

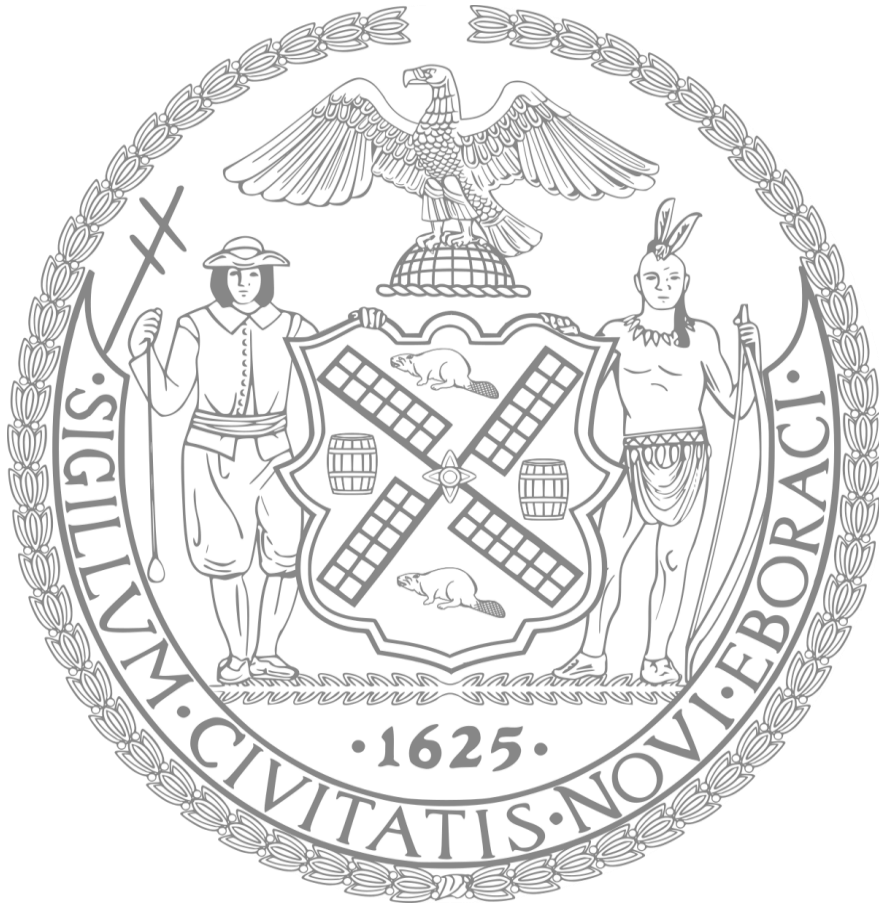
NEW YORK CITY
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

2020 - 2021



BRIDGE TO SCHOOL

Strengthening Community and Fostering Resilience



Mayor Bill de Blasio

Chancellor Richard A. Carranza



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Letter from the First Lady of New York City

Dear Colleagues,

When we brought social and emotional learning to every New York City classroom last year, the idea behind it was simple: children learn best when they're healthy in *every* way, and have a sense of emotional well-being. When our young people enter the classroom, they have more than math or science on their minds. They're learning to manage relationships with friends, siblings, and parents. Although some students may be upbeat and joyful, others may be angry. Many are worrying about whether their family will ever have a stable place to live. Or if there will be enough money for a new shirt or sneakers.

In New York City, we know that educating our kids—*really* educating them—means helping them deal with those parts of life, too. It means helping them process their many emotions. It means helping them build relationships and resolve conflicts in a constructive way. It means preparing them to be happy, healthy adults.

Social and emotional learning means creating an educational experience where learning those skills is just as important as how to read or do math. As simple as it sounds, that was a *radical* idea: by bringing our SEL efforts to every classroom last year, we created the most comprehensive programming in the nation.

And now, after the stress and disruption our young people have been through in the COVID-19 pandemic, it's more important than *ever* for children to keep learning these skills. Our youngest have spent months isolated from their friends and away from social activities. Our high schoolers have not only witnessed a long-overdue national reckoning on racial injustice—they've led the way and challenged our country to be better. And sadly, many of our young people are in pain, grieving the loss of parents and loved ones to this virus.

On the following pages, you'll find a detailed plan that expands on our unprecedented work last year and gives our children, educators, school leaders, and families more support than ever before. It's designed not only to help our students through this moment—but to help them build the emotional skills they'll need for the rest of their lives.

As we embark on a school year unlike any in our City's history, I commend Chancellor Carranza and Department of Education staff for their diligence and leadership. New York City has come back from this crisis because of our *people*—extraordinary New Yorkers who stepped up when things got tough. As I think about the new school year, I'm confident for the same reason. We have the best school leaders, educators, staff, and parents in the nation. Together, I know we'll make this a safe, healthy, and successful year for our young people.



Chirlane McCray
First Lady of New York City

Introduction and Overview

The COVID-19 pandemic and recent attention on long standing racial injustice and social unrest, have resulted in significant stress, trauma, grief, and loss for our 1.1 million students and their families, as well as our nearly 150,000 educators. These realities require us to plan for a different school opening than previous years, one that centers the humanity and lived experiences of our school communities with a focus on community and resilience.

Proactive communication with families and caregivers during the weeks leading up to the beginning of the school year, as well as throughout the year, is critical to ensuring safety of every kind. Explicit instruction around responsible personal behaviors that can effectively reduce the spread of COVID-19 must also occur at all schools with both staff and students. Beyond physical health and safety, our primary focus for the initial re-opening transition should be social-emotional and mental wellness, ensuring that all staff and students have access to a foundational period of stabilization and support. Centering community and social-emotional wellness at the start of school will create a strong foundation for academic success and can reduce the number of students requiring intensive clinical mental health services later.

