

Teach It Better

EDUCATOR HANDBOOK

An integrated framework for
relationships, learning, and accountability



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INTRODUCTION

Educators make decisions about behavior every day, often with limited time and incomplete information. A student may be confused, protecting status, avoiding a task, responding to stress, testing a boundary, seeking connection, or making a deliberate choice. More than one of those things may be true.



INTRODUCTION

Different educational frameworks help adults notice different parts of the same moment. None gives us complete knowledge of a student, and none removes the need for professional judgment. Together, they can widen the questions we ask before deciding what to do.

The work begins before anything goes wrong.

RELATIONSHIPS BEFORE RESPONSE

Relationships are foundational, transformative, and a significant protective factor for young people. They are built in ordinary moments: greeting a student, remembering something they shared, noticing a strength, following up after an absence, laughing together, or asking what music, movie, game, color, or place matters to them.

The particular question matters less than whether the interest is real. Students often recognize when an adult is working through a relationship-building checklist. Genuine curiosity cannot be reduced to a script or used as a strategy for securing later compliance.

Adults do not need to share every student's interests. They do need to communicate that the student is worth knowing beyond grades, attendance, behavior, and the last difficult interaction.

A relationship may increase trust without producing immediate cooperation. Its value does not disappear when a student struggles, disagrees, refuses, or makes a mistake.

Students experience school through more than their relationships with individual adults. They experience how adults work together, how peers treat one another, how authority is used, whether routines are predictable, whether expectations are accessible, and what happens after someone makes a mistake.

Adult–student relationships influence whether correction, support, and accountability can be heard.

Adult–adult relationships influence whether students encounter coordinated support or conflicting and escalating responses.

Peer relationships shape status, belonging, conflict, influence, and the social risks attached to accepting help or changing course.

Students also develop a relationship with the school environment itself. Classrooms, hallways, offices, routines, and discipline processes can become associated with safety and membership—or with unpredictability, exclusion, and humiliation.

INTRODUCTION

Positive community develops when these relationships reinforce one another. It is not simply a collection of friendly interactions. It includes dependable adults, meaningful student membership, constructive peer norms, accessible expectations, fair processes, and credible ways to repair and return.

WHAT THE FRAMEWORKS HELP US SEE

PBIS and MTSS ask what has been taught, prompted, acknowledged, and supported. They help teams consider patterns, prevention, data, and the level of support a student may need.

Trauma-informed practice asks what conditions support safety, trust, regulation, access, collaboration, and participation. It does not allow adults to infer a trauma history from behavior or turn classroom educators into clinicians.

Restorative practice asks who or what may have been affected and what responsibility, repair, or return might become possible. It does not make an apology, direct conversation, reconciliation, or formal restorative process automatically appropriate.

De-escalation asks what is happening to intensity and what the adult may be adding to or removing from the interaction.

Transferable-skills and SEL traditions ask what students need to recognize, practice, reflect on, and use in other settings.

Experiential-learning and service-learning traditions ask how reflection and meaningful participation can turn an experience into learning. Completing a consequence or helpful task does not automatically produce that learning.

Culturally responsive and equity-centered practice asks how identity, culture, power, access, interpretation, and institutional patterns may be shaping both the incident and the response.

Adult reflective practice asks what is happening within the educator and how that may influence the next move.

These approaches overlap, but they are not the same thing. Each has its own history, purpose, evidence, language, and expectations for practice.

PBIS and MTSS contribute prevention, explicit teaching, acknowledgment, attention to patterns, and graduated support. Expectations should not remain hidden until a student violates them. At the same time, observable compliance does not tell us everything about understanding, trust, belonging, or growth.

Trauma-informed frameworks contribute attention to safety, trust, choice, collaboration, and the effects of adult systems. We use these principles broadly without diagnosing trauma from behavior or assuming that regulation can be produced on command.



WHAT THE FRAMEWORKS HELP US SEE

Restorative traditions contribute attention to belonging, impact, accountability, repair, and reintegration. We do not treat restorative language as inherently restorative. Questions, conferences, and circles can still become controlling when readiness, consent, power, and voice are ignored.

De-escalation and conflict-cycle work contribute attention to timing, intensity, audience, and adult response. We do not treat every difficult interaction as a crisis or use these ideas as a substitute for specialized safety training.

Ross Greene's collaborative problem-solving work contributes the question of what skill, condition, or unsolved problem may be getting in the way. Identifying that problem does not remove boundaries, consequences, or the needs of those affected.

Carl Rogers and Alfie Kohn contribute an important distinction between the worth of the person and approval of the behavior. Their work cautions against making care and belonging conditional on compliance. Schools still carry responsibilities for safety, rights, structure, and proportionate accountability.

Donna Hicks contributes the understanding that dignity is inherent rather than earned through compliant behavior. Preserving dignity does not require adults to avoid boundaries or difficult truths.

Dorothy Vaandering and other power-aware restorative critiques warn that relational or restorative language can still be controlling. Who defines the problem, whose account is believed, who is expected to repair, and who is allowed to decline all matter.

WHERE TEACH IT BETTER STANDS

Teach It Better brings these ideas together in shared language for everyday relationships and difficult school moments. It begins with genuine interest, prevention, and positive community. It asks adults to notice their own role in an interaction, protect dignity while maintaining expectations, match reflection and repair to readiness, and preserve a credible path back to learning and belonging.

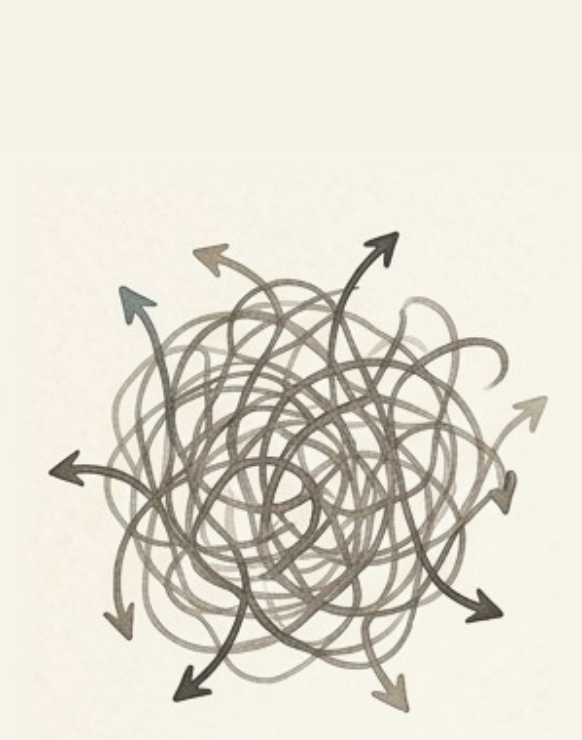
Prevent, Pause, Pivot, Repair, and Return organize the adult response. The Five Principles shape how that response is carried out.

The framework does not replace the practices, professional learning, judgment, or school-based protocols behind the work. It gives educators a common way to draw from them when deciding what the moment can hold and what might make the next constructive step more possible.



FOUNDATIONAL QUESTIONS

- What do students learn about relationships from the way adults work together?
- When and where do students experience genuine interest outside correction?
- Which framework most strongly shapes your school's current response to behavior?
- Which questions disappear when adults feel pressure?
- Where does your system rely on consequences without enough teaching?
- Where might relational language be used without enough clarity or accountability?
- What happens to a student's relationship with school after something goes wrong?
- What would it mean to respond for growth instead of trying to win the moment?



“We all bring background noise into the room. Notice it, find the moment again, and respond for growth—not for the win.”

— Hoy

PART I

THE STRATEGY AND FIVE PRINCIPLES

Behavior is part of teaching. So are accountability, repair, and the return to learning.



30-MINUTE PD • MODULE 1

Method and Five Principles

Focus: Locate a difficult moment with Prevent, Pause, Pivot, Repair, and Return, then apply the Five Principles without turning them into a script.

30 MINUTES: Connect 3 · Understand 6 · Experience 4 · Practice 8 · Apply + Plan 7 · Close 2

Practice: Rehearse one recurring case twice: first as it usually happens, then with one changed condition - audience, tone, timing, choice, or reentry.

Follow up: Try one small move in an authentic setting and bring back one observation about fit, timing, relationship, or adult regulation.

30-MINUTE PD • MODULE 3

Classroom Practice and Adult Regulation

Focus: Use the same Part I material from the adult-practice angle: regulation, quiet correction, relationship, reentry, and appropriate handoff.

30 MINUTES: Connect 3 · Understand 6 · Experience 4 · Practice 8 · Apply + Plan 7 · Close 2

Practice: Write and rehearse the first 30 seconds of a familiar classroom moment, including one adult-regulation cue and one honest boundary.

Follow up: Track one ordinary-day move and note when it helped, when it did not fit, and what support or handoff was needed.

Behavior is part of teaching. So are accountability, repair, and the return to learning.

WHEN THE MOMENT TURNS

A student refuses a reasonable direction. A correction becomes public. Frustration rises while the rest of the class watches. The expectation still matters, but pressing harder may make it less likely that the student can hear it. In that moment, the adult is teaching more than the rule. Tone, timing, audience, and the next available choice all shape what happens next.

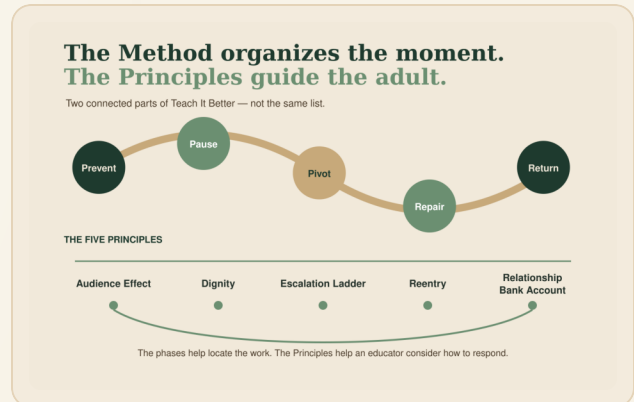
Difficult moments rarely call for a speech. They call for judgment: whether to address the behavior now or later, whether to speak privately, whether the student is ready to reflect, and what support or accountability will help. A useful response protects safety and dignity without losing sight of the expectation.

A boundary may need to be held, and a consequence may be required. Even then, the student needs a workable next step and a way back to participation. When harm has occurred, the work also includes understanding the impact and taking part in repair.

READ THE MOMENT

No strategy works for every student or every situation. What helps depends on regulation, development, culture, access, the relationship already in the room, and what safety or school procedure requires.

The five phases are Prevent, Pause, Pivot, Repair, and Return. They are not a fixed timeline. A moment may move quickly, stall, circle back, or require another adult. The phases help an educator decide what kind of response the moment can hold.



PREVENT

Prevention is not about predicting every difficult moment or controlling every variable in the room. Students are not equations to solve. Prevention removes avoidable barriers and strengthens the ordinary conditions that make participation more likely.

Look at what the classroom can actually shape: predictable routines, expectations that are taught and retaught, accessible directions, meaningful choices, supported transitions, and relationships built outside moments of correction. An expectation announced in September may need to be modeled again in February. A direction that sounds like refusal may first need to be checked for clarity, access, or understanding.

IN PRACTICE: Before class, identify one transition or direction that regularly creates friction. Make the next step easier to see, hear, or begin. Then notice whether the change helps, who still needs support, and what should be adjusted.

PAUSE

Pause begins when something in the moment changes: a refusal, a look, a raised voice, a shift in the room, or a change in your own body. The expectation may still need to be held. The pause creates enough space to decide how to hold it.

Notice pace, tone, posture, proximity, and audience. A faster voice, rigid stance, or move into a student's space can raise the pressure. Lowering your volume, stepping to the side, waiting a few seconds, or speaking privately may change what the student can hear. Sometimes the intensity of an adult reaction also carries frustration from an earlier class, conflict, or experience. The pause helps separate that history from the decision in front of you.

IN PRACTICE: Before repeating the direction, take one breath and ask: Does this need to be public? Does it need to happen now? Is the student regulated enough to respond? What is the smallest clear next step?



PIVOT

A pivot is a change in approach, not a retreat from the expectation. Holding a boundary and entering a power struggle are not the same act. If the first correction is becoming a contest, repeating it more loudly may only strengthen the contest. Change one condition: the audience, the wording, the timing, the choice, the adult, or the amount of processing time.

A pivot might sound like, "The laptop still needs to close. You can put it under your chair or leave it on the back counter. I'll check back in two minutes." The boundary remains. What changes is the route available to the student.

IN PRACTICE: When a familiar correction stalls, resist adding a speech. Offer one workable choice, allow time to process it, and decide in advance what support or school procedure comes next if the student still cannot meet the expectation.



REPAIR AND RETURN

REPAIR

Repair begins when there is enough regulation and readiness to look at what happened. It is not a forced apology, an immediate admission, or a conversation held for an audience. Repair makes room for the student's intent without allowing intent to erase impact.

Start with what can honestly be discussed: What happened? What were you trying to do, get, avoid, or protect? Who or what was affected? What needs to happen next? A consequence may remain in place. Repair adds the learning the consequence cannot carry by itself.

IN PRACTICE: Ask for the student's account before supplying one. Name the impact without turning the behavior into an identity. Agree on a repair that is proportionate, possible, and connected to what happened.



RETURN

Return is the path back to learning, participation, and belonging. It does not erase the incident or require everyone to act as though nothing happened. It tells the student what rejoining looks like now.

Sometimes Return is brief: "Glad you're back. We're on page 12. Start with the first question, and I'll check in." Sometimes it requires a reentry plan, support from another adult, or a later conversation. In either case, the student should not have to guess whether the consequence has become a permanent change in belonging.

IN PRACTICE: Prepare one genuine welcome and one manageable first step before the student returns. Follow up after the immediate reentry so Return becomes more than crossing the doorway.



THE ADULT CAN REPAIR AND RETURN, TOO

When an adult response misses the mark, naming the impact, making a repair, and restoring participation can model the same skills the framework asks students to practice.

THE FIVE PRINCIPLES, AT A GLANCE

The phases help answer when and what: what the moment can hold and what kind of response is most useful now. The Five Principles shape how that response is carried out without losing dignity, relationship, accountability, or a way back. Neither is a script; the work still depends on the student, the setting, professional judgment, and school procedures.

1

The Audience Effect

The rule: Reduce the audience when the social setting is raising the stakes.

The move: When safe and feasible, use proximity, a quiet voice, or an agreed signal.

2

The Dignity Principle

The rule: Hold the expectation without unnecessarily damaging the relationship.

The move: Address the behavior while preserving the student's dignity.

3

The Escalation Ladder

The rule: Step off the ladder; don't climb it.

The move: Lower intensity, allow appropriate time and space, and follow protocol.

