



Working with Parents and Caregivers in Schools—Part 2

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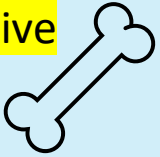



Presentation for the NJ Association of School Psychologists,
March 28, 2024.



Focus of Tonight's Presentation

Establishing partnerships with parents whose children are receiving Tier 2 or Tier 3 mental health interventions at school.

Different Types of Parents

	Responsive	Not Responsive
Collaborative 	Type 1: Responsive and Collaborative  Willing to work with you Show up for meetings Respond to phone calls	Type 2: Collaborative but Not Responsive  Express interest in working with you but do not follow through
Not Collaborative 	Type 3: Responsive but Not Collaborative  Angry Demanding Unrealistic Litigious	Type 4: Not Collaborative or Responsive Do not express interest in working with you Hard to reach 

What prior experiences might your parents be carrying into your relationship?



Privileged Parents

Might be more optimistic about what is possible and have a clear understanding of what school problems can be fixed, based on their life experiences.

May be more trusting of healthcare and educational professionals as they have directly benefited from these systems in the past.

Marginalized Parents

Might be uncomfortable speaking up about their worries, less confident in their opinions, and/or may be unsure of their place within the education system.

May have developed a warranted mistrust of health care or educational systems when witnessing disparities related to access to high-quality services and past harm caused to them or loved ones.

