

# Circle of Security Parenting

A New way of Understanding Your Child's Needs

A program for the caregiver to work on relationship with the child, not about directly correcting a child's behavior

Observing, reflecting, and making choices  
in response to the child's needs

## Cultural, family type, and generational differences

Attachment is present and is similar in all humans.

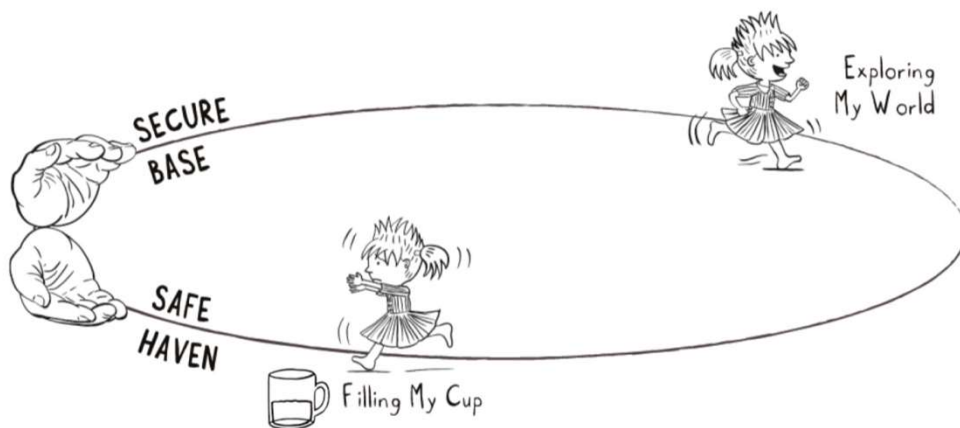
Circle of Security helps caregivers attune to the core needs of children and is open-ended to support many different points of view.



Circle of Security Introduction  
<https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/resources-for-parents/>

# Circle of Security<sup>®</sup>

Parent Attending To The Child's Needs



## Going Out

Discover their world while we watch over them

Help them when needed

Enjoy their new adventures with them

*Participant Sharing: examples of going out*

## Coming In

Fill their emotional cup

Organize their emotions

Welcome them back no matter what the need or feeling

*Participant Sharing: examples of coming in*


### THE EMOTIONAL CUP

**Some ways that children deal with having an empty cup:**

- Steal from other people's cups
- Misbehave to get your attention and show that they need a refill
- Seem to have bottomless cups, or need constant 'topping off'
- Can't sit still for refills or actively refuse them
- Bounce off the walls when they approach 'empty'
- Think they have to fight or compete for every refill


**What fills a child's cup:**

- Play
- Friendship
- One-on-one time
- Love and affection
- Connection
- Succeeding
- Doing what they love



**What empties a child's cup:**

- Stress and strain
- Rejection by peers
- Loneliness and isolation
- Yelling and punishment
- Failing
- Fatigue
- Doing what they hate



*One of the most ironically counterintuitive twists of parenting is this:*

The more we welcome our children's displeasure, the happier everyone in your household will be.

*- Janet Lansbury*



@connectedparenting



## Support System

### Hands on the Circle

#### Bigger, Stronger, Wiser, and Kind

It is crucial to support yourself so that you can support the children

Ask for help, access resources, give yourself grace

Participant Sharing: examples of supports for the kids and yourself

## When a child misbehaves

- Trust to know what the child needs when they are feeling lost, confused, or out of control
- Rooted in how safe and secure they are feeling
- Staying in charge and committed to helping me feel connected

