

I'm Ok - You're Ok

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ASEN / ChBE Senior Academic Advisor

CEAS Academic Coach

Today's Discussion

- ▶ Transactional Analysis (TA)
 - ▶ Ego States (PAC)
 - ▶ Complementary, Crossed, and Ulterior Transactions
 - ▶ Strokes
- ▶ Overall Goals -
 - ▶ Help you discover which ego state you communicate from in various situations.
 - ▶ How to move into effective ego states.

Today's Discussion

- ▶ Time permitting, we'll also talk about
 - ▶ Voice and Tense
 - ▶ Word Choice
 - ▶ Focus

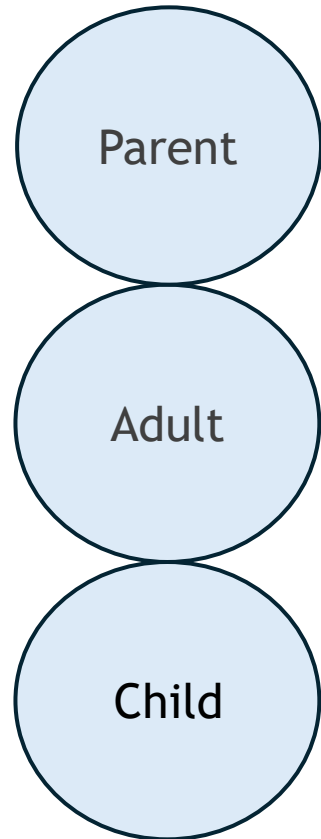
Transactional Analysis (TA)

- ▶ Goal of recognizing a TA communication pattern is to help you and the other person match ego states.
 - ▶ Parent, Adult, Child (Ego States)
- ▶ Strokes
 - ▶ Positive or Negative
 - ▶ + Praise, encouragement, a smile
 - ▶ - Criticism, sarcasm, ignoring

Parent, Adult, and Child (Ego States)

Parent:

- Recordings of imposed, unquestioned external events perceived by a person from birth to age five



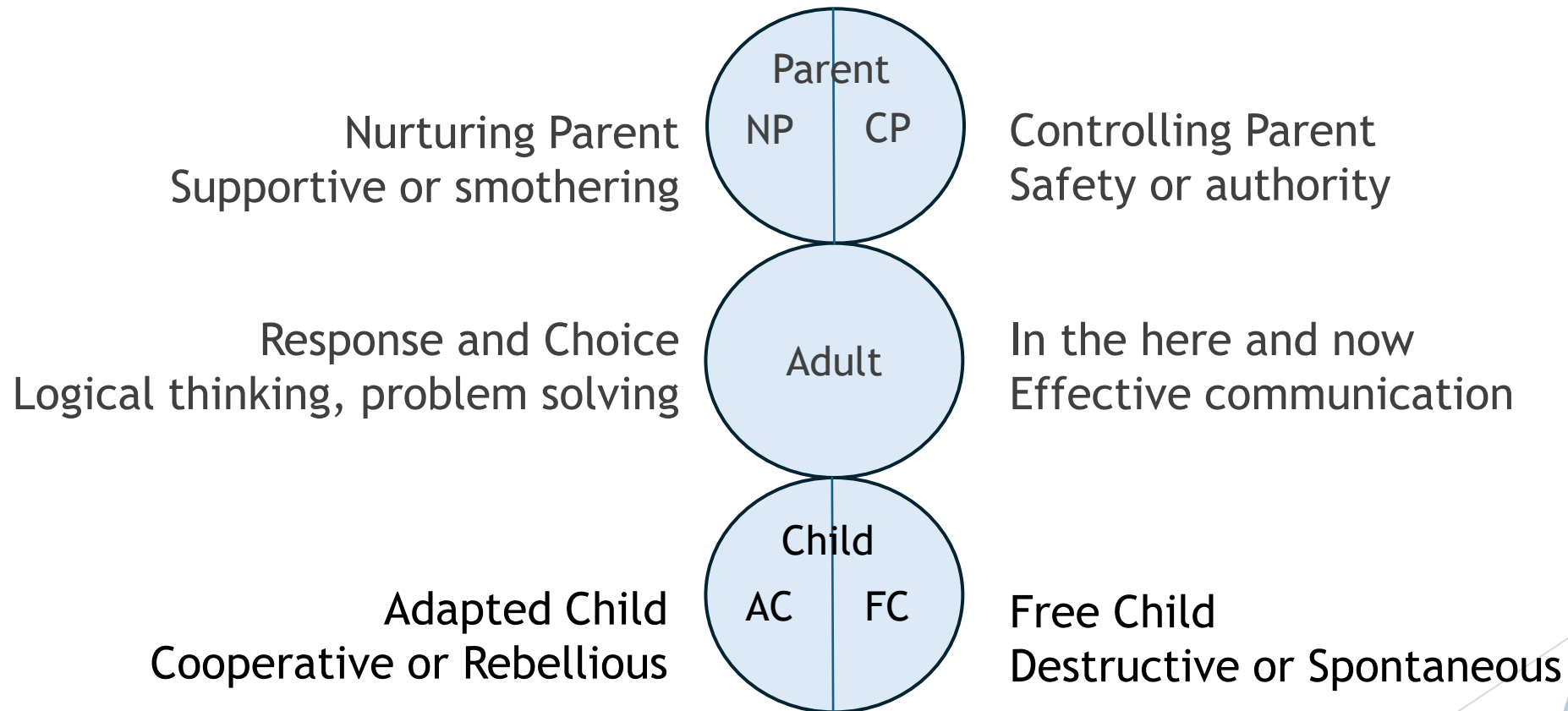
Child:

- Recordings of internal events (feelings) in response to external events.
- Internalized from primary care givers. Again, birth to five

Adult:

- Examines data
- Makes logical decisions

Parent, Adult, and Child (Ego States)



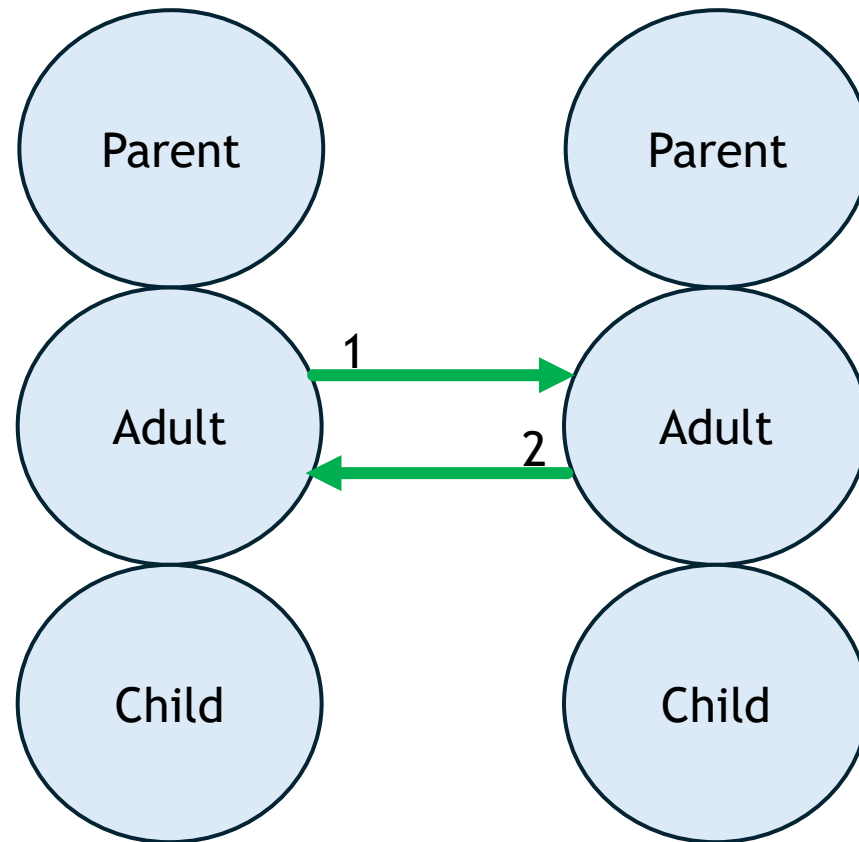
Types of Transactions

- ▶ Complementary
 - ▶ Smooth, effective, parallel, healthy
 - ▶ Aligned ego states
- ▶ Crossed
 - ▶ Conflict, defensiveness, tension
- ▶ Ulterior
 - ▶ Complex, hidden agenda, negative or manipulative

Complementary Transaction

Person 1: How are things going today?

Person 2: Great, thanks! How are you?



Complementary Transaction

Adult = Adult

This is the healthiest type of transaction.

Keeps communication open.

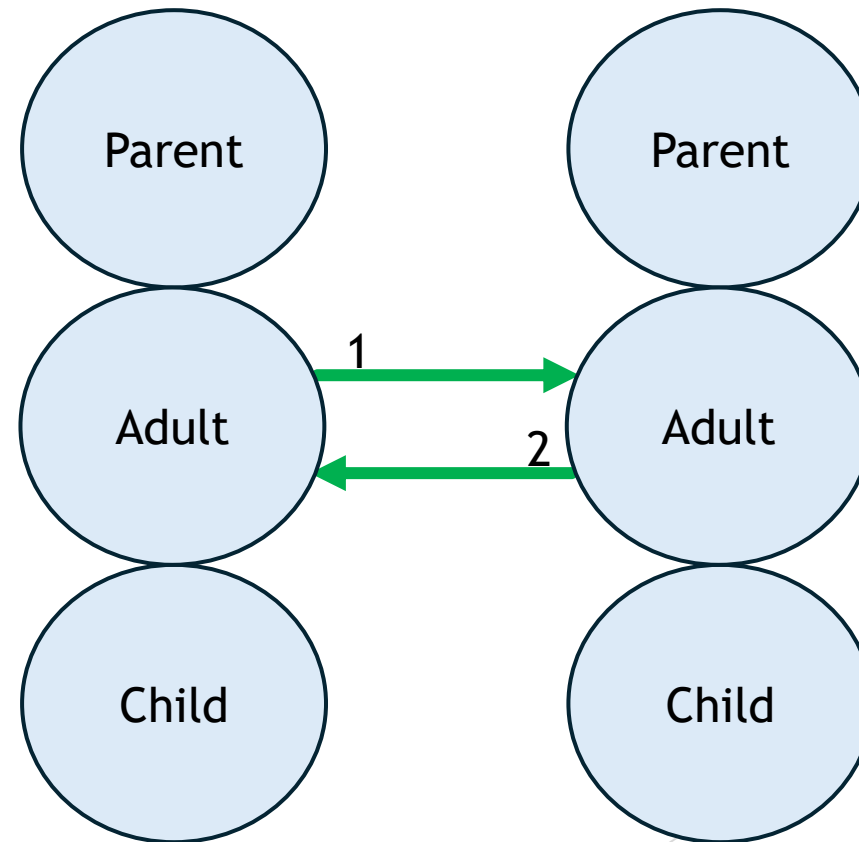
No judgment or blaming.

Reduces or eliminates conflict.

Logical and in the moment.

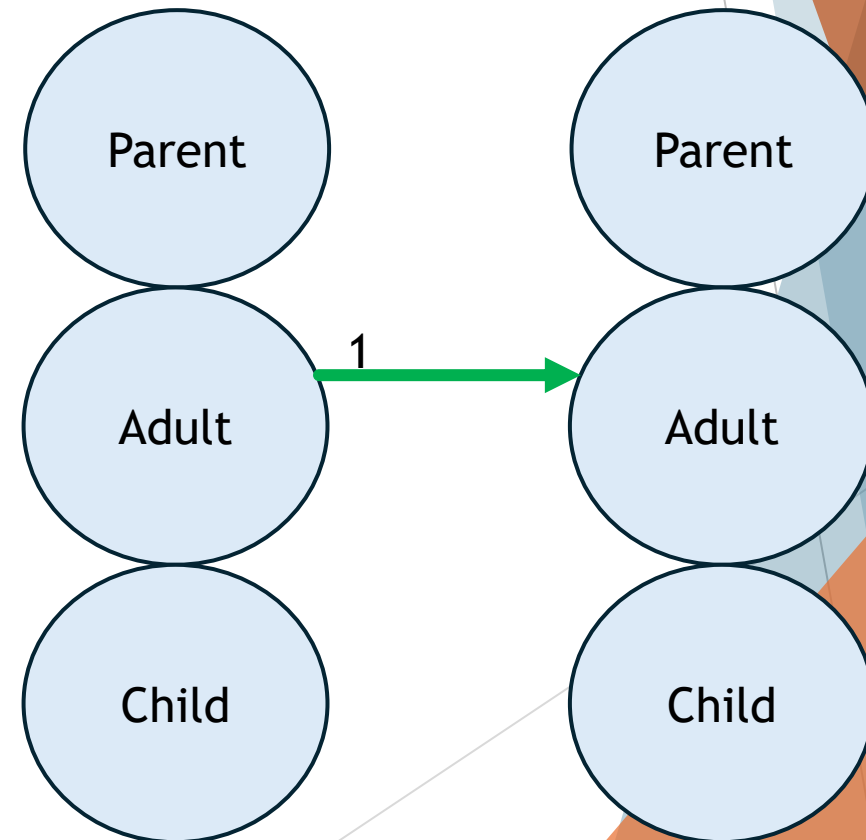
No tension to deescalate.

Both parties feel respected.



