Coaching Families Through Conflict

Diana Cruz, Dispute Resolution Training Specialist
RPTAC Region B Conference, Charleston, SC
June 18, 2019

Setting Our Intention

When elephants fight, it's the grass that suffers
-African Proverb
Why Are We Here?

By the end of the session, you will be able to:
• Identify causes of conflict for families of students with disabilities
• Understand strategies available to help coach families through conflict
• Use a variety of skills to move families once they are in conflict

Agenda

• Conflict
• Cultural differences
• Communication and listening skills
• Scenario/Role Play
• Challenges
• Being a coach
• CADRE Resources
Introductions

- Name
- Role/position
- Name someone who inspires you

Layers of Conflict

- The child
  - Abilities of the child
  - Needs of the child
- How best to meet needs
  - Service/placement
  - FAPE
- Interactions
  - Communication
  - Relationship
Layers of Conflict (cont’d)

What other sources of conflict effect families of students with disabilities?

Dimensions of Conflict

• Think about a parent/family you have worked with in the past that had conflict with their child’s school.
• Write down a few words that summarize the concerns.
• Review the issue you identified previously.
• Discuss with your group what dimension of conflict the issue aligns with.
• Place your post-it on the chart on the side of the triangle that aligns with the conflict.
What comes to mind when you hear the word “conflict?” How does your perception impact your response to conflict?
How Do You Respond to Conflict?

Supporting the prevention and resolution of disputes through partnership and collaboration.
How Do You Respond to Conflict?

Discussion questions

• How does understanding your own conflict style impact your ability to support parents in conflict?
• How can you use this information to change how you provide support to parents?
• What ways can you coach parents into responding differently?

Bias

Noun
a particular tendency, trend, inclination, feeling, or opinion, especially one that is preconceived or unreasoned.
The Glasses That Shape Our View

Our perspectives come from:

- **Beliefs** – specific ideas about the world we hold true, largely unproven
- **Values** – represent what we believe as important about the life and individual behavior

(Evans & Vaandering 2016)

The Ladder of Inference

(Arghris, 1970 and Senge, 1994)
Effective Listening

Basic skill clusters for effective listening:

**Attending Skills**
- Contact (distance, eyes, touch)
- Gestures
- Body language
- Interested silence

**Responding Skills**
- Reflect content, emotions, meaning
- Ask open-ended questions
- Summarize and clarify
**Tips for Communicating Effectively**

- Be mindful of your emotional pressure
- Focus positively on your goals - suppress negative expectations
- Prioritize issues
- Listen to understand other perspectives

- Ask questions for clarification
- Rephrase and restate
- Be open to multiple solutions
- Keep the focus on the student
- Remember you are human

**Positions and Interests**

**Positions are:**
- Declarative
- Fixed
- One solution
- The “What”

**Interests are:**
- Hidden
- Underlying need
- Open to many solutions
- The “Why”
Position or Interest?

- My daughter needs 45 minutes of language therapy, daily.
  
  Position

- I am worried about my son running away from me on the walk home from the bus stop. Is door-to-door drop off available?
  
  Interest

- Students in my class must complete all their assigned classwork and homework in order to attend the end of year fieldtrip.
  
  Position

Questions for Uncovering Interests

- What will you gain if you get what you’re asking for?
  
  Position

- What do you think will happen if we do ___?
  
  Interest

- Can you explain how this is important to you?
  
  Position

- How does this solve the issue?
  
  Interest

- What is standing in your way?
  
  Position

- How will this affect your child?
  
  Interest
Relationships and Trust

- Integrity
- Transparency
- Personal regard
- Responsiveness

Scenarios

ROLE PLAY
How To Coach Effectively

- Accept & legitimize
- Allow venting
- Stay solution-oriented
- Separate personal emotions
- Help surface interests
- Connect to resources
- Remain positive

- Prioritize issues
- Identify topics that will cause conflict and prepare
- Brainstorm multiple options for resolution
- Inform regarding DR options

Challenges

- What do you see as the biggest challenge to helping families through conflict?
- What limits your ability to coach effectively in your job? Personal life?
- What role do you see school personnel having in coaching families through conflict?
**Online Learning Series**

- **Working Together Series**
  - For educators and family members
  - 5 courses
  - Facilitator guide
  - Available in Spanish!
- **Your Journey to Self-Determination**
  - Student modules
  - 4 courses

**Using CADRE Webinars**

CADRE offers a series of webinars that can assist in professional development.

- [Self-Care Strategies for Families with Children with Disabilities](#)
- [Productive Conversations Through Empathy](#)
- [Perfect Together: Aligning and Leveraging State Education Agencies and Parent Centers in Shared Work](#)
Can’t Find What You’re Looking For?

For Families

Steps to Success

Successful transitions also require that families and students have a clear understanding of the steps involved and what they can expect at each stage.

Educational Advancement: A Guide for Parents

This resource provides families with information on options for entry and progression within educational pathways.

Working Together

Parents and students can work together to ensure success, with support from appropriate community stakeholders.

Dispute Resolution Parent Guides

Parental guidance on strategies for resolving disputes with schools and districts.

Dispute Resolution Faculty Guides

Guidance for schools on dispute resolution processes and protocols.

Additional Popular Resources

Order publications online!

Supporting the prevention and resolution of disputes through partnership and collaboration
Questions

Need More Information?

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www.cadreworks.org

Contact CADRE via email
dcruz@directionservice.org

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