Humanity 101 on the Homefront: "Toxic" Parenting Behaviors
Attendees, please make sure your audio is muted and your video is turned off.
Meet Our Experts
Dr. Elisa Kawam, Lecturer, ASU School of Social Work

Elisa Kawam PhD has her bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in social work. Her main area of work has concerned children, youth, and families in the areas of poverty, violence, substance use, abuse and child welfare. Motivated by her experiences working in child welfare, she found a passion in parenting, motherhood, trauma and PTSD. She also has extensive experience in mezzo and macro aspects of social work including community organization, policy, advocacy, grant writing, teaching and research.
Chussette Oden is a seasoned professional who has vast experience in the mental health field. She has held various positions with multiple agencies in Arizona in social services and behavioral health for over twenty years. Currently, as Director of Training and Community Resources for Beia’s Place, she utilizes her extensive knowledge of local resources and deep understanding of the challenges faced by underrepresented populations. She is responsible for developing programs and curriculum, training staff, facilitating and coordinating placements, and providing education on navigating dual systems. All of her work is done with the efforts to achieve whole health and self-sufficiency for individuals and families.
Harold "HB" Branch Speaker, Trainer, Poet, Motivational Entrepreneur

Harold “HB” Branch is an Arizona State graduate and Fulbright fellow who has trained domestically and internationally for over twenty years, developing and facilitating for a variety of both youth and adult clients. Accolades include City of Phoenix Living the Dream Award, Universal Learning Centre’s Courage in Learning Award, and Estrella Mountain Community College’s Inaugural Distinguished Alumni Award. Harold, commonly known as HB, is also a globally recognized poet and writer who founded the legendary HomeBase Poetry, one of Arizona’s most prestigious literary venues. Passionate co-parent of two gifted children.
Neil Tift, M.A. Outreach Project Coordinator for the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association (NAFFA)

Neil Tift, M.A. is the Outreach Project Coordinator for the Native American Fatherhood and Families Association (NAFFA) in Mesa. Prior to this, he was the Father Involvement Program Director for the Child Crisis Arizona in Mesa.

Neil served as Director of Training for two national fatherhood organizations in Washington DC. For 35 years, Neil has served as adjunct instructor at seven colleges and universities in Minnesota and Arizona teaching ethics, child psychology, gender studies and human service administration.
This conversation...

is about:

- Recognizing parenting is hard
- “Toxic” parenting behaviors
- Identifying strengths and improvements

is NOT about:

- Making light of toxic parenting behaviors
- Labeling people “toxic”
- Shaming or blaming parents
Think & share

1. How may a parent cross their child’s boundaries?
2. What actions/words may cause a child to feel shamed, guilty, disrespected, unsupported, judged, pressured, inadequate, fearful on a regular basis?
3. How may a parent neglect a child’s emotional needs?
What do we mean by “toxic” parenting behaviors?

- Repetitious
- Long-term/ongoing
- Behaviors centered around manipulation, guilt, fear, abuse, unhealthy boundaries, belittling, neglect, etc.
- Not all “toxic” behavior is abuse, but all abuse is “toxic”
Panel Discussion
What is the impact on the child’s development and sense of self?
What is the impact of toxic parenting behaviors on other family members or the surrounding community?
What responsibility does the extended family, school, community, state have in situations of toxic parenting?
WHY?
How may a parent justify these behaviors? What are common explanations you have heard from parents?
How does this conversation vary across different cultures and classes?
MOVING FORWARD
What can parents do to be more mindful of their behaviors? How can we break the cycle of toxic parenting behaviors?
What community supports are necessary for this process?
What obstacles are present for accessing these supports?
Closing Remarks by Michelle Mace, Co-founder of Come Rain or Shine Foundation
Further Reading

Little Things Long Remembered
Making Your Children Feel Special Every Day
Susan Newman, PhD

Children Learn What They Live
Parenting to Inspire Values
Dorothy Law Nolte, PhD & Rachel Harris, PhD

OUR KIDS
The American Dream in Crisis
Robert D. Putnam
author of Bowling Alone