Organization of Tonight's Presentation

01

Setting the Stage
with Parents

02

Establishing Our
Roles and Parents'
Roles

03

Maintaining
Connection



I. Setting the Stage

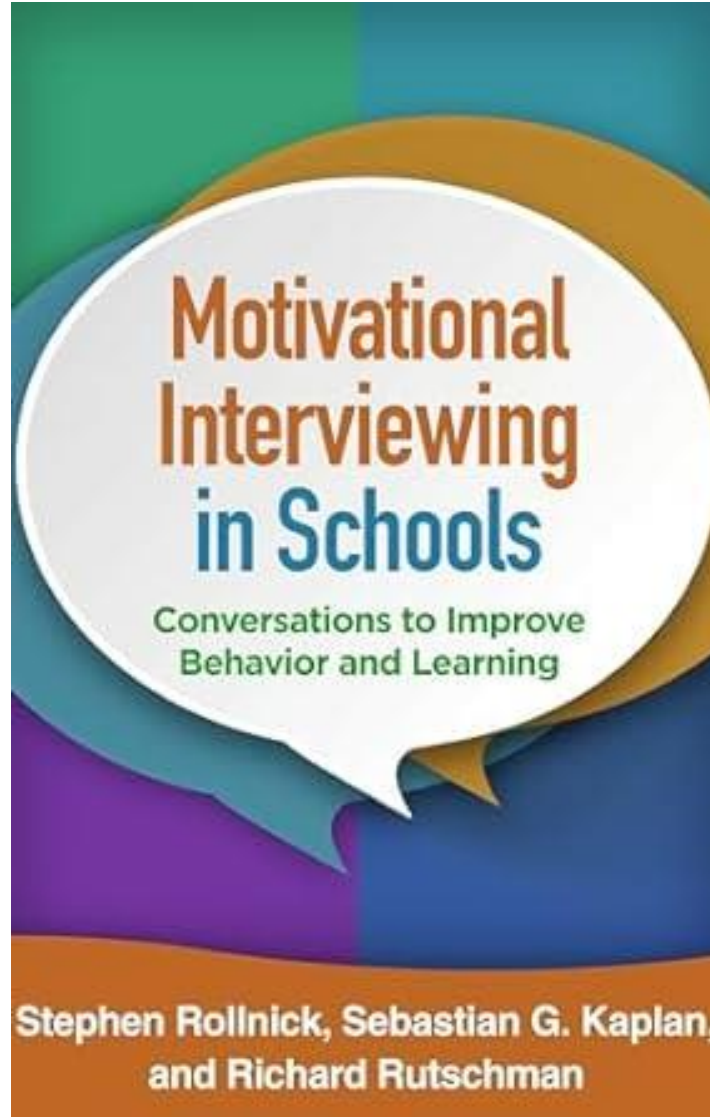
TECHNIQUES TO FORM STRONG
CONNECTIONS AND FACILITATE
PARTNERSHIP



Business as Usual vs. Other Options



Business as Usual	Other Options to Consider
Ask parents to complete behavior rating scales as part of the assessment process.	Consider how motivational interviewing and CBT can be used to build motivation for change and optimism among parents.
Discuss counseling as a related service at the IEP meeting.	Meet with parents after the IEP meeting to discuss specific counseling goals and how you can partner to support those goals.
Call parents to discuss concerns that arise at school.	Involve parents in progress monitoring and report successes as well as challenges
	Increase opportunities for psychoeducation.



Motivational Interviewing with Parents

What is MI?

- MI is a **guiding** style of communication, that sits between **following** (good listening) and **directing** (giving information and advice).
- MI is designed to **empower** people to change by drawing out their own meaning, importance, and capacity for change.
- MI is based on a **respectful** and **curious** way of being with people that facilitates the natural process of change and honors client autonomy.

MI Strategies with Parents: Change Talk



Asking Evocative Questions: Asking about disadvantages of the status quo, advantages of change, optimism for change, and intention to change.

Elaboration: Asking someone to go into more depth about a particular reason for change.

Looking Back: Asking what things were like before the problem began.

Looking Ahead: Asking what things would be like in the future if the problem was resolved.

Exploring Goals: Asking about values and goals

Assessment Feedback: Looking at data to

Readiness Rulers: Using numbers to assess how ready someone is for change.



MI Strategies with Parents: Asking Evocative Questions

Definition: Open-ended questions that focus on disadvantages of the status quo, advantages of change, optimism that change is possible, and the intention to change.

Parent: Will's behavior at home is out of control right now.

School Psychologist: Things are tough right now. It sounds like everyone is ready for things to get better.

Parent: Yes, we are (sighing). But I honestly don't know how. He is just so difficult.

School Psychologist: I hear that. What other things do you think would improve if we could work together to help Will's behavior to improve?





MI Strategies with Parents: **Elaboration**

Definition: Asking more questions to go deeper into a reason for change rather than moving on to another reason for change.

Parent: Maia refuses to do her homework. I just don't know what to do anymore.

School Psychologist: You're struggling to get her to do her homework. Why do you believe homework is important for Maia?

Parent: Well, I don't want her to get a reputation for not doing her homework.

School Psychologist: You want her to be seen as a student who does what is expected.

Parent: Yes. I want the teacher to see her as a good student and me as a responsible mother.

School Psychologist: So, it's important to you that the teacher perceives not only Maia as a good student but also you as responsible mother.

MI Strategies with Parents: Values Clarification



Values Clarification

Your values are the beliefs that define what is most important to you. They guide each of your choices in life. For example, someone who values family might try to spend extra time at home, while someone who values success in their career may do just the opposite. Understanding your values will help you recognize areas of your life need more attention, and what to prioritize in the future.

Select the 10 most important items from the following list. Rank them from 1-10 with "1" being the most important item.

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love | <input type="checkbox"/> Honesty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wealth | <input type="checkbox"/> Humor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | <input type="checkbox"/> Loyalty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Morals | <input type="checkbox"/> Reason |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Success | <input type="checkbox"/> Independence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Knowledge | <input type="checkbox"/> Achievement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Power | <input type="checkbox"/> Beauty |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Friends | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirituality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Free Time | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adventure | <input type="checkbox"/> Peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Variety | <input type="checkbox"/> Stability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Calmness | <input type="checkbox"/> Wisdom |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Fairness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fun | <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Recognition | <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nature | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Popularity | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsibility | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Optimistic PARENTING

