 'I wonder if....'
- Have a conversation with yourself.... Without expecting a response!
- If adult can stay curious about behaviours then child and adult are less likely to feel cross/ frustrated.
- Curiosity is non-judgemental so it helps the child to be open to how they are thinking- child stays open and engaged in conversations

Page 10



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Empathy

- Lets the child feel the adults compassion for them
- Adult actively showing the child that the child's inner life is important to them and that you want to be with them even at tough times.
- When the child is sad or distressed the adult is feeling the sadness and distress with them and lets the child know that – demonstrating that you know how difficult it is for them- you are showing them that they do not have to deal with the distress alone
- The adult stays with the child emotionally, providing comfort and support and will not abandon them when they need you most
- The adult is also communicating strength, care (love) and commitment

Page 11



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PACE

We can't change the child's experiences BUT we can change how we respond to them

- Focuses on the whole child, not just the behaviour
- Helps children to be more secure with adults and reflect upon themselves, their thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- The child discovers that they are doing the best that they can, and are not *bad, lazy, selfish, naughty*
- Difficulties diminish as the need for them reduces
- Children learn to rely on adults and trust them to truly know them

Page 12



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PACE

- For adults using PACE - can reduce the level of conflict, defensiveness and withdrawal that we see in traumatised children
- If adults respond differently, over time you will notice the child change the way they behaves or communicate.

Page 13



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Managing Behaviour whilst building Security



Page 14



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PACE & Behaviour Management

- PACE empowers discipline and behaviour management.
- Discipline is provided with understanding.
- It guides and teaches the child.
- Child experiences discipline in a more open and trusting manner.
- PACE expresses unconditional care/love.
- Child is confident of adults good intentions and belief in him.
- PACE brings you back to the relationship

Page 15



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Support to Connect and Correct

Two hands for parenting:

Hand One: provides warmth and nurture, and allows children appropriate autonomy matched to their developmental age.

Hand Two: provides structure, and boundaries.

Connection before correction

- No correction without understanding
- Avoid lectures and delay problem solving
- Avoid punishing with the relationship
- Adult takes responsibility for relationship repair

Page 16



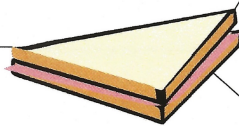
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Support to Connect and Correct

Discipline in the form of boundaries and consequences is important, but it needs to be sandwiched between lots of attunement and relationship repair.

Support sandwich!

Discipline
Remain calm, warm and sympathetic, whilst being clear about the boundary (what isn't allowed) and the consequence (if – then). Avoid anger



Attunement
Use empathy to communicate your understanding and sympathy for how the child is feeling

Relationship Repair
Help the child to know they are still loved and cared for. The relationship is stronger than this episode.

Page 17



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Connection with Correction... 7 steps....

- By keeping these steps in mind it is easier to stay open and engaged with the child rather than becoming defensive.
- This in turn helps to make an emotional connection with the child whilst also providing some behavioural management.
- When an adult **connects** before correcting the child will experience unconditional care/love and acceptance alongside the safety which empathic boundaries and discipline can provide.

Page 18



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Step 1

1. Notice

What is happening?
Do I need to step in?
What immediate steps do I need to take to ensure everyone's safety?

Page 19



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Step 2

2. Impact

What impact is this having on me?
-Am I regulated and can I stay open and engaged?
-Am I becoming defensive?
-Do I need a break or can I get back to being open and engaged?
-Can I be compassionate to myself?

Page 20



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Step 3

3. Regulation or Reflection

What part of the child's brain is activated?

Do I need to provide
- Sensory regulation?
- Emotional regulation?

Or, can I help the child to reflect?

Page 21



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Step 4

4. Curiosity and Understanding

Reflect with or on behalf of the child

What is the child's internal emotional experience that has led to the behaviour?
(Remember- Internal experience is neither right nor wrong- it just is)

Page 22



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Step 5

5. Acceptance and Empathy

Connection

How can I help the child to know that I get it?

Page 23



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Step 6

6. Correction

Do I need to do anything further?

- Increase structure and supervision
- Provide a consequence
- Problem-solving

Page 24



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Step 7

7. Relationship Repair

Do I need to repair the relationship so that the child knows he is loved unconditionally

Page 25



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Page 26

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In conclusion...

- PACE builds in more connection whilst continuing to provide correction.
- This increases safety, builds trust, increases reciprocity.
- Child experiences emotional co-regulation.
- Reduces traumatisation.
- Child experiences healthy dependency through attachment relationship.
- PACE contains and manages behaviour whilst maintaining the emotional connection.
- Healthy dependency provides the foundation for successful independence. A healthy future is open to the child

Page 27



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