

Module 2 Transcript

Reducing Reliance on Crisis Management Practices in Massachusetts' Schools. Module 2: The ASUP and Plan B.

[Stephanie, Director of Education, Connecticut] When we create systems around responding to crises, we can unintentionally come to view crises as inevitable. So we plan, you know, schools are planning a great deal of time, spending a great deal of time planning on what to do when a student is escalated, but less time building structures to identify and solve problems that are causing the escalation in the first place.

[Lindsey, School Psychologist, Massachusetts] We used to spend a lot of time in meetings to predict what student was going to do and when things were going to get really dicey and then how we were going to react if this happened or this happened and none of those reactions were things that really come naturally to a teacher or really feel good to a teacher but what does come naturally and feels good is sitting down and problem solving with a kid working it through listening to them. I think that's a lot easier for teachers to do and honestly it feels a lot more productive.

[Amy, Director of Special Services, Maine] If you're not spending a lot of time restraining and secluding kids and spending time as adults trying to figure out what's going on with the kids and instead spend your time alongside the kid trying to understand the problem from their perspective and designing a solution, it's a much better use of your time.

[Jody, Special Education Teacher, Georgia] Educators receive very very little training in, most importantly, how to problem solve with children. The training they do get is more about modifying behavior and managing behavior. And I think they're frustrated because it's not working. Almost all the school districts that I'm familiar with are going to a student-focused culture. The last thing we do is talk to kids. That absolutely blows my mind. If it's a student-focused culture why aren't we talking to them more?

[Stephanie] So ultimately our goal is really to build a culture where the focus is really on prevention rather than reaction.

[Voiceover with text on screen] Module 2 Part 1: *What to Expect*. Brief Review of Module 1, Discussion of an additional important key theme, Deep dive on wording unsolved problems on the ASUP, Video of ASUP meeting, Revisit the Problem Solving Plan.

[Dr. Ross Greene, clinical psychologist and founder of the nonprofit Lives in the Balance] Welcome to Module two. You now know from Module one that creating that culture, that climate, means being proactive and that focusing on concerning behavior does not help you move in that direction. You know that moving in that direction means focusing on the problems that are causing that behavior, solving them proactively and collaboratively, meaning with the full involvement of the kid. You're going to be learning a lot about that in this module.

You're still going to have some questions like, can this model be applied to kids who are non- and minimally speaking and those with high support needs? You'll be getting the answer to that question in this module. How do we help staff get good at this model? How do we create structures that support and sustain our new practices? You'll be hearing about those questions in module three.

Our primary focal point in this module is to give you some instruction that you didn't get in module one about how to use the assessment of skills and unsolved problems and how to solve problems with kids collaboratively and proactively.

Before we jump in, a little bit of review. You know that developmental variability is a very important concept. Not only are kids different, it's not your goal to try to get them to look the same. Rather, it is critical to take into account each kid's developmental trajectory and to meet every kid where they're at. And you know that a big part of that is managing expectations well, meaning not placing expectations on kids that you already know they can't meet.

There is a theme that we didn't cover in Module one. It's the mentality of the CPS model. Six little words that so many people have told me really got the ball rolling on changing their lenses. Kids do well if they can. The belief that if this kid could do well, they would do well, and that if the kid isn't doing well, something must be getting in the way. What's getting in the way of them responding to problems and frustrations adaptively? Skills, like, as you've already heard, flexibility, adaptability, frustration tolerance, problem solving, emotion regulation, plus a whole bunch more.

What are they getting frustrated about? Expectations they're having difficulty reliably meeting, expectations they would meet if they could meet them. In other words, these kids would very much prefer to be handling frustration adaptively and would very much prefer to be meeting our expectations. Because doing well is preferable. Kids do well if they can encompasses all of that.

I think the reason kids do all if they can is a big deal for a lot of people is because of a much more popular mentality that's been out there for a very long time called *kids do all if they wanna*. Now, *kids do all if they can* and *kids do all if they wanna* are two completely different mentalities. And they have completely different implications for what you're thinking about this kid and what you're doing with, meaning collaboratively, or to, meaning unilaterally, this kid. Let's think about *kids do well if they wanna*, just for a few minutes.

Many of us were formally trained to think that way. I know I was. Lots of folks think that way, even if they weren't formally trained to think that way. If you have a *kids do well if they wanna* mentality, and you're working with a kid who's not doing well, then the reason you think the kid isn't doing well is that they don't want to do well. Your role in the life of that kid is now crystal clear. Make the kid want to do well.

How do we do that? By incentivizing doing well, meaning rewards and punishments. If you're incentivizing a kid to do well, you are not solving any of the problems that are causing their concerning behaviors. Not one. I've seen the mentality, it's not true, but I've seen it, that if a kid is just motivated enough, they can do anything. It's not true.

So a lot of us adults have spent a great deal of time and effort trying to incentivize kids to do well when they weren't lacking the incentive in the first place. What we could have been doing instead is proactively identifying and solving the problems that are causing their concerning behaviors in the first place. Long time ago, I asked a very important question. Why would the kid not want to do well? Here's the answer I was given. Because doing poorly is working out better for the kid than doing well would. How is doing poorly working out better for the kid than doing well would?

Here's the answer I was given. These are some very popular characterizations of kids with concerning behavior. They're seeking attention by doing poorly. They're manipulating us by doing poorly. They're coercing us into capitulating to their wishes by doing poorly. They're unmotivated. That's why they're doing poorly. They're testing limits. That's why they're doing poorly.

I don't think any of those characterizations are true, but let's put a few of them to the test, just so you can see where I'm coming from. The kid is seeking attention by exhibiting concerning behavior. You mean the kid has the skills to seek attention the right way, but is choosing to seek attention the wrong way because that's making their life go better? I gotta tell you, I've never seen it. I'm about 2,000 kids with concerning behaviors in at this point in my career, and I've yet to come across a kid who had the skills to seek attention the right way and was choosing to seek attention the wrong way because it was making their life go better.

Plus, what very popular intervention is going to make perfect sense if you believe that a kid's concerning behavior is for the purpose of seeking attention, planned ignoring, so as to withdraw all of the reinforcement, all of the attention from their concerning behavior, so as to extinguish it.

Now I have a very interesting reference point for thinking about this. Infants. Infants have frustration responses, or what we might call distress responses. Do we ignore infant distress responses, or do we attend to them, try to figure out what's causing their distress, try to relieve them of their distress, and then watch closely to see how well we did. If we missed the mark, we try again.

Now, why do we stop doing that? Four-year-olds have distress or frustration responses. Eight-year-olds do. Fifteen-year-olds do. Why would we want to extinguish frustration or distress responses when they provide us with such critical information. That's right. In that respect, concerning behavior is actually good. Not that we're hoping for it, but concerning behavior tells us there's an expectation this kid is having difficulty meeting.

As an educator, you want to know that, right? Not only that, concerning behavior is informative. If we adults take the time alongside the kid to figure out what's getting in their way, and alongside the kid, come up with solutions for whatever is getting in their way.

Plus, if we listen to the voices of the neurodivergent community, and we should, they are among the communities that has been disproportionately on the receiving end of punitive exclusionary disciplinary practices, and to their credit, has been among the communities that has been most outspoken about the harms of those practices, you'll hear adult members of that community telling you that the planned ignoring they endured in childhood was experienced by them as harmful.

And you know what? That makes sense. Having your distress responses ignored is harmful. Look at all the information we've been missing out on by trying to extinguish frustration responses. Plus, planned ignoring isn't going to solve any of the problems that are causing the behaviors that we've been busy ignoring in the first place. If there was another way to accomplish whatever we think we're accomplishing with planned ignoring that doesn't cause harm, we should do it.

