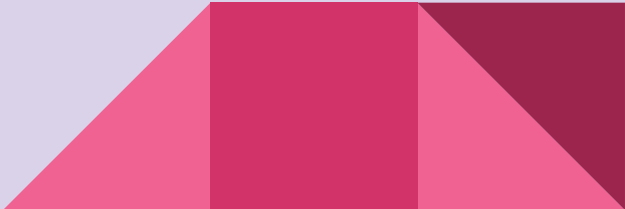


SUPPORTING PARENTS THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

*Strategies for Educational Therapists to Build
Trust & Rapport with Parents, especially if
you're new to private practice*

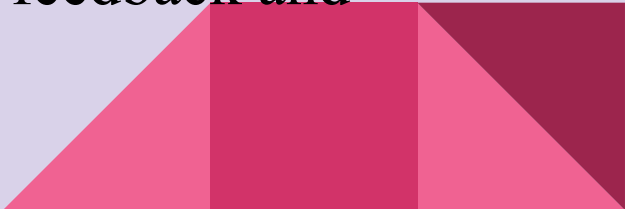
Presented by: Maria Fagan Hassani and Wendy Lamoreaux

Overview

- **Intake Process**
 - Step by step walkthrough of process
 - EF/TM
 - Divorced/ing parents
 - **Working in Schools & Students' homes**
 - Parents/School/ET
 - Managing home environment
 - **Manage difficult parent relationships**
 - Over involved
 - Under involved
- 

Our Intention...

is to provide guidelines and suggestions for Educational Therapists to build relationship and trust with parents. This information is based on our experience, and it is our hope that this presentation will give you a solid base from which to begin. We ask that you consider our ideas thoroughly and then *'eat the fish, spit out the bones.'* In other words, use what works for you and refine those ideas that are not a good fit. We welcome your feedback and questions.





The Attachment Relationship

Effectively working with parents requires an ATTACHMENT RELATIONSHIP

- *Build Trust With Parents

 - *Acknowledge Parent's Strengths

- *Put Yourself as the Educational Therapist in the Driver's Seat

 - *Establish Yourself as a Professional and the Point Person for the team

- *Define Your Role With Parents

 - *Set Up Methods of Communication





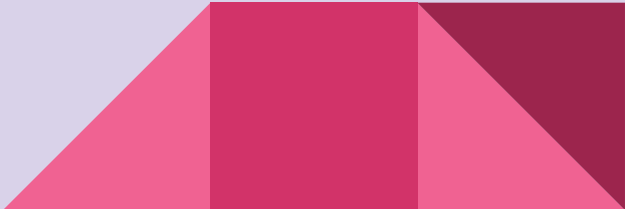
The Intake Process

Intake Process

- Opportunity to build trust and rapport, as well as set professional boundaries
- Initial Phone call
 - Focus on needs of child/family, the parents' hopes and dreams for their child and their expectations of Educational Therapist and Educational Therapy
 - Listen attentively and determine if you are the right match for this family
- Gather reports and paperwork
 - Dual purpose
 - Gather info
 - Testing results and/or reports
 - Set policies/expectations
 - Policies
 - **Consent** - be sure to get this signed **BEFORE** reaching out to anyone
 - Case-Birth-Dev. History
 - General Information
 - Scholarship Request

Intake Process

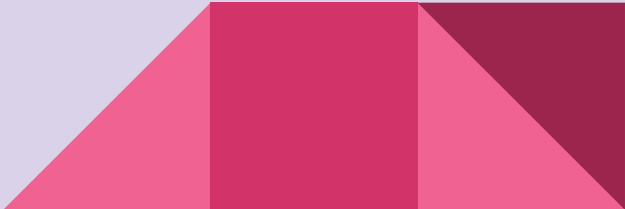
(Continued)

