

## *Episode 41: Season 2 Overview*

The main content of Season 2 podcast episodes will follow two different, but complementary, program development pathways.

One pathway is designed to give residential staff a structured approach for Processing problem-behaviors with their child and youth clients. Processing teaches kids how to understand, and learn from, their own patterns of problem-behaviors. It's a way to help kids brains mature in a way that leads to increased self-control and increased skills at regulating their own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

The second training pathway that will be followed this season is called the Unit Supervision Pathway. It focuses on techniques, tools, and perspectives for providing direct-care staff with individual supervision designed to promote their professional development, to increase their skills for managing the kids during their shifts, and to increase their skills at managing the traumatic stress that comes with working closely with troubled children and youth.

There are a couple general concepts that apply to both pathways. The first is understanding the distinction between providing Care and providing Treatment. Although these concepts overlap, I believe there's a lot of advantages to teasing apart these two core goals for any residential treatment program.

When I talk about providing Care, I'm talking about everything staff must do to meet all the different needs that kids have, simply because they are kids. They need housing, clothing, food, exercise, sleep, guidance, and to be kept physically and psychologically safe. They also need structures that support their learning how to better manage their own behaviors.

Unfortunately, most kids in residential treatment also have significant histories of failure, neglect, abuse, trauma, deprivation, mental illness and potentially very difficult family dynamics that result in challenges that most children and youth don't have to face, at least not to the same overwhelming degree. So, effective residential programs need to go beyond Care and provide Treatment. While there are typically staff that focus on providing treatment, there's an especially powerful role for residential staff in helping kids learn how to better manage all the daily stressors in their lives.

The second general concept I'm going to brief expand upon in this podcast episode is the distinction between Counseling and Therapy. As with the distinction between providing Care and providing Treatment, there's an overlap between providing Counseling and providing Therapy.

These are my own definitions, but in my mind, Counseling tends to focus on the present. In contrast, Therapy tends to look at connections between a person's past and their present. Counseling isn't interested in "why" a person is the way they are. Rather Counseling is interested in "how" a person functions. What feelings and thoughts trigger various behaviors? How does a person improve at regulating those feelings, thoughts, and behaviors? What are the mechanisms used for better self-control and how can that self-control be taught and learned?