

My name is Ian Rosser.

I'm a former Foster youth.

I spent 13 years in the system here in Lexington and my case

moved to Florida as well.

I've been working with Murray State University as training

resource coordinator.

And so I've been putting together these unique trainings

for kind of the team population anywhere from 14 to 17 somewhere

in there and help with some transition things.

And so This presentation is called talk with teens and it's

kind of part of our Gold Series which is going to be about

just kind of really going to the next level with trying to

help these youth transition and stuff like that and we're

going to start with talk with teens, which is focusing on

communication. And you know, there's a lot of things surrounding

communication some of this you've probably seen before but

some of this will hopefully be helpful and maybe be new to

you guys.

And so we'll Dive Right In So I want to start with an activity

that's called.

What are you trying to say and a lot of times what we see

is in communication, especially when it comes to like any

kind of text format, whether it's an email or a text message,

right? We see something and without punctuation and without

some other surrounding Context sometimes we don't know what

it is the speed communicated.

So we're going to look at two or three different phrases

here. And I want to get your take on just no punctuation.

Just seeing the text how you feel about it.

What do you think is the other thing surrounding the text

as far as what they're trying to communicate.

So let's look at this first one.

It says, you know it So anyone who wants to can unmute themselves

and tell me what you think the the connotation of this, you

know, it is.

And I think it would could mean that's right or confirming

something. Right, that's definitely definitely the way to

take it.

You know it you got it is it could be you know it like you're

like a frustrated like, you know it already but without punctuation

stuff. We really don't know right so so yeah, this is a Google.

What about every time?

My say that myself and I think when I say it it's like if

someone asked a question that they know the answer to I'm

like every time or all the time right?

Yeah, so it's like every time or could be confident like

every time right?

Yeah, so there's so many different ways.

I can take it now.

The next one is everybody's favorite.

Yeah, that could be taking lots of ways.

Right, right.

And again without the conversation is kind of hard to rely

car. They just confirming okay.

Got it.

You know is it?

Okay is it they're just trying to shut down like a lot of

people put K.

They just leave the oath.

Okay.

Okay, don't you cut off this conversation K look, right so

This is just kind of just a little thing.

I came up with to try to think through, you know, the he's

us into the realm of communication and how sometimes it's

hard to know exactly what's being communicated with especially

with things like text right because there's so many elements

missing but not only that then there's the dimension of Youth

and how youth use communication which is how we're going

to dive into a so, we're it's going to kind of be two ways.

I'm going to ask you guys how you guys communicating how

you guys process through things and then we'll look at how

the the youth do it and how they relate to it to try to get

a well-rounded perspective of communication as a whole.

So diving in here's some of the objectives that we're going to go over today.

We're going to learn the different forms of communication and how you use them.

We're going to learn about managing emotions and how they can impact communication.

We're going to learn how trauma affects the brain and how that can relate to the youth in your homes.

And then we're going to learn strategies on some conflict resolution. So that's what we're going to cover today.

So let's look at some types of communication very basic stuff again. I know you guys are probably seen this a billion times, but just bear with me for a second are two main types of communication are verbal and nonverbal.

Would you agree with that?

And then there's written and that's kind of more nonverbal

so looking at it.

What do you think the percentage of communication is verbal?

If you had to guess.

I'm guessing 30 30.

Okay any other guesses?

What was the question?

I'm sorry.

My husband came in asked a dinner question.

No, you're fine.

That's a new question do so for verbal communication.

What do you think?

The percentage is that our communication is verbal if you

had to get a teenager?

Probably I would think it would be 5050.

Okay.

Alright.

Well, that's interesting because it's actually seven percent.

Seven percent and the other portion that makes up the verbal

half if you will is tone and inflection and things like that.

How many times have you guys heard?

It's not what you said, but it's how you said it.

Right that makes soaps so much of it and even more so with

youth right so the thirty eight and seven of course is 45.

So what makes up the other 55, that's the nonverbal the the

body. Which the stuff like that and you know, if we're missing

any one of these pieces the verbal the tone and inflection

the body language we could miss at all and even if we see

it all week, it's still possible for us to make a mistake

and misunderstand what they're trying to communicate.

So just as an example, we look really closely at verbal with

the exercise and stuff.

Let's look at nonverbal.

So what do you think my man on the left?

What do you think that he's communicating?

Like?

What would you say?

What would you describe him as?

Anybody can unmute and jump in.

I don't think she would it seems pretty stiff maybe a little

nervous but More formal, you know, like that's how you would

say somebody stalling as they were trying to present a good,

you know, display some confidence Maybe.

Absolutely, like maybe you know, it looks matter istic, right?

He's showing manners polite.

Maybe it's a restaurant server may be a rusher in a church.

Maybe they're just standing like that patiently waiting for

something to me.

That's what it kind of shows is exhibits patients to me like

they're waiting now.

What about the guy on the right?

What do you guys experience with that?

nervousness Maybe Yeah, absolutely.

He looked you know, I mean it's a stretch but some people

would jump and say, you know, maybe he has ADHD can't contain

his energy like it looks like he's almost holding his arm

back from just I don't know going crazy.

