



# SHELDON

## **LEARNING MOTIVATION INTERVENTION MODEL for Students with Emotional, Behavioral and Learning Difficulties DESCRIPTION**

**Intellectual output 2**

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Note: For the Short Version of the SHELDON Intervention model, look at the last chapter of the present book (chapter 8)



# PART I. THEORETICAL PART

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# 1. THEORY

This is an intervention based in Narrative Therapy Interviewing (with some cognitive - behavioral elements also).

It was inspired and used many ideas from the book of Metcalf (2003) "Teaching towards solutions". The ideas in this book are from Solution-focused Counseling. We took some basic ideas and interventions from it and convert them in Narrative Counseling ways. Narrative Counseling and Solution-Focused Counseling have common theoretical origins and many practices that are almost the same. Still, there are important differences.

- Solution-focused counseling is concerned / deals mostly with the actions of persons while Narrative counseling is concerned/ deals with the actions *and* the identity of the persons.

- Narrative counseling externalizes the problems of people, while Solution Focused Counseling is interested mainly on the aims of the people and not on ways of describing problems.

-Narrative counseling and Solution-Focused Counseling have many *similar* ideas but also many *different* ideas about how to deal with the re-enactment of the problems (after some time of improvement).

-Narrative counseling gives emphasis in many different kinds of sharing with other people the progress of the person and of circulating the knowledges of changes to other people.

These were the main conversions in the ideas of Metcaf that make finally the Sheldon Intervention a different kind of intervention. Additionally, there were many extra narrative counseling ideas and interventions and in some places the Narrative Ideas were combined with ideas from Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.

## 1.1. Educational Theory

Many pupils (in the context of special education or in the context of regular education) frequently encounter / come up against difficulties in learning. These difficulties in learning, if not handled properly may result in difficulties in the ways the pupil acts in the classroom (e.g. disturbances in the lesson or not participating / acting passively) or even in difficulties in one's relationships with other pupils (e.g. aggressiveness or isolation / sadness).

There are many ways to deal with these problems.

One way is to think of the pupil as having something internal that is bad and it needs to be discovered and fixed. This "bad thing" is frequently considered to be a personality trait, something that is in the child, a personal characteristic. This kind of explanation usually creates self-fulfilling prophecies and reproduces the problems for the pupil, the lesson and the other people.



Another way to think of the pupil is to think of him/her as having been caught in a description of oneself as incompetent. The pupil knows and lives a story of himself in which he has recognized oneself or has been recognized as not capable of handling the difficulties of learning about relational situations. This self-perception is usually produced and reproduced by the pupil's environment (including teachers, family and other students). If we think this way about the pupil's difficulties, then we recognize as problem not the pupil but the way he/she is perceived in the context of his/her relationships.

In this case we take responsibility to change our perception, our way of connecting to the pupil and our way of communicating with him.

The teacher may have in mind the following:

1. CHANGING PERCEPTION OF THE PUPIL BY THE TEACHER. The story of the pupil having poor learning or having difficulties in the way he acts and relates is just one story in his life. There are also other instances, incidents and events in his life in which he shows abilities, values and knowledges that are beyond the dominant story and description of the child. The teacher takes responsibility to observe these moments in the child's life, to inquire more on this kind of moments and to try to expand the alternative perception of the child in the present and in the future.
2. CHANGING /ENHANCING CONNECTION TO THE PUPIL. The teacher takes responsibility to create a situation where he/she shows interest and care for the pupil. This does not mean a lot of extra time from the part of the teacher but it means some time to a) show appreciation for the pupil and for what the pupil does already well, b) talk with the pupil about the difficulties and his/her aims and ask him/her about what the teacher themselves might do together with the pupil and c) follow up the conversation the teacher does with the student in an encouraging and appreciative way.

The pupil who is shown interest and care by the teacher takes a great message of appreciation and is more easily detached from the problematic identity that he has gone stuck to. The teacher gives a powerful message "I appreciate you, I care for you, I believe that you can make it" and the pupil becomes almost "obliged" to conform to the new way of being seen. This powerful message can be given to the pupil, even when (or better even after) disciplinary measures may have been applied in order to stop disruptive actions of the student.

We propose below specific ways for the teacher to do this (to change perception of and enhance connection to the pupil).

## **1.2. Narrative Counseling (and Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy) integrated in Educational work**

Narrative Therapy believes that "The person is the person and the problem is the problem" (M. White). That is in Narrative Therapy we distinguish the problem from the person, believing that the problem is produced and reproduced inside a social, cultural context and that the person may choose between the



problematic story and other alternative stories in his life. The identity of a person is fluid and is constructed during the conversations that he has with himself and others.

In Narrative Therapy Interviewing we externalize the problems in a person's life. We use Names for the Problems that make a person separate oneself from the problem and explore the results of the problem on one's life. The person evaluates these results and justifies these evaluations according to their intentions in life, values, hopes and dreams for their life. In this way the person can understand that his life is not only dominated by the problem but there are also other parts of one's life that do not go with the problem story.

In a second phase we interview the person about times when the problem does not succeed to control the person's life in order to find more about how he/she manages to do this and about the person's intentions/values/hopes/dreams, abilities and Knowledges that are behind these different events. These events are called "unique outcomes" or "sparkling moments". We might also interview for more stories about how the intentions/values/hopes/dreams, abilities and Knowledges of the person have manifested in the person's life in areas outside the areas that the problem manifest (E.g. If we have found that a child uses Persistence when he/she manages to overcome Carelessness in attending lessons, we might be interested in hearing or asking for more stories from his life in which he/she uses Persistence. So we might find out about a story about Persistence and Courage that the student showed, when she learned to ride her favorite horse).