<h3>What's Hiding Behind the "Misbehaviors"</h3> <p>Common Behaviors and What's Really Going On</p>	
WHAT "MISBEHAVIOR" YOU SEE	WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON
<p><b>SENSITIVE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cries over smallest things</li> <li>• Gets sad when you leave</li> <li>• Doesn't like being alone</li> <li>• Can't watch super sad movies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child lacks self-regulation</li> <li>• Child is worried about "new" things and need help gradually being introduced to them</li> <li>• Child has an inner fear they are unable to verbalize</li> </ul>
<p><b>ANGRY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yells and screams often</li> <li>• Throws things and is destructive</li> <li>• Crosses arms and shuts down</li> <li>• Shouts "I HATE YOU" or "GO AWAY"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child is unable to recognize emotions</li> <li>• Child does not have appropriate coping strategies</li> <li>• Child needs help with calming strategies</li> <li>• Child is worried about "unknown" feelings</li> </ul>
<p><b>PERFECTIONIST</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nervous about breaking rules</li> <li>• Can't handle getting things wrong</li> <li>• Doesn't ever want to miss school</li> <li>• Scared of answering things wrong</li> <li>• Struggles with Constructive Criticism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child is struggling with negative thought patterns</li> <li>• Child needs help connecting thoughts and actions</li> <li>• Child has trouble verbalizing their worries</li> <li>• Child thrives on doing things the right way</li> </ul>
<p><b>SHY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hides behind your legs</li> <li>• Scared of "new" people</li> <li>• Fearful of change</li> <li>• Doesn't like going new places</li> <li>• Prefers playing with "familiar" friends</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child is unable to verbalize big worries and fears</li> <li>• Child is cautious of anything new and want to understand the situation fully</li> <li>• Child needs help making plans for "new"</li> </ul>
<p><b>OVER-EXCITED</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Becomes "hyper" when guests come over</li> <li>• Says inappropriate things around others</li> <li>• Makes jokes at inappropriate times</li> <li>• Jumps on furniture</li> <li>• Plays rough with others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child is unable to detect their inner "engine"</li> <li>• Child needs help regulating their excitement</li> <li>• Child lacks calming strategies for building anticipation</li> </ul>


instituteofchildpsychology · [Follow](#)
...

When the kids are melting down,  
I try to remind myself,

I get *grumpy* when I'm hungry, too.

I get *anxious* with change, too.

I feel *frustrated* when things don't go  
my way, too.

I get *overwhelmed* when things seem  
big, too.

We're all learning.

And we ALL need a little patience,  
a listening ear and a lot of *grace*.

## Allowing your child to feel...

### Does NOT mean:

- solving the problem for them
- trying to make them stop crying
- rushing through coping
- allowing them to hurt themselves/others
- you aren't supporting them



### Does mean:

- + they need time
- + they may cry on their own timeline
- + they know where you are if they need coping support
- + you hold safety boundaries
- + they are safe to share their hard feelings



@seed.and.sew

## 8 WAYS A CHILD'S ANXIETY SHOWS UP AS SOMETHING ELSE

### 1. Anger

The perception of danger, stress or opposition is enough to trigger the fight or flight response leaving your child angry and without a way to communicate why.



### 4. Chandeliering

Chandeliering is when a seemingly calm person suddenly flies off the handle for no reason. They have pushed hurt and anxiety so deep for so long that a seemingly innocent comment or event suddenly sends them straight through the chandelier.



### 2. Difficulty Sleeping

In children, having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep is one of the hallmark characteristics of anxiety.



### 5. Lack of Focus

Children with anxiety are often so caught up in their own thoughts that they do not pay attention to what is going on around them.

FOCUS

### 6. Avoidance

Children who are trying to avoid a particular person, place or task often end up experiencing more of whatever it is they are avoiding.

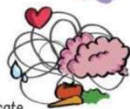


### 7. Negativity

People with anxiety tend to experience negative thoughts at a much greater intensity than positive ones.

### 3. Defiance

Unable to communicate what is really going on, it is easy to interpret the child's defiance as a lack of discipline instead of an attempt to control a situation where they feel anxious and helpless.



### 8. Overplanning

Overplanning and defiance go hand in hand in their root cause. Where anxiety can cause some children to try to take back control through defiant behavior, it can cause others to overplan for situations where planning is minimal or unnecessary.





