

Moving From Power and Control to Collaboration and Problem Solving

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PARADIGM SHIFT

1. Emphasis is on **problems** (and solving them) rather than on behaviors (and modifying them)...
 - Concerning behavior (whether lucky or unlucky) is simply the **signal** by which a child **communicates** that they are having difficulty meeting certain **expectations**
 - Behaviors are not the only observable, objective, quantifiable data...unsolved problems are too
 - This will require different assessment practices

PARADIGM SHIFT

2. The problem solving is **collaborative**, not unilateral

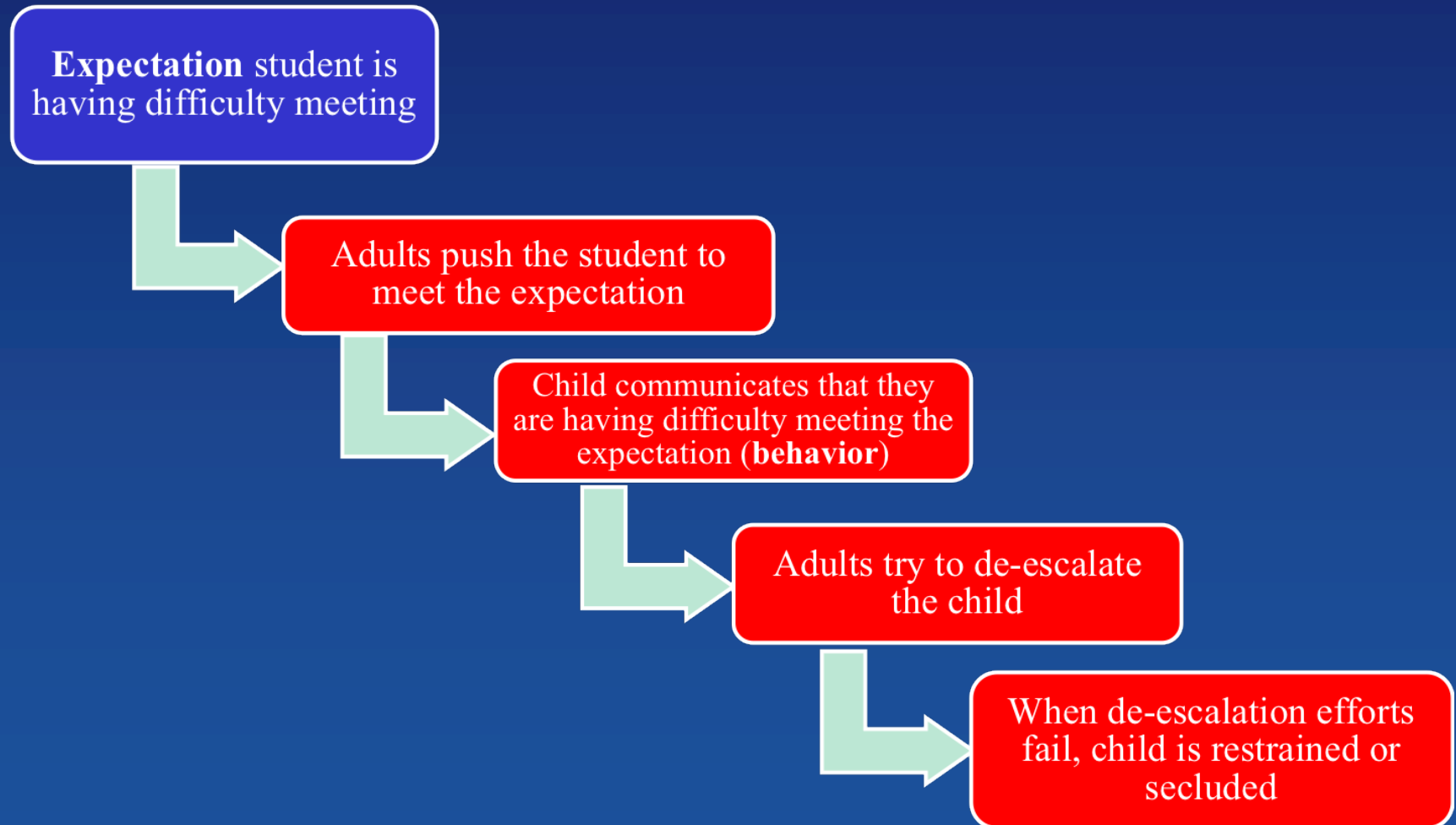
- Something you're doing *with* the kid rather than *to* them

