

# Welcome To Bouncing Back

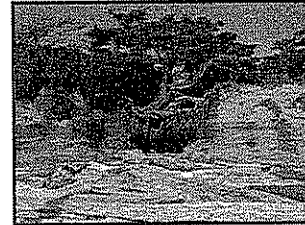
Teaching Children Resilience Skills to Decrease Problem Behavior



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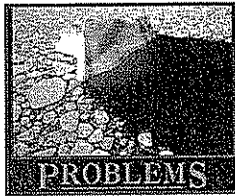
## What is "Resilience"?

> The ability to deal with life's challenges in a positive & productive manner...adapting to adversity/problems



## Why Do We Need Resilience?

- ✓ Makes us stronger, flexible
- ✓ Better able to cope with life's problems
- ✓ Helps us manage during tough times



## What is the Link Between Resilience & Challenging Behavior?

- > Your ideas?
- > Risk Factors
- > AKA as stressors



## Some Stressors/Risk Factors

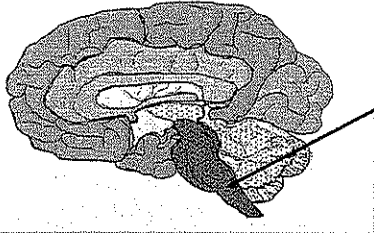
- > Loss of a loved one through death, divorce or moving
- > Chronic abuse, neglect or poverty
- > Exposure to violence
  - Natural disasters such as fire, flood or earthquake
- > Change in family composition
- > Change in schools
- > What else?



## Stress & Challenging Behavior

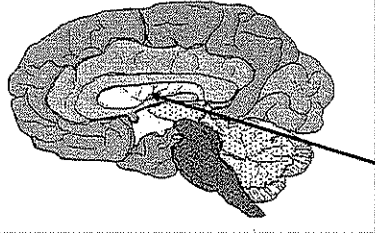
- A set of changes in the body & brain
- Set into motion when there is a challenge or condition that the brain sees as **threat** to physical or psychological well being





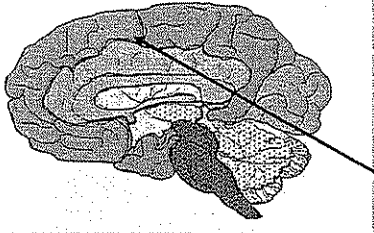
**Brainstem:**  
Gatekeeper of Brain

- Receives sensory information from body
- Organizes heart rate, blood pressure, body temp, appetite
- Home of fight-or-flight response for physical survival



**Limbic System:**  
Attachment, Motivation,

Memory, Emotional Reactivity/Regulation  
Amygdala at base of Limbic System connects with brain stem

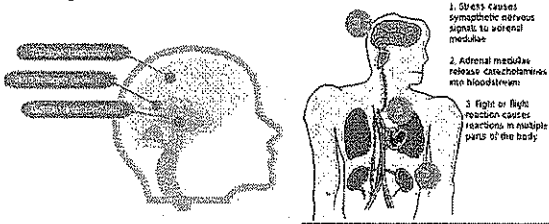


**Cortex:**  
Abstract Thought  
Concrete Thought

Complex Information Processing, Perception, Thinking, Reasoning

### Fight or Flight


- Amygdala, scans for danger
- Brain downshifts to fight/flight area of brain when threats are perceived



1. Stress causes sympathetic nervous signal to adrenal medulla
2. Adrenal medulla releases catecholamines into bloodstream
3. Fight or flight reaction causes reactions in multiple parts of the body

The Fight or Flight Response

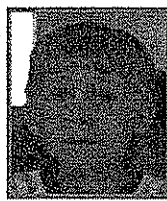
### FIGHT Looks Like...



