

# **Collaborative Problem-solving with Parents Exercises, Activities, and Reflections**

This packet contains instructions or stimulus content for exercise, activities, and reflections for this workshop.

We may not have time for all of them, but since you will not be able to view the PPT when in Breakout Rooms, please pre-print these so that you have an accessible reference for each activity. They are numbered individually.

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## #1 Family-School Partnerships...

### REFLECTION

- What is the climate in your school regarding Family-School Partnerships?
- What steps does your District take to invite parents to partner?
- Are there differences across subgroups of parents in terms of feeling their input is welcome and are engaged as partners?
- In Special Education, what's climate between parents and faculty?
- **WHAT COULD BE DONE TO IMPROVE FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS IN YOUR DISTRICT?**

## **#2 Reflection Exercise...if you could...**

**In an ideal world how would you program your service delivery time to be more effective and more in line with evidence-based practice?**

**What are the barriers to practicing in this manner?**

**How could the barriers be addressed?**

## #3 Exercise: Interactional and Contextual View of Development

- **Reflect upon your own life and describe the influence on your development from at least one area in each circle**

[if not comfortable talking about yourself...project a student of yours]

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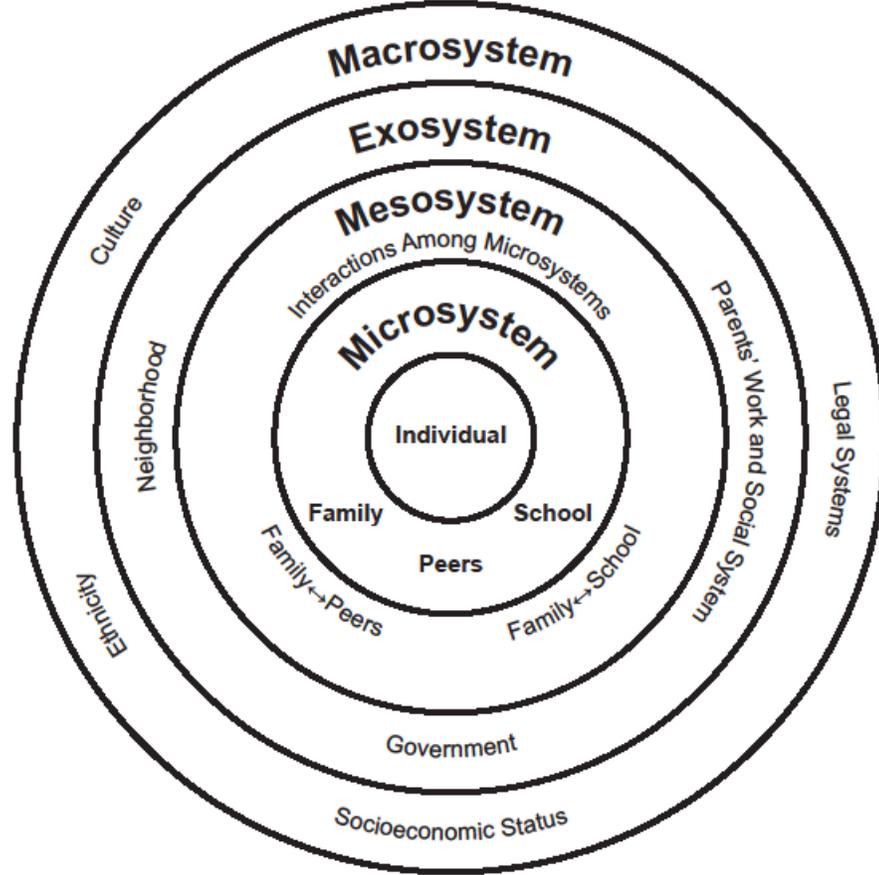
**Given the perspective of Social Reciprocity**

- How did you in turn influence your environment and may be carry out a unique path influenced by but not solely determined by environmental influences

[See Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory Diagram on next page.]

# BRONFENBRENNER

## ECOLOGICAL SYSTEMS THEORY



Based on: Bronfenbrenner, U. (1977). Towards an experimental ecology of human development. *American Psychologist*, 32(7), 513-531.

