

Delving Below the Surface: Examining Unmet Needs

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Importance of Identifying Needs

When supporting youth and families it is key
to identify what the deep needs are.

Varying perspectives on needs....

- *As an imperative* (indirectly expressing an order or obligation – “you need to pay your taxes.”)
- *Basic needs* As something missing or lacking that is important to health – “I need a place to sleep tonight.”
- *Incremental needs* As necessary steps toward accomplishing a goal –
“To get from here to there, you need to drive 3 blocks west on Kendall till you reach the Car Wash, then turn right for 2 blocks.”
- *Deep needs* As the holes in our hearts that drive us to do the things we shouldn't and keep us from doing the things we should – “I need to be sure that no one will try to hurt me again.”

Our perspective of needs.....

- Underlying conditions or causes
- A reflection of the basic humanness in all of us.
- What causes us to behave in ways that result in difficulty.

Getting to the “deep needs” is what separates an OK outcome from an outcome that is life changing.

Consequences of not addressing “deep needs”

- When deeper needs are not addressed the result is typically big behaviors.
- The reaction to these behaviors can be to focus on control and containment
- Control and containment alone often results in an escalation of behaviors
- Escalation of behaviors can lead to people feeling helpless and ultimately a more restrictive level of care for youth

- A need statement is not a requirement.
- If left untended, needs that are unmet will create a gap, tear or void in a person's life. When such a void occurs, behaviors often arise that communicate the unmet need. Unfortunately when such behaviors arise, systems and services are often focused at managing the behavior rather than meeting the need. If the need continues to go unmet, the behavior is likely to escalate resulting in more attempts to contain the behavior.

Challenges with Needs & Community Based Services

- BIG behaviors cause us to overlook need & react to behavior
- Finding words to communicate unmet need
- Helping families find a language to communicate the most important unmet need at the earliest possible moment
- Increasing the precision of "fit" between what you get and what you need
- Overburdening families with the responsibility for "voicing" needs
- Mistaking service for need
- Mistaking goals for need

Services and Needs are Different

- | | |
|--|--|
| • Proposed Service | • Reframed as a Need |
| – Therapist | – Someone to talk to |
| – Positive Peer Socialization Group | – Good friends to hang with |
| – Life Skills Group or Class | – Becoming an active part of the household |
| – Vocational Assessment | – Finding a job |
| – Point System Behavior Management Class | – Learning how to be a regular kid |
| – Support Group | – To know there are other people like me |

- People may be hungry or about to get evicted but that doesn't mean housing or food is the unmet need statement. You can feed the individual but if you can't figure out what caused the situation in the first place you may end up as frustrated as when you began. A need statement is different than a problem statement. A problem statement labels and categorizes a situation while a need statement explains it.

Bad Behavior comes
from unmet needs

Loneliness is the biggest
unmet need

Getting a service does not necessarily mean a need has been met

Joining with Families to Meet Needs

Difficult behaviors tell us important things about a person's life. Things that are often missing from kids and family's lives....

- Meaningful Relationships
- Sense of Safety, Security and Well being
- Power and Control
- Joy
- Relevant Skills and Knowledge
- A sense of Value and Self-Worth

Imagine your life without these things...

Life Domain Areas Used for Needs Identification

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------|
| Social /Fun/Joy | Spiritual |
| Emotional | Safety |
| Feelings | Legal |
| Family | Health |
| A Place to Live | Money |
| School\Work | Relationships |
| Cultural Needs\ Traditions | Behavior |

Getting to the underlying needs

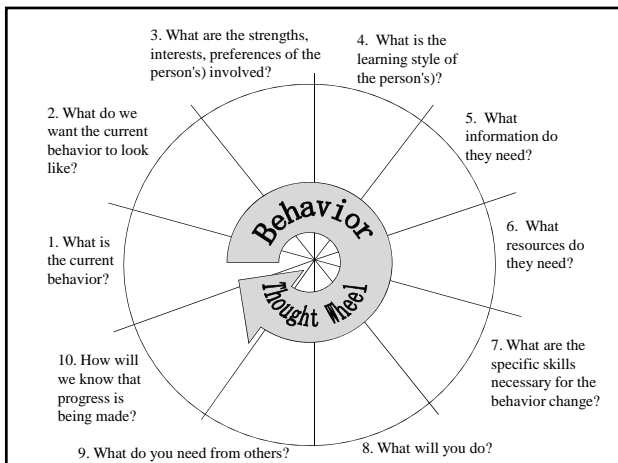
In order to get beyond service driven needs
try asking questions like:

- *What do you hope will be accomplished through this?
- *Why do you think this is important to the person?
- *How will you know if it has been effective?


Pat Miles

Tips for Using the Needs "Egg"

- Consider the facts of the "last time"
 - When, Where, What, Who
- What was next & how did others respond?
- Brainstorm "10" reasons to explain why anyone would need to act like that
- Apply what you know about the history & context to the needs statement



STRESS-“O”-METER



High
Med
Low

My Home/ Middle School

High
Med
Low

Family

High
Med
Low

Neighborhood/ Public Safety

High
Med
Low

School/Fun

High
Med
Low

Transportation

High
Med
Low

Work

High
Med
Low

Personal/Fitness

High
Med
Low

Safety

High
Med
Low

Local

High
Med
Low

Quality of Life/Health

High
Med
Low

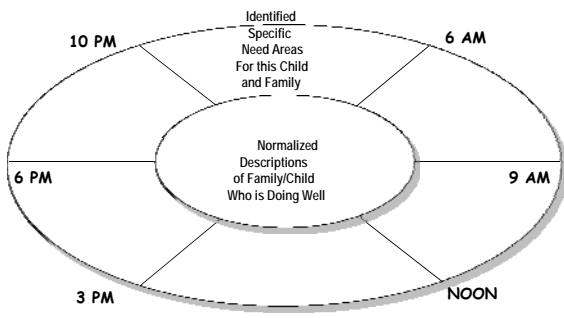
Finances

High
Med
Low

Beliefs

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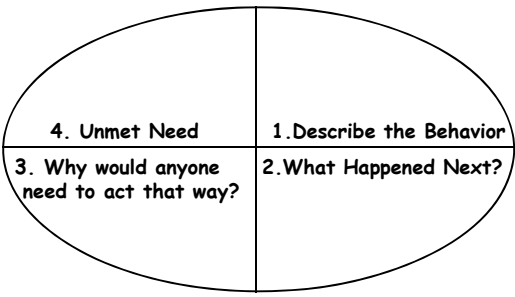
The Planning Clock



