

# We help people with their mental health



**OUR PURPOSE IS TO HELP  
OUR CLUB MEMBERS STAY  
HEALTHY.**



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# 60 Seconds To Engage

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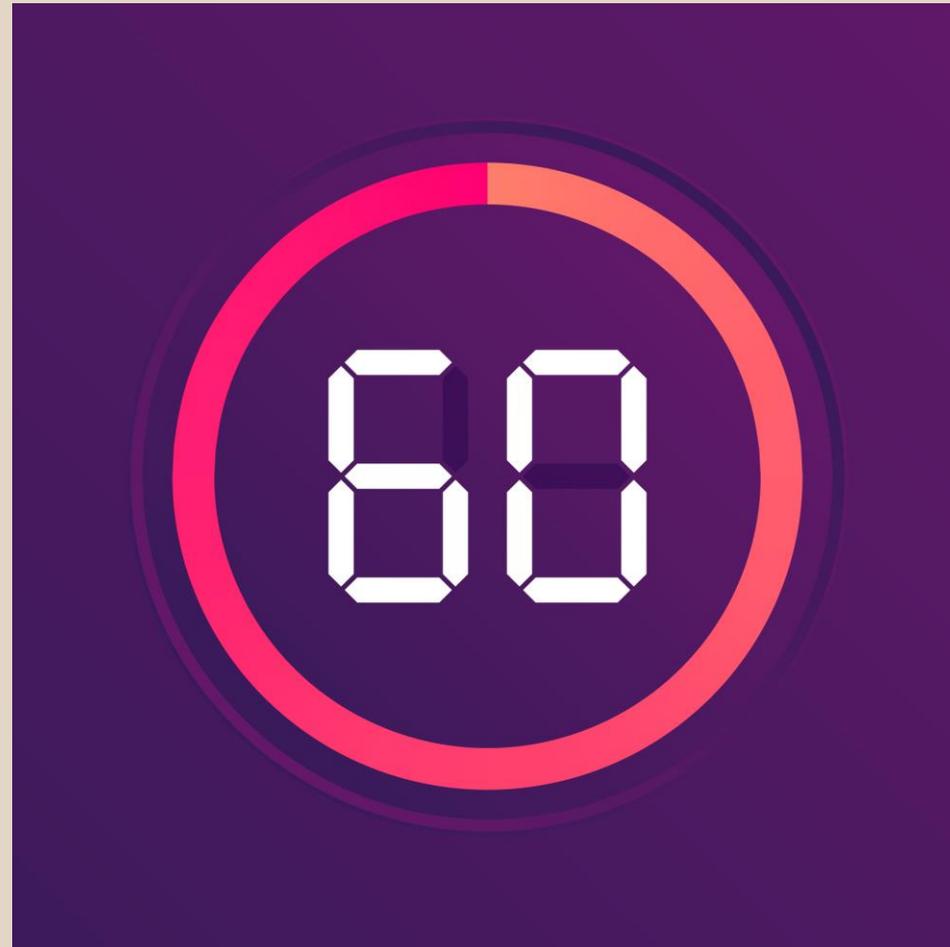
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# 60 Seconds to Engage

## The First 60 Seconds

For Parents and Professionals  
Who Want Engagement – Not  
Escalation.





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## Today we will....

- ✓ Why engagement is won or lost in the first minute
- ✓ What shuts down teens, young adults, and overwhelmed parents
- ✓ A simple framework you can use immediately
- ✓ The neuroscience of resistance and defensiveness
- ✓ Keys to extend connection beyond the first 60 seconds into long-term engagement

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## Have You Ever Had This Experience?



1. Shown our frustration, disappointment or anger
2. Set loved one on the defensive
3. Bombarded by half truths, and push back
4. Higher physiological arousal
5. Loss of parental dignity

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## Goals of the First 60 Seconds



In that first minute, your job is to:

1. Lower physiological arousal
2. Reduce shame
3. Preserve parental dignity
4. Create alliance
5. Narrow focus to one step

If you accomplish those five, engagement rises dramatically.



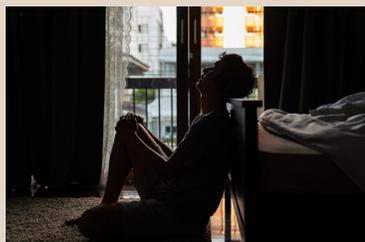
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## Engagement is Won or Lost because ....



- **1 The brain decides if it is safe or threatened.**  
When people feel judged or attacked, the brain shifts into **fight, flight, or shutdown**. In that state, listening and problem-solving drop dramatically.

- **2 Early reactions set the emotional tone for everything that follows.**  
A response filled with anger or blame escalates defensiveness.  
A response that shows calm and curiosity lowers resistance.



- **3 Shame closes the door to honesty.**  
If someone feels shamed or blamed in the first moments, they often hide, minimize, or withdraw instead of sharing what is really happening.

