



Session 2 Transcript

- Julie: Today's class is about providing effective support and inclusive classrooms again. And today's actionable topic is about, how do we increase independence and interdependence? And here's another surprise. This one both Kristie and I are sort of thrilled about. We have someone joining us today named Sherrill Knezel, and she's a friend of ours and a lovely human being from Milwaukee. And she has a website called Meaningful Marks. And today she's going to be graphically recording what we're talking about. So, can we look at Sherrill's, quickly, Sherrill's screen?
- Kristie: Yeah, go ahead and unshare yours, Sherrill, with everybody. But this is a view. Maybe you can describe it, actually, Sherrill, what it is that they're looking at.
- Sherrill Knezel: Sure. So an actual setup is using my camera, my iPhone has a document camera onto paper. And I'm going to be listening to the conversation and using images and text to capture the essence of it, so that at the end you have a picture of the conversation that took place. And it's a great way, I'm an educator too, and it's a great way to just be more engaged with content and certainly the visuals. There's all kinds of super brain science around why we learn and remember more things if visuals are included.
- Kristie: And we'll take three pit stops across our hour and check in to see what she's been drawing. So, if anybody wants to see it sooner than we do, just say, "Hey, let's check and see what Sherrill's got."
- Julie: Okay, here we are. Week two agenda. Our plan today is we've got a little bit of an opener. We're going to jump into the challenges and benefits of paraprofessional support. We're going to look at a little student advice, and then we're going to jump into independence and fading support. If you're following the arrows, they don't really make sense in my head, so just take a look how we're going student advice, then independence, then interdependence, and then we're going to share some tools. So here we go. Here's the opening. Okay.
- The opening is this. I want everyone to imagine and jot your ideas down. So imagine that you get an email tomorrow morning. And the email tells you that you are going to be supported by somebody. And they're going to be right next to you and hanging out with you and helping you with things you struggle with throughout the day. Can you put in the chat, what words come to mind? What thoughts, what feelings come to your mind when you hear that? Oh, fear. Overwhelming relief. Anxiety. Nervous, relief. Okay. I'm all in. Exactly. It depends, right? Oh, uneasy, nervous. Why? Will they be nice? I love surprises.

Kristie: Will they stink?

Julie: Nauseous, sick to my stomach, whoa, beautiful. Okay. So many thoughts are coming up about that surprise. And now I want to add that they're going to be really helpful to you, and they're going to find, they're going to look for the places that you need support and they'll give it to you right when you need it. But you don't get to select the person that's going to help you. They're just assigned to you. So just jot down, how do you feel? You don't get to select the person. Not fair. Okay, yay. Who are they, right? Good. And then let's just add on, they're going to tell you how to support you. Okay? So they're going to be really very, they're going to be the experts and they're going to tell you how to support you. What do you think? Experience. I don't need help. Concern. Bring it on! That's how I feel is like, this seems great. Good. And bossed around. And all those thoughts are really accurate, in terms of, what do kids feel or think or say about paraprofessional support.

So, I want you to kind of, you've all done this already. But I said, you wake up tomorrow, they're going to guide you. You don't get to select who it is, and they're going to tell you how you should be supported. These are really common issues when paraprofessional support is in place. I want to start, though, with the benefits. Because students benefit from paraprofessional support in unknowable ways. Kristie and I put some down, but I want to hear from you, what do you think are the benefits of paraprofessional support? So meaning, what good do you do in the lives of kids?

Here are some benefits that Kristie and I put together. We know great paraprofessional support helps students manage friendships, you help with physical supports. Sometimes you help with life skills. Sometimes you support educators, believe it or not. So your work with kids allows educators to be working with more kids. Your paraprofessional support helps students to review and maybe teach content. You help kids as they get stuck, so you're a portable support, ready to go. You help with modifications, adaptations, safety, communications support, mobility support, et cetera. And at the bottom we wrote, "So much more," because we know that this is just the beginning of all the good things that you do. Right?

What unintended challenges can exist for students because of paraprofessional support? There's been a ton of research, as you probably know, about, what are the unintended challenges that exist because of paraprofessional support. And we want to just talk about a couple of them. You've mentioned most of them. Dependence on adults. The way we see that in classrooms is we might see a teacher say, "Turn to page 200." And we know dependence is there when the student kind of cranes their neck around and looks to see, "Where's that lovely person who's paid to support me?" Right? If they can't do it on their own. That's dependence. Interference with peer relationships and friendships. And so sometimes peer relationships suffer because of paraprofessional support. Sometimes, and people mention it in here, behavior problems occur because of paraprofessional support. Sometimes separation from classmates, sometimes the kids themselves have better relationships with you than they do their peers. Which seems good, right? But on the other hand they're not having typical relationships. And then, stigmatization or impact on belonging, which I saw lots of people talking about in chat. Anything else you want to mention related to that, Kristie?

