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**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: TECHNICAL SUPPORT PROGRAM**

**Message Compendium**

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Message Compendium for Positive Learning Environments and Behavior Change

**Introduction**

A positive learning environment is one in which school staff, students, and parents build safe and peaceful environments where people feel accepted and respected and where learning is the main focus. Therefore, a positive school climate exists when all students feel comfortable, wanted, valued, accepted, and secure in an environment where they can interact with caring people they trust. A positive school climate affects everyone associated with the school. It is the belief system or culture that underlies the day-to-day operations of a school. Improved school climate is a goal to pursue, where educators need to constantly work toward improving their school climate, culture, and conditions so that student learning is improved. The suggested framework for creating and sustaining this positive learning environment is creating safe, caring, engaging and healthy schools that will operate effectively in the 21st century. The framework is based on the concept that all students’ teachers, parents, and local communities will benefit from positive behavior messages and help in behavioral supports for all students. The concept of positive learning environments is based on universal expectations of behaviors and academic achievement for all students in all locations and is expected to promote social-emotional learning and positive culture change in our schools. The behavioral expectations of this compendium serve to address behavioral concerns and to increase the capacity of schools on the school wide level, classroom level and individual level.

This manual was developed to empower schools to adopt positive behaviors and promote behavior change in all members concerned with the learning and teaching process through specific messages that will lead to positive behaviors. The adoption of positive behaviors in turn will lead to the bettering of our school environments.

**Primary Audience for the Messages**

This message compendium was designed to communicate positive learning environment messages to the following audiences:

* Students of all ages (1st-11th grade)
* Teachers (all capacities, including home-room teachers, subject teachers , health teachers, counselors, and resource room teachers)
* Parents and care-givers of the students when needed

**Expected Outcomes of the Compendium**

This manual aims to achieve the following:

* Promote positive behavior change in schools towards changing school climate and culture
* Encourage social-emotional learning
* Promote higher academic achievement and behavioral outcomes
* Build capacity among students, teachers and parents in expected behavior change
* Foster safe, caring, engaging and healthy behaviors

**Use of Booklet**

This booklet was designed to be used by teachers in communicating behavior and social change messages to students and parents and to teachers themselves. Many of the messages apply simultaneously to all audiences, and other messages have specific audiences. The teachers at schools are to adopt all 4 behavioral expectations of this compendium, to be applied at the school level and classroom level simultaneously. The following are suggested considerations:

* The School Support Team (SST) of the learning environments will aid in conducting trainings on the behavioral expectations, messages, and outcomes.
* The SST along with the coaches will help in monitoring the behavior change progress and dissemination of the messages.
* All schools participating in LETS program will apply all 4 major behavioral expectations during the first semester on the school wide level, and continue to reinforce the behavioral expectations throughout the 4 semesters of implementing the program. Each school will determine which of the specific messages in this booklet to promote, based on its needs assessment and school improvement plan. . Each school has the freedom to choose as many messages as it deems appropriate and to customize the messages to be age appropriate and to meet different audience needs.
* The messages could be applied throughout the life of the project. However each message used will need to be sustained after introducing new messages. The school team should devise ways to sustain messages.
* Selecting messages could be part of the effort of the teachers’ professional development meeting.
* The principals of the schools will act as facilitators and supporters for the dissemination of these messages in their schools.
* Each school will devise a plan that demonstrates how, when, and where the messages are to be carried out and implemented, taking into consideration that behavioral outcomes are expected to be at the at the school wide level and the classroom level.
* The compendium is to be integrated within the regular school day, and could be implemented during morning assembly, national and international days, through extracurricular activities and free periods, or as the school perceives suitable.
* The school peer counselors and Learning Environment ambassadors may assist in any capacity.
* All school members are expected to model the positive behavioral expectations in the compendium, especially when introducing and sustaining these messages.
* Some of the tips and approaches - written at the end of the compendium- are taught directly to students through teachers, and some of the suggested tips and approaches are to be used by the teachers. Nonetheless all are to help the audiences acquire the expected behavioral change and will lead to the specific outcome mentioned in the compendium.
* The compendium has an additional matrix that specifically addresses teachers and parents. Teachers could use these messages as guidelines for their professional development meetings, in their teacher-teacher conferences or incorporate the messages in their teaching strategies.
* The messages specified to parents are to be disseminated through effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications such as workshops, parent conferences, brochures, memos, newsletters, school-to-home notebooks, communication through technology or any other form of printed and non-printed communications. The main point is that the parents should be informed about what messages the school is working on with the students and the rationale behind that; the parents in return will offer support as needed at home. Certain messages are directed to the parents to help foster the behavioral expectations in the message compendium.
* The messages will be implemented as following:
* The teacher introduces the 4 major school-wide behavioral expectations and the selected messages related after discussing them with the students. These expectations will be applicable to all settings and are disseminated at a school –wide level. They are defined in terms that students will understand. These behavioral outcomes are to be taught like academics. Students’ understanding should be checked. Example: “I will be safe” is identified and students are to develop a list of 3-5 examples of “safety”, these examples could be drawn or written on charts. Subsequently, activities are assigned to students such as topics for journal entries, drama skits, song, or entertainment in general and then assignments are discussed in the classroom. Efforts of the students exhibiting improved “safety” behaviors are acknowledged through a reward system. Students are to be provided with written and graphic cues in the setting where the behaviors are expected, so if the message they adopt is “I will look both ways before I cross the street” the students are taught to be safe coming and going to school if it is determined that street safety is problematic. . The message concept could be embedded into the curriculum, and outcomes of the behaviors are to be recorded such as risk avoidance in this instance. The previous is applicable as well for all 4 behavioral outcomes and is to be shared with the parents.

