



# Table of Contents

The School Wellbeing Toolkit is a resource created for teachers and school staff to practice self-care and support the wellbeing of their school community. Each topic card will provide practical strategies and self-care tips for educators. These are meant to be a quick-reference resource but we have more in-depth resources on the Wellbeing4LA Learning Center. To access anytime trainings and other wellbeing resource visit [Wellbeing4LA.org/Schools](http://Wellbeing4LA.org/Schools). The School Wellbeing Toolkit and Wellbeing4LA were created by the DMH + UCLA Public Partnership for Wellbeing.

<b>Engagement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>In the Classroom</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Student &amp; Family Support</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Teacher Support</b>	<b>34</b>

# Engagement



# Make Positive Connection with Students and Caregivers a “Day 1” Priority

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Caregiver, Family & Student Supports

- Create and send a letter or short video of introduction to parents and students at the beginning of the school year. Highlight things about yourself that will likely matter most to parents and students. The goal is to build trust and connection. You do not need to flex your credentials. They're not there to “hire” you.
- Briefly describe why you became a teacher and what excites you about teaching their child.
- Establish a dedicated and confidential classroom-home communication channel that is text message-based.



### Platform Supports

- Text message based apps like Remind allow you to message caregivers and students en masse or individually. Messages from students and caregivers go only to the teacher and cannot be seen by others.

- Create a Flipgrid or other opportunity for students and caregivers to introduce themselves to you.
- Ask them to share something they are really good at or another engaging prompt that will provide you with “good to know” type information.
- Revisit the Flipgrid or similar feedback strategy as a way for students and caregivers to reflect out loud on what’s going well or what’s challenging periodically as the year or the semester progresses. Teachers should do the same reflection and consider making it public to students and caregivers.
- Utilize an “intake” form that allows students and/or caregivers to confidentially let you know about any information, needs, triggers, or sensitivities you should be aware of in providing care and instruction to the student. Think of this as “care instructions.” Teachers should do one for themselves too and share it with students and caregivers as a way to build mutual trust.

Engagement

# Make Positive Connection with Students and Caregivers a “Day 1” Priority



## Self-Care for Teachers

- Text messaging apps do not reveal your personal cell number and can be set to certain hours of the day. The apps also let you funnel the messages to your email if preferred.
- Allowing yourself to be “known” by your students and caregivers encourages them to do the same, which eliminates a lot of the potentially stressful “guesswork” teachers have to do when working with students.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

**“Communicating with my students’ caregivers is nearly impossible because I don’t speak their language.”**

**“My students and their caregivers never read school flyers, emails, etc sent home.”**

- Text message apps often have built-in translation features, which remove language-barriers in classroom-home communications
- Creating your introduction videos using platforms like Google Meet, allow you to easily add subtitles in a variety of languages for greater accessibility
- Text messages are more accessible as most families have access to a cell phone
- Text messages are harder to overlook because of their immediate nature
- Text messaging apps allow you to record and send voice messages, attachments, and links. Students and caregivers can do the same which also makes it equally accessible for those who may lack literacy skills

# Engaging Disengaged Students

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Disengagement is often a symptom of a larger issue

- First, find ways to identify and address the real issue. Ask yourself the following questions:
  - How well do I know my students and their interests beyond academics?
  - How do I find ways to use elements of their interest in how we learn in our classroom?
  - How much of my lesson is me talking?
  - Have my students been explicitly taught the skills I am asking them to use?



### Check-in with students one-on-one prior to teaching

- A handshake, fist bump, or greeting at the door can give you some quick information around how students are feeling at that moment.
- Check-ins allow for a quick opportunity to recognize larger issues.
- Check-in with the whole class (i.e., circle, survey, exit ticket). What would make \_\_\_ more interesting/inviting? Do this consistently and not just once!



### Notice & Track: Is your student always disengaged?

- Get specific: Is it content specific? Time of day? Is it during group or independent work? Is disengagement attention-seeking or avoiding?
- Use information gathered to address specific needs.
- Take time to build relationships with your students. The more you know them, the more you can find authentic, organic ways to pull them into the lesson, discussion, and conversation.



### Know your students and their needs

- Once you have more information on the larger issues, increasing engagement will come directly from what you have learned and understood about your students' needs. What engages one group doesn't necessarily engage another. That's why it is always important to KNOW your students and their specific needs.

Engagement

# Engaging Disengaged Students



## Self-Care for Teachers

- Think of yourself as a learner, when are you most engaged? Least engaged? Why?
- Acknowledge that many times disengagement is not a personal attack against you.
- Remember relationship building takes time, offer yourself space, compassion and understanding as you get to know your students.
- Continue to reflect and incorporate what you learn about your students.



## Resources for Continued Learning

- <https://goalbookapp.com/toolkit/v/strategies>
- <https://udlguidelines.cast.org/>



## Teacher Self Reflection Questions: Consider Bias & Barriers

- How accessible is my lesson (accommodations and modifications)?

- Are students clear on the purpose/objective of the lesson?
- Take into account your students' priorities and realities.
- Is there space for student voice, thinking, real life interaction in this lesson?
- What am I expecting in terms of engagement for my students? Does it look the same for everyone?
- Would I be bored during this lesson?



## Strategies to Support Student Learning

Accommodations: Changing the how of the lesson (i.e. extra time, additional resources, captions for video, graphic organizer, word wall, etc.).

Modifications: Changing the what of the lesson (i.e. different text, different objective, different product etc.).



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

- Engagement should look like \_\_\_\_\_. Engagement doesn't always look or sound the same. Consider the ways you are checking for engagement.
- Engagement ebbs and flows, it doesn't always stay at 100% throughout the whole lesson.
- Calling out perceived disengagement in front of the whole class is never a good idea.

# How to Support Students Struggling with Focus and Sustained Attention

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Check-in and ask for feedback from students

- Ask the class for feedback and follow through on their suggestions, ex: “No, we can’t have recess all day, but what I am getting from this conversation is that we need more breaks, joy, and movement.”
- Check-in with individual students one-on-one to get a better idea of what support looks like for them.



### Adjust lesson pacing, assignments, and timing of activities

- Start with shorter instruction blocks and add time as students build stamina.
- Add in transitions with movement throughout content blocks.
- Allow for students to successfully complete single-step

instructions and tasks before adding more, ex: give one or two math problems at a time instead of a whole worksheet.

- Create multiple opportunities to access instructions. Write lesson objectives in a predictable place on the board, give verbal instructions and a visual example.



### Be consistent with daily routines and procedures

- Allow for flexibility in how and where students complete their work and classroom practices.
- What is the goal of the lesson? Writing, math, literacy? Focus on the content and language objectives and allow students to access them in a way that works for them.
- This may look like writing one paragraph with a round marker for some or one page with a pencil for others; or students may stand at the counter, sit on the floor, or sit in a chair.



