

KELLY CASE STUDY

Alternative High School, Poor Study Skills

Step One - Beginning the Activity:

Read Kelly's description below silently to yourself

Kelly is a mature, attractive high school junior who has many friends. She has average intelligence. When she was younger, she received a diagnosis of ADHD but her hyperactivity and distractibility did not improve with medication. There are no indications of learning disabilities and her performance on standardized tests indicates grade level abilities. However, her actual performance on assignments is inconsistent. Low motivation, poor study habits, and lack of task completion impede her success. She has received modifications and accommodations under Section 504 since fifth grade including a daily agenda to keep track of assignments and weekly progress reports. She is supposed to bring these home for her parents' signature but consistently doesn't.



Fictitious picture

Kelly lives with her parents and younger siblings. They requested her placement this year at Monterey Pine Academy, an alternative high school setting because of her poor grades in the regular high school.

This year has been no more successful than the previous ones. She is failing, or getting Ds, in most of her academic classes because she doesn't hand in assignments, or they are of poor quality. She is not particularly inattentive in class, and is rarely disruptive, but what she doesn't do in class doesn't get done. Kelly enjoys sports and has the interests of others her age. She is apparently not using drugs or alcohol and has good social relations outside her home. She associates with friends from her previous school as well as her new friends at Monterey Pine. However, the new friends are typically students who are more at risk and are not modeling any better school behavior for her. The staff at Monterey Pine choose to work with at-risk adolescents. Kelly likes them and they like her.

KELLY

Step Two - Activity Instructions:

1. Quickly pick roles in your team from the list below.
2. Look at descriptions in your handout packet.
3. Each player reads his/her part.
4. What to do next is embedded in each person's role description.
5. Kelly's parent begins the role-play.

- Kelly
- Kelly's Parent(s)---can be one or more
- Administrator
- Lead BSP collaborative consultant (can be teacher, psychologist, behavior specialist, etc.)
- Scorer (Advocate or other visitor who checks and scores each section)
- Remaining members of group: Adjunct role players

KELLY

Step Three:

Read **ONLY** your assigned role below. Be ready to play your part. Do your best to make this fun, and accurately communicate to the team your information and perspectives.

The parent(s) will open when everyone has read their roles, written the role on the provided label and put it on.

Opening Dialogue, first speaker – Parents Role

You open the role-play by speaking first. Wait until you can tell everyone has read their parts and is ready to begin. Ask everyone to say their first name, and the role they are playing in this meeting. Tell them you are Kelly's parent(s). After that, tell everyone you are frustrated by her school performance and characterize her as lazy and oppositional. Talk about how she refuses to get off the phone at night to do homework, and this often results in a battle. Tell everyone you think it is laziness that is resulting in her failure and plead for help. Do this after the behavior consultant asks you what you think the problem is. If Kelly says she likes to go camping on weekends, tell her you would like to do that!

Opening Dialogue, second speaker – Administration from the Alternative High School (principal or vice principal) Role

You have seen Kelly with her parents, particularly her mother, are surprised at the level of hostility and defiance she shows because with school staff, she is polite even when non-compliant. Tell the team about this after the parent (first speaker) talks about what s/he thinks the problem is all about. Then, (you're second speaker) suggest that plans to improve her performance will require significant support from school staff and perhaps should rely only minimally on assistance from parents. Do this respectfully, talk about taking the load off of them, etc. Talk about working together to help Kelly do well. Then, shift to Kelly. Ask Kelly what she most wants from the school. Tell Kelly she should contribute to a real plan to help get assignments done after she tells you what she really wants. Offer her study support before and after school to remove parental pressure. When Kelly asks who that might be with, ask about favorite teachers, counselors. Offer her a favorite counselor.

❑ Opening dialogue, third speaker – Kelly role

When someone asks you what you want most of all from the school, **say, “I want to graduate on time!”** When you hear the offer of study support, ask who that might be with. Tell them you really like Ms. Saren. If anyone asks you if there is anything you like to do with your parents, talk about shopping with your mom and going camping on weekends.

❑ Opening dialogue, fourth speaker – Behavior consultant, teacher or psychologist in the role of leading this COLLABORATIVE team effort

After the first three speakers, then you start off: Let everyone know now that “my job is to facilitate everyone working together to understand the problem and find a solution. We have about an hour to write down what we all plan to do to help support Kelly in graduating from high school and meeting her career ambitions. If it takes us longer, we will reschedule to finish on another day.” Offer to record the discussion on the blank BSP. Ask for acknowledgment that this is fine with everyone. Tell them “After we ALL make a decision is made as to what to write, I will check with you on final wording and record it for us. My scorer-assistant will let us know if we are on track, and if not will tell us to try to improve what we are writing.” Then start with Line One: The problem behavior. “So I hear everyone saying that Kelly is having a problem with her work. Let’s discuss what that is and finds words to write here.” ETC. Praise people for their contributions lavishly as you go through the plan.

You are modeling collaborative behavioral consulting skills. You may only write while YOU are talking, not while THEY are talking. Play Columbo: “Do I have that right? Now what should we write here again?” Your scorer-assistant will whisper to you to remember to write only what the team has agreed if you forget. You may only write when YOU are speaking, not while others are speaking. Your scorer-assistant will remind you by gesturing a hand with an invisible pencil.)

Scorer - Assistant

Your primary duty is to whisper to the behavior consultant to remember to write ONLY if he/she is speaking, not while others are speaking. You cue him/her by gesturing a writing motion with an invisible pencil. He/she knows what that means. After the team determines what they will write for each line, consult your scoring guide. You give your analysis of the points for each response. After lines that must be analyzed together have been written (such as C. linking 5 and 6) stop the group to discuss the score. If you think any response is not a “2” response, suggest rethinking and writing again.

Adjunct Role Players

When you are required to introduce yourself, choose ANY role:

Grandparent, speech language pathologist, district psychologist, school psychology graduate student, ape specialist at the school, one of Kelly’s teachers. As the plan is written, play that role. Ask questions whenever you can, ask for more explanation, and above all, express how thrilled you are, praise lavishly!

KELLY CASE STUDY HINTS

Step Four - Key Information and Hints:

EVERYONE: Read as you write each BSP section/line and as you role-play plan development:

1. **Behavior:** Failure to complete written work or study outside of class
5. **Predictors:** All work assigned to be completed at home (write this to a 2 pt.)
6. **What is in/missing in:** Nothing has been done so far (write this to a 2 pt. response)
7. **Environmental:** Write changes that impose a structure (Time-Space-Materials-Interactions) in the home environment, or in after school study sessions or both. Make sure Kelly agrees on, or suggests structure to try, with staff assistance and planning.
8. **Function:** Behavior is task **avoidance** of all schoolwork that needs to be completed outside of the classroom, i.e., work which must be done in distracting and non structured environments
9. **Alternative replacement behavior:** write something that allows Kelly to not attempt do work in distracting, non-structured environments at non-preferred times (**we can accept that!**) but requires Kelly, with staff assistance, to learn how to do homework outside of class through imposing her own structure and plan.
11. **Reinforcers:** Everyone ask her what she really likes to do at home. Build contingencies, offer access to stuff she likes (talking on the phone, playing computer games, whatever) Be sure to see if there are activities she wants to do with her parents and build that in as well.
12. **Reactive Strategies:** Write multiple steps and include phone calls, new meetings, meeting with counselor to look at the plan again with her, etc.
14. **Communication:** This parent has email. Think of daily reports written on her progress to both Kelly and her parents.