

School Counsellor Newsletter



Positive Conversations - Part One

Edition Four

At Breakfast with the Boys last Friday morning, John Quinn shared many helpful messages about building resilience in young people. One message was to be authentic, both in yourself as well as in your interaction with others. Active Constructive Responding (ACR) is one way in which you can be authentic with your son, as well as support him and help him to build his positivity and resilience.

How do you react to your son when he shares good news?

Imagine he has come home from school and told you that he has made it into the school production or a sports team, or has improved an aspect of his Effort Card? There are many ways in which you could respond to this news. An active and constructive way to respond would be to say, "That's amazing! I knew your hard work and practice would be recognised. Let's have a special afternoon tea. I'd love to hear more about how you achieved this."

Active Constructive Responding (ACR), developed by psychologist Shelly Gable, is a style of responding to good news in which the responder, by showing genuine interest, supports the person to relive and amplify their positive experience. ACR impacts individuals positively by both giving and receiving it. If you receive ACR you are likely to have increased satisfaction and trust, as well as increased daily happiness

and fewer conflicts. If you give ACR it will increase your positivity and life satisfaction. It will also allow your son to think about how he has been able to achieve what he has, and to know he has your genuine support. This will help him develop resilience when he faces challenges.

The image overleaf clearly outlines four different ways of responding, with Active Constructive Responding being the goal.

Here are three challenges for at home, as ACR requires practice!

1. As a parent, really challenge yourself to take your responses a step further.

For example, rather than just saying you are proud of your son, amplify their success by explaining why you are proud of them and giving them the chance to talk more about it. For example, if your son comes home and tells you he made the soccer team your response could be, "That's great news! You practiced so hard over the summer, and now it's paying off. I can't wait to see you play in your first game. Tell me more about it!"

2. Try a role play.

Take turns sharing some positive news and respond in the four different ways from the ACR image.

- Notice your responses/feelings to the different ways of responding

- Discuss how the Active Constructive Response was better.

3. Create a family goal of using more ACR responses.

To begin, try to make only active and constructive responses for one full day. Over time, it will become natural to respond actively and constructively to others' good news. By making these positive responses, you will make others feel good and you will feel good as well.

For more information about ACR, and as a reference for some of the above, please click [here](#).

The next newsletter will look at conversations with your son when the topic is not necessarily good news.



Jenelle Hooson

Jenelle is a Registered Provisional Member with NZAC (New Zealand Association of Counsellors).

If you wish to discuss the services the school counsellor can provide please see your son's homeroom teacher or Amos Pilgrim
amos.pilgrim@medbury.school.nz.



Active

Passive

Constructive

Enthusiastic support
Eye Contact
Authentic

Great news! I knew you'd do it. How do you feel?



Low Energy
Delayed Response
Quiet

Oh cool, that's nice...good for you.



Destructive

Quashing the event!
Dismissive
Demeaning

I don't believe you! It sounds stressful.



Turns focus inward
Avoiding
Ignore Speaker

Huh. Well, I just got a new video game.



Illustrated by GoStrengths.com