Behavioral Risk Management

Preventing Critical Incidents in the Field

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Overview & Definitions

Concept 1: Behavioral Risk Management Model

Concept 2: Cascade of Events &
Tightly and Loosely coupled systems

Concept 3: Safe Container & Behavioral Expectations

Small Group sessions

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Goals

After attending this workshop, you will be able to:

- Develop a training session for staff to explain how behavioral risk factors mirror technical/physical risk factors in the field.
- Choose a recent incident and analyze it using "cascade of events" or the "safe container" to identify contributing behavioral factors.
- Create a set of prescriptive expectations for use with staff to both anticipate behavioral risk factors and help mitigate the risks they create.

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Overview

Santa Fe Mountain Center clients

- Youth in the juvenile justice system
- Native American populations; notably local pueblos & people from nearby Navajo and Apache reservations
- GLBTQ (Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Questioning) populations & HIV at-risk populations
- Victims of domestic violence & sexual abuse/assault

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Reportable Incident

- Any of the following will indicate a reportable incident:
  - Requires more than simple first aid
  - Requires more than cursory staff attention
  - Requires follow-up care
  - Requires use of prescription medications or evacuation
  - Results in a near miss
  - Behaviors mount and interventions appear not to be working
  - Interferes with participants participation and staffs' attention to the group as a whole becomes diffuse

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Types of Incidents

- Injury: Client or staff is injured.
- Illness: Client or staff is sick or gets sick.
- Motivational/Behavioral: Behaviors or emotions get in the way of program or cause emotional harm to client.
- Near Miss: Whew! Something bad *almost* happened.

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Motivational/ Behavioral Incident

- reluctance or unwillingness to participate
- being verbally or physically abusive
- running away
- using alcohol or drugs
- suicidal or homicidal ideation
- any emotional or psychological situation that compromises the students ability to participate in the program.

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Case Study:
Is this a reportable incident?

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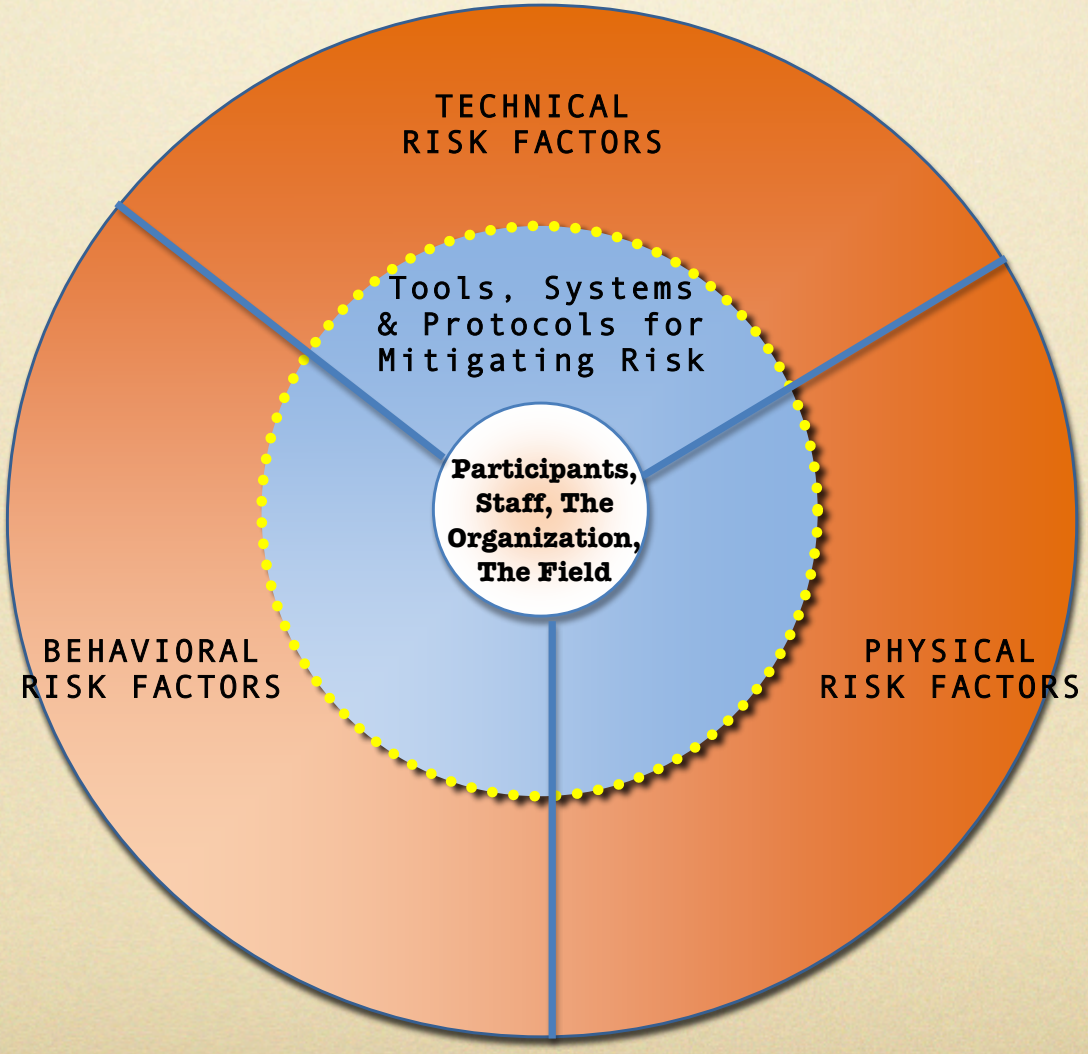
Resolutions & Learnings

