

TTAC

NYC Early Childhood
Mental Health

Training and Technical Assistance Center



TTAC Webinar: A Responsive Feeding Approach to Supporting Picky Eaters and Their Families

Presented by: Marsha Dunn Klein, OTR/L , Med, FAOTA

Who We Are

The New York City Early Childhood Mental Health Training and Technical Assistance Center (TTAC), is funded through Mayor's Office of Community Mental Health, in partnership with the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH)

TTAC is a partnership between the New York Center for Child Development (NYCCD) and the McSilver Institute on Poverty Policy and Research

- **New York Center for Child Development** has been a major provider of early childhood mental health services in New York with expertise in informing policy and supporting the field of Early Childhood Mental Health through training and direct practice
- **NYU McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research** houses the Community and the Managed Care Technical Assistance Centers (CTAC/MCTAC), which offer clinic, business, and system transformation supports statewide to all behavioral healthcare providers

TTAC is tasked with building the capacity and competencies of mental health and early childhood professionals through ongoing training and technical assistance

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Responsive Feeding Approach to Supporting Picky Eaters and Their Families

Marsha Dunn Klein , OTR, MEd, FAOTA

Disclosures



- Paid Presenter
- Royalties Archway Publishing Anxious Eaters, Anxious Mealtimes
- Royalties ProEd and Mealtime Notions Prefeeding Skills 2nd Ed, Homemade Blended Formula Handbook
- Royalties Special Supplies, TeetherHeart™
 - www.specialsupplies.com
- Co-Founder Get Permission Institute
 - www.getpermissioninstitute.com
- Board member, Nourish www.nourishaz.org

Objectives



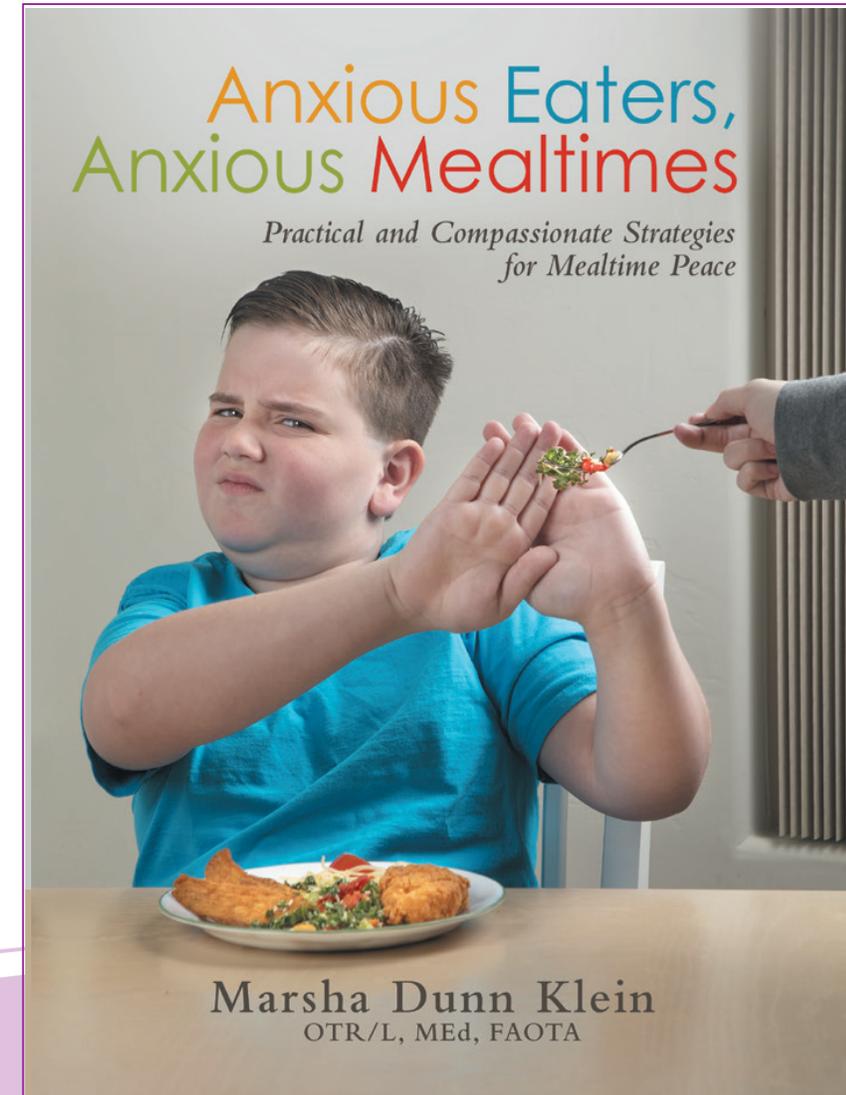
- Define principles of responsive feeding and Get Permission Approaches to feeding.
- Define challenges of picky eating on children and parents.
- Define Mealtime Peace as a starting point for positive mealtimes.
- List strategies that support both children and parents for mealtime enjoyment and success.

