

Relational Connection



CONNECTION BASICS

Relational connection is a basic human need. Just as humans have a basic need for food and shelter, we also have a need to belong, form relationships and connect! Sharing our internal experience is integral in human relationships. If we are unable or unwilling to connect and share with others effectively our needs, wants and desires, we are unable to form and maintain authentic, healthy relationships.

Acknowledgement of internal experiences creates vulnerability for everyone, particularly children who have experienced adversity. When a child expresses their emotions and they receive anger, judgement, rejection or indifference, they learn shame (emotions or needs are bad / unimportant) and a need for secrecy (if I share, then something bad will happen).

“Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health;

safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives.”

Bessel A van der Kolk

OUR GOAL

To help children build the skills and tolerance for effectively sharing internal experience (what is happening on the inside) with others, while building connection and meeting needs, both practically and emotionally.

Encourage safe expression

Help facilitate casual ways to increase a child's safety and comfortability in expression.

This could be around food preferences, clothing, style, hobbies, games etc.

Start small!

Our caregiver goals relate to creating opportunities for safe connection and communication. This is meeting the child where they are.

Meaning we aren't forcing expression when they are not ready.

Reflect on your own emotions and responses

Work towards increasing your insight to emotions you struggle to connect with or tolerate.

A big part of what you do is tolerating the child's emotional expressions...

But remember, we don't have to agree with what a child might be saying or how they are expressing it, to be empathetic!

Empathy doesn't need agreement.

It relies on non-judgement and listening ears.