1. Behavioral Risk Management Model



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Behavioral Risk Management Model

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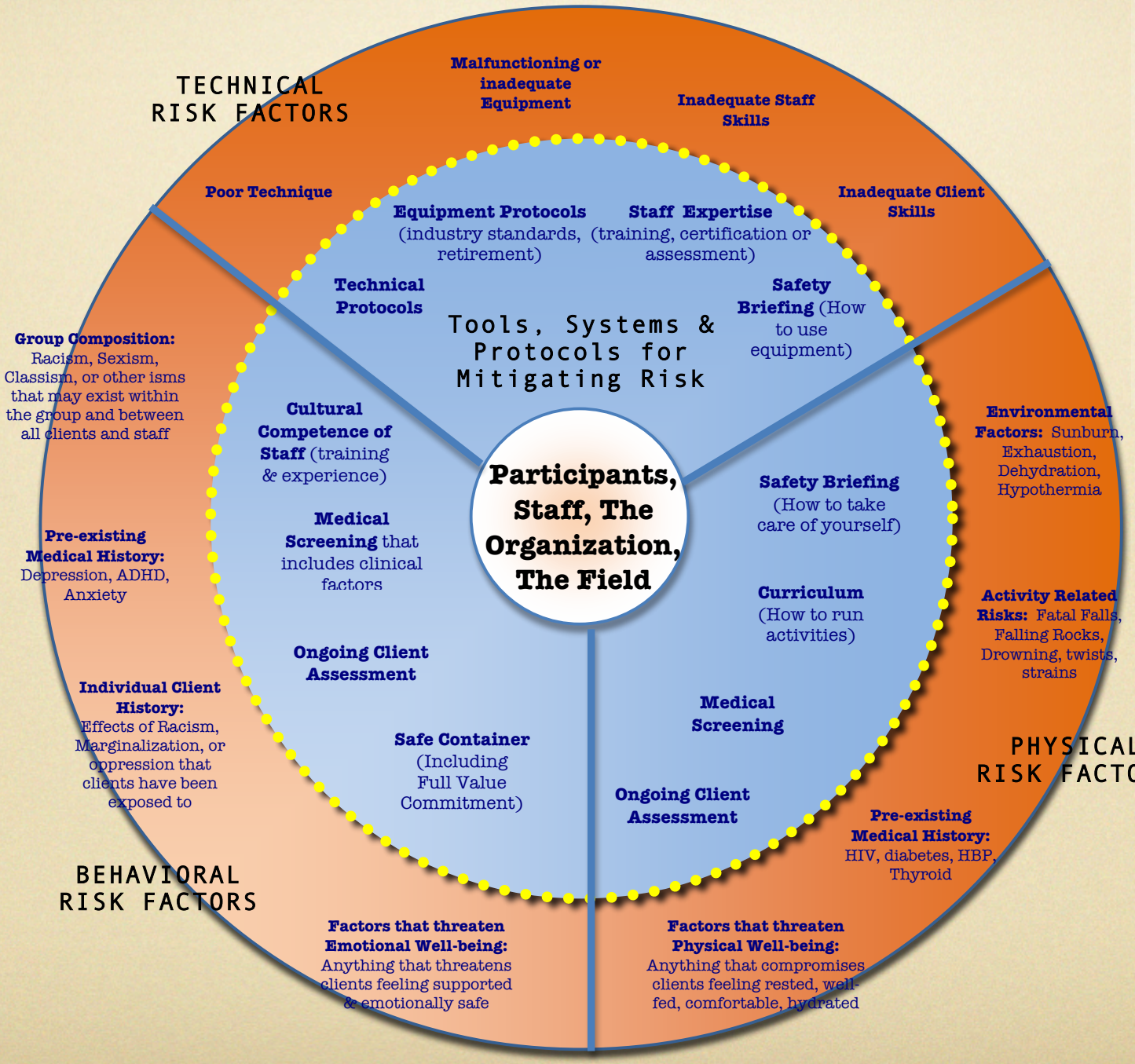
Behavioral Risk Management Model



