

**Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Office of Workforce Development**

Transcript of Webinar

Kids These Days, with Dr. Steven Parese, Part 1

Date: October 19, 2012

[Numbers in brackets indicate the approximate playtime, or time stamp, in the audio version]

PAUL BOUNDS: Good morning, how are you doing today, my name is Paul Bounds. I work with the Office of Workforce Development. I want to thank you all for coming in and signing up today for our teleconference, our video conference. Next to me is, this handsome man here is Dr. Steve Parese. He was gracious enough to come in today and speak with you about his perspective on serving high-risk youth.

The project today is called “Kids These Days”. I have had opportunity to sit with Steve out in the field and go visit his training in person, and it’s a wonderful thing. So I think you guys out there can get some great knowledge in terms of getting with some of your youth in your program.

Right now, if we have the time, I would like to go through the roll call to see who’s out there and see who’s listening, and making sure you can respond. And make sure you guys are very enthusiastic today, because Steve’s presentation is very high energy. So I think you’re really going to be happy with this.

So, I’m going to go through the list, so just give me a “hello” if you’re out there. So....

[Counties indicating they are in attendance: Ashtabula, Athens, Champaign, Defiance, Fairfield, Franklin, Fulton, Geauga, Greene, Guernsey, Harrison, Lake, Madison, Mahoning, Medina, Monroe, Muskingum, Ottawa, Perry, Pike, Richland, Sandusky, Seneca, Shelby, Stark, Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Wayne, Williams, Wood.]

Thanks again, thank everybody for joining us. The reason for the roll call is, this will be a very interactive thing, and Dr. Parese will be talking to the folks in the field and getting you guys engaged. So, hopefully, you guys are there and ready. And, as I said earlier, high energy and ready to start our feed on this. Some handouts were sent to you earlier today, and wanted to make sure you guys have everything you could possibly have for this webinar. If, by chance, you did not get the documents, we can forward them to you later today. So, make sure you get all that key information you can from today’s presentation.

And so, at this moment, for right now, I’m going to pass this over to Dr. Parese. So, how are you? Good morning and how are you? [6:40]

STEVE PARESE: Thank you, Paul. I appreciate it. Well, good morning Ohio. I hope you’re all doing well out there. As Paul said, my name is Steve Parese. It is Doctor Steve, but if the information I have to share with you today doesn’t impress you, I doubt that my doctorate will either. So, if we have a chance to interact, if you call in and we chit chat, then, please, just call me by my first name, Steve. That’s fine.

You should have a couple of handouts in front of you. If you don’t, you can still follow along with the PowerPoint in the discussion. But the handouts will be helpful. One of them is a copy of the slides that I’ll be using. Most of them are accurate; there are a few changes, just to throw a monkey wrench into the works. The other is a handout that looks like this, that was emailed to you, probably in the last thirty minutes. If you have an opportunity to print this out, that would

be great. It will help you in terms of taking notes, and such, but it's not essential. It will be waiting for you in your email afterwards. So, if you don't have it now, you can get it a little bit later. [7:34]

So, again my name is Steve Parese and, by trade in training, I'm a special education teacher. I got my start working in the mountains of North Carolina with troubled kids in a wilderness program, and then moved from there to the swamps of Florida, behind a razor-wired fence – working with the juvenile defenders. And then, from there, up to Baltimore/DC area, where I worked as a teacher and counselor with kids who had emotional and behavior problems, for a number of years as well. [8:00]

It turns out that troubled kids often grow up to be troubled adults, and so, I find myself also doing work with offenders, in and out of the prison setting, with welfare-to-workers, substance abusers – pretty much anyone who's got adjustment problems, or becomes their own worst enemy.

So today, what we're going to be doing this morning, is looking at troubled kids. In particular, kids who have become their own worst enemies, who push away the folks that they most need. Let's go ahead and take a look at our PowerPoint: [8:31]

So, this morning's presentation is called, "Leave me alone, now wait, don't go." We'll be taking a look at the insights into the psychological world of emotionally troubled kids. There are several questions that we're going to try to answer.

First, How can we improve relationships with troubled kids by understanding the self-defeating patterns that they engage in? As I just mentioned, a lot of our kids are their own worst enemies. [8:57]

A second question we're going to try to answer is, How can we improve relationships by avoiding power struggles with kids who try to pull us into arguments and disagreements?

And then, finally, How can we improve those relationships by using good listening skills with troubled kids?

So, you'll notice that all three of these begin with the preface, how can we improve relationships? I have a strong belief that we can't teach them until we reach them. And, the kind of kids that we're here to talk about today are those that are expert at sabotaging relationships with the people who most care about them – people whose help they most need and, yet, they manage to push us away and undermine their own success. So we'll be trying to answer some questions about why those kids do that, and how we can connect with them anyway. [9:48]

I've got a little studio audience here that's going to be interacting with me, as well. So you'll be hearing their voices from time to time.

Say Hi, Alice.

ALICE WORRELL: Hi, this is Alice Worrell, the manager for the Connect the Dots Initiative.

STEVE: We've got Angel with us this morning.

ANGEL RICE: Hi, good morning everyone, this is Angel Rice. I'm the dislocated worker program manager from here in the State office.

STEVE: And Carol, as well.

CAROL WARGO: Carol Wargo, of Workforce Dimensions, technical assistance provider.

STEVE: So if you hear strange voices, it's not me getting schizophrenic; it's them, as well – being schizophrenic, of course.

So, I've got a little warm up exercise for you, and if you've printed out that handout that was emailed to you 30 minutes ago, you'll see this in front of you. If not, just follow along on the screen. I'm going to pause after each item, in order give you a chance in your groups to discuss and see what you come up with. If you want to answer, when I pause, just go ahead and holler out what you think the correct answer is. [10:44]

So, again, it's a five-item, little survival quiz. Let's take a look at it together.

First – How to escape from a mountain lion attack. Should you:

- a. Open your coat, making yourself bigger and more threatening.
- b. Run away as quickly as possible in a zigzag pattern. Or,
- c. Mutter “nice kitty, nice kitty” while slowly backing away!

If you've got an opinion on this, holler it out.

VOICE: Get big.

STEVE: Most of you are saying, “C” – Mutter nice kitty.

VOICE: A.

STEVE: What about my studio audience? What do you all think?

PAUL: Steve, I'd have to go with B, because I'm a pretty fast guy, and I can run from a mountain lion.

STEVE: You know what they say, when you're being attacked by a mountain lion with a group of friends, you don't have to be faster than the mountain lion, just faster than your slowest friend. Actually, the right answer is to open your coat, making yourself bigger and more threatening. Cats are predators; if you run away, Paul, they're going to nail you. Open your coat, make yourself bigger, more threatening; they may just be frightened and back up, maybe. [11:52]

Now, you know folks, how they say a cat gets nine lives? Well, you get three today, and every time you miss one of my items, you lose a life. So, if you're going to survive your experience with me here this morning, you have to have at least one life left when we finish this little exercise. So, Paul, you're down to two lives. [12:10]

The second one – How to escape from killer bees. Should you...

- a. Freeze and hunker down, or if it's available, dive into some water.
- b. Run away as quickly as possible to an indoor area. Or,
- c. Set out a bottle of honey as a distraction.

Let me give you a moment to chat with your colleagues about that, and let's talk about it here in the studio while they're doing that. What do you think Angel?

ANGEL: Oh, I would try to run away and hide myself in indoors. That way, they can't follow me.

STEVE: They can't follow you indoors? Alice, what would you think? [12:42]

ALICE: I would say diving in water would be a good option.

STEVE: You know, a lot of people pick diving in water, and my guess is that many of you in the audience did. But you'd be dead, just like Alice is right now. It's, diving in the water is a great idea if you can hold your breath for four solid minutes, which is how long the killer bees will hover; and only five percent of the American population can actually hold their breath for that long. I'm not one of them either, so don't feel bad. The best answer is, actually, to run away to an indoor area.

How to win a sword fight. Angel's still alive. How to win a sword fight. Should you..

- a. Keep your sword slightly vertical, like the little boys in the picture, block, and step *into* opponent's attack.
- b. Should you keep it horizontal, and lung forward to attack your opponent. Or,
- c. Just drop your sword all together and suggest a visit to the beach, instead.

CAROL: I like that one.

STEVE: Carol's thinking – go to the beach.

CAROL: The beach is always the right answer.

STEVE: You know what, it can't be a bad answer, you're right. But a lot of people pick B - Keeping a sword horizontal. That's a great way to become a human shish kabob. The actual best answer is to keep your sword vertical, tipped slightly forward, block your opponent, and step *into* his attack. Could be helpful if you ever find yourself in Heidelberg, in the middle of a duel. Who knows? [13:57]

Number four – How to treat frostbite. Winter's coming; this could be helpful.

- a. Should you rub snow into the affected area to increase circulation?
- b. Should you immerse in lukewarm water and rewarm slowly? Or
- c. Just take two shots of tequila and call the doctor in the morning.

ANGEL: I'd take the tequila.

STEVE: I thought you would Angel. Do we have any other thoughts on this one?

ALICE: I've always heard that you should rewarm slowly.

STEVE: Alice says to thaw slowly, and, actually, she's quite right. Yes. The only time you wouldn't want to thaw the tissue slowly is if you have to go back out into frozen air. If you thaw it and re-freeze it, it will be hard for the tissue to survive. [14:37]

So that's four items, and, again, you lose one life every time that you've missed an item. Hopefully, most of you are still in the game. Let's go ahead and find out what our last item is.

Five. So, how to jump off a cliff and into a river.

- a. Jump feet first, opening your arms and legs after entering water.
- b. Curling into a cannonball, rolling to your back before hitting water. Or
- c. Wave your arms and smile for the camera.

Angel's waving to the camera right now.

CAROL: I'm wondering why you would want to jump off a cliff in the first place.

STEVE: That's a good point.

ALICE: To escape the killer bees.

STEVE: To escape the killer bees, Alice says. Paul what do you think?