Identified Specific Need Areas For this Child and Family

Normalized Descriptions of Family/Child Who is Doing Well

Exploring Unmet Needs as the Basis for Behavior

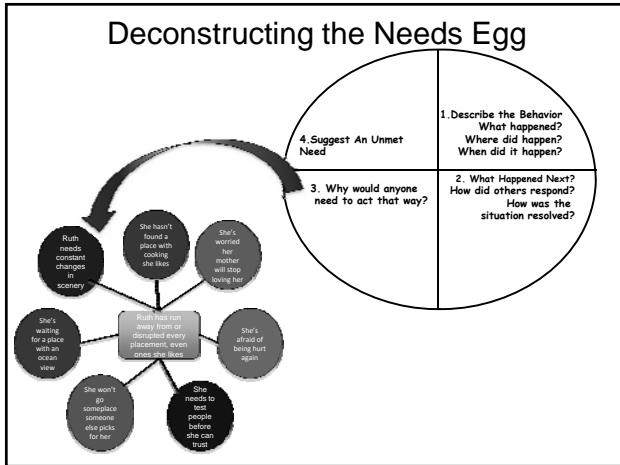


4. Unmet Need

1. Describe the Behavior

3. Why would anyone need to act that way?

2. What Happened Next?



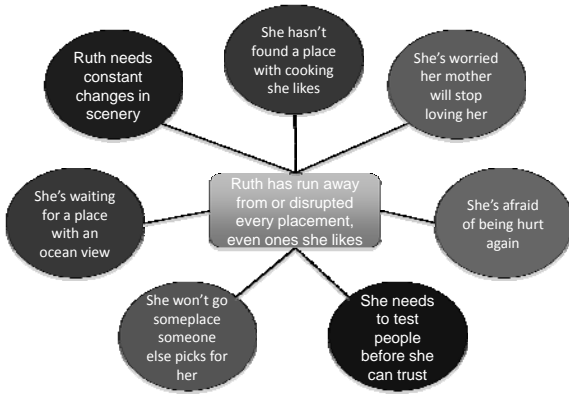
The Needs Wheel

- Resiliency-based practice doesn't ignore problems
- But it addresses them in a different way
- Once a foundation of what has worked in the past has been identified, then the current issues can be deconstructed and addressed
- Sometimes it is hard for families to put their finger on the needs and driving forces that underlie the challenges they are facing
- One of many tools for helping sort things during the engagement phase is a needs wheel

The Needs Wheel

- Using the needs wheel helps clarify what you are trying to accomplish in the 3 step of the needs egg.
- A statement summarizing a challenge is put in the center of a piece of paper and then a series of circles are drawn around it with spokes leading to the challenge statement in the center, like hours on a clock face
- Try to identify as many different reasons as possible why the challenge continues to be a problem
- The ideas can be both silly and serious
- There are no right or wrong answers during brainstorming
- After the 3rd step is complete return to needs egg to continue the process.

Ruth's Needs Wheel



Needs & Individualized Service Planning

- Focus on the "why" of a need not the "how" of it
 - Needs to be reassured to know that others see him as okay even when he makes mistakes on homework rather than he needs to complete his homework
- Use descriptive terms
 - To learn, To know, To experience, To feel, To see, To have, To be
- Deal with the "big" stuff
 - Families deserve to know their teams are dealing with their larger challenges

P. Miles 2009

Needs statement examples

_____ needs to know _____
 _____ needs to feel _____
 _____ needs to be _____
 _____ needs to understand _____
 _____ needs to find _____
 _____ needs to develop _____

Remember that actions and services are not needs.

Examples of Needs Statements

Behavior: Aggression

Potential Needs Statements:

- Kim needs to understand why she gets so angry
- Kim needs to learn acceptable ways to vent her anger
- Kim needs to learn methods to increase her frustration tolerance
- Kim's mom needs to know she can keep the rest of the kids safe if Kim loses her temper
- Kim's siblings need to know they will be safe
- Identify other potential needs statements

Developing Needs Statements

Behavior: Skipping School

Good Needs Based Plans

- Will include at least one of the following:
 - Modify the family's context in home, school or community (tell a new story)
 - Support skills development (learn a new skill)
 - Builds clear pathways for getting needed resources (Get the right stuff at the right time in the right way for the right price)
- And will **always**
 - Build on strengths to meet needs

Tips for Meeting Needs

- Identify clear needs statements
- Avoid blaming the person or their family for the unmet need
- Avoid a “problem” orientation
- Ask people to do what they can do
- Remember to focus on helping the person live a life which makes sense
- Empower the person’s supporters to *listen*

Matching Help with Needs

- Unless we match our help with a person’s needs, what we do:
 - May not help at all
 - Only help a short while
 - Be helpful for one person but not another
- We can get locked into using just one kind of helping:
 - Demand reduction (i.e., meds, therapy)
 - Resource increase (i.e. housing, stipends)
 - Coping strategy addition (i.e. symptom management, job skills, stress reduction, meaning making)
- People may disagree with which kind of help is best and not know how to work it out

A Picture of Things Getting Better

- Hope can be a rare commodity during the engagement stage
- One tool for planting the seeds of hope is to ask the family to imagine it’s a year from now and things are finally getting better
- This can be a continuation of the family story
- Or it can be done graphically by drawing a picture or making a collage
- This can be the transition into the planning phase – “If the needs statements from the egg and wheel show us where we are now, and this picture shows where we want to be, what are some good ways to get from here to there?”

In the end, people want their life to be different more than they want one more service that does not meet their needs
