



THE CALM CONNECTION – PARENT GROUP

— ** —

**STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS, REDUCE STRESS, AND INCREASE
AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING**

The “YES” Brain



The Gift of the No Blame Zone...



Before we get started, we will go over this slide, and once again, giving all of us the gift of the **no blame zone**.

As we continue to learn new information there may be times that you may have feelings of guilt. It is important to remember that these feelings are normal.

We need to remember that there is no such thing as perfect parenting. As parents we do the best we can with the information we know, we are human, and we will make mistakes. The gift of the no blame zone helps us from feeling shame or blame for the practices we do.



The “Yes” Brain



The YES Brain has us explore our language and how the words we use can have huge impacts on how our children react or respond.

Now remember, **no shame, no blame.....**

This is all coming from research and for many of us the concepts are very new.

We just invite you to hear it and perhaps try it!

Receptive Brain Versus the Reactive Brain

Language is powerful and the words we use with our children can influence whether they are going into their upstairs brain and be receptive to your words or whether they end up triggered and land in their downstairs brain and instinctually react to your words.



Language is powerful and the words we use with our children can influence whether they will go into their upstairs brain and be receptive to your words

or

whether they will be triggered, landing in their downstairs brain and instinctually react to your words because they feel safe. Remember the brain is always asking 'Am I safe' and 'Am I loved' and words can have huge impact on children's feeling of love and safety.

Using a YES Brain approach starts with becoming more aware of your **voice tone....body posture....and** then being more intentional about your words you been learning.

Responding to your child's YES Brain also includes, limiting the number of times you use negatives, such as : **“NO” “DON”T”** and **“STOP”**.



Using a YES Brain approach starts by becoming more aware of our **tone of voice and body posture.....and** then being more intentional about the words you use.

Responding to your child's YES Brain also includes..... **and this is a hard one.....** limiting the number of times you use negatives, such as: “No”, “Don’t” and “Stop.”

You will be surprised how many times in the day these three words are used.

In a UCLA survey in 2006,, the data reported that at the average age of one-and-a-half, children heard the word “NO” more than 400 times a day. I am sure this is partly because we repeat the word no when trying to keep them safe, such as “No, no, no no...don’t touch that...it is hot” to our little ones.

However, we have generally seen huge impacts with our children growing up within structures and walls, which has resulted in a significant increase in the number of times our children hear these negative words, such as “Don’t run in the house”, “Stop jumping on the couch”, “No screaming”

When we must provide negative feedback to our big people, we tend to take the time to find the positive ways to express it....



When we must provide negative feedback to our big people, we tend take the time to find the most positive ways to express it...

Instead of "No, I don't feel like coming to your house tonight, I am too tired."
Instead, you might say, "I would love to come to your house tonight except I am feeling really tired."

Do you see how we make a conscious effort to speak to the adult YES Brain so that we don't upset the other person. So why do we do this differently with our children?

Just think of how much we dislike it when our children say "No" to us..... doesn't feel good does it? Can you imagine if a boss at work said "No" most of the time...

"Can I take the day off to be with my kids"..... "No, not today."

"I am not feeling well, I need to go home"....."No, I need you to finish this first."

"I am just taking off for lunch, I am starving."....."No, I am going first."

“YES” Brain Responses

Child says, “I want a cookie” right before dinner.

- Parent Response, “Yes, you can have a cookie after dinner.
Maybe I will have one with you too!”

Child is running in the house. Instead of “Stop running...”

- Parent Response, “Your body wants to run. Let’s run over here”



Then how do we set limits with our children.... because limits are very important to help children feel safe. Sometimes when children do not have limits, they will do anything they can to see who is in charge... so yes, we do want to set limits.

Let’s look at these examples.

In the first example your child may say “I want a cookie” and it is right before dinner. Your ‘Yes Brain’ response, might be,

“Absolutely, you can have a cookie after dinner. Maybe I will have one with you too. I wonder which one I will choose?”

Now your child might be persistent and say, “I want a cookie now” and then you go into validation and ‘YES Brain’ response,

“I hear you want a cookie now and it can be so hard to wait for something yummy, and we will both have a cookie after dinner.”

In the next example, you child is running inside the house and instead of saying

“YES” Brain Responses

Child is hitting sister. Instead of “Don’t hit your sister.”

- Parent Response, “You look frustrated with your sister. Let’s find another way.”



Remember your children need to expend their energy. You can create spaces in your home that can allow them to jump, run, spin and do all those things that they would be doing if they were outside like we did growing up?

In the last example your child is hitting their sibling. Instead of saying, “Don’t hit your sister”, a ‘YES Brain’ response may include a skill that you have learned earlier which is validation

“You look like you are very frustrated when your sister takes your puzzle piece. Let me help you find a different way.”

