



RethinkEd

Creating Safe and Caring Schools

- ✓ *Connection*
- ✓ *Community*
- ✓ *Accountability*



All staff play an integral role in creating a safe and caring school.

- Increase connectedness
- Increase achievement
- Decrease absenteeism
- Decrease unsafe behaviors

Check-In

Relationships and Connectedness to School



1

Do they even know my name?



2

Cordial relationships but disconnected overall from school community



3

Good connections with some in my group (grade, subject, position)



4

Meaningful connections and feel like I belong most of the time



5

Meaningful connections with staff and community and feel like I belong

Safety in School: Physical and Psychological



1

I don't feel safe and am on edge every day.



2

I don't feel safe most days.



3

I feel safe for the most part but am vigilant and on edge many days.



4

I feel safe overall though practices could improve.



5

I feel safe and am happy with our preventative and responsive practices.



Indicators

- Increase in chronic absenteeism to 25% since pre-pandemic
- Increase in disorderly conduct and severe types of behaviors



Objectives

- Improve attendance through caring relationships
- Establish fair and predictable practices
- Approach behaviors with empathy and respect
- Empower students, families, and staff to embrace safety and care

Perpetuating Factors



Perpetuating Factors: Trauma

Trauma results from:

- **exposure to an event, series of events or set of circumstances**
- that an individual **experiences as** physically or emotionally **harmful or threatening**, and
- has **lasting impact** on the individual's functioning and well-being.