Contact me

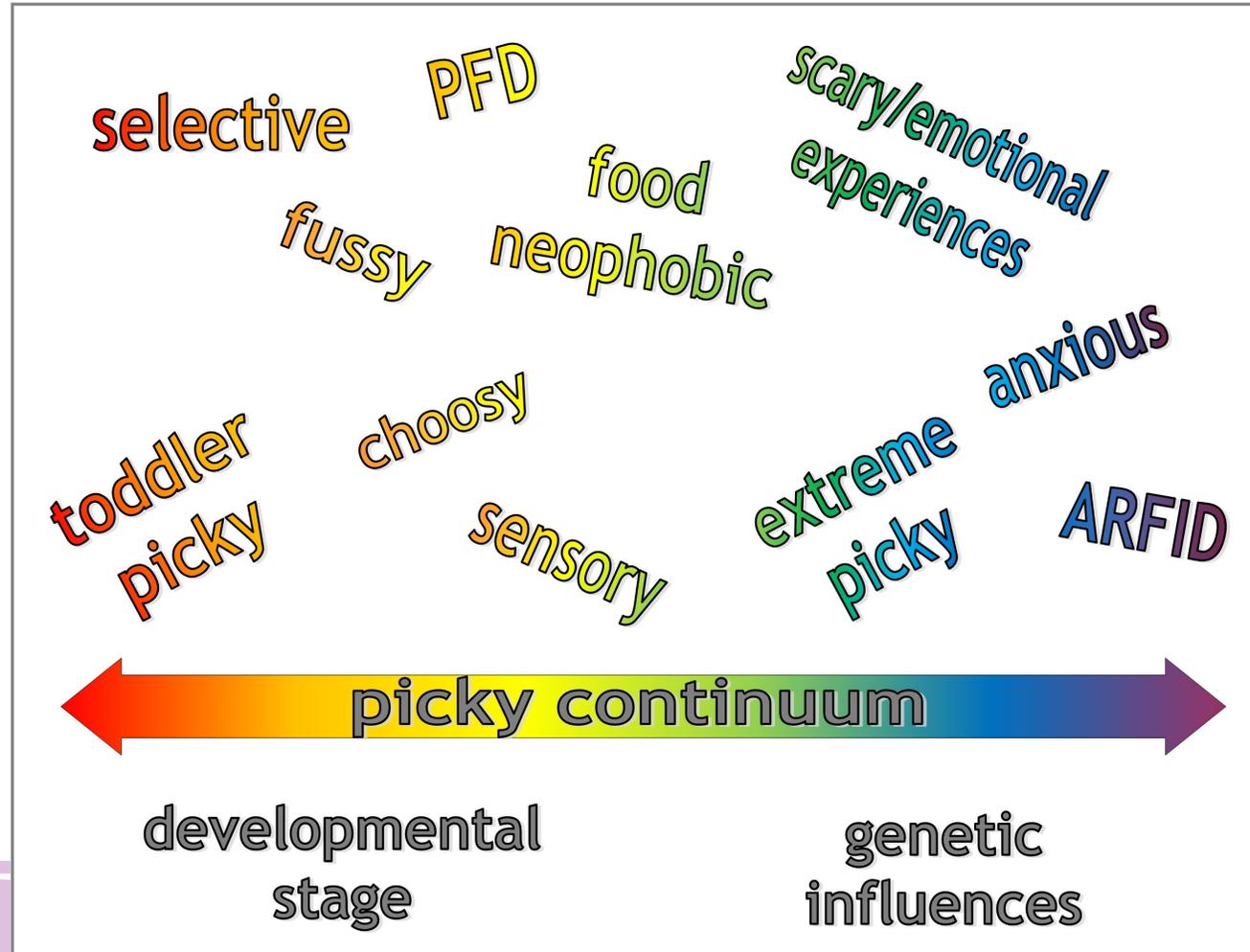
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Check out the Grasshopper Story
on www.getpermissioninstitute.com



"Picky" is a continuum



Avoidant
Restrictive Food
Intake Disorder

Our pickiest of eaters

- Food Neophobic (Birch et al, 1999, Pliner et al, 1997, Dovey et al, 2008, Hartman & Keller, 2013, Lafraire et al, 2016, VanderHorst, 2016)
- Extreme picky eaters (Rowell and McGlothlin, 2015)
- Autism spectrum (Zickgraf et al, 2018)
- Predisposition for anxiety, depression (Zucker, 2015, Farrow, 2012)
- Sensory diagnoses (Green, 2010)
- ARFID Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (DSM V)
- Anxious Eaters (Klein, 2019)
- Neurodiversity matters (Feeding Humans Podcast, Naureen Hunani and NAM Neurodiversity Affirming Model)

Influences on “Picky”

- Developmental stage matters
- Health and skill matters
- Connection matters
- Autonomy matters
- Motivation matters
- Experience matters (Choking? Trauma)
- Presentation matters
- The food matters (sensory and skill requirements)
- Pressure matters

“The List”

Favorite, favored, preferred foods

Sometimes foods

Used to foods

Parentheses Diet, "The List"

- Food (.....)

(Klein, 2019)

Favored (Preferred) foods

Yogurt (whipped blueberry, Kroeger brand, open container in front of child, offer from the container, only from Mom)

Chicken (nuggets, from McDonalds, hot, not any other brand or shape)

Milk (whole milk from the blue cup with straw)

Crackers (Most types, must not be broken)

PBJ Sandwich (Wonder Bread™, one brand peanut butter, not crunchy, crusts cut off, sandwich cut in triangles)

Cereal (Two brands only, without milk)

Cheese (Must be string cheese, only white, not orange, and must open the package in front of the child)

Pizza (Must be cheese, certain brand, hot not left over)

Waffles (one brand, round, no syrup)

Juice (one flavor from the Green box. Child puts own straw in)

A List is only a LIST until you look deeper

- Then “The LIST” helps you understand what questions to ask and where you might start with support.
- You can learn about oral confidence.
- You can learn about sensory trends in look, texture, smell, sound and taste.
- You will begin to understand the nutritional starting point.
- Is there worry? Fear?
- To fully understand “The List,” ask more.

What would happen if...

Listen for worry, experience and pressure and ability to manage change

Roadblocks (Parentheses??)	What would happen IF...?
My child drinks milk from the blue cup.	What would happen if you offered the drink from a red cup?
My child only eats her PB sandwich cut in squares.	What would happen if you offered it in triangles?
My child eats yogurt.	Must it be a specific brand? What would happen if you change the brand?
My child must have her yogurt opened in front of her.	What would happen if you opened it somewhere else? What would happen if you offer it in a bowl?
My child must eat with MOM, ONLY MOM.	What would happen if someone else tries to feed her or sit with her at a meal?
My child can use a spoon.	What would happen if you changed spoons? Plates? Forks?