PARADIGM SHIFT

3. The problem solving is **proactive**, not reactive

- Unsolved problems are highly predictable, if we answer two questions:
 - **Why** do some kids respond so poorly to problems and frustrations?
 - Answer: **Because they're lacking the skills to respond more adaptively**
 - **When** do kids exhibit concerning behaviors?
 - Answer: **When they're having difficulty meeting certain expectations**
- This is the information that's been missing

SEQUENCE OF RESTRAINT & SECLUSION



PARADIGM SHIFT

4. Kids do well if they can

- If the kid could do well, they would do well
 - Not True:
 - Attention-seeking
 - Manipulative
 - Coercive
 - Unmotivated
 - Limit-testing

5. Doing well is preferable

- Concerning behaviors are set in motion by lagging skills and unsolved problems...not by poor motivation

LIMITATIONS OF MODIFYING BEHAVIOR

- Rewards and punishments solve no problems and enhance no skills
- Rewards and punishments are distracting...they cause us to focus on signals rather than the problems that are causing those signals
- There is significant disproportionality in the ways in which rewards and punishments are administered
- There wouldn't be disproportionality if we weren't using punitive disciplinary procedures
- Better to be disproportional in solving problems than in administering detentions, suspensions, expulsions, paddling, restraint, and seclusion

KEY HELPER ROLES IN CPS

- Identify lagging skills and unsolved problems
 - Makes concerning behaviors highly predictable and intervention proactive rather than reactive...otherwise, you're in "perpetual survival mode" or "walking on eggshells"
 - Once lagging skills and unsolved problems are identified, there are very few surprises left
- Solve problems collaboratively and proactively
 - Promotes a problem-solving partnership
 - Engages kids in solving the problems that affect their lives
 - Produces more effective, durable solutions
 - Simultaneously enhances skills

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?

NEXT GOAL

Prioritizing

- You can't work on everything at once
- Focus on the “big fish” first
 - **SAFETY:** Unsolved problems contributing to unsafe behaviors
 - **FREQUENCY:** Unsolved problems contributing to concerning behaviors most often
 - **GRAVITY:** Unsolved problems having the greatest negative impact on the kid or others

THE PROBLEM SOLVING PLAN

PROBLEM SOLVING PLAN

Collaborative & Proactive Solutions
THIS IS HOW PROBLEMS GET SOLVED

CHILD'S NAME _____ DATE _____

UNSOLVED PROBLEM #1

Adult taking the lead on Plan B:

Kid concerns identified: (Empathy step)
DATE _____

Adult concerns identified: (Define the Problem step)
DATE _____

Solution agreed upon: (Invitation step)
DATE _____

Problem Solved?
YES? ☐ DATE _____
NO? ☐ COMMENT: _____

UNSOLVED PROBLEM #2

Adult taking the lead on Plan B:

Kid concerns identified: (Empathy step)
DATE _____

Adult concerns identified: (Define the Problem step)
DATE _____

Solution agreed upon: (Invitation step)
DATE _____

Problem Solved?
YES? ☐ DATE _____
NO? ☐ COMMENT: _____

UNSOLVED PROBLEM #3

Adult taking the lead on Plan B:

Kid concerns identified: (Empathy step)
DATE _____

Adult concerns identified: (Define the Problem step)
DATE _____

Solution agreed upon: (Invitation step)
DATE _____

Problem Solved?
YES? ☐ DATE _____
NO? ☐ COMMENT: _____

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OPTIONS FOR HANDLING UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

PLAN A:

Solve the problem unilaterally

PLAN B:

Solve the problem collaboratively

PLAN C:

Set the problem aside for now

PLAN B

Solve the problem collaboratively

1. Empathy Step

Gather information **from the child** about what's hard about meeting the expectation

2. Define Adult Concerns Step

Identify adult concerns

3. Invitation Step

Collaborate on a solution that is realistic and mutually satisfactory

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES



livesinthebalance.org

cpsconnection.com

thekidswelose.com

truecrisisprevention.org