Evidence-based Kernels for Life teaches strategies to improve the cooperation and performance of young people at home or in the community.

THE PROBLEM:
Many of our young people have been, to some degree, exposed to a predatory environment. Some have lived without stated rules or consequences while others have had harsh or even abusive experiences. Some young people never experienced the rewards of hard work and have failed to develop positive decision-making skills to set them up for success. Predatory environments like these make it difficult and even unlikely those young people will be successful as adults. These experiences and habits make it difficult for young people and adults to get along.

THE SOLUTION:
To offset these predatory environments and promote positive interactions between adults and young people, adults need strategies to create nurturing environments. Nurturing environments allow young people to learn and grow safely and provide for positive relationships between adults and young people.
THE PROCEDURE:

1. **Richly reinforce pro-social behavior.** Humans have always responded to rewarding stimuli. Whether it was early humans learning to hunt and fish or modern humans earning a bonus at work, rewarding consequences encourage hard work and good performance.

2. **Limit problematic behavior.** Having clear and stated limits allows humans to operate in a safe, predictable world. When young people are provided with clear limits, they are better able to meet expectations and avoid harsh or unpredictable consequences.

3. **Reduce toxic influences.** Physically or emotionally toxic influences like abuse, neglect, or even overly harsh consequences can be damaging for mental and physical development. Providing young people with protection from these influences and adults with alternatives ensures positive relationships between adults and young people.

4. **Increase psychological flexibility.** Many of the concepts we often expect from people—accountability, respect, responsibility—are actually somewhat difficult to define. By breaking down concepts into clear mutual expectations, adults and young people can get on the same page.

THE SCIENCE:

Adults can provide nurturing environments to young people by using Evidence-based Kernels as prevention strategies to promote positive relationships with young people. Much like an “active ingredient” is at the heart of medicine that works, Evidence-based Kernels are at the heart of what changes our behavior. For example, in our cars, a bell prompts us to put on our seatbelts. A stop sign encourages us to stop at an intersection. A speeding ticket may encourage us to slow down. All of these are evidence-based kernels that change our behavior.

Evidence-based Kernels for Life teaches strategies to improve the cooperation and performance of young people at home or in the community. Inspired by decades of research from schoolteachers, developmental psychologists, prevention scientists, and age-old cultural wisdom, these strategies have been developed and honed for application with adults and any young person.

For more information, see mha.ohio.gov.
Evidence-based Kernels for Life
PREVENTION STRATEGIES FOR THE HOME AND COMMUNITY

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