It's important to note that when a child exhibits difficulty focusing and sustaining attention, it can be a sign of many different things, such as a learning disorder, ADHD, stress, trauma, anxiety, OCD, and other related disorders. All supports, regardless of origin, must have a culturally responsive and trauma-informed lens.

## Engagement



# How to Support Students Struggling with Focus and Sustained Attention



## Resources for Continued Learning

The Child Mind Institute, at [childmind.org](https://www.childmind.org), contains general information, and information for teachers and schools specifically, on anxiety disorders, ADHD, learning disorders, and more.



## Glossary

**Differentiation:** Adapting instruction, practice, routines, and procedures to meet the individual needs of students

**Trauma-informed:** Care, perspective, practice, and policy that recognizes the complexity and prevalence of trauma and acts accordingly in order to foster safe and empowering spaces and practices



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

**“But my student doesn’t have an IEP or 504.”**

- First, please consider: *Why do I need my student to have written proof in order for me to validate, respect and address their needs?*
- Secondly, there are many barriers to access special education services. While teachers may not be able to address all barriers within the scope of their position, trusting and validating our students’ needs and differentiating in the classroom is a starting point.
- Lastly, not all students struggling with focus require an IEP or 504. For instance, a student struggling to focus because their mom is sick is different than a student with chronic anxiety.

# In the Classroom



# Anti-Racism in the Classroom

## Classroom Practice and Student Support



### Be Reflective

- Our social position shapes our interactions in the classroom and sends implicit messages. As educators, we need to frequently reflect on how our race, gender, sexual orientation, and class are received by our students.



### Be Racially and Culturally Responsive

- Conduct an audit of your curriculum and see if the racial groups represented in your class are also being represented in your course. For example, how many books are your students reading that have a Black female protagonist? Do math problems include names similar to my students'?
- Provide opportunities for students to express culture through class assignments. For example, students could write a short essay on people in their community whom they admire, or students could be assigned to interview community members as experts for a research project.
- Invite community members who reflect the racial-ethnic backgrounds of your students into your classroom. Create opportunities to invite guest lecturers to share their experiences and expertise. For example, an algebra teacher may bring in a local business owner to show how they use algebra to project annual sales.



### Be Data Driven

- Disaggregate your student achievement and behavioral data by race and gender. Explore trends and ensure that subgroups are not being favored, overlooked, or surveilled.



### Be Collaborative

- Parents and guardians must be active members of their children's educational experience. Schools have not been inviting spaces for parents from racially marginalized populations. As educators, it is our responsibility to find out how to best engage parents. Quarterly parent-teacher conferences are not enough.
- Los Angeles County's data shows that Black, Latino, and Indigenous students are disproportionately impacted by many out-of-schools factors (housing and food insecurities, environmental racism, employment discrimination etc.). You cannot resolve these out-of-school factors alone, but you can partner with local Black, Latino, and Indigenous community-based organizations to address these issues.

In the Classroom

# Anti-Racism in the Classroom



## Resources for Continued Learning

- **Books:** Why Race and Culture Matters in Schools, Culturally Responsive Teaching & The Brain, All Students Must Thrive: Transforming Schools to Combat Toxic Stressors and Cultivate Critical Wellness, Why They Hate Us: How Racist Rhetoric Impacts Education, We Want to Do More Than Survive: Abolitionist Teaching and the Pursuit of Educational Freedom



## Glossary

**Institutional Racism:** The specific ways in which institutional policies and practices create disparate outcomes for different racial groups. Institutional racism is normalized through both informal and formal practices and procedures that often seem racially neutral.

**Anti-Racist:** One who supports policies that explicitly address racial disparities within institutions through their actions.

**Racial Equity in Schools:** The condition that would be achieved if students' racial identity no longer predicted how they achieved or were treated in schools.



## Self-Care for Teachers

Teacher self-reflection questions: What power and influence do I hold in my position, and how do I use my power to promote anti-racist policies?



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

*Only White educators can perpetuate explicit or implicit bias.*

All teachers have internalized toxic stereotypes about racially marginalized groups and therefore all teachers are biased by these messages. It is important that teachers, no matter your race, reflect on your positionality and how your bias may impact your interactions with and expectations for students.

*Creating targeted interventions for specific racial groups in schools lead to discrimination towards other groups.* Teachers should set rigorous universal goals for all students. However, targeted intervention acknowledges that the needs for different groups of students to meet those goals differ—targeted interventions promote equitable resources and attention to ensure that all kids achieve.

# Engaging Diverse Learners in Remote and Hybrid-Learning Environments

## Classroom Practice and Student Support



### Be Strategic About Your Use of Digital Platforms

- Using too many online platforms and devices can encourage disengagement and present equity issues in your classroom. So, when it comes to online learning platforms, less is more.
- Reflect on the value-add and assess whether more than one or two platforms is necessary-- consolidate as much as possible.



### Prioritize Building Genuine and Meaningful Relationships with Students & Families

- Actively seek to build a partnership with families by making communication a norm. Part of your practice should include calling every student's home consistently. Share your syllabi with families, let them know ways that they can help support your classroom, and keep a "call tracker" to help hold you accountable and organized.
- Schedule check-ins with your students and make yourself available outside of class.
- Create assignments that will help you get to know your students.
- Allow your students to make meaningful decisions about their classroom, curriculum, and learning environment.



### Employ a Flipped Classroom Model

- Pre-record your lesson and class notes, and have students come to class having already watched the lecture.
- Spend class time having a meaningful discussion, engaging in collaborative problem solving, and applying and building from the lecture.
- Make sure your pre-recorded lectures have clear objectives and agendas, are well-rehearsed videos, effectively model note-taking, and are no more than 10-15 minutes long.



### Organize Students for Written Note Taking

- Research shows that notetaking with paper and pencil is more effective for learning than typing notes.
- Prepare your lesson for formal note-taking with paper and pencil by (1) modeling how to set up your paper for notes (2) being explicit about what notes they should take, where, and how they should be organized and stored and (3) allotting sufficient time for students to take notes.

**In the Classroom**

# Engaging Diverse Learners in Remote and Hybrid-Learning Environments



## Self-Care for Teachers

**As you prepare for another year of teaching, take time to reflect on the following:**

Your personal thoughts and feelings. Ask yourself: *How has this time impacted my life? My mood? How I think about my profession? How do I feel about going back to school?*

Your students and classroom. Ask yourself: *What do I want for my students this year? What is my vision for my classroom? What needs to be in place to make this happen?*

What you need. Ask yourself: *What do I need to plan and prepare? What help do I need, and where can I find it?*

Taking time to reflect will help ensure that you don't misplace your feelings and project unattainable expectations onto others. Further, acknowledging your feelings will help you show grace to yourself, students, and colleagues.



## Glossary

**Bloom's Taxonomy:** A framework for understanding learning objectives, which uses a classification system to distinguish different levels of thinking, learning, and understanding. According to this framework, the lowest levels of learning happen when students are simply tasked with recalling and understanding information. Deeper learning happens when they are tasked with applying and analyzing information. The highest level of learning comes from evaluating and creating information.

