

# **Building self-regulation skills among educators and children**

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## **POSITIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAM**

SHAWNA LEE



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Positive Early Childhood  
Education Program



## At a glance

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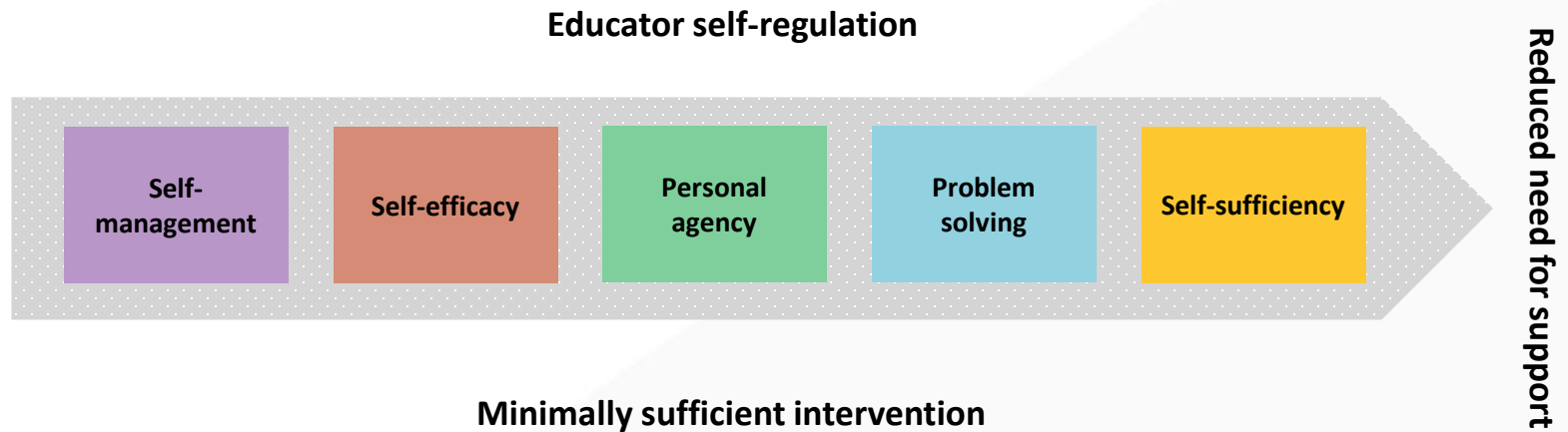
- Introduction to self-regulation
- Need for Positive Early Childhood Education Program?
- Mental health rates – risk factors
- Quality indicators – protective factors
- An example of how to address concerns
- Evidence (testimonials)





## A self-regulatory framework

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## Misbehaviour vs. stress behavior (Shanker, 2017)

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### *Misbehavior*

**The key to *misbehaviour*** is that the child could have acted differently; was aware that he/she shouldn't have done something, and was perfectly capable of acting differently



### *Stress behavior*

**The key to *stress behaviour*** is that the child is not fully aware of what he/she is doing, or why: limited capacity to act differently

Stress behaviour is caused by too high stress load – the challenge is in determining why the child's stress is too high



## Behaviour

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“speaks” (ie. Communication)

Children may not have the words to express their feelings or thoughts

Developmentally, they are still mastering coping strategies

serves a function

A coping strategy

A means to get unmet needs met

A way to get or avoid something

Sensory stimulation balance

Is connected to brain development



## Trauma Informed Models of Care

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Relevant key principles of a trauma-informed approach:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice and choice fostering recovery and healing
- Cultural, historical and gender issues incorporating processes that are responsive to the cultural needs of clients



## Theoretical basis for Trauma Informed Models of Care

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Attachment -developing a secure base

- Positive, secure relationships between infants and caregivers forms the template for secure adult interpersonal relationships
- Disruption to the relationship or insecure attachment is a fundamental mechanism by which childhood trauma affects adult self-concept, wellbeing and interpersonal relationships
- Trauma-informed care systems facilitates the development of new models of the self and relationships



## Why develop a program for Early Years Educators?

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**In a population  
of 100 children**

