



December 2015

Issue 3

# TIC NEWS



## More on the 4 R's...

### 4 "R's" (what happens when an emotional state changes:)

1. **Regulating:** When a child is in a regulating emotional state, he/she is calm, in control of his/her emotions and behavior, and is engaged with the environment. During the regulating phase, children are fully aware (focus of attention and orientation) of the external world. It is in this regulating state, therefore, that they can best be engaged in treatment.
2. **Revvng:** During the revving state, a child with traumatic stress has encountered a stimulus that consciously or unconsciously reminds him/her of a traumatic event. Children send out signals of distress in this phase. Children's coping skills are challenged. Interventions are acute, devoted to removing the immediate stimulus and working with their existing coping skills to help them manage their emotion and return to the baseline regulated state.
3. **Re-experiencing:** During re-experiencing emotional states, children are often flooded with feelings that remind them of their trauma, including flashbacks where the child actually perceives the elements of the trauma in the present. This state is survival-in-the-moment. When a child is in a re-experiencing emotional state, he/she experiences flashes, along with bits and pieces of highly threatening information.
4. **Reconstituting:** During the reconstituting state, efforts focus on reorienting children and working with them to calm themselves, to self-soothe, and to get back to the regulated emotional state. This reconstitution period is very important because the child is particularly vulnerable at this time to trauma triggers and at risk of re-entering the re-experiencing, fight or flight state.



## More on Common Errors

- **Personal space trespassing:** Kids with trauma have a bigger personal bubble...greater than the usual public 6 feet, generally, more between 7-10 feet space, especially when they are agitated or upset. Our impulse is to move into the situation, but the correct thing is to back out (unless imminent danger to self or others is involved).
- **Touching without permission or warning:** This is obvious. Kids with lots of trauma and especially sexual trauma are very sensitive to touch. Coming up behind somebody and laying a hand on the shoulder is common, but is a trigger. Giving a hug, without explicit permission every time, can be a trigger. Even when we do restraints, we need to warn the person that hands will be touching them. Touch, even good and healthy touch needs permission, every time and in every circumstance.
- **Ignoring:** Selective ignoring of certain behaviors that sometime elicit attention is a healthy and powerful tool. But, ignoring is a component of neglect, the most common type of trauma. When, for personal or supposed therapeutic reasons, an adult ignores (meaning doesn't say hi, turns away, doesn't acknowledge them, etc), then this triggers the neglect response. Research suggests that boys would rather be hit then ignored.
- **Intimidation as motivation:** This is the pissing contest stance. Fear is about compliance and therefore, the adult uses intimidation to cause fear and therefore temporary compliance. Intimidation (puffing of the chest, natural stance for fighting, clenching of fists, etc), are about the insecurity of the adult. They lack or can't apply the needed other tools to get safety, peace or actions.



**TIC Committee Members:**

- Josh Wirtzfeld
- Kala Bacon
- Mel Rose
- Jeff Bertelsen
- Laure Wirtzfeld
- Jessi Maness
- Mike Gooch
- Shelly Schaefferkoetter
- Laura Feldmann
- Vanessa Ueckert

## More on Common Errors cont'd..

- **Rescuing:** If, as we all do, a student is our favorite and we don't consequent them the same for the same infraction, we are rescuing. If because we are insecure, we offer our opinion to all problems at all times, we are rescuing. When we stop being healthy, therapeutic, professional, ethical adults and start becoming like friends or overly compassionate parents in proxy, we are rescuing.
- **No REAL emotions:** When an adult feels a strong emotion, it shows. When the adult can't share honestly, safely and in a healthy manner their strong emotions, we are poor examples and deny the kid the chance to learn. If we cannot identify, express, and demonstrate the array of emotions, know the physical and mental signs, and can't be honest about our humanity, then we cannot expect the kids to learn in real situations.
- **Splitting loyalty:** This is a caddy, junior high game that staff play trying to be the most liked. There are subtle messages about loyalty to me over that other staff, disregard what your case manager told you, or I'll ignore this if you help me catch another kid, etc.
- **Relationship as reward or punishment:** Often, when something goes wrong, a kid gets mouthy or the adult gets their feelings hurt. Staff say in many ways, "do what I say and I will like you." This is abusive and unhealthy. At no time should my connection, care, or working with a kid be contingent on them reciprocating the like, loyalty to the adult or to following rules.



## New Social Skills language...

- ~ **We don't WORK POINTS....**we discuss the feelings and actions, with the intent to replace those that ended poorly with better alternatives.
- ~ **We don't discipline...**we "habilitate" and then practice.
- ~ **We don't restrain...**we provide the temporary SAFETY to stop significant harm and damage.
- ~ **We don't let the kids slide...**we selectively ignore certain behaviors.
- ~ **We don't dwell on the negative....**but make a big deal of the positive, even just approximations to the desired behavior.
- ~ **We don't show POWER...**but use the authority and persuasion to move kids.