

# Restoring “Explosive” Students: Strategies for Students with Chronically Challenging Behaviors. Restorative Practices, The Brain, and Trauma

Paradigm Shift Educational Solutions

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“We don’t just heal our bodies by refusing to pass on the trauma we inherited, we help heal the world.”

-Resmaa Menakem

“A really bad idea embraced by millions of people is still a really bad idea“ - Tony B.

“The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth.”- African Proverb

# The History of American Education

- The first public school in the American colonies, Boston Latin School, opens.
- Massachusetts Bay Colony passes the Compulsory Education Law, requiring parents to teach their children to read.
- Harvard College has its beginnings in a seminary founded by the Great and General Court of Massachusetts at New Towne.

[www.isminc.com](http://www.isminc.com)

**“Being able to feel safe with other people is probably the single most important aspect of mental health. Safe connections are fundamental to meaningful and satisfying lives.”**

**Dr. Bessel van der Kolk,  
The Body Keeps The Score**

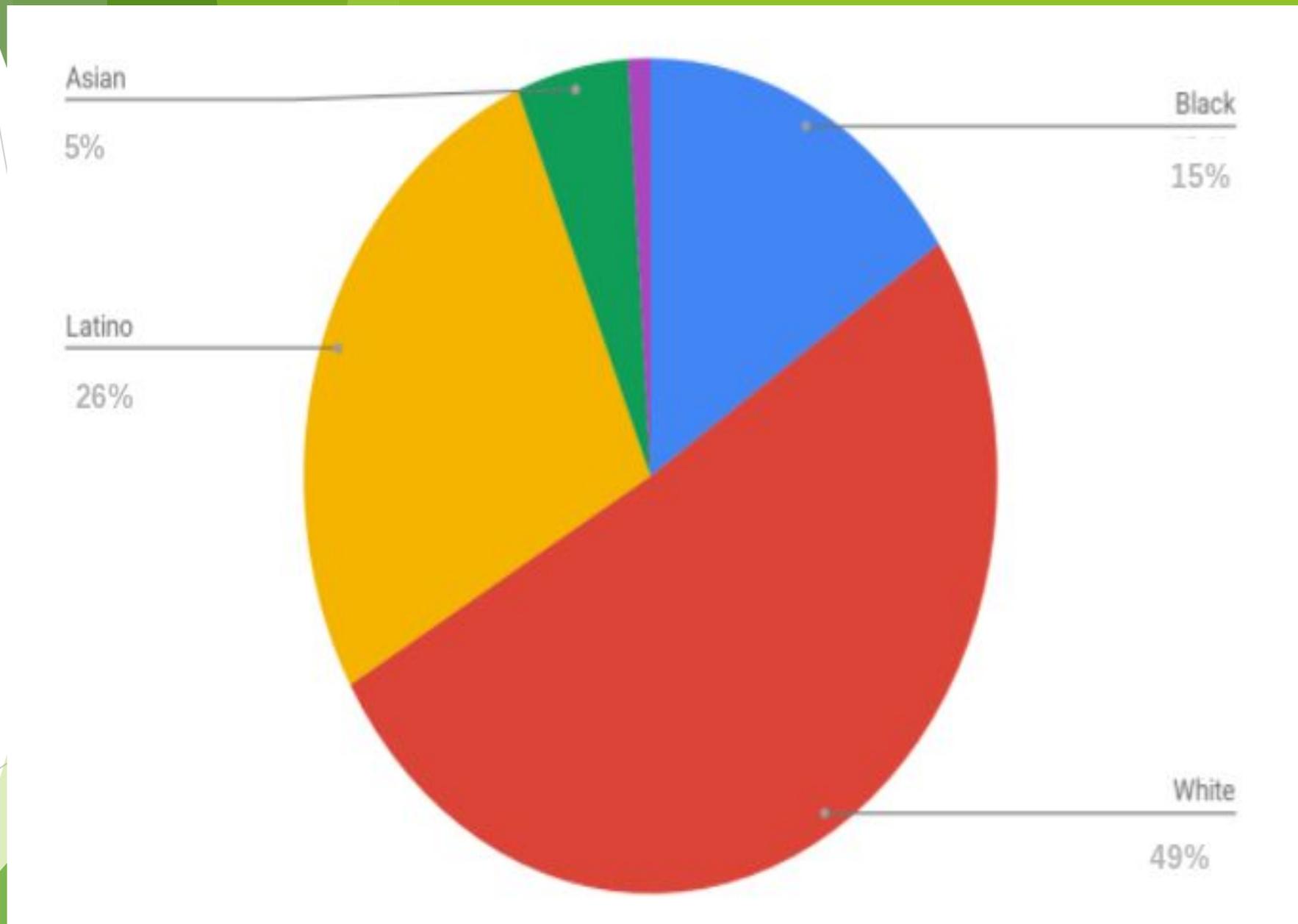
**Data Snapshot: School Discipline**

**U.S. Department of Education  
Office for Civil Rights**

**CIVIL RIGHTS DATA COLLECTION**

**Issue Brief No. 1 (March 2014)**

# Nationwide Student Demographics- Race/Ethnicity



# **K-12 OUT OF SCHOOL Suspensions IN THE USA**

Nationwide, 2.8 million K-12 students received one-or-more out of school suspensions.

