



Northeastern Family Institute

Bringing Vermont Children, Families, and Communities Together

The Family Center: Outpatient Mental Health

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Reframing

Youth/Client's Action:	Youth/Client Emotion/Cognition/Beliefs:	Reframe: What else might this be?	Adult Response: Re-label/Re-categorize Make Contact
<p>Defiance Resistance Refusal Stubborn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You're not helpful ○ Your values are not my values ○ This is rigged against me ○ You don't listen to <i>me!</i> ○ Helplessness ○ Feeling unsafe ○ I don't trust you can help ○ I fee; alone, scared ○ I feel stupid ○ I am not capable ○ Requests from adults feel threatening ○ I don't trust people that Sound, Act, Look (SAL) like you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tireless ○ Persistent ○ Driven to be heard and seen ○ Internal fortitude ○ Good at setting limits ○ Able to control intimacy by creating distance. ○ Strong-willed ○ Self-protective ○ Determined ○ Self-advocate ○ Stand your ground ○ I am not going to give up what I am already doing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "You are being quite strong in how you are standing up for yourself" ○ "You are very clear about what you need" ○ "You are trusting what your body needs" ○ "It sounds like you need to listen to yourself and not me" ○ "I appreciate how clear you are being" ○ "Let's figure out together how to deal with this"
<p>Threats</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You won't keep me safe ○ You are dangerous to me ○ You don't listen to me ○ I don't matter here ○ I feel powerless ○ I feel vulnerable ○ I don't trust people that Sound, Act, Look (SAL) like you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establishing a firm boundary ○ Being strong is important ○ Decisive ○ Desires safety and security ○ Being in charge ○ Setting a firm limit ○ Knowing what they need ○ Able to feel safe ○ Creating a "property line" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "It is important that you feel in charge right now" ○ "You are being very clear about your needs" ○ "You really need me to back off" ○ You are very good at taking care of yourself"

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<p>Avoidance Passivity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Head down on desk • Wandering around • “I can’t do this” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Your demands don’t make sense ○ You can’t stop me from doing “nothing” ○ You are not in charge of me. ○ This is not <u>relevant</u> to me! ○ I cannot trust you ○ I don’t feel competent ○ I feel worthless ○ I feel helpless ○ Why should I even try if I know I will fail ○ You won’t help me out or meet my needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Excellent self-advocate ○ Clear and unambiguous ○ Able to create distance from perceived source of pain ○ Watchful ○ Decisive ○ Know their limits ○ Good at using their power ○ Able to endure, accept things as they are ○ Avoiding danger and distress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I can see that you might be worried about _____” ○ “I appreciate how clear you are being (about what you need)” ○ “You seem to know what you need” ○ “You make clear decisions about what is best for you.” ○ “I think I am not doing a good job reaching you”
<p>Impulsive Talkative</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I have a voice! ○ Your rules don’t make sense to me ○ You won’t see me ○ I need to get it now or I won’t get it ○ I am not important ○ I am not seen, heard ○ I am alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Eager/Helpful ○ Passionate ○ Wants to be heard/seen ○ Persistent ○ Spontaneous ○ Daring ○ Energetic ○ Action orientated ○ Intense involvement/interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I like how eager/helpful you are ○ “I notice how important it is for you to participate/show me how _____ you are” ○ “This is really important to you” ○ It is important that you are really heard”
<p>Demanding Controlling “Bossy”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You don’t care about my needs ○ Only I will meet my own needs ○ You’re not in charge of my body ○ I am not important ○ Powerless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Clear about needs ○ Bold ○ Passionate ○ Intense ○ Self-agency ○ Decisive ○ Good at structuring their environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “I can see how critical it is to do things your way, you are really clear about that...” ○ “I like how strong your opinions are, lets figure out how to do that by” ○ “It is important to do things your way” ○ “You are really clear about what is best for you” ○ “I bet it feels better to know you are making the decisions”

