

The **Angry** Smile



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The New
Psychological Study
of Passive-
Aggressive Behavior
at Home, at School,
in Marriage and
Close Relationships,
in the Workplace &
Online

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**LIFE SPACE CRISIS
INTERVENTION**
Turning Problem Situations Into Learning Opportunities



LIFE SPACE CRISIS
INTERVENTION

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I was angry with a friend
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

William Blake

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The New Psychological Study of Passive-Aggressive Behavior
at Home, at School, in Marriage & Close Relationships, in the Workplace &
Online

Seminar Objectives:

Understanding Passive Aggressive Behavior:

1. Identify the reasons people use passive aggressive behaviors
2. Recognize five distinct levels of passive aggressive behavior

Breaking the Passive Aggressive Conflict Cycle:

3. Practice eight specific skills for effectively responding to passive aggressive behavior
4. Learn the six-step process of Benign Confrontation



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“Cash, check or charge?” I asked, after folding the items the woman wished to purchase.

As she fumbled for her wallet, I noticed a remote control for a television set in her purse.

"So, do you always carry your TV remote?" I asked.

"No," she replied, "but my husband refused to go shopping with me and I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him legally."

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Module 1:

Understand the Hidden World of Passive-Aggression

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**LIFE SPACE CRISIS
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Anger

Aggression

Counter Aggression

Passivity

Assertiveness

Passive Aggression

Passive-aggressive behavior is a deliberate and masked way of expressing covert feelings of anger.

Passive Aggressive Behavioral Traits

1. These individuals *habitually* resent, oppose, and resist demands to function at a level expected by others.
2. Anger is expressed through passive resistance, compliant defiance, and sugarcoated hostility, especially in response to tasks assigned by authority figures
3. They feel cheated, unappreciated and misunderstood and chronically complain to others, especially about authority figures in their life
4. When difficulties appear, they blame their failures on the behaviors of others
5. Self confidence is often poor despite a superficial bravado. They foresee the worst possible outcomes for most situations, even those that are going well.

CHALLENGE

IF WORKING WITH A GROUP:

Arrange yourselves in pairs.

ACTIVITY:

Think of as many examples of passive aggressive behavior you can.

Write down your answers.

As we move through the training, continue to add specific passive aggressive behaviors to this “Red Flag” list, as you become aware of them.

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Module 2:

How One Becomes a
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Person

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Pathways to Becoming Passive-Aggressive



Reaction to early, prolonged and excessive parental abuse

Nothing grows stronger or becomes more powerful than an unexpressed hostile thought toward others over time

Once a passive-aggressive youth perceives an authority figure as hostile, regardless of whether the perception is accurate or not, he will react as if the adult were the abusive adult.

Pathways to Becoming Passive-Aggressive



Reaction to early, prolonged and unrealistic parental standards and expectations

Both the existence and the expression of anger become taboo.

The Healthy Socialization of Anger

Children need to learn to say “yes” to the existence of angry feelings and “no” to the expression of those feelings in hurtful or destructive ways.

The Concept of “GOODNESS”

Pathways to Becoming Passive-Aggressive



Reaction to Dysfunctional and Triangular Family Dynamics

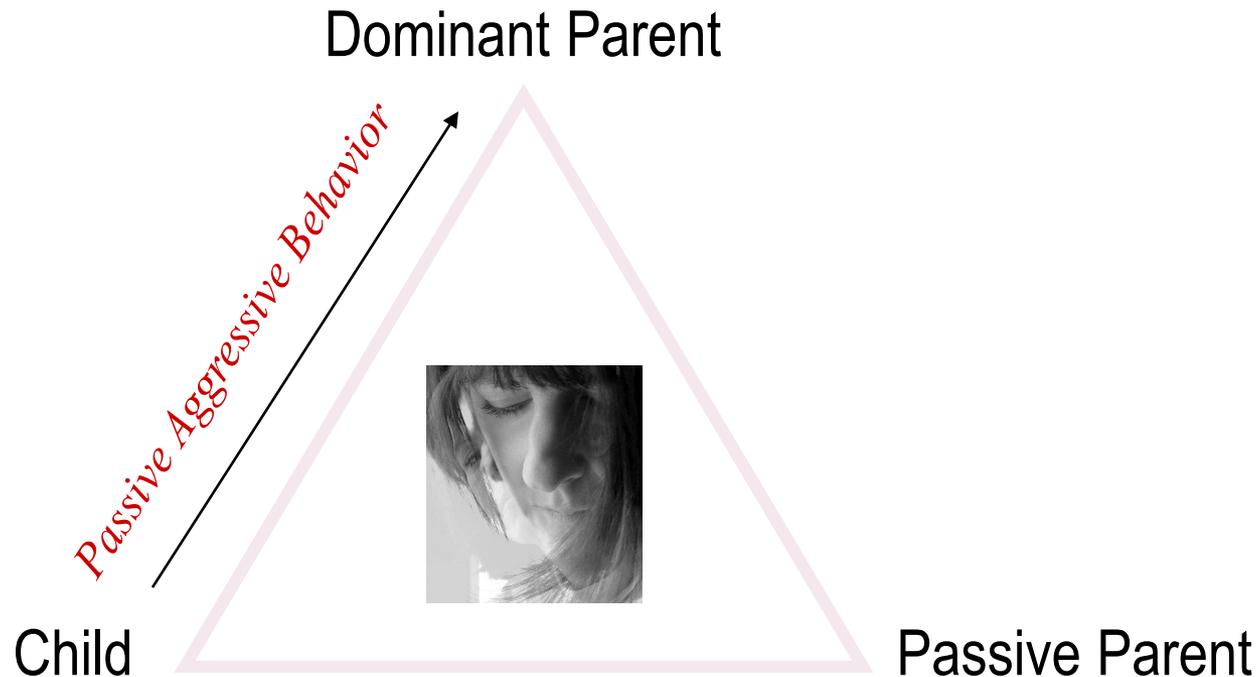
Variation 1: Dominant father, subservient mother, passive aggressive child

Variation 2: Domineering mother, backseat father, passive aggressive child

Both variations: The child carries a passive-aggressive message to the dominant parent with such determination that the child is willing to sabotage his own life to succeed.

