

Review of the Book *The Explosive Child: A New Approach for Understanding and Parenting Easily Frustrated, Chronically Inflexible Children* (6th ed.), by R. Greene

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In its sixth edition, *The Explosive Child* is marketed as a parenting guide but offers remarkable advice for anyone working closely with children and young people (CYP). Greene presents a digestible version of collaborative and proactive solutions (CPS), which is now widely accepted in the U.S. as an evidenced-based model for working with children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. By adopting a social constructionist approach, Greene describes how to reduce concerning behaviours whilst simultaneously promoting the autonomy of CYP — an objective that feels familiar to the work of educational psychologists (EPs).

Greene transcends his promise of improved communication with CYP by offering frequent and varied examples of dialogue between stakeholders. Skillful use of repetition and differentiation (including non-verbal communication methods) enables readers to extract practical ideas on how to surpass tokenistic collaboration with CYP. Greene paints an accurate picture of the reality of having to prioritise problems and repeat aspects of the problem-solving process, a caveat I am sure will resonate with many parents, teaching staff and EPs.

A unique strength of *The Explosive Child* is the way in which Greene eloquently encourages the reader to view behaviour through “new lenses”, without reprimanding them for traditionally paternalistic approaches; a well-intended metaphor for the CPS model I am sure. Without entirely dismissing clinical diagnoses, Greene reflects the current social model perspective by reframing unhelpful within-child deficit beliefs and highlighting a clear shift in language towards “lagging skills” and “unsolved problems”. By offering relatable examples of “explosive behaviour”, Greene speaks with empathy and reassurance, enticing readers to feel hopeful about solutions. Perhaps pertaining to the success and popularity of *The Explosive Child* amongst readers to-

day, Greene remains humble by signposting to his website (livesinthebalance.org), where he generously offers free resources.

“Unsolved problems at school” was a chapter that I found particularly interesting, with Greene myth-busting discrepancies between home and school behaviours. Perhaps due to my position as a trainee educational psychologist (TEP), I was left eager to read more about how I can work with schools to be more flexible within existing (rigid) behaviour management policies and time constraints. Greene acknowledges that more can be said on this topic and directs us towards his other book *Lost at School*, which will be next on my reading list.

The Explosive Child conveys different options for responding to behaviour with chapters “The truth about consequences”, “Three options” and “Plan B”. Through recognising the intersectional relationship between socio-economic status and raising a child with SEMH needs, Greene empowers the reader to take control by working pragmatically. Greene touches on the subject of disagreement on discipline within families and between systems, but, given the culturally diverse population that EPs work with, in my opinion, it would have been interesting here to read more about how the CPS can be implemented cross-culturally, outside of a majority Western-centric parenting population. Consequently, it will be useful for EPs to reflect on *if* and *how* the CPS model can be used sensitively within the pluralistic communities with which we work.

Overall, Greene provides a refreshing and fascinating lens with which to view concerning behaviour by reminding us that children “do well when they can”. As long as the CPS model is considered with cultural competence, it could provide a strong framework to structure systemic work within education systems.