PAUL: I'm going to go with the cannon ball.

STEVE: You'd make a big splash with the cannon ball. Actually, the right answer is what most of you guessed, unlike my studio audience here – jump feet first, opening your arms and legs after entering the water.

So, how did you do? Let's go back to the other camera. So, how many of you survived your experience? Let's check in, if we could. Did you have at least one life left when we finished? I'm hoping I can hear you. I'm still working on this technology thing.

LAKE COUNTY: Lake County survived.

WOOD COUNTY: Still has 3 lives.

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STEVE: Someone still had all 3 lives. Excellent. Anybody die?

GEAUGA COUNTY: Geauga survived.

MUSKINGUM COUNTY: Muskingum County got a hundred.

STEVE: Excellent, good for you.

GREENE COUNTY: Greene County got two.

STEVE: The reason I do this warm-up exercise; first, is just to warm you up and to make sure that you're actually paying attention. But, secondly, I want to make a point about survival. The kids that we work with, the ones that cause us most problems, are really survivors of incredibly difficult circumstances, many of them. And if you look back at the history of some of the kids that you work with, you'd find that many of them have been struggling through poverty, homes that are filled with drug addiction and criminality and violence, neighborhoods where only the strong survive.

Very often the skills that are necessary for them to survive on the street, in their homes, in the institutions – which some of them have been - in their school environments. Those very skills that are necessary for survival also sabotage their likelihood of their survival when they become adults. At least, if they ever want to move into the world of work.

Most of the folks that are listening to me this morning are job counselors, employment counselors, and job coaches – your folks that are trying to help young people get and keep good jobs, that will move them into working or middle class homes. Into a life in which they can raise their kids to have a better chance than they were given by their own parents. But, very often, the attitudes and the skills that they've developed in order to survive those harsh environments have trapped them, or will trap them, in those hardship environments.

So, a big part of our job is not just to help them get jobs, but to work through some of the survival attitudes that they have, that cause them to sabotage relationships and short circuit the opportunities that you provide for them. [17:47]

This morning's conversation, we're going to be looking at exactly how it is that kids sabotage their own chances of success and, then, this afternoon, we'll be taking a look at what we can do to try to help them be successful, specifically on the job, and meet employer expectations.

Let's go ahead, back to the screen for a moment, if we could. I want to give you and your groups a chance to discuss some typical behavior problems that you see from your most difficult kids. Now, this is not a slide that was in that handout that was sent to you. This is a new one, so, I'm going to throw you off a little bit.

I want to have a brief discussion here, with my studio audience, as well, and then we'll come to you and ask you to contribute. So guys, what kinds of problems do you see from the youth with which you work? What are typical behavior issues that you experience with them? [18:34]

ANGEL: Recently, previous experiences I've found in the majority of them, are kind of, like, disrespectful.

STEVE: Disrespectful language, for instance?

ANGEL: Yes.

STEVE: What else?

PAUL: Angry.

STEVE: Kids are constantly angry, and, so, frequently getting in fights with one another and arguing with adults. [18:52]

ALICE: The very first fight that I went through, with older youth that are in foster care. They said, the things they've learned in foster care, were – trust no one.

STEVE: So they have a un-trusting attitude. The kids from foster care, in particular, have been very often traumatized by issues of trust. So, you tell them something, and they question it constantly. You promise that you'll be there, and they doubt that you will. Because they can't trust you, they often have difficulty being trustworthy themselves. Carol, what have you seen in your work?

CAROL: Some defiance, some really oppositional behavior, just doing the opposite of what you think would be the appropriate kind of response. That can, and I also see bullying, fighting.

STEVE: Absolutely. Let's go out to our remote sites, and I'll ask you to kick-in with some typical behavior issues that you've seen from the youth that you try to serve.

This would be the point where somebody actually speaks out loud. (laugh) [19:55]

Meko: Hey, Steve. Can you hear me? I'm Meko from Richland County. Some, a major behavior that we see in youth is depression, which is huge in our area. And knowing how to channel that emotion.

STEVE: So they get depressed? How does that show up, in terms of behavior? What do depressed kids do, in your perspective?

Meko: Isolate themselves. Remove themselves from, you know, the social situations; you know, not following through with appointments even. You know, with the youth that we work with, and I think it goes back to that major issue of trust being a barrier, and trying to overcome that, in itself.

STEVE: Absolutely, those are really specific examples. Thanks for kicking-in first. We'll send you a bonus prize at the end of this session. [20:49]

Anyone else? Or, you can have what's behind curtain no. 2.

MUSKINGUM COUNTY: This is Muskingum County. Manipulation.

STEVE: Definitely. What do they manipulate you on?

MUSKINGUM COUNTY: Self-destruction.

STEVE: Can you give us an example of manipulation?

MUSKINGUM COUNTY: In an effort to gain what they want, if they're told "no", then they attempt to manipulate you sometimes.

STEVE: Absolutely, manipulation is real common with our group, and I think you're right when you say that's related to trust issues. They're not sure that we will get them what they need, and so, they're going to try to manipulate or lie to get what they need. Yep.

Let's get a bit more of input from the field, if we could.

BEN: This is Ben from Lake County.

STEVE: Hey, Ben.

BEN: Something I see a lot with my clients is self-sabotage. People who...

STEVE: How do they sabotage?

BEN: They, when they receive services from us, we help them either get a job or make a resume, or go to college, even, in some cases. And these guys, they get the help that they needed from us, but then something clicks with them, where they don't follow through. They don't think they can do it, and then they tell themselves that – they convince themselves that they can't. Then, they go back to where they were, even though they may have received a lot of help. It just doesn't, always, it's not enough for them.

STEVE: Absolutely true.

DARLENE: This is Darlene from Lake County. I just wanted to piggyback off of what he just stated. I get a lot of that, as well, but what I see – because I do home visits – a lot of that going back to self-sabotaging, is a lot of family dysfunction, as well. [22:43]

STEVE: Absolutely.

DARLENE: Because, for years – "I've been told I'm not nothing" or "You're not like that" and "You'll never be nothing" – so they'll get all this great support from the counselors, but then, what I experience is, my kids coming back to me saying, "Well, my mom says that, you know,

I'm nothing. My mom says this; my family's not supportive." It just takes them back to ground zero, if you will.

STEVE: You're so right. You know, it's so hard to undo the damage that's been done by parents whose lives are wrapped up in addiction, or in self-serving behaviors, or neighborhoods that are enveloped in poverty and violence. It's hard to undo that damage. It doesn't mean that our work isn't worthwhile, but, boy, it sure does seem like a lopsided effort from time to time.

So, as a system, what is our typical reaction to the kinds of problems that you've just mentioned? My background, as I mentioned earlier, is in special education – in particular, with kids with emotional behavioral problems, and I'll tell you what I've seen. As a system, it seems we begin to chastise those kids. When they misbehave, we lecture them, we kick them out of our classroom, we call their parents on them. If that doesn't work, we suspend them or expel them from school. We put them in special ed programs or alternative schools. We stick them in foster care and boot camps and detention centers. [24:06]

In a single word, our typical response as a nation seems to be punishment. Let me ask an important question: How's that been workin' for us? Not so good with this population. Now with probably 80 or even 90 percent of kids, they want to do well. Most kids want to do well, they want to have a connection with, not only their parents, but with their teachers, and with people in the community, and with their coaches and ministers and neighbors. And the approval or disapproval that they get from those folks is important to them.

But the kind of kids that you're serving, the ones who most need our help, aren't afraid of what we can do to them anymore. After what's been done to me, they say to themselves, there's nothing you can do that's going to scare me. Nothing you can do that's going to frighten me. We've run out of things to do to make these kids behave. We cannot force them into compliance. Yet, we continue trying. You know what Einstein said the definition of insanity was – doing the same things over and over and over again, and expecting different results.

This is a population of kids for whom punishment, alone, isn't working. Now, there is no magic solution – there is no silver bullet – but I'll tell you what I think you already know, there's no solution that's going to work at all, period, ever, without relationships. [25:28]

So, what we're going to be digging into now is understanding how to build better relationships with kids, by first understanding what they do to sabotage those relationships, and, then, what we can do to try to connect with them, despite those factors.

So if you've got one of those handouts that were emailed this morning. Then look on page three of it. If you don't, then you can follow along on the screen, or with the handout on the slides. Troubled kids often see themselves in the world around them, in a fundamentally different perspective, one that creates a self-fulfilling prophesy of failure and rejection. As you can see from the screen, it says that for many of our kids, predictable failure is better than unpredictable success.

Now, let me ask this question – this may seem unrelated, but I'll tie it back in – How many of you read to your children at night, or did, when they were little?

CAROL: Yep, absolutely.

STEVE: Carol, you did. Many of us did. It's an incredibly rewarding thing, like the woman on the screen there. To snuggle up with a kid and flip through a book and read together; they pretend read. How many of you have discovered that your kids want to read the same books, over and over and over again?

CAROL: Little tired of the Velveteen Rabbit after a while. (laugh)

STEVE: Night after night, the same books, and God help you if skip a page. Trying to get through it more quickly? 'Cause they'll know that you did.

Now why do they want to read the same books over and over again? Is it because they can't remember what happens next? No it isn't. It's because they need to know what's coming next. They need to be able to predict that, what's coming on that next page is exactly what came on it last night. They need to know that when you flip the page, just like last night, there'll be a picture of a princess and the castle and prince, or whatever might be there, and that you'll read the words tonight that you read last night. [27:00]

It's not that they can't remember what happened last night. It's that they want to be able to predict what's coming next. Because, to kids, predictability equals safety. Our worlds, now we can't control our worlds, not much of it, anyway. We can't control the weather, we can't control traffic. Little kids can control almost nothing in their world. So, they're powerless to influence what happens around them, although they can scream, and cry, and kick.

By and large, the adults have most of the power. But if they can predict what's happening, they feel safe. When you flip the page and, just like last night, there's that picture of the princess, the child says to himself, the world is a predictable, safe place. I know what's coming – I don't have to be afraid of what happens next.