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How this applies to your program

- The Santa Fe Mountain Center comes from a therapeutic perspective- your programs and clients may look different from ours. However, you can STILL use this theory on your programs whether it's a therapeutic program or not.
- Remember, "If you invite the public, the public will come."

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Behavioral Risk Management Model Take-aways

- In order to mitigate critical incidents, it is important to give equal attention to all 3 of the realms where risk factors lie: the behavioral, technical and physical realms.
- There are a number of tools, protocols & systems that your organization can put into place to help mitigate behavioral risk factors.

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2. Cascade of Events

- The idea that critical incidents can be caused by a number of preceding events. Often, these preceding events are by themselves not enough to set off people's awareness that an incident may be imminent.

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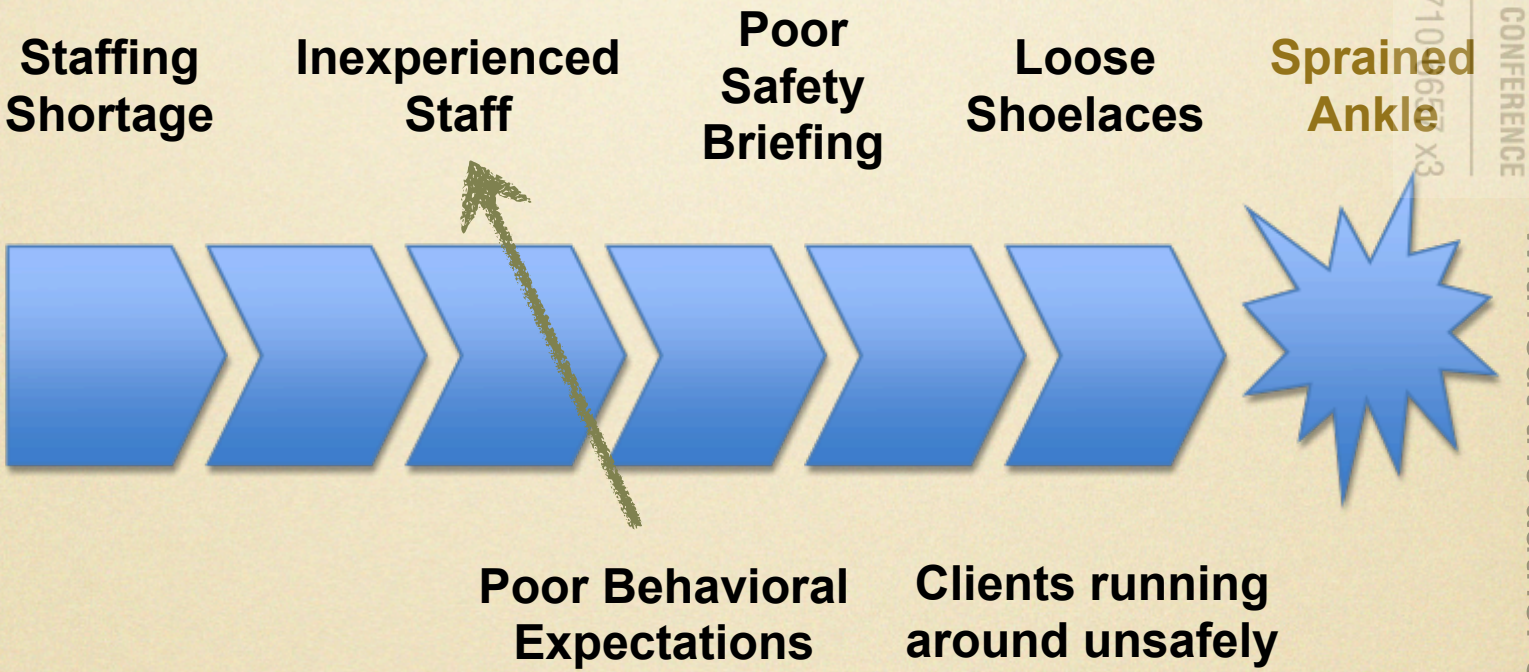
Technical and Physical Risk Factors



