

Counselling Post-Millennial Kids

South Shore Regional School Board Counsellors
May 8, 2015

Who is Robert Wright?

- A registered SW Private Practitioner - direct practice and forensics
- Former Ex. Dir. Child & Youth Strategy
- Former Race Relations Coordinator of the Dartmouth District School Board
- Former Social Worker Youth Pathways Programme
- PhD Student in Sociology – Race, Identity, Power



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Engaging “other” – Cultural Competence

Consider working with today's students as an exercise in cross-cultural counselling. If so, the following principles apply:

- Working together is easier the more similar we are.
- Working together is easier if our methods of working fit with and meet the life experience and values of our clients
- Many implications flow from these proposition

What's with these kids?!

- Resistant to authority
- Not open to being reasoned with
- Seemingly immune to consequences
- Emotionally explosive/chaotic
- Unable to be reined in by parents
- In and out of conflict with peers
- Apathetic nihilistic
- Self-harming
- Addicted to social media
- Life cluttered with innumerable, superficial relationships
- Substance use is epidemic

Cultural Competence: Definition

- Cultural competence refers to an ability to interact effectively with people of different cultures. Cultural competence comprises five essential capacities. We must:
 - A. understand our own cultural positions and how they differ from and are similar to others
 - B. understand the social and cultural reality in which we live and work and in which our clients live and work
 - C. cultivate appropriate attitudes towards cultural difference
 - D. be able to generate and interpret a wide variety of verbal and non-verbal responses
 - E. understand structural oppression and demonstrate awareness and commitment to social justice

Who are the Post-millennials?

The Generations

- Traditionalists (born before 1946)
- Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1960)
- Generation X (born 1960 – 1979)
- Millennials (born 1979 – 1994)

Traditionalists (born before 1946)

- Values
 - Believe in conformity, authority and rules
 - Believe in logic
 - Very defined sense of right and wrong
 - Loyalty and respect for authority

Baby Boomers (born 1946 – 1960)

- Values
 - Individual choice
 - Community involvement
 - Prosperity
 - Ownership
 - Self-actualizing
 - Health and wellness

Generation X (born 1960 – 1979)

- Values
 - Contribution
 - Feedback and recognition
 - Autonomy
 - Engaging with authority

Millennials (born 1979 ~ 1995)

- Values
 - Self-expression is more important than self-control
 - Marketing and branding self is important
 - Violence is an acceptable means of communication/expression
 - Fear living poorly—this is related to lifestyle enjoyment, not wealth
 - Respect must be earned; it is not freely granted based on age, authority or title