Most of us want our lives to be predictable. We want to know what's coming next. We want to know what the weather's going to be like tomorrow, so we can prepare for it. We want to know that if I'm driving down the road, and if I stay on my side of the yellow line, you'll stay on your side of the yellow line. I don't have to worry that every single car that's coming at me at 60 miles an hour, might swerve and hit me head on. I, I need my world to be safe and predictable.

For the troubled kids that we work with, because they can't always get predictably good, in fact, they seldom get predictably good, they'll often settle for predictably bad. If they can't be sure that they can pass a test, well, they can be darn sure that they can fail the test. If they can't be sure that they can be successful on a job interview, well, then, they won't go to the job interview. They'll fail, but on whose terms do they fail? Their own.

It doesn't make sense to those of us that have been conditioned to do your best, regardless, and we believe that success or failure is largely in our hands. But to kids who've grown up in that kind of environment, that we're talking about today, very often, success or failure has been in the hands of parents whose lives have been filled with addiction and violence, who are incredibly unpredictable. If they can't get predictably good, they'll often settle for predictably bad. [29:28]

So, I want to share with you four dynamics by which troubled kids are able to manipulate their worlds so that, if they don't get what they want, they, at least, get predictable failure –that, if they can't get predictable success, they can't get you to get what they need, they can't get what they want – they, at least, know that they'll fail gloriously.

And follow along if you, like on page 3 of your notes, and – by the way, a lot of what I'm going to be chatting with you about today, I also have in little mini 3-page articles. So, if something that I talk about today appeals to you, and you're interested in more information about it, just send me an email. My email is all over this material, and I'll be happy to follow up with a 3-page little mini-article that you do for more reading.

So, the first pattern that's real common with troubled kids is aggression. Now, I want to ask my studio folks, here, and you, out there in radio land, and you, out there in remote sites, to chat with us as well. Aggressive kids are our first dynamic. What do aggressive kids do, what are they like?

PAUL: They like to lash out, like to, they're angry, they want to push your buttons.

STEVE: You're right about that Paul. They're angry. They shout a lot. What else have you seen from aggressive kids?

CAROL: They're on the offensive. They're not sitting back waiting for you to, they'll be in your face before you can be in theirs, I think. [30:54]

STEVE: You're right about that, Carol. They get right up in people's faces.

CAROL: They bully.

STEVE: Bullies, yep.

CAROL: They're always instigating.

STEVE: They often are, and they're not indirect about it either. They're, they're right up there, in your face. Typically, we see fighting, threatening, yelling, controlling, intimidating, damaging property. These are kids that are very direct about their issues. There's no doubt about it. They push, they bully, they intimidate. They'll even intimidate staff. These are the ones that slam doors – and you know they're in the room, when they're there.

Now, my background's as a cognitive behavioral specialist, so when I'm working with the kids, I'm doing more than just trying to figure out what they're doing and try to stop it. I'm trying to

figure what story is this youngster telling himself that explains this behavior, that justifies his behavior?

The aggressive kid has a world view that says, the world is a dangerous place, and, if you're going to survive, you have to strike first. The way they look at the world, the way that they've been conditioned, they look around – the world is not a gentle, kind place with people you can depend upon. The world is a dog-eat-dog place. It's a jungle, and only the strong survive.
[32:05]

Very often, aggressive kids, of course, have been raised in aggressive settings. Ah, they've got at least one aggressive parent. Not always, but often, they've been raised in environments where the basic needs aren't being met, and, really, only the strongest ones are able to get what they need. Very often, not always, but often, they're physically stronger, or physically larger, than their age mates. They often have a bigger personality, a more impulsive style. So it becomes very easy for them to slip into aggressive patterns.

And not surprisingly, the dominant feeling for an aggressive kid is anger. So, we might very well see a kid who's sad, an aggressive kid who's sad, but he covers it up with anger, or is frightened or nervous, or lonely. But, then he gets angry at the person who left him alone and left him feeling lonely.

So, this first pattern is probably the most common one that people talk about when they think of troubled kids. But, not surprisingly, when you checked in folks out there, when you checked in about the problems that you see most often with troubled kids, it wasn't aggression, but one of the two patterns, or three patterns, as I'll mention.

A second pattern that is real common with troubled kids is passive-aggression. Look at the smirk on the young lady on the screen. Passive-aggressive kids aren't passive, not at all. What does passive-aggressive mean, what do they do, what are they like?

PAUL: They like to, they like to produce an outcome. Do certain things that produce an outcome that they can benefit from. [33:43]

STEVE: You're right. They certainly will manipulate and push buttons to try to get people to behave certain ways. What else?

ANGEL: They gossip.

STEVE: Oh these are big gossipers. Yea. These are the ones that go, Alice, oh my God, did you hear what Angel said about Carol? You know what, it's nothing on me, but if I were Carol, I wouldn't put up with it.

CAROL: It's behind your back. It's not direct necessarily, but it's, it's there, and it's sneaky.

STEVE: They'll pretend to be your friend, but then they'll go behind your back and do some sneaky stuff, absolutely. These are the kids that are frequently sarcastic, mean, cynical. They'll

pretend to be pleasant; they'll pretend to be nice. "Oh, I only said that for your own good." "You know, you really might want to do something about your weight. I mean, if you want to be more popular, at least, you know." They're pretending to be friendly, but they're sticking you behind your back. In fact, the passive-aggressive kid will stab you in your back. While the aggressive kid stabs you where?

ALICE: In your face.

STEVE: Right in your chest. (laugh) The aggressive kid, the one we talked about first, will come right at you with guns blazing. The passive-aggressive kid is more like the submarine, that you don't even see until the last moment, and then, boom, there's an explosion. Now the passive-aggressive kid sees the world in a somewhat different way than the aggressive one does.

She sees the world as an unfair place. It might be dangerous, but mostly, it's an unfair place. A place where you can't count on people to say what they mean, and mean what they say. People are two-faced in her view. So, if you're going to survive, you've got to hide your real feelings – never show what you really feel. Never, let them see you sweat. They've often grown up in environments similar to the one that the aggressive kid grows up in. With scary, loud, demanding, threatening people.

But, unlike the aggressive kid, they often don't have the physical size or the fearless nature. What they do have, though, is a quick wit. And they've learned that, while they may not be able to push their big brother back, they can undermine him, they can push their buttons, even if they can't push their bodies. And they can run away before they get hit. "Mommy, mommy!" (laugh) And they've learned how to manipulate people very skillfully, while avoiding blame for it.

They've learned that, if they show their anger directly, that they're going to get beaten down. So, passive-aggressive kids have often learned that it's safer to pretend to have a smile. They have an angry smile on their face. You ask them "What's wrong, are you alright?" They go, "I'm fine. Thanks for asking." But, with that evil smile on their face, it's clear that something's wrong. [36:22]

The dominant feeling for this group is resentment. Resentment's, kind of, like anger, but it's anger with a lid on tight. They've learned, again, it's not safe to show your anger directly, so it sneaks out like steam around the lid of a pot that's boiling over with the lid on tight. It's a troubling population for some of us to deal with, because they won't tell you, straight up, what's wrong. They'll insist that they're just fine, and every nerve in your body knows that there's something wrong. And then, they'll go behind your back and report you to your supervisor for something that may have, or may not have, happened, rather than just being straight up with you about it. So, the first two dynamics, either directly or indirectly, influence or manipulate their peers. And that's how they get a sense of controllability to their worlds.

The third and fourth dynamics are a little less direct about it. The third dynamic is avoidance. Now, one of you this morning was talking about depressed kids, and that's exactly what we mean when we're talking about avoidance. Avoidance and depression go hand in hand; it's hard to know which one comes first, the chicken or the egg. Are avoidant kids depressed because

they're isolated, or are they isolated because they're depressed? I'm not sure it matters which one, but there's certainly a disconnect. What are some typical behaviors that you see from avoidant kids?

ANGEL: They don't show up.

STEVE: They don't show up to appointments.

PAUL: Withdrawn.

STEVE: When you do have them in a job club, they're withdrawn. They're the ones that are least likely to participate.

ALICE: Every part of their being just shows they don't want to participate.

STEVE: It does. These are the kids that will, their heads down, their hoodies up, their hair in their face. Absolutely. Typically, we see a lot of isolation. They're the ones that are least likely to make friends with other people in the group, and, if they do, it's usually with other kids who are also isolators. They typically slip into counter culture groups. Back, they get into a Goth culture, or they'll get into an alternative culture that's so far off to the left, that they cannot identify with anything close to mainstream.

And they'll often shut down, they'll get high – getting high, or getting drunk, is a great way to escape the reality of your life so you don't have to face what's really going on. They'll sleep up to twenty hours a day. Sometimes, the only time they're awake is in the middle of the night, when they're playing an online video game, or something like that.

These are kids that will often hurt themselves. The girls will, frequently, cut on their arms; the boys will gouge themselves or tattoo themselves with the razors. They'll tattoo or pierce themselves to an extreme, beyond body art. They'll go to a point where their bodies are mutilated – quite literally – mutilated by the choices that they've made. They'll put, not just ear rings in their ears, or an occasional one in their nose, they'll put ear rings in their eye brows and their cheeks, a bone through their nose, tattoos up their arms and across their faces. May not, very often, these avoidant kids will deface themselves.

When you offer them help, they'll refuse. "Paul you look like you're struggling with something. Can I help?" (in a low voice) "No, it's ok." "Really, Paul I'm happy to help ya." "I'm alright, I don't need any help." Pretty soon, you find yourself responding in kind. "Okay, Paul, let me know if you change your mind." (laugh) And, kind of, sound like Eeyore, on Winnie the Pooh. And, then, you walk away, and he says, "See I told you, you didn't want to help me." (laugh) It becomes a real self-fulfilling prophecy of failure. He pushes you away, and then complains that you left. The world. [40:08]

CAROL: He proved you right.