- ▶ 1.1 million Black students
- ▶ 610,000 Latino students
- ▶ 700,000 students served by IDEA
- ▶ 210,000 English learners.
- ▶ 1,075,257 students received 2 or more out -of-school suspensions

# PRE-SCHOOL OUT OF SCHOOL Suspensions in the USA

Most public preschool children suspended are boys

While boys represent 54% of preschool enrollment, they represent 78% of preschool children receiving one or more out-of-school suspensions.

# Trauma

Trauma is an adverse experience or series of adverse experiences that causes damage to the psyche.

Trauma lives in the body, impacts the function of the brain, and cause various adverse behaviors.

“Trauma kills the desire to have purpose.”

Dr.B  
essel van der Kolk

# High level facts about the function of the brain



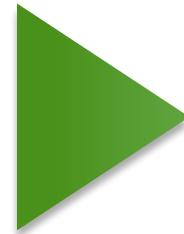
- ▶ The Limbic system (emotional Brain) - Part of the brain that shows, recognizes, and directs the body's reactions to emotions.
- ▶ The Amygdala (alarm) - Part of the brain that alerts the brain causing the brain to enter into self preservation mode.
- ▶ The pre-frontal Lobe (executive brain) - Part of the brain that does the reasoning, is logical and make sense of things.

# Emotional Brain

The parts of the brain involved in the experiencing of emotion; specifically the amygdala and the limbic system.

# Executive Brain

The part of the brain also known as the frontal lobe or pre-frontal lobe. The function of this part of the brain deals with logic, reasoning, self regulation, working memory, etc. I call it the project manager.

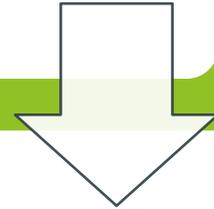


As children, this part of the brain is not developed but we are born with the potential.

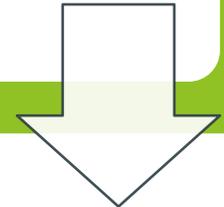


# ACEs & Trauma

**Addressing Needs**



**Building a Culture of  
Community in Schools**



**Connect Challenge Shift**

# Human Behavior:



- ▶ Human behaviors are actions controlled by the brain which, itself, is influenced and developed by lived experiences. Utility Man

“  
It’s a framework, a particular way of  
looking at wrong doing.  
It’s a relational approach to problems,  
conflict, and harm...”

Howard Zehr

## RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IS A WAY OF LIFE.

To have a long term restorative impact, restorative practices must start with being aware of the individual personal experiences, trauma, and how they drive behaviors.

