

Practical Application: An Introduction to TBRI

Guiding Thought

*As we provide emotional, physical, and spiritual safety for our kids ...
we create space for hope and healing.*

— Tona Ottinger

Questions & Reflections

- + As you consider how your needs were met as a child, what gave you a sense of belonging, felt safety, and trust? If those needs for security were not met, what might have disrupted those feelings of connectedness and felt safety?
- + What are some needs that might have gone unmet for your child in his or her past? What can you do to meet those needs now?
- + How does remembering the impact of stress and trauma change the way you view and engage your child's behavior?
- + As you consider your current parenting strategies, what may need to be adjusted to better communicate care, security, and safety to your child(ren)?

Tips & Reminders

- + Relational trauma impacts beliefs about the self, including self-awareness, self-regulation, self-esteem, and self-efficacy. Use character praise to help change your child's belief system about himself or herself by recognizing his or her character traits. Some examples include:
 - » "I love playing with you! You are so much fun."
 - » "Thank you for sharing. You are really thoughtful."
 - » "You are so creative. That is such a great idea!"
- + Positive experiences are essential for rewiring the brain while also contributing to the mind's overall health. Each week, look for opportunities to introduce a new, positive experience in the life of your child or teenager. Include activities where engagement strategies (eye contact, healthy touch, behavior matching, play) can be incorporated to further build connection and felt safety.
 - » Have a family dance party.
 - » Paint together. (For littles, start with rocks, and for your older children, try pottery.)
 - » Explore together a new park or area of town where you can play, snap photos, or just be outdoors as a family.

Action Points

Crossing the Midline

Cross-lateral movement refers to any time one side of the body crosses over the midline of the body to the other side. The right side of the body is controlled by the left side of the brain, and the left side of the body is controlled by the right side of the brain. Practicing crossing the midline is a great way to get the right and left sides to communicate optimally. Ideas for younger children—that are also fun—include classic games like “Hot Potato” (but you must hold the object with both hands), clapping games like “Miss Mary Mack,” and “Simon Says.” For older children and teens, consider tennis, baseball, or softball; washing a car together (which also promotes connectedness); and even a game of Twister.

Family Game Night

Card games (UNO, Go Fish), board games (Monopoly, Operation), chess, checkers, and puzzles are great opportunities to exercise the brain to help improve attention, coordination, concentration, planning, and more. Incorporate regular (weekly or bimonthly) family game nights for everyone in your home, keeping in mind varying skills and abilities. It can become a fun tradition and an excellent opportunity to foster connection as a whole family.

Practical Application: Connecting Principles

Guiding Thought

When you connect to the heart of a child, everything is possible.

— Dr. Karyn Purvis

Questions & Reflections

- + As you consider your childhood, what from your past might hinder the connection between you and your child?
- + In times of stress, remember, *It is my job to help my child regulate*. What are some proactive strategies that will help you remain calm and present in those moments?
- + Remaining flexible is critical to your son or daughter's mental and emotional health. In what situations can you give more "yeses"?
- + Why is it sometimes challenging to see beyond your child's behavior and recognize the underlying need he or she is trying to express or have met? Consider proactive strategies like identifying your personal triggers to better see the need your child is expressing.

Tips & Reminders

- + Be fully present.
 - » "Stop" what you are doing.
 - » "Look" into his or her eyes.
 - » "Listen" to his or her words, and empathize with the joy or pain your child is expressing.
- + Make it a priority to incorporate healthy touch (with permission) in your child's daily activities and interactions to help build connection and disarm fears.

Action Points

Daily Favorite

For dinnertime or at the end of each day, spend time where each family member shares one “favorite” thing from his or her day. Remember, positive experiences are essential to rewiring the brain. Celebrate together that one thing—no matter how big or small—and share in each member’s joy. It is an easy way to foster connection and focus on gratitude together as a family.

Behavior Matching

Matching your child’s or teen’s posture, and voice can be effective in building connection and fostering felt safety. It’s an engagement strategy that really validates your child or teen and his or her expressions and passions. For younger children, it can be as simple as joining them in building blocks and copying their creations. For teens, it can be playfully mimicking their use of slang, body language, and tone. Behavior matching can also be an easy opportunity to incorporate other engagement strategies like eye contact and healthy touch—always with permission.

Practical Application: Empowering Principles

Guiding Thought

Giving a child a voice is one of the most powerful tools we can give.

— Dr. Karyn Purvis

Questions & Reflections

- + Think of a time when you were safe, but you didn't feel that way. Consider situations in which your child or teen may not feel safe. How does he or she respond to fear?
- + Describe a time when you misunderstood a fear-driven response as manipulation, control, or willful disobedience.
- + Help your child navigate change by creating predictability. Doing so will encourage felt safety. Think about the transitions that are most difficult (i.e. bedtime, school drop off, technology limits). What are some strategies you can use to support your child or teen in transitioning well?
- + What are some ways you can modify your environment to support your child's sensory needs (i.e. lights, smells, noises, sensory-rich or sensory-sensitive environments)?