STEVE: In fact, that's exactly what all of these dynamics do, Carol, is, they get us to behave in ways that prove them right. Now, an avoidant kid will often behave or believe that the world is an unforgiving, uncaring place. That's how he sees the world – and to survive, you can't fight, you can't manipulate. You just don't have the power to do that. So, it's best just to escape your problems. Just, go ahead, and disconnect. It doesn't matter, just disconnect, and forget about it. And the dominant feeling, not surprisingly, is a sense of depression, hopelessness, helplessness. It doesn't matter, just go ahead, and disconnect. [40:47]

Now, the final dynamic that we're looking at today. I'm glad to get off those avoidant kids; it's depressing just talking about them, isn't it? The final dynamic is a dependent child. What are dependent kids like? What do you see from dependent kids, Angel, Alice, Paul?

PAUL: Needy, needy, needy.

STEVE: Oh my goodness, you're so right.

ANGEL: Help me, please.

STEVE: Help me, help me.

ALICE: It's, like, they can't do anything on their own, and they don't plan to. They want you to make all the decisions for them.

STEVE: And if you're not there to help them when they want it, bam, they get demanding, don't they? These are your needy, clingy, whiny, demanding kids. They often have difficulty making friends with their peers, so they'll turn to adults for their primary source of approval. They'll, they'll isolate themselves from their peers and cling on to you. When they do make friends, they often will do anything for those friends – give up their individuality. In relationships, girls, in particular, will give up their sexuality for, just to be in a relationship. They'll give up everything about themselves, and they're surprised – hurt, betrayed – when their friends won't do the same things for them. These are kids that often grow up in environments where either there's an over-controlling parent – a parent that wants to fix and control everything that they do. Could be extremely demanding parent, that's constantly telling them, you're not smart enough, you're not good enough; here, let me fix it for you.

OCD parents often create dependent children, or, it could be that they're growing up in an environment that's surrounded by dependency, chemical dependency, as well. When you've got parents who are drug users, alcohol abusers, then it's not surprising that kids develop perspectives of dependency, as well. [42:39]

Now, typically, they have a world view that the world is a scary place, and if you're going to survive, you're too weak, you're too dumb, you're too small to do it on your own. All their lives they've been told: find a protector to take care of you, find somebody who will do it for you. And so, of course, they feel incredibly anxious about, about doing anything on their own. And it's tempting, when we're working with these kids, to go ahead and do it for them.

They make it, because they are very cooperative, initially. They will do what we ask them to do. In fact, they're so grateful for our help, that it's really rewarding to finally get someone who's not cursing you out, or trying to manipulate you, or trying to fall asleep on you. This kid is, like, "Oh, I'm so glad you came to help me." But after a while, they become the emotional vampires of your program. They will suck the last ounce of compassion and energy out of you, until you've got nothing left to offer.

You start wishing that this kid won't come to job club this morning. When they walk in the door, you duck your head and hope they don't notice you're there. But it doesn't matter, they saw you walking by. "Miss Angel, I'm right here. Let me know when you're ready for me." "Well, I'm kind of busy." "It's okay, I'll wait." (laugh) And they do, all day long. So, finally, when you've got no more energy left to give these kids, they get assigned to someone else's case. So they're like "Oh my gosh, I'll, Miss Alice, I'm on your case load now. I used to be on Miss Angels case load, but I think she's got issues." (laugh) Yea, I've got issues – you. (laugh) [44:18]

Now, all four of these dynamics are, with these dynamics, kids are able to do two things: either get what they need from us – the dependent kid gets us to help him by demanding it; the aggressive kid gets us to do the things that he wants by intimidating; the depressed gets us to leave him alone by refusing to engage. If they can't get what they want, though, they can, at least, assure that they failed on their terms. They ultimately push people away, and when we do, when we step away, they go – see, that's why I can't trust adults. That's why I never, I can't, count on them myself. That's why I get aggressive and pushy, and I'll bully, is because, sooner or later, you got to take care of business yourself. They ultimately fail, but they fail on their terms.

Quickly, let's take a look at the screen, and if your, this part, is not in your booklet, but follow along on the screen. Imagine four kids going through a practice job interview. Each one of them reaches a question that he or she cannot answer, and feels stressed out. Now, our character Perry has this to say. Paul, would you mind reading Perry's voice for us?

PAUL: Sure. Perry: "I tell you what, bud, I got no clue. Guess you think I'm stupid now, right? It's not like YOU'RE Mr. Perfect. I've seen your desk, and CLEARLY you have some organizational issues..."

STEVE: Now, Perry. What style is Perry using? What do you all think here?

Voice: Passive-aggressive.

STEVE: That's passive-aggressive Perry. He's being cynical and sarcastic, and he's triggered by feeling, kind of, stupid and can't answer a question. But, what he's doing is lashing out at us.

Our second character is DJ. Alice, would you mind reading DJ? Okay.

ALICE: DJ: "Can you give me a hint? I really need to get this job. If I don't, my parents said they're gonna kick me out. Maybe just a little hint? Pleeese?"

STEVE: Woof, it gives me the shivers just listening to that whiny voice. You're right Angel, that's a dependent kid. That's the dependent DJ. [46:18]

Angel, would you mind reading Andy's character?

ANGEL: Andy: "Smart --- people like you are always tryin' me. I'm ----- sick of it. Let me tell you – one of these days I'm gonna slap you upside the head, then we'll see how smart you are."

STEVE: (laugh) What do you think?

PAUL: Aggressive.

STEVE: That's pretty aggressive. That's aggressive Andy. When he gets triggered, you don't wonder if he's upset about something. He let's you know straight up.

And then, our final character is Adrian. Carol?

CAROL: Adrian: "Can we take a quick break? I had a lot of coffee this morning and just need to use the restroom. Don't go anywhere.... I'll be right back!"

STEVE: Of course, Adrian walks out the door and never returns. Which pattern is she?

Avoidant.

STEVE: That's avoidant Adrian. Absolutely.

So, here's my first key point, and you'll find this in your booklet, towards the last page, and also, of course, right up here on the screen. At-risk kids will often adopt negative mindsets, which let them predict how people will react to them. Aggression, passive aggression, avoidance, and dependency – these are all examples of these self-defeating patterns of behavior that let kids fail, but fail on their own terms.

So, what I'd like to do, next, is chat with you some about how stress affects the way that kids behave. And we'll go from there, to also looking at how childhood trauma does the same thing. Troubled kids experience chronic stress, it says on the screen. With greater intensity, frequency, and duration than do normal kids, and it overwhelms their ability to cope. You know, adolescence is a tough time for any kid, but it's particularly tough for the kids, the kind of kids who lead the lives that we do.

I see stress as a magnifying glass. I'm, when you're under stress, problems don't get bigger, but they sure do look bigger. I mean, imagine yourself coming back from a difficult day at work. It's been a horrific day, your co-workers have been getting on your case, the kids have been demanding, your stomach has been aching, something's going wrong with ya. You got a speeding ticket on the way home, and you know you're going to hear about it from your spouse or significant other.

You're just having a miserable day, and you're in an absolutely terrible mood. When you walk in the door, and you trip over a toy in the front hallway, and, suddenly, it seems like nobody else in this house ever does anything to clean this place up. I am the only one who ever tidies up here. Why does nobody else ever pick up after themselves? And, that little toy – that one little issue out in the hallway – suddenly seems, through the magnifier of stress, to be a monster issue. And you are ready to divorce your spouse, and abandon your family, because you are the only one who ever does anything of value. You can't count on any of them. Now, of course, that's a silly example. But if we're under stress and it exaggerates our problems, how much worse must it be for troubled kids?

Let's go ahead, I want to encourage a discussion about stressful issues that you know your kids have at home or school. Let's flip back to the screen, so that the audience can see me and I can see them, as well. [49:28]

I'd like to have a brief discussion with you about home issues, school issues, or personal issues that are, in your perspective, affect your kid's lives and their behavior. What stresses your kids out?

MUSKINGUM COUNTY: Divorce.

STEVE: Absolutely, parents going through divorce, or abandonment issues. Absolutely. When you jump in, tell me what county you're from, as well.

MUSKINGUM COUNTY: Muskingum

STEVE: Let's get a few more counties to kick in. What else stresses out your kids?

JACKSON COUNTY: Jackson County here. I think taking them out of their comfort zone, and trying to get them to do something, actually accomplish something.

STEVE: Give me an example of taking them out of their comfort zone.

JACKSON COUNTY: Well, when they're particularly used to doing nothing, or doing nefarious things, and then, you try to get them in some type of training or education program – or get them into a job. They start to feel bogged down because it's not something that they're necessarily used to, and, sometimes, you get a lot of push back on those kinds of things.

STEVE: Absolutely, they might get stressed out because you're asking them to dress differently, to carry themselves differently, to use different language. And it stresses them out. You're right. What else do you see that's stressful in your kid's life?

STARK COUNTY: Stark County here, Paul. Dealing with just graduation fees, just normal fees in life. (absolutely) A lot of times they can't even, you know, they can't even live for a \$20 fee. [51:13]

STEVE: So fees come out of the blue. Stark County, I see we're well represented there. Shout out to you all. What else do we have?

ASHTABULA COUNTY: Hi, this is Ashtabula. (they must have got cut off) (go ahead, cut in).

TRUMBULL COUNTY: Trumbull County, parent's expectations. Wanting straight A's and not being able to accomplish that.

STEVE: Well said. That's especially true for kids who have learning difficulties. Not all of our kids poverty stricken environments. Some of them are coming from middle or upper-middle class environments, and their parents have exceptionally high expectations of them. Good point. Let's get one more.

MADISON COUNTY: Madison County here. Madison, domestic violence.

STEVE: Very true, and that's not restricted to poverty-stricken homes, either. But domestic violence can leave kids incredibly stressed out. Whether they're the victims of that violence, or not. You know, it's more traumatizing for a four-year old to watch his mother being beaten down, than it is for him to be beaten himself.