*Hope and Help for You and
Your Challenging Child*



**What does parental
optimism have to do
with changing
challenging behaviors?**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=CQ3j7V3Jv8g>

Meet V. Mark Durand

Professor of Psychology

University of South Florida, St. Petersburg Campus

Pessimistic

- My child is disabled
- Shopping with my child is a disaster
- I will never have my own life

Optimistic

- My child needs help learning new skills
- My child is not ready yet for long shopping trips
- I am working toward more time to myself

(Durand, 2014)

- **Example - “She wouldn’t leave the TV to go to school.”**
- **What were you thinking?**
- **Pessimistic Scenario – “Here we go again.”**
- **Optimistic Scenario – “I knew this might happen and I have a plan to handle her if she tantrums.”**

(Durand, 2014)

A Strategy for arguing or challenging beliefs.

- Step 1: Identify the negative belief (e.g., What exactly do you say to yourself that is pessimistic?).
- Step 2: List evidence that supports the belief. (e.g., What makes you believe that to be true?)

- Step 3: Find alternative explanations for the problem (e.g., Are there other possible reasons/motives?).
- Step 4: Evaluate the usefulness of maintaining the belief. (e.g., In what ways does that belief benefit you/ others or improve the situation?)



II. Establishing Our Roles and Parents' Roles

DEFINING THE PARTNERSHIP

WORKSHEETS AND HANDOUTS

PROVIDER RESOURCES FROM MATCH-ADTC



Our Roles vs. Parents' Roles in Manualized Interventions

- Many manualized interventions involve a parent component.
- Some involve face-to-face parent training; others include handouts to send home to parents.
- **Resilient Education Program (REP): A Tier 2 Intervention for Internalizing Concerns (Garbacz, Eklund, & Kilgus, 2022):** Initial collaborative meeting; handouts for families to accompany CBT lessons; positive parenting materials; coaching sessions.
- **MATCH-ADTC (Chorpita & Weisz, 2009):** Parent psychoeducation sessions; handouts for parents to accompany all student lessons; all conduct problems modules are delivered to parents rather than students.
- **TF-CBT (Cohen, Mannarino, & Deblinger, 2006):** Parallel parent and child sessions. Parent sessions focus on effective parenting and preparing the parent to respond appropriately to the child's trauma narrative.

Collaborative Meeting Worksheet

Date: _____ Family: _____

Facilitator: _____

Engagement Strategies				
	Home		School	
Facilitator sends a meeting summary to the parent/caregiver and teacher In a phone call or email, based on the individual's preference, invite the parent/caregiver and teacher to attend a collaborative meeting. Note the date, time, modality, and location of the meeting.	Y	N	Y	N
Facilitator sends a reminder about the collaborative meeting 24 hrs before the meeting Using the family's preferred method of communication, provide a reminder about the date, time, and modality.	Y	N	Y	N

Initial Collaborative Meeting	Start Time:	End Time:		
	Home		School	
Provide a social opening Establish a friendly supportive atmosphere (e.g., position of the chairs, nonverbal communication) Facilitate introductions Demonstrate interest for the family (e.g., ask about past events) Emphasize that everyone's input is vital; describe the collaborative process within REP; use inclusive language	Y	N	Y	N
Describe meeting purpose and agenda Discuss steps of the meeting, referring to addressing the agenda as partners: strengths, concerns, priorities, describe key parts of REP, communication, ways to keep in touch	Y	N	Y	N

Resilient Education Program: Resilient Families Handbook

Garbacz, Eklund, & Kilgus (2022)

Initial Collaborative Meeting	Start Time:	End Time:		
	Home		School	
Guide a review of child's strengths Identify strengths of the child Establish the importance of building on strengths				
Discuss family goals for their child Explore general priorities or what may be getting in the way of goals the family has for the child	Y	N	Y	N
Describe how family goals can be addressed through REP Link family goals (e.g., building social-emotional skills) can be addressed in REP	Y	N	Y	N
Identify family goals Identify 1-3 goals the family has for REP (e.g., building child social-emotional skills, identifying new strategies for the caregiver to support their child)	Y	N	Y	N