4

The Reentry Principle

The rule: Accountability with a way home.

The move: Offer a genuine welcome and clear next step, adapted to the situation.

5

The Relationship Bank Account

The rule: Build the relationship before you need it.

The move: Build authentic connection and examine who receives acknowledgment and correction.



THE AUDIENCE EFFECT

A larger audience can raise the social stakes. When possible, reduce the audience before making the ask.

THE IDEA

Peer context can strongly shape how a classroom interaction unfolds, especially when a correction becomes public. A student may be responding both to the original request and to the social stakes of being corrected in front of others.

Adolescence gives peer context particular weight. Public identity, belonging, and status are still being worked out, and a correction delivered before peers can become a second problem layered over the first.

A public correction can turn a small request—put the phone away—into a test of status: comply in front of everyone or risk looking weak. Proximity, a lowered voice, a private aside, or a pre-agreed signal can preserve the expectation while lowering the social stakes.

SAY

[walk over, quiet, beside them] “Phone in the bin for ten minutes, then it’s yours. Thanks.”

SKIP

[across the room] “Jordan! I have asked you THREE times to put that phone away!”



INSTEAD OF THIS, TRY THIS

- “Put your phone away NOW.” → quiet, by name, with a time limit and a thank-you
- Correcting from the front of the room → correcting from beside the desk
- Making an example of one student → keeping that student from becoming an example

Watch for

The audience may be one important peer, not the whole class. A quiet correction can still carry shame if the tone is sarcastic. Tone travels.

In practice: Third period. Maya has her phone out again. Instead of calling across the room, you move closer and say quietly, “The phone still needs to be away. Put it in the bin for now, or check in with me at the door.” Maya may comply, ask for another option, or refuse. The private approach does not settle the outcome; it addresses the expectation without turning her into an example.

Try this: For one class period, move corrections to a private channel when it is safe and feasible. Notice student responses, exceptions, and what you may want to adjust.

THE DIGNITY PRINCIPLE

Preserve dignity while holding the expectation. A short-term response should not unnecessarily damage the relationship needed for future work.

THE IDEA

Dignity is a person's inherent worth. It is not earned and it is not conditional on behavior. Respect may change with conduct; dignity does not.

That distinction is the whole principle. A student's behavior may need correction. The student's dignity is never the thing on the table.

Public shaming, sarcasm, or a power move may produce short-term compliance while damaging trust. An adult can be correct about the behavior and still respond in a way that makes future cooperation and repair harder.

SAY

"You're better than this moment. Let's fix it. I'll help."

SKIP

"Maybe if you actually did your work instead of clowning around..."

INSTEAD OF THIS, TRY THIS

- "Act your age." → "This one's hard. Let's take it one step."
- A consequence that humiliates → a consequence that corrects and preserves face
- Assuming the worst → extending benefit of the doubt



Watch for

Benefit of the doubt may be especially difficult to maintain when an adult is tired, rushed, or reacting strongly. Notice when an interpretation hardens quickly, and pause long enough to consider what else may be true.

In practice: Devon flips his worksheet onto the floor and mutters that it is stupid. The room waits. You avoid sarcasm and say quietly, "This one looks frustrating. Pick it up, and I can help you start the first problem." Devon may accept, need another option, or continue to refuse. The response keeps the expectation visible while offering support and reducing the chance that the interaction becomes a public contest.

Try this: Before settling on a consequence, ask: Is it proportionate? Is it connected to the behavior or harm? Does it preserve dignity and leave a path back? Where you have discretion, adjust the response when one of those pieces is missing.

THE ESCALATION LADDER

Behavior escalates when adults and students compete for control. Step off the ladder; don't climb it.

THE IDEA

Adult and student responses can interact in ways that increase or decrease intensity. Pay attention to timing. A response that may help early in an interaction may add pressure once the situation has escalated.

Acceleration may include an eye-roll, a refusal, a challenge, or a visible increase in intensity. Adults may experience these behaviors as bait; naming their own reaction can help them avoid turning the moment into a contest.

Raising one's voice, stacking consequences, or issuing ultimatums may add intensity. Acknowledging, allowing appropriate time and space, seeking support, or returning later can create better conditions for de-escalation. Safety needs and school protocol still govern the response.

SAY

"I'm going to give you a minute. I'll be right back." [step away, lower voice]

SKIP

"Excuse me? You do NOT get to talk to me like that. That's a referral."



INSTEAD OF THIS, TRY THIS

- Matching the student's volume → lowering your own
- Adding consequences mid-climb → pausing all consequences until recovery
- "Last warning!" ultimatums → time and space, then a calm return

Watch for

Peak intensity is primarily a safety moment. Save nonurgent teaching, reflection, and consequence conversations for recovery.

In practice: "You can't make me." The words may pull an adult toward an argument. When safety and supervision allow, one response is to step back, lower the voice, and say, "I'm going to give this a little space. I'll check back." If the pressure does not ease, follow the appropriate school support or response.

Try this: When the bait arrives, name it silently. That's acceleration. Then answer one rung lower than the student, not one rung higher.

THE REENTRY PRINCIPLE

Whenever possible, a consequence should include a clear path back to participation, learning, and belonging.

THE IDEA

A consequence responds to what happened. Reentry addresses what participation, repair, and support look like next.

When a consequence has no clear path back, a student may experience continued exclusion or uncertainty about belonging. That can make repair and future participation harder.

Reentry is a deliberate return after removal, de-escalation, absence, or another difficult moment. It may be a brief welcome and orientation or a fuller plan. Accountability remains; belonging does too.

SAY

"Glad you're back. Clean slate. Here's where we are, jump in right here."

SKIP

[student returns; teacher says nothing and avoids eye contact the rest of the period]

INSTEAD OF THIS, TRY THIS

- Silent treatment after an incident → a brief, genuine welcome and clear next step
- "We'll see if you've changed." → "Clean slate. Here's where we are."
- A consequence with no path back → a consequence plus a named way home



Watch for

Cold reentry. Technically allowing the student back while withholding warmth reads to the student as continued exile. The tone is the message.

In practice: Aaliyah returns from the office after a difficult interaction. At the door you say, "Glad you're back. We're on page 12. Start here, and I'll check in with you shortly." She may be ready to join, or she may need a different first step. The reentry language communicates that the earlier incident will be addressed through the appropriate process without making continued exclusion the price of returning.

Try this: Prepare reentry language before you need it. Use it promptly when the student returns, adapting to readiness and context. Reconnect, orient, and offer a manageable next step.

THE RELATIONSHIP BANK ACCOUNT

Withdrawals require deposits. Build the relationship before you need it.

THE IDEA

The Relationship Bank Account adapts Stephen Covey's metaphor: some interactions build trust and connection, while others place strain on the relationship. Greetings, specific noticing, fairness, curiosity, and follow-through can build relational capital. Correction and accountability may draw on it, but the metaphor should not turn relationships into transactions or praise into currency for compliance.

The same correction can land differently depending on trust, history, fairness, timing, and the student's experience of the adult. Relationship does not guarantee cooperation. It changes the context in which feedback is heard.

Specific acknowledgment tells a student what the adult noticed—for example, “Thanks for getting started.” It should remain authentic, culturally responsive, and sensitive to student preference; praise is not experienced in the same way by every student.

SAY

[at the door, by name]
“Morning, Sam. Good to see you. Loved your point yesterday.”

SKIP

[first words to a student all day are a correction, before any deposit has been made]

INSTEAD OF THIS, TRY THIS

- First interaction of the day is a correction → first interaction is a greeting
- “Good job.” → “Thanks for starting the second you sat down.”
- One big repair gesture → many small, consistent deposits

Try this: For one period, tally specific supportive interactions and corrections. Notice the balance, authenticity, and distribution across students, then choose one adjustment to try.



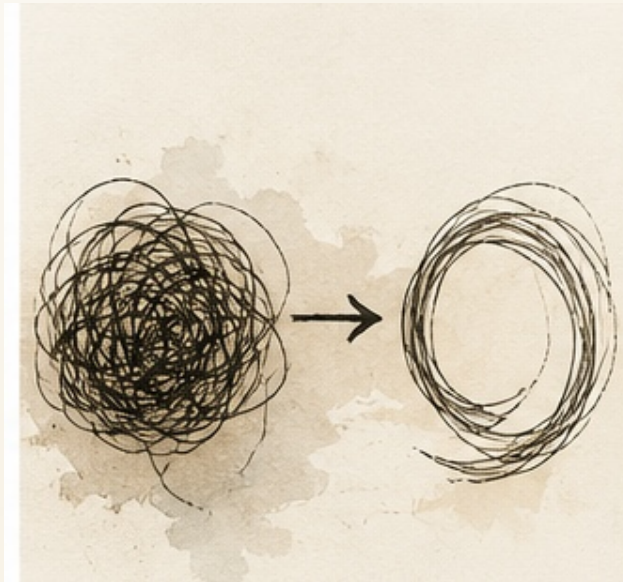
Watch for

An overdrawn account cannot be fixed with one big deposit. It is rebuilt with many small, consistent ones. Repair is steady, not dramatic.

In practice: Across the week, you have greeted Marcus, noticed his drawing, thanked him for starting, and shared a moment of humor. When he drifts off task, you say quietly, “Marcus, back with me.” The correction arrives within a history that includes more than correction. Marcus may still resist, but he knows this is not the only way you see him.

CONNECTING FRAMEWORKS

Most schools already use more than one approach to behavior, relationships, and school climate.



The crosswalk translates points of connection while preserving the history, purpose, language, and practice expectations of each approach.

30-MINUTE PD · MODULE 2

Connecting Frameworks

Focus: Use the Shared Center and Wider Crosswalk to connect existing approaches without treating distinct models as interchangeable.

30 MINUTES: Connect 3 · Understand 6 · Experience 4 · Practice 8 · Apply + Plan 7 · Close 2

Practice: Map one familiar incident through two or three framework lenses. Name what each helps you notice and what it does not authorize.

Follow up: Test one shared phrase in local practice and note where it clarifies, conflicts with, or duplicates existing language.

THE SHARED CENTER

Most schools already use more than one approach to behavior, relationships, and school climate. The crosswalk translates points of connection while preserving the history, purpose, language, and practice expectations of each approach.

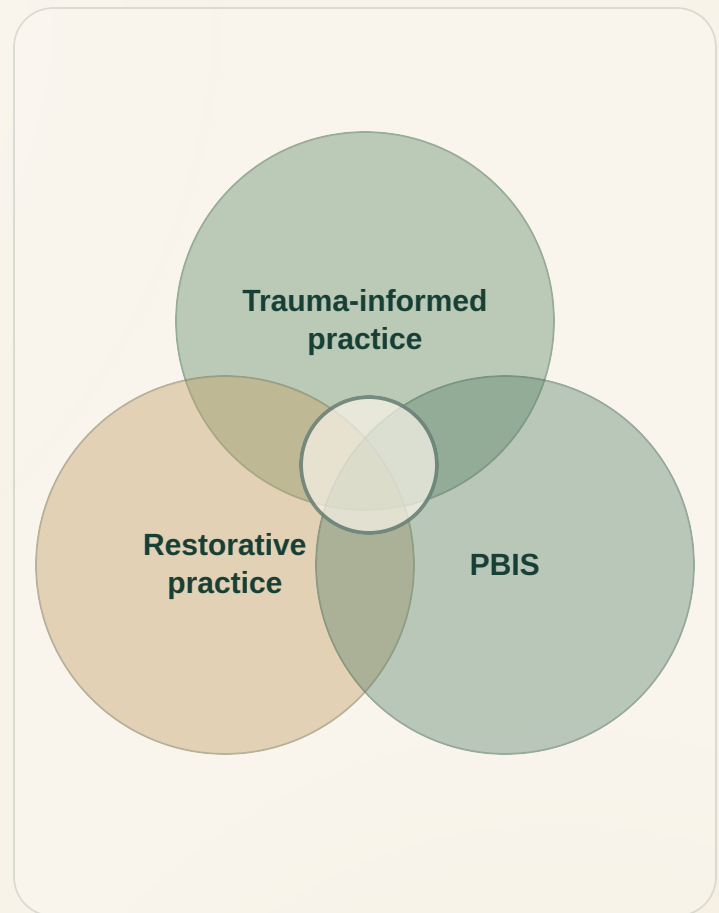
The central overlap is among three established traditions: trauma-informed practice, restorative practice, and PBIS. They are not interchangeable, and each keeps its own history, purpose, training, and expectations for practice.

Trauma-informed practice contributes attention to safety, trust, regulation, and the conditions needed for learning.

Restorative practice contributes attention to belonging, impact, accountability, repair, and return.

PBIS contributes structure: expectations taught explicitly, prevention, acknowledgment, and graduated support.

At the shared center, Prevent, Pause, Pivot, Repair, and Return organize the adult response across the moment. The Five Principles keep attention on audience, dignity, escalation, reentry, and relationship. The school's existing approaches remain the methods behind the shared language.



THE WIDER CROSSWALK

Other approaches deepen or extend this shared center. De-escalation helps educators judge timing, space, and adult response. MTSS helps teams organize levels of support. Transferable skills and SEL can strengthen emotional language, reflection, and decision-making.

Experiential learning can turn repair into practiced contribution. Culturally responsive and equity-centered practice asks adults to examine identity, power, interpretation, discretion, and access. Adult reflective practice keeps the educator's own regulation and judgment visible.

The crosswalk names the connections. It is not meant to stand in for the full practice behind any of these approaches.

Trauma-informed practice

Safety, trust, regulation, and attention to the conditions that make learning and reflection possible. This connection does not infer trauma from behavior or replace specialized support.

Whole-school restorative approaches

Proactive community, repair, accountability, and reentry. The handbook does not replace restorative implementation or facilitator training.

PBIS / MTSS

Prevention, explicit teaching, prompts, acknowledgment, data reflection, and tiered support. Local systems determine tiers and interventions.

Restorative codes and school protocols

Dignity, educational access, proportional accountability, restorative exit, and reentry. District policy and administrator procedures remain controlling.

Culturally responsive and equity-centered practice

Examine interpretation, power, access, identity, discretion, and response patterns. A script or data dashboard alone is not culturally responsive practice.

Youth-adult partnership

Co-design, shared inquiry, choice, accessibility, and authentic student power. Student voice is not adult messaging delivered by students.

Responsive Classroom

Community, modeling, supportive language, and logical responses. Similar practices remain grounded in their source approach.

RULER and other SEL approaches

Emotion knowledge, reflection, and regulation can support Pause, Repair, and Return. The handbook does not reproduce a source curriculum.