- Become more physical (especially boys), hyperactivity
- Aggression, often re-enactment play
- Have outbursts of activity, irritability, defensiveness
- Take frustration out on peers
- Overreact to minor situations—edgy
- Inability to wait or adapt to social constraints
- Inability to express self

### FLIGHT Looks Like...

- Short attention span, inability to focus, spacey, easily distractible
- Exhibit nervous behaviors, e.g. hair pulling or twirling, chewing, sucking
- Poor understanding, even of simple tasks
- Introverted or overly attached to teacher (especially girls)
- Social avoidance
- Reduced exploration & pleasure in play
- Self-comforting behaviors, e.g., rocking
- Headaches, stomachaches



## Resiliency—



- The "self-righting tendency"
- The resilient child recognizes a stressful event, often responds emotionally, then bounces back & returns to a prior balanced emotional state figuring-out what he can do to manage the situation

## The Good News!

- All children have some inherent level of resilience
- Resilience can be learned & increased



## How to Recognize Resilience

- Adapt quickly to stressful circumstances & take things in stride
- Think of change as a challenging & normal part of life
- See setbacks & problems as temporary & solvable
- Believe that you will succeed if you keep working toward your goals, hopeful
- Take action to solve problems that crop up
- Build strong relationships
- Have a support system & ask for help
- Participate regularly in activities for relaxation & fun

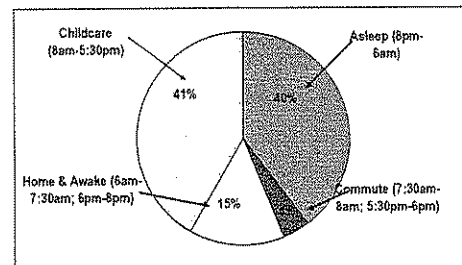
## It Takes Empathy

- In order for children to bounce back from a difficult situation it is essential for children to have a close relationship with at least one **emotionally healthy adult** in or outside of the family
- It is essential for that adult to **help the child gain the belief that the child has everything necessary to be successful and overcome challenges**



## The Teacher Factor

- One of the most important and consistent findings in resilience research is the power of schools, especially of teachers, to turn a child's life from risk to resilience



## Are You Resilient?

- The Resiliency Quiz
- [te@developmentalConsulting.com](mailto:te@developmentalConsulting.com)
- To become resilient, children need role models
  - Optimistic
  - Flexible
  - Good relationships
  - Sense of purpose
  - Good self esteem



## The Language of Resilience

- Resilient children can say:
  - 'I HAVE.....people I trust & love'
  - 'I AM.....a loveable person'
  - 'I CAN.....find ways to solve problems'



## I HAVE..Caring, supportive relationships

- The I HAVE factors are the external supports & resources that promote resilience to promote:
- ❖ Feelings of safety & security that lay the foundation, that are the core, for developing resilience



## I AM..loveable, think well of myself & have a positive attitude

- The I AM factors are the child's internal, personal strengths
- These are feelings, attitudes, & beliefs within the child



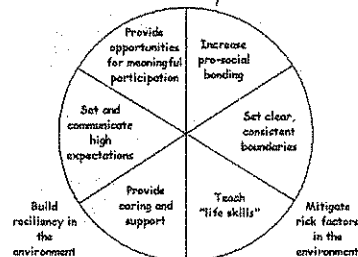
## I CAN..get along with others & solve my problems

- The I CAN factors are the child's social & interpersonal skills
- Children learn these skills by interacting with others & from those who teach them



"I Have" Factors.. are found in the home, school, & community & need to be managed by adults

### The Resiliency Wheel



## "I Have" Factors to Check in Classroom/Relationships

- > People around me I trust & who love me, no matter what
- > People who set limits for me so I know when to stop before there is danger or trouble
- > People who show me how to do things right by the way they do things
- > People who help me when I am sick, in danger or need to learn



## Teaching Resilience Skills

- Each of the I HAVE, I AM, & I CAN factors suggest numerous actions children & their care givers can take to promote resilience
- Be intentional about teaching the skills
- Build it into your curriculum
- Here are a few ideas



