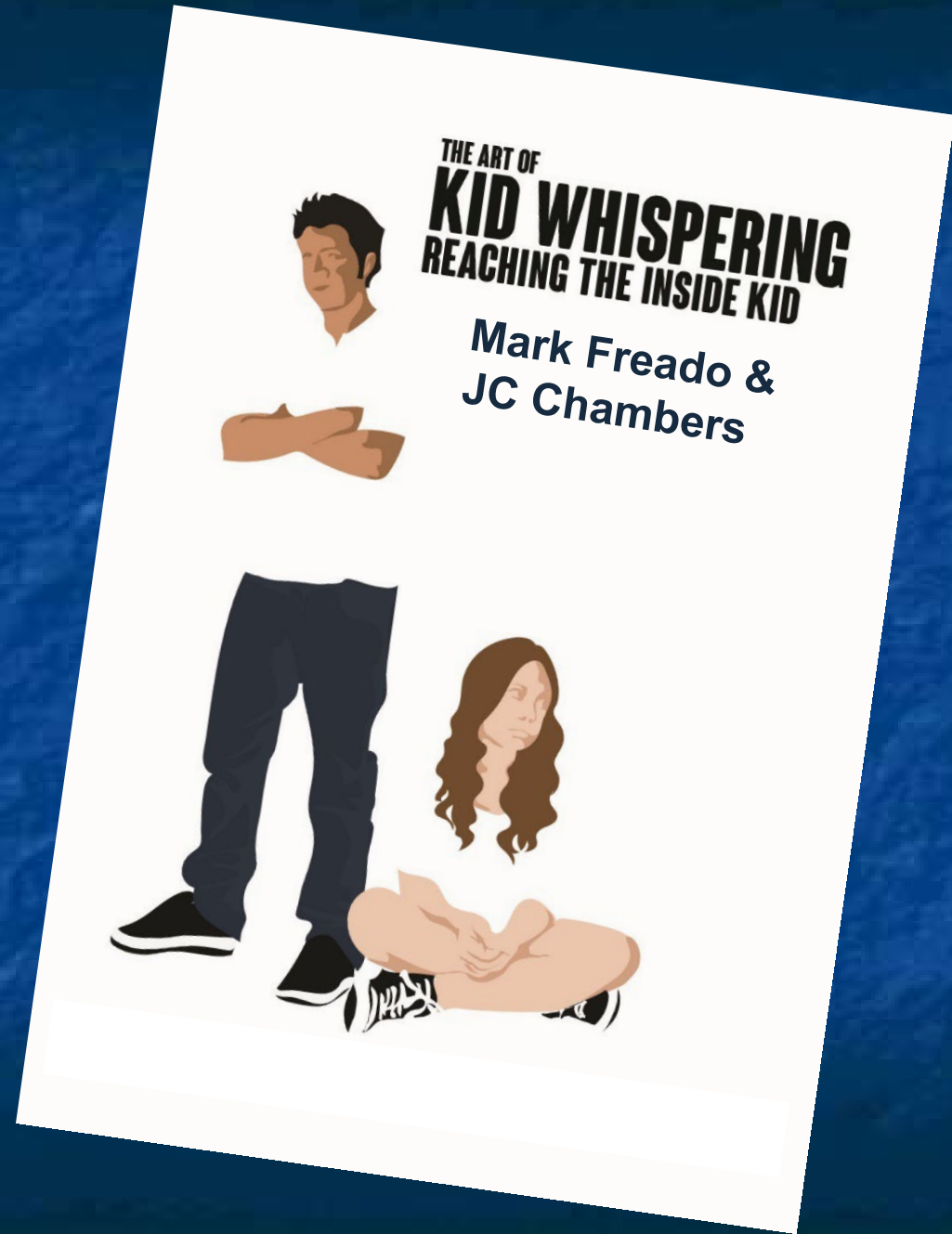




The Art of Kid Whispering:  
Reaching the Inside Kid  
Mark Freado  
[freado@growingedgetraining.com](mailto:freado@growingedgetraining.com)

ACRC 66<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference  
July 12, 2022







# A Kid Whisperer

- A '**Kid Whisperer**' is a teacher-counselor who adopts a compassionate view of the motives, needs, and desires of youth, based on modern strength-based, trauma-informed psychology.
- A '**Kid Whisperer**' is one who attempts to connect with youth that have become adult-wary and untrusting due to neglect abuse, or trauma.