## #4 Brief Reflection Exercise

### Reflect on your practice

- What have been the most important skills to apply in your own practice?
- Is there anything you would like to add to this list or highlight in bold?
- What training did you receive in grad school or later professional development in working with parents and specifically in family interventions?

## #5 Reframing Activity

- **Think about a parent, teacher, or student who is stuck in repetitive problem**
- **Craft a reframe response that might yield a fresh perspective to foster problem-solving**
- **Share your example with your elbow partner**

## #6 Motivational Interviewing Activity

- Examine discrepancies
  - Express appreciation for the dilemma of change
  - Frame all behaviors as choices & explore pros and cons
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**Beginning with an Active Listening response, role play using one of the above MI communications to a client of yours**

**Describe client...how stuck or “resisting” change...choose MI strategy...Role play**

## #7A Externalizing the Symptom... EXERCISE

### Know and Challenge the *Muck Monster*

- **N** in ACTION is “never get stuck in the negative muck”
- Externalizing the symptom – psychologically distance self from your depression

*[“Muck Monster is voice that tells us negative things about ourselves, the world, and other people. Everyone has Muck Monster thoughts occasionally, but kids who are happier talk back to their Muck Monster, while kids who are sad believe everything the Muck Monster says. If you believe what the Muck Monster says, then you get stuck in the Muck and have the dark lenses on all the time.”]*

## #7B Externalizing the Symptom... Exercise

- Identify a common negative thinking trap that challenges you
- Describe to your partner a common situation on how it manifests itself so that your partner can take on its role and be your **Muck Monster**
- Sit directly across from each other and have your partner say the **negative, depression or anxiety provoking thoughts**, and have an argument with your partner where you **“fight back”** **against your Muck Monster**

## #8 Brief Reflection Exercise: Systemic Analysis

Consider one of your own cases

- What are some of the **interaction patterns** that contribute to the student's problems?
- What are some of the **systemic barriers** that thwart problem resolution?
- What are **some resources** that could be tapped to address the systemic barriers?

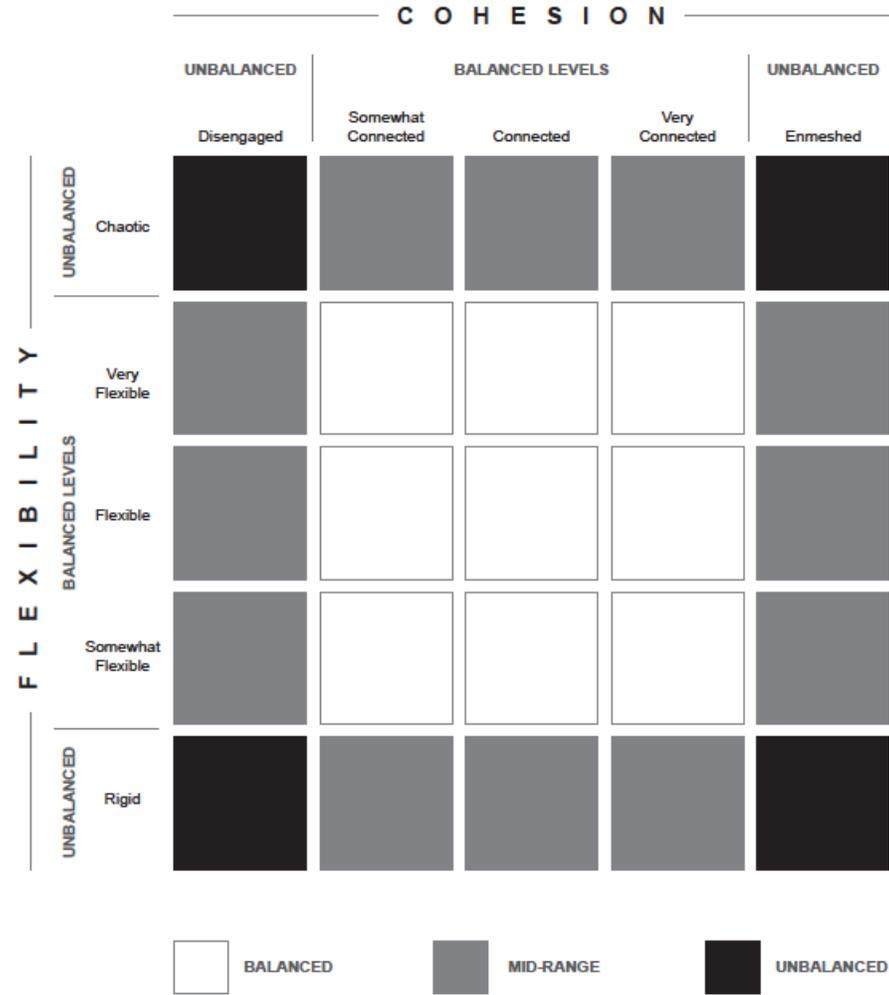
## #9 PPC 1: Tone & Goal Setting... EXERCISE

