



Collaborative & Proactive Solutions  
**THIS IS HOW PROBLEMS GET SOLVED**

# Overcoming School Alienation in Sweden's Most At-Risk Students

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## Experiences

- Principal
- Trainer in CPS
- Soccercoach
- Work as a CPS Trainer in Ekerö municipality



# SIX KEY THEMES

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- 1: Emphasis is on **school alienation problems** (and solving them) rather than on behaviors (and modifying them)...



# SIX KEY THEMES

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- 2: The school alienation problem solving is **collaborative** rather than unilateral ...something you're doing *with* the kid rather than *to* him



# SIX KEY THEMES

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- 3: The school alienation problem solving is **proactive** rather than emergent



# SIX KEY THEMES

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- 4: **Understanding** school alienation problems comes before helping



# SIX KEY THEMES

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- 5: "Kids goes to school if they can"



# SIX KEY THEMES

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- 6: Going to school is preferable



# Factors for school alienation

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- **Individual factors**

Absence due to troublesome absence.

Disabilities.

Anxiety, fear and depression.



# Factors for school alienation

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- **School factor**

School changes, graded return after leave,  
School climate and school affiliation.

Vomiting, harassment and bullying.

Physical school environment,  
Pedagogical factors.

# Factors for school alienation

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- **Social factors**

Family situation.

Norm-breaking behavior.

Comrades.

The residential area.



# School Factors Contributing to School Alienation

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- There is a connection between school climate and absenteeism.
- The quality of the relationships between teacher and student and between students, clear rules in the school and security are some aspects of the school climate.
- Feeling connected to the school, such as feeling accepted, included and valued, is also related to the school climate.
- Several studies show that a bad relationship between student and teacher can contribute to absence.

# School Factors Contributing to School Alienation

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- Frequent teacher changes, stress among teachers and large classes can contribute to the relationship not having a chance to develop positively.
- A student with great difficulty may need a clear and strong relationship to avoid the difficulties.
- Another aspect of the school climate is the degree to which students feel safe. Bullying is associated with absence. An insecure school environment with a risk of violence and threats contributes to absenteeism.



# Student Factors Contributing to School Alienation

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- The lessons are boring
- I have a hard time keeping up in school
- School makes me stressed
- I'm being treated badly
- I have no friends
- I feel different
- There is a lot of trouble at school
- Buildings and schoolyards make me feel bad
- I'm not listened to



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”Can you imagine waking up in the morning thinking about going to school and knowing that 40 or 50 expectations are going to be placed on you that you have difficulty meeting.

**If i was that kid i wouldn't go out of bed”**

And some don't....

Dr. Ross W Greene



Enjoy 😊

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# ASSESSMENT OF LAGGING SKILLS AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS (ALSUP)

CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

The ALSUP is intended for use as a **discussion guide** rather than as a freestanding check-list or rating scale. It should be used to identify specific lagging skills and unsolved problems that pertain to a particular child or adolescent.

## LAGGING SKILLS

This section will help you understand why the child is responding so maladaptively to problems and frustrations. Please note that these **lagging skills are not the primary focal point of intervention**. In other words, you won't be discussing the lagging skills with the student, nor will you be teaching most of the skills explicitly. The primary targets of intervention are the unsolved problems you'll be documenting in the next section.

<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty maintaining focus	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty seeing "grays"/concrete, literal, black & white, thinking
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty handling transitions, shifting from one mindset or task to another	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty taking into account situational factors that would suggest the need to adjust a plan of action
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty considering the likely outcomes or consequences of actions (impulsive)	<input type="checkbox"/> Inflexible, inaccurate interpretations/cognitive distortions or biases (e.g., "Everyone's out to get me," "Nobody likes me")
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty persisting on challenging or tedious tasks	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty attending to or accurately interpreting social cues/poor perception of social nuances
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty considering a range of solutions to a problem	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty shifting from original idea, plan, or solution
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty expressing concerns, needs, or thoughts in words	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty appreciating how his/her behavior is affecting others
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty managing emotional response to frustration so as to think rationally	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty starting conversations, entering groups, connecting with people/lacking other basic social skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Chronic irritability and/or anxiety significantly impede capacity for problem-solving or heighten frustration	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty empathizing with others, appreciating another person's perspective or point of view
<input type="checkbox"/> Sensory/motor difficulties	<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty handling unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, novelty

## UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

Unsolved problems are the specific expectations a child is having difficulty meeting. The wording of an unsolved problem will translate directly into the words that you'll be using when you introduce an unsolved problem to the child when it comes time to solve the problem together. Poorly worded unsolved problems often cause the problem-solving process to deteriorate before it even gets started. Please reference the ALSUP Guide for guidance on the four guidelines for writing unsolved problems.