Diet themes

- Narrow choices
- Imbalanced diet
- Narrow color range, tan, brown, white ...
- Particular sensory aspect is important, visual appearance, smell, texture, brand specificity
- Personal logic
- Change is difficult

Parents tell us...

- “I think my child is terrified of new foods”
- “Any change freaks him out”
- “You would think I was trying to kill him”
- “There is NO WAY she will try ANYTHING NEW...AT ALL.”
- “He falls apart with NEW.”

Parent Challenges

- Picky eating, choices not logical
- Can't change diet, presentation, brand, environment
- Poorly balanced diet
- Hard for family to eat together
- Emotional impact, anger, worry, stress...
- Doctors not concerned
- Friends and family do not get it!
- Eating out is stressful!

Child challenges

- Poor nutrition
- Becomes worrisome to come to the meal
- Highly stressful meals
- Difficulty transitioning to meals
- Suspicious of change
- No mealtime enjoyment
- Motivation to eat?

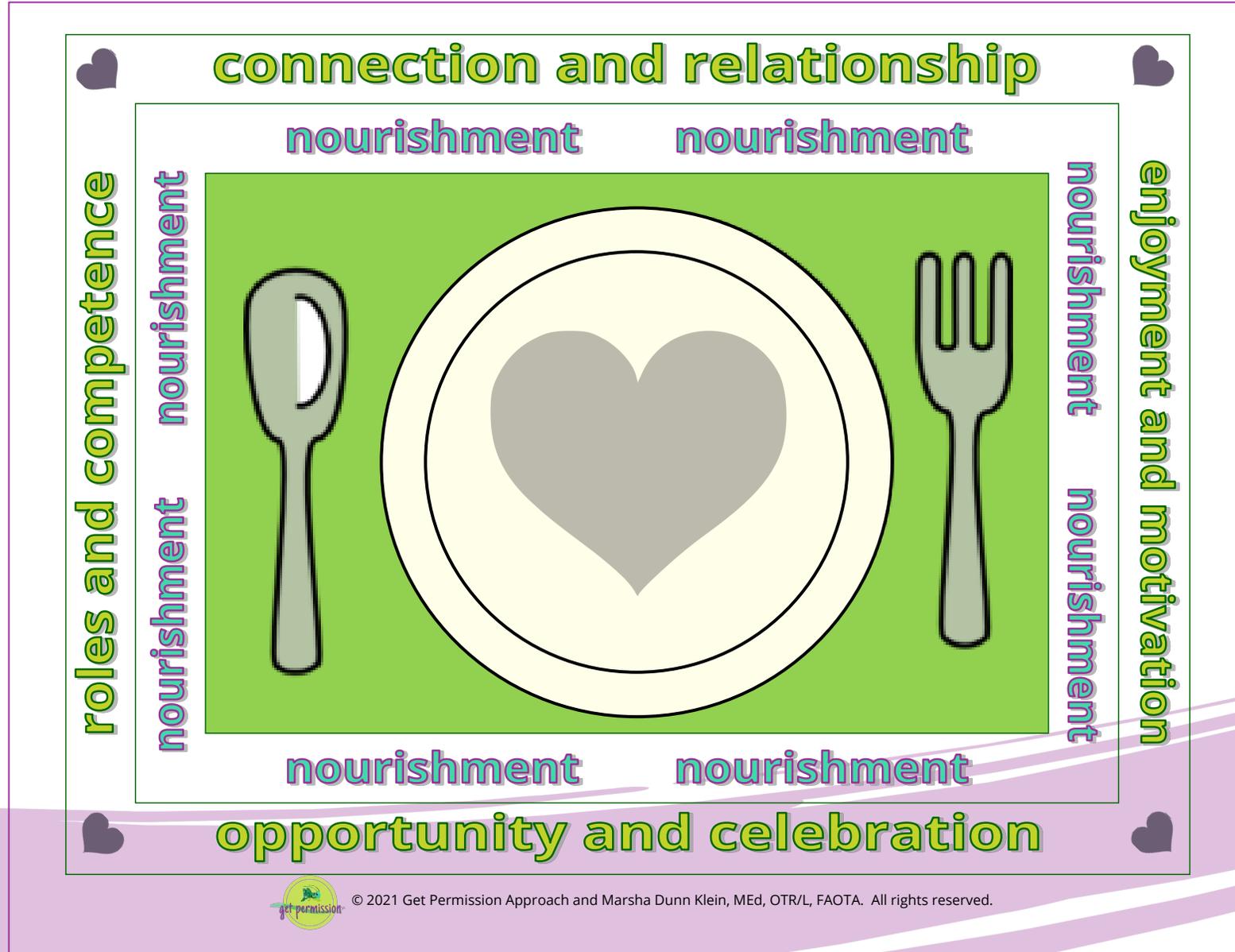
Common parent solutions

- Offer same foods
- Same brands
- Same amounts
- Same feeder
- Feed separately?
- No eating out

Instead of being blamed or feeling guilty

- Perhaps we can see the parents as responsive
- Responding to their child's worry
- Perhaps they see their child's differences and challenges
- Perhaps they are offering the screen time because it calmed the child down
- Perhaps they see the child only likes one texture and may not be skilled with others
- Perhaps they need more education
- So, let's look at basic ways to help, prevent escalation and then, when to refer.