# Identify and Assess for Mental Health Conditions in the Classroom

## Classroom Practice and Student Support



### Mental Health Intervention

- Incorporating mental health intervention in the curriculum is essential to support an optimal learning environment for all students.
- Example: Raise awareness of mental health in the schools to normalize that mental health conditions can happen to anyone. Select certain periods throughout the school year to support mental health awareness. In addition, incorporate mental health education in the curriculum. Include students, teachers, administration to create a supportive community.
- Create a positive and supportive environment, develop a trusting relationship with open communication, and monitor changes in students, including thoughts, behavior, and mood.
- Example: “Hello, class. Before we get started let’s check-in with everyone in the class. I would like to hear from everyone in the class. Is there anyone that would like to begin?”
- Early identification is key.
- Students needing a further mental health assessment may start in the classroom and extend to school social work support, family/caregivers, community agencies.
- Once a student is identified as needing some sort of mental health intervention, it is essential to connect the student to support. Example: “Student, how are you doing? I noticed a change in your focus in class and wanted to check in with you.”

- Initial assessment can begin in the classroom, but a referral to a social worker or a community mental health agency is essential.
- Interventions should match the student’s needs.
- Everyone, including families, are recommended to be involved.
- Counseling may include family meetings and therapy, as the problem may be tied to their home situation.



### Handling Crisis Situations

If the crisis warrants psychiatric hospitalization:

- It is essential to call LAC DMH or law enforcement.
- Once they return back to school there should be a plan to help the student transition back. The student could continue therapy or begin therapy shortly after returning back to school.
- Engage families and caregivers to support the student’s transition back to school.
- Prevention and Intervention should be part of the academic curriculum.
- Always connect with students and communicate with them. If the student has a relationship with a teacher/staff is it more likely the student will reach out for support.



Schools have become the default mental health providers for children and adolescents but not much support or training to intervene have been provided. Subsequently, adolescents are more likely to seek mental health treatment at schools than a community based clinic. Students experiencing mental health issues are more likely to miss school, experience an inability to focus in school, poor academic performance, and higher dropout rates.

In the Classroom

# Identify and Assess for Mental Health Conditions in the Classroom



## Resources for Continued Learning

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13632752.2019.1582742>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1056499314001242>

[file:///Users/swlaptop/Downloads/Langley2010\\_Article\\_Evidence-BasedMentalHealthProg.pdf](file:///Users/swlaptop/Downloads/Langley2010_Article_Evidence-BasedMentalHealthProg.pdf)

DMH Help Line (800) 854 7771 (DMH clinicians support individuals in mental health crisis)



## Glossary

Legal hold for psychiatric hospitalization-5150 hold and 5585 for children is a legal hold to support individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Individuals that are suicidal, homicidal, or gravely disabled are placed on a legal hold to support getting immediate mental health interventions and crisis stabilization.



## Points of Reflection

- It is important to remain open and communicate often.
- Delay judgment and interpretation of what you think the student needs.
- Consider culture and how the student and their family cope with stressors and problems.
- Embrace diversity and be sensitive to the needs of the students and their families.
- Understand your bias and judgements about mental health in schools.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

- Assuming the acting out or behavior observed is deliberate.
- Being quick to misjudge and intervene in a way that is punitive, which does not address the issue.
- Giving advice before knowing the situation and circumstance.



# Race Equity in Schools

## Classroom Practice and Student Support



### Tips for in the Classroom

Ensure that curricular materials are racially diverse.

- Evaluate representation of minoritized groups in instructional materials so students have the opportunity to learn about themselves in a positive manner, as well as positive representations of others who are racially different.



### Community/School-Wide Tips

Disaggregate discipline and achievement outcomes by race.

- Analyzing discipline data by race can uncover racial disparities in discipline practices.
- Which policies in particular are disproportionately impacting minoritized student groups (Gifted and Talented, discipline, special education referrals and data, etc.). Ex: *75% of dress code violations are Black students, but Black students are only 20% of our school population.* Disparities like this should let us know something is wrong with the policy or the way it is being enforced.

Disaggregate SPED, discipline, and Gifted and Talented referrals by race.

- Black and LatinX students are grossly overrepresented in discipline data and special education programs and underrepresented in Gifted and Talented programs across the country.



### Support from Families and Caregivers

Solicit feedback from students' families of Color

- Regularly ask caregivers of Color and students of Color about their experiences to gain insights into what is and is not working.
- This can be done via a school wide survey, asking questions such as: What is going well for your student at school? What is challenging for your student at school? Does your student feel safe at school? As a caregiver do you feel valued when you come into the school space?

In the Classroom

# Race Equity in Schools



## Points of Reflection

Analyze your own data by race and reflect on the following questions:

1. What is the purpose or goal behind discipline policies, SPED eligibility criteria, etc.? Does this goal or purpose unintentionally single out any student group?
2. What does it mean when a program (ex: SPED) is not reflective of your broader student population?
3. Are there commonalities between staff members that refer to Students of Color to the office for disciplinary infractions and staff members that frequently refer Students of Color for SPED testing?



## Glossary

**Minoritized groups:** Groups that are different in race, religious affiliation, sexuality, or gender and as a result of social constructs have less power or representation compared to other groups in society.

**Representation:** The way that media, such as television and books, portray certain types of people or communities.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

*“I don’t see race; I treat all my students the same because they are all a part of the human race. I don’t have a racist bone in my body, the best way to move on from racism is to not discuss race.”*

- First reflect: *Is ignoring race helpful for my students, or comfortable for me?*
- Ignoring race in the classroom prevents educators from recognizing the full identity of their students. Treating all students the same ignores the unique racialized experience of minoritized student groups. Our students do not need equality, they need equity which means providing different students with different supports based on their individual needs and experiences.



## Resources for Continued Learning

- [5 Ways to Show You Care for Your Black Students](#)
- [The Chauvin Verdict Is In. Now What?](#)
- [Office Hours with Allen, Noguera, Howard, and Harper](#)

# Restorative Justice Part 1: Classroom Community

## Classroom Practice and Student Support



### Restorative Classroom Management

Restorative classroom management is routines and expectations that are grounded in mutually respectful and empowering relationships. The goal is that positive relationships will ultimately help with restorative discipline and conflict resolution.

- Schedule for daily positive relationship-building activities, such as morning meetings, closing circles, minute-to-win-it games, teacher-student journals

Focus on big and open-ended classroom agreements to allow for *multiple and flexible* ways to access them

- Such as, “We’ve agreed to focus on three norms in this class: We learn, We respect ourselves, We respect our community.”

