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INTRODUCTORY MATERIAL



The Logic

■ Overview in a Nutshell

Welcome to The Healing Species Compassion Education Interception Program.

The Healing Species Interception Program actually “intercepts” the mentality of crime, victimization, frustration, anger, and sense of isolation found in many childhood lives today. These are the attitudes that so often cause disruptive behavior and lack of concentration in the classroom. Our program intercepts old negative ways of relating and delivers to students a new way of experiencing the world around them. We follow through with easy assignments, follow-up services, and a compliance rewards program.

We provide tools the students can use in daily situations that might ordinarily trigger anger and challenge their self-esteem, self-worth, responsibility, ambition, hope, and ability to concentrate.

This is an **intervention** program. What is the logic behind such a program?

- Ninety-two percent of Juvenile Court judges polled agree that intervention programs actually do help juveniles. (1)
- Most experts agree, and statistics reveal (2), that crime is a mentality, a mindset that escalates. In other words, crime is not necessarily a predetermined personality trait. Crime is a way of thinking that is learned. Thus, it can be unlearned.
- The Healing Species looks at how crime mentality is learned, then acted out, and it provides ways to redirect, avoid, and even repair this crime mentality.

(1) According to “Investigative Reports: Juvies,” Arts and Entertainment Network, June 2000.

(2) Please refer to detailed legal research on this topic, available through The Healing Species order form at back of manual.



■ The First Principle

- In order to perpetrate a crime or violence, the perpetrator must be able to view the victim as an object with no feelings or value. (3) This ability is usually learned. It is rare that an infant emerges from the womb as a victimizer, such as a rapist or murderer. Instead, this murderer or rapist typically experiences victimization in his or her childhood: 1) by observing victimization, 2) by being victimized, and, finally, 3) by practicing his or her own acts of victimization.

- How Do We Know This?

We know this partly from observing the histories of notorious murderers, such as serial killers Carol Edward Cole, Jeffrey Dahmer, Ted Bundy, David Burdowitz (“Son of Sam”), and Albert DeSalvo (“The Boston Strangler”)—as well as Patrick Sherrill, who killed fourteen post office co-workers; and teenager Luke Woodham of Pearl, Mississippi, who gunned down fellow students. Jimmy Vaughn (real name: Joseph Paul Frankey) went on a race-war killing spree across America in 1979. As a child he was abused. He went on to torment animals, even hanging cats. All “school-shooters” to date, first victimized animals. Leonard Lake murdered and tortured dozens of people in California; his first violent act was torturing an animal.

The fact is, the only thing these notorious criminals all have in common is that they first victimized animals before moving on to humans.

- While in law school, I conducted my own research, interviewing dozens of violent offenders in prison in South Carolina. *Every* inmate I interviewed told of first abusing animals before victimizing people. Typically, when I asked the inmate about any feelings of sorrow or compassion for the animals they had harmed, each stopped as if thinking about the subject for the first time. They confessed that they had never felt sorry for the animal victims—but after I brought it up, they actually felt sad for the animals.

It was obvious the missing link, the one connection each of these inmates shared, was a lack of compassion.

[For further information regarding this cycle of victim/victimizer, please refer to the legal research paper “The Link Between Animal Abuse and Criminality Against Children” available for purchase through the order form at the back of this manual.]

(3) Dr. Louis Krauss, head of child psychiatry, Northwestern Hospital, Illinois, and head of a maximum security youth facility in Joliet, IL.



- Dr. Lenore Walker, often referred to as the mother of the Battered Woman Syndrome, explains that domestic violence actually takes place within a context. “If you do not understand the context,” she says, “then you do not understand domestic violence.”

Dr. Walker’s findings gives heightened importance to the family unit in which one or more members are victimized. The Humane Society of the United States has found that oftentimes a parent will control or terrorize a child or a spouse by threatening harm or harming the family pet. Other times a child will harm the pet to “act out” or repeat abuses perpetrated against him or her in order to gain a sense of power and control. Acknowledging these behaviors is an act of understanding the *context* of domestic violence. Until we can look at the full picture, we cannot intercept, correct, or heal domestic violence within our society.