## Things to Teach

- Strengths
- An optimistic view of life



## Say What You See & Add a Strength

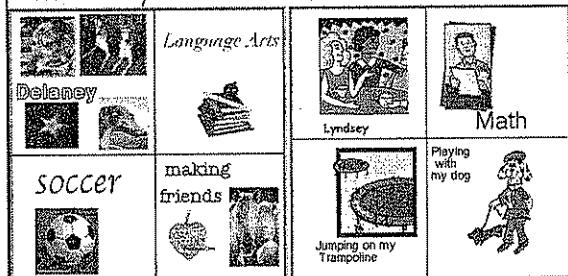


- You finished making that even though you were frustrated. That shows you are determined."

OR

- "You told me right away you spilled the milk. That shows you are responsible."
- Additional strengths include: appreciative, brave, careful, truthful, considerate, tenacious, etc.

Teach children about their strengths: Name them, help them see how they do & can use them



## Offer an Optimistic View of Life

- Modeling is most effective
- When problems arise
  - Point out any possible silver lining in the troubled cloud
  - Help the child see that problems, negative feelings do not last forever
  - Teach children that mistakes are the way people learn, no need for guilt

Choose to be optimistic  
...it feels better!



-The Dofal Lens

## Things to Teach

- Problem solving
- How to manage feelings & impulses



## Problem Solving

- Teach kids to solve problems on their own
- Feeling empowered to make a difference even when obstacles look overwhelming is a key skill for resilience

Mouse & Elephant Problems hand out



## Feeling Pairs/Emotional Literacy

### Cloudy feelings

- Sad



- Scared



- Mad



### Sunny Feelings

- Happy



- Safe



- Calm



## Emotional Literacy

- Cloudy & Sunny Feelings hand out
- It is OK to have cloudy feelings
- Don't need to stay cloudy all day
- You can do something to get to the sunny side



## Worksheet Think Of A Child...

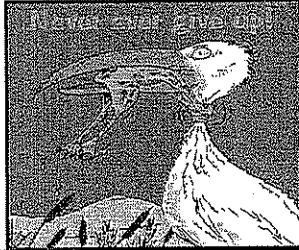
- Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Problems/Challenges/Stressors
- Strengths & Positive Supports
- What resiliency skill(s) does this child need to learn?

## Wrap Up

- This is resiliency
- It's the ability to go through a difficulty without having your life completely unravel
- Although it may feel that your life has turned upside down, you can talk about your feelings and fears as you muddle through
- You can teach your kids that difficulties happen to everybody and the way you get through a difficulty makes a big difference

## Never Give Up!

- Persist in these approaches
- Be realistic in expectations: expect continued behaviors while working to increase resiliency skills



## Thank You!

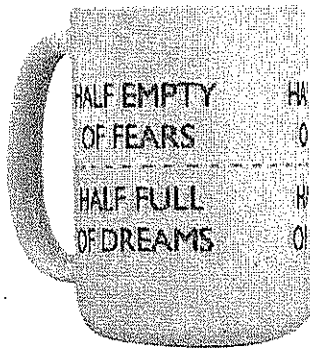
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You have them...we were all born with them. That is, that we have natural strengths and skills that can be increased over time.

## Strengths Vocabulary

The following words describe personal qualities that are important. Check all the words that describe the child. Trust your first response to each word.

There is no limit to how many words you can check. Add some words of your own if you like. Then, select the 10 that best describe the child, and list them at the bottom of the page.