The Get Permission Framework



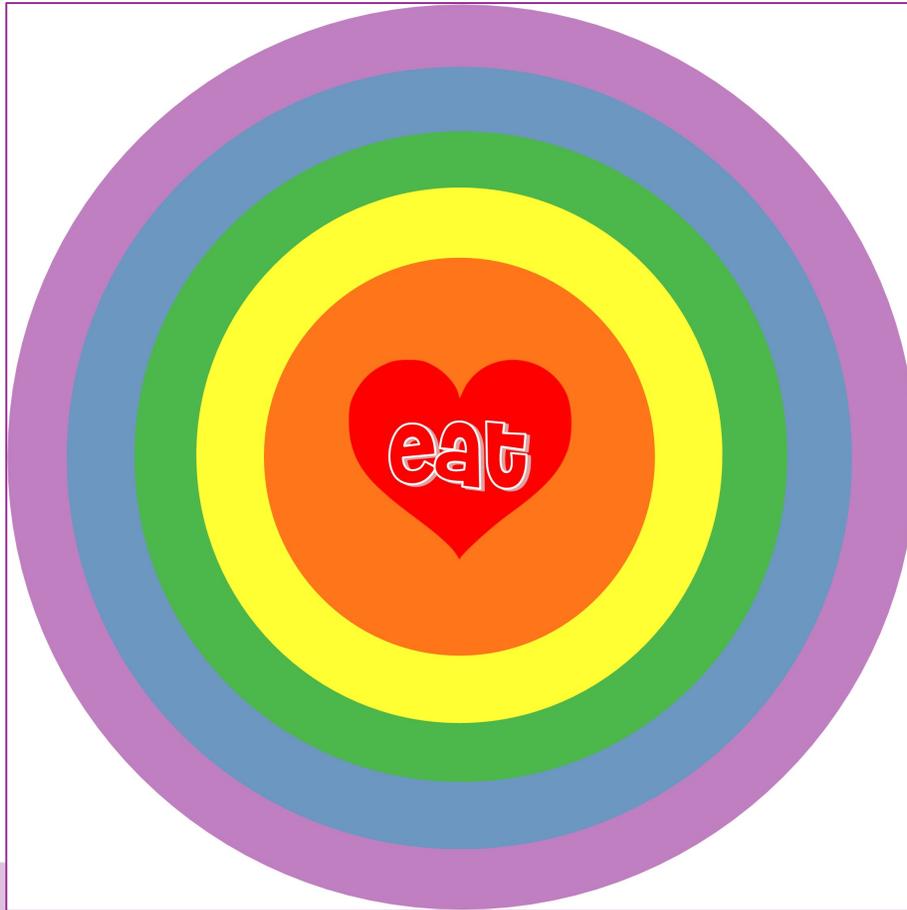
Based on principles of responsive feeding

- Supported by American Academy of Pediatrics
- Supported by World Health Organization
- Morris and Klein, Pre-feeding Skills, 1986→2000→
- The Get Permission Approach
www.getpermissioninstitute.com
- Responsive Parenting
- Responsive Feeding Therapy www.responsivefeedingtherapy.com
Values: Autonomy, Relationship, Motivation, Individualized Care and Competence

Even grocery store shelves

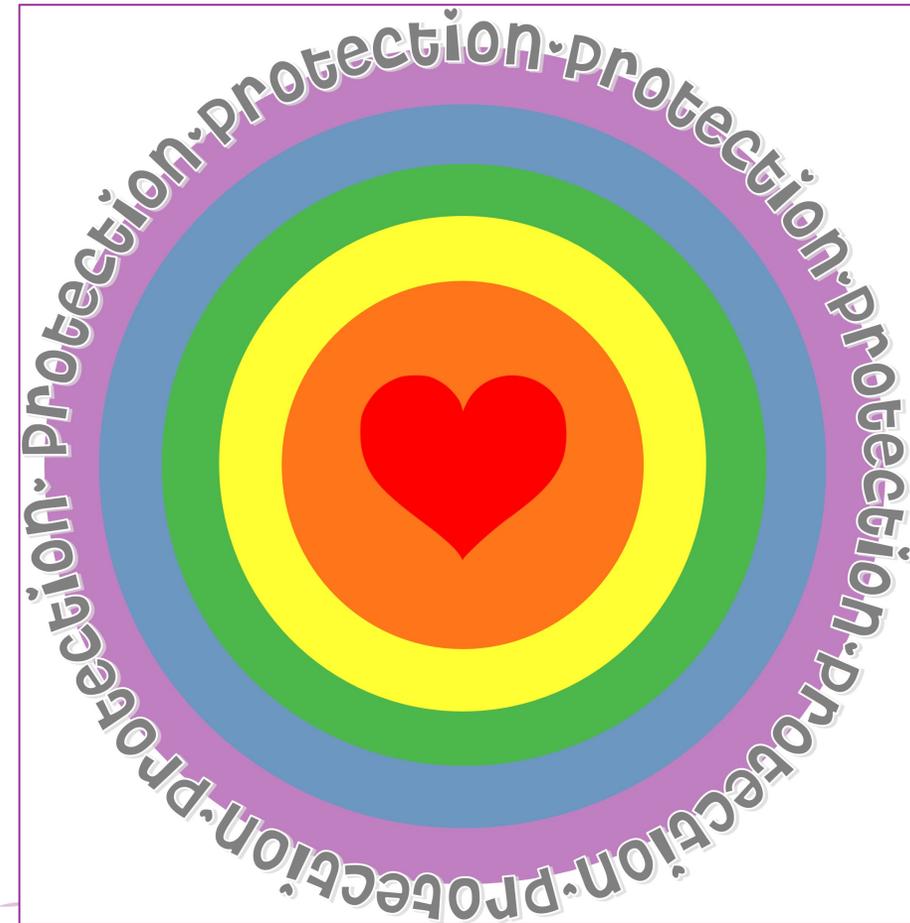


Get Permission Circles of Sensitivity



- Enjoyable eating
- Pleasant
- Curious
- Competent eating
- Independent eating

- When it does not feel well
- When the sensory is ‘wrong’
- When the roles are confused
- When the child is not developmentally ready
- When the mealtime structure does not support success (hunger, setting etc)
- When the child is not motivated
- When the child is not allowed autonomy and partnership
- When there is too much pressure



Mealtime Peace

- Mealtime peace is the starting point for this journey of mealtime change. It is that peaceful place that no longer causes the mealtime to be a battlefield of stress and worry for everyone. No pressure.
- Based on the Anxious Eaters, Anxious Mealtimes: Practical and Compassionate Strategies for Mealtime Peace, 2019, by Marsha Dunn Klein



Mealtime Peace to Optimize Mealtimes





Connection Matters

What is a mealtime?