In a third phase we invite the person to imagine a future in which he/she uses the ways, intentions, abilities and Knowledges that he/she has discovered before. We invite the person to imagine using all these qualities in order to cope more with the problem and in order to advance towards his/her preferred directions of his/her life and find new ways of handling difficulties. We invite the person to imagine and plan future sparkling moments / possibilities.

In a fourth phase we inquire the person about possible actions that can be taken so that the alternative identity that the person is discovering, creating and enhancing can be circulated to other people. We inquire about possible actions that can make the new developments in the person's life known to a larger and significant audience. This is done, because in Narrative Therapy, we believe that the construction of identity is a social achievement, it is done in the context of social discussions and not in the isolated minds of the persons.

In the intervention and questionnaires bellow we simplify the narrative practices and also embody elements from solution-focused and cognitive-behavioral questions. Therefore, a) we also ask the student about his aims contrary to the problem and to rank his progress and b) we ask the pupil about the thoughts>feelings> actions that take place when the problem is present (problem story) but also about the thoughts>feelings> actions that take place when the student manages to restrict, postpone or even overcome the problem or some of its results (alternative/ preferred story).

We propose a sequence of actions that the teacher can undertake so that she/he helps the pupil with difficulties succeed in school having a positive identity of oneself



## 2. MAIN IDEAS OF THE INTERVENTION

The intervention described below is an intervention that can be undertaken by the teacher himself/herself, by a group of teachers or by a counselor with the collaboration of the teacher(s). It describes a different way of conversating with the student with EBLD. In this different way of conversating, we try to include as many stakeholders as we can.

### 2.1. Basic principles of action in the intervention

In the pedagogic theory described above, we talked about some basic pedagogic ideas that lead our intervention.

1. The pupil with EBLD (emotional, behavioral and learning difficulties) is caught in a description of them that is poor/ restricted and restricting and we need to help articulate and develop alternative stories of their life that will help them cope or dissolve the problems.
2. The above can be done by a) changing perception of the pupil by the teacher and the pupil's environment more generally (other teachers and parents) and b) by changing/enhancing the pupil's connection with the teacher (and other teachers, pupils and parents)

This is a collaborative endeavour of the teacher and the pupil (in which we try to include as many other stakeholders we can). It is NOT an attempt to compel the student, to make him conform or to impose our ideas about what needs to be done. We become collaborators that try to see what everybody can do in order to overcome the difficulties. This non-imposing attitude is what creates the opportunity for a different kind of connection or the pupil with the teacher(s), other pupils and parents.

Therefore, the following are some basic practical principles of action/ conversating with the pupil.

1. **We want to help the student articulate his /her ideas about school, lessons, difficulties and good things and about the ways he/she overcomes problems and can continue overcoming them.** The purpose is not to make a diagnosis of the student, but to help the student elaborate on his/her life and make decisions of his/her own. The conversation is a collaborative endeavor in which the words and the ideas of the student have primacy. The preferred story for the student that is elevated through this process is preferred by the student and it is important to have this in mind and not try to impose our preferred ideas and aspirations for them.
2. **We take responsibility for helping create the right conditions to help the student succeed.** The main mentality of the conversation is: "Let's see what you and I can do to help you succeed". The student and the teacher(s) try to be collaborators for a common aim



## PART II. PRACTICAL PART

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### 3. MAIN DIRECTIONS OF INTERVENTION

There are 3 main parts in the intervention

- A. EXPLORING THE IDENTITY OF THE STUDENT OUTSIDE OF THE PROBLEM
  - By noticing and documenting when the pupil is doing well in the classroom
  - By asking the pupil's parents for their child's "wonderfulnesses"
  - By asking the pupil themselves about the things they do well
  
- B. COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATION WITH THE STUDENT about:
  - Difficulties and his aims
  - Sparkling moments
  - Future sparkling moment / future possibilities
  
- C. SUBSEQUENT ACTION AND MEETINGS
  - Circulating information about the different actions and descriptions of the student to other stakeholders.
  - Preserving Connection and recognizing the student
  - Follow up meetings
  - Advice of the student (and of his/her "favorite" character) for other students

Knowing about the identity of the pupil outside the problem (A) will give us elements on how to address the difficulties in school and in lessons and create future positive possibilities (B). When, in some degree, we have handled the difficulties and new possibilities for our student have been realized, then our task will be to support these new actions from the pupil and their new descriptions of them (C).

### 4. PART 1: EXPLORING THE IDENTITY OF THE STUDENT OUTSIDE THE PROBLEMS

In this intervention we believe that the pupil with difficulties is not the problem. We believe that he is caught in a problematic story and that there are also other instances, events and incidents that make a different story of him. This story is a story we want to explore together with the student, ask him about his preferred story in his life and expand this preferred story.

The teacher himself/herself or/and a counselor that helps can explore the identity of the student outside the problem in many ways.