For a four-year old, your mother is a protector, a nurturer, a provider. She is a goddess to you, and, if the world can beat your mother down, what does that say about how safe you are? Domestic violence is incredibly stressful for our kids. You're right. Let's go back to the PowerPoint slide. And we'll go on to the next piece of our content.

So, with our kids being as stressed out as they are about some of the things that you've mentioned, is it any wonder that they sometimes over-react to minor problems? It seems like it's no big deal when we ask them to bring in a job application. We get impatient when they haven't completed a packet, when they don't show up on time. They should be able to manage a bus schedule, or juggle the demands of school, and work at the same time.

Is it? But with all the stress that they're struggling with, with all the burdens that they're carrying – the normal developmental ones, like dating, and acne and cramps, all those normal developmental issues – and then, we add, on top, the kinds of things we've been talking about. Of course, they're going to be overwhelmed. Very often, they simply over-react to what we would consider to be a minor problem. [53:42]

One of the things that can stress out a student, and we've alluded to this several times this morning, is trauma. An awful lot of our kids have been deeply impacted by traumatic events in their early childhood years. A lot of times, these events can change them. Not only emotionally, which we might understand, but physically, even biochemically. That can create changes in our bodies and, as a result, impact their behavior. Not just in their early childhood years, but in their teenage years and throughout adulthood, as well.

When you think of PTSD, let me ask my studio folks here: When you think of PTSD, what flashes to mind?

PAUL: Victims, survivors of war.

STEVE: Yes, exactly. Like soldiers coming back from Iraq or Afghanistan. Or people who have been victimized during those wars. Sure, what else?

ALICE: Foster youth who have been moved from home to home. Been to five or six high schools.

STEVE: Absolutely, and because of your background with foster care, it's near and dear to your heart, Alice.

People often think of victims of rape or domestic violence, for instance, or survivors of natural disasters, like hurricane Katrina. We think PTSD, that makes perfect sense. But, by far, Alice, you're right. By far, the most common form of PTSD is childhood trauma. Kids who have gone through severe abuse and neglect throughout their lives. Like the young man on the screen, right now.

When you think of childhood trauma, by definition, childhood trauma's a psychological trauma that comes from severe – and, usually repeated – instances of physical, sexual, psychological abuse, neglect, or exposure to extreme violence during childhood. That definition is, the words in that definition, they hit us in the mind, but they don't touch our hearts. It's only when we get specific examples, I think, that we really appreciate just how deeply these traumas impact individual kids. [55:41]

Statistically, eighteen percent of all adult men and twenty-six percent of all adult American women have had at least one severely abusive childhood experience, sexually or physically abusive. So, if we've got a hundred of you out there in audience right now, then there are probably twenty of you, or twenty-five of you, that, right now, are sitting around your tables and have had, as a child, at least one severely abusive experience. Now, chances are good that you've bounced back from that. Maybe it was even more than one, but you've bounced back. But that doesn't mean that you still don't have a scar somewhere inside, that there aren't still times when horrible memories come back to you, or when a movie or a song, or listen to a conversation. It's just more than you can deal with.

The kids that we're talking about have often had more, far, far more than one. Alice, you've worked with foster care, so you know that kids in residential treatment centers, that ninety percent of girls and about forty-two percent of boys have a known history of being sexually abused and molested, usually by someone that they know and thought that they could trust. A family member or a friend of the family. [56:53]

In 2007, 5.8 million were referred to child protective services. Usually, by teachers in elementary school or pre-school, who saw bruises, cuts, were worried about something they saw concerned them. And they reported it to child protective services. Of those 5.8 million, there were almost eight hundred thousand confirmed victims of severe physical, sexual, or psychological abuse or neglect.

CAROL: Estimates of how many aren't reported? Is there an idea of much worse than it really is?

STEVE: Absolutely, we don't know. But, certainly, only a fraction of cases get reported and there are many of those 5.8 million cases where abuse was suspected, but couldn't be proven or confirmed. And this is the scariest number – out of those 800,000, almost 1,800 children were murdered by their parents. 1,800 deaths are a direct result of abuse or neglect. 1,800 children, half of them infants. Infants who couldn't speak for themselves, who couldn't fight back, who couldn't do anything, except be victimized by the parents who brought them into this world. We live in a country, arguably the most advanced nation in the world, and we've had 1,800 children murdered by their parents, or died as a result of abuse and neglect. This is a staggering statistic, a disheartening one, and it's something that we, as a nation, can do something about. [58:30]

I want to talk more about the impact of the abuse and neglect on the 795,000 children who survived it. The direct results of abuse/neglect are often pretty visible. The physical ones, anyway. We see bruises, broken bones, and malnutrition. The psychological injuries are harder to see, but just as real. Dissociation is one example, a disconnection with reality. Young people who zone out, not day dreaming the way almost any kid might, but unable to connect with what's going on around them, a long-term disconnection. Not surprisingly, those kids often turn to drugs or alcohol as a way of numbing themselves even further.

A second one is that startle reflex, that hyper-arousal. Kids who are on constant edge – a loud door, a loud voice, a tap on the shoulder as you're walking by, and, suddenly, they startle or get frightened.

And a third is re-experiencing nightmares, or flashbacks. Now, we're familiar with veterans from wars coming back and having flashbacks when they see fireworks or they hear a siren or a car backfiring. But it happens to kids, as well – when a voice is raised, sometimes; when the smell of a particular cologne can bring back the trauma of a violent rape for a girl, or for a boy who has been raped by and, often repeatedly, by a man who was wearing that cologne when he was originally assaulted. [1:00:05]

Now there are long-term physical changes that aren't always connected. We don't always realize how connected they are to trauma. For instance, twenty to twenty-five percent of children who have been traumatized, end up with a physical disability that never heals. It might be something as simple as a broken finger, or a dislocated elbow that is weak for the rest of their lives. It could be something as severe as a brain injury.

Kids who have been sexually abused, even those who have not had direct injuries to their brains, often have a smaller brain size. Malnutrition, sexual abuse, and shaken baby syndrome, for instance, can lead to a brain size that is quite literally seven or eight percent smaller. And then, what I think is most startling, are home, permanent hormonal changes. Take two teenage girls say, Angel and Alice, one of whom has been sexually abused repeatedly over and over during her early childhood years when she was 6, 7, 8, 9-years old. Now, it's been years since the events have happened, and they're both sitting in class. If we were to do a blood test of them in

a resting state, we would find that Angel has higher levels of adrenalin and noradrenalin in her blood stream, in a resting state than Alice does.

Catecholamines are those adrenalin and noradrenalin cortisol that are responsible for the body responding in a fight-or-flight mode. So, Angel is constantly ready for fight or flight. Even in a resting state, her body is biochemically primed to run or to fight back, and this could be years after the abuse incidents took place. [1:01:49]

Permanent changes to biochemistry. Now, we see a lot of behavioral changes, as well. Many of the things that you complained about earlier, in terms of behaviors you've seen from our youngsters, things that we talked about in terms of their aggression and passive-aggression. Girls, more often than boys, tend to internalize with avoidance, depression, and withdrawal, sleeping problems, suicidal thoughts, self-injurious behaviors. Boys – although girls can slip into externalizing symptoms as well – boys, more often fighting, unprovoked aggression, direct defiance, and substance abuse, criminal behavior.

I'm not making excuses for this behavior. I'm not saying that they have no choice in whether they fight, or get defiant, or hurt themselves. They do have choices, but their pasts, their traumatized pasts, have hardwired them for certain responses, and it becomes much harder for them to not kneejerk, withdrawal, or all the rest. As I mentioned, girls often lean toward internalizing symptoms, and boys toward externalizing. One of the fascinating things, the sad things about victims of sexual abuse, is this – that some of them, most of them, children who have been sexually abused, will avoid physical contact. [1:03:00]

That's not surprising. I taught fifth grade, my first year, with a group of emotionally troubled, very emotionally troubled kids, many of whom had been abused. And I had two girls in my class; one of whom, whenever I walked near her, would shy away. If I, even after months of working with her, if I laid a hand lightly on her shoulder, she would startle and shy away. She wanted nothing to do with me. Even though I was nothing close to an abuser.

The other one demonstrated highly sexualized behavior. Even at age ten, she was already being seductive toward her classmates and even toward me, as a male teacher. She had been so sexually abused, so exposed to sexualized behavior from age six and age seven, that she was already behaving in an highly sexualized way, long before it was developmentally normal for her to do that. [1:03:58]

You know, as I mentioned, I've been a special ed teacher, at least, that's how I got my career started. When I first started working with troubled kids, people would ask me at a party – they'd say – “So, what do you do Steve?” And I'd say, “So, well I'm a special ed teacher.” And they would always give me the same response, “Really, that must be so rewarding.” I'm sure you hear the same thing when you talk about kids that you work with. And they, of course, would always be picturing certain kinds of kids, like the ones up on the screen. They picture a kid with down syndrome, or a child in a wheel chair, as a special ed kid. And I'd go, “No, no I actually work the emotionally disturbed behavior disordered kids, like the one up there.” And they'd go, “Oh, the bad ones!” (laugh) And I'd say, “No, no they're not bad. Well some of them are bad,

maybe, but most of them are just good kids, or kids who have been through bad times, or have made some bad choices.”

You know, it’s natural for some people to look at a kid, like the one we have on the screen, and to see him as angry and bad. It’s natural to look at a student who’s gossiping and manipulating, and to see them as unkind, or see a depressed kid as lazy, or dependent kid as unwilling to do his own thing.