# Social Development window-inside the brain

## Impact of Social Environments on the Brain

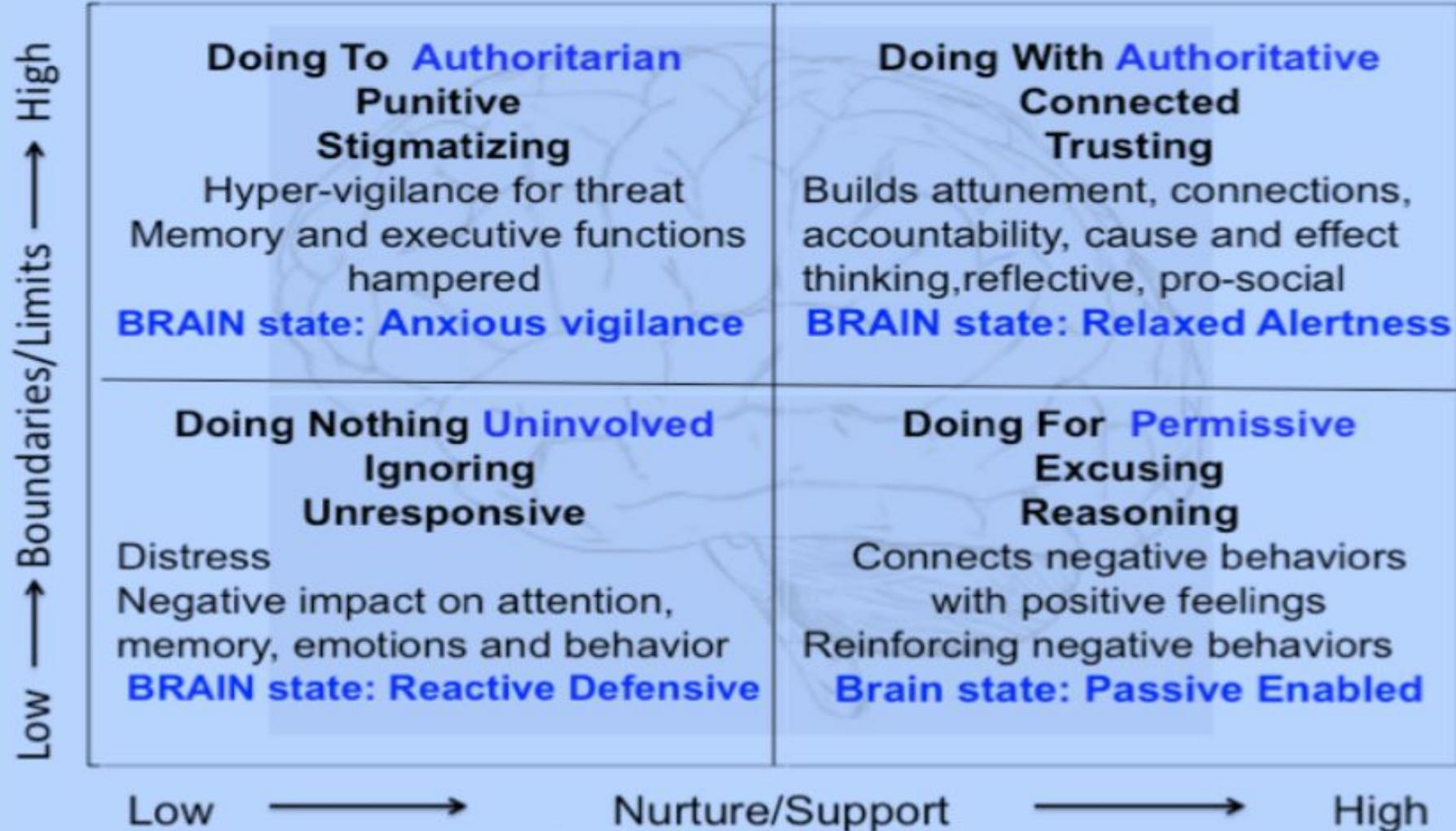
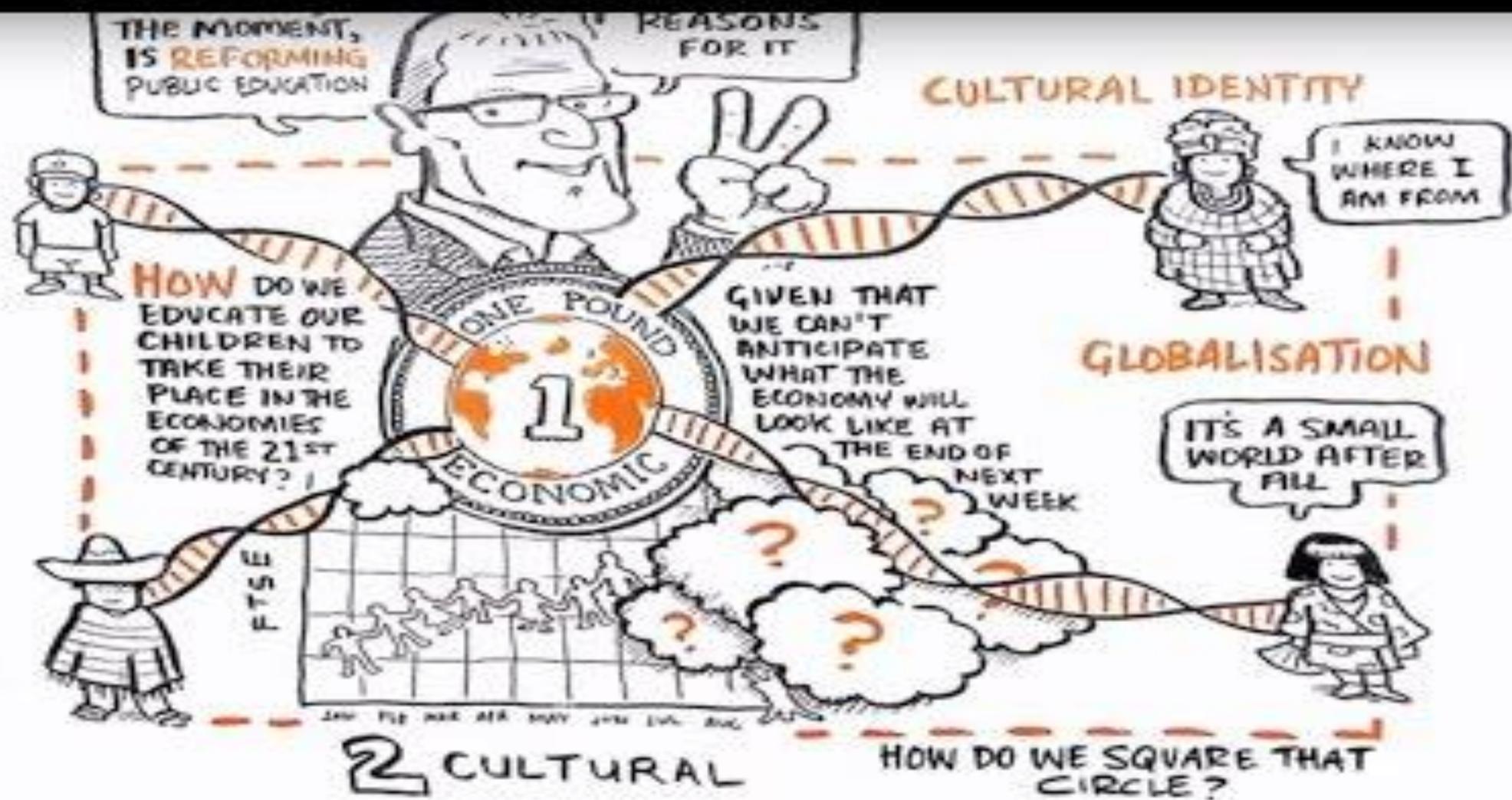


