Engage Students to Embrace Civility

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Lessons From My Father

This is my father

He co-invented the process to make potato flakes

To make positive change, it is necessary to look at what is not working and figure out why – then to identify, based on the research, what approaches hold greater promise for success.

In this presentation, I will explain why what schools are doing is not working and present strategies that hold a better promise of effectiveness.
CONCLUSIONS:

What educators are being told about those who bully is wrong

The way they have been told to address bullying will not work in the digital age

Reality check: Adults are not in control!

We have to empower young people with the skills and motivation to independently maintain positive relationships
Maintain Positive Relationships

Book for school leaders and student empowerment program will be released Summer 2022
Being Bullied
and the Harms
**What is “Bullying?”**

**Academic Definition**
Intentional – repeated – imbalance of power

**“Hostile Environment”**
Definition under civil rights laws

**50 Different Statutory Definitions**
USDOE: “contributes to confusion”

**Survey Descriptions**
“Teasing” “Made fun of you” “Excluded you”

**Students/Parents**
“Someone is being hurtful to me and this is making me feel really bad”

**Principal Thinking**
“If I consider this ‘bullying,’ then I will have to report”
BULLYING – NO DECLINE

- NO decline in student reports of being bullied or not going to school for safety concerns on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey since 2009

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<td>6.7</td>
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Concerns About Surveys

- Use of terms that do not reflect serious or persistent hurtful behavior and often do not assess frequency
- Results in large percentage of students “bullied” – 20% - 30%
- Downplay seriousness of concern because percentage is so high
- Likely 6% - 8% experience serious or persistent hurtful
Lack of Effectiveness

- Recent meta-analyses of bullying prevention programs demonstrated
  - Marginal to no positive impact in reducing bullying at elementary level
  - Zero effectiveness at the secondary level
- There are NO “evidence-based best practices”
**Students at Highest Risk**

**Targeted Students**
- Social Misfits
  - “Weak” “Weird”
  - “Annoying”
  - “Different” “Wimps”
- Rivals
  - Students perceived to be challenging status of Hurtful Student

**Identity Based**
- Disabilities
- Sexual or gender minority
- Physical appearance/obese
- Race/color/national origin
- Religion
- Low income/Foster care

**Marginalized Hurtful Students**
- “Victim/Bullies”
  - “Hurt people hurt people”
- Abusive homes
- Challenges in self regulation
- Poor social relationship skills
- Bullied and excluded by peers
- Denigrated by staff
Images of Those Bullied

What words come to mind? “Weak” “Wimp”

How do these images make students who are treated badly feel about themselves?

Do not call them “victims”
This is disempowering
Harms of Bullying

- Stress-related physical and mental health symptoms
- Less engaged in school, low grades and test scores
- In schools with more bullying, there is less student involvement, lower test scores, higher drop-outs
- Marginalized Hurtful Students are at high risk of criminal involvement and social maladjustment in adulthood
BULLYING IS TRAUMA

- High incidence of PTSD symptoms
- Strong association between frequency and symptoms
- Marginalized Hurtful Students worst PTSD symptoms

- Two forms of trauma
  - Acute traumatic events – serious incidents
  - Chronic situations – persistent situations

- Trauma symptoms
  - Intrusion
  - Avoidance
  - Negative cognitions
  - Arousal
Suicide and Self-Harm Behavior

- Suicide behavior is multidimensional
  - Persistent bullying increases risk
  - Serious incident can trigger behavior
- Youth suicides most prevalent during school year
- Marginalized Hurtful Students at greatest risk
SCHOOL VIOLENCE – HATE GROUP RECRUITMENT

• Students being bullied who feel unsafe more likely to bring weapons to school
• Three-quarters of school shooters had experienced being bullied
• Lack of belonging, trauma, isolation, feelings of betrayal are factors that support recruitment by hate groups
Bullying Behavior
Educators are told that those who bully others are “at risk” youth. These are Marginalized Hurtful Students who engage in Reactive Aggression.
This is an inaccurate Stereotype!!!

“a stereotype held by the general public about individuals who bully … … high on psychopathology, low on social skills, and possessing few assets and competencies that the peer group values.”

Key source of stereotype: stopbullying.gov

2016 NAS Report
“... studies suggest that most children and youth who bully others wield considerable power within their peer network and that high-status perpetrators tend to be perceived by peers as being popular, socially skilled, and leaders. ...

High-status bullies have also been found to rank high on assets and competencies that the peer group values such as being attractive or being good athletes; they have also been found to rank low on psychopathology.”

The reality is that most of those who bully are NOT “at risk”
Primary Source of Bullying

Students who are hurtful to achieve social dominance

- Popular
- Competent
- Socially skilled
- "Cool"
- Good athletes
- Have empathy
- Leaders
- Attractive
- Compliant to staff

Engage in Proactive Aggression
TWO KINDS OF TARGETS

Ethological-Based Behavior

Perceived to be “deviant”
May or may not be “at risk”

Rivals or perceived rivals
Generally are NOT “at risk”
NATURE OF BULLYING BEHAVIOR

This is social dominance behavior by students who are not “at risk!”

Risk prevention approaches will not reduce this kind of hurtful behavior.

Do not call them “bullies”
This is “name calling”
POSITIVE BENEFITS OF BULLYING

• Status Benefits
  - Leadership positions
  - Starting positions on teams
  - Admission to high ranking university
  - Career achievement
  - Leaders in the eyes of many

• Relationship Benefits
  - Earlier dating and sex
  - Greater dating and sex
  - More sexual partners

• Marginalized Hurtful Students
  - Do not receive ANY of these benefits
SOCIAL DOMINANCE THEORY

- Group-based social hierarchies develop ideologies to legitimize the social inequality and mistreatment of marginalized social groups
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Arbitrary – marginalized identity

- Students with higher Social Dominance Orientation report greater involvement in bullying
What happens in schools when a marginalized student, who has had other difficulties, has the bravery to report that a popular, compliant, leadership student has been being hurtful to them?
Staff Bullying

An abuse of power by a staff member who persistently degrades a student, often in front of other students.

