



Newport-Mesa
Unified School District

Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

Parent Meeting

January 30, 2025

CAC 2023-2025 Officers



Emily Norton
Chairperson



Melissa Winberry
Vice Chairperson



Leila Cesario
Secretary



Director Introductions



Sara Jocham, Ed.D
Assistant Superintendent,
Special Services



Elsie Briseño Simonovski, Ph.D
Administrative Director I,
Special Education



Juliana Sauvao, M.A.
Director, Special Education
Resolution/SELPA



Coordinator Introductions



Elke Day,
Preschool Coordinator,
Special Education



Heather Cash, Ph.D.
Elementary Coordinator,
Special Education



Amy Nagy, Ph.D
Elementary Coordinator,
Special Education



Clara Valdez
Elementary Coordinator,
Special Education



Mike Tincup, Ph.D.
Elementary Coordinator,
Special Education



Kim Doyle,
Secondary Coordinator,
Special Education



Samantha Eggen-Garcia
Secondary Coordinator,
Special Education



Agenda

1. CAC Overview and Business
2. Understanding Distress Behavior
3. Questions and Comments



CAC Overview and Business

At the April meeting, the CAC will:

1. Present 2025-2026 meeting dates
2. Determine next year's CAC Officers



Presenter Introductions



Justin Micka
Autism Specialist,
Special Education



Eby Kent
Behavior Specialist,
Special Education



Kelly Starr
Behavior Specialist,
Special Education



Michelle Lepak
Behavior Specialist,
Special Education



Understanding Distress Behavior

“
ALL **BEHAVIOR**
IS A FORM OF
COMMUNICATION.
—
DISTRESS BEHAVIOR
CAN BE HOW A PERSON
COMMUNICATES
THEIR **DISTRESS.**”
—



Understanding Distress Behavior



Understanding Distress Behavior



A person communicates distress through behavior.

What does this mean for you? How does this change your approach to “challenging” behavior?



Understanding Distress Behavior



What are some factors that can increase the likelihood of the “emotional brain” taking control?

