

Working with Angry and Resistant Youth: Strategies for Fostering Motivation, Self-Discipline, and Resilience

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The power of mindsets

Mindsets: The assumptions and expectations we have for ourselves and others that guide our behavior

The beginning of my career: The negative mindset I often possessed as a young clinician and school principal--It was so easy to blame patients and students but not without a cost as frustration and burnout appeared

Lessons learned and questions raised on my journey

What is the mindset of adults who touch the hearts and minds of angry youth, thereby increasing cooperation, self-discipline, hope, and resilience?

Features of a more positive mindset

To believe in the resilience of angry and resistant youth to overcome adversity, become more cooperative, and beat the odds against them: To become a “charismatic adult”

“I want to be a charismatic adult. What do I do?”

Features of a more positive mindset

To believe that if the strategies we are using with angry children and adolescents are not effective then we must ask, “What is it that we can do differently to help the situation?” rather than continue to wait for the youth to change: This should not be seen as blaming but rather as empowering ourselves

Features of a more positive mindset

To be empathic: We must see the world through the eyes of the youth with whom we work

Exercises to promote empathy

The bottom right portion of the slide features a decorative graphic of several concentric, light blue circles that resemble ripples on water, set against the solid blue background.

Features of a more positive mindset

Exercises to promote empathy: Some basic questions to consider

Would I want anyone to say or do to me what I have said or done to this youngster?

In anything I say or do with a child or adolescent what do I hope to accomplish?

Am I saying or doing it in a way where the youngster feels respected and can truly hear what I have to say and respond constructively?

Features of a more positive mindset

Revealing stories written by angry children and adolescents: What are some central themes? What do the stories of angry, challenging children and adolescents teach us in terms of developing and implementing effective strategies?

The negative mindset of many angry, at-risk children and adolescents

Helplessness: Lack of control or influence about events that happen in one's life

Hopelessness: Nothing will ever change

Others don't understand and can't help me

The negative mindset of many angry, at-risk children and adolescents

I make little difference in the world

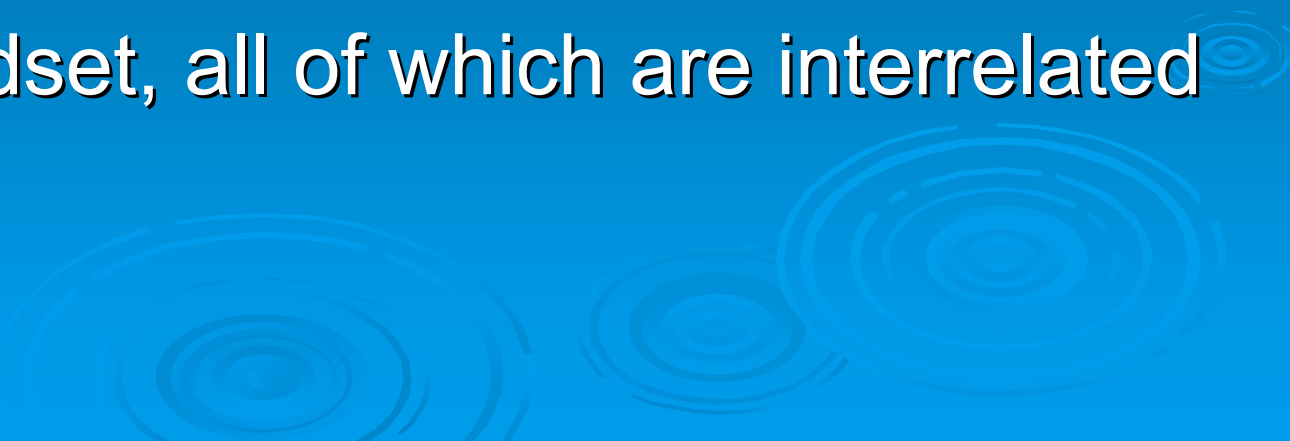
General feeling that things are not fair

I feel unaccepted and unloved



Features of a more positive mindset

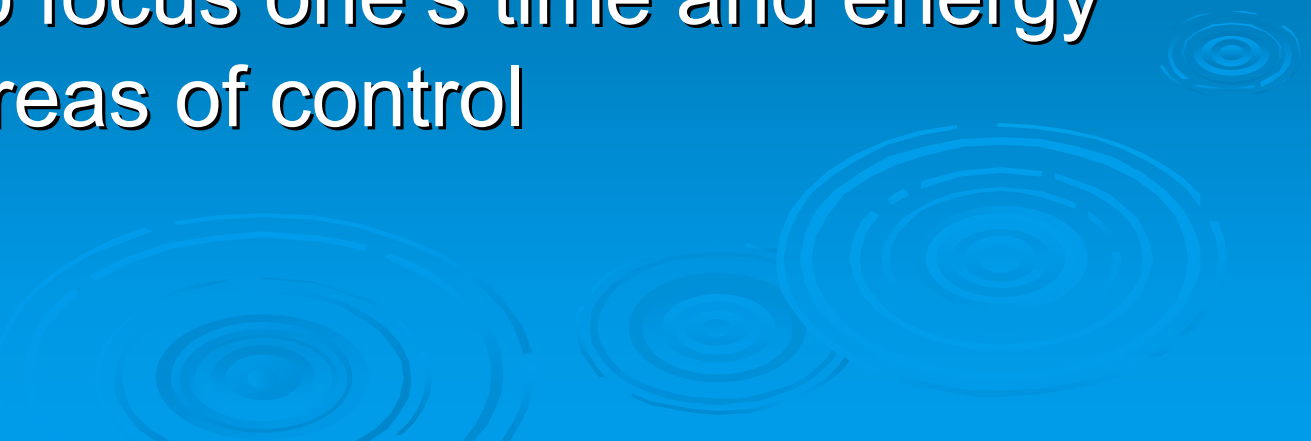
To understand the main characteristics of the mindset of resilient children and adolescents so that we can have guideposts for reinforcing this mindset in all of our interactions with angry youth: Let's look at several of the main features of this mindset, all of which are interrelated



The mindset of resilient youth

To feel comfortable with and appreciate that others can be of support and help


To be able to define what one has control over and to focus one's time and energy on these areas of control



The mindset of resilient youth

To believe that one can solve problems and make decisions, which promotes a sense of ownership

To define and reinforce one's strengths or "islands of competence" without denying or running from problematic areas



The mindset of resilient youth

To believe that one can contribute to
and make a positive difference in the
world


To possess self-discipline and self-
control



The mindset of resilient youth

To believe that mistakes are experiences from which to learn

To possess a sense of humor that includes being able to laugh at but not ridicule oneself



Features of a more positive mindset

To strengthen our own “stress hardiness” and lessen the likelihood of burnout: To practice the “3 C’s”

Commitment: What brings purpose to your life?

Challenge: To interpret difficult situations as opportunities for learning

Control (personal): To focus your time and energy on areas of your life over which you have some influence