Behavioral Risk Factors

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Case Study-
Behavioral Cascade of Events

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Technical and Physical Risk Factors

Poor job assessing appropriateness of clients?

Clients stressed by difficulty of hike?

- Client threatening self-harm
- Another client threatening staff
- Other clients wandering off during incident

Staff Culture Unsafe

Incohesive Staff Team

Poor Behavioral Expectations

Unsafe emotional environment

Clients emotionally stressed, acting out and fronting

Behavioral Risk Factors

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Resolution & Learnings

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Breaking a cascade of events

1. **Be aware that a cascade of events is in motion.**
2. **Understand that behavioral factors may be at play in the cascade.**
3. **Interventions may be needed on the technical, physical and/or behavioral level to break the cascade.**

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Loosely and Tightly coupled systems

Behavioral Factors in a Cascade of Events- Take-aways

- There are often a number of behavioral factors underlying a cascade of events.
- Breaking a cascade of events may require interventions in the technical, physical OR behavioral realm.
- When viewing how tightly or loosely coupled a system is, be sure to pay attention to how behavioral factors are involved.

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3. The Safe Container

- Safe Container: a safe emotional & physical space where clients can process their experiences and practice positive behaviors.

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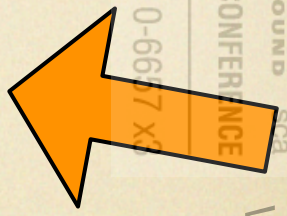
- A **Safe Container** consists of multiple elements & concepts:
  - Behavioral Expectations (Full Value Commitment)
  - *Challenge by Choice* and *Comfort Zones*
  - A prescriptive and flexible program
  - Culturally Competent staff



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Behavioral Expectations are a way to help clients grow and learn.

But Behavioral Expectations are **ALSO** a Risk Management tool.

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Technical and Physical Risk Factors

Inadequate pre-program client assessment

Clients stressed by difficulty of hike?

- Client threatening self-harm
- Another client threatening staff
- Other clients wandering off during incident

Staff Culture Unsafe

Incohesive Staff Team

Poor Behavioral Expectations

Unsafe emotional environment

Clients emotionally stressed, acting out and fronting

Behavioral Risk Factors

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Fronting

- A coping behavior that involves presenting a false "front" or facade to others. With disadvantaged youth, this often comes out as presenting themselves as "tough" by threatening one another emotionally or physically, glorifying negative behaviors, cursing, fighting or putting others down.

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Prescriptive Behavioral Expectations for "Fronting" behaviors

No threats or violence, including horseplay

No War Stories

Use appropriate language

No put downs

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Behavioral Expectations for young men in a detention facility

- Respectful Behavior, including:
  - Listen when others are speaking
  - Respect differences like race, color, gender, ethnicity, body size or shape
- Participation, with *Challenge by Choice*
- **No violence of threats of violence**
- **No War Stories**
- **Use Appropriate Language**
- **No** teasing or **put-downs**
- No horseplay
- Take serious situations seriously (like at the top of a cliff)
- Have Fun!