The Art of Kid Whispering:

Reaching the Inside Kid



# Needs and Principle Based



Trust between a child and adult...

Life is to be lived now...

Time is an ally...

Intelligence can be taught...



“We must learn the gentle Art of  
Connecting to kids and building  
on their Strengths”





Search Institute

20 Internal

20 External

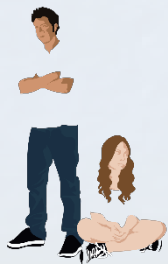


[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)

Support  
Empowerment  
Boundaries & Expectations  
Constructive Use of Time

---

Commitment to Learning  
Positive Values  
Social Competencies  
Positive Identity





## The State of Assets Among U.S. Youth

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** On average, youth, grades 6 to 12, surveyed in the United States in 2010 experienced 19 of the 40 Developmental Assets.\*

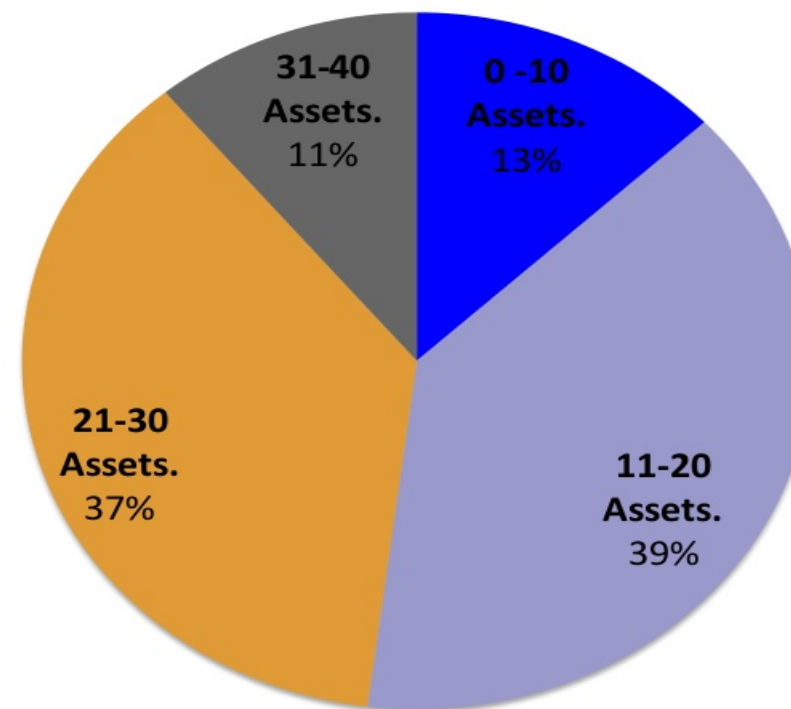
Only 11% of youth experience at least 31 of the 40 assets—a level that suggests they are thriving.

SOURCE: Surveys of 89,000 U. S. youth, grades 6 to 12, in 2010. See [A Fragile Foundation: The State of Developmental Assets Among American Youth](#)

SURVEY: [Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors](#)



### Youth Experiencing Each Level of Development Assets



\* Developmental Assets are supports, strengths, and non-cognitive skills they experience in themselves, their families, their schools, and their communities.

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## Assets and Youth Persistence

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** The more Developmental Assets youth report, the more likely they are to be persistent in the face of challenges and adversity.