Tips & Reminders

- + Dr. Karyn Purvis was also known as the "Queen of Bubblegum." Chewing and sucking are both calming engagements, so do not shy away from giving your son or daughter a piece of gum or candy in dysregulated situations.
- + Exercise, physical activity, hydration, and healthy snacks are critical for children, teens, and adults, and all promote healthy brain development and regulation. Go for walks together, consider weekend hikes, or find sports you can play as a family. Have water readily available along with healthy snacks for any time of the day.

Action Points

Transition Formula

One way to empower your children for success is by utilizing this formula for transition from one activity to the next.

Attention + Mention + Distract + Act = Successful Transition

First, get your child's attention by being in front of him or her with direct eye contact; then mention what is going to happen. For example, "In three minutes, it will be time for bed. When I come back, I am going to say, 'It's time for bed,' and you will say, 'OK, Mom (or Mommy)!' Sound good?" When it is time to make the transition, try a "connected distraction" (i.e. playful eye contact, healthy touch, etc.). The goal is to distract your child or teen from his or her activity and get him or her connected to you. Once you feel connected, stay with him or her until the transition is successful.

Alerting and Organizing

There are times when our brains and bodies are running slow (lethargic, unaware), and there are times when they are running too fast (hyperactive, lacking focus). Whether your child's or teen's brain and body are running too slow or too fast, these activities can bring regulation, relaxation, and even focus.

- + Jumping (rope, trampoline, exercises)
- + Chair, desk, and/or wall pushes
- + Safe pillow fights or crashing into a pile of pillows (i.e. "Crash and Bump")

Practical Application: Correcting Principles

Guiding Thought

It is better to err and repair than to have never erred at all.

— Dr. David Cross

Questions & Reflections

- + How could you “practice outside the moment” to help create a new pattern of behavior or interaction—for both you and your child?
- + Which elements of the IDEAL Response come more naturally to you? Which elements do you struggle with and why?
- + When thinking about calming engagement, what helps you regulate and calm? What helps your child regulate and calm?
- + As you consider your current strategies, how can you correct while staying connected and building greater trust with your child or teen?

Tips & Reminders

- + Implement behavioral scripts—the actions of a trauma-informed culture that seek to reduce escalation and teach self-regulation skills.
 - » Choices (“You have two choices”—choices given are never threats or punishments.)
 - » Compromises (“Would you like a compromise?”)
 - » Behavioral Re-Do’s (“Can you try that again with respect?”)
- + Take a deep breath. Breathing deeply will oxygenate the body and brain, helping children and teens (and you!) think more clearly, learn more easily, calm down, and make better behavioral choices.

Action Points

Life Value Terms

Common in TBRI and trauma-informed cultures, Life Value Terms create an effective, efficient mode of communication that avoids lengthy lectures and can be used in times of stress or dysregulation. We encourage you to develop your own Life Value Terms, suited for your daily interactions with your child or teen. Consider even posting these on your refrigerator or a common space in your home. The following are some ideas to get you thinking as you develop ones for your family.

- » "Gentle and Kind"
- » "Using Words"
- » "Accepting 'No'"
- » "With Permission and Supervision"
- » "With Respect"

For the Everyday

- + The "TBRI Mantra", as coined by Dr. David Cross, is one to think through, memorize, and call to mind on a daily basis.
 - » Stay Calm (No Matter What).
 - » See the Need (Behind the Behavior).
 - » Meet the Need (Find a Way).
 - » Don't Quit (If Not You, Then Who?).



Practical Application: The Gospel + TBRI

Guiding Thought

God created us to be in relationship—at peace within ourselves, with him, and with others.

— Emily Chapman Richards

Questions & Reflections

- + As you consider the love and grace shown to you through Christ's work of reconciliation, how can that inform and encourage your daily interactions with and approaches to your child or teen?
- + In what times during your day can you carve out space for yourself for personal prayer, meditation, and time with God?
- + Do you have regular time set aside to connect with mentors for wise counsel and family, friends, and community for support and encouragement? What holds you back from those critical relationships and regular times together?

Tips & Reminders

- + Consider reading "Every Moment Holy." This book includes liturgies for the ordinary events of daily life—"A Liturgy for Feasting With Friends" or "A Liturgy for Laundering"—reminding us that our lives are "shot through with sacred purpose even when, especially when, we are too busy or too caught up in our busyness to notice."
- + Whether it is a moment of joy or hardship, work to remind yourself what brought you here, why today matters, where you are headed, and who, ultimately, holds you and your family in the palm of his sure and trustworthy hand.

Action Points

Verses to Remember

Below are four Bible verses Show Hope believes connect well to the foundational principles of TBRI. Spend time meditating on these truths whether through journaling, memorizing, or writing on index cards to place around your home or office space.

- » **An Introduction to TBRI:** *Two are better than one, ... For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow.* — Ecclesiastes 4:9-10
- » **Connecting Principles:** *Let love be genuine ...* — Romans 12:9
- » **Empowering Principles:** *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear.* — 1 John 4:18
- » **Correcting Principles:** *Love never ends.* — 1 Corinthians 13:8

Three Gratitudes

At the end of each day, before your head hits the pillow, record three things for which you are grateful in a journal. Spend time meditating on each one, and ask God to remind you of his love, grace, and the hope found in him. This could be an excellent routine for your family to do together as well. Just as our children need positive experiences and the reminders of those, so do we.