<input type="checkbox"/> Agreeable	<input type="checkbox"/> Athletic	<input type="checkbox"/> Self-directed	<input type="checkbox"/> Helpful
<input type="checkbox"/> Sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> Orderly	<input type="checkbox"/> Scholarly	<input type="checkbox"/> Materialistic
<input type="checkbox"/> Impulsive	<input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive	<input type="checkbox"/> Flexible	<input type="checkbox"/> Optimistic
<input type="checkbox"/> Creative	<input type="checkbox"/> Responsible	<input type="checkbox"/> Critical	<input type="checkbox"/> Risk-taking
<input type="checkbox"/> Adventurous	<input type="checkbox"/> Independent	<input type="checkbox"/> Punctual	<input type="checkbox"/> Involved
<input type="checkbox"/> Assertive	<input type="checkbox"/> Stable	<input type="checkbox"/> Out-going	<input type="checkbox"/> Verbal
<input type="checkbox"/> Strong	<input type="checkbox"/> Generous	<input type="checkbox"/> Active	<input type="checkbox"/> Logical
<input type="checkbox"/> Analytical	<input type="checkbox"/> Honest	<input type="checkbox"/> Understanding	<input type="checkbox"/> Accurate

___ Ambitious	___ Mechanical	___ Quiet	___ Competitive
___ Curious	___ Economical	___ Passive	___ Supportive
___ Loyal	___ Cautious	___ Imaginative	___ Cooperative
___ Kind	___ Conventional	___ Realistic	___ Practical
___ Decisive	___ Organized	___ Friendly	___ Forceful
___ Controlling	___ Persistent	___ Tactful	___ Tolerant
___ Sociable	___ Artistic	___ Dependable	___ Attentive
___ Humorous	___ Conscientious	___ Aggressive	___ Patient
___ Individualistic	___ Idealistic	___ Visual	___ Conservative
___ Self-controlled	___ Accepting	ADD SOME WORDS	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
TOP TEN	STRENGTHS	1 _____	2 _____

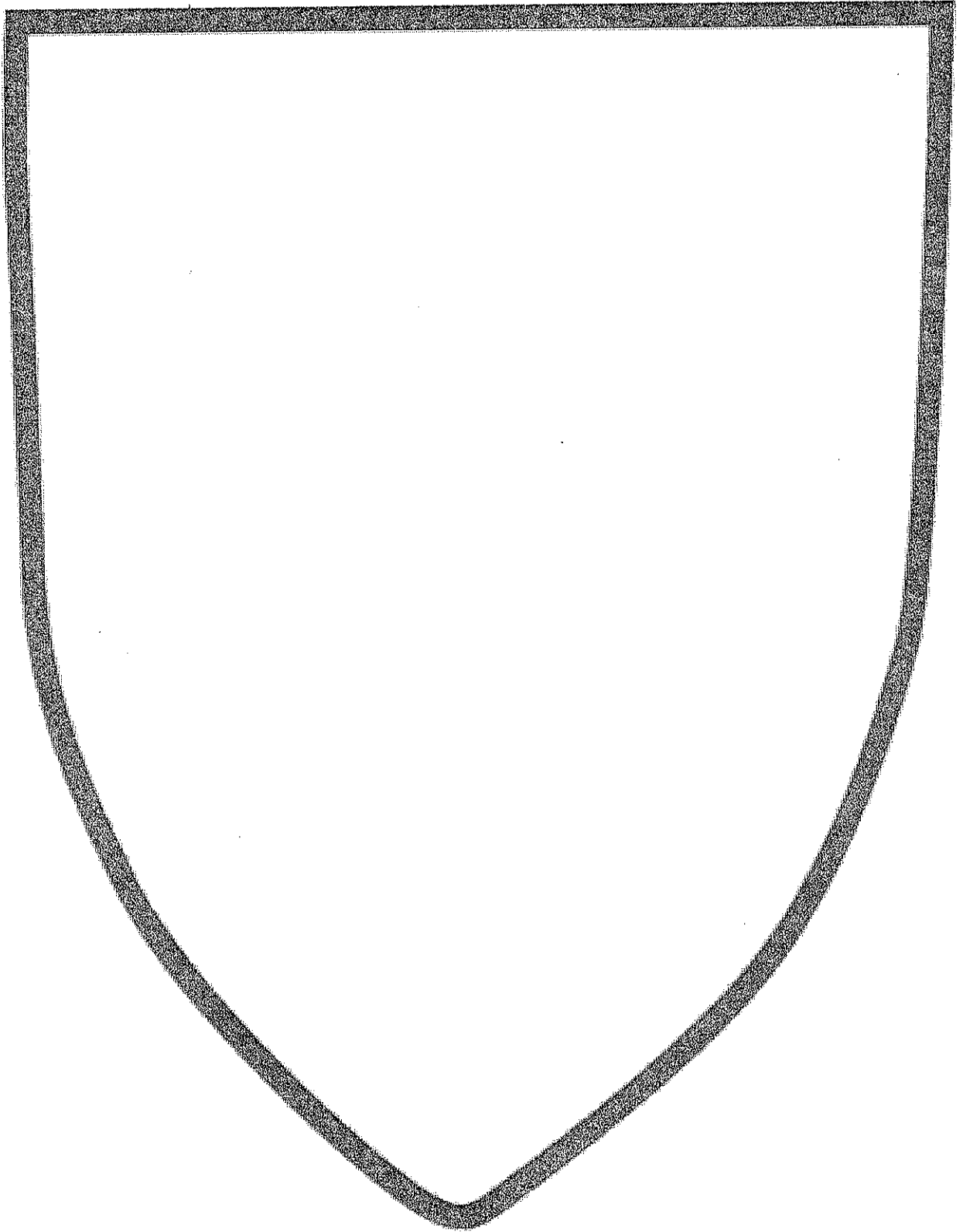
3 _____	4 _____	5 _____	6 _____
7 _____	8 _____	9 _____	10 _____

