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# Responsibility, Respect and Relationships

## Sample Lesson

### **Study Teams and Group Activities**

If you register as an individual, ask a colleague or spouse to participate with you in discussion assignments. If that is not possible, use group activities for your own personal reflection.

### **Application Assignments and Access to a Classroom**

If you are an administrator, counselor, or do not currently have access to a classroom, instead of reporting on implementation of application assignments describe how you plan to use the course concepts in your environment.

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# Session #1

## Emotional Safety in Today's Schools

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### LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By watching Video Program #1 and completing this session's learning activities, you will:

- Examine the difference between physical and emotional safety.
- Assess degree to which your teaching situation is providing your students with emotional safety.
- Analyze your current approach to emotional safety and identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Establish a course goal to improve the level of emotional safety in your teaching situation.

### READING ASSIGNMENT:

Please read chapter 1 in the course text "Creating Emotionally Safe Schools."

### PREPARATION:

In order to focus your thinking as you begin this session, please complete the following Emotional Safety Survey. This survey lists a number of practices that characterize an emotionally safe climate. It has been included to help you evaluate your goals, policies and intentions, as well as the degree to which each exists in actual practice. The list is deliberately idealistic and comprehensive. Studies suggest that each item is an important component of an emotionally safe environment, and that emotional safety is built on a combination of all of the characteristics listed in this survey. As you strive to achieve the specific behaviors each item suggests, you will no doubt see improvements in the culture of your class-room, as well as in the performance, commitment, behavior and interactions that occur within its walls. Likewise, as you increase the agreement with each of the items in this survey, you can expect a reduction of stress commonly associated with failure, rebelliousness, disruptive-ness and passive student behavior.

This survey will help you to evaluate the degree to which you are committed to each item in terms of your philosophy or vision, as well as the degree to which the behaviors described in each item regularly occur in actual practice.

Use the following scale to rate each item:

- 1- Strongly committed
- 2- Somewhat committed
- 3- Somewhat uncommitted
- 4- Strongly uncommitted

### **Need for Meaningful Outcomes (Positive Consequences), Structure, Boundaries (Limits) and Follow-Through**

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- \_\_\_ I make a deliberate effort to anticipate what students and teachers (and parents) will need in various situations in order to prevent problems from occurring.
- \_\_\_ I have and communicate boundaries and policies that clearly describe desirable and acceptable student behaviors.
- \_\_\_ My classroom environment is reward oriented (as opposed to being punishment oriented). Rules and boundaries emphasize the positive consequences of cooperation and compliance.
- \_\_\_ My goal is to motivate through access to positive outcomes, rather than through avoidance or fear of negative outcomes.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to motivate students with the promise of a positive outcome, rather than using the promise of punishment.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to follow through consistently, withholding (or withdrawing) positive outcomes until students follow through on what is required on their end.
- \_\_\_ I am committed to avoiding warnings, threats, meaningless or delayed (negative) consequences.
- \_\_\_ I make students and their parents aware, as soon as possible, of changes in behavior or performance that could affect grades, promotion or graduation.
- \_\_\_ I communicate with parents on a regular basis about what their kids are doing well.

### **Need for Respect, Belonging and Dignity**

- \_\_\_ I attempt to avoid equating students' worth with their behavior or achievement.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to avoid humiliation, shaming, sarcasm, ridicule or other forms of attack in regard to students' personality, achievement or behavior.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to avoid depending on negative adult reactions (anger, punishment, disappointment) in order to motivate students (or control their behavior).
- \_\_\_ I recognize that students have a need to experience meaningful positive outcomes, just as adults do.
- \_\_\_ I treat my students with the same respect I want them to show one another and me.
- \_\_\_ I recognize that my students have a need for dignity, purpose, success, impact (seeing outcomes of choices and behaviors), acceptance, belonging, attention, structure, power and fun, among other things.
- \_\_\_ I encourage students to have and voice their own thoughts and opinions.
- \_\_\_ I encourage students to speak up for their own instructional needs (for example, more help, additional information or resources, clarification, other learning needs).
- \_\_\_ I encourage inquiry and debate, and attempt to avoid negatively reacting to students who challenge or disagree with adults (although I do ask students to pre-sent their positions respectfully).
- \_\_\_ I attempt to adhere to the same standards of behavior (including language and tone of voice) that I expect or require from our students.
- \_\_\_ I regard and use a students' mistakes simply as opportunities for new learning.
- \_\_\_ I avoid responding with impatience, anger or disappointment to a student who is having difficulty understanding or mastering a new concept or performing a new skill.
- \_\_\_ I respect students' affective needs and am committed to listening and supporting their feelings in positive ways.
- \_\_\_ I work to eliminate prejudices toward students based on their racial or cultural background, physical appearance; academic, artistic or athletic competence; sexual orientation; family history; prior achievement or performance.
- \_\_\_ I avoid gossiping about students or their families.
- \_\_\_ I strive to stay aware of put-downs expressed by students or staff, especially those that involve the use of slurs or derogatory names or remarks.

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\_\_\_ I respond immediately to put-downs, slurs and derogatory names or remarks (rather than ignoring or excusing them).

### **Need for Autonomy (Power and Control)**

- \_\_\_ I accept the importance of students learning decision-making and self-management skills.
- \_\_\_ I encourage kids to set goals and evaluate options in order to take responsibility for solving their own problems, rather than “rescuing” them or telling them what they should do.
- \_\_\_ I allow students to self-manage with regard to materials and resources.
- \_\_\_ I encourage students to self-manage their personal needs within clearly stated boundaries (ex: drinking water or using the rest rooms as needed)
- \_\_\_ I allow and encourage students to have input in and make decisions about their learning (topics, presentation, media, sequence, assignments, need for additional practice, readiness for the next skill or topic, etc.)
- \_\_\_ I allow and encourage students to have input in and make decisions about how, where and with whom they work.
- \_\_\_ I hold students accountable for their behavioral choices without blaming, shaming, attacking or punishing (ex: withholding positive outcome, privileges, credit for work due)
- \_\_\_ My students are encouraged to initiate and take risks regarding their own learning.
- \_\_\_ I allow and encourage students to create, design, request or renegotiate projects and assignments to make them personally meaningful and relevant.

### **Need for Recognition, Attention and Emotional Safety**

- \_\_\_ I attempt to recognize positive behavior with statements that emphasize a positive outcome or meaningful benefit to the students, rather than using statements that emphasize the students’ worth (“goodness”), our happiness or pleasure, or the students’ ability to please us.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to reinforce positive behavior by allowing positive outcomes to occur, continue or become available, contingent, for example, on work completion or non-disruptive behavior.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to meet students’ needs for attention in positive, constructive and proactive ways in order to diminish the tendency for them to act out to get these needs met.
- \_\_\_ I strive to stay aware of changes in patterns in students’ behavior and to maintain a sense of how students are doing (that is, not just focusing on their academic performance).
- \_\_\_ I attempt to create emotional safety by noticing and supporting students in crisis.
- \_\_\_ I provide appropriate outlets for students in crisis.
- \_\_\_ My students know that if they need to talk, I am willing to listen (or set a time when we can listen, or refer them to someone who can listen).
- \_\_\_ I respect students’ needs for confidentiality to the degree that doing so will not put that student or anyone else in danger.
- \_\_\_ I strive to maintain awareness of how students treat one another.
- \_\_\_ I immediately respond to incidents I witness that involve any form of bullying, harassment or threat to a student’s safety.

### **Need for Options as a Learner (Individuality)**

- \_\_\_ I attempt to determine what interests and motivates my students and use this information in my planning and instruction.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to identify various aspects of our students’ individual learning needs (such as learning styles, modality preferences, dominance profiles, temperament or personality profiles), and use this information in my planning and instruction.

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- \_\_\_ I attempt to identify various types of intelligences (linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal) and use this information to capitalize and build on students' strengths.
- \_\_\_ I provide resources and activities to accommodate a variety of intelligences in each class.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to accommodate a variety of modality strengths (visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic preferences) in my directions and activities.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to accommodate a variety of learning style and preferences in my instruction and assignments.
- \_\_\_ I recognize and attempt to accommodate the needs of tactile and kinesthetic learners (as well as high visual, verbal and auditory learners).
- \_\_\_ I acknowledge and appreciate the fact that some students may pay attention without sitting up straight and making continual eye contact.
- \_\_\_ I make sure kids have ample opportunities to move during the day.
- \_\_\_ I teach children ways to self-regulate (maintain appropriate alertness for the particular class or activity) without disrupting others.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to accommodate a variety of learning preferences by offering choices, particularly during independent work time (ex: seating or location in room, affiliation, music or sound, intake, etc.)
- \_\_\_ I offer a variety of assessment tools to allow students to demonstrate mastery in ways besides paper-and-pencil tests.

### **Need for Success (Academic, Social, Intrapersonal)**

- \_\_\_ I assess student ability before beginning instruction or assigning tasks.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to accept students exactly the way they come to me, build on what they know, and encourage growth from wherever they start.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to provide opportunities for success for each child, even if he or she is far behind curricular expectations.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to match instruction and assignments to individual student needs according to their current skill or mastery levels or prior experience.
- \_\_\_ I have adopted the belief that the primary purpose of evaluating a student's work is to determine what type of instruction or resources that particular student needs next.
- \_\_\_ I invite and consider student input and self-assessment when assigning placement, follow-up work or grades.
- \_\_\_ If a student fails to master a concept or skill, I see my role as that of improving understanding, rather than simply evaluating their performance before moving on to the next concept.
- \_\_\_ I encourage students to use my feedback to improve their work and re-submit (for a higher grade, for example, or until they get it right).
- \_\_\_ I attempt to build interpersonal skills such as communication skills, respect, tolerance, compassion, resistance to teasing and peer pressure, and other positive social behaviors.
- \_\_\_ I attempt to build intrapersonal (character) skills such as persistence, responsibility, honesty, integrity, as well as confidence, the ability to stick up for one-self, problem-solving skills and resistance to failure, defeatism or victim thinking.

### **Survey Analysis:**

What are the areas of greatest agreement?

What improvements are suggested by your survey analysis?

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**Goal for Improvement:**

Set a goal for improvement to be reached by the conclusion of this course?

What existing strengths can you capitalize on to help you achieve this goal?

What support can you rely upon for achievement of this goal?

Identify an existing or potential constraints and obstacles to achieving your goal.

Identify resources (persons, programs, literature, etc.) that can help you.

How will you know you achieved your goal (observable indicators)?

**VIDEO VIEWING PREPARATION:**

Before viewing the video for this session, with your study team develop description of a safe learning situation. Your definition should include the five dimensions of safety: emotional, behavioral, academic, social, and physical.

**VIDEO PROGRAM:**

View the video program for this session, "Emotional Safety in Today's Schools." It is the first program on Tape #1. The running time for this video is 25 minutes.

**VIDEO PROGRAM OVERVIEW:**

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Educators have always been concerned about the safety of students. However, the recent tragic violence on school campus has height-en that concerned and made it a national priority. Now, more than ever, measures are being demanded to ensure the safety of both students and teachers. Until recently, this call for increased security has focused on physical safety. Today, an additional safety concern is emerging, a concern for creating classrooms and schools that are emotionally safe. Emotional safety can be defined as creating an education environment in which students can experience: a sense of belonging, freedom from discrimination and harassment, freedom to make choices and influences their own learning, encouragement and success regardless of abilities and learning styles, and the freedom to have their own feelings and opinions without fear of recrimination. Creating emotional safety involves much more than preventing crimes on campus. It involves creating a supportive, understanding, and caring learning environment in which all students have the opportunity and encouragement to succeed.

### **VIDEO AND READING FOCUS QUESTIONS**

With respect to the information present in the video program and the reading assignment, consider the following questions. Discuss your answers with your study team.

1. With respect to safety, what do you remember about your elementary and secondary school years? Did safety concern you? Why? Why not?
2. Dr. Bluestein states that schools today must prepare students to enter the age of information. What knowledge and skills do you believe students need to learn in school to succeed in today's economy?
3. With respect to the knowledge and skills that you identified in your answer to question #2, what are you doing in your classroom to teach these to your students?
4. Dr. Bluestein believes that students are coming to school today with the same needs as students of previous generations? Do you agree or disagree? What evidence can you give to support your position?
5. Dr. Bluestein points out that when students are in a highly emotional state they are not receptive to instruction. Does your own personal experience confirm or deny Dr. Bluestein's position? Explain your answer.
6. Do you believe that your school's administration is sensitive to meeting teachers' need for emotional safety? Why? Why not?
7. If your administrator could do one thing to improve your emotional safety, what would that be? What could you or your colleagues do to bring about this action?
8. Refer to the definition of a safe learning environment that you developed prior to viewing the video for this session. With respect to what you learned in viewing the video, would you change your definition? Why? Why not?

### **APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT:**

Your Application Assignment for this session is to complete the Emotional Safety Survey again but this time with respect to your entire school. The survey will help you to evaluate the degree to which your school is committed to each item in terms of its philosophy or vision, as well as the degree to which the behaviors described in each item regularly

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occur in actual practice. Rate each item according to your perception of the school environment as a whole.

Before completing the survey, take a day or two to observe the activities in your school with respect to the areas covered in the survey.

Use the same scale that you used before to rate each item:

- 1- Strongly committed
- 2- Somewhat committed
- 3- Somewhat uncommitted
- 4- Strongly uncommitted

The survey has been positioned on separate pages for easy of copying. Use the following copy as a master. Make a copy for your use in this assignment. Save the master, as you will need to make additional copies for your assignment in the next session.

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# SURVEY

## **Need for Meaningful Outcomes (Positive Consequences), Structure, Boundaries (Limits) and Follow-Through**

\_\_\_ We make a deliberate effort to anticipate what students and teachers (and parents) will need in various situations in order to prevent problems from occurring.

\_\_\_ We have and communicate boundaries and policies that clearly de-scribe desirable and acceptable student behaviors.

\_\_\_ We have and communicate boundaries and policies that clearly de-scribe desirable and acceptable staff behaviors.

\_\_\_ The school environment is reward oriented (as opposed to being punishment oriented): Rules and boundaries emphasize the positive consequences of cooperation and compliance.

\_\_\_ Our goal is to motivate through access to positive outcomes, rather than through avoidance or fear of negative outcomes.

\_\_\_ We attempt to motivate students with the promise of a positive outcome, rather than using statements that offer conditional approval or safety (avoidance of disapproval, punishment) for cooperation (threats).

\_\_\_ We attempt to follow through consistently, withholding (or withdrawing) positive outcomes until students follow through on what is required on their end.

\_\_\_ We are committed to avoiding warnings, threats, meaningless or delayed (negative) consequences.

\_\_\_ We make students and their parents aware, as soon as possible, of changes in behavior or performance that could affect grades, promotion or graduation.

\_\_\_ We communicate with parents on a regular basis about what their kids are doing well.

## **Need for Respect, Belonging and Dignity**

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\_\_\_ We attempt to avoid humiliation, shaming, sarcasm, ridicule or other forms of attack with regard to students' personality, achievement or behavior.

\_\_\_ We attempt to avoid depending on negative adult reactions (anger, punishment, disappointment) in order to motivate students (or control their behavior).

\_\_\_ We recognize that students have a need to experience meaningful positive outcomes, just as adults do.

\_\_\_ We treat our students with the same respect we want them to show one another and us.

\_\_\_ We recognize that our students have a need for dignity, purpose, success, impact (seeing outcomes of choices and behaviors), acceptance, belonging, attention, structure, power and fun, among other things.

\_\_\_ We encourage students to have and to voice their own thoughts and opinions.

\_\_\_ We encourage students to speak up for their own instructional needs (for example, more help, additional information or resources, clarification, other learning needs).

\_\_\_ We encourage inquiry and debate, and attempt to avoid negatively reacting to students who challenge or disagree with adults (although we do ask students to present their positions respectfully).

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- \_\_\_ We regard—and use— students’ mistakes simply as opportunities for new learning.
  - \_\_\_ We avoid responding with impatience, anger or disappointment to a student who is having difficulty understanding or mastering a new concept or performing a new skill.
  - \_\_\_ We respect students’ affective needs and are committed to listening and supporting their feelings in positive ways.
  - \_\_\_ We work to eliminate prejudices toward students based on their racial or cultural background, physical appearance; academic, artistic or athletic competence; sexual orientation; family history; prior achievement or performance.
  - \_\_\_ We avoid gossiping about students or their families.
  - \_\_\_ We strive to stay aware of put-downs expressed by students or staff, especially those that involve the use of slurs or derogatory names or remarks.
  - \_\_\_ We respond immediately to put-downs, slurs and derogatory names or remarks (rather than ignoring or excusing them).

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- \_\_\_ We attempt to identify various types of intelligences (linguistic, musical, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal and intrapersonal) and use this information to capitalize and build on students' strengths.
- \_\_\_ We provide resources and activities to accommodate a variety of intelligences in each class.
- \_\_\_ We attempt to accommodate a variety of modality strengths (visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic preferences) in our directions and activities.
- \_\_\_ We attempt to accommodate a variety of learning style and preferences in our instruction and assignments.
- \_\_\_ We recognize and attempt to accommodate the needs of tactile and kinesthetic learners (as well as high visual, verbal and auditory learners).
- \_\_\_ We acknowledge and appreciate the fact that some students may pay attention without sitting up straight and making continual eye contact.
- \_\_\_ We make sure kids have ample opportunities to move during the day.
- \_\_\_ We teach children ways to self-regulate (maintain appropriate alertness for the particular class or activity) without disrupting others.
- \_\_\_ We attempt to accommodate a variety of learning preferences by offering choices, particularly during independent work time (ex: seating or location in room, affiliation, music or sound, in-take, etc.)
- \_\_\_ We offer a variety of assessment tools to allow students to demonstrate mastery in ways besides paper-and-pencil tests.

### **Need for Success (Academic, Social, Intrapersonal)**

- \_\_\_ We assess student ability before beginning instruction or assigning tasks.
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- \_\_\_ We attempt to match instruction and assignments to individual student needs according to their current skill or mastery levels or prior experience.
- \_\_\_ We have adopted the belief that the primary purpose of evaluating a student's work is to determine what type of instruction or resources that particular student needs next.
- \_\_\_ We invite and consider student in-put and self-assessment when assigning placement, follow-up work or grades.
- \_\_\_ If a student fails to master a concept or skill, we see our role as that of improving understanding, rather than simply evaluating their performance before moving on to the next concept.

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\_\_\_ We encourage students to use our feedback to improve their work and re-submit (for a higher grade, for example, or until they get it right).

\_\_\_ We attempt to build interpersonal skills such as communication skills, respect, tolerance, compassion, resistance to teasing and peer pressure, and other positive social behaviors.

\_\_\_ We attempt to build intrapersonal (character) skills such as persistence, responsibility, honesty, integrity, as well as confidence, the ability to stick up for one-self, problem-solving skills and resistance to failure, defeatism or victim thinking.

## **CONCLUDING ACTIVITY**

After you have completed your survey, analyze the results and list the areas of greatest strengths and the areas in most need of improvement. Be prepared to discuss your analysis with your study team in the next session.

## **PROGRESS REPORTING**

To conclude your learning activities for this session, please turn to the Progress Report form for Session #1. Progress Report forms for all sessions are placed together at the back of this Course of Study book for easy removal and evaluation.

### **Session Notes:**