Let's jump down to unmotivated. Do you know that I would never characterize any kid that way? Why not? Because here's what I know. The minute we take a closer look, what skills is this kid struggling with? What expectations is this kid having difficulty reliably meeting? It becomes crystal clear that unmotivated doesn't even come close to capturing what's really going on with this kid. The trick, of course, is to take a closer look using the assessment of skills and unsolved problems.

Plus, if once again we listen to the voices of the neurodivergent community, and once again we should, we will hear adult members of that community telling us that the sticker charts they endured in childhood were experienced by them as harmful. They were the kid who was identified at a very early age as the kid who doesn't get the sticker. Not getting the sticker isn't going to solve any of the problems that are causing the behaviors that are causing us to deprive kids of stickers. If there was another way to accomplish whatever we think we're accomplishing through stickers without causing harm, we should do it.

Now, some of you might be thinking, aren't stickers good for the kids who are doing well? I have my doubts. First of all, the expression isn't, kids do well for a sticker. The expression is, kids do well if they can. The kids who are getting the stickers are the kids who are already doing well. Why would we want to move the kid from intrinsic motivation to extrinsic motivation just because us adults got a thing for stickers? We wouldn't.

Those are your new lenses. Kids do well if they can.

[Jody] I think just one of the big things in regards to why educators have been taught to assume that maladaptive behavior works for kids. And I just think that's something we really have to confront and get out on pretty quick. Here's a kid being restrained several times a day. How is

that working for them? It's not working for the adults who should be teaching. It's not working for the child who should be learning, should feel like they're safe. How does a child having concerning behavior work for them? I don't understand it, but there seems to be a big mindset that, oh, yeah, well, the reason why he's doing this is because he can get attention or he can escape. And it's almost as if the kid's happy with it, right? it's just working for them so much. But here we are talking about a child and clearly it's not working with them.

[Dr. Ross Greene] As you know, there are two key facets to implementing the CPS model. Identify skills and unsolved problems and solve problems collaboratively and proactively [Text on screen. Title: Key Ingredients. Body text: Identify skills and unsolved problems. Solve problems collaboratively and unilaterally]. We're about to dive into the details of doing both.

Now it's a lot of information in one sitting and you won't be good at it just because you're hearing about it, but hearing about it is a very good place to start. Once again, just by way of reminder, why are we identifying skills in unsolved problems? Because that is going to make intervention proactive rather than reactive. Why are we identifying skills? Because that's what's going to help us adults come to view these kids through much more compassionate, much more accurate, much more productive lenses. Why are we identifying unsolved problems? Because as you heard me say in module number one, if we do not identify problems proactively, we won't solve them proactively, and we will always find ourselves in the heat of the moment, dealing yet again with a kid's concerning behavior, and thinking that de-escalating, restraining, and secluding kids makes all the sense in the world.

The reason we're de-escalating, restraining, and secluding so often is because we aren't identifying skills and unsolved problems proactively, and because we aren't solving problems collaboratively and proactively. Why are we solving problems collaboratively and proactively? Because in this model, you and the kid are partners, teammates, not adversaries, not enemies. You are engaging kids in solving the problems that are affecting their lives. Once again, why would you want to leave the kid out of the loop on that? That's a good way for kids to learn how to solve the problems that are affecting their lives.

Problems that are solved collaboratively and proactively tend to produce solutions that are a whole lot more effective and a whole lot more durable because, once again, you're not flying solo. And as you've already heard, when you're solving problems collaboratively and proactively, you're not just solving problems. You're not just reducing concerning behaviors. You're not just improving communication with the kid. You are simultaneously enhancing the skills they're struggling with. Not through a separate curriculum, not through direct instruction, you may not need that anymore, but merely through the process of solving problems collaboratively and proactively, you are modeling, giving kids practice at, and enhancing the very skills they're struggling with.

All right, you know that the assessment of skills and unsolved problems is how you're going to be identifying those skills and unsolved problems. You know that the ASUP is best used as a discussion guide, not as a freestanding checklist [image of ASUP on screen]. You know that the

ASUP helps you focus on the things you can actually do something about, skills, unsolved problems. You know that a lot of meeting time can be spent talking about things about which we can do nothing. And you know that we don't want to spend our meeting time talking about the things about which we can do nothing. That just causes people to leave the meeting thinking they can do nothing to help this kid. You can do something to help this kid, especially if you're talking about skills and unsolved problems.

You know that the easy part of using the ASUP is identifying skills the kid is struggling with, checking off those skills, and that's about a three to five minute process. It's fast. The rule of thumb here is ten seconds per skill, five seconds to read it, five seconds to decide whether to check it off. That's about three to five minutes.

The hard part is writing unsolved problems. And you're going to get the ball rolling on writing unsolved problems by using the prompts that are in the unsolved problems section on the ASUP [image of ASUP worksheet Step 2: Unsolved Problems section on screen]. Are there specific tasks or expectations the student is having difficulty completing or getting started on? Are there classmates the student is having difficulty getting along with in specific conditions? Are there tasks and activities the student is having difficulty moving from or to? Are there classes or activities a student is having difficulty attending or being on time to?

We recommend that you go in order with the prompts. We recommend that you not prompt hop, meaning stick with the prompts in order and don't move on to the next one until you exhaust the one that came before it. You know that's how you're going to identify all of the expectations this student is having difficulty meeting in your building over the course of a school day. Once again, well done. No one ever did it before you.

The hard part is the wording of the unsolved problem, which is going to translate directly into the words that you're going to use when you're introducing the unsolved problem to the kid when it comes time to solve it together. Poorly worded unsolved problems often cause the problem-solving process to come to a dead stop before it even gets started. So there are four guidelines for the wording of unsolved problems, and that's the part I didn't give you any instruction on in module number one. Let's do that now.

[Text on screen: Title, Using the ASUP: Guidelines for Wording Unsolved Problems] The wording of the unsolved problem contains no concerning behaviors [text on screen: Free of concerning behaviors]. I'll explain why in a moment. The wording of the unsolved problem contains no adult theories [text on screen: Free of adult theories]. I'll explain that soon. The wording of the unsolved problem is split, not clumped, meaning micro, not macro [text on screen: Split, not clumped]. I'll explain. And the wording of the unsolved problem is as specific as possible [text on screen: As specific as possible].

Let's go back to guideline number one, which tends to be the easiest of the four. Why are we leaving the concerning behavior out of the wording of the unsolved problem? Because if you throw concerning behavior at the kid, when you're trying to get started solving a problem with

them, they're going to think they're in trouble, they're going to become defensive, and they're far less likely to talk to you.

So you wouldn't write in, gets upset and runs out of the room when trying to complete the double-digit division problems on the worksheet in math. Gets upset and runs out of the room, is replaced by the word difficulty. It's much more neutral. It's not going to get in the way of a kid talking to you. All of your unsolved problems are going to start with the word difficulty, As in difficulty completing the double-digit division problems on the worksheet in math, which is a very well-worded unsolved problem. Notice that after the word difficulty comes a verb. For example, completing, getting started on, getting along with, going to, coming back from, participating in. So difficulty, verb, and then the details of the expectation the student is having difficulty reliably meeting. The concerning behavior is out. You're not talking with kids about their concerning behavior in this model. That's just their frustration response. It's late, and as you already know, talking with kids about their concerning behavior doesn't solve any of the problems that are causing that behavior.

Guideline number two. The wording of the unsolved problem contains no adult theories. So in other words, you wouldn't write in *difficulty*, actually that's a very good start, *using*, it's a very good verb, *the software on the computer during math*. Stop there. That's a very well-worded unsolved problem. Because, no, no, no, not because, don't do because, *she's adopted*. I'm sorry, come again? Well, she's adopted, you know. Well, I know she's adopted, but how does that have anything to do with the difficulty using the software on the computer during math? Believe me, they'll make a case for it.