Crossed Transaction

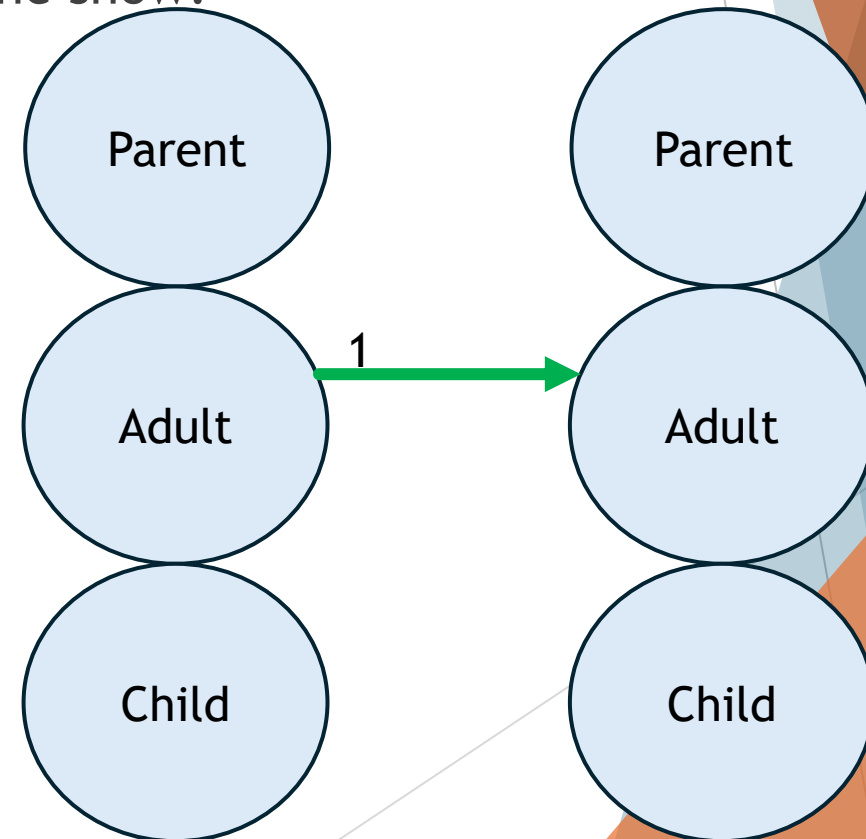
Person 1: How are things going today?



Crossed Transaction

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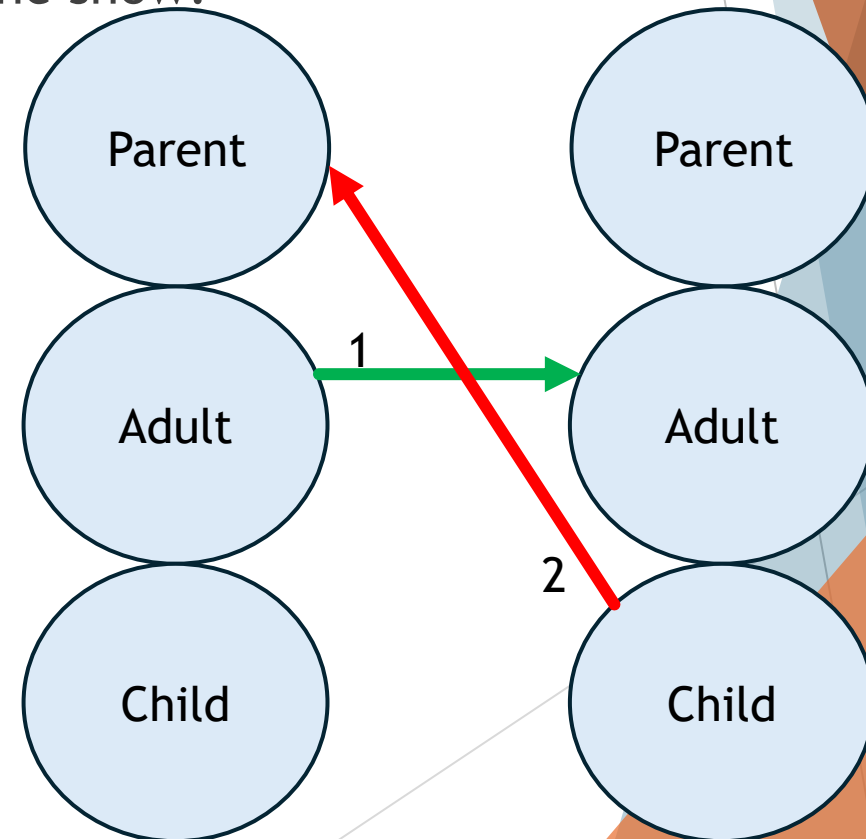
Person 2: I can't believe they are making us come into the office today. It's totally stupid and dangerous with all the snow!



Crossed Transaction

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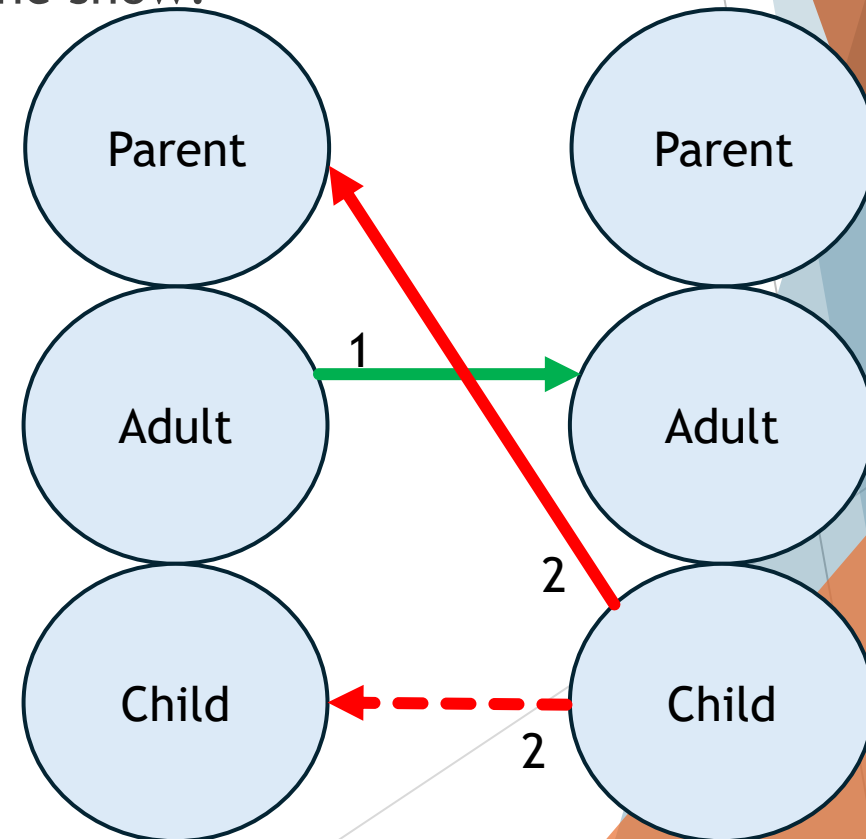
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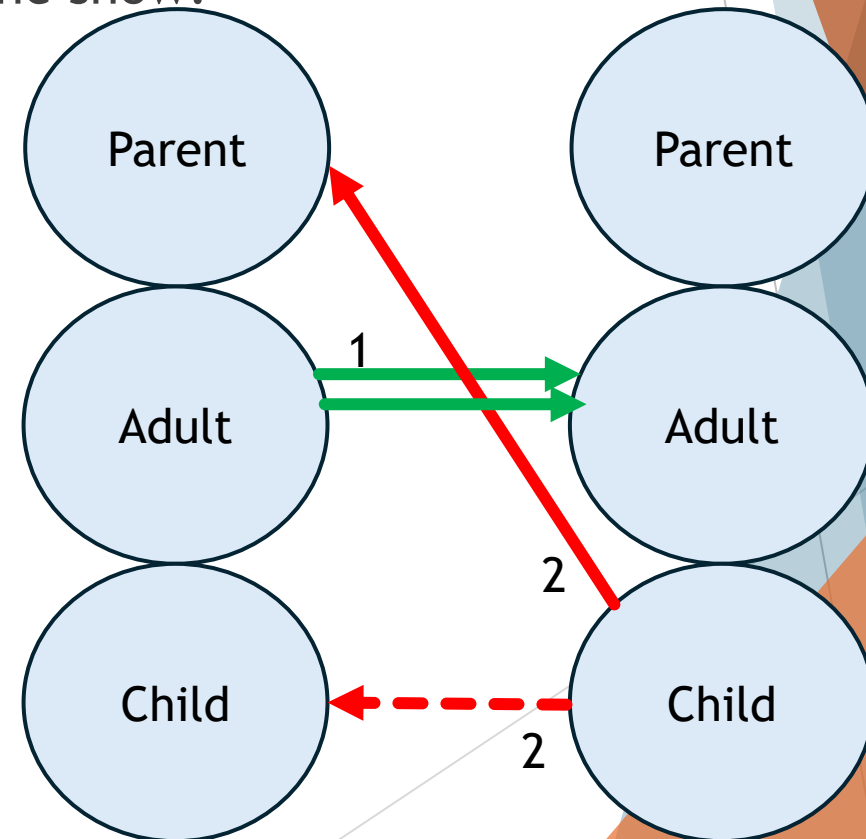


Crossed Transaction

Person 1: How are things going today?

Person 2: I can't believe they are making us come into the office today. It's totally stupid and dangerous with all the snow!

Person 1: Yeah. It sounds like driving in this type weather isn't fun for you.
(Stays in Adult)

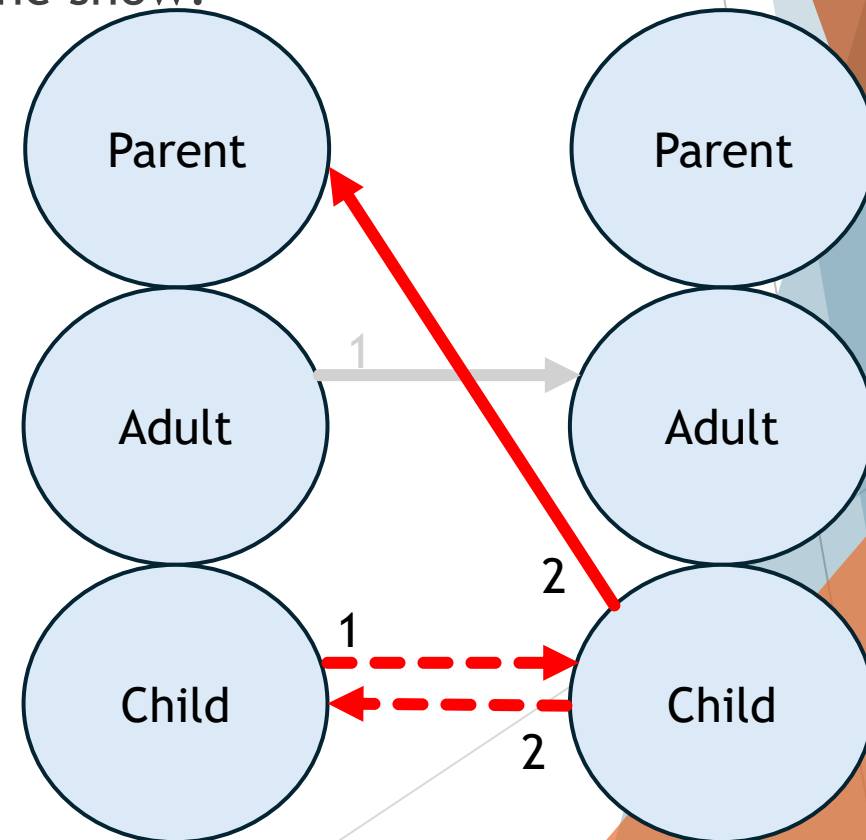


Crossed Transaction

Person 1: How are things going today?

Person 2: I can't believe they are making us come into the office today. It's totally stupid and dangerous with all the snow!

Person 1: Yeah. It's pretty stupid. They don't really care about us.
(Moves into Child)

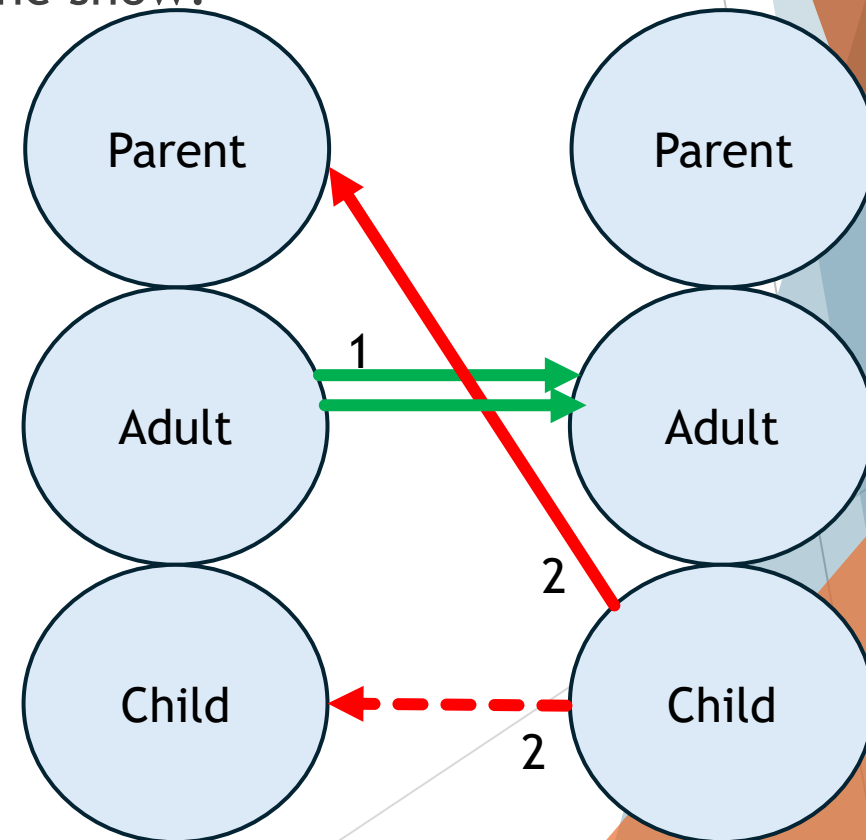


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Person 1: How are things going today?

