

Lifts, Transfers and Handling Training

Prepared by Occupational Therapy Team

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Safe Lifts, Transfers & Handling

Audience:

- School staff who are involved in the supervision of students.

Purpose:

- To provide guidance prior to hands-on training of effective lift, transfer and handling techniques for specific students.
- To ensure the safety and dignity of students and staff when completing lifts, transfers and handling.

Training Outline

- guidelines for manual lifting and transfers;
- guidelines for operating a mechanical lift and completing safe transfers using a mechanical lift;
- guidelines for handling students within a developmentally appropriate educational plan.

Students often require special consideration in addition to these general guidelines.

Disclosure

- This presentation is introductory training. Additional support may be requested at any time through the EST.
- It is not meant to replace the direct assessment and hands-on training provided by an Occupational Therapist for specific students.
- All staff members involved in handling, lifting and transferring students must receive training by an Occupational Therapist on an annual basis (or if the situation changes considerably).

Transfer and Lifting Weight Guidelines

- A one person manual lift can be used when the student weighs less than 30 lbs.
- A two person manual lift can be used when the student weighs up to 50 lbs.
- A mechanical lift should be used if the student cannot weight bear, has unpredictable spasms and/or weighs over 50 lbs.

Lifts & Transfers Manual

Safe Handling

Typical handling of students

1. when students are very young, because it is developmentally appropriate;
2. when a student is hurt, injured or very upset;
3. when a student needs help with personal care, such as a parent / guardian would provide;

Healthy Boundaries for Typical Handling

- ensuring that the student is feeling safe, respected and non-violated;
- working towards increased independence in practical skills;
- working towards increased self-regulation;
- working within a public environment using appropriate and safe interactions;
- staying mindful about others' perceptions.

Beyond Typical Handling

- personal care needs persist past the normal developmental timelines;
- emotional development is delayed resulting in increased need for support compared to same-aged peers;
- students show behaviours that require adult help to prevent harm to self or others.

Beyond Typical Handling Principles

Establishing consent and teamwork:

- approach with compassion,
- come alongside the student,
- make soft eye contact,
- pause,
- explain what you are going to do,
- pause,
- and invite participation.

Routine and predictability creates security and trust.

Beyond Typical Handling Principles

Always plan ahead - be proactive rather than reactive!

- be aware of potential dangers (hope for the best, but plan for the worst);
- create safe environments (Sensory Rooms, mats, declutter, clothing, etc.);
- anticipate upsets in creating an education plan;
- read subtle cues; know your student; know yourself;
- establish ways to signal for help;
- consider Safety Plan.

Beyond Typical Handling Principles

Use least restrictive means as possible:

- consider personal space: womb space vs. arm's length vs. from a distance;
- stay within the appropriate space to ensure safety and attachment;
- consider barriers to create space such as a pillow, blanket, stuffy or exercise ball between adult and student;

Keep in mind all the typical guidelines, especially consent!

Beyond Typical Handling Principles

Think of the goal and work towards it:

- the goals will be set by the team (e.g.: attachment / self-regulation / skill development)
- use a growth mindset rather than fixed thinking.