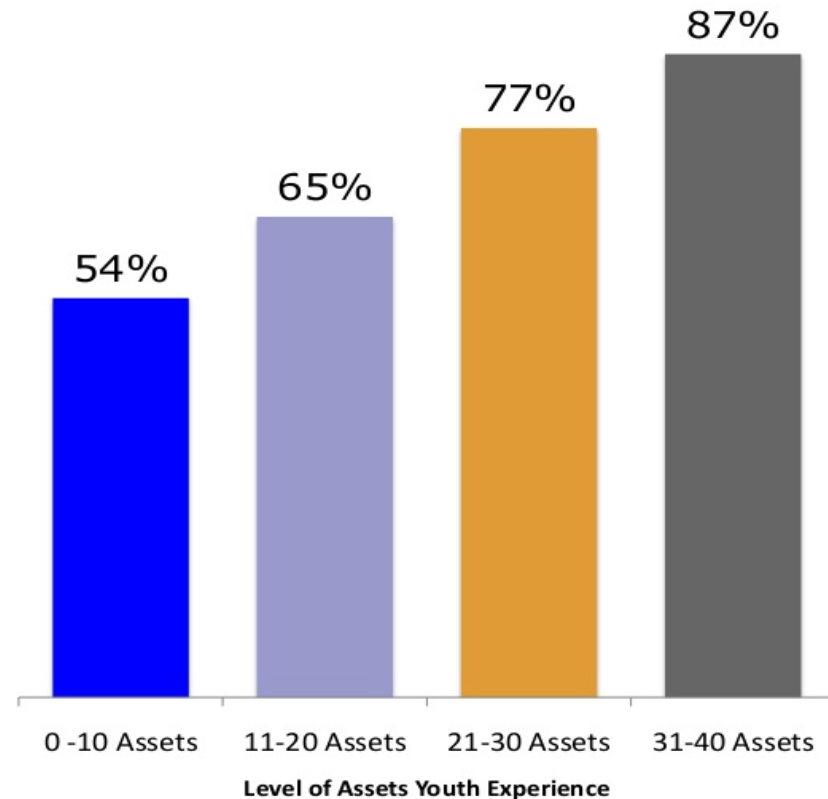
**DEFINITION:** Youth who report that they do not give up when things get difficult.

**SOURCE:** Surveys of 89,000 U. S. youth, grades 6 to 12, in 2010. See [A Fragile Foundation: The State of Developmental Assets Among American Youth](#)

**SURVEY:** [Profiles of Student Life: Attitudes and Behaviors](#)



Percent of Youth Who Report that They Don't Give Up



\* Developmental Assets are supports, strengths, and non-cognitive skills they experience in themselves, their families, their schools, and their communities.

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“Our challenge is to engage kids productively and do so without re-injuring them in the process!!”



# Healing Trauma

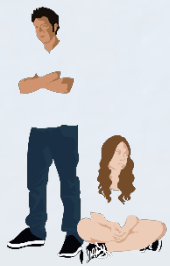
1. Create a Context of Safety
2. Express the Trauma Without Being Re-Traumatized
3. Healthy Experiences Repeated Frequently Over Time