**Approximately  
20 will have  
struggles with  
their MH**

**Only 4 will  
receive the  
support  
they need**





## Long term impacts of mental health challenges

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- Poor capacity for self-regulation
- Low academic achievement
- Substance abuse
- Early school leaving
- Conflict with the law
- Inability to live independently or hold a job
- Health problems
- Suicide



## Quality educator-child relationships

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- Increase child-centered awareness and educator self reflection
- Increase understanding of factors influencing child behaviour
- Use effective, strength based classroom management techniques
- Emotionally positive and supportive environment



## Quality educator-child relationships

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- Engage children in the teaching and learning process
- Decrease anger and severity
- Reduce authoritarian approaches to educator-child interactions



## Educators report feeling...

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There is a heavy dependence on outside experts to assist with addressing these challenges...



# **An example of how to address concerns in Early Childhood Education**





# Principles of positive early childhood education

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- Setting up a safe, engaging environment
- Creating a positive learning environment
- Teaching good social skills and behaviour
- Having realistic expectations
- Taking care of yourself
- Working as a team



## PECE Program strategies

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### Building children's social and emotional skills

- Setting up engaging activities
- Managing transitions
- Talking with children
- Descriptive praise
- Giving attention
- Individual time
- Affection

### Helping children develop a positive approach to learning

- Setting a good example
- Incidental teaching
- Ask-say-do
- Teaching backwards
- Encouraging early learning
- Behaviour charts
- Rewards

### Helping children learn new ways to behave

- Setting rules and limits
- Directed discussion
- Diversion
- Planned ignoring
- Clear, calm instructions
- Consequences
- Sit and watch
- Quiet time





## Increased confidence and competence

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- Provide responsive care and rich learning opportunities to promote children's social and emotional skills.
- Help children develop a positive approach to learning.
- Respond to common child developmental, behavioural and emotional issues.
- Communicate more effectively with co-workers and parents.
- Reduce job stress.



### **Personal PECE Program:**

- Educators complete 4 online modules
- Outcomes – increase confidence and competence of meeting individual needs of children in group environments:

### **Team PECE Program:**

- Leadership or consultative staff are trained as PECE Program coaches to support integration of PECE Program skills/ strategies by educators in the classroom
- Outcomes – increase communication and relationships with children and families

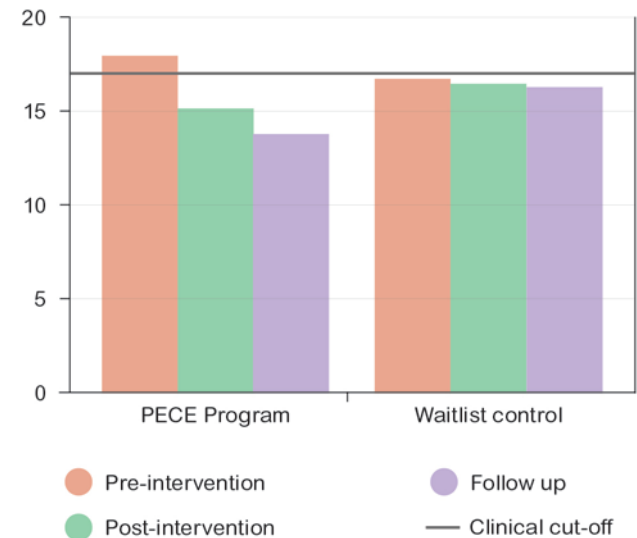
### **Community PECE Program:**

- Team PECE Program plus the additional support of Triple P for parents.



## Research outcomes of the Positive Early Childhood Education Program

- Randomised controlled trial in Alberta, Canada
- 96 Early Childhood Educator (ECE) participants
- Randomly allocated to intervention (n = 43) or waitlist control (n = 53) conditions
- Outcomes assessed via questionnaires, observation and self-reflective interviews
- Outcomes included ECE confidence, competence, job stress and emotional wellbeing, and child behaviour
- Outcomes measured at post-intervention and 2-month follow up



*Significant improvements were also shown in disruptive child behaviour towards adults, observed child peer relationships, and ECE job satisfaction and control*



## PECE Program - evaluation

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- PECE Program trials continue to identify comparable findings in research trials around the world (North America, Australia, Asia)



# Questions?

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