Chart is modified from Diana Baumrind's parenting research

RSA

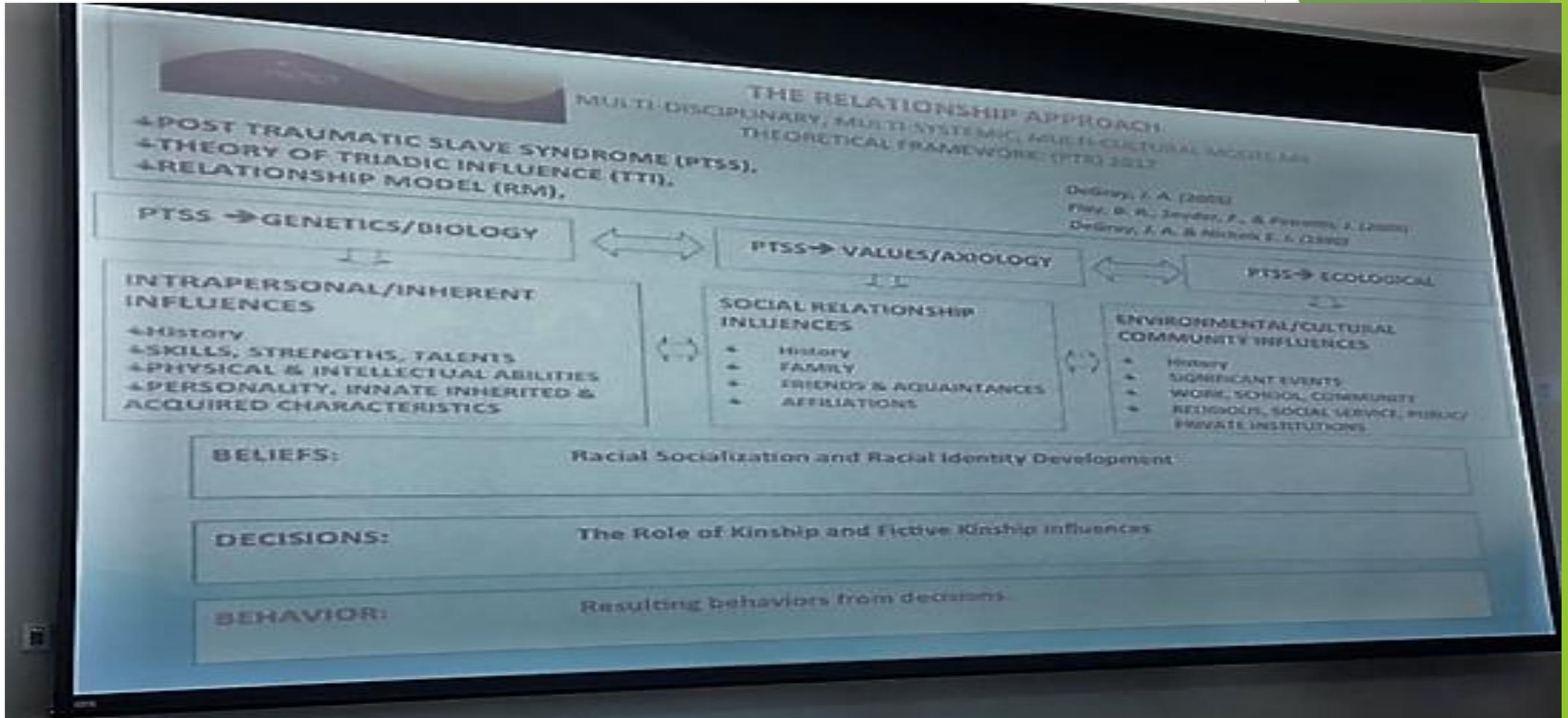
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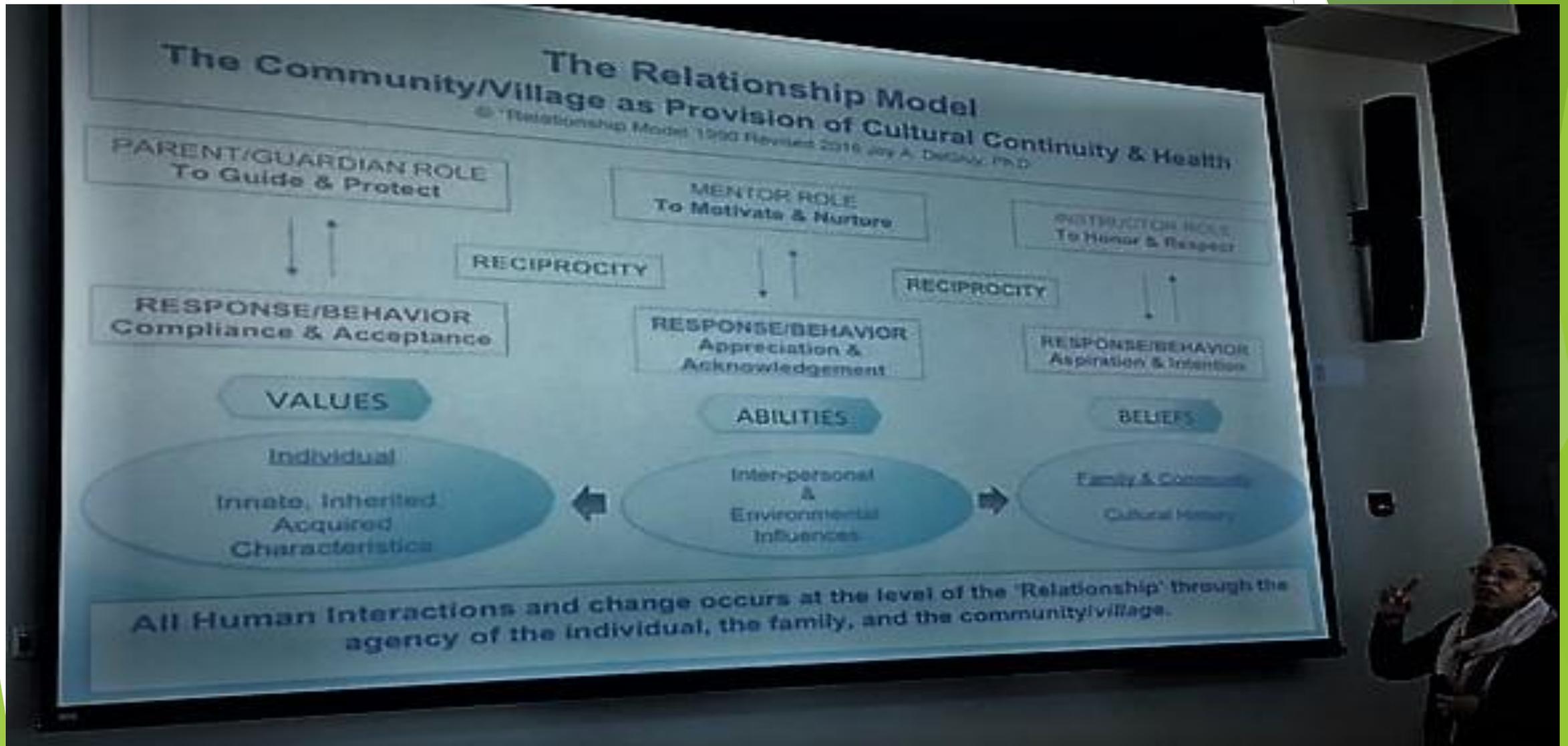
**“What we have found from our research is that kids who felt connected to school . . . smoked less, drank alcohol less, had a later age of sexual debut and attempted suicide less. On top of this, from the educational literature, they do better across every academic measure we have... It is a causal relationship. There is something in that bond, in that connection to school that changes the life trajectory--at least the health and academic behavior. It is very powerful--second only to parents in power. In some contexts it's more powerful than parents.”**