Kristie: I was just thinking of a story, and it might have been from my teammate Molly from Alaska. And so Kimmer, you're going to have to help me remember how it went. But she was talking to her daughter about lunch, this is pre-COVID-19. And her daughter was sharing about how some of the students with disabilities, they all eat lunch together. And so her mom Molly was saying, "Well, what's good about it? What's bad about it?" Like, "How does it go?" She said, "It's bad, because they bring adults with them." Something to that effect. She said it much more profound, but she was just like, we love eating lunch together. But some of these kids come with these adults that take up all the space, and they got all the talking. So, that was just ...

Molly: Hey Kristie, I'm here, actually.

Kristie: What's that?

Molly: I'm here, can you hear me?

Kristie: Oh hi, Molly.

Molly: Hi.

Kristie: Can you tell the story real quick?

Molly: Yeah. She was just, you told it pretty much. We were just talking about who she ate lunch with that day. When she was naming people I didn't recognize some of the names, and she said, "Oh, they're from Miss P's class." I said, "Oh, that's nice that they sit with you." She said, "It's really nice to sit with them. But they bring ... But our table gets really crowded because they bring all their grownups with them."

Julie: That is such a beautiful story. And think about what that might look like, feel like, et cetera. Bringing your own grownup to the lunch table could be cool, and it also really might interfere with some natural conversations that exist. We're going to use Michael Giangreco's cartoons, which I love. If you don't know who Michael Giangreco is, he's a researcher and scholar studying school inclusion, and he has several cartoons. This one is one of my favorites. And it's the ways in which we might unintentionally support kids. One of them is Guardian Angel, one of them is Super Magnet, one of them is Stuck Like Glue, and one of them is Hovercraft. And I like those visuals to say, we've got to make sure that we're not doing any one of these things.

I was working with a team of paraprofessionals and they were working on the concept of fading, and there was this woman, and she's so funny. And she said, "Julie, watch me fade today." And I was like, "Okay." So I'm watching her. And she probably stood maybe three feet from the student, and she had her legs in kind of a stance, and she just looked at the student and went like this, right? And she was like, "I'm watching you," kind of a thing. And I was realizing, she understood the first concept of fading but didn't understand sort of the second or third. So that cracked me up. She's someone who, since then, has become excellent at fading. But at the time it was like, not quite.

I love this cartoon that says, "Let me help you with that." And I put myself, I used to teach special ed, and so did Kristie. I put myself in this place. So sometimes when I'm supporting students, I am really having a blast doing the project myself. Right? In fact, I had a student that I supported, a student with Downs Syndrome. Kristie, I wish this

wasn't true. But I took her report home on the weekend, it was a poster, and added a bunch of detail, and added some glitz. Because I really wanted it to be awesome. And I wasn't thinking about the ... that's not my role, and also, it doesn't help the student become an independent learner. So here's someone, "Let me help you with that." And the kid's like, "But when do I get a turn?" After only two months as a teaching assistant, she finds her spelling has improved, her math skills are honed, and she has artistic ability.

The next one is this concept, and all of us have felt this way. When we're shadowing a kid, you maybe even heard that phrase. Sometimes we feel like we're supposed to wear an invisibility cloak or something, because we know that our presence can sometimes have a deleterious affect on kids' social interactions. And so this kid says, "I feel like I'm being followed." "No, you're just paranoid." Rodney's suspicions were accurate. Unbeknownst to him, a paraprofessional had been assigned to be his shadow.

And the last big idea, these are the pieces, these are the challenges that we have to work through. All of these are true, they can be real, and then we're going to talk about, so, how do we do, how do we support students in better ways? This is a study that I did. It's called A Boy in the Bubble. And Kristie, we could even add it onto our dashboard. But I studied a student who was a fourth grader, and I studied him for a month. And during the month, he had 32 interactions with peers. Kristie, do you think that's a lot of interactions or a little, over a month? 32 interactions.

Kristie: Way too few.

Julie: Way too few. Most of the peers were interacting at rates of about four or five interactions per minute. He had 32 in a month. Okay? In the 32, 29 occurred on the same day. Guess what happened on the day where the student had 29 interactions with peers? I just want you to make a guess. It's okay if you're wrong. What do you think? Paraprofessional was absent. That's it. She was absent. She ended up, she's the best paraprofessional I worked with in a long time, and she was absent, and this student went rogue and started to have interactions with peers. Right? 29 interactions out of a months long interactions, were all on the day the para was out. And for me I was like, "Oh my goodness," and I think this paraprofessional is awesome. And I realized that unintentionally, she is stopping interactions.

One really good way to determine, how included is the student you're supporting, is how many interactions they're having with peers without disabilities all day long? And work to increase that over time. Keep increasing that. That is a brilliant thing to think about when you're supporting students. Maybe they have five on one day, five interactions. Good. We're trying for six on the next day, we're trying for seven. You also might work with a very chatty student who's involved in many, many interactions. But one thing we know for sure is paraprofessional support can impact the number of interactions students have.

Kristie: So Julie, would this be good time to check on Sherrill?

Julie: Yeah, it would be a perfect time.

