If you are viewing this course as a recorded course after the live webinar, you can use the scroll bar at the bottom of the player window to pause and navigate the course.

This handout is for reference only. Non-essential images have been removed for your convenience. Any links included in the handout are current at the time of the live webinar, but are subject to change and may not be current at a later date.

No part of the materials available through the continued.com site may be copied, photocopied, reproduced, translated or reduced to any electronic medium or machine-readable form, in whole or in part, without prior written consent of continued.com, LLC. Any other reproduction in any form without such written permission is prohibited. All materials contained on this site are protected by United States copyright law and may not be reproduced, distributed, transmitted, displayed, published or broadcast without the prior written permission of continued.com, LLC. Users must not access or use for any commercial purposes any part of the site or any services or materials available through the site.
Technical issues with the Recording?

- Clear browser cache using these instructions
- Switch to another browser
- Use a hardwired Internet connection
- Restart your computer/device

Still having issues?

- Call 866-727-1617 (M-F, 8 AM-8 PM ET)
- Email ececustomerservice@continued.com
Creating a Professional and Personal Relationship with Challenging Parents,
in partnership with Region 9 Head Start Association

Ronald Mah, MA, PhD,  
Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist  
Ronald@RonaldMah.com - www.RonaldMah.com  
(510) 614-5641

Learning Outcomes
After this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify key characteristics of a professional personal relationship.
- Identify four communication processes to connect and validate.
- Identify ways professionals might self-sabotage the communication process.
Not field-trip-driving, cookie-giving, “how-was-your-weekend” parents… but

Thorny &

“I want to talk to you…”

Them & Them  You & Them

Child & Adult Correlation

The Professional Personal Relationship - Investing in a positive alliance with the parent.
Integrity – Honesty

Parents and families need to trust in your word and actions. That you will not try to make things sound good when they aren't. That you have the best interests of the child and of the family at heart.

Connection - Rapport

Parents and families need to know that you are for and with them.
Competence - Knowledge

Parents and families need to know that you know what you are doing; and doing what you know well.

Experience

Parents and families need to know that you have done it before and can deal with possibilities. “war stories”
Availability

Parents and families need to know that you are available to them when they have concerns.

A Personal Relationship

Parents and families need to know that you are a real person and not just a role.
Professionalism

Parents and families need to know that you will treat them fairly, respectfully, and with integrity.

Confidence

Parents and families need to know that you believe in what you are doing and that you know you can do it.
Ones Ability to Follow Through Depends On

Being able to:
- Integrate learning
- Avoid self-sabotage
- Apply more adaptive responses
- Deepen self-awareness

What's going on in the other person.

1ST STEP: PSYCHO/EMOTIONAL DIAGNOSIS/EVALUATION--

The FACTS don’t count!! (yet)

WHAT IS THE ADULT FEELING/EXPERIENCING IN THE SITUATION?

Feelings… NOT Facts!!
Psycho/Emotional Connection/Validation*

2ND STEP: The person’s perspective & needs.
The four communication processes to connect and validate.
1. GESTURE/VISUAL EXPRESSION
2. VOICE TONE
3. TOUCH
4. and the VALIDATING MESSAGE
   - "I can see that you feel terrible about this...."
   - "If I thought that had happened to my child, I certainly would be upset too...."

*These First!!

The REALITY Message - 1
(now the facts)

3RD STEP: Start with a "regret phrase" (if you disagree with the parent)
- "Unfortunately, we just don't have enough time for that..." (Message is that you want it too)
- "Our problem is that it would be hard for the teachers to do that because of the schedule..." (Message is that although you want it too & have tried for it, there are obstacles; it wasn't just arbitrarily decided)
The REALITY Message - 2

On the other hand, if the PARENT IS CORRECT, i.e. HAS A LEGITIMATE COMPLAINT, you must acknowledge that, and commit to it yourself.

- "We should have been on top of that. I'm not pleased with how we handled this."
- "I agree. That's something I would like us to improve on as well."

The REALITY Message - 3

Whether or not you agree or disagree then you must, offer what you can do or are willing to do and are going to do (including alternatives) ***and explain it****

- "We will change how we do that."
- "I'll make sure the teachers understand what we want."
RENEW THE COMMUNICATION CONTRACT

Thank the parents and families for bringing the problem up. Upfront families are much safer to deal with than families who hold in concerns and get all worked up.

SELF-SABOTAGE or How One Messes UP!

Typical Defensive Styles in response to being attacked:

1) Attack back
2) Defensiveness
3) Placating or Appeasement
4) Disassociating
5) Distracting
6) Running Away
7) Taking the High Ground Morally or Intellectually
Recognizing your own defensive style to being attacked becomes key to recognizing the entire dynamic at hand!

- From recognizing that your defensive style has been evoked, then you know you have been attacked.
- From knowing you have been attacked, then you remember that a person usually attacks out of fear or insecurity.
- From knowing the attack is from fear and insecurity, then you remember and implement the validation process.

Or...

- You realize that the interaction is getting more and more heated without positive resolution,
- Then you may assume that you are missing it or not doing it right
- Or the other person is not getting what he/she wants/needs-
- Which is validation!

So DO IT!!
References

- Difficult Behavior in Early Childhood, Positive Discipline for PreK-3 Classrooms and Beyond, Ronald Mah, Corwin Press, 2007.