Understanding Anxiety

TOPICS INCLUDED:

1. Is anxiety good or bad?
2. How does anxiety work?
3. Why is my child anxious?
4. Anxious thoughts
5. How cognitive behavioral therapy can help

Anxiety is a problem only when a child becomes anxious in the absence of any real danger or trouble.

to help us be alert to danger and therefore be able to avoid it. In the early stages of anxiety, when the

and can be genuinely useful in the face of a real threat. At this point, the body enters a second stage of

Similarly, if a child who is walking to school suddenly hears a dog bark, she might pause and think about what to do next—stop, look,




Helping Your Child Succeed

Encourage at-home practice. Many parents are surprised to learn that what happens at home and school is actually more important than what happens with the therapist. Therapy is similar to music lessons. If a child is taking piano lessons, his or her teacher reviews progress and assigns new things to practice. But if the child doesn't practice at home, he or she will never learn to play the piano. Similarly, a child who does not practice the techniques and activities assigned by the therapist is unlikely to make progress.

Coach your child. Therapists and parents act as coaches to help a child develop new skills. Your child will be most successful if you take on an increasingly larger coaching role as therapy progresses.

Make the program a high priority. The more energy and enthusiasm your family can commit to the program, the higher your child's chance of success. For now, the program may need to come before other things, like school plays, sports events, or family travel.

Be willing to work hard. If you are willing to work hard in the short term, you and your child will have better long-term results. For example, it can be tempting just to let your child have fun and

	<i>Uninterested child</i>	
	Lowest chance of	Possible success

Anxious Thoughts

Children with anxiety problems tend to see the world more negatively than other children do. They are very good at imagining what can go wrong. This tendency shows up in three important ways: (1) the things they pay attention to, (2) the way they interpret situations, and (3) the “self-talk” they engage in.

Attention

Anxious children focus more on negative things. For example, when researchers show children pairs of words on a computer screen, anxious children are more likely to look at words that seem threatening, such as

“storm” or “crash.” So anxious children tend to look for danger signals.

Interpretation

When presented with an unclear situation, anxious children are more likely to interpret it as dangerous. For example, when an anxious child is asked to imagine possible explanations for an unfamiliar noise, the child is more likely to offer negative answers such as, “a burglar.”

Self-talk

Anxious children also generate more negative “self-talk” than non-

Anxious thoughts lead to anxious feelings—racing heart, sweaty palms, fast breathing— by creating “false alarms” when there is no real danger.

anxious children. That is, they are more likely to tell themselves things like, “I’ll never be able to do this” or “I don’t know what I’m doing.”

Example of Working Together to Reduce Anxiety



School Psychologist Role	Parent Role
Provide psychoeducation about anxiety to the child and parent.	Provide a consistent message to the child that anxiety can make things hard, but facing your fears gets easier with practice.
Teach the child coping strategies to manage anxious feelings.	Remind the child to use the coping strategies that they have learned when they feel anxious.
Help the child develop more adaptive ways of thinking.	Remind the child of adaptive ways to think about situations that cause anxiety.
Work with the child to develop a fear hierarchy and practice graded exposure.	Encourage the child to engage rather than avoiding; remind the child to use coping strategies rather than avoidance.
Teach the child that anxiety can be overcome with courage, skills, and practice.	Reinforce that anxiety can be overcome with courage, skills, and practice.

Synthesis of Important Skills for Parents of Children with **Internalizing** Behaviors

- Gently encouraging new/novel experiences and working towards avoiding escape from uncomfortable situations.
- Framing difficult/challenging situations as opportunities for growth.
- Providing positive reinforcement for having courage and trying new things.
- Modeling rational thinking and adaptive coping in times of stress.
- Allowing children to struggle a bit and not swooping in to immediately rescue them from difficult situations.
- Avoiding polarized thinking (all or nothing).

