FACILITATING HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND CO-PARENTING DISCUSSIONS...

Jason Seals
Professor of African American Studies
Merritt College
OBJECTIVES...

- Explore trauma and challenges that create and maintain toxic co-parenting relationships
- Understand lifelong impact of toxic co-parenting relationships on children
- Identify strategies for healthy parenting
TESTIMONY...
REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS...

- What’s needed to support healthy child development?
- What *behaviors* should the parents *employ* to nurture healthy development in their children?
- How do parents *foster* a healthy parenting relationship?
HEALTHY CO-PARENTING...

- Allies
- Boundaries
- Respect
- Consistent Schedule
- Consistent Communication
- *Non Violent Communication*
- Conscious Parenting (child focused)
- Flexibility
- Self Awareness/ Self Control
- Community or Support Network
- Financial Agreement
THE CHILD’S PERSPECTIVE...
ISSUES . . .

- Family Background
- Child Rearing
- Personal Values
- Parental Styles
- Relationship Wounds and/or Trauma
- Life Stressors (employment, family, economics, grief, safety, etc.)
LAYERS OF SOCIALIZATION...
PATHWAY

- Individual and/or Family Therapy
- Learning Community
- Self Care Practices
- Trust (will be developed over time w positive co-parenting experiences)
- Establish the type of desired or needed parental relationship
TOOLS...

- Decision Making Skills (conscious)
- Anger Management - understand and practice self regulation
- Conflict Resolution (explore, teach, practice)
- Emotional Intelligence - being aware that emotions can drive behaviors and impact people (positively and negatively), and management of emotions
- Non Violent Communication - a language of compassion, as a tool for positive social change, and interactions
THE FOUR AGREEMENTS...

- Be **impeccable** with your word
- Don’t take **anything** personal
- Don’t make **assumptions**
- **Always** do your best
NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION...

- Clearly expressing how I am without blaming or criticizing
- Receiving how you are without hearing blame or criticism
NON VIOLENT COMMUNICATION...

- **Observe** - what do you see, hear or remember *without* judgement
- **Identify** - what are your feelings? Specific emotions?
- **Need** - what need is *not* being met? What is needed?
- **Request** - what actions would you like taken?
CO-PARENTING VS. PARALLEL PARENTING . . .

Co-Parenting

Parents *work together* to create a common parenting vision and provide *consistent* expectations or routines in both homes.

Parallel Parenting

Each parent is “free” to parent as he/she see fit within reason, *regardless of expectations or routine in the other home.*

**Goal**—reduce conflict, provide parenting w/o interference
EXAMPLES . . .

**Co Parenting**
- Child is not allowed to attend sleepovers
- Child attends church every Sunday regardless of home
- Bedtime is always 8pm, at both homes
- Parents attend teacher conference together

**Parallel Parenting**
- Child may not attend sleepovers while staying at one home, but may do so while at the other
- Child attends church every Sunday while at one home, not while at the other
- Bedtime at 8pm at one home, bedtime at 9pm at other home
- One parent attends teacher conference, other sends email update or parents attend different conference times
PARALLEL PARENTING TIPS...

- **Acceptance** *(you can’t control every situation, let go of trying to be right)*

- **Minimal Interaction** *(safe visitation, drop off, and pick up location)*

- **Keep Communication Business Like** *(It should be concise, to the point, and unemotional)*

- Use email, text message or parenting app *(for schedules, medical appointments, expenses etc.)*

- **Shift Conflicts to Learning Opportunity** i.e. if your kid struggles with your ex’s behavior, try to focus on the lesson and not the behavior itself
Being a conscious parent is all about building strong, sustainable bonds with your children through mindful living and awareness, this helps you develop a positive emotional connection with your child.
THE 4’S OF CONSCIOUS PARENTING...

- **Safe**- physical, emotional, mental and spiritual

- **Secure**- children feel secure when parents are available and present, and a secure attachment is created/ maintained through meeting a child’s emotional needs

- **Seen**- being attuned to a child’s feelings supports a child to feel seen, a parent’s self awareness allows a parent to be more attuned

- **Soothed**- parents should try to understand how their child likes to be soothed, parents can sooth through their own emotional state, voice control, soft eye gaze, gentle touch and staying present
# Erikson’s Stages of Psychosocial Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approximate Age</th>
<th>Psycho Social Crisis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Infant - 18 months</td>
<td>Trust vs. Mistrust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 months - 3 years</td>
<td>Autonomy vs. Shame &amp; Doubt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - 5 years</td>
<td>Initiative vs. Guilt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 - 13 years</td>
<td>Industry vs. Inferiority</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 - 21 years</td>
<td>Identity vs. Role Confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 39 years</td>
<td>Intimacy vs. Isolation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 - 65 years</td>
<td>Generativity vs. Stagnation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 and older</td>
<td>Ego Integrity vs. Despair</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(C) The Psychology Notes Headquarter - http://www.PsychologyNotesHQ.com
RESOURCES...