ACES



Root Cause **Impacting** Absenteeism and Behavior



Lack of purpose

Lack of or inconsistent connection/belonging

Mental health

Chronic stress response

Lack of trust/safety

Home/Environmental issues

Motivation



Relationships



Belonging



Safety



Relevance



Purpose

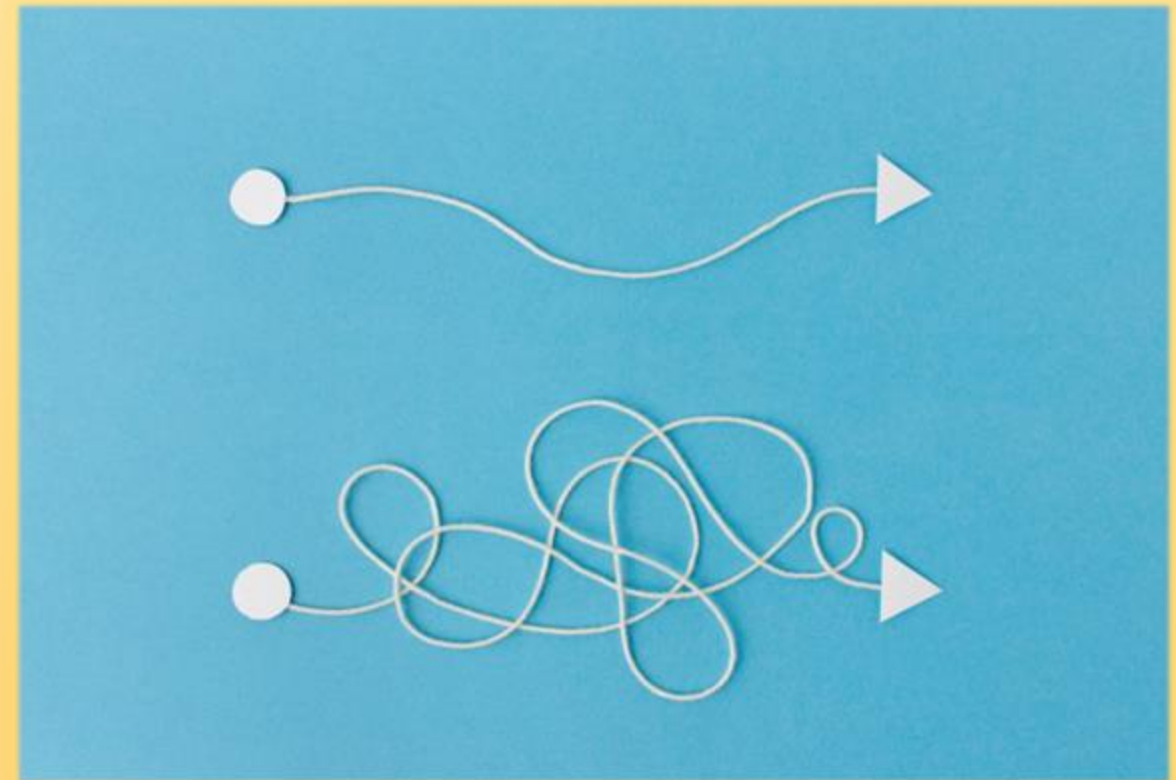
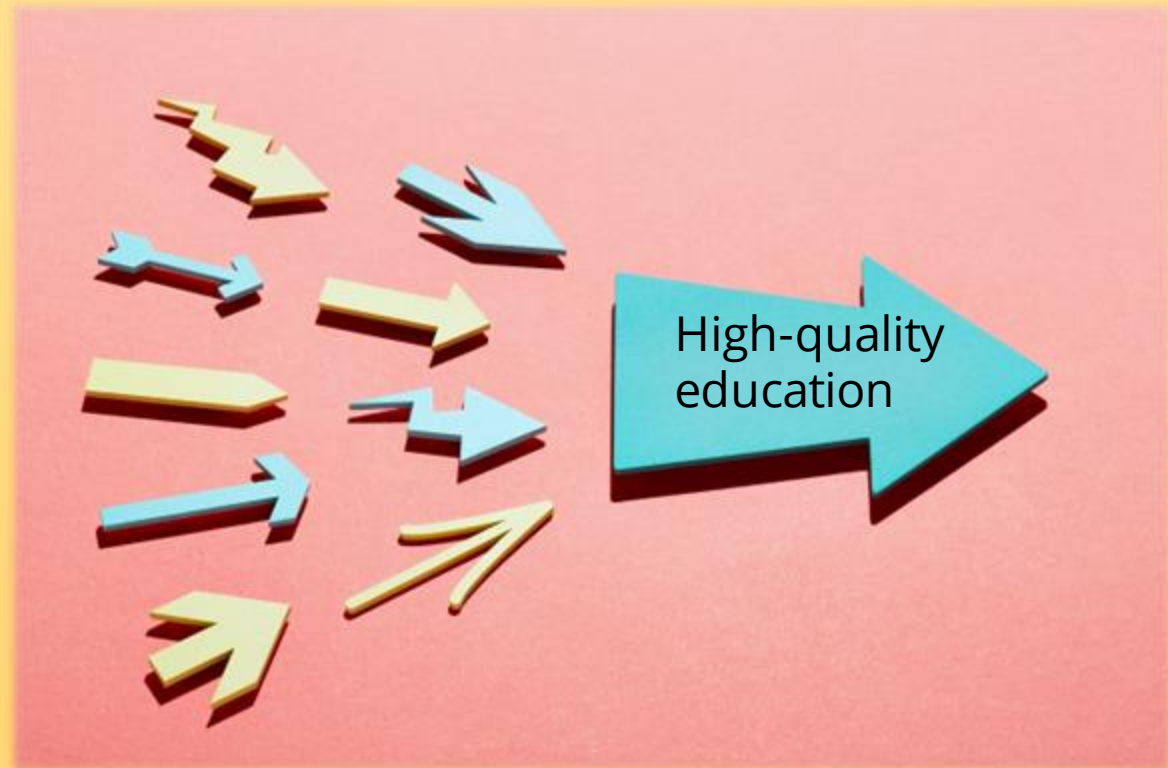


Goal of a Safe and Caring School

A learning environment where students, families, and staff feel secure, valued, and connected.



Flexible Mindset



Factors you can control

Connection:
Connect and
Build
Relationships

Community:
Develop a safe
and caring
environment

Accountability:
Promote fair,
purposeful,
relevant
practices

Consider this statement:

Student relationships are reflective of the adult relationships in the building.

Connection

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Connection

- Authentic Relationships
- Trust
- Belonging
- Consistent and Reliable



Connection: Daily strategies

- Greet students by name
- Implement daily check-ins
- Listen and ask questions
- Communicate your intentions



Connection: Daily strategies

- Be flexible and thoughtful during interactions
- Model respect and consideration
- Help students feel welcome and included
- Partner with families and caregivers



Schoolwide connection programs

- ✓ 2 X 10 Connection
- ✓ Looping homeroom/advisory staff
- ✓ Frequent, scheduled check-ins with families
- ✓ Name game
- ✓ Student focus groups

Physical and psychological safety is essential.