Kristie: Okay. Let's check on Sherrill. So you stop sharing, and let's let Sherrill share. And then you look at your slide deck, Julie, and just the time, and start thinking. All right Sherrill, tell us what you got going. Oh my gosh. Look at this, okay?

Sherrill Knezel: All right. So, opening with thinking about what's going on. I tried to capture a few of the words that people were sharing. Listing your benefits. I think story's so important. So the sandwich story. So I use the sandwich to hang that story on, because when you look at the sandwich you'll remember, "Oh yeah, they brought their adults." The helping or hovering, that was a great cartoon. So I'll probably go back and add some labels to those images. But once I got the images, I can remember the words. And then getting the boy in the bubble.

Kristie: And so you guys, this beautiful drawing that Sherrill's creating, this will be part of our archived information. So if this helps you remember the key things from today, this might be the only thing you look at. And you can go back and go, "Oh yeah, what was that story that Molly told from Anchorage?" Or, "What was that joke that I was like, oh, that's kind of true of me. I wish it weren't." So, oh, perfect. Thank you, Sherrill.

Julie: I know exactly where we need to go next, Kristie.

Kristie: Perfect.

Julie: So I'm going to share my screen.

Kristie: Yep.

Julie: So we asked students, "What do you have to say about paraprofessional support?" Because we think it matters most of all, what are their experiences with the supports that we're giving, right? And so we did a couple things. We first asked students what they thought. And this is a student named Nikki Lopez. And she wrote this. "My freshman year, I felt like everyone in class had a teacher except for me. I had a helper. I wanted to be more independent, so my parents advocated for me and things got much better with my para. She helped me when I needed it, but it wasn't all the time." So she's really distinguishing between making sure that the support is there when it's needed, but not all the time. "If I could give advice to paras, it would be that you should believe in your students. I just wish my teachers and paras would see me the way my parents see me. Independent and strong." So that was beautiful from Nikki. So we wanted to put that up there. And this next one brings absolute goosebumps, head to toe.

This is from someone, oh, not this one, but this too. So, Jamie Burke. Jamie is a friend of mine, and he's a man with autism. He was supported by paras his whole life. And he wrote this. "We are willing and ready to connect with other kids. And adults must quietly step into the background. Camouflaging their help as a tiger who may hide in full view. It is the needed disguise of the adult who smooths the way for friendship, then stands back in the shadows, observing the complicated dance of steps, taking you to the feeling of confidence." So Jamie is someone who types to communicate, so he typed out that full message about what it means to be supported. And I love the way he uses imagery to create this idea. Kristie, do you have a comment about Jamie's?

Kristie: Oh, I can't wait to see Otto's again.

Julie: I know, that's what I'm excited about, too. Otto is a new friend of mine. He's someone who types to communicate, and he wrote this and sent it to us yesterday. He wrote this. "Please know your position is valued. Please treat your position as a profession. You are not just an anything." And I want to stop for a second, I think he means, not just a

paraprofessional, not just a mom, not just a teacher. You're so valuable. This part, he says, "You are the thread that supports a day that can be seamless or completely unraveled. You serve the function of interdependence. You are an integral component to success." That, right?

Kristie: Soak that in, y'all. All hundreds of you. That's his message. I mean, what a beautiful thing. If someone said, "What advice do you have to Kristie?" They'd probably say, "Slow down, quit creating so much content." They wouldn't say, "You are valued. You are an integral component of my success." What a beautiful thing, what a beautiful gift that you've given to him and he's returning. So I just love that. I'm glad that those who needed to hear that today heard that. So you just print it off and read it as many times as you need to.

Julie: And if you're wondering, "Oh no, the words are gone," we will promise to give you Otto's words right in the dashboard. So don't worry that you missed it. We'll make sure to share that with you on the dashboard. We're going to talk about a couple best practices. And we're doing great with time.

Kristie: Good.

Julie: So we've kind of divided the best practices as increasing independence and increasing interdependence. We put them in two big categories. When we say independence, we're really thinking about, how do we help students do the most they can by themselves so that we're there to support only when support is needed? And the second is interdependence. And that is, how do we make sure that every student that we support, that we first consider having others support and work with them. Okay? Does that make sense to everybody, I hope?

The first one, like I said, is increasing independence and fading support. If you saw our video, we talked about the prompting ladder. And we're going to talk again about the prompting ladder, so don't worry if you didn't see it. But, actually I'm jumping to the ladder, then I'm going to go back to before the ladder. Kristie, make sure I don't keep going on, okay?

Kristie: Yep, yep.

Julie: We're about to talk about the prompting ladder. And that is, how do we help a student to do anything? Often we have to provide prompts? Prompts would be things like supports, gestures, cues, modeling, showing a picture, saying something, providing physical support. Those are examples of prompts. And when we talk about the prompting ladder, in a minute we're going to talk about starting at the least intrusive and going all the way to the most intrusive. But, we decided that before you even get on the ladder, before you even step on the ladder, we really want you to do a few things. So I'm going backwards.

And Kristie, we can kind of go every other one for this, if you want.

Kristie: Okay.

