

A photograph of a stone path leading to the ocean. The path is made of large, irregular stones and is flanked by a concrete curb. The ocean is on the right, and mountains are visible in the background under a cloudy sky.

# INTRODUCTION TO BALANCED PARENTING:

## Finding your Middle Path

Trained by Kristin Licardi, LCSW

Adapted from Perepletchikova (2016). Harvey & Rathbone (2015) Parenting a Teen Who has Intense Emotions; Kazdin (2005) Parent Management Training; and Miller, Rathus, & Linehan (2006) Dialectical Behavior Therapy: Multi-Family Skills Training Group.

# Biosocial Theory



**Emotional vulnerability is biological: it's simply how some people are born**

- Low threshold for tolerating emotions
- Reactions are immediate & intense
- Slow to return to baseline

# Biosocial Theory

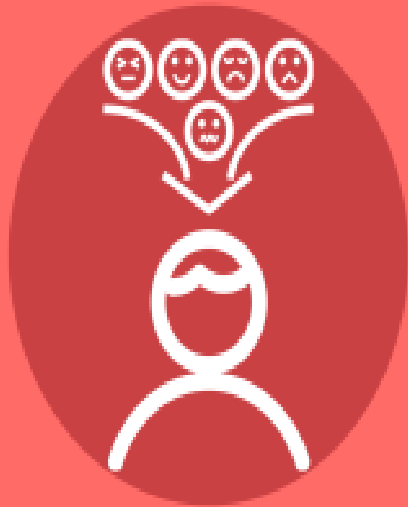


## Invalidating Environment:

- Communicates that what you are feeling, thinking, doing doesn't make sense
- Poor fit between person & environment
- May not be intentional
- Everyone invalidates sometimes
- Can be understandable in context of high emotions

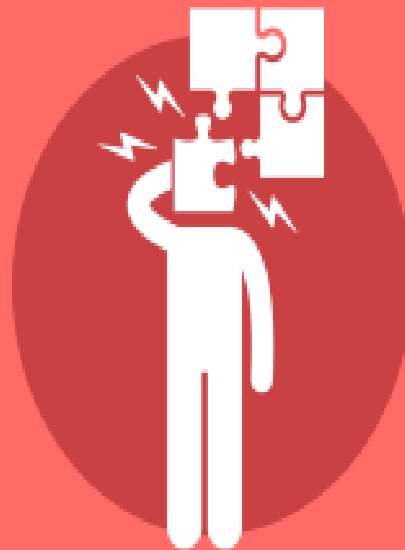
# Biosocial Theory

## Pervasive Emotion Dysregulation



Emotional sensitivity

+



Invalidating environment

=



Pervasive emotion dysregulation

# Biosocial Theory

Who's Fault Is It?

Invalidating  
environment



Biological  
sensitivity



Patterns



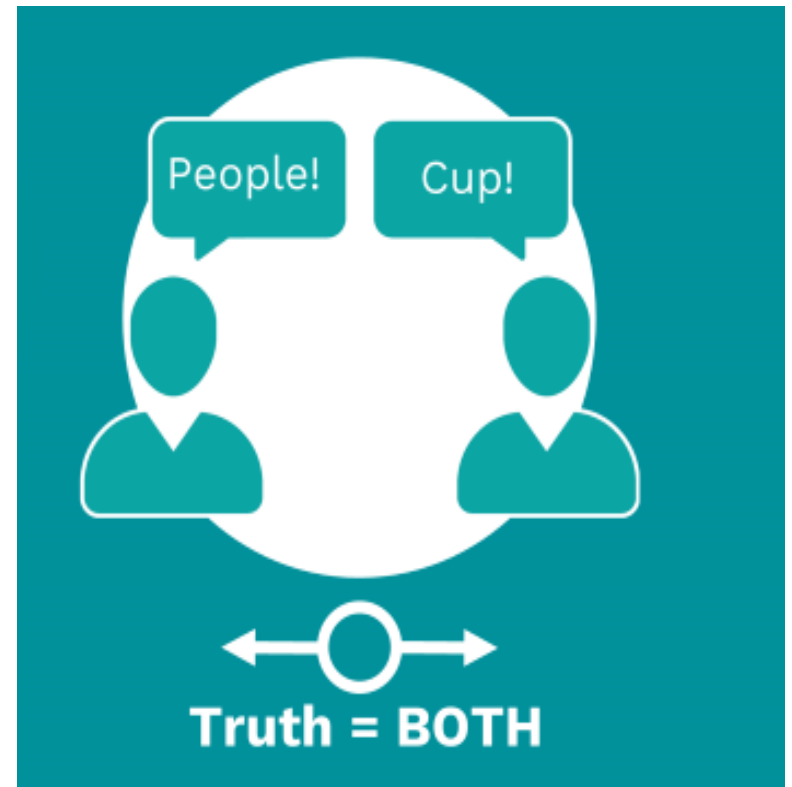
Identify &  
change

**NO-BLAME MODEL**



*Let people know how they feel makes sense.*

# Dialectics



# Dialectics

## Universalistic Thinking

- One person is right & one wrong-Black & white
- Increases conflict & tension
- Interferes with effective problem-solving