Community

Engage with families and community members in creating a safe school environment.



Community: Increase Supervision



Less structured parts of the day

Loud or chaotic environments

Crowded environments

Areas where less staff are present

Community: Classroom Management



Remain calm

Actively supervise

Respond (don't react) to behaviors

Consider themes of content

Prepare students for changes and potential triggers

Respond to student concerns with care

Help students experience a *sense of control* by putting them in positions to influence school culture and decision-making.



Engage students in decision-making

Provide choices when appropriate

Engage students in supporting their school

Ask students about their opinions: Help students feel heard and solve problems

Community: Foster safe behaviors

- Teach and model:
 - cooperation,
 - acts of kindness,
 - empathy,
 - conflict resolution.



Students and staff benefit from practices that:

- enhance their sense of safety,**
- create connection,**
- focus on consistency and predictability, and**
- are based on fairness and purpose.**

Accountability: School Environment

Review safety, attendance and discipline policies

Use data to assess fidelity and make decisions

Develop rules and expectations **with** students

Teach coping, social awareness and regulation skills



Accountability: School Environment



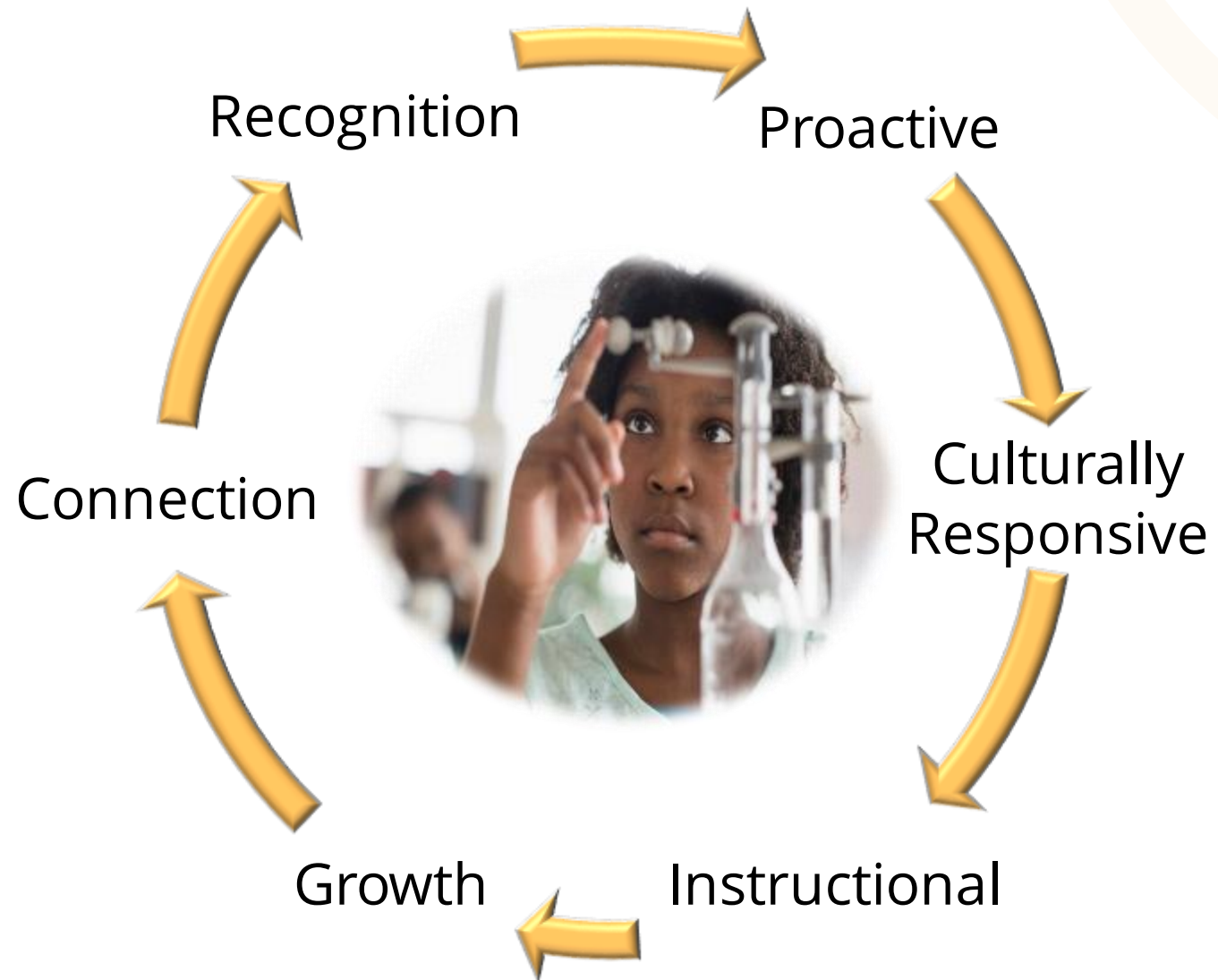
Utilize Restorative Practices

Provide clear, logical consequences

Consistent & transparent follow-through



Accountability: Positive Behavioral Momentum

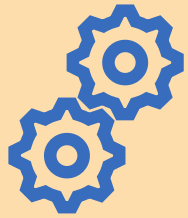


- Communication/Transparency
- Relevant Skill-based PD
- Support for implementing effective classroom management
- Time for building connections
- Allowance for flexibility

Reflect



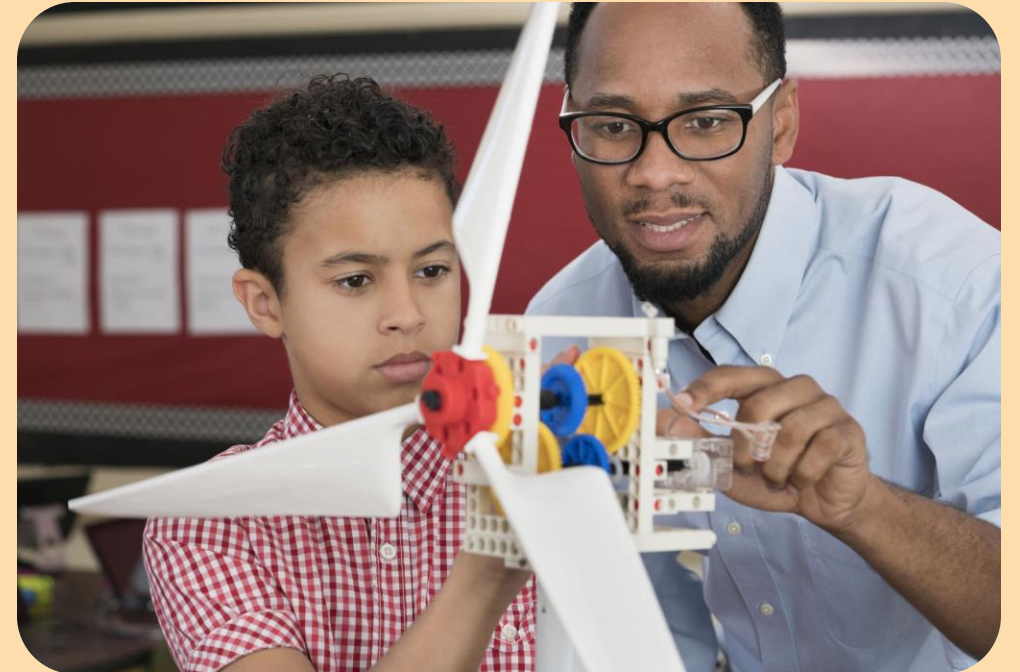
Themes



What's working well



1 Take-away



Rethink Behavior Training Series

A comprehensive professional development series on positive behavior management that takes a holistic and strengths-based approach to supporting students, educators, school staff and families.





RethinkEd

Free Webinar Replay

<https://get.rethinked.com/creating-safe-and-caring-schools-replay>



Question Time

Recognizing the Safe and Caring Actions of Colleagues

Acknowledging when fellow staff act in safe and caring ways can provide opportunities to create a positive and supportive environment among colleagues through recognition, appreciation, and connection. Helping staff feel more seen and supported can enhance their experience of a safe and caring school environment. Strategies to support a positive culture among staff can directly influence the broader school community and a culture of acting in safe and caring ways.