Terri Emberling

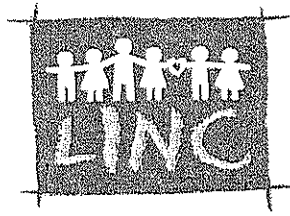
te@relationshiproots.org for talks and workshops on this topic



# MY STRENGTHS SHIELD





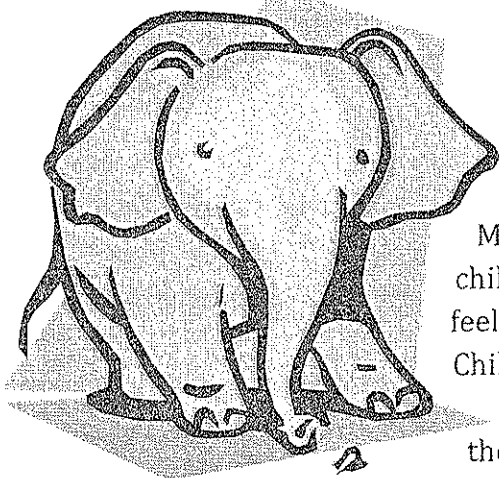


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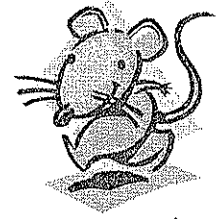
## Problem Solving: Key Ideas, Language and Skills

### Elephant Problem



If there is a problem in which someone gets hurt, or could get hurt, it is an ELEPHANT PROBLEM and requires an adult's help. Children learn to always talk to a safe grownup when there is an Elephant Problem.

### Mouse Problem



MOUSE PROBLEMS involve something that children don't like and that may hurt their feelings, but no one gets physically hurt. Children learn that, no matter how much they don't like it, it is still a Mouse Problem and they can solve it on their own. At first, however,

adults help children a lot, even with Mouse Problems. And sometimes, even Mouse Problems need an adult's help if, for example, one of the children involved refuses to engage in problem solving, or if they've tried everything and nothing has solved the problem.

Is that a Mouse Problem or an Elephant Problem?

When your children come to you complaining about a problem, you can ask them this question to help them think about it.

Is anyone getting hurt?

