Creating Caring School Communities

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Envisioning A Desired State

Picture a Caring School Community.

- What would it look like?

- What would one experience in the school? In the classroom?

- What would one hear?

Partner Task

Directions:

1. Please choose one of the questions and reflect upon it.

2. Then turn to a colleague and share your thoughts.

3. Identify similarities and differences in your responses.

Analysis Task:
Examining Your Collective Responses

What are some of the common attributes you noticed in your reflections about **Caring School Communities?** Please create a list in the space below:

Why do this?

"Violence among the students of our nation has presented teachers and school administrators with a grave crisis, but also an important opportunity.

Violence, such as the horrific massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary and the tragic killings at Columbine High School, has alerted us to the imperative of identifying and addressing this crisis at its source; not only to root out violence, but to evolve a more compassionate classroom that also nurtures academic growth and achievement.

Studies confirm that one of the primary causes of violence among students is peer disrespect or 'dissing'. Fear, hurt, and anger, springing from the wounds of ridicule and bullying by other students, can translate into severe emotional pain as well as depression, violence, and in extreme cases, suicide."

Peter Yarrow et.al, *Don't Laugh at Me/Operation Respect, Inc.*

Good News!

When social and emotional learning and character education programs are successfully introduced into classrooms and schools, safe, nurturing classroom environments are created and learning soars!!

(CASEL.org)

EQ and **IQ**

Self Awareness

Managing Emotions

Motivating Oneself & Delaying Gratification

Empathy

Social Skills

"Heartware" not "Hardware"

Develop a caring community by creating schools and classrooms characterized by:

- A healthy expression of feelings
- Caring, cooperation, and compassion
- Creative resolution of conflicts
- A valuing of differences
- ABC Incomplete
- Available support for all stakeholders

Elements of Culture
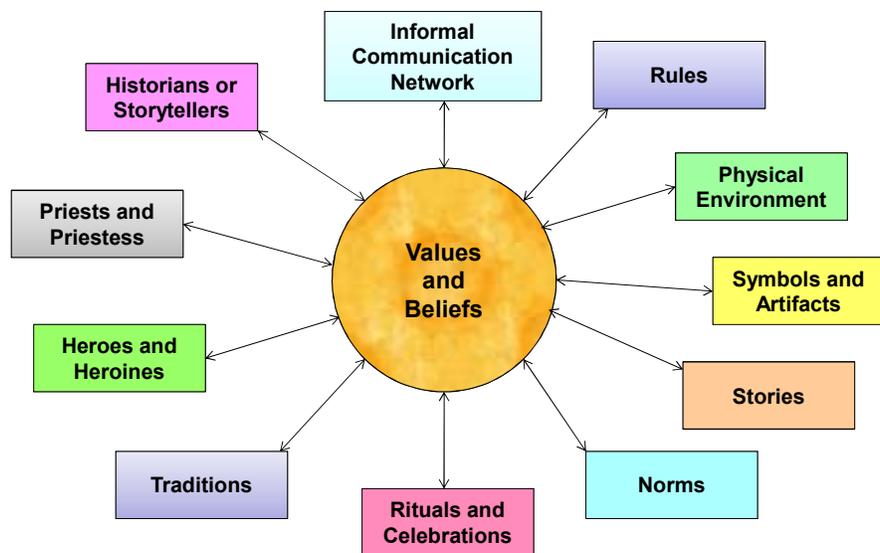
(From, *The New Principal's Fieldbook*, Robbins and Alvy, p. 19, 2004, ASCD)

Anger Management Alumni

Example

"Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) make teaching social responsibility a core practice in education so that students develop the convictions and skills to shape a safe sustainable, democratic and just world."

Activity: How Would You Feel?

- Distribute index cards and a marker to each student.
- Pose a variety of scenarios to students and ask them to respond by writing one word to reflect how they would feel in response to the scenario:
  - Someone made fun of you because of the clothes you were wearing.
  - You were picked last when choosing sides for a game.
  - You were told you were good at doing something.
  - Someone called you a "dork."

After each scenario, ask students to hold up their cards and compare and contrast their responses (in pairs, trios, quads). When students are finished, ask them to identify what they noticed.

Collect the feeling word cards.

Follow up Activity:
- Ask students "why might it be important to read someone else's feelings"?
- Distribute a feeling card to each student. In small groups, ask each student to act out the feeling on his/her card and invite the other students to identify the feeling.

Reflecting on the Activity

Ask students to identify:

- Which feelings were easiest or most difficult to guess?
- What feelings were the easiest to act out?
- Why are some feelings more difficult to act out?
- Has there ever been a time when someone didn't understand how you felt? What happened? How did you resolve the situation?

Closing Task

Ask students to form pairs and respond to the following questions:

- How might you help someone feel better after he was teased, called a name or excluded?
- Describe a time when you stood up for someone being teased, called a name or excluded, or saw someone else do this.
- Would you stand up for someone now, even if you didn't do it then?

After students have responded, ask each one to share one word to describe his/her feelings about the session.

(adapted from Educators for Social Responsibility)

Initiatives to Help Students Feel Connected, Cared For, and Supported

- Responsive Classroom
- Morning Meeting
- Cooperative Learning
- Study Buddies
- Student Council
- School-wide Behavior Plan
- Rachel's Challenge
- Peer Mediation Program
- Student Support Teams
- Cross-Age Tutoring
- Service Projects
- Professional Development
- Professional Learning Communities

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resilience 🔊

re·sil·ience 🔊 [ri-zil-yuh ns, -zil-ee-uh ns] [?] Show IPA

noun

1. the power or ability to return to the original form, position, etc., after being bent, compressed, or stretched; elasticity.
2. ability to recover readily from illness, depression, adversity, or the like; buoyancy.

Also, **re·sil·ien·cy.**

Origin:
1620–30; < Latin *resili*(*ēns*), present participle of *resilīre* to spring back, rebound (see resilient) + -ence

Related forms
non·re·sil·i·ence, *noun.*
non·re·sil·i·en·cy, *noun.*

Building Cultures of Care that Foster Resilience

The school's first priority is learning. While educators have little impact outside the school on early childhood development and character development, research suggests that educators can promote educational and psychological resilience.

Key Competencies of Resilient Students

- Social Competence

- Intellectual Competence

- Planning

- Resourcefulness

Together, these resilience competencies lead to success in school and in life!

Internal Protective Factors

These are individual characteristics that facilitate resiliency:

1. Gives of self in service to others and/or a cause
2. Uses life skills, including good decision making, assertiveness, impulse control, and problem solving
3. Sociability/ability to be a friend/ability to form positive relationships
4. Sense of humor

5. Internal locus of control
6. Perceptiveness
7. Autonomy/independence
8. Positive view of personal future
9. Flexibility
10. Capacity for and connection to learning
11. Self-motivation
12. Is "good at something"/personal competence
13. Feelings of self-worth and self-confidence
14. Personal faith in something greater; spirituality

External Protective Factors

These are characteristics of families, schools, communities, and peer groups that foster resiliency:

1. Promotes close bonds
2. Values and encourages education
3. Uses high warmth/low criticism style of interaction
4. Sets and enforces clear boundaries (rules, norms, and laws)
5. Encourages supportive relationships with many caring others

6. Promotes sharing of responsibilities, service to others, "required helpfulness"
7. Provides access to resources for basic needs of housing, employment, health care, and recreation
8. Expresses high, realistic expectations for success
9. Encourages goal-setting and mastery
10. Encourages pro-social development of values (like altruism), and life skills (like cooperation)
11. Provides leadership, decision making, and other opportunities for meaningful participation
12. Appreciates the unique talents of each individual.

(Adapted from *Resiliency in Schools: Making It Happen*, N. Henderson and M. Milstein, Corwin Press)

Reflecting on Protective Factors

- Please review the lists of internal and external protective factors.

- Select one from either list.

- Identify an activity that could be done in the classroom or at a school level to develop or improve this protective factor.

- Share your idea with a colleague.

Six Steps to Resiliency

Six consistent themes have emerged from research showing schools, families, and communities can provide both environmental protective factors and the conditions that foster individual factors (Hawkins and Catalano; Benard).

1. Increase bonding
2. Set clear and consistent boundaries
3. Teach life skills
4. Provide caring and support
5. Set and communicate high expectations
6. Provide opportunities for meaningful participation

Combining Resiliency Strategies

Results
- Increased positive self concepts
- Attachment to school
- Belief in rules
- Higher standardized test scores
- Significant decreases in delinquency, drug use, and suspensions.

(Hawkins et al.)

Getting Started

- What are your core values?
- The walls talk – what do you want them to say?
- What will you model?
- What will you celebrate?
- How will discipline practices promote respect, care, understanding, and enhanced problem solving and decision making?
- What are the stories to be told and videos to be shown?

- What is your vision for what will go on in classrooms?
- How will the circle of care extend beyond classrooms?
- How will relationships among professional colleagues contribute to developing and sustaining cultures of care?
- How might parents and the community be engaged as partners?

All decisions should address the question, "How will this benefit students?"

The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade you do not expect to sit.

- Nelson Henderson

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