

## Defining Acceptance

Acceptance is not about tolerating or condoning inappropriate behaviour, nor does it mean withholding discipline or not setting limits.

It is about creating the conditions for unconditional positive regard. Accepting the thoughts, feelings, perceptions and memories which lie underneath the behaviour. "All behaviour is communication".

## Why is Acceptance so important in trauma-focused care?

Children with a background of abuse, neglect and loss can be prone to toxic shame. They have great difficulty making sense of their thoughts and feelings and expressing these in socially appropriate ways.

Acceptance shows the child that we understand and allows him or her to safely explore and communicate their inner experience. It's a way of saying "I get that this is a big deal for you",

## Why can Acceptance be so difficult?

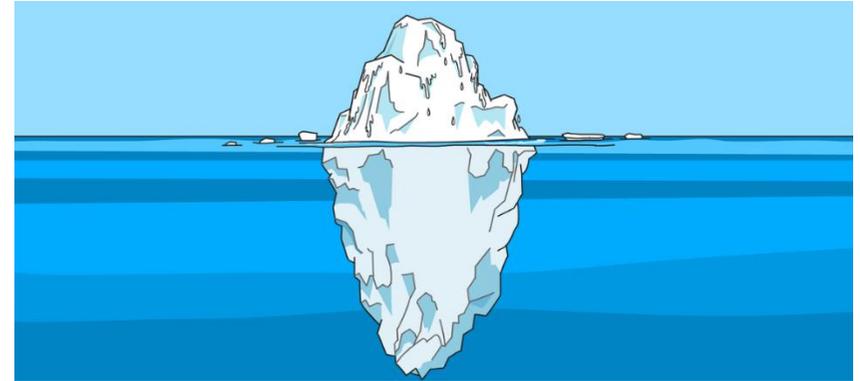
- We can be quick to evaluate behaviour...but this activates the child's defensive systems and triggers shame rather than guilt.
- We can prioritise traditional behaviour management...but the child's trauma-impacted brain is ill-equipped for thinking about consequences.
- We are keen to change behaviour...but the child may have lacked the experience of regulating thoughts and feelings through relationship.

# P The A in PACE A Care-giving Formula by Dan Hughes

# A ACCEPTANCE

# C

# E



## Some Examples of Acceptance

*"I can see how you feel this is unfair. You wanted to play longer"*

*"You probably think that I don't care about what you want"*

*"You were letting me know that you were really scared when you ran out of the classroom".*

*"I know you were angry about what he said last time, but hitting can hurt. Let's try talking to him about it."*

*"I can hear you saying that you hate me and you're feeling really cross. I'll still be here for you after you calm down".*

*"I'm disappointed by what you did, but I know you were really upset. It doesn't change how much I care about you".*