Think:Kids
RETHINKING CHALLENGING KIDS

# MGH 1811 MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL HOSPITAL

Collaborative Problem Solving®
Assessment and Planning Tool (CPS-APT)

Youth's Name _____   Date _____

ASSESSMENT: Identifying Challenging Behaviors, Problems to be Solved and Lagging Skills

Responding to life's demands requires a lot of thinking skills.
If a youth doesn't have the skills to handle a problem, it is likely to result in some form of challenging behavior.
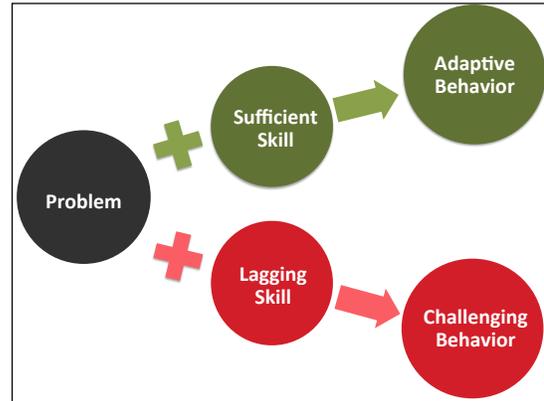
Use this tool to make 3 lists:
List **#1**: Challenging behaviors
List **#2**: Specific problems that lead to challenging behaviors
List **#3**: Thinking skills to be developed (see following page)

PLAN A, B, or C to be used	PROBLEMS TO BE SOLVED ✛	LAGING SKILLS ⇨	CHALLENGING BEHAVIORS
	The situations **WHEN** the child has difficulty. Also known as expectations, precipitants, antecedents, triggers or contexts that can lead to challenging behavior. When making your list, describe the who, what, when and where and be specific!	The reasons the child is having difficulty handling these specific situations. Use the list of problems as your clues and refer to the list of lagging skills on the next page. If the problems to be solved are the WHEN, the lagging skills are the **WHY**.	The challenging behaviors are the observable responses that often bring up the greatest concerns for adults and parents. Examples are yelling, swearing, refusing, hitting, crying, shutting down etc.
	List #2	**List #3**	**List #1**

THINKING SKILLS REFERENCE SHEET

Language and Communication Skills

- Understands spoken directions
- Understands and follows conversations
- Expresses concerns, needs, or thoughts in words
- Is able to tell someone what's bothering him or her

Attention and Working Memory Skills

- Stays with tasks requiring sustained attention
- Does things in a logical sequence or set order
- Keeps track of time; correctly assesses how much time a task will take
- Reflects on multiple thoughts or ideas at the same time
- Maintains focus during activities
- Ignores irrelevant noises, people, or other stimuli; tunes things out when necessary
- Considers a range of solutions to a problem

Emotion and Self-Regulation Skills

- Thinks rationally, even when frustrated
- Manages irritability in an age-appropriate way
- Manages anxiety in an age-appropriate way
- Manages disappointment in an age-appropriate way
- Thinks before responding; considers the likely outcomes or consequences of his/her actions
- Can adjust his/her arousal level to meet the demands of a situation (e.g., calming after recess or after getting upset, falling asleep/waking up, staying seated during class or meals, etc.)
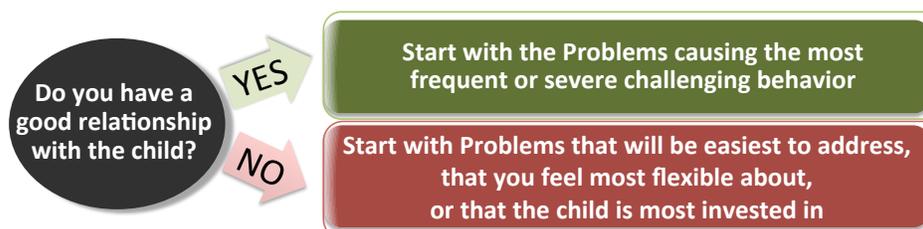
Cognitive Flexibility Skills

- Handles transitions, shifts easily from one task to another
- Is able to see "shades of gray" rather than thinking only in "black-and-white"
- Thinks hypothetically, is able to envision different possibilities
- Handles deviations from rules, routines, and original plans
- Handles unpredictability, ambiguity, uncertainty, and novelty
- Can shift away from an original idea, solution, or plan
- Takes into account situational factors that may mean a change in plans (Example: "If it rains, we may need to cancel.")
- Interprets information accurately/avoids over-generalizing or personalizing (Example: Avoids saying "Everyone's out to get me," "Nobody likes me," "You always blame me," "It's not fair," "I'm stupid," or "Things will never work out for me.")

Social Thinking Skills

- Pays attention to verbal and nonverbal social cues
- Accurately interprets nonverbal social cues (like facial expressions and tone of voice)
- Starts conversations with peers, enters groups of peers appropriately
- Seeks attention in appropriate ways
- Understands how his or her behavior affects other people
- Understands how he or she is coming across or being perceived by others
- Empathizes with others, appreciates others' perspectives or points of view

PLANNING: Prioritizing Problems to Solve

Next, decide which Problems are the first to be addressed with Plan B. Mark those Problems with (B) in the leftmost column. Not sure where to start? Use these guidelines:

Do you have a good relationship with the child?

YES → **Start with the Problems causing the most frequent or severe challenging behavior**

NO → **Start with Problems that will be easiest to address, that you feel most flexible about, or that the child is most invested in**

For Problems that you won't address using Plan B right away, mark with (A) or (C) (for now).

- Choose Plan A if trying to get your expectation met is more important than reducing challenging behavior.
- Choose Plan C if reducing challenging behavior is more important than getting the expectation met for now.

REMINDER: As problems get solved using Plan B, you will choose new problems from those marked A and C to be addressed next with Plan B.