



STAFF INTERVENTION IN MINOR HURTFUL INCIDENTS

OBJECTIVE: To effectively and rapidly resolve **Minor Hurtful Incidents** between students in a restorative manner and to identify those situations that are **Serious or Chronic Situations** for referral for a more comprehensive intervention.

INCIDENT INTERVENTION

- **Initial Response.** Stop incident, if it is safe to do so. Direct students to separate, ensure safety of students, and help students to self-regulate.
 - Realize that what you witnessed is likely not the “whole story.”
 - Conduct an **Initial Assessment** to determine if this is a Minor Incident or a Serious or Chronic Situation that should be referred to the Designated Staff Person.
 - Is there evidence of an ongoing more serious situation or of retaliation?
 - If the incident appears to be Minor and the students have self-regulated, seek to help students effectively resolve the incident.
 - At this time, if possible—unless you have other responsibilities.
 - If at a later time, make interim arrangements for “separate paths,” if necessary, and arrangements to meet.
- Resolving a **Minor Hurtful Incident.** Use “shuttle diplomacy”—talking with each student independently to reach a resolution.
 - Talk with the targeted student to gain greater understanding into the dynamics. Find out how he or she wants to proceed and what would be an effective resolution from his or her perspective.
 - Ask **Accountability Questions for Hurtful Student** to identify the hurtful student’s motivations and help him or her agree to accept personal responsibility and to remedy the harm.
 - This should include a written expression of personal responsibility, apology, and a commitment to discontinue harm. An agreement to “separate paths” for a time may also be necessary.
 - After the hurtful student proposes/prepares a remedy, check with the targeted student to determine whether this is acceptable or what modifications are desired.
 - Ask **Accountability Questions for Hurtful Supporters**, if present, and obtain a similar written remedy of harm.
 - If a resolution cannot be achieved, refer to Designated Staff Person.
- If this incident appears to be a minor bi-directional conflict between students of equivalent social power, privately ask each student if he or she would be willing to engage in **Conflict Resolution**.
 - With you, with another staff member, with a peer mediator, or by themselves and report back to you.
- Periodically **Follow-up** with all involved students privately for a period of time to ensure that things got better.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

- Ask all involved students, what has been happening in your relationship with ____ (name of student) before this?
 - If there is evidence of significant distress, the targeted student indicates that this is an ongoing hurtful situation, or the hurtful student indicates that the targeted student had been hurtful to him or her earlier, refer the situation to the Designated Staff Person.

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS FOR HURTFUL STUDENTS

- What happened? What were you trying to accomplish?
- Is there anything troubling going on in your life that I should be aware of? Listen for clues about any underlying issues or concerns.
- Why did you think what you did was okay? Listen for and challenge **Rationalizations**—spin it, deny responsibility, deny harm, blame target.
- How would you feel if someone treated a friend you care about or a sibling in this way? (Do not ask how he or she would feel.)
- How do you think you made (name of targeted student) feel?
- What do you think other students think about students who say or do what you said or did to ____ (name of targeted student)?
- If an adult you admire had seen what you did, what do you think this he or she would have said to you?
- What do you think other students think about someone who acknowledges that they treated someone badly and takes steps to make things right?
- If your school had students participate in creating **Shared Values and Commitments**, ask student what commitments he or she made related to how he or she would treat others and what he or she would do to remedy the harm if he or she were ever hurtful.
- What are your thoughts now about what you did? Do you accept personal responsibility?
- What do you think you can to do to make things right?

ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS FOR HURTFUL SUPPORTERS

- Is there anything you know about this situation that you think might be helpful in making sure that it does not continue?
- What are your thoughts on how you think students should treat others?
- It appeared to me that you were supporting ____ (name of hurtful student). Why did you think it was okay for you to be supporting him or her? Listen for and challenge **Rationalizations**.
- What are your thoughts now about how you were supporting someone who was being hurtful? Do you accept personal responsibility for your supportive actions?
- What do you think you can to do to make things right?
- In the future, how do you think you could support another student to stop being hurtful, accept responsibility, and make things right?

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

- Make sure each is calm and agree to listen to the other.
- Ask each person to explain what happened and how this made them feel. Guide them to use an “I” statement: “I feel ____ when you ____.”
- After each person explains, reflect this back by saying: You are feeling (describe feelings), because (description of what happened). Is this correct? Ask if the other person understood.
- When you are sure both understand how the other is feeling and why, then ask them to brainstorm strategies that would remedy the harm their behavior caused to the other and resolve the situation.
 - What are some strategies you could use to resolve this? (List several.)
 - For each, ask them to think about what might happen if they used this strategy and whether this outcome would be acceptable.
 - Help them come to an agreement on which strategy or strategies they will try first and if this does not work, what they will do as a back-up.
- Put the solution in writing that they both sign.
- Follow-up with each privately to ensure the situation was resolved and things got better.