1. By noticing and documenting when the pupil is doing well in the classroom



2. By asking the pupil's parents for their child's "wonderfulnesses"
3. By asking the pupil themselves about the things they do well

The first way (Noticing and documenting when the pupil is doing well in the classroom) is a very important activity that the teacher must get involved. For a while the teacher should leave away the frustration and maybe the anger about the pupil's lack of cooperation and concentrate in what is going well even slightly with the student. The teacher's observations will be very important in the conversation that the teacher will have with the pupil later. This conversation will be the opportunity for the teacher to show to the student that he believes different for him than what the dominant problematic story wants to believe about him.

The second way is a good way to start involving also the parents in the intervention.

The third way is a preparation for the intervention per se, which can be done by the teacher/counselor (with the presence of the teacher) or skipped, since there will be time to speak about these things in the first conversation that the teacher will have with the pupils.

#### **4.1. Noticing and documenting when the pupil is doing well in the classroom**

After the lessons take some time in order to fill the "Teacher Observation Sheet" below (see Activity 1)

#### **4.2. Asking the pupil's parents for their child's "wonderfulnesses"**

Use the following line of inquiry in a quick telephone call to or in a meeting with the child's parents (see Activity 2).

#### **4.3. Asking the pupil themselves about the things they do well**

Use the following experiential exercise as a team building / bonding exercise for all the students of your classroom (See Activity 3a). You will gather information about all the pupils in your classroom but also about the pupil that you want to do the intervention for.

These questions empower the person because the person sees oneself as something bigger than what the problem wants us to see him/her. They also give information about qualities and support means that the person has. These qualities and support means might be useful in the coping with the difficulties (when we will be discussing the Future Sparkling moments / Future Possibilities).

Another thing that these questions do is that they give important information about what the person likes and the student's interests. This is important information that the teacher might embody in the content of the lessons that she does in order to attract the student's interest and curiosity.

If you do not have time to do the experiential exercise with the whole class, you might want to use the questions of Activity Part B in a small conversation with the student that you want to do the intervention for (see Activity3b). You can include in this conversation, some of your observations from the Teacher's Observation Sheet (Activity 1). You might say for example:

Use your notes from the "Teacher's Observation Sheet" and say something like:

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“I have noticed that when I .....(say what you did), you were able to..... (say what was more possible for the student). Is my observation correct? What abilities /qualities (do you think) that your favorite character would have recognized that you had in this instance?”

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### Activity 1

#### TEACHER OBSERVATION SHEET

Name of student \_\_\_\_\_ Name of teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Subject \_\_\_\_\_ Date and time \_\_\_\_\_

Record down the activities in which the student was participating or doing well. Record down what the student does in order to be considered participating or doing well. Evaluate the student's progress on a scale from 1 to 10 (1= not doing well, 10=doing perfectly well)

#### 1.

- Class activity \_\_\_\_\_

- Performance of student (what the student did) \_\_\_\_\_

- Teaching method used \_\_\_\_\_

- Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_

- What are the qualities that the pupil seems to have at that moments \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2.

- Class activity \_\_\_\_\_

- Performance of student (what the student did) \_\_\_\_\_

- Teaching method used \_\_\_\_\_

- Evaluation \_\_\_\_\_



- What are the qualities that the pupil seems to have at that moments \_\_\_\_\_

Continue in next page if there are more activities in which the student went well

## Activity 2

### INQUIRY OF PARENTS' ABOUT THE PUPIL'S WONDERFULNESSES

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

"Hello Mr / Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ . I call you because I want to find new ways to connect with my students, in order to be able to encourage them and motivate them so that they go better in my classroom (in terms of behavior and in terms of their achievement in lessons). I know that there were some other times that we have talked a lot about the problems that Maria has. But this time I would like to ask you for some information about what it is wonderful in Maria. I would like to team up with you and Maria against the problem. And before doing this it would have been good for me to know what Maria's wonderfulnesses are. This way we can all see what are the things that go for her and consider how to put them against the problem. Is it alright if I ask you some question on this?"

#### 2. WONDERFULNESS QUESTIONS

Follow up with questions like the following:

- I am wondering if you could introduce me to your daughter's wonderfulness- those gifts that stand out about her... the qualities that others may appreciate...those virtues that I might come to admire as I get to know her more
- What is about your daughter that serves as a reminder that you are a wonderful mother to her?
- What is about your son that would give you the impulse to brag about him, when you are out socializing with friends?
- Is there something about your son that warms your heart when he comes in mind during your commute?
- Is there anything about your daughter that is like a dream come true?
- What is about your daughter that you like so much that you would not like to change it?

(Questions taken from: "Marsten, Epston & Markham (2016). Narrative Therapy in Wonderland. New York & London: Norton Company)

#### 3. STORIES THAT ILLUSTRATE THE PUPIL'S WONDERFULNESSES

"Can you tell me a story or two that will help me understand what you mean when you say that she is fair?"

