

A photograph of a stone pier extending into the ocean, with mountains in the background. The pier is made of large, irregular stones and has a central concrete path. The ocean is blue and white with waves crashing against the pier. In the background, there are mountains and a city skyline.

INTRODUCTION TO BALANCED PARENTING:

Finding your Middle Path

Trained by Erin Rider, LCSW & Ashley Wendt, MSW

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

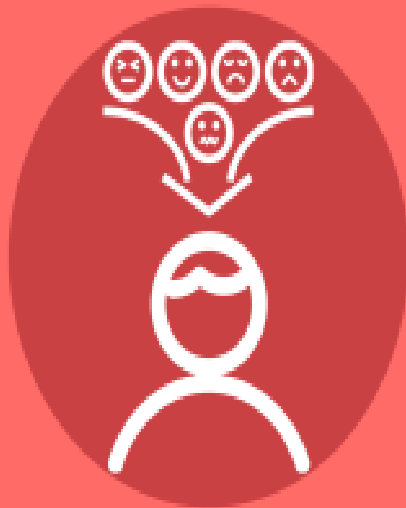


Invalidating Environment:

- 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

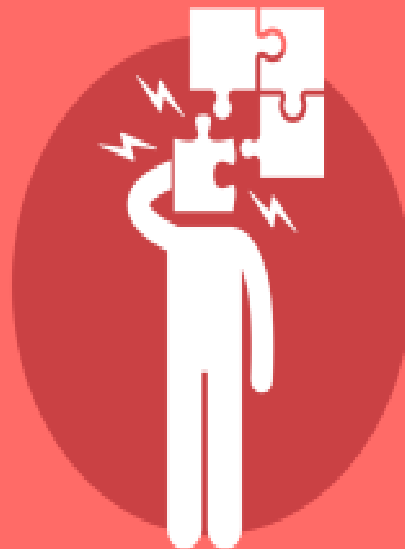
Biosocial Theory

Pervasive Emotion Dysregulation



Emotional
sensitivity

+



Invalidating
environment

=



Pervasive emotion
dysregulation

Biosocial Theory

Who's Fault Is It?

Invalidating
environment



Biological
sensitivity



Patterns



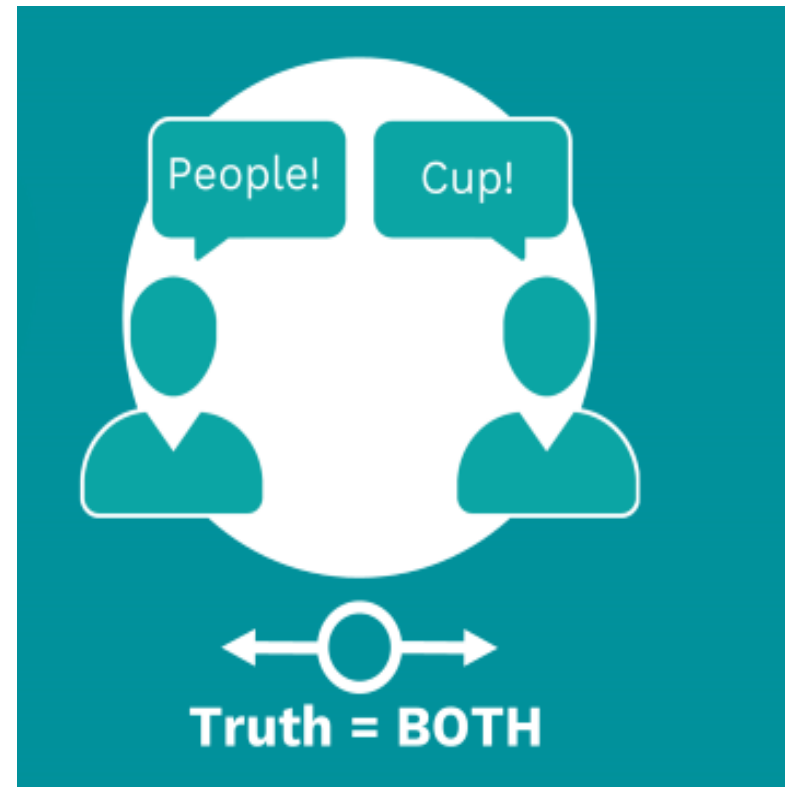
Identify &
change

NO-BLAME MODEL



Let people know how they feel makes sense.

Dialectics



Dialectics

Universalistic Thinking

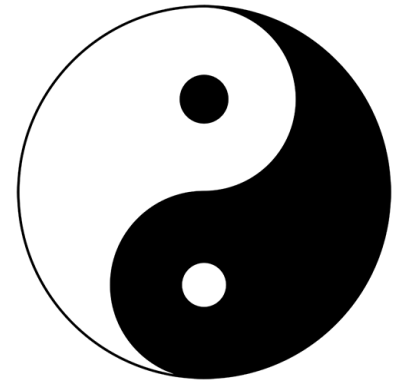
- One person is right & one wrong-Black & white
- Increases conflict & tension
- Interferes with effective problem-solving

Dialectical Thinking

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

Thinking Dialectically

- **There are no absolutes!**
 - There is 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