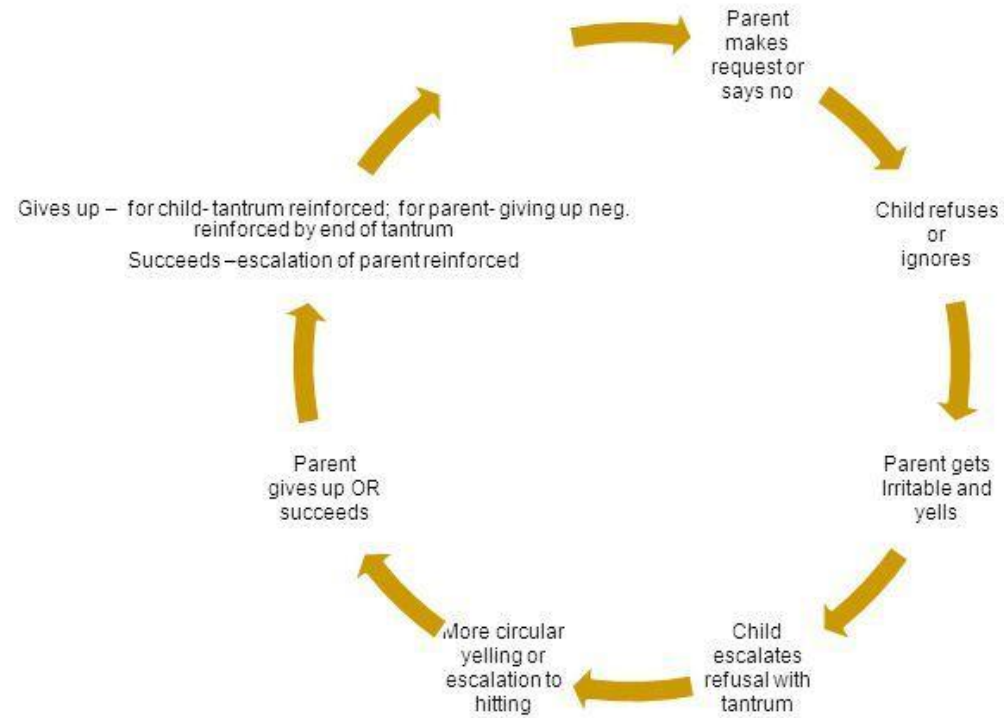


Synthesis of Important Skills for Parents of Children with Externalizing Behaviors

- Providing positive reinforcement for showing cooperation and using self-control.
- Catching them being good.
- Changing the pattern of coercive family process.
- Modeling self-control and effective coping when angry or upset.
- Ignoring behaviors that are designed to get attention but are not dangerous.
- Knowing how to make a graceful exit (to cool off) and encouraging children to do the same.
- Parental monitoring



The coercion cycle





III. Maintaining Connection

How are you involving parents in progress monitoring?

How are you staying in communication?





Progress Monitoring

Keep it simple!

Behavior	Worse	Same	Better	Notes
Uses self-calming strategies when prompted				
Speaks to others at home with respect				
Shares with siblings when reminded to do so				
Complies with parental instructions				
Starts HW with no more than 1 prompt				

Staying in Communication



Apps: Talking Points, Remind, Google Voice, Class Dojo

Monthly Phone Calls

Folder Notes Home

Other options?

Final Takeaways

- ✓ Use MI and CBT to get parents to engage in change talk and increase optimism.
- ✓ Define your role and parents' roles in the change process.
- ✓ Become familiar with psychoeducation materials from manualized interventions.
- ✓ Set up systems to stay in contact with parents and include them in progress monitoring.

MATCH-ADTC

https://www.practicewise.com/portals/0/MATCH_public/index.html

TF-CBT

<https://tfcbt2.musc.edu/>

CBITS

<https://traumaawareschools.org/index.php/learn-more-cbits/>

REP

<https://smhcollaborative.org/rep-materials/>



Thank you

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