

## **Managing Challenging Conversations Bitesize Information Sheet**

*Important to take care of yourself before you take care of others –*

### **Our 'Window of Tolerance' –**

Focusing on disconnection, nervous system arousal, suppressing feelings, releasing stored pain

### **Check our communication – How do we TALK?**

**Tone** – *How you say it*

**Attitude** – *How you approach it*

**Language** – *What words you use*

**Kindness** – *How you engage*

*Connection is both the outcome and the intervention (Jack Hinman, Attachment Psychologist)*

**Conscious communication is about listening, respecting and guiding children even when their experiences, expression and opinions differ from our own.**

**Observation opens up communication and sparks curiosity.**

**Judgment shuts down communication and creates barriers to compassionate listening.**

### **4 ways to release the need to control**

- 1) Take a time-out. Step back, breathe and count to 10. When you feel calm, return to your child. Don't ignore your emotions. Tell yourself 'I'm safe'
- 2) Look for the root cause. Over-stimulation, hunger, anxiety etc - you can deflect negativity and help your child calm down if you know the real reason they are upset
- 3) Make sure children know their feelings are heard and understood. Let them know you are curious about how they feel without blaming or judging their behaviour
- 4) Regroup by looking for your window of opportunity. Follow your child's cues to find the right moment to offer a new choice, direction or activity

#### **4 reasons why children might lie –**

- They're feeling worried about how you might react and are afraid of disappointing you
- They're afraid you won't love them anymore if you found out what they did
- They're embarrassed by their behaviour and don't know how to ask for more help
- They're avoiding the pain of the consequences because lying is less stressful than telling the truth

#### **Instead of 'make a good choice', which can be shaming, try these alternatives to build problem-solving skills –**

What's your plan here?

Will anybody get hurt/upset by that choice?

Are there any rules that you are unsure of?

What do you hope will happen here?

Do you want any help with this situation?

Always tell an adult if you don't feel safe

What options do you have here?

Who is a safe person that you can find when you're not feeling ok?

Come and get me if you tried to fix the problem and it didn't work

#### **Power Struggles**

- Prevent situations from spiralling out of control by anticipating children's needs and preparing them in advance to support them through transitions and frustrations.
- Patience helps children reflect on their behaviour. Take time to sit with any feelings that arise during conflict and resist the urge to focus on behaviour.
- Practice skill-building by giving children opportunities to make decisions about the things that affect them so they learn how to meet your expectations.