**Robert Blum, professor and chair, Department of Population and Family Health Sciences: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health**

# Relationship Model



# Relationship Model cont.



“Trauma remains a much larger public health issue, arguably the greatest threat to our natural well being.”

“I wish I could separate trauma from politics... but as long as we continue to live in denial and treat only trauma while ignoring it’s origins we are bound to fail.”

Dr. Bessel van der Kolk

The children now love luxury; they have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, and tyrannize their teachers.

Socrates

399 B.C.

# Restoring “Explosive” Students Involves

- ❑ Consistency
- ❑ Preview/ Practice
- ❑ Relationship

“If a child doesn’t know how to read, we *teach*.

If a child doesn’t know how to swim, we *teach*.

If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, we *teach*.

If a child doesn’t know how to drive, we *teach*.

If a child doesn’t know how to behave, we...  
*teach?* punish?

**Why can’t we finish the last sentence as  
automatically as we do the others?”**

John Herner (NASDE President ) Counterpoint 1998, page 2



[www.livesinthebalance.org](http://www.livesinthebalance.org)

# Identifying Lagging Skills

## Assessment of Lagging Skills & Unsolved Problems

- ❑ Tool for identifying undeveloped behavioral skills
- ❑ Discussion guide for problem solving

**ALSUP** ASSESSMENT OF LAGGING SKILLS & UNSOLVED PROBLEMS  Collaborative & Proactive Solutions  
THIS IS HOW PROBLEMS GET SOLVED

CHILD'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

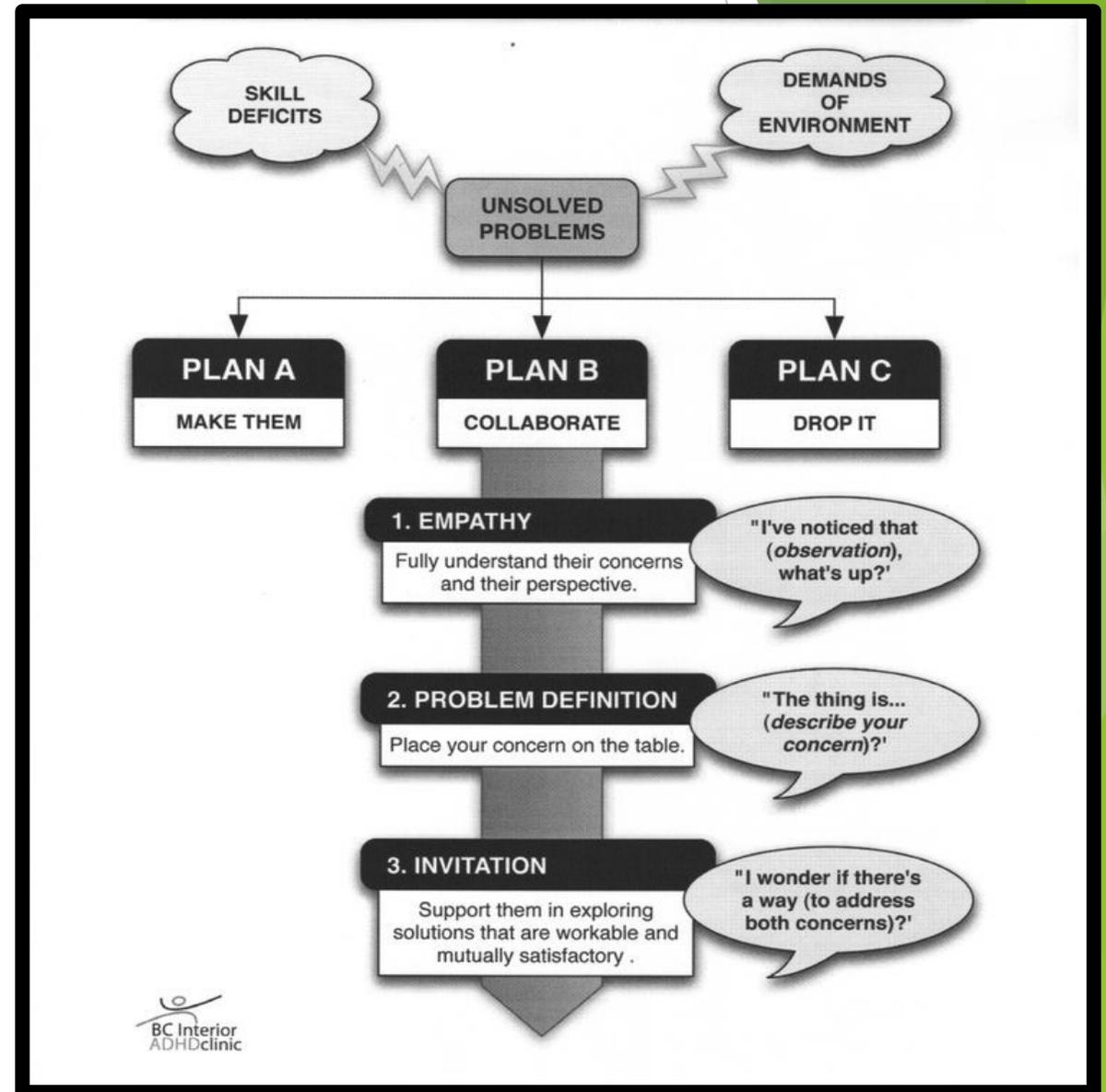
**INSTRUCTIONS:** The ALSUP is intended for use as a discussion guide rather than as a freestanding check-list or rating scale. It should be used to identify specific lagging skills and unsolved problems that pertain to a particular child or adolescent.