De-escalation and conflict-cycle models

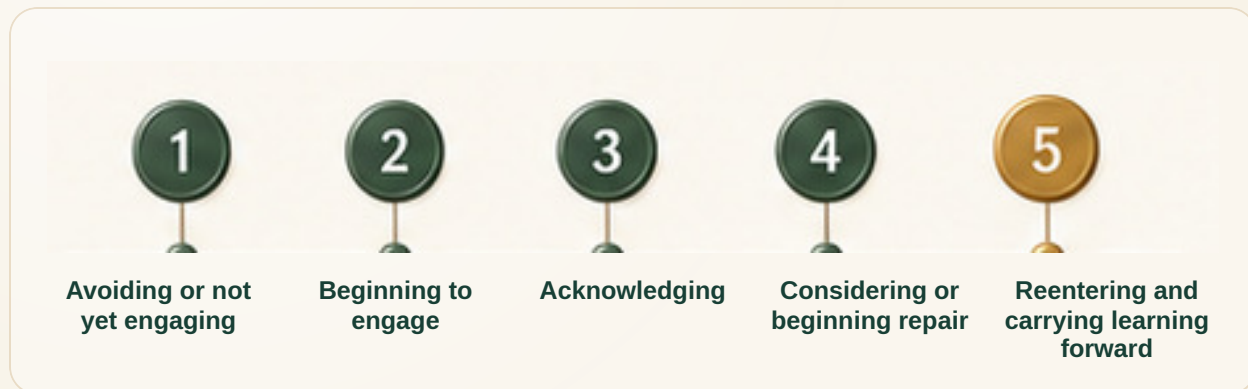
Adult awareness, interaction cycles, safety, and timing. The handbook is not crisis certification or a substitute for specialized training.

Local school procedures

Dignity, reflection, repair, and return remain subject to established procedures; the handbook does not replace them.

THE CONSEQUENCE CONTINUUM

The Continuum is a way to notice a student's readiness in a particular moment. It is not a student label. Readiness can change with time, regulation, support, and the person leading the conversation.



ACCOUNTABILITY IS LEARNED

Accountability is more than admitting what happened. Students may need help recognizing impact, listening to another perspective, making a workable repair, and practicing what to do next.

A student may know the rule and still need teaching after breaking it. What did the behavior change for someone else? What part can the student honestly own? What repair is possible? What will the student try when a similar moment happens again? Those are teaching questions, not just discipline questions.

30-MINUTE PD · MODULE 5

Accountability, Consequences, and Transfer

Focus: Read readiness as contextual, distinguish consequence from learning, and connect accountability to impact, repair, reentry, and transfer.

30 MINUTES: Connect 3 · Understand 6 · Experience 4 · Practice 8 · Apply + Plan 7 · Close 2

Practice: Use one fictionalized incident to build a proportionate response with a consequence where required, a learning purpose, and a workable path back.

Follow up: Try one reflection, repair, or reentry move when readiness allows; study what the student could actually engage with.

ACCOUNTABILITY IS DEVELOPMENTAL

Accountability involves skills that develop over time. Access to those skills changes with regulation, context, trust, communication, development, and the situation itself.

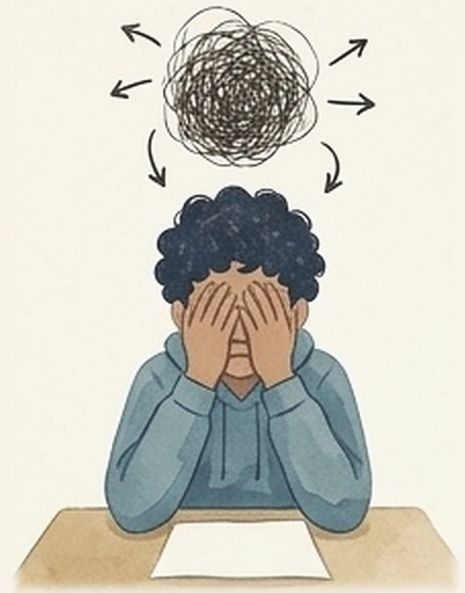
School discipline often treats accountability as binary: a student admits what happened, apologizes, and accepts the response—or is judged unwilling. That structure can miss the student's present readiness and the skills or conditions needed for honest reflection.

A student may be protecting status, managing shame, questioning fairness, responding to stress, or struggling with perspective-taking or communication. Pressure for immediate ownership can produce a rehearsed apology, withdrawal, argument, or greater distress. None of those responses tells the whole story of the student's eventual capacity for accountability.

Collaborative problem solving asks adults to look for the unsolved problem beneath recurring behavior and to work with the student on a realistic solution. The Consequence Continuum uses a similar question—what is getting in the way?—while focusing on readiness for accountability and repair.

The adult is looking for more than an admission. The work may include helping the student regulate, hearing what happened, separating intent from impact, teaching perspective-taking, and keeping enough relationship intact for repair to remain possible.

Look for the next workable movement toward reflection, responsibility, repair, or reentry. Aim one readiness step forward rather than demanding the final stage immediately. Sometimes that step is simply space, support, a private check-in, or an agreement to return to the conversation.



Read the moment, not the person.

The Continuum is a way to notice a student's readiness in a particular moment. It is not a student label.

The expectation does not move; the staircase becomes reachable. A consequence can establish a boundary, protect safety, or meet a school requirement. Learning asks what happens next: reflection, repair, support, and return. The expectation may stay fixed while the route and timing change.

THE FIVE STAGES

The Continuum describes five possible positions of accountability readiness. It reads the moment, not the person. A student’s position may change across incidents, relationships, settings, and points in the same conversation.

Prevent, Pause, Pivot, Repair, and Return help locate the larger work. The Continuum becomes most useful as reflection and repair become possible. The acting-out cycle offers additional context for timing.

Prevent · calm Build relationships, teach expectations, design engagement, reduce predictable triggers.	Pause · trigger + agitation Notice the adult response, slow the exchange, reduce the audience when safe and practical.	Pivot · acceleration Offer a clear and dignified next step without entering a power contest.	Peak Prioritize safety and school protocols. Hold nonurgent teaching, reflection, and consequence conversations.	Repair · de-escalation When regulation and readiness allow, name impact and make accountability specific, proportionate, and possible.	Return · recovery Re-engage in learning and belonging through a manageable next step.
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The acting-out cycle is attributed to Colvin and Scott. Real situations may move back and forth, pause, or require another adult before repair continues.

READINESS BEFORE REFLECTION

1 Avoiding or not yet engaging

MAY SOUND LIKE

"It wasn't me." "This is dumb." Silence, walking away, laughing it off.

EDUCATOR CONSIDERATION

Regulate before reason. Lower the stakes, delay the debrief, signal the relationship is intact.

WHAT MAY BE INVOLVED

Fear, shame, self-protection. Admitting fault feels unsafe.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP

Co-regulation, time, a private check-in. The incident conversation may need to wait.

2 Beginning to engage

MAY SOUND LIKE

"Okay, but they started it." "It was just a joke."

EDUCATOR CONSIDERATION

Affective statements. Acknowledge their piece of the truth. Introduce intent against impact.

WHAT MAY BE INVOLVED

Partial ownership. Testing whether the process is fair before investing in it.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP

A structured reflection sheet. Naming impact without confessing motive.



Audience can change readiness.

A student who reflects privately may become defensive around peers when the social stakes rise. Describe what is observable now rather than turning the stage into a trait.

ACCOUNTABILITY, REPAIR, AND RETURN

3 Acknowledging

MAY SOUND LIKE

“Yeah, I did that.” Owns the act, no plan yet.

EDUCATOR CONSIDERATION

Restorative questions. Who was affected, what needs to happen to make it right.

WHAT MAY BE INVOLVED

Ownership has landed but the path forward is foggy. Shame can set in here.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP

Further restorative questions or, when appropriate, choosing a repair option.

4 Considering or beginning repair

MAY SOUND LIKE

“What can I do to fix it?”

EDUCATOR CONSIDERATION

Contribution-based repair tied to the harm. Co-author the plan, do not assign it.

WHAT MAY BE INVOLVED

Motivated for action. Needs a concrete, dignified path.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP

Carrying out repair with light support. Brief progress check-ins.

5 Reentering and carrying learning forward

MAY SOUND LIKE

“Here's how I'll show up next time.”

EDUCATOR CONSIDERATION

Reentry plan. Restore role and status publicly. Log the Bank Account deposit.

WHAT MAY BE INVOLVED

Integration. The learning is becoming part of identity, not just this incident.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEP

Closing the loop, strengthening reentry, or taking a constructive role when freely chosen and developmentally appropriate.

Three field notes

Readiness is situational. Do not place a stage in a student record as though it were a trait. Audience can change readiness. An apology is not a complete measure of understanding; listen for specificity, perspective, and follow-through while accounting for language, disability, culture, communication style, and readiness.

The principle check

Audience Effect: reduce social stakes. Dignity: do not use humiliation or forced disclosure. Escalation Ladder: prioritize safety and regulation. Reentry: plan a workable return. Relationship Bank Account: trust and interaction history influence how accountability language may land.

INTENT, IMPACT, ACCOUNTABILITY

Intent and impact are different parts of the same event. Accountability makes room to understand intent without using it to erase impact.



INTENT

IMPACT

ACCOUNTABILITY

Owning impact does not require a student to accept a negative identity. Fear, shame, misunderstanding, distrust, communication needs, disagreement about the event, or concern about consequences may all shape resistance.

Keep the conversation focused on the behavior and its impact. Shame aimed at the whole person often leads to hiding, defending, or shutting down. A student is more able to consider repair when the person is not treated as the problem.

THE TWO-COLUMN REFLECTION SHEET

The reflection sheet separates intent from impact. One side asks what the student was trying to do, get, avoid, or protect. The other asks who was affected and how the event may have been experienced.



Some students can begin with intent and then consider impact. Others need a different format, communication support, more time, or more than one conversation. The prompts are invitations, not a required sequence.

Questions that can move reflection forward: “Walk me through what you were trying to do.” “If the other person described this, what might they say happened?” “What would make this closer to right?” “What do you want people to see from you next time?”

THE CONVERSATION CASE

A well-timed conversation can gather context, separate intent from impact, clarify expectations, support reflection, and identify a next step. Its timing and form depend on safety, readiness, relationship, staffing, and school protocol.

1. REACHING

A consequence is delivered to a student; a conversation is held with one. Sitting down, asking a genuine question, and allowing time for an answer can reduce the adversarial feel of the exchange and provide better access to the student's perspective.

Reaching out also tells the student that the relationship is still available after the incident. That makes room for reflection and repair, even when neither happens right away.

2. REFRAMING

A consequence says that behavior costs this much. A conversation can separate intent from impact, surface the unmet need or lagging skill underneath the behavior, and change the student's account of the incident from *I got caught* to *I affected someone*.

Critics of punishment-centered discipline, including Alfie Kohn, argue that conditional acceptance and punishment can focus attention on adult approval or what will happen to the student rather than on the impact of the behavior (Kohn, 2005). This is a theoretical and practitioner argument, not proof that every consequence has that effect.



3. THE PERSONAL TOUCH

In a conversation, the adult models the exact skill being asked of the student: staying regulated while discussing something uncomfortable, naming feelings with affective statements, and owning their own missteps. *I raised my voice earlier, and that is on me.*

Policy provides consistency and boundaries. Conversation adds context, modeling, and human connection. In practice, the two often need to work together.

IN THE ROOM · SAY

Walk me through what was happening for you. I believe you didn't mean it that way, and it landed that way. What would make this closer to right?

SKIP

You know better than this. Apologize, now. How many times do we have to do this? The skip-lines raise pressure, presume motive, or demand immediate performance.

WHEN THE CONSEQUENCE STILL BELONGS IN THE ROOM

Consequences still belong in the room. Predictable, proportionate responses can protect safety, uphold expectations, address impact, and provide structure.

The response should fit the incident, the student's needs and rights, school policy, and the needs of those affected. A consequence does not replace the learning conversation, and a restorative conversation does not erase responsibility. Classroom educators, behavior teams, administrators, and support teams follow school protocols while preserving dignity, reflection, relationship, and a path back to learning wherever possible.

SAME INCIDENT, TWO PATHS

CONSEQUENCE-ONLY PATH

Incident: Jordan knocks a classmate's laptop off a desk after a whispered insult. Adult: that's two days of lunch detention. Office, now.

Jordan may experience the response as incomplete or unfair because his account has not yet been heard. Reflection and repair have not begun.

The detention is served and the laptop is checked. Without a follow-up conversation, the context, impact, and relationship between the students may remain unresolved.

Relationship note: if trust was already limited, the response may add strain. A later follow-up can still reopen the work.

CONVERSATION PATH

Same incident. Adult, later and privately: Jordan, I saw the laptop go down and I saw your face right before. Walk me through what was happening for you.

Jordan: Marcus called me broke in front of everyone. Adult: that would land hard. So the shove was about making it stop? Intent acknowledged. Stage 2 opens.

Adult: here's the other true thing. The laptop could have broken, and the class saw you lose it. What happened to how people see you in that room? Impact named without character attack. Stage 3.

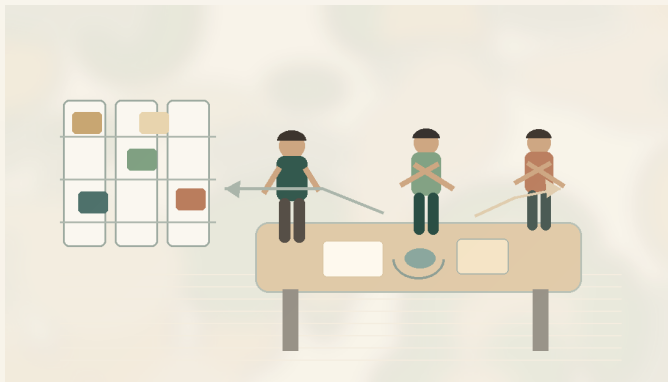
Jordan helps check the laptop, agrees to a mediated two-minute repair conversation with Marcus, and a consequence is still assigned. The conversation adds context and a repair option while the school-based consequence remains in place.

The two paths respond to the same incident. One closes the immediate behavior. The other also opens space for context, accountability, and relationship.

CONTRIBUTION-BASED REPAIR

Community service can sit awkwardly in school discipline. When helping is assigned as visible punishment, it can feel like penance. Contribution-based repair should be connected to the harm, carried out with dignity, accessible to the student, and appropriate to the situation. It is different from general service learning.

Repair is strongest when it is connected to the harm, carried out with dignity, and shaped with meaningful student voice.



CHECK THE SYSTEM, NOT JUST THE STUDENT

Before assigning student repair, ask whether adult action, unclear expectations, bias, crowding, escalation, or a system condition contributed to the harm. If it did, the plan includes the adults too.