Julie: So I'm going to do the first one. So, make sure the entire class perceives that you're there to help all students. So one thing you want to make sure is that you're not considered Otto's helper, right? You're not considered so-and-so's paraprofessional.

You're considered someone who's a support available for anyone at any time. And Kristie, want to do the second one?

Kristie: Yeah. So one of the things that all of us do, because we're helpers and we're fixers and we're problem solvers and we can almost see where it's going to end up before it gets there, that we step in. For me, I move at a really fast pace. And I remember this one time this little kid was asked to go get some toy to play with. And he mosies over to counter and then to the shelf, and I'm thinking, "Oh, for the love of God, pick a toy. Get a toy, get a toy, get a toy. Okay, I'll get a toy for you." He literally puts his hands in his back pockets, like, "I'm here for a while," and he's just looking at the shelf, and looking around. And I'm like, "Get a toy. Get a toy. She said get a toy, get a toy."

And so I have to really say, sometimes people don't need help. Of all ages. Even if I'm assigned to them or not assigned to them. And so many times just pausing long enough for processing, which for many children might be up to 30 or 60 seconds to process auditory information, they can do it. So long story for that bullet, Julie, but it made me think of that little kid who totally knew what toy he wanted, and if I would have jumped in and said, "Here's what you're looking for," he'd have been like, "No. I'm just looking for it."

Julie: This is my hardest. When I'm supporting kids, Kristie, just what you said. These, the next two go together. Giving the student time and watch before helping. Sometimes for me I literally am sitting on my hands, I'm literally rocking back and forth. And I'm just laughing because essentially you're perseverating like, "What toy what toy what toy," and then we'll call the kid perseverating, that's pretty funny. Or for me, I really, really, really struggle with wait time. So I'll count in my head sometimes 30 seconds before jumping in. 30 seconds is a lifetime.

Kristie: Let's just do it right now, Julie. Count to 10 slowly, and we are going to close our eyes. And I want you guys to raise your hand or touch something on the keyboard in the chat of when you feel anxious. So Julie's going to count slowly to 10, and we're going to notice what it feels like, and notice what number you felt anxious at. So if you got twitchy at three, put three in. Or just raise your hand. So okay Julie, we're ready.

Julie: Okay. Ready, get set, go. 10.

Kristie: I'm holding my breath. Is she done yet? Is she done yet? Is she?

Julie: That's 10, right? And I didn't use a watch, but that's the kind of wait time before we jump in. Many of us that are helping people are fast thinkers, fast movers, and we're working with kids who have processing time that's a lot slower. They have moving time that's a lot slower. So man, that's important. Another one quickly is, can you set up the materials in a way that they're not going to need prompting at all? Could you color code something? Could you number something? And then you're not physically needed there, which is actually ideal, and you can work with other students. Setting up a self monitoring system. And then, do you want to do the last one, Kristie?

Kristie: Yeah. I think, we'll talk about this in a minute, about how to foster friendships that, if we have a role to play, any adult, it's to really build friendships between children. So when we talk about peer support, the kicker once you think about is that a child or a student with a disability can be a peer support for someone else. So when we talk about peer mediated intervention peer support, it doesn't mean always children who are identified

as typical supporting children on IEPs. It's also finding the superpower or the strength or the talent of the student that you're serving to be a support to somebody else in the classroom. So they might be fabulous at math or at motor or at opening their milk carton. They can learn how to support other students so that it's more reciprocal. So it's not just that the student that is on the IEP needs other people to support them, but we're looking for all kinds of bidirectional, back and forth, two way street peer support.

Julie: And sometimes that takes a lot of thinking. What can this student do that would be supportive to others? And then making sure that you build that in, build it in from the front. Beautiful. So that's before you even jump on the ladder, okay? So the ladder is this idea of, when you are prompting a student. So you've decided it's time to prompt, you've decided the kid's not going to do it any other way unless you provide the support. We like to ask you to think that you're, and this is just a way to think of it, pretend that you're afraid of heights. And you only want to get on the ladder if you have to. And you only want to go as high as you have to, and then you want to get back down as quick as you can. That's how I want you to think about the ladder.

So you start with, I'll start on the bottom. Invisible materials. So you might just make material supports. Meaning, let's just say you can highlight the big ideas and you can walk away. Or, the materials you make is a to-do list with four ideas on it and you get to walk away. Maybe you walk away for a minute. Maybe you walk away for a half hour. But essentially the materials are created, and then you leave.

Kristie: And I'm going to, I'm making myself a note, but in early childhood we talk about self correcting materials a lot. You guys might too in K-12. But it comes from, in our theories, Montessori, Maria Montessori's work. I'll put some links to my Pinterest board for self correcting materials. It's one of the best ways for kids to be independent with materials if the materials meet six criteria of what we call self correcting. And I'll put that down.

Julie: And I'd love to look at that, even, to make it K-12-ish, Kristie, maybe we could do that, too.

Kristie: Let's do it. Okay.