The compendium consists of the 4 majors behavioral outcomes, the illustrative behaviors related to these outcomes, the messages related, and the expected outcomes (skills) expected after adopting and disseminating the messages.

**Main Behavioral Expectations on the School-Wide Level**

1. I will be responsible
2. I will care for myself, others, and the environment
3. I will be safe
4. I will be a good citizen

**(1) Student Message Compendium**

| **School-Wide Behavioral Expectation** | **Illustrative Behavior** | **Messages** | **Expected Outcome** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |
| 1. **“I Will Be Responsible”** | Manage time effectively | “ I will do my homework, then play “ | Time Management |
| “I will wake up early for school” |
| “ I will have my breakfast, then come to school” |
| “ I will get 8 hours of sleep at least “ |
| Arrive to school and class on time | “ I will participate in the morning assembly “ |
| “ I will arrive to my classes on time “ |
| “ I will use my school calendar” |
| Bring all materials to class | “ I will organize my bag before coming to school according to my class schedule “ | Academic goal setting |
| “ I will bring all my text books and note books to class “ |
| Do well in school | “I will ask my teachers for advice” |
| “I will participate in classroom discussions” |
| “ I will try my best at school to achieve well and not give up” |
| Listen to others | ‘I will listen to my classmates, teachers and parents and not interrupt them when they speak” | Listening skills |
| “ I will respect other people’s opinions“ |  |
| Follow classroom and school rules and regulations | “ I will know my classroom rules and discuss them with my teacher” | Classroom management |
| “ I will share the classroom rules and school rules and regulations with my parents “ |
|  | “ I will follow classroom and school rules and regulations “ |
|  | Be responsible for actions and emotions | “ I will accept consequences of my mistakes “ | Self –regulation |
| “ I have the right to my feelings, but I should regulate how I express them“ |
| “ I will control my anger” |
| “ I am the master of my own destiny .I do not quit without trying” |
| Be a team player | “ I will help my classmates when they ask for assistance “ |
| “ I will join in group activities and discussions” |
| “ I Will do my best to work collaboratively with my peers to make a difference “ |
| 1. **I Will Care for Myself, Others and the Environment** | Eat healthy | “ I will eat 3 meals a day “ | Healthy lifestyles |
| “ I will eat fruits and vegetables every day” “ An apple a day keeps the doctor away” |
| “I will eat breakfast daily “ |
| “ I will drink milk instead of tea in the morning |
| Brush teeth | “ My brushed teeth= a beautiful smile” I will brush my teeth at least twice daily” |
| “ My dentist is my friend: I see him every 6 months” |
| Exercise daily  Using the bathroom | “I will exercise for 60 minutes a day at least” |
| “Exercise improves my health and my general performance” |
| “I will close the door when I use the bathroom” |
|  | “ I will throw toilet paper in the trash can “ |  |
| “ I will flush the toilet after using the bathroom” |
| “ I will wash my hands with soap and water after using the bathroom “ |
| Conserve water | “ I will close the water faucet when I brush my teeth” |
| “ I will tell an adult if I see water leaking” |