Often, children say a problem is an Elephant Problem simply because it is a big problem to them. This question will help remind them about what makes a problem an Elephant Problem.

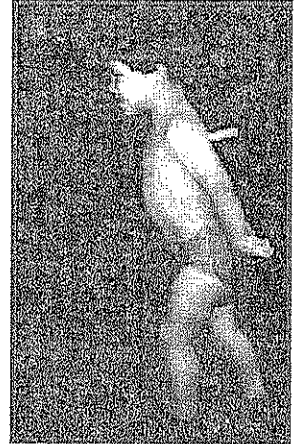
That's a Mouse Problem. You can solve it on your own.

You can say this to your children to encourage them to solve Mouse Problems on their own. Even with Mouse Problems, however, you should offer help when needed.

# Problem Solving Choices

We teach four simple problem-solving choices. Even very young children can understand and use these choices. They work for older children as well, although they may come up with their own ideas to add to the four basic choices. The four choices are: walk away, talk it out, take turns, and share.

**Walk Away.** When someone does or says something you do not like, walking away can often be a simple solution. In practicing this choice, children learn that they do not have to react to something another person does that they do not like. They can simply walk away and ignore it.



We also teach children that walking away is not always the best or the only solution to a problem that must be solved. Sometimes children choose to walk away when another child is trying to talk out a problem with them. In that case, if the child is upset or doesn't want to talk right then, they can walk away to calm down, and then come back to solve the problem.



**Talk It Out.** Children learn to talk to each other when they have a problem. They can tell someone, "I don't like that," "I feel \_\_\_\_," or "I would like \_\_\_\_." They can then talk about their ideas for ways to solve the problem.

**Take Turns.** Often conflicts among children start because two children want to play with the same thing at the same time. Children can solve this problem by deciding to take turns

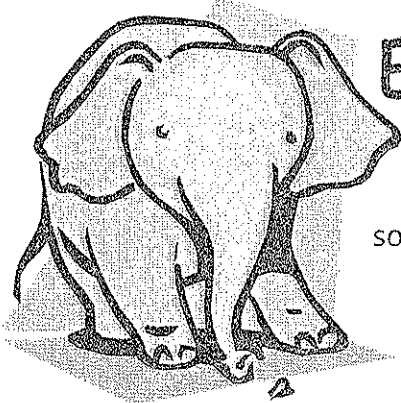
with a toy or game. Everyone gets what they want: First one person gets what she wants, then the other. Sometimes, this leads to another problem because both of the children want to have the first turn! Adults can help in this situation by pointing out that they can take turns with taking turns—that is, Person A goes first this time, and next time Person B can go first.



**Share.** When children solve their problem by sharing, both children play with the toy, game, book, etc., at the same time. Children learn that this can be a great choice because they *both* get to be "first" and they both get what they want at the same time. Also, in sharing a game or toy with another child, they might discover an even better way to play together than when they play alone!

## Problem Solving

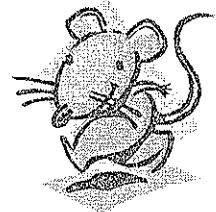
### QUICK SHEET



### Elephant Problem

Elephant problems are big problems where someone gets hurt or could get hurt. Children always need to get a grownup to help solve an elephant problem and to keep everyone safe.

### Mouse Problem



Mouse problems are small problems that children can solve on their own using the four problem solving choices. They involve something that children don't like and that may hurt their feelings, but no one gets hurt or could get hurt.

Is that a mouse problem or an elephant problem?

Is anyone getting hurt?

That's a mouse problem. You can solve it on your own.

Things you can say to children to help them recognize and solve their mouse problems.

## Problem Solving Choices

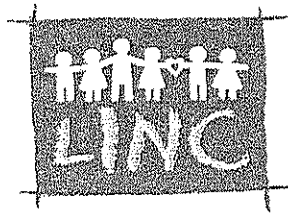
**Walk Away** — When someone does or says something you do not like, walking away might be the best solution. Sometimes a problem must be solved by talking it out, in which case, walking away is not a good choice. In such a case, a child may walk away to calm down, but come back later to solve the problem.