So it's like nervousness something like that.

Absolutely.

You definitely see that and You know, I was doing this presentation

with someone else and I said, I don't really see people staying

like that ever not saying they don't but I don't typically

see it often so that could be that's something to factor

into what are they trying to communicate as well and we're

going to dive into it in a second here.

But a really big thing is sometimes you don't know what they're

even communicating so somebody could stay in like this and

have no idea that they're thinking a certain way.

Way which is why they're acting a certain way but moving

on. I want to look at a couple more images to just really

reinforce the point.

So let's look at let's see third row down and then the guy

the second one from the left.

So the guys kind of hunched over like this.

What is your take on that guy?

He looks beaten down like just depressed absolutely looks

kind of sad, you know, one of the things I always say is

looks sick almost like what if he's you know has to is sick,

maybe asleep.

I've sometimes seen students sleep in that position oddly

enough. Let's look at one more.

Let's go the very bottom row and the first guy on the left.

What is that position communicate?

He looks ready to go like.

To me.

Yeah.

Yeah, and I was kind of like ready for what right like because

it almost looks aggressive like, you know arms out legs out.

Yeah back straight almost like a I don't know ready ready

to tackle.

I don't know maybe not maybe just playfulness.

But you know that kind of position should like with we communicate

to me something is everything.

Okay?

As you know, what's getting ready to happen.

But yeah, these are some different, you know body languages

that we can see and again, you know, we have different ones

for each character that we see caricature that we see here.

That's exactly how it is for Youth and we may think the youth

with their head down their sleeve.

They're not a tent.

They're not paying attention.

They don't understand but it could be that you know, they

got a lot on their mind.

They're stressed out.

It could be that they feel sick.

It could be a lot of different things.

And so That's just important to kind of think about especially

when it comes to youth communicating is they may have no

idea what they're communicating and this is really the purpose

of this is just to understand how youth kind of Express themselves,

which we're going to dive a little deeper into so some brief

takeaways from what we've looked at already.

This means that sometimes we are missing the body language

quote-unquote message, you know, sometimes we see their body

language other times.

We don't even see it.

But when we do see it, it's also are we interpreting it the

way that they're trying to communicate and do they even know

that they're communicating something with their body language?

The other thing is there's also a lot of instances where

youth don't know what they're communicating which is will

be kind of already talked about and I see that a lot that

youth don't really think about it.

So what are some of the ways that you guys have seen youth

maybe in your home or maybe friends of them or something

like that?

What are some ways that you've seen youth Express themselves

just in a general sense?

I'm going to cross the border.

You said hopping across the board stomping stomping.

Okay.

Yeah, I'm slamming cabinet shut slam a cabinet.

Oh, man.

You think there are they are they angry or is it just they

just slammed it either that or show of like how strong they

are. Maybe I don't know could be showing off to doors those

same. Way, I have a lot of distance thrown in my house.

Let you know that they're home.

They're here.

They're here.

Hey here.

I am and the whole dynamic of come talk to me, but don't

come talk to me.

Exactly.

Wait.

What did you do at school today?

Nothing.

What do you mean?

Nothing?

Nothing?

All right get a lot of that.

Most of our good conversations are Tech do tags.

Like I'll get way more out of them if they're texting back

and forth rather than a face-to-face.

You know, that's really interesting because I think that's

a lot of Generation Z like this rarely used to technology

and and we're almost seeing some existences of very outgoing

in like social media and different things online, but very

closed off in person, which is almost completely backwards

from Like Our Generations, right?

So yeah, it's just something to think about and consider

as well.

So sometimes here's just not an exhaustive list, but a couple

things that I've seen from interacting from Youth and with

of course went me being a youth you know, disproportionate

responses to situations.

Everybody's had a youth or experience you that go through

a breakup and it's like the end of the world we're going

to die.

Right and it's about trying to help them see that they are

not going to die.

They're going to live and work.

In through that and but you know, it could even be the Doritos  
are finally gone.

Oh my God, there's no Doritos.

We'll just we'll just go get more knowledge.

No Doritos in the house every time I eat them and it's like  
why is it such a big deal, but that's just you know, sometimes  
we see that in you.

Mismatched emotion and event.

So a good example of this.

I'll tell a quick story.

You know, I had a supervised visit and the the place  
where they have those at and I went and my family was there  
almost my entire family my uncle was there my mom and dad  
they were there to tell me that my dad had passed away and  
they gave me a McDonald's and I just ate french fries and

was like, okay and I completely didn't have you know the reaction. You would think a son would have to hearing your father passed.

And so that's kind of the mismatched emotion and event could be due to trauma could be due to several different things.

But you can sometimes see that and youth and of course, we know that a lot of the youth that come and care for whatever reason have gone through a lot of trauma and so we can see some things that don't seem to match what we think they should feel or how we think they should react they react differently.

This one.

I know you guys love which is a strong push for individuality and freedom, but often gets coined as Rebellion, right, you know, they come into your home listen lights out at this

time. This is the rule of this this and they want to do their own thing.

And I think if you guys have probably already found out trying

to you know, redirect that energy because that's a positive

thing. You know, we want them to be individual.