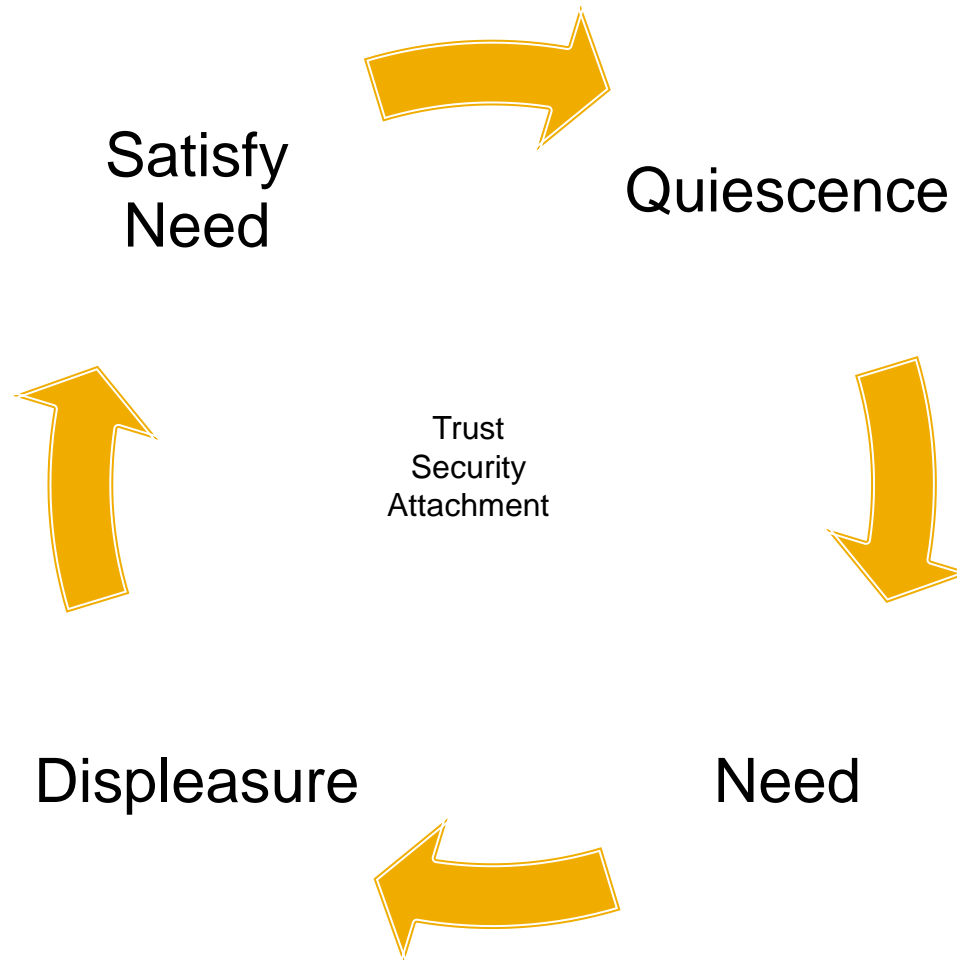
Post-Millennials (~1995 -)

- Identity, values and outcomes for post-millennials are just now developing. We are aware that they are the latest generation to be affected by the ever increasing shift in our social make up:
 - Attachment – economic forces and disruptions in extended family patterns make for weaker contexts for forming relationships – trust, security, attachment, empathy, self control (frustrates intolerance), (Bowlby)
 - Future Shock – society is transforming quicker than the human cultural capacity to adjust. Extended family, community, religion, career, substantive skill, reflexivity and identity are all fleeting and no longer provide security of identity (Alvin Toffler)

Special Populations

- Racialized persons and others from rural and isolated communities have been especially affected given the even more dramatic changes in their community and social location (the death of ethno cultural and rural community)
- Boys and men are likewise dramatically affected by these trends given the radical shift in the expectation of evolved male identity and attitudes in the absence of social mechanisms to support and nurture this change (assault on rape culture without appropriate services to perceived perpetrators)

How Attachment Develops



How to Engage Post-millennials – a & b)