If a lagging skill applies, check it off and then (before moving on to the next lagging skill) identify the specific expectations the child is having difficulty meeting in association with that lagging skill (unsolved problems). A non-exhaustive list of sample unsolved problems is shown at the bottom of the page.

LAGGING SKILLS	UNSOLVED PROBLEMS
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty handling transitions, shifting from one mindset or task to another	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty doing things in a logical sequence or prescribed order	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty persisting on challenging or tedious tasks	
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor sense of time	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty maintaining focus	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty considering the likely outcomes or consequences of actions (impulsive)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty considering a range of solutions to a problem	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty expressing concerns, needs, or thoughts in words	
<input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty managing emotional response to frustration so as to think rationally	

# Collaborative Problem Solving

- **Plan A**
  - Make Them
- **Plan C**
  - Drop It
- **Plan B**
  - Collaborate



# Plan B

## 1. Empathy

- ☐ Gather information and achieve clear understanding of the kid's concerns or perspective

## 2. Define the Problem

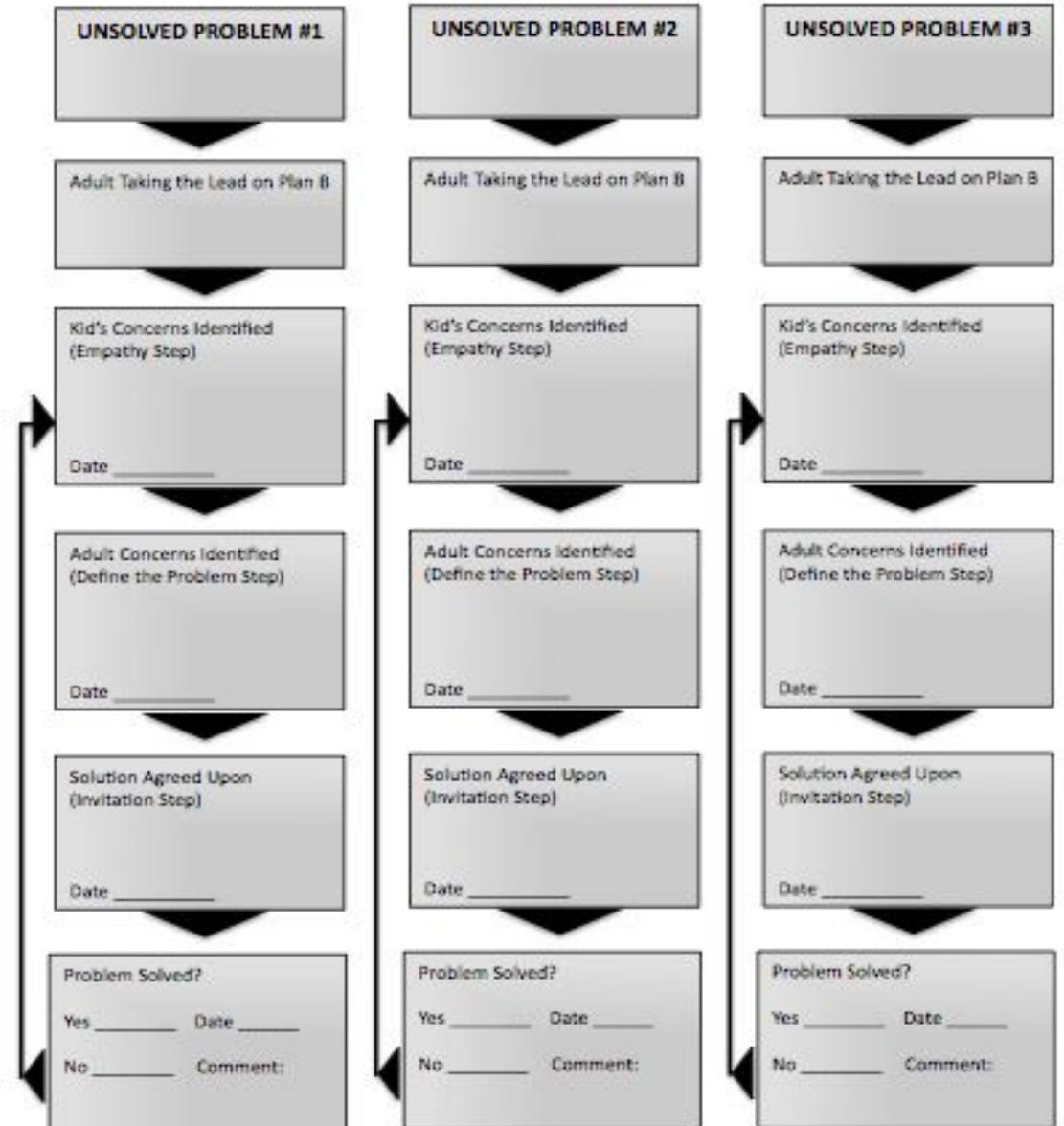
- ☐ Enter the concern of the second party (often the adult) into consideration