- Communication
- Socialization
- Exploration
- Sensory! Sensory! Sensory!
- Giving and Receiving Love
- Family time, Celebrations
- Skill Mastery
- Nourishment

Nourish

- Not only calories but...
- With delicious enjoyable food
- With pleasant safe company
and connection
- With opportunities for autonomy
- Having the child be a **celebrated** part of the meal
- By providing opportunities to learn about and master eating skills
- By being sensitive to the child's experience
- By also being sensitive to the parent experience

It's a relationship!



Feeding Relationship

- Feeding is central to development of attachment and trust in the relationship.
- Connection and relationship are important in the development of self regulation.
- When babies feel secure, have needs met predictably, experience the closeness of touch, use their vision to help regulate themselves, they grow and learn to regulate themselves and eventually reach out into the world from that safe place.
- They can be ready to learn, in the social engagement space.
(Check out Steven Porges)

Parent and child relationship

- Parent feeding practices do not exist independently. They are embedded in a complex system developing over time in response to a child behaviors, mealtime emotions and parent beliefs
- Both parent and child have agency in contributing to the feeding relationship.

(Wolstenholme et al, 2020)

Parent's Description of Feeding Their Young Infants

- When there were no feeding issues, parents spoke about their feeding relationship with their child in a positive frame, spoke about bonding, and the opportunity to get to know their child.
- When there were feeding difficulties, parents did not talk about the parent child relationship, but about how difficult it was to feed and the difficulty of figuring out how to feed and help their child.

(Pados & Hill, 2019)

Research on the Importance of Family Meals

- Role models, more fruits and veggies, fewer at-risk behaviors

(Miller et al, 2012)

- Eat more, try more, support repeat experiences
(Addessi, et al, 2005)
- Increased self esteem, and school success
(Harrison, 2015)



Clear expectations

Mealtime Roles and Mealtime Rules

As we consider treatment, we **MUST** consider **OUR ROLES**

- In Get Permission- WE OFFER , not demand and the child gives permission, (or not) and we ADJUST responsively as needed for success. Inherent in offer is CHOICE.
- American Academy of Pediatrics “Parents provide, children decide.”

Division of Responsibility

- Parent's role is deciding the **menu**, the **where** and the **when** of eating.
- Child role is to eat until full and decide what of offered and "whether"
- Ellyn Satter 2000, (Child of Mine)
- www.ellynsatterinstitute.org/
- And this still needs to be adapted responsively

It is **NOT** our adult job to get food in children

Not in homes, and not in therapy

The only **“GET”**, per Jenny McGlothlin, SLP, should be **Get Permission** 😊, Thanks Jenny.

Food Choices



- Children learn from being around foods. (Nicholas, 2015 and Birch and Doub (2014)
- We need to offer several foods that are familiar
- Developmentally appropriate foods
- Family foods
- Cultural foods
- Baby foods, children's menus
- Vary the presentations (to support flexibility and change
- French Kids Eat Everything, Le Billon
- Let children plate or help with plating foods

Know your family rules and routine

- Routine, hand washing, prayers, helping with meal preparation?
- Might include manners
- Might include joining at the table for some or all of the meal
- Maybe “Be nice to the chef”
- Might be “No “Yucky”, NO “thank you” instead
- Take what you want, eat until done
- Rules need to be real, workable. Not too rigid and must adapt to the eating differences of the anxious eater



Preparation Matters

Hunger, the environment, learning the skills of trying new foods.

Preparation supports

- Allow the child the privilege of being **hungry** at a meal
- Meal-snack-meals-snacks-meals with water in between
- Help the child **transition** to the meal (alert that mealtime is about to happen)
- Proper **seating** can help focus
- Proper **utensil** sizes can help skill mastery
- **Invitation** into the meal (Is the child motivated to join in the meal? Does the mealtime have meaning for the child?)
- Prepare for **messiness**
- Prepare **parent state** as nervous systems speak



Motivation

We are looking for internal, intrinsic motivation, (child driven)
Not external motivation (adult driven)

Natural (intrinsic) motivators to eat

- Hunger (Woods, 2020)
- Opportunity
- Enjoyment (Lucardie, 2014)
- Imitation
- Social experiences and relationship
- Curiosity and discovery
- Developmental readiness
- Comfort and enjoyable experiences
- Sensory pleasure and exploration

Sensory pleasure matters

Would YOU eat a food that you did not like the...

- Banana story
- Look (Jansen & Mulkens, 2010)
- Smell (Sheperd, 2013)
- Texture
 - Nederkoorn et al, 2015
 - Nederkoorn et al, 2018
 - Coulthard & Thakker, 2015
 - Coulthard, 2017
 - Werthmann et al, 2015
- Sound
- Taste (Scaglioni et al, 2018)

An internally motivated eater

- Eating is child driven.
- Child is interested, motivated to eat.
- Child eats what she can of what is offered and stops when full.

“I am hungry. I am going to eat that. I want that food. I like that food.”

“Melinda, eat until you are through. Just eat what you can.”

An externally motivated eater

- Child eats for reasons outside herself.
- Often parent driven as parents try to control the eating, more, less or differently
- Eats for external reasons such as
 - Parent demands, shaming, guilt
 - Parent pressure, bribes, anger, rewards, stickers
- Or even too much praise and cheers

“Johnny , eat your food, finish your meal, You cannot get up from the table until you have cleaned your plate”. “Eat three bites of this before you can eat that”. The vegetable struggle

Rewards- External motivators

- Eat this and you can have a sticker, toy, activity.
- If you eat this new food, I will buy you a new Lego Set.
- Unfortunately , we can set children up for failure if our asks are too big or unrealistic.
- Scorpions!!!!!!!!!!