## Connection

<https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/resources-for-parents/>

## Connection

- Essential Need for an emotional connection
- Safe haven to come back to when things become difficult
- Presence and unconditional love
- Secure in their emotional connectedness and safe in our love
- Set limits and take the time to understand their emotional world
- Make sense of their mess and confusion

**Trust is about signing up to work through hurt when it arises. If we relate to trust through this perspective, then trusting becomes much easier. All of a sudden, we shift from trying to avoid being hurt (which is impossible), to recognizing that we can move through anything that comes our way.**

## Being With

(until 1:20)

<https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/resources-for-parents/>

Emotional availability

Emotional intelligence

All the feelings

Helps them feel less overwhelmed and more secure

*Participant Sharing: examples of being with*

## Time In versus Time Out

Consider something completely different

2. This fierce and loyal guard dog remained steadfast during timeout:



u/Suprovation / Via reddit.com

### TIME IN

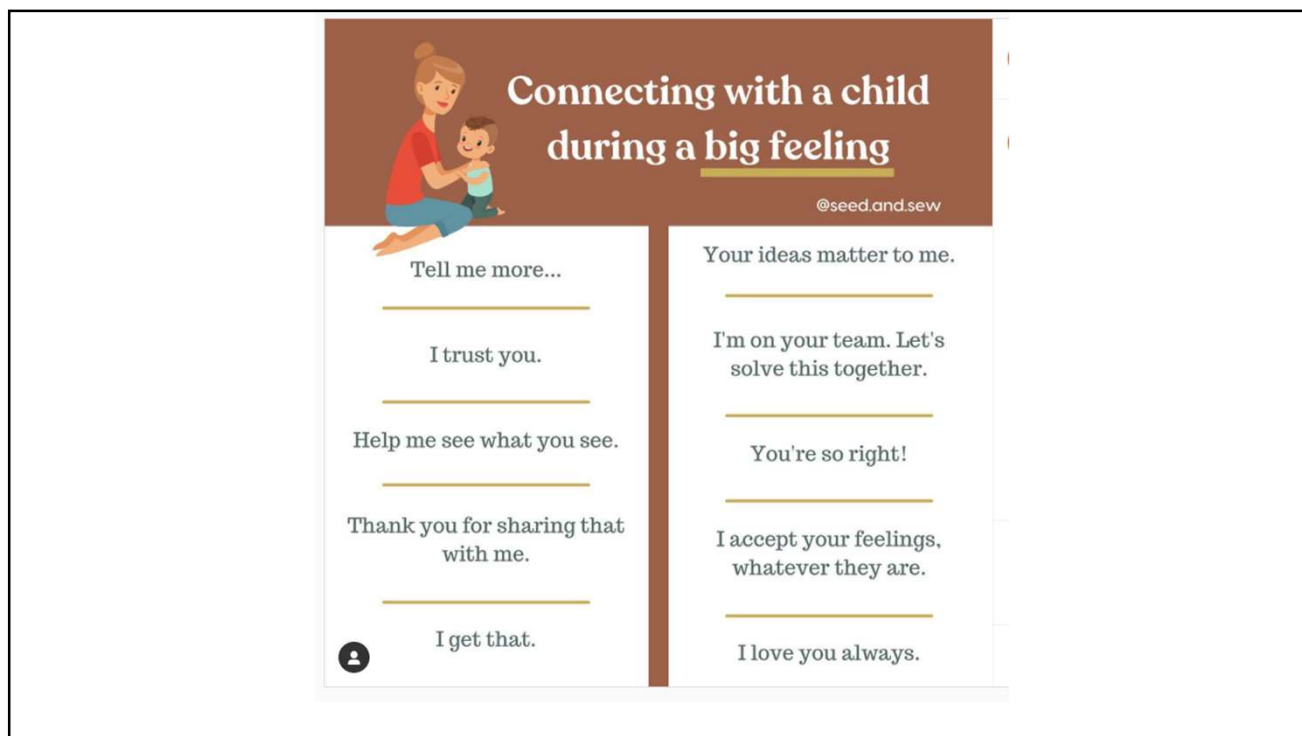
vs.