Person 2: I can't believe they are making us come into the office today. It's totally stupid and dangerous with all the snow!

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(Stays in Adult)



Crossed to Complementary

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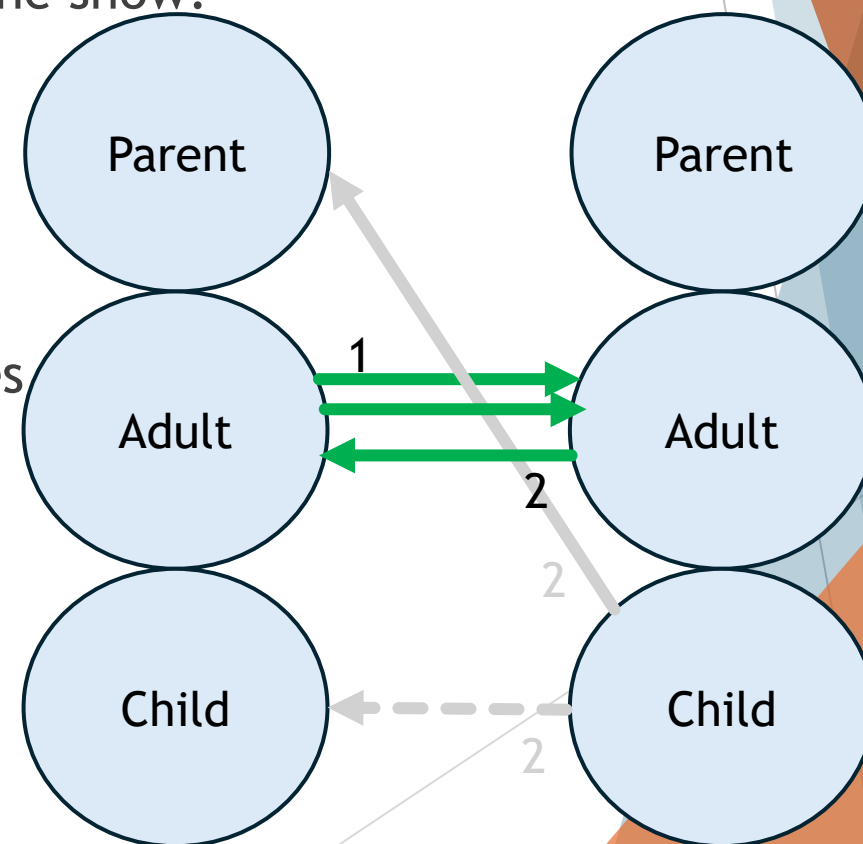
Person 1: Yeah. It sounds like driving in this type weather isn't fun for you.

(Stays in Adult)

Person 2: I don't have very good tires, so it makes me nervous driving in snow.

(Moves to Adult)

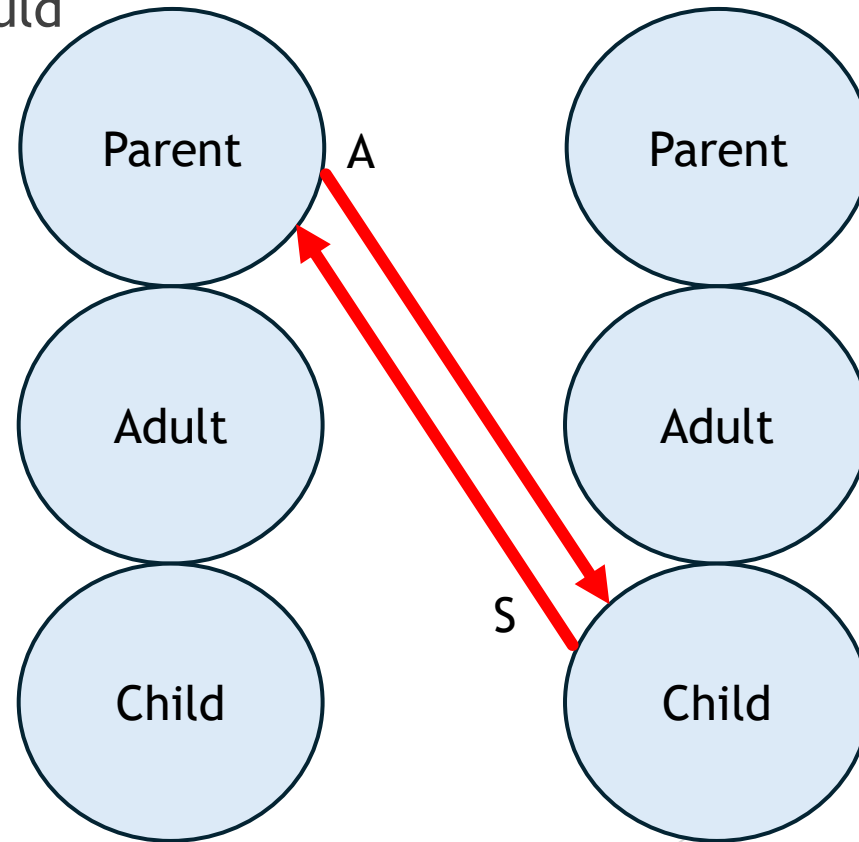
Transaction has moved into Adult = Adult.



Complementary Transaction

Student: You told me this course would work as a tech elective.

Advisor: I didn't say that. I said you would need to have it approved first.

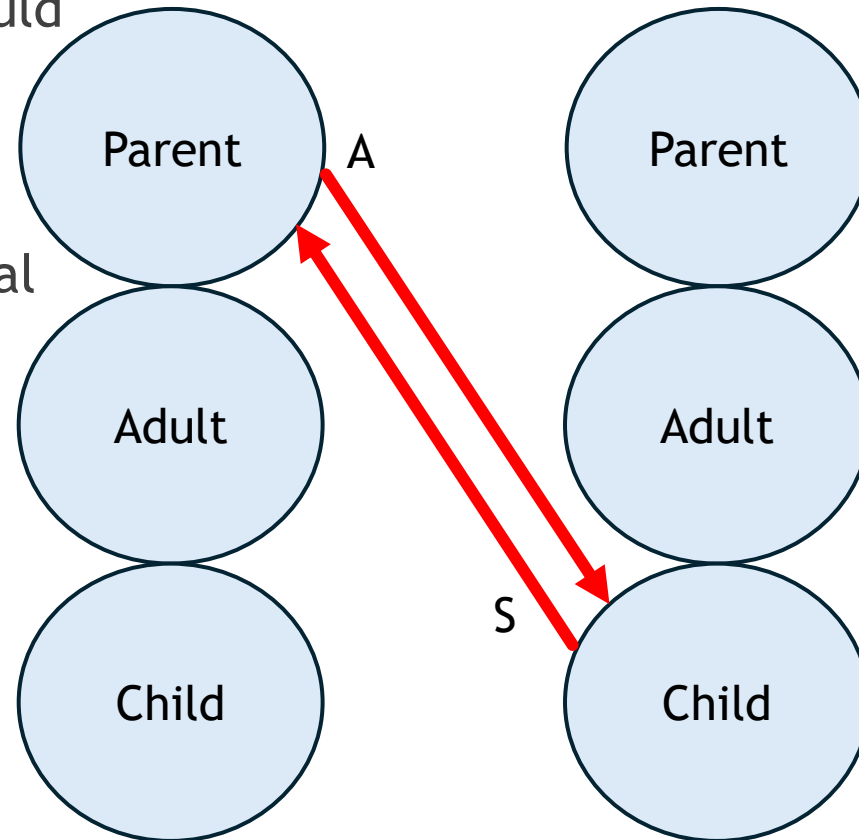


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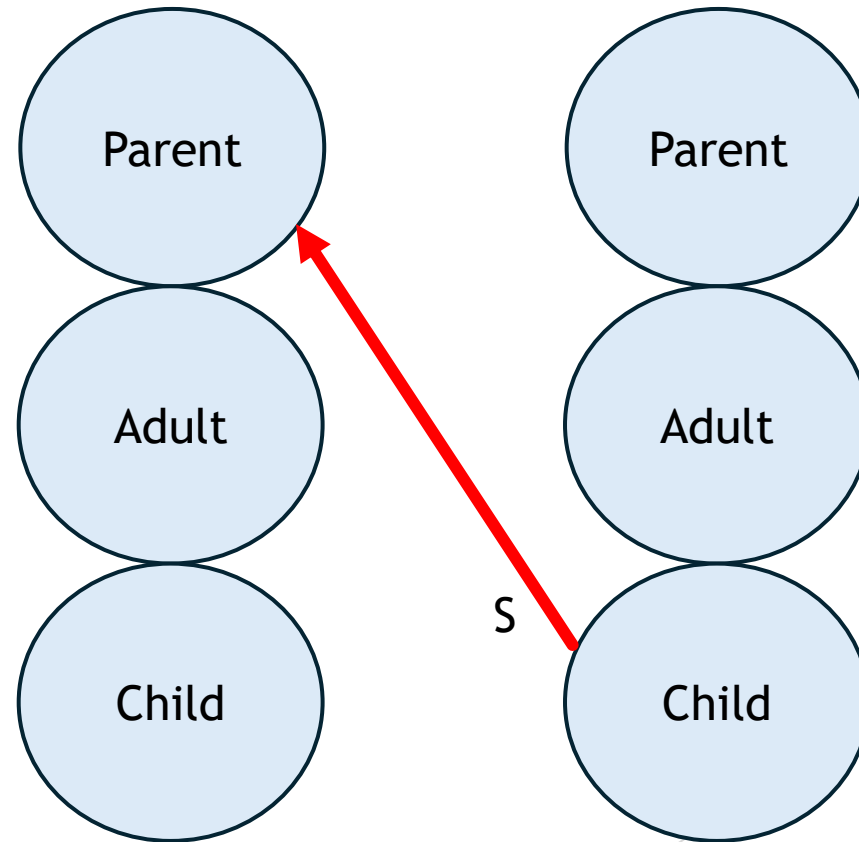
Advisor: I didn't say that. I said you would need to have it approved first.

This is complimentary; however, the goal is to get to Adult = Adult.



Complementary Transaction

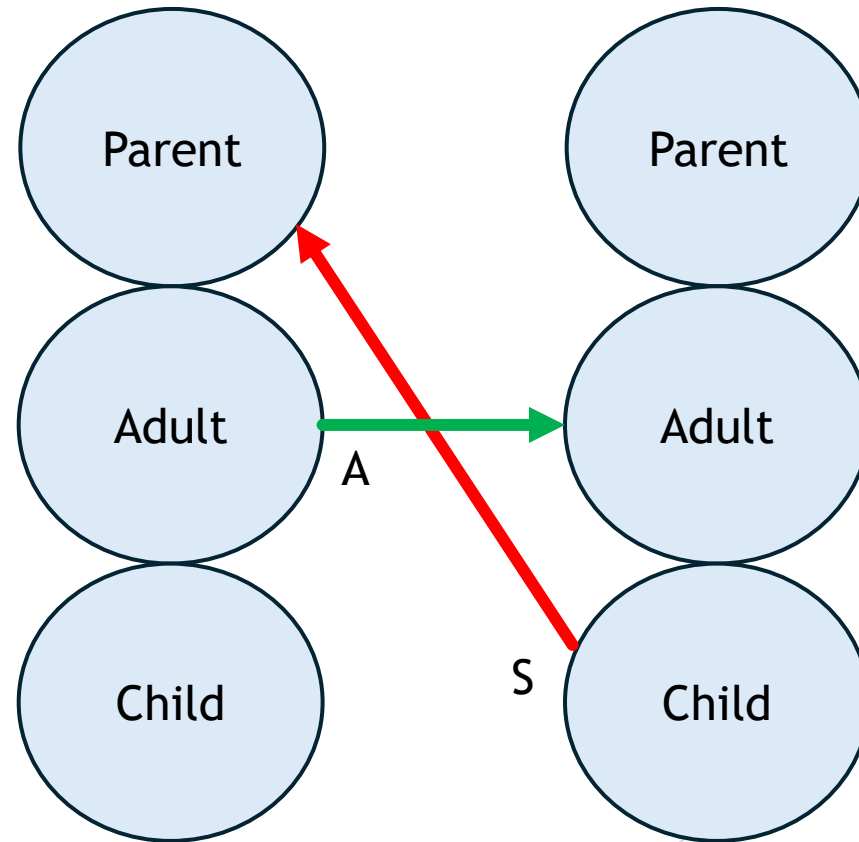
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Complementary Transaction

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Advisor: It might, but it needs to be reviewed.

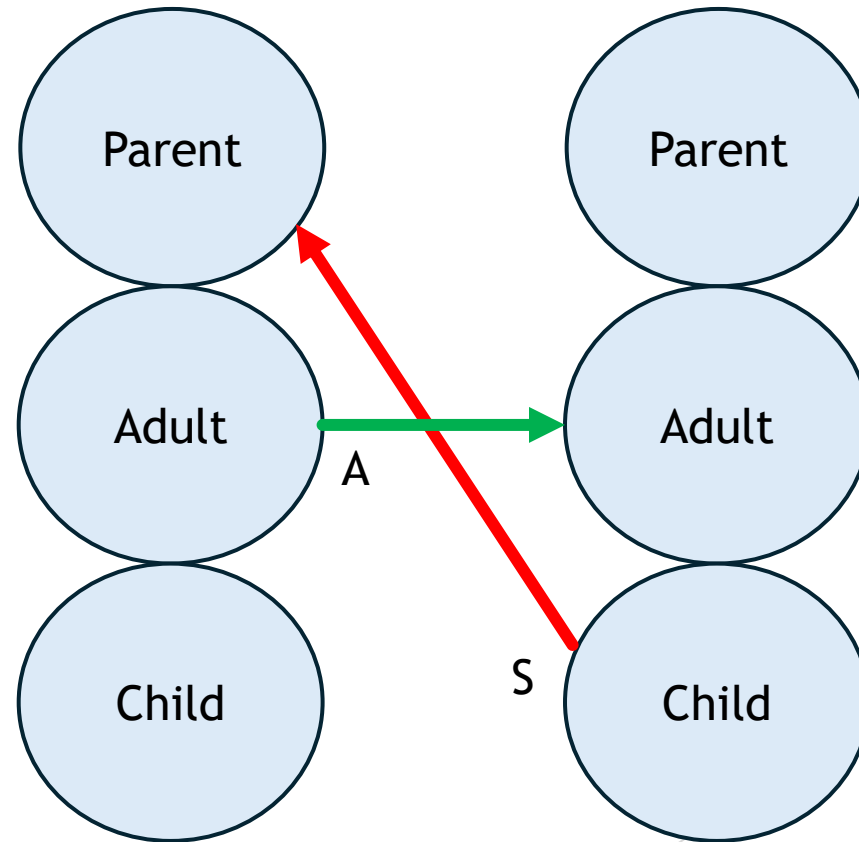


Complementary Transaction

Student: You told me this course would work as a tech elective.

