



Realistic Ways to Build Collaboration in IEP Meetings

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Purpose & Outcomes

- The purpose of this webinar is to review collaborative problem solving strategies advocates can use to build collaboration in IEP meetings.
- Participants will learn effective communication skills and a four-step process to build collaboration with all team members.



Conflict is...

When you hear the word "conflict",
you immediately think...
and feel...

Conflict is...



...what happens when people disagree

...a perceived divergence of interests



...an opportunity for positive change

Detour

Conflict Management Styles

Avoider



Accommodator



Competitor



Compromiser



Collaborator



Conflict Management Styles

High Importance

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Low Importance

Goals

High Importance



Collaboration

Use when the goal and outcome are important enough to you to spend time and energy resolving the problem.

You must want to maintain a relationship with the other person.
You must be willing to be honest and build trust.
You are willing to move away from



"I know what occurred." "I know who is right."
"I know who is to blame." "I know what should happen."

To...

"I don't know for sure what occurred." "I don't know who is right."
"I don't know who is to blame." "I'm not sure what should happen next."

You are willing to *watch, listen, learn* and *take responsibility* for your own actions and contribution to the problem.

The Truth About Collaboration

- ✓ It's hard work
- ✓ Takes a lot of time
- ✓ Requires at least one person to have good communication skills
- ✓ You can't fake it
- ✓ Requires patience and persistence
- ✓ You can't make others do it or change their behavior



The ACBD'S of Collaborative Problem Solving

Air All Viewpoints

Clarify the Joint Problem

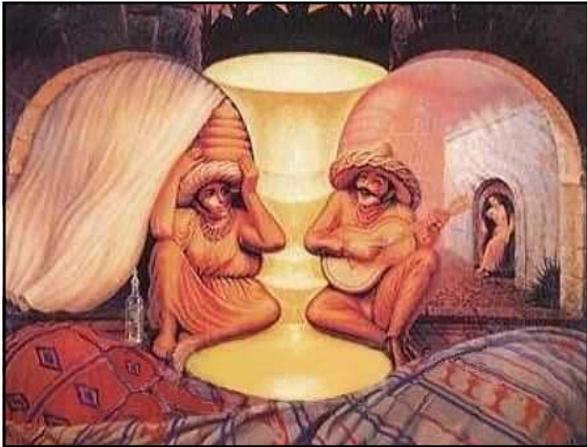
Brainstorm Solutions

Develop an Agreement



Clarify the Problem





Creating a Joint Problem

moving beyond *positions* (wants)
to *interests* (needs).

POSITION:

- Your position is something you have decided upon. It is what you say you want. It represents one possible solution-- one that satisfies you.

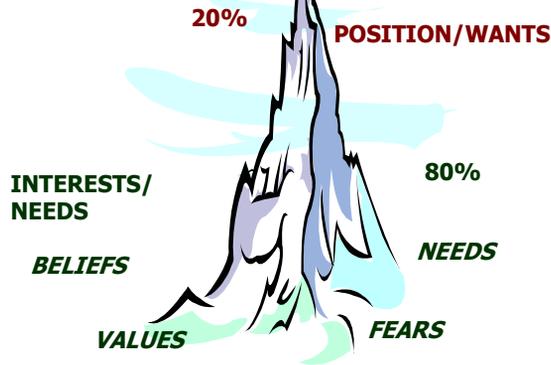
INTERESTS:

- Your interests are what caused you to decide on your position. It is what motivates you. It represents your values and your *underlying needs*.

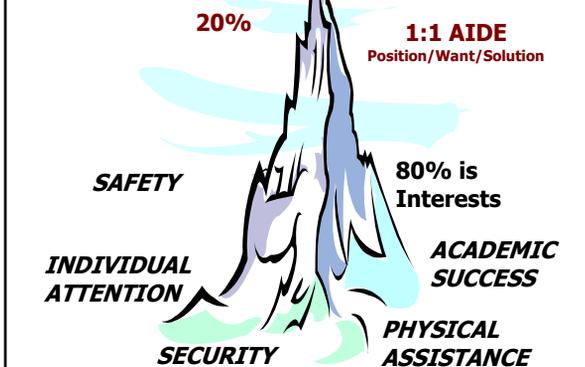
Reframe all Interests into a Joint Problem

1. Restate the problem in terms of all parties *interests*, not positions.
2. Pose a problem statement so that:
 - everyone agrees on the problem to be solved;
 - the problem becomes a joint concern; and
 - action can be taken by all parties.

