

Strategies for Connecting and Engaging Adolescents and College.

Presented at TLPCA Summit 2025 by:
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Presentation Objectives

- Be able to verbalize why HALT is not good and SOLER is good to use to engage or connect with adolescents in counseling and the classroom.
- Learn a couple of new evidence-based methods of engaging and connecting to adolescents in therapy or an educational setting.
- Be able to apply strategies learned to the case studies presented.
- Have additional resources and techniques for engaging and connecting to adolescents in counseling and educational settings.

Evidence-based Strategies to Engage

- Do not be HALT
 - H
 - A
 - L
 - T
- Do use SOLER
 - Demonstrate
- Do use humor as appropriate.

Evidence-based Strategies to Connect

- Cultural Competence and Sensitivity
 - Must demonstrate to engage and connect.
 - Understanding what?
 - Respecting what?
 - If we understand and respect, we can enhance _____ and _____.
 - According to research, this then leads to _____ and _____.

Evidence-based Strategies to Connect Cont.

- Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques
- Caveat! Mindfulness can be a trigger for some!
 - What are the purposes of mindfulness and relaxation techniques?
 - These techniques can help with _____, _____, and _____ to name three. But they also help, according to research, with _____ and _____.
 - As a result, the adolescent or college student will experience an _____.
 - Mindfulness promotes two (2) important outcomes which results in _____ and _____.
 - (Note – these are brief mindfulness activities in a school setting)

Evidence-based Strategies to Connect Cont.

- Strengths-based Feedback and Reinforcement
 - Focus on the positive – even when difficult.
 - Rationales: Can enhance _____, self-_____, and self-_____.
 - Acknowledge their efforts, progress and positive qualities like cooperation because it fosters what?
 - R_____
 - E_____
 - M_____
 - Also increases that positive behavior making it easier to engage and connect.

Evidence-based Strategies to Connect Cont.

- Narrative Therapy and Storytelling
 - Everyone has a STORY to tell. We need to actively listen in order to engage and connect, especially with the adolescent.
 - Rationales:
 - Adolescents and college students often connect through storytelling and narrative expression.
 - Can help adolescents and college students make sense of their experiences and identities.
 - Research suggests that narrative approaches empower adolescents to _____, leading to increased engagement in counseling and educational settings.
- Sapp's book – example of STORY.

Evidence-based Strategies to Connect Cont.

- **Other Evidence-based strategies with examples of objectives:**
 - **Increase self-awareness** - Objective: By the end of the counseling sessions or classroom activities, Sarah will demonstrate increased awareness of her emotions, triggers, and coping strategies through self-reflection exercises and discussions.
 - **Enhance coping skills** - Objective: The college student will acquire and practice at least three coping skills to manage stressors encountered in daily life, as evidenced by their ability to apply these skills in real-life situations.
 - **Improve interpersonal relationships** - Objective: Johnie will demonstrate improved communication and conflict resolution skills in their interactions with peers, family members, or teachers.
 - **Foster goal setting and planning skills** - Objective: The adolescent will identify short-term and long-term goals, develop action plans with measurable steps, and demonstrate progress towards their goals.

Applying Evidence-based Techniques and Strategies to Case Studies

- Cultural Competence and Sensitivity:
- READ case study “Maria”
- Counselor or teacher takes a _____ approach.
 - What else does the counselor or educator do to engage and connect?
 - As a result, Maria will feel _____ and _____ which in turn will enhance her _____ and promote a _____ outcome.

Applying Evidence-based Techniques and Strategies to Case Studies Continued.

- Mindfulness and Relaxation Techniques:
- READ case study “Emily”
- What does the educator or counselor help Emily manage?
 - What are a couple (2) mindfulness techniques that have been shown to assist a client or student like Emily?
 - Rationales would be to _____ and _____.
 - With consistent practice, Emily will decrease her _____ and _____ and feel more equipped to _____ and _____ in counseling.

Applying Evidence-based Techniques and Strategies to Case Studies Continued.

- Strengths-based Feedback and Reinforcement:
- READ case study “Maya”
 - The teacher or counselor now focuses on Maya’s what?
 - This focus on strengths allows Maya to receive _____ and _____.
This, in turn, helps Maya feel more what?

Applying Evidence-based Techniques and Strategies to Case Studies Continued.

- Narrative Therapy and Storytelling:
- READ case study “Jake”
- Narrative therapy techniques, such as externalizing problems and using metaphors, help him explore _____ and _____.
 - Through storytelling and metaphorical language, Jake begins to what?
 - As Jake reshapes his narrative, he gains a sense of _____ and _____, leading to _____ and _____ in counseling and the classroom.

Summary

- Should we be HALT?
- Should we use SOLER?
- Should we be using a little PCT (Rogerian Therapy) when working with adolescents and college students?
- Are there several ways to engage adolescents and college students in counseling and the classroom?
- Are there several ways to connect to adolescents and college students in counseling and the classroom?
- Are there resources available to help engage and connect to adolescents and college students?

Resource with evidence-based activities

- Sapp, J. F. (2019). Engaging Youth of Today: Mind clear, body fit, spirit well. (Available on Amazon – e-book or hard copy – and other fine retailers like Walmart and Barnes & Noble e-books)
 - To date, this book has been sold and used in the UK, Germany, and the United States!
 - Counselors, teachers, parents, and graduate students have reported that the techniques used work, including the brief assessments!

Evidence-based Sources

- D'Amico, M., Lalonde, F., & Snow, S. (2018). Therapist active listening in youth psychotherapy: An observational study. *Psychotherapy Research*, 28(6), 945-956. (Active listening and validation)
- Smith, C. A., & Lynch, M. A. (2004). Adolescent resilience: A framework for understanding healthy development in the face of risk. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 25, 395-415. (Collaborative goal setting)
- Waters, L. (2011). A review of school-based positive psychology interventions. *The Australian Educational and Developmental Psychologist*, 28(2), 75-90. (Strengths-based approach)
- Gilman, R., & Huebner, E. S. (2006). Characteristics of adolescents who report very high life satisfaction. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 35(3), 293-301. (Strengths-based approach)
- Bernal, G., Bonilla, J., & Bellido, C. (1995). Ecological validity and cultural sensitivity for outcome research: Issues for the cultural adaptation and development of psychosocial treatments with Hispanics. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, 23(1), 67-82. (Culturally competence and sensitivity)
- Sue, D. W., & Sue, D. (2016). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (7th ed.). John Wiley & Sons. (Culturally competence and sensitivity)

Thank you so much!

Innovation!