### TIME OUT

- ✓ Emphasizes on connection
- ✓ Parent acknowledges the child's emotions
- ✓ Genuine reflection of misbehaviour occurs
- ✓ Teaches what to do & supports emotion regulation
- ✓ Both parties leave feeling better about what took place

- ✗ Emphasizes on isolation
- ✗ Child feels unheard = issue is not resolved
- ✗ Resentment and upset feelings grow
- ✗ Child doesn't learn, misbehaviour happens again
- ✗ Both parties leave feeling worse about what took place

@INSTITUTE OF CHILD PSYCHOLOGY



## Shark Music

(from 1:20)

<https://www.circleofsecurityinternational.com/resources-for-parents/>

Their emotions trigger strong emotions for us

Our experiences create the background music for our experiences now

Our past experiences telling us to be afraid of or uncomfortable with feelings that are actually safe

Those emotions are safe and actually essential for life

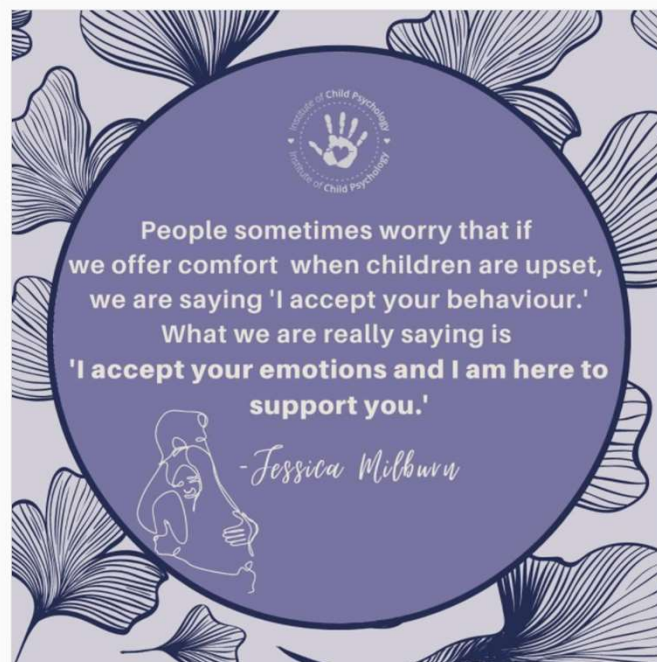
Recognize the shark music and turn it down

Participant Sharing: examples of shark music

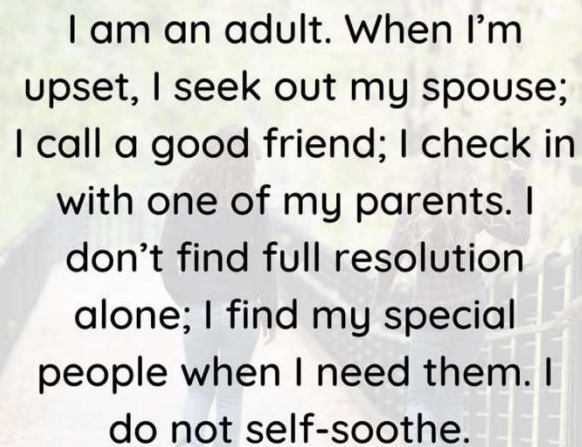
**When I lock horns with my child during a power struggle, I try to keep this question in mind:**

Am I actually angry with my child  
OR is my own fear on fire?

Once I realize that my own insecurities and triggers are running the show, I can take a deep breath and approach the conflict in a more compassionate way.



## Focus on the caregiver

A photograph of a person walking on a path, overlaid with text. The person is wearing a dark jacket and light-colored pants, walking away from the camera on a paved path. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with trees and a fence.