- Meet in person with parents and student (if appropriate)
 - No charge
 - Another opportunity to establish trust with parents
 - Opportunity to make sure you and family are a fit
 - Try to get both parents in the room (if possible)
 - Invoice (E-mailed monthly on the 1st/due on 10th)
 - First 1-4 sessions = assessment phase (formal/informal)
 - Parent conference scheduled after the first month or two of sessions to share results of assessment, review goals and ensure we're all on the same page
 - Intro and establishing a relationship with teachers
- 



Stories from the Field

Divorced or Divorcing Parents

- Important to meet with both parents
 - Set parameters about how payment will be handled
 - Understand details about custody arrangement and drop offs/pick ups from sessions
 - Find clarity about how communication will occur
 - Get each parent to review and sign your paperwork, especially consent forms
- 

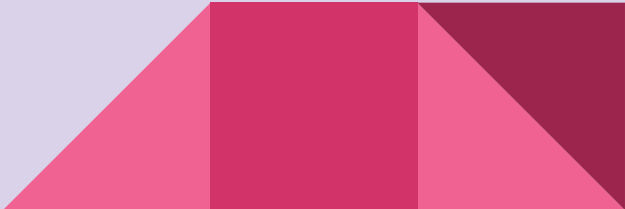
Executive Function/Time Management Skills

- Middle and high school students
- Important to be clear about expectations and how remediation will be delivered, i.e. in context of school assignments and coursework
- Set clear goals regarding skills and methods being taught and practiced
- Some buy-in from student required to make progress
- Emphasize that work in this area is not a ‘success only’ journey
- Encourage partnership between ET, parents and school



School & Home Settings

Working in the School Setting

- ❖ At the beginning of your interventions have parents introduce you to all school personnel that would be involved via email or in person (Teachers, Learning Specialist, other Allied Professionals)
 - ❖ Develop open communications with appropriate teachers (initiate the process)
 - ❖ Start a partnership with teachers so that you develop a reciprocal relationship (ET can help teachers with strategies to use with student-teachers can help ET so that ET can be more effective when working with their student on specific work)
 - ❖ Develop partnership with parents and teachers where you are the point person
 - ❖ Check-in With Teachers Periodically to Hear What They Experience in classroom
- 



Stories from the Field

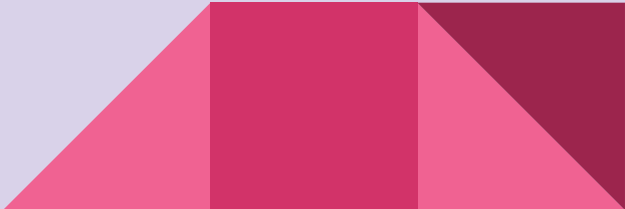
Disability in Writing-ET Struggling

- ❖ Parent won't share psycho-ed assessment results-how do you proceed
- ❖ Clarify exactly what parents want teachers to know before communicating
- ❖ Reach out to teachers and question what programs they are using and how they are working with your student-your student may not tell it like it is
 - Ex-"My teachers don't care about spelling"
 - ET is struggling to get their student to put effort into spelling and getting thoughts down
 - Ask teachers for support and coordination so that you can be more effective
 - Use words like "writing issues" as opposed to "writing disability"
 - Come up with game plan for your work and teachers work to better support student
 - Teachers can talk to student about the importance of spelling and effort and-stress when they are going to expect that effort
 - ET can ask student how they feel about their writing-(often they are defensive and hiding their actual feelings)-agree on simple plan moving forward



When a teacher asks for an
“Off the Record” Call

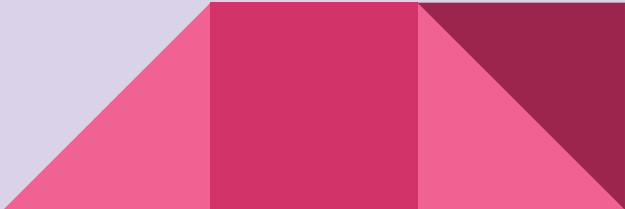
“OFF THE RECORD” CALLS

- Teachers will reach out to ET with concerns of a student
 - Such as a student’s behavior is confusing to teachers
 - Can be effective as long as it is in the spirit of helping parents, teachers, and student
 - Often teacher wants ET’s perspective of your student and will initiate
 - Helps teacher to understand learning needs of student
 - Listen to their concerns and observations
 - Brainstorm ideas how to help student and parents
 - Agree to communicate with parent after the conversation (and how)
 - Transparent and Inclusive
 - Reciprocal
- 