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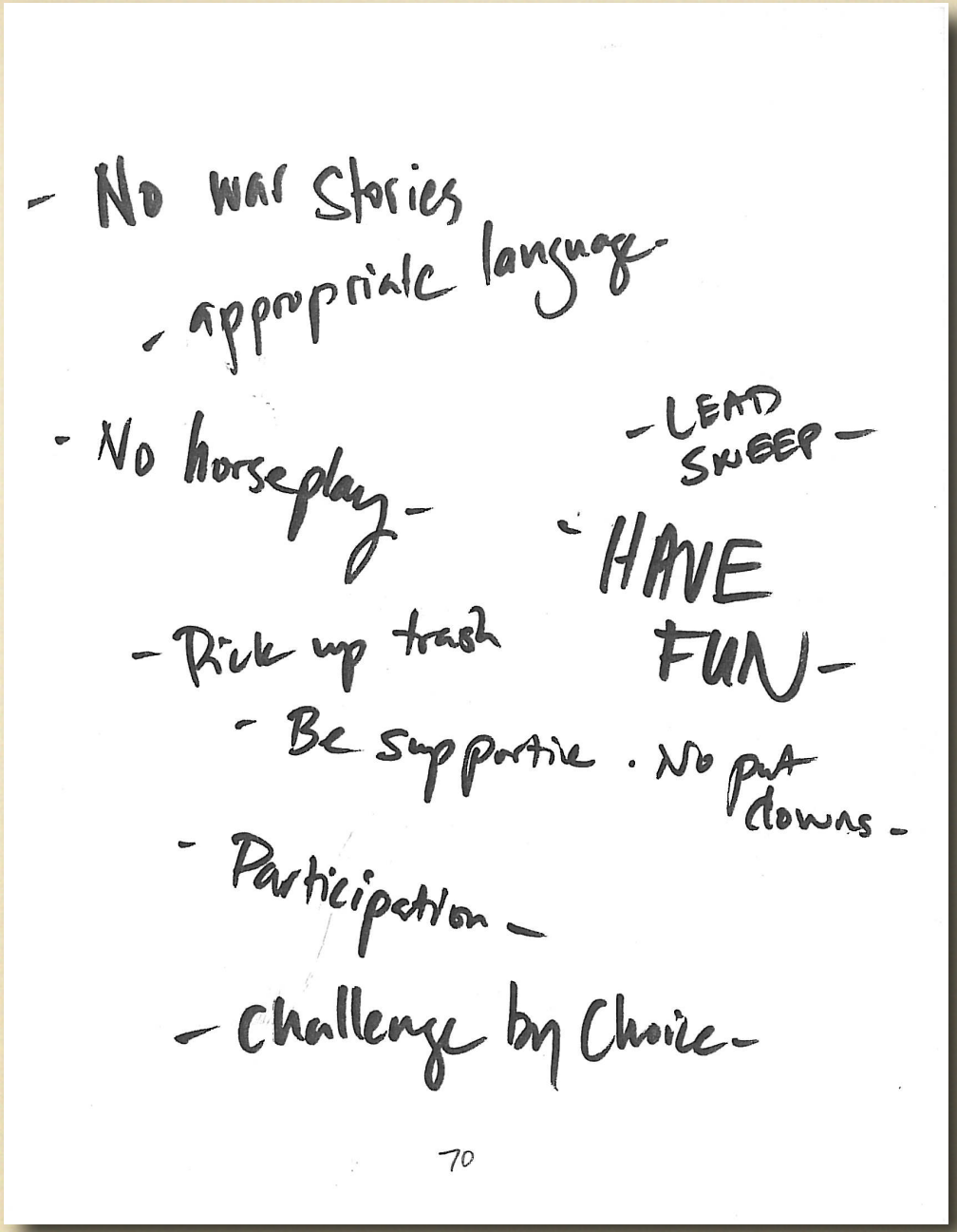