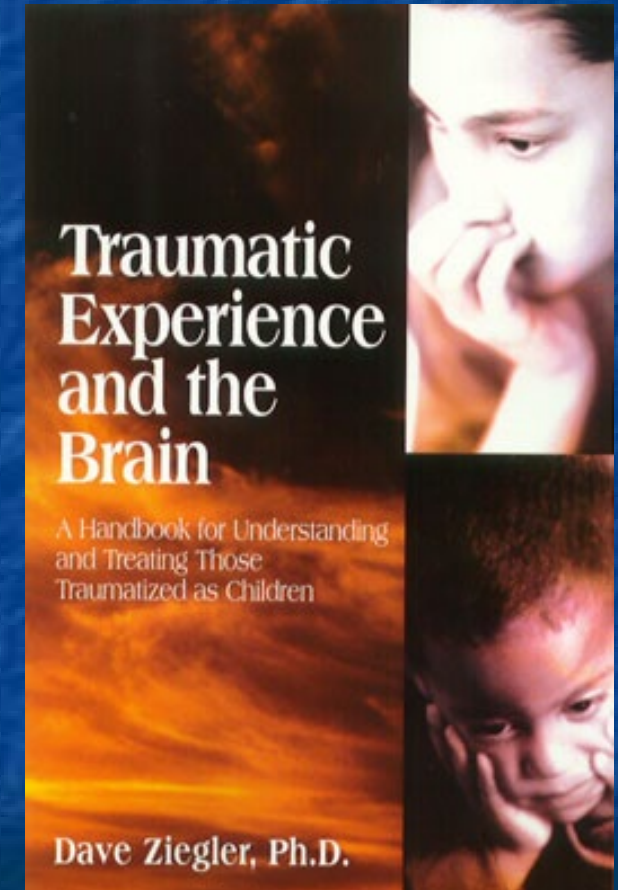
“Not only must we challenge kid’s  
pain-based responses, we must  
manage ours!!”





# Pain ~ Based Casing

- **SAFETY THREAT**
- **INTERPERSONAL THREAT**
- **EASY MARK**
- **IRRELEVANT**





# INTRODUCTION



1



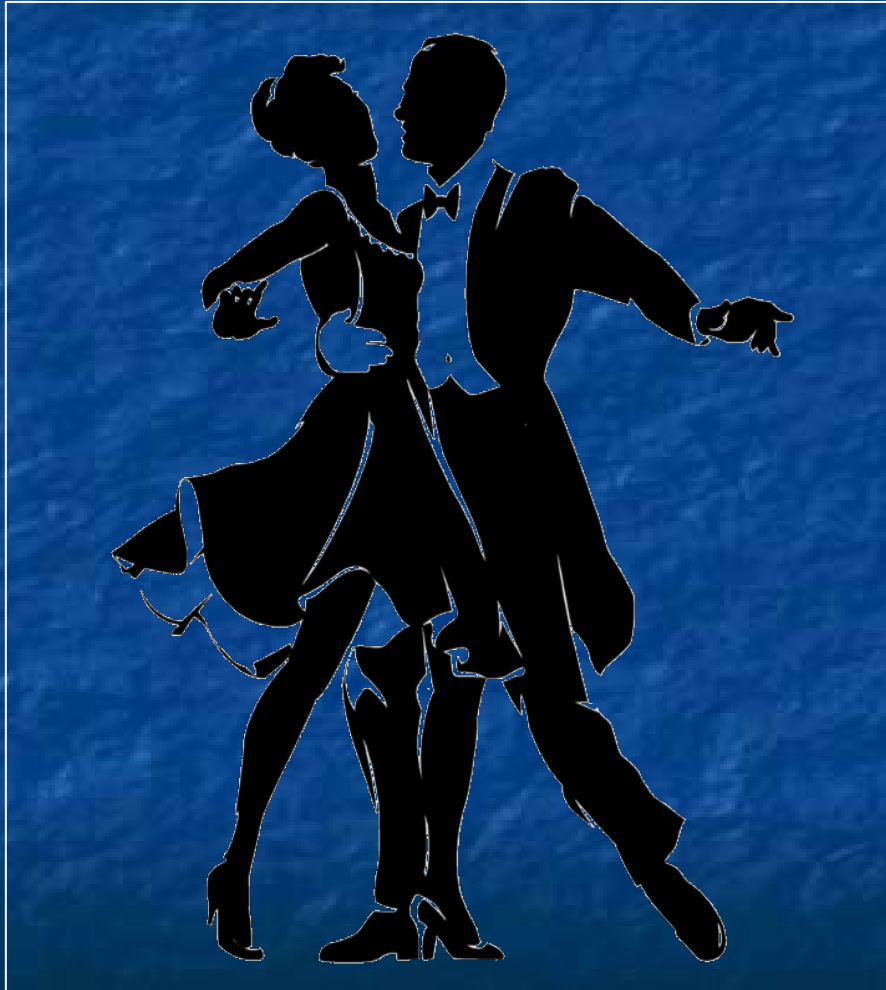
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1



# MASTER THE DANCE:



**“see,  
hear, &  
feel the  
beat”**



# MASTER THE DANCE



“The reality of the other person is not in what he reveals to you but in what he cannot reveal to you. Therefore, if you would understand him, listen not to what he says but rather to what he does not say.”