- Each **identify a case** where it has been difficult for you to get parent(s) in for a conference around a problem at school
- Using each other as resources **brainstorm how you might use the engagement principles** just outlined to successfully get parent(s) to come to a meeting...discuss **specific phrasing** you use appropriate to this specific case
- Then imagine you have successfully brought them in and **role play your welcoming introduction and your collaborative tone setting for the purpose of the meeting**

## #10 PPC2 -- EXERCISE

- Reflect on your own family of origin style of **COHESION AND Flexibility/Adaptability**
- **Where would they fall on the Circumplex Grid?**
  - Explain why
  - Are there certain kinds of events or stressors that markedly change your family's **interactional style** on these two dimensions?
  - How has your family of origin's style impacted your development as an adult?
- [If you are uncomfortable sharing this personal information, describe a client family you know well and locate them on the Circumplex Grid.] Grid on following page.

# CIRCUMPLEX MODEL OF MARITAL AND FAMILY SYSTEMS



## #11 Ecological/Systemic Assessment EXERCISE

### Relational Functions of Behavior

Think of a challenging family you have worked with...

- What family interaction sequences contribute to occurrence and continuation of student's problematic behaviors?
  - How are the student's behaviors inadvertently reinforced?
- How would those family interactions need to change to change student's behaviors?
  - ...and reinforce alternative positive behaviors?

# #12 PPC4 Exercise – Application to Your Case

- Pick and share **a case of your own**
- Share with your partner and use each other as consultants:
  - **Symptoms** at school and home
  - **Systemic issues** that are barriers to change at home and/or school
    - Social or relational functions of behavior
    - What interactions need to change
  - **Project an Action Plan that includes a Behavior Contract**
    - Contract should be designed to change both student and adult behaviors

## #13 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Boy Demonstrating Disruptive Behaviors Comorbid with Performance Anxiety

Dan exhibited **repeated disruptive behaviors** in the classroom (**masked performance anxiety**). The **FBA** hypothesized that behaviors were reinforced by attention from peers, the teacher, and eventually parents, and by work avoidance which relieved his performance anxiety. **School kept suspending him, and parents kept scolding him.** Afraid of his engaging in delinquency, parents repeatedly grounded him so he would stay out of trouble.

## #13 con. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Boy Demonstrating Disruptive Behaviors Comorbid with Performance Anxiety...

- **Father was underinvolved** except when Mother asked him to discipline his son, which turned out to merely be loud scolding, predictions of future failure, and unrealistic threats to send him to live with another relative. The result was that **he only received attention from his Father after a negative school report.**

#13 con. 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Boy Demonstrating Disruptive Behaviors Comorbid with Performance Anxiety...

Schoolwork was very difficult for Danny. He felt stupid and inferior. He defended himself against anxiety by work refusal and protected his own vulnerability by bullying other students and gaining attention for his defiance of school rules.

## #13 con. PPC Case Example Exercise

- Brainstorm an intervention plan for Dan within the PPC Framework.
  - What are the **key individual and systemic issues**?
  - What **social interaction or relational issues** must be addressed by the plan?
  - What might a **coordinated family-school intervention plan** with a behavioral contract look like?
  - [Feel free to make up details to fill in the blanks of the case.]