- Staff bullying is
  - Rationalized by offenders
  - Normalized or ignored by colleagues
  - Enabled by inaction of school system
  - Accepted by students
  - Undetected by outsiders
Staff Bullying is Totally Ignored

- 2014 NAS workshop on bullying had a student panel
- At the end they asked the students what was missed
  - “Teachers and Adults as Bullies.” “Teachers can be bullies too.”
    “If teachers give the impression that this kind of behavior is okay, the kids are going to think this kind of behavior is okay.”
    “We cannot be having teachers and coaches being okay with bullying kids in addition to the students who are doing so.”
- Resulting 2016 report had no mention of staff bullying
Staff Bullying is Totally Ignored

The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of Bullying: A Comprehensive and International Review of Research and Intervention, 2 Volume Set

Peter K. Smith (Editor), James O'Higgins Norman (Editor)


No references to staff bullying!
Observations from Researcher

- A small number of teachers who bully students exists in most schools
- High degree of agreement on who the “mean teachers” are
- Public event observed by students, often done in class
- Fear of reprisal for those voicing concern
- Absence of means of redress to handle complaints
- Creates discriminatory hostile climate
- Causes profound student harm
Students who are bullied by teachers typically experience confusion, anger, fear, self-doubt, and profound concerns about their academic and social competencies. Not knowing why they have been targeted, or what one must do to end the bullying, may well be among the most personally distressing aspects of being singled out and treated unfairly. Over time, especially if no one in authority intervenes, the target may come to blame themselves for the abuse and thus feel a pervasive sense of helplessness and worthlessness.

- McEvoy
On-line survey of 1067 K-12 teachers, July, 2017, by McEvoy, with assistance SPLC

**Students Targeted by Staff**

- **Display an extreme emotional outburst to student**
  - Never: 13%
  - 1-2 Times: 22%
  - 3-4 Times: 27%
  - 5-9 Times: 16%
  - 10 or More: 18%

- **Embarrass a student in front of others**
  - Never: 18%
  - 1-2 Times: 22%
  - 3-4 Times: 16%
  - 5-9 Times: 17%
  - 10 or More: 16%

- **Publicly suggest a student is stupid**
  - Never: 50%
  - 1-2 Times: 7%
  - 3-4 Times: 6%
  - 5-9 Times: 13%
  - 10 or More: 24%
Students Typically Targeted by Staff

- Students with behavioral disorders
- Students with low academic achievement
- Students with poor attendance
- Students with cognitive impairments
- Other (minorities, LGBTQ, ELL)
- Considerable overlap with being a minority, behavioral disorders, and low academic achievement
• How frequently in the last month did you witness a school staff member be hurtful to a student?
  - 9% Almost every day
  - 12% Once or twice a week
  - 21% Once or twice a month
  - 58% Never

• Results on three questions about student-on-student hurtful behavior were analyzed based on whether they had “ever” or “never” witnessing staff being hurtful to students
Students who had “ever” witnessed staff be hurtful to a student reported SIGNIFICANTLY higher levels of student-on-student hurtful behavior – $P<.001$ = “very significant”
Lack of Effectiveness
HOW EFFECTIVE IS THIS APPROACH?

Staff Training on Bullying Prevention

To ensure that bullying prevention efforts are successful, all school staff need to be trained on what bullying is, what the school’s policies and rules are, and how to enforce the rules.
Effectiveness of Staff

• Numerous studies have found students do not perceive the actions of school staff to be effective in preventing or responding to bullying.

• Students overwhelmingly believe teachers
  - Ignore or do not recognize hurtful activities
  - Are not prepared to intervene if asked
  - Are incapable of doing anything effective
DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

- **Have effective strategies**
  - **87% staff**
  - 58% MS
  - 66% HS

- **Not doing enough**
  - 90%
  - 68%
  - 63%

- **Staff make things worse when they intervene**
  - **61% MS**
  - **59% HS**
  - 7% staff

- **Will intervene if they see**
  - **100% staff**

- **Saw and did nothing**
  - **97% staff**
  - **43% MS**
  - **54% HS**
WHERE BULLYING OCCURS

- The highest reported rates of bullying occurred in classroom, hallways, and lunchroom
  - Where staff are expected to supervise
- The failure of staff to intervene was associated with increased distress of the targeted students
"Tell an Adult"

- The primary prevention approach
  - Students are often also told not to tattle
  - Social norm that if you tell an adult, you are a "snitch"
  - Leads to retaliation – "snitches get stitches"
  - Telling is an admission you are a "wimp"

- The vast majority of students do not report
Students who were bullied and distressed

Grade 5
- Did not tell
- Told and stayed same
- Told and got better
- Told and got worse

Grades 6 to 8
- Did not tell
- Told and stayed same
- Told and got better
- Told and got worse

Grades 9 to 12
- Did not tell
- Told and stayed same
- Told and got better
- Told and got worse
**Why Did You Not Tell?**

- A school staff member will not do anything to help
- A school staff member might make things worse
- Will lead to public recognition they reported, which will damage reputation
- Think they will be blamed
- Student being hurtful would likely retaliate
- Would have to reveal confidential information
- Think they deserved it
Effectiveness

Apparent effectiveness of the “tell an adult” approach

About 10%
CONFLICTING GUIDANCE

- **State Statutes**
  - Adopt policies, tell students to report, investigate, consequences

- **Federal Civil Rights**
  - Identify a hostile environment – take steps reasonably expected to stop the harm, remedy the harm, and correct the environment

- **StopBullying Guidance**
  - Don’t use conflict resolution or mediation for bullying

- **Dear Colleague Letter**
  - Do not suspend students
  - Use restorative practices
State Statutory Directives

• Required by statute to adopt disciplinary policies
  - Shifts focus from resolving the hurtful situation to a determination of whether a student violated a rule and should be punished
  - Incidents are frequently persistently hurtful minor acts of harm – not serious acts that cause a substantial disruption
  - Students are rarely punished – target is told “this is not bullying”
  - Punishment is known to be ineffective in changing behavior
2010 USDOE GUIDANCE ON STATUTES