In support of internally motivated eating

- EM can compromise self regulation of eating and promote eating in absence of hunger. (Birch and Douthett, 2014)
- Negative effect disliking required food and craving reward food (Birch and Fisher, 1997)
- Hamper their ability to listen to their body and self-regulate effectively (Cormack, 2017)
- Autonomy matters (Rowell, 2020)
- Pressure disrupts child's ability to respond to internal cues of hunger and satiety (Carper et al, 2000)
- Pressure exacerbates feeding problems & makes mealtime more negative for parent & child (Harris and Booth 1992)
- Intrusive Feeding provokes refusal with decline of calories (Levine, 2011)



No Pressure Zone!

Experience matters

What would need to happen at YOUR house to reduce perceived pressure?

Parent might pressure because...

- They are worried about weight gain
- They are worried about amounts
- They are worried about variation and diet
- They misunderstand their roles
- Their parenting style is more controlling

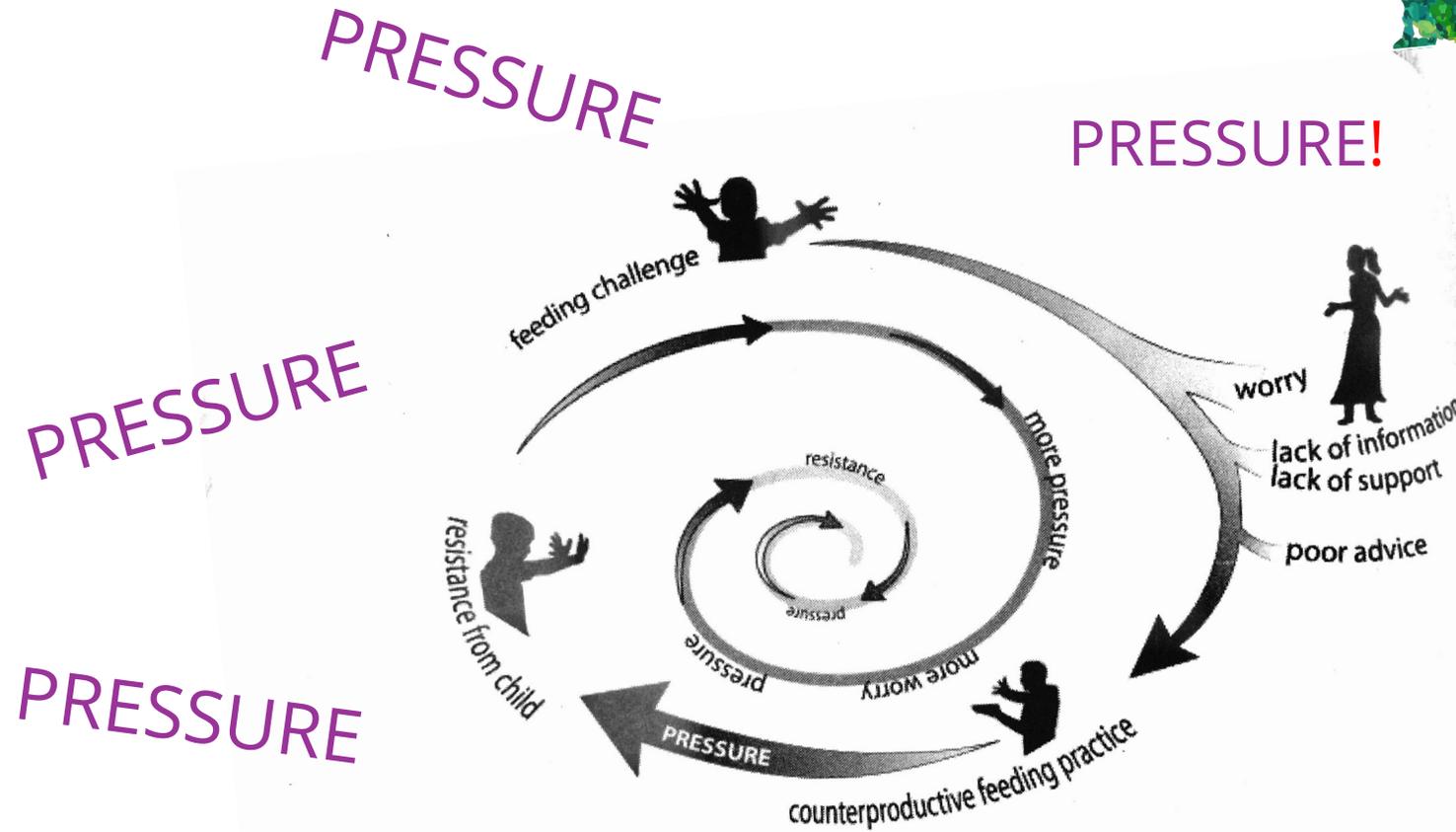
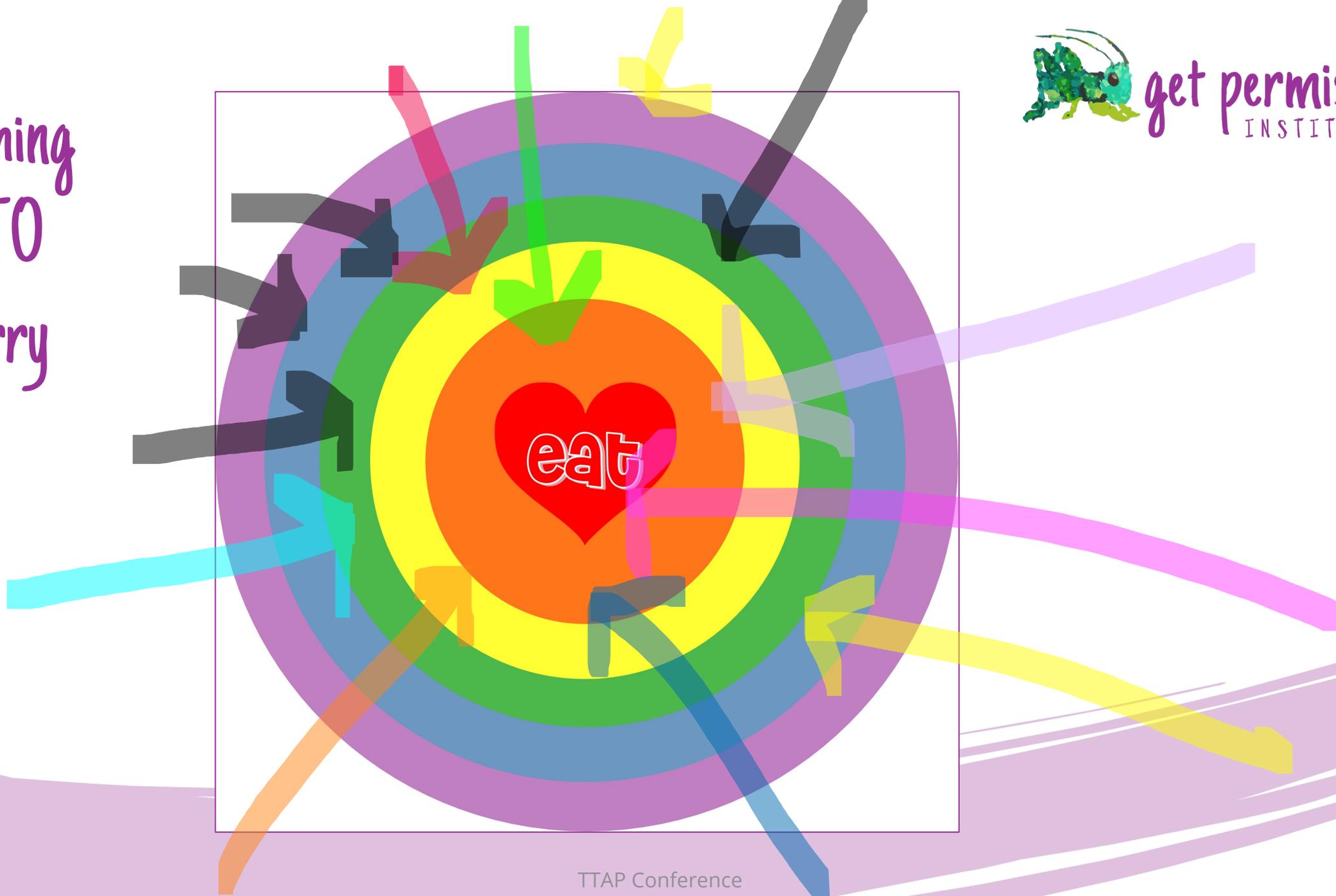