Kahlil Gibran



## MASTER THE DANCE:

# The Reachable Moment

- Recognize
- Respond





# CATCHING THE REACHABLE MOMENT



“Change never comes all at once or easily; it is sometimes an exceedingly slow process in which we ought to expect to backslide periodically. This is a time to be especially tender with ourselves, to have faith in ourselves.”

Gershen Kaufman & Lev Raphael,  
*Dynamics of power: fighting shame & building self-esteem.*



# Problem Solving

“The way one defines a problem determines in large measure the strategies that can be used to solve it.”

Nicholas Hobbs

# A girl named Lisa

- Her story, as told by others...
- Lisa's story included much more.

# Hitting the Right Chord





# Bids

- Small bits of outreach toward a connection. Invitational.
- Can be natural or strategic.
- They can be accepted, unacknowledged, or rejected.

# Creating Pathways to Connecting

- Reachable Moments
- “Wait, who are you?”

# Internal Signals

- Cues for when to practice self-regulation strategies and skills.
- No one can do it alone.



# CATCHING THE REACHABLE MOMENT

**“Letting Silence Happen”**





# CATCHING THE REACHABLE MOMENT



**WHERE TRAUMA ENDS, SHAME BEGINS**

# SHAME BINDING



# COSTUMES



“Traumatized children often act as though there is no past and no future, just the present. And, the present becomes a repetition of what children could not change, often the script traumatized children came to believe about themselves” p.267.

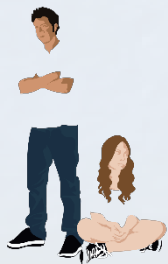
Richard Kagan,  
*Rebuilding attachments with traumatized children: Healing from losses, violence, abuse, and neglect*



# COSTUMES



Designing  
for a  
Purpose





# COSTUMES



- 2 Basic Categories:
- Externalizing
  - Internalizing



We are not the survival of the fittest:  
we are the survival of the nurtured  
and 'those who are nurtured best survive best.'

Louis Cozolino

# Lisa's Self-Image

- Doesn't like:
  - Feeling out of control
  - The things she does
  - Others to see her like that
- Thinks she's mentally ill

“I don’t want to be like my mother.”

“You know, crazy.”





# COSTUMES

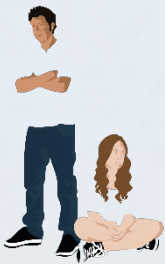


***“Iyeska”***



# Three A's of Social Reinforcement

- Attention
- Acknowledgement
- Affirmation



# Strengths

- Music: creativity and rhythmicity are assets
- Patterned, rhythmic, repetitive actions...  
Henry Maier, Bruce Perry

# Using Music to Help Regulate

- Tying in the interest and rhythmic strength of music
- Creating a strategy
- Getting staff support
- Practice



# That Very Night

- Disruptions outside the group home.
- Stress among the residents.
- Recognizing the signals.
- Using her new regulation strategy.