THE HARMED PARTY'S PARTICIPATION IS VOLUNTARY

The harmed party's voice matters, but participation is never required. No one who was harmed has to meet, listen, forgive, or accept an apology. Indirect repair can be valid when direct repair is unwanted or unsafe.

Why these safeguards matter

Contribution-based repair should not become a polished way to make a student absorb a system's problem, or a process that requires the harmed person to perform reconciliation.

FROM THE FIELD

"Contribution-based repair has included students working at a community store or washing tables after lunch when their behavior left a mess or affected the shared space. The task is connected to a real impact: the community had work added to it, and the student has a structured opportunity to put something back. In several instances, students who completed assigned community repair later asked whether they could keep helping or contribute in another way. They said they had learned from the experience. Those moments suggest a possible shift from completing an adult-assigned response to seeing oneself as someone who can contribute. They are field observations, not proof that every student will experience community repair this way."

— Middle & High School Dean of Students

ASSIGNED REPAIR CAN STILL INCLUDE VOICE

Accountability is sometimes non-negotiable. A school may determine that a student needs to repair a shared space, replace time or effort imposed on others, or complete another proportionate response under school-based protocols. Student voice can still exist inside that boundary. Depending on the incident and the available options, a student may help choose the task, role, timing, adult partner, tools, or way the learning will be reflected and carried forward.

The adult's job is to teach the work rather than assume the student already knows how to do it. Washing tables can involve noticing what a finished shared space looks like, sequencing a task, using materials safely, persisting when the work is repetitive, accepting feedback, and recognizing how one person's work affects everyone who uses the space. Working in a community store can involve reliability, communication, organization, service, and participation in a place that other people depend on.

VOICE INSIDE A CLEAR BOUNDARY

TASK

Which approved repair option fits the impact?

ROLE

What part can the student genuinely own?

TIMING

When can the work be completed well?

PARTNER

Who can work alongside or coach?

TOOLS

What support makes success more likely?

REFLECTION

How will learning be noticed and carried forward?

CONTRIBUTION-BASED REPAIR IS NOT AUTOMATICALLY SERVICE-LEARNING

A brief or assigned repair task should be called contribution-based repair, not service-learning. High-quality service-learning ordinarily includes explicit learning goals, meaningful community need, reflection, youth voice, community partnership, sufficient duration, and attention to transferring skills beyond the original activity (National Youth Leadership Council, n.d.; Youth.gov, n.d.). A repair task may become the beginning of a larger service-learning or youth-leadership opportunity, but the labels should not be collapsed.

A meta-analysis of 62 service-learning studies found positive average effects across attitudes toward self, school and learning, civic engagement, social skills, and academic performance. Links to curriculum, youth voice, community involvement, and reflection were associated with stronger outcomes (Celio, Durlak, & Dymnicki, 2011). Those findings are useful for thinking about design, but they do not tell us that a short disciplinary repair task will produce the same results.

Contribution is more meaningful when a student can see who benefits and how the work matters. Whenever possible, let the student work alongside a trusted adult or community member rather than completing an isolated task.

There is also a restorative precedent for joining accountability with skill development and community participation. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention's Balanced and Restorative Justice model organizes responses around accountability, competency development, and community safety and includes community service among possible restorative processes (Bazemore & Umbreit, 1994; Pranis, 1998). The model comes from juvenile justice, not school-effectiveness research. Here, it helps clarify the balance among accountability, skill development, and community safety.

Next: The four-part test—Contribution, Connection, Choice, and Dignity—turns these safeguards into a practical check for repair.

THE FOUR-PART TEST

Contribution-based repair is strongest when it is connected to the harm, carried out with dignity, and shaped with meaningful student voice.

CONTRIBUTION

It adds something to the community or the person affected. Not busywork, not visible penance.

CONNECTION

A student who damaged the cafeteria helps the custodial team. A student who hurt a younger kid helps plan the buddy program. The repair rhymes with the harm.

CHOICE

The student helps select from real options. Student voice may increase relevance and investment, although choice must remain genuine and the response must still meet safety, policy, and the needs of those affected.

DIGNITY

No public shaming, no visible penance in front of peers. Repair should not become public penance. A dignified process is more consistent with reintegration; a humiliating one may increase defensiveness or disconnection.

CONTRIBUTION

Adds something useful. Not busywork or visible penance.

CONNECTION

The response relates to the impact or shared need.

CHOICE

Student voice exists inside real, safe options.

DIGNITY

No humiliation. Belonging is not put at risk.

A MENU BEATS A MANDATE

Consider building a standing repair menu with the behavior team, administration, support staff, and—in developmentally appropriate ways—students. Options should be voluntary where required, connected to the impact, accessible, safe, and consistent with school policy.

When a student reaches Stage 4, the conversation becomes which of these is closest to right, rather than here is your sentence.

Contribution-based repair may include reflection, action, feedback, and another attempt, but it should not be labeled service learning merely because a student performs a helpful task. If a school wants to study later leadership or participation outcomes, it should define those outcomes and review its own data rather than promise a result in advance.

FROM ACCOUNTABILITY TO TRANSFERABLE LEARNING

A consequence may mark a boundary, protect safety, or create a pause. Transfer asks a different question: can the student recognize and use the learning with another person, in another setting, or under greater stress?

Learning does not automatically carry from one situation to another. Name the skill, practice it in more than one setting, and return to it later. A student who repaired a mess in the cafeteria may still need help recognizing the same responsibility in a classroom, on a team, or at home.

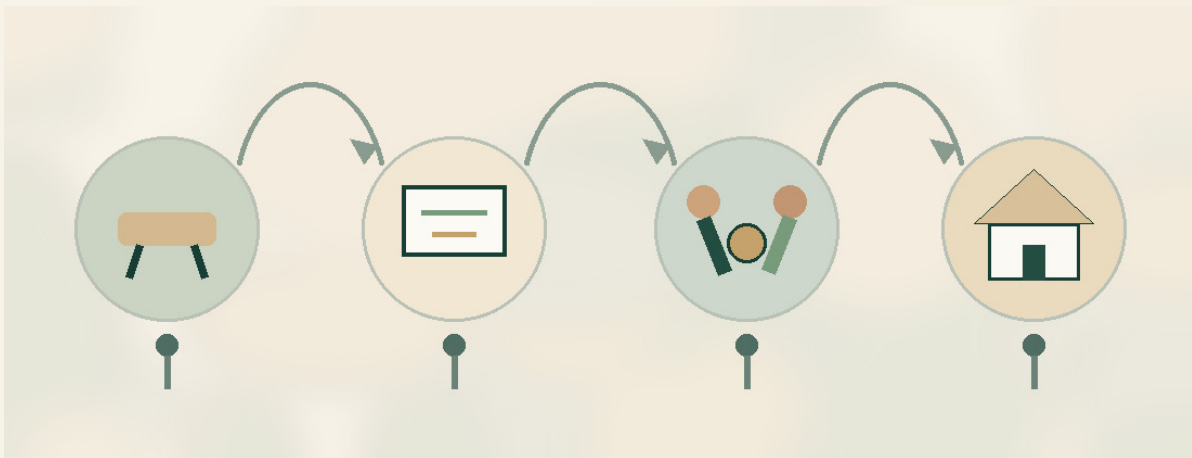
WHAT TRANSFERS?

- Name what happened without turning the event into an identity.
- Identify the need, trigger, goal, or unsolved problem that shaped the response.
- Distinguish intent from impact and notice whose perspective is still missing.
- Rehearse an alternative that is realistic under the conditions in which it will be needed.
- Try the alternative in more than one relevant setting and adjust it with feedback.
- Notice and reinforce later use without requiring perfection or making support contingent on success.

REPAIR CAN BECOME TRANSFERABLE LEARNING

A connected consequence can become a place to learn, but only when the school does more than assign and monitor a task. The student needs help connecting the response to the actual impact, learning how to complete the contribution, reflecting on what happened, and trying the skill again in another setting.

The point is not simply to complete the assigned repair. Look for whether the student can explain the impact, use the skill with less support, and recognize when it is needed again.



THE REPAIR-TO-TRANSFER CYCLE

1

NAME IMPACT

Clarify what happened to the person, group, space, or shared work. Separate the behavior from the student's identity and do not require public confession.

2

CONNECT THE CONTRIBUTION

Select a proportionate task that addresses, restores, or contributes to the community affected. The connection should be understandable rather than symbolic busywork.

3

TEACH THE WORK

Model the task, break it into usable steps, clarify quality and safety, provide needed accommodations, and give feedback. Accountability includes learning how to carry responsibility through.

4

BUILD RELATIONSHIP THROUGH SHARED WORK

When appropriate, an adult works alongside, checks in without hovering, notices genuine effort, and learns something about the student beyond the incident. The task can become a new relational experience rather than another withdrawal.

5

REFLECT AND NAME THE TRANSFERABLE SKILL

Ask what the student practiced, who depended on it, what was difficult, and where the same skill might matter next. Make the bridge explicit: "You stayed with a job that other people needed. Where else could that help you?"

6

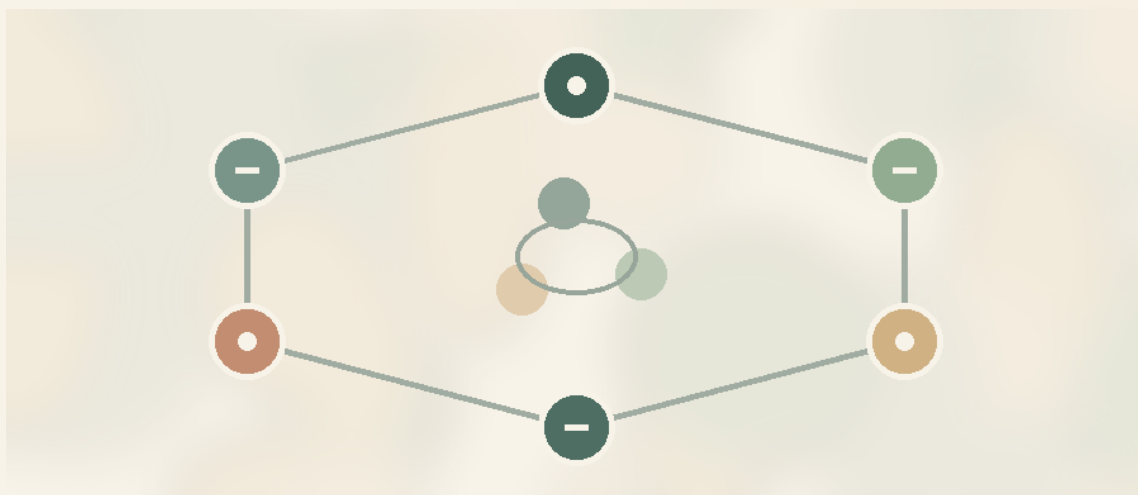
CREATE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY

Invite the student to use the skill in another relevant setting and follow up. A later voluntary request to keep helping may indicate growing ownership or connection, but it is welcomed—not demanded as proof that repair was successful.

RELATIONSHIP CAPITAL RUNS THROUGH THE CYCLE

Relationship capital is both a condition and a possible product of contribution-based repair. Existing trust may make it safer for a student to accept instruction and feedback. Shared work can then give the adult and student a different experience of one another: the adult sees competence and contribution; the student experiences the adult as a teacher and partner in accountability rather than only an enforcer.

Shared work is not automatically relational repair. If a task is humiliating, unrelated, inaccessible, poorly supervised, or treated as repayment of a moral debt, it can deepen disconnection. Framing, instruction, reflection, and follow-up matter more than a count of service hours (McGuire, 2006).



WHAT SCHOOLS SHOULD WATCH

Because this is an emerging practice theory, schools using it should look at more than whether the task was completed. A small implementation record can ask:

Was the task connected and proportionate to the impact?	What skill or work habit was explicitly taught and practiced?
What support, accommodation, or adult partnership was provided?	Could the student describe the contribution and where the skill might apply again?
Was there later use of the skill in another setting?	Did the student later choose another contribution or leadership opportunity?
How did the student and affected community experience the response?	

These questions help a school learn from the work instead of counting completion as the only measure of accountability.

RELATIONSHIP CHANGES WHAT CAN BE HEARD

Relationship is not a reward for compliance. It is part of the context in which feedback, risk, and another attempt become possible. A meta-analysis of 99 studies found that affective teacher–student relationship quality was associated more strongly with engagement than with achievement (Roorda et al., 2011). Relationship matters as a condition for participation, not a guarantee of outcomes.

Students are more likely to stay in a difficult conversation when they believe the adult is trying to understand their perspective. Listening does not remove the limit or the consequence. It makes it more possible to work through what happened.

Respect is built through ordinary interactions as well as difficult ones: listening, following through, explaining a decision, and making a genuine return possible after conflict.



HOW THE CONTINUUM SUPPORTS TRANSFER

The five positions can help an adult decide what kind of learning is possible right now. They do not tell us that transfer has happened.

1 • AVOIDING OR NOT YET ENGAGING

Protect safety, lower pressure, and preserve a route back. The adult may model regulation, but this is usually not the time to test whether the student can explain or generalize the learning.

2 • BEGINNING TO ENGAGE

Help the student reconstruct the situation: What were you trying to do, get, avoid, or protect? What made this moment different? This begins to make the conditions around the behavior visible.

3 • ACKNOWLEDGING

Move from the event to the principle without overgeneralizing: What impact did this have? Where else might this pattern show up? What would need to be different next time?

4 • CONSIDERING OR BEGINNING REPAIR

Rehearse a specific alternative and vary the scenario: What could you try with this teacher? With a peer? When you are already frustrated? Identify the support, cue, words, or exit plan that makes the alternative usable.

5 • REENTERING AND CARRYING LEARNING FORWARD

Treat Return as the beginning of transfer, not proof that it is complete. Follow up, notice what worked, revise the plan after setbacks, and invite the student to name where else the learning could help. Do not turn a student's successful repair into an obligation to perform leadership or disclose the incident publicly.

A CONSEQUENCE CAN CLOSE AN INCIDENT. TRANSFER REQUIRES ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY.

The Continuum is not a race through five positions on an adult timeline. It connects accountability to learning that can become more available and more student-owned over time. The question is not whether the student said the right words in the office. It is whether the school created realistic conditions to understand, practice, use, revisit, and strengthen a more workable response.