- "Transparency and Monitoring Include a provision for LEAs to report annually to the state on the number of reported bullying incidents, and any responsive actions taken"

NYC public schools have been underreporting bullying: report

Schneideman’s analysis of state Education Department data from the 2013-14 school year found that 1,257 of 1,792 city schools — or 71% — reported zero incidents of harassment, bullying or discrimination of students for that entire year. And 1,762 schools — or 98% of the total — reported 10 or fewer incidents.
ESSA Included this Requirement

- Under ESSA, schools must report "incidences of violence, including bullying and harassment"

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<th>- Los Angeles schools</th>
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<td>4,915 allegations</td>
<td>426 allegations</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,887 students disciplined</td>
<td>94 students disciplined</td>
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https://ocrdata.ed.gov
MAJOR DISCONNECT

- The vast majority of students do not report when they are bullied
- When they do report, these are frequently persistent situations that have not caused a substantial disruption
- Principals have strong incentive not to characterize situation as “bullying” because there would be a requirement to report
- So the student is told “This isn’t bullying”
TOLD TO USE PBIS

• Some aspects of PBIS are sound – but not token rewards
  - Grounded in behaviorism from the 60's
  - Has not integrated insight into trauma or neurodiversity
  - External rewards interfere with development of intrinsic motivation
  - Models relational aggression against students who have greater challenges
  - Cannot “motivate” students who have challenges by giving rewards to those who do not have challenges
  - Is very discouraging for students who have challenges
TOLD TO USE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

- This is often implemented as logical consequences, mediation, or restorative circles
  - Logical consequences may not remedy the harm
  - Mediation or restorative circles are ineffective and dangerous where there is an imbalance of power

Restorative practices has an excellent underlying theory
Bullying prevention isn’t rocket science

It is far more complicated

Especially when the coordinates given to the rockets are in conflict and going in the wrong direction!
Engage Students
Approach
**My Research Framing**

- What aspects of the environment and planning need to be better addressed?
- How can we empower those who are more frequently targeted to reduce the potential others will treat them badly and improve their response?
- How can we influence those who are hurtful to stop being hurtful and to remedy the harm if they were?
- How can we empower and encourage witnesses to step in to help?
- How can we improve the effectiveness of staff and school leader in responding to hurtful incidents and situations?
• ESSA Evidence Based 4. **Demonstrates a Rationale.** To demonstrate a rationale, the intervention should include:

  - 1) A well-specified logic model that is informed by research or an evaluation that suggests how the intervention is likely to improve relevant outcomes; and
  - 2) An effort to study the effects of the intervention, ideally producing promising evidence or higher, that will happen as part of the intervention or is underway elsewhere (e.g., this could mean another SEA, LEA, or research organization is studying the intervention elsewhere), to inform stakeholders about the success of that intervention.
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - SCHOOL

Annual survey, analyzed, and focus groups

Improvement objectives tied to data

Evaluation of effectiveness

Strategies informed by research

Leadership team with staff, students, and parents

Strategies informed by research

Leadership team with staff, students, and parents

Evaluation of effectiveness

Improvement objectives tied to data

Annual survey, analyzed, and focus groups
The best way to motivate students to foster a positive and inclusive school climate and reduce hurtful behavior is to give them the responsibility to make things better.
STUDENT LEADERSHIP TEAM

• Prestige leaders or potential prestige leaders
• From every social group in school
• Especially from those marginalized in our society
• Who have a long standing history of being kind and respectful
• After started, allow to expand to include others who are interested
• Use a nomination or self nomination form
CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT - STUDENTS

• The Embrace Civility Student Survey has …
  - Positive Social Norms questions
  - Incident questions that focus on actual incidents – and …
    ‣ Empowerment if treated badly
    ‣ Remedy of harm if were hurtful
    ‣ Positive intervention if a witness

• Have the Student Leadership Team engage in Continuous Improvement Process
  - Students analyze the data, enunciate objectives, discuss strategies, evaluate progress

• Make increasing civility at school a student responsibility!
Activities of Student Leadership Team

- Teach and use problem solving process
  - What is the situation or issue that we would like to address?
  - What strategies could we use?
  - What is our best choice or choices?
  - What is our plan for implementation and who will take what responsibilities?
  - How will we evaluate success?

- If your school acquires Embrace Civility program, make presentation using survey data and skills information
Focus on Kindness
AUTHORITATIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

• Students in schools that maintain an authoritative school management approach are less likely to experience being bullied in school and more likely to step in to help.
  - Unfortunately, most schools use an authoritarian approach.
TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

• Knowing they are safe and welcome in their school helps students survive and thrive
• Imperative to address the trauma students are experiencing within the environment over which educators have the most control
Positive Psychology is the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive. The field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.

The Greater Good Science Center studies the psychology, sociology, and neuroscience of well-being, and teaches skills that foster a thriving, resilient, and compassionate society.
• Use strategies grounded in the development of intrinsic motivation to increase student motivation to engage in civility.

**Connections**
Positive connections with important others

**Competencies**
Effective skills in areas of perceived importance

**Control**
Personal autonomy and choice

**Primary Motivators**
Leadership status can be attained through

- Dominance – coercion and intimidation
- Prestige – skill and respect

In every school, there are prestige leadership students who are consistently kind and respectful

Dominance and Prestige: A Tale of Two Hierarchies
Jon K. Maner
GROWTH MINDSET

• Having a growth mindset perspective increases effectiveness in maintaining positive relationships and not retaliating if treated badly
Social scientists identified the core capacities that lead to goodness in human beings across cultures, nations, and beliefs.
**Positive Social Norms**

- When students learn the actual positive norms of their peers – disapproval of those who are hurtful and strong admiration of those who step in to help – are more willing to abide by those norms.
Psychology of Influence

• **Reciprocity**
  - “How would you feel if someone did that to you?”

• **Commitments**
  - “Does this fit with your personal commitments?”