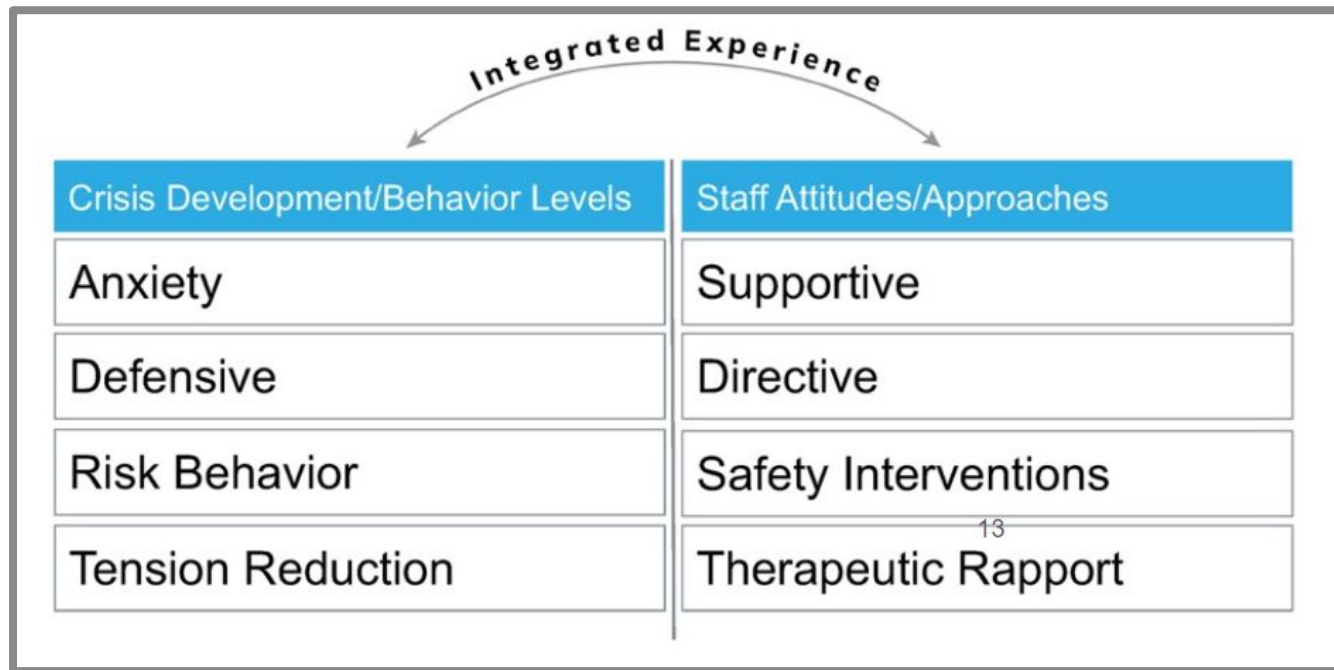


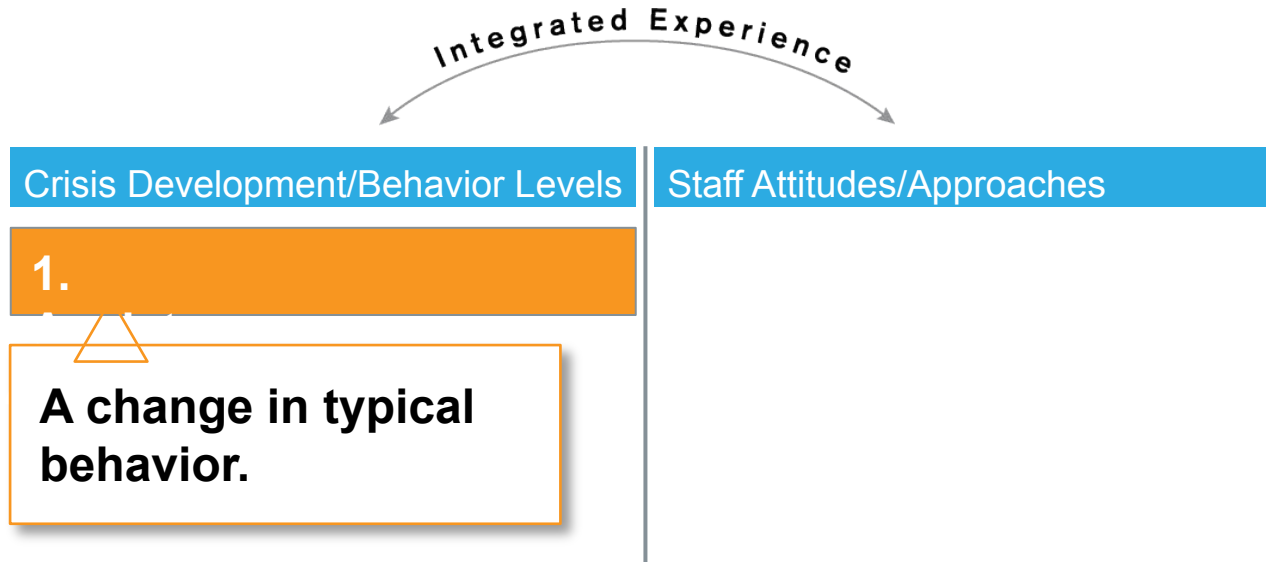
Understanding Distress Behavior

- **Trauma** can change a person's brain.
- **Frequent stress** can also affect the brain's ability to dampen the stress response.
- **Cognitive development** is another factor. Managing emotions is a slowly developing skill.



Responding to Escalating Behaviors





What does this look like for your kids?

What do behaviors at the Anxiety level communicate?

Distress that could be due to unmet needs, triggers in the environment, or factors in their life that may be out of your control.



Integrated Experience

Crisis Development/Behavior Levels

1. Anxiety

Staff Attitudes/Approaches

1. Supportive

**An empathic,
nonjudgmental approach.**



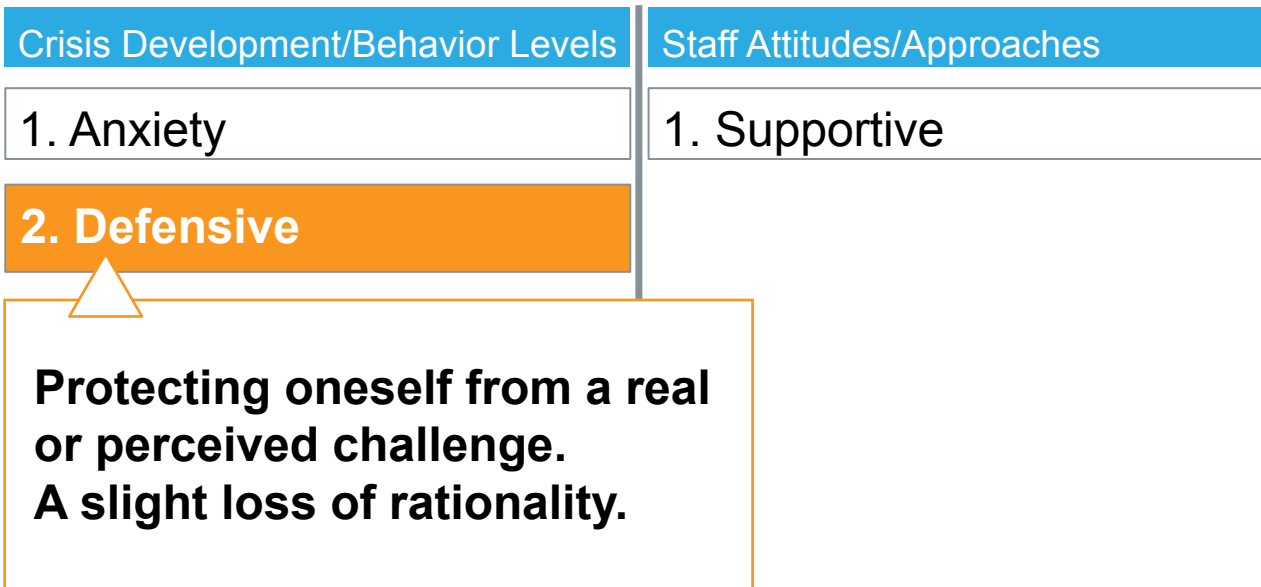
How can you be supportive to a person at the Anxiety level?

