

Everyday Challenges and How to Cope With Them

By Bill Mulcahy LPC

“In order for children to learn how to do hard things, you have to let them go through hard times. There is no way to truly master something without experiencing it.” Sara Bean, M.ED., Elementary School Counselor

“We don’t want our children to hurt. But we also want them to do more than simply get through difficult times; we want them to face their troubles and grow from them.” Daniel Siegel and Tina Payne Bryson

History of Zach

ZACH APOLOGIZES

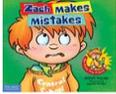


ZACH GETS FRUSTRATED



History of Zach - Phase Two

ZACH MAKES MISTAKES



ZACH HANGS IN THERE



What are we going to accomplish today?

- ▶ Introduction to Bill and the Zach Series
- ▶ Provide a simple but helpful understanding of coping
- ▶ What potentially gets in the way of ones abilities to cope and learn
- ▶ Dig deep into the four Zach Books and the four corresponding tools focusing on how each works as a coping tool, creates better relationships, and can help with academic achievement
- ▶ How do we make tools into skills into habits in our schools, homes and communities.
- ▶ Leave here with clear idea of how to utilize the Zach books and its tools in your home, classroom and communities.

Definition of Social and Emotional learning

Social and Emotional Learning

“Process through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships and avoid negative behaviors. It is the process through which students enhance their ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behaving in order to achieve important life tasks.”

(Elias, M.J., Zins, J.E., Weissberg, R.P., Frey, K.S., Greenberg, M.T., Haynes, N.M., Kessler, R., Swab-Stone, M.E. & Shriver, T.P., 1994)

Framework of SEL Competencies

- ▶ **Self Awareness**
 - Identifying and recognizing emotions
 - Accurate Self-perception
 - Recognize strengths, needs, and values
 - Self-efficacy
 - Spirituality
- ▶ **Social Awareness**
 - Perspective taking
 - Empathy
 - Appreciating diversity
 - Respect for others
- ▶ **Responsible Decision Making**
 - Problem identification and situation analysis
 - Problem solving
 - Personal, moral and ethical responsibility
 - Evaluation and reflection



Framework of SEL Competencies . . . continued

- ▶ **Self Management**
 - Impulse control and stress management
 - Self motivation and discipline
 - Goal Setting and organizational skills
- ▶ **Relationship Management**
 - Communication, social engagement, and building relationships
 - Working cooperatively
 - Negotiation, refusal, and conflict management
 - Help seeking and providing
- ▶ (Zins, Weissberg, Wang, & Walberg, 2004)



Kids Cope Now

▶ Healthy Functional Coping

the process of contending with life difficulties in an effort to **WORK THROUGH THEM**

**The Zach Series are stories about a young boy and his friends learning to work through lives difficulties.*



Healthy Coping: Feeling & Dealing

Feeling

Encourage and assist child to be aware of and experience the full range of emotions and sensations.

Happy, Sad, Mad, Scared and all it's derivatives.

Help child to be aware of where the emotion happens in the body. Careful -- may have to titrate emotions and sensation.

Dealing

Encourage and assist the processing of emotions, thoughts, images, behaviors, and sensations.

Working through, moving out of, reconciliation of, the continuation of life going on.

**Zach is a young boy learning how to feel and deal and in turn showing others that it's not just okay, but cool.*

Unhealthy/Maladaptive Coping

- ▶ Inability to contend with lives difficulties
- ▶ An inability to form a valid appraisal of the stressors
- ▶ Inadequate choices of response, and/or inability to use valuable resources in the face of lives difficulties.