THE RELATIONSHIP BANK ACCOUNT, APPLIED

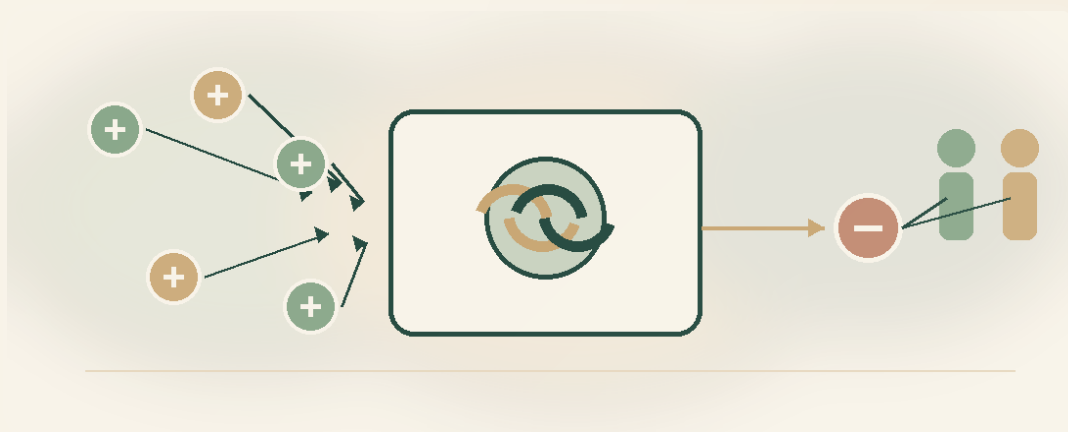
The Relationship Bank Account is a metaphor for trust and interaction history. The Continuum asks educators to consider how that history is shaping the accountability conversation.

The Relationship Bank Account is the history already present when an accountability conversation begins. The Continuum helps an educator read the student's readiness; the Bank asks what the relationship can carry right now.

BANK BALANCE	WHAT IT BUYS ON THE CONTINUUM	PRIORITY MOVE
Low or overdrawn	Limited trust may make accountability requests feel threatening or unfair.	Build non-contingent connection and consider who is best positioned to hold the debrief. Do not impose a fixed waiting period.
Moderate	Private reflection may be more accessible than public reflection.	Private conversations, affective statements, the two-column reflection sheet. Protect their status while they practice ownership.
High	Established trust may support more direct feedback and co-authored repair. Public repair should never be presumed.	Co-authored repair, reentry plans, leadership in circles. Use trust carefully; it is not permission to pressure disclosure or compliance.

Two things carry over from Part I unchanged. Correction and consequences can place strain on a relationship even when they are warranted. Relationship-centered practice attends to that strain without treating connection as a transaction or promising that every response produces learning.

A brief follow-up can reconnect, clarify what comes next, and create another opportunity to use or revise the plan. "How did it go with Marcus?" does not prove transfer or complete the repair. It keeps Return open as an ongoing process.



UNCONDITIONAL REGARD, SCAFFOLDED ACCOUNTABILITY

Unconditional regard separates the worth of the person from approval of the behavior. An adult can reject an action, hold a limit, and require accountability without making belonging conditional on perfect behavior. The ideas below come from different traditions. They should not be treated as a single evidence base.

FOUR LANDMARKS

Carl Rogers, unconditional positive regard (1957).

Rogers described unconditional positive regard within a therapeutic relationship. In schools, the useful distinction is between accepting the person and approving the behavior; the clinical theory is not direct evidence for a discipline model.

Alfie Kohn, “Unconditional Teaching,” *Educational Leadership* (2005).

Kohn argues that educator care should not be contingent on student obedience or performance and critiques reward-and-punishment approaches. This is a clear philosophical position rather than a neutral research summary.

Dorothy Vaandering’s Relationship Window (2013).

Vaandering critically examines the Social Discipline Window and the power dynamics that can allow restorative language to reproduce non-restorative practice. Her work supports a relational and power-aware caution, not a claim that one window predicts outcomes.

Smith, Fisher, and Frey, *Better Than Carrots or Sticks* (ASCD, 2015).

This practitioner text describes restorative approaches to school community, responsibility, and repair.

HOLDING BOTH

BEHAVIORIST POLE

Behavior is shaped by contingencies. Rewards and consequences, consistently applied, are the engine. Acceptance is implicitly conditional on compliance.

TEACH IT BETTER

Regard is unconditional. Accountability is scaffolded. The relationship is never on the table, and because it is not, real consequences and real repair become teachable rather than threatening.

ABOLITIONIST POLE (KOHN)

Rewards and punishments, including most consequences, are two sides of one controlling coin and should largely be abandoned in favor of working with students on problems.

Kohn’s work raises a useful caution about conditional belonging and punishment as a default. Schools still carry legal, ethical, safety, and policy responsibilities. The tension is real; it is not resolved by choosing either relationship or accountability.

Responses should be predictable and proportionate. Those affected deserve safety, voice, and a meaningful response. Students who caused harm deserve due process, support, dignity, and a realistic path to repair and return. School-based protocols govern the response.

Unconditional regard. Scaffolded accountability.

THE TWO-MINUTE READ

In a hallway, there is no time for a flowchart. Four questions can guide the next move:

- 1 IS EVERYONE REGULATED, INCLUDING ME?**
If no: safety, space, co-regulation. The Continuum waits. Your de-escalation training governs here.
- 2 WHAT STAGE AM I HEARING?**
Listen for the sentence frames: denial and deflection (1), yeah-but (2), bare ownership (3), how do I fix it (4), future-tense identity talk (5).
- 3 WHAT DOES THE BANK BALANCE LET ME ATTEMPT?**
Consider whether limited trust or a strained history is affecting the conversation. Another adult, a relationship-building step, or a later time may create better conditions for the debrief.
- 4 WHAT IS THE ONE-STAGE-RIGHT MOVE?**
Choose a manageable next move rather than forcing full repair immediately. Reassess, involve appropriate support, and follow protocol when the conversation stalls or safety concerns remain.

DOCUMENTATION NOTE. Do not place a fixed stage label in a student record as though it were a validated assessment or trait. If a school studies the Continuum, document observable language, supports used, student response, repair status, and reentry needs in accordance with local policy. If a school creates a process measure, define it clearly and check it for bias and reliability. Do not use it for high-stakes decisions unless it has been validated for that purpose.

THREE SHEETS YOU CAN COPY

Copy freely within your school. Keep the Teach It Better attribution line when sharing beyond your building. If you improve one, send the better version back.



REPRODUCIBLES

A • INTENT AND IMPACT REFLECTION SHEET

For students at Stage 2 moving toward Stage 3. Left column first. The right column can take more than one sitting.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Adult partner: _____

MY INTENT. What I was trying to do, get, avoid, or protect.	THE IMPACT. What happened to someone else, in their voice if I can.
1. Right before it happened, I was feeling...	1. The person or people affected were...
2. What I was trying to do was...	2. If they described this moment, they would say...
3. What I wish the other person knew about my side...	3. One thing that changed for them because of this...
Both-things-true sentence: I didn't mean to _____, and it caused _____.	One step toward making it right that I could actually do soon: _____

B • REENTRY PLAN

For students at Stage 4 moving toward Stage 5. Written with the student, not for them.

1. The repair I completed. What, when, and who witnessed it: _____
2. How I want to reenter the class, team, or space, in one sentence: _____
3. My signal to my adult partner if I feel the old pattern starting. A word, a gesture, or a signal card: _____
4. Check-in schedule. A brief check with _____ at _____ for _____ days.
5. What I want people to see from me: _____

THE ACCOUNTABILITY CONVERSATION FRAME

C · THE ACCOUNTABILITY CONVERSATION FRAME

Adult-facing. Six beats, in order. Tape it inside a desk drawer.

Open with relationship, not the incident. One genuine, specific line that has nothing to do with the referral.

Honor intent out loud before naming impact. I believe you. And here is the other true thing.

Co-author one next step, sized to the student's stage rather than your timeline.

Ask, do not tell. Walk me through what was happening for you. Then be quiet longer than is comfortable.

Ask the restorative core. Who was affected, and what would make it closer to right?

Close the loop with the follow-up nobody required. That is the deposit.

THE IMPACT WEB

The Impact Web is a Teach It Better visual conversation tool built around established restorative questions: What happened? Who may have been affected? How? What might help make things right? It places the event in the center and leaves the rest of the page open. The participant and adult create the branches together as people, relationships, impacts, and possible next steps emerge.

LEARNING IMPACT THROUGH MAPPING

An Impact Web helps make the effects of an event easier to see. Starting with what happened, students can identify people, relationships, learning, shared spaces, time, trust, or responsibilities that may have been affected. Mapping can slow the conversation down and help a student notice connections that may be difficult to hold in a spoken exchange. It does not establish another person's experience or prove that every possible impact occurred. Do not fill in another person's perspective. If they have not shared it, it remains unknown.

WHY MAPPING CAN BE POWERFUL

The visual structure allows impact to be considered without reducing the conversation to blame or demanding an immediate apology. It can give a student a concrete place to begin, reveal indirect effects, and help identify a repair connected to what actually changed. The conversation that develops while building the web may be as useful as the completed map, but mapping does not guarantee insight, agreement, or repair.



LEARNING IMPACT THROUGH MAPPING

USE AND LIMITS

A full web may take time. During a busy school day, an educator may use a brief conversational version to open reflection and identify a next step. That conversation does not by itself complete a restorative process. Do not force an admission, apology, direct contact, reconciliation, or repair meeting. What happens next still depends on readiness, consent, safety, power, developmental needs, and school-based protocols.

A FULL IMPACT WEB

Write or draw what happened in the center.

Ask who may have been affected or may still be carrying part of this. Draw a new line and shape only when a party, group, relationship, shared space, or part of self emerges.

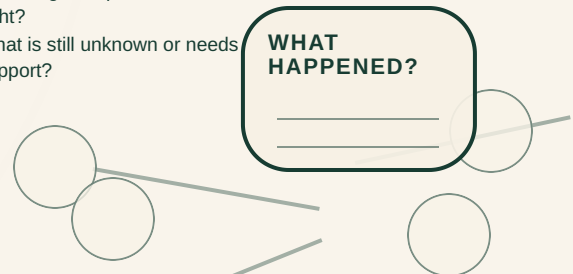
From each party, ask how they might have been affected. Mark uncertainty rather than turning possibility into fact.

From each impact, ask what might help make this more right, safer, or more workable. Record possibilities, not promises.

Decide what needs more information, whose voice is missing, what support is needed, and what protocol or readiness step comes next.

QUESTIONS TO HOLD

Who or what may have been affected?
How might the impact be showing up?
What might help make this more right?
What is still unknown or needs support?



Build branches only as people, relationships, shared spaces, impacts, questions, or possible next steps emerge. The participant and adult determine the map.

A CONVERSATIONAL IMPACT WEB

“Here is what happened. Who is feeling the effects? How might it be showing up for them? Where are we now? What would a better next point look like? What is one move that could help us get there?”

A quick map opens reflection and identifies a next step; it does not stand in for a completed repair process.

RELATIONSHIP AND NEXT-STEP MAPPING

Use the same open mapping process for a strained relationship: name where the relationship is now, the relationship the participant hopes for, what may be getting in the way, one possible next move, available support, and a check-in point. Keep this variation separate from incident accountability so participants are not pushed to accept blame simply because a relationship needs attention.

PART IV

PRACTICAL LANGUAGE AND TOOLS

Try these as starting points, not formulas. Different words will work for different people, relationships, cultures, communication needs, and situations. Educators and students should rewrite them into language they can say honestly.

RESTORATIVE LANGUAGE, FOR EDUCATORS. Adaptable openings, questions, and structures for community-building, repair, and reentry. Serious harm, safety concerns, and complex conferences require appropriate school protocols and trained support.

FAMILY AND GUARDIAN LANGUAGE, FOR EDUCATORS. Possible openings for first contact, good news, difficult information, partnership, attendance, access, and follow-through.

SAY IT BETTER, FOR STUDENTS. Starting points for boundaries, pressure, conflict, help-seeking, strong feelings, and online situations. Unsafe moments are get-an-adult moments.



30-MINUTE PD • MODULE 4

Practical Language

Focus: Use restorative, family/guardian, and student-facing language as adaptable openings rather than formulas.

30 MINUTES: Connect 3 • Understand 6 • Experience 4 • Practice 8 • Apply + Plan 7 • Close 2

Practice: Choose one difficult conversation. Rewrite the opening in your own voice, rehearse it, receive feedback on tone and clarity, then try a second version.

Follow up: Use one prepared opening in an authentic conversation and note what changed when the words met the real relationship and context.

RESTORATIVE SCRIPTS

Repair creates an opportunity to teach and practice what a consequence alone may not address.

WHAT THESE ARE FOR

Restorative practice includes proactive community-building as well as responses to harm. Relationship and shared expectations developed before conflict may create stronger conditions for later reflection and repair.

One source framework is Wachtel and McCold's Social Discipline Window, which organizes responses using support and limit-setting and advocates working with people rather than acting only to, for, or around them. Dorothy Vaandering's Relationship Window adds an important power-aware critique: restorative language can still become controlling if adults do not examine whose voice and needs shape the process.

This collection offers possible language and basic structures for circles, brief repair conversations, conferences, and reentry. Adapt freely. Do not use a script to press for disclosure, bypass readiness, or conduct a serious-harm process beyond your training and role.

Teach It Better is an independent educator project and is not affiliated with the IIRP. These pages are not a substitute for trained facilitation. Follow mandated-reporting duties and school protocols for safety, abuse, harassment, discrimination, threats, self-harm, trauma disclosure, or other serious concerns; involve the appropriate counselor, administrator, safeguarding lead, or emergency support.

1 • CIRCLE LANGUAGE AT A GLANCE

Use circles for community-building and learning only when the purpose, relationships, preparation, and conditions support participation. A prompt list is not facilitator training. Detailed planning, circle design, openings and closings, and serious-harm processes belong in the Teach It Better Facilitator Guide and in the full Circle Forward resource.

POSSIBLE AGREEMENTS TO DEVELOP TOGETHER

One person speaks at a time; everyone else listens.

Speak from your own experience rather than for someone else.

Passing is allowed. A participant may ask to return to a prompt later.

Explain privacy limits and safety responsibilities before personal sharing begins.



Source note. This orientation is informed by Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Kay Pranis, *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community* (revised edition, 2020), and Kay Pranis, *The Little Book of Circle Processes*. Consult the complete sources and appropriate training for facilitation practice.

RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

2 · RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

These questions are informed by established restorative-question traditions, including IIRP practitioner materials. Use only the questions that fit the situation, ask with curiosity rather than as an interrogation, and allow time or another communication format. For the originating materials and formal training, consult the source organizations.

WHEN SOMEONE HAS CAUSED HARM

What happened?

What was happening for you then? What are you thinking about now?

Who has been affected, and how?

What might help address the impact or move this closer to right?

WHEN SOMEONE HAS BEEN HARMED

What was that like for you?

What has been the hardest part?

What do you need to feel okay moving forward?

What would help now, and what would you want considered in any repair?