Positions Vs. Interests



Positions Vs. Interests



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Air All Viewpoints

1. Actively Listen to Others
2. Use Assertive Speaking



What is Communication?

Communication occurs when a listener hears and understands a speaker's essential thoughts and feelings.

Often, conflicts continue because of poor communication between people.



Active Listening

- a way to find-out if you correctly understand the other person's *point of view* AND *keep them talking*.

Active Listening Guidelines:

1. Listen *attentively* without interrupting.



2. Try to understand:

- how the other person feels;
- what they want; and
- why they want it.



3. Tell the other person what you heard.

Active Listening

Also involves...

Tone of voice

Facial expressions

Body language



Active Listening Techniques

Encouraging

- To show interest
- To encourage the other person to keep talking

To do this: don't agree or disagree, use neutral words, use varying voice intonations and ask them to tell you more

Example: "Can you say more about the details of this new program?"

Active Listening Techniques

Clarifying

- To help clarify what is said
- To get more information

To do this: ask questions, restate your interpretation to get the speaker to explain further

Example: "Are you recommending that all therapy services be dropped from Joe's IEP?"

Active Listening Techniques

Restating

- To show you are listening and understanding what is being said
- To check your meaning and interpretation

To do this: restate basic ideas and facts in the speaker's words

Example: "So you are saying that this district can not provide a regular education classroom setting with fewer than 30 students per class?"

Active Listening Techniques

Reflecting

- To show that you understand how the person feels
- To help the other person evaluate his or how own feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else

To do this: reflect the speaker's basic feelings

Example: "You seem very frustrated with my son's behavior."

Active Listening Techniques

Summarizing

- To review progress
- To pull together important ideas and facts
- To establish a basis for further discussion

To do this: restate major ideas expressed including feelings

Example: "Basically you are frustrated with my son's behavior and you would like him moved to another classroom with a teacher more qualified to meet his needs."

Active Listening Techniques

Validating

- To acknowledge the worthiness of the other person

To do this: acknowledge the value of their issues and feelings and show appreciation for their efforts and actions

Example: "I appreciate your willingness to resolve this matter."

Communication Pitfalls

WHEN YOU ARE LISTENING, YOU DON'T...

Interrupt

Offer advice

Look bored, disinterested or disbelieving

Ridicule

Criticize

Distract

Bring up your own experience

Judge

Console



Listening Comprehension

Focus on the message and BLOCK OUT factors that compete for your attention.

- Your own ideas/thoughts/wants/etc.
- Biases and Assumptions
- Attitude
- Trigger words that push your buttons/emotions
- Others?...



Acknowledging What You Hear A Teacher says to an Advocate...

"I'm really glad that you showed up for this meeting because we've had a lot of "not-so-productive meetings" with Mom. I hope that you'll be able to convince her that it is in Susie's best interest to be classified as special-ed. in order for Susie to get the help she needs."

The active listening process

- IMAGINE: How does the listener/advocate feel?
What would the listener/advocate like to say?
- THINK: What *feelings* has the teacher conveyed?
- THINK: What *facts* has the teacher communicated?
- SPEAK: Develop an active listening response that shows that the listener understands the speaker.

Practice

Acknowledging What You Hear

"I'm really glad that you showed up for this meeting because we've had a lot of "not-so-productive meetings" with Mom. I hope that you'll be able to convince her that it is in Susie's best interest to be classified as special-ed. in order for Susie to get the help she needs."

What *feelings* has the teacher conveyed?

Relief Concern Others....

What *facts* has the teacher communicated?

