

Perspectives on Demand Avoidance: Is it PDA, or something else?

*A two-day virtual conference hosted by POPARD,
in collaboration with ACT*

Session 2:

Collaborative & Proactive Solutions: Moving from Power and Control to Collaboration and Problem -Solving

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Presented by

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Collaborative & Proactive Solutions
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Moving From Power and Control to Collaboration and Problem Solving

Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.



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PARADIGM SHIFT/KEY THEME

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

- Concerning behavior is simply the **signal** by which a child **communicates** that they are having difficulty meeting certain **expectations** (not unmet needs)
 - Concerning behaviors can be "lucky" or "unlucky"
- Behaviors are not the only observable, objective, quantifiable data...unsolved problems are too
- This will require different assessment practices

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PARADIGM SHIFT/KEY THEME

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

- Something you're doing *with* the kid rather than *to* them
- Even if the kid can talk but won't or won't talk because they can't
- Kid is still "accountable" (a lot more so than if they are passive recipients of our imposed solutions and consequences)
- T-I-M-E?

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PARADIGM SHIFT/KEY THEME

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

- These kids are 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 (e.g., flexibility/adaptability, frustration tolerance, problem solving, emotion regulation)*
 - **When** do kids exhibit concerning behavior?
 - Answer: *When they're having difficulty meeting certain expectations*
- Once unsolved problems are identified, intervention can be largely proactive

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SEQUENCE OF RESTRAINT & SECLUSION

```

    graph TD
      A[Expectation student is having difficulty meeting] --> B[Adults push the student to meet the expectation]
      B --> C[Child communicates that they are having difficulty meeting the expectation (behavior)]
      C --> D[Adults try to de-escalate the child]
      D --> E[When de-escalation efforts fail, child is restrained or secluded]
  
```

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THE (non-exhaustive) LIST OF LATE

- Take a break
- Calming corner
- Coping strategies
 - especially the ones teaching kids how to cope once they're already frustrated
- De-escalating
- Restraint and seclusion
- Discipline referral
- Detention, suspension, expulsion, paddling

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PARADIGM SHIFTS/KEY THEMES

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

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WHAT SKILLS?

Flexibility/adaptability
Frustration tolerance
Problem solving
Emotion regulation

These are the global skills that help us respond to problems and frustrations adaptively

Many skills can be taught through direct instruction, but these may not be among them

But these skills are enhanced by engaging kids in the process of solving problems collaboratively

Unsolved problems are the targets of intervention in the CPS model...not lagging skills

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KEY HELPER ROLES IN CPS

- Identify lagging skills and unsolved problems
 - Helps make intervention proactive rather than reactive...otherwise, you're in "perpetual survival mode" or "walking on eggshells"
 - Lagging Skills: Help adults view kids through more compassionate, accurate, productive lenses
 - Unsolved Problems: Help us focus on the problems that are causing concerning behaviors rather than on the behaviors (behavior data can be informative, but only tells us that a child is having difficulty, not what they're having difficulty with)
- 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

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ASSESSMENT OF LAGGING SKILLS AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS (ALSUP)

ALSUP 2020
Assessment of Lagging Skills & Unsolved Problems (ALSUP)

LAGGING SKILLS

Difficulty understanding basic	Difficulty writing their thoughts down using simple writing
Difficulty working memory (forgetting from one minute)	Difficulty having an accurate recollection of events or activities
Difficulty completing the daily activities or responsibilities in a timely manner	Difficulty recognizing or recognizing emotions or feelings
Difficulty completing or finishing tasks	Difficulty recognizing or recognizing needs
Difficulty completing a range of activities in a problem	Difficulty starting conversations, entering groups
Difficulty managing negative emotions or feelings	Difficulty recognizing or recognizing emotions
Difficulty managing negative emotions or feelings	Difficulty recognizing or recognizing needs
Difficulty recognizing or recognizing needs	Difficulty recognizing or recognizing emotions
Difficulty recognizing or recognizing emotions	Difficulty recognizing or recognizing needs

UNRESOLVED PROBLEM

Identify the problem and the specific expectations it is having difficulty meeting. The marking of an unsolved problem will be made during this step and will be used as a starting point for developing a remediation plan. If the child is unable to solve the problem on their own, then the problem-solving process is determined before a team plan is developed. Please reference the ALSUP 2020 in parentheses after the four questions for every unsolved problem.

REMEDIATION PROMPTS

Are there specific expectations that the student is having difficulty completing or getting started on?
 Are there tasks and activities that the student is having difficulty moving from on to?
 Are there consequences for not meeting these expectations?
 Are you thinking about the start of the day for the end, are there any other expectations the student has difficulty meeting or that you thought frequently reminded the student about?