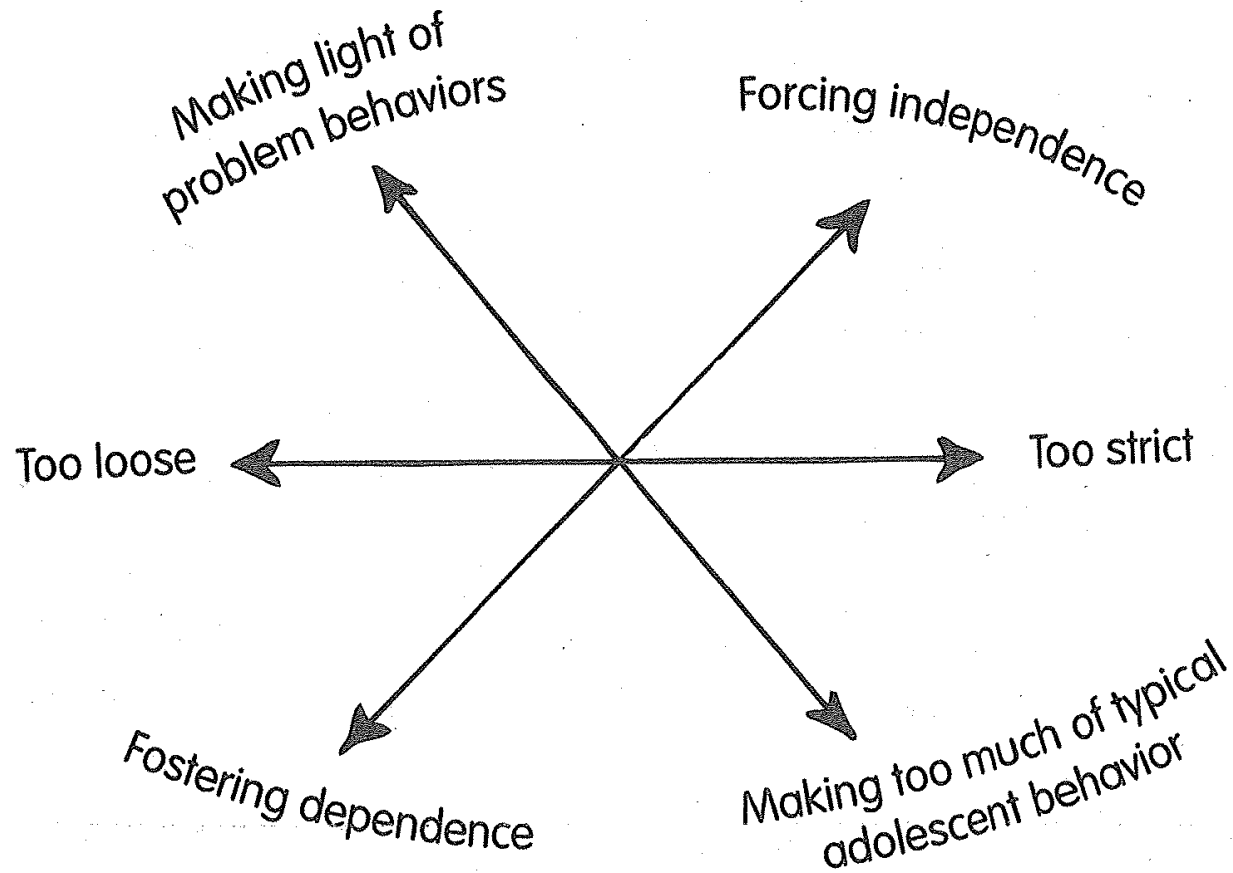
Dialectical Dilemmas

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**

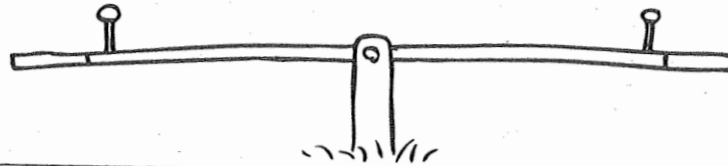


Dialectical Dilemmas



How does the dilemma apply to you?

Too loose



Too strict

Have clear rules and enforce them consistently

AND AT THE SAME TIME

Be willing to negotiate on some issues and don't overuse consequences

Making light
of problem
behaviors



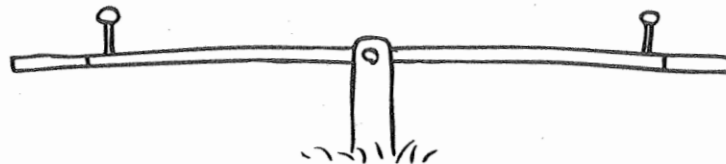
Making too
much of typical
adolescent
behavior

Recognize when a behavior "crosses the line" and get help for that behavior

AND AT THE SAME TIME

Recognize which behaviors are part of typical adolescent development

Forcing
independence



Fostering
dependence

Give your adolescent guidance, support, and coaching to help figure out how to be responsible

AND AT THE SAME TIME

SLOWLY give your adolescent greater amounts of freedom and independence while continuing to encourage an appropriate amount of reliance on others

Dialectics “How-to” Guide

- Practice looking at all sides of a situation & all points of view
- **Find the Middle Path-** balance opposites to get “unstuck”
- **Find the “Kernel of Truth”**
 - What is being left out? What am I missing?
 - Be curious, not furious
- **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 “I” 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 (i.e. they did this because they don’t care, or they want to hurt me).
- **Watch out for Mind Reading:** Do I expect others to know what I am thinking?
- **Use the Golden Rule:** Treat others how I want to be treated, model what you want to see in your child

Let's Practice!

- Independence vs. Dependence
- Rules vs. No Limits
- Change vs. Stability
- It's all your fault! Vs. It's all my fault
- Blind trust vs. Suspicion
- Entitled vs. Undeserving

Breakouts

- When do you find yourself on opposite sides with your kid about (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 affect my child?
- How did my child's behavior affect me?
- Identify your child's "side," or point of view, and find the kernel of truth (what can be validated?).
- What might a middle path solution be to this problem?

Coming soon...

- Parent support group on October 18th

- Tuesday, October 25th

Mindfulness for Parents

- Tuesday, November 8th

Emotional Competence: Emotion Regulation, Cope Ahead

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

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