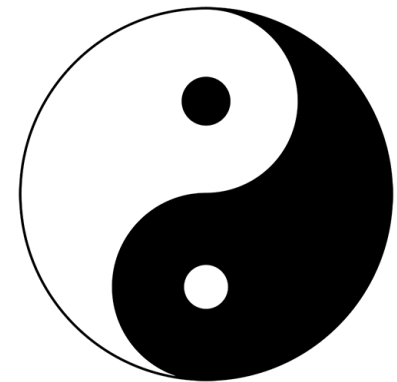
## Dialectical Thinking

- More than 1 valid point of view-NO absolute truth
- Increases likelihood of calmer interactions
- Learning & change can occur



# Thinking Dialectically

- **There is no absolute truth;** always more than one way to see a situation & solve a problem
- **Opposite things can both be true**
  - ❑ **Acceptance AND Change**
  - ❑ Your child is doing the best s/he can AND needs to try harder & do better
  - ❑ Parents are doing the best they can AND need to try harder & do better



# Thinking Dialectically

- **Change is the only constant**



- **Change is transactional**
  - What we do influences our environment; what the environment does influences us

# Dialectics “How-to” Guide

- Practice looking at all sides of a situation & all points of view- **Find the kernel of truth-**
  - What is being left out? What am I missing?
  - Be curious, not furious
- **Find the Middle Path-** balance opposites
- **Let go of extremes** & absolute terms:
  - Think “SOMETIMES” instead of “always” or “never”
  - Think “SOME PEOPLE” instead of “everyone” or “nobody”
  - Think “**BOTH-AND**” rather than “either/or” (no more “buts”!)

# Dialectics “How-to” Guide

- **Use statements** to indicate your perspective:
  - "I feel...", "I think...", "It seems to me..." **NOT**...“You are,” “You should...,” “Because I said so”
- **Check your assumptions-** Do not assume intent of the behavior (to impact someone negatively)
- Do not expect others to know what you are thinking
- Treat others as you would like them to treat you