Figure 3.1. The Worry Cycle

Helping Your Child with Extremely Picky Eating: A Step by Step Guide for Overcoming Selective Eating, Food Aversion, and Feeding Disorders
Rowell and McGlothlin

Pushing
INTO
Worry



The Biology of Pressure

- Danger! Danger! (Fight Flight) blood flow to limbs not internal systems
- Increase of Cortisol, stress hormone (Decreases stomach emptying, can increase diarrhea)
- Decreases Oxytocin (happiness hormone)
- Appetite suppression
- Increase anxiety, hypervigilance
- Anxiety matters around eating!

Clean your plate

Learning and Motivation

Volume 18, Issue 3, August 1987, Pages 301-317

“Clean up your plate”: Effects of child feeding practices on the conditioning of meal size

Leann Lipps Birch & ... Ruth Krehbiel

Children were more internally motivated to listen to appetite when allowed to eat with not pressure or external demands

(Birch et al, 1987)

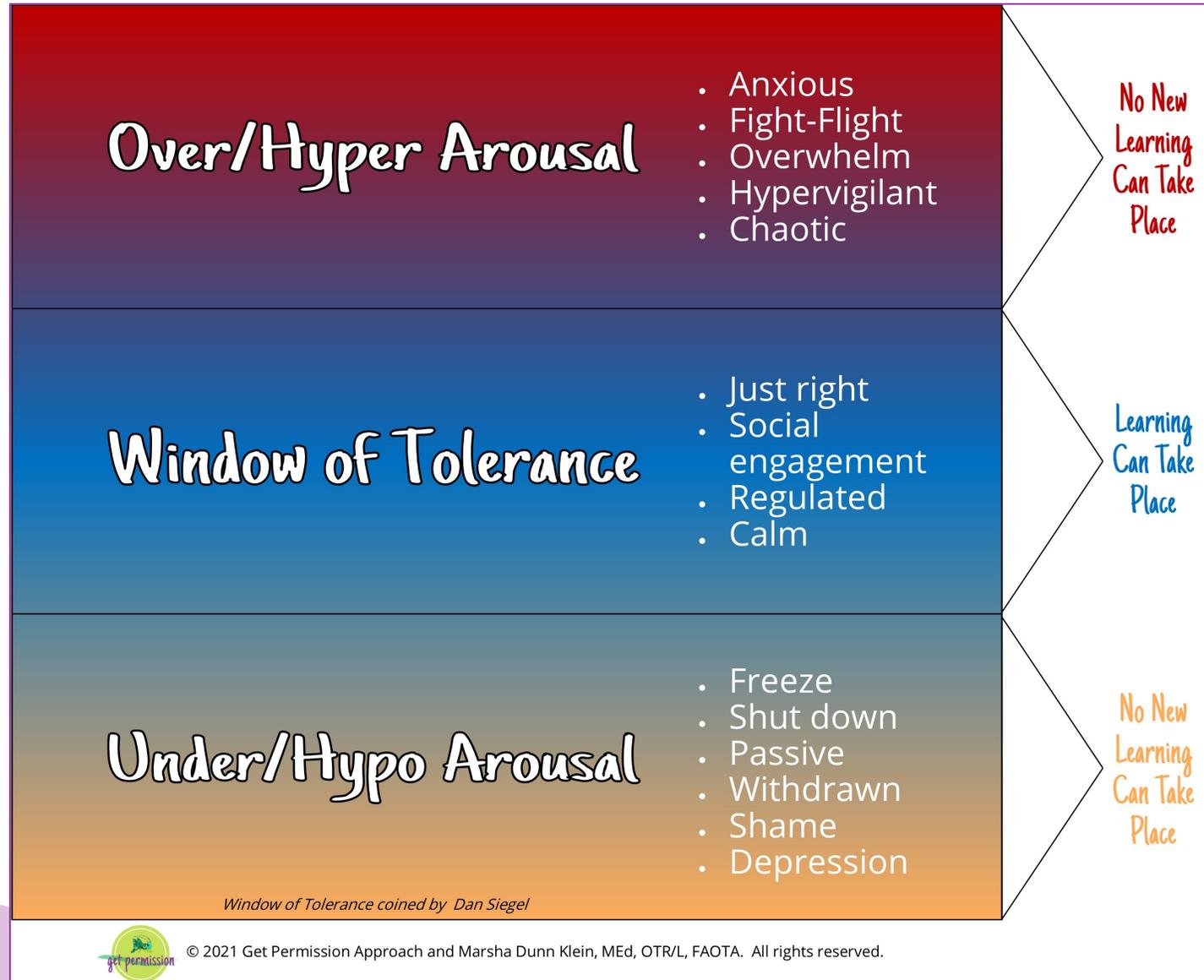
Trauma influence feeding

- Big trauma and little trauma change the neurophysiology
- Some feeding experiences have been traumatic
- Bottom up amygdala responses, emotional rather than top down cognitive memories
- We need to support trauma with connection, and principles of trauma informed care.

(Great resources Mate, Pittman, Porges, VanderKolk, Perry, Purvis, Shonkoff, Siegel)

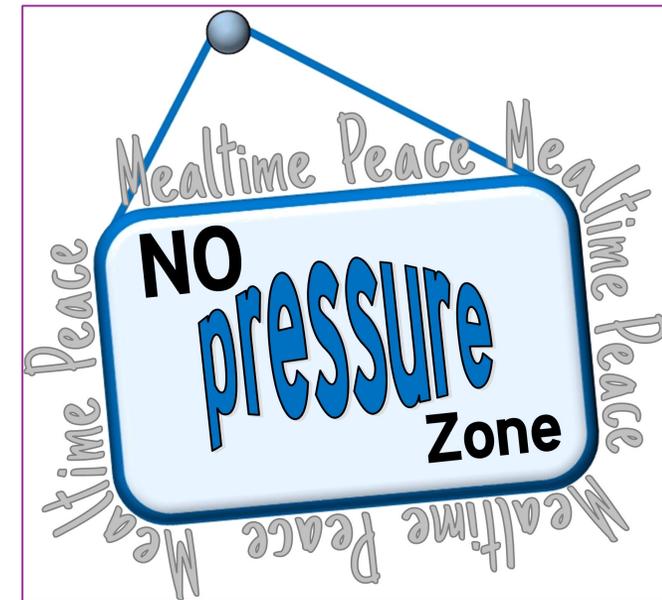
Trauma comes back as a reaction, NOT a memory

Bessel Van Der Kolk



No Pressure Zone summary for parents

- What would need to happen at your house to create a no pressure zone?
- Offer foods at each meal, some of which the child knows (At least 1-2 foods)
- Conversations about something besides eating their foods
- No talk about what the child is to eat
- When the child is done, believe him...there will be another meal





Opportunity

Children will not learn about new foods unless they are
around new foods. How can we make that happen?

Include them, eat with them, opportunity to
participate in food interactions

Mealtime Jobs are Rehearsals

- Helping to serve foods, pass foods, set or clear the table,
- Preparation of foods
- Pour drinks
- Place or color napkins
- Salad maker, avocado smasher, quesadilla maker, peanut butter spreader, smoothie helper
- Cooking helps (Allirot, 2016)



As we meet picky eaters.....

- Developmental Stage Matters
 - Typical Toddler , autonomy
- Connection Matters