## 3. Invitation

- ☐ Generate solutions that are realistic and mutually satisfactory

### PLAN B FLOWCHART (7-12-10)

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



# **Response Guidelines for Oppositional / Defiant Behaviors**

- Non-emotional instead of emotional demands (control your bias)
- QTIP (Quit Taking It Personally)
- Specific and Descriptive Demands
- Do not use a question format
- Keep a safe distance
- Do not invite an audience
- One task at a time
- Check your tone of voice
- Time to comply
- Tell them what to do rather than what not to do.
- Reinforce MINIMAL Compliance

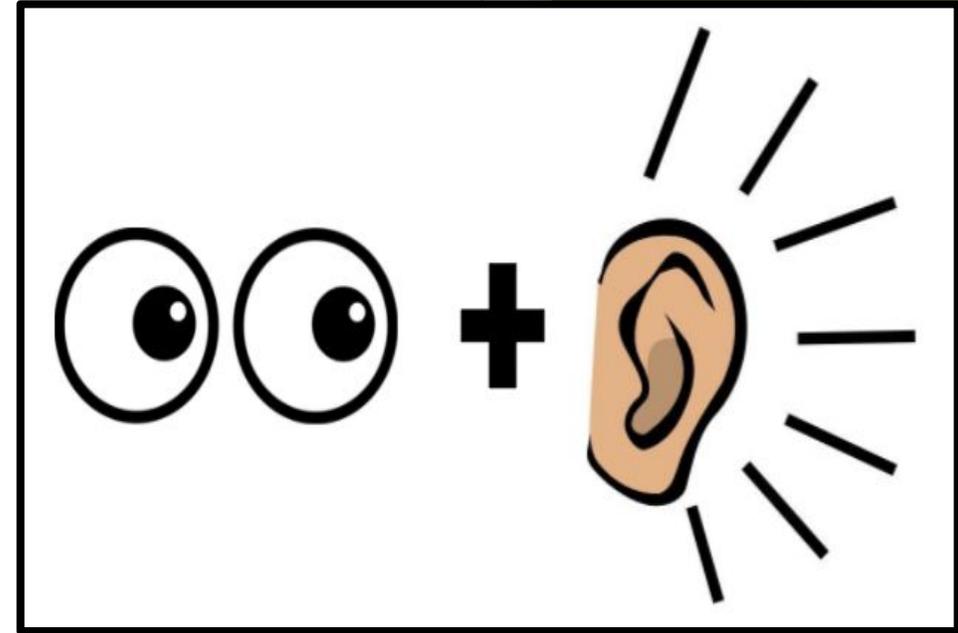


# The Four-Step "MindSet" Model



# Step 1: "Say what you see and/or hear?"

- Be concrete, non-judgmental
- Focus on body language



## Purpose:

To let the person know they have your attention in a non-judgmental way.

# Step 2: “Establish the feeling”

- “Seems to me like you’re\_\_\_\_\_”.
- Keep the communication focused.
- Feelings drive the behavior.



## Purpose:

To connect a feeling to the behavior in an effort to establish a base or understanding for further communication.

# Step 3: "Connect the feeling to the source"

- Who, what, when, where, how
- Avoid why
- Use Active Reflective Listening



## Purpose:

To connect the feeling to the source or sources of distress

# Step 4: "Plan of Action"

- "What do you want?"
- "What have you tried?"
- "What else can you do?"
- "What can you do right now to calm down?"
- "What are you willing to do?"
- "Is there anyone else that you are willing to talk with about this?"
- "What are the pros and cons?"