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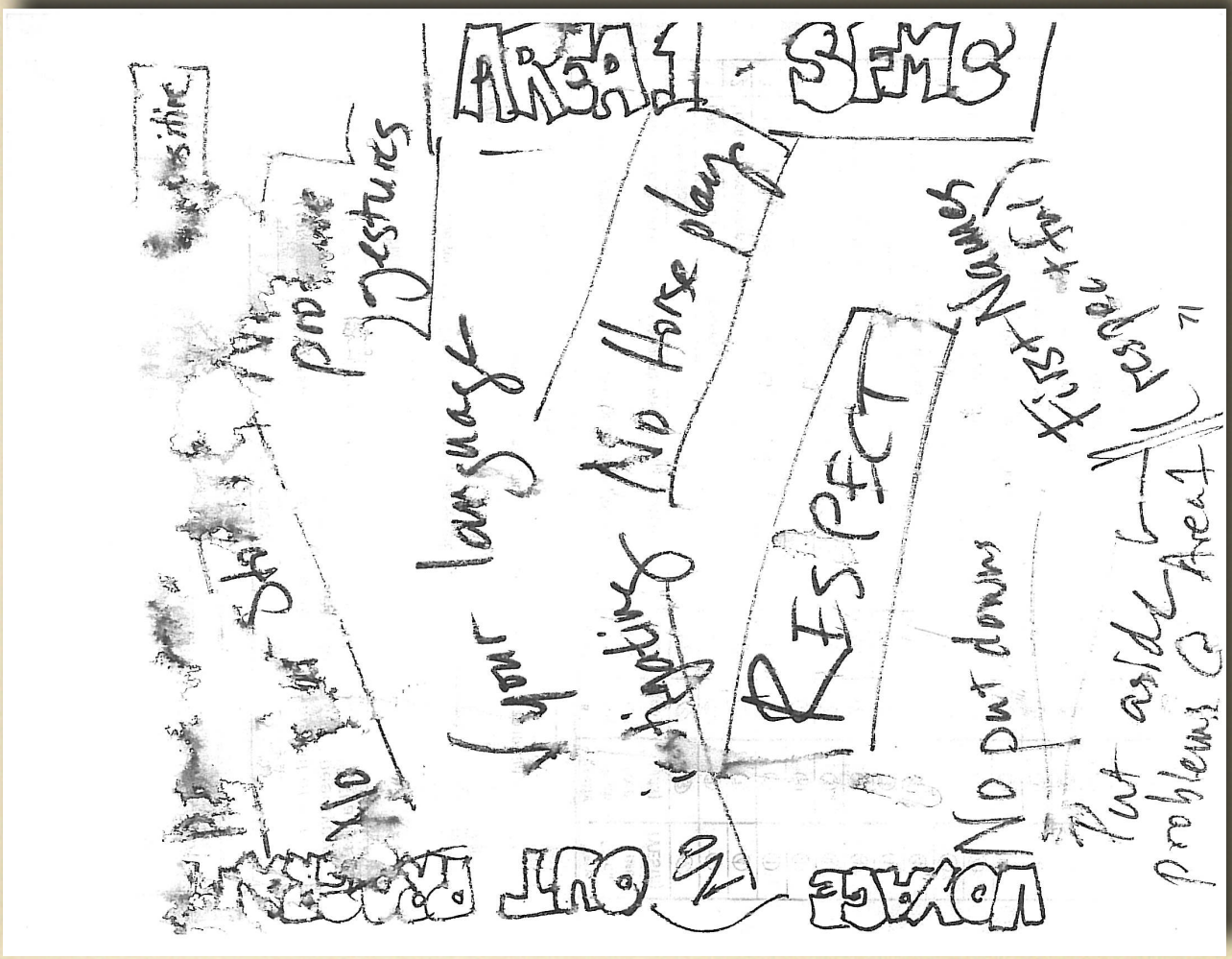

Behavioral Expectations for 5th graders in an anti-bullying program

- Five finger agreement:
  - **Thumb** (thumbs up)- Support one another
  - **Index Finger** (don't point and blame)- personal responsibility
  - **Middle Finger** (often used to disrespect)- respectful behavior & respect differences
  - **Ring Finger**- commitment to being part of a group
  - **Pinky Finger** (the most fragile finger)- we are all fragile creatures and need to take care of one another

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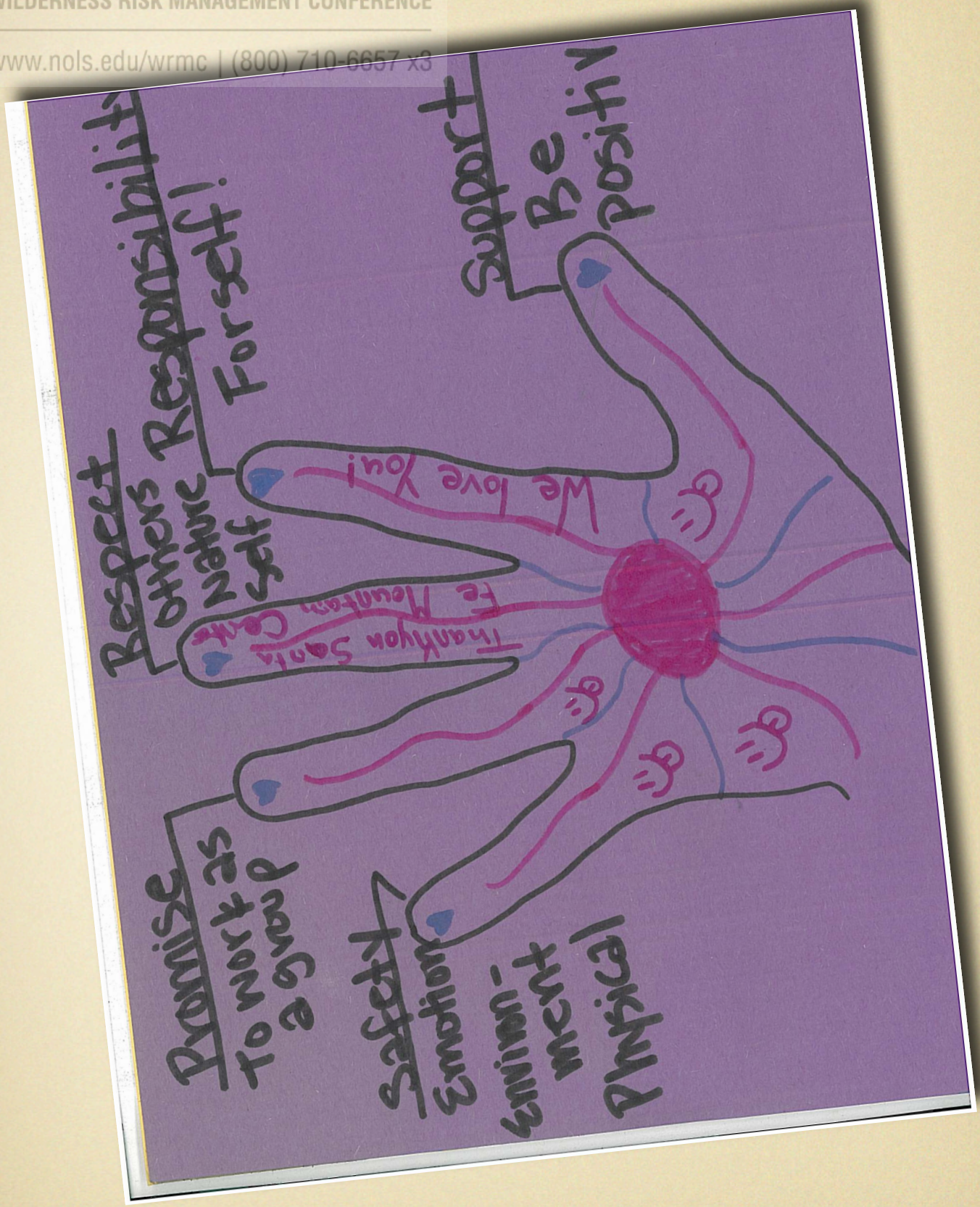

Behavioral expectations as a risk management tool- Take-aways

- Behavioral expectations are frequently used on programs but are not always thought of as a risk management tool.
- A well-crafted and thoughtful set of behavioral expectations can not only help staff keep clients on track, but can prevent potential behavioral incidents.

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5. Small Group sessions

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1. Rate your organization on some of how relevant the risk factors are (1= low risk, 5=high risk) and then on the corresponding Tools, Systems and Protocols (1=no tools or protocols, 5=great tools or protocols) that your organization has in place. Do you notice any discrepancies or trends?

