

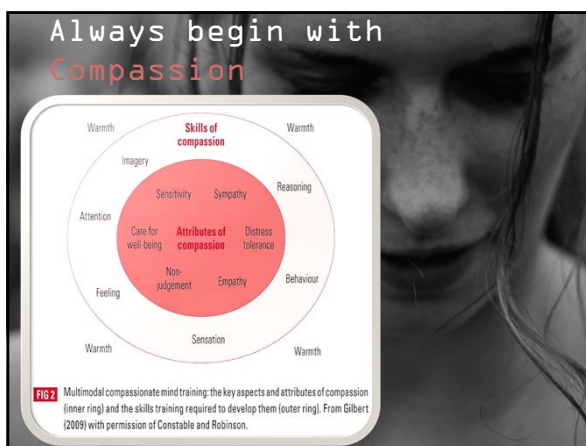


Educational Objectives

- Describe possible causes of student resistances to learning and a way to improve learning outcomes.
- Create strategies to enhance behaviour management by means of ACT, Kevin Polk's Matrix, RFT and CFT.
- Build relationships between teacher and students by means of CFT.

I am thankful to be present on the land of the traditional owners, the Ojibwe and Dakota Sioux people

Ojibwe: Aaniin
 Dakota Sioux: Hau
 Australian: G'day




Issues in student management for adolescents in an educational context

- The primary outcome is learning but the subtext is to assist personal development. Which comes first?
 - Readiness to learn. Who sets the agenda?
 - Group contexts and individuals, tribalism/subgroups.
 - The context of the classroom/learning environment.
- Key issue of avoidance and/or acceptance.
 - Movement from external to internal motivation.
 - Check the avoidance level of the group. Then move to individuals.
 - Generally speaking there will always be some avoidance occurring but this may exist within a mostly positive learning environment so it is up to the teacher/system to judge effectiveness of the situation.


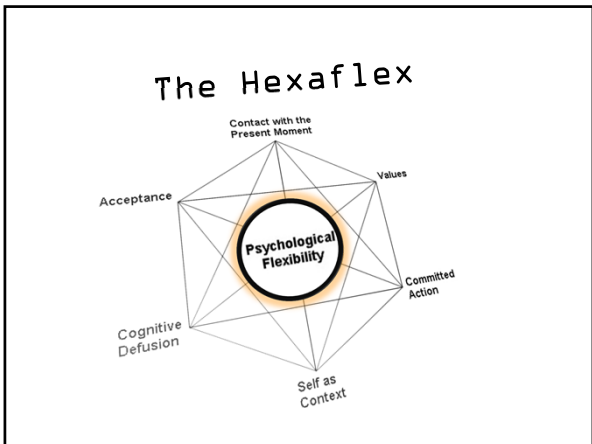
Focus on avoidance

- Be mindful of identity issues some students will be non-compliant as part of their identity formation and developmental stage. Don't stress over it.
- What we are seeking is greater manoeuvrability and insight into student management and outcomes.
- This is enhanced through psychological flexibility.
- It always begins and ends with the student. The teacher uses interventions to help move to psychological flexibility.



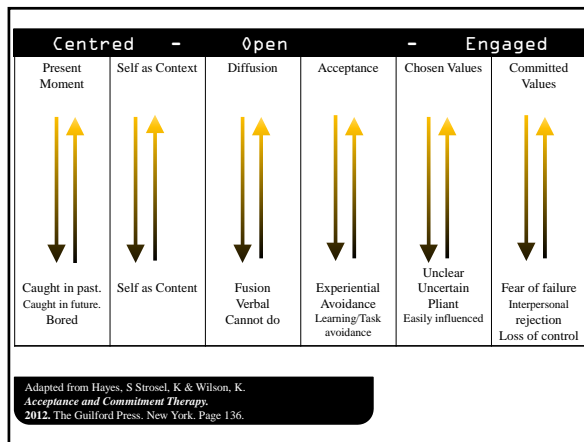
Focus on avoidance

- Although experiential avoidance may be present it is important for the educator to be mindful and respectful.
- The teacher can work out of a compassionate existential position.
- Do we need to know why students do what they do? Recommend a non-judgemental approach. Our job is not to put students into pigeon holes.
- There are many reasons why students avoid learning and there will be many different levels and reasons for avoidance. (Appendix 1)
- We would like students to become aware that they are/maybe avoiding their responsibilities/ ability to respond.

