MOVING TOWARD RESILIENCE

Sarah Oliver, M. Ed.

Purposeful movement as a tool to help adolescents build resilience
Finger - Thumb
Nose Ear
Figure 8’s – arms, legs, floor, add a ball
Circle 6
Movements that cross the midline of the body stimulate both hemispheres of the brain.

Movements that activate the left and right hemisphere of the brain simultaneously are especially effective for learning/remembering key concepts.

Note: all Level I on Movement Hierarchy
The brain processes movement sequences and patterns the same way it processes thought sequences and patterns.

- Front to back (motor cortex)
- Side to side (corpus collasum)
- Up and down (brain stem to frontal lobe)
Balance and pick up
Balance and read
Balance and close your eyes
Balance and turn (knee up)
Balance and toss a ball
Use a line – add a ball, bean bag
Cross Walk

- Note: All Level I on Movement Hierarchy
The balance mechanism of the body allows brain processes to smooth out – reroute

Stress inoculation – Multi modal movement creates stress in mild doses. It has the same effect on the brain similar to that of vaccines on the immune system. In limited doses, it causes brain cells to overcompensate and thus strengthen themselves against future demands. (Ratey, 2008)
Clap
Jump rope
Dance
Bounce – add a hoop
Partner Pat – numbers, words, spelling
Categories
Repetitive Gross Motor (Madigan)

- Repetitive gross motor movements balance brain chemicals, hormones and neurotransmitters that calm behavior and elevate self esteem.
- Every human being responds to rhythm!
- Language, reading, bodily functions are all rhythmic
Why do movement activities in any treatment modality? (Ratey)

- Provides distraction
- Increases brain-body awareness
- It teaches a different outcome – the physiological symptoms of anxiety and physical activity are similar
- It reroutes the circuits by activating the sympathetic N.S., (no more wait and worry)
- Improves resilience – self mastery (go from “I have to calm down” to “I can take a walk”)
“Physical activity has been shown to reduce symptoms of anxiety by more than 50%. This supports that exercise can be an additional treatment method to reduce anxiety.” (Ratey, Hagerman, 2008)

“The more complex the movement is, the more complex the synaptic connection will be.” (et. al., p. 56)
Why do a brain break? (Lengel-Kuczala)

- Give the hippocampus time to process information
- Reduce feelings of anxiety
- Provide for laughter/fun
- Refocus as youth returns to content
- Develop social skills
- Reenergize the body and brain simultaneously
- Reinforce brain/body connection
All humans possess various intelligences (H. Gardner)

85%

of school aged adolescents are kinesthetic thinkers!
The Movement Hierarchy (Oliver)

Level 1 (Low)
Move as an individual
Move with a trusted adult

Level 2 (Medium)
Move with a chosen partner
Move within a small group
Move within a large group
Move in a group game or activity

Level 3 (High)
Move in a group game or activity with an audience
Move in a group game or activity with an uncontrolled result
(win-loss, scored, judged)
Use the “17 minute” guide (Madigan)

- Include movement in some form about every 17 minutes to maintain attention and remember key concepts.
- Connect the movement to the learned material if possible. It will become more meaningful because of muscle memory recall.
How did this start?

- Our journey at Perseus House
- Teaching youth about brain/body
- Staff development
- Movement Hierarchy
- Collection of Activities in binders - kits
- Movement Cards
- Video Clips

The goal is to increase brain/body awareness!
What does it look like so far?

1. Feel fine as you cross your midline
2. Brain Boosters
3. Vestibular Fun
4. Class Cohesions
5. Content Connectors
6. Stress Busters
7. Juggling Scarves
8. Noodles
9. Tennis Ball
10. Bean Bag
11. Playground ball
12. Balloons
13. Jump Rope
14. Hula hoop
15. Cup Stacking
Each card follows the same format

- Ready:
- Set:
- Go:

- Try it a new way:
Group Cohesions (Partner or Trusted Group)

Get a partner
Mirror, Mirror
Partner Finger Point
Gotcha
Group Gotcha
Group Juggle

Note: Level II and III on the Movement Hierarchy
Content Connectors connect purposeful movement to content

- Group Clap
- Ball Toss
- Cooperative Passing
- Where’s the Answer?
- Four Corners
Stress Busters (self regulate)

- Neck stretch
- Slow and Smooth
- Shoulder Drop
- Forward and back (like a cat)
- Gentle Twist
Body Awareness (Gambetta)

- **Tactile**- Discriminate through touch
- **Visual**- Process visual stimuli
- **Directionality**- Right, left, forward, backward and any combinations
- **Auditory**- Interpret sound
- **Vestibular**- The body’s relationship to gravity
- **Rhythmic**- Repetitive and patterned movement
- **Spatial**- Navigate space and orient
- **Temporal**- Timing mechanism of the body
Movements need to be what the adolescent needs, values, enjoys or wants to do.

The more things you try and the more they feel success, the more motivated they will be to try new things.

Note sure? Refer to the Movement Hierarchy or refer to Movement Cards, Video Clips.
When to do a movement break? (Lengel, Kuczala)

- Staring into space
- Fidgeting
- Doodling, humming
- Talking to a neighbor
- Shouting answers before question is complete
- Attention seeking behaviors
- Interrupting
- Can’t complete activities
A few Tips....

- Start simple – observe the response
- Get feedback from youth
- Allow for transition time to calm down
- If possible, include music
- Never use movement as punishment
- Use progressive relaxation as a calming transition when complete
Conclusion

- solivererie@aol.com
- Updates to packet, equipment, activities
- Let me know how you are doing
- This training, and video of each skill demonstrated can be purchased through the web site: uscart.org which is the official web site for Education and Treatment Alternatives.