Stories from the Field

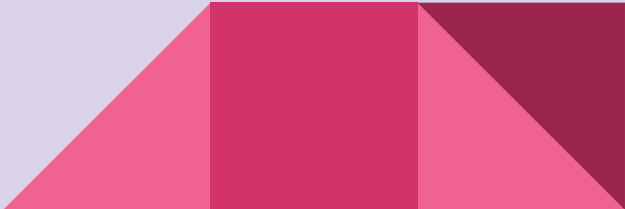
“Off the Record” Call

- ❖ Teachers were baffled by certain behaviors
 - ❖ Discussed possible “baby syndrome”
 - ❖ Teachers questioned why student wouldn’t join in with group work-couldn’t get started-often not engaged
 - ❖ Discussed possible attention issues
 - ❖ Brainstormed ideas for classroom such as always getting him started with visual aid with assignment-give him more structure with assignments-don’t expect him to function with open ended assignments or too many choices
 - ❖ I agreed to talk to parents-give ideas how to tighten the reins and give more structure at home
 - ❖ Both of us agreed to talk to parents
- 



Managing the Home Environment


Managing Home Environment

- *Work in a common area
 - *Be mindful that you can easily be heard-you are in the spotlight every session
 - *Parents who micro-manage (won't let their child fail)
 - *Keep parents informed of your areas of intervention
 - *Students can be “out of sorts”
 - *Opportunity to build reciprocal trust
- 



Stories from the Field

Managing Home Environment

- ❖ Share with parents how your work with the student in a certain area such as math or writing
 - ❖ Let them know why you are working this way
 - ❖ Ex-I use a highlighter for students to trace over to further input for letter formation or written expression
 - ❖ Dealing with a student who is out of sorts
 - ❖ Students work the parents' emotions
 - ❖ Know when to back off and make session easier and/or more fun
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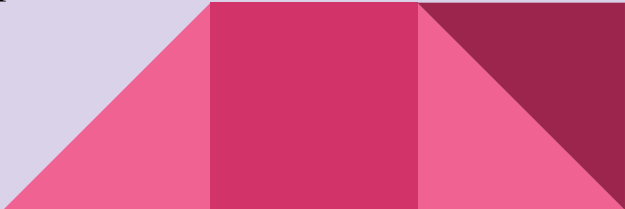


Over or Under Involved Parents



Over Involved Parents

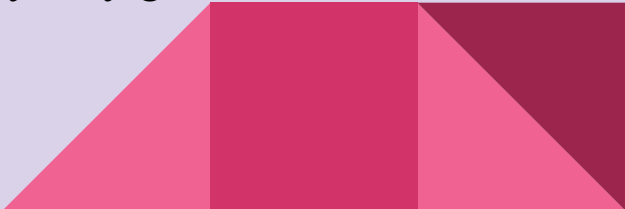
Characteristics of the Over-Involved Parent

- Characteristics of Parent (Family)
 - Fear of failure
 - Convinced (until now) it's their role/purpose for the success of their child
 - Noticing parent-child relationship is strained or lacking
 - Unsure how to help child... 'Go to strategy' relies heavily on managing educational experience
 - Parent is usually highly organized 'Type A' personality
 - Want fast results and can be impatient
 - Willingness to trust ET can wax and wane over time
 - Child is often under-functioning and sometimes can appear '*uninterested*' in engaging with the educational process
- 