The first step in this process is to build adult capacity through the trauma-informed care training series developed in partnership with the Trauma Responsive Educational Practices (TREP) project at the University of Chicago. This resource is intended to build on the competencies developed through the TREP training by offering tangible strategies and resources to welcome staff, students, and families to the new school year, emphasizing the importance of centering community and fostering resilience. In addition to building on the trauma training with resources and strategies for the first few weeks of school, this document includes recommendations, resources, and supports to guide the work of social-emotional learning and mental wellness throughout the year. This includes content resources and planning tools to ensure each school has a comprehensive plan for sustaining this work throughout the 2020-2021 school year.

It is recommended that all school-based adults participate in the trauma-informed care professional learning series and the suggested learning experiences detailed in this plan, in addition to teachers and school leaders. This includes Main Office Personnel, School Aides, Paraprofessionals, Parent Coordinators, Community Coordinators, School Counselors, Social Workers, School-Based Support Teams, Related Service Providers, School Librarians and Custodial Staff, who all play unique and important roles in the life of the school community which exists for our young people. Whenever possible, School Safety Agents (SSAs) and Community Based Organization (CBO) partners should also be invited to learn, heal, and build community alongside DOE staff.

The transition period outlined in this resource includes daily opportunities for students and adults to reconnect, build community, share experiences, strengthen and share coping skills, process grief, and orient themselves to the new dual environments and expectations of blended and remote learning. To this end, it includes recommendations for the first few weeks of school around two themes: community and resilience. More information about these broad themes is included in the sections that follow.

Proactive Family Communication and Engagement

We know that school opening this year will be unlike any other, especially as it relates to students' social-emotional and mental wellness. Engaging a diverse group of students and families in the re-opening process, with clear and consistent communication, is essential to positioning your students and communities for success! A few key actions to support a strong start to the year include:

1. *Initiate Proactive Communication to Assess Student Social-Emotional and Mental Wellness*

To ensure a successful start to the school year, it is critical that we hear from families, caregivers, and children about how they are doing and how our supports are working for them. Initiating proactive outreach to families in the first few weeks of school can help inform the social-emotional and wellness supports that staff provide in the initial transition period and throughout the year. It will also help signal if students may require more intensive services right away. Below are some suggested questions for staff to use in conversation/reflection with families and caregivers:

- How are you doing? *(As your relationship allows, be empathetic and sensitive to the immediate needs the family may have as well as recognize the strength and resilience of each family. Note that while you may not be able to support these challenges directly, being aware of them can help ensure that the supports you are able to provide are responsive to those challenges.)*
- How is your child doing? Is there anything you would like to share with me about how they are adjusting to all of the changes around them?
- What have we offered that was helpful to your child and your family during remote learning? *(Follow-up questions may seek feedback about specific things that teachers tried, children's engagement, and how the child and family/caregiver experienced them.)*
- How can we best support your child and your family in the days ahead?
- Do you have any social or emotional concerns about your child that I should share with our support staff?

2. *Develop a Communications Plan*

Schools should develop a two-way external communication plan that ensures timely, consistent, and robust communications with families. A two-way system ensures that families have clear and consistent information from the school, and that the school receives regular feedback and recommendations from the families they are serving. Set expectations and make sure that families know how you will be reaching out to them.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL
LEARNING AND WELLNESS



Social-Emotional Learning and Wellness

This document contains resources to help you in establishing a re-opening transition that emphasizes community, connection, and healing. Building upon and enhancing social-emotional learning and community building practices that are already embedded in your school is recommended whenever possible (i.e., Sanford Harmony, Circle practices, Health Education Instruction, School Wellness Councils, RULER, Restorative Practices, Advisory Programs, etc.). Additional recommendations are offered with consideration of schools being at varied stages of development with school-wide community building and social-emotional learning practices.

The document is organized with a focus on strengthening community and fostering resilience. Following a grounding in adult wellness activities, the social-emotional learning resources are organized by grade level and include Day 1 and Week 1 ideas for staff and students. There are also additional resources that extend beyond the first few week(s) of school, including:

- Activities and resources to support robust trauma-informed care and social-emotional learning school-wide; and
- Supplemental resources from the Trauma Responsive Educational Practices (TREP) Professional Learning series.

The themes of Community and Resilience are woven throughout the document, recognizing that strong relationships and strengthening emotional competencies are central to trauma-informed care. A focus on Community creates meaningful engagement for multiple stakeholders and serves as the foundation for relationship building. A focus on Resilience supports a strengths-based approach towards healing. The Bridge to School resource supports the social-emotional wellbeing of students and adults in order to create a safe, supportive learning environment.

Strengthening Community

The sudden closure of schools and abrupt transition to remote learning in March created a profound disruption to the consistent, predictable routines and relationships that schools provide. Following a period of separation, it is necessary to cultivate a foundational sense of community and belonging at school before attempting to reengage staff and students in the academic experience. The first few weeks of school will be a critical period to connect all members of the school community, extend gratitude for how community has sustained us during last school year, and share hopes for the type of community we will have this school year. Human-centered community building experiences, which place positive relationships (within and between staff and students) at the center of school life, can transform uncertainty to hope. This resource will guide you in embracing this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to rebuild strong, supportive, and equitable learning environments for all students.

Fostering Resilience

Investing time for staff and students to experience beginning-of-year transitions that are healing-centered creates a strong emotional foundation for the school year. Anchoring these experiences in exchanges of diverse strengths and assets ensures students develop perseverance as they continue to be presented with unprecedented and unpredictable circumstances including new learning models. Creating space for sharing about recent experiences and current mindsets can also activate future resilient performance aligned to shared core values; strengthen coping skills; facilitate the processing of grief; and ignite authentic engagement and achievement in the academic experience. The prioritization

of social-emotional learning and mental health and wellness, including the explicit teaching of social-emotional skills creates internal and external mechanisms that help with navigating and withstanding the stress that is inevitable with daily living—and that is amplified during times of crisis and lingering long after traumatic events have passed. In this resource you will find tools to use as you work to actively develop social-emotional literacy, fluency, and empowerment in your school community.

