



All staff handout

8. Strategies for Collaboration

Trauma-sensitive schools foster collaboration with students and families by using strategies that support their control and empowerment, such as speaking respectfully, ensuring that families and students understand what is happening and can give their opinions, and involving families as partners in decision making related to student needs and plans.

Use this handout to learn strategies for collaborating with students and families that align with core principles of a trauma-sensitive approach.

| Understand Trauma and Its Impact |
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| Consider types of potentially traumatic events that students, families, and the broader community may have experiences. |
| Identify the unique experiences and risk for trauma among particular groups of students and families (e.g., LGBTQ+ youth and their families, youth and families of color, American Indian and Alaskan Native students and families) |
| Be aware of how experiences of trauma may affect student and family engagement. |
| Minimize potential trauma-related triggers in the school environment and in interactions with students and families. |
| Believe Healing Happens in Relationships |
| Build trusting relationships with students and families. |
| Maintain clear and respectful boundaries with students and families. |
| Demonstrate a commitment to maintaining positive relationships with students and families, even during difficult interactions or times of crisis. |
| Model healthy interactions with and for students and their families. |
| Facilitate positive connections between students and staff. |
| Provide skill building that fosters healthy relationships. |
| Support Choice, Control, and Empowerment |
| Support student and family control and choice during all interactions. |
| Focus on student and family skills and strengths. |
| Empower families to be advocates for their children. |
| Involve students and families in creating policies, practices, and programs |
| Ensure Emotional and Physical Safety |
| Ensure the physical environment is safe for students and families. |
| Make sure the physical environment reflects the students and families in the school community |
| Create an environment where students and families feel values and connected. |
| Be consistent, reliable, open, and honest with students and families. |

| Strive for Cultural Competence |
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| Learn about families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for their children. |
| Use a cultural insider to help bridge cultural gaps in communication |
| Create opportunities for students and families to share their stories. |
| Consider cultural factors when meeting with families (e.g., how to greet, what topics may be difficult to address, cultural norms, values, practices, and experiences with the education system). |
| Ensure an assessment process that engages students and families through varied lenses, including family strengths, capacities, cultural heritage, and extended family resources. |
| Verbal and written information is shared and discussed with families in their preferred language. |
| View Students Holistically |
| Understand the relationship between school, family, and community factors and student health and well-being. |
| Incorporate strategies for understanding and coping with trauma into activities with students and families. |

References

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