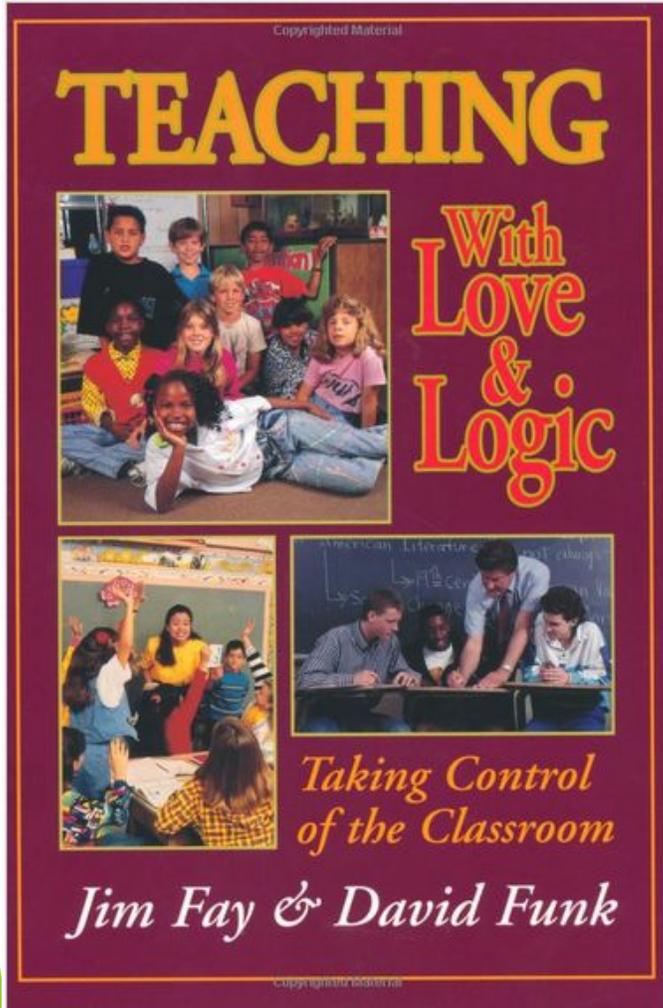
## Purpose:

To assist the person in crisis towards establishing a plan of action of getting their needs met in acceptable and safe ways

# Questions

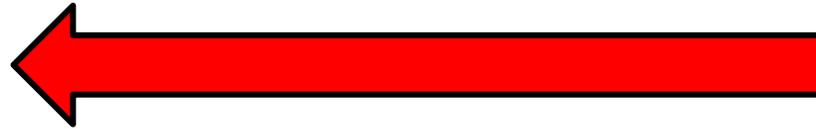


# Additional Strategies

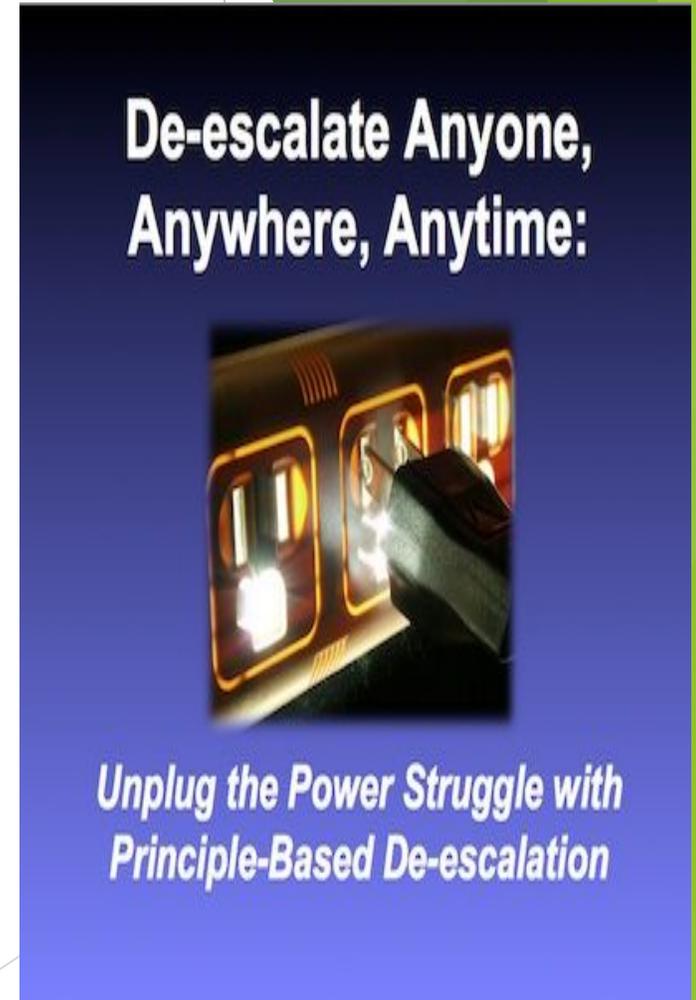


These are two other resources that offer more practical and effective strategies for students with lagging social skills.

<https://www.loveandlogic.com/>



<http://rightresponse.org/>



# References

McMahon, Steve. *The MindSet Curriculum*. Intervention Support Service, 2016.

Fay, Jim, and Charles Fay. *Teaching with Love and Logic: Taking Control of the Classroom*. Love and Logic Institute, Inc., 2016.

Greene, Ross W. *Lost at School: Why Our Kids with Behavioral Challenges Are Falling through the Cracks and How We Can Help Them*. Scribner, 2014.

Greene, Ross W. *The Explosive Child: a New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children*. Harper, 2014.

Institute, Service Alternatives Training. "RIGHT RESPONSE - De-Escalate Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime."  
*RIGHT RESPONSE - De-Escalate Anyone, Anywhere, Anytime*, [rightresponse.org/](http://rightresponse.org/).