

Practical & Creative Methods for Engaging “Resistive” Parents

- ✓ Work on building of rapport/relationship
 - use parts language
 - use the parent’s own words
 - focus of strength and potential
 - read the subtext
 - establish interest in the whole person not just the problems
 - take time to explain the process
 - talk about less threatening subjects while establishing rapport
 - help them feel heard, repeat what you understood them to say, ask if you got it right

- ✓ Establish a mutually-agreed upon goal
 - identify what the parent is interested in
 - do something tangible to help
 - reframe the problem if client is mandated
 - don’t focus only on the identified problem

- ✓ Normalize the fear of fear
 - parent’s feeling of failure interfere in the process
 - address fears about the solutions to the problems
 - start at the beginning
 - extend time lines when possible

- ✓ Don’t come off as an expert
 - use collaborative language
 - ask questions, use the Socratic method
 - ask the parent for advise
 - double bind them
 - talk to yourself or to another therapist about the client in the client’s presence (respectfully)

- ✓ Make treatment interesting
 - what’s in it for them?
 - how is it enjoyable?
 - why should they engage?
 - how will they remember your message?

- ✓ Provide nurturing
 - a person can only give another what they already have
 - parent may feel anxious or uncomfortable about the child being nurtured

- ✓ Help parents understand their vital role
 - how important the parent is to their own child
 - how the parent defines the trauma/experience greatly impacts the child
 - they are the expert on their own child

- ✓ Understand the importance of resistance
 - self protection
 - protection of the child