

Today's Key Points



Key Point 1

The youth care field requires professional skills which may be challenging to learn & use, especially for staff originally from harsh environments.



Key Point 2

Personal beliefs guide our behavior in personal situations.... but could backfire in work situations with troubled youth!



Key Point 3

The professional guidelines of youth care are often unspoken, and may contradict deeply held personal beliefs of some staff.



Key Point 4

Professionalism is a mindset as much as a skill set. It can be fostered if we create teachable moments with staff who respond too personally to problems.

Want more information about quality staff development? Contact:

Dr. Steve Parese

SBP Consulting, Inc. Danbury, NC
(336) 593-3533 www.TACT2.com

Personal Beliefs

vs.



Professional Ethics in the Youth Care Field

Dr. Steve Parese

SBP Consulting, Inc. Danbury, NC
(336) 593-3533 www.TACT2.com

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Today's Agenda

1. Professional Skills of Youth Care

What skills are needed to be effective and therapeutic with both staff and troubled youth?

2. Personal Beliefs vs. Professional Ethics

How do the beliefs that drive our personal reactions to problems differ from those which guide our professional responses to issues?

3. Coaching "UnProfessional" Staff

How can we effectively impact the perspectives and behaviors of staff when they behave the wrong way for what seems like the right reasons?

More about Dr. Steve Parese

Dr. Steve Parese has been an educator since 1986, teaching and developing programs for populations with special needs in a variety of therapeutic, community, and correctional settings. He has written over a dozen articles and programs, and has spoken at more than 30 national and regional conferences for at-risk youth, ex-offenders, and welfare to work individuals.

For more information about workshops and training programs for staff, visit www.TACT2.com or contact:

Dr. Steve Parese

SBP Consulting, Inc. PO Box 336 Danbury, NC 27016
SBParese@aol.com (336) 593-3533 www.TACT2.com

Coaching "Unprofessional" Staff

When working with staff who are behaving unprofessionally because of strong underlying personal beliefs, simple discipline seldom works. A coaching or counseling approach based on principles of cognitive restructuring is often a more effective initial intervention.

Step 1. DeEscalate

First, be sure everyone is calm enough to think clearly. Then ask for a minute to talk privately.

Step 2. Ask for Information

Next, note what you observed and ask the staff member to explain what happened from their point of view.

Listen carefully and non-judgmentally for his/her reasoning (underlying beliefs).

Step 3. Summarize

Third, show you understand by briefly summarizing the facts of the situation and his/her reasoning.

Step 4. Restructure

Finally, try to restructure the staff member's perspective. Describe the appropriate professional response, explaining the youth care values and beliefs which support it.

*"Seek first to understand,
then to be understood."*

Mr. Thomas' Work Situation



1. Mr. Thomas watched with satisfaction as one of the bigger kids in his program shoved Billy, the group aggravator, into a wall and punched him several times. His supervisor was upset with him for not intervening sooner.

Mr. Thomas: "I'm not going to tell my supervisor this, but I think that little @#\$% got what he was asking for! Maybe now he'll learn his lesson!"

Which personal belief is he still using? _____

Supervisor: "Whether Billy deserved a beating or not isn't the point. It's our job to protect these kids regardless."

Which professional belief is his supervisor using? _____

Ms. Lori's Work Situation

2. Ms. Lori was talking with Mary, a resident in her program one night, and felt close enough to share her own story of past abuse. Later that week, she was terribly hurt when Mary yelled out angrily during crisis: "Well, just because YOU got raped by your stepfather doesn't mean my Dad is a bad man!"



Lori: "I can't believe she would do that to me! I thought it would make feel better to know she wasn't alone with what she was going through..."

Which personal belief is Lori still using? _____

Supervisor: "There are some things you should keep to yourself with these kids. Lori went to far, and she got burned."

Which professional belief is her supervisor using? _____

Professional Youth Care Skills

"Skills needed to respond effectively and therapeutically to daily situations with staff and with troubled youth."

Brainstorm five professional skills for the youth care field:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Professional Youth Care Skills:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Q: Why do staff fail to use these professional skills?

- A:**
1. S _____ deficit
 2. M _____ deficit
 3. C _____ incompatibility

Personal Beliefs Survey

Answer this survey about your beliefs in your PERSONAL life.

- 1: Disagree strongly 3: Neutral 4: Agree a little
2: Disagree a little 5: Agree strongly

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

1. You shouldn't have to back down when you know you're right.

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

2. You ought to appreciate the people who try to help you.

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

3. Some kids need a good @\$@ whoopin' once in a while to learn some respect.

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

4. Sometimes it helps to hear that you're not alone in your problems.

[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

5. You should fight your own battles and take care of your own problems.

Professional Perspectives

As professionals in the youth care field, we understand a number of unspoken rules or ethics which guide our behavior.

a. It's important to keep some boundaries with troubled youth, especially regarding your personal history.

b. Don't try to do it all on your own. Ask for help, especially in crisis.

c. Protect kids from physical and emotional harm, even when they're "asking for it."

d. Never argue on their level. The only way to win a power struggle is to not engage at all.

e. Troubled kids have trust issues, and may deliberately disappoint people who get too close or try too hard to help.

Thomas' Home Situation



1. Thomas' 12-year-old son comes home from school one day cussing up a storm. When Thomas gives him a warning look, his son sucks his teeth and mutters, "Whatever..."
"Yeah, I gave him a beatin'! I was raised to be respectful to your parents. I tell you what: he learned his lesson!"

Which personal belief is Thomas using?

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Lori's Home Situation



2. Lori's best friend calls her up one night, crying that her boyfriend is cheating on her. Lori immediately tells her to come over and spend the night.
"We stayed up all night, talking and crying about the horrible things men do. It really helped her to get it all out, and to know she wasn't the only one..."

Which personal belief is Lori using?

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