FROM
CONFLICT
TO
COLLABORATION

AGC Institute
2015
Who Are You?
Crucial Conversations
Getting to Yes
Getting Past NO
Common Sense
Is it that OBVIOUS?

Doing vs Doing Well
Individual vs the System…
Not a match made in heaven!
Special Education Parents and Public Schools: A Dysfunctional Relationship

- The lawsuit focus that has come to dominate the process makes trust and collaboration difficult.
- The outcome is largely dependent on who the players are on both sides (family and school personnel) in a given situation.
- There are some situations where the best course of action is for the family to have an advocate but...
- Often the best scenarios occur when both parties step out of the box and do the right thing for the child while staying within limits of the system.
- This often happens in spite of the system not because of the system.
Public School and Special Needs: *Not* a Match Made in Heaven

- Parents expect school to prepare children to meet their expectations
- Parents often overwhelmed by and unprepared for the IEP/ARD process
- Parents often feel they must take an adversarial approach
- School systems have limited resources
- Schools are expected to provide individualized education to children with widely varying disorders and manifestations
- Schools legally must operate under highly regulated parameters
Public School and Special Needs: Not a Match Made in Heaven

- Reality: collaboration is needed for skills to generalize across environments
- Parents assume school staff have expertise and training
- Parents often have unrealistic expectations
- Disconnect between what school administrators value as outcomes and student outcomes
- Lack of trained staff, high staff turnover and lawsuits
- Policy makers: Lack of understanding about what is important
Public School and Special Needs: Not a Match Made in Heaven

• Large system with many layers - decisions and adjustments often not made quickly
• Disconnect between resource decision makers and real-world classroom and individual student needs
• System has limited flexibility for accommodating our kids, especially in the regular education environment
• Understanding of individual disabilities/unique needs often incomplete
• Expertise and experience often lacking, especially in support staff
• High staff turn-over makes consistency challenging
• Staff to student ratios not geared toward disorders requiring 1:1 for skill acquisition
• When dealing with problem behavior, knowledge on how not to reinforce
The best scenarios occur when both parties step out of the box and do the right thing, while staying within limits of the system....

This often happens in spite of the system not because of the system.
Scapegoat

A Good Scapegoat Is Nearly As Welcome As A Solution To The Problem
Picture

- Picture of a goat
- Text reads Scapegoat- a good scapegoat is nearly as welcome as a good solution to the problem
Everybody take your finger & point it at me....
• Two men standing pointing finger blaming one another
Are You Above or Below the Line?

Ownership
Accountable
Responsible

Blame
Excuses
Denial
REQUIRES A PARADIGM SHIFT:
From seeing others as a part of the problem to seeing them as a part of the solution.
# 1

Own It

KEEP CALM AND OWN IT
Picture

- Keep calm and own it
# 2

- How you make others *feel*.

"People will forget what you say, they will forget what you do, but they will never forget how you made them feel."
Carl Beuchner

www.engage4results.com
People will forget what you say, they will forget what you do, but they will never forget how you make them feel
# 3

• Be a Master Perspective Taker
#4

Communication Skills
Are you a Reinforce or a Punisher?
LISTEN
Ask Questions
Crafting a Message
Pool of Information
Saving Face
Build a relationship
#5

- PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION
POSITIONAL BARGAINING VS PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION

Don’t bargain over positions.
Cooperate to solve the problem.
Picture

• 2 men playing tug o war
4 ELEMENTS OF PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION

1. People: Separate the people from the problem
2. Interests: Focus on interests, not positions
3. Options: Generate a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do.
4. Criteria: Insist on objective standards of measurement
PEOPLE: SEPARATE THE PEOPLE FROM THE PROBLEM

- Emotions
- Perceptions
- Communication
Emotions
Several emoticons with varying emotions
Perceptions
• Man driving car fast and recklessly
PERSPECTIVE TAKING

Group activity
What do parents want?
How might a parent feel in a meeting?
Exercise

• Take your “opponent’s” perspective
PEOPLE:
SEPARATE THE PEOPLE FROM THE PROBLEM

Face the problem not the person
Partnership for Problem-Solving

*Listen first to understand, then speak to be understood*

Paradigm Shift to Joint Problem Solving!!!
INTERESTS: FOCUS ON INTERESTS, NOT POSITIONS

• Listening for Interests (over positions)
• Ask Questions
• Reflective Listening
Person Centered Planning
THE IMPORTANCE OF SHARED GOALS

• MAPS/PATHS/Etc
• Convergence of Parent/teacher concerns
OPTIONS:
GENERATE A VARIETY OF POSSIBILITIES BEFORE DECIDING WHAT TO DO.

Ineffective

• Premature Judgement
• Searching for a Single Answer
• Fixed Pie
• Thinking solving the problem is the problem

Effective

• Broaden Options:
  – Separate creativity and judgement
• Search for Mutual Gains:
  – Stand in their shoes
  – Shared interests are opportunities
• Make the decision easy
CRITERIA:
INSIST ON OBJECTIVE STANDARDS OF MEASUREMENT
Picture

• Tape measure
4 ELEMENTS OF PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION

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WHEN THINGS ARE BROKEN
• Band-Aid
• Text reads “The relationship repair kit”
TAKE A SELFIE

- What bias’ do you and your team have?
- Are there things you legitimately should be doing differently?
Picture

• Man holding Selfie stick taking a selfie
KEEP CALM AND OWN IT
Picture

• Keep calm and own it
GO TO THE BALCONY

• Take a deep breath
• Suspend your reaction. Regain Balance
• Re-visit your interests
STEP TO THEIR SIDE

- Help them regain their balance.
- Give the other side a hearing: paraphrase and ask for correction
- Acknowledge their points, their feelings
- Agree whenever you can without conceding, accumulate "yeses" for yourself and the other party
- Acknowledge the person: their authority and competence to build a working relationship
- Express your views without provoking
- Don't use "but" statements, use "yes…and" statements
- Make "I" statements not "you" statements - stand for yourself
- Acknowledge differences with optimism
DON’T REJECT: REFRAME

• Don’t attack a position, look behind it- I want ALL the IEEs
• Reframe an attack
• Tell me more
• Help me understand
BUILD A BRIDGE

- Build Momentum
- Incorporate their ideas
- Saving Face
- Third Party
- Reframe based on their interests
- Make them the Victor
EDUCATE: DON’T ESCALATE

Pre-meet & Table Topics
Don’t get sucked in
Know the BATNA- but don’t threaten it.
“For the sake of the kids, for the sake of the family, for the sake of the community, for the sake of the future, let's stop fighting for a moment and start talking.”

-William Ury
Thank you!

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