Sometimes I wish that we could go beneath the surface and take a look at these traumatic wounds that our kids have suffered – to look beneath the surface and see what’s really there. If we could take this young girl, and for every time that she’s been burned by her mother, who put her drug habit ahead of her daughter, that those burn scars could rise to the surface. If we could look at this young child, and every time that his spirit was crushed as a toddler by the abuses he suffered and can never talk about. If those bruises could rise to the surface again. If we could look at this young girl, and for every time her body was battered by being smacked around by her step-father. Every time that her heart was broken by the people that didn’t show up in her life. If those bruises and broken bits could show up on her skin. If for every time that this young girl, her heart has been hurt, her spirit has been crushed. Every time that she has been cut by harsh words from people she thought were her friends. If those cuts could show up on her arms. If every, if we could look inside this young man, and see this one instead, see the pain, the emotional pain that these kids are going through, would we not treat them somewhat differently? Would we not reach out to them and handle them in a different way? I have to believe that we would. [1:06:35]

So, my second key point is on the screen, and it’s in your booklets, if you’re following along. It’s on the last page. Because troubled kids experience overwhelming chronic stresses in their lives, they’re often going to overreact to what we would consider to be a minor problem. And because many of them have suffered childhood trauma, they also have significant emotional, mental and physical damage.

It leads often to making them what Sandra Bloom, the, one of the leading researchers in trauma informed care says: exquisitely sensitive to shaming. So, almost anything that appears to be disrespectful, or put them on the spot, or embarrassing or humiliating – even a comment we intended to be funny, came out a little bit sarcastic – can be over-reactive.

So, the second part of what we are going to cover in the time that we have left is “how to avoid power struggles”. And if you’re following along in your booklet, I’m on the top of page five of the handout. If you’re following along in the slides, I’m sure you’re flipping them with me. Troubled kids can often draw even helping adults, people that really do care, into destructive power struggles. They over-react to basic requests – turn off your cell phone, put that magazine away, I need you to show up on time, don’t make any more excuses, just take responsibility. They react with anger, and sarcasm, with whining, and withdrawal. And when staff react in-kind, we ultimately feed into battles of will, and we end up damaging those relationships.

The model that really helps us to understand how staff can get drawn into these power struggles and how we can end up being, if not abusers, at least triggering power struggles with kids, is the

conflict cycle. A model that was created by a mentor of mine, Dr. Nicholas Long. He says that kids carry around with them negative beliefs about themselves or others. I picture that as being a stick of dynamite that they're carrying around in their backpack, that's got a very short fuse and is just waiting for something to set it off.

So, a kid walks into class with a negative belief – adults are constantly picking on him, they're always looking for a chance to put him down, to make him look bad in front of his peers. That they're always up in his business. And he carries those beliefs around, everywhere he goes. Then he comes into your office, sits down, pulls out his cell phone, and starts to text while you're having a conversation, and you say, "Excuse me, would you mind, please just put that cell phone away. That's disrespectful." That's not an unreasonable request. Most of us have asked kids to do something just like that. But for him, because he thinks that adults are always looking for ways to put him down and make him look bad, that triggers that negative belief.

It activates some strong feelings of being picked on, for instance, and because he's not real good at managing those feelings, he may very well respond impulsively, as a passive-aggressive kid would respond with sarcasm. He might say, "Well sure I'll put it away, if you'll turn your laptop off." Now, a well-trained staff member would recognize that this is a kid reacting emotionally and might try to calm him down or use reason with him. But, if we're under stress ourselves or our buttons are being pushed, it's real easy for us to react with negative consequences and to say something like, "I said put it away. If you don't want to put it away, we'll just consider this little interview over. How's that?"

Now, of course that calms the kids right down, right? (laugh) When we react with negative consequences to a stressful situation, we almost always increase the stress for the kid and for us. Now he's not just embarrassed and feeling picked on, now he's getting angry, and so he or she responds with greater anger and greater sarcasm. They might mutter under their breath, some profanity, and we turn to them and say, "Excuse me, what did you say, young man?" Which only gives him the opportunity to repeat what he said. Around and around it goes until "Pow! Bam! Splat" we've got a full-blown crisis on our hands. I was a Batman fan growing up, can you tell? (laugh) [1:10:48]

We're going to bypass the little story that's there on the bottom of page five. It's just an example of the way a power struggle can unfold, much like the one I just shared with you now. I want to take a few minutes, however, to go over some adult anger traps. As you see on this screen, it says that, despite our training, there are times when, even as professionals, we might react personally rather than responding professionally.

By understanding what pushes our buttons, we can do a better job of guarding against that personal reaction. So, follow along if you've got the handout that we emailed you. Follow along on page six. If not, then just follow along on the screen. And I want you to ask yourself, as I go through these five traps, which one you feel like you're most susceptible to, at this point in your life.

The first one is outside stress. It can be, happen, that we're stressed out about other things that are going on in our lives, whether they're at home or at work. And because we're stressed about

those other things, we over-react to, otherwise, minor situations with a kid. You get a kid in your office, on that cell phone again, and you've just come out from an angry meeting with your supervisor, and you just got chewed out. You haven't been able to let go of it; you walk straight into a meeting with a youth and he's got that daggone cell phone out. And you find yourself snapping at him. You're not so angry at him, you're upset about the meeting that you just had. You're just taking it out on the kid. Any one of us is capable of displacing that stress from our home or work lives. We try to be fair, but we're human beings, and sometimes we get stressed out, too. [1:12:29]

A second one is embarrassment. That can happen when we do our best to deal with a challenging situation, and nothing that we do, seems to work. We end up feeling incompetent, helpless, and inadequate, trying to deal with the situation. Maybe you got assigned to teach the class at the very last minute. You're not prepared; you don't know what you're teaching. You walk in and the kids won't listen, no one's paying attention, and you find yourself getting angry. That anger is really coming from embarrassment, or a sense of inadequacy.

A third one is fear, or shock. Some of our kids are big and scary, especially those aggressive ones. Some of them aren't so big and scary, as they are creepy. And we can deal with some kids that are, will sometimes do, or ask us questions, that will put us in a spot, where we just feel really on edge. I think you know the ones I'm talking about. Kids who manage to find out something about your personal life, or who ask you a question about a son or a daughter of yours, or reveal that they know where you live, and you're, like – Where did you get that information and what are you going to do with it? We get very angry when we feel afraid or suddenly shocked by something like that. [1:13:45]

The fourth one is probably the most common one, and that's a values violation. We have a core value of belief about how people should behave, should be treated. That gets violated by a young person's behavior, and then we feel a deep indignation, a righteous anger. I had a co-worker, a pregnant female co-worker, one time, and we were all very protective of her. We were all so excited for her, and I had a youth in my class that, when I was teaching, said, "I'm going to kick her right in the stomach." He was so, and I'll tell you what, I let my rage come up. It was everything I could do, not to grab this kid and shove him up against the wall. Now, if he tried to kick her, then perhaps stepping in between and doing a restraint of some sort would have been appropriate. But those were fighting words for me. I don't even know where it came from, but that protective instinct kicked in.

And finally, as an authority challenge. With this one, this isn't protective instincts. If we're protecting anything, it's our own dignity. We get caught up in a power struggle, because we're gonna prove to the kids who is in charge. "You will do what you're told, young lady, and you'll do it right now. Yea, not five minutes from now, but by the time I count to five, you will do what I tell you to do." [1:14:50]

I remember saying that exactly to a kid early in my career. I went, "1..2.., he went 3..4..5..B." Now what? (Laugh) and I realized that he called my bluff, cause there was nothing I could do to force him to comply. And I just put myself on the spot, looking like a fool. So, let's just have a

very brief conversation in our studio audience here, and I encourage you, as we're talking, to chat amongst yourselves as well.

Which of these anger traps do you find yourself falling into most often? Which are the biggest traps for you? [1:15:35]

PAUL: I know, in my experience with youth, is the authority challenge because rules are so important and we feel like maintaining the rules. We're able to maintain discipline and compliance, and that was always sort of a – how do you deal with it after you've broken the rules? After you try to enforce it and they broke it. What do you do then?

STEVE: And so, that focus on discipline and compliance can really lead to authority challenges.

CAROL: I think another part of it, for me, is probably similar, but it's somewhere in my head that I believe that I should not excuse behavior. That I shouldn't enable behavior. So I end up trying to take a strong stand, to say, "I'm not going to let it go by." And I think that's a wrong reaction. But, that's sometimes what I'm thinking when it's, it's hit me hard.

STEVE: That's authority challenge as well. Although, it's also a values violation, when we say to ourselves, "I shouldn't have to deal with this", then the core value that's being violated. Alice and Angel what are your biggest traps?

ALICE: I'd say for me, at least with my own kids, it's stress that I carry into situations with them, and I always try to think of myself, of living with margins, and when I don't have those margins. You know, anything just falls apart when things go wrong.

STEVE: So, if you're stressed out about other things that are going, it's easy to bring that stress into work with you. If you're being rushed especially. What about you, Angel?

ANGEL: It goes both with the authority challenge and values violation. From my culture, it's always, we respect authority, no matter what, and so, when it gets to me, I feel like, OK

STEVE: So, because you respect authority, you expect that others will also respect your authority. That makes perfect sense. That's a values violation and an authority challenge.

So my third key point is on the screen. In your booklet, on the last page, if you're following along. Troubled kids often overreact emotionally to problems, especially when they're stressed out. And they can draw us into destructive power struggles. In situations like this, it's really important that we manage to avoid those self-defeating traps. Not just their traps, but ours, as well. We should try build on their strengths rather than reinforcing their weaknesses.

Now we've got about ten minutes left to our session, and then I'll be, I'll stay here, and do some question and answer for those who want to hang out. In that remaining time, what I would like to do, to share with you some active listening skills that can help us to do a better job of connecting with troubled kids when they bring problems to us. Our session this afternoon will also have

some instruction on listening skills. So, we'll be building on what we do this morning, later on this afternoon.

As it says on the screen, troubled kids often have difficulty expressing themselves when they're upset. Often, what they end up doing, is slipping into patterns of aggression and avoidance, and passive aggression, and so on. So one of the best ways to maintain a professional perspective and to de-escalate them, to bring them down out of that stress mode, is to use good listening skills. Not only do we get the story accurately, but we also communicate that we care.

