

When punishment is problematic - By Colby Pearce

People do not act for no reason.

They may act in response to an idea.

They may act in response to an emotion.

They may act in response to a need that requires satisfaction.

They may act because the way their brain developed impairs their capacity to think before they act in the presence of a trigger (stimulus).

If we accept the truth that people do not act for no reason, then we must similarly accept that when we punish a child for their actions without any effort to try to understand why they did what they did, we are essentially communicating to them that their thoughts, feelings, needs and biological characteristics are unimportant or invalid. Repeated often enough, the child develops the belief that they are unimportant and invalid.

The consequences of invalidation include behavioural problems, emotional problems, preoccupations with needs and a lack of regard for the impact of one's behaviour on others and one's relationships.

We can avoid perpetuating maladaptive behaviour in children by responding with understanding to the reason for their behaviour and, in doing so, nourish connections that support their self-regulation and adherence to behaviour conventions.

Pinocchio tells the truth, lest his nose grow and he experience disapproval.



Connection Matters!