Advisor: It might, but it needs to be reviewed.

Student: How long does that take?



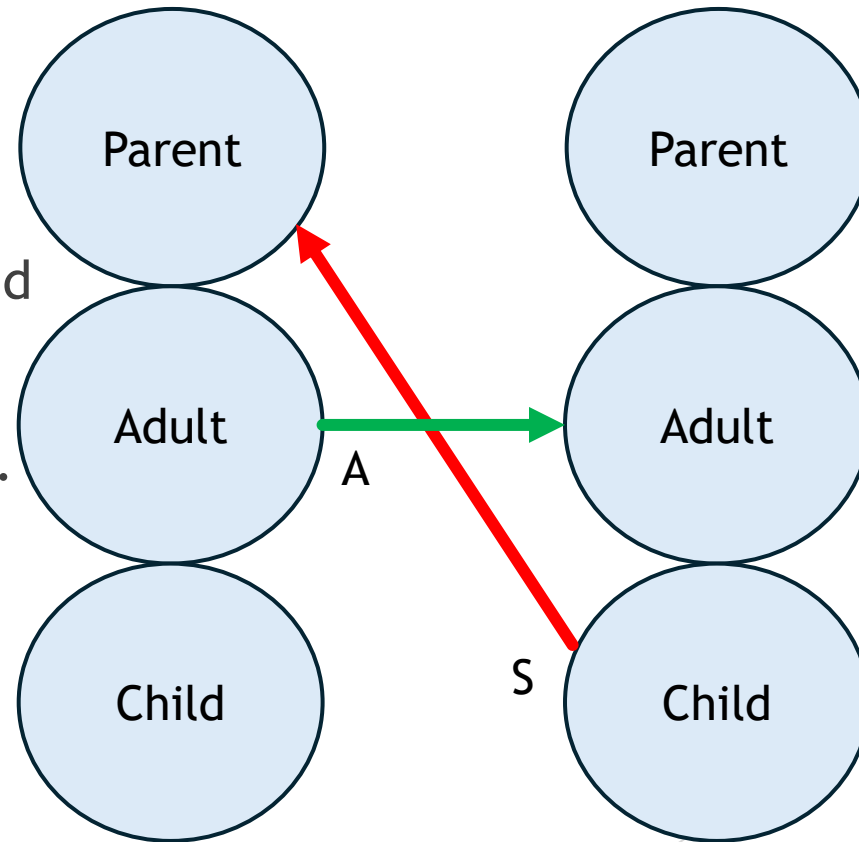
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Advisor: It might, but it needs to be reviewed.

Student: How long does that take?

Advisor: You can complete a petition and attach a copy of the syllabus. Once it's reviewed, we'll know. It should take about a week.



Complementary Transaction

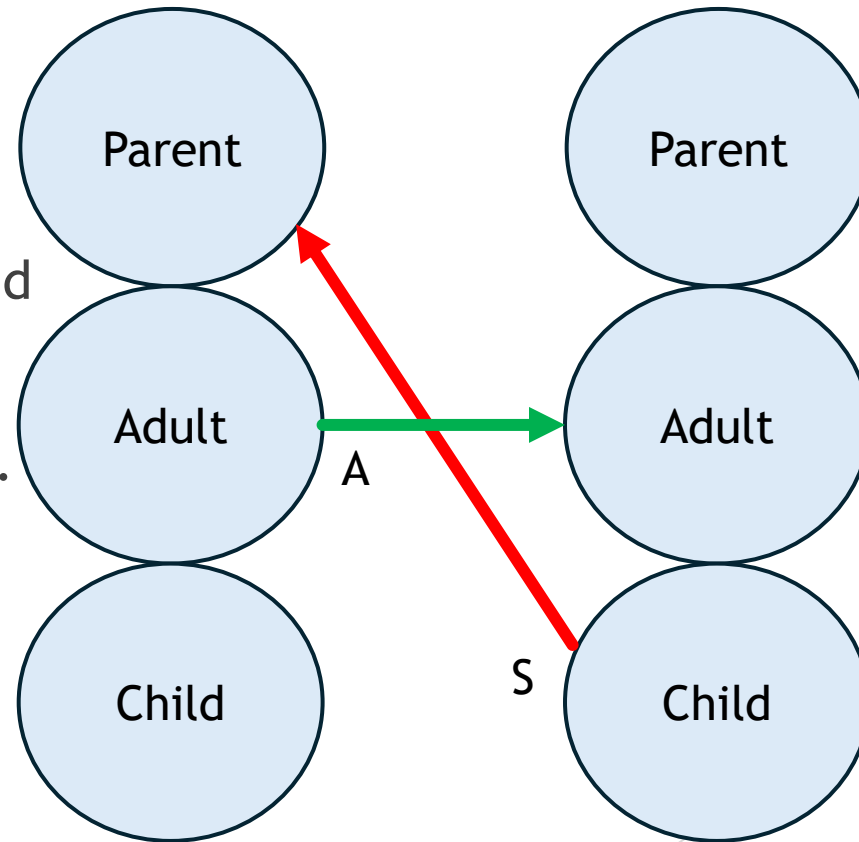
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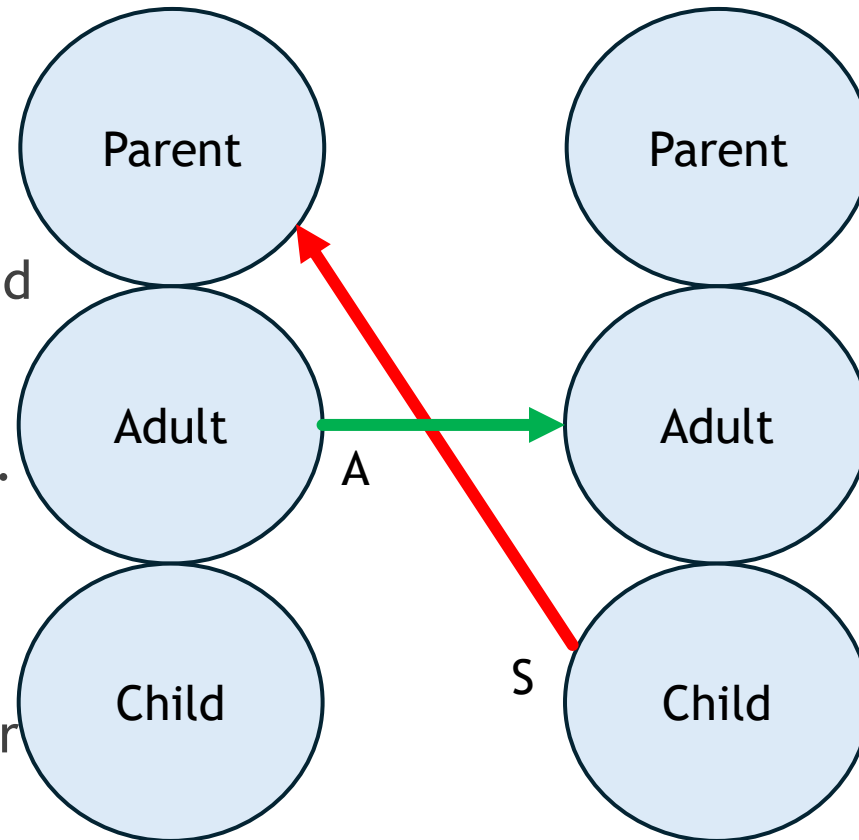
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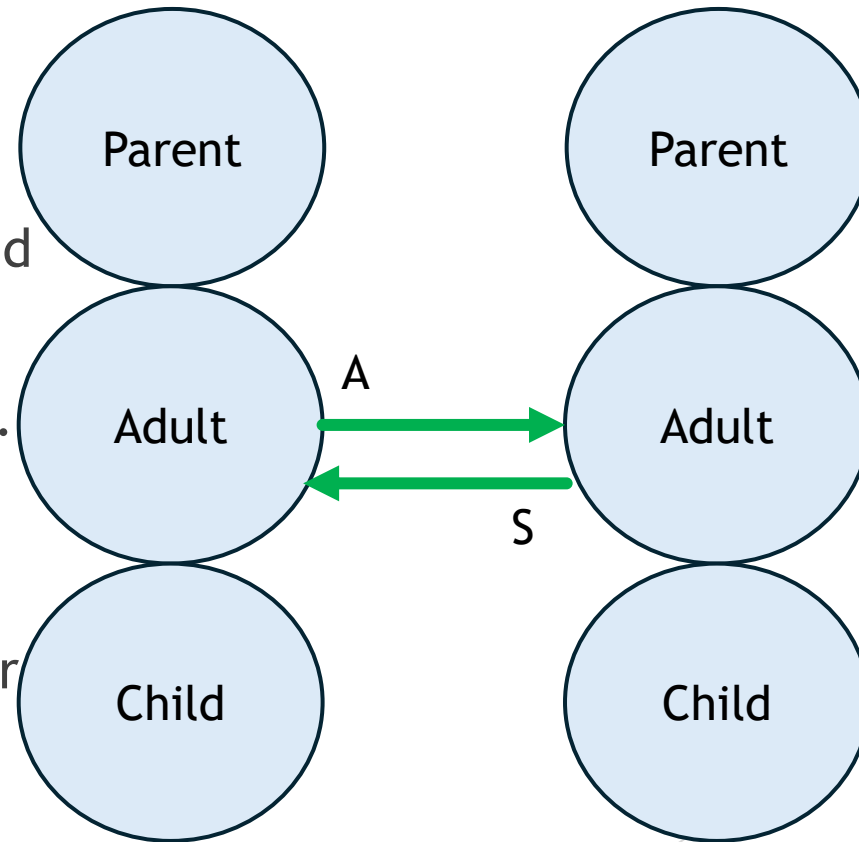
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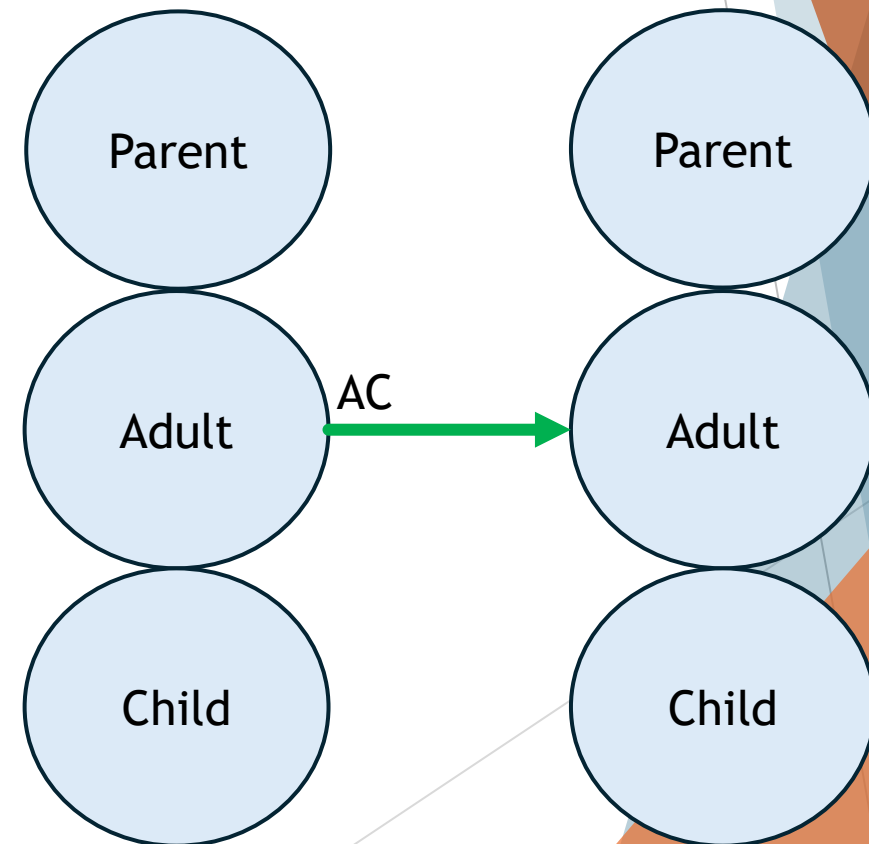
Advisor: We can take a look together for alternate course.

Student: Ok. Thanks.



Ulterior Transaction with Subtext

Academic Coach: How did you do with the study techniques we talked about?

