SIX KEY THEMES

- Emphasis is on problems (and solving them) rather than on behaviors (and modifying them)...upstream (not downstream)
 - Behaviors are not the only observable data...unsolved problems are observable too

SIX KEY THEMES

- The problem solving is collaborative rather than unilateral...something you're doing with the kid rather than to him
- 3. The problem solving is **proactive** rather than emergent
 - This is possible if we answer two important questions: why and when is this kid challenging?
- 4. Understanding comes before helping

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SIX KEY THEMES

- Kids do well if they can
- If the kid could do well, he would do w
- 5. Doing well is preferable
 - We've been focused on motivation when we should have been focused on skills

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION WHY:

Challenging Kids are Lacking Skills

Challenging kids are challenging because they're lacking the skills not to be challenging...they are delayed in the development of crucial cognitive skills, such as flexibility/adaptability, frustration tolerance, and problemsolving.

- Challenging kids aren't always challenging
- They're challenging in conditions in which certain skills are being demanded
- It's a developmental delay

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ANSWER TO THE QUESTION WHY:

Challenging Kids are Lacking Skills

Challenging behavior *communicates* that the kid doesn't have the skills to meet certain demands and expectations...behavior is simply the signal...the fever...the byproduct.

WHAT SKILLS ARE BEHAVIORALLY CHALLENGING KIDS LACKING?

- ✓ Executive skills
- ✓ Language processing/communication skills
- ✓ Emotion regulation skills
- ✓ Cognitive flexibility skills
- 🗸 Social skills

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THE TOP 5

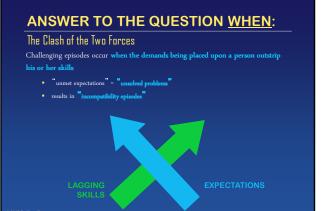
Skills That Foster the Better Side of Human Nature

Empathy

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- Appreciating how one's behavior is affecting others
- Resolving disagreements without conflict
- Taking another's perspective
- Honesty

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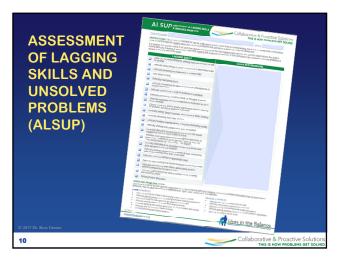
ADULT ROLES IN THE LIVES OF BEHAVIORALLY CHALLENGING KIDS

- Identify lagging skills and unsolved problems
- 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 teaches skills

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ASSESSMENT OF LAGGING SKILLS AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS (ALSUP)

- On the left side is a representative list of the skills frequently found lagging in challenging kids
- Unsolved problems are identified on the right side
- The ALSUP is meant to be used as a discussion guide...not simply a checklist or mechanism for quantifying
- The ALSUP helps caregivers focus on things they can actually do something about (if we
 only focus on things we can't do anything about, we are likely to come to the conclusion
 that we can't do anything to help)
- We want to avoid the "correlation equals causation error"

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USING THE ALSUP

- Participants receive a blank copy of the ALSUP
- The kid is not present in the meeting
- Start at the top...don't "cherry-pick" lagging skills
- After checking off a given lagging skill, identify the unsolved problems that spring to mind when thinking of that lagging skill
 - "Can you give me some examples of expectations Theresa is having difficulty meeting when you think of her having difficulty (repeat lagging skill)..."
- Come up with as many unsolved problems as possible for an endorsed lagging
 skill

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USING THE ALSUP

Guidelines for Identifying Unsolved Problems

A problem well stated is a problem half solved

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. The wording should be kid-friendly and...

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USING THE ALSUP

Guidelines for Identifying Unsolved Problems

- Free of challenging behaviors (Difficulty...)
- Free of adult theories (no need to explain anything)
- Split, not clumped
 - "Split early, maybe you can clump later...but if you clump early, you'll never find out"
- As specific as possible
 - STRATEGY #1: Who, What, Where/When...NOT why)
 - STRATEGY #2: What expectation is the child having difficulty meeting?

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USING THE ALSUP

A Few More Guidelines

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- Don't go down the entire list of lagging skills and then go back to identify unsolved problems
- Don't identify unsolved problems first and then go back to decide which lagging skills apply to that unsolved problem
- No need to establish which lagging skill best explains a particular unsolved problem...just assume multiple lagging skills can contribute to the same unsolved problem
- No need to write the same unsolved problem more than of
- You're not looking for "hundred percenters"
- Very important to consider whether the kid is actually capable of meeting a given expectation

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USING THE ALSUP

Expect lightbulbs to go on when...

- Caregivers come to recognize that a kid is, indeed, lacking many skills
- Caregivers come to recognize why prior interventions have been ineffective
- Caregivers begin to regret the manner in which they've been interacting with a kid based on incorrect assumptions
- Caregivers become aware that unsolved problems occur under highly specific conditions
- Caregivers recognize that unsolved problems are predictable and therefore be solved proactively
- Caregivers begin pondering how they 're going to create mechanisms for changing practices given what they now know about a kid' s difficulties

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MORE UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

Ask the Kid

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- "What are people getting on your case about?"
- "What are you getting in trouble for?"

NEXT GOAL

Prioritizing

- You can't work on everything at once
- Focus on the "big fish" first
 - SAFETY: Those unsolved problems contributing to unsafe behavior
 - FREQUENCY: Those unsolved problems contributing to incompatibility episodes most often
 - GRAVITY: Those unsolved problems having the greatest negative impact on the kid or others

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THE PROBLEM SOLVING PLAN SOLVING PLAN (Plan B Flowchart)

Lives in the Balance

Collaborat

KEEPING TRACK

The Problem Solving Plan (Plan B Flowchart)

- Specify high-priority unsolved problems
- Designate person primarily responsible for solving the problem with the child
- Follow the remaining sequence to solve the problem
- Add new unsolved problems as old ones are solved

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OPTIONS FOR HANDLING UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

PLAN A:

Solve the problem unilaterally $% \label{eq:solve} \begin{tabular}{ll} \end{tabular} \end{tabular} \end{tabular} \end{tabular} \end{tabular} \begin{tabular}{ll} \end{tabular} \end{tabular} \end{tabular} \end{tabular} \begin{tabular}{ll} \end{tabular} \e$

PLAN B:

Solve the problem collaboratively

PLAN C: Set the problem aside for now

PLAN A

Solve the problem unilaterally

- The adult decides what the solution is and imposes it, often accompanied by adult-imposed consequences
- I've decided that...
- PLAN A causes incompatibility episodes in challenging kids
- PLAN A is not a partnershi
- PLAN A does not involve kids in solving the problems that affect their lives
- PLAN A provides no information whatsoever about the factors making it difficult for the kid to meet a given expectations...solutions arrived at through Plan A are "uninformed"

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TIMING IS EVERYTHING

INCOMPATIBILITY EPISODES ARE HIGHLY PREDICTABLE

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CRISIS MANAGEMENT: Intervention is reactive and occurs emergently, in the heat of the moment ("What should I do *whent*")

CRISIS PREVENTION: Intervention is planned and occurs proactively, well before highly predictable incompatibility episodes occur again ("What am I going to do *before*?") PLAN C

Set the problem aside for now

- Not about giving in or capitulating... it's about prioritizing
- EMERGENCY C: "OK"
- PROACTIVE C:

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- don't bring it up
- an agreed-upon interim plan for tabling the problem for now

Good parenting and good teaching mean being responsive to the hand you've been dealt

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PLAN B

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Solve the problem collaboratively

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

PLAN B

The Empathy Step

GOAL:

Gather information from the kid so as to achieve the clearest possible understanding of his concern or perspective on a given unsolved problem

INTRODUCTION:

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

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PLAN B

The Empathy Step

What happens after "What's up?"

The kid says something

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- 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!")

Reflective list

PLAN B

Asking about the who, what, where/when of the unsolved problem

The Empathy Step: The Kid Says Something

- Asking about why the problem occurs under some conditions and not other
- Asking the kid what s/he's thinking in the midst of the unsolved problem
- Breaking the problem down into its componen
- Discrepant Observation
- Tabling (and asking for more concerns)
- Summarizing (and asking for more concerns

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PLAN B

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The Empathy Step: The Kid Says Something (cont.)

PLAN B

The Empathy Step: I Don't Know/Silence

Don't freak
 Keep drilling

- You used Plan A You used Emergency Plan B instead of Proactive Plan B

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PLAN B

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The Empathy Step: Other Responses to "What's Up?"

- "I don't have a problem with that" or "I don't care"
- that is the beginning of his concern or perspective...start drilling!
 the kid almost certainly has a problem with all the conflict surrounding the unsolved problem
- next give him permission to talk
 see if he'll talk about why he doesn't want to talk about it
 Don't do anything today that will reduce the likelihood of the kid talking to you tomorrow
- he may need reassurance that you' re not using Plan A

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PLAN B

The Define Adult Concerns Step

Enter the adult's concern or perspective into consideration (possibly beginning with "The thing is..."

Adult concerns typically fall into one of two categories:

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PLAN B

The Invitation Step

GOAL

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Collaborate on a solution that is realistic and mutually satisfactor

WHAT'S HARE

The Wording:

- Should recap two concerns so as to summarize the problem to be solved (Starts with: "1 wonder if there's a way...")
- The kid is given the first opportunity to generate solutions ("Do you have any idens?"), but resolution of the problem is a team effort (collaborative)

PLAN B

The Invitation Step (cont.)

- Goal is to demonstrate to the kid that you're as invested in getting his concern addressed as you are in getting your own concern addressed
- · You don't know where the plane is landing before it takes off (no preordained solutions
- If there are multiple concerns that cannot be addressed by the same solution, you'll need multiple solutions (and more than one Plan B)
- Before agreeing on a solution, give deliberate consideration to whether the solution is realistic and mutually satisfactory...if not, refine the original solution or think of alternatives
- Goal is to come up with a solution so the problem doesn't come up again...not to come up with a solution for what to do
 in the heat of the moment when the problem recurs (don't use the word "when" in the Invitation)
- Battling over solutions define a power struggle (a win/lose proposition)...solving problems collaboratively is a win/win
 proposition

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YOU' RE READY!

ADDITIONAL POINTERS

- The Invitation ends with an agreement to return to Plan B if the first solution doesn't stand the test of time
- Solving problems tends to be incremental...the first solution seldom solves the problem durably...most problems require more than one discussion

Solutions that don't stand the test of time:

- weren't as realistic as first thought
- weren't as mutually satisfactory as though
- didn't address all the concerns (those that hadn't yet been identified or prioritized)

HOW ARE THE SKILLS TRAINED?

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

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IMPLEMENTATION IN SCHOOLS AND FACILITIES (Start Small)

- Helping those who are having trouble

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IS PLAN B RELEVANT FOR KIDS WITH VERY LIMITED COMMUNICATION SKILLS?

- Reference point is infants

Important Questions:

- The relationship between problems and solutionsBasic concepts of problems and concerns
- How can we help the child communicate more easily (pictures) about the basic components of problem-solving (problems, concerns, solutions)?

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FINAL QUESTIONS

- them?
- Are the ways in which we're going about parenting, teaching, disciplining, and interacting with our kids teaching the skills that foster the display of the