#### 4. ASK FOR PERMISSION TO SHARE THE INFORMATION WITH THE CHILD

"Thank you very much, Mrs \_\_\_\_\_ . Is it alright with you if I share with your son your perceptions about him and the stories about him that you shared with me in a conversation that I will have with you son in a few days. As I have told you I want to find a good foundation for collaborating with him"

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### Activity 3a

#### EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY FOR THE WHOLE CLASS :

#### IDENTITY OUTSIDE THE PROBLEMS

#### (The things I do well and my hero)

##### PART A.

- 1. Ask children to answer the following questionnaire in written form** and then share in pairs their answers and talk about them. Questions for the whole class:
  - *What are the things that you like generally or that interest you?*
  - *What are some of the things that you like doing?*
  - *What are some of the things you are good at?*
  - *What are some things that your parents or other persons that you like or love appreciate about you?*
- 2. Draw a picture with a story** of in which you do something that interests or like or are good at or other people appreciate about you.
- 3. In pairs show the pictures and talk about**
  - *What might be the abilities that you put in use in these things that you like or that you are good at?*
  - *How do you think other persons see you when you are doing all these things? What do they appreciate in you?*Write your answers on the drawings or in the back page of the pictures. Present the pictures and conversation for the whole class

##### PART B.

- 1. In pairs talk about your favorite character and draw a picture of him/her.**

Questions to consider:  
*What is your favorite character (from cartoons, books, science, movies) or your favorite pet or animal? Why do you like them? What do you like in them? What are the qualities of this character\*<sup>1</sup> that you are fond of?*

Write on the drawing some of your answers to the above questions.
- 2. In pairs talk and answer the following questions about what the character likes in you.**

Questions to consider:  
*What do you think that this character\*like in you or would have liked in you, if they had the chance to get to know you? What are the qualities of you that this character\* would have been fond of? Tell me more about these qualities and some story(ies) about them.*

Make a talking bubble above the head of your favorite character in which your favorite character says what she/he likes on you

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<sup>1</sup> When there is a star on the word character, use the name of the character that the student has chosen

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### Activity 3b

#### CONVERSATION WITH THE STUDENT:

#### IDENTITY OUTSIDE THE PROBLEMS

#### (The things I do well and my hero)

1. **You might talk with the student about their favorite character and ask him to draw a picture of him/her.**

Questions to consider:

*What is your favorite character (from cartoons, books, science, movies) or your favorite pet or animal? Why do you like them? What do you like in them? What are the qualities of this character\*<sup>2</sup> that you are fond of?*

Write on the drawing some of your answers to the above questions.

2. **Ask the student about what his/her favorite character appreciates in him/her.**

Questions to consider:

*What do you think that this character\* like in you or would have liked in you, if they had the chance to get to know you? What are the qualities of you that this character\* would have been fond of? Tell me more about these qualities and some story(ies) about them.*

Use your notes from the "Teacher's Observation Sheet" and say something like: "I have noticed that when I .....(say what you did), you were able to..... (say what was more possible for the student). Is my observation correct? What abilities /qualities (do you think) that your favorite character would have recognized that you had in this instance?"

Ask the student to make a talking bubble above the head of your favorite character in which your favorite character says what she/he likes on you

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<sup>2</sup> When there is a star on the word character, use the name of the character that the student has chosen



## 5. PART 2: COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATION WITH THE STUDENT

The following guidelines for collaborative conversation with students for coping with problems are designed so that the conversation does not take a lot of time.

It is a guide for a conversation in which both the teacher and the pupil try to find ways to help so that the problem is coped and the student succeeds in what is important for him/her.

This is a guide that can inform the conversation of an individual teacher with the student with EBLD or more teachers with the student with the student with EBLD. The more teachers involved in such a collaborative conversation, the better it is. Just think of the powerfulness of the message that is sent to a pupil that is having difficulties, if the teachers of his/her classroom invite the pupil to a Meeting of Collaboration in order to find ways to help him, a meeting in which also the teachers take responsibility for acting for change. This decisiveness to be of help can be especially helpful to pupils that come across *very intense* difficulties in collaborating and belonging in the school. It is important that the teachers decide and commit to follow-up the first meeting with more Meetings of Collaboration that are done steadily and periodically and in which they follow-up collaboratively with the pupil the progress of their common efforts.

This is a type of conversation that can be done by the teacher(s) with or without the help of a counselor. We propose an extended version and a short version of conversation with the pupil.

You may use this line of questioning, even when some sort of disciplinary measures has been applied to the pupil. If the pupil was send out of the room for doing things that were disturbing the lesson or other people or if he was suspended from school for something really bad that he did, it is still important to find ways to restrain from being angry to the pupil and try to find collaborative ways to help him/her<sup>3</sup>.

Of course, you will have to convert the questions proposed bellow according to the ability and age level of each pupil.

The guide for collaborative conversation with the student includes the following categories of inquiry / conversation:

### A. Preparatory conversation

Invitation to the student by the teacher(s) for a conversation

### B. First meeting

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<sup>3</sup> Rob Plevin proposes one short of disciplinary measure for minor problems that fits well with the logic of this intervention project. It is the **2-minutes follow-up** (NeedsFocusedTeaching.com, 2018), we have considered it usefull and it is described in the Appendix 2 of this book.



#### EXTENDED VERSION

1. The problem and a goal for it
2. Sparkling moments in school life
3. Sparkling moments in coping with the problem
4. Sparkling moments by the teacher
5. Sparkling moments learned from the parents
6. Assistance from the parents
7. Future possibilities – planning
8. Appreciation

#### SHORT VERSION:

1. The problem and a goal for it
2. Sparkling moments (from the student and the teacher)
3. Sparkling moments in the future –Planning
4. Appreciation and Scheduling

#### **C. Subsequent actions and meetings**

1. Circulating information to other teachers and parents
2. Preserving Connection and recognizing the student
3. Follow up meetings

#### **D. Return of the problem**

### **5.1. Preparatory conversation and first meeting**

See in the sheets “COPING WITH PROBLEMS Collaborative Conversation – EXTENDED VERSION” (Sheet 1) and “COPING WITH PROBLEMS Collaborative Conversation – SHORT VERSION” (Sheet 2) for guidelines in how to do the preparatory conversation and the first meeting with the student.