We want them to find their uniqueness.

But they got to do it in a healthy way and they got to do

it in the proper channels.

And then I know another one you guys love and being sarcastic

here is the no filter, right?

I don't know if you guys have ever had a youth in your home

just outright just cussing and just saying all these different

things and you're like now listen, we don't do that here

and they do it.

Anyway, a lot of times speaking as a former traumatic traumatized

youth myself a lot of times that comes from we're trying

to test to see if you're going to still be there.

And it sounds crazy but after a really good heated argument

if you still there now were punished and we're in trouble

but if you're still there though, and you still love us we

know we can count on you and it's a very weird situation

and sometimes we have to get underneath some of these behaviors

and things that we're seeing to really get to the meat of

what's really going on.

So youth with a whole bunch of cuss words.

What are they really communicating?

What is really going on and that's when we can really get

to the bottom of what's going on to have better fruitful

conversation and I would ask you what else but you guys already

kind of chimed in on some different things that you've seen

your youth do so.

All right, so I want to talk about emotions as it relates

to communication.

We know that an emotion has a strong impact on communication

and how people communicate in general and so let's take a

brief look at this.

So I want to ask you guys as parents.

How do you guys manage your emotions and it doesn't have

to be a specific emotion.

But do you guys have any examples of how you manage something?

I think with me in is like I have reflected as I've taken

in teens and learned a lot about myself on sometimes things

that trigger, you know that I get triggered by just kind

of looking at it to learn about my responses, but the best

thing for me is to Take a break, you know when I feel myself

getting frustrated or whatever is just to let them know,

you know, whether I'll put myself in timeout or just take

a break.

And then come back to the situation when I'm a little bit.

In a better place, I guess not and it's not a long period

of time, you know, but just to take a break for a minute

if I get really upset.

That's a really good idea because we're going to get into

some of the steps.

But you know, there's a lot of that in the story that you

do share.

We'll just go ahead and dive in a little bit naming the emotion.

You're like, okay, I'm upset.

Maybe I'm angry.

Maybe I'm just emotionally charged right now.

I'm going to give myself permission to kind of take a break

for a second and with emotion.

Especially with youth and youth experience any amount of

trauma. We see that you know, they may know just these ones

here in the middle fear anger.

I'm sad.

I'm happy that kind of thing.

But these other gradients in these other specific details

of things that we see in this chart.

We can really understand not only what's really happening

but on a deeper level, but how can we resolve this?

So, you know, I'm scared.

Aired what are you scared of?

I don't know.

What do you mean?

Oh, no, I don't know.

I'm just scared what you skip when really they're feeling

anxious or they're feeling insecure or they're feeling worried.

And while these seem to be synonymous words almost there

really driving at the heart of what's going on and I think

a lot of Youth in foster care and even adoption they struggle

to articulate these things because they just don't know.

They I'm sad I'm mad.

That's all they can.

So we almost have to work with them to get them to a place

where they will communicate what's actually happening and

even know how to do so.

You know, I've seen a lot of parents that get teens in their home and they have a certain amount of expectations is made which makes sense.

But I think the youth failed to meet those sometimes because there may be lagging behind where we think they should be based on our upbringing or based on our friends upbringing or sister or whatever.

So, you know, I work with a lot of Youth who don't know these things may not even have the word in their vocabulary let alone be able to tell You I'm just feeling insecure right now. Let's see.

If we have that nugget of information that they're not just scared. They're feeling insecure.

Then we would know we need to provide encouragement.

We need to show them Assurance of themselves.

We need to help them solidify their identity.

We would have much more, you know tools at our fingertips

if we knew exactly what kind of fear they're experiencing

as an example.

And then there's identifying the cause of the emotion rice.

Oh and this is something as you know adults we do in maybe

seconds flat without even thinking about it.

It's on a subconscious level.

Yeah.

I'm angry.

I'm angry because the dog peed on his dog bed again, and

we've been through this a million times, but you know, that's

an important step to know why you're upset in that same context.

I want to talk about how negative Can influence so you know

for you all as parents may be at your job, even if you go

to work with a positive attitude.

If every if your co-workers have a negative attitude or negative

connotation, then you know that can influence and then you

can go home and have them so even more so For youth who go

to school right and they go to school and around all their

buddies at the lunch table and they may be digesting some

things that's negative and influences their so even if they

leave on a good note to go to school.

I can come home in a different way.

That's just something to kind of think about because you

have a hard time identifying the cause so they could go to

school. They can be around their friends experience some

negativity come home or in a bad mood and they don't even

know why they're in a bad.

Move they can't even tell you and may not even recognize

that they're in a bad mood, but you know, right because you

see them every day and you understand them and you know that

there's been a change in Behavior.

So you're like what's going on now?

I don't know.

What do you mean you don't know?

Yeah with no youth are famous for I don't know and I don't

care to their famous lines.

Excuse me.

And you know, this is especially the case with again with

trauma. And I know that as far as I understand that you guys

have probably already been through trauma specific trainings,

but just as sort of an overview I want to talk about the

amygdala and the prefrontal cortex which hangs out in the frontal lobe.