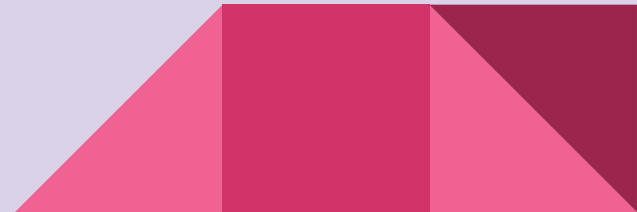
Stories from the Field

Dealing with the Over-Involved Parent

- Parent is so proactive they have overscheduled their child in a variety of other interventions before having the opportunity to prioritize best plan with ET
 - Inform/reiterate parent the services I provide as an ET
 - Inform/remind parents where child is with each program
 - Push back from parent
 - Always find the balance with the parent (Give recommendations but agree with their decision)
 - Leave your defensiveness and rigid ideas of ‘how this should go’ behind
 - Defer to parent
 - Long term point person, vs short term intervention
 - How much parent trusts the ET determines the ET’s ability to lead
 - You may be the first to tell parents unwelcome news and they may go elsewhere for services
- 

Dealing with the Over-Involved Parent (continued)

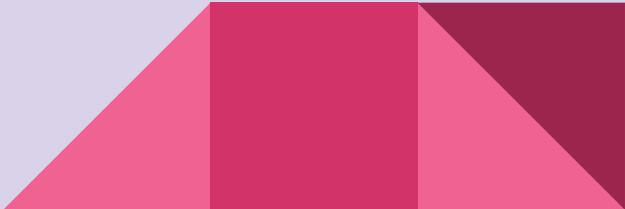
- While it's important to review and reflect on your process and the families' actions, work to productively process through this ending and move forward with other students who need your time, attention and expertise
- The ET's continued attachment to the previously expected results only breeds resentments
- Allow the parent their process and responsibility for their child





Under Involved Parents

Characteristics of the Under-Involved Parent

- Characteristics of Parent (Family)
 - Can be convinced they are unable to help their child
 - Aware they do not have patience to manage their child's learning process
 - Fear they're letting their child down (failure)
 - Fear of overwhelming the child
 - Tentative
 - Unwilling to take action that has been recommended by ET
 - Can appear as though they '*don't care*'
 - Lackadaisical about communication
 - Familiar refrain...'*I didn't know...*'
- 

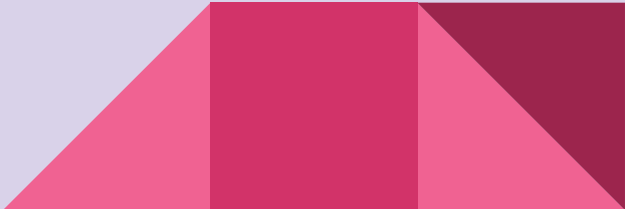


Stories from the Field

Dealing with the Under-Involved Parent

- Opportunity for ET to build trust and help parent maneuver through academics
- Example of 'don't care'...Don't follow through at home, not involved with child's academic pursuits
- Difficulty working productively with child due to a multitude of obstacles which can look like resistance
- Find ways through sessions and communication to invite parents into the process in unconventional ways
- Show how I've worked with student...give example to parent...good way to help under-involved parent get engaged
- Understand they need to take time sensitive action (can't wait forever)
- Help parent find alternative ways to stay involved in academic life

Take AWAY

- ❑ **ET builds the attachment relationship with parents**
 - ❑ **ET develops a very effective intake process with parents**
 - ❑ **ET works with teachers in a reciprocal way**
 - ❑ **ET takes every opportunity to continue building trust with parents**
 - ❑ **ET takes the initiative with teachers**
 - ❑ **ET is the point person to both help and orchestrate all interventions for parents**
 - ❑ **ET works effectively in the home environment**
 - ❑ **ET helps the under/over involved parents**
 - ❑ **ET builds the attachment relationship with parents**
- 

Questions



THANK YOU

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