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Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: An Ecological Model to Facilitate Home-School Partnerships

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**Conjoint Behavioral
Consultation:**
*An Ecological Model to Facilitate
Home-School Partnerships*

Susan M. Sheridan, Ph.D.

Workshop Presented at the Resource Teacher
Learning and Behaviour Conference
Christchurch, New Zealand
September 18, 2004

What do We Mean When We Say
"Collaboration?"

Why Collaborate with Families?

- Learning occurs across many settings and contexts
- There are several systems that interact to support the child's development
- Children spend more time out of school than they do in school
- Maximizing the extent to which these systems work together on behalf of the child can *close the achievement gap* for students who are not succeeding in school

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- An extension of traditional (teacher) consultation that goes beyond the school setting and brings parents into the decision making process
- A vehicle by which to foster constructive, goal directed, solution-oriented services for children
- Emphasizes meaningful parental/family involvement in education
- Promotes and supports *home-school partnerships* in the context of cooperative and collegial problem-solving

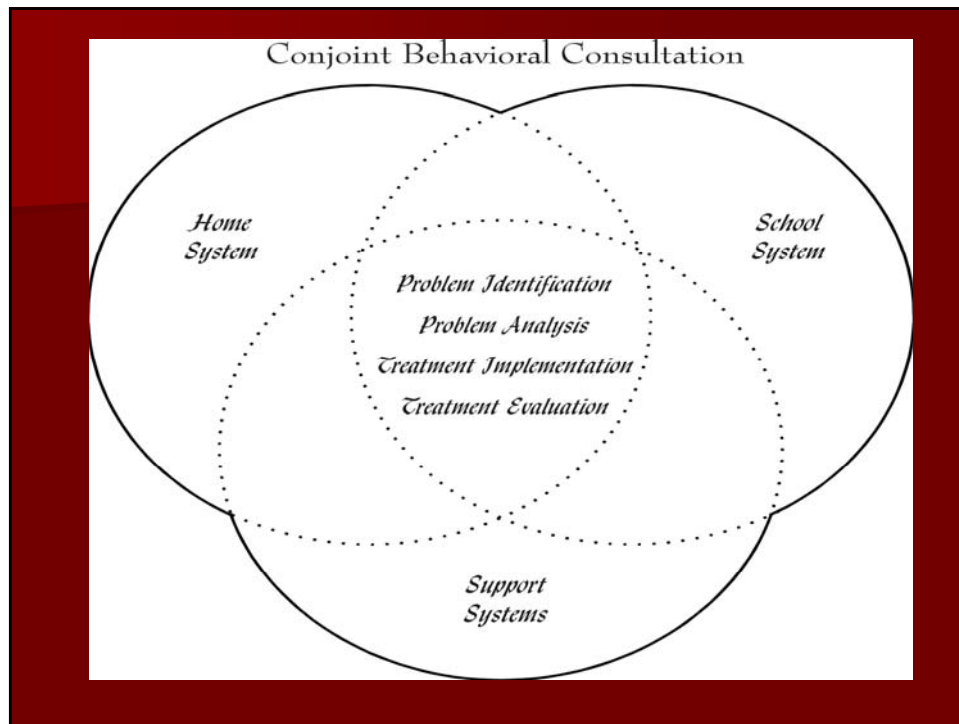
Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

Based on the assumptions that:

- Consistency and congruency in approaches, attitudes, and actions across home & school systems are important
- Structured, joint problem solving facilitates clear communication, shared goals, and congruent practices

Conjoint Behavioral Consultation: A Definition

- ❖ A structured, indirect form of service delivery in which teachers and parents are brought together to collaboratively identify and address students' needs (Sheridan et al., 1996; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 1992)
- ❖ All stages of consultation (from problem identification to plan evaluation) are conducted with parents and teachers together, in a simultaneous (rather than parallel) manner



Conceptual Bases: Ecological-Behavioral Theory

- Combines the empirical technology of behavioral analysis with the conceptual advances of ecological theory
- Allows for a comprehensive and functional understanding of a student's needs
- Recognizes the importance of cross-setting intervention and data-based decision making
- Stresses the importance of looking at the entire system surrounding clients, as well as coordinating these systems

CBC Outcome Goals

- Address the needs that consultees have for students
- Obtain comprehensive data over extended time (temporal) and place (context)
- Improve skills and knowledge of all parties
- Establish consistent programming across settings
- Monitor effects (and side effects) of interventions systematically across settings
- Enhance generalization and maintenance of treatment effects

Video Example

Video Example



CBC Outcome Goals

- (How) Were various outcome goals illustrated in the videotaped example??

CBC Process Goals

- Improve communication and knowledge about the child, family, and classroom
- Increase commitments to educational goals
- Use consultee strengths to address needs
- Promote greater conceptualization of a student's needs
- Increase the diversity of expertise and resources available to address concerns

CBC Process Goals

- Promote shared ownership for solutions
- Establish and strengthen home-school partnerships
- Strengthen the mesosystem – the connections, linkages, and relationships across home and school
- Provide opportunities for parents and teachers to become empowered
- Encourage parents to establish roles and beliefs in their ability to effectively contribute to their child's learning and development

Video Example



Video Example



CBC Process Goals

- (How) Were various process goals illustrated in the videotaped example??