Affective statements can describe observation and impact without assigning a character label. One possible frame is: "When ____ happened, I felt/noticed ____ because ____." This may create more room for response than "You're disrespectful," but tone, timing, relationship, and cultural context still matter.

Wachtel, T., & McCold, P., International Institute for Restorative Practices (restorative questions, affective statements) · iirp.edu

3 · A BRIEF RESTORATIVE CHECK-IN

For a brief private check-in when the incident, relationship, and student readiness make that appropriate. A short conversation may open repair; it may not complete it.

CONNECT. "Can we talk privately for a moment? I want to understand what happened before we decide the next step."

GET CURIOUS. "What was going on for you?"

NAME THE IMPACT. "Here's what I noticed, and who it affected."

ASK FOR REPAIR. "What would make this right?"

LOOK FORWARD. "What's our plan if it comes up again?"

Check readiness. If either person is highly activated, prioritize safety and regulation and return later when possible. Do not require perfect calm as a condition for being heard.

4 • REPAIR READINESS AND LEARNING REFLECTION

Adapted from the Restorative Readiness Rubric created by Justin Hoy, RPS.

Its first purpose is to reduce the risk of causing additional harm by attempting a repair process before the people, plan, timing, or supports are ready. Use it when preparing peer-to-peer, peer-to-adult, adult-to-peer, adult-to-adult, conference, or circle-based repair. Its second purpose is instructional: notice the social-emotional skills and supports that can be modeled, taught, practiced, or strengthened while preparing for repair.

Use this as a planning conversation, not a score or label. It should never be used to require forgiveness, agreement, reconciliation, or face-to-face contact. Readiness can vary by person, role, relationship, harm, setting, culture, communication needs, power, and point in time.

QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE

What happened, and what were you feeling then?

How have you been feeling since?

Do you feel safe now? What would increase safety?

What has been hardest?

What do you need before any next conversation?

Would a conversation, another communication format, more preparation, or no direct contact be appropriate now?

SEL MARKERS TO NOTICE AND TEACH

Look for developing capacity in perspective-taking; empathy and compassion; awareness of strengths and support needs; self-management; respectful communication; community-impact awareness; and responsible decision-making. These are skills adults can model, teach, scaffold, and revisit—not traits a person either has or lacks.

A SITUATIONAL READINESS GUIDE

NOT READY FOR A RESTORATIVE NEXT STEP YET

Continue safety planning, regulation, listening, and processing.

DEVELOPING UNDERSTANDING

Some reflection is possible; additional preparation, skill practice, or support may help.

GROWING READINESS

The person can engage with parts of impact, needs, perspective, or repair; plan accommodations and clarify choices.

READY FOR THE PROPOSED PROCESS

The person understands the purpose and limits, can participate with available supports, and accepts the next restorative step within school protocols.

ADULT CHECK. Readiness is not agreement with the adult's account. A person may be able to reflect and still dispute facts, decline direct contact, need an advocate, or prefer writing, shuttle dialogue, or another repair pathway. For adult-to-adult or adult-to-student processes, assess the adult's readiness, power, regulation, and accountability as carefully as anyone else's. Reassess rather than treating one conversation as a permanent label.

FAMILY AND GUARDIAN SCRIPTS

Family communication is part of the relationship, not merely notice after a problem.

TRY IT

Each card offers words to try, why they may help, and what they may open. Replace the brackets with accurate names and details, adjust for culture and communication needs, and use language you can say honestly. Listen as much as you speak.

For families who prefer another language or communication mode, follow school procedures for timely language access and qualified interpretation. Do not rely on the student or another child to interpret sensitive school communication.

FIRST CONTACT AND GOOD NEWS

When possible, make early contact that is not connected to a problem. Familiarity and follow-through may make later communication easier.

THE VERY FIRST CALL HOME

“Hi, I’m [NAME], [STUDENT]’s teacher. I’m calling with something good. I wanted you to hear from me when it isn’t a problem.”

WHY TRY IT. Makes contact before the relationship is carrying a problem.

THE HOPE. The family has one more reason not to assume that every school call means trouble.

CATCHING THEIR KID BEING GREAT

“I wanted you to know [STUDENT] did [SPECIFIC THING] today. That took real character.”

WHY TRY IT. Specific information is more useful than a general compliment.

THE HOPE. The family hears specific information about the student beyond concerns and corrections.



THE HARD CONVERSATION

Lead with care, accurate facts, an invitation for the family’s perspective, and possible next steps. Partnership cannot be scripted into existence, but the opening can make room for it.

OPENING A TOUGH CALL

“I’m calling because I care about how [STUDENT] is doing, and I need your help with something.”

WHY TRY IT. Starts with shared concern instead of opening with blame.

THE HOPE. The opening leaves room for the family member to listen and respond.

REPORTING AN INCIDENT

“Here’s what happened, here’s what we did, and here’s what we’re hoping to do together.”

WHY TRY IT. Separates what is known from what still needs to be understood and decided.

THE HOPE. The conversation stays focused on accurate information and next steps.

WHEN A PARENT IS UPSET

WHEN A STUDENT IS STRUGGLING

“[STUDENT] is capable. Right now something’s getting in the way, and I want to figure out what. With you.”

WHY TRY IT. Keeps the student’s capability in view while naming a current problem.

THE HOPE. The conversation turns toward solutions.

DELIVERING A CONSEQUENCE

“A consequence is part of the school’s response. I also want us to be clear about the skill, repair, support, and return we are working toward with [STUDENT].”

WHY TRY IT. Connects the school response to learning, repair, support, and return.

THE HOPE. The family understands how the response connects to accountability and learning, even if questions remain.

NAMING A PATTERN EARLY

“I’m starting to see a pattern, and I’d rather get ahead of it together now than wait.”

WHY TRY IT. An early pattern notice gives the team more time to understand and respond.

THE HOPE. You build a plan before it escalates.

A FAMILY MEMBER IS UPSET ON THE PHONE

“I hear that you are concerned about [STUDENT]. I want to understand your perspective and talk through what we know and what happens next.”

WHY TRY IT. Names the concern and makes room for the family member’s perspective.

THE HOPE. Both people can slow the exchange enough to hear the concern.

A FAMILY MEMBER QUESTIONS THE SCHOOL’S ACCOUNT

“It is possible we missed something. Help me understand what you and [STUDENT] are seeing.”

WHY TRY IT. Allows for the possibility that the school does not yet have the full picture.

THE HOPE. You learn what the family member believes the school has missed.

YOU AND THE FAMILY DISAGREE ABOUT RESPONSIBILITY

“We both want the same thing: for [STUDENT] to be successful. Here’s what I’ll do, and here’s where I need you.”

WHY TRY IT. Names a shared goal and makes each person’s next step clearer.

THE HOPE. Each person can name what they will do next, even if agreement is incomplete.

An upset family member may be protecting, questioning, grieving, frustrated, or responding to prior experience with schools. Listen for the concern without presuming its cause.

YOU DON’T HAVE AN ANSWER

“That’s a fair question, and I don’t want to guess. Let me find out and call you back by [TIME].”

WHY TRY IT. Avoids filling uncertainty with information that may be wrong.

THE HOPE. Your follow-through shows that uncertainty does not have to become guessing or avoidance.

PARTNERSHIP AND PLANS

Families hold essential knowledge about their children. Educators also hold information from school. Ask, compare perspectives, and make the plan specific.

ASKING FOR A HOME STRATEGY

“What works at home when [SITUATION] happens? I’d like to line up with you.”

WHY TRY IT. Invites knowledge from home without assuming that school and home are the same setting.

THE HOPE. You learn what has helped in another setting and decide what may transfer to school.

SETTING UP A CHECK-IN

“Can we set a quick weekly text, so you’re never surprised?”

WHY TRY IT. Regular contact may reduce surprises and make adjustments easier.

THE HOPE. Fewer surprises and a more useful pattern of follow-through.

OPENING A CONFERENCE

“Let’s start with what’s going well, then the growth area, then the plan.”

WHY TRY IT. A clear structure lets people know what will be discussed and when.

THE HOPE. The group can return to the structure when the conversation becomes difficult.

CLOSING ON A PLAN

“Here’s what we each agreed to do, and I’ll check in on [DATE].”

WHY TRY IT. Turns a broad agreement into named actions and follow-through.

THE HOPE. Each person can restate the next step and when follow-through will be checked.

ATTENDANCE AND ACCESS

Missed classes can have many causes, including access barriers, health, caregiving, disengagement, conflict, avoidance, or choice. Begin with curiosity, follow attendance procedures, and address barriers the school can influence.

THE ATTENDANCE CALL

“I noticed [STUDENT] has missed some [CLASS]. Is everything okay? What’s getting in the way?”

WHY TRY IT. Begins by checking for barriers rather than assuming a cause.

THE HOPE. You learn more about the barriers, choices, or supports connected to the absences.

RE-ENGAGING A DISENGAGED FAMILY

“I’m not calling to lecture. I’m calling because [STUDENT] matters and we miss them when they’re out.”

WHY TRY IT. Communicates concern without pretending that attendance procedures do not apply.

THE HOPE. The contact communicates concern and leaves a clearer path for the next conversation.

WORKING ACROSS LANGUAGE OR CULTURE

“I want to make sure I understand you well. Would it help to have an interpreter join us?”

WHY TRY IT. Checks communication access and follows school procedures for qualified interpretation.

THE HOPE. The family member can understand, respond, and participate directly.

SAY IT BETTER

These words are starting points. Change them until they sound like you.

ONE RULE FIRST. If someone is getting hurt, talks about hurting themselves, or you feel unsafe, that is a get-an-adult moment, not a handle-it-yourself one.

Each card names a situation and offers words to try, why they may help, and what they may open. They are not magic lines, and another person may still react badly. Use your own words, notice safety and power, and ask an adult for help when the situation is bigger than a peer response.

For teachers and advisors: post these, hand them out, or run one card per advisory. They pair with the classroom Better Moves archive at the-teach-it-better.com.

A Teach It Better resource, an independent educator project. These are general communication tips, not a replacement for talking with a trusted adult or a counselor when something serious is going on.



BOUNDARIES AND ASKING TO STOP

A FRIEND KEEPS TEASING YOU ABOUT THE SAME THING

“I know you’re joking, but it’s actually getting to me. Can you drop it?”

WHY TRY IT. Names the impact and gives the other person a clear request.

THE HOPE. They stop, and you stay friends.

SOMEONE KEEPS GRABBING YOUR STUFF OR PHONE

“That’s mine. Please ask first.”

WHY TRY IT. States the boundary simply and calmly instead of grabbing it back.

THE HOPE. They respect your space and it doesn’t become a fight.

A JOKE ABOUT YOU HAS STOPPED BEING FUNNY

“That one’s not funny to me. Let’s leave it.”

WHY TRY IT. Makes the boundary clear without pretending the joke is fine.

THE HOPE. The joke dies and you keep your dignity.

A FRIEND KEEPS INTERRUPTING YOU

“Let me finish my thought, then I want to hear yours.”

WHY TRY IT. Asks for fairness without blaming them.

THE HOPE. Each person gets a turn to finish a thought.

SAYING NO TO PRESSURE

Saying no is a skill. Keep it short and calm. You do not owe a big reason.

SOMEONE OFFERS YOU A VAPE OR SOMETHING TO TRY

“Nah, I’m out. You do you.”

WHY TRY IT. A short, judgment-free no keeps it from turning into a debate. If the pressure keeps up or you feel unsafe, tell a trusted adult.

THE HOPE. You’re out of it without making enemies.

THEY SAY EVERYONE’S DOING IT

“Maybe, but I’m not everyone.”

WHY TRY IT. Reframes the pressure with a little humor so it loses its grip.

THE HOPE. The line lands and the pressure eases.

SAYING NO TO PRESSURE

YOU'RE PRESSURED TO HELP SOMEONE CHEAT

"I can't, but I'll study with you if you want."

WHY TRY IT. Says no and offers a real alternative, so it's not just a rejection.

THE HOPE. You keep your integrity and the friendship.

YOU'RE DARED TO DO SOMETHING RISKY

"I'm not doing that, but I'm still here."

WHY TRY IT. Refuses the dare without abandoning the group.

THE HOPE. You stay safe and stay included.

FRIENDS WANT YOU TO SKIP CLASS

"I can't miss this one. Catch you after."

WHY TRY IT. Simple and quick, no lecture, no judgment of them.

THE HOPE. You make your choice without adding a lecture.

REPAIR AFTER CONFLICT

People make mistakes. Repair means naming what happened and following through on what comes next.

YOU MESSED UP AND WANT TO TRULY APOLOGIZE

"I was wrong about that. I'm sorry, and here's what I'll do differently."

WHY TRY IT. A real apology names the specific thing and the fix, not just my bad.

THE HOPE. Trust starts to rebuild.

RIGHT AFTER A FIGHT WITH A FRIEND

"Can we talk when we're both calm? I don't want to leave it like this."

WHY TRY IT. Asks for repair without reopening the fight while you're both hot.

THE HOPE. You get a calmer reset later.

YOU SAID SOMETHING BEHIND THEIR BACK

"You probably heard what I said. It wasn't fair, and I own it."

WHY TRY IT. Names your part without adding excuses or waiting to be confronted.

THE HOPE. You take the air out of the rumor.

SOMEONE APOLOGIZED AND YOU STILL NEED TIME

"Thanks for saying that. I still need some time before I know what I'm ready for."

WHY TRY IT. Honest about both the hurt and the hope.

THE HOPE. Space, without a breakup.

RECONNECTING AFTER YOU'VE DRIFTED APART

"I've missed hanging out. Want to do something this week?"

WHY TRY IT. A small, specific invite is easy to say yes to.

THE HOPE. The door reopens.

STANDING UP

These words are starting points. Change them until they sound like you.

You do not have to fix everything. A small move may interrupt harm or help someone reach support.

SOMEONE IS GETTING PICKED ON

“Hey, come sit with us.”

WHY TRY IT. Offers the person an exit without requiring a peer confrontation. If the harm is serious or continues, involve an adult.

THE HOPE. The target gets an exit and the moment breaks.

A RUMOR IS SPREADING

“I’m not passing that on.”

WHY TRY IT. Refusing to repeat it starves the rumor of fuel.

THE HOPE. It loses momentum.

SOMEONE IS BEING LEFT OUT

“We’ve got room. Want in?”

WHY TRY IT. A direct invitation offers a concrete opening without requiring the excluded person to ask.

THE HOPE. The person has a concrete way into the group.

YOU WITNESSED SOMETHING THAT WASN’T OKAY

“I saw what happened, and I don’t think it was okay.”

WHY TRY IT. Naming it matters, and reporting real harm to an adult matters more.

THE HOPE. The truth gets out, and help comes if it’s needed.

ASKING FOR HELP

Asking for help is a skill. Use it before the situation becomes yours to carry alone.

