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THE
SCHOOL DISCIPLINE
FIX

DISCUSSION
GUIDE

CHANGING BEHAVIOR USING THE
COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
APPROACH

How to Use This Guide

This discussion guide for *The School Discipline Fix: Changing Behavior Using the Collaborative Problem Solving Approach* is designed as a professional learning resource and can be used to facilitate a professional book study or to create a roadmap for schoolwide change.

For additional training and resources to help you implement **Collaborative Problem Solving** in your school, visit **www.thinkkids.org**.

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PART 1: RETHINKING CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS

CHAPTER 1 – Why Traditional School Discipline is Broken

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- How stressed do you feel dealing with chronic challenging behaviors in your job? How does your interaction with students change (if at all) when you are more stressed?

- What is the standard process you use in your school when you suspect a student has a significant learning difference / disability? How is that process similar or different from how behavioral difficulties are handled at your school?

CHAPTER 2 – All Students Want to Do Well: What is Getting in the Way?

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- In what ways is the philosophy that students do well if they can similar to or different than your assumptions about students' behavior before reading this Chapter or being exposed to the approach? Be honest with yourself!

- When have you seen motivational approaches "work" in your school and what specifically have they accomplished?

- When have you seen motivational approaches fail to change behavior in your school and why do you think they didn't work?

Self-reflection:

- Have you been more likely to interpret certain students' behavior as willful, intentional or due to a lack of motivation than other students'? What, if anything, do these students share in common (such as sex, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status)?

CHAPTER 3 – Challenging Behavior is Predictable–and Preventable

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- How different is the assessment process outlined in this Chapter from the typical process at your school?

- Do you use FBAs at your school? If no, which aspects of the FBA process will be helpful in using this new process?

Exercise:

- Choose a student and complete list #1 (Challenging Behaviors) and list #2 (Problems to be Solved) for that specific student. Swap lists with a colleague and ask them to see if your list of Problems to be Solved is specific enough.

- Discuss as a group what was most challenging about trying to identify specific Problems to be Solved for your students.

CHAPTER 4 – Assess Students' Thinking: A Deficit of Skill, Not Will

Exercise:

- In pairs, complete list #3 (Skill Struggles) for the specific student you chose for the last exercise for the previous Chapter. Remember to use the list of Problems to be Solved as your clues as to which specific skills are to blame for the student struggling in those specific situations.

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- What was most challenging about trying to identify the specific skill struggles for your students?

- What are examples of specific skills that a particular student struggled with in one situation and yet was able to demonstrate in another? What was the difference between those situations?

CHAPTER 5 – Develop a Game Plan: There Are Only Three Options

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- What is an example of a time when you used Plan A recently? What did that look like?

- What is an example of a time when you used Plan B recently? What did that look like?

- Who is in charge with Plan C and why?

Exercise:

- Return to the APT for the student you chose and pick a Problem to Solve to address using Plan B. Then assign either Plan A or C to each remaining Problem to Solve on your list. Discuss as group how you made those choices.

PART 2: COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

CHAPTER 6 – Plan B: Empathize, Share, Collaborate

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- How do the ingredients, sequence, and structure of Plan B differ from how you have approached conversations about behaviors with your students previously?

Self-reflection:

- What do you think will be the hardest part about doing Plan B for you personally, and why?

CHAPTER 7 – Teach Skills While Solving Real Problems

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- How is the form of skills training described in this chapter different from the types of skills training you typically practice with students in your school? What are the likely relative advantages and challenges?

Self-reflection:

- Which specific skills on the APT do you see as your strengths and which do you see as your personal areas of struggle? How might those skill struggles impact your ability to practice Plan B with students?

CHAPTER 8 – How Plan B Changes the Brain

Self-reflection:

- Was there a time recently when you were dysregulated to the point of not being able to think clearly? How did you behave and what might you have done differently if you were thinking clearly (ie, had access to your cortex!)?

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- Consider what efforts your school may have made to be trauma-sensitive. After reading this chapter, do you think your school's disciplinary policies and practices are consistent with trauma-informed principles? If not, why not?

- Have you ever had a time when you were addressing a student's challenging behavior and the student may have just been telling you what they thought you wanted to hear. Flowing from this chapter, why do you think that was the case and how might you handle that conversation differently now?

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CHAPTER 9 – Practice, Practice, Practice: Planning and Troubleshooting Plan B

Exercise:

- In pairs, complete a Plan B Prep Sheet for the students for whom you completed the CPS-APT previously.

- Then use that Plan B Prep sheet to practice role-playing Plan B with one person pretending to be the student. Switch roles and repeat the process so that each person gets a chance to try Plan B.

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- What was the hardest part of trying to do Plan B for you and why? In what part of Plan B did you have the least fidelity to the process and why?

- What was it like being the student as your colleague tried Plan B with you?

CHAPTER 10 – When Students Are Stuck: Direct Skills Training

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- Describe a time when you tried to didactically practice a specific skill with a student, but that student wasn't able to use the skill in a real-world situation. How might that look different using the structure of Plan B?

- Which specific types of skills do you think lend themselves more readily to didactic skills training?

- Conversely, which types of specific skills do you think are best trained by using Plan B with students and thus might not require any didactic skills training?

CHAPTER 11 – Group Plan B: Problem Solving with Multiple Students

Guiding questions for group discussion:

- What are some specific examples of situations in which you think you could use Group Plan B to try to resolve an issue between a small group of students?

- What are examples of existing group meeting times in your school day that you might use to practice larger Group Plan B?

- What are some specific examples of problems that you might address with larger Group Plan B?

Self-reflection:

- Do you think Plan B with one student or Group Plan B will be more challenging for you? Why?

PART 3: SCALING AND SUSTAINING THE SHIFT IN DISCIPLINE

CHAPTER 12 – Schoolwide Change and Implementation

? Guiding questions for group discussion:

• What are examples of past initiatives that have failed or have not been sustained because of not following best practices related to implementation described in this chapter?

• How ready do you think your school is to implement a new approach to school discipline like CPS? In what ways do you think your school is not maximally ready?

⟲ Self-reflection:

• Are you interested in being a culture carrier (or change agent) for implementing CPS in your school? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 13 – No Pain, No Gain: Common Challenges

? Guiding questions for group discussion:

• Of the factors described in this chapter, what do you think the biggest systemic barriers will be to successful implementation in your school? How might you go about addressing those prior to implementation?

• How does CPS fit with existing structures and approaches in your school? Are there are places where CPS is at odds with existing practices? How might you resolve those areas of difference?

CHAPTER 14 – Plan B with Colleagues and Parents

? Guiding questions for group discussion:

• Discuss a challenging situation you had with a parent of one of your students and how you handled it. Which Plan do you think you used? If you didn't use Plan B, what might the situation have looked like if you had?

• In the language of the Plans, how would you characterize your school's leadership style – Plan A, Plan B or Plan C – especially when it comes to attempting to adopt new practices like CPS?

⟲ Self-reflection:

• Think of a time when a colleague's behavior frustrated you. Would you think about that situation differently now through the lens of skill not will?

• In your interactions with your colleagues, which one of the three Plans do you think you most often use?

❓ **Guiding questions for group discussion:**

- How does your school use data to guide decision making and practice when it comes to managing challenging behavior?

- What would be the biggest challenge to studying the effectiveness of your school disciplinary procedures? How might you address those obstacles?