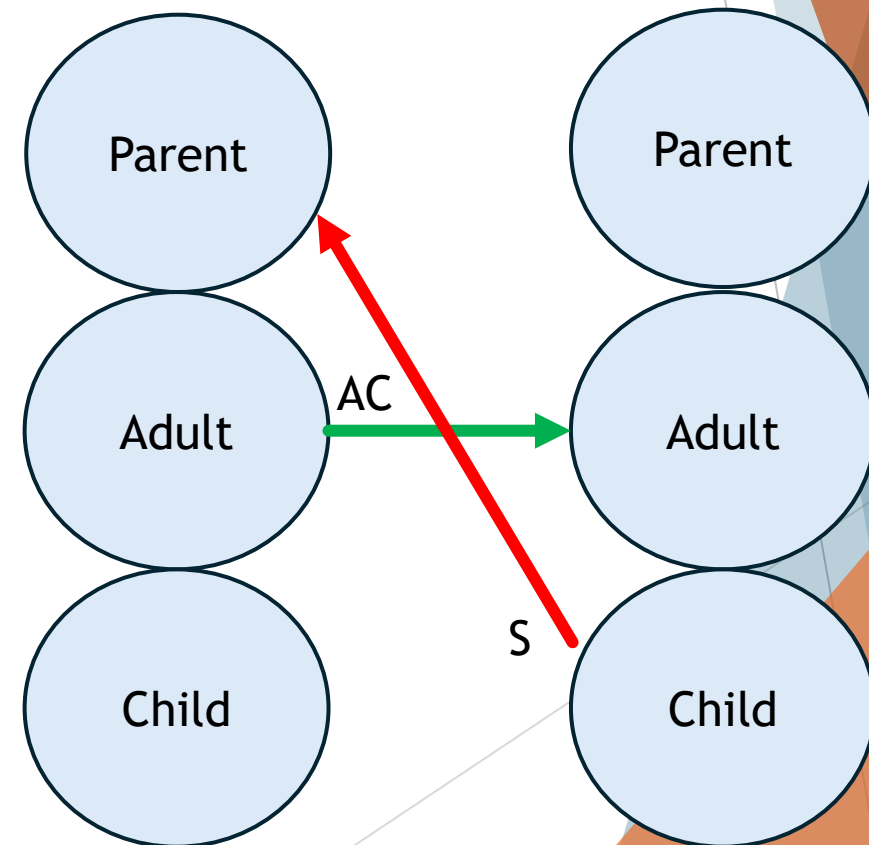


Ulterior Transaction with Subtext

Academic Coach: How did you do with the study techniques we talked about?

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(Subtext: I need more advice.)



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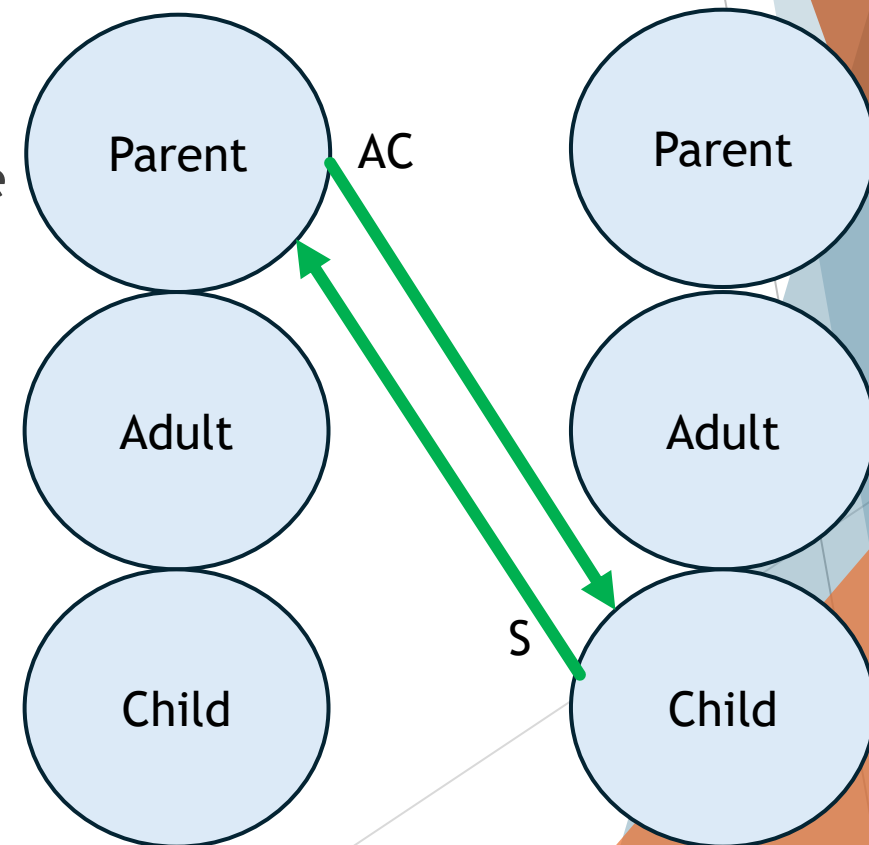
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Academic Coach: Did you try putting your phone away until your work was done?

(Subtext: I'm taking care of you.)



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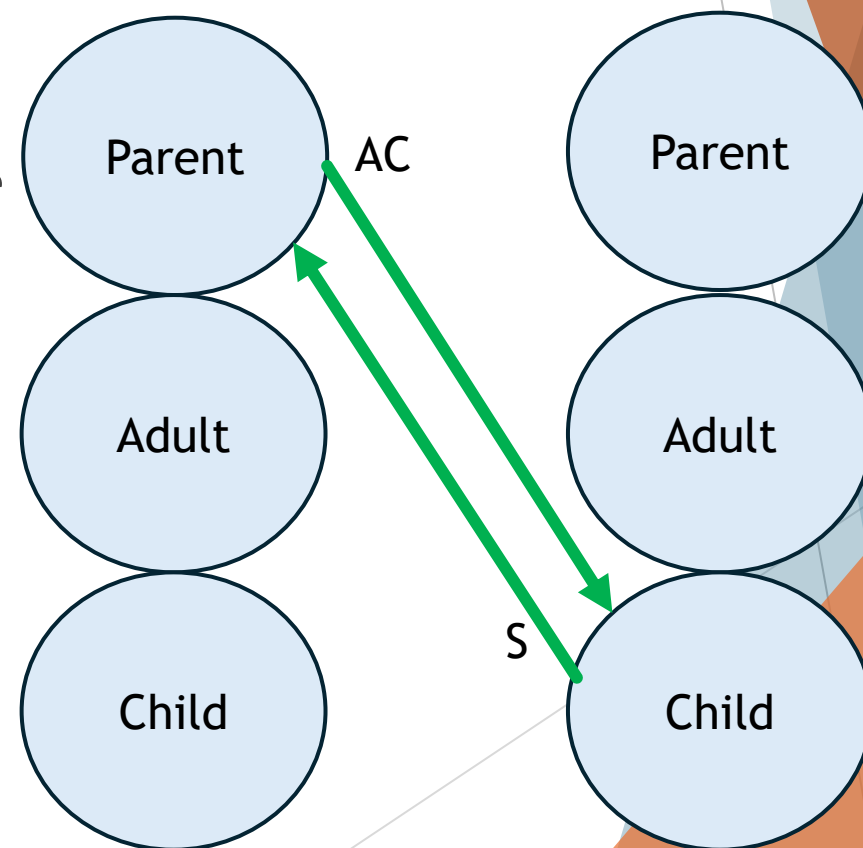
(Subtext: I need more suggestions.)

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Student: Yeah, but I just spent time on tic toc.

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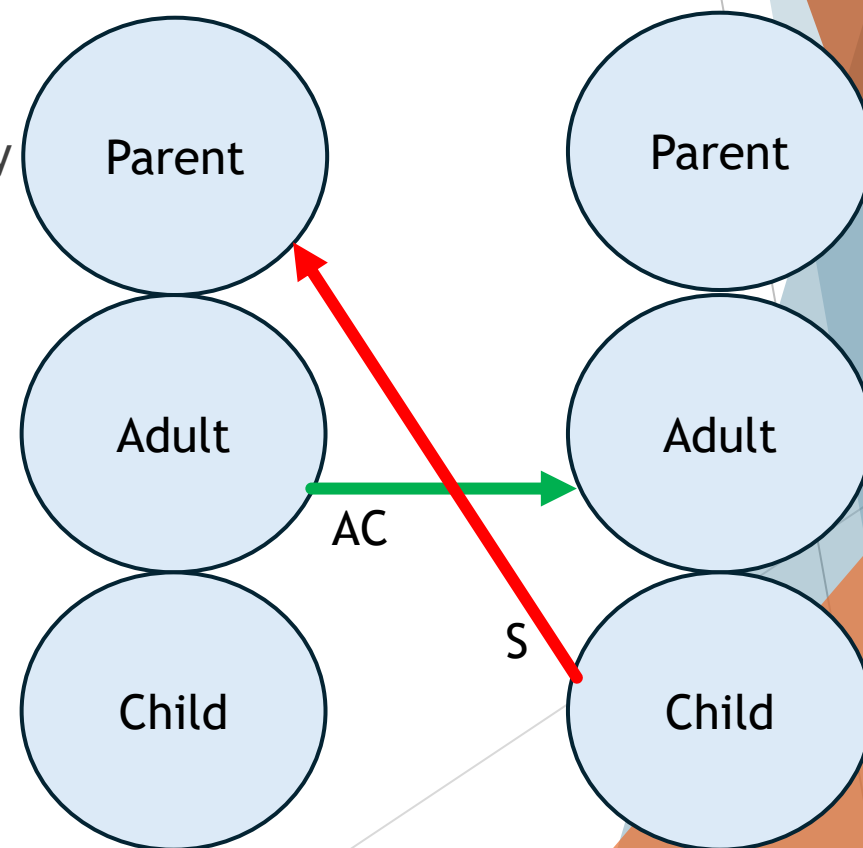
(Subtext: I'm trying to take care of you.)

Student: Yeah, but I just spent time on tic toc.

(Subtext: I still need suggestions.)

Academic Coach: It sounds like you're having a tough
time. What do you think would help?

(Subtext: You can problem solve.)



Ulterior to Complementary

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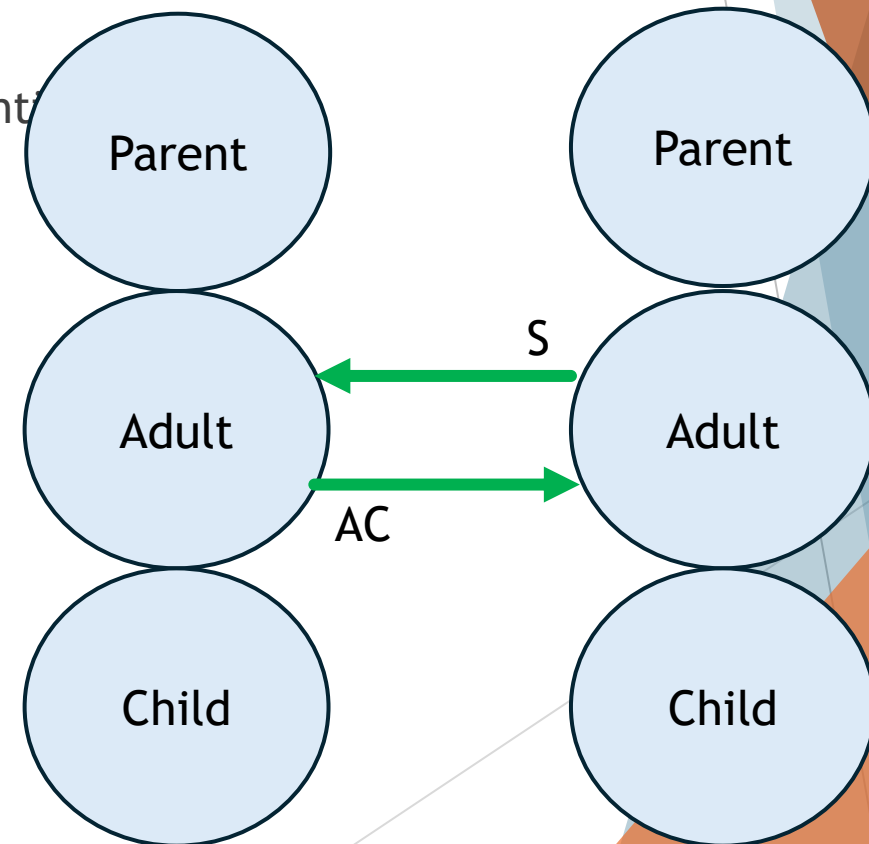
(Subtext: I still need suggestions.)

Academic Coach: It sounds like you're having a tough time. What do you think would help?

(Subtext: You can problem solve.)

Student: Maybe I could go to a study group.

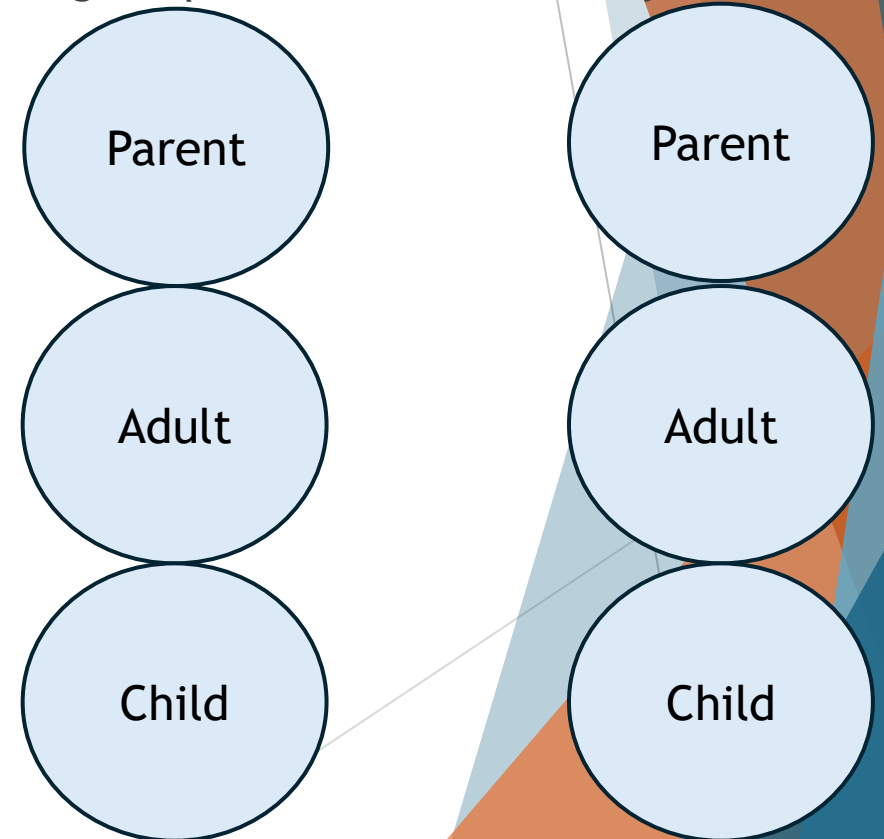
(Subtext: I can solve this problem.)