YOU’RE LOST IN CLASS

“I didn’t get that part. Can you show me again?”

WHY TRY IT. Asking is a skill, not a weakness.

THE HOPE. You get unstuck.

YOU NEED A BREAK BEFORE YOU LOSE IT

“I need two minutes to reset. Can I step out?”

WHY TRY IT. Naming the need gets you the space before things boil over.

THE HOPE. You come back regulated.

BIG FEELINGS

Strong feelings happen. These lines may help you name a need, pause, or ask for support.

YOU'RE MAD AT A FRIEND

"I'm frustrated and I don't want to say something I'll regret. Can we talk later?"

WHY TRY IT. Pausing protects the friendship from words you can't take back.

THE HOPE. You handle it without a blowup.

YOU NEED SPACE WITHOUT HURTING FEELINGS

"I'm not mad. I just need some quiet time. I'll find you later."

WHY TRY IT. Names that it's not about them.

THE HOPE. Space, without hurt feelings.

ONLINE AND GROUP CHATS

The screen makes it easy to pile on. These keep you out of it.

A GROUP CHAT TURNS MEAN

"Not into this. I'm muting it for now."

WHY TRY IT. Steps away from the pile-on without trying to settle it inside the chat.

THE HOPE. You pause your participation and keep the conflict from gaining another reply.

YOU'RE ASKED TO SHARE SOMETHING PRIVATE

"That's not mine to send."

WHY TRY IT. A clean refusal protects everyone, including you.

THE HOPE. You stay out of it.

WHEN TO GET AN ADULT

Some things are not yours to handle alone. Telling a trusted adult is the brave move, not snitching.

Someone's getting hurt, talks about hurting themselves, or you feel unsafe:

"This is bigger than us. Let's tell [a trusted adult] right now."

WHY TRY IT. Some things are not a peer fix. Getting an adult is the brave move.

THE HOPE. The right help arrives.

Post your building's counselor, nurse, and main office next to this card, so the trusted adult has a name and a room number on it.

PART V

YOUTH PARTNERSHIP AND APPLIED REPAIR

Learning through rehearsal.

Students do not only need language explained to them. They need supported opportunities to examine it, change it, try it, receive feedback, and decide where it might fit in real life.

Performance, role-play, and youth-created projects can provide that rehearsal. They do not guarantee behavior change, and they should not be presented as a substitute for instruction, counseling, safety response, or a real repair process.



30-MINUTE PD • MODULE 6

Youth Partnership, Rehearsal, and Repair Readiness

Focus: Use supported rehearsal and meaningful student choice while protecting safety, role boundaries, readiness, and the option not to perform or disclose.

30 MINUTES: Connect 3 • Understand 6 • Experience 4 • Practice 8 • Apply + Plan 7 • Close 2

Practice: Pause a fictionalized scene at the decision point. Compare two possible next moves and identify what raised or lowered pressure.

Follow up: Use one rehearsal or youth-choice structure and note what students changed, rejected, or made more usable.

LEARNING THROUGH REHEARSAL

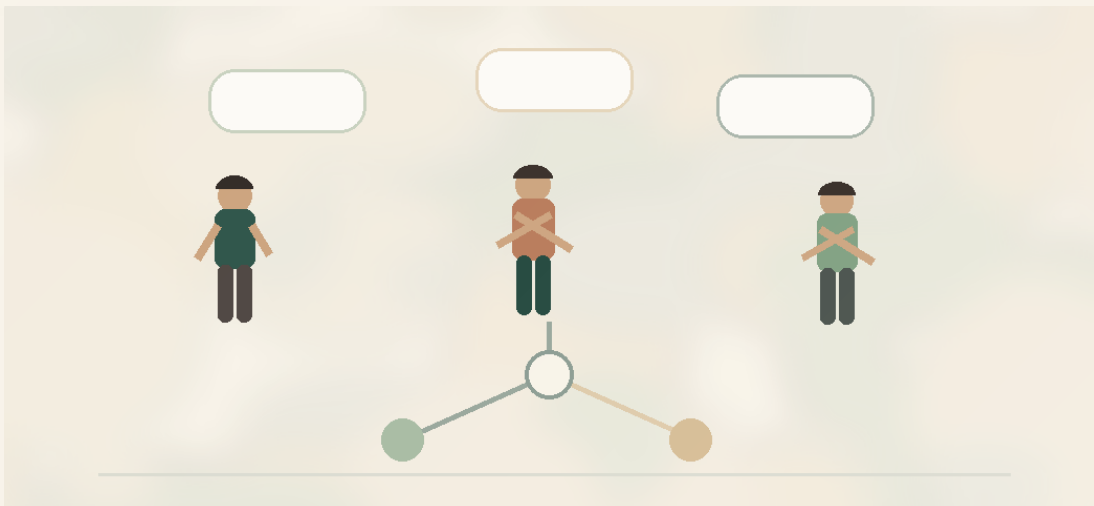
A scene makes a response visible. Rehearsal gives students a chance to try it with support. Reflection helps them notice what felt usable, what did not, and what they would change. Transfer happens later, when a related situation appears and the student recognizes another response they can use.

During rehearsal, pause at the decision point rather than waiting for the scene to end. Ask, “What is each person noticing right now?” “What raised the pressure?” and “What could change the next ten seconds?” Then let students try more than one response. The learning is in comparing the choices, not performing a perfect script.

YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

Calling an activity youth-led does not make it a youth-adult partnership. Students need meaningful choices about the issue, language, roles, audience, format, revision, and whether a piece should be performed at all.

Adults still carry responsibility for safety, access, logistics, accurate information, school protocols, and follow-through. Shared work does not mean equal power; it means adults use their power transparently and make room for real student decision-making.



FOUR COMMITMENTS

CHOICE

Participation, role selection, personal disclosure, and performance boundaries are discussed rather than assumed.

DIGNITY

No student or group becomes a stereotype, cautionary tale, villain, diagnosis, or public example.

ACCURACY

Health and prevention claims are checked against current authoritative sources and localized carefully.

SUPPORT

Adults plan for disclosures, accessibility, language needs, emotional activation, mandated reporting, and a clear route to help.

THE LEARNING CYCLE

CHOOSE AND QUESTION. Why this issue, for this group, now? Who is affected and whose perspective is missing?

CO-CREATE AND CHECK. Students revise the language; adults check safety, facts, representation, and protocol.

REHEARSE AND NOTICE. Practice the move, pause it, try another version, and notice the role of audience, power, timing, and relationship.

DEBRIEF WITHOUT FORCING DISCLOSURE. Discuss the scene and its choices. Students may pass or respond in another format.

ADAPT AND TRANSFER. Name where the move might help, where it might not, and what support would be needed in a real situation.

FORMAT MATTERS. The debrief does not always need to be a circle. A written reflection, paired conversation, fishbowl, rehearsal reset, or anonymous response may be a better fit.

HOW ADULTS PREVENT THE ACTIVITY FROM CAUSING HARM

- Do not assign a student a role because it resembles their identity, history, behavior, disability, family situation, or known experience.
- Do not ask students to reenact an unresolved real incident involving people in the room.
- Preview content and support routes. For serious harm, mental health, abuse, harassment, substance use, or trauma, involve appropriately trained staff and follow school protocols.
- Separate educational role-play from an actual restorative process. A performance cannot establish facts, secure consent, make an agreement, or complete repair for real people.
- Check the adult role too. Youth-adult partnership includes adult willingness to hear critique, revise the plan, own impact, and stop an activity that is not safe or useful.

THE COMPANION SCENE LIBRARY

The complete working library contains twenty-five scenes. Fifteen explore prevention and peer communication; ten rehearse parts of repair and return. The library now lives as a separate Teach It Better Youth Partnership Performance and Repair Toolkit so the handbook can explain the approach without becoming a facilitator script.

PREVENTION AND PERFORMANCE

- 01 · The First Puff · Vaping & Nicotine
- 02 · Harmless Water Vapor · Vaping & Nicotine
- 03 · The Algorithm Knows · Vaping & Nicotine
- 06 · Everyone's Doing It · Social Norms
- 08 · Group Chat · Online Life
- 11 · New Kid · Belonging
- 14 · The Secret · Trusted Adults
- 15 · Asking Is Strong · Asking for Help

REPAIR AND LEARNING

- 16 · The Hallway Repair · Brief restorative chat
- 17 · The Circle, Demonstrated · Circles
- 18 · The Conference · The Conference
- 19 · Reentry Day, Twice · Reentry
- 20 · Apology, Side by Side · Apology
- 23 · I Laughed Too · Bystander Repair
- 24 · The Adult Goes First · Student-Teacher Repair
- 25 · Follow-Up Check-In · Closing the Loop

SUBSTANCE-MISUSE PREVENTION AND LOCAL PARTNERSHIP

Substance-misuse prevention also involves belonging, decision-making, help-seeking, communication, practice, and transfer. The rehearsal structures in this section can help students practice those skills alongside—not in place of—health education, counseling, prevention work, and school or community supports.

A strong local implementation may include a prevention coalition, regional prevention partner, public-health professional, school health educator, counselor, or student-support team.

Partners can help interpret local data, verify health information, identify protective and risk factors, prepare adults and youth, connect students with support, and evaluate the work.



Partners may also help carry or fund implementation, but partnership, co-branding, and funding should be discussed rather than assumed. Youth partnership should remain meaningful; students are not simply messengers for an adult-created campaign.

STRATEGY INDEX AND QUICK REFERENCE

Use this index to find the part of the handbook that matches the work in front of you.

A DIFFICULT MOMENT IS BEGINNING

Start with Part I: the five phases and Five Principles.

A STUDENT IS NOT READY TO REFLECT

Use Part III: the Consequence Continuum and conversation case.

YOU NEED TO UNDERSTAND IMPACT

Use the Impact Web, intent-and-impact sheet, or conversational version.

PEERS OR ADULTS ARE PREPARING FOR REPAIR

Check readiness first. Use the facilitator readiness tool when the repair is complex or could cause more harm.

YOU ARE PLANNING PROFESSIONAL LEARNING

Use the Facilitator Guide and the Learning and Assessment packet.

YOU NEED LANGUAGE FOR A CONVERSATION

Go to Part IV: restorative, family, and student-facing language.

A CONSEQUENCE NEEDS A LEARNING PURPOSE

Use contribution-based repair and the Repair-to-Transfer cycle in Part III.

A STUDENT IS RETURNING

Use the Reentry Principle, reentry plan, and accountability conversation frame.

STUDENTS ARE REHEARSING PREVENTION OR REPAIR

Use Part V and the Youth Partnership Toolkit.

LEARNING AND ASSESSMENT

Detailed quizzes, application responses, answer keys, practice trackers, rubrics, and completion records are in the separate Learning and Assessment Packet.

The larger purpose is transfer: noticing a real situation, selecting a proportionate response, trying it, studying what happened, and adjusting the next attempt.

LEARNING SEQUENCE

30-minute use. In a short PD block, narrow the outcome and protect practice and application. Follow Up happens after the session, not as a rushed closing activity.

3 min **CONNECT.** Name a real situation and what makes it difficult.

6 min **UNDERSTAND.** Examine the idea, evidence, boundaries, and school context.

4 min **EXPERIENCE.** See or participate in a model, example, or scene.

8 min **PRACTICE.** Rehearse language and decisions with feedback.

5 min **APPLY.** Use one move in an authentic setting.

2 min **PLAN.** Identify conditions, supports, and evidence to notice.

Between sessions **FW UP.** Return to the attempt, learn from it, and adjust.

ASSESSMENT IS NOT A READINESS LABEL

Knowledge checks are for educator learning. The Consequence Continuum and Repair Readiness and Learning Reflection are not tests to score students, diagnose character, compel an apology, or force direct repair. Readiness is contextual and can change across people, settings, incidents, and time.

COMPLETION AND CREDIT. Teach It Better does not issue credentials. Contact hours, continuing education, or recertification credit are determined by the school, district, provider, or licensing body.

SOURCES AND NOTES

ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ATTRIBUTION

Teach It Better is written from two decades of work with young people and educators in behavior intervention, prevention and youth empowerment, restorative practice, and school leadership in Vermont. The perspective is that of a working dean of students.

Relevant training includes Restorative Practices I-III, Life Space Crisis Intervention, CPI, and Therapeutic Crisis Intervention. Teach It Better is an independent educator project and is not affiliated with the organizations or school systems cited in this handbook. Established models are credited to their originators.

The references are organized by the claims and practices they support. Named frameworks are attributed to their originators, and evidence is described within the limits of the cited study or source.

Source notes distinguish definitions, practitioner guidance, empirical findings, and Teach It Better's own synthesis. A citation supports the claim attached to it; it is not evidence for every use of the larger framework.

Links and public data were accessed in August 2026. Time-sensitive public data may change after publication.

1 • TRAUMA-INFORMED FOUNDATION

Trauma-informed practice runs through the handbook. These sources define the approach and translate it into school settings.

THE DEFINITIONAL SOURCE

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: SAMHSA, 2014. library.samhsa.gov
Supports the six principles used in this handbook and SAMHSA's organizational implementation domains.

TRANSLATING IT INTO SCHOOLS

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Creating, Supporting, and Sustaining Trauma-Informed Schools: A System Framework. NCTSN, 2017. nctsn.org

Supports the Four Rs and the tiered school-system framework for trauma-informed practice.

U.S. Department of Education, National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package. safesupportivelearning.ed.gov
Provides a free federal training and implementation package for trauma-sensitive school and district work.

Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, Harvard Law School and Massachusetts Advocates for Children. Helping Traumatized Children Learn. traumasensitiveschools.org
Provides a whole-school framework for trauma-sensitive learning environments and school operations.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. nctsn.org
Provides educator-facing information about child traumatic stress and school support.

Treatment and Services Adaptation Center. Resiliency, Hope and Wellness in Schools. traumaawareschools.org
Provides school implementation resources and Psychological First Aid for Schools materials.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR BEHAVIOR

Felitti, V. J., Anda, R. F., Nordenberg, D., Williamson, D. F., Spitz, A. M., Edwards, V., Koss, M. P., & Marks, J. S. "Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, vol. 14, no. 4, 1998, pp. 245-258.

Foundational ACE study documenting associations between adverse childhood experiences and later health outcomes. It does not support inferring an individual student's ACE history from behavior.

Venet, Alex Shevrin. *Equity-Centered Trauma-Informed Education*. W. W. Norton, 2021. ISBN 978-0393714739.

Supports an equity-centered approach to trauma-informed education and attention to school-created harm.

THE ADULT SIDE

Figley, Charles R., ed. *Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder in Those Who Treat the Traumatized*. Brunner/Mazel, 1995.

Provides a foundation for understanding secondary traumatic stress among helping professionals.