Stages of Conjoint Behavioral Consultation

- Problem/Needs Identification
- Problem/Needs Analysis
- Plan Implementation
- Plan Evaluation

Problem/Needs Identification

Goals Include to:

- Identify strengths of the child, family, teacher, systems
- Behaviorally define the concern or need as it is represented across home and school settings
- Explore environmental conditions that may be contributing to or motivating problem behaviors (antecedent, consequent, and sequential conditions)
- Determine a shared goal for consultation
- Establish a procedure for the collection of baseline data across settings

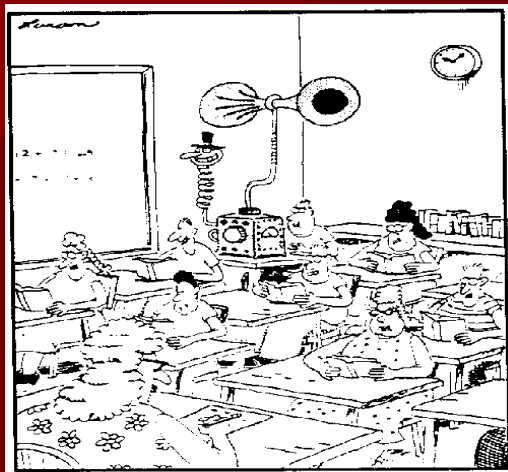
Problem/Needs Identification

Considerations:

- Priorities for consultation are identified jointly, with an emphasis on shared perspectives and decision making
- Careful specification and operational definitions of the concern is essential to ensure shared understanding of the problem, direct the focus of an intervention, and monitor progress
- Clarify specific settings within systems that will be the focus for intervention to focus and simplify procedures

Problem/Needs Identification

- Explore within- and across-setting environmental factors that contribute to or influence behaviors
 - Events that occur in one setting do affect what happens in another setting... What happens at home influence behaviors at school, and vice versa
 - Setting events: Events or factors that may occur in a time or place that is distal to the target behavior, but still influence its occurrence
 - Examples across home and school???



The class was quietly doing its lesson when Russell, suffering from problems at home, prepared to employ an attention-getting device.

Problem/Needs Identification

- Baseline data collection procedures are established and implemented to set the stage for careful, systematic, data-based decision making
- Parents and teachers should assist in determining the most feasible and meaningful way to collect data
- Make it easy by providing forms and/or using permanent or tangible evidence

Video Example

Problem/Needs Analysis

Goals Include to:

- evaluate and obtain agreement on the sufficiency and adequacy of baseline data across settings
- identify setting events, ecological conditions, and cross-setting variables that may be impacting the target concerns
- collaboratively design an effective intervention plan across settings that is sensitive to setting-specific variables

Problem/Needs Analysis

Considerations:

- Baseline data collected across settings are explored
- Trends across settings (e.g., home and school) are investigated and highlighted when appropriate
 - ↳ Are there common things that happen across settings that trigger or maintain a behavior?
 - ↳ Do events occurring in one setting trigger or contribute to a behavior in another setting?

Problem/Needs Analysis

Considerations:

- Consultant should direct discussion around possible environmental conditions that may be contributing to the problem, in a collaborative and supportive manner
- When eliciting parent's and teacher's perceptions about the purpose or function of the behavior, environmental (rather than internal) explanations can then be identified
- Interpreting the problem in terms of environmental conditions provides an important link between assessment and intervention!
- Examples....

Video Example



Plan Development

- Consultant, parent, and teacher together discuss general strategies and plans to be included in a treatment package across home and school settings
- Strategies should be related to the environmental factors that contribute to the behavior
 - *Example: If child acts out to avoid doing schoolwork at home and school (escape), what would and would not be appropriate strategies??*
- The closer the congruity and coordination of plans across settings, the better!
 - *Home programs may involve home-school notes, procedures for enhancing learning environments and opportunities outside of school, etc.*
- Brainstorming techniques are often useful to generate ideas openly from parents and teachers
- Summarize the plan, being clear about what is to be done, when, how, and by whom... Write it down!

Treatment (Plan) Implementation

Goals Include to:

- monitor implementation of the intervention across settings
- provide training to parents and teacher, if necessary
- assess behavioral side effects and contrast effects; is the treatment causing any unforeseen problems or effects?
- determine the need for immediate revisions in the plan
- continue data collection procedures across settings

Treatment (Plan) Evaluation

Goals Include to:

- determine if the shared goals of consultation have been attained
- evaluate the effectiveness of the plan across settings
- discuss strategies and tactics regarding the continuation, modification, or termination of the treatment plan across settings
- schedule additional interviews if necessary
- discuss ways to continue conjoint problem solving or shared decision making

Video Example



Final Thoughts...

- Always focus on both outcomes AND process/relationships
- Engage in perspective taking – really *listen!*
- Use *strengths* of families, teachers, systems to promote effective problem solving
- Effective use of CBC strategies can:
 - Support continued, intentional approaches to joint problem solving
 - Encourage continuity and consistency in interventions to support students
 - Strengthen skills in all parties
 - Provide a context for families and teachers to feel *empowered*
 - Promote data-based decision making across settings
 - Provide opportunities for *accountability*

Thank You!!

Please contact me at:

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