There's three levels of listening. When we talk about active listening, we usually mean attending, which means paying attention carefully to what the youth is saying, and doing all the verbal and non-verbal things, like nodding, and so on – that show that we truly are paying attention. Decoding, which means reading between the lines. And then reflecting, which means, to bounce back to the youth what we hear him saying – which proves that we're listening, and also gives us a chance to redirect. It might be that we didn't hear accurately and he says, "No that's not it." It's actually something different.

So, let's briefly, in the minutes we have left, take a quick look at each one of these three.

The first level of listening is attending. As it says on your screen and in your booklet; good listening is more than just waiting your turn to talk. You know, my wife is fond of telling me, "You know, Steve, you need to take one of your own courses." I'll laugh at her and say, "What are you talking about?" She'll say, "You know, you go all over the country teaching people how to be good counselors and good listeners. You're a terrible listener."

One time I tried to prove to her what a good listener I was, by repeating back to her pretty much everything she'd said in the previous five minutes. Gentlemen, don't try that. What my wife means when she says, I'm not listening, is not that I didn't hear what she said. What she means is that, I'm not making her feel as if what she said matters to me at all.

When a kid brings to us a certain problem, he wants to talk with us about something, it's important that we do more than just hear, it's important that we truly listen. And those attending skills that are on page seven of your booklet are clearly, some of them are clearly good and some of them are clearly bad. So, if you haven't already done so, just mark "G" for good, and "B" for bad. And as we do that, let's talk here in the studio about which ones, of the things we do, you think are bad habits. If you're looking in your booklet, they're on page seven. You're following on the screen, you won't find them. So let's chat briefly. You can follow along with our conversation.

ANGEL: Ah, looking at your watch is a bad thing.

STEVE: Not so good to look at your watch.

PAUL: Texting, while someone's talking to you.

STEVE: Texting is not such a good way to show that you're truly paying attention.

CAROL: Interrupting, is absolutely ah, sometimes you think that's, you're connecting with someone because you can finish their thought, and that's, actually, counterproductive.

STEVE: That's so annoying, isn't it? But I do it often. Now, there are things that we say that are also helpful. If you've got that handout in front of you. You can see that we could probably come up with some of our own, as well. What are some things that we say that are helpful and that show that we're truly paying attention?

ALICE: I like to use, How did that make you feel?

STEVE: How did that make you feel?

ALICE: So, that you really get more, and not the activity or the event, but, the feeling.

STEVE: Absolutely.

CAROL: I like, tell me a little bit more about that. Just opening it up and letting somebody know that you are truly interested in hearing more than the surface.

STEVE: You might be, if you're listening in the background, you might be hearing me, without even meaning to. I'm doing a little "mm", or "ah oh yea, definitely". Those are little things that we say, are ways that we indicate that we're listening and urging the youth to share as well.

A second level of listening, is decoding. Now, much of what we really mean, goes beneath our words. It's communicated paraverbally, or nonverbally. And a good listener is skilled at reading between the lines, not just at hearing what's said, but hearing what's not being said. The difference between our verbal and nonverbal messages for instance. The classic study was done in 1969 by researcher named Mehrabian and he discovered, of course, most of what people mean is really communicated through means other than their actual words. If you, for my audience in the room; what would you guess, in terms of facial expressions and body language, out of 100 percent, how much of real meaning is communicated that way?

ANGEL: Probably about 55 percent.

STEVE: What an amazing guess, Angel, 55 percent. (laughing)

ANGEL: They always say, actions speak louder than words.

STEVE: Action. They sure do.

PAUL: I say that 55 percent of the time. (laugh) [1:23:00]

STEVE: 55, Mehrabian found 55 percent of our real meaning is communicated by body language and facial expressions. So, you ask somebody, "How you feeling, you doing okay?" And their head is hung, and their shoulders are slumped, and their body is kind of trembling, and

they say, “Sure, yea, I’m okay.” And you say to yourself, well they don’t look okay. 55 percent of meaning. 38 percent by tone of voice. This, you can tell, just on this, on the phone, right? “So Steve, how ya doing? Uh, huh, I’m fine.” Clearly, I’m not fine. Most of what you’ve picked up is from tone of voice. And, finally only 7 percent from our actual words.

This is why it’s a dangerous thing to do, to communicate emotional information with emails and texts. Emails are fine for factual information, but when we’re trying to communicate a feeling, emails are challenging, because – not because we’re not necessarily using our words properly – but because most people rely on body language and tone of voice to interpret our words.

How many of us have sent an email or text that we thought we were being clever, only to have it misinterpreted as cynical? We thought we were being funny and the other person thought we were being rude. It’s very easy to do. So, when kids talk with us, when they share a message with us, when they come to talk about a problem, listen to their words, of course, but look even more deeply for their body language, facial expression, and tone of voice. [1:24:34]

Look at the young lady on the screen. What do you interpret there, what do you decode? Chances are, you’re seeing her anger, her helplessness, and her frustration.

Take a look at this young man, leaning into the locker. I’m not seeing anger there, what are you all seeing?

ANGEL: Depressed.

STEVE: Depression.

PAUL: He seems lost, hopeless.

STEVE: He does. He looks lost and hopeless. Yea, I came up with some other words that are very similar – embarrassed, defeated, and worried. Lost and hopeless, I think, are real accurate. If you stepped up to him, and if you had a relationship, you might lay your hand on his shoulder and say, “James, you look lost today, what’s going on with you?” And you would probably be right on track.

This young man doesn’t look lost, does he?

ANGEL: No, he’s ready to fight.

STEVE: He does, yea. He looks defensive, hostile, arrogant, absolutely. I’m not sure I’d say, “You know Ryan, you’re looking pretty arrogant today.” But you wouldn’t be wrong if you interpreted his body language as being somewhat arrogant.

The final level of listening is reflecting. And I’m just going to briefly touch this, and then we’ll wrap up our morning. Reflective listening is a way of summarizing what we hear kids saying. Kind of bouncing back to them, what they’ve said, but using it, putting it in your own words. If Alice said to me, “You know I’m sick and tired of Angel and her attitude. Everything she does,

she's such a smart "a"." I wouldn't want to say, "Sounds like you're sick and tired of Angel because she's such a smart "a"." That would be parroting or repeating back exactly what the youth said. But it is useful to say, "Sounds like you and Angel aren't getting along so well right now." That would be a good reflection back. [1:26:15]

So we look at our young lady on the screen, we met her just a moment ago, and Alice, would you mind reading what's going on up there on the screen?

ALICE: "I can't believe that Tanisha posted that picture of me on Facebook! Now everybody will think I'm a total slut! I'll teach her...."

STEVE: So now we've got that image of her face, we've got the voice and intonation, and we've got the actual words. A good reflection back to our character might be something like this, "I can see how upset you are about what Tanisha's done." And that opens us up for more conversation with her. We might follow up by saying, "Tell me more." Or, with our second character, here, can I ask you to read what's going on here with this young man?

PAUL: Sure, "When my foster parents find out that I skipped school again today, they are going to totally lose it! They'll probably tell Social Services to take me back. Whatever... I was getting tired of their crap, anyway."

STEVE: So, we see him leaning up against the locker, looking all depressed, and everything. Now listening to the tone of voice and hearing the words, we're going to reflect back something a little bit different. We might say something like, "It sounds like you're nervous about how your foster parents will react." And then go on to ask for more information about that. "Let's talk more about how you want to handle that situation." But, by bouncing it back to him, by reflecting it, we show that we were really listening and interested in helping.

Our last character is up on the screen, Carol would you mind reading what he has to say?

CAROL: "So, I'm doing my job yesterday, when my supervisor just yells at me out of the blue! He's like 'Raymond, get your @\$ off that @#% cell phone!' I mean, what gives him the right to talk to me like that? And what's the big deal, any way, if I text my friends while I'm waiting for him to tell me what to do next? I just don't get him."

STEVE: So, if we're going to reflect back what Raymond seems to be saying, it might sound like this. "So, sounds like you are upset about the way your boss treated you." It sounds very obvious, but, I'll tell you, there really is something validating about having someone listen to you and bounce it back. And so many of our kids have been so neglected over time, ignored, or neglected, or lectured, or yelled at, that having someone listen that carefully and then ask how can I help is an incredibly empowering thing to do. [1:28:33]

So, let me offer my fourth key point and then we'll close and, if you have questions and answers, I'm happy to stick around for a while. At some level, youth in crisis would want to tell their stories to trusted adults, but they seldom say exactly what they mean. Good listeners prove that they're trustworthy by paying attention, by decoding hidden meanings, and by reflecting back to

kids what we hear them say. And if we're wrong, they'll correct us and we can continue on with that.

So, I want to thank you for spending ninety minutes with me this morning, and hope that you plan on coming back this afternoon, when we'll be looking specifically at what we can do to help kids adjust to the workplace. I know most of you are working with employment services in some fashion. So this afternoon's content will build on the relationship building stuff we talked about this morning. And give you some tools to help kids adjust more effectively to the workplace.

So, we'll switch back to the standard camera mode and check out, if you'd like, or I'll stay available for a few questions and answers.

PAUL: So, are there any questions or any follow-up comments you would like to make, please do so at this time.

STEVE: Smart alec comments are acceptable too. Feel free.

PAUL: Passive aggressive comments. (laugh)

STEVE: That's right. I can talk to myself for thirty minutes, that's quite all right. (laugh)

PAUL: Allow me, I'd like to make a final comment.

STEVE: Sure, jump in, if you've got something, folks, otherwise we'll close.

PAUL: As Steve and I had mentioned earlier, on the handouts I sent, prior to the video conference, so if you've had a chance to print them before the second session, please do. You'll find them very handy, and perhaps you can prepare for any questions you may have for the second session, as well, between now and then.

ABBIE: This is Abbie from Preble County, I kind of have a situation I wanted to run over with you. You could try to give me some feedback, because something you said earlier kind of hit home with the kid that I'm working with right now, about how we're punishing these kids for lashing out for what's happened to them. And what's happening with the one kid that I'm dealing with is that every school is kicking him out because he's lashing out, because he's mad. He's mad about everything that's happened to him. He moved here during his junior year, which is really hard on kids, especially when they have problems going on.