**Talk It Out** — Talk about the problem and how it can be solved. Say how you feel and what you want: "I don't like that." "I feel \_\_\_\_." "I would like \_\_\_\_."

**Take Turns** — Many problems can be solved by agreeing to take turns with a toy, game or activity.

**Share** — Rather than taking turns, children can also solve a problem by sharing, that is, playing with toys or games together at the same time.

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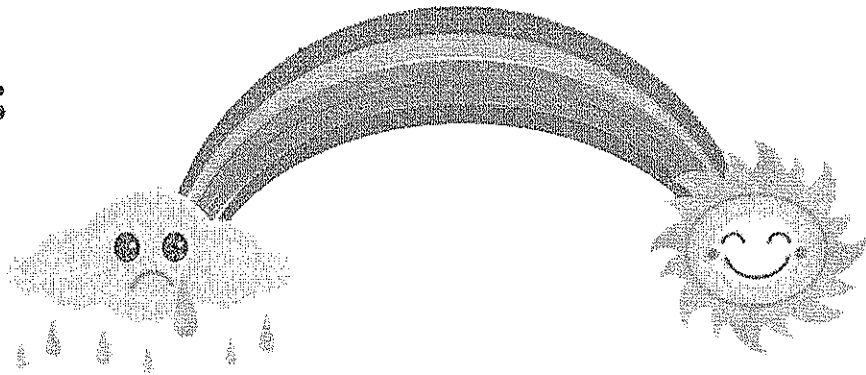
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Learning In Nurturing Communities (LINC)

## Understanding & Managing Feelings: Key Ideas, Language and Skills

### Cloudy Feelings

Cloudy feelings are ones that don't feel good in our bodies. Children learn that it is okay to have cloudy feelings because it is our bodies' way of telling us that something is happening that we don't like. But we don't have to feel cloudy all day.



### Sunny Feelings

Sunny feelings are ones that DO feel good in our bodies. When we are feeling cloudy, we can do some things that will help us feel sunny again.

### Moving from the Cloudy Side to the Sunny Side

In LINC, we use a rainbow with a cloud on one side and a sun on the other side to represent cloudy and sunny feelings. When we are feeling cloudy, we can move across the rainbow to get to the sunny side.

**I Messages** Children learn to make simple I messages to express their feelings:

"I feel angry," or "I feel happy."

### Three Steps to Get to the Sunny Side

Children will learn that there are three things they can do to move across the rainbow to the sunny side. They learn how

to do these three things for the feelings pairs of sad-happy, angry-calm and scared-safe:

- **1. Move your body to move the feeling.** For each feeling pair, we provide a movement based on research that shows that the particular movement will help shift the cloudy feeling state. Children learn to always do balloon breathing along with the movement—that is, deep breaths, all the way down into the belly, in through the nose and out through the mouth.

- **2. Talk about it.** Children can talk to someone about what happened and how they're feeling.
- **3. Make a plan.** Children then make a plan for what else they can do to move all the way across the rainbow to the sunny side. One thing they can do is to solve the problem that led to the cloudy feeling. Or they can think about something they do when they have the sunny feeling (e.g., "When I am happy, I like to..." or, "It helps me feel calm, when I...").

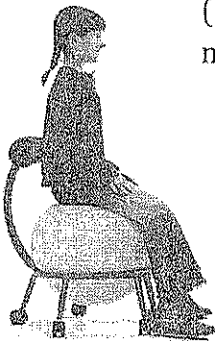
## Dragon Brain

Anger is a special kind of emotion. It is particularly strong and it triggers a cascade of reactions in the body and brain that make it very difficult to make smart choices. We call this having a "Dragon Brain." When one has a Dragon Brain, it is very difficult to think clearly enough to even do the three steps. The first step in moving from the cloudy side of angry to the sunny side of calm, therefore, is to interrupt this process by saying to yourself, "Stop, Dragon Brain." The children learn that they need to say this *only* to themselves, never to another child who is angry. Adults, however, can gently remind children to say to themselves, "Stop, Dragon Brain."