But you're going to leave the theory out. Here's the bad thing about theories. They're often wrong. This is why I tell people that when I'm implementing this model, I am assumption-free. I call it Assumption-Free Living. It's not that big of a deal. It's actually kind of fun. But the minute I feel an assumption kicking in, I get rid of it as quickly as possible. It's probably wrong. It's also very freeing. Because you know what you're freed up to do when you're not busy assuming? You can ask the kid.

Plus, if you leave the theory in and the wording of the unsolved problem on the ASUP is going to translate directly into the words that you're going to use when it comes time to introduce the unsolved problem to the kid, then here's what that's going to sound like: *I've noticed you've been having difficulty using the software on the computer during math because you're adopted. What's up?* If the kid's got attitude, they're going to say, what are you asking me what's up for? You just told me what's up. If the kid doesn't have attitude, they're going to think to themselves, are they asking me about the adoption? Are they asking about the math? I have no idea what they're asking me about, so I shall now simply say, I don't know.

Guideline number three is the hardest. This is the one most people struggle with the most. The wording of the unsolved problem is split, not clumped. Micro, not macro. Let me give you some ideas about where I'm coming from here. Here are some clumped, macro, unsolved problems. Difficulty being safe. Difficulty getting along with others. Difficulty following directions. Difficulty

with unpreferred tasks. Difficulty completing work at school, difficulty completing homework, difficulty reading, difficulty writing. All macro. All examples of what not to do. You're not looking for patterns or themes in this model. You're looking for highly specific, unsolved problems so the kid will talk to you. If you say any of those clumped ones, you will greatly reduce the likelihood of the kid talking to you.

In other words, if you said, *I've noticed you've been having difficulty writing, what's up?* The kid now has to think about all of the things they're having difficulty writing over the course of the school day. All of the different reasons they're having difficulty writing those things, they can't think about all that at once, which means you've just greatly increased the likelihood of the kid responding, once again, with, I don't know.

So you're going to split that by asking, in the ASUP meeting, what's the kid having difficulty writing? Oh, the kid is having difficulty writing the answers to the word problems in math. The kid is having difficulty writing the lab reports in science. The kid is having difficulty writing the term paper on Ponce de Leon in social studies. Those are three separate unsolved problems. You'll write in all three on the ASUP, and then you're going to talk with the kid about one of them. *I've noticed you've been having difficulty writing the answers to the word problems in math. What's up?* You just greatly increased the likelihood that the kid will talk to you.

Once the kid helps you understand what's making it hard for them to write the answers to the word problems in math, you can then ask, *do you think what we now understand about that also helps us understand what's making it hard for you to write the lab reports in science?* As I always say, the answer is either yes or no. If the answer is no, I'm glad we split it. It's not the same. If the answer is yes, I'm still glad we split it, because the kid wouldn't have talked about it if we'd have clumped it. Splitting is the reason you're going to have a lot of unsolved problems. But as you already know, you're not going to have to solve all of them. Some are going to solve by solving others.

Finally, the wording of the unsolved problem should be as specific as possible. Making an unsolved problem specific means relying on two strategies. Asking W questions. Who, what, where, when, not why. Don't ask why in an ASUP meeting. If you ask why in an ASUP meeting, you're going to be there for the next 20 minutes listening to people's theories. You're not interested in their theories.

And asking the question, and I'll give you an example of both of these in a moment, what expectation is the kid having difficulty meeting? So let's say somebody in your ASUP meeting proposes the following unsolved problem for a particular student. Difficulty with the word no. That's clumped [text on screen: Not: Difficulty with the word "no"]. Why is that clumped? Because you're probably saying no about many things, but I also have a feeling that what you're saying no about is the kid's concerning behavior. That's what adults usually say no about.

Let's use our strategies to see if we can get an unsolved problem out of this. Let's start with a W question. What are you saying no about? I'm saying no. You cannot sharpen your pencil ten

times during every writer's workshop. No is not the unsolved problem. Sharpening the pencil ten times during every writer's workshop is the concerning behavior, as we suspected.

Now let me use strategy number two. What expectation is the kid having difficulty meeting? Oh, they're having difficulty writing the paragraphs during writer's workshop. That just got a whole lot more specific in a hurry. Let's see if we can move that on to the next level of specificity. Ask another W question. When are they having difficulty writing the paragraphs during writer's workshop? When I asked them to add details. Got it. Now we're ready to write it in on the ASUP. *Difficulty. Adding. Good verb. The details to the paragraphs during writer's workshop* is a very well-worded unsolved problem. You've just greatly increased the likelihood that the kid will talk to you.

Let me give you one more example. W question. What else are you saying no about? I'm saying no, you cannot go to the bathroom 15 times during every math period. Once again, no is not the unsolved problem. Once again, going to the bathroom 15 times during every math period, that's the concerning behavior. Let's see if we can make an unsolved problem out of that one.

Strategy number two, what expectation is the kid having difficulty meeting in math? Oh, they're having difficulty completing the division problems on the worksheet in math. Well, that just got a whole lot more specific in a hurry. Let's see if we can make that one just a little more specific with another W question. What division problems? Double digit division problems. Got it. Now we're ready to write it in on the ASUP.

I thought it would be good to show you just a few minutes of what an ASUP meeting looks like, with me helping a few teachers learn how to use it, and you'll see that I'm increasingly trying to help them be more specific. I'm also trying to help them write unsolved problems that are about what's going on upstream rather than downstream. Remember, the behavior is downstream. I'm helping them move upstream to the unsolved problems that are causing that behavior. Let's see what that looks like.

[Video of an ASUP meeting]

Dr. Greene: Here are the prompts. I'm going to ask you the first one first. Are there specific tasks or expectations that John is having difficulty completing or getting started on? And here we go.

Educator 1: Well, I would say that John is having difficulty joining the class at morning meeting time in the circle area.

Dr. Greene: Joining the class in the circle at morning meeting. Great unsolved problem. I can't think of any way to make it more specific. It's great. Any other tasks or expectations John is having difficulty completing or getting started on?

Educator 2: Well, I don't know if this is considered a task, but difficulty regulating his voice volume. Is that?

Dr. Greene: Well, here's what I'm going to ask you, because at the moment, that's what we call clumped. I'm going to try splitting it, right?

Educator 2: Okay.

Dr. Greene: Regulating would not be a verb that I would throw at a kindergartner.

Educator 2: Okay.

Dr. Greene: And so I'm going to ask you, first of all, I'm going to ask you when. When is John having difficulty - I'm not writing anything down yet. When is John having difficulty regulating his voice volume? If you say all the time, I'm going to ask you -

Educator 2: Yeah I know I can't say all the time. When frustrated, but sometimes it's even when he's not frustrated.

Dr. Greene: Okay so we're going to take frustrated or not frustrated out. And let's think more specifically, either about what he's getting frustrated about, or when he's having difficulty speaking softly. Which is what I would, well, let me ask you, what is your expectation? When you say regulating voice volume, tell me how you would put that for a kindergartener.

Educator 3: An inside voice. Using an inside voice.

Dr. Greene: Difficulty using inside voice. And now all we need is during. And it could be multiple durings.

Educator 3: During a specific time.

Educator 2: Conversation.

Educator 3: During direction, during a time when directions are being given.

Educator 2: No but he would be listening then.

Educator 3: No because then he, if you if somebody's trying to say something, he right screams.

Educator 2: So would that be during conversations? I don't know.

Educator 3: It's not a conversation. It's not a conversation, it's the task you're trying to do. Difficulty, he raises his voice when he doesn't understand...

Educator 1: Well, isn't it, Lee, when difficulty, using an inside voice when it's when an academic task is presented. So difficulty...

Educator 3: Right. But I was trying to be specific.

Educator 1: When directions are given in literacy or directions are given...