Now, I'm kind of fighting the school administrators and all they want to keep doing is punishing him. What, do you have some advice on some wording I could use to talk to the superintendent to kind of show him, okay, that punishment is not working? What are some other steps? I'm trying to, almost, home school him, take his alternate school work to my office so we can work on it that way. And they almost see it like he's almost being rewarded for not being able to stay in school. So, what do I do? [1:31:33]

STEVE: Right, so if I'm understanding you right – you're dealing with a young person who's very angry, and who has been lashing out verbally, even physically lashing out, and the school systems have been excommunicating him. They're kicking him out. And you're concerned that they're not seeing the big picture. He's doing school work with you right now, but the school's don't want to have him.

ABBIE: Exactly.

STEVE: Ok. Well, the first thing I'd say is, we have to be careful not to make excuses for kids' behavior. He's angry and he's been through a lot, but he's still responsible for the choices that he makes. It's real, I think, it's real important that we don't communicate to a kid, that he can't help it. What he's doing, that this is not his fault, it's not his choice. It may not be his fault. He may be a victim of some horrific circumstances in his life, but it's still his choice, how he behaves. It's still his responsibility, what he chooses to do with his anger.

Now, he may need some help from you and from others in learning how to manage his anger, how to express himself more effectively. He may need more help than he has. It's possible that he doesn't have all the tools in his toolbox yet. But, I think, it's vitally important that we don't say to him, "It's not your fault, you can't help yourself". And that we don't enable him to avoid dealing with the reality of his choices. So, one caution is that we don't communicate to this young man that we will take care of him; that it's not his fault. [1:33:05]

Now, the other thing that you're asking, though, is very important. How do we get the schools to be willing to give him a shot? First we have to understand that schools are serving a very large population. They're trying to take care of hundreds or thousands of kids, and if the one young man that you're talking about is a fly in the ointment, they're not often set up, especially public school systems in regular education, they're not set up for this odd man out.

So, you're really going to have to advocate for him, but what you're going to have to do is convince him that he is school ready. That he is prepared to deal with stresses of a normal school life, without losing his temper, without being a danger, or an incredible disruption. If he's not able to do that, if he isn't school ready, if he doesn't have the tools yet, then finding an alternative placement for him is in everyone's best interest. Putting a kid back into a mainstream setting before he's ready and before the school is ready is a recipe for failure.

ABBIE: That's kind of what I'm trying to do with him now. He was in regular high school, got expelled, because he's on an IEP, they had to send him to an alternative classroom, did not work there, so, I made the offer that, hey, let's bring his schoolwork into my office and, then, maybe, at the first of the year, maybe, we can try to acclimate him back into the school. The superintendent keeps seeing this, like, he's - I don't know - he's, it's like a good thing for this kid, that, oh, he's being rewarded for not being able to get along with teachers.

STEVE: Hm, That's a, I'm glad you brought that up again. That's a misperception on the part of school and other agencies that are compliance-oriented. When I work with agencies that are compliant oriented they're concerned with people obeying the rules, and when we try to make exceptions, accommodations, and try to help them see things from a different perspective, they

see it as spoiling of those kids, as rewarding them. It might be helpful for you to offer the analogy of a kid in a wheelchair.

I'll sometimes say, let's imagine that we've got, you know all of your kids have to do a 50 yard or a 50 meter dash, you know every year, whatever it might be, but one of my kids, Paul here, is in a wheelchair, am I making excuses for him, when I give him a head start? Should I say, "Paul, come on, you have to finish it just as fast as everyone else does. It's the real world; you've got to be just as quick, just as tough." And, it might be helpful for them to perceive that your young person, your young man is just as disabled, by the issues that he's struggled with, as Paul might be by the muscular dystrophy that he struggled with. Of course, I'm making that up about Paul.

On the other hand, I want to come back to what I first said – is that, even if Paul is in a wheelchair, even if your young man is disabled by the traumatic events that he's suffered, I still expect him to try. For Paul to sit at the starting line and saying "I don't even want to try" is unacceptable. Paul, you don't have to finish quickly, but you do have to finish, and I have faith that you can. It doesn't matter to me, and it shouldn't matter to you, if you do it in 10 seconds, I don't care if it takes you 10 minutes. What I admire about you is your willingness to try, and then to never give up.

That's the message that I hope that you'll give to your young man – is that, no matter how people see him, no matter how they treat him, that you believe in him and you expect him to try and not give up. A tough love approach is always, a tough love approach, not just tough and not just love but both. I think is important for our kids. (hello) [1:36:45]

ABBIE: Thank you so much.

STEVE: I hope I've been helpful. My email address is on the handout that you have and if you want to send me more details I can often send a thought or two by email as well.

CAROL: I think she turned her sound off.

PAUL: Yes, she did.

STEVE: Thanks so much.

PAUL: So, if there are any other questions, now's the time to pose them, while Dr. Parese is available.

OTTAWA COUNTY: Hello, this is Ottawa County and it's always stressed to us that we are career advisors, and not counselors, and not trained to be a counselor, and we aren't to go into that area. But as you've discussed, it's obvious that we, in a way, do. And I'm just curious to know, like, let's say we have a young man who is avoiding, you know, is a classic avoidance, should we call it out? Like say, I can sense that you're avoiding the situation, what's at the core of this or something like that.

STEVE: Thanks for asking that question. If I were a troubled youth and I were coming to you for help, it wouldn't matter to me one bit, what your job description was. Whether you were my PE teacher, my minister, my employment counselor, or my therapist. If I trust you enough to open up to you, then I don't care what your job description is. I'm hoping that you're willing, at least, to help me.

Now, I understand that our occupations create divisions of labor, and you don't want to cross those lines. What's more important is that you don't open a can of worms, that you can't close later. So, an awful lot of us with some clinical experience or training go a little bit too far and say, "tell me more about that abuse incident that occurred when you were 3 years old." And then you end up with a re-traumatized youth, diving into issues that you have no idea how to deal with. That's a mistake. So, talked about avoidance, if you sense that a kid is avoiding; I would recommend in saying, "You know what, I've been working hard to try to get you to do this work, to try to get you to complete this application, and it feels to me like I'm working harder than you are. I'm sensing that you're avoiding dealing with this. Tell me what that's about."

I'm not sure I would ask the question, where is this coming from. Like, trying to probe for home issues, or anything. I'd leave that completely out of it, unless you are prepared to deal with it, but I think it's perfectly fine, I think it's necessary to ask; what is this about. I see you avoiding this topic, what is this about? [1:39:22]

Nine times out of ten, he might say I just don't feel like it. Oh, well, what are you worried about? Avoidance is almost always about worrying and fear. What are you worried about? I just don't think I can do it; I'm going to look stupid. And then you don't have to be a counselor to just say, I appreciate that. I'm here to help you do your very best, so that you don't look stupid. I think we could do an awful lot of ad hoc – if you want to call it counseling – you can call it helping.

My mentor called it emotional first aid. You don't have to be an emergency room surgeon to put a band aid on the knee of a kid who's fallen and scuffed it. You don't drag that kid off to the ER. We say, "Come on over here, let's put some Bactine on it." Put a band aid on it, and you give them a kiss on the top of their head. I'm not suggesting you kiss your kids, but you can do some emotional first aid, simply by saying I can see how overwhelmed you seem to be, or, it looks to me like you're avoiding. What is this all about? [1:40:31]

OTTAWA COUNTY: Thanks.

STEVE: My pleasure. Go ahead Alice.

ALICE: It seems like when you label things for kids that also helps them label their own behavior and it helps them understand their feelings and how to deal with them.

STEVE: Very true. In fact, sometimes anger is a cover-up for other feelings. You'll say to a youngster that you look like you're really angry about something and he probably is, but very often anger covers up other emotions. A kid feels lonely and he gets angry at somebody who left him alone, went off to lunch without him. A young person feels embarrassed because he messed up. Then he gets angry at himself for messing up.

So, very often it's helpful to label those feelings to say, you know, you look like you're angry, I get the feeling you're embarrassed. He may not be in touch with the embarrassment yet. He's in touch with his anger, but by labeling the feeling, by saying it looks to me like you are blank, embarrassed, angry, avoiding, whatever it might be. Sometimes you put them in touch with something going on deeper down, and that can be a powerful thing. Don't expect them to thank you for doing that, by the way. They'll almost always say, "That's just stupid, you're wrong, you don't know what you're talking about". But, they might walk away going, "Hmm, you know what? They had a point."

I just love coming up with these smart answers, if anyone else has a question so I can feel good about myself, I'm happy to help. (laugh)

Am I talking to myself?

PAUL: Yea, I think we may have exhausted the questions for today. Or this morning, perhaps.

STARK COUNTY: This is Stark County.

STEVE: Hey, we're not finished yet.

STARK COUNTY: Will this be available for future viewing?

PAUL: Are we videotaping this session? (yes) Is that what you are asking? Yes, we are recording this. The normal process I believe is to contact ...

GRAIG: Send it originally to me, I'm sorry, Graig Pellman, email Graig Pellman with your mailing address and we'll send you a disk.

PAUL: Ok, hopefully, you heard that. Greg works in the office at Workforce Development, so contact him and we'll make sure you get a copy. Thanks for the questions Stark.

STEVE: Hopefully, I'll see most of you this afternoon. My website is listed on the handout that you, if you haven't already gotten, you will receive. And I have a number of articles on the website as well as other resources that you can download for review. Be glad to chat with you further if you like.

PAUL: Ok, I think that this may be a good time to move on and I'd like to thank everyone who's still there. Thank you for your time. Thank you for your questions, your interaction and I'm very positive you guys learned something very successful today. Again thank Dr. Steve Parese.

STEVE: My pleasure.

PAUL: And we will see you guys later this afternoon. Have a good lunch.

Kids These Days, with Dr. Steven Parese, part 1

STEVE: 1:00. Thanks guys.