PREVENTING EARLY SCHOOL LEAVING

AUTHORITY AND LEADERSHIP

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The professional dialogue

Differences

Protect oneself
Defend oneself

Opposites
Conflicts

Learning

Endure discomfort for a while

Closed

Discussion
Being right
Prove and persuade
Struggle for power
Force - manipulation
Arguments

Open

Dialogue
Learning something
Showing
Dialogue
Learning
Listening

The professional dialogue

Before the dialogue:

- General planning:
  - Plan of action and treatment
  - Aims
  - Partial goals
  - My task

- **Planning a specific dialogue:**
- Purpose(s) of the dialogue:
  - What do I already know?
  - What do I need to say?
  - What do I need to ask?
  - Who should participate? – areas of responsibility
  - Where should the dialogue take place?
  - How long do I have?
  - What is going to be hard for me in the dialogue?

Beginning the dialogue

- Establish **contact**

The starting point / the basis of all cooperation / treatment

Being the host (welcome, introductions)

The professional must lead the way

Double attention

Attentiveness / making yourself present

Showing yourself

Interest

Empathy

Beginning the dialogue

Contact

The family's perspective

Negotiation dialogue (- treatment)

The professional perspective

Contract

Appointment / agenda
Adjusting the timeframe
Agreeing on a focal point
Atmosphere of cooperation

Dialogue progression
Attitudes and approaches

- **Be personal**
  - Personal statements (not private)
- **Ask as few questions as possible**
  - Statements rather than questions
  - Explain why you ask
- **Be specific**
  - Move from the general to the specific
  - Ask for examples
  - Avoid saying ”one does/doesn’t, we, always, never”
- **Emphasise opposites**
  - Between the participants in the dialogue
  - Between subject matter and process
- **Take your dialogue partner seriously**
  - Accept reactions
- **Talk about one thing at a time – sustain or change the nature of contact**
- **Be attentive to the boundaries of yourself and others**
- **Be aware of the significance of pauses**

- **Grasp your dialogue patner's:**
  - perspective
  - opposites
  - antipathy
- **Avoid**
  - proving
  - persuading

Conclusion of the dialogue

Goodbye

- announcement
- summing up / emphasising themes / important decisions
- mutual evaluation of the process
- new appointments, if any

Following the dialogue

Evaluation

- what went well / less well
- status in relation to the general plan

Invite the opposites

- Welcoming reluctance rather than trying to subdue it
- Helping parents to express their views
- Avoid trying to persuade them
- Be humble

Invite the opposites

- When professionals speak of the reluctance of parents, it is often a matter of projection
- They perceive their own reluctance, but hold the parents responsible
- Actual reluctance in parents is often justified. It is often triggered by elements of the professional’s behaviour which there is no reason to embrace.

Invite the opposites

- Reluctance to counselling:
- Parents feel that they are not “seen” or taken seriously
- Our suggestions differ radically from their perspective
- Their emotional reactions to the problem are still “undigested”
- The professional is a new person whom they do not know very well, and may yet be wary of

Motivation

- **To motivate**
  is rarely motivating

- **To understand** the other's views and to be able to **acknowledge** them can be highly motivating

- **A school / institution**

  is not a service facility where the “customer” is always right

- **It**

  is a place where professionals take care of children based on:

  knowledge and experience

  laws and regulations

  the possibilities at hand

  in cooperation with the parents

Parental cooperation

- Cooperation on a regular basis
- Cooperation on a daily basis
- **Problem-based cooperation**
- **Necessary cooperation**

The good dialogue

- **The good dialogue**
  is a dialogue in which the participants gain knowledge
  where they acquire a new truth
  maybe a shared truth
  maybe different truths

- **The good dialogue**
  does not necessarily lead to agreement
  is not necessarily harmonious,
  easy or quiet

- **The good dialogue**
  is equal
  although the participants are not in equal positions

- **The good dialogue**
  is not meant to reveal a truth that already existed,
  but to create a new truth