Beyond Typical Handling Principles

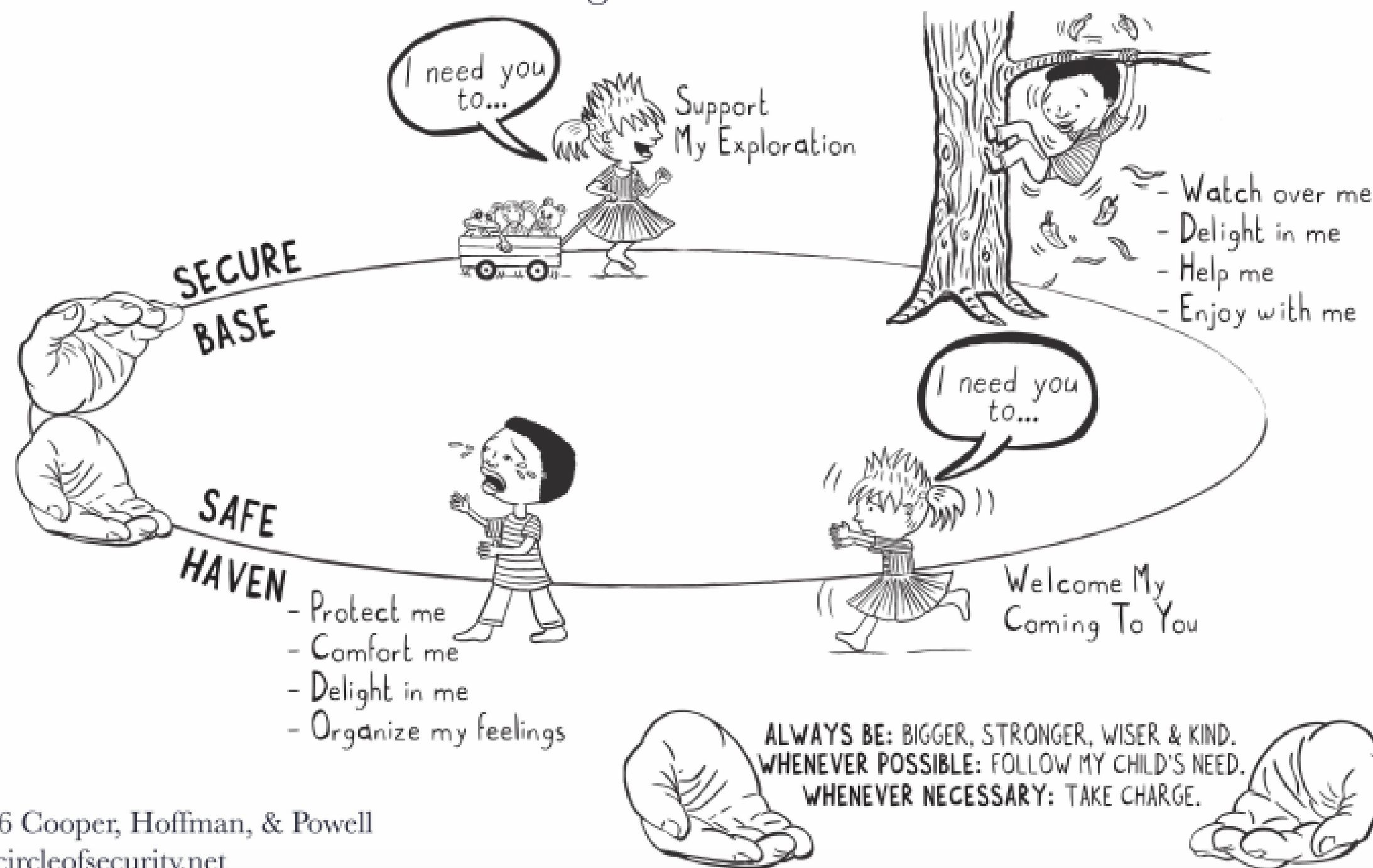
Consider self-care:

- be mindful of your own state and responses
- never get angry
- but if you are, handoff to another staff.

Keep in mind all the typical guidelines,
especially consent!

Circle of Security®

Parent Attending To The Child's Needs



Keep in mind...

- when a student is in flight - fright - fight - freeze, they are operating from their brainstem
- this is survival mode
- their responses will be based upon how they perceive our non-verbal cues (animal instinct)

The brain can protect or grow, but not do both at the same time.

Becoming a Herd Leader vs. a Predator

NON-VERBAL CUES	PREDATOR	HERD LEADER
eye contact	hard & direct	soft & empathetic
movement	goal-oriented; fast; straight lines;	coming alongside; slow; circular routes;
posture	looming; large; 3D;	same level; same size; 2D;
hands	clawed; fingers spread; hands outstretched;	flat; fingers & thumbs parallel; hands close to body;

Weight Considerations for Handling

When working with students who are independently mobile, it is preferable to stay within the Transfer and Lifting guidelines, however there are situations where exceptions can be made.

Lifting of a child:

- in a play scenario
- for comforting
- when rescuing from potential harm
- during a meltdown

And when there is no physical disability and when repetition is not anticipated to be a major factor.

Weight Considerations for Handling

- For students weighing more than 40 lbs, it is strongly recommended that OT consult is requested to establish safe alternatives to lifting, even in exceptional situations.
- Always work within your own personal physical ability. Exceptions should be within your capacity and comfort level.

Questions?