Educator 3: Okay. Yeah. Okay. I was right. Because academic's too big. I was trying to think...

Dr. Greene: Academic's too big. Academic's too big. We're going to get a lot of, I get the feeling we're going to get a lot here, right?

Educator 3: Yeah, there's a lot to get.

Dr. Greene: Difficulty using inside voice when instructions are given during or for. Now let's make our list.

Educator 3: Okay. Well, for class activities. What class activity be? For physical education. For art projects.

Educator 2: For hanging up backpack and coat.

Educator 3: Right. Math.

Dr. Greene: Math? Yes. So now we just have to think about what we want our stem to be. I understand that he's having difficulty using an inside voice. But is the fact that he's having difficulty using an inside voice just his way of letting us know that he's having difficulty with each of these things? Is John having difficulty following the instructions for phys ed.

Educator 3: Yes. I think that's what it's related to.

Dr. Greene: Is John having difficulty following the directions for art projects?

Educator 2: Yes.

Dr. Greene: Is John having difficulty hanging up his pack and coat?

Educator 2: Yes.

Dr. Greene: Is John having difficulty in math?

Educator 2: Yes.

Dr. Greene: So I'm going to take out inside voice. I get it. But I think that by the time he starts screaming, the expectation he's having difficulty meeting that comes before that has already happened, right? Then he has difficulty using an inside voice. But before that, he's having difficulty doing something. Would you agree with that?

Educators (all): Yes.

Educator 1: And I would say it's written math, like pencil, paper. I think we can separate the math even from, being even more specific.

Dr. Greene: Absolutely. Mo what do you think?

Educator 2: But wouldn't you agree sometimes he just isn't even aware of his voice at all? He's screeched. He's got a really high - screeching and yelling even when he's doing something that's not frustrating or preferred. Maybe not.

Dr. Greene: Well maybe, if you have an example. Is there a time when he's having difficulty using an inside voice, where the difficulty using the inside voice is not signaling to us that he's having difficulty meeting an expectation?

Educator 2: I guess I don't.

Educator 1: I think that I hear what you're saying, Mo. I think usually it's in result of an expectation he can't meet.

Educator 3: Right.

Educator 2: He's already dysregulated.

Educator 2: I hear what you're saying too because he'll, if you ask him a question and even if he just doesn't want to answer you, he grunts, in a loud like, no! But that's not related to...

Dr. Greene: Here's what I want to know. Are there any times when there's not something he's frustrated about or having difficulty doing, that is a time when you expect inside voices to be used, that he's still having difficulty using an inside voice. Anything unprompted by an expectation he's having difficulty meeting?

Educators 2 and 3: I don't think there is.

Educator 1: I don't think so. I think that's usually frustration. I think the frustration and irritability is just most of the time.

Educator 2: So then, yeah, so we don't exactly. Right.

Dr. Greene: Got it. So, so our list of things that John is having, tasks and activities that John is having difficulty participating in and completing is going to be quite long. Do we want to be more specific about phys ed? Anything in particular in phys ed or just following the directions?

Educator 3: Following, I would say like following along as the directions vary.

Educator 1: Multiple steps.

Educator 3: Multiple steps are just too much for him.

Dr. Greene: And are there different activities in Phys Ed?

Educator 3: Yes. I mean every week or every day that they go it's a different activity and so we try to pre-teach, but that, you know, he still has a difficult time with following the steps.

Dr. Greene: Here's what I'm wondering. Because the wording of the unsolved problem on the ASUP is the prompt that gets John talking. If we say to him, I notice that you're having difficulty following directions in phys ed, what's up? Is he going to know what we're talking about?

Educators (all) : No.

Dr. Greene: Or is that not specific enough?

Educators (all): No.

Dr. Greene: So how do we want to make that one more specific? The only way I can think of to make it more specific is by the activity of phys ed. What the directions are being given about. Kickball.

Educator 3: I was just going to say, it was what I'm thinking of most specifically, I guess we could call it the hula hoop game.

Dr. Greene: Hula hoop game. Any other phys ed activities that come to mind that he's having difficulty following the directions?

[Transition from ASUP meeting video to module instruction] [Dr. Ross Greene] A few other pointers about the ASUP and then we'll move on to Plan B, as promised. First, the hardest part of writing unsolved problems is verb selection. Here's the good news. There are some verbs, six of them in particular, that comprise 70 to 80 percent of the expectations that you're placing on kids during a school day. Here they are [text on screen. Common verbs: completing, getting started on, participating in, getting along with, going to, coming back from]. Completing, you're asking kids to complete a lot. Getting started on, you ask kids do that a lot. Getting along with, that's a big part of the school day. Participating in, you're asking them to do that a lot. Going to,

coming back from. If I'm you, I'm probably considering those verbs first, and then considering others if none of them apply.

And on the ASUP guide [text on screen: You can find the ASUP Guide and the ASUP in the CPS Implementation Guide], you'll find at the bottom 20 sample unsolved problems, so if those six don't apply, I'll bet some of those 20 probably will.

Just in case it's not clear, let me give you an example of what I mean by upstream rather than downstream [text on screen: Unsolved problems should be upstream rather than downstream]. This is an unsolved problem I was helping a sixth grade teacher write for one of his students. He proposed the unsolved problem difficulty remaining in the classroom for ELA, which technically at least is a very well-worded unsolved problem. But I was also thinking that it was downstream. So I said to him, is there anything going on before the student is having difficulty remaining in the classroom for ELA? He said, yeah, she's having difficulty staying awake during ELA, and I'm trying to wake her up. Also technically a well-worded unsolved problem, but I'm still thinking we're still downstream. I said, what's going on before the student is having difficulty staying awake during ELA? He said, she's having difficulty reading along as I'm reading All-American Boy to the class. I said, now that's upstream. That's the unsolved problem I would start with.

Now why is that a big deal? Because if you start downstream, you may never get to the unsolved problem that's upstream. But if you start upstream, you're going to knock out what's downstream too.

You know that you're not supposed to be writing concerning behavior into the unsolved problem. How about desired behavior? That's okay [text on screen: It's OK to write desired behavior as the unmet expectation]. Let me give an example. You wouldn't write in difficulty not calling out answers during social studies discussions, because calling out answers is a concerning behavior. What do you want the student doing during social studies discussions? If a teacher says, I want them raising their hand before responding during social studies discussions, then all I gotta do is put the word difficulty in front of that and I've got a bona fide unsolved problem. *Difficulty raising hand before responding during social studies discussions* is a very well-worded unsolved problem. It contains desired behavior, not concerning behavior.

You want to make sure that the wording of the unsolved problem is kid-friendly [text on screen: Make sure the kid is going to understand what you're asking about]. As you're looking at your wording, think to yourself, is the kid going to understand what we're talking about here? And if the answer is no, reword it.

You want to remember that even if a kid can meet the expectations sometimes and not others, it's still an unsolved problem [text on screen: It's still an unsolved problem even if the student can meet the expectation sometimes and not others]. It's an unsolved problem if the kid cannot reliably meet the expectation.

Now you know the most common thing I hear from adults about why a kid can meet an expectation sometimes and not others. He can do it when he wants to. We just went straight back to the motivation territories. Truth is he can do it when he wants to is really just proof positive that we don't yet understand why the kid can meet the expectation sometimes and not others. I got an idea. Let's ask the kid about that.

And finally, here's what you want to remember. The wording of the unsolved problem is the conversation starter. It's the entry point to getting the kid talking about things they're struggling with. And as a conversation starter or an entry point, it is far superior to trying to talk with kids about their concerning behavior [text on screen: Kids are far more likely to talk about unsolved problems than concerning behavior].