Pathways to Becoming Passive-Aggressive

Reaction to Dysfunctional and Triangular Family Dynamics



Pathways to Becoming Passive-Aggressive



Summary:

1. Reaction to early, prolonged and excessive parental abuse
2. Reaction to early, prolonged and unrealistic parental standards and expectations
3. Reaction to dysfunctional and triangular family dynamics



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Module 3:

The 4 Reasons People Use Passive- Aggressive Behavior

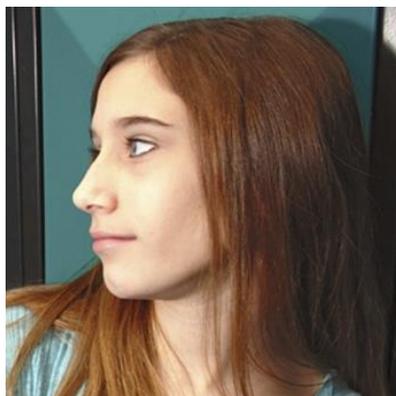
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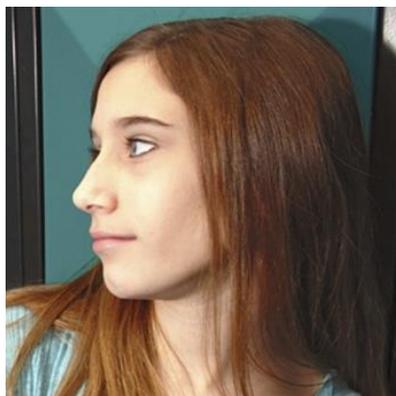
Reasons for Passive-Aggressive Behavior

- **Situational response to adult demands**
- **Passive-aggressive behavior as a developmental stage**
- **Characteristic of a cultural norm or ethnic group**
- **Passive-aggressive behavior as a way of life.**



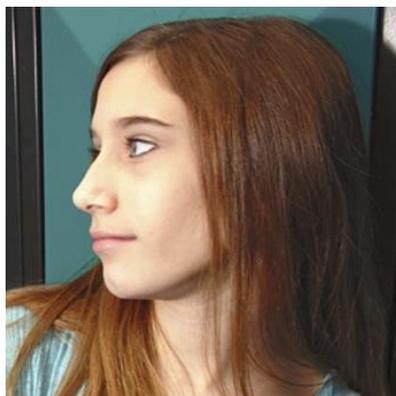
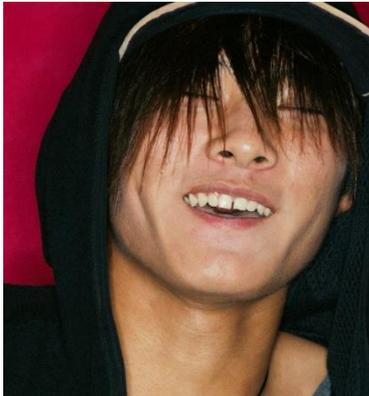
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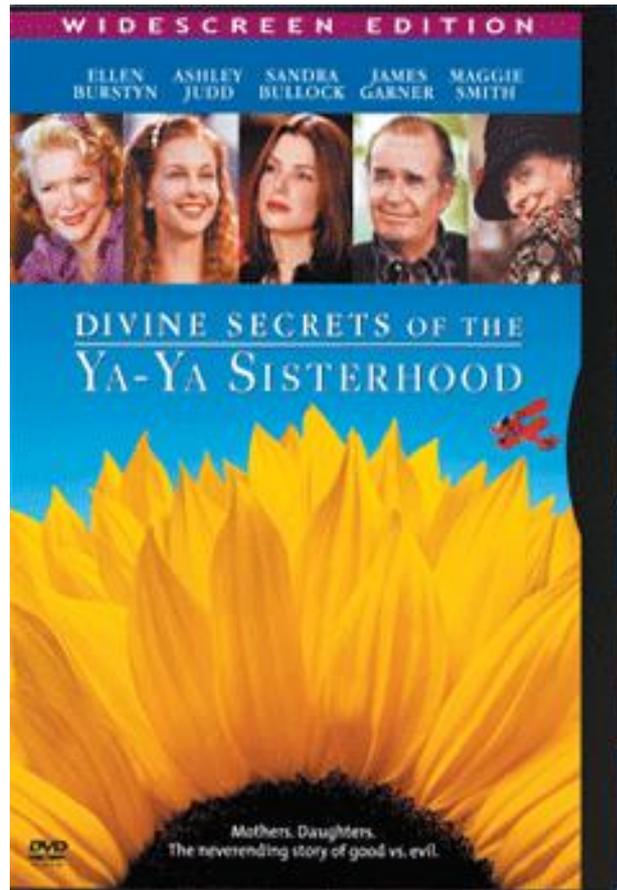


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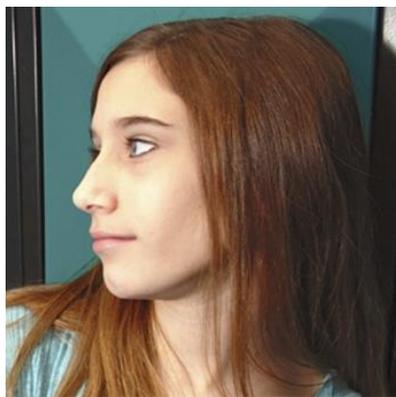
Pathways to Becoming Passive-Aggressive



