

# Parents Helping Parents Problem-Solving Steps

1. Ask for a volunteer (with a real challenge that has not yet been solved) to sit next to you and explain that he or she is now a co-facilitator because everyone can learn from the demonstration. Ask for a scribe to write on a flip chart: the volunteer's name, spouse's name, the names and ages of all the children, and other household members.
2. Ask the volunteer to share a newspaper headline of the concern (just a few words). Ask the group for a show of hands of those who have had a similar concern or feelings. Point out how many people he/she will be helping. The scribe can now sit down until Step No. 9
3. Ask the volunteer to describe the last time the challenge happened, in enough detail, so the group can role-play. "What did you do and say? What did the child (or others) do and say? And then what happened?" Include others who may have been in the room or another room.
4. Ask, "How did you feel?" If he/she has trouble (or says, "frustrated"), show the "Feelings Column 2" on the "Mistaken Goal Chart" and ask him/her to choose the feeling that comes closest.
5. Ask the volunteer to read columns 3 and 4 after the chosen feeling, to verify if this is how he/she reacts, and how the child responds. If it doesn't fit, ask the volunteer to find the rows in columns 3 and 4 that do fit. Then read column 5 to identify the belief, and back to column 1 for the mistaken goal.
6. Let the group know that the Mistaken Goal is just a working hypothesis and that we learn about beliefs and how to encourage even if we aren't exactly "right".
7. Set up a role-play. Invite the volunteer to role-play the child. Include volunteers to play people who might have been in the same or another room. Ask for volunteers to play each part, starting with the lines they heard during the description of the problem. Advise that they "act" the part while being in the here and now to respond to what is happening now, not how they think the child usually responds—and to exaggerate and have fun.
8. Stop the role-play as soon as you think they have had time to experience feelings and decisions (usually two minutes or less). Ask the role-players (starting with the child) what they were thinking, feeling, and deciding (to do) as the people they were role-playing.
9. Put the volunteer in a "cone of silence" (to listen, but not respond). Ask the group to brainstorm solutions. Be sure they are addressed to the scribe at the flip chart, not to the volunteer. Invite the group to refer to the last two columns of the Mistaken Goal Chart, the Positive Discipline Tool Cards, or ideas from their personal wisdom.
10. Ask the volunteer to listen closely while the scribe reads all the suggestions, and then choose one to try. Bring back the volunteers to role-play with the volunteer playing him/herself (so he or she can practice) or to play the child if a punitive suggestion is chosen (so he/she can experience the child's reaction). At the end of the role-play, process the thoughts, feelings and decisions of each role player, starting with the child.
11. Ask for a verbal commitment from the volunteer to try the suggestion for one week and report back to the group.
12. Invite 3 or 4 people from the group to express their appreciation for the volunteer by asking, "What help did you get for yourself by watching this? What did you see that you appreciate about the volunteer? What ideas did you see that you could use?"