**Doesn't this sound eerily similar to a struggling student who lacks self confidence and independence and is a passive learner?*

Executive Functioning

Global Term

- ADHD, Autism, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, Dyslexia, Trauma
- Neurological Disorder
- Frontal lobe, basal ganglia, caudate nucleus, thalamus, cerebellum
- Decrease in Catecholamines (dopamine, norepinephrine, GABA)

Executive Functioning Issues

- ▶ The Conscious regulation and integration of thought, emotion and behavior
- ▶ Six separate clusters work together
 - Activation - organizing, prioritizing and activating to work
 - Focus - focusing, sustaining and shifting attention to task
 - Effort - regulating alertness, sustaining effort & processing speed
 - Emotion - managing frustration and modulating emotions
 - Memory - Utilizing working memory and accessing recall
 - Action - monitoring and self regulating action

Society of Comfort Seeking

Shadow comforts- numbing devices, soft addictions, buffers which diminish, choice to create or go to numb
Jennifer Louden

“We reach for what we think will offer the most protection.”
Brene Brown

*Often, Zach first's impulse is to avoid.

Trauma Based Issues

▶ Trauma: When something happens that is so terrible it overwhelms our ability to cope.

- Some Types of Trauma
 - ▶ Divorce and Separation
 - ▶ Addiction
 - ▶ Physical abuse
 - ▶ Neglect
 - ▶ Sexual abuse
 - ▶ Medical
 - ▶ Traumatic Loss
 - ▶ Witnessing Violence
 - ▶ Psychological/emotional
 - ▶ Natural disaster
 - ▶ Poverty
 - ▶ War and Terrorism

▶ Are you aware of the ACES study?

Attachment Theory

- ▶ "Attachment theory is a concept in developmental psychology that concerns the importance of "attachment" in regards to personal development. Specifically, it makes the claim that the ability for an individual to form an emotional and physical "attachment" to another person gives a sense of stability and security necessary to take risks, branch out, and grow and develop as a personality." from www.PsychologistWorld.com
- ▶ Our minds are structured by the kinds of interactions we have with our primary attachment figures.
- ▶ Our goal has been to present Zach as a well attached kid.

Four Patterns of Feeling and Dealing

1. **Secure Attachment:** Able to feel and deal or process, affective competent, flexible strategies in relational experiences, don't need to avoid conflict
2. **Insecure-Preoccupied Attachment:** Feeling but not dealing, confused about integrity of relationships in the present, insecure, uncertainty
3. **Insecure-Dismissive Attachment:** Dealing but not feeling, sacrifices inner life in order to function, relationship is maintained through minimizing it's importance, doesn't feel therefore doesn't engage
4. **Insecure-Disorganized Attachment:** Not feeling and not dealing, tremendous difficulty with self regulation, primary affect is fear which leads to splitting and dissociation in order to cope

(Lalotitis, 2015)

Zach Gets Frustrated (ZGF)

- ▶ Summary: At the beach, Zach kicks sand, yells, and asks his dad if they can just go. Dad teaches Zach to use a three-step "triangle" to get a handle on frustration and find a way to enjoy himself.
- ▶ Tool: The Frustration Triangle
- ▶ SEL Competencies: Self-Awareness, Self-Management
- ▶ Core skills: Identifying emotions and recognizing emotions, accurate self-perception, impulse control and stress management, self-motivation and discipline and using cognitive behavioral reframing skills.

Tool: The Frustration Triangle
It all begins with Self-Regulation

Example of The Frustration Triangle



S.I.F.T.
(Siegel, 2011)

Paying attention to what's going on inside . . .
Teach how to managing their own responses and
reactions, be aware of your own reactions

- Sensations
- Images
- Feelings
- Thoughts



Anchors or other things to help Tame it

- ▶ Breathing exercises
- ▶ Body scan
- ▶ Mindfulness
- ▶ Prayer or mantras
- ▶ Meditation
- ▶ Count to Ten
- ▶ Focusing on your senses
- ▶ Focusing on belly, feet or bottom
- ▶ Safe calm place



The Origins of . . . This too shall pass

The legend of the quote finds its roots in the court of a powerful eastern Persian ruler who called his sages (wise men) to him, including the Sufi poet Attar of Nishapur, and asked them for one quote that would be accurate at all times and in all situations. The wise men consulted with one another, and threw themselves into deep contemplation, and finally came up with the answer ...

"This too, shall pass".