Stamm, B. H. *The Concise ProQOL Manual*, 2nd ed. proqol.org
Provides the Professional Quality of Life measure addressing compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. Secondary Traumatic Stress Core Competencies for Trauma-Informed Support and Supervision. nctsn.org

Describes competencies for trauma-informed support and supervision related to secondary traumatic stress.

VERMONT-SPECIFIC

Vermont Department of Mental Health. Trauma and Schools. mentalhealth.vermont.gov

Supports. The state's curated school-facing trauma resource list, including the Vermont Child Welfare Training Partnership's Fundamentals in Trauma-Informed Practice modules.

Vermont Agency of Education. Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, and Early MTSS. education.vermont.gov
Supports. Vermont integrates trauma-informed and mental-health practice directly into its PBIS and Early MTSS frameworks.

2 • DE-ESCALATION AND THE ACTING-OUT CYCLE

Colvin, Geoffrey, and George Sugai. *Managing Escalating Behavior*. Behavior Associates, 1989.

Supports. The seven-phase acting-out cycle: calm, trigger, agitation, acceleration, peak, de-escalation, recovery.

Colvin, Geoffrey, and Terrance M. Scott. *Managing the Cycle of Acting-Out Behavior in the Classroom*, 2nd ed. Corwin, 2014. ISBN 978-1483374369.

Supports. Timing the adult response to each phase. The peak is for safety; teaching and consequences belong to recovery.

Carr, Edward G., et al. "Positive Behavior Support: Evolution of an Applied Science." *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2002, pp. 4-16.

Supports prevention and intervention before behavior reaches high intensity.

Long, Nicholas, Mary Wood, and Frank Fecser. *Life Space Crisis Intervention*. lsci.org

Supports. The conflict cycle. The adult's reaction can become the next stressor. Provides a useful lens for how an adult response can become part of an escalating conflict cycle.

Goffman, Erving. "On Face-Work." In *Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior*. Anchor, 1967 (originally 1955).

Supports. Face as the public image a person claims in an interaction. Useful for thinking about public status and face concerns during correction.

3 • RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Wachtel, Ted. "Defining Restorative." International Institute for Restorative Practices, 2016. iirp.edu

Supports. The social discipline window. Two axes, control and support. The restorative quadrant is high on both: working with rather than to, for, or around.

Wachtel, Ted, and Paul McCold. "Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual." In Strang, H., & Braithwaite, J., eds., *Restorative Justice and Civil Society*. Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 114-129.

Supports a continuum of restorative responses from informal affective statements to formal conferences.

Costello, Bob, Joshua Wachtel, and Ted Wachtel. *The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators*, 2nd ed. IIRP, 2019. ISBN 978-1934355435.

Supports. The restorative questions, affective statements, circles, and school implementation guidance. One source for the restorative questions adapted into plain language in this handbook.

Braithwaite, John. *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*. Cambridge University Press, 1989. DOI 10.1017/CBO9780511804618.

Develops the distinction between reintegrative and stigmatizing shaming; *Teach It Better* draws on that distinction in the Reentry Principle.

Zehr, Howard. *The Little Book of Restorative Justice: Revised and Updated*. Good Books, 2015. ISBN 978-1680990447.

Supports. The three questions: who has been harmed, what are their needs, whose obligation is it to put things right.

3 • RESTORATIVE PRACTICE • CONTINUED

Pranis, Kay. *The Little Book of Circle Processes: A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking*. Good Books, 2005.

Supports the circle guidelines summarized in the practical language section: speak with the piece, speak from the heart, listen from the heart, trust you will know what to say.

Boyes-Watson, Carolyn, and Kay Pranis. *Heart of Hope: A Guide for Using Peacemaking Circles*. Center for Restorative Justice, Suffolk University, 2010.

Supports. The seven core assumptions, beginning with the true self in everyone is good, wise, and powerful.

Boyes-Watson, Carolyn, and Kay Pranis. *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community*. Living Justice Press, 2015. Provides a school-focused collection of circle designs and guidance.

Vaandering, Dorothy. Revised relationship window scholarship on power dynamics in restorative justice. Offers a critical, power-aware examination of the Social Discipline Window.

Augustine, Catherine H., et al. *Can Restorative Practices Improve School Climate and Curb Suspensions?* RAND Corporation, RR-2840-DOJ, 2018.

Reports a large randomized evaluation of schoolwide restorative practice in Pittsburgh: suspension outcomes and teacher-rated climate improved, while academic outcomes did not improve and declined for some middle-grade students.

4 • PBIS, PRAISE, AND THE RELATIONSHIP RATIO

Center on Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. "What Is PBIS?" U.S. Department of Education technical assistance center. pbis.org

Supports. PBIS as an evidence-based tiered framework built on systems, data, practices, outcomes, and equity.

VT PBIS. Behavioral Supports. pbisvermont.org

Documents a Vermont PBIS practice benchmark for positive-to-corrective feedback. The handbook treats it as local guidance and a reflection prompt, not a universal research threshold.

Caldarella, Paul, Ross A. A. Larsen, Leslie Williams, Howard P. Wills, and Joseph H. Wehby. "Teacher Praise-to-Reprimand Ratios: Behavioral Response of Students at Risk for EBD Compared with Typically Developing Peers." *Education and Treatment of Children*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2019, pp. 447-468.

Reviews research and practice guidance on positive-to-corrective interaction patterns. Ratios are treated as reflection prompts rather than universal measures of relationship quality.

Brophy, Jere. "Teacher Praise: A Functional Analysis." *Review of Educational Research*, vol. 51, no. 1, 1981, pp. 5-32.

Examines the purposes and conditions under which teacher praise may be informative or effective; it does not support treating praise as a universal reward formula.

The IRIS Center, Vanderbilt University. Behavior-specific praise. iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu

Supports. Practitioner guidance on naming the exact behavior to repeat.

Cook, Clayton R., Aria Fiat, Madeline Larson, Christopher Daikos, Tal Slemrod, Elizabeth A. Holland, Andrew J. Thayer, and Tyler Renshaw. "Positive Greetings at the Door: Evaluation of a Low-Cost, High-Yield Proactive Classroom Management Strategy." *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2018, pp. 149-159. DOI 10.1177/1098300717753831.

Supports. Positive greetings at the door improved academic engaged time and reduced disruptive behavior.

Bal, Aydin. "Culturally Responsive Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: A Process-Oriented Framework for Systemic Transformation." *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies*, vol. 40, no. 2, 2018, pp. 144-174. DOI 10.1080/10714413.2017.1417579.

Develops a process-oriented framework for culturally responsive PBIS and systemic attention to disproportionality.

Covey, Stephen R. "The Emotional Bank Account." In *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*. Free Press, 1989.

Source of the deposit-and-withdrawal metaphor adapted as the Relationship Bank Account.

5 • SKILLS, MOTIVATION, AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Greene, Ross W. *Lost at School*. Scribner. Collaborative & Proactive Solutions. livesinthebalance.org

Supports. Kids do well if they can. Challenging behavior as a lagging skill rather than a character trait. Cite as Collaborative & Proactive Solutions, not Collaborative Problem Solving, which now refers to a separate program.

Prochaska, James O., and Carlo C. DiClemente. "Stages and Processes of Self-Change of Smoking: Toward an Integrative Model of Change." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, vol. 51, no. 3, 1983, pp. 390-395. DOI 10.1037/0022-006X.51.3.390.

Included to distinguish the Consequence Continuum from the transtheoretical Stages of Change model. Teach It Better does not claim an educational adaptation of the smoking-cessation stages.

Brown, Brené. *Daring Greatly*. Avery, 2012. ISBN 978-1592407330. See also "Shame vs. Guilt," brenebrown.com, 2013.

Offers accessible practitioner language for distinguishing behavior-focused guilt from identity-focused shame. Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek provide the stronger research source for the distinction used in the text.

Hicks, Donna. *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict*. Yale University Press, 2011. ISBN 978-0300163926.

Supports. The ten essential elements of dignity, and the distinction between dignity, which is inherent, and respect, which is earned.

Kohn, Alfie. "Unconditional Teaching." *Educational Leadership*, vol. 63, no. 1, 2005. alfiekohn.org

Supports. Unconditional regard for the student as a person, independent of performance or behavior.

Kohn, Alfie. *Punished by Rewards*. Houghton Mifflin, 1993. ISBN 978-0395650288.

Presents Kohn's critique of rewards and punishment as controlling practices. The handbook treats this as a position in an educational debate, not a universal empirical conclusion.

Rogers, Carl. "The Necessary and Sufficient Conditions of Therapeutic Personality Change." *Journal of Consulting Psychology*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1957, pp. 95-103.

Clinical source for unconditional positive regard. The handbook uses the person-versus-behavior distinction without treating psychotherapy research as direct evidence for school discipline.

CASEL. The CASEL 5 framework for social and emotional learning. casel.org

Supports. Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making.

Kolb, David A. *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice Hall, 1984.

Supports the experiential learning cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. It is not used here to support fixed learning styles.

Smith, Dominique, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey. *Better Than Carrots or Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management*. ASCD, 2015.

Supports. Classroom-level restorative alternatives to reward-and-punishment management.

6 • CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PRACTICE AND DISCIPLINE EQUITY

Ladson-Billings, Gloria. "Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy." *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 32, no. 3, 1995, pp. 465-491. DOI 10.3102/00028312032003465.

Supports. Academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness.

Gay, Geneva. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*, 3rd ed. Teachers College Press, 2018. ISBN 978-0807758762.

Supports. Teaching through students' own cultural knowledge and frames of reference.

Paris, Django, and H. Samy Alim, eds. *Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies: Teaching and Learning for Justice in a Changing World*. Teachers College Press, 2017. ISBN 978-0807758335.

Supports. Sustaining a student's language and culture rather than asking them to trade it for school.

Skiba, Russell J., et al. Research on racial disproportionality in school discipline. Indiana University Equity Project.

Supports analysis of racial disproportionality and differential discipline. National administrative data also document persistent disparities by race and disability.

U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights. "School Climate and Student Discipline Resources: Know the Data." *ed.gov*, reviewed January 2025.

Documents persistent discipline disparities affecting Black students, other students of color, and students with disabilities through the Civil Rights Data Collection and IDEA data. Disparity alone does not establish a legal violation, but it warrants examination of policy and practice.

Hammond, Zaretta. *Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain*. Corwin, 2015.

Supports. Everyday practitioner language. Useful for teaching the ideas; not the evidence anchor.

7 • PREVENTION AND YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Results from the Annual National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS): 2025 Findings. Published June 2026.

Supports current 2025 youth tobacco-use figures, including past-30-day e-cigarette use and flavored e-cigarette use. Check the current NYTS release when reusing time-sensitive figures.

Vermont Youth Risk Behavior Survey. healthvermont.gov

Supports. Local prevalence data for the social-norms scenes. Always localize the numbers on the cards.

Truth Initiative. EX Program (formerly This is Quitting). truthinitiative.org

Supports free text-message quit-vaping support for young people. National Cancer Institute. Smokefree Teen. teen.smokefree.gov provides free youth-facing quit plans, tools, and information.

UP for Learning. upforlearning.org · Outright Vermont. outrightvt.org · Prevent Child Abuse Vermont. pcavt.org

Provides relevant youth-adult partnership, ally-skill, GSA-support, and protective-factor resources for deeper training and local adaptation.

8 · PROFESSIONAL LEARNING DESIGN

Learning Forward. “Designing Professional Learning That Actually Transforms Practice.” 2025.

Supports. Connected outcomes, relevance, reflection, planning, application, transfer, modeling, collaboration, and attention to adult learners’ physical, social-relational, and cognitive needs.

Robinson, Sheila B. Designing High-Quality Professional Development Programs: A Playbook. Frontline Education, 2020.

Supports. Sustained, collaborative, classroom-focused, job-embedded professional learning with implementation support, feedback, reflection, leadership, and alignment to local goals.

TNTP. Teacher Professional Development Toolbox.

Provides a reference for organizing practical educator resources by audience and purpose; it is not evidence for Teach It Better outcomes.

SCOPE AND INDEPENDENCE. Teach It Better is an independent educator project. It is not affiliated with or endorsed by organizations named in the handbook and is not a substitute for their formal training. Established models are credited to their originators.

APPENDIX

REPRODUCIBLES

Copy freely within your school. Keep the Teach It Better attribution line when sharing beyond your building. If you improve one, send the better version back.

Included here: Intent and Impact Reflection Sheet · Reentry Plan · Accountability Conversation Frame · Blank Impact Web.



A · INTENT AND IMPACT REFLECTION SHEET

For students at Stage 2 moving toward Stage 3. Left column first. The right column can take more than one sitting.

Name:

Date:

Adult partner:

My intent. What I was trying to do, get, avoid, or protect.	The impact. What happened to someone else, in their voice if I can.
1. Right before it happened, I was feeling... _____	1. The person or people affected were... _____
2. What I was trying to do was... _____	2. If they described this moment, they would say... _____
3. What I wish the other person knew about my side... _____	3. One thing that changed for them because of this... _____
Both-things-true sentence: I didn't mean to _____, and it caused _____.	One step toward making it right that I could actually do soon: _____

B • REENTRY PLAN

For students at Stage 4 moving toward Stage 5. Written with the student, not for them.

1. The repair I completed. What, when, and who witnessed it: _____

2. How I want to reenter the class, team, or space, in one sentence: _____

3. My signal to my adult partner if I feel the old pattern starting. A word, a gesture, or a signal card: _____

4. Check-in schedule. A brief check with _____ at _____ for _____ days.

5. What I want people to see from me: _____

C • THE ACCOUNTABILITY CONVERSATION FRAME

Adult-facing. Six beats, in order. Tape it inside a desk drawer.

Open with relationship, not the incident. One genuine, specific line that has nothing to do with the referral.

Ask, do not tell. Walk me through what was happening for you. Then be quiet longer than is comfortable.

Honor intent out loud before naming impact. I believe you. And here is the other true thing.

Ask the restorative core. Who was affected, and what would make it closer to right?

Co-author one next step, sized to the student's stage rather than your timeline.

Close the loop with the follow-up nobody required. That is the deposit.

IMPACT WEB • BLANK MAP

Write or draw what happened in the center. Build branches only as people, groups, relationships, shared spaces, parts of self, impacts, or possible next steps emerge. Mark uncertainty rather than turning possibility into fact.

QUESTIONS TO HOLD

Who or what may have been affected?

How might they have been affected?

What might help make this more right, safer, or more workable?

What is still unknown?

What support or next step is needed?

WHAT HAPPENED?

Add lines, shapes, words, and branches only as they emerge in the conversation. The participant and adult determine the flow.

Readiness, consent, safety, power, developmental needs, and school-based protocols govern what happens next.