Collaborative & Proactive Solutions
THIS IS HOW PROBLEMS GET SOLVED

Moving From Power and Control to Collaboration and Problem Solving

Ross W. Greene, Ph.D.
livesinthebalance.org

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WEBSITES I’LL BE MENTIONING

- livesinthebalance.org
- cpsconnection.com
- mainepublic.org/post/kids-we-lose
- truecrisisprevention.org (coming soon)
BIG PROBLEMS

- More kids with social, emotional, and behavioral challenges than ever
  - More kids in classrooms who are unavailable or only intermittently available for learning
  - More kids responding to social, emotional, and behavioral challenges in ways that are aggressive and violent
- Teachers under greater duress
  - High stakes testing
  - Zero tolerance policies
When the expectations being placed upon an individual outstrip their skills, behavior occurs (fight, flight, or freeze).
BIG PROBLEMS REQUIRE BIG SHIFTS

1. Emphasis is on problems (and solving them) rather than on behaviors (and modifying them)…
   - Challenging behavior is simply the signal by which a child communicates that he/she is having difficulty meeting certain expectations
     - “I’m stuck…there are expectations I’m having difficulty meeting”
   - Behaviors are not the only observable, objective, quantifiable data…unsolved problems are too
   - This will require different assessment practices
BIG PROBLEMS REQUIRE BIG SHIFTS

2. The problem solving is *collaborative*, not unilateral
   - Something you’re doing *with* the kid rather than to him
BIG PROBLEMS REQUIRE BIG SHIFTS

3. The problem solving is proactive, not reactive

- Unsolved problems are highly predictable, but only after we answer two questions:
  - **Why** are challenging kids challenging?
    - Answer: *Because they’re lacking the skills to not be challenging*
  - **When** are challenging kids challenging?
    - Answer: *When expectations outstrip skills*

- Once lagging skills and unsolved problems are identified, there are very few surprises left (an unsolved problem is a surprise only the first time it happens)
ASSESSMENT OF LAGGING SKILLS AND UNSOLVED PROBLEMS (ALSUP)
CYCLE OF RESTRAINT AND SECLUSION

**Expectation** student is having difficulty meeting

Adults push the student to meet the expectation

Child communicates that he/she is having difficulty meeting the expectation (**behavior**)

Adults try to de-escalate the child

When de-escalation efforts fail, child is restrained or secluded

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BIG PROBLEMS REQUIRE BIG SHIFTS

4. Kids do well if they can
   ▪ If the kid could do well, he would do well
     ▪ Not True:
       ▪ Attention-seeking
       ▪ Manipulative
       ▪ Coercive
       ▪ Unmotivated
       ▪ Limit-testing
ADULT ROLES IN THE LIVES OF BEHAVIORALLY CHALLENGING KIDS

- Identify lagging skills and unsolved problems
  - Lagging skills are for lenses
  - Makes incompatibility episodes highly predictable and intervention proactive rather than reactive...otherwise, you’re in perpetual survival mode

- 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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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 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)
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/RESOURCES

livesinthebalance.org
cpsconnection.com
thekidswelose.com