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Unmotivated "Lazy" Uncaring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is not relevant to me ○ I have other things to put my energy into ○ These are not my values or interests ○ I feel vulnerable ○ I am not important ○ Whatever I do fails ○ I am helpless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Independent minded ○ Good at self-protection ○ Careful ○ Cautious ○ Clear about strengths/challenges ○ Understanding limitations ○ Decisive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I haven't done a good job making this important/interesting to you" ○ "Glad you are giving us a chance to figure this out together" ○ "You seem really good about communicating your needs/preferences" ○ "You have a lot of other things to worry about/deal with"
"Manipulative" Attention Seeking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You won't look out for my interests ○ You only see me when I am "bad" ○ I feel insecure and uncertain ○ I want help my way ○ I must get my needs met ○ I don't trust I will get what I need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Connection seeking ○ Validation seeking ○ Self-advocating ○ Safety seeking ○ Resourceful ○ Knowing how to get what you need from adults 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "You really want me to know what you need" ○ "I like how you are practicing ways to communicate/be clear with me" ○ "I sometimes worry that you think you can't be direct about your needs"
Running/ Elopement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You are not safe to me ○ You are not listening ○ You're not offering what I need ○ Powerless ○ Passive to active ○ What I am trying is not working ○ I am in danger here 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having a good back-up plan (Second Plan) ○ Exploring options and possibilities ○ Seeking refuge/safety ○ Flexible ○ Decisive ○ Paying attention to body needs ○ Good at taking action to help yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "You trusted what your body needed" ○ "You really needed a break from..." ○ "I noticed you took care of yourself the way you thought best" ○ "You were able to get/pursue what you needed"
Aggression Being hurtful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You pose a threat to me. ○ You don't understand me ○ You are crowding me ○ I am in danger ○ I must protect myself ○ I feel alone 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ I am tough and decisive ○ I can protect myself ○ I am setting a limit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "It is important that I know how tough and determined you are" ○ "You let me know how frustrated and fed up you were"

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Dishonesty "Lying "	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You are not safe or trustworthy ○ You will harm me ○ I am in danger ○ I have to navigate around you. ○ I anticipate that the "truth" will get me harmed. ○ I am stressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Self-protective ○ Savvy ○ Self-agency ○ Able to read others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I am worried that you got very stressed and I didn't notice it" ○ "I know that when you are stressed you don't always trust me"
Stealing Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You won't meet my needs ○ I feel in charge and powerful ○ I have to rely on myself ○ People like you don't care about me. ○ This feels exciting which helps my stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Independent ○ Self-agency ○ Crafty ○ Good at reading the environment ○ Getting own needs met ○ Able to make myself feel better 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "I am worried that you got very stressed and I didn't notice it" ○ "I wonder if you were worried about_____" ○ "When you take things, I think old feelings came up for you" ○ "I wonder if you needed to feel strong and in control of your life"
Anger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You don't get it ○ You don't care about me ○ I am worried ○ I feel helpless 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intense commitment to a belief ○ Wanting to feel in charge ○ Clear ○ Decisive ○ Self-advocate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ "You have every right to feel upset" ○ "I notice how strongly you feel about this" ○ "I want to better understand how important this is to you"

Reframing:

As much as we depend upon frames, frameworks, categories, classification, and labels to group and understand our world, we also have the ability to re-label, re-classify, re-categorize and reframe what we see, hear, feel, think and experience. One of our many cognitive gifts and responsibilities is to challenge and overcome our fixed, static and rigid beliefs about what we are seeing, especially when outcomes with our children/youth are not successful.

Reframing is needed our conventional and traditional ways of viewing acting out are not working. Instead of a singular, unidimensional viewpoint, reframing fundamentally relies on our ability to consider multiple truths and multiple versions of an event, an action, a behavior, an experience and a child. There are multiple explanations for what we see, hear, feel, and experience.

Reframing is the ability to replace one frame, label, name, category or descriptor with another. We entertain that what we see can have multiple “names”. With reframing, we call what we see something different, so we can perceive it differently, and when we do, we feel differently about the event, action, behavior, experience and child. When we feel differently about what we see, hear, experience, we will often act differently. Change your perception, you change your feelings, and then your behavior. In doing so, you change the interaction with the child/youth and possibly the outcome. Reframing asks us to think about what the “adaptive or positive value” of the behavior might be. As Stuart Shanker, Ph.D., states, “See a child differently and you’ll see a different child”.

In order to successfully reframe something, you have to embrace the complexity of humans and the reality that we are deeply contradictory beings. Reframing requires that we believe more than one thing can be true about someone, at the same time. When you allow yourself to see multiple versions of the truth, you allow choice in your response, and possibly greater choice for the child/youth.