Linda, Listen to me
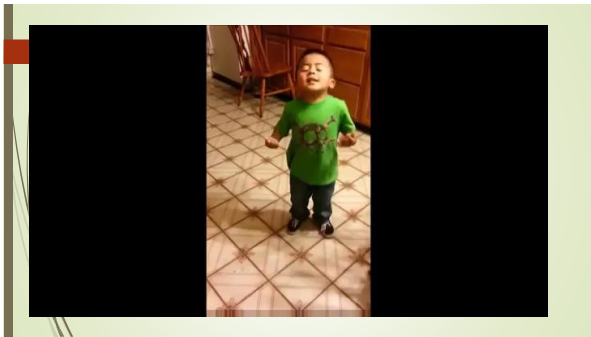
Minnesota Family Support & Recovery Council
October 2017

The Work we do is too important not to be done

The problems clients cause
are not the cause of their problems

The Conflict Agenda

- Anxiety and Stress
- Precipitating Factors
- Understand and know your triggers
- Perception vs Reality
- Conflict Cycle
- Aggression elicits Aggression
- Respond vs React
- Basics of De-escalation

Anxious/Stressed/Agitated

- What does it look like?

Precipitating Factors

Internal or External causes of acting out behavior that the professional has little or no control over

Stress triggers

- Family/Relationships
- Holidays
- Finances
- Safety/Violence
- School
- Precipitating Factors

Recognize your Feelings

You need to manage you own behavior before you can deal with the actions of others.

Negative feelings toward a client is not a sign of weakness; but it is imperative to not act on those feelings in a negative manner.

What gets under your skin?

Other Triggers

- Threatening your family
- Name Calling
- Insulting your integrity
- Racial Slurs
- You don't care about me!
- Lying

Workers often *react, rather than respond* to clients because they lack experience, lack support and or feel worn down.

Self - Esteem

- Self esteem is a fragile entity – even when it is high. Humans are incredibly susceptible to self-esteem injuries (Triggers)
- Workers may suffer 10-15 self – esteem injuries in one day.
- When this occurs workers must use their "observing ego" (inner voice that helps guide our actions)

Any adult who works with challenging clients will become punitive or counter aggressive if he/she does not receive enough:

- Ongoing support
- Training
- Breaks
- Time-off
- Praise
- Encouragement

Psychological Principle

A client in stress can create in others his or her feelings and if the others are unaware of this psychological process they will mirror the client's inappropriate behavior.

Perception is Reality

Each client perceives a situation based on their life experiences. This is what drives their reaction.
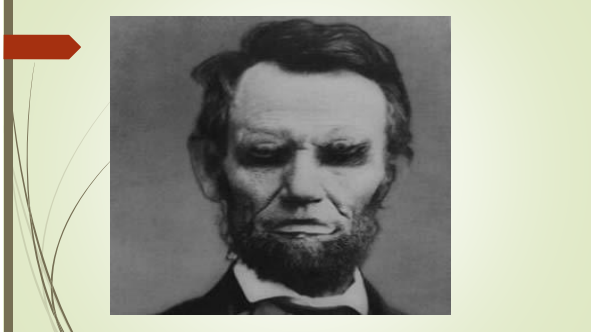
Remember what we see may not be what they see.

What we see…
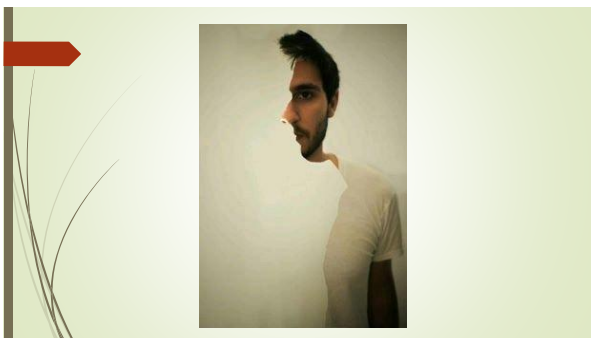## may not be what they see..

Perception is Reality

The only way to alter ones reality is to alter their perception.

The Power of Words

What clients believe about themselves is more important in determining behavior than any facts about them.
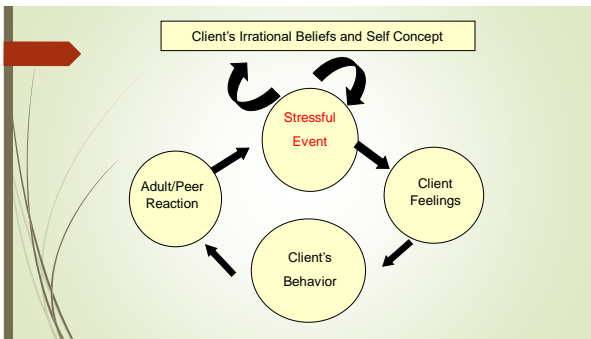
The Conflict Cycle

A circular model that explains the escalating interactions between a troubled person and a non troubled person.

Critical Understanding

- How a person thinks about an event is what triggers feelings, it is not the event itself.

- Negative thoughts trigger negative feelings.

- Negative feelings will influence the way a person reacts to the event.

Digging a little deeper...

Client's Irrational Beliefs and Self Concept

Stressful Event

Adult/Peer Reaction

Client Feelings

Client's Behavior

The Stressful Event

Counter Aggression

Aggressive clients have a way of engaging staff members in personal struggles by using words and actions that "push their buttons"

Remember.. Aggression elicits Aggression!

Stress and button pushing

They say things within hearing distance, hoping the someone notices.

They choose words and actions they know the worker will react to.

Counter Aggression

Managing Conflict effectively

- Awareness of the conflict cycle
- Enables professionals to recognize and choose not to engage in power struggles.
- Focus on what the client needs vs what the worker is feeling.
- Recognize connection between behaviors, feelings and an event.

De-escalation Basics

- Listen to the story

- Let them vent…drain the emotions

- Use Affirmations, they just want to be heard.

- If they get louder you get quieter

- Practice/Prepare for tough situations via Role Plays

Thank you and have a great day!

Michelle K. Nelson

emkayen914@gmail.com