And so the amygdala is this pink area up here which lives in the limbic brain and that area controls our emotion.

There are fight flight and freeze and in a traumatic brain that area of the brain is swollen so very high sensitivity to emotion very explosive.

emotions and fight flight or freeze The prefrontal cortex is where it has the flexibility the empathy the body regulation the intuition, right the fear modulation.

This has the control and a lot of times as parents.

We're looking for you to control whatever the behavior is or at least attempt to control and I think what we're seeing in a traumatic brain is that they have high high difficulty to do that task because you in a traumatic brain, you're

looking at an underdeveloped prefrontal cortex and a over

stimulated amygdala or limbic brain system.

And so I don't know how many times you guys have maybe had

an argument with a youth whose experience trauma or anything

like that or just any kind of conversation where it seems

like they're not getting it.

They don't know why they can't tell you, you know why they're

angry or you can't get them to calm down.

They won't calm down and it's maybe it's because they physically

can't or they they have to work to can write they have to

work to being able to control that.

And so what all this means is that emotions typically can

be explosive and their decision-making can lag behind.

You know, I've worked with youth in many different scenarios

group homes.

So on and so forth and you know, they have trouble making

decisions what seems like common sense to us to them.

They don't even think about or they don't have whatever the

tools are needed to process through the data.

Like why are you going over that person's house you already?

You know, so and so does this so and so got in trouble doing

this? Why do you insist on keep going there?

I've already told you you can't go there and they probably

a lot of times it could be seen as Rebellion.

They just they're just going to do what they want to do.

They're doing their own way, but they may not even know why

they gravitate towards that and why they go to that and that's

just an important differentiation to make sometimes it is

rebellion, but if it's not it's important.

To get in there and figure out why.

And figure out are they having trouble making the connections

in their brain to understand why they're doing something

when they have trouble coming down do they need to calm down

is their prefrontal cortex underdeveloped?

Are they reacting in fight flight or freeze right Arguments

for no reason just fighting the fight feels like flight Runners

right people who just their true it they run away from school.

They're constantly gone.

No reason to it.

They have a good loving home they have Have everything they

need or needs are met.

Why are they running?

They just run freeze?

I won't say anything won't speak.

We'll just sit there play video games.

All Bay won't say a word to a soul and my foster mom, belie

and turn that PlayStation off because we be on it all day

long and she knew we needed to get up and interact and talk

to people and stuff like that.

And so this in turn affects identifying and managing emotions,

which we know has a direct impact on communication and how

we communicate with each other.

And so they definitely go hand-in-hand another step is you

know thinking about how does your emotion affect your behavior?

You know, so Becky Jay was saying she'll get upset.

She'll take a break.

And you know, there may be something.

Is there anything Becky in your behavior that says what's

the trigger I guess for you to know.

I need to take five.

Is there is there a thing that you maybe think or do or I

don't know.

Is there anything there that let you know, you need to take

a break?

when when I can feel myself starting to engage in things

and get as heated as the situation is that's that's a sign

to me that I need to step back because I'm typically a pretty

calm person.

But when I feel myself, you know going to Tit for Tat or

you know, starting to get in that agitated mode, then that's

when I'll take you know pull back.

Yeah, and that's a huge amount of self-awareness to to be

able to and I'm sure it wasn't easy and maybe you didn't

always do that right getting to a place where you realize

and I'm real involving up my fist right now must be really

angry. I didn't think five you know where I'm, you know,

raising my voice.

I need to give myself a minute here.

And so I think part of this the reason why we're kind of

bouncing back and forth between you all and the youth is

to help you kind of see how All you guys process through

your emotions to understand how difficult than it can be

for youth whose experience trauma to try to regulate their

emotions and you know also thinking about where we've come

from and what we had to overcome to try to regulate ourselves,

and I think just kind of looking at that.

sometimes the behavior can develop in the subconscious way

as easy as that can be excuse me, as far as understanding

how emotion affects Behavior You can really struggle to make

this connection and another example I'll give is I had another

visit different visit with my mom supervised biological mom

and we were meeting everything was fine.

They have the Double Glass, you know window there.

So social workers and people can watch as supervised and

at the end now our visits were typically emotionally charged

because you know mother and son.

We had a really strong bond.

We wanted to be back with one another other and at some point

we got to leave right?

It's over.

Well, sometimes they would have to physically separate us

because we were just hugging and they're like, okay, we gotta

go like y'all got to wrap it up and you know, it was very

emotionally charged.

I cry she cries and then I'm in the car ride home to my foster

home. Well little did I know I start acting out in the home.

I start acting different at school and see I wasn't able

to Do you see anything different or tell anything different

going on but my caretakers did people at school did other

people notice there was something off and they couldn't understand

why and I couldn't even communicate and tell them why because

I didn't know what was going on.

So that's what I mean by some of this stuff can be very subconscious

and some of the behavior that's unexplainable or doesn't

make sense.

A lot of times could be something that they don't even know

how to explain to you to help you to help you help them.

They can't even articulate it.