Stop, Dragon Brain.

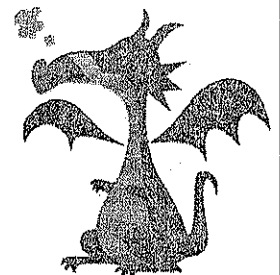
## Movements:

Here are the movements that go with each of the feelings pairs. These movements are based on research that shows that when you move your body in a specific way, it will change your brain chemistry in a way that will help you move from the cloudy feeling to the sunny feeling. Always do "balloon breathing" (deep breaths, in through the nose and out through the mouth) as you do the movement. **THESE MOVEMENTS WORK FOR ADULTS, TOO!**



**From Sad to Happy.** When we're sad, we tend to be slumped over and we have frowns on our faces. The movement to help us move to the sunny side of happy is to do the opposite: sit up straight and smile. The best kind of smile is a gentle, not forced, smile—kind of like a "Mona Lisa smile."

**From Angry to Calm.** After saying, "Stop, Dragon Brain," children can then "Fly their Dragon Brain away" by moving their arms in large, slow circular motions at their sides. They can do figure eights or big circles. It is important that they not flap their arms in a jerky or quick motion. Big, slow, loopy motions are the most effective in calming the brain when one is angry.



**From Scared to Safe.** When we're scared, we feel shaky and like we're going to fly off in a million pieces. One way to help us feel safe again is to "hold ourselves together" by giving ourselves a big hug. Wrap your arms around your body and squeeze. Don't forget to balloon breathe!

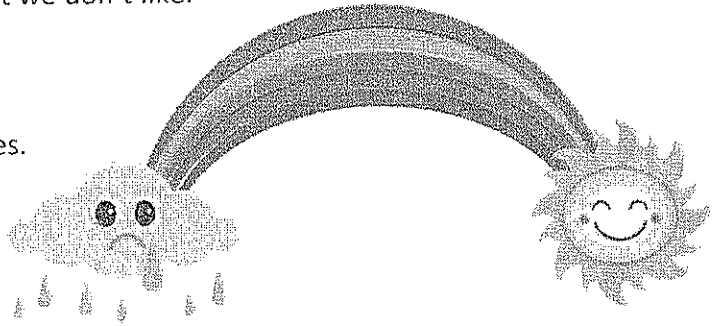
# Understanding & Managing Feelings

## QUICK SHEET

**Cloudy Feelings.** Cloudy feelings are ones that don't feel good in our bodies, like sad, angry and scared. Cloudy feelings are our bodies' way of telling us that something is happening that we don't like.

**Sunny Feelings.** Sunny feelings are ones that DO feel good in our bodies.

**I Messages.** To express feelings, say, "I feel angry," or "I feel happy."



### Moving from the Cloudy Side to the Sunny Side.

When we are feeling cloudy, we can do certain things to move across the rainbow to get to the sunny side.

### Three Steps to Get to the Sunny Side

- 1. Move your body.** Do the specific movement for each feeling while balloon breathing.
- 2. Talk about it.** Talk to someone about what happened and how you're feeling.
- 3. Make a plan.** What else can you do to move all the way to the sunny side? Solve your problem or do something else.

**Dragon Brain.** When angry, say, "Stop, Dragon Brain" before doing the three steps.

Stop, Dragon Brain.

### Movements:



From Sad to Happy.

Sit up straight and tall and smile a "Mona Lisa smile."

From Angry to Calm. After saying, "Stop, Dragon Brain," "fly your Dragon Brain away" by moving your arms in large, slow circular motions at your sides.



From Scared to Safe. Give yourself a hug!