Special Considerations

In Person Learning

- Prioritize health and safety guidance and expectations when planning staff and student experiences, such as:
 - Number of participants in Circle discussions and/or other activities.
 - Location: Try to meet in larger, more open spaces (cafeterias, gymnasiums, and/or outdoors) where recommended physical distances between participants are possible.
- Adapt all Circle protocols and prompts to meet health and safety requirements. For example: using a unique hand gesture or special word or sound as a verbal “talking piece” instead of passing a physical object to eliminate physical contact between Circle participants.
- Use the [Restorative Practice Handbook](#) to learn how to best facilitate Circles.
- Any theme of a suggested “Circle” can be utilized without following the Circle format. Try using the prompts listed as verbal and written conversation starters and discussion points.

Blended Model - Remote Learning

- Review [Facilitation Tips for Remote Circles](#).
- Provide both virtual and in-person options for the suggested activities above.
- Include virtual ways to join classroom and school-wide celebrations and other community activities.
- Determine ways to connect the students learning in-person and the students participating in remote learning during the school day.
- Any theme of a suggested “Circle” can be utilized without following the Circle format. Try using the prompts listed as verbal and written conversation starters and discussion points.

Full Remote Learning

- Review [Facilitation Tips for Remote Circles](#).
- Organize virtual opportunities for classroom, grade-wide and/or school-wide celebrations and other community activities.
- Provide guidance and support to students in writing Circles and practicing virtual Circle Keeping with their peers to increase student voice, engagement, and ownership of their learning and collective wellness of the school community.
- Any theme of a suggested “Circle” can be utilized without following the Circle format. Try using the prompts listed as verbal and written conversation starters and discussion points.

Personal Behaviors to Limit COVID Spread

COVID-19 has changed the way that we can be in community with one another. Keeping one another healthy and safe is a top priority.

The following personal [health and safety lessons](#) were designed to provide students with opportunities to learn the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions and adopt behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19. The two lessons at each grade level cover handwashing, face coverings, and physical distancing and include adaptations for remote or in-person learning. In addition to learning essential content, students have the opportunity to practice and demonstrate the

skills they need to maintain healthy behaviors. While these lessons are designed to be taught by any teacher, students should continue to practice health and safety skills throughout the year as part of their [comprehensive health education class](#). For more lesson planning resources, see the [NYC Health Education Scope and Sequence](#)

Note: Activities in this resource guide should be modified to reflect health and safety protocols, as needed, to adopt behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Universal Adult Learning Experiences

The following activities are intended to support adult wellness, community-building, and resilience. These activities are appropriate for staff working with students of all ages. Some of the activities use student facing language but are included here because they could be valuable for adults as well.

Community Building	Fostering Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Icebreakers and Warm-Ups • Connections Activity • Where I'm From/Name Story Circle • It Takes A Village • Fun Community Building Prompts • Coming Together in Hard Times: A Virtual "Gathering" • Listening Circles • Affirmation Cards • A Trauma Informed Approach to Teaching Through Coronavirus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Blocks of Resilience • Challenge Irrational Thoughts • Grounding Techniques for Managing Overwhelming Feelings • CASEL Staff SEL Personal Assessment and Reflection • What's Underneath? Enhancing Emotional Vocabulary • Realms of Concern and Influence • Self-Care Going Home Checklist • Teach Deep Breathing: A Calming Technique • Mindfulness • Yoga and Mindfulness Teacher Preparation Program



SECTION I
EARLY CHILDHOOD

Section I: Early Childhood

Day 1 Staff

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Reflection • Where I'm From / Story Circle • Hopes and Fears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Minute Mindful Art Activity • Body Scan Meditation • It Takes a Village 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3A's: Appreciate, Apology & Aha • Self-Care Going Home Checklist

Day 1 Students

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Up and Dance: During a short 5-minute morning meeting, practice gathering on the rug through a short and active song using children's names, such as: "<i>I have a friend, their name is <u>[name]</u>. Get up and dance <u>[name]</u>, Get up and dance <u>[name]</u>, Get up and dance <u>[name]</u>. We are happy that you're here.</i>" (See page 63 of Unit of Study 1 for larger group meeting tips.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective Classroom Agreement Activity • During lunch, show children a short 2-3 minute puppet show that reinforces an expectation they have been introduced to such as washing hands, using walking feet, or mealtime practices. After the short puppet show sit with children and encourage discussion about their day so far. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Classroom Superpower Activity: Introduce a class project about Classroom Superpowers. Share with children that a superpower is something you are really good at. Give an example of your own superpower, for example: being a great friend, listening to other people, or being an artist. Ask children what their superpowers are and write them down on chart paper. Invite children to create or draw their superpowers over the week during center time. Collect their art, photos of their block structures or dramatic play costumes about their superpower and compile them into a small art exhibit with

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
		<p>the list of superpowers you collected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before each child leaves for the day, write a short note about one thing the child enjoyed and a special quality they bring to the class. Read the note to children and let them know you appreciate having them as part of your school family. Send the note home so families can share a moment with their child celebrating their school day.

