Ready to Resolve? Collaborative Problem Solving with Agency Partners webinar

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Formed Families Forward
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Formed Families Forward - who we are...

• A family-led resource center in Northern Virginia supporting foster, adoptive and kinship families who are raising children, youth & young adults with special needs, and professionals who work with our families.

• We offer free training, consultations to families, events, resources, and systems navigation. Also - peer support groups for youth & parents/caregivers; webinars; virtual trainings; child care program; videos and other resources.

• Family partner to VDOE’s Virginia Tiered Systems of Supports (VTSS)

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Who is Here?

Poll

Mark all that apply:

• Foster parent
• Adoptive parent
• Kinship caregivers
• Birth parent
• Professional
Learning Intentions

• Review common communication barriers for families and schools, social service agencies, mental health providers and other partners.

• Explore the stages of the collaborative problem solving cycle and offer strategies for improving each stage during team meetings.

• Share interpersonal communication tips and apply them to common team meeting scenarios.

• Learn “go to” strategies for resolving conflict through clearer and more effective communication from others’ living experiences.
What are your Brick Walls?

Poll

What best describes your MOST RECENT brick wall in working with your child’s team? Mark ONE.

- We asked for more or different; agency refused
- Agency wanted change; we did not agree
- Child/youth and adult team members had different goals
- Not enough funding available
- Program/services not available

Type in OTHER challenges in Questions pod
Where Communication Goes Bad...

Problems can arise when there is a lack of clarity, inconsistencies, mismatches in:

- Encoding the message
- Decoding the message
- Sending feedback

And

- The channel used for the communication
how you say what you say matters most

In Person - voice/speech, eyes, body language, social proximity

Virtual or video - eyes, body, tone of voice

Audio Message - prosody of speech

Handwritten

Email

Text

Maximizing Potential Cues of Safety - In Message Delivery

Source: NTTAC
COVID Barriers- Communication in Virtual Era

- No in-person connections (student OR parent/caregiver)
- Our traditional channels of communication are unavailable.
- Tone, emotion, emphasis and body language is often difficult to interpret virtually.
- Feedback may be delayed or absent.
- Confidentiality may be more difficult to maintain.
Collaborative Problem Solving (CPS)

- Defining the problem
- Analyzing the why
- Developing/implementing the plan
- Determining how it went
Why Problem-Solving?

• Offers team a shared framework for the process
• Cyclical; allows for course corrections
• Family voice and perspective is considered
  • Modeling inclusion of family voice and perspective in all steps
  • Agency encourages this through policies, expectations, support and resource allocation
Procedures to Facilitate Family Collaboration:

- Family availability is considered in scheduling
- Procedures and protocols (e.g., meeting rules, etc.) to facilitate family input
- Relevant family input obtained and utilized prior to/following the meeting
- Intent of problem solving discussed as a method to link assessment and intervention goals and strategies for child
- Mutual agreement among families and educators re: identified problem and goals, using data
- Family input informs hypothesis development and validation during problem-analysis and team agrees on hypothesis that will guide intervention selection.
- Family included in intervention development plans and implementation, and included when making decisions about a student’s response to intervention and subsequent changes to intervention, instruction, and curricular plans.

Source: D. Minch
Returning to the Conversation

1) What did the administrator do to create an atmosphere of positive regard and respect?
2) The mother wanted more speech therapy for her son. How did she assert this position and pursue her goal without becoming negative?
3) What are some ways the mother could tell the administrator was truly listening and understood what was important to her?
Effective communication invites active, engaged listening.

Effective communication brings clarity & aligned purpose.

Effective communication fosters connection & advocacy.
(New) Options for Communication!

New uses of traditional communication methods:
► Emails
► Phone calls

New communication methods:
▪ Tools embedded in virtual learning platforms (Blackboard Collaborate; Canvas; Schoology)
▪ Tools embedded in school/educator communication and management apps (Classroom Dojo; Google Classroom; Remind)
▪ Social media
▪ Texts
Communication basics

► Consider the What and the Why of your message
► Active voice
► Don’t assume knowledge; Build information piece by piece
► Leave out unnecessary details
► Rule of three; beginning, middle, end
► Include:
  ► The Ask
  ► The How
  ► Thank You

Adapted from Weinzapfel, 2018
Emails - When

Use when:

• you need to get in touch with a person who is hard to reach via telephone
• the information you want to share is not time-sensitive
• you need to distribute information to a large number of people quickly
• you need a written record of the communication

Don’t use when:

• your message is long and complicated or requires additional discussion that would best be accomplished in real time.
• information is highly confidential. Email is NEVER private!
• your message is emotionally charged or the tone could be easily misconstrued.

Source: UNC Chapel Hill
Emails- How

► Use some greeting and sign-off.
► Think about your message before you write it. Don’t send email in haste.
  ► Decide on purpose of message and desired outcome
  ► Consider your message’s audience and what they may need in order for your message to have the intended result.
► Reflect on the tone of your message. When you are communicating via email, your words are not supported by gestures, voice inflections, or other cues, so it may be easier for someone to misread your tone.
Emails- the What

- Strive for **clarity and brevity** in writing.
- Briefly **state purpose** for writing in the very beginning message.
- Be sure to provide reader with some **context**; brief background, attachments.
- **Separate** emails for different needs.
- State the desired **outcome** at the end of message. Be specific re: type of responses required, due dates, etc.
- End with the **next step**, what is expected and by whom.
- Format message so it’s **easy to read**. Use white space to visually separate paragraphs. Bullet important details so that they are easy to pick out. Use bold face type or capital letters to highlight critical information, such as due dates.
Supporting Your Student’s Emails

**HOW TO EMAIL A TEACHER**

1. **SUBJECT LINE**
   - 2-5 word summary of the email
   - Missing Grade
   - Homework Question
   - Late Work

2. **BEGIN WITH A GREETING**
   - Good Morning
   - Hello
   - Good Afternoon

3. **BODY OF THE EMAIL**
   - I am writing because......
   - I need help help........
   - I am confused by........

4. **CLOSING**
   - Thank you
   - Have a nice day!

5. **SIGN YOUR NAME!**

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**General Tips:**
- Be sure to use proper capitalization & punctuation.
- Always use proper grammar.
- Piz spell out ur words.
  - Please spell out your words.
Discussion Time!

- Chat your question or comment in or raise your hand to let us know you want to share verbally.
- Please complete the BRIEF evaluation at end.
- Certificates of attendance? Email info@formedfamiliesforward.org

• After 6 years of publishing hard copies, FFF launched an online interactive Northern Virginia Family Resource Directory. Can narrow searches by jurisdiction, insurance, Medicaid, and trauma expertise.

• Topics include:
  · LEGAL ADVOCACY SERVICES AND RESOURCES »
  · EDUCATIONAL SERVICES AND RESOURCES »
A Request- What Training Topics Matter Most?

Complete our three-question survey at https://forms.gle/SNqu1zJpWyCjwtYW7
Formed Families Forward – Stay in Touch!

PLEASE COMPLETE EVALUATION right after we end.

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