• **Social Proof**
  - “What would others think?”

• **Liking**
  - “What would your friends think?”

• **Authority**
  - “What would your mom or dad think?”

• **Scarcity or Possible Loss**
  - “How could this damage your reputation or get you in trouble?”
TEAMWORK – ATHLETIC ENVIRONMENTS

• Hurtful behavior is influenced by culture and social factors, that often normalizes aggressive behaviors that occur in the sporting context
  - Toxic masculinity
  - Hazing is normalized
  - "What happens in the locker room stays in the locker room"

Preventing Bullying: What Great Coaches Need to Know

U.S. CENTER FOR SAFESPORT
CHAMPION RESPECT. END ABUSE.
Empowering Students
If someone is hurtful, I stand tall and respond in a positively powerful way.

I focus on the good and make a positive difference.
Cultivating Dandelions

- Dandelions can grow and flourish everywhere
- Some students – because of their identity – will always face greater potential of being treated badly

We can’t protect them – we MUST empower them!
Research has identified a common set of factors that predispose children to positive outcomes in the face of significant adversity:

- Supportive adult-child relationships
- A sense of self-efficacy and perceived control
- Opportunities to strengthen adaptive skills and self-regulatory capacities
- Sources of faith, hope, and cultural traditions
Three critical factors increased the resilience of bullied students and led to a successful outcome:

- A place of refuge where they could feel safe, appreciated, and challenged in a constructive way
- Responsible adults who supported and sustained them and provided them examples of appropriate behavior
- A sense of future possibility to persuade them that staying in school, despite the bullying, promised better things to come
**Teen Developmental Considerations**

- **Personal Identity**
  - Develop personal identity, sense of morality, independence, personal control

- **Change bullying behavior**
  - Shifts from observable hurtful acts to more indirect relational aggression

- **Significantly less adult supervision**
  - Not as closely supervised and are constant users of social media

- **Changes bullying motivation**
  - Bullying to achieve dominance

- **Sexual maturity**
  - Significant hurtful behavior in association with romantic interests

- **Exclusion**
  - Teens form exclusive social groups

- **Autonomy**
  - "Just say ‘No’" can have an opposite effect
KEY RISKS DURING TEEN YEARS

- Act without thinking
- Fail to predict consequences of their actions
- Play follow the leader
- Judge their value based on attention
BE POSITIVELY POWERFUL

- Make Positive Connections
- Reach Out to Be Kind
- Use My Strengths
- Focus on the Good
- Be Mindful
- Keep My Personal Power
- Think Things Through

Be Positively Powerful

A Guide for Teens on Achieving Resilience and Empowerment

Resilient When Things Get Tough

Ninna Yliluoto
Students who demonstrate they do not feel they have personal power are most often bullied
- They look like victims and are then victimized

Students who bully are seeking to take “personal power” from the one they are being hurtful to
- When a student over reacts, gets angry, or upset, they lose “power points”
As an imbalance of power is at the heart of bullying behavior, it is essential to assist targeted students -

- Gain greater personal power
- Not respond to being treated badly in a manner that undermines their personal power

The Be Positively Powerful strategies support empowerment of students
**Key Parts of the Brain**

- **Prefrontal Cortex**
  - "Thinking"

- **Anterior Cingulate Cortex**
  - "Emotional Regulation"

- **Hippocampus**
  - "Memory"

- **Amygdala**
  - "Threat Response"
Healthy Threat Response

**Danger!**

Your Amygdala senses the danger and triggers your body to respond.

**Control**

Your Anterior Cingulate Cortex regulates your emotional response.

**Process**

Your Hippocampus processes information about the threat based on what has happened to you in the past.

**Think**

Your Prefrontal Cortex allows you to solve problems.

- Heart rate
- Pulse
- Respiration
- Blood flow
- Adrenaline
- Cortisol
**What Might Happen**

You Might "Flip Your Lid"

Your Threat Response and Memory Centers may become disconnected from your Emotional Regulation and Thinking Centers.

When this happens, you will not be able to:

- Regulate your emotions
- Solve problems
The working part of your brain are the neurons.

Neurons form synapses (connections) to establish neural pathways to communicate so your brain can tell your body what to do.
What you generally experienced as you have grown up has guided how your neural pathways have been established.

- If you have generally had positive experiences you will mostly have positive neural pathways.
- If you have had a lot of negative experiences you will have more negative neural pathways.
Our brains look for bad news and store memories of bad events in our Hippocampus. This helps us to effectively respond to the next similar risky or dangerous situation. Human brains developed with a natural tendency to focus on potential danger and risk.
A new experience can trigger a response based on your memories of the past.

If you have stored a lot of past bad memories, these can influence your reaction to a new experience.

When bad things do happen, you may become more highly distressed and may overreact.
If you have experienced a lot of bad things or are experiencing bad things now, these are the common reactions:

- **Fight**: Engage in aggression, become disruptive
- **Flight**: Run away, refuse to talk, avoid people
- **Freeze**: Become disconnected, stop trying
- **Fawn**: Avoid conflict by always seeking to please others
**Brains Can Change**

The neurons in your brain can “rewire” themselves. This allows anyone who has experienced challenges to achieve resilience and empowerment.

**Neuroplasticity**
HANDLING CHALLENGES

When you successfully handle difficult challenges, this can result in significant positive growth

- You will have an increased sense of your personal strength
- New opportunities and possibilities can come to you
- You can form closer relationships with people
- You will likely become more interested in social justice
Think in Terms of Strategy

To rewire the neurons in your brain to achieve greater resilience, and to not “flip your lids,” requires a consistent focus on “positive”

Five positives for every negative!

It takes 5 “positives” to undo 1 “negative”
MAKE POSITIVE CONNECTIONS

I maintain positive connections with good friends and trusted adults.
Research has clearly documented that students who are bullied, but who have supportive friends, experience less distress.

The best way to make new friends is by engaging in activities they enjoy.

The biggest barrier to making friends is fear of failure.

