

What Challenging Behavior Communicates
□How Pediatricians Can Facilitate Helpful Conversations with Caregivers

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Six Key Themes

1. 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

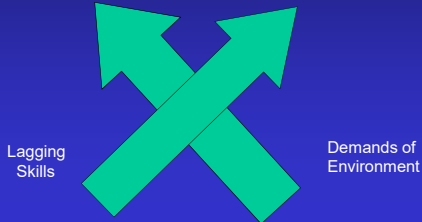
Six Key Themes

2. 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?

**Visual Depiction of When:
The Clash of the Two Forces**

Challenging episodes occur when the demands being placed upon a person outstrip his or her skills

- best conceived as "unmet expectations" or "unsolved problems"
- results in "incompatibility episodes"



Six Key Themes

4. Understanding comes before helping
5. Kids do well if they can
 - If the kid could do well, he would do well
6. Doing well is preferable
 - We've been focused on motivation when we should have been focuses on skills

What Skills Are Behaviorally Challenging Kids Lacking?

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

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 (but indirectly) teaches skills

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

Timing is Everything

INCOMPATIBILITY EPISODES ARE HIGHLY PREDICTABLE

Crisis Management: Intervention is reactive and occurs emergently, in the heat of the moment (“What should I do when?”)

Crisis Prevention: Intervention is planned and occurs proactively, well before highly predictable incompatibility episodes occur again (“What should I do before?”)

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)

How are the Skills Trained?

Mostly Indirectly

- Some skills can be trained explicitly
 - some social skills
 - language processing/communication skills
- There really isn't a technology for explicitly teaching most of the lagging skills on the ALSUP...but skills are being taught in each of the three steps of Plan B

Facilitating the Conversation with Caregivers

- Emphasize skills rather than motivation
- Emphasize *when* (unmet expectations)
 - *De-emphasize behavior/diagnoses*
- Emphasize proactive intervention
- Emphasize non-punitive, non-adversarial, skill-building, collaborative interventions
- Send them to the [Lives in the Balance](#) website

Additional Information/Resources

www.livesinthebalance.org

Walking tours/Web-based radio programs/
Kids Advocacy Action Network/
Research/Paperwork/Facebook groups

www.cpsconnection.com

Advanced and certification trainings