Use community agreements to discuss more specific expectations together as a community:

- *What are some ways it can look and sound like if we do this math activity in a way that is respectful to ourselves and our community and allows us to learn?*
- *What can we/I/you do to practice and improve ourselves if we are unable to do this?*
  - This language and practice around expectations will help students develop the skills they need to reflect during moments of conflict and repairing harm.
- Be sure to recognize and list multiple ways to access one activity, creating an intentional and loving space for the diversity in student needs, behaviors, identities, and ways of being.
  - Allowing for multiple ways to do activities mitigates the need for redirection and consequences and allows more space for building respectful relationships.
  - Example: “We can respectfully learn by sitting on the carpet, at our desks, standing at the counter.”

Instead of consequences when students are struggling, ask for *feedback* about their behavior:

- *Together* develop a plan to address it in a strengths-based, step-by-step way that is *manageable, sustainable, and empowering* for the student.



*Restorative justice* requires us to rethink classroom management. It requires **classrooms to be centered around community and relationships** instead of rules and punishment.

**In the Classroom**

# Restorative Justice Part 1: Classroom Community



## Resources for Continued Learning

Books:

- Better Than Carrots or Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management
- The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools



## Glossary

**Restorative Justice:** in schools is a student and community-centered approach to solving conflict that focuses on positive, sustainable relationships grounded in mutual respect, accountability, compassion, and repairing harm.

**Restorative Justice Circles:** a group/class discussion process to engage in conflict resolution, healing, develop community agreements, and build community. Also see: [The Origins of Circles](#)



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

***“Restorative Justice is only needed after there has been conflict or punishment”***

1. Restorative justice practice is not meant to be reactionary, but instead, it is a core foundation of your classroom culture. In order for restorative justice to work and restorative accountability to take place, there must be a foundation of strong relationships and community.
2. Restorative justice and the routines around it take time and practice. Proactively implementing community building activities, practicing agreements around community, small group, and partner discussions will help when the time comes to repair harm and relationships.

# Restorative Justice Part 2: Conflict Resolution

## Classroom Practice and Student Support



### Restorative Justice for Conflict Resolution

The goal is to resolve conflicts in a way that restores the relationship and community and allows for learning and reflection so students develop new skills that will strengthen individual and community wellbeing overtime and mitigate future harm.

- Before engaging in a restorative conversation, *allow time and space* for all students involved to de-escalate.
- Activities to help de-escalate: listen to music, color, go for a walk down the hall, calm corner.
- Together with all students, staff, or anyone involved, focus on *reflection, learning and repairing harm* instead of punishment.

#### Questions for the person(s) who caused harm:

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts or feelings at that moment?  
Who was harmed by your actions?
- What can you do to make this better? When?
- What did you learn from this and what could you do differently if this happens again?

#### Questions for the person(s) who was harmed?

- What happened?
- What were your thoughts and feelings at the moment?
- How were you impacted by what happened?
- What does healing and support look like for you at this moment?
- How can we make this right?

Restorative justice is centered in relationships. Proactively prioritize relationship and community building in the classroom to build a restorative culture. Then as restorative processes are used to solve conflict and repair harm, students have the support and foundation of strong relationships and community.

In the Classroom

# Restorative Justice Part 2: Conflict Resolution



## Resources for Continued Learning

### Books:

- Better Than Carrots or Sticks: Restorative Practices for Positive Classroom Management
- The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools



## Glossary

**Restorative Justice:** in schools is a student and community-centered approach to solving conflict that focuses on positive, sustainable relationships grounded in mutual respect, accountability, compassion, and repairing harm.

**Restorative Justice Circles:** a group/class discussion process to engage in conflict resolution, healing, develop community agreements, and build community. Also see: [The Origins of Circles](#)



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

*“Students need consequences!”*

1. Reflect: How do students learn to do better if they are suspended or sitting in the hall or in the office? When do they learn the skills they need to change or improve their behavior? When do they learn the skills they need to stay engaged in the lesson if they are not in the classroom?
2. Punishment can harm trust. It sends a message that the adult is the authority and the one with power. Restorative discipline is a more equitable way to safely and respectfully communicate expectations and have accountability while sustaining relationships. It empowers students by allowing space for students to share their ideas and by giving them the grace they need and deserve as they learn, reflect, take responsibility, and build new skills. Overtime, students will learn the skills they need to think both collectively and independently to solve problems on their own.

# Supporting LGBTQIA2S+ Students in the Classroom

## Classroom Practice and Student Support



### Curriculum, books, signs in all classrooms and at all grade levels

- Safe Space and Pride signs, and core content that positively represents all diversity in the queer community, such as Black trans women, disabled queer folx, and more, are needed in the classroom.
- Ex: Books at all grade levels, justice-centered conversations about current events, queer pop culture



### Pronouns: she/her, he/him, they/them, ze/hir, and more.

- Ex: “I’m Mr. Smith, and my pronouns are he/him.” “My name is Jae and I use they/them pronouns”
- If comfortable, introduce yourself with your pronouns, and allow students to follow along if it feels safe and comfortable for them. If students do not share pronouns, refer to them by their name.
- Create a survey at the beginning of the year to ask students about what’s comfortable for them:

- What name would you like me to call you at school? What pronouns do you use at school? If I am talking to your caregiver/parents, do I need to use a different name or pronouns? If yes, what name and pronouns?



### Inclusive language to create inclusive and affirming classrooms

- Instead of saying “boys and girls” or “ladies and gentlemen” we refer to our students with inclusive language such as “third graders,” “scholars,” “readers,” and “activists.”
- Model the use of inclusive language and encourage students to do the same
  - Ex: When reading a story and talking about characters, acknowledge and refer to the character’s authentic pronouns. Use they/them pronouns unless students can point to evidence in the text that shows the character’s pronouns.
- Consistently denounce all anti-LGBTQIA2S+ language when it is heard at school. See [“Speak Up”](#) resource.



All LGBTQIA2S+ students deserve to feel safe and welcome at our schools and in our classrooms.

In the Classroom

# Supporting LGBTQIA2S+ Students in the Classroom



## Resources for Continued Learning

Websites and organizations:

**GLSEN** → info about GSAs, Safe Space signs, inclusive schools and classrooms, lessons, and more  
**The Trevor Project** → resources for LGBTQ+ mental health, crisis intervention, and suicide prevention  
“**Speak Up**” strategies by Learning for Justice to help with addressing anti-LGBTQIA2S+ language



## Glossary

**Pronouns:** Pronouns are used when we refer to a person without using their name. Ex: she/her, they/them, he/him, ze/hir, and more

**GSA:** Genders and Sexualities Alliance



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

***“My students are too young. This is not appropriate for elementary students.”***

1. No person’s identity — sexuality, gender, race, disability, culture — is inappropriate for young students. Labeling an identity as inappropriate sends a message that who that person is, is not welcome or valued. That messaging is wrong. If we expect our students to learn in our classrooms, we must welcome them into our classrooms. All LGBTQIA2S+ students and people are welcome in our schools.
2. When we model and teach inclusivity in our classrooms and allow spaces for students to learn about themselves and others, it encourages students to build empathy and to learn to have respectful conversations and interactions with all people.
3. There are many picture books about LGBTQIA2S+ characters that are great for elementary students, such as: *My Rainbow*, *Sparkle Boy*, *When Aiden Became a Brother*, and *Heather Has Two Mommies*



# Student & Family Support



# How to Respond to Adolescent Substance Use in the Classroom

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Students need to feel a connection

- Middle school is the phase in which students most often begin experimenting with substances. School connectedness is a mitigating factor to adolescent substance use. Research has shown that as long as students feel connected to home or school, they are less likely to use substances in middle/high school.
- Risk factors to consider: Family history of substance use, lack of family and school relationships, poor academic performance, and lacks or has negative peer relationships.
- Early detection of substance use: Overly protective of one's space and things; changes in interpersonal relationships; mood swings especially if it does not match the situation; lose interest in daily activities, poor academic performance; memory issues, sudden change in weight, appetite, and sleep; noticeable change in pupils; and excessive nosebleeds or nasal irritation.



### Start with three pre-screening questions

In the Past 12 months, did you drink any alcohol (more than a few sips)? In the past 12 months, did you smoke any marijuana or hashish? In the past 12 months, did you use anything to get high?

If answer yes to any of the above questions, then proceed to the full assessment tool: [CRAFFT](#)



### Steps to create a supportive classroom environment and positive connection

1. Create an open environment for students to build a positive relationship in the classroom. An example, check-in with each student before or end of class; build in-group check-in time in your curriculum.
2. Develop a positive relationship with each student in the class; invest in connecting with each student in your class. An example, ask students about their family, social life, and academics. Ask students about their interests, hobbies, and other activities.
3. Build open communication with the class and each individual student. Be intentional about the language you use in the class. Create time for students to give feedback and comment about how the class is going.
4. Use positive communication and messages, including praise, acknowledgment, and positive advice. Remain objective and positive. An example, if a teacher notices a change in a student's behavior, the teacher can inquire what has changed.
5. After the initial inquiry, check-in with the student periodically to support the student. Listen with the intent to understand and create a space for the student to feel comfortable to talk. If a student opens up and discloses they are currently using substances then you can use the brief CAGE pre-assessment to help you understand the student's substance use and next steps.

## Student & Family Support

# How to Respond to Adolescent Substance Use in the Classroom



## Glossary

**Adolescent substance use** is usually a way for one to cope with pain, trauma, and stressors.

**Stress** including family, school, peers, and community is cumulative and can be a factor of teen substance use.

**Lack of school and family connections** and negative peer interactions are high indicators of adolescent substance use.

**Early detection** and education is the best intervention to support adolescent substance use.

**Empathy** the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.



## Resources for Continued Learning

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>

### Any other additional resources

Teen substance use hotline 844-289-0879

Samhsa substance referral hotline 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

<https://www.211la.org/> (Los Angeles County Directory of resources)

# How to Support Basic Student and Family Needs

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Understand Social Determinants of Health

- The conditions in which we are born, live, learn, work, play, and worship are known as social determinants of health (SDOH).
- SDOH have a profound impact on our health. The opportunities available to an individual to practice healthy behaviors, either enhances or limits our ability to live healthy lives.
- SDOH contributes to the chronic disparities in the United States among racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups, and systematically limits certain groups to have opportunities to be healthy.
- Families do not have the resources or access to meet their children's basic needs to survive. Not enough food, water, or a place to go to sleep can severely impact the child's learning process and can set children up to struggle for years.



### Identify the student's and family basic needs

Consider early life stress, including abuse and neglect, lack of basic needs met, family instability, socioeconomic status. Example, if you notice a student is not focused or lacks interest in academics, you may inquire about their circumstance. Say, How are you? How are things at home? I've noticed there is a change in your interest in school. I'm here to support you. Or you can normalize the situation by saying, It is normal to start high school and feel a little out of place. Most students feel uncomfortable in the beginning. I'm Ms. Smith and am here to help you feel welcome. Keep in mind, early life stress adversely affects a child's physical and mental

health and can lead to inadequate coping, lack of affect regulation, and lack of optimal functioning in the classroom. Classroom staff should make every effort to get to know each student in the class! You can start a couple of classes by doing a check-in. Example: How was your weekend? Anything new you would like us to know? The more comfortable a class feels the more likely the students will feel safe about opening up and communicating their needs.



### Education can be a protective factor to a student's needs not being met

1. First, understanding that environmental factors can impact a child's academic and social functioning.
2. Second, understand each student's academic functioning while assessing their basic needs. Ask, How is your family? What types of things do you do on the weekends?
3. Third, develop a relationship with each child and family (if possible) in the class to further understand their basic needs.
4. Fourth, communicate and evaluate the needs of the children/adolescents in the classroom.
5. Fifth, identify and refer resources and services to meet the child/adolescent's basic needs such as food, shelter, adequate water, etc.
6. Sixth, it is crucial to refer and access the services and resources that reflect the child/adolescent's needs while considering one's culture and environment.

## Student & Family Support

# How to Support Basic Student and Family Needs



## Points of Reflection

Consider the student's behavior may be a symptom of one's needs not being met.

The externalizing behavior of a student may be a result of their environment, family stress, and lack of social and family support.



## Glossary

**Social Determinants of Health:** A comprehensive approach is needed to address the social determinants of health.

**Maslow Hierarchy of Needs:** Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a motivational theory in psychology comprising a five-tier model of human needs, often depicted as hierarchical levels within a pyramid. From the bottom of the hierarchy upwards, the needs are: physiological (food and clothing), safety (job security), love and belonging needs (friendship), esteem, and self-actualization.

**Mckinny-Vento act:** Every local educational agency is required to designate a liaison for homeless children and youth. The local educational agency liaison coordinates services to ensure that homeless children and youths enroll in school and have the opportunity to succeed academically.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

A common misstep is judging the student's acting out behavior as disruptive, maladaptive, and requiring a negative consequence.

Acting out does not necessarily mean that the behavior is deliberate and intentional.

One can judge or perceive acting out behaviors are an indication that individually something is wrong.

One may want to fix the student and family problems rather than listen to their needs.



## Resources for Continued Learning

<https://www.cdc.gov/>

<https://dmh.lacounty.gov/>

<https://bmcpublichealth.biomedcentral.com/>

Los Angeles Coordinated Entry System- [lahsa.org/ documents](https://www.lahsa.org/documents) <https://www.lahsa.org/>

# How to Support Multilingual Students Labeled as English Learners

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Prioritize Building Community Trust

- Make time for activities that help you get to know your students and support their connections with each other. This can be as simple as providing a safe space in a community circle each morning where students are allowed to share in any language how they are doing and what is on their mind, with prompts that draw from their interests and experiences. These connections can support their willingness to take more risks as they continue to develop their language.
- Check-in with and provide positive updates to caregivers. Seek to listen and not only talk in these communications to better understand students' assets and resources outside of school.
- Build language flexibility into classroom and communication norms.
- Ask students what language resources were available during virtual schooling (e.g. Google translate, bilingual texts). Provide continued access to these resources when possible.
- Especially for secondary students, ensure that they have access to content texts or opportunities for conversations in their home language(s).



### Community Supports

- Support recently arrived ELs and their caregivers in navigating the norms and functions of in-person schooling.
- Recently arrived newcomer ELs might have little to no experience learning in physical buildings in the U.S. Ensure that you know of and can direct them toward language, social, and economic support available in person that might have been unavailable or differently available during virtual learning.
- Practice understanding by allowing for flexibility in how families and caregivers are expected to participate in their student's schooling.
- Ask caregivers their preferred mode of receiving information. Continue to share information through their preferred modes even if they are not always actively responsive.

**Student & Family Support**

# How to Support Multilingual Students Labeled as English Learners



## Resources for Continued Learning

**Teaching and learning resources for ELs and their teachers:** <https://www.colorincolorado.org/>

**Important context about ELs' experiences during COVID-19 pandemic:** <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/>



## Glossary

ELD: English Language Development, a required class for students labeled as ELs, intended to support their acquisition of English and reclassification to fluent English proficient



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

Remember that ELs are a diverse group of students with widely different needs. Resist making assumptions about your students and one-size-fits-all approaches. These recommendations are perhaps even more important for teachers at schools with small populations of ELs, as their needs are more likely to have been eclipsed by larger student populations in the past school year. ALL educators are responsible for supporting ELs in their content learning and language development, not only those primarily teaching or supporting ELD.

# How to Support Students With Disabilities (SWD)

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Understanding your students

- Start with relationships and understanding your students, their hopes for themselves, and the supports they need.
- Read their IEP and learn their goals for the year, as well as the services and accommodations they have. Make note of any unfamiliar terms and follow up with your school psychologist.
- Meet with your students and ask them about any specific goals they have for themselves this year.
- Support SWD with their organization skills as they transition back into the classroom.
- Ask SWD what tools they like to use at home, they likely have an idea of the kinds of resources and technology that help them.
- Incorporate a “cool-down” or “chill” station in your classroom specifically designated to support SWD and other students who may be overstimulated and need to step away from the class.
- Add sensory toys or objects (fidget spinners, cushions, textured items, headphones), writing materials, reading

materials, coloring books, or whatever is age-appropriate.

- If a “station” is not appropriate for your classroom, create a signal or notification system for students who might need support or need to step away.
- Co-construct rules and guidelines for your classroom with your students.
- Offer a job or leadership position in the classroom that may give sense of purpose and contribution to the classroom.
- Provide in-classroom opportunities for peer collaboration and feedback to promote SWD social skills, self-esteem, and sense of belonging.



### Family Collaboration

Families have valuable and rich knowledge about their child and their child’s disability that can help ease their transition into the in-person classroom environment. Meet with families beforehand to discuss what they noticed and/or learned about their child’s learning needs during the pandemic.



# How to Support Students With Disabilities (SWD)



## Points of Reflection

Students of Color are more likely to be labeled with a disability than other students. Be mindful of your school's practices and policies that may contribute to disproportionality within your school, particularly around the realms of disability classification and discipline.



## Glossary

**SWD** - Students with Disabilities.

**Resource Specialist Program (RSP)** - Students who participate in the general education setting with either “push-in” or “pull-out” support or both.

**Special Day Class (SDC)** - Students who participate for the majority in specialized classrooms for students with disabilities.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

***“Students with similar/like disability labels learn similarly”***

- Disability is not a monolith. Just like all students, students with disabilities have their own unique needs, styles, and assets that they bring to the classroom.

***“Students with disabilities are difficult to teach. They should be in special classrooms.”***

- We must design learning environments that accommodate the needs and abilities of all students, and not just the majority.
- Students with varying types of disabilities can learn in general education settings with support, and often do well in those kinds of settings with teacher, peer, administrative, and family support.



## Resources for Continued Learning

[Universal Design for Learning](#)

# Teacher Support



# Addressing Racial Bias in Mandated Reporting

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Addressing Racial Bias

- Beware of your own assumptions. Talk to students directly to better understand their situation.
- Be upfront about your legal obligation to report if a student begins to disclose something that may be reportable.
- Support your students' basic needs by keeping non-perishable snacks and/or hygiene items readily available.
- Give accommodations for students such as quiet time in class or homework extensions.



### Engage in Anti-Racist Practices and Learning Opportunities

- Deepen your understanding of what racism is, how it is carried out by systems and structures, who is most impacted, and the ways that individuals perpetuate and maintain racism and white supremacy.
- Be conscious and aware of your own personal beliefs, biases, and philosophies about your students, their parents/caregivers, and the community you serve.



### Caregiver/Family Supports

- Maintain open communication and partnerships with parents/caregivers. If you are concerned about a student, don't be afraid to contact the parent/caregiver to discuss further.
- If there is no other option but to report, talk to the parent/caregiver about your legal obligation and let them know what you will be reporting. Though this may feel uncomfortable, being honest and transparent is important.



### School and Community Collaborations

- Before making a report, seek counsel from a school administrator, school psychologist, or social worker to discuss. Making a report should be the last course of action when providing intervention for families.
- Be familiar with the resources available to students at your school and in the community.
- Partner with your school social worker and identify supports that you can connect the families with.

Teacher Support

# Addressing Racial Bias in Mandated Reporting



## Points of Reflection

- School personnel report Black children and families for suspected maltreatment more than any other race. What role does race play in which families are reported and which are not?
- Are you familiar with California's mandated reporting laws? If not, ensure that you understand what qualifies as reportable and what does not.



## Glossary

**DCFS:** The Department of Children and Family Services, the entity which oversees the child abuse hotline and conducts investigations of families.

**Child maltreatment:** The physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and/or neglect of a child.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

### *“DCFS will connect the family to resources”*

- DCFS is not a social service agency designed to connect families to resources. Its true function is an investigative entity that surveils and regulates families.



## Resources for Continued Learning

**Rise Magazine** - An online magazine created by parents impacted by child welfare

**211** - Resource Guide for families in LA County

# Teacher Agency in the Classroom

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports

Teacher *agency* is the voluntary exercise of power in thought, choices, and actions. Exercising this power of choice can enable teachers to create more equitable spaces for students and communities.



### Routines

Teachers have agency over many of their classroom routines, such as discussion structures, seating arrangements, bathroom procedures, and more.

- Are the routines in place because it's better for the teacher or better for the students?
- Routines can be changed without obstructing the objective.
- Example: Transitioning from the loud, crowded hallway to a silent, independent “do-now” can be difficult for many students. Teachers can change the structure to ease the transition.



### Curriculum

- While there are some constraints to the curricular materials teachers use in the classroom, it is imperative that teachers utilize agency to ensure that the curriculum is inclusive and speaks positively of all students.
- Find materials that provide students the opportunity to see themselves reflected in the text, as well as the opportunity to learn about others who may be different.
- Challenge content districts to eliminate curricular materials that may be harmful to certain student groups or do not depict all groups in a positive light.



