

# CONNECTING WITH YOUR CHILD

By Daniel Crump LICSW

McLean Hospital

The Be Center

[www.thebecenter.net](http://www.thebecenter.net)

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- What gets in the way of connecting with your child
- Validation as a way to connect
- Warning signs

# COVID WORLD

## PARENT ROLES:

- Supporting development of your child
- Teacher?
- Therapist?
- Problem solver?
- Chore reminder?
- Expectations?
- Limits?
- Safety?

## RESULT:

- Less and less support
- Isolated
- Alone
- Decrease in building positive experiences
- Increase in avoidance
- Loss
- Negative reinforcer stimulus for your child

# THE RESULT LOSS OF CONNECTION



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## WARNING SIGNS

- Intense, painful, long lasting moods; risky mood-dependent behavior, major depression, or panic attacks; self-injury or suicidal thinking
- Social phobia or withdrawal, perfectionism and unrealistic standards; bingeing, purging, or restricted eating; obsessive about or neglectful hygiene
- Multiple distractions to point of not being able to complete homework or projects, lack of focus that interferes with daily work or tasks, regularly late for appointments
- Verbal and/or physical aggression
- Drug use
- School refusal; bullying or being bullied; lack of connection to school or peers; school truancy, failure or dropout
- Rebellious questioning of social rules and conventions; causing opinionated trouble with family members, teachers, or others who attempt to assert authority over the adolescent
- Paralyzed by indecision
- Isolation from family and peers
- Often up nearly all night; sleeps almost all day on weekends; ) routinely late (or missing school) because of sleep schedule

## RELATIONSHIP MINDFULNESS

- Being present with your child in the moment, non-judgmental, while being effective.
- Letting go of distractions
- Being curious about what is happening with them
- Being mindful that you love them even when they are being difficult
- Regulating your own emotions such as fear, anxiety and worry



Right now,  
at this moment,

what do you want  
most?

VALIDATION IS

- The act of communication to another person with acknowledgement and acceptance of the person's experience.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I2zLCCRT-nE&feature=youtu.be&app=desktop>

# THE ROLE OF VALIDATION

- Teaching parents how and what to validate is essential in improving family communication and managing difficult situations.
- Validation can:
  - -Help reduce conflicts
  - -Invites accurate expression communication
  - -Provides soothing
  - -Reduces reactivity
  - -Builds Trust
  - -Leads to problem solving
  - -Models effective
  - -Shows a desire to understand
  - -Acceptance



## WHAT CAN WE VALIDATE

- Anything that is VALID, makes sense and is understandable
- Emotions
- Wants/Desires (even scary ones)
- Thoughts and beliefs
- Effort
- How difficult something is
- Effective behaviors

# HOW TO VALIDATE

- Stop to pay attention and listen
- Acknowledge the person's experience with reflecting what they are expressing
- Seek to understand by asking questions and clarification. Seek reasonable assumptions in an attempt to understand and show interest.
- Express how it makes sense given the person's history or unique experiences.
- Normalizing an experience that would make sense for most people
- Joining in own expression with a "Me too"
- Radical genuineness by not treating the person as fragile
- Behavioral validation
- Validation does not mean you agree or do not have limits/rules

# ACCUMULATION OF POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

- **Connection is not automatic it must be created**
  - Building positive experience with your child in order to compete with the negative ones
  - Creating positive experience are a buffer for negative emotions
  - Reduces see each other as negative stimulus
  - Going for a walk
  - Playing a game
  - Watching a TV show
  - Making something
  - Youtube
  - Sitting and listen
- Dance
- Sing
- Make a joke
- Blow Bubbles

We cannot influence another  
person's behavior

Until we have connected with them

## REFERRALS

- Mclean child outpatient Program
- MAMP anxiety program
- Mclean DBT outpatient program
- The Be Center –Parent support
- The Boston Child Study Center
- The Concord Center

**Thank you**

**Dcrump@thebecenter.net**