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Collaborative and Proactive Solutions: Successfully Treating Oppositional Behavior in Children

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Recommended Citation

manheim, moshe R., "Collaborative and Proactive Solutions: Successfully Treating Oppositional Behavior in Children" (2015). *Georgia Association for Positive Behavior Support Conference*. 36.
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An Introduction to **COLLABORATIVE PROACTIVE SOLUTIONS**

FROM THE EXPLOSIVE CHILD BY ROSS GREENE PH.D.

www.LivesInTheBalance.com

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The difference
between cooking
and baking.

CPS History

- ▶ Ross Greene Ph.D. Virginia Tech 1989 Faculty appointments at Virginia Tech and Harvard The Explosive Child and Lost at School
- ▶ Collaborative Problem Solving - Collaborative Proactive Solutions
The Explosive Child first edition 1998, now in its 5th edition
- ▶ www.Livesinthebalance.com includes resources, research/publications, information for parents, professionals and educators.
- ▶ Five-year NIMH-funded outpatient study of the model at the Va. Tech Child Study Center published Spring 2015 proving it's efficacy.

Step 1 of 4 With Parents

CPS Background

Child Behavior Basics

Why do children behave badly?

Why Do Children Behave Badly?

- ▶ Neurobiological Causality for Children's Behavior
 - ▶ ADHD
 - ▶ Anxiety
 - ▶ Depression
 - ▶ Bi-Polar (?)
- ▶ Treatment: Medications

Why Do Children Behave Badly?

- ▶ Traditional Assumptions About Child Behavior: Maladaptive or challenging behavior works due to “functionality” (consequence) of behavior (eg) escape or reinforcement.
- ▶ Traditional Solution: Set in place consequences to teach the child that maladaptive behavior will not work.
 - ▶ “If - Then”
 - ▶ Reward and Punishment

Why Do Children Behave Badly?: PMT, The “Traditional” Method (what to do)

- ▶ Parent Management Training (PMT) by Russell Barkley PhD training parents In:
 - ▶ Establishing effective contingencies
 - ▶ Using clear and direct commands
 - ▶ Differential attention (reinforcing target behaviors)
 - ▶ Contingent reinforcement
 - ▶ Response cost
 - ▶ Time Out

Why Do Children Behave Badly?: The “Traditional” Method, Type 2

- ▶ Psychodynamic
 - ▶ Interpretation of motivation of behaviors.

Why Do Children Behave Badly? (Greene's model)

- ▶ Alternative to Traditional View of Child Behavior:
- ▶ Behavioral Problems Due to: Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems
 - ▶ Behavioral challenges: when the child's skills are surpassed by the stress of the environment/situation.
 - ▶ Alternative Solution: Teach the parents how to help the child proactively collaborate to find a solution that is acceptable to both.

Why Do Children Behave Badly? (Greene's Model)

- ▶ Children behave badly due to delays in development of crucial cognitive skills:
 - ▶ Flexibility and adaptability
 - ▶ Frustration tolerance
 - ▶ Problem solving
- ▶ The goal of CPS is to increase the child's skills deficits collaboratively

Why Do Children Behave Badly? (what to do)

▶ Collaborative Proactive Solutions, (CPS)

Ross Greene PhD posits that we:

- ▶ Define the problem in non-behavioral, non-theoretical, non-"why," theory free format.
- ▶ Use of Empathy to align with and learn the child's point of view
- ▶ Review of child's and parent's concerns
- ▶ Invite to collaborate
- ▶ Brain storming to find a collaborative solution, review as needed.

**KIDS DO WELL IF
THEY CAN**

You're making it difficult
for me to be the parent I
always imagined I would
be.



Collaborative vs Behavioral Methods: Comparing Pros and Cons

▶ CPS Pros:

- ▶ Engages and maintains child in the process
- ▶ Eliminates the “power struggle” against which challenging kids push
- ▶ Empirically based

▶ CPS Cons:

- ▶ Initially time intensive
- ▶ Resistance from parents/teachers (takes time and struggle with loss of control)

▶ Behavioral Pros:

- ▶ Quick Initial Effect
- ▶ Empirically based (particularly Applied Behavior Analysis - ABA)
- ▶ Establishes/maintains traditional structure of parental control

▶ Behavioral Cons:

- ▶ Based on adult theories and beliefs that ignore the child’s experience
- ▶ Stimulate oppositional behaviors
- ▶ Power based -
 - ▶ Can alienate children
 - ▶ Over entitle adults

Collaborative vs Behavioral

comparing pros and cons of each method

▶ CPS Over Time:

- ▶ Engages
- ▶ Communication based
- ▶ Collaborative

▶ Behavioral Approaches Over Time

- ▶ May increase Alienation
- ▶ Increases Severity/Frequency of Consequences
- ▶ Ongoing Negative Messages to the Child

Collaborative Proactive Solutions Focus

- ▶ Focus on problem solving, not behavior modification
- ▶ Focus: “When” “Where”
 - ▶ not “Why” kids behave the way they do or “what” they do.