Zach Makes Mistakes

- ▶ Summary: A humorous story about Zach learning from mistakes and dealing with embarrassment while on a field trip to the Museum.
- ▶ Tool: The Key to Mistakes
- ▶ SEL Competencies: Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Self-Management
- ▶ Core SEL Skills: Aware of having made a mistake, Accurate self perception, decrease fear and anxiety about making mistakes, turn negative into positive, evaluation and reflection, problem solving, and make good decisions.

Tool: The Key to Mistakes

Example of Zach Makes Mistakes

A couple of very important things to be aware of in regards to making mistakes

- ▶ Mistakes are made three ways
 1. Not understanding something - asking questions, clarifying
 2. Not paying attention - mindfulness, managing impulsivity
 3. Not being careful - mindfulness, managing impulsivity
- ▶ Underachievers - Casual or passive attitude toward mistakes, repeating mistakes over and over
- ▶ Overachievers - fear of making mistakes, try to perfect. How to refocus to being excellent vs. perfect



View of Mental Health (Siegel, 2011)

Chaos



Rigidity



Zach Apologizes

- ▶ Summary: When Zach shoves his little brother to the floor, he knows he did something wrong. Even so, it's hard to apologize. With his mom's help, he learns the "four-square" apology.
- ▶ Tool: Four Square Apology
- ▶ SEL Competencies: Self-Awareness, Social Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Self-Management, Relationship Management
- ▶ Core skills: Being aware of one's own behavior, developing empathy, critical thinking impact of one's behavior, personal, moral and ethical responsibility and repairing damaged relationships.



Tool: Four Square Apology

▶ [Example of The Four Square Apology](#)



What Happy People Know

VERB

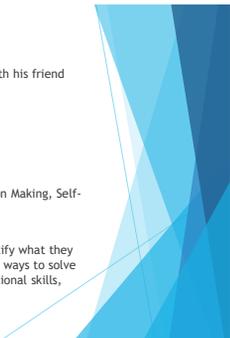
- Victim
- Entitlement
- Rescuer
- Blamer

(Baker, 2004)



Zach Hangs in There

- ▶ **Summary:** Out on the playground Zach learns, along with his friend Sonya, how to persevere when things get difficult.
- ▶ **Tool:** Hang in There Rings
- ▶ **SEL Competencies:** Self-Awareness, Responsible Decision Making, Self-Management
- ▶ **Core Skills:** Self-efficacy, Grit and determination, identify what they are trying to accomplish, analyzing a problem, develop ways to solve problem, revamp as needed, goal setting and organizational skills, complete task.



How to further integrate Zach into schools, classrooms, and communities

- Introduce books and it's tools at early age
- Shortening story to fit needs
- Using scaffolding to introduce the tools to form independent and interdependent habits
- Have books available in each home, classroom, school counselor, etc
- Connect to PBIS including encouragement and praise for using the tool
- Use the books in friendship, mindfulness and social groups
- Use Zach tools handouts and posters for prompts
- Use tools after behavior incidents occur
- Use current events to exemplify the tools
- Have the author visit
- Author training for teachers and parents regarding the value of Zach Books & tools
- Local library holding a Zach Rules event
- Guidance lessons
- Using tools as visual aids to prompt behaviors
- *Modeling the Zach tools

INTEGRATION OF THE FOUR ZACH BOOKS

- Zach Gets Frustrated
- Zach Makes Mistakes
- Zach Apologizes
- + Zach Hangs in There

It's not just a behavior that a student does once or twice, it's a habit that students appreciates the value of and develops the propensity for using mindfully in a variety of settings

Additional Tools for Coping

- ▶ Journaling
- ▶ Cinemetherapy
- ▶ Play
- ▶ Dance
- ▶ Music
- ▶ Stop Worry F.A.S.T.
- ▶ Grounding
- ▶ Mindfulness
- ▶ Bibliotherapy
- ▶ I didn't cause it, I can't fix it, I can cope
- ▶ Butterfly hugs
- ▶ Art

OUR MISSION

ZACH'S TOOLS into SCHOOLS
COPING SKILLS of SHAPES & RHYME
BECOME HABITS for a LIFETIME

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Thank you from Bill and Zach!

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"The best way out is always through" Robert Frost