# THE INSIDE KID HAS INSIDE NEEDS

“Tipping Points  
for  
Change”



COMPASSION



# THE INSIDE KID HAS INSIDE NEEDS

“Tipping Points  
for  
Change”



COMPASSION

INFLUENCE





# THE INSIDE KID HAS INSIDE NEEDS

“Tipping Points  
for  
Change”



COMPASSION

INFLUENCE

PLAYFULNESS





# THE INSIDE KID HAS INSIDE NEEDS

“Tipping Points  
for  
Change”



COMPASSION

INFLUENCE

PLAYFULNESS

CONTEXT



# THE INSIDE KID HAS INSIDE NEEDS

“Tipping Points  
for  
Change”

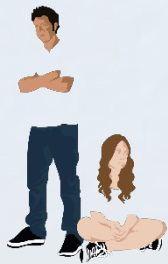


COMPASSION

INFLUENCE

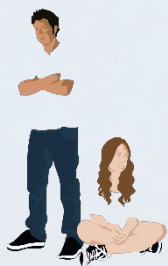
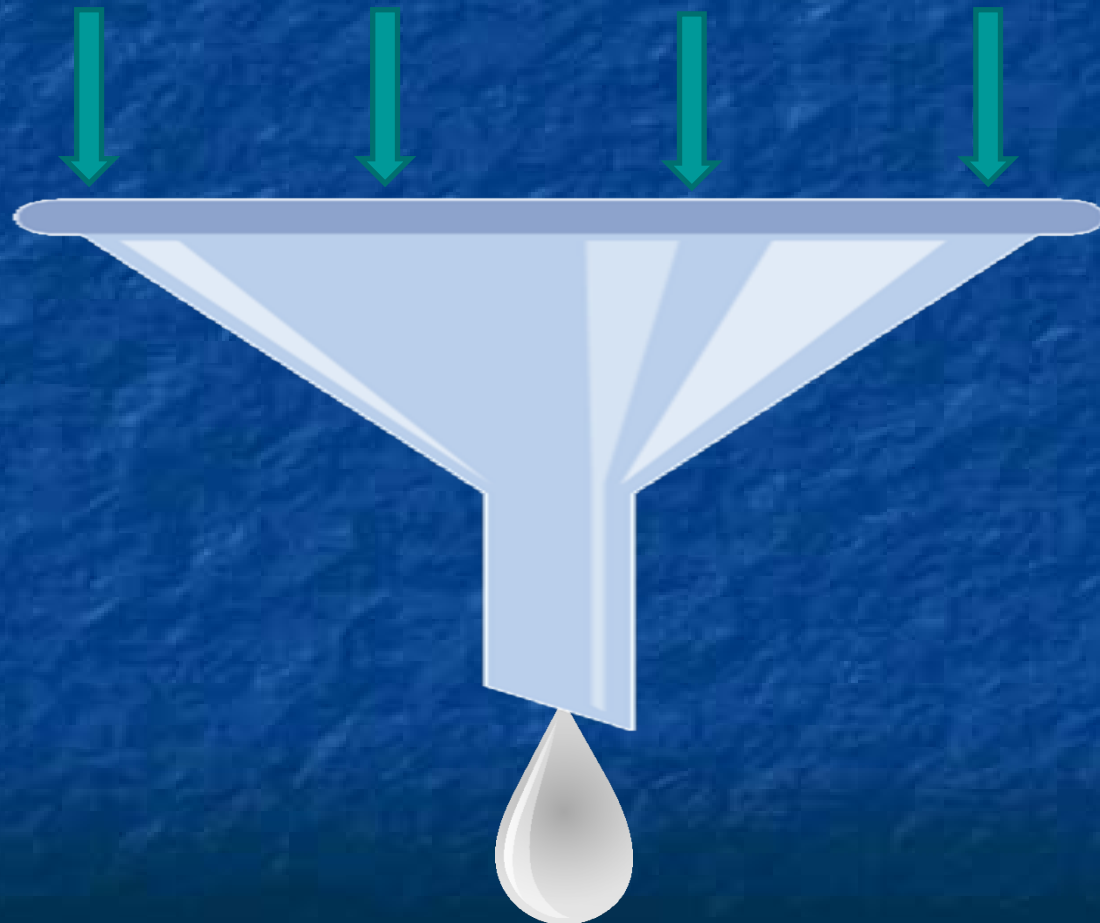
PLAYFULNESS

CONTEXT



# KID WHISPERING SKILLS: CHAPTER 9

Engaging Clarifying Deciphering Responding



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