Step 2 of 4 With Parents

Lagging Skills and Unsolved
Problems

CPS In Practice

- ▶ Assessment of Lagging Skills and Unsolved Problems.
- ▶ ALSUP
 - ▶ Springboard for discussion with parents, then with the child
 - ▶ What are parent expectations of the child?
 - ▶ Define specific, not “clumped” problems
 - ▶ Learning how to “unclump” problems takes a bit of time, but helps lead to specific solutions.
 - ▶ “Not hitting your sister” is not a lagging skill.
 - ▶ “Not hitting your sister” is not an unsolved problem.

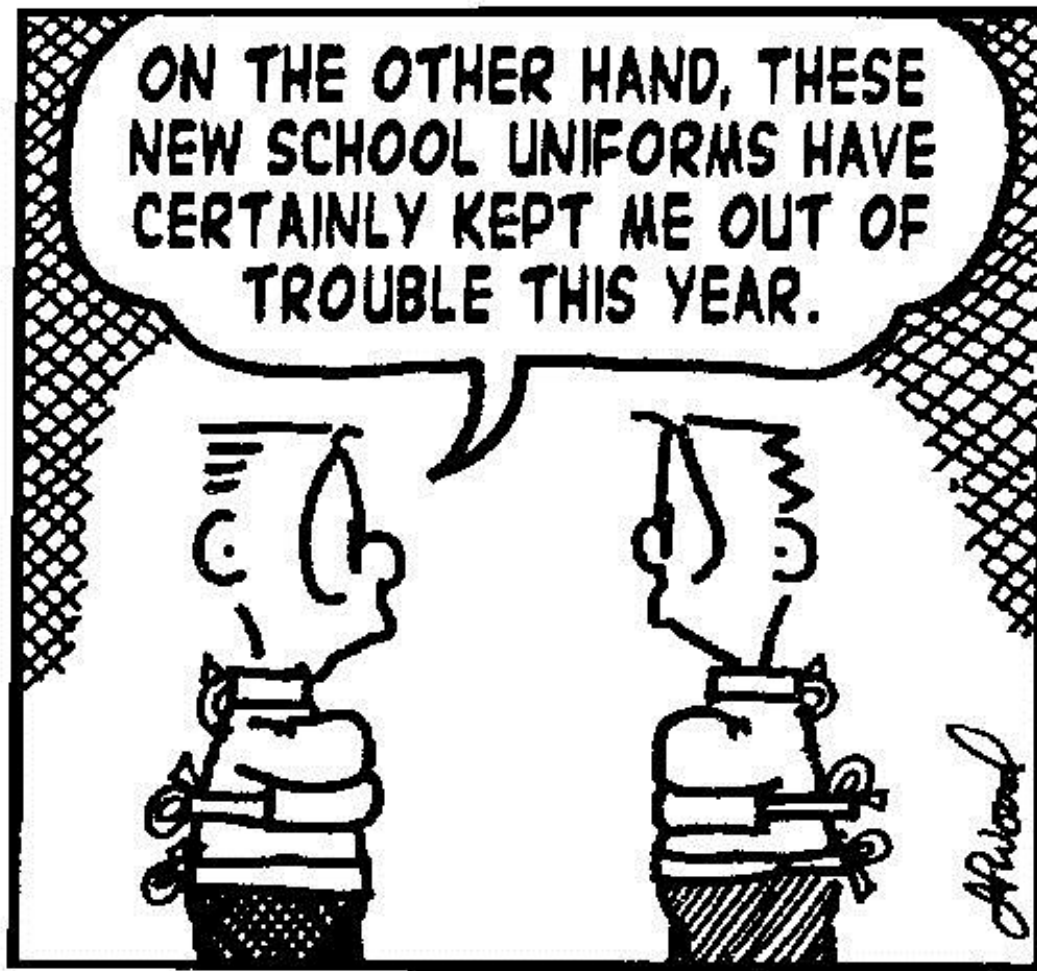
CPS In Practice

- ▶ Prioritizing ALSUP questions
- ▶ Understanding Plan A, B and C.
 - ▶ A: “I’ve decided”
 - ▶ C: from the ALSUP
 - ▶ B: Where we start with CPS
- ▶ “What’s up” with “what’s up?” -how to formulate neutral questions
- ▶ Having patience with “I don’t know” and restating the problem softly, patiently.