Recommended Activities to Support Community Building and Resilience

Community Building	Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FUN Skills Activity Suggestion • Cozy Corner Activity • Varying Emotions Activity • Family Portrait Activity • Finding Similarities: Use transition activities that help children get to know each other and see some of their similarities and differences. For example you could say: If you have a ____ (insert common family trait, i.e., sister, cat) in your family you may go make a choice. Consider singing or chanting the words. Using your knowledge of children's diverse families, repeat with other traits until all children have transitioned to centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breathing Exercise for Students • Boundaries Exercise - For Students • Student Jobs Suggestion • Supporting a Growth Mindset (<i>Virtual and In-Person</i>): Be intentional about giving children praise based on their growth and effort rather than outcomes. Rather than say "<i>Great job opening your milk!</i>" you might say "<i>I noticed you kept trying when it was hard to get your milk open, then asked me for help. You were really determined to try your best!</i>" • Tools to Support Grieving Students • How Stress Inoculation Training Treats PTSD

Community Building	Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Classroom Tour: Go on a field trip around your classroom. Introduce children to each center and space in the classroom. Ask children what they notice about each space and what they are looking forward to playing with in each space. <p>Virtual Consideration: record or on live video give children a tour of the classroom and explain each space. Ask them to share what they might do in each center and how they play similarly at home.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Building Your Resilience• Grounding Techniques for Managing Overwhelming Feelings





SECTION II

K THROUGH 5

Section II: K - 5

Day 1 Staff

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Reflection • Where I'm From/Name Story Circle • Hopes and Fears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Minute Mindful Art Activity • Body Scan Meditation • Grounding Techniques for Managing Overwhelming Feelings • Self-Care Going Home Checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3A's: Appreciate, Apology & Aha • It Takes a Village

Day 1 Students

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome and Reflection • Get Up and Dance: During a short 5-minute morning meeting, practice gathering as a group through a short and active song using children's names, such as: "<i>I have a friend, their name is <u>[name]</u>. Get up and dance <u>[name]</u>, Get up and dance <u>[name]</u>, Get up and dance <u>[name]</u>. We are happy that you're here."</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grades K-2: Self-Awareness: Movement and Feelings Lesson Plan • Grades 3-5: Self-Awareness and Self-Confidence Lesson Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirmation Cards Lesson Plan • Supporting Hands

Recommended Activities – Community Building and Resilience

Community Building	Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All About Me • Generating Classroom Shared Agreements • Listening Circles • Everyone's a Helper Lesson Plan • Friendships Lesson Plan (Grades K-2) • Fostering Belonging with Classroom Norms (Grades 3-5) • Managing Emotions Lesson Plan (Grades K-1), Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5) • Big Changes vs. Small Changes Lesson Plan • Acts of Kindness • How to Teach Positive Self-Talk (6 Strategies) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a Feelings Thermometer • Teaching Self-Care: Breathing • Coping Skills Lesson Plan • Addressing Change and Loss Lesson Plans (Grades K-2) AND Grades 3-5 • Other People's Feelings Lesson Plan Using Simple Physical Activity (Grades K-2) • Self-Management: Movement and Feelings Lesson Plan Using Simple Physical Activity (Grades 3-5) • Social Awareness Lesson Plan Using Simple Physical Activity (Grades 3-5) • Tools to Support Grieving Students • How Stress Inoculation Training Treats PTSD • Building Your Resilience • Mindfulness



SECTION III
MIDDLE SCHOOL

Section III: Middle School

Day 1 Staff

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Reflection • Where I'm From/Name Story Circle • Hopes and Fears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Minute Mindful Art Activity • Body Scan Meditation • Grounding Techniques for Managing Overwhelming Feelings • Self-Care Going Home Checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3A's: Appreciate, Apology & Aha • It Takes a Village

Day 1 Students

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Reflection • Where I'm From/Name Story Circle • Hopes and Fears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Your Success Squad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3A's: Appreciate, Apology & Aha

Recommended Activities – Community Building and Resilience

Community Building	Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fun Community Building Prompts • Self-Esteem Community Building Circle • Establishing Community Agreements • Getting to Know You • Building Connections Activities • Listening Circles • Pair Share Drawing Activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Celebration of You • Building Your Support Team • Conscious Breathing • Tools to Support Grieving Students • How Stress Inoculation Training Treats PTSD • Building Your Resilience • Mindfulness

Community Building	Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Put Your Hands in Mine	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Emotions and Feelings• Gratitude Journal• Stress Management





SECTION IV
HIGH SCHOOL



Section IV: High School

Day 1 Staff

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Reflection • Where I'm From/Name Story Circle • Hopes and Fears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Minute Mindful Art Activity • Body Scan Meditation • Grounding Techniques for Managing Overwhelming Feelings • Self-Care Going Home Checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3A's: Appreciate, Apology & Aha • It Takes a Village

Day 1 Students

AM Community Building Activities	Midday SEL Activities	PM Close-Out Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome & Reflection • Where I'm From/Name Story Circle • Hopes and Fears 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building Your Success Squad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3A's: Appreciate, Apology & Aha

Recommended Activities – Community Building and Resilience

Community Building	Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ice Breaker Activities • Name and Motion Activity (pg. 13) • Community Building Prompts • Building/Strengthening Relationship Circle • Generating Classroom Shared Agreements • How To Listen Circle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refining Emotional/Feelings Vocabulary • Strengths Bingo Activity • Teach Deep Breathing: A Calming Technique • This Too Shall Pass: Short Story and Reflection Prompts • Pictures Speak Volumes: A Digital Collage Activity

Community Building	Resilience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="253 270 623 302">• Pair Share Drawing Activity<li data-bbox="253 344 561 375">• Cooperative Counting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="873 233 1333 264">• Tools to Support Grieving Students<li data-bbox="873 306 1377 375">• How Stress Inoculation Training Treats PTSD<li data-bbox="873 417 1065 449">• Mindfulness





STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

& SUPPORTING RESOURCES

Stakeholder Engagement

We know that students are deeply impacted by the trauma of the pandemic and the tragic events from the past few months. We must address the mental, emotional, and physical needs of our students for them to recover and be ready to learn. Principals and School Leadership Teams will need help with focused communication and coordination around these key student supports. Borough/Citywide Offices (B/CO), Student Services staff, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), students, School Wellness Councils, and Community Based Organizations (CBO) are a few of the key stakeholders that can support an effective transition to school and long-term social-emotional and mental wellness.