Supportive

- Be patient, listen, and convey empathy.
- Be non-judgmental. Focus on helping the person meet their needs and address the cause of their behavior.



Integrated Experience



What do behaviors at the Defensive level communicate?

Distress that is more intense.
They feel misunderstood, challenged, or threatened.

Integrated Experience

Crisis Development/Behavior Levels	Staff Attitudes/Approaches
1. Anxiety	1. Supportive
2. Defensive	2. Directive

Providing clear direction or instruction.



Limit Setting

Using short, simple statements to offer a person clear choices and clarify boundaries of acceptable behavior.



LIMIT Setting



Respectful

Phrase limits in a positive way using effective nonverbal, verbal, and paraverbal skills.



Simple

Limit the number of words you use.



Reasonable

Connect the expectation to the person's circumstances and level of ability.



Limit Setting Patterns

Interrupt and Redirect - Interrupts the person's emotional flow to get their attention and redirects them to an alternative positive behavior.

- Bring attention to their behavior.
- Pointing to something, such as the clock.
- Using their name or statements like "I'm here to help."

Desired Behavior, Desired Outcome - Helps the person identify the behavior that will help them reach the desired outcome.

- "(Name), when you lower your voice, then I'll be able to address your concerns."

Fail Safe Choice - Provides an individual with two acceptable options for fulfilling a request.

- "(Name), which would you like to complete first, (Option A) or (Option B)?"



RATIONAL DETACHMENT

Recognizing the need to remain professional by managing your own behavior and attitude.



Rational Detachment

Rational Detachment can positively impact the situation.

- You stay consistent and calm while maintaining self-control in the moment.
- You are less likely to become another Precipitating Factor to the person in distress.
- You can objectively identify the crisis level the person is in and choose the approach best suited to that level.



Strategies to Help With Rational Detachment




While watching the next video, think about why it is difficult to rationally detach?




Strategies to Help With Rational Detachment




Rational Detachment Strategies in a Crisis Moment

STRATEGY	HOW DOES THIS HELP?	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
 Breathe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Research has shown that deep breathing enables more air to flow into your body. This can calm your nerves, reducing stress and anxiety.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Pausing also helps you not react right away to what the person is saying.


Rational Detachment Strategies in a Crisis Moment

STRATEGY	HOW DOES THIS HELP?	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
 Use grounding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Focusing on some aspect of the physical world rather than your thoughts and feelings can help you regulate your emotions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Holding on to a chair,▪ pressing your first finger and thumb together,▪ squeezing an object,▪ pressing your heels into the ground—these are all examples of grounding techniques.


Rational Detachment Strategies in a Crisis Moment

STRATEGY	HOW DOES THIS HELP?	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
 Observe	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Objectively observing behavior can prevent your emotions, past experiences, and implicit bias from influencing how you see the behavior and the situation.	<p>Ask yourself the following questions as you observe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the other person communicating?• How am I responding?• What am I expressing?• How are they responding to me?

Preventative Strategies before a Crisis Moment

STRATEGY	HOW DOES THIS HELP?	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
 Frontload	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Primes both you and the student for what is coming.It helps prepare the mind for potential triggers, expectations and options in the moment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Avoid accusatory or judgemental language, but instead focus on growth and positives. Keep it direct and casual.

Preventative Strategies before a Crisis Moment

STRATEGY	HOW DOES THIS HELP?	ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
 <p data-bbox="131 813 479 900">Check Lists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Helps with minimizing the sense of being overwhelmed and helps the mind organize upcoming events. Additionally, presents an opportunity to warm up to something occurring before it does.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Match your child's ability level to your lists. A range from pictures to detailed descriptions may be appropriate. Similarly, schedules or step by step instructions can be helpful.

Strategies to Help With Rational Detachment

Why is it difficult to rationally detach?

- The behavior and attitude of the person in distress can influence your behavior and how you respond.
- Any Precipitating Factors you have also influence you.
- Your emotional reactions can take over your “thinking brain.”
- Sometimes, factors like implicit bias and previous experiences contribute to what the brain perceives as threat.