Psychological Flexibility

- i. Engaged learning is when psychological flexibility is active. Learning takes place when students move to committed action based upon their value system.
- ii. How much learning is happening right now? Am I ready to learn? Student(s) need to ask themselves these questions.
- iii. Be aware of the distractors? Major and minor. Can this be managed quickly or will it take time? Quite often with have to work within limitations such as time and culture. (Appendix 1)
- iv. The hexaflex is a model of learning and engagement. Learning involves as much unlearning as adapting new information.
- v. This is why fusion is difficult to change.
- vi. We should always be open to something new. Learning is basically adapting to new ideas. Teacher needs to adapt psychological flexibility to their own way of thinking. They should ask themselves; How hexaflexible is my thinking?
- vii. We are transcending/evolving/adapting beings. This is what the brain is attempting to do.



Avoidance & fusion

- ❖ We can start anywhere but this may be as good a place as any. Fusion affects all aspects of the hexaflex.
- ❖ Definition of **fusion**. Rules which shape behaviour, beliefs, values. Examples of rules are: pleasure, attention seeking, goals, end justifies the means.
- ❖ **Powerlessness**. Sometimes educators feel powerless too. Self esteem issues.
- ❖ **Inability/difficulty** in moving beyond current behaviour. Selfishness, isolation, low EQ and IQ.
- ❖ **Relational Frames**. Linked to rules and way brain functions. They are akin to mental folders that we use to function. Can limit our progress.
- ❖ **Self as Content**. 'I am' statements.

Diffusion techniques for individuals and groups

- **Stories, metaphors, consequences, visual material, dialogue**-take an interest in them (treat them as an equal), show compassion, **assertion** (keep at it), tell them how you feel, this is how I feel when.... **Praise**, offer incentives, show consistency, break down content and skills to **achievable tasks**, be specific. Tell them what you want to happen.
- **Moving into the present moment**. Detaching the 'I' from me. This is why meditation is so important in the process.

Remember they might seem like they are from another planet but behind the veneer is often an unsure, vulnerable and ambiguous person. Be kind to yourself as sometimes moving a student along can be very slow and frustrating process. Showing compassion will eventually reap rewards for both yourself and the student(s)



Getting Into Now activities (GIN) individual or group

- Simple breathing exercises for class.
- The five senses, listening, touching, tasting, smelling and seeing. See what happens when you pull out a lolly. Use music or YouTube, listen to the noises around you, touch something unusual, have a scented candle.
- Focus questions: Is there something bothering you? Are you OK? What's the problem? Have I done something to upset you? What do I need to do to get you focused now? What do you need to do to get focused now? Is the work too difficult for you? Do you understand the task? Do you know that what you are doing is against the rules?
- Using metaphors. Student(s) create symbols, stories or pictures to express what is bothering them or why they are not getting down to work.

Differentiation

- In your class, depending on the type of school and school population, some students will be experiencing relationship/ family difficulties. They may have some form of disability, a diagnosed or undiagnosed mental illness. It is not the teachers role to make assessments but they need to be aware of the complexity of the learning environment. If a student is not open to learning most likely something significant is happening within them.

Self as context

- Arguably the most transformative stage, but it maybe difficult to implement.
- Could be better to understand self as content and the characteristics of fusion.
- Very suitable for the teacher to be aware of self and slow progress of change in some students.
- The 'I' cannot be programmed. The 'I' is the observer which takes in information the mind/me/you then makes judgements whether the data is good/bad/threatening/safe.

**Self as Context /GIN
exercises**

Observation: Ask them to comment on a visual display, natural object, what is around; what they see now.

Listening: Listen to what is happening now. Play some music. Listen to their own breathing.