And so it may just be just kind of being with them during

that time and being understanding as much as possible and

trying to give them the freedom to kind of work through it

because they got to communicate to you what's going on or

maybe sometimes it's straightforward, you know you as the

caretaker may see them going to visit they come.

That they start slamming stuff.

They start yelling and start acting different and you're

like there could be some resentment there some anger there

and it's important for them to whether they have a counselor

or if it's with you or whoever it's with to pull that out

and understand where that comes from and also understand

then how to regulate it because you know going back to the

earlier step naming the emotion if they can't even name it

because they don't think anything's different.

You know, I didn't think anything was do.

Different then how can they identify the cause and how can

they know how the emotion affects Behavior if they haven't

even named it?

And so that's just something I thought that would be helpful

to work through.

Continuing with this and we're going to take questions at

the end should have said that at the beginning as well.

So if anybody has any questions, we will have some time at

the end and an example of something like that.

Sure go ahead jump in.

Yeah.

Okay.

We had a young man that he was talking with his mom on the phone and they hadn't had visits for a while and it was looking

like tpr was going to happen and he got off the phone and

he Stamped across the floor and said this just isn't fair

course. He was very angry and I looked at him and I said

you're exactly right.

It's not fair.

It's not right and I said, well, there's one thing right

about it.

And he was mad what I said I get to take care of you.

That's one great thing about it.

And he was fine after that was like it popped.

His bubble anger was gone.

He was fine because I agreed with his anger.

It wasn't right, you know.

That's a really powerful moment.

Thank you for sharing that because that shows you reassuring

the moment, you know, very hurtful to hear the info the news

when it breaks, but then being like hey, you're good because

I get to take care of you and I get to do my best job.

That was the only good thing in the whole situation.

I think he got that, you know.

Yeah, and that's great because you know some you probably

wouldn't and and they need to express more before they get

to a place to absorb anything.

You know, it's almost like a field cup sometimes if the cup

is filled, you know, they can't absorb any more liquid.

It's going to run over so sometimes we got to let that stuff

evaporating before we can pour in.

So looking at managing emotions, we know that acceptance

is a big part of that a lot of us probably do it on the fly

again without even thinking about it.

But as far as you know in passing that on to a youth what

would you guys say goes into accepting an emotion?

Just validating, you know a lot of times like when I heard

you while ago, I was thought you've been watching my house

this week because a lot of what you sad as far as my girls

responding and just losing it over things that they can't

even explain and just me not understanding why.

but you saying it's because they need to know that I'm still

going to be here make like it click like a lightbulb, but

I think that's one thing is just to just to validate as much

as we can.

Listen, you know, just To understand, you know, because we

because I can't like I can't always understand it.

I wish I could I wish I could get inside their brain or they

could explain it to me, but I can't But just to validate.

You know that that you hear they're upset and you know, you're

not going anywhere you're here with them.

Right because there's empathy in their sympathy right?

There's right.

I've been there and I can understand and then there's I haven't

been there.

I don't understand but you know what?

I'm here, right?

I'm here.

I'm not going if you need to cry you can cry all night you

I'll get you tissues, you know, because typically and we

have to go way back, you know to think about our early, you

know, working through problem solving and stuff but are our

initial first.

Action is we want to stop feeling whatever the feeling is,

whether it's angry.

I want to turn it off.

I'm sad.

I want to stop being sad, but the longer you fight the emotion

the longer it goes.

So we're going to talk about it in a second but acceptance

really helps to process through things.

And so that's something that you know, I definitely didn't

get it first and maybe some of you all didn't you know practice

that at first but that's definitely Anything to accept it

so that it can pass on its own realizing.

It's okay to feel the way you feel which is what you're talking

about, but it doesn't have to control behavior.

And you know, that's a higher level Advanced kind of thing

first. It may just be piecing it out, you know, letting them

feel letting them know they have permission to feel the way

they feel You know, I'm sad.

Okay, will you be sad and you can give yourself a when I

want to be sad for a week.

I want to be sad for a month.

Okay, but whatever you said.

Now let's work on getting back on track and pushing forward

but letting yourself feel those emotions.

That's an okay thing.

Letting the emotion run this course, which is kind of what

we were just talking about.

You know, I can't tell you how many times you know, if you're

angry or sad or I've been angry and sad and try to fight

that it just stays longer longer longer and the quicker.

I just recognized it's okay to be sad.

It's okay to be angry.

You know, I think you know Becky Jay I think in a way that's

kind of what you're doing maybe without even thinking about

it as you let yourself cool down, you know, you're upset

you recognize your upset you go somewhere else to cool down.

That's kind of letting yourself steam off, you know, the

cartoon the the stuff going out of the ears that you letting

yourself do that.

And right now it's okay to be angry for a few minutes and

then you can come back and then you can have a much more

fruitful conversation, right?

So this is kind of implied but you know thinking about how

does accepting the emotion help diffuse it?

Like what would you what would you guys say about that?

I think if you like, you know, like you have been saying

validated you kind of you know, say I'm sorry or you didn't

spin it to be positive if the one situation you're talking

about. It's just you kind of taking the fight out there just

kind of I don't know just kind of washes over, you know,

let him say that and then still kind of steered towards a

positive. You know, if you like you should be angrier it

does. Yeah, it does suffer.