Sometimes friendships end.
Trusted adults can provide support at times they may be facing any challenges – and for positive times.

A trusted adult is someone who …

• They can talk with about anything
• They can feel safe sharing a serious concern with
• Will help my Think Things Through to decide what to do – and not dictate their solution
Positive Staff-Student Relationships

• Use Relationship Mapping to ensure every student has one or more staff members who are committed to maintaining a close connection
  - Being the person who really cares about them

• Hold regular “circle time” in classrooms, advisories, or homerooms

• Students should regularly receive 5 positive comments to every 1 negative comment or correction
Reach Out to Be Kind

I reach out to be kind to others.

I know this makes them and me feel happier.
Reach Out to Be Kind

Being kind to others results in a significant increase in feelings of happiness of the person being kind.

The link between happiness and prosociality is bidirectional—not only do happy students do good for others, but encouraging students to engage in acts of kindness also increases their well-being and peer acceptance.
Use My Strengths

I use my strengths every day and when things get tough.

I focus on my growth and build new strengths.
When students have a Growth Mindset they will continue to grow.

- Embrace challenges.
- Realize that failure is a great way to grow.
- Learn from criticism and mistakes.
- Realize that both they and others can improve and change.
- Focus on their effort as their path to mastery.
We each have different strengths.

Intentionally using their strengths and building new strengths can lead to greater happiness.

Recommend using resources on this site to supplement SEL.
Focus on the Good

I focus on the good things happening in my life.
I am thankful and express my gratitude.
By intentionally focusing on the good, they can achieve greater feelings of happiness!

Focus on the Good

- **Notice the Good**
  - Either notice that a good thing that has happened or do something good for yourself

- **Enrich the Good**
  - Take the time to feel really happy

- **Absorb the Good**
  - Think about this good experience as being absorbed into their mind and warming their heart

- **Appreciate the Good**
  - Send a note of thanks to someone who made them feel good
Be Mindful

I take time each day to achieve calmness and focus.

If things get tough, I remind myself to remain calm.
Benefits of Mindfulness

- Improved attention and concentration
- Improved emotional regulation
- Greater compassion for others and self
- Reduced stress, anxiety, emotional reactivity
**Self Regulation**

**Triggering**

Six stages of triggering

- Calm
- Trigger
- Build
- Outburst – “Flip Their Lid”
- Confusion
- Recovery

**Flattening the Curve**
**Self Regulation**

Help them to Self Regulate

- When they are calm, help them identify what may trigger them
- Collaboratively Think Things Through about how they can take steps to remain calm
- After any triggering situation, discuss what happened and note success or things they can improve

**Avoid T.A.C.O.S**

Avoid actions that can increase their distress

- Threaten
- Argue
- Challenge
- Order
- Shame
Keep My Personal Power

I hold myself tall and strong

I do not allow what happens to me control how I think about myself or respond
HOLD MYSELF TALL

• When students hold themselves tall this communicates that they have a sense of their personal power

• It is possible to “fake it” to “make it” – intentionally holding themselves tall can result in increased feelings of self-confidence
Rational Emotive Theory

- We will never have the ability to control what might happen to us.
- We do have the ability to control how this makes us feel about ourselves and how we respond.

\[ A + B = C \]

A: the Adversity that you cannot control
B: your Belief that you can control
C: the Consequence or result

"I am not going to give you the ability to control what I think about myself or how I respond."
In any challenging situation, I think things through to decide what to do.
PROBLEM SOLVING

• Four key interpersonal cognitive problem-solving skills
  - Means-ends thinking to reach a stated goal by planning a step-by-step means to reach that goal
  - Alternative solution thinking to identify alternative solutions
  - Consequential thinking to consider what might happen
  - Weighing pros and cons
How to Think Things Through

- What is the situation?
- What do I want to accomplish?
- What strategies could I use?
- Is each in accord with my values and does each use my strengths?
- For each, what might happen?
- What is my best first choice and how should I proceed?
- Did this work?
- What else could or should I do?
INCREASE EMPOWERMENT AND ACCEPTANCE

- Ensure positive relationships with several staff allies
- Develop strategies to increase friendships
- Encourage to reach out to be kind several times every day
- Help them to identify their strengths, have a growth mindset, and focus on their future
- Encourage them to focus on what makes them happy
- Ask them to participate in the Student Leadership Team
Respond When Someone is Hurtful

- Take a deep breath to remain calm
- Think to themselves they will not give this person the power to control how they feel about themselves or act
- Immediately shift their body into a more powerful position
- If they can do so, calmly tell the person to stop, then hold their head high and walk away
- If they do not think saying stop will be effective, hold their head high and walk away
- Connect with a friend or trusted adult to Think Things Through to determine what to do
- If they have also been hurtful, acknowledge their wrongdoing and make other amends
Encouraging Remedy
Stop, Own It, and Fix It

I always remember that my choices show who I truly am

I stop myself and make things right if I have been hurtful
TRAUMA INFORMED RESPONSE

- If the student who has been hurtful also has experienced students being hurtful to them, it is imperative to address this harm.
- This likely will also require addressing extensive past trauma both at home and at school.
- Also, this student must be held accountable to accept personal responsibility and remedy the harm.
**Restorative Practices**

- **Grounded in shame management**
  - Adaptive response to shame is to acknowledge wrongdoing, accept responsibility, and engage in remediation
  - Punishment leads to maladaptive shame response, which leads to withdrawal, attacking self or others

- **Four Questions**
  - What is the harm to all parties involved and to the community?
  - What needs to be done to repair the harm?
  - Who is responsible for this repair?
  - What needs to occur to prevent similar harm in the future?
COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

• Collaborative Problem Solving is a 2-part approach
  - Identify challenges and strengths – necessary for Marginalized Hurtful Student
  - Collaboratively engaging in problem solving
• As part of an Accountability Process, the Hurtful Student and Hurtful Supporters should be engaged in Collaborative Problem Solving to develop a remedy of harm
**Principles of Influence**

- **Reciprocity**
  - “How would you feel if someone treated your friend in the way you treated this other student?”