CPS Implementation

- Plan A: “I’ve decided that....”



Plan B: Specifics

- ▶ 1. Empathy
 - ▶ Present the “difficulty” (problem)
 - ▶ The challenge of waiting.
 - ▶ Focus on empathizing with the child’s definition of the problem. (“active listening”)
 - ▶ “What else?” - ensuring the child has completed or refined his/her definition of the problem
 - ▶ Review of child’s concerns

Plan B: Specifics

- ▶ 2. Define Adult's Concerns
 - ▶ Not a review of the behaviors
- ▶ 3. Invitation: Brainstorming and selecting realistic and mutually satisfying solutions
 - ▶ Have the child begin the brainstorming process.

CPS Implementation

▶ Plan B:

▶ Collaborative

- ▶ Not parent/teacher/therapist driven- but collaboratively with the child's input

- ▶ Not “theory” based

▶ Proactive

- ▶ Before, not during crises. CPS is NOT a model for crises intervention.

CPS Benefits

- ▶ Ability to return to “Empathy Step” as often as necessary - no escalation of consequences.
- ▶ Keeps kids engaged.
- ▶ Less likely to result in “I Give Up” responses from adults.

Step 3 of 4 With Parents

Modeling the Method

CPS in Practice

▶ James

- ▶ HFA with Depression r/o Psychosis
- ▶ 1st session “Sounds like you’ve been having difficulty talking with mom and dad after school, what’s up?”
 - ▶ “I don’t know” monosyllabic or grunting responses.
 - ▶ After 1/2 hour of restating initial question and milking his minimal responses with the “Empathy Step” he exclaimed “Finally, Someone is listening!”

CPS in Practice

▶ Ilene

- ▶ RAD, ADHD, Depression
- ▶ Aggressive verbally and physically to mom in dad's absence
- ▶ Non-compliant with assistive technology in school; with chores and homework at home
- ▶ Currently: grades up, rare aggression, compliant with homework and chores, using assistive technology reliably

CPS in Practice

▶ Abraham

- ▶ 8 y/o with ADHD, well managed by meds, but with very difficult bedtimes
- ▶ 2 consultations with parents 6 months ago, parents and Abe continue to collaborate on bedtime challenges successfully.

CPS in Practice

▶ John

- ▶ ADHD, RAD, sibs all severely abused sexually and physically by different adults in biological home, adopted at 6 with sister now in residential treatment
- ▶ Mom read The Explosive Child after sister went to treatment, and said CPS was working great with John -no need for f/u

CPS in Practice

- ▶ Clay: 14 y/o with ADHD and ODD. Mom learned method quickly and well. Significant reduction in tantrums at home. Successful collaboration over transition from video games; sibling aggression and rudeness to parents.
- ▶ Mom thanks me for “reminding her” that she and Clay could speak when they renewed CPS method 8 months later.

Step 4 of 4 With Parents

Coaching the Parents
Programming for Independence

Coaching for Independence

- ▶ Coaching in
 - ▶ Understanding role of ALSUP
 - ▶ Formulating questions by focusing on unsolved problems and not:
 - ▶ Focusing on behavior
 - ▶ Creating an obvious “solution” with the question
 - ▶ Using “Why” and “theory” questions

Coaching for Independence

- ▶ Coaching in
 - ▶ Empathy Step
 - ▶ Drilling “Cheat Sheet”
 - ▶ Clarifying the child’s concerns
 - ▶ Clarifying parents’ concerns

Coaching for Independence

- ▶ Coaching in
 - ▶ Invitation to collaborate
 - ▶ Problem solving so that everyone gets what they want
 - ▶ Commitment to review and return as needed to re-clarify problem and continue collaborating

The background features abstract geometric shapes in various shades of orange and brown, primarily concentrated on the right side of the frame. These shapes include triangles and polygons of different sizes and orientations, creating a layered, architectural feel. The colors range from a light, warm orange to a deep, dark brown. The overall composition is clean and modern, with the text 'Questions?' centered on the left side of the image.

Questions?

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