Divine Secrets of the Ya-Ya Sisterhood

Reasons for Passive-Aggressive Behavior

- Situational response to adult demands
- Passive-aggressive behavior as a developmental stage
- Characteristic of a cultural norm or ethnic group
- **Passive-aggressive behavior as a way of life.**



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Module 4:

The 5 Levels of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

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Types of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

1 *Temporary Compliance*



Types

of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

2 *Intentional Inefficiency*



Types

of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

2 *Intentional Inefficiency*



Types

of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

3 *Letting a problem escalate*



Types

of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

4 *Hidden but conscious revenge*





I hate it when you sit down to watch something you DVRd, after getting all the kids to bed, cleaning up the kitchen, doing laundry, that you've been really looking forward to watching, and someone in your family deleted it. Soooooooo inconsiderate. Sorry, I'm rambling. :-)

5 hours ago · Like · Comment

 View all 4 comments



~~Steve F...~~ Yes, ~~like~~ you guessed right. How did you guess? :-)
I'll be deleting the next episode of American Pickers that he tivos. That will fixem' :-)

2 hours ago · Like ·  2 people

Types

of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

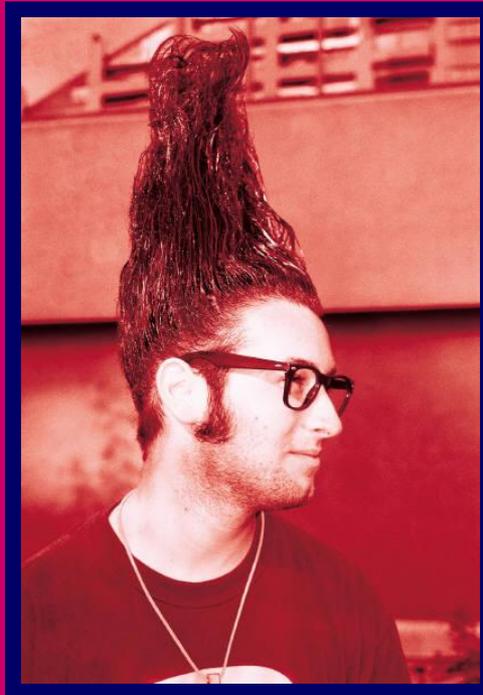
4 *Hidden but Conscious Revenge*



Types

of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

5 *Self-depreciation*



Types

of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

5 *Self-depreciation*



Types

of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

5 *Self-depreciation*



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Module 5:

The Domains of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

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The domains of passive aggressive behavior

- Families are battlegrounds for unexpressed anger
- Passive aggression learned at home can spread to other interpersonal relationships



The domains of passive aggressive behavior

Temporary Blindness

Temporary Deafness

Temporary Brain Damage



The **domains** of passive aggressive behavior

- Students are in a virtually powerless role in school.
- Perfectionistic and authoritarian teachers most often encourage P.A. dynamics
- P.A. students are effective at creating their anger in others





I have come to a frightening conclusion. I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or de-humanized.

(Haim G. Ginnot, *Teacher and Child*, 1975)

The domains of passive aggressive behavior

- Individuals with certain developmental pathways may generalize all hostile persons as the abusive parent from the past.
- Children of passive aggressive parents learn this behavior.
- Spouses of passive aggressive people learn to use the same tactics.



*Whenever I get mad
at you, you never seem
to get upset. How do
you manage to control
your temper?*

*I just go and
clean the toilet.*





How does that help?

*I use your
toothbrush.*

THE SILENT TREATMENT

A man and his wife were having some problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment.

Suddenly, the man realized that the next day, he would need his wife to wake him at 5AM for an early morning business flight.

Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (and LOSE), he wrote on a piece of paper, "Please wake me up at 5AM."

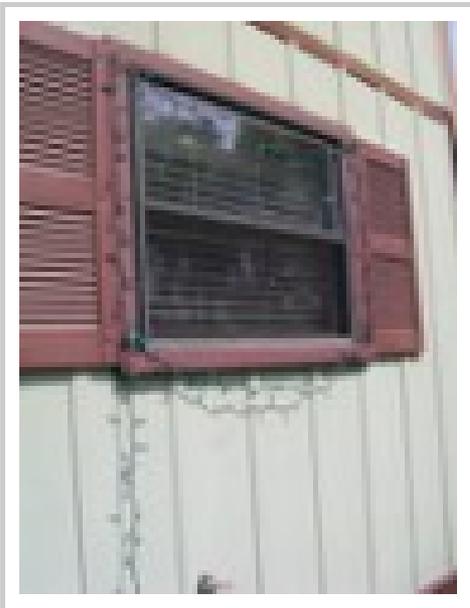
He left it where he knew she would find it.

The next morning, the man woke up only to discover it was 9AM and he has missed his flight.

Furious, he was about to go see why his wife hadn't wakened him, When he noticed a piece of paper by the bed.

The paper said,
"It is 5AM. Wake up."

May 26: Do you think it's too early to take down our Christmas lights?



 21 hours ago · Like · Comment · Share



 okay .. I get it .. public shaming . . . nice touch . . .

The domains of passive aggressive behavior

- “The perfect office crime”
- Acts of insubordination and sabotage can impact an organization's productivity and morale



The “Ripe” Workplace Environment



1. People spend a lot of their time at work
2. Relationships are formed in the workplace
3. Professional standards make direct emotional expression unacceptable
4. Hierarchy makes direct expression of anger seem like insubordination





The "Ripe" Workplace Environment

5. Hierarchy may resemble dysfunctional home environment
6. Electronic communications are ideal cover for passive aggressive exchanges
7. Teamwork dynamic permits obstructionism and loss of accountability
8. Termination can be difficult



The **domains** of passive aggressive behavior

- Many of us remain constantly “plugged in” via technology.
- Yet, technology may be leaving us more disconnected than ever before.
- For the passive-aggressive person, the anonymity of screens and apps is an ideal medium to hide their hostility.