Actual Email Transaction

Student Email: This dept is full of ***t! You're supposed to help students and you sure don't know what in the ***k you're doing! This is so ****ed up! Now I'm not going to graduate from this ****ing program! I'm just going to quit! It's not worth any more of my time and you shouldn't be an advisor!"

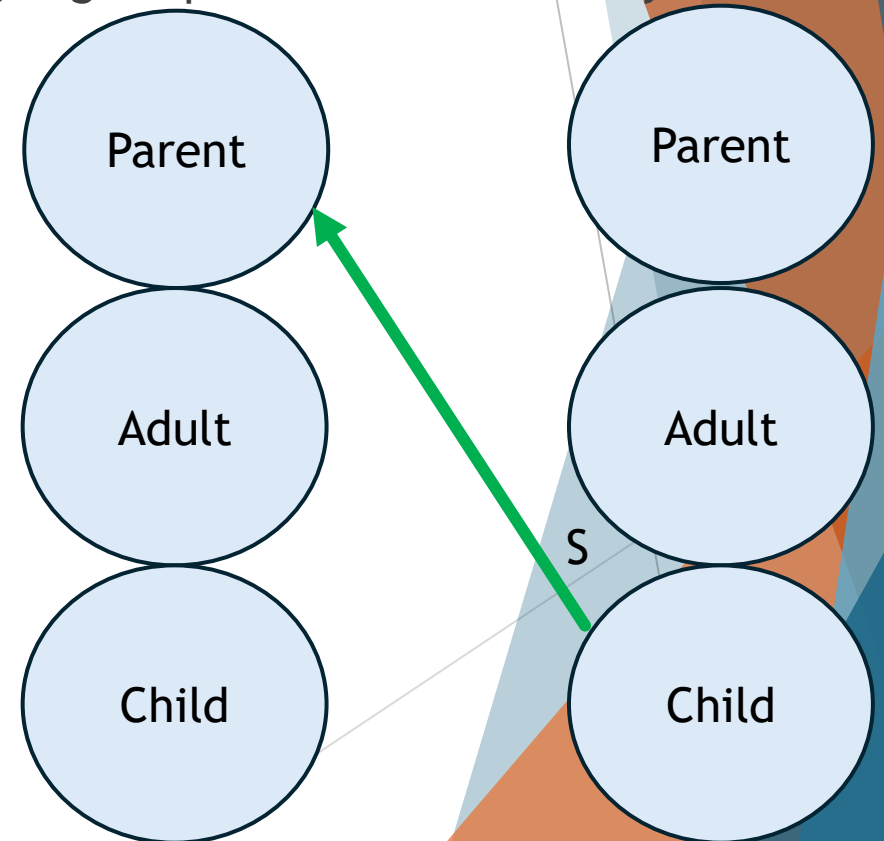
Where is the student speaking from and to?



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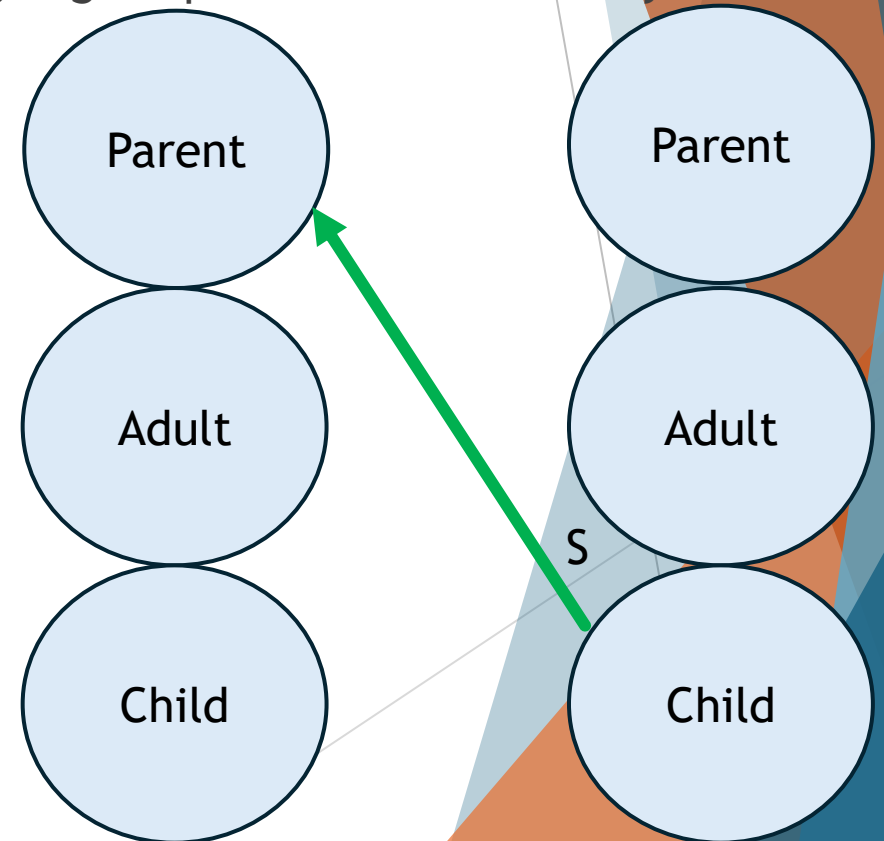


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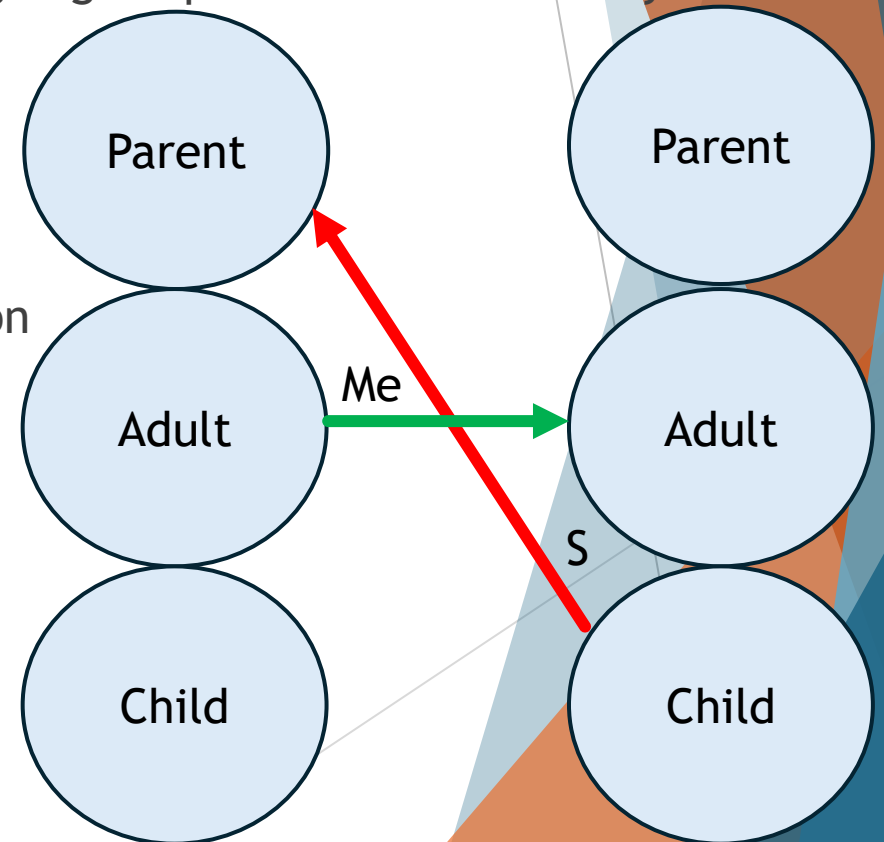
How would you reply?



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My reply: Hi student, Thanks for your email. I'd like to talk with you about this. Please schedule an appt as soon as you're able. Best, Dr. Renshaw

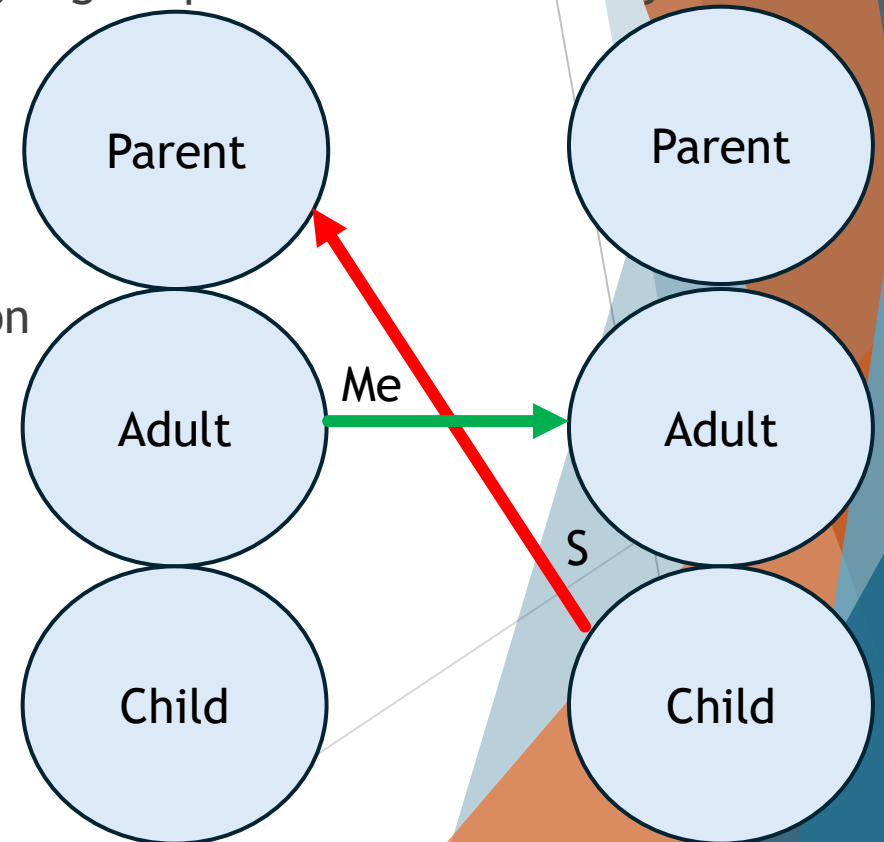


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Is this a crossed or ulterior transaction?



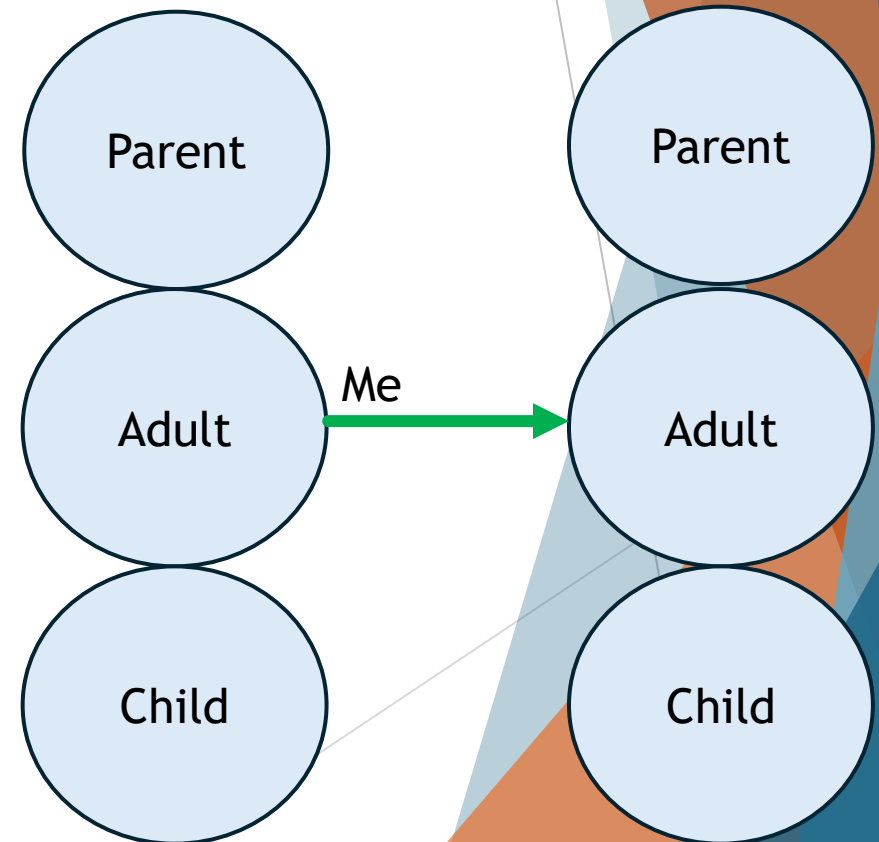
Introduction of Strokes

- ▶ Strokes are essential to help move into Adult = Adult transactions.
 - ▶ Act of recognition, attention, or response given from one person to another.
 - ▶ Positive
 - ▶ Praise or acknowledgement
 - ▶ Negative
 - ▶ Criticism or neglect

The Meeting - Crossed / Ulterior?