These principles extend beyond domestic violence. The principles of The Healing Species encompass an **overall** sense of healing—and if no healing is necessary, then enlightenment—of the human character and related effects, including the ability to concentrate, a sense of self-esteem, ambition, and the desire to excel in the classroom and in life.

Gradually, over time,

- through being abused, or severely neglected,
- through observing the abuse of others,
- and by practicing, “acting out,” and repeating these abuses,

an individual begins to relate to victimizing. He actually finds a sense of power and release or relief, from acts of victimizing. This behavior sets up a cycle of relating to others. Enduring anger, frustration, and pain leads an individual to creating his own circumstances of pain whereby, this time, he is in control. These patterns establish a sense of isolation and ultimate hopelessness regarding the individual’s view of the world.

Many times these rituals of abusive patterning are subtle. [More about this in Lesson Plan Two.] Often, this individual can restrain acts of victimizing while in the presence of others—in public view—or while under strict rules and structured reinforcement. However, once relying on his own attitudes, mentality, and perceptions of the world around him, this individual is at a loss for traits such as restraint, responsibility, integrity, follow-through mentality, self-worth, self-esteem, discipline, perceptions of hopeful and positive outcomes, and even the ability to relax and settle down enough to concentrate. This is why the experience of military boot camp may be successful in teaching the initial appreciation and concepts of such positive traits, but the recidivism rate among boot camp graduates is not as successful as that of inmates involved in animal programs. [See enclosed article.]



■ The Second Principle

Not only can an individual be re-directed away from crime patterns, mentality, and ways of relating, this individual can actually begin repairing the damage already experienced. How is this done? Healing is initiated when an individual gives nurturing to another vulnerable member of his world. True nurturing involves going beyond a tender pat on the head. **It involves responsible decision making, compassionate choices, “follow-through” activity, and empathetic ways of relating.** These skills are illustrated in The Healing Species Lesson Plans.

True nurturing is critical in an individual’s ability to heal and re-direct crime mentality. Through nurturing an animal, an individual gains a sense of power, importance, self-esteem, rewards from positive behavior, experience in giving tenderness as opposed to violence, and, perhaps most importantly, the experience of receiving the unconditional love animals provide. This bonding and relationship experience has proven—in prison programs, for example—to be enough to give the individual a sense of hope and inspiration for future relationships, and the ability to set life goals.

There is Hope.



The Mechanics

■ Overview in a Nutshell

- The Healing Species provides a way to counter a child's path to victimizing, even if the child himself is victimized. Our unique program of "Interception" is based on a fundamental set of principles, or rules, that can be applied to everyday life. Part of what makes The Healing Species unique in that it incorporates rescued stray dogs as "teachers" and "healers" into its program, similar to the way the successful prison programs, mentioned earlier, incorporate animals.
- However, it must be made very clear that The Healing Species is not pet therapy. We share many of the benefits that pet therapy provides, because we do involve animals. But, The Healing Species Interception Program is a highly specific and developed education curriculum. Through our lesson plans we can actually reverse many students' negative behavior patterns and ways of relating. Our program embodies a natural healing process through which almost anyone can benefit. It also provides a wonderful formula for living by incorporating a belief system and set of attitudes regarding the vulnerable members of our world.
- This system provides refuge and healing, a sense of power and purpose, a need and reason to excel, and motivation to overcome past histories of pain and hardship. The lesson plans open up a new vision of awareness, consciousness, and a world of options for the student. Knowledge is power. Acting knowledgeable and powerful in a benevolent way builds self-esteem. A student with self-esteem will try harder, try more often, and value his own situations, even failures, as learning experiences and opportunities for choices—as opposed to frustrating anger triggers. [Lessons Two, Four, and Seven teach how to recognize and control frustration (anger) triggers.]
- The beauty of our program is that it speaks to all ages. Even a seven-year-old child can learn the rewards of filling an old Cool Whip container with cool water for a sweltering dog (after we have emphasized and walked them through "safety first.") Suddenly, this seven-year old has a job, is important, receives gratitude, and is learning "nurturing." Especially if this child suffers emotional pain from hurt feelings, an abusive environment, or neglect—this program offers a better option, a better use of "energy from pain," than repeating the violence. This seven-year old has just learned about his choices and has exercised his options, despite heartbreak. This seven-year old has just begun to break the cycle of violence.