Fostering Kindness and Calm in Libraries

Circle of emotions/behavior

We all have feelings—>All feelings are okay—>Some behaviors are not okay—>Every behavior has a function—>Connection before correction—>We all have feelings.....etc

- **We all have feelings** - We are all human and we all feel things, though we may handle them in different ways.
- **All feelings are okay** - Anger, frustration, sadness, happiness, etc. Are normal emotions and it is okay to have them.
- **Some behaviors are not okay** - While we all deal with a variety of emotions, how we handle these emotions with our behavior does have limits. If you are angry, it is not okay to hit someone or break things.
- **Every behavior has a function** - As adults, it is our job to recognize that every behavior a child exhibits has a function, though we may not know what that function is. It is our job to figure out that function and share it with the child. "You are hitting Joe, why do you think you're doing that?" "You are being very loud yelling at the computer. Are you excited about something in the game?"
- **Connection before Correction** - Make the connection to the feeling and behavior before making the correction. "I understand you're feeling upset because Tommy made fun of your hairline, but that doesn't mean you can hit him." "I realize Roblox is super exciting, especially because you just got the bugatti, but I need you to be quiet while you're in the library." By making the connection to the emotion, it shows the child you understand their emotions, but disapprove of the behavior.

Self-Regulation

How can we handle emotions on our own?

Some techniques to model/teach:

- **Turtle Technique**
  - Stop what you're doing.
  - Hug yourself tight, like a turtle in a shell.
  - Take a deep breath.
  - **Great technique for kids at the beginning of computer sessions/when they get too rowdy/when you need to talk to them.**
- **STAR**
  - **Smile, Take A** breath, **Relax**
- **Deep Breathing**
  - Effective way to calm down and center one's self. Examples include:
    - **Elevator Breathing** - Take deep breaths as if an elevator is moving through your body. Deep breath in (elevator up), deep breath out (elevator down).
    - **Blowing Bubbles** - Pretend you're blowing bubbles, you need deep breaths for that
    - **Flower/Candle** - Smell the flower (deep breath in), blow out the candle (deep breath out)
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Forming Successful Habits

It is important to remember, especially with behavior modifications, it takes 21 SUCCESSFUL tries before a child remembers how to do something. Success is the key. They can try 5 million times to do something, but if it’s wrong every time, it will not work. It can be frustrating as the adult to always repeat yourself, but if you help the child to be successful, you will see the change. Make sure to praise the children for their attempts, and especially when they do it correctly. "You guys came up the steps so quietly today, that was awesome. Thank you so much!" "I see you guys are trying to stay quiet, thank you so much for that, you’re doing really well."

Listening Strategies

- Always ask what happened, NOT what is wrong with the child. For example, "Why are you crying? What happened?" Not, "What’s wrong with you? Why are you crying?"
- ABC-
  - Antecedent: what happened before the behavior began (What was going on between you two? "He was saying stuff about me!")
  - Behavior: what just happened/what are you doing (What did you just do to Sam? "I punched him cause he was saying stuff about me!")
  - Consequence or Intervention: what now? What is the result of your behavior? (What happens when you do that to Sam? "I'm not allowed in the library for the rest of the day.")
- Proximity is essential. Always get softer and closer. Do not shout across the room at a child, you will blend in with background noise and quickly be forgotten. Walk over to them and quietly talk about a situation or behavior. By getting close to them and talking to them face to face, you are able to hold their attention and make a personal connection.