Julie: So going back to, the next rung up is a natural cue. And a natural cue might be, the bell rang, it's time to get up. That's a natural cue. Nobody did anything. And so you might just use a natural cue. Or, I'll use an example. In the lunch room, there are natural supports that aren't you. And so maybe there's someone else that can be providing support. That's a natural cue. Wait time, like we said. The next one up is a gesture. So you might simply be pointing or gesturing in some way, like maybe it's time to wash their hands and you're just sort of ... That's a gesture. Kristie, what's another common gesture in early childhood that you might use?

Kristie: I think too often we probably use pointing, directing. But I think sometimes if we use facial expressions, sometimes to me is a part of a gesture, because my hands, as you can see, work with my mouth. But it's this way of showing people what is to be focused on. So if I gesture to the thing or in some way even gesturing to my face, helps people know what to be looking at or attending to.

Maybe stop. We use some sign language that is also a form of, of course, communication and language, but also a gesture. So.

Julie: Beautiful. And I'm seeing people saying tapping, prompt cards, this is awesome. Yes, all of those things could be either a gesture, they could be a model, or they could be a visual prompt. All the different ones that you're coming up with. An indirect verbal prompt is something like where you ask a question. Like, "Huh. I wonder what's next?" Or, "Hm, I'm not sure where the markers are." Right? I'm not saying to the kid, "Hey, the markers are over there." I'm saying, "Oh, I don't know." Now the kid knows, I'd better be looking for the markers. Right? So you're giving indirect, compared to a direct verbal prompt. Modeling is actually showing and not saying anything, just showing what's going on. A visual prompt might be a visual that you provide to show them the schedule or something like that. A verbal prompt is like, "Let's find the markers. Time to get up. Head over to the rug." Those are verbal prompts, right?

Then there are physical prompts. And as you notice, we consider all the way on the top would be physical prompts. Meaning, you don't want to do a lot of physical prompting of kids. You don't want to be moving kids' heads, bodies, arms, et cetera. And, some of you work with kids who you need to manipulate hands, bodies, arms, based on the disability. So we recognize that. But what we want you to think about is, when do you need to and when can you not? And how would that look? And of course partial physical prompting is something like, I'll use an example. I worked with this kid who got stuck in his locker a lot. He has autism. And what that meant is he'd be in his locker. It's like a cubby, he'd be sitting on the bottom. And he'd be like, "I'm stuck, I'm stuck." And really, in Steven's life, he was stuck. Meaning, his motor [inaudible 00:29:11] wasn't working. So instead of fully pulling him out, I just put my hand on his back and I'd say, "Steven, I'm going to help you stand. Are you ready?" And I'd say, "One, two, three, and up." I just gave him a little support. With that tiny bit of momentum, he was on his own and I was careful to sort of back off.

And then full physical support would be, what do you need to help kids do physically? And I want you to challenge yourself. A lot of people think, "Well, yeah, I've got this student with cerebral palsy. I have to, I have to." Everything you provide physical support for, I want you to think, "When could I provide partial, verbal, visual," all the way down the ladder. Kristie, anything else about the ladder?

Kristie: I'll say one thing about visual prompts, and then some people are having questions about the dynamics between teacher and paraprofessional or different adults having different perceptions. So definitely we'll raise that in session five if we don't, we've got a little bit along the way. But I wanted to recognize that. Visual prompting just really quickly too, guys, that, it's on a developmental continuum. So the actual object is actually more supportive than all the way to something that has emoticons, all the way to something that's in writing. So there's a developmental continuum. So there's a support ladder inside a support ladder. So I'll put that on our dashboard, too, that shows you from more supportive to least supportive, what the visual is.

Julie: I like that idea of a tiny ladder, Kristie. A tiny ladder of visual supports. And sort of, and also, I haven't said this, I wish I did. Ask students how they wish to be supported.

Kristie: Yes.

Julie: Ask students how they wish to be supported. So back to the very beginning this morning, or, when I said that you woke up and had an email that someone was going to support you, I said as one of the things that they're going to tell you how to support you. And that

changed a lot of the ways that people were talking. We have to remember that support is only supportive if it seems so to the person we're supporting.

Kristie: Yep.

Julie: So we've got to ask, ask, ask.

Kristie: I love that. And even for younger children or children who are using other modes to communicate, notice their cues. They tell you a ton. Julie, let's do this. Let's check in with Sherrill's drawing, and that'll give you a chance to reprioritize our stuff, too.

Julie: Love it.

Kristie: And I'll follow your lead. All right, Sherrill. What have you been learning?

Sherrill Knezel: So very much. All right. I'm realizing-

Kristie: Oh my gosh! You're going to need more paper!

Sherrill Knezel: [crosstalk 00:31:49] information. So I'm trying to get the ladder. I loved, pretend you are afraid of heights.

Kristie: Yeah.

Sherrill Knezel: Then, I wanted to just capture some of the visual images you shared. So, they're a little small, but the verbal prompts are important with, "Let's go." Or especially the, "Hmm. I wonder where" So for example I didn't even, I just put, "Hmm," because I bet you'll all remember what they said after that. And even a little ladder inside the big ladder.