Here's what talking with kids about their concerning behavior sounds like. This should sound familiar. I noticed you hit Billy on the playground. What's going on? You're going to get, I don't know. Why are you going to get, I don't know? Because talking with kids about their concerning behavior causes them to think they're in trouble, become defensive, and stop talking. The other possibility is that the kid will say, No, I didn't. Ah, denial, the most primitive of defense mechanisms. Now what do we say? Well, I saw you hit Billy. Well, I didn't. Well, I saw you. No, you didn't.

Is this conversation going anywhere? Let's try talking with this kid about an unsolved problem instead. I've noticed that you and Billy have difficulty agreeing on the rules of the four-square game during recess. What's up? He always changes the rules so that he wins. Is the conversation now started? It is. Keep going.

All right, here's something else you know. You're going to need to prioritize those unsolved problems because you can't work on everything at once. Prioritizing means safety first. Once again, any unsolved problem causing safety issues is a very high priority [text on screen: Safety: Unsolved problems contributing to unsafe behaviors]. If you don't have safety issues, it's either going to be frequency, the unsolved problems that are occurring the most, or gravity, the unsolved problems having the greatest negative impact on this kid's life or the lives of others.

You know that you are never working on more than three unsolved problems at any particular point in time with a kid. The rest are being put on hold, at least for now. How are you keeping track of the ones you're working on? You learned this in module one, the problem solving plan [image on screen of the Problem Solving Plan]. It's how you're keeping track of the unsolved problems you're working on right now, and your progress in solving them, and by process of elimination, the ones you are not working on right now. How are we going to handle those problems?

[Voiceover with text on screen] Module 2, Part 2. *What to expect*. Deep dive on the three steps of Plan B, including: drilling strategies and how to engage kids who can talk but aren't and those who aren't talking because they can't, video example of the Empathy step, and guidance on why a solution might not work or stand the test of time.

[Dr. Ross Greene] How are we going to handle those problems. You already know you have three options. Plan A, Plan B, and Plan C [Image on screen titled: Options for Handling Unsolved Problems. Plan A: Solve the problem unilaterally. Plan B: Solve the problem collaboratively. Plan C: Put the expectation on hold for now].

Coming up next, you're going to be getting a lot more detail on two of them, B and C. Plan A is where you're solving a problem unilaterally. Once again, that's where the adult decides what's getting in the kid's way, and the adult decides what the solution is. Somebody very important missing from that scenario, the kid, and that's why you're almost never using Plan A when you're implementing this model. Once again, it's not that you're allergic to it, it's just that you don't need it anymore. So the fact that we call it Plan A does not indicate that it is preferred. Us humans are much more likely to end up in Plan A in the heat of the moment, which is another good reason to stay out of the heat of the moment.

Note the two that you're to be using almost exclusively when you're implementing this model are Plan B and Plan C. So let's get into some of the details [text on screen titled: Plan C Put the Expectation on Hold for Now. Body text: Prioritizing/Triaging: You can't solve everything at once. Expectation management: Taking a very close look at whether a child can meet the expectations being placed on them and removing expectations that are out of reach at this point in their development. Stabilizing: Unsolved problems that have been put on hold don't cause concerning behavior. *Stabilization comes before education*].

This you know already. You know that you're using Plan C for one of three reasons. Reason number one, you're prioritizing or triaging because you can't solve everything at once. And if you try to solve everything at once, you'll end up solving nothing at all. Reason number two that you're using plan C, expectation management. You've concluded, perhaps during the ASUP meeting, that this expectation is out of range for this kid at this point in this kid's development. Once again, out of range forever? No, out of range for now. And, you know this already, the third reason you'd use Plan C is because this is a kid who is so reactive, so volatile, so unstable that they are not really in a position to meet almost any expectations right now. We're going to have to stabilize them first. Stabilizing kids means a lot of Plan C, and it might also be, as you've already heard, a lot of consultation with parents and outside mental health providers, and perhaps someone who's doing prescribing to get this kid back to stability. Stabilization comes before education. We're not going to get much educating done until this kid is stabilized. And the last thing we'd want to do is put expectations on this kid that we already know they can't meet and destabilize them further.

[Amy] If a student is having difficulty during writing and we've tried all the accommodations and we've tried supporting and changing the environment etc. and that's still escalating that student, something that's on the table for us is, should we not do writing for a while? Should we do something else? And that was initially really hard for people even to consider that because we're teachers, we teach writing, we're elementary school teachers, we teach math, that's what we do.

When we remove an academic expectation, such as writing, we really are hitting the pause button. So it is something that we will come back to.

[Dr. Ross Greene] What we didn't cover in Module one is what Plan C looks like. There are two forms of Plan C, proactive and emergent. Which form of Plan C should you be using 99.9% of the time? Proactive, because you already did the ASUP, you already did the problem-solving plan, you already know what problems you're trying to solve, and you know which ones you've placed on hold. That's proactive Plan C. Now, one form of proactive Plan C is to just not bring up the expectation, but in a classroom, that might not be feasible because you've got 25 other kids in there, and you don't want to risk this kid wandering around the classroom bugging other kids just because you've removed an expectation.

So what you probably want to do instead is come up with a plan for what they're going to be doing instead of that expectation. We call that an interim plan [text on screen: Interim Plan: A collaboratively-arrived-upon plan for what the student is going to be doing while a given expectation is on hold]. An interim plan is a plan that you and the kid come up with together for what they're going to be doing while the rest of the class is working on an expectation that has been removed for them, at least for now. Notice, it's still collaborative. You and the kid are doing this together, but it's not a solution. A solution means you'd be solving the problem. An interim plan means you're just coming up with a plan for what the kid's going to be doing instead of meeting that expectation.

Here's what that conversation would sound like. Buddy, you know how we've been working on a few things with you lately? We've been working on those double-digit division problems you've been having difficulty completing on the worksheet in math. We've been working on the difficulty you and Billy have been having agreeing on the rules of the four-square game. We've been working on the difficulty you've been having getting along with Trevor on the school bus in the morning. There's your three. The problem-solving plan is now full. All right, back to the conversation. I'm thinking if we tried working with you on that social studies project you fell behind on, it'd be too much. How about you don't got to work on the social studies project right now? How about me and you figure out what you're going to be doing while the rest of the class is working on their social studies projects, and we'll get back to the social studies project just as soon as we get some of these other ones solved. Is that giving in? No. Is that giving up? No. Is that selling the kids short? No. Is that prioritizing? Yeah.

Emergency plan C is when you remove an expectation in the heat of the moment, often because of a kid's strong reaction. But if you're using the ASUP to identify unsolved problems proactively, and you're using the problem-solving plan to decide which ones you're trying to solve and which ones you're putting on hold, you should almost never find yourself using Emergency Plan C. It's there if you need it. But if we use it, we've got to ask ourselves, is that an unsolved problem we missed? Is that an unsolved problem that we meant to put on hold, but inadvertently placed on the kid? We should almost never be using Emergency Plan C.

You might get some pushback on Plan C. Maybe from other kids in the class, or from other adults in the building or from the parents of the well-behaved kids. Let's prepare you for that, because what's about to come into play is the fair does not mean equal principle. There isn't a classroom in Massachusetts where fair means equal. In every classroom in Massachusetts, somebody's getting something somebody else isn't getting. What's that called? Good teaching. Some might even call that equity. Turns out you're not shooting for equality anyway. You're shooting for equity, meeting every kid where they're at.

So if a kid in the class should look for clarification on the fair does not mean equal principle, well, that's a very exciting moment. But they don't ask how come fair doesn't mean equal. That's not how they ask. Here's how they ask. How come I got to do my social studies project and he doesn't? We're ready. We've been waiting for this moment. Well, because he's having trouble with his social studies project and you're not. What if I start to have trouble in the social studies project? Well, then we would help you out with that. But are you having trouble with the social studies project? No. I don't think so. You don't usually have trouble with the social studies projects. You usually have trouble in math, which is why we give you the help you need in math. They're having trouble with the social studies project. That's why we're helping them with that. So I got to do my social studies project. I'm having trouble thinking of any reason why you wouldn't.