Writing: Write a story about what is happening now.

Speaking: What is it like when.....?

Drawing: Draw a picture of what they are thinking or feeling right now.

Tasting: Hand out a sweet/lolly/fruit/biscuit.

Smelling: Have some scent available such a perfume or a candle.


Touching: A bowl of water/flowers/antibacterial solution/eucalyptus leaves/rosemary.

**Values
continued**

- Need to do a values clarification exercise. E.g. 'you would like to do well but you are not handing in or doing any work'. What is stopping you?
- What do you need to change in order for your goals to come about?

Values

- Whose values are there?
- Students most likely do not have clear values.
- Ambiguity of society and their world
- What do they want to do and achieve?
- Premise that they want to move in some direction but this is not a given and they may not want to move. The dominance of the comfort zone.

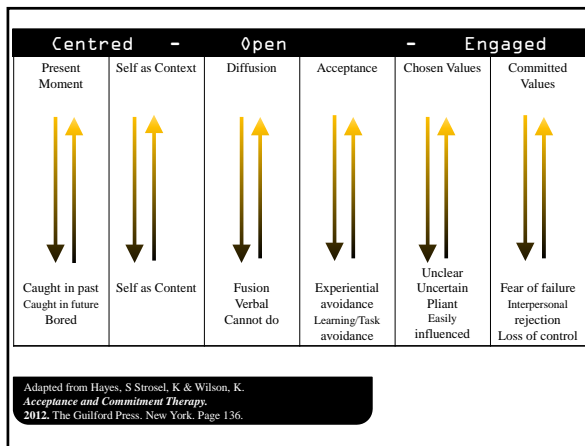


**Committed
Action**

- Do not give up
- Every day is a new beginning
- Remember progress is often slow and as we are dealing with adolescents at this age we often deal see regression rather than progression
- Life is a journey not a destination
- When we arrive at where we want to be we have to move to new place. This is life.

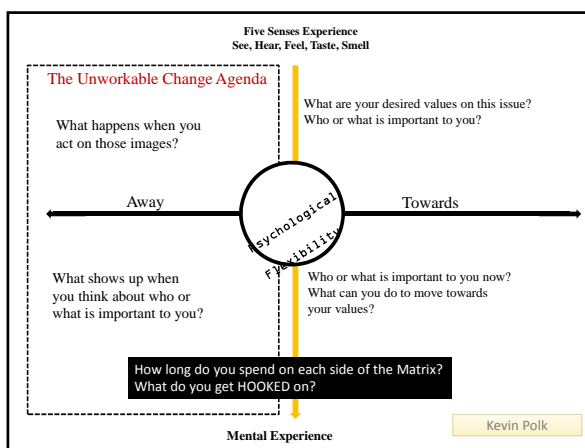
Committed action

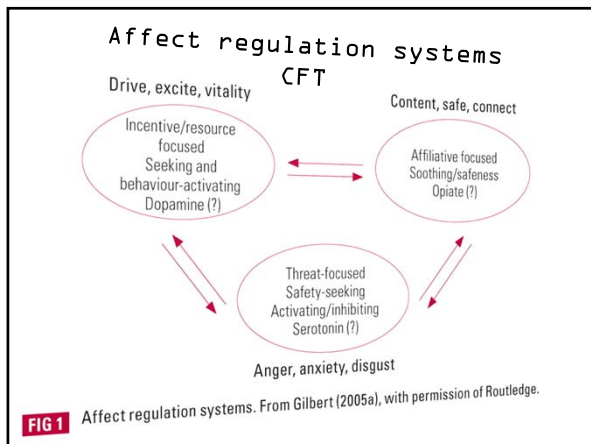
- Reward students who are making progress.
- Schools most often work out a punitive model.
- Working with external motivation rather than internal motivation is often the way the system works. We are trying to move away from this.
- It is very rewarding when students get it together. Mel's story
- Students may say they will change but evidence is lacking.
- Teachers also have to set goals for each student which is very time consuming. One of the major issues with teachers is time. Unfortunately due to its highly regulated change process priorities take away from what may be most important. That is one to one.