Julie: Oh, you drew it. Aren't you amazing, Sherrill? So here's what somebody said to me. And they were supporting a kid named Joe. And they said, "But I thought my job was to sit next to Joe." And I loved that quote, because what the person was saying is, "I thought I was hired to sit next to this kid. And I was teaching him to fade his support. And so I realized, no, no, no. Your job isn't to sit next to anyone. Your job is to do three things. Help the student become as independent as possible, help the student connect to other students, and fade your support." And that's, create and implement a fading plan. So I'm going to talk about fading plans. I'm hopeful that you have them. And if you don't, don't worry. We're going to give you a lot of resources about them.

The chair. Dun dun dun! I usually am doing this live, so picture that we're in a big auditorium. I'll pull a chair, and I have a microphone. I'll pull a chair over next to one of the participants, and I'll sit there and I'll talk on the microphone right next to the participant. And I'll ask everyone in the room the question, "So, what does my presence do for this person who's trying to learn right now?" And everyone's like, "Ugh, it makes the person feel stigmatized." Actually, I'm just going to ask you that question. If we were in an auditorium and I put a chair next to Maria Crooks, that's who I put the chair next to. And I sat there next to her, and I supported her while she was learning. What do you think is the problem or challenge for Maria if I relocate and create a chair next to a human being?

- Kristie: Yeah. You guys are so right. And I think what's even interesting is that the other people who aren't Maria feel that for her. Because they're thinking, "Oh my God, I'm so glad. Is she going to come sit by me, next?" And so it's almost like, other people that have those feelings of being uncomfortable or intimidated or anxious, they might be feeling it for Maria. And Maria's like, "Hey, why are y'all talking about me?" Right? Well, we just sat our chair next to you, like your dog, Maria. We just kind of had to get next to you, get some love, yeah.
- Julie: That's how come you came up, Maria. It's because your dog is cute, so I just wanted to really point you out. So the chair. We've got to think about where we put ourselves in school. So think back to school situations. Where do you place yourself, and what does that look like? And I very jokingly say this. Burn the chair. Right? We cannot have an adult chair next to a kid. So in Iowa, I did a presentation and they had a chair burning ceremony and it was the most fun thing we've done in a long time. My point isn't to literally burn chairs. My point is to say, rethink side by side support. It is considered one of the least effective ways to support kids. We've got to think about [inaudible 00:35:01] supports and all kinds of other things. Not side by side support.
- Kristie: And I would elaborate on that. It is a challenge, guys. It's not, I know it sounds like we're saying, "Support, but be invisible. Help them, but don't touch them." It's like, well, where do you want me to go? Go right or go left? Because I'm going to say, even behind support really invites full physical assistance. So many times if children are sitting in a circle or seated at a horseshoe table, and you come in behind them, it's easy for us to do physical or feel drawn to do it. And many times it's just a bit of a trap.
- Julie: It's a big trap. And so, I love that you brought up that cognitive dissonance. And sort of how annoying this must feel, right? If I'm a paraprofessional and I'm hearing, "Support, but not too much. Be close, but not close enough. Create love and connection, but don't." We know that is the most bananas sort of combination. I call it an art form. And I work with many paraprofessionals who do it so beautifully. And they're constantly thinking about, when do I need to, and when do I not need to come in, support, what does it look like? Et cetera. And they're cognizant of it. We're asking you to be cognizant of it, and constantly think about fading.
- I'm not going to talk about the fading plan in front of you too much, because it's pretty self-explanatory. You're going to get this in your handout packet. In fact, you have it in your handout packet. These are the questions on the right that we think every team, if you're supporting, especially if you're a one on one. But if you're supporting a student who needs a great deal of support, you need to look at these questions. So I'm going to give you 30 seconds of silence just to practice, what does 30 seconds look like and feel like? During my 30 seconds of silence, look at what the questions are and maybe how to use it. Ready?
- Kristie: Yeah. And if you can't see it on. Sorry, Julie, two seconds, because I don't like silence. But if you can't see Julie's screen, it is in your packet of handouts today. It's also in the key PowerPoint for today. And if you don't have any of those things, you can just sit with 30 seconds of silence knowing that you have it later. All right Julie, we're ready.

Julie: Okay. Ready? I'm going to actually do 30. Watch how long 30 seconds is, everybody. And just read and relax during this time.

Okay. That's 30. I did set a timer for 30 minutes accidentally. So that would have been a really ... if I waited for that alarm, people would have been like, "Oh no." So this fading plan. These should be something, and if you haven't ever heard of a fading plan, don't worry about it. What you do need to say is, "Hey teachers that I'm working with, let's start to create fading plans for students." And your job becomes, how do we make sure that we're fading our supports in ways that help students become as independent and interdependent as possible?

Kristie, you want to talk about the what to do?

Kristie: No, you go ahead. Let's keep going.

Julie: Okay.

Kristie: Because we only have 10 minutes, Julie.

Julie: I know, we're doing great. We're doing great.