- **Commitments**
  - “How do your actions fit with the personal commitment statement that you created?”

- **Social Proof, Liking, and Authority**
  - “What did our school survey tell you about the thoughts of other students related to what they think about other students who engaged in the actions that you did?”
MECHANISMS OF MORAL DISENGAGEMENT

Spin It
Deny Personal Responsibility
Deny the Harm
Blame the Other
Impulsive Retaliation

• Impulsive retaliation is a significant concern
  - Frequent cause of hurtful behavior
  - Modeled and supported by society
  - Students are advised to “fight back”
  - Mixed feelings of students

• Research-based strategies can address this concern
NOT RETALIATE

- **Self-Regulate**
  - “I will make sure I remain calm”

- **Personal Power**
  - “I choose not to give anyone the power to control how I feel about myself or act”

- **Growth Mindset**
  - “I know that others can change and the situation can change”

- **Problem Solving Skills**
  - “I will think things through to decide what is best to do”
Encouraging Peer Intervention
Reach Out

I reach out to be kind to those who are treated badly or left out.

I help others think things through or resolve conflict.
Say “Stop”

If it is safe, I publicly tell someone being hurtful to stop

I help someone who was hurtful stop, own it, and fix it
Report Concerns

If it is a serious situation, I will tell an adult who can help.
THE IMPORTANCE OF WITNESSES

- Most hurtful behavior takes place in front of peers
- Many students indicate they would like to help
- When students do step in to help, they are generally effective
- Targeted students who have friends experience less distress
- Students strongly admire those who step in to help
- **Most often, witnesses do not step in to help**
Bystander Research

Factors that support Intervention
- Noting a hurtful situation
- Interpreting it correctly
- Feeling of personal responsibility
- Sufficient personal power
- Effective intervention skills
- Supportive social environment

Factors that discourage Intervention
- Diffusion of Responsibility – think someone else is responsible
- Audience Inhibition – fear public embarrassment
- Social Influence – Perceive others do not support intervention
When a Witness

- Students have a choice – they can be …

Hurtful Supporter  Passive Observer  Helpful Ally
**PERSONAL FACTORS**

- **Motivation**
  - Personal responsibility for well-being of others
  - Acceptance of differences
  - Affective empathy
  - Personal connection

- **Personal Power**
  - If witness is not as powerful as aggressor, risks are embarrassment or retaliation
  - If witness becomes associated with target, risk is embarrassment

- **Self-Efficacy**
  - Effective skills plus confidence (personal power)
  - Can reduce risks of embarrassment or retaliation
Strategies to Address

- Use local student survey data to help students understand actual peer norms of admiration for students who step in to help
- Influence Witnesses with higher social status to be Helpful Allies, by increasing skills and motivation
- Lower social power barrier with a Positive Norms Approach to reduce social power of aggressors and increase social power of Helpful Allies
- Teach private strategies of reaching out to be kind, privately telling a friend to stop, or reporting a concern to an adult
- Teach safer public strategies such as working with others as a team
SOCIAL-ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

• **Friendships**
  - Friends of target likely to help targeted friend
  - Friends of aggressor likely to support aggressor
  - Friends of both may help to mediate or may stay out
  - Friends of neither depends on Personal Factors

• **Perceived Norms**
  - Students often behave in accord with perceived peer norms
  - When those norms discourage peer aggression and support positive peer intervention, the percentage of students who are willing to act in a positive manner increases

• **School Climate**
  - Culture of acceptance of differences
  - Engagement of students
  - Conflict with school expectations
  - Effectiveness of school interventions
Legal Issues
FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWS

• Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
  - Sex and sexual or gender minority

• Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964
  - Race, color, national origin, religion if grounded in national origin

• Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990
  - Disabilities
HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

• When unwelcome conduct directed at a protected class student becomes so severe or persistent that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment that affects a student's ability to participate in or benefit from an educational program or activity

- Also applies to pervasive hurtful conduct directed at many protected class students
Requirements for a Response

• If a hostile environment exists, schools are required to conduct a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation and intervene by taking prompt and effective steps that are reasonably calculated to:
  - End the harassment by the hurtful students
  - Remedy the harmful effects on the target
  - Correct any aspects of the environment that appear to support the hurtful acts
    ‣ Which could include how staff are treating students, behavior management approaches, cultural competencies, implicit bias, athletic department perspectives, etc.
  - Ensure that the harassment does not continue
MY GUIDANCE

- The more effective requirements under civil rights laws are only available for protected class students

- EVERY STUDENT who is experiencing a serious or persistent hurtful situation deserves a complete investigation of the situation and steps taken to stop the harassment, remedy the harm, and correct the hostile environment
When the behavior implicates the civil rights laws, school administrators should look beyond simply disciplining the perpetrators. While disciplining the perpetrators is likely a necessary step, it often is insufficient. A school’s responsibility is to eliminate the hostile environment created by the harassment, address its effects, and take steps to ensure that harassment does not recur.

- OCR 2010 Dear Colleague Letter
Elements of a Case

- Student is a member of, or perceived to be a member of, a protected class under federal statutes and the hurtful behavior is associated with the student’s protected class status, or perception thereof.
- The school had actual knowledge of the harassment.
- The student(s) were under the school’s authority.
- The harassment was so severe, pervasive, and objectionably offensive it deprived the student of access to the educational opportunities or benefits provided by the school.
- The school was deliberately indifferent to this harassment.
If a school district is aware that students are not being deterred from engaging in harassment by individual disciplinary action, and the district continues to rely on those disciplinary measures as its exclusive remedy, that response would not be reasonably calculated to prevent persistent harassment from occurring again.

- OCR argument in an Amicus Brief
If student with disabilities is being bullied or engaging in bullying, the school must develop an **Intervention Plan** that addresses the identified concerns in an IEP or 504 team meeting.

- Must include steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, remedy the harmful effects, and correct the hostile environment in the IEP or 504 Plan.
- May also include Functional Objectives to increase student’s interpersonal relationship skills.