| “ I will take 5 minute showers” |
| Say no to smoking | “ I will not smell like an ashtray” |
| “ I will say no to smoking around me” |
| “ I will say no when somebody offers me a cigarette “ |
| “ My school is a smoke free school” |
| Bathe regularly | “ I like the smell of cleanliness” |
| “ I will bathe twice a week at least” |
| Think positive | “ I like myself “ | Self –efficacy |
|  | “ I am unique” |
| “ I have confidence in myself” |
| “ I believe I can climb mountains: I believe in myself” |
| “ I will do the best I can “ | Positive social interaction |
| Be a good friend | “ I will respect others” |
| “ I will be a good friend “ |
| “ I will choose my friends wisely “ |
| “ I will apologize when I make a mistake “ |
| “ I will treat my friends kindly” |
| Sympathize with others | “ I will put myself in other people’s shoes” |
| “ I will find excuses for people’s behavior “ |
| Be assertive | “ I will respect other people’s opinions” | Assertiveness |
| “ I have the right to explain my point of view in a calm voice “ |
| “ I will maintain eye-to-eye contact when I speak to people “ |
| “I will be true to myself” |
| 1. **“I Will Be Safe “**   **4. “I Will Be a Good Citizen”** | Bullying | “ I will say no to bullying “ | Bullying prevention |
| “ I will make school a better place for everyone “ |
| “ Preventing bullying is my job” |
| “ I will report bullying incidents to an adult” |
| Stay away from dangerous situations | “ I will be aware of my surroundings” | Risk avoiding |
| “ I will look both ways before crossing the street” |
| “ I will walk on the sidewalks “ |
| “ I will think before I react “ |
| “ I will play in safe areas “ |
|  |
| Be a problem solver | “ I will ask questions” | Problem solving |
| “ I will be an explorer “ |
| “ I will prepare my daily lessons well” |
| Appreciate others’ differences | “ We are all unique and special” | Accepting diversity |
| “ Diversity adds flavor to my life” |
| “ Our differences make us stronger” |
| Deal with life problems and life stressors | “ My school counselor is my friend “ | Coping strategies |
| “ I will solve one problem at a time” |
| “My teacher is my friend “ |
| “ I will see the humor in the situations I witness” |
| “ It’s ok, tomorrow is another day” |  |
| Resolve conflicts | “ I will resolve conflicts peacefully” | Conflict management and peer mediation |
| “ I will first listen, then judge” |
| “ The best solution is the solution that keeps everybody happy” |
| “ There are no problems, there are only solutions” |
| “Anger produces more anger” |
| Maintain school and property | “ One person can say no to vandalism “ | Anti -vandalism |
| “ I will report acts of vandalism “ |
| “ I will follow school rules and regulations” |
| Respect | “ I will respect my teachers” |  |
| “ I will respect my parents” |
| “ I will respect my community” |
| “ Respect is commanded not demanded” |
| Cultivate a sense of belonging | “My school is the reason for my success” |  |
| “ I create my tomorrow in my school today” |
| “ I will be a role model for positive behavior ” |
| “ I will serve my community “ |  |
| Take initiative | “ I will take the first step for change and follow through” |  |
| “ I will focus on the school’s goals for change” |  |
| Work up to full potential | “ I will become an optimist” |
| “ I will embrace change” |
| “ I will become a life- long learner “ |