- **4 Connection creates the possibility of influence.**  
When a person feels heard and respected, they are far more likely to stay in the conversation and consider change.





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## Contained Next Step

- Crisis intervention models (Roberts 7-Stage Crisis Model) show that early stabilization requires:
  - Clear structure
  - regulate emotions first
  - Create connection
  - Then define action
- Avoid:
  - Long explanations
  - Treatment overviews
  - Statistics

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## **Key #1 - Name The Emotion**

I can see this is overwhelming

You may be feeling lost right now

I guess this can be pretty scary right now

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## **Key #2 - Affirm Their Care**

The fact that you are here says a lot about how much you care.

You have been trying hard to help.

You might not be here if you did not love your child.

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## **Key #3 - Reduce Blame**

This is more common than people realize.

You did not cause this.

These situations are complex.

There is no manual to raising your child.

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## Key #4 - Signal Partnership

We will work through this together

You do not have to figure this out alone

Let's slow down and look at possibilities

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## **Key #5 - Contain the Next Step**

Right now let's focus on one step.

We don't have to solve everything at once.

This is a process so let's just decide what happens next.

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## Example

“I can see this is overwhelming,  
The fact that you are here says a lot about how much you care,  
This is more common than people realize,  
You do not have to figure this out alone,  
This is a process so let’s just decide what happens next.”

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## 5 Keys To Engagement

1. Name the emotion
2. Affirm their care
3. Reduce blame
4. Signal partnership
5. Contain the next step



# Engagement is Like Opening A Door

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First 60 Seconds: Unlock the Door

Lower emotional threat  
Reduce Shame  
Create safety



# Keep The Door Open

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Next 12 Hours: Keep Door Open

- Stay Calm
- Avoid Interrogation
- Leave space to talk later



# Build Trust

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Next Days: Build Trust

- Listen, don't lecture
- One small step
- Consistency



# Influence Change

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Next Weeks: Influence Change

Consistent engagement

Clear boundaries

Reinforce healthy behavior

Support motivation to change



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## **The Science of Demoralization**

Most families don't fail because they don't care.  
They disengage because they lose hope.

After repeated fights

After broken promises

After failed treatment episodes

After feeling blamed

After feeling powerless.

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## The Typical Responses We See

- Withdrawal
- Defensiveness
- Anger
- Agreement without commitment
- Avoidance
- Shutting down



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## The Path Most People Try First

- Lecturing
- Threatening consequences
- Rescuing or over-helping
- Monitoring more closely
- Arguing to prove the point
- Withdrawing in frustration



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## What Has To Change To Increase Engagement

- Belief they can still influence something.
- Learning to respond without escalating.
- Recognizing what they can control - and what they cannot.
- Focus on relationship, not just the behavior.

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## What Research Shows About Engagement

- Families can change how they act ( CRAFT)
- Empathy replaces confrontation ( Motivational Interviewing)
- Safety reduces defensiveness ( Attachment research)
- Repeated experiences change patterns ( Neuroplasticity)

**Even after conflict, influence can return.**



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## There Is Another Way Forward

Engagement improves when families try:

- Regulating their own response first.
- Reduce shame instead of increasing pressure
- Use curiosity instead of accusation.
- Reinforcing small steps.
- Holding boundaries without losing connection.
- Staying engaged even when change is slow.