### SCHOOL/FACILITY PROMPTS:

- Are there specific tasks/expectations the student is having difficulty completing or getting started on?
- Are there classmates this student is having difficulty getting along with in specific conditions?
- Are there tasks and activities this student is having difficulty moving from or to?
- Are there classes/activities the student is having difficulty attending/being on time to?

### HOME/CLINIC PROMPTS:

- Are there chores/tasks/activities the child is having difficulty completing or getting started on?
- Are there siblings/other children the child is having difficulty getting along with in specific conditions?
- Are there aspects of hygiene the child is having difficulty completing?
- Are there activities the child is having difficulty ending or tasks the child is having difficulty moving on to

# USING THE ALSUP

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## Guidelines for Wording Unsolved Problems

**A problem well stated is a problem half solved.”**

*-Charles Kettering*

The wording of the unsolved problem on the ALSUP is going to translate into the words that are used when the unsolved problem is introduced to the child when it comes time to solve it together.

# GUIDELINES FOR WRITING UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

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1. Free of concerning behaviors (*Most unsolved problems start with the word “Difficulty,” followed by a verb...*)
2. Free of adult theories (*no need to explain anything*)
3. Split, not clumped
  - *“Split early, maybe you can clump later...but if you clump early, you’ll never find out”*
4. As specific as possible
  - STRATEGY #1: Who, What, Where, When...NOT Why)
  - STRATEGY #2: What expectation is the child having difficulty meeting?



# Unsolved problems

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## School factors

- Difficulty using social media for staying in touch with Tim before school
- Difficulty going into the school building on Mondays
- Difficulty coming to the first English lesson on Mondays
- Difficulty staying at school after lunch on Mondays



# Unsolved problems

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## Social factors

Difficulty talking kindly to your parents

Difficulty turning down your computer 11 pm

Difficulty turning down your phone 11 pm

Difficulty sleeping 10.00 pm

Difficulty waking up 7.00 am

Difficulty eating breakfast before school

Difficulty taking the bus to school



# PLAN B

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## Solve the problem collaboratively

1. **Empathy Step**  
(gather information so as to identify child's concerns)
2. **Define Adult Concerns Step**  
(identify adult concerns)
3. **Invitation Step**  
(collaborate on a solution that is realistic and mutually satisfactory)

# PLAN B The Empathy Step

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## GOAL:

Gather information from the kid so as to understand their concern or perspective on a given unsolved problem...**especially, what's making it hard for them to meet the expectation.**

## INTRODUCTION:

The Empathy step begins with the words “**I've noticed that**” followed by an unsolved problem and an initial inquiry (“**What's up?**”)



# PLAN B The Empathy Step

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What happens after “What’s up?”

- The kid says something
- The kid says nothing or “I don’t know”
- The kid says, “I don’t have a problem with that” or “I don’t care”
- The kids says, “I don’t want to talk about it”
- The kid responds defensively (“I don’t have to talk to you!”)





# PLAN B The Define Adult Concerns Step

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## GOAL:

Enter the adult's concern or perspective into consideration (possibly beginning with “The thing is...” or “My concern is...”)

## WHAT'S HARD:

Adults frequently don't know what their *concerns* are...adult concerns are related to **why it's important that the expectation be met**

- Adult concerns typically fall into one of two categories:
  - How the problem is affecting the kid (e.g., health, safety, learning)
  - How the problem is affecting others (e.g., health, safety, learning)



# PLAN B The Invitation Step

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## GOAL:

Collaborate on a solution that is **realistic** and **mutually satisfactory**

## WHAT'S HARD:

### ▪The Wording:

- Should recap two concerns so as to summarize the problem to be solved (Starts with: **“I wonder if there’s a way…”**)  
Generically: “I wonder if there’s a way for us to do something about (one party’s concerns) and also do something about (the other party’s concerns)”
- The kid is given the first opportunity to generate solutions (**“Do you have any ideas?”**), but resolution of the problem is a team effort (collaborative)

# HOW ARE THE SKILLS ENHANCED?

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- Some skills can be trained explicitly (in the traditional sense)
  - some social skills
  - language processing/communication skills
- But skills are being enhanced in each of the three steps of Plan B

# Contact

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