REMEDIATION PROMPTS

Are there specific expectations that the child is having difficulty completing or getting started on?
 Are there tasks and activities that the child is having difficulty moving from on to?
 Are there consequences for not meeting these expectations?
 Are you thinking about the start of the day for the end, are there any other expectations the child has difficulty meeting or that you thought frequently reminded the student about?

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NEXT GOAL

Prioritizing

- You can't work on everything at once
- High priorities:
 - 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

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THE PROBLEM SOLVING PLAN

PROBLEM SOLVING PLAN

CHILD'S NAME _____ DATE _____

UNRESOLVED PROBLEM #1 | **UNRESOLVED PROBLEM #2** | **UNRESOLVED PROBLEM #3**

ADULT using the best on Plan B | **ADULT using the best on Plan B** | **ADULT using the best on Plan B**

KID completes identified (Priority) goal | **KID completes identified (Priority) goal** | **KID completes identified (Priority) goal**

ADULT completes identified (Priority) goal | **ADULT completes identified (Priority) goal** | **ADULT completes identified (Priority) goal**

SOLUTION agreed upon (Interim) | **SOLUTION agreed upon (Interim)** | **SOLUTION agreed upon (Interim)**

SOLUTION implemented (Interim) | **SOLUTION implemented (Interim)** | **SOLUTION implemented (Interim)**

Problem solved? | **Problem Setup** | **Problem Recreated?**

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OPTIONS FOR HANDLING UNSOLVED PROBLEMS

PLAN A:
Solve the problem unilaterally

PLAN B:
Solve the problem collaboratively

PLAN C:
Put the expectation on hold for now

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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 concerning behaviors
- PLAN A is not a partnership
- 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 expectation...solutions arrived at through Plan A are "uninformed"

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PLAN C

Put the expectation on hold for now

Not about giving in or giving up...it's about prioritizing (and stabilizing) – **expectation management** rather than behavior management

- PROACTIVE C:
 - don't bring it up
 - an agreed-upon interim plan for putting the expectation on hold for now
- EMERGENCY C: "OK"

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

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PLAN B

Solve the problem collaboratively

- Empathy Step**
Gather information from the **child** about what's hard about meeting the expectation
- Define Adult Concerns Step**
Identify **adult** concerns
- Invitation Step**
Collaborate on a **solution** that is realistic and mutually satisfactory

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PLAN B The Empathy Step

GOAL:
Gather information from kids 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?")

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PLAN B The Empathy Step

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 right now"
- The kid responds defensively ("I don't have to talk to you!")

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PLAN B The Empathy Step

The Kid Says Something

DRILLING STRATEGIES:

1. Reflective listening and clarifying statements
2. Asking about the **who, what, where, when** of the unsolved problem
3. Asking about the **situational variability** of the unsolved problems
4. Asking kids what they are **thinking** in the midst of the unsolved problem
5. Breaking the problem down into its **component parts**
6. **Discrepant Observation**
7. **Tabling** (and asking for more concerns)
8. **Summarizing** (and asking for more concerns)

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PLAN B The Empathy Step

I Don't Know/Silence

WHAT TO DO:

- Don't freak ("I don't know" and silence are typical)
- Keep drilling

FIGURE OUT WHY:

Adult Factors

- You used Plan A
- You used Emergency Plan B instead of Proactive Plan B
- The unsolved problem wasn't worded according to the guidelines

Child Factors

- The kid doesn't trust you and/or the process yet (they have a lot of experience with Plan A)
- The kid really doesn't know
- The kid has lost faith and doesn't see the point in talking anymore
 - Strategy: "Was it always so?"
- The kid needs time to think (adults better get comfortable with silence)
- The kid is having difficulty putting their thoughts into words
 - Strategy: Educated guessing/hypothesis testing

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PLAN B The Define Adult Concerns Step

GOAL:
Enter the adult's concern or perspective into consideration in a way that doesn't cause the child to feel that their concerns are being dismissed or disregarded (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:**

How is the unsolved problem affecting the kid?
How is the unsolved problem affecting other people? (e.g., health, safety, learning, fairness)

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PLAN B The Invitation Step

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...")
Generally: "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)

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PLAN B The Invitation Step

- Goal is to demonstrate to kids that you're as invested in getting their concerns addressed as you are in getting your own concerns 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, prioritize which concerns are going to be addressed in this Plan B and which may be addressed in a subsequent Plan B
- Before agreeing on a solution, give conscious, deliberate consideration to whether the solution is realistic and mutually satisfactory...if not, refine the original solution or think of alternatives (one solution at a time...no brainstorming)
- Goal is to solve the problem so it doesn't arise again...not to come up with a solution for what the kid should 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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advocator
(noun) a person who pleads for a cause or propounds an idea.

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**ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION/RESOURCES**



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