Kristie: Okay. Julie's so positive. I'm such a-

Julie: Interdependence. This part. Oh. When I talk with people who have been supported by paraprofessionals, they are continually asking me to help people think about interdependence. I think about all the things I need support on every day. It is unreal, the kinds of supports that I need just to get through my regular day. Some of you are probably very independent. I am not. And so what I want you to think about is, how do we make sure that kids are getting support from friends whenever possible, and they're giving support to friends whenever possible? These two students taught me this lesson in a way that I have not ever forgotten. So the student that's in the stroller is named Luke, and the student on your left hand side is named Darius. And I was in class and I was doing a study of interactions between Luke, and Luke has a significant disability, and doesn't, he uses eye gaze to communicate. And he has some very challenging behaviors.

So I'm in his class, I'm observing what's going on, and I notice that Luke starts to breathe really loud. And when he breathes really loud, I know that some significant behaviors are about to occur. Well, I watch, and Jill is the name of the paraprofessional. She's phenomenal, phenomenal, phenomenal. And Jill comes floating over and provides craniosacral support on Luke's head. And I watch, and Luke's body calms in about a minute and a half. And I watch him calm, and I think, "Oh." So I'm jotting down notes and I say, "Oh, craniosacral support, blah blah blah."

Then, I listen to Darius, who's talking to the new kid in his table group. And Darius turns to the new kid and goes like this. "Hey, dude. Whenever Luke is naughty, Miss Murray gives him the claw." Right? So Luke and, so Darius believes that this craniosacral support is the claw. And I think he believes that every time that Luke starts to have a hard time, here comes Miss Murray, and she squeezes his head until he's compliant, right? So first of all, I'm like, "Oh no, everyone's thinking that, here comes Jill to hurt Luke and get him to be compliant." And so I say to Jill, "Hey, guess what? This is what

Darius said. What do you think?" So first she laughed and was like, "Oh my gosh." Next, she said, "During morning meeting, maybe I'll explain my support." And I was like, "Okay."

The next day, she wants to explain the support to the whole class. So she says to the whole class, "Hey. Any time Luke's having a hard time, what I do is provide craniosacral support, which is a light touch on the forehead and the back of the head." And I listen, the kids are watching. And she says, "In fact, I can show you each." So she shows everybody what craniosacral support is. And Darius, the same kid, raises his hand and says, "Miss Murray, whenever Luke has a hard time like that, why can't I just do that for him?" And Miss Murray says, yeah, that's amazing, right? Miss Murray goes like this. It was so funny. She goes, "Well, Darius, you're not really trained in craniosacral techniques." And then she goes like this, "But, neither am I." And so she says, "Well, let's see."

So honestly a week later I'm in the same classroom. Luke is supposed to be writing in his journal and putting his pictures in. Everyone's writing and all of a sudden, I have to be able to act this out. People can see my face, yes, Kristie? Okay. So you're going to want to look at me for this acting.

Kristie: If you want it big, you've got to take your screen off.

Julie: Oh, it's not that big a deal.

Kristie: Okay.

Julie: So Darius is writing in his journal like this. And all of a sudden he looks at Luke and Luke's having a hard time and he looks again. Hard time. The third time he looks, he goes like this. And it looks like this. It's not good craniosacral support, okay? It's not pretty. And then I notice Luke's body calms in four seconds. And I was like, "Right. Students want to be supported by their friends and loved ones. And so do I." So our job is to help friends and loved ones provide support to kids in new ways. Right? So for me, this Luke and Darius thing was awesome, and really, really useful. I know we have five minutes. So we're going to put this and a few other things online for you, to get you set. You've had tools to take, you've got the ladder, the fading plan, and then I can talk about choice. Or you want to talk about zig-zag process, Kristie, your choice.

Kristie: Let's do the zig-zag, just so I can introduce it. There's a whole podcast and handouts, but let me just orient.

Julie: Okay, beautiful.

Kristie: Yeah. And so what this is, guys, is another way to think about supports that's a zig-zag back and forth versus an up and down ladder. So keep in mind Julie's analogy of, you're scared of heights. You only want to go as far up on the ladder as you need to and come back down as soon as you want. This is a little bit more like a side to side, so we call it the zig-zag. Everything on the right hand side of your screen is harder for humans of any age. When there's many things, when they're complicated, when they're unfamiliar or we don't like it, that's always harder for us as humans. On the left hand side is something you can do that humans like. The human brain feels safe and better when things are one at a time. It's pretty simple for me. Very clear what I'm supposed to do. And I like doing it. Okay?

So there's these seven things that you can do on the fly, even if it's not part of your fading plan, but you can just notice somebody struggling. And if you can do something to simplify it, something that is preferred, which would be a segue into choice, something that's familiar, human brains go, "Oh! Turn the alarm off. It's all good." If it's too much of the stuff on the right, the alarm in the brain here in the amygdala and the hypothalamus, the limbic regions, will signal, "Danger, danger, you are not safe. Do something stat." So it's called the zig-zag process. There's a whole podcast that explains each of these seven, on both sides. If you want to learn more about, "Well, what is global and specific?" It's all on your dashboard.

Julie: I love this because it gives you just a way to think about how students learn. And when Kristie talked about the alarm bells going off, I want you to put a pin in that, too, for when we talk about students whose behavior challenges us, on the second to last session now. Because we're going to give you lots of ways to think about that. But one thing that might be occurring is, this is unfamiliar. This is un-preferred. This is abstract. All those things might be creating the thing that's going on in someone's brain that's causing some kind of behavior. Okay. Beautiful. Kristie, yes or no?

Kristie: No.

Julie: Okay. Yes or no? Yes.

Kristie: I'll say it very short, and then I'll let you wrap things up.

Julie: Okay.

Kristie: And we can check on Sherrill.

Julie: Great.

Kristie: So this is also to put a pin in it. And we have things on your dashboard. But this is probably the most magic we can give you. All of us, regardless of our title, especially right now in a pandemic, and then absolutely as we think about schools reopening and as we're reimagining all of our interactions and we're starting to do things maybe still with social distancing, doesn't matter. Our job right now is thinking about our children feeling safe, seen, soothed, and secure. And this is across the lifespan. So those of you who work with students and young adults, those of you who work in middle school, those of you who work with three year olds. Maybe 30 year olds. Maybe you're working with your parents who are 80 year olds. This is our job, to help make sure that whatever we're doing, sitting beside, sitting behind, we're somewhere on the ladder of fading supports, we're trying to foster friendships, we've got all this stuff we're thinking about.

If it becomes overwhelming, if your own alarm goes off and you're like, "I don't even know what my job is anymore," just remember the four Ss. This is your key. Does this human that I'm interacting with, my teacher, my principal, a parent, a child, a student, do they feel safe, seen, soothed, and do we have a secure attachment? That's going to be key. There are some resources on your dashboard, and we're going to come back to it in our fourth session. But in case you were feeling a little bit of that go left and go right at the same time, strip it down. And if we're doing these things for humans, they will grow, develop, and thrive.

Julie: Okay. Beautiful. We want to choose one question. Actually, we can do these two really quickly. The first question that we know people worry about is, I worry that my principal will think I'm not doing my job if I'm not next to the student. How do I deal with that? And I think that you are armed now with a lot of words and thoughts around, make sure your principal sees and understands your fading plan. Make sure you communicate the ladder of supports. Go ahead and talk to people who are observing your work, so that they know that you're working really hard, it just doesn't look always like side by side support. And the same thing, and we're going to talk more about that interaction between your lead teacher or your teachers that you work with, because they might have very different ideas than you, but let's just say the teacher is saying, "I want you sitting next to this kid all the time." How do I communicate? And so we're just saying, share this chapter or this content with your teacher and we're going to discuss it. That's a short way of saying, we have to have a professional conversation. And sometimes you can spark that conversation or start that conversation.

Today we're going to end, because we like to be really respectful of your time and make sure that we stick within your hour. And I'm going to stop sharing. We're going to see what Sherrill's up to.

Kristie: Perfect. Oh my god, those words are amazing. Oh my god. So many amazing things!

Julie: I always feel like crying at this moment.

Kristie: I do too!

Julie: It feels so beautiful. Oh. I hope you're looking at Sherrill's work, as you're writing your words. You can do two things at once.

Kristie: They can.

Julie: Sherrill, is there anything you want to say about your work from there until now? Oops. Unmute yourself, Sherrill.

Kristie: Yeah. Could you just draw and have cameras and unmute yourself? Like, come on.

Julie: Woops! You re-muted.

Sherrill Knezel: There we go. Now?

Julie: Yep, good.

Sherrill Knezel: I, again, when I'm listening and there's a lot of content, I tend to hang information on the visuals. So I got the chair. And I think that you all will know, burn the chair and rethink your side by side support. And then we fill in the information that we heard when we saw the image, or when we pictured the image. Also the claw was such a powerful story, Julie. So that's on there with the little hairy claw hand. Luke and Darius, and then, why can't I do it? And four seconds to calm, with some [inaudible 00:50:27] calm. So yeah. Such good stuff.

Julie: So we want to, I'll close, and then Kristie, if you want to end and say goodbye. I just want to say thank you for your time and energy today. This was beautiful. So just so you

remember, you're going to get a picture of Sherrill's visual and you're going to get it directly in your dashboard. And then you can print it and share it and make it big, which is all the learning from today. I just can't thank you enough, Sherrill, for taking the time and energy to do this work for us, and with us, today.

Kristie: All right Sherrill, thank you again, and Julie. Just amazing thank you. Ashley, Tony, thank you to my team. And then of course thank you to this amazing group of paraprofessionals. Feel free to join us over on Facebook. Write to us if we can help you in any way. Yeah.

Julie: Thanks everybody. Good luck, Kristie. Talk to you soon.

Kristie: Thank you. Thank you.

Julie: Okay. Bye.

Kristie: Bye everyone.