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Tom, a paraprofessional working with Trevor, a first-grade boy, was having a difficult time getting Trevor off the playground at the end of recess. Trevor would run around and hide, and Tom could not reach him or get him to go inside. The end of recess time was becoming a bit like a game of tag, except that Tom definitely did not enjoy chasing Trevor around. Trevor would climb to the top of the slide, and if Tom came up, Trevor would slide down. If Tom went up the slide, Trevor would go down the monkey bars. This was almost humorous to watch unless you were Tom, who felt frustrated and embarrassed. Tom considered the communicative intent of the behavior and decided that Trevor was likely trying to communicate that he did not want to come in from recess. Knowing that information, however, did not help Tom identify what to do to get Trevor inside. He also knew that Trevor had a difficult time with transitions. Tom decided to talk to his team. They sat together and engaged in a CPS process, which is briefly outlined in Table 9.1.

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BUILDING A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

If you were all alone in the universe with no one to talk to, no one with which to share the beauty of the stars, to laugh with, to touch, what would be your purpose in life? It is other's life, it is love, which gives your life meaning. This is harmony. We must discover the joy of each other, the joy of challenge, the joy of growth.

—Mitsugi Sautome (1986)

To sustain yourself as a paraprofessional, you need a network of caring support. Do you feel isolated in your workplace? Do you feel that you could use more support? Think of all the people who love you and care about you. Now, consider others at work who also might feel isolated. In your school, classroom, or grade level, create a small team of support.

Table 9.1. The creative problem-solving (CPS) process in action

Stage of CPS process	Examples from Tom and Trevor
1. Fact finding	<p>It doesn't work to wait him out.</p> <p>It takes easily 10 minutes to get him off the playground.</p> <p>He does not respond to everyone leaving the playground—he continues to play.</p> <p>He enjoys playing tag with his friends.</p> <p>He has trouble with transitions.</p> <p>No one has ever asked him what he needs.</p>
2. Problem finding	<p>In what ways can we help Trevor return from recess promptly and happily?</p>
3. Idea finding	<p>Give him a time out.</p> <p>Have him lose minutes off his recess time.</p> <p>Give him a timer or watch.</p> <p>Have a peer help him in.</p> <p>See how long he will play outside before coming in.</p> <p>Don't allow him to go outside for recess at all.</p> <p>Make a sticker chart.</p> <p>Give him extra recess.</p>
4. Solution finding	<p>We want this solution to . . . (example criteria)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhance the image of the student among peers. 2. Promote independence or interdependence. 3. Appeal to the student. 4. Increase and promote belonging. 5. Increase interaction with peers. 6. Seem logistically feasible.
5. Acceptance finding	<p>The team finally decided on a solution for this problem. What they did was to combine three ideas. They first met with Trevor to ask him what would help (they provided him a menu of ideas); he decided on a timer with peer support. They gave Trevor a watch timer and asked him to identify a peer whom he was to find when the timer went off. When the timer rang (with 2 minutes remaining in recess), the two boys found each other and went to line up together. Problem solved.</p>

Sources: Giangreco, Cloninger, Dennis, and Edelman (2002); Osborn (1993).

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