

TRUST-BASED RELATIONAL INTERVENTION® (TBRI®)

Life Value Terms

Life Value Terms are short phrases with shared meaning that can be used in daily interactions with children and youth. *Life Value Terms* differ from life skills, in that they give caregivers and children language to use for understanding, communicating, and learning valuable skills. Essentially, *Life Value Terms* are the language of a trauma-informed culture. This language not only helps children use their voice in an appropriate and respectful manner, but it also provides caregivers with tools for engaging children in healthy communication within relationships.

"Gentle and Kind"

Due to sensory challenges, histories of harm, and/or altered brain chemistries, many children who have experienced trauma are unaware when they are not being gentle. Using the terms *gentle and kind* or *be kind* reminds children to soften their touch, their tone of voice, their facial expressions, and their attitudes.

"Askin' or Tellin'?"

When a child demands something from an adult - even without the intent of disrespect - such as, "Give me that water bottle," the caregiver can playfully respond to the child with, "Are you askin' or tellin'?" Playfully responding this way nudges the child toward understanding the differences between respect and disrespect.

"Use your Words"

Behavior is the language of unmet needs. While it is important for caregivers to be detectives of the messages behind behaviors, prompting children to "use your words" teaches them to express their needs and feelings in a healthy way.

"With Respect"

Simply saying, "Try that again with respect," or "Let's remember to treat our friends with respect" encourages children to be mindful and respectful in their tone of voice, facial expressions, words, and body language.

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"With Permission and Supervision"

It is important for children to learn that adults are in charge and responsible for keeping them safe. Responding "With permission and supervision, you may..." when children ask to perform certain activities helps them learn to trust that adults will keep them safe, respond to their requests, and meet their needs.

"Listen and Mind"

Children need to be encouraged and rewarded for listening to and obeying their caregivers. If an adult gives a child a directive, and the child hesitates to follow through, the caregiver may say, "Listen and mind (or obey) the first time, please." If a child follows the directive the first time, the adult may say, "That was great listening and obeying the first time. Great job, buddy!"

"Accepting 'No'"

When some children hear "no," they believe that their needs will never be met, and that they have no voice or value. Caregivers can get creative about ways to give more "yeses" than "nos" so children learn that they are heard and valued. When "no" is necessary, however, praise children for accepting "no".