**(2) Messages to Teachers   
(in addition to all that apply above):**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Behavioral expectations** | **Illustrative Behavior** | **Messages** | **Expected Outcome** |
| 1. **“I Will Be Responsible”** | Know the students | “I will know my students by name “ | Individualization and academic personalization |
| “ I will get to know my students’ psychosocial background” |
| “ I will know my students’ health needs” |
| “ I will familiarize myself with my students’ educational records” |
| “ I will teach each student uniquely “ |  |
| Involve the parents | “ I will speak to the parents about their child’s needs “ | Connectedness to parents/ parental involvement |
| “ I will build a relationship with my student’s parents” |
| “ I will keep open channels of communication with the parents” |
| “ I will recruit and organize parents’ help and support” |  |
| Monitor students appropriately | “ I will give special care to my students’ academic progress” | Consistency/ follow up |
| “ I will monitor my students’ behavioral progress” |
| “ I will screen for my students’ needs” |
|  | “ I will recognize symptoms of depression, anxiety as I screen my students” |  |
| Work with colleagues collaboratively | “ I will meet with my colleagues regularly for better professional development “ | Fostering positive school environments/ teacher-teacher connectedness |
|  | “ I will refer my students when needed to the appropriate entity at school” |
| Reward positive behavior | “ I will catch my students doing something right and reward them “  “I will apply behavior modification techniques in the classroom” | Classroom management/ positive behavioral interventions |
| “ I will avoid corporal punishment” |
| 1. **I Will Care for Myself, Others, and the Environment** | Expect students to do well | “ I will encourage my students to do well in school “ | Raising academic expectations |
| “ I will not give up on my students” |
| Be fair to students | “ I will treat my students similarly” | Fairness |
| “ I will give all students a chance to participate “ |
| “ I will enforce rules and regulations equally” |
| Be responsive to students‘ needs | “ I will listen to my students when they speak” | Teacher –student connectedness |
|  | “I will offer extra support to my students when needed” |
| Avoid power struggles | “ I will avoid lecturing my students when they become argumentative” |
| “ I will remove the student from an escalating situation and talk to him/ her after they calm down “ |
| “ I will use reflective listening “ |
| “ I will validate students’ feelings” |  |
| 1. **“I Will Be Safe”** | Support bullying prevention programs | “ I will enforce school rules and regulations “ |  |
|  | “I will be an active participant in bullying prevention programs “ |  |
| Control anger | “ I will count to ten before I react to an escalating situation” | Anger management |
| “ I will breathe deeply when faced with an evoking situation” |
|  | Combat violence | “ I willsupport student anti-violence programs” |  |
| 1. **“I Will Be a Good Citizen”** | Respect | “ I will respect my students’ opinions “ |  |
| “ I will respect my colleagues’ opinions even if they are different than mine “ |
| Be a change agent | “ I will effect change in my school” |
| “ Learn to change, change to learn” |  |

**Messages to the Parents (in addition to all that apply above)**

| **Behavioral expectations** | **Illustrative Behavior** | **Messages** | **Expected Outcome** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1. “I Will Be Responsible”** | Participate in school activities | “ I will support my son’s/ daughter’s school through any means available to me “ | Parental involvement / school parent connectedness |
| “ I will attend school activities” |
| “ I will volunteer my time to my children’s school” |
| Participate in school policy decision-making | “ I will share my views with my children’s school without conflict ” |
| “ I will support bullying prevention programs in my children’s schools “ |
| Communicate with the school | “ I will keep open channels of communication with my children’s school” |
| “ I will document all communications with the school” |
| “ I will talk freely to my children’s teachers about my concerns“ |
| **2. “I Will Care for Myself, Others and the Environment”** | Know your child | “ I will talk to my children about their school day**”** |
|  | “ I will avoid comparing my children to each other “ | Individualization |
|  | Establish routines | “ I will set rules about homework with my children “ | Time management |
|  | “ I will read to my children daily before they go to bed” |  |
| “ I will check my child’s school bag daily for homework and school communication items” |
| **3.I Will Be Safe** | Bullying | “ I will talk to my child about bullying prevention “ | Bullying prevention |
| **4.I Will Be a Good Citizen** | Modeling good citizenship | “ I will model good citizenship behavior in front of my children“ |  |

**Tips and Approaches for the Desired Outcomes**

Following are some tips and approaches that teachers could use or teach to their students directly in order to achieve the desired outcomes of the expected behaviors and illustrative behaviors:

**Time management**

To the students:

* Design blocks of study time and breaks depending on the difficulty of the task
* Dedicate study spaces that are free from distