KEYS TO MAKING AGGRESSION THERAPEUTIC

Aggression is a symptom of sympathetic nervous system activation when a child perceives a threat or challenge. It is a normal biological response.

1) Become the external regulator to help modulate the intensity. Children need to be able to borrow the therapist's regulatory capacity.

2) Any intervention must encourage children to become mindful of the thoughts, feelings, and sensations in their bodies.

3) Model to children how to stay connected to themselves in the midst of the intensity so that children can observe and learn alternative ways of working with intensity.

4) Be authentic and congruent to promote feelings of safety for children. If not, children will escalate the play.

5) Boundaries must be set when the aggression moves outside of the therapist's window of tolerance and when there is a genuine safety concern.

6) Create a neuroception of safety if emotional flooding occurs to help children get back into their window of tolerance.

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