- *Past meetings have not been productive*
- *Susie should be classified as a special ed. student to get help.*

Practice

Acknowledging What You Hear

I'm really glad that you showed up for this meeting because we've had a lot of "not-so-productive meetings" with Mom. I hope that you'll be able to convince her that it is in Susie's best interest to be classified as special-ed. in order for Susie to get the help she needs."

SAMPLE RESPONSES

It sounds like (you believe) the only way Susie is going to get the services she needs is if she is classified as a special needs students.

It sounds like the past meetings haven't gone so well...

You seem relieved to see me, I don't often get that kind of reception...

Practice

A Parent says to a Mentor...

"Principal Smith is going to rue the day he ever met me. I'm going to show him how special education ought to be run. My child is going to have every service that falls under IDEA and you and I aren't going to leave this meeting until this team agrees to it all!"

The active listening process

IMAGINE: How does the listener/advocate feel?
What would the listener/advocate like to say/do?

THINK: What *feelings* has the teacher conveyed?

THINK: What *facts* has the teacher communicated?

SPEAK: Develop an active listening response that shows that the listener understands the speaker.

Dealing with Emotions

Emotions generate emotions and can quickly bring a situation to a close or impasse.

1. Recognize and Understand Emotions- Theirs and Yours
 - How are you feeling? (Upset stomach-nervous)
 - How are they acting? (Calm, fidgety, relaxed)
 - Be more pro-active and less reactive (come prepared)
2. Acknowledge Emotions as Legitimate and Explicit
 - Allow freedom to express emotions
 - Be prepared to share your emotions
 - Be prepared to acknowledge other's emotions
3. Allow the other side to let off steam (in response to others' anger and frustration)
 - Listening quietly without responding to their attacks provides little fuel for the fire
 - Venting allows people to "deflate"

Don't overreact to emotional outbursts

Assertive Speaking



- Think before you speak
- Say what you mean and mean what you say
- Separate facts from feelings
- Focus on the action- not your interpretation
- Take responsibility for your feelings/reactions and deal with how this is impacting you
- Tell the other person what you want as opposed to what you don't want or don't like

Purpose of Assertive Speaking

To express yourself
in a
NON-THREATENING MANNER
and
KEEP THE CONVERSATION GOING

Simple Formula for I-Messages

I messages are a clear, assertive and non-threatening way of telling another person:

a) how you feel; b) when something happens; and c) why.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| A. I FEEL... | State how you feel |
| B. WHEN... | State the problem
(as a video camera would show) |
| C. BECAUSE... | State why you feel that way |

EXAMPLE

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| A. I FEEL... | frustrated |
| B. WHEN... | you talk while I'm talking |
| C. BECAUSE... | what I'm saying is important and I need to be certain that you heard it. |

Assertive Speaking

Assertive Speaking DOES NOT:

- blame or attack
- criticize
- name call
- bring up past grievances
- assume the other party knows how you feel
- accuse



Practice

A Principal says to a Mentor...



I know your job is to get this parent "everything under the sun", but in this district, we just don't have the resources to provide small class sizes or para-professionals to every disabled student. So let's get real.

Practice

A Principal says to a Mentor...

- How are you feeling?
- What behavior/words causes that feeling?
- Why does that behavior/words cause that feeling?

Develop an I-message that explains your point of view in a way that the listener can understand.

I feel (a) _____
when (b) _____
because (c) _____

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Brainstorming



Brainstorming Process

Brainstorming is a process for thinking of many different solutions for resolving a dispute by creating an atmosphere that promotes creativity.

1. Set a time limit .
2. Everyone will offer any idea that comes to mind, no matter how crazy it seems.
3. No one may criticize any ideas at this time.
4. When the allotted time is over, evaluate each idea against the parties' interests and other appropriate criteria.

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Brainstorm Solutions

Develop an Agreement

Gaining Agreement



Developing Agreements



- Generate the list of options through brainstorming.
- Discuss which option or combination of options best meets the *interests* or needs of all parties.
- Make certain that everyone fully understands what they are agreeing to:
 - write it down
 - ask for it to be repeated
 - clarify *who, what, where, when, how* and *what happens when...*
- Include plans to re-evaluate the agreement after a stated period of time.