Fair does not mean equal. That should be part of every school day, and not just when it pops up. Because that's the kind of climate and culture you're creating in your classrooms from day one. If you need help, you get it. If you're in a position to help somebody else with something they're struggling with, you give it. This is not a tit-for-tat classroom. In our classroom, everybody gets what they need. And that's better for everybody. And that's different for everybody.

Plan B, as you already know, is where you're solving the problem collaboratively. And as you heard in Module one, Plan B consists of three steps. The Empathy step is where you're gathering information from the kid about what's making it harder for them to meet a particular expectation. The Define Adult Concerns step is where the adult is entering their concern into consideration, namely why it's important that the expectation be met. And the invitation step is where kid and caregiver are collaborating on a solution. One that both of them can actually do, meaning it's got to be realistic, and even more important than that is that it address the concerns of both parties, so it's got to be mutually satisfactory.

Now let's get into some of the details we didn't get into in module number one. Here's the good news. You can watch this module as often as you like, because you're getting a ton of information thrown at you at the moment, and it's going to take a little time to digest it. So feel free to watch again and again.

The Empathy Step, once again, is where you're gathering information from the kid about what's making it hard for them to meet a particular expectation [text on screen: The Empathy Step. Goal: Gather information from kids to understand what's making it hard for them to meet the

expectation. Introduction: The Empathy Step begins with the words “I’ve noticed that” followed by an unsolved problem and an initial inquiry (“What’s up?”)].

The empathy step begins with an introduction. The introduction begins with the words, I've noticed that, and ends with the words, what's up? In between you're inserting what hopefully is a very well-worded unsolved problem. I've noticed you've been having difficulty agreeing with Billy on the rules of the four-square game. What's up? I've noticed you've been having difficulty coming to school. What's up? I've noticed you've been having difficulty getting along with Trevor on the school bus in the morning. What's up? I've noticed you've been having difficulty sitting next to Susie during circle time. What's up?

I could go on forever, but that's why it's important that you word your unsolved problems well. After you say what's up, one of five things is going to happen next. And it really is one of these five things that's going to happen next. Possibly number one, the kid's going to say something. Possibly number two, the kid's going to say nothing or I don't know. Possibly number three, the kid's going to say I don't have a problem with that or I don't care. Possibly number four, the kid's going to say I don't want to talk about it right now. And possibly number five, the kid's going to become defensive and say something like, I don't have to talk to you. Or worse. Let's cover all five.

If the kid says something, you're always going to probe for more information, because the first thing the kid says is seldom going to give you a complete picture of what's making it hard for the kid to meet the expectation. We call that probing process, drilling. Drilling for information. And as I always say, drilling is without question the hardest part of doing all of plan B. It's where most ships run aground. It's where most captains abandon ship. Mostly because we didn't know what to say.

That's why there are eight drilling strategies, so you'll never not know what to say. That's why there's the drilling cheat sheet, where you'll find all of the drilling strategies [text on screen: You can find the Drilling Cheat Sheet and all the paperwork of the CPS model in the CPS Implementation Guide]. I'm only going to cover three of them. The drilling cheat sheet goes into good detail about what the other five look like. The three that I'm going to be covering are the three that you're going to be using the most. If you're brand new at this model, I don't know if I'd be thinking about eight drilling strategies. That's a little overwhelming. I'd be thinking about the three that I'm about to cover.

Strategy number one, reflective listening, sometimes known as mirroring [text on screen: Reflective listening and clarifying statements]. Simply saying back to the kid whatever the kid just said to you, often accompanied by a clarifying question or statement like, how so? Or, I don't quite understand. Or, I'm confused. Or, can you say more about that? Here's what reflective listening might sound like. I've noticed you've been having difficulty completing the double-digit division problems on the worksheet in math. What's up? Let's make this one difficult. I hate it. Now, a lot of adults think I hate it is a showstopper. They think the curtain just came down on plan B, but you've got reflective listening

in your back pocket. You know what to say next. You hate it. Can you tell me more about that? It's stupid. What do you say to that? Isn't that a showstopper? No, you've got reflective listening in your back pocket. You know exactly what you're going to say to that. It's stupid. Sorry, I'm still not sure I understand exactly what you mean. It's stupid how you make me do math I don't know how to do. Are we starting to get some traction here? We are. Are we done drilling yet? We are not, but at least we've got the ball rolling. Reflective listening is your default drilling strategy. It's number one. It's the one you use when you don't know which one to use.

The second strategy you're going to be using the most is W questions. Who, what, where, when [text on screen: Asking "W" questions (the who, what, where, when of the unsolved problem)]. I'm not religious about this, but I try very hard not to ask kids why. I find that when I ask kids why, what I get back is something an adult has already told them. True story. Four-year-old girl I was working with quite some time ago, before I originated this model, which means that I was still talking with kids about their concerning behavior and still asking the question, why? I said to her, why do you do these things you do? She said, four years old, I do it for negative reinforcement. I thought to myself, most adults don't know the true meaning of negative reinforcement. I can promise you most four-year-olds don't. So whenever I hear something kind of sketchy I ask what does that mean. She said, I don't know. I said, who told you that? She said, my dad.

Finally strategy number eight that rounds out the top three summarizing and asking for more [text on screen: summarizing (recapping and asking for more concerns)]. This is where you are recapping or restating the concerns you've heard from the kid so far and you're asking for more. And there's almost always going to be more, which means you're going to be summarizing and asking for more multiple times in every empathy step. When there's no more, the empathy step is done.

[Text on screen and voiceover:

Title: An Example of Drilling.

Body text:

- Second grade student with the school counselor and his classroom teacher
- Unsolved problem: Difficult leaving math to come to Morning Meeting
- Watch for:
 - Reflective Listening
 - W Questions
 - Summarizing and asking for more]

[Transition to video of two educators and a student]

Student: Well, I just want to finish the math page and stuff.

Educator 1: Mm-hmm. So...

Student: I just I just want to catch up. I don't want to be behind and not to work.

Educator 1: So when you don't come up, it's because you...

Student: I'm still working.

Educator 1: You're still working.

[text on screen: Reflective listening]

Student: Well, I just don't want to be behind on stuff.

Educator 1: So what I'm hearing is that whatever the morning job is, whether it's spelling or math, you want to know that it's all done before you come to morning meeting.

Student: Yeah.

Educator 1: Okay.

Student: Well, if you do it like after a few times, then I guess I know you're serious about it.

Educator 1: Oh, so wait, let me make sure I'm clear on this. What do you mean if you do it a few times? If I do what a few times?

[text on screen: W Questions]

Student: I'm just like hurrying on the page, trying to finish it as fast as I can.

Educator 1: So what have I done a few times that you're hurrying on the page? Can you?

Student: Well, you say, come on, Ryan. It's time to go to morning meeting.

Educator 1: So in your head you're thinking...

Student: Finish work, finish work.

Educator 1: In your head you're saying over and over, finish work, finish work, finish work.

[text on screen: Reflective listening x3]

Educator 1: How do you know when I'm serious?

Student: Because you go like, Ryan, come on.

Educator 1: So my face will do something?

Student: Yeah. Sort of like the sound of your voice.

Educator 1: The sound of my voice. So I use a different tone when I ask you after a few times as opposed to one time?

Student: Do you even know you're doing that?

Educator 1: These are all the things I've heard. Let me go through them [text on screen: Summarizing and asking for more]. When it's time for morning meeting, you really wanna get your work done. And you don't wanna come up until you're done with your work. Does that seem right? Okay, because if you have anything to add or if I'm not saying it clearly, I want you to let me know. The second thing is that you'll keep working because you know that I'm going to probably remind you and when I do it in the way that seems that, uh-oh, I'm gonna get in trouble if I don't go.