## Sheet 1

### COPING WITH PROBLEMS

#### Sheet for collaborative conversation of teachers with the students

#### EXTENDED VERSION

##### A. Preparatory conversation

Say: "I think that people are getting the wrong impression of you and of what you can achieve. I have seen you doing these things..... and I appreciate very much many qualities of you, such as..... (Use your experience with the student but also your Teacher's observation sheet in order to discover and articulate what you appreciate in the student). I would like to have a conversation with you about how we can collaborate and sort things out / and stop people from having the wrong impression about you."

Arrange a small meeting with the student.....

##### B. First meeting

###### 1. THE PROBLEM AND A GOAL FOR IT

Talk to the student again about the purpose of the meeting (with about the same words that you have used in order to invite him to the meeting – see preparatory meeting)

After that, talk with the pupil about the problem and ask him about its results (on him and on others) and get his view about it. (You may ask them: "Do you want these results in your life? Are these results fair (for you and the others)?"). Define a goal with the pupil.

Say:

"It seems hard for you. What would you like instead to happen in school? How would like things to be for you in school (in my lesson)?"

"Why is this important for you? What is important for you when you say that you would like to (...)?"

"Would your favorite character (use the name of the character) like you to do this? Is he your ally? What would he say about the things you want for you in school?"



“What would I see you doing, if you were to move a small step forward towards your aims (name the aim with the words of the student) the rest of the day (elementary school) or in the next lessons of the week (high school) ? “

## 2. SPARKLING MOMENTS BY THE TEACHER

Use your notes from the “Teacher’s Observation Sheet” and say:

“I have noticed that when I .....(say what you did), you were able to..... (say what was more possible for the student). Is my observation correct? Was it helpful what I did? What was helpful about it? Should I do more of it?

“What else have I done at other times that it was helpful for you in order to handle the problem?”

## 3. SPARKLING MOMENTS IN LIFE

Say:

“Tell me of a time in your school life, when this problem did not make your life difficult?”

“What were other people (e.g. teachers) were doing? What were their methods?”

“What were you doing? How were you doing it?”

“How were you thinking?”

“How were you feeling about yourself? What was your image about yourself when doing this?”

“How did other people see you?”

“Are this kind of things you want for yourself?”

## 4. SPARKLING MOMENTS IN COPING WITH THE PROBLEM

Say:

“What is your method of staying out of trouble? (Think of a time that the problem could have tricked you in controlling you, but it did not manage to do so).”



“What were you doing?”

“What were you thinking?”

“How were you feeling about yourself? What was your image about yourself when doing this?”

“How would you call this method?”

“What ability/quality do you think you have used?”

#### 5. SPARKLING MOMENTS learned FROM THE PARENTS

Say:

“As you know I have consulted your parents about what they mostly appreciate about you. They have told me some wonderful stories about your abilities and qualities. I would like to share some of the things that they have told me.”

“Do you think that any of these abilities could help you in your effort to reach your goal?”

#### 6. ASSISTANCE FROM THE PARENTS

Say:

“What are the things that your parents are doing that are helpful for you so that the problem does not make your life difficult?”

“What would you like them to do differently?”

“Is it O.K. if I tell them your ideas, when I meet with them?”

#### 7. FUTURE POSSIBILITIES – PLANNING

Say:

“If we were to rank where you are now, where do you think your aim is now?”

“What could I do, just in order to help you go one degree more? “



“What could you do, just in order to go one degree more?”

#### 8. APPRECIATION AND SCHEDULING

Show appreciation. Say something like:

“I enjoyed very much our conversation. I appreciate very much your willingness to help solve the problem and your thoughtful remarks and ideas. I recognize this thoughtfulness and willingness because I have seen it many times in my lesson (describe briefly some incidents- you may use information from your notes from the “Teacher’s Observation Sheet”)”

Also, schedule a follow-up meeting. Say something like:

“When do you think we can follow-up how things go for you?”



## Sheet 2

### COPING WITH PROBLEMS

#### Sheet for collaborative conversation of teachers with the students

#### SHORT VERSION

##### A. Preparatory conversation

Say: "I think that people are getting the wrong impression of you and of what you can achieve. I have seen you doing these things..... and I appreciate very much many qualities of you, such as..... (Use your experience with the student but also your Teacher's observation sheet in order to discover and articulate what you appreciate in the student). I would like to have a conversation with you about how we can collaborate and sort things out / and stop people from having the wrong impression about you."

Arrange a small meeting with the student.....

##### B. First meeting

###### 1. THE PROBLEM AND A GOAL FOR IT

Talk to the student again about the purpose of the meeting (with about the same words that you have used in order to invite him to the meeting – see preparatory meeting)

After that, talk with the pupil about the problem, ask him about its results (on him and on others) and get his view about it. (You may ask them: "Do you want these results in your life? Are these results fair (for you and the others)?"). Define a goal with the pupil.

Say:

- "It seems hard for you. What would you like instead to happen in school? How would like things to be for you in school (in my lesson)?"

