

Lewis and Clark College
Graduate School of Education and Counseling
Summer 2019

SPSY 590

Collaborative Problem Solving



“kids do well if they can...”

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1 Semester Credit

Thursdays 5:30 - 8:30 pm, June 13 - July 18 (no class July 4)

General Course Information

Required Class Text

Ablon, J. Stuart; Pollastri, Alisha R. The School Discipline Fix: Changing Behavior Using The Collaborative Problem Solving Approach. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018.

Course Description

What is Collaborative Problem Solving? The core philosophy of the **Think:Kids** model is that "kids do well if they can." If they can't, the adults - caregivers, teachers, providers - need to understand what is getting in their way in order to find a way to help. Although this idea does not seem earth shattering, it is a significant departure from conventional thinking of "kids do well if they want to." When adults view challenging behavior through the lens of "kids do well if they want to," then behavior is often seen as a choice and the youth is then provided with interventions to try to "motivate" the youth to do better. What transpires with the most challenging youth is a cycle of providing ineffective interventions that teaches the youth that he or she is not trying hard enough, when in fact, he or she is most likely trying harder than other kids who do not have similar difficulties.

Collaborative Problem Solving has a different explanation: Children with challenging behavior lack crucial cognitive thinking skills in the areas of frustration tolerance, adaptability/flexibility, and problem solving. Or they have difficulty applying these skills when most needed. The model effectively identifies what skills a child is lacking and trains/teaches these skills through a collaborative process in increments the child can handle developmentally. This collaborative process helps the adults who interact with the child to pursue expectations, reduce challenging behavior, teach skills, and gather information with an empathetic rather than punitive stance. Ultimately the opportunity to restore / build healthy relationships with loved ones and other caregivers sets the stage for resilience and success in the face of challenges that remain.

Course Goals and Objectives:

- 1) Learn why traditional approaches to understanding and intervening with challenging behaviors are limited and ineffective.
- 2) Develop an understanding of why the philosophy of "kids do well if they can," provides a neuroscientifically based understanding of challenging behaviors that guides effective interventions.

- 3) Learn how to complete an assessment process that identifies challenging behaviors, lagging skills, and problems to be solved; and creates a framework for providing interventions and support for individuals.
- 3) Learn the three options for responding to unmet expectations.
- 4) Develop skills to engage in Collaborative Problem Solving conversations with others in order to: develop skills and build confidence, create helping relationships, reduce challenging behaviors, pursue high priority expectations, and solve chronic problems durably.
- 5) Gain understanding of how the Collaborative Problem Solving approach mimics healthy neurological development and why it is considered “trauma informed care.

Assignments and Expectations

Class Participation

In order to create a positive learning environment, students will be expected to be actively engaged in class sessions and discussions. Demonstrating active listening skills, asking questions, and contributing to discussions and role plays is important to achieving this goal. It is expected that all electronic devices will be put away and silenced during class sessions unless needed for an in-class activity. Limiting side conversations and being punctual to class and back from breaks are also important to creating a good learning environment for all.

CPS Assessment and Planning Tool Practice

Students will practice the assessment process by interviewing one person about a youth or adult with challenging behaviors. The CPS-APT form from Think:Kids will be used to list Challenging Behaviors, Problems to be Solved, and Lagging Skills. The CPS Integrity Scorecard will be used to determine if the information on the form meets the criteria of a good assessment. Additionally, a written reflection will be completed to answer the following questions:

- What was challenging about completing the assessment?
- What challenges would you anticipate when completing this in “real life?”
- What parts of the assessment were easier to complete?
- When would you anticipate using this in your daily work with youth?

Plan B Practice Assignment

Students will be asked to complete the Plan B Prep Sheet and have the Plan B conversation, take notes on the conversation, and answer the following reflection questions:

- What aspects of the conversation went well?
- What areas did not go well or as expected?
- Why do you think it did not go as expected?
- What tools or aids could you use to help it go better the next time?

Weekly Reflection

At the end of each week, students will be asked to complete a survey and answer questions which will allow reflection on the material taught in class and application of the information to personal practice and/or life experiences.

CPSY Department Attendance Policy

Class attendance is expected and required. Any missed class time will be made up by completing extra assignments designed by the instructor. Missing more than ten percent of class time may result in failure to complete the class. This would be 4.5 hours of a 45 hour class (3 credits), 3.0 hours for a 30 hour class (2 credits) or 1.5 hours for a 15 hour class (1 credit.) In case of extreme hardship and also at the discretion of the instructor, a grade of incomplete may be given for an assignment or the entire course. In such cases, the work to be submitted in order to remove the incomplete must be documented appropriately and stated deadlines met. Students are expected to be on time to class and tardiness may be seen as an absence that requires make-up work.

Disability Services Statement

If you have a disability that may impact your academic performance, you may request accommodations by submitting documentation to the Student Support Services Office in the Albany Quadrangle (503-768-7192). After you have submitted documentation and filled out paperwork there for the current semester requesting accommodations, staff in that office will notify me of the accommodations for which you are eligible.

Course grading summary

Class Participation	20 points
Weekly Reflection (4 x 10)	40 points
CPS Assessment and Planning Tool Practice	20 points
Plan B Practice/Reflection	<u>20 points</u>
	100 points total

Overall course grading:

A = 93 – 100

B = 85 – 92

C = 77 – 84 (a grade of C or lower is a non-passing grade)

	Assignments Due	Weekly Activities & Media
Wk. 1 6/13		<p>Presentation: Syllabus Review</p> <p>Activity: Think of a youth...</p> <p>Presentation:</p>

		<p>Review of Philosophy Limitations of Motivational Approaches Shift in Thinking: Behavior as a Learning Disability Assessment Procedures</p> <p>Activities: Practice Assessment</p>
<p>Wk. 2 6/21</p>	<p>Weekly Reflection #1 Read Introduction/Chapters 1-4</p>	<p>Presentation: Identifying Problems to be Solved Assessing Thinking Skills using the CPS-APT</p> <p>Activities: Assessment Practice Pair practice with youth from class one Small group practice with case study</p>
<p>Wk. 3 6/27</p>	<p>Weekly Reflection #2 CPS Assessment and Planning Tool Practice Read Chapter 5-7</p>	<p>Activity: Assessment Fidelity Practice</p> <p>Presentation: Goals of Intervention Three Plans and Goals Prioritizing Problems to be Solved</p> <p>Activity: Practice Prioritization</p> <p>Presentation: Plan B Ingredients Plan B as Skills Training</p> <p>Activity: Plan B Preparation Practice</p> <p>Videos: Examples of Plan B</p>
<p>Wk. 4 7/11</p>	<p>Weekly Reflection #3 Reading Chapters 8-10</p>	<p>Activities: Plan B Preparation Plan B Practice</p> <p>Presentation: Neurobiology Plan B Preparation Troubleshooting Plan B</p>

Wk. 5 7/18	Plan B Practice/Reflection Weekly Reflection #4 Read Chapters 11-15	Activities: Implementation Barriers Presentation: Emergency Plan B Spontaneous Plan B Group Plan B Trauma-Informed Care Research Systems Implementation
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