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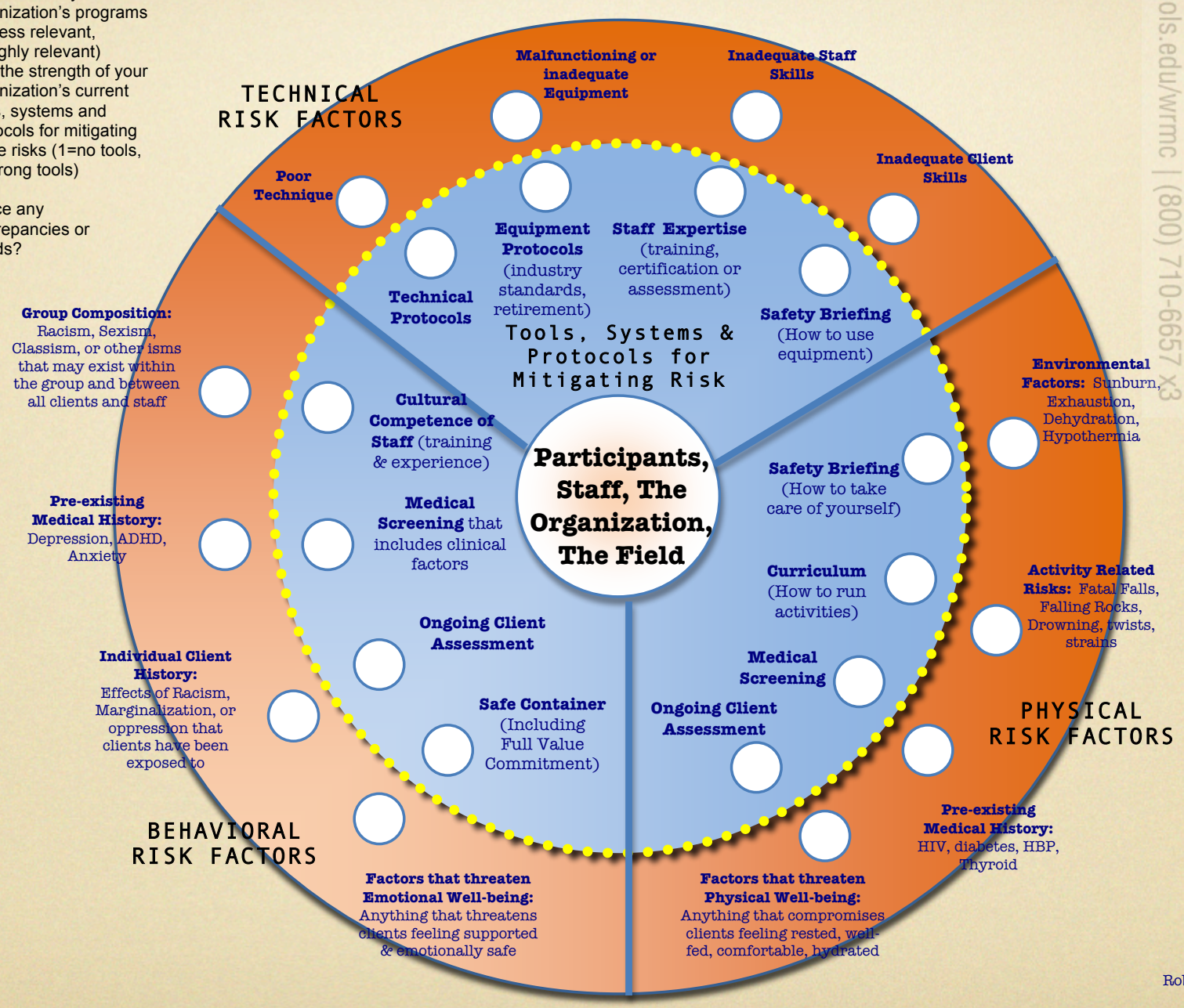
Worksheet #1

1) Rate the relevance of risk factors in your organization's programs (1= less relevant, 5=highly relevant)
2) Rate the strength of your organization's current tools, systems and protocols for mitigating these risks (1=no tools, 5=strong tools)

Do notice any discrepancies or trends?

Behavioral Risk Management Model



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