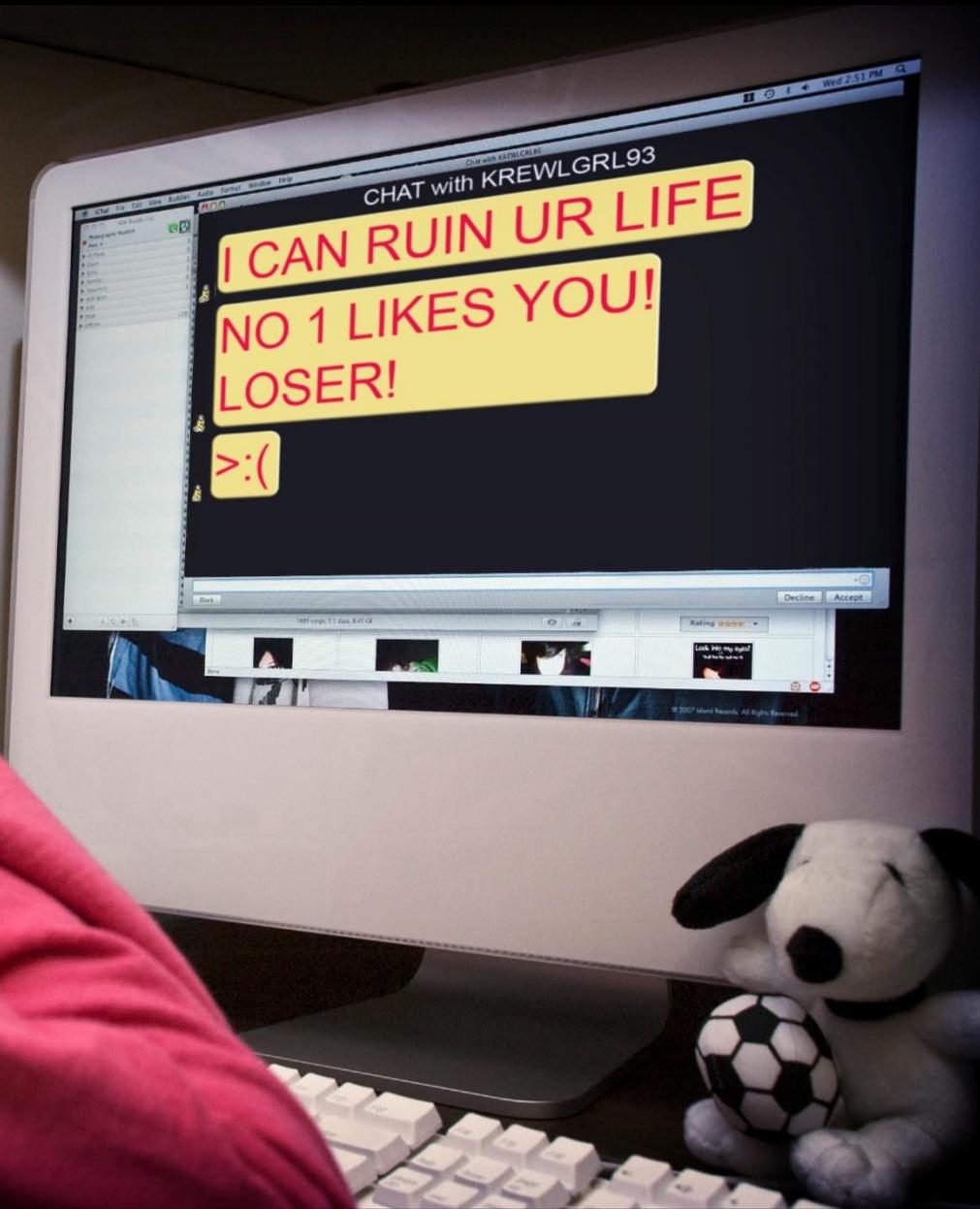


“Truthfully, passive-aggressive behavior is just plain fun. Getting back at other people in socially acceptable ways is just so easy to do these days now that so much of what we say and do happens through a keyboard instead of person-to-person.”

Texting is a brilliant way to miscommunicate how you feel, and misinterpret what other people mean.



THINKSTOCK



The domains of passive aggressive behavior

1. Home
2. School
3. Relationships
4. Workplace
5. Online



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Module 6:

The Dark Side of Passive-Aggressive Behavior

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Counter Passive

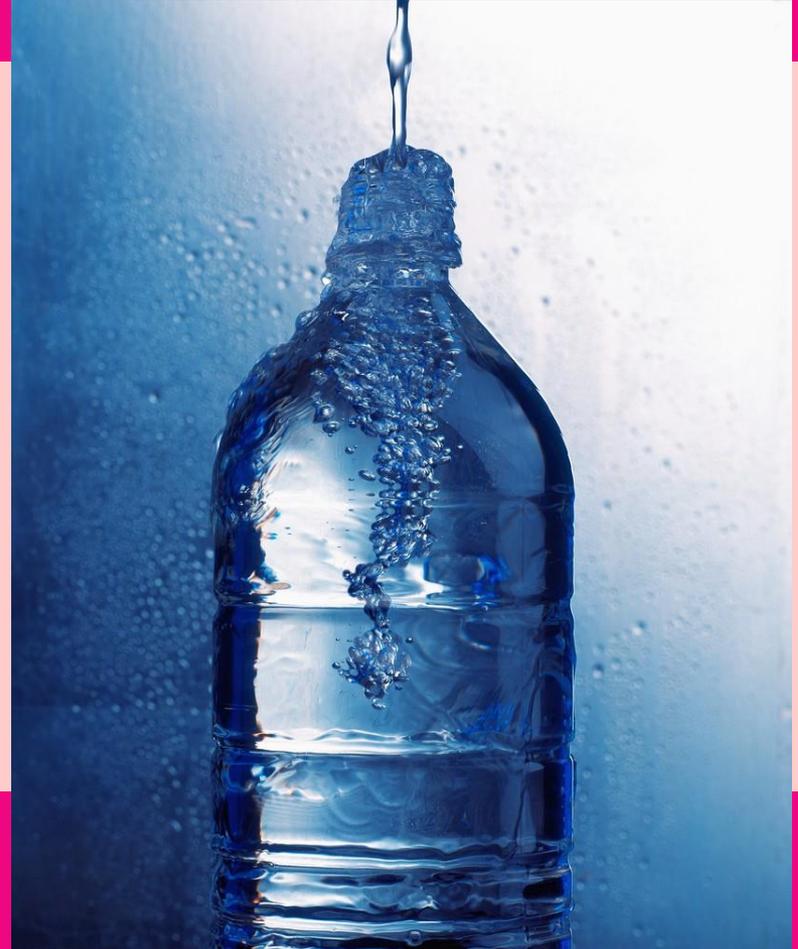
Aggression



The Unconscious Accumulation of Counter Passive Aggressive Feelings



The Unconscious Accumulation of Counter Passive Aggressive Feelings



Let's talk about us...

Adult Counter Passive-Aggression

- Counter-Temporary Compliance
- Counter-Intentional Inefficiency
- Counter-Escalation
- Intentional Over-Efficiency



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Module 7:

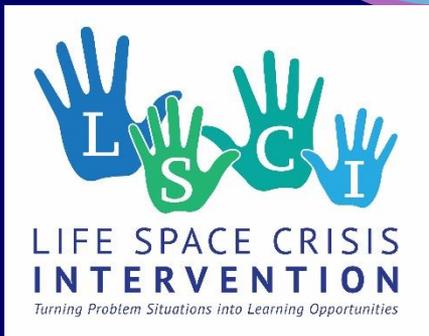
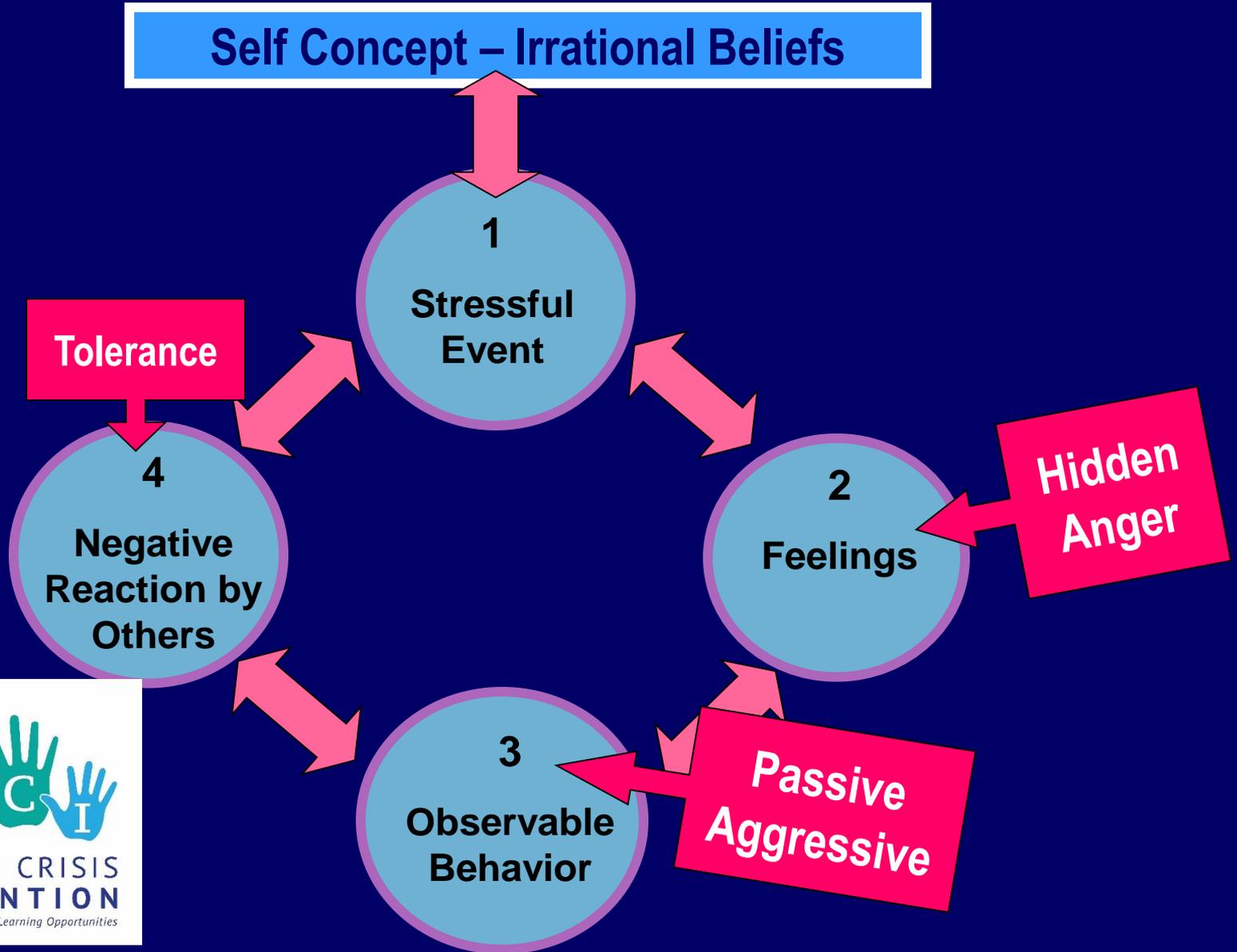
The Passive- Aggressive Conflict Cycle™