###### 2. SPARKLING MOMENTS BY THE TEACHER

Use your notes from the "Teacher's Observation Sheet" and say:

"I have noticed that when I .....(say what you did), you were able to..... (say what was more possible for the student). Is my observation correct? Was it helpful what I did? What was helpful about it? Should I do more of it?"



“What else have I done at other times that it was helpful for you in order to handle the problem?”

### 3. SPARKLING MOMENTS BY THE PUPIL

Say:

- “Tell me of a time in your school life, when this problem did not make your life difficult?”

“What have other teachers (in the past) have been doing that helped you do better?”

- “What are the things that I do and help even slightly?”

“What else?”

- “What are the things that you do and you manage to do better or stay out of trouble?”

“What are you thinking at that moment?”

“How / What are you feeling at that moment?”

“What is possible for you (when you think like that) at that moment?”

“How do you see yourself at that moment?”

### 4. SPARKLING MOMENTS IN THE FUTURE - PLANNING

Say:

- “What can we (you and i) do –during the next day (in elementary school) or during the next week (in high school) so that you do better and feel better about yourself?”



“What can you do?”

“What can I do?”

- “What else?”

“What else?”

“What else?”

## **5. APPRECIATION AND SCHEDULING**

Show appreciation. Say something like:

“I enjoyed very much our conversation. I appreciate very much your willingness to help solve the problem and your thoughtful remarks and ideas. I recognize this thoughtfulness and willingness because I have seen it many times in my lesson (describe briefly some incidents- you may use information from your notes from the “Teacher’s Observation Sheet”)”

Also, schedule a follow-up meeting. Say something like:

“When do you think we can follow-up how things go for you?”



## 6. PART 3: SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS AND MEETINGS

After this first meeting, there are four important things that the teacher(s) can do in order to help the good change in the student's life.

1. Circulating information to other teachers and parents
2. Preserving Connection and recognizing the student
3. Follow up meetings
4. Advice and sharing of the student (and of his/her "favorite" character) to other students

### 6.1. Circulating information to other teachers and parents

As it was mentioned above, the problems in a pupil's life are produced and reproduced inside a social context. The old restricted descriptions of the student as being a problem may still dominate the discussions about the student, even when he has done subsequent changes. Therefore it is important to try to circulate any new way of discussing, perceiving and intervening to other stakeholders. For example, you may:

- Give copies of the Teacher's observation sheet to other teachers
- Inform the parents about the good changes that are happening in school
- Ask the parents to fill out an observation sheet akin / similar to the Teacher's observation Sheet
- Ask the principal to fill out a copy of the teacher's Observation Sheet
- (After making collaborative conversations) you may ask the child about his/her advice for other pupils that might be coping with Difficulties (\*use the name that the child is using for the difficulty) similar to his/hers.

### 6.2. Preserving Connection and recognizing the student

It is important that the teacher keeps the connection with the student in an appreciative way. In the next days it is important that the teacher shows to the student that he/she cares enough to ask the student how he/she is and what can the teacher do to continue helping. The teacher should not be overwhelming for the student (not always on him/her) but he should show that he/she is willing to keep the collaboration and support during the next days and from time to time.



So in the NEXT DAY you might say:

“What was the thing that went a little bit better for you today?”

If the student has nothing to say, you may just recognize something to him, even if it is very small. For example: “I see that you give effort and show willingness so that things go better”

Say also:

“What do you need from me in order to help (you succeed in you aims / perform better)?”

Similar to the above line of questioning might be used during the next days and from time to time. You might also use questions from the Sheet for Collaborative Conversation -1<sup>st</sup> Day that you have not had the time to ask before.

### 6.3. Follow up meetings

It is very important to follow –up with next meetings, where you use the same kind of inquiry (this time the questions will mainly have to do with the developments of the previous days).

If there are no follow-ups or not enough follow-ups, then it is very possible that an initial improvement of the student will be followed by a big return of the problem in the pupil’s life. Therefore follow– up meetings are very important. It would be good that these follow-up meetings will be scheduled at the beginning in short intervals and after sometime they might be scheduled in bigger intervals (for example in secondary education at the beginning they are scheduled every week and after sometime they are scheduled every fortnight or even later).

In order to make follow-up meetings it is important that you keep filling –up from time to time the TEACHER OBSERVATION SHEET. The information gathered from it will be used for the follow-up meetings.

In the follow-up meetings you can use:

- A. Questions from the EXTENDED FORM of the Sheet for collaborative conversation (presented above in chapter 5.1)

or

- B. Question from the SHORT FORM of the Sheet for collaborative conversation (presented above in chapter 5.1). We have a modified form of this questionnaire so that it fits better the follow-up meetings and we present it at the end of this chapter.

A.

If you choose the A alternative that is to use questions from the **Sheet 1: COPING WITH PROBLEMS - Sheet for collaborative conversation of teachers with the students - EXTENDED VERSION**, then



you might want to remember to use questions that you did not have the time to use in the first meeting.

The main categories of inquiry you might use in this situation will be:

.....

2. Sparkling moments in the life of the classroom

(the same questions as in the first meeting but referring not generally to his school life but to his present school life or life in the present classroom)

3. Sparkling moments in coping with the problem

4. Sparkling moments by the teacher

5. Sparkling moments learned from the parents

6. Assistance from the parents

7. Future possibilities – planning

8. Appreciation

(Still if a new problem arises, you may use also categories 1)

B.