I am an adult. When I'm  
upset, I seek out my spouse;  
I call a good friend; I check in  
with one of my parents. I  
don't find full resolution  
alone; I find my special  
people when I need them. I  
do not self-soothe.

Dandelion Seeds Positive Parenting  
Sarah R. Moore

Good Enough  
NO perfect parent  
Blame is a one way street  
Never too late

Reflection and choice

Once you change your view of "naughty/attention seeking/manipulative behaviour" to "struggling to make sense of the world with an immature brain" you are naturally different in the way you parent and discipline

*Sarah Ockwell-Smith*

'The Gentle Parenting Book'



THINGS WE EXPECT FROM  
~~1 YEAR~~ children ~~AND~~  
BUT NOT GROWN ADULTS

**THE ABILITY TO SLEEP ALONE FOR 12 HOURS STRAIGHT WITHOUT WAKING**

**THE ABILITY TO SHARE OUR MOST BELOVED POSSESSIONS WITH COMPLETE STRANGERS WE JUST MET AT THE PARK**

**THE ABILITY TO CRY ALONE AND "SELF-SOOTHE" WITHOUT WANTING COMFORT**

**THE ABILITY TO NEVER HAVE/SHOW NEGATIVE EMOTIONS, ESPECIALLY IN PUBLIC**

**THE ABILITY TO HAVE ZERO CONTROL OVER ANYTHING IN OUR LIVES, DOWN TO THE CLOTHES WE WEAR, THE FOOD WE EAT, WHERE WE GO AND WHEN, AND BE SUPER HAPPY ABOUT IT ALL DAY LONG!**



It can be really tough to remember **how emotionally immature children are** because they can be so impressively intelligent, capable and aware.

When they seem deliberately bratty or downright mean, we'll need to remind ourselves: **These are tiny people with incredibly low impulse control who are very easily overwhelmed.**

In the moment, it may feel like our kids are out to get us, but it is actually that their **impulses have gotten the better of them.**

JANET LANSBURY  
www.janetlansbury.com

**Take a breath.** Kids don't need to know what they did was wrong this second. They don't need a lecture, a stern talking to or a withering glance right now. They don't need to go to their room alone, explain themselves or apologize right away. **They just need help calming down and feeling seen and heard. We all do.**

**PASS IT ON!**

HANNAH + KELTY  
@upbringing.co



**MANTRAS TO THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU'RE HAVING A HARD TIME WITH YOUR TEEN:**

MY TEEN ISN'T GIVING ME A HARD TIME,  
THEY'RE HAVING A HARD TIME.

I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO CONTROL THEIR MOODS OR  
REACTIONS, BUT I CAN ALWAYS CONTROL MINE.

GROWING UP IS HARD. MY KID'S BODY AND BRAIN  
ARE UNDER MASSIVE CONSTRUCTION.

BEHIND THE EYE ROLLS, SIGHS AND CLOSED  
BEDROOM DOOR IS A CHILD WHO NEEDS ME.

IT WON'T BE THIS HARD FOREVER.

@raisingteens today



**Things a Traumatized Child/Teen Needs to Hear**

@the\_mindful\_psychologist

- I AM ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU
- I LOVE YOU NO MATTER WHAT
- YOU CAN TELL ME ANYTHING
- YOU ARE WORTHY
- I BELIEVE YOU
- TELL ME WHAT YOU NEED
- YOU BRING ME JOY, MAKE ME SMILE/LAUGH
- I LOVE SPENDING TIME WITH YOU
- YOU HAVE SUCH A LOVING HEART

“There is no such thing as a ‘bad kid’ – just angry, hurt, tired, scared, confused, impulsive ones expressing their feelings and needs the only way they know how. We owe it to every single one of them to always remember that.”

—EDUCATOR JESSICA STEPHENS

#T2T

## Concrete supports: Instagram

raisinghumankind

curious.parenting

seed.and.sow

raisegoodkids

mama\_babyphd

dandelionseepositiveparenting

themompsychologist

biglittlefeelings

the\_mindful\_pyschologist

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