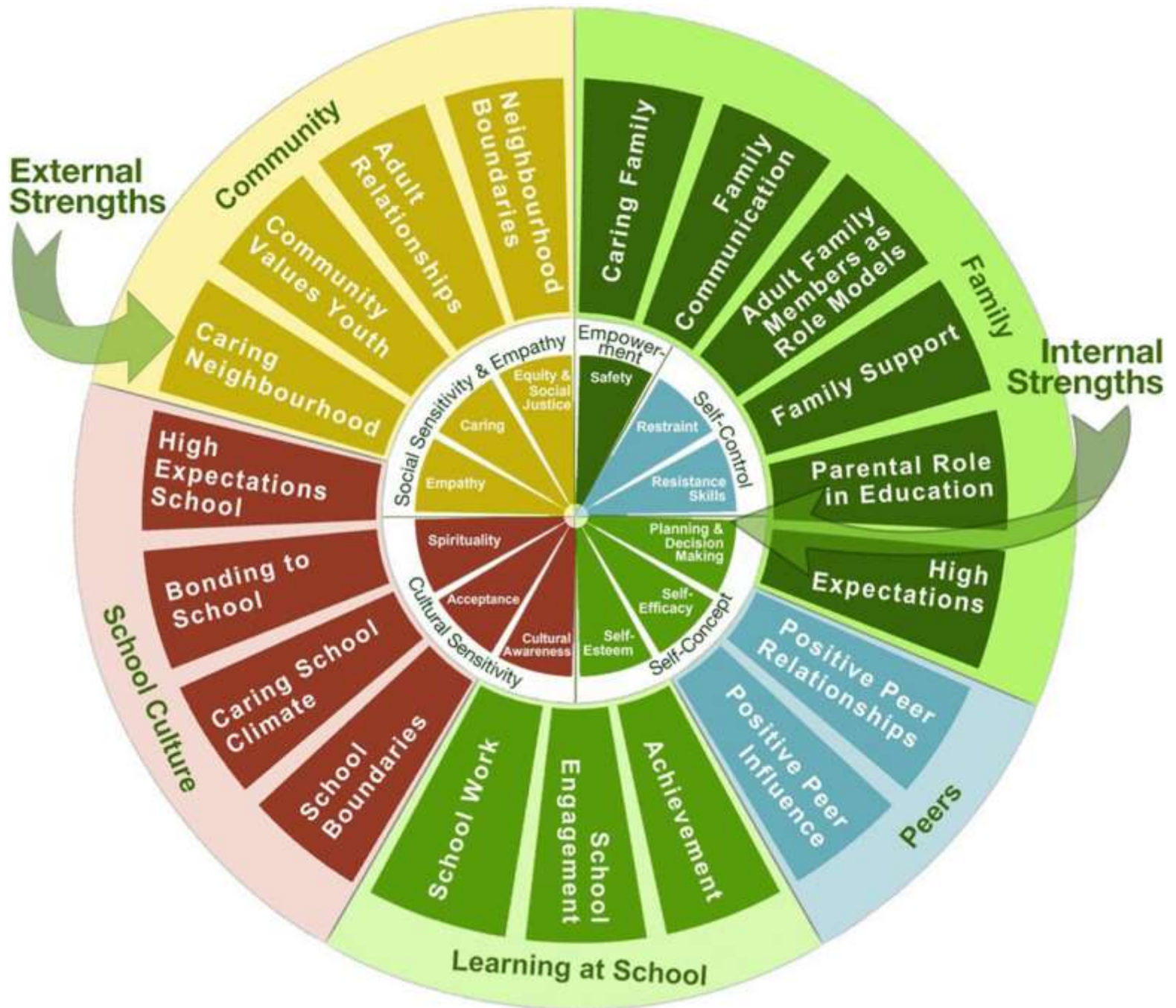
- understand their cultural position, the social and cultural reality our students live and work – learn how the social forces we spoke about are generally and specifically affecting your students. Generally – what’s happening in your school community. Specifically – how is it playing out in the life of the particular student.
- Self-in Context mapping
- Psycho-education regarding attachment and development

How to Engage Post-millennials – c & d)

- cultivate appropriate attitudes towards cultural difference and be able to generate and interpret a wide variety of verbal and non-verbal responses – an open, non-judgemental, non-confrontational, engaging manner is most successful. Co-opting students in session is more successful than confronting.

How to Engage Post-millennials – e)

- Understand structural oppression and demonstrate awareness and commitment to social justice – youth respond to persons who demonstrate this awareness and a willingness to engage them in the process of analysing and confronting the forces that are negatively affecting them.
- Similar to eco-structural intervention models



Relationship & Relevance

- Those who measure the impact of various helping services have observed that 83% of change that people make in a helping relationship is attributable to two factors:
 - A caring, supporting relationship between helper and client, and
 - the degree to which the “help” was directed to issues of relevance to the client.

Rules for Building Relationships

- Be approachable, accepting and non-judgemental
- Seek to understand. Adopt an attitude of learning towards students' lives and experiences
- Express affection genuinely
- Meet student needs effectively
- Reflect students' feelings accurately
- Make connections from curriculum to students' aspirations and experience
- Understand what is happening in the lives of your students

Q & A

- Discussion of Implications

Let's Get to Work!

- Collectively build a student profile of the kind of students your group finds particularly challenging to engage.
- Brainstorm and lists the social, familial, community, and school forces that are likely affecting this student
- Discuss how you might provide education to the student about the concepts of attachments and future shock and how they may be affecting them. Discuss how you might use self in context mapping to support that discussion.

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