Remember we want to teach the skill, not penalize our children for not having the skill.

CHILD REQUEST/EXPERIENCE

Child Requests/Experiences	'YES' Brain Response
Child says, "I want to eat a cookie" before dinner.	
Child grabs toy from sibling or another child and says, "It is mine!"	
Child is jumping on the couch.	
Child doesn't want to clean up their toys and says, "I don't like cleaning up the toys."	
Child doesn't want to leave the park and says, "I don't want to go home."	
Child wants to play on their iPad for longer and screams, "No I'm not done yet!"	
Child doesn't want to go to bed, and says, "I am not tired."	

Let's Practice



Let's go over the examples in the Family Workbook.

Facilitator Question: Are there any more questions about the 'YES Brain'?

Setting Limits



Mean...

Weak...



Being balanced and in charge, as described by Dr. Vanessa LaPointe, registered psychologist, is like parenting from the top of the mountain.

Staying at the top of the mountain requires that when you set a limit, it is important that you follow through with it.

If you don't follow through, this means you have fallen down one side of the mountain. This can look like your child either no longer sees you as the in-charge parent which is known as permissive parenting, or they may see you as the mean or authoritarian parent, which can lead to feelings of unsafety. Both styles do not meet the need of a Space of Security as they can feel unpredictable for your child.

Balance requires that children understand the limit and that we know that the expectation is not too high, and they are developmentally capable of following through with it with your guidance.

Setting limits through the I CARE approach

STEP 1

Connect AND set the limit or choice

STEP 2 (if needed)

Respond with empathy AND set limit or choices.

It is ok if they land in their downstairs brain, remember to Connect with safety until they are ready go to STEP 2 again.



The CALM Connection Group Session 5 The "YES" Brain



We can provide our children developmentally appropriate limits through the I CARE approach. This might require that you use fair and firm limits and then following through as the "In Charge Safe Person" with empathy and validation.

This can be followed using these two steps:

STEP 1

Connect AND set the limit or choice

STEP 2 (if needed)

Respond with empathy AND restate limit or choice.

It is ok if they land in their downstairs brain, remember to Connect with safety until they are ready go to STEP 2 again.

Choices

Whenever possible try to include positive choices so your child can make the decision.



Notice in Step 2 a choice was provided. Whenever possible provide positive choices. Choices help children feel like they have autonomy or control over what is happening to them, such as,

“You can choose carrots or broccoli, which one would you like?”

“Which shirt would you like to wear today, your red one or your blue one...you choose?”

Choices that remove autonomy and do not speak to the ‘YES Brain’ include:

“You have a choice,, you can stay at the table and finish your dinner, or you can go straight to bed.”

This can actually be considered an ultimatum, and not a choice...we as adults do not like these either.

Can you imagine if your partner said, “If you are not ready in 5 minutes, I am leaving without you!”

Predictability



We are going to watch two video clips that will help lead us to an understanding of the power of safe and predictable environments. In the first video we are going to see children of different ages having to wait to eat a marshmallow. The study suggests that children who seemed to have this skill of waiting when they were young demonstrated better long-term outcomes when followed later in life.

Let's watch the clip.

Now....Before you try this at home with your child, let's watch the next clip.

Transitions

Try and make the transition fun – time to choose two books before bedtime (instead of it is time to go to bed)



Predictability can be hard for children especially with transitions, especially if the transition is new or there are too many in the day. Children require lots of warning to help make the transition easier.

Children can't tell time, so saying 'in five more minutes', still usually comes as a surprise when clean up needs to happen. Instead, try something more tangible such as playing a favourite song and when it is done, it is time to clean up or move on, or use your fingers and count down the minutes...make it fun!

Remember, when you can, it is important to provide them enough time to finish the activity. As adults, we would probably like to finish the last two pages of a novel, or tv show or an email rather than having to stop right before we were done.

Saying Good-Bye

Always say good-bye to your child when you are leaving them in other's care.



Predictability of the environment also means have the courage to say "good-bye" to your child when leaving them in other's care. It can be tempting to leave while they are playing to prevent tears. However, when they notice you are gone, they will be upset and confused. The next time you try to leave them they may be clingier because they are worried that you are going to leave while they are playing. It is far more secure for children when you say good-bye and hug them through the tears and let them know that you will be back to pick them up.

Also, if you are not going to be picking up and another parent or family member is picking them up, make sure they know that as well...predictability is important to all of us, especially our children. If they know what their day is going to look like, they will feel more informed about what to expect. Can you imagine, waking up and not knowing what your day was going to look like? I think I look at my schedule 10 times a day to see what is happening in my day.