[Transition from video to module instruction] [Dr. Ross Greene] The second possible response to what's up is, don't know or the kid not responding at all. I have a few tips for you before we get into the weeds on this. First, don't freak out. I don't know and silence are fairly standard in the empathy step. Tip number two, keep drilling. But if the kid ultimately doesn't respond, we need to figure out why. And figuring out why means taking a look in the mirror. Are there things we adults might be doing that's making it hard for the kid to talk to us? Let's cover some of the possibilities.

[text on screen: Title: Plan B 1. The Empathy Step. The kid says nothing or "I don't know".

Figure out why: Adult Factors

- You used Plan A
- You used Emergency Plan B instead of Proactive Plan B
- The unsolved problem wasn't worded according to the guidelines
- Demeanor (facial expression, tone of voice, etc.)]

You didn't use plan B. You used plan A, which means you weren't even interested in what the kid had to say, and they figured that out pretty quick. You didn't use proactive plan B. You used emergency plan B. So you've added heat and rush to the mix. Since you're doing plan B proactively 99% of the time, that shouldn't be an issue very often.

Maybe you didn't word the unsolved problem according to the guidelines. You threw concerning behavior at the kid so they thought they were in trouble. You threw a theory at the kid and it confused them. You clumped it so they couldn't respond. It wasn't specific enough so they had trouble responding to that too.

Possibility number four, and by the way I'm not being exhaustive here, you might be doing plan B but your demeanor says Plan A, your facial expression, your tone of voice. Remember, when

you're doing Plan B with a kid, you're not mad. They're not in trouble. We just have a problem to solve.

Are there things about the kid that might make it hard for them to respond to what's up? Yes, of course. [text on screen: Title: Plan B 1. The Empathy Step. The kid says nothing or "I don't know". Figure out why: Child Factors

- The kid doesn't trust you and/or the process yet (due to lots of experience with Plan A)
- The kid has lost faith and doesn't see the point in talking anymore
 - Strategy: "Was it always so?"
- The kid needs time to think (adults better get comfortable with silence)
- The kid just doesn't know or is having difficulty putting their thoughts into words
 - Strategy: Educated guessing/hypothesis testing]

Possibility number one, the kid doesn't trust you yet. The kid doesn't trust the process yet. They have a lot of experience with Plan A and they're still betting on the plan A horse. If this kid's had 1,500 plan A's in their life, and you're doing plan B for the first time, I know what horse I'd still be betting on. Now, it's not going to take 1,500 plan B's for you to persuade them that we're on a different playing field here, but it might take five.

Maybe the kid has lost faith and just plain doesn't see the point in talking anymore. How do you know a kid has lost faith? They tell you. How do they tell you? They say things like, this will never get better. There's no point in talking about this. You can't help me. Those are *I've lost faith* statements. Now whenever I hear I've lost faith statements, I ask the following question. Was it always so? See, I know it wasn't always so, because the kid wasn't born having lost faith. Something must have happened along the way. Maybe the kid will talk about that. A kid that I was working with in a residential facility quite some time ago, 15 years old, was having difficulty reading out loud during social studies discussions. Good unsolved problem. What was the kid's frustration response? Getting up and leaving the classroom whenever he was asked to read out loud in social studies discussions. By the way, that frustration response was getting that kid punished over and over again, and was getting the kid punished even before the kid landed in the facility. So it's more of the same. Why would we do more of the same?

So I sat down with the kid to talk to them, not about the leaving the classroom, that's the frustration response, but instead about the difficulty reading aloud in social studies, and was greeted with a bunch of I've lost faith statements. So I used my strategy. I said, was it always so? He said, no, it was not always so. I said, tell me a time when it wasn't so. He said, first grade, Mrs. Edwards. I said, tell me about first grade, Mrs. Edwards. He said, she was really nice. She gave me the help I needed. When did things start going south on you? Second grade, Mrs. Johnson. I said, tell me about second grade, Mrs. Johnson. Not nice, not helpful. All right, I got the kid talking. Maybe this is a good time to go back to the unsolved problem. Tell me, how's the reading out loud going for you in social studies these days? He leaned forward in his chair and whispered, I don't know how to read.

Reflective listening, you don't know how to read. and you've been struggling with that for nine or

ten years. Eventually we would want to come to a solution to that. But first I've got to check in with the kid. If we could do something about the reading now, would you be interested? If the kid's not interested today, I hope the kid's interested tomorrow. Because I've got to say, it's kind of tragic that kid's been lugging that unsolved problem around like a bowling ball for nine or ten years. And it's still unsolved?

Possibility number three. The kid needs time to think, which means we adults better be quiet. You know us adults. The minute there is the slightest hint of silence, we tend to fill the void with the sound of our own voices. If you ask me the number one piece of feedback I give to adults who are new at this model, here it is. Shh. Let him think.

Sometimes, if I have a kid who's still not responding, I ask the following question. Do you know what you want to say but you're not sure how to say it? Or are you not sure what you want to say? Helps me get my bearings on why the kid is having difficulty responding. If I'm still getting nothing from the kid, then it's fine to do some educated guessing. Finally, our adult theories might come in handy. But notice that's a last resort. You'd really rather hear it in one way or another from the kid.

Now speaking of one way or another, we have now arrived at what we do with kids who are not communicating through the spoken word, non or minimally speaking kids. And I got to tell you that changes things a little bit, but it doesn't change things that much. I don't approach the kids who can talk but aren't and kids who aren't talking because they can't in dramatically different ways. We just need to find a way. So some of the strategies I'm about to describe I would use with both populations of kids.

Here are some strategies and none of them are earth-shattering. If a kid isn't responding to my guesses through the spoken word or by any other means, I'm likely to teach them five fingers. This is a strategy I use fairly routinely [image of The Five Finger Strategy on the screen]. Five means very true. Four means pretty true. Three means sort of true. Two means not very true. One means not true at all. And all the kid's got to do is hold up fingers to let me know if my guess is correct. No speaking needed. If five fingers is too much for the kid, I'll go with three. If three is too much for the kid, I'll go with the usual two [motions thumbs up/thumbs down]. If fingers are not the kid's gig, we'll find some way for the kid to communicate yes or no. That could be through a tablet. That could be through sticky pads.

Lots of folks I know, especially speech and language pathologists, use pictures that kids can point to give us information about what's making it hard for them to meet an expectation. I'm always envious of speech and language pathologists. They often have lots of pictures. I tend to go the Google Images route carefully. You never know what's going to come up in Google Images. There are apps to help kids communicate, what's making it hard for them to meet a particular expectation, and there are any variety of assistive technologies to help kids communicate.

The most important things we're looking for them to communicate in this model, what's making it hard for them to meet a particular expectation? What are potential solutions? This model is used routinely with high support needs kids. In those kids, the first question is always going to be, is the kid communicating in any way now that we are able to decipher? Maybe we can build on that.

If not, we've got to find a way for the kid to communicate somehow about something. That's how you get the ball rolling. What could some of the some things be? We'll start with the basics. Preferences, that something is wrong, pain, a need for sensory input. What are the somehows? Gestures, grunts, hand signals. A speech and language pathologist is likely to be very helpful with this population of kids. And as any speech and language pathologist will tell you, early on your eyes are going to be your most important assessment tool. So often you're not asking, as you would see being done in Plan B with kids who can communicate already, you're observing.

You're trying to figure out what's distressing the kid. You're trying to find a way to address whatever they're distressed about. You're paying close attention to see if your solution needs any adjusting. Eventually you get to know the kid. Eventually they feel you're safe, attuned, and responsive. You're on your way.