- **Borough Citywide Office:** Every Borough/Citywide Office (B/CO) has a professional team dedicated to the provision of vital student support services aimed at promoting student success. The B/CO Student Services staff are important members of the B/CO leadership team and include a Director of Student Services, Health Director, Counseling Manager, Attendance Supervisor, Climate/Culture Manager, and Crisis Intervention Manager. B/CO Student Services teams work collaboratively with school staff, such as School Counselors, Social Workers, School Psychologists, School Nurses, and School Administration, to (a) foster school climates conducive to student achievement; (b) promote social-emotional learning and leadership; (c) advance student health and well-being; and (d) support interventions to address non-cognitive factors affecting student success, such as positive discipline strategies or chronic absence. B/CO Student Services staff have been trained, or have access to expertise, in various healing-centered approaches and practices identified within this Bridge to School resource, and will serve as resources to ensure schools are supportive environments during this unprecedented time in our lives. The expertise of the B/CO Student Services staff can be leveraged to support schools in obtaining resources, conducting trainings, and embedding the domains of the [Supportive Environment Framework](#).
- **Parent Teacher Associations:** The Parent Association (PA) or Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is the official organization of the parent body in a school and can support schools with parent engagement and school enrichment. PA/PTAs were encouraged to meet during the summer, and many facilitated virtual meetings with parents to support a successful re-opening.

PA/PTAs have their own communications channels (e.g., websites, newsletters, social media, etc.), which are a useful resource for distributing important information. In addition to finding ways to use existing infrastructure to support communication, schools should consider leveraging PA/PTA support to expand parent engagement opportunities, especially as it relates to students' social and emotional wellness.

Here are some key ways to partner with your PA/PTA:

- Provide the PA/PTA's executive board with regular updates and ask them to amplify your communications via their website, newsletters, social media, emails, and phone outreach.
- Plan family meetings jointly with the PA/PTA to leverage parent leaders' support organizing logistics, identifying key engagement issues, and maximizing turnout.
- Share information on budget issues to encourage collaborative planning.

- **Students:** Most schools have established student leadership structures (e.g., student government, student advisory councils, youth-adult equity teams), which are available to provide insight and feedback on re-opening plans and strategies for supporting students' social and emotional wellness. Student leaders can serve as a sounding board or focus group for re-opening policies and supports. In addition, by involving student leaders, you can provide them with a unique learning opportunity to use collaborative problem solving to resolve complex policy issues.
- **School Wellness Councils:** [School Wellness Councils](#) can provide a centrally supported engagement structure that schools can launch, develop, and operate, remotely or in-person, and at no cost to schools, to assist with recovery in our school communities. School Wellness Councils draw from a [Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child \(WSCC\)](#) approach of intentional collaboration and communication among key stakeholders to ensure that everyone in the school community puts students' health and wellness at the center of their efforts. Councils are led by "champions" who recruit members, set agendas for meetings, and liaise with Central support staff.

In order to most effectively use these resources in their own unique communities, schools need a structured way to plan, coordinate, and implement a comprehensive approach to wellness that utilizes all available resources, especially when budgets are tight. Strong School Wellness Councils fill this need, as the school-based structure that can initiate and sustain wellness efforts, promote connectedness, and help coordinate the services, programs, and instruction that are necessary for students to be able to heal and ready to learn. They can lead councils in reviewing the [Supportive Environment Framework](#) in order to develop, rollout, and reinforce actionable practices and consistent health messages to students, staff, and families. By creating an action plan, identifying the available supports and resources, and engaging council members who represent all aspects of wellness in the school community, School Wellness Councils ensure that their schools can better meet students' social, emotional, mental, and physical health and safety needs. This [resource](#) outlines special considerations for a blended model approach when establishing a School Wellness Council.

- **Community Based Organizations:** Robust school and community partnerships can help create supportive school environments through connecting students to social, emotional, and academic supports that build on the strengths of students, families, and communities. Many Community Based Organizations (CBOs) operate from a whole child lens, have expertise in SEL, and have developed deep and trusting relationships with students and families. By partnering with CBOs during and after school, schools can leverage these skills and relationships to better serve students and families and to build a stronger school community. For example, many CBOs have expertise in facilitating restorative circles—CBO staff can conduct these circles together with teachers in the classroom during the school day, and CBO staff can also use them during afterschool. Schools should deepen relationships with existing CBO partners and include them in plans for re-opening, as well as establish new CBO and community partnerships, where needed.

Consider engaging your community partners in your planning for school re-opening. Think broadly about which partners in your school are best positioned to support the transition back to school as well as the blended learning and remote teaching models. As we transition back to school, all relationships should be leveraged to ensure students feel supported and connected in this new environment. Community partners can also engage in personalized outreach to ensure that all students understand their schedule for the fall and are equipped to access remote learning through technology.

B/CO Student Services staff, PTAs, students, School Wellness Councils, and CBO partners should be leveraged in leading the school's social-emotional learning plan for students and school staff during school re-opening. These groups can provide comprehensive resources for families and ensure that information will be shared in a consistent and timely manner to allow families to plan and help their children to prepare for school re-opening. They can also help to communicate the social-emotional learning plan to school staff, so that staff are aware of the health and wellness services and supports available in the school and community and understand how to connect students and families to these supports.