### Grades

- Teachers have agency over their grading: involve and work with students, be clear about what is being assessed, allow for multiple attempts, and do not grade as a reward or punishment.
- Allow for multiple ways of knowing and showing based on the content objective. Example: Students can ask and answer questions of a text by drawing, talking, TikTok-ing, or they can use post-its, highlighters, etc.



### Expectations and Rules

- Classroom rules and expectations when created solely by educators create power imbalances in classrooms. Teachers have agency in regard to classroom rules and can utilize that agency to empower students rather than subordinate them.
- Creating community agreements with students rather than for students gives students a sense of ownership over their own classrooms.

Teacher Support

# Teacher Agency in the Classroom



## Points of Reflection

- What is your motivation for the practice and what do you hope to accomplish with this practice?
- Is it truly a school policy, or is it something that has just always been done, and therefore often goes unquestioned?
- Who does the practice help? Who does the practice harm?
- How have I empowered students to take ownership in this space?
- What message does this unit send to students about themselves or others?



## Glossary

**Agency:** the voluntary exercise of power in thought, choices, and actions.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

***“If I am too nice to my students and not strict in the classroom, students will take advantage of me.”***

Our primary goal is to create classroom norms based on mutual respect and not obedience. Therefore our goal is not to be “mean” to students but to develop communities of care.

Here is an example: Many classrooms only allow 3 bathroom passes per semester. Changing this routine is not “letting students take advantage.” It is addressing a basic human need. What is the goal of only allowing 3 bathroom passes? If students are not trusted, and therefore only allowed to miss class 3 times to use the restroom, is the bathroom the problem? What about addressing the reasoning behind the lack of trust instead, or addressing why some students may want to leave the classroom? Over the course of a semester, many students will need to use the restroom more than 3 times. We do not need to police their natural functioning and basic needs.

# Educator Self-Care

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Make self-care your routine

- Make self-care all the while, not once in a while. In other words, make self-care as routine as brushing your teeth, buying a cup of coffee or saying “I love you” to your children.
- Teaching demands a lot of your social energy. This can be a drain regardless of whether or not you are an introvert or extrovert. Consider marking time on your calendar for a 10 minute check-in with yourself each day.



### Engage your students in a self-care routine

- If it feels too hard to work self-care into the busy work day, consider how much you and your students might benefit from a mindfulness exercise as a class.
- If you need guidance for meditation, consider using meditation and mindfulness apps like Headspace, Waking Up, Calm, etc.
- Work mindfulness into natural teaching breaks. Consider taking a mindful minute to focus on your breathing while students engage in tests and other self-driven activities.
- Set your social media to private to support separation between

work and personal life.

- Journaling in the morning before starting work has been shown to increase a sense of presence and overall wellbeing. Consider writing 2-3 pages of stream of consciousness thoughts in the morning to gather yourself and let go of things that are bothering you.
- Practice self-care across multiple life domains such as environmental self-care (enjoying nature); physical self-care (taking a walk); social self-care (spending time with family, friends, pets); financial self-care (balancing a healthy expense account).



### A community approach to self-care

- Share your self-care plans with a colleague, friend or loved one – this will hold you accountable!!!
- Consider a community approach to self-care. Creating wellness groups, challenges, and cohorts with other teachers and school staff can make talking about self-care seem less daunting. Also, by sharing practical strategies you can find ways to support your wellbeing despite the busy work day.

Teacher Support

# Educator Self-Care



## Points of Reflection

- How can I make self-care habitual?
- How can I find time for self-care?
- Do I have to be resilient to practice self-care?
- Will my school support self-care practices?



## Glossary

**Resilience:** The ability to “bounce back” from challenging circumstances.

**Self-care:** The practice of engaging on overall wellbeing.

**Mindfulness:** A body of practices and approaches to checking in with yourself and supporting your wellbeing. Often includes a form of meditation.

**Life domains:** Areas of our lives e.g. social, occupational, environmental where we are impacted by events or conditions that influence how we survive.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

- Self-care takes too much time away from more important things in my life.
- Taking time for myself means I’m taking it away from my students.
- The barriers whether time or people in my life mean I can’t practice self-care.
- Self-care is only for people who can’t handle the pressures of work.
- Self-care should have huge, overarching goals.
- Self-care will take away from my productivity.



## Resources for Continued Learning

[www.statprogram.org](http://www.statprogram.org) - Support for teachers affected by trauma.



# Identifying and Responding to Commercial Sexual Exploitation

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Student Supports

- Check-in one-on-one in a private and spacious setting, away from other students and authority figures.
- Clearly define commercial sexual exploitation and be transparent about your role as a mandated reporter.
- Use trauma informed approaches to ask judgment-free questions and avoid re-traumatization of students.
  - For example: *“Have you ever traded sex or sexual activity for money or anything of value?”*
- Remind students that exploitation is not their fault and express concern.
  - For example: *“You are not to blame. You are worthy of safety and comfort. You’re not alone.”*
- If a trafficker is involved, then the student may still be under their control. Elicit their perception of their immediate safety.
- Avoid involving parents or caregivers until it is confirmed that they are not complicit in the commercial sexual exploitation.
- Give the student agency to be present and autonomy to be active in the reporting process to the child protection hotline.
- Honor the student’s resilience and survival skills by using person-centered language.
- Remind student’s that abuse and exploitation might be their experiences, but it is not their identity.
- Empower students by providing psychoeducation on healthy boundaries, relationships, and connecting them with information and services that can guide healthy decision-making.



### Classroom Practice

- Create and foster a safe space by understanding the implications and outcomes of commercial sexual exploitation.
- Ensure all students feel empowered to disclose their exploitation by using inclusive language of all gender identities and sexual orientations.
- Always employ empathy and remind students that their safety and wellbeing are priority.
- Avoid harmful, judgmental, or victim-blaming language that stigmatizes or reinforces stereotypes about exploitation.
- Identify red flags including but not limited to frequent truancy; changes in appearance and unexplainable expensive items (e.g., provocative clothing, garish make-up, phones); suddenly has a lot of money or continually discusses making money; has much older “boyfriends,” “friends,” or sexual partners; discusses frequent travel to places like Las Vegas; seen at locations known for soliciting commercial sex; appears to be excessively tired; maintains a sense of secrecy about activities outside of school; expresses fear for their safety and wellbeing, and finds it difficult to think about the future.

### Teacher Support

# Identifying and Responding to Commercial Sexual Exploitation



## Tips for Teachers

- Students may be reluctant to disclose their exploitation.
  - Do not assume that well-intended intervention strategies will be viewed as such.
  - Do not take it personally if your help is rejected.
  - Stay consistent and continue to offer support.
  - Consult with experts in the anti-trafficking field.
- Check your biases and dismantle harmful beliefs related to sex, rape culture, and victim-blaming.
- Monitor your tone, facial expressions, and body language. Note, students will not disclose more than they think you can handle.
- Exploitation impacts individuals differently. Assume that their exploitation and histories of trauma are unique.
- Take care of your own physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing and access support as needed.



