

**WELCOME TO HOLLAND**

---

Sandra Avzaradel, MS Ed.  
Educational Consultant  
sandyavzaradel1@gmail.com

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



---

---

---

---

---


---

---

---

Understanding The Family Perspective:  
The Dream And The Reality

- Coming to terms with reality may mean grieving the dream or the 'hoped for' child
- Stages of grief
  - Denial
  - Anger
  - Bargaining
  - Depression
  - Acceptance
- Acknowledge their loss
- Place them on the path



---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Starting Where The Family Is . . .

- Place them on the path
- Be empathetic: hearing that life may have to change or that their child is different is very difficult
- Tolerate non acceptance – parents may be shocked or angry
- Tolerate emotional expression
- Understand context of the conversation
  - Inopportune time
  - Incompatible with family beliefs
  - Family life cycle disrupted
  - Relief, validation
- Be available to support the family

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Fears That May Keep Us From Saying Something

- Fear of being blamed (killing the messenger)
  - Blaming is a reaction and may also point to the parents blaming themselves
- Fear of unleashing an emotional reaction
  - What if they cry? What if they yell?
- Fear of expressing our own emotions
  - Finding balance between professional composure and expressing sympathy and other helpful feelings
- Fear of not knowing all the answers

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Expertise

#### Educators

- Knowledge of child development
- Experience with *many* children
- Observation of a particular child over weeks and months
- Knowledge about local resources

#### Parents

- Know their child best
- Know the background and history
- Knowledge of the family dynamics
- Live the culture with their child

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**YOUR HOT  
BUTTONS**

What  
ADULT  
behavior  
pushes  
your  
button?

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Basic Expectations For People

- People look generally symmetrical
- People will move in coordinated ways
- People will communicate in ways that others can understand
- People will behave appropriately in social situations
- People will be able to learn

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

What happens when parents don't behave as we expect?

**We react**

- First reactions are automatic reflexes

**Because**

- Unfamiliar response
- Unexpected response
- Unsettling response

**Initial reaction may not be a rational reaction**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Working with Difficult Parents

- Listen with understanding
- Imagine the conversation with you as a parent
- Know your own “hot buttons”
- Paraphrase what they say
- Be aware of your body language and posture
- Acknowledge their reactions
  - “I understand this is difficult to hear . . .”
  - “I can tell you are very upset . . .”
- Allow the parent to feel in control
  - “How would you like me to handle this situation?”
- Sometimes you can only “place them on the path”
- Come to a compromise that doesn’t compromise your professionalism and professional judgment

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### When You Are Concerned About A Child . . .

- Begin observing more closely – observe the child over time
- Make notes, describe *what you see* in detail. Gather information about specific behaviors not opinions
- Note when and where behaviors occur and under what circumstances
- Make notes of what you have tried and what happened- see if changing the environment or your approach affects the behavior
- Observe on different days at different times
- Note both positives and areas of concern
- Consult with other professionals, respect privacy
- Schedule a time to meet with the parents

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

### Discussing Your Concerns With Parents

#### Do

- Use clear, cooperative and collaborative language
- Share with the family that you support their child’s development
- Listen to responses and questions & keep an open mind
- Provide data about specific behaviors
- Recognize feelings of nervousness, fear, upset, frustration etc.
- Come up with a plan together
- Offer referrals, resources, & support throughout the process

#### Don’t

- Label the child
- Diagnose
- React
- Do not guarantee eligibility or services from another agency
- Blame, accuse or judge

---

---

---


---

---

---

---

---



Remember . . .

People's emotional reactions and anger towards the educator are usually the result of displaced feelings from something going on in their personal lives with no connection to you!

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Take Aways

- Know your hot buttons; manage your own reactions
- Use data to tell the story
- Realize this is THEIR child, not yours
- Be empathic; their "perfect child" may not be perfect
- Provide resources

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



**YOU CAN ONLY PLACE THEM ON THE PATH  
THEY HAVE TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---