Looking Ahead

The need for supportive school environments that prioritize student social-emotional wellness and honor the voices and lived experiences of students does not end after the initial transition period. Supporting students' social-emotional needs is critical to their academic success all year long. Schools are encouraged to plan for continued community building, explicit teaching of social-emotional learning skills, and embedding of social-emotional learning into core academic instruction, regardless of the learning model. Included below are considerations and suggestions for community building and social-emotional learning through in-person, remote learning, and blended learning environments. The [Supportive Environment Framework](#) also outlines four critical domains with specific strategies and practices to do this work well. You are encouraged to leverage the following resources to support the ongoing work of social-emotional learning and trauma-informed care within your school community, in partnership with existing systems and structures.

Resources to Support Ongoing Work: Early Childhood

In early childhood, we know the beginning of the year is a crucial time for establishing the best practices that help young children thrive: creating safe spaces, providing predictable routines, establishing trusting and caring relationships, and learning to recognize and work through big emotions. This plan offers some specific activity ideas to incorporate into blended learning during the first few weeks of school, but the work of building community and fostering social emotional development should extend into all of your daily activities and well beyond the first two weeks. Please refer to some of our key resources for supporting this time of transition in addition to this document:

- [Instructional Resources](#)
- [DECE Curriculum](#) (for all age groups)
- [Explorations: Our Community](#)
 - What does it mean to be 3? (page 2)

- [Sample Schedules](#)
- [Tips for Easing Separation Anxiety](#) (translations available)
- Why is it Important for Young Children to Learn about Feelings? [Infographic](#) (translations available) and [Video](#) (subtitles are translated)
- [Beginning of the Year Questionnaire for Families](#) (translations available)
- [Birth – 5 Professional Learning Toolkit](#): Advancing Play-Based Learning and Responsive Instruction
- [Early Childhood Framework for Quality](#) (EFQ)

Resources to Support Ongoing Work: K-12

DOE Resources	External Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive Environment Framework <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ WeTeachNYC – Supportive Environment Framework • Health and Physical Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NYC K-12 Health Education Scope and Sequence ○ NYC K-12 Physical Education Scope and Sequence ○ Office of School Wellness Programs: wellness@schools.nyc.gov • Sample DOE Initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Sanford Harmony ○ Yale RULER ○ Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility ○ Cornell University's Therapeutic Crisis Intervention System ○ Life Space Crisis Intervention • Community Schools <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Family Engagement ○ Learn at Home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) ○ CASEL Roadmap for Re-opening Schools: Reunite.Renew.Thrive • National School Reform Faculty <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://nsrfharmony.org/ • Restorative Justice Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Restorative Practice Handbook ○ Facilitation Tips for Remote Circles ○ The Neuroscience of Restorative Justice ○ The Basics of Non Violent Communication ○ Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth ○ IIRP (The International Institute for Restorative Practices) ○ Brene Brown's video on the power of vulnerability ○ The power of story circles ○ Brene Brown's video on the anatomy of trust called BRAVING ○ Restorative yoga with Jessamyn Stanley • Greater Good in Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adapting Practices for Students with Special Needs

Resources to Support Ongoing Work: SEL for Families

Early Childhood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a Comfortable Spot • Feelings on the Outside • Feelings Check In
K-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making Connections • Feelings Check In • Creating a Comfortable Spot • Feelings Detective
Middle School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story of My Name • Feelings Check In • Poem Reflection
High School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story of My Name • Where I'm From • Mental Wellness Plan • Feelings Check In





TRAUMA RESPONSIVE

EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES RESOURCES

Trauma Responsive Educational Practices Resources
TREP Collective-Care: Quick Start



Collective Care is one way administrators and colleagues striving to meet the needs of their staff emotionally, intellectually, and professionally can support their overall well-being. Rising to the challenges of reducing stress, improving job satisfaction, strengthening resilience, and, ultimately, preventing teacher burnout can feel overwhelming. It is more important that you simply start somewhere.

PRACTICE: All school leaders should begin every staff or team meeting with a brief mindfulness to give staff a moment to calm any emotional agitation that may have been activated during the day.

POLICY: Foster a supportive and collaborative work environment by ensuring that EVERY staff member participates in ongoing grade level/cluster or other team meetings, to ensure that no staff member feels isolated. Policies regarding meeting agendas should ensure that a designated part of the time is spent on collective professional-level problem-solving.

REASSURANCE OF WORTH: Develop a culture of positivity. Even when you need to provide professional correction and critique, begin with a specific and concrete statement about what you notice they are doing well. Include a word of encouragement for your teachers in every school-wide communicate, such as a weekly bulletin. When recognizing individual teachers, use a staff checklist, to ensure that EVERY staff member receives some form of positive recognition every few months.

CONTINUE: The following will help build a school climate that values educator wellness and reduces burnout.

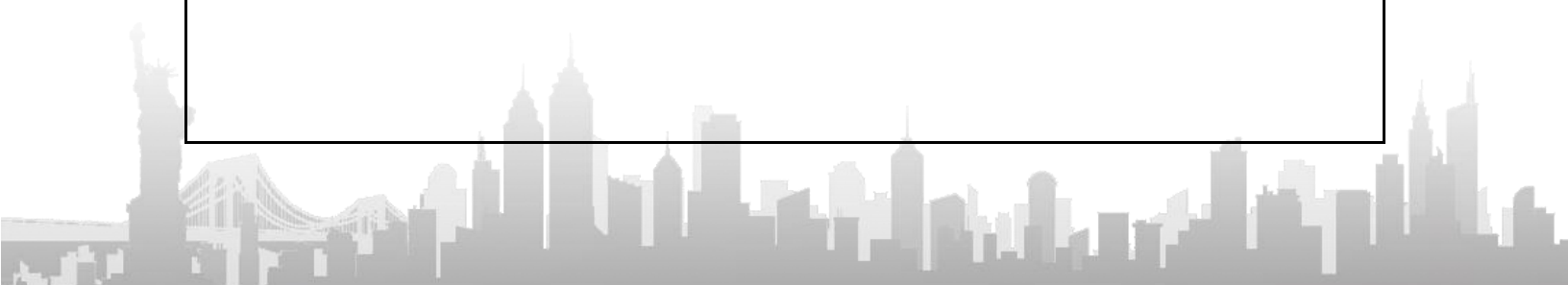
Wellness Practices	Recognition & Reassurance of Worth	Relationship Building
Bring fun and wellness into your school atmosphere like massage therapists in the staff lounge one day.	Whenever possible, allow teachers to be a part of the decision-making process.	Include a team-building activity in every staff meeting or PD.
Encourage staff to leave work at a healthy time and leave their work bag at school once a week. Check on teachers who often stay late and ask how you can support them to leave earlier.	Feature a few staff members each month with a casual, or silly picture along with a couple interesting facts about themselves and one educator-related quote.	Create a social club or having each grade level plan one monthly outing for the entire staff, for an early evening, weekend, or day off.