It's awful and you You know and let them know that you agree

with that but that you know, you're there to come help him

move on.

I don't know that's always helped with ours is you know,

we've let them rant and Rave we had one that would always

ranting raving then one that was like mr.

Quiet stoic man.

So we've had those spectrums but usually if you would just

let the one that would rant rape let him rant Rave for a

few minutes get it out.

And then, you know, we could move on and process and you

know, we talk about next is what we different next time It's

amazing, isn't it?

Because you would think if you like you motion with the reason

why that's our nature.

A lot of times.

We're thinking that we could push it away.

Like we can just pull ourselves together, you know, maybe

we've had someone in our childhood tell us will together,

you know, but when we lean into those things and give ourselves

permission to feel X then it's funny how quickly it goes

away or at least goes to a More manageable level right where

when we were fighting it was way up here.

It's a skyscraper and then we lean into it and say you know

what? It is sad.

I am going to let myself be sad for a little bit.

Nothing better than a good cry.

Right just a good old cry and then how much better do we

feel after we cry?

Issue still there has it left but instead of a skyscraper.

Maybe now it's a little tiny house.

Where you can deal with it, you can think more rationally

once you calm down a little bit, you know, so that's definitely

a thing it can help us recognize and explain our emotions.

And those who have been affected by trauma may need help

with acceptance.

And the reason why is because I had this like thing I don't

know what you would call it, but it was like a block almost

in my in my way of thinking through things that if I was

accepting something whether it's a circumstance like my dad

passing or some sort of thing like that that I was I just

had to take it like it's like life is picking on me and it's

not fair.

Just have to take it.

This is a very negative perception in a very negative way

of thinking about it while it could be true.

I think a better way to flip it on its head is to think about

acceptance is the beginning of control because once we accept

that that were sad, it's okay to feel sad.

It's okay to have this emotion emotions are there to tell

us that something is wrong.

It's wrong my dad passed.

He's gone.

but then once you begin to accept that that's when you can

begin to control your behavior with the emotion and you can

start to really process through it and a lot of times there's

a there's a block there for youth who have experienced trauma

because they think that they can think that you know acceptance

is synonymous with defeat so telling them, you know, you're

not telling them but them feeling like Just have to take

it. This is just my life.

It sucks.

And this is just the way it's going to be they feel defeated.

That's where you get the hopelessness this where you get

the depression as where you get all those kinds of things

and really this can be a really good teachable moment to

help them show how acceptance can actually help you gain

control over not only how you feel.

But how you act based on the field.

And that's something that you know, maybe for you and me

we've done for years and years, but for youth they really

struggle with this.

They may have never done it.

You may have a youth come in your home and they have never done any of this and it's completely brand-new.

And so if we know that right we can help them begin to learn begin to associate acceptance with control instead of acceptance into feet.

So how does managing emotions help communication?

Because at the end of the day, you know, this presentation is not about emotion.

It's about communication, but we know that emotion plays a big role in communication.

So it helps us make communication more clear, right?

It can bring Focus to the core issues.

How many is been in an argument where you completely lost track of what you're arguing about?

You're arguing about something way out.

Over here to the left.

Anybody ever been through that ultimately helps everyone

navigate conflict and this is where it gets kind of interesting

because when you just think about just basic like the word

communication, it usually doesn't come up until there's some

sort of conflict.

There's some sort of issue where it's like our communication

needs to get better.

That's typically what you hear.

So ultimately that's what we're looking for is to help navigate

conflict to have better fruitful conversation that can actually

create some you know Solutions.

So looking deeper into conflict.

What are some ways that you guys manage conflict if there's

anyone brave enough to share it doesn't have you know obvious

specific, but what's a way that you manage conflict?

Well, we do like a kind of a family meeting like is this

what the we had two teen boys right now and you know, if

someone's having some big blow up, you know, it's going to

obviously affect the other one who's sleeping in the Next

Room over so we kind of we try to talk it through because

when they were younger so much was in from them or you know,

like has Crews were told so from the get-go.

We were always kind of just like even if it's okay.

We're just going to put it out there, you know, like whatever.

I'm going to talk away through it.

You know, we're not going to sugarcoat.

We're not going to have tell you what's going on, you know,

and we expect them to do the same and they kind of just when

you know verbal diarrhea when something's bothering them

and we kind of dig through and work through it like talking

because you know, There they both can can rage.

So we've just found that this kind of I'm not always works

for us, but we do try to kind of as a for you know, my husband

and I and the boys will come together and just kind of put

it all out there and just kind of Wade through the debris

of the blow up.

That's really good though.

So many levels because you're building that trust with them

and them with you.

And also I'm sure you already know all this but also, you

know, there's a tense there's attending to be Sheltering

and protect especially, you know, when we have parents to

adopt or Foster, they want to protect and shield them from

this brutal World out here as you would do with biological

children the same but it's like what I'm learning.

Is to allow them responsible amount of exposure to that stuff

and just to tell them straight up.

Here's what it is.

And here's what's going on.