## Glossary

- Commercial sexual exploitation of children: Any minor less than age 18 engaging in commercial sexual activity that is exchanged for anything of value, such as money or basic needs.
  - Commercial sexual activity may include transactional sex, erotic dancing, or pornography.
  - The use of force, fraud, coercion, or travel do not need to be present or proven.
  - Example: "You are a person experiencing commercial sexual exploitation."



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

- Boys and youth in the LGBTQ community are susceptible to exploitation but remain under-identified.
- Avoid accusations or re-traumatizing questions, such as inquiring about their number of sexual partners, sexually transmitted infections, or other sensitive details that are not salient for the purpose of reporting.
- Youth can and do experience exploitation within their own home.
- Sexual abuse becomes commercial sexual exploitation when something of value is exchanged, even when the exchange involves items of minimal or non-monetary value (e.g., grades, status, food).



## Resources for Continued Learning

National Human Trafficking Hotline: Telephone: 1 (888) 373-7888  
SMS: 233733 (Text "HELP" or "INFO")  
Website: [traffickingresourcecenter.org](http://traffickingresourcecenter.org)  
National Center for Missing and Exploited Children: Telephone: 1 (800) THE-LOST Website: [missingkids.com](http://missingkids.com)  
Los Angeles County Child Protection Hotline  
Telephone: 1 (800) 540-4000

# How to Address Xenophobia in the Classroom

## Classroom Practice and Student Supports



### Practice culturally sustaining pedagogy

- Include historical and/or literary references in your lessons that are often overlooked in U.S. history curriculum. Discuss how different Communities of Color have worked together and provide examples!
- Create written reflections where students can analyze multiple perspectives and develop a sense of self-awareness and critical consciousness to social issues.
- Teach students that words matter and what they say has an impact on others.



### Embrace difference and nurture empathy

- Be attentive to how you and other students react to the food, dress, and speech that reflect the culture and customs of immigrant-origin students. Ex. when a student brings lunch from home, don't ask (or think), "What is *that*?" with a tone of disgust but rather a tone of genuine curiosity; affirm the attire of students who wear a hijab or turban.
- Teach students that being different makes them unique and appreciating difference is beneficial to their learning and a positive interaction with others.



### Integrate current events during weekly check-ins

- Gauge the emotional atmosphere of your classroom on a weekly basis. Ask for volunteers to share.
- Normalize difficult conversations because your students and their families may be impacted by current events.
- Debunk myths and stereotypes.



### Learn about trauma informed practices specific to immigrant-origin students

- Understand stressors and different forms of trauma experienced by immigrant-origin students and their families (e.g., family separation, deportation, social belonging and exclusion, precarious legal statuses, and/or limited access to resources like healthcare and legal aid).
- Embed self-soothing strategies and quiet time space in your classroom routine.
- Be informed about local resources that support different immigrant families.

Teacher Support

# How to Address Xenophobia in the Classroom



## Self-Care for Teachers

- What do I think when I hear an accent from a student talking? What are my thoughts when I hear an African, Asian, European, Pacific Islander, and Spanish accent? How do I treat someone based on their accent?
- When I ask an Asian, Latinx, or Pacific Islander student, “Where are you from?” what is it that I really want to know? What are the implicit assumptions in this question?
- Am I associating the idea of difference with acceptance or exclusion and not belonging? If so, why? Where do my ideas come from?



## Glossary

**Immigrant-origin:** Children of immigrants, which include the first-, decimal-, and second-generation.

**Xenophobia:** Derives from Greek origins; xenos meaning “stranger” or “foreigner,” and phobos meaning “fear;” an ideology that separates groups based on presumed inferiority, foreignness, and nativity in a society to justify practices and policies that exclude, ostracize, and subordinate.

**Culturally sustaining pedagogy:** An approach that seeks to foster, affirm, and preserve the ways of knowing and experiences of historically marginalized groups as part of education and social transformation.



## Common Missteps or Misconceptions

***“Immigrant students and their families don’t know much because they are new to the country and/or aren’t from here.”***

This is a deficit way of thinking about a student and their family. Immigrant-origin students and their families come to the U.S. with a wealth of knowledge. Immigrant-origin students and their families bring new insights to problem-solving because they come to a country where they have to constantly navigate educational and other systems not created with them in mind; this requires a knowledge of creativity and resourcefulness while having the mental fortitude to both survive and thrive.



## Resources for Continued Learning

- Erika Lee’s book, *American for Americans: A History of Xenophobia in the United States*
- [Re-Imagining Migration](#)
  - [Migration as Opportunity Framework](#)
  - [Learning Arc to Teach about Migration](#)
  - [Approaching Migration in Education](#)

# Finding More In-Depth Resources

We hope you have found this resource useful. We made this flashcard deck as a quick reference teachers could use during a busy day. If you want to learn more about any one of these topics we have a comprehensive collection of resources, training videos, and tools at [Wellbeing4LA.org/schools](https://Wellbeing4LA.org/schools). It's easy to sign up and all resources are free. If you have any questions about this resource or others contact us at [support@wellbeing4la.org](mailto:support@wellbeing4la.org).

**Thank you to our authors!**

## Engagement

Engaging Parents Who are Disengaged – Cicely Bingener, MEd  
Engaging Students Who are Disengaged – F.H Rafi, MEd  
Supporting Students Struggling with Attention – Sam Blanchard, MAT

## Teacher Support

Addressing Implicit Bias for Mandated Reporters – Brianna Harvey, MSW  
Responding to Xenophobia in Schools – Rose Ann Gutierrez, MA  
Educator Self Care – Sam Blanchard, MAT; Steve Hydon, Ed, MSW  
Recognizing CSEC in Schools – Sarah Godoy, MSW  
Classroom Practice and Teacher Agency – Sam Blanchard MAT; Jaleel Howard MEd

## Student Support

Supporting English Language Learners – Olivia Obeso, MA  
Supporting Students with Disabilities – Brande Otis  
Supporting LGBTQIA+ Students – Sam Blanchard, MAT

## In the Classroom

Mental Health in the Classroom – Michelle Talley, MSW  
Restorative Justice in the Classroom – Sam Blanchard, MAT  
Hybrid Learning Strategies – Elianny Edwards  
Race Equity in the Classroom – Jaleel Howard, MEd  
Anti-Racism in the Classroom – Earl Edwards, MA  
Cover Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUimages



LOS ANGELES COUNTY  
DEPARTMENT OF  
MENTAL HEALTH  
hope. recovery. wellbeing.

**UCLA**

**Public Partnership for Wellbeing**

Engagement • In the Classroom • Student & Family Support •  
Teacher Support • Engagement • In the Classroom • Student &  
Family Support • Teacher Support • Engagement • In the Classroom