If you choose the B alternative that is to use questions from the **Sheet 1: COPING WITH PROBLEMS - Sheet for collaborative conversation of teachers with the students – SHORT VERSION**, then you can use the following sheet (which is modified exactly for follow-up meetings).



### Sheet 3

## COPING WITH PROBLEMS

### Sheet for FOLLOW-UP collaborative conversations of teachers with the students

#### SHORT VERSION

Arrange a small follow-up meeting with the student.....

#### B. Meeting

##### 1. SPARKLING MOMENTS BY THE PUPIL

Say:

- "Tell me of a time **during the previous week**, when the problem (as it was named by the pupil in the first meeting) did not make your life difficult or a moment when things went the way you want in school (use your notes in order to remind the student about what were the *goals* that he/she has articulated in the first meeting) ?"

*(Note: It might be important to help the pupil re-connect with the goals that they have put in previous week. If things did not go very well and only a small progress had been made in the previous week, it might be very possible that the pupil might continue falling in a perception of themselves as incompetent. If this is the case, then they might initially start talking about aims like: "I do not want to try anymore" or "I want you all to leave me alone". These are reactions of a discouraged pupil (and he/she might be discouraged for reasons that you do not know and are beyond your ability to know, e.g. because of a situation with another teacher, another pupil or a situation that happened in the family. The teacher can help the pupil reconnect with their aims by reminding them what they have told during the first time and can help the student stick to the aims that they have put or re-state them in a better and more fitting for them way)*

"What have other teachers did that helped you do better?"

- "What are the things that I do and help even slightly?"

"What else?"

- "What are the things that you do and you manage to do better or stay out of trouble?"



“What are you thinking at that moment?”

“How / What are you feeling at that moment?”

“What is possible for you (when you think like that) at that moment?”

“How do you see yourself at that moment?”

## **2. SPARKLING MOMENTS BY THE TEACHER**

Use your notes from the “Teacher’s Observation Sheet” and say:

“I have noticed that when I .....(say what you did), you were able to..... (say what was more possible for the student). Is my observation correct? Was it helpful what I did? What was helpful about it? Should I do more of it?”

“What else have I done at other times that it was helpful for you in order to handle the problem?”

## **3. SPARKLING MOMENTS IN THE FUTURE - PLANNING**

Say:

- “What can we (you and i) do –during the next day (in elementary school) or during the next week (in high school) so that you do better and feel better about yourself?”

“What can you do?”

“What can I do?”

- “What else?”



“What else?”

“What else?”

#### **4. APPRECIATION AND SCHEDULING**

Show appreciation. Say something like:

“I enjoyed very much our conversation. I appreciate very much your willingness to help solve the problem and your thoughtful remarks and ideas. I recognize this thoughtfulness and willingness because I have seen it many times in my lesson (describe briefly some incidents- you may use information from your notes from the “Teacher’s Observation Sheet”)”

Also, schedule a follow-up meeting. Say something like:

“When do you think we can follow-up how things go for you?”



## 6.4. Advice and sharing of the student (and of his/her “favorite” character) to other students

Say to the pupil:

“You know in my career I have met / and still meet many pupils that have to cope with difficulties like the ones that you are managing / have managed to find successful ways of coping, many children that are aiming towards the same goals like yours although they might still meet difficulties while trying to do this. (Speak specifically: use the names that the children have chosen for the difficulties and the aims)

You now know a lot about how to overcome difficulties and how to approach your aims...

1.

What message would you like to give the other children? What do you think would be a good word of advice for them in order to cope with difficulties like the Difficulty/ies\* that you are coping with and in order to approach goals like the ones that you are aiming at?

What words of advice do you think that your favorite character would have said to them?

2.

Would you like to write a letter about how have you managed to do progress towards your aims, which can be read also by other pupils that have similar aims and aspirations? They might get inspired by your achievements for realizing their own goals.

Help the student write the letter by asking them questions like:

- What are the difficulties you were facing and you wanted to overcome?
- What were your aims, the things that you wanted to have instead of the difficulties?
- What are the things that you started doing differently that helped you go towards your aims?
- What are the difficult situations you had to handle in order to succeed progress?
- Say some short story about all this.
- What were the things that other people did in order to support you?
- What are your plans for the future? “

You might take permission from the student in order to read their letter to other students and take feedback from them about the letter. A series of questions that you might ask the pupils that you will be asking their feedback is the following:

- What stood out mostly from the story of the student that you have heard /read?
- What is the image that you created in your mind about the life of this person and about what kind of person he/she is? (What are the things that they value and what are some of their abilities?)
- How all these are connected with your story, with the things that are important for you?



- How were you influenced by this story? Did it make you feel or think new things or new ideas of action?

This is a series of questions used in Narrative Counseling for the people that give feedback. This series of questions provide feedback that help the receiver of the feedback re-define their identity towards their preferred descriptions and feel at the same time connected and recognized by other people. It is important to have in mind that the feedback that we are seeking is not critical or interpretive of the story of the pupil. It is a feedback that aims at recognizing the student's efforts and progress and helps to connect them with other pupils.

The receiver of the feedback might also be asked the following questions:

- What stood out mostly from the feedback that you have heard /read?
- How, by having this feedback, has your image about your life and yourself been shaped? What is your image now about what counts / is of value in your life and about your abilities?
- How all these are connected with the things that are important for you?
- How were you influenced by this feedback? Did it make you feel or think new things or new ideas of action?