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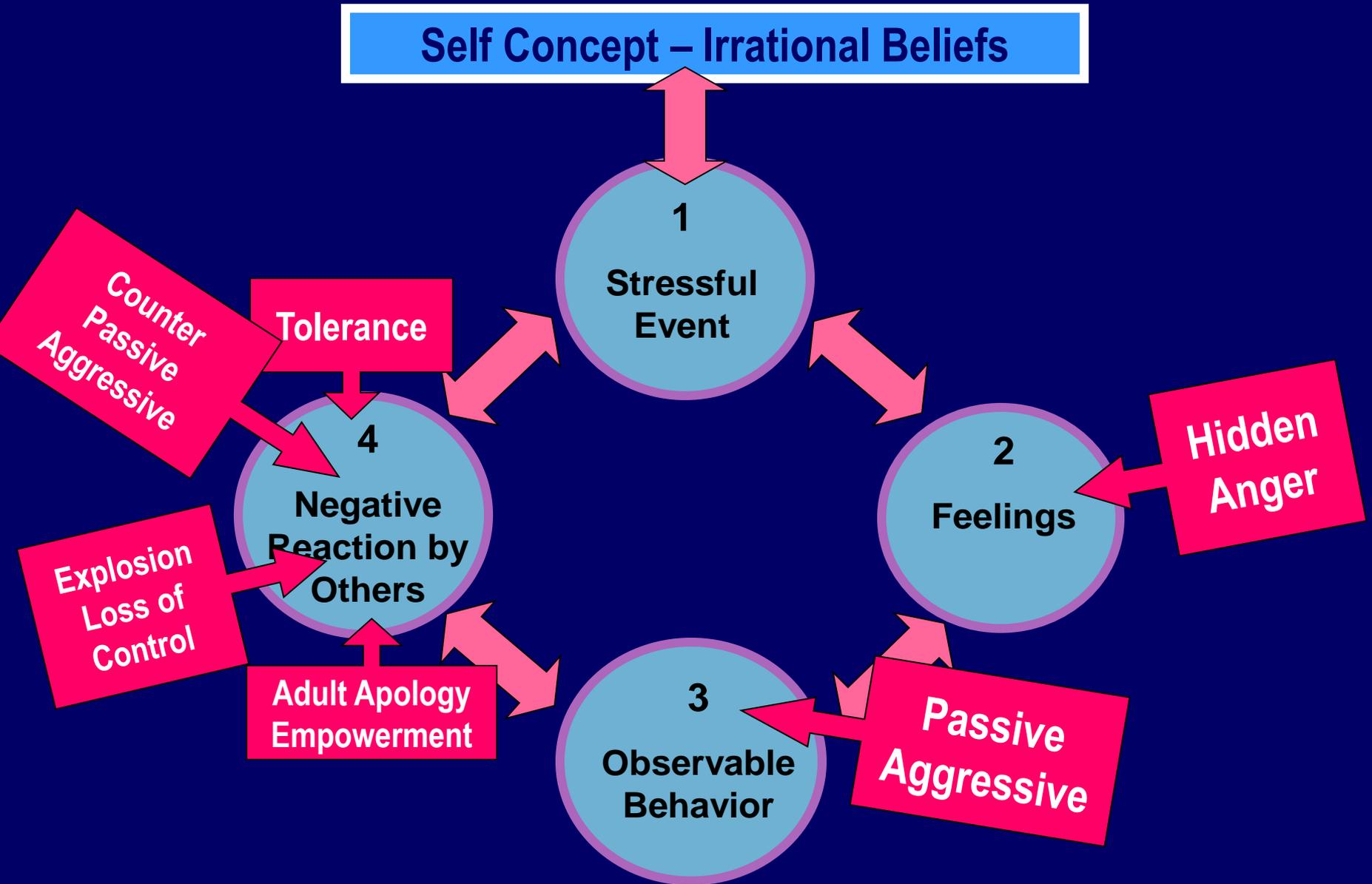


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INTERVENTION**
Turning Problem Situations Into Learning Opportunities

Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cycle

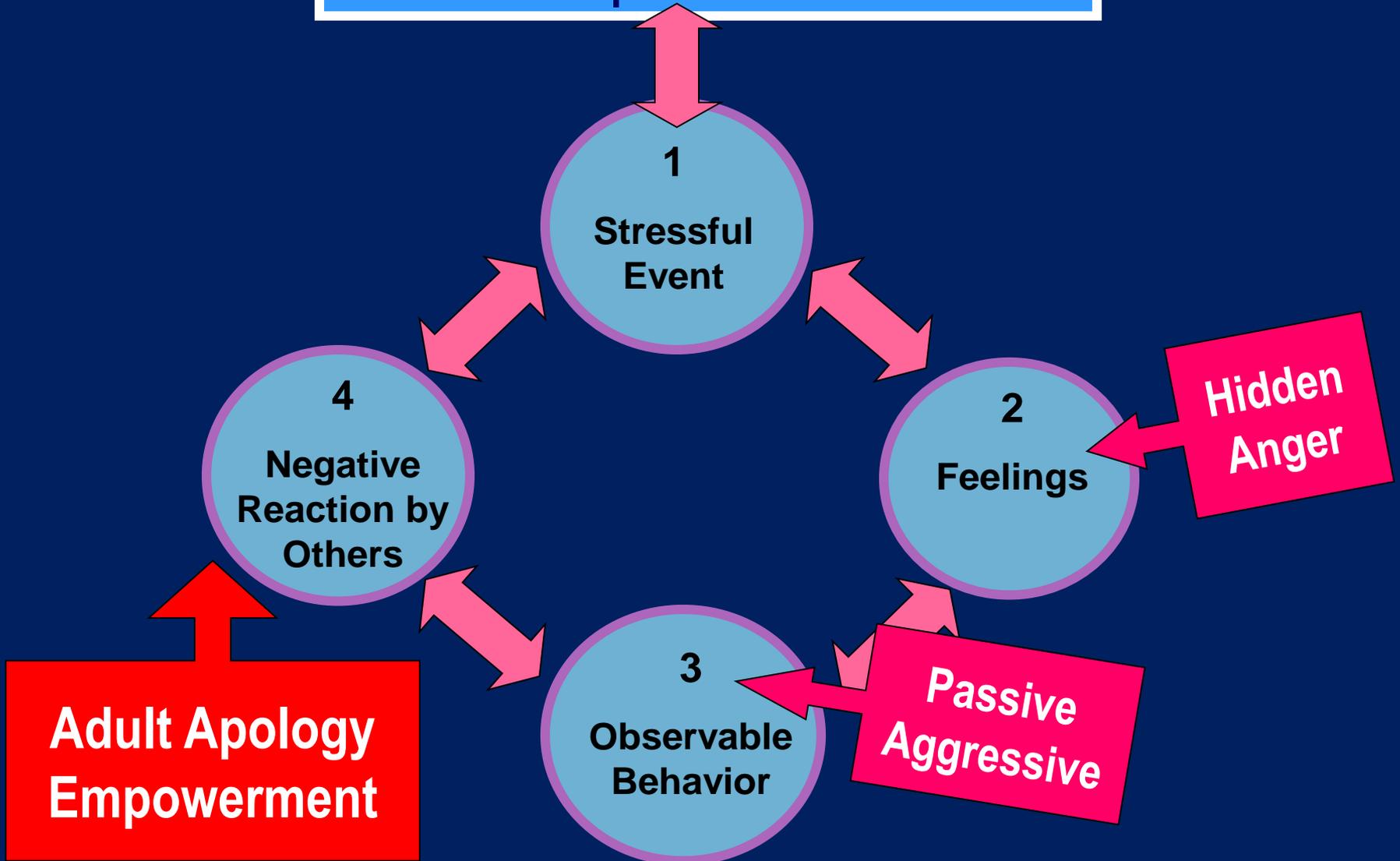


Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cycle



Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cycle

Self Concept – Irrational Beliefs

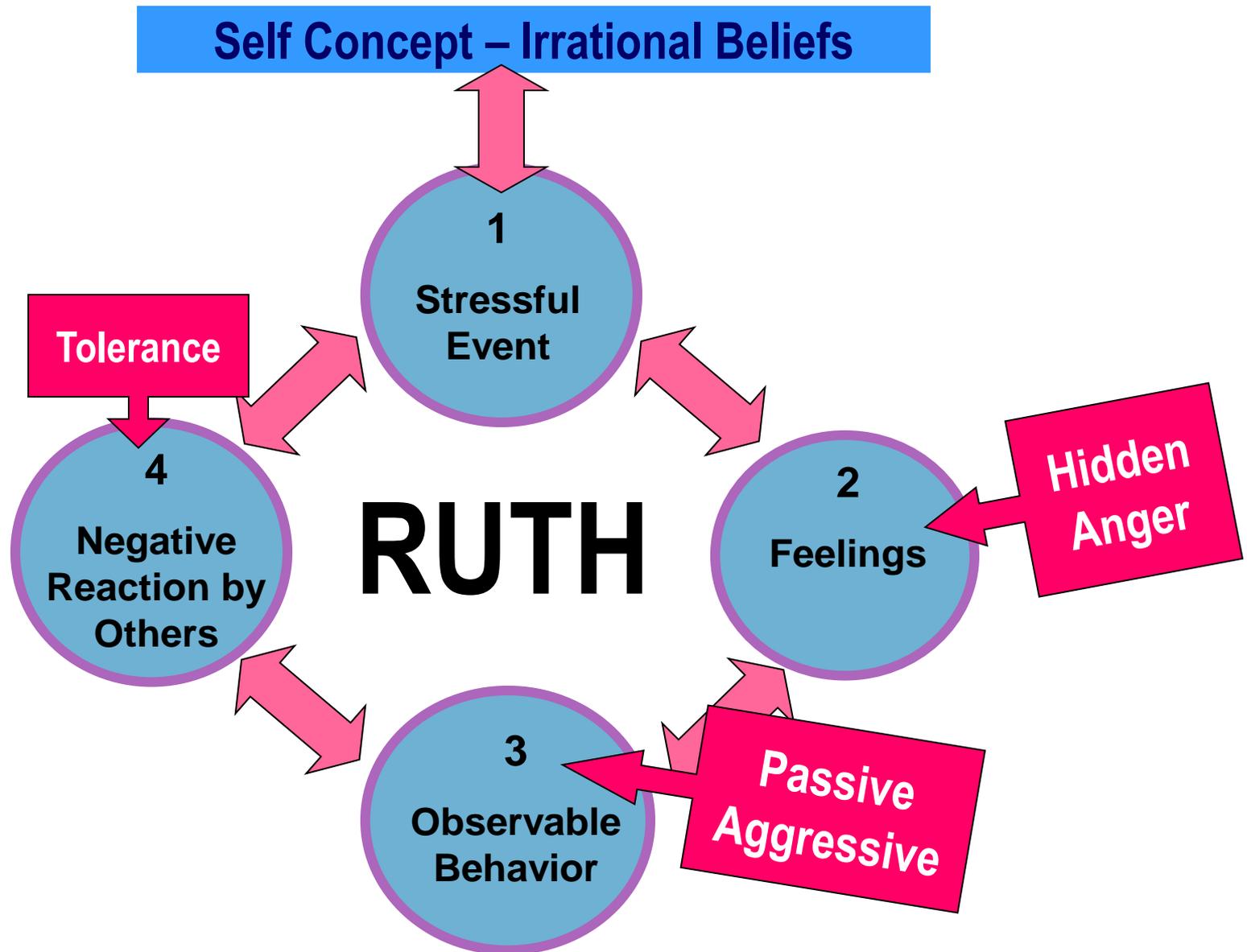


Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cycle

Self Concept – Irrational Beliefs



Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cycle



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Module 8:

8 Skills to Stop Passive-Aggressive Behavior

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8 Skills

Changing Responses to Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Skill #1

Recognize the warning signs.