It is okay if you fall downstairs. It takes practice to use positive self-talk. You need to give yourself a break when this happens.

The first step is having self-awareness of your self-talk.

Self Compassion

Just remember, sometimes it is just about having awareness that you have fallen into your downstairs brain and dysregulating self-language had taken over.

You will make mistakes with your language, and in your reactions because you are human.



Once you have increased self-awareness that you have fallen into the downstairs brain, you can practice positive self-talk to help you for next time.

Many times, we hear our parents in ourselves, and we say something we promised ourselves we would never say to our own children.

In most circumstances your parents did the best they could, and you are doing the best YOU can.

You will make mistakes with the language you use, and the reactions you have...because you are human.

When we make these mistakes, we need to have self-compassion.

Dr. Kirsten Neff, a pioneer in understanding Self-Compassion provides us with some basic tips that are important for us to consider.

Self-Kindness vs Self-Judgement :

Being empathetic and understanding towards ourselves in moments of stress, rather than ignoring or being hard on ourselves.

This means we need to stop “Shoulding” on ourselves!



Self-Kindness Versus Self-Judgement.

This means we need to have more empathy and understanding towards ourselves in moments of stress, rather than being hard on ourselves.

How many of you get wrapped up in negative thoughts, such as

“I should have done this”, or “I should have done that”...

We need to stop “shoulding” on ourselves....

Yes, it sounds exactly like what you think it did!

Mindfulness vs Over-Identification:

Balancing our thoughts on how we approach our emotions so that they are not exaggerated or bottled-up.



Mindfulness versus over-identification is balancing our thoughts on how we approach our emotions so that they are not exaggerated, such as,

"I *always* do this!", or "I will *never* be able to this"

This is down-regulating self-talk. Remember, using positive self-talk can help keep us in our upstairs brain, where we can think more rationally.

We also want to make sure we are not bottling up our thoughts. We really hope you have a person, or safe people, where you can share and release some of your thoughts to others.

Everyone needs to have their person or people.

Homework...



Practice: Using “Yes Brain” Responses



Practice: Self-Compassion



Read: Melvin is Kind



Your homework for this week, is **practice, practice, practice.**

The more we practice, the easier this will become.

Also, we want you to practice kindness to yourself.

Finally, we invite you to read the Melvin is Kind book to your child. This book can provide some visual strategies to help your child to feel kindness through problem solving.

SELF-ASSESSMENT

Where am I in my understanding of the concept of responding to the 'Yes' Brain?



How am I doing in my practice of using the 'Yes' Brain response?



Please take a minute to fill out the weekly assessment of your understanding of these skills based on how you learned them today and hand them back to us.

References: Module 5

IMAGES: continued

- Slide 6: Wowomnom, **Vector illustration of pink color human brain with glasses invented something.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. December 14, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/vector-illustration-pink-color-human-brain-728353150>
- Slide 7: Wowomnom, **Vector illustration of pink color human brain with glasses goes thinking forwards.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. December 14, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/vector-illustration-pink-color-human-brain-728354728>
- Slide 8: Wowomnom, **Vector Creative Illustration of Unhappy Pink Human Brain Character with Question Marks.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. December 14, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/Image-vector/vector-creative-illustration-unhappy-pink-human-2059021154>
- Slide 9: Sangoiri, **Quit Yelling at Your Child.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. September 6, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/quit-yelling-your-child-alternative-screaming-412350382>
- Slide 10: Sangoiri, **Quit Yelling at Your Child.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. September 6, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/quit-yelling-your-child-alternative-screaming-412350382>
- Slide 15: Chompoo, **Businesswoman on the top of broken cliff, illustration vector cartoon.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. August 2, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/businesswoman-on-top-broken-cliff-illustration-1396198841>
- Slide 16: Chompoo, **Businesswoman on the top of broken cliff, illustration vector cartoon.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. August 2, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/businesswoman-on-top-broken-cliff-illustration-1396198841>
- Slide 24: Chainarong06, **Close up young Asian woman smiling with happiness and using hand touch over chest.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. December 14, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/close-young-asian-woman-smiling-happiness-1329915809>
- Slide 25: TanyaFox, **Neon lettering you're not alone.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. December 14, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-vector/neon-lettering-you-not-alone-motivational-1170940657>
- Slide 26: ESB Professional, **Pretty young lady taking a decision with scale above her head.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. December 14, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/pretty-young-lady-taking-decision-scale-190541977>
- Slide 27: KlektaDarya, **3d illustration of cartoon person with yellow oops.** Digital Image. Shutterstock. December 14, 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-illustration/3d-illustration-cartoon-person-yellow-oops-110085275>