I think there's real value in that.

So there's really five main strategies when it comes to dealing

with conflict.

One you can look at accommodating which is kind of giving

in ending.

The conflict is the most important thing, you know, you maybe

see this with small things.

She keeps putting her socks in the living room.

I'm just going to just go let it go.

I'm just gonna leave it alone today, right?

Another one is avoiding which is pretending an issue doesn't

exist. Another one is collaborating working to achieve a

good outcome for everyone involved.

For is compete.

So this is sometimes the person with power makes a decision

regardless of what other people want.

So, you know, sometimes we have to do that as parents, you

know. Listen, I know what you want to do, but you ain't going

across that street no more.

Don't go across that street no more.

Sometimes you gotta lay the law down five compromise.

So when both parties give up something in order to get some

of what they want.

The interesting thing is when I was putting this together

I was looking at collaborating is working to achieve a good

outcome for everyone and compromise and I almost was like

I thought the collaborating definition was going to be for

compromising it was not.

And I think the key difference is just you know, giving up

something to get something something you're willing to part

with for the compromise versus collaborating where everybody

gets everybody wins.

So a couple things to take from this is I want to ask you

guys. What time do you see fit to use each one of these strategies

like what's a good time to use avoiding?

so Ian are you saying to ignore like a A behavior.

Yeah, okay.

Okay, so like we have or try to enforce, you know to where

we watch our language, you know, and not use a lot of foul

language, but there I would say there have been times where

In certain situations, whether it had to do with something

that happened in their bio family or something that was drilling

upsetting that that came out.

Pretending like I didn't hear it just because I knew the

intensity of their feelings right then if that makes sense,

right? Yeah, and you know, I've also heard Maybe when someone's

trying to push your buttons and you know that they're trying

to do that to ignore.

Yeah, that's another one.

But yeah, absolutely, you know, if you're understand the

gravity of the situation and you're like instead of reacting

to this, I'm going to address the thing underneath this that's

kind of what this is all about is because you know, there's

a piece of you at least that knows that the no filter during

that moment is really masquerading over.

Think deeper going on right something else Happening Here.

And the fact that you can acknowledge that and you know not

we're not talking about giving permission for them to talk

like that either but but just to temporarily ignore that

to weed through it and get to what's really at the center

of this.

I think this this really wise to do.

Which strategy is your go to anybody can answer this is he

might want to talk about what their go-to strategy is.

Collaborating.

Okay.

Yeah, I think that's mine too.

I want to I want to try to if it's possible to give something  
that everybody wins with.

Yeah.

What's a what's one that you wish you did?

Maura Probably compromise more.

Okay.

Yeah, honestly, that would be mine.

So to give up a little something to get yes.

Yes.

And then the most important question is I don't know if you

see it down here is does it work?

Whatever your strategy is and this is to everybody do you

feel like the strategy that you gravitate towards?

Do you feel like it works?

No, no ways because especially with the how I was telling

you to kind of talk through things or see everybody's Point

diffuse a situation.

So when you have to put your foot down like you're saying

like don't go across the street or don't blow play with that

friend. You shouldn't I don't know.

It's like they still want a dialogue back and forth until

we can you know, we're not yet compromise.

That's how I'll see him here but not there and you know,

it's hard harder to put your foot down when you're like,

let's talk more about this or you know, I know Yeah, sometimes

you got to have the The Firm head right the Iron Fist.

Listen, you you can't go over there.

You just can't and you know because you guys are so open

you can even here's why this this this and this that's why

you ain't going over there.

So don't ask me no more.

Sometimes we got to have one of those too.

But yeah, that's that's just really interesting to see you

know, how different things we do, you know a lot of times

for me when you look at something like this that has strategies

and stuff.

Typically, I don't think The way our problem solve that fits

into one of these strategies, but when you really think about

it it does it kind of does if it's in maybe into multiple

maybe there's times where you have to do multiple things

and one solution based conversation.

So in summary, we talked about different forms of communication

and how you use it.

We talked about how emotions come to play and communication

we talked about out how to manage those and how you can manage

those emotions.

We talked about conflict management and five strategies to

try to resolve conflict and all in all I think thinking about

all this and how trauma affects the brain will help communication

with the youth in your homes.

If you haven't done this stuff already, I'm sure a lot of

you already do but hopefully there was something in there

that you know, I think Becky made a comment earlier that

was like man Like you've been watching my house this week

like this is exactly what I'm maybe there was something like

that for every one of you all and and I hope so because I

try to mix in my lived experience with the stuff that that

I've learned from material stuff as well and just being in

the field as a social worker seeing those two things from

both sides of the coin.

I really think gives me a different perspective.

Hey, and this is Becky.

I just wanted to ask course every Teen is different.

I can everyone you know, their experiences a lot of them,

especially when they come and they're older.

Like I'm I'm understanding of the fact that I may never know.

You know, what all they've been through but when we talk

about responding from that place in their brain, the therapist

had told me one time her therapist had said just Jen you

know that everything that you you know, like if you relate

to a traumatic situation like in my life and how you responded

then just for just imagine that You're in that stage almost

all the time and that that's kind of where she's responding

from and I guess my question is.