2013 and 2014 Dear Colleague Letters from OSERS and OCR.
Child Find

- If a student is being treated badly – on any basis – and that student has developed mental health concerns associated with this harm – and this is interfering with the student's ability to learn and participate – this student should be reviewed for having a mental health disability that is interfering with learning and likely placed on a 504 Plan.

  - Then, the bullying of this student should be addressed in the 504 Plan.

  - The sole reason for this 504 Plan may be the serious or persistent hurtful acts this student has experienced.
With Freedom of Thought, there can be no such Thing as Wisdom; and no such Thing as Publick Liberty, without Freedom of Speech: Which is the Right of every Man, as far as by it he does not hurt and control the Right of another; and this is the only Check which it ought to suffer, the only Bounds which it ought to know. – Locke

The critical element in all cases will be evidence of harm or foreseeable harm to students.
**Significant Speech Cases**

- **Tinker v Des Moines (SCOTUS)**
  - Schools may not restrict student speech unless there are reasons to believe it could cause a substantial disruption or a significant interference with other students.

- **Bethel v Fraser (SCOTUS)**
  - Schools can restrict lewd, vulgar, plainly offensive, and contrary to the school’s educational mission – but not off campus.

- **Morse v Frederick (SCOTUS)**
  - Schools can restrict student speech for safety reasons.

- **Saxe v Island Tree (3rd Circuit)**
  - The primary function of a public school is to educate its students; conduct that substantially interferes with the mission is, almost by definition, disruptive to the school environment.
According to a federal government initiative, student-on-student bullying is a major concern in schools across the country and can cause victims to become depressed and anxious, to be afraid to go to school, and to have thoughts of suicide. ... Schools have a duty to protect their students from harassment and bullying in the school environment ... Far from being a situation where school authorities suppress speech on political and social issues based on disagreement with the viewpoint expressed, ... school administrators must be able to prevent and punish harassment and bullying in order to provide a safe school environment conducive to learning.
Off-Campus Speech

• Schools have the authority to respond to off-campus student speech if that speech has, or foreseeably could, cause a substantial disruption in school or a significant interference with the ability of a student or students to receive an education.
Off-Campus Speech

- Should have notice in policy
- "Substantial disruption" means of disruption of the delivery of educational opportunities to students
  - NOT disruption in the life of a staff member
    - If a student has targeted a staff member online and there has been no disruption of student learning, suspending that student could lead to liability
    - Also should assess whether staff member has been hurtful to the student
Hate Speech

- Schools have the authority to restrict hate speech on campus if that speech has, or foreseeably could, cause a substantial disruption in school or a significant interference with the ability of a student or students to receive an education.

  - The primary issue in the hate speech cases is in situations where there has been no obvious substantial disruption or interference.

  - Schools must be diligent in documenting prior situations that have caused harm and documenting research insight on the foreseeable harms.
Free Speech Concerns

- The focus **always** must be on documenting the substantial disruption to student learning in the school community or a significant interference in any individual student’s ability to learn and participate in school activities.
Positive Interventions
The Challenge — My Solution

• Principals are not going to want to determine that a hurtful incident or situation is “bullying,” because this will require a report.

• My recommended solution:
  - Avoid “bullying” — hurtful incidents (minor) or situations (serious or persistent).
  - Implement a response that is a diversionary intervention — with any decision on discipline held in abeyance.
  - Stop the behavior, remedy harm, correct environment for all targeted students.
  - Treat all incidents or situations as “teachable moments.”
**MTSS Thinking About Incidents**

- **Tier I**
  - All students need insight into how to maintain positive relationships
  - All staff need effective, positive classroom management skills
  - All minor incidents should be resolvable by students, sometimes with staff assistance

- **Tier II**
  - Many serious or persistent hurtful situations should be resolved in accord with civil rights regulations
MTSS THINKING ABOUT INCIDENTS

- Tier III
  - Serious or persistent situations involving Marginalized Hurtful Students or Targeted Students who show evidence of profound distress should be addressed as Tier III situations
STUDENT VOICE IN INTERVENTIONS

• Recall evidence on degree to which students do not trust staff

• It is essential to give the targeted student VOICE
  - Ask if they want a more formal resolution or just support
  - Ask if they want this to be initiated based on their report or if they want staff to be attentive and detect concern
  - Ask what the student needs to feel protected and for a remedy for the harm
  - Never disclose to the Hurtful Student that the Target initiated the complaint
CERTIFIED STAFF

- Staff members respond to Hurtful Incidents
  - Seek to stop the Hurtful Incident
  - Engage in further investigation of any Incidents to determine whether this is a more minor Hurtful Incident or should be considered to be a Hurtful Situation
  - Intervene in the Hurtful Incidents to resolve these or report Hurtful Situations to the Designated Staff Person
  - If these Hurtful Incidents appear to be resolved are not part of a Hurtful Situation, they do not have to be reported
  - Periodically follow-up with the involved students to ensure the Incident been resolved
**DESIGNATED STAFF PERSON**

- Designated Staff Person respond to Hurtful Situations
  - Investigate with Target and any staff or student witnesses
  - Determine Target’s needs for Protection Plan and Positive Action Plan
  - Implement an Accountability Process with Hurtful Student and Hurtful Supporters to achieve an Accountability Agreement
  - Present Accountability Plan to Target
  - Assuming this resolves current situation, continue to monitor
  - Evaluate effectiveness
Positive Action Plan

- Maintain focus on positive
  - Daily positive connection, reach out to be kind, build strengths, focus on good
- Plan to remedy any harm to academic success
- Address challenges student may have related to social relationship skills
- Identify and address traumatic distress
- Designate Staff Allies
POSITIVE ACTION PLAN

• Determine need for daily check-in that focuses on positive
• Develop and practice an incident response
• Address digital and social media activities
• Help student identify and build upon character strengths
• Identify strategies to strengthen student’s friendships
• Identify strategies to increase advancement in future goals
Protection Plan

- Staff Ally for positive check-in
- Safe passages plan
- Place of refuge and calming
- No contact order, if necessary
- Other requests, if necessary
ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

• What happened?
• What were you trying to accomplish?
• Is anything troubling going on in your life that we should be aware of?
• Why did you think it was okay for you to be doing this? Challenge rationalizations
• How would you feel if someone treated a friend in this way?
ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

• How do you think you made the student you were hurtful to feel?
• What do you think other students think about students who do what you did?
• If an adult you admire had seen what you did, what do you think this adult 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?
ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

• Consult student’s Statement of Personal Commitments and ask student to compare their actions with their commitments

• Are you willing to accept personal responsibility for the harm caused by your actions?

• What do you think you can do to make things right to the student to whom you were hurtful and to the school community?
AQS for Hurtful Supporters

- Is there anything you know about this Situation that you think might be helpful in making sure that the hurtful behavior does not continue?
- Why did you think it was okay for your friend to be doing this? Challenge rationalizations
- Why did you think it was okay for you to be supporting this harm? Challenge rationalizations
AQS for Hurtful Supporters

- Consult student’s Statement of Personal Commitments and ask student to compare their actions with their commitments.
- What are your thoughts now about how you were supporting someone who was being hurtful?
- What do you think you can do to make things right to the student who was treated badly and to the school community?
ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT - DISCLOSED

• Write a statement that describes what you did:

• Write a statement that acknowledges why what you did was wrong and that you accept personal responsibility for this wrongdoing:

• Write a statement where you commit you will agree to abide by a No Contact Order (if ordered):
ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT - DISCLOSED

• Write a statement where you commit you will agree to abide by target’s requests (if requested):

• Write a statement where you commit that you will avoid engaging in any further harmful acts directed at this student:

• Describe what you will do to make things right for the person to whom you were hurtful:
ACCOUNTABILITY AGREEMENT - NOT DISCLOSED

• Write a statement of what you will you say to your friends about this situation:

• Describe what you will do to make things right to our school community:

• For another remedy the harm to the school community, for the next ___ days, you will reach out to be kind to at least ___ students outside your social group (reported on form)
Write a statement acknowledging that you recognize that any violation of this agreement will be considered a violation of the disciplinary code and will subject you to a disciplinary consequence:

Signatures of the Hurtful Student and Parent/Caregiver.
AA FOR HURTFUL SUPPORTER - DISCLOSED

• Write a statement that describes what you saw happen and how you responded:

• Write a statement that acknowledges and accepts personal responsibility for the harm caused by how you responded:

• Write a statement that acknowledges why what (name of Hurtful Student) did was wrong:
AA FOR HURTFUL SUPPORTER - DISCLOSED

• Write a statement that acknowledges why how you responded was wrong:

• Describe what you will do to make things right for the student who was harmed:
AA FOR HURTFUL SUPPORTER - NOT DISCLOSED

• Describe what you will do to make things right to our school community:

• For another remedy the harm to the school community, for the next ___ days, you will reach out to be kind to at least ___ students outside your social group (reported on form)

• Write a statement indicating your agreement to avoid engaging in any further harmful acts or supporting any further hurtful acts directed at this student:
• Please recognize that any violation of this agreement may be considered a violation of the disciplinary code and may subject you to a disciplinary consequence

• Signature of the student: (Can be sent to parent)
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

• A comprehensive assessment of the student’s social relationship skills
  - CPS Thinking Skills – not a FBA

• Identification of social relationship objectives and a plan for instruction
  that is delivered in a sufficiently comprehensive manner to lead to
  success in improving social relationship skills
  - Developed in a CPS manner with student
Students with Disabilities

• An identification of any challenges and motivations of students who are being hurtful sufficient to
  - Ensure an appropriate Protection Plan in Supplemental Aids and Supports
  - Support the actions necessary to correct a Hostile Environment

• An identification of the circumstances under which the hurtful behavior directed at student is most often occurring
  - Ensure an appropriate Protection Plan in Supplemental Aids and Supports
Students with Disabilities

- An identification of any challenges associated with use of social media
  - A plan of action involving use of social media at school included in Supplemental Aids and Supports – recommended plan for home

- An identification of any concerns associated with staff behavior – being disparaging or not responding effectively when students are hurtful
  - A plan of action included in Supplemental Aids and Supports to ensure appropriate training and performance requirements for any staff members whose actions may be playing a role in the challenges faced by student
POST-SITUATION EVALUATION

- Designated Staff Person conduct a Post-Situation Evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention
  - Request of feedback from all involved parties
  - Continue periodically for several months
  - After several months of consistent response that the challenges have been resolved, this follow-up can be discontinued
CORRECT HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

- Use a team approach ensuring student, parent and advocacy voice
  - Including student, parent, and advocacy representatives from identity group(s)

- Engage in assessment
  - Using data and focus groups

- Develop an action plan
  - Strategies that are grounded in research and insight into cultural competence
C ORRECT  H OSTILE  E NVIRONMENT

• Provide professional development in cultural competence
• Ensure appropriate corrections of staff behavior, if necessary
• Incorporate Incident/Situation and Post-Incident Evaluation insight
• Evaluation plan
Peer Assistance and Accountability Team

- Combines concepts of peer mediation, teen court, and peer support
  - Student Leadership Team members who receive special training

- Three activities
  - Implement the Accountability Process and Agreement approach with Hurtful Students and Supporters
  - Engage in Peer Mediation or Peer-led Restorative Conference
  - Provide peer support services
PAAT Members

- PAAT Team members, especially for Accountability Process
  - One student from a more powerful social class of students within the school
  - One student from an identity group in the school that is more frequently targeted
  - One student who has also engaged in or supported hurtful behavior in the past, who is serving on the PAAT as part of required community service
PAAT Processes

- PAAT members receive training in confidentiality and sign Confidentiality Agreement
- Parents of Hurtful Students and Supporters may need to sign waiver of any FERPA concerns
PAAT Effectiveness

- Clear expression of peer norms against hurtful behavior
- Increased expectation that violation of Accountability Agreement will be noticed
- Communicates forgiveness and reconciliation
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