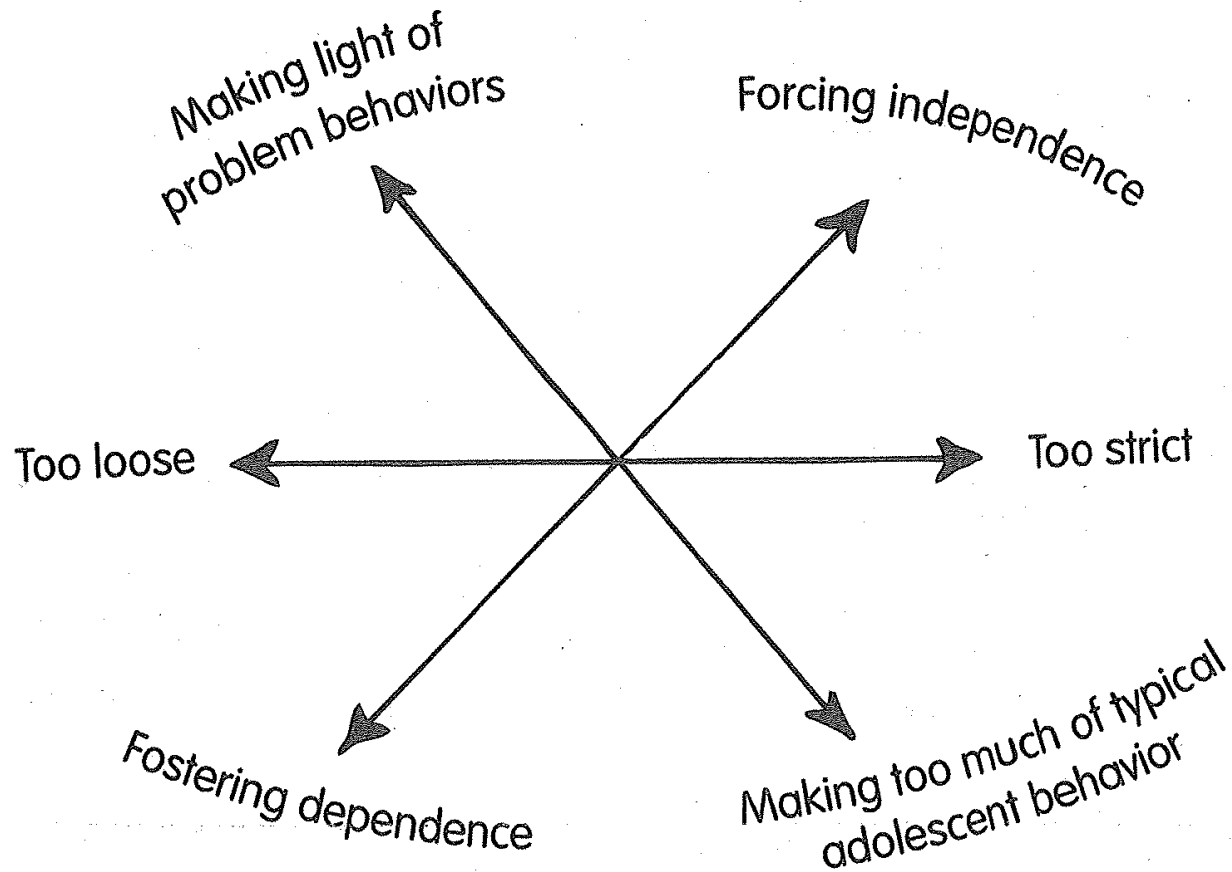
# Dialectical Dilemmas

**There are several dialectical dilemmas that relate to parenting and are affected by:**

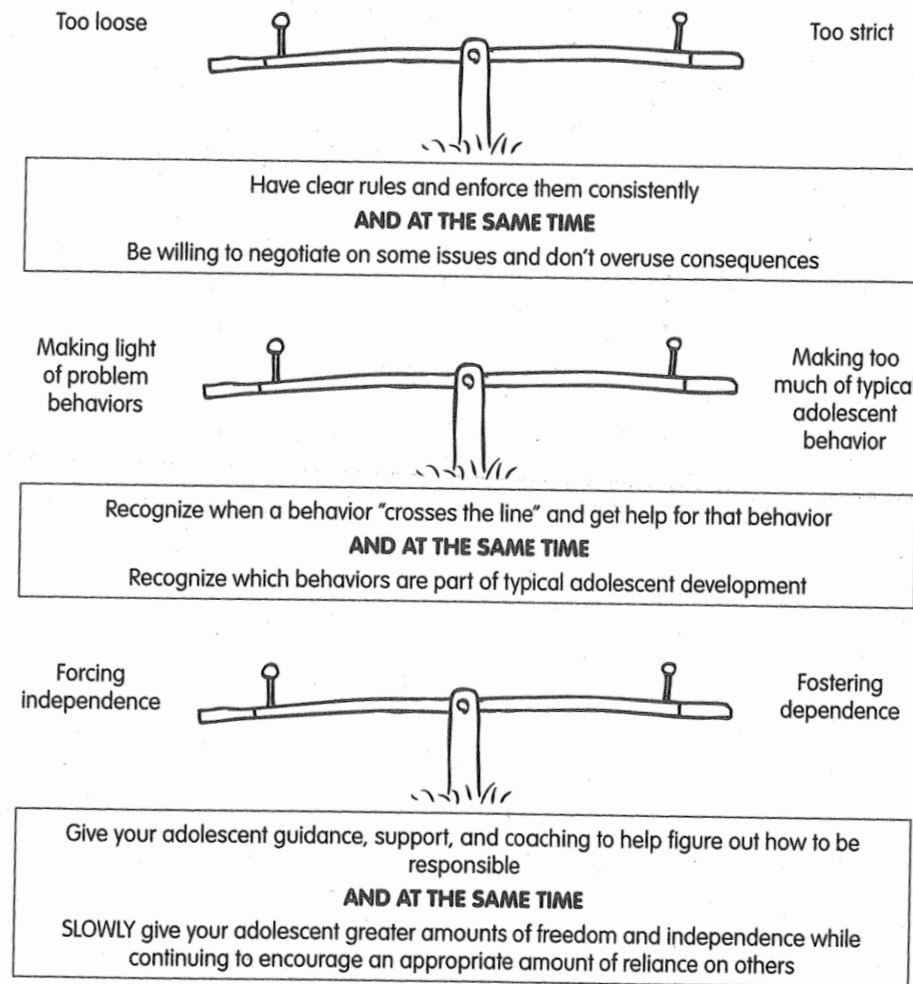
- 1. Parenting children with emotional and behavioral difficulties**
- 2. Your natural parenting style**
- 3. How you were parented yourself**



# Dialectical Dilemmas



# How does the dilemma apply to you?



# Breakouts

- When do you find yourself on opposite sides with your kid (i.e. curfew/bedtime, grades/school, screentime, friends, hygiene, dress, food, privacy)? Pick one that causes you the most stress. Briefly describe situation.
- How did you think or act in this situation?
- How did my behavior effect my child?
- How did my child's behavior effect me?
- Identify your child's "side," or point of view, and find the kernel of truth.
- What might a middle path solution be to this problem?



# Coming soon...

- Tuesday, October 12<sup>th</sup>

## **Mindfulness for Parents**

- Tuesday, October 26<sup>th</sup>

## **Emotional Competence: Emotion Regulation, Cope Ahead**

Thank you! Please take a few moments to fill out our survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GCparenttraining21>