

Best Practices for School Safety & Student Interaction: The Collaborative Problem Solving Approach

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RETHINKING CHALLENGING KIDS

What We Learned

School Safety Agents and Police Officers told us:

- The stakes are high: their job is keeping kids and schools safe, but they end up having to enforce school rules
- They often don't have the time to talk with kids
- They are sometimes told not to be friendly with the students
- They feel like they have to clean up messes they didn't start
- They are asked to play the heavy when kids don't comply with other authority figures
- They are asked to back people up even if they don't agree with how they are handling things
- Every building is different

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Goals: What Agents / Police Officers Care About

1. Compliance
2. Keeping student calm
3. Solving the problem so it doesn't happen again

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The Missing Link

To accomplish these goals, we have to have an accurate understanding of the behaviors that are happening in the first place

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Research on Skills Deficits

Challenging behavior is linked with deficits in the following areas. In other words, you need these skills to be compliant:

- **Executive skills**
- **Language processing skills**
- **Emotion regulation skills**
- **Cognitive flexibility skills**
- **Social thinking skills**

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Goals for Training

1. Compliance
2. Keep student calm
3. Solve the problem so it doesn't keep coming up
4. Teach skills
5. Create a helping relationship

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A Helping Relationship

- Regardless of the approach you use, the best predictor of success in helping people change is the **relationship** between helper and helpee
- Helping is messy and takes time
- Helping is a **working alliance**, a two-way **collaborative process**, a two-person **team effort**
- Helping is not something you do **to** kids; rather, it is a process that adults and kids work through **together**

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CPS as a Roadmap

CPS provides a common philosophy, language, and replicable structure with clear guideposts for adults to:

- **Maintain authority and elicit compliance via collaboration**
- **Help students build skills**
- **Build a helping relationship**

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CPS: A common approach

- Started as a parenting approach
- Has a proven track record in Juvenile Correction facilities (see Maine and Oregon)
- Also utilized in many Mental Health facilities (Residential and Non-Residential Treatment facilities)
- Schools across the country
- New York City Department of Education
- New York City Police Department (School Safety Division)

Collaboration: Community, Educators & School Safety Division

- We have engaged in this work as true partners
- Collaborative Problem Solving not only helps the adults work challenging kids but it helps the adults communicate and collaborate with other adults
- There is no question that the structure of this approach has had a real impact on the quality of our communication and our ability to move an agenda.
- Attending to the culture and climate of our schools is everyone's responsibility including the kids!