Committed action exercises

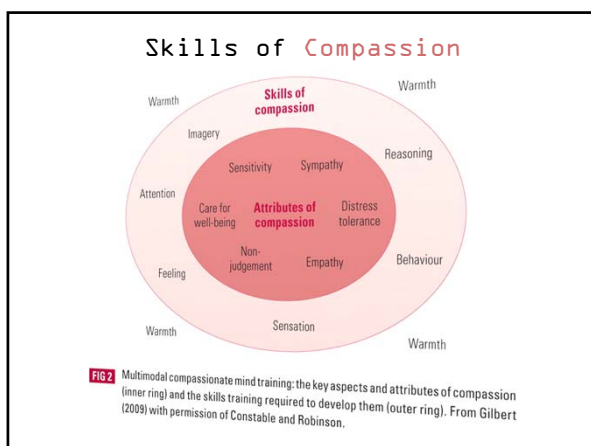
- Visualisation exercise. What does it look like when you achieved your goal?
- What does it feel like when you have achieved your goal?
- Do you feel disappointed when you do not achieve your goal? What can you do about it?
- What would help you achieve your task?
- **Role Play scenario.**





Teacher self-care

- Use ACT to monitor your own feelings and motivation.
- When things don't go according to plan give yourself some compassion and non-judgement.
- No self-judgement and condemnation.
- Meditation not medication. Exercise is worth the effort.
- Teaching and learning is as much an adventure for the teacher as the student.
- You have invested considerable time and money to get to where you are at. As a teacher/counsellor you make many unrewarded sacrifices.
- Value yourself and your efforts.
- Always be open to new ideas.
- Remember your best is good enough.



Sources and References



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Appendix 1 continued

- No requirement to change. Little internal or external expectations.
- Bored. Covered the material before. Not interested in topic. Little success in subject.
- Issue of multiple intelligences; Howard Gardner. Strong in some areas limited in others.
- Lack of connection with peers/teacher and visa versa.
- Teacher too soft/hard.
- Undiagnosed mental disorder.
- Prefers to work alone/others.
- Teacher consistency. Lack of preparation by teacher.
- Playful personality and personality issues in general. MBTI. Students like to push teachers buttons for many reasons.
- Ego centricity/ narcissism/lack of sensing others needs.
- Authority issues. We have to live with social conventions. Indigenous issues.
- Behaviour has become a habit.
- Electronic dependency, games and phones.
- Trapped in comfort zone. Likes to just cruise along.
- Evidence of drug dependency.
- Hypersensitivity
- Fear of failure. Issues of fear/anxiety in general.
- Difficulty in getting into the present moment.
- Peer group pressures.
- Combination of inhibitors.

Appendix 1. Some inhibitors to learning

- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder.
- Trying to express negative feelings in an inappropriate way.
- Need for attention. Feeling left out. Affection Deficit.
- Difficulty in understanding content/expectations. Little understanding of rules.
- Language difficulties.
- Low/High IQ.
- Attention span.
- Passivity/dependency. Little experience in taking initiative. Loneliness.
- Limited experience in interacting with others.
- Lack of self-discipline.
- Low self esteem. Fusion. Depression. Sense of not being like (or liked by) others.
- Victim of trauma. Refugee. War experiences. Refugee camp. Mandatory Detention Centre.
- Complex/Difficult home life.
- Low socio-economic background. Generational welfare dependency.
- Lack of sense of self. Self awareness issues. How much do we know about ourselves?
- Trying to cope in a new environment. Difficulty in managing change.
- Tiredness due to biological/hormonal changes.
- Identity anxiety. Gender complexity. Who am I?
- Unsure of expectations.
- Height, weight, ethnicity issues.
- Parental expectations. Sibling rivalry.
- Late night. Lack of sleep. Social media. Gaming. Study hours. Music. Sport commitments and fatigue.
- Influence of media. Body image. Success. Apocalyptic messages. Violence. Sexual expectations.

My Favourite Words

at the moment

Intersubjectivity

Ambiguity

Serendipity

