



## 8.2.6.1 PEACEful Schools - Intervention Resources

### Predictability and Routine Emotional Literacy Attuned Relationship Calming Activities Empowerment

#### PREDICTABILITY AND ROUTINE

- Make **routine, structure and predictability** a priority. Some examples could be to use a visual schedule to map out the student's day; use consistency with teacher responses and prepare students for transitions or any changes in routine; have food/snacks to help students regulate; incorporate morning rituals before work time; and incorporate regular relaxation activities into class time (e.g., breathing ball, relaxing music, etc.). Seating plans can also be helpful for predictability.
- **Daily check in and check outs** (scripted to stay the same, make them personal)
- Teach **arousal regulation**: five minutes active, five minutes calming, 15 minutes concentration, repeat.

#### EMOTIONAL LITERACY

- **Implicit Teaching**: This powerful strategy involves experiential daily interactions between the adult and the student. Often students do not want to be told what to do, but will then notice HOW adults do things. This can be done by modeling emotion language regularly (i.e. I'm feeling frustrated, do you know what that means? Do you ever feel frustrated?)
- **Explicit Teaching**: Directly teaching social and emotional skills. The following curriculums are evidence based and recommended: Zones of Regulation, Mind UP, Superflex: A Social Thinking Curriculum.
- Teach students to monitor where they are on a scale of 0-10, 0 being the worst mood, 10 being the best mood they could imagine, and 5 being in the middle, feeling ok.
- **Emotion Validation**: Provide a safe place to talk about feelings. Reminder: validating how the child is feeling is not the same as condoning the behaviour. If necessary, set aside a designated time and place for sharing.



- Facilitate **self-monitoring** opportunities, (e.g., 0-10 scale, zones visual, feelings chart/thermometer).
- **Sharing Circles:** Hold a daily class meeting where students are free to share how they feel, which zone they are in, or where they are on a scale from 0-10, and any additional information. This gives the staff an idea of where the child is emotionally. Always give the option to pass.
- Teach **Mindfulness:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dzd444JvjCs>

## ATTUNED RELATIONSHIP

- **Do not take the student's emotions or behaviours personally.** Where are you on the stress staircase? If you feel yourself becoming angry or feeling hurt or rejected, take a moment to reflect, calm yourself and then come back to the interaction. **Remember!** How you manage your own emotional arousal and regulation is **vital** to assisting the student and to maintaining a peaceful classroom.
- **Counter the shame response.** *"I see you need help with ..."* (stopping an activity, moving to another part of the room, cleaning up, not kicking the chair, etc.). Warnings and second chances are less helpful complex trauma resources for these children, as they don't necessarily want to please adults and to establish relationships that non-abused children use to maintain a sense of connection.
- **Time in not time out.** Time out replicates the rejection these children have often experienced and reinforces the child's sense of self as unlovable. Instead, ask the child to come sit with you to complete their work. *Reframe their disruption as a need for your extra attention and help.*
- **Non-contingent Relationship Building Time:** Child directed 1:1 time with teacher for 3-5 minutes a day, every day, no matter what happened with that child that day. **Change your lens.** View the student as 'attachment seeking', rather than 'attention seeking'. If they are seeking it, give it to them!
- **Consequences, not punishment.** Consequences for unacceptable behaviour should be natural consequences, designed to repair any damage to relationships or property, rather than punishments that have no relationship to the behaviour. Where possible, consequences should have a relational and educational element.
- **Acknowledge good decision and choices.** Traumatized children tend to receive little praise, and they often don't respond well to praise. They do, however need positive reinforcement when they have done something well. Try to avoid statements about internal characteristics, such as "you are a good kid", as sometimes that is too much of a contradiction for a child who believes that they are not good or kind, but actually bad and unlovable. It is better to comment on actions, so the child can feel good about something they have done.



- **Give positive reinforcement:** “catch them being good”.
- **Public versus Private Praise.** Often public praise will be uncomfortable for a student who has been through traumatic events. Ask: “when I’m proud of you, how should I let you know?”

## CALMING ACTIVITIES

- **Cozy Corner or Calm Zones** can be used to calm anxious energy.
- **Tools:** soft lighting, and comfort items such as: soothing furniture, cushions, bean bag chair, weighted blanket, stuffed animals, squishy balls, headphones, calming music, calming scents
- **Techniques:** shoulder squeeze, hug, burrito blanket wrap, deep breathing, etc.
- **Gas Station or Energy Output zones** can be used to drain hyper energy.
- **Tools:** Treadmill, slam balls, mini trampoline, chin up bar, TRX, jungle gym, etc.
- **Techniques:** wall push, chair push, crab walk, push off, etc.
- **“Body check” or “self check”.** Explicitly teach the students what “body clues” might come up when feeling anxious or stressed. Teach the child to “self-check”, for example, instead of saying, “stop being loud” or “stop wiggling”; the teacher can say, “Can you check yourself please”. This allows the child to develop the crucial life skill of self-monitoring.

## EMPOWERMENT

- Find and celebrate successes; build off of existing skills and interests; develop mastery
- Offer choices to give the student a sense of control. Often traumatic events involve loss of control and/or chaos. The adult can help children feel safe by providing them with some choices or control when appropriate. *You can finish that work standing up or sitting down.*
- Give students a voice in classroom expectation, routines, and activities (e.g., my job, your job, IEP’s)
- **Service Learning:** when the child helps others in need, this expands who they are and fills their own needs (e.g., reading to younger children, time with elders, etc.)