



## **“Bad” Behavior**

One’s definition of behavior guides the response to it. If you believe children who exhibit behavioral problems act that way because “they weren’t taught who’s boss” or “they’re just attention-seeking,” for example, you might miss some important ingredients to shape healthy behavior.

It is helpful to look at problem behavior as a lack of skills. Mental flexibility, adaptability and frustration tolerance are needed to avoid problem behavior. Teaching skills to identify feelings, communicate needs and recognize the impact of behavior on others, even for a young child, can help increase satisfaction and produce successful interactions. Older adolescents with more capacity may still need to be taught how to shift mental gears, regulate emotional states and avoid rigid black and white thinking.

We know that skills take time to learn and practice. There are usually no quick fixes. However through teaching skills, modeling and sharing experiences, we can improve our children’s ability to face life’s challenges.

**Ron Meier, LPA**

**Clinical Director**

**Palmer Residential**

**Psychiatric Treatment Center**

**To submit questions to our experts on  
behavioral health, please  
e-mail: [northstarinfo@uhsinc.com](mailto:northstarinfo@uhsinc.com)**

**For more information, please call our Intake Department  
258-7575 or toll free in Alaska, 800-478-7575**