Finally, you might ask the student that you are working with to be the feedback giver for other students that you know that are struggling with similar difficulties. You may use the same process, only this time the student that you are working with might be the feedback giver for the stories of other pupils.

## 7. PART 4: RETURN OF THE PROBLEM

Following up the first meeting with more meetings will certainly help so that we will have fewer ~~relapses~~ re-enactments of the problem but it won't eliminate them. In fact part of the normal course of coping with a problem is that it will come back some time in the future again, that there will be some kind of re-enactments of the problem. Usually these returns of the problems come unexpectedly, exactly when we have thought that we were over with the problem. Not only should we not get surprised by them, but we should consider them almost certain and be expecting them (when least expected).

When a problem returns, one of the choices we have is to explain to the pupil all the above things about the normality of the problem coming back from time to time and then invite the pupil to an exploration of this return so that we can help make it less possible in the future.

Use the following sequence of questions:

1.
  - "If you were to rank how far you were towards your aims BEFORE, when we first started talking, where do you think you were at that time?"



- “If you were to rank how far you are towards your aims NOW that the problem came back, where do you think you are now? “
  
- 2.

  - “I know that you might be somehow disappointed but how come and it did not go lower? How did you manage and you did not let it go lower?”
  - “What do you know now better that you did not know before?”
  - “What abilities do you have now that you did not have before?”
  - “What do you know now that it is important for you that you did not know before?”

- 3.

  - “How do you think you can keep up the good work and go one more degree upper?”
  - “How can I help?”
  - “How can your classmates help?”

## 8. SHORT VERSION OF SHELDON INTERVENTION MODEL

Time of the teacher or other practitioner who works in a school is many times limited because of a lot of duties and work that has to be done.

The SHELDON project can be equally successful if you do not use the full version that we propose, but if you use the Short version. This includes

- Chapter IV. Sub-chapter 1. **Noticing and documenting when the pupil is doing well in the classroom.**
- Chapter V. Collaborative conversation with the student.  
(Skip the Long Version and use the **Short Version of the “Sheet for collaborative conversation of teachers with the students”**).
- Chapter VI. **Subsequent actions and meetings.**  
(In regard to the Follow-up Meetings, skip the Extended Version and use the **Short Version of the “Sheet for FOLLOW-UP collaborative conversations of teachers with the students”**
- Chapter VII. **Return of the problem.**

Later, you might try some of the other activities that are included in the Extended Version that includes all the content of the Chapters IV, V, VI, VII.

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## APPENDIX 1: Two-minute follow-up: Consequence delivered in a collaborative way for minor problems.

Rob Plevin proposes one short of disciplinary measure that fits well with the logic of this intervention project. It is the **2-minutes follow-up** (NeedsFocusedTeaching.com, 2018). In case a pupil is creating a mild-disturbance during the lesson (forgets to bring equipment, is late, makes silly comments, is not been completing work when asked etc), then it is proposed to do the following:

1. Immediately *after* your lesson, as soon as other students have been directed to leave, ask the student to stay for a small conversation with you.
2. Set the tone of the conversation.

Re-assure the pupil that this is going to be a very quick-follow up, that its purpose is to find solutions and help prevent them from getting into further difficulties of troubles. (Begin the setting of the tone saying something like: "I do not want to be on your case all the time....", "I want you to have a chance at succeeding here..." and continue saying something like "... Shall we try and work out ways we can work well together without these recurring problems?"

3. Describe the problem and the consequences it has.

Calmly state what they were doing and speak about the consequences this has on you, on other students, on school community and possible consequences on the student.

E.g. "You were late in the classroom for 5 minutes.... When you are late, then the lesson is disrupted, which is a problem for me and your classmates. I also have to catch up work in your own time and repeat things"

If the pupil is not in the autistic spectrum and the pupil is not likely to respond aggressively, then you might try to role play what they did instead of telling them. Tell them: " Do you mind if I show you what I *saw* you doing?" "This is what I *saw* you doing."

DO NOT ask the pupil to apologize or to answer why he/she did this. There is no meaning in putting the pupil in defense and doing something that has been proven countless times ineffective.

4. Investigate for Future possibilities.

Ask" What could you do next time?", "Is there anything I can do to help?"

5. Finish-up .

Say things like: "Is there anything else you want to say? "Thanks for your time.

This is still, according to its creator, a consequence or sanction (since the pupil loses some of their free time) but is intended to strengthen relationships between teacher and pupil. That's why it is realized in a supportive rather than a punitive fashion and helps grow mutual respect. So even if you had very difficult time with the student just some minutes before, REFRAIN FROM MAKING THE TWO-MINUTES DRAG ON AND BECOME FOUR OR FIVE MINUTES. If you take the whole break from them (and especially if you start lecturing on that time etc), you will lose their respect for you. You just want to let them know the problem and encourage them to make the necessary changes to move forward, nothing more.

If the pupil absconds at the end of the lesson, and does not come to your Two-Minute Follow Up, do not chase after them. Remain calm and continue with other ways of intervening. You might, ask them to



come to a bigger meeting (with defined duration) in which you will use some of the other practices and proposals of intervening of SHELDON project.

## APPENDIX 2: Table of Activities and Working Sheets

### Activities

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3	<b>COPING WITH PROBLEMS: FOLLOW-UP sheet for collaborative conversation of teachers with the students SHORT VERSION</b>	27
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