Let's talk about the other things that can happen after you say, what's up? What if the kid says in response to what's up, I don't have a problem with that, or I don't care. A lot of people when they hear, I don't have a problem with that or I don't care, ask, how can we talk with the kid about a problem if the kid doesn't have a problem with the problem? The kid doesn't have to have a problem with the problem. The kid doesn't have to care about the problem. It's your expectation. So the kid saying, I don't have a problem with that or I don't care, is just the beginning of the kid's concern or perspective on this unsolved problem. Start drilling. Probably reflective listening.

True story, middle school science teacher asked me to sit on an empathy step that she was going to do with one of her students, who she described as being rather belligerent. She thought she might need help. She didn't. She did great. Here's what it sounded like. I've noticed you've been having difficulty turning in your science homework lately. What's up? The kid responded, I don't have a problem with that. Reflective listening. You don't have a problem with that. Sorry, I'm not sure what you mean. What do you mean when you say you don't have a problem with that? I don't have a problem with it means I don't have a problem with it. Got it. Actually, I don't think I got it. I don't understand what you mean when you say I don't have a problem with it. Do we have to do this right now? We do not have to do this right now, although I was hoping you could help me understand. Don't worry about it, it's under control. I'm glad it's under control. And we can stop if you want to. But before we stop, can you just give me a hint about what's making it hard for you to turn in your science homework? What's the point? What's the point in doing it or what's the point in talking about it? What's the point in doing it? I'm going to fail the class anyway.

Are we starting to get some traction here? We are. Are we done drilling yet? We are not. But it all started with, I don't have a problem with that. Now, was the kid losing style points on how they were communicating with the teacher? Yeah. But in plan B, I'm much more interested in the information about what's making it hard for the kid to meet a particular expectation than I am in style points.

Was the kid being kind of disrespectful? Maybe. But I find that kids become a whole lot more respectful when they're being heard, when they feel understood, and when they're participating in solving the problems that are affecting their lives. I give kids a fair amount of grace, a fair amount of leeway on style points.

Another possibility for what kids might say after you say what's up is, I don't want to talk about it right now. Here's the first thing I think when I hear that. I bet the kid's got a good reason for not wanting to talk about it right now. Here's the first thing I say. You don't have to talk about it right now. You'd be amazed at the number of kids who start talking about it right now the minute you give them permission not to. Now that's not trickery, that's comfort level.

If that doesn't get me there, I will sometimes pull the question "why" out of the hat and ask the kid why they don't want to talk about it right now. Some kids will talk about why they don't want to talk about it right now, and then they're comfortable enough to start talking about what they didn't want to talk about in the first place. Once again, not trickery, comfort level. There's no trickery in this model.

I will say this. Those of us who are accustomed to having kids talk to us are at risk for trying too hard when one won't. And then we have to remind ourselves, don't try so hard to get the kid to talk today that they won't talk to you tomorrow. There's always tomorrow. This kid's had this unsolved problem for two or three years. I think you've got tomorrow.

Finally, what if the kid becomes defensive and says something like, I don't have to talk to you, or worse. Just go honest on the kid. But here's the beautiful thing about this whole model. It's honest. It's transparent. You don't have to talk to me. You're not my boss. I'm not your boss. You can't make me talk. I can't make you talk. Some kids are so disarmed by the honesty, they start talking, because what they thought you were going to say is, oh, you'll talk. We have our ways.

The Define Adult Concern step is where the adult is entering their concern or perspective into consideration, but in a way that doesn't cause the kid to feel that their concerns are being dismissed or disregarded. So you want to start your Define Adult Concern step with the words, the thing is, or my concern is, but not, well that is all well and good, but. That is all well and good, but, is the sound of a kid's concern about to get blown off the table. Now you didn't put all that time and effort into getting the kid's concern on the table, in the Empathy step, just to blow it off in the next step. I'm always telling people there's plenty of room on the table for both sets of concerns.

What's the hard part of this step? The fact that us adults frequently don't know what our concerns are. As you've already heard me say, your concerns are the answer to the question, why is it important that this expectation be met? Now, why would it be important that the expectation be met? I can think of two reasons. It's either because of how the unsolved problem is affecting the kid and/or how the unsolved problem is affecting other people. And within those two categories, it's almost always about health, safety, learning, and/or fairness. Those guidelines make the define-it-all-concern step the easiest and the fastest of the three steps.

Finally, the invitation. That's where you and the kid are collaborating on a solution. But as you've heard, a solution that must meet those two criteria has got to be realistic, got to be mutually satisfactory, or it's not going to work. The hard part of the invitation is the wording. You want to start your invitation with the words: I wonder if there's a way. And then what you're going to do is recap or restate the concerns of both parties.

Here's what it would sound like generically. I wonder if there's a way for us to do something about or make sure that (one party's concerns) and also do something about or make sure that/do something about (the other party's concerns). The two sets of concerns are now back on the table. You are then going to give the kid the first crack at the solution. Not because it's the kid's job to come up with the solution, it's y'all's job to come up with the solution. Y'all are partners. If the kid doesn't have any ideas, I'm sure you will, but it's a very good strategy. It lets the kid know beyond a shadow of a doubt you're actually interested in their ideas.

What if the first solution you come up with doesn't work or stops working. I can think of three reasons for why that might happen. Possibly number one, it wasn't as mutually satisfactory as y'all thought it was. You thought it was, it wasn't. That's not an unusual scenario. Back to plan B to get that sorted out. Come up with a solution that is more mutually satisfactory. Maybe this solution, this is possibly number two, wasn't as realistic as you thought it was. Is that a Plan B catastrophe? No, but it is a good reason to go back to Plan B to get it sorted out, come up with a solution that is more realistic. Possibility number three. You've only done Plan B once on this unsolved problem. Your solution could only have addressed the concerns you heard about. The solution could not possibly address any concerns you didn't hear about. Back to Plan B to see if there are any concerns you didn't hear about.

Now you just got loaded up with a whole bunch of information. Again, good for you to have all of those details, but much better for you to now take those details and put them into action. Because as you've heard, hearing all the details about Plan B and all the details about the ASUP is the beginning of the beginning. Good for you to have those details, but what comes next is practice.

And in module number three, we're going to talk about how to make sure you get that practice, how to make sure that the ASUP becomes the standard pre-referral triage instrument for the kids you're most worried about in your building, how to get the ball rolling in your building, how to plan for sustainability in your building.

I'm sure you have lots of questions about those things. Can't answer every question in the first two modules. That's why there's module number three.

[Lindsey] When teachers learn this new way of thinking about behavior, you see their stress decrease so much because they no longer are taking these behaviors personally and they're no longer feeling like they need to control this kid and they need to prevent, you know, things in the moment. They truly understand that, okay, the behavior is just the kid struggling and then compassion kind of replaces that frustration.

[Justin, SEL Coach, Connecticut] I think, you know, we've done, since my first year here, this is my fourth year, we've done a much better job of shifting our way of thinking and the way that we approach the students when they are not meeting expectations, softens the response of the student. Because now we feel through the Plan B conversations that we've been having, it almost seems like when we approach curiously and we soften the way that we speak to the children that they feel like we're bought in and we care about, you know, what they're going through and that in and of itself is you know enough to kind of get the students to drop their guard.

[Jody] And I mean I have hundreds of stories of where we never would have guessed what the child was going to say and things that we learned about our classrooms, things we learned about our teachers that we didn't know that needed to be changed came from the mouth of a child.

[Lindsey] I think a lot of times teachers get so stressed because they don't know how to help a certain student and then that becomes now this student, who they don't know how to help, is impacting the learning and well-being of all their other students that they're in charge of and I think nothing feels more stressful for teachers. So to give them something that they can really do to help not only that kid but their entire classroom and their larger school community, that is such a gift.