What Can I Do to Move Toward the “NEW NORMAL”

It’s NEVER ok to HIT A CHILD

Bringing About Change to the Status quo with Regard to Hitting Children:
A Force-Field Analysis

Lucien X. Lombardo, PhD  
Karen A. Polonko, PhD  
Old Dominion University  
Norfolk, VA USA

Presented at Creating a Non-Violent Future  
Loyola University of Chicago Symposium  
May 23-24, 2014
DRIVING FORCES:
• Push us Towards our Goal / New Normal (NEVER ok to HIT A CHILD)
• Find Ways to Strengthen These

RESTRAINING FORCES:
• Maintain Status Quo / Old Normal (OK to hit a child)
• Find ways of Weakening These

TASKS AS FOR US as CHANGE AGENTS: INCREASE VISIBILITY of It’s NEVER ok to HIT A CHILD message.

Identify: (1) most salient forces (2) most amenable to change.
• Individually: Pick those to work on that fit ones skills and resources
• Collectively: Work on many forces at the same time, share our work with others.
• Fill Out Commitment Forms
Restraining Force #1: Lack of a Child Centered View:
Which Is the Longer Period of Life: Childhood or Adulthood?
MOST SAY ADULTHOOD – We can’t see that:
Whatever Impedes Children’s Work in Violence in Children’s Lives

**ADULT CENTERED MODEL**: Devalues Childhood Experiences
Adulthood Longer:

- **Childhood** → **Adulthood**
  - Rites of Passage – Childhood Stops

**CHILD CENTERED MODEL**: Values Childhood Experiences throughout life-span

- **Childhood** ↔ **Adulthood**
  - Childhood Continues

---

The Adverse Childhood Experience Study; Child Trauma Academy (Brain Development); Works of Alice Miller; Life long Effects of Early Childhood Adversity and Toxic Stress (2012 PEDIATRICS)

**Adult Centered**
I’m OK,
Children Resilient
Hitting OK
Don’t want to feel powerless, need power

**Child Centered**
Hitting me affected me
Children malleable
Hitting Wrong
Need to empower children
Colonial /Adultism Perspective Dominates All Contexts of Childhood Maltreatment: Adultism Missed in WHO Report

Ecological Model for Understanding Child Maltreatment

Force Field Analysis: THE NEW NORMAL
It’s NEVER ok to HIT A CHILD: Personal Contexts

OLD NORMAL (Adult Centered)
- Violence to children is Physical Harm
- By-standers
- Excuses Accepted (stress, culture, religion, race)
- No-Hitting Norm Invisible
- Ritualistic – Non-thinking
- Don’t know Alternatives
- Devalue Childhood Experiences
- Adults Don’t learn form children
- Deny impacts of hitting
- Organizations and Professional Roles shy away from No-Hitting Position

NEW NORMAL (Child Centered)
- Violence “anything that interferes with Children’s Work”
- Enlightened Witnesses
- No Excuses Accepted
- No Hitting Norm Visible
- Ritual linked to negative
- Awareness of Alternatives
- Value Childhood Experiences
- Adults Engage and Learn from Children
- Recognize impacts of hitting
- Organizational and Professional Roles promote No Hitting position
UNDERCUT “Restraining Forces” Adult Centered Forces Supporting the Status Quo of Hitting Children

**TO UNDERCUT:** Be Aware that Whatever Impedes Children’s Work in Violence in Children’s Lives

**Cultural, religious values and expectations** relating to children and adults; provide language; justifications for CP (There are no excuses or acceptable justifications!)

**Social Structural:** Social Roles emphasizing difference; actual differences in access to valued resources (Adult’s Work, Children don’t? Child’s Work?; learning from children)

**Community and Institutions:** Law, Schools, CW, CPS: reflecting power differentials between children and adults; “balance” in unbalanced situation, law supports (Integrate no-hitting message into EDUCATION, TRAINING and PRACTICE – No Hit Zones)

**Family Values:** support justifications and explanations and social roles (Develop and spread Aha Parenting, positive techniques, parental benefits of positive parenting – always with no-hitting message, targeted messages (Vieth))

**Individual backgrounds and experiences with CP:** experiences of victimization reflect learning of the above; (Cycle): (Confront experiences with child centered view).
DRIVING FORCES: Toward New Norm
Links to Prevention, Education and Public Policy

• **Research**: New Knowledge and its Dissemination: Reduces Unawareness; Fosters Confidence in Pursuing New Norm; Reduces power of CP advocates; supports child-centered view
  - Effects of Corporal Punishment
  - Dynamics of Corporal Punishment
  - Effects of Positive Parenting
  - Dynamics of Positive Parenting
  - Brain Development and Children
  - ACE Research

**UN Convention on the Rights of the Child**
*Articles (19, 39); General Comments (8, 13); Global Change in Banning CP Reduces isolation of non-CP advocates; provides social support for New Norm. (37 countries)*

**Prosecutions** HIGHLIGHTING ROLE OF CP, CHILD CONTROL AND DISCIpline IN CHILD ABUSE CASES AND CHILDREN’S DEATHS and Legal Changes: Opportunities for Education of Politicians and Public
Education: Schools, Universities and Broader Public

- Linked into course work, curricular structure, student engagement
- No Hit Zones in Hospitals, should be everywhere
- Street Actions (Asadah) / Social Media Campaigns – T-Shirts
- Deferred Prosecutions (for all where ‘discipline / behavior change implicated in context)
- Links to: Other Violence Prevention / Human Dignity Promotion actions: Seasons of Non-Violence; Domestic Violence Includes Children; Human Dignity and Humiliation Studies; linking with non-traditional allies.
What to do to Break the Cycle of CP, Childhood Humiliation and Violence

• **UNDERCUT Restraining Forces** *BY CONFRONTING VIOLENCE AND BEING AN ENLIGHTENED WITNESS*. All End CP advocacy should start with message: It’s NEVER ok to HIT A CHILD

• Start all counseling interactions with: “Remember, it’s NEVER ok to HIT A CHILD”

• **Teach and Promote** positive parenting strategies and their benefits children and care-takers and community, making explicit that “It’s NEVER ok to HIT A CHILD” is a starting point

• **WHAT CAN YOU DO?** ---- **Fill out Commitment form to make NEW NORM of It’s NEVER OF TO HIT A CHILD!! More visible!!!**

*Rt Click / Open Hyperlink to see: *Written as part of review of Alice Miller’s, THE BODY NEVER LIES
See: Some Observations on THE BODY NEVER LIES. **Reasserting Humanity in the Face of Violence**
Be aware of the lost section of to 4th Commandment* to “Honor thy father and mother”

The Lost Commandment

Parents should honor and empower their children, so that they, their children and their children's children will live their own truths over long and authentic lives!

This is something ‘hitting children’ will not do”!

*This was lost when the first version of the stone tablets was broken and it was never replaced. While we traditionally apply the version we have to young children relating to adults, it was really meant to apply to adults’ relationships to their elderly parents.