Checklist for Recognizing Common Passive Aggressive Behavior Patterns

- Denies anger
- Resents authority
- Procrastinates
- Gives excessive excuses
- Claims forgetfulness or misunderstanding
- Keeps others waiting and dangling
- Is intentionally inefficient
- Acts evasive and secretive at times
- Uses the silent treatment
- Shuts down conversations with "Fine" and "Whatever."
- Is often charming & intelligent
- Gives out hidden, coded messages, drip by drip
- Acts pleasant one week, intolerable the next week, making you feel you're on a perpetual emotional roller coaster
- Brings out temper tantrums and feelings of guilt in others

Skill #2

Acknowledge and accept angry feelings.

Skill #3

Role model assertive behavior.

8 Skills

Changing Responses to Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Skill #4

No empowerment.

Skill #5

With temporary deafness:

Use the Columbo Technique

Skill #6

*With feigned
misunderstanding:*

Set clear expectations.

Skill #7

With chronic lateness:

Take away secondary gratification.

8 Skills

Changing Responses to Passive-Aggressive Behavior

Skill #8

With delay behaviors:

Establish logical consequences.

8 Skills

Changing Responses to Passive-Aggressive Behavior

1. *Recognize passive aggressive behaviors as they are acted out*
2. *Acknowledge and accept your own angry feelings*
3. *Manage personal anger and role model assertive behavior*
4. *End all empowerment of passive aggression*
5. *Maintain a calm, non-threatening stance*
6. *Establish and enforce precise limits*
7. *Minimize opportunities for secondary gratification*
8. *Employ logical, natural consequences*

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Module 9:

6 Steps to Change the Behavior of a Passive- Aggressive Person

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Long Term Approaches

For responding to passive-aggressive behavior

BENIGN CONFRONTATION

Let's make a few waves...



Long Term Approaches

For responding to passive-aggressive behavior

Six Stages of BENIGN CONFRONTATION

Step 1: Recognize the Patterns of Passive Aggressive Behavior

Step 2: Refuse to Engage in the Passive Aggressive Conflict Cycle

Step 3: Affirm the Anger

Step 4: Manage the Denial

Step 5: Re-visit the Thought

Step 6: Identify Areas of Competence

Long Term Approaches

For responding to passive-aggressive behavior

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Step 3: Affirm the Anger

RUTH:

At this step, the teacher should say calmly:

Teacher: *Ruth, let's stop. I have a thought I want to share with you. I asked you to put away the cards, and you pretended not to hear me. I know I speak clearly, and other students can hear me easily. What I have to figure out is why, at this particular time, you are choosing not to hear me and follow my reasonable request.*

Pause. No response from Ruth.

Teacher: *My guess is that a part of you may be upset with me. You probably would prefer to continue to write than do math right now. If so, we need to talk about your anger and stop pretending you can't hear me. Ruth, the difficulty we are having right now is not about the cards. We can forget about the cards and who puts them away. What is happening between us right now is important. Perhaps, we may have discovered a pattern of behavior you use when you are angry. Perhaps, when I ask you to do something you think is not fair or pleasurable, you act as if you don't hear me. Ruth, you are a smart student, so let me hear what you think about this situation."*

Long Term Approaches

For responding to passive-aggressive behavior

Six Stages of BENIGN CONFRONTATION

Step 1: Recognize the Patterns of Passive Aggressive Behavior

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Step 6: Identify Areas of Competence

Step 4: Manage the Denial

Ruth: (Refuses to discuss the incident)

Teacher: *It is difficult to talk about personal issues but I want you to think about it.*

Ruth: *There is no problem here. I don't know what you're talking about. I'm not angry.*

Teacher: *I'm glad you believe this is not a problem. In other words, if I ask you to do something like put the cards away, you will be willing to do it?*

Ruth: (Nods in agreement)

Then, once again, the teacher should ask Ruth to put the cards in the box.

Long Term Approaches

For responding to passive-aggressive behavior

Six Stages of BENIGN CONFRONTATION

Step 1: Recognize the Patterns of Passive Aggressive Behavior

Step 2: Refuse to Engage in the Passive Aggressive Conflict Cycle

Step 3: Affirm the Anger

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Step 5: Re-visit the Thought

Step 6: Identify Areas of Competence

Step 5: Re-Visit the Thought

Teacher:

Ruth, I have a thought about what is happening here right now. Remember yesterday when I shared that I thought you were angry over our writing lesson ending and having to begin math? Your not cleaning up your paint reminds me of yesterday's situation and I am wondering if this is your way of letting me know that you are angry again. What do you think?

The teacher does not argue the point from here, but rather leaves Ruth with this thought to reverberate in her mind. The next time the teacher observes an example of passive aggressive behavior from Ruth, she may be able to simply say:

“Guess what I am going to say about this behavior?” or “What do you think I am going to say next?”

Long Term Approaches

For responding to passive-aggressive behavior

Six Stages of BENIGN CONFRONTATION

Step 1: Recognize the Patterns of Passive Aggressive Behavior

Step 2: Refuse to Engage in the Passive Aggressive Conflict Cycle

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Scripted Examples

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**Most
troubled
persons
want to tell
their story
but lack the
necessary
skills and
trust.**