Provide an incentive for teachers to lead staff care classes before or after school: e.g., yoga, painting, dancing, or cooking.	Quarterly Staff Recognition lunches with a note of appreciation for their hard work including specific praise.	Ensure new teachers are paired with veteran teachers and schedule a time for them to connect monthly.
Teacher Book Character Read-In. All staff dress as a book character and read to a couple classes.	Teacher Appreciation Day: Consider small gifts and cards of appreciation. Include non-instructional staff.	Potluck/ Pot Blessing monthly, quarterly or holiday-themed lunches in the Teacher’s Lounge.
Walk/ Run Events: Invite staff to be a part of a team at a walk/ run in the city related to a shared cause.	“Catch a Break Day”: Administrator(s) visit classrooms to relieve the teacher for a 10-minute break.	“Secret Santa”, “Halloween Ghosting” and staff birthday recognitions
To encourage the teacher’s own self-care, issue a friendly weekly challenge related to their health and wellness,	Invest in professional development to strengthen classroom management and student behavior without compromising their own well-being.	Practice “give a break/ take a break”: one prep time a week, each staff member offers another a 10 minute break, with a focus on new staff.

Which two collective care strategies do you think you could get started for your staff?

Which staff members may be able to take the lead getting these strategies started?

What resources will you need to get this started, time, space, materials?



COVID-19 Psychoeducation Resources

Normalizing talking with students about COVID-19 related mental health challenges is a form of psychoeducation.

Psychoeducation is offered to individuals who are suffering from mental health challenges that are impairing their quality of life. The aim of psychoeducation is to give both the individuals who suffer from psychological conditions and their families a stronger base of knowledge regarding ways to cope and thrive—providing the person suffering from the psychological condition a better road map towards healthy functioning and management of their challenges.

Use this work time to browse these COVID-19 psychoeducation resources and identify a couple that you will return to later to prepare yourself (and your staff) to talk with families and children about these issues at start of the academic year.

- [The Pandemic Parenting Guide: How to Improve Your Child/Teen’s \(and Your Own\) Emotional Well-Being in Times of COVID-19](#)
- [A Compassionate Guide to Anxiety During the COVID-19 Pandemic Part 1: Understanding Why We Are so Anxious Right Now](#)
- [A Compassionate Guide to Anxiety During the COVID-19 Pandemic Part 2: Managing Your Anxiety](#)
- [How to Talk to Your Anxious Child or Teen About Coronavirus](#)
- [COVID-19 MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCE HUB](#)
- [COVID-19 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INFORMATION HUB--Resources to Support Children](#)
- [Cognitive Behavioral Strategies to Manage Anxiety: Tools to Build Resilience](#)
- [Supporting children and young people with worries about COVID-19](#)
- [Talking to children about illness](#)
- [National Center for School Mental Health—COVID-19](#)
- [National Association of School Psychologists-COVID-19: Crisis & Mental Health Resources](#)

Easy-Read Social Stories For Kids

- [My COVID-19 Capsule Workbook](#)
- [Getting Ready To Go To The Test Centre - Story for Children](#)
- [Coronavirus Test - Social Story](#)
- [I Feel Worried About Coronavirus - Social Story](#)
- [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPS\) - Social Story](#)
- [Social Distancing - Social Story](#)
- [Coronavirus - A Book for Children](#)
- [My Hero is You - Storybook for Children on COVID-19](#)

COVID-19 Graphic Comics/Novels

- [My Hero is You](#)
- [A Kid's Guide to Coronavirus](#)
- [Digital book for primary school children](#)
- [NPR comic](#)
- [Wazi](#)
- [Vaayu and Corona](#)
- [Oakly and the Virus](#)
- [Baffled Bunny and Curious Cat](#)



Review Non-Clinical Tier 2 Supports That Can Be Implemented in the Classroom

Use this work time to browse these Tier 2 Interventions and consider the follow-up worksheets.

First, take some time to browse each intervention, then complete the staffing inventory

Each intervention equipped with its own manual and certification for these programs is easily obtained or generally not required allowing for effective and efficient implementation.

<h3>Support for Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET)</h3>	<p>Demonstrated results: Support for Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET) has shown to be effective among middle school students (between the ages of 10-14), SSET has been associated with decreases in depressive and PTSD symptoms.</p>	
<p>Description: SSET is a group intervention for students who have experienced traumatic events and display post-traumatic stress (PTSD) symptoms. Adapted from the Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) Program, SSET is a non-clinical intervention intended specifically for use by teachers and school counselors. Like CBITS, SSET helps students to develop cognitive and behavioral skills such as relaxation and social problem solving. Certification is available for free through an online course.</p>		
<p>Implementation considerations: Evaluations of the SSET program have been conducted with middle school students, but the program will likely fit the needs of children from late elementary to early high school. The format of this program is ideal for classroom use within 10 user-friendly session plans.</p>		<p>Staffing: Although the program can be implemented by educators, having the involvement of a clinical staff member can improve the capacity of the program for supporting clinical decision-making.</p>
<p>Manual: The SSET Program</p>		<p>Additional resources: SSET Fact Sheet</p>



Psychological First Aid in Schools (PFA-S)

Demonstrated results: Interventions derived from the PFA-S framework have [demonstrated reductions](#) in depressive and post-traumatic stress symptoms in students.