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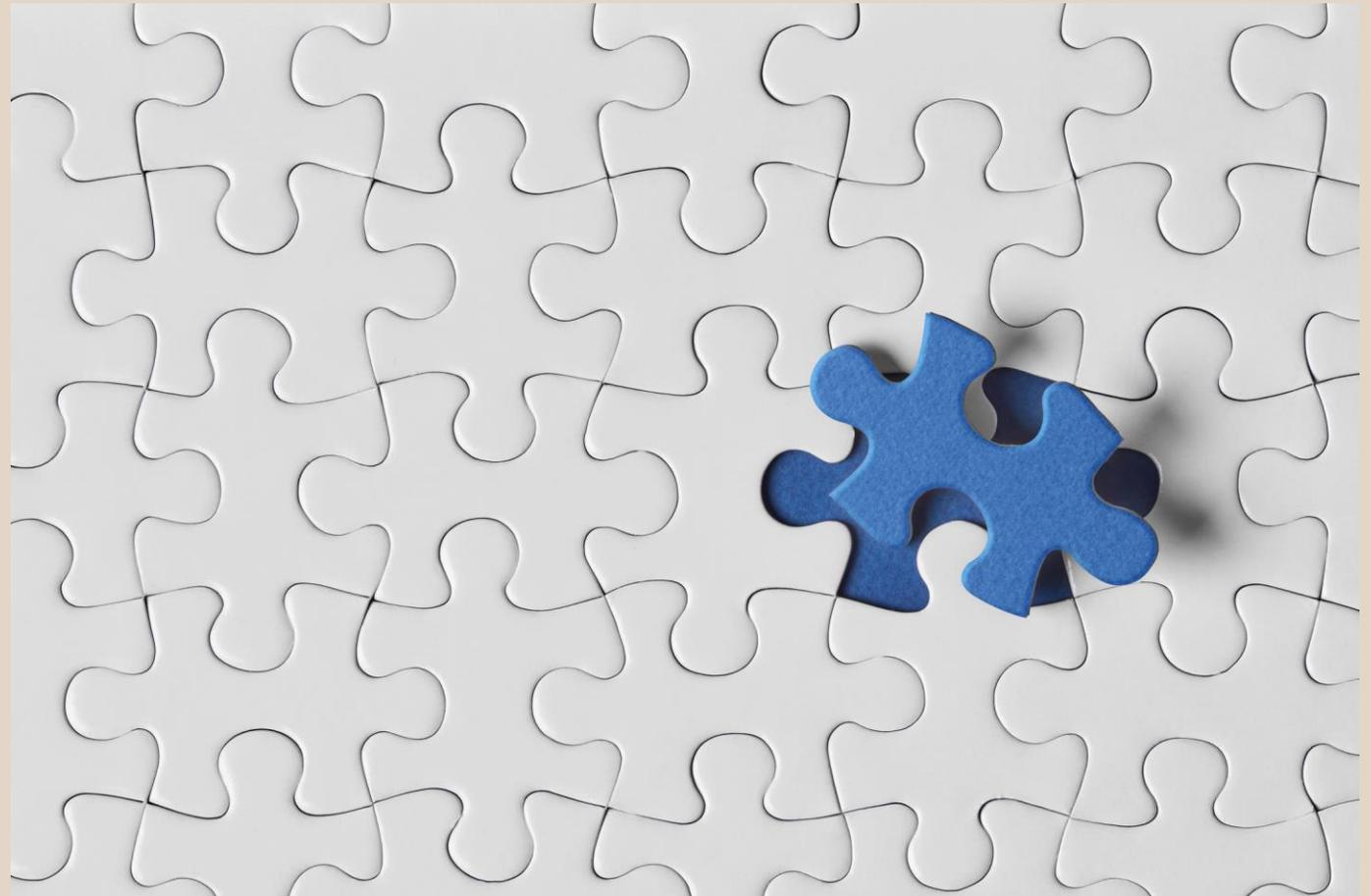
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## Small Shifts Can Change Patterns

Change often starts with one different response

- Calmer reaction
- Curious question
- Moment without escalation
- Clear boundary
- Supportive statement



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## The First 60 Seconds Is Where Change Begins

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Engagement is shaped in the first minute when:

- Perception of threat goes up or down
- Shame increases or decreases
- Relationships feel safer or more damaged
- Doors stays open – or closes



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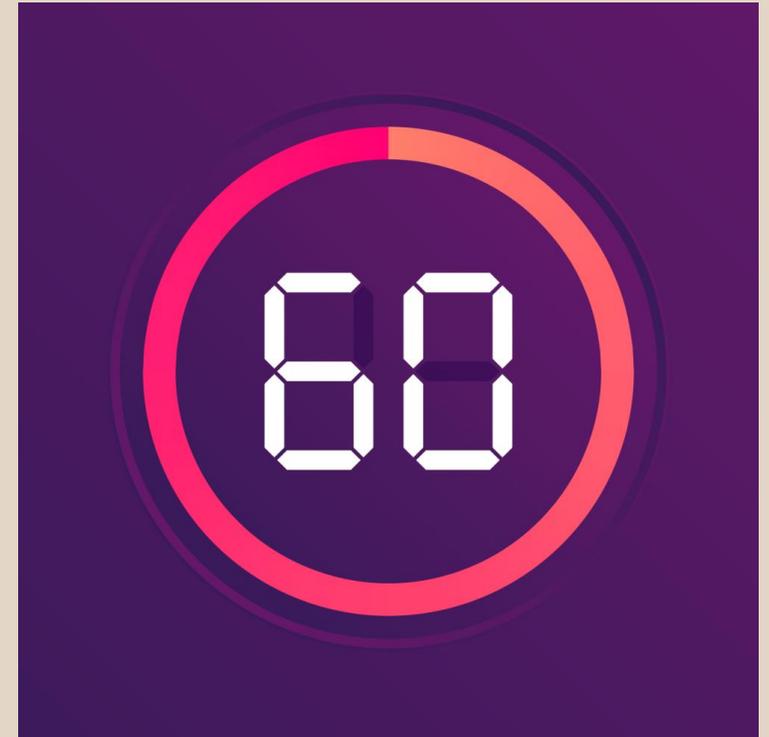
## Engagement Happens In Stages

First 60 seconds – **unlocks the door**

Next hours – **keep the door open**

Next days – **build trust**

Next weeks – **gain influence**





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## When Families Seek Help

In my work with parents, we focus on:

- Handling the first 60 seconds differently
- Staying engaged without escalating
- Reducing conflict without losing boundaries
- Rebuilding trust after damage
- Finding a path forward when things feel stuck

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