Me: Hi student. Thanks for scheduling a meeting so quickly.

(Positive stroke)



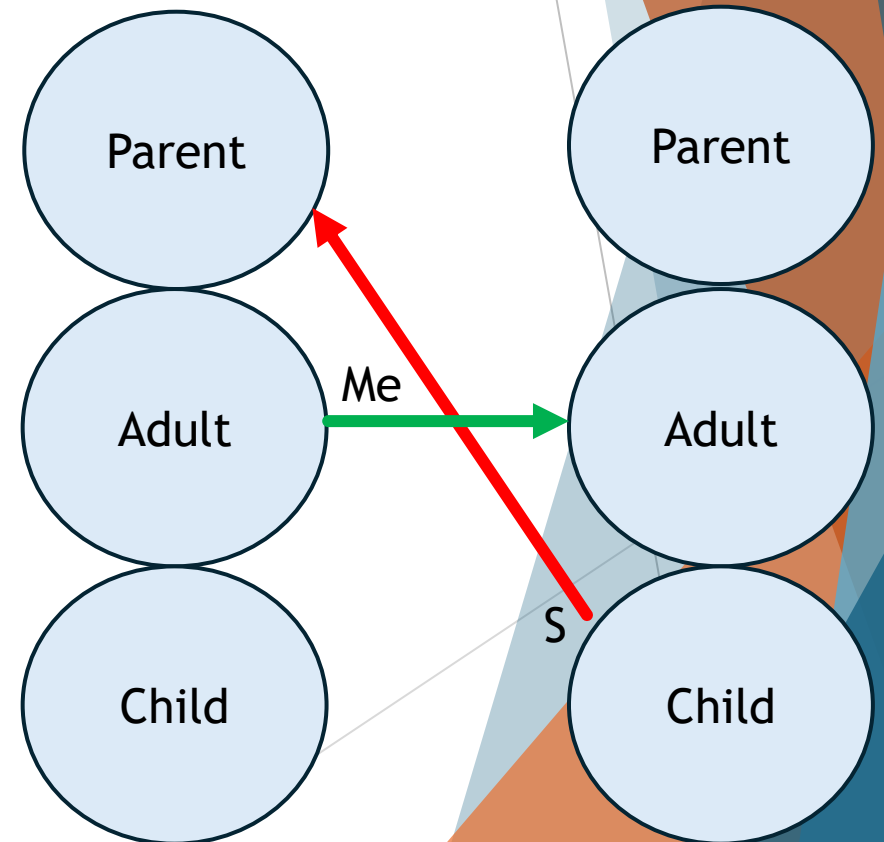
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Me: Hi student. Thanks for scheduling a meeting so quickly.

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Student: Are you going to punish me or help me?

(Subtext: I think I might be in trouble.)



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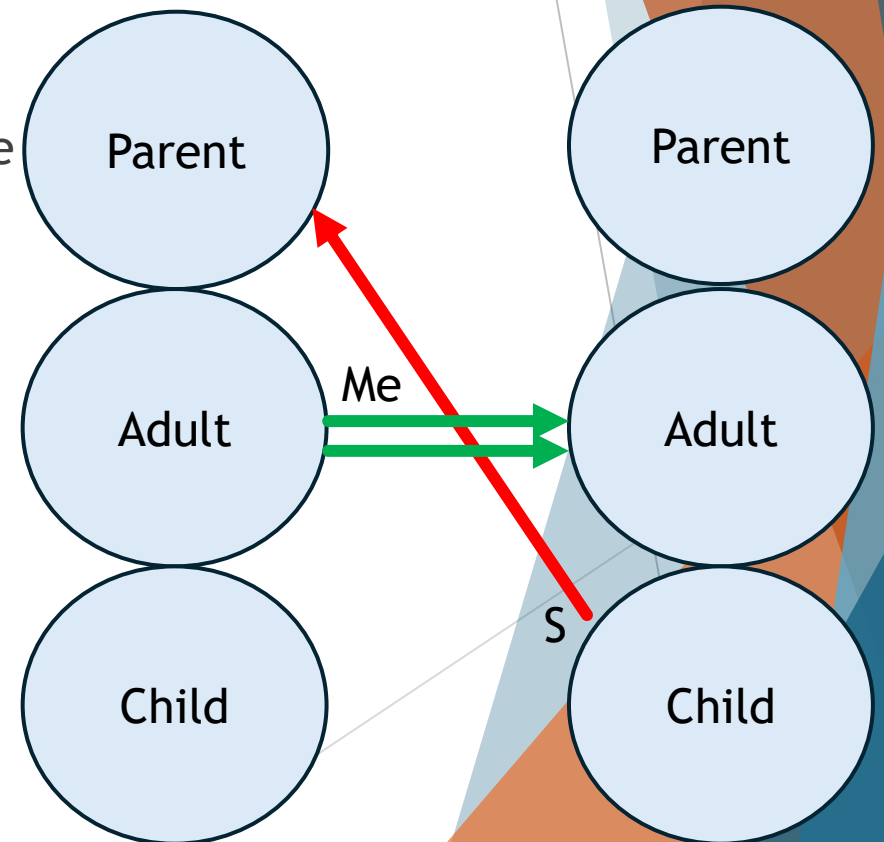
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Me: I just want to talk **with** (**to**) you so I can understand more of what's going on for you.

(Positive stroke)



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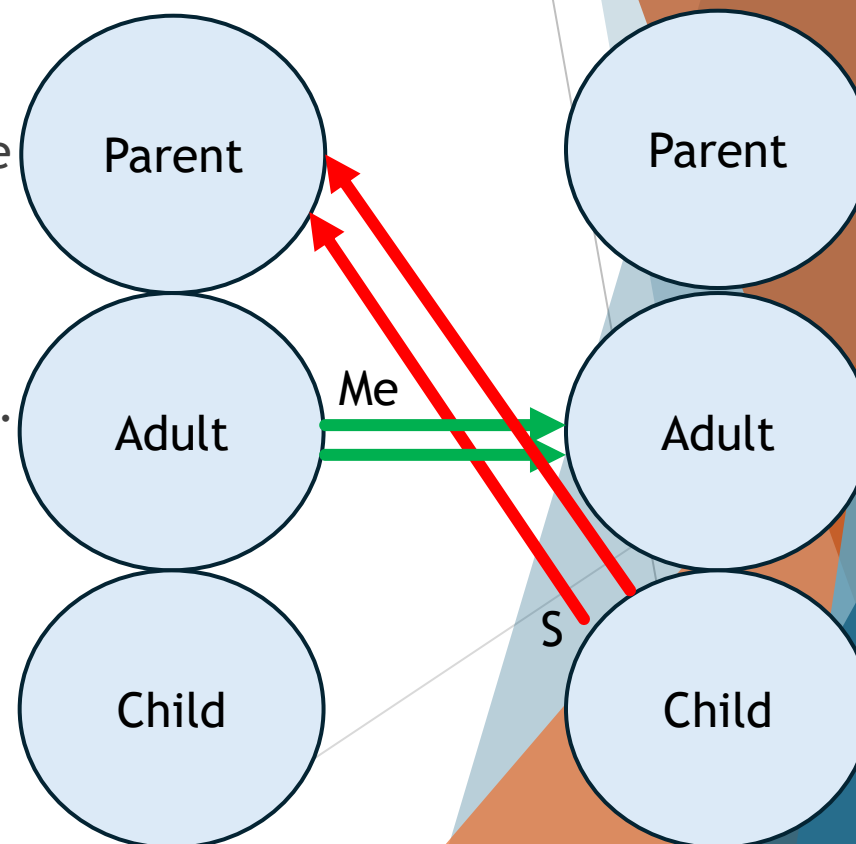
(Subtext: I think I might be in trouble.)

Me: I just want to talk **with** (**to**) you so I can understand more of what's going on for you.

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Student: I'm p***** off that I'm not going to graduate on time.

(Subtext: You didn't help me and I may not have done what I was supposed to do.)



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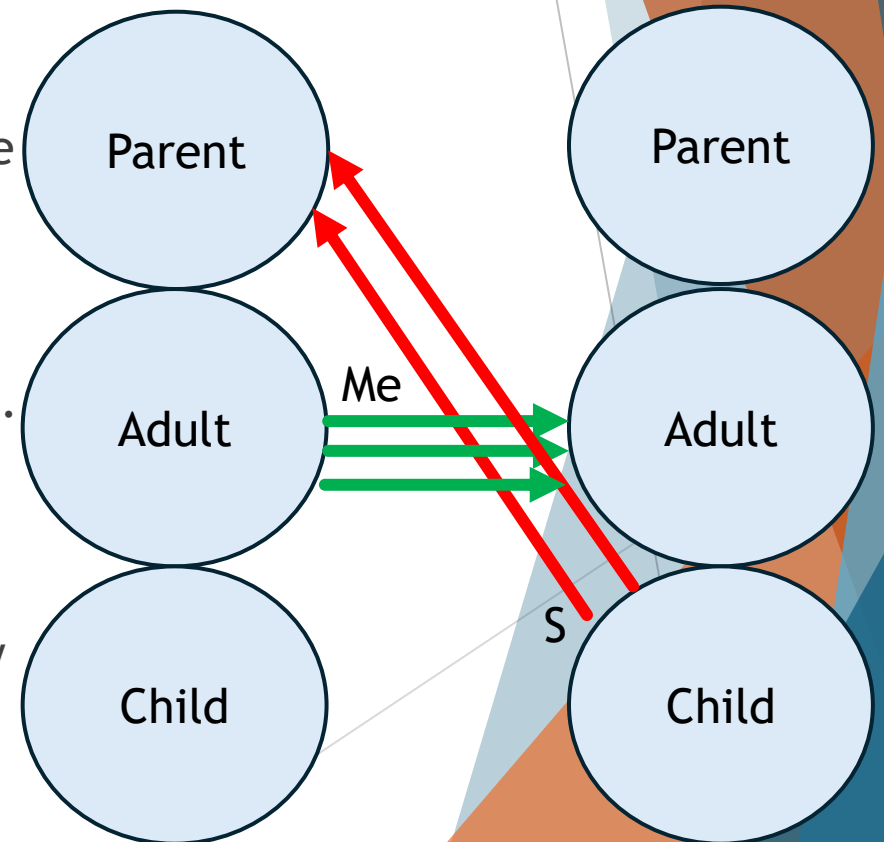
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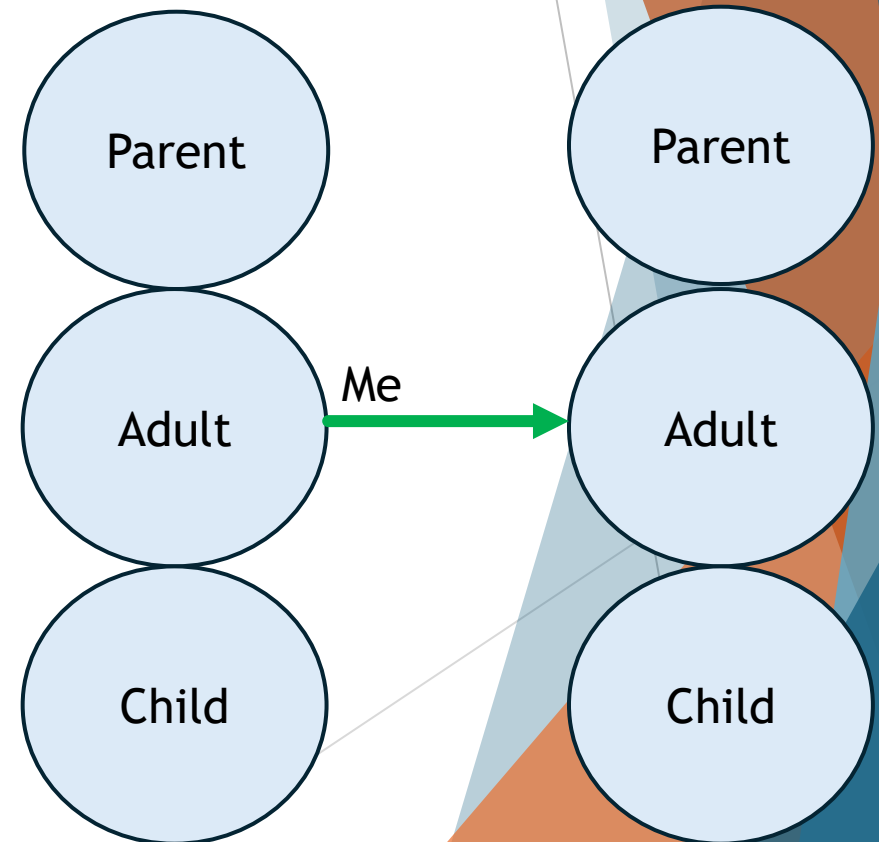
(Subtext: You didn't help me and I may not have done what I was supposed to do.)

Me: Let's go over the options you do have and talk about how close you really are to graduating.



The Meeting - Email Revisited

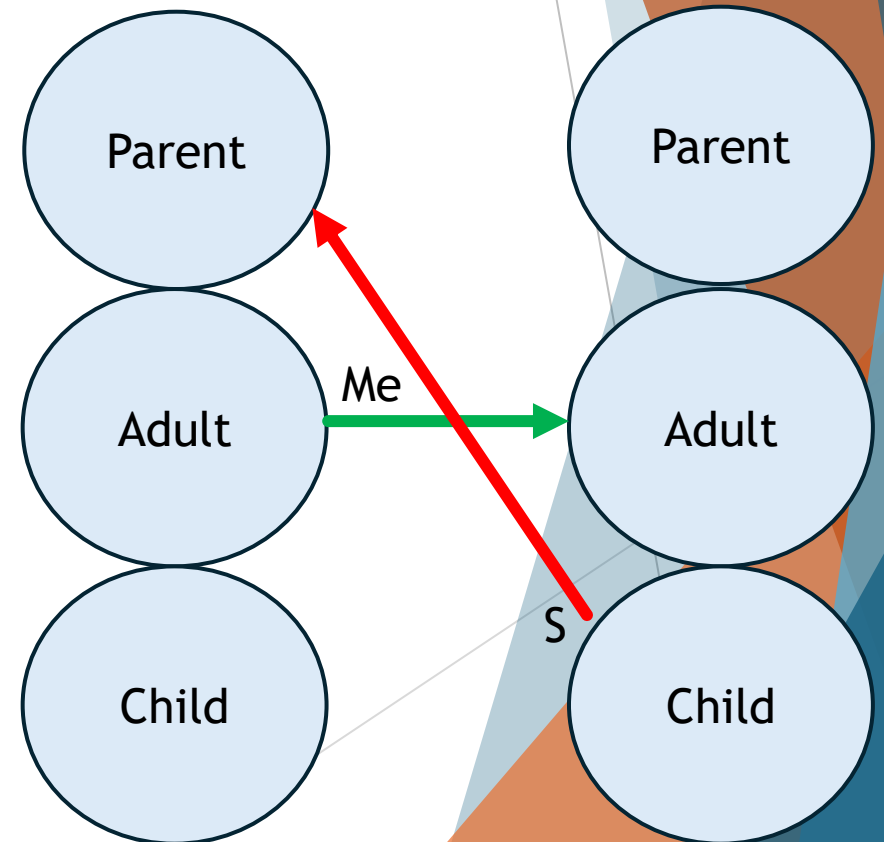
Me: Now that we've figured out what you need to do to graduate on time,
let's talk about **your** (**the**) email.



The Meeting - Email Revisited

Me: Now that we've figured out what you need to do to graduate on time,
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Student: No response.



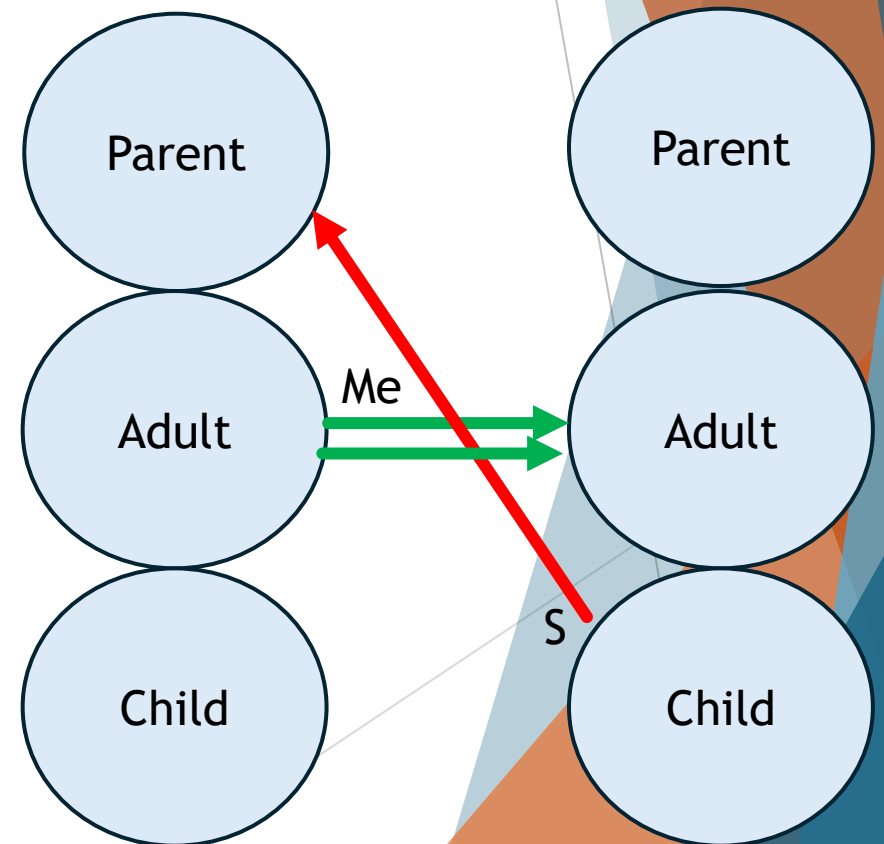
The Meeting - Email Revisited

Me: Now that we've figured out what you need to do to graduate on time,
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Student: No response.

Me: This is person to person, not advisor to student.

(Moving both of us into adult)



The Meeting - Email Revisited

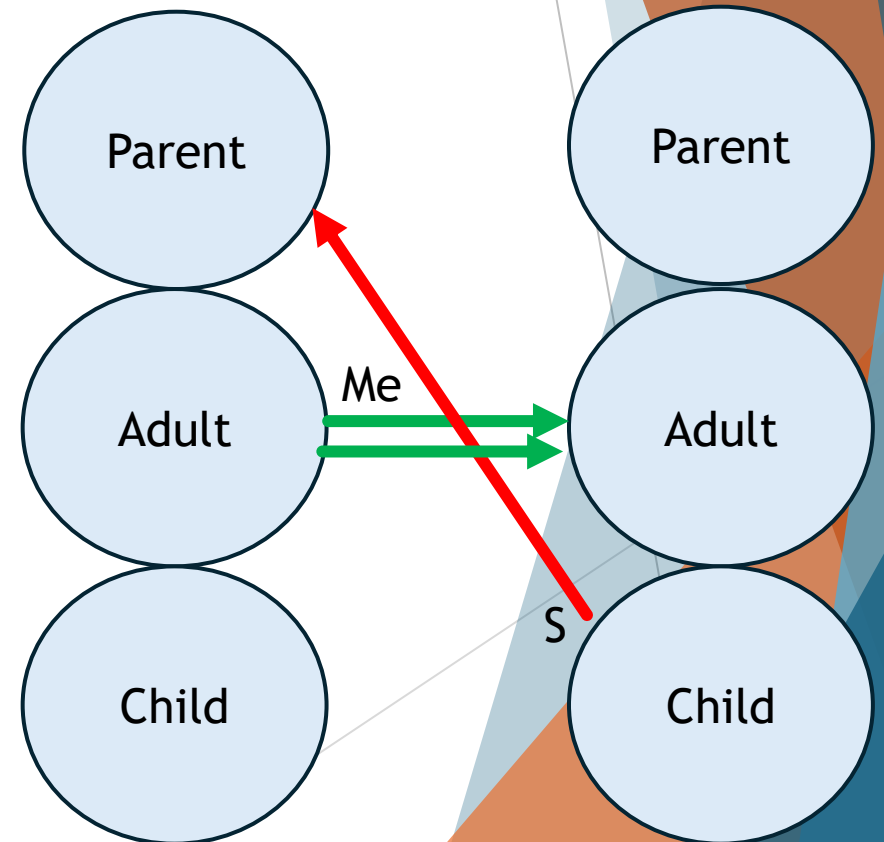
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When I received your email, I was surprised at the language you used. Not because I was shocked, more because email is considered a professional communication.



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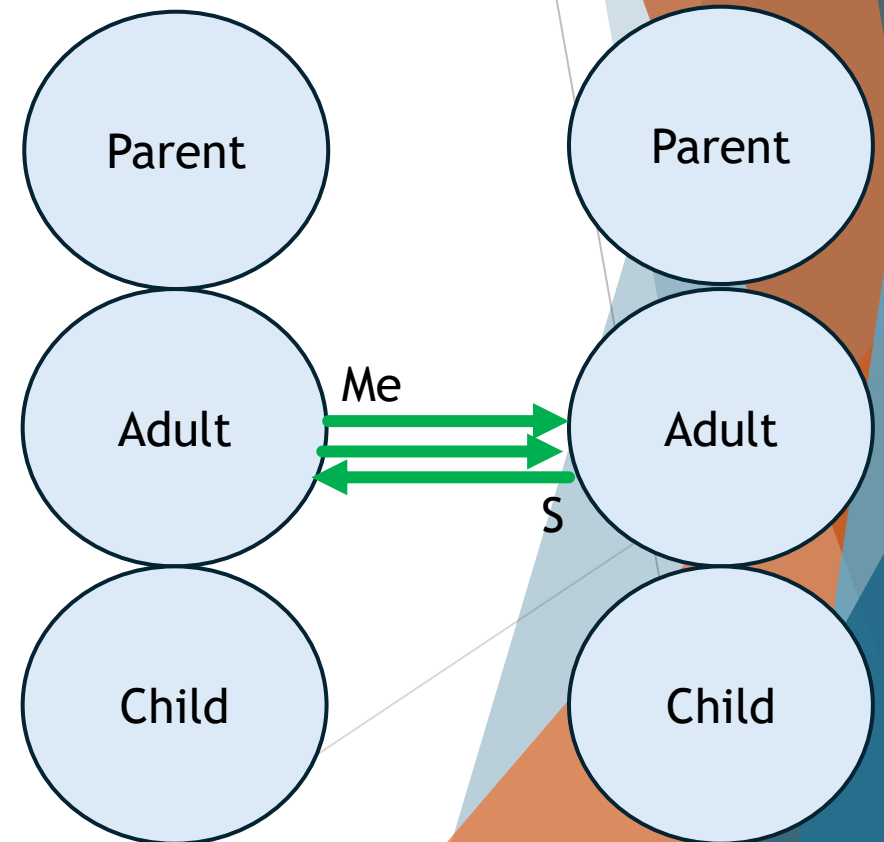
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After some discussion about the student's experience, the student thanked me and shook my hand.



Role Plays

- ▶ Three of you need to come up here to help with the role plays.
 - ▶ Yikes! Where was I speaking from and to?
 - ▶ **Feisty** (hehe) Parent to Cooperative Children
- ▶ It would be super helpful if three of you would please come help me with these role plays?
 - ▶ Where was I speaking from and to?
 - ▶ Child to Parent
- ▶ Can I please have three volunteers join me for the role plays?

Role Plays

1. Student shows up for an appointment after having no showed for two other times.
2. Parent is blaming you for not catching an error that delayed the student's graduation.
3. Student is blaming faculty for not passing them on an exam.

Key TA Strategies for Effective Communication

1. Spot the Ego State in Yourself and in the Other

Parent - demanding/judgmental language

Child - emotional / helpless

Adult - factual / logical

When you notice a mismatch in ego states, you can try to shift the other person's ego state or you can shift your own.

To move into the Adult - Adult, you can:

1. Ask questions
2. State facts
3. Ask for the other person's view

Key TA Strategies for Effective Communication

2. Avoid the Rescue in Parent-Child Interactions

Don't enable child state by being too empathetic

Ask adult questions

“What have you tried?”

“What do you think the next step should be?”

Avoid Parent-Child Interactions

3. Shift to Objective Language (Adult)

- ▶ Avoid “Should” statements
 - ▶ Rather than, “You should submit talk with your prof in person.”
 - ▶ “What do you think about talking with your prof in person?”
- ▶ Remove “I” statements
 - ▶ Rather than, “I want you to complete this petition by Friday.”
 - ▶ “The deadline for the petition is Friday.”
- ▶ Use descriptive feedback
 - ▶ Rather than, “You haven’t applied for graduation yet.”
 - ▶ “I’ve noticed you’re not on the graduation list yet.”

Key TA Strategies for Effective Communication

4. Practice “Wait-Time” and Redirection

- ▶ Don't take the bait
 - ▶ Student initiates a child transaction
 - ▶ Take time to formulate a **response**, not a **reaction**.
 - ▶ Ask empowering questions
 - ▶ That sounds intense. What do you plan to do about it?

Key TA Strategies for Effective Communication

5. Manage Emotional Strokes

- ▶ Praise Autonomy
 - ▶ Verbally notice when they move into the adult by taking ownership
- ▶ Avoid Nurturing and Over-Dependence
 - ▶ I'm here to support you; let's look at some solutions together.

Key TA Strategies for Effective Communication

6. Establish Clear Contracts

- ▶ Define roles early
- ▶ Length of appointments
- ▶ Expectations of student's responsibility

Voice and Tense

▶ Active and Passive Voice

- ▶ Active voice points to the subject (person)

 - ▶ Blame or praise

- ▶ Passive voice results in implication

 - ▶ Takes focus off the person

 - ▶ Puts focus on object (task, project, problem)

- ▶ Tense does not impact voice

Voice

- ▶ You were dropped from APPM 2350. (A/P)
 - ▶ **Active voice.** Points to the Subject **You** rather than the action.
 - ▶ Action is on the person.
- ▶ APPM 2350 is being dropped from your spring 2026 schedule.(A/P)
 - ▶ **Passive voice.** Makes **APPM** the Subject.
 - ▶ Action is on **APPM**, rather than the student.
- ▶ The project was a success thanks to your input! (A/P)
 - ▶ **Passive voice.** The **project** is the focus of the outcome.
 - ▶ **You** did a great job on the project!

Tense and Voice

- ▶ Tense has no bearing on voice.
 - ▶ APPM 2350 **was dropped** from your spring 2026 schedule.
 - ▶ APPM 2350 **is being dropped** from your spring 2026 schedule.
 - ▶ APPM 2350 **will be dropped** from your spring 2026 schedule.

Focus

- ▶ Keep the focus on the object, not the person or behavior.
 - ▶ Guide the conversation to the project, problem, or solution.
 - ▶ Helps keep communication happening.
 - ▶ Use the “Yes, and....” approach.
 - ▶ Yes, I can see that. Also, did the team consider....

Thanks for your time!
Questions / Comments

Resources

- ▶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tpeKK0FxFU>
 - ▶ Good 14-minute video of basic TA
- ▶ Berne, Eric (1964) *Games People Play*
- ▶ Harris, Thomas (1955) *I'm Ok - You're Ok*
- ▶ Key TA Strategies Generated by *ChatGPT*