Description: Psychological First Aid (PFA) is designed to provide support immediately following a disaster. This approach focuses on addressing primary needs, decreasing stressors, and improving practical and social support. The five key principles of PFA include the promotion of safety, calm, efficacy, connectedness and the instilling of hope--all of which help to facilitate positive adaptation and readjustment. Core practitioner actions include gathering information, stabilizing situational stressors, providing instrumental assistance, connecting clients with mental health services and coping techniques, and empowering individuals to take an active role in their recovery. The aim is to quickly assess coping skills and needs in order to refer individuals to appropriate resources based on the level of severity of their symptoms. Although this approach was designed to be used directly following a disaster, the returning of students to schools will provide the first opportunity for the implementation of such supports.

Implementation considerations: Although the manual provides a helpful overview of how to apply the principles of PFA in a school setting, designated school staff will need to take the time to prepare a specific plan for how the various suggestions can be made to work within the specific school context. Although PFA is designed to be done directly following a disaster, the temporal dimensions of the current pandemic are uncertain. As such, the return to physical school buildings will be an opportune moment to begin implementing PFA-S in order to establish supports that will enhance the school experience for all.

Staffing: There are guidelines for each school professional’s role in administering PFA-S including both clinical and non-clinical staff: Principals and Administrators, Teachers, Health Professionals and Support Staff.

Manual: [Psychological First Aid for Schools \(PFA-S\) Field Operations Guide](#)

Additional Resources:
[Psychological First Aid TEACH - Apps on Google Play](#)
[Listen, Protect, Connect - Model & Teach](#)



Stress Inoculation Training (SIT)

Demonstrated results: Stress Inoculation Training (SIT) is a method used to teach adolescents about [stress coping mechanisms](#) which has demonstrated decreases in perceived stress, anxiety and improvement in self-esteem.

Description: SIT is a stress management program that unfolds in three different phases. This approach relies on the premise that skills learned during training are transferable to future stressful encounters that occur beyond controlled conditions. Phase 1 is conceptualization where individuals develop an understanding of constructs used in the training to describe the situational and personal components of stress. Phase 2 is skill acquisition and rehearsal where individuals gain relevant coping and adaptation skills. Finally, Phase 3 is application where individuals participate in controlled exposure to relevant images or simulations of stressful encounters. During this time, individuals are expected to apply their learning from the first two stages.

Implementation considerations: SIT training is completed through a 10-week process which gradually progresses through the three phases mentioned above. In order to complete this training with fidelity, students will need a school mental health professional to lead them through each session.

Staffing: School-based mental health provider or community partner mental health provider.

Manual: [Stress Inoculation Training Manual](#)

Additional resources: [How Stress Inoculation Training Treats PTSD](#)



Coalition to Support Grieving Students

Demonstrated results: Supporting grieving students is a highly situational process which should be undertaken with special consideration for the specific student involved. The Coalition to Support Grieving Students provides a host of resources but there is no one comprehensive program to be evaluated.

Description: The Coalition to Support Grieving Students is comprised of numerous organizations, school professionals, and other stakeholders who are concerned with ensuring that grieving students have needed supports from the entire school community. Their overarching goal is to create and share quality resources with schools across America. This work is primarily facilitated through their [website](#).

Implementation considerations: The resources available through the Coalition to Support Grieving Students are not presented as a singular program. Instead, the available trainings and modules give practitioners the opportunity to reflect on their current understandings and practice with the intention of improving their approaches to supporting grieving students.

Staffing: Broad range of school personnel including clinicians but ranging from community members and parents to school-based mental health practitioners.

Manual: [Tools to Support Grieving Students](#)

Additional resources: [Supporting grieving students during a pandemic](#)

Which of the above interventions is best suited for your school site? Why?

What considerations need to be made or additional resources are needed to implement this intervention effectively?

Preparing All Staff to Implement Effective Tier 2 Interventions

Childhood trauma is a local, national, global crisis—no school is untouched by this issue. Schools are often the one place students can have their safety restored and benefit from access to strong positive relationships that can help them heal and experience post-traumatic growth.

Supporting students struggling to cope with the effects of toxic stress and trauma requires a multidimensional approach that includes:

- Interdisciplinary teams
- Strong communication systems
- Whole-school initiatives
- Teacher-led instruction
- Counselor- or social worker-led interventions brought into the classroom
- Strategic family connections
- Partnering with community supports and resources.

Find ways of bringing all your staff to the table to present information and garner ideas. Then, a smaller, more focused team may consolidate ideas and finalize approaches before bringing the whole team back together to get every single adult in the school involved. Use small and large group processes to ensure that all classrooms and non-classroom spaces are equipped with standardized processes and tools to meet students' needs.

Staffing Inventory

In order to determine designated leaders of your school's socio-emotional support system, identify who has the background and skillset to best support students. Reflect on the following and complete the staffing inventory on the next page.

- Who is part of the core set of professionals who will tackle the day-to-day behavioral health supports for the school? This can include school mental health professionals, school partners, deans, specific teachers, etc.
- What do you know of their strengths, professional experiences, expertise, and training/certifications?
- Which classroom teachers are the best equipped to join this process?
- Which classroom teachers have a large number of students who need support and will need assistance from a colleague to implement any of these interventions in their classroom?

Staffing Inventory

<p>Name & Role in the School</p>	<p>Strengths, Experience, Expertise, Certifications, Support Needs, etc.</p>