- Health Matters
- Motivation Matters
- Presentation matters
 - Role Mismatch
- Pressure Matters
- Worry Matters
 - Scary experience. Choking
 - Trauma Big and Little
- Genetics Matters

When to refer

- If someone thinks there is a problem, there IS a problem.
- When we provide *non-pressured* **opportunity**, many children become more comfortable expanding their diet without intervention.
- Some do not. **Believe** the child. THEY ARE COMMUNICATING.
- Be curious about why the child is saying “no” or acting “worried.”
- PFD Feeding specialists can support mealtime peace and have a deep understanding of the systems that support eating and digestion. They can help to understand the motor and sensory and interactional skills and the careful calibration of challenges.
- Grade the Ask to reduce food anxiety with team members.

Questions?



Connections

- **Why? Relationships are at the heart of family mealtimes. Strong relationships help mealtimes feel good for parents and kids.**
- Are the parent and child struggling?
- Does the mealtime bring parent and child closer together?
- Are the parent and child enjoying mealtime together?
- How does the parent feel about the mealtime?
- Does the parent look forward to a mealtime?
- Is the parent happy with the child's intake whether the child eats a lot or little?
- Does the parent empathize or "get" the child's challenges?
- How does the parent maintain sense of connection when the child says no?
- Does the child feel emotionally safe?
- Does the parent feel emotionally safe?
- Does the family have conversations about things besides the child's eating?

Clear Expectations

- **Why? The child eats best when they can anticipate an enjoyable experience.**
- Is there a mealtime routine?
- Does the child know what to expect?
- What types of foods are offered?
- Does the whole family eat the same meal?
- Are there any foods that the child's knows or prefers offered?
- Is the food plated or can the child participate in what goes on the plate?
- Are there enough preferred foods for the child to fill up on?
- Can the parent offer those foods with confidence?
- Can the child expect offers or demands?
- Can the child eat what he wants of what is offered?
- Can the child leave the table when full?
- Does the child know the "kitchen is not open" between meals?



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