Can it can you make a difference like can can that change

can it be different?

Can you help them not be in that?

Response in that phase all the time.

Well, I'm making okay.

Yeah, what you're talking about is they call it seeing a

bear. Everything is a bear.

Yeah, like a bear in the wild like they think about you know,

I got a bad grade on a test on my God.

It's the end of the world.

I had a break.

Oh my God, like everything seems like it's a Monumental huge

Crux thing.

And the way to get through that from from research and what

the data suggest is to just be consistent consistent in the

lovingness into showing them.

It's not a bear.

It's okay now, you know because they have to almost rewire

their brain and rewire the way that they think and it can

be done but it has a lot of consistency to show them over

and over.

Hey, it's good now, it's good.

Good now and you know the first tries not definitely not

going to work the first three hundred tries may not work,

right, you know, they will eventually start and you'll start

to see some changes in Behavior.

You'll start to see that they're starting to trust something

new but that's really what it comes down to I don't

not sure what type of therapy it is.

But if it's cognitive behavioral, that's what they work on

is trying to help them.

Rethink the way they think because the way they think is

from a trauma born perspective at you.

That's an awesome question though.

I'm appreciate you asking that because at the end of the

day that's like takes me hours to go to sleep because I'll

go through scenarios and just think okay, you know, what

did I know about this?

Because I can't get in the rain though.

I wish I could what did I know about this what could have

I done different, you know, and so just knowing consistency

will be beneficial in that.

I mean just you know, because it's easy.

To say be consistent, but when you're in that every day all

day, I'm not you know, I'm human and there's times where

I'm just like tired and I don't have it in me but knowing

that with consistency that is a possible, you know, what

gives me hope.

Yeah, absolutely.

And I mean for my life, it's a years everybody's different

though, but you know, it just took years of reaffirming years

of seeing different results each time and everything doesn't

have to be a bear.

You're not looking to Bear the face all the time, and I kind

of equivocated this may sound silly and I'm not trying to

put it down on me, but it's almost like you know, if you

have a puppy and you know, sometimes puppies get separation

anxiety and you know, you walk away from the cage when you

just go get a glass of milk and they freak out and you come

back and as soon as they can make eye contact with you, they're

good. Sometimes it's like kind of that.

It's almost feels like that like they freak out with it when

A certain circumstance happen or when something negative

happens and they have to learn how they can adapt they can

learn things.

They can problem solve they can have support in you and whoever

else supports them in their life.

They do have friends.

They do have answers.

They do have Solutions once they start to put those things

together and then practice it for a long period of time that

is really what convinces the brain to think differently.

They what happens is the the normal triggers that happen.

You see how is clear as day.

It's like a black Speck on a white piece of paper.

You see how different that reaction is to what just happened

and I mean, you may not see it.

You may like that that youth may be in a group of friends

and a car wreck happens and they are freaking out and it's

just like a fender bender and everybody else in the car is

like yo chill and they are freaking out.

They may take that go home and Dad sleep that night pondering

on. Wow.

I must have I don't know if I was in an accident when I was

little or something, but something had me really scared in that moment.

And I wonder why and that you know, you start to really work through it and grow through it.

Gotcha.

So I hope that made sense and stuff it did.

Yeah, absolutely.

Did anybody else have any more questions or anything?

I'm actually glad you asked that Becky because you know,

I know this presentation is not centered around trauma per

se but it was very important to me as a presenter to incorporate

trauma because I really think that that has a lot to do with

with a lot of the youth that come into care and I think that

we can't just ignore it because it's a huge piece of how

they think and how they operate and a lot of times with a

lot of parents struggle with in behavioral wise is The friction  
between a traumatic brain and a brain that grew up in a two-parent  
home and you know, everything was fine or maybe not everything  
was fine.

But you know minimal stressors things like that.

But to a traumatic brain, everything is just completely different

and oh, yeah just coming at him and approaching it from a

place of understanding is going to just take everything to

a whole new level because you know where something is in

somebody else you get onto them for that well with the person

with tremendous And Bray, it may be a sit-down conversation

and then in enable the punishment, but they need that Conversation

Piece first or what?

I I'm just throwing out things but you know, you get what

I'm saying that that their trauma piece I think is something

that's easily missed.

I still to this day think it kind of flies under the radar

and I think sometimes Behavior gets treated almost like a

symptom like we're treating coughs instead of what's causing

the cough.

That's kind.

yeah, yeah of drops for you know, whatever PTSD like major

things so well and it's not going to things I guess the outcome

is not going to be any different if we don't recognize that

I think just because we don't understand responses and you

know have insight into things if we are just setting expectations

without that factored in I don't see how it could.

For either of us have a better outcome.

Absolutely, and the fact that you understand that like it

just is light years and it's just going to continue to help

you with with raising the youth in your own with that being

said if there's no other questions, I just I wanted to say

this in the beginning and forgot but I just want to thank

you all for taking these Youth and your home and giving them

a chance, you know, the state has a hard time finding places

for for teens.

And so so I just want to thank you personally for taking

them in your home and helping them through early adulthood.