Below are several examples of activities that provide opportunities to emphasize the safe and caring actions of colleagues.

Benefits: Staff members experience overall positive well-being when the school climate and culture are positive. When staff members work together to create a positive climate and culture for students and each other, it can lead to more genuine and supportive relationships among colleagues.

Activities to thank colleagues and support staff



Compliment Box

Objective:

This activity encourages staff members to express appreciation and gratitude for their colleagues. The Compliment Box creates a sense of community that can help boost morale and improve relationships among staff members. By taking turns reading the compliments aloud, everyone has the opportunity to feel recognized and appreciated, making it a simple yet powerful way to show support for one another.

Materials:

- A box
- Index cards or small pieces of paper
- Writing utensils

Instructions:

1. Decorate a box and label it (e.g., "Compliment Box," "Shout outs," "Positive Recognition")
2. Place the box in a central area, accessible to all staff
3. Remind all staff to write compliments and expressions of gratitude on index cards and place them in the box whenever they visit that area or as part of their weekly routine.
4. Have staff members take turns drawing cards and reading the compliments aloud to the group during a staff meeting or redistribute them to staff individually as a note of recognition (e.g., put in their mailboxes, distribute when they clock, sign, or swipe in as a positive way to start the day).



Wrapping-up:

Acknowledging Colleagues and Sharing Gratitude

Safe and caring schools strive to make students, families, and staff feel secure, valued, and connected.



Core Components

- Building caring relationships
- Approaching behaviors with understanding and respect
- Encouraging students to act in safe and caring ways



Benefits

- Attendance
- Academic engagement and performance
- Participation in the school community
- School connectedness
- Reduce student risk related to mental health, substance use, and violence



Strategies for Creating a Safe and Caring School

Build Caring Relationships:

- Greet and welcome students by name
- Listen and ask questions
- Communicate your goal is to help and how you can help
- Provide clear information and expectations
- Facilitate connections

Approach Behaviors with Understanding and Respect:

- Identify factors influencing behavior (e.g., stressors, disability)
- Strive to be flexible and thoughtful
- Model respect and consideration of individual differences
- Recognize student and family needs
- Help students and families feel respected, understood, and welcomed

Encourage Student to Act in Safe and Caring Ways:

- Model cooperation, kindness, and empathy
- Model how to resolve conflicts appropriately
- Provide specific feedback to reinforce safe and caring actions you observe
- Support schoolwide expectations and rules that fit a safe and caring school
- Teach and model social skills, like communication, listening, and perspective-taking
- Help students explore their identity
- Help students understand factors that influence their behavior (e.g., stress)

Wrapping-up:

Safe and Caring
School Fact Sheet

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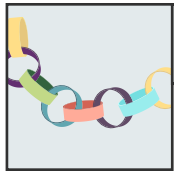
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Gratitude Chain

Objective:

Encourage staff members to provide each other recognition.

Materials:

- Strips of paper
- Writing utensils
- Tape or string

Instructions:

1. Cut strips of paper into equal sizes.
2. On each strip of paper, have support staff and teachers write one thing they appreciate about their colleagues.
3. Once everyone has written something, connect the strips of paper together to create a chain using tape or string.
4. Hang the chain somewhere visible, such as in the teacher's lounge or break room.
5. Encourage staff members to read the chain and add to it throughout the week.
6. Repeat this activity monthly or quarterly.



Gratitude Notes

Objective:

Staff write notes to show appreciation for one another. Displaying the notes in a common area lets staff members see the positive impact they have on their colleagues and the school community as a whole.

Materials:

- Small pieces of paper or sticky notes
- A bulletin board or designated display area
- Writing utensils

Instructions:

1. Set up a bulletin board in a common area.
2. Provide staff members with sticky notes and writing utensils.
3. Encourage staff to write notes of appreciation for their colleagues on the sticky notes.
4. Once staff have written notes, they can place them on the bulletin board.
5. Remind staff members to read the notes and add to them throughout the week.
6. Repeat this activity on an on-going basis and consider rotating themes based on what your school or staff are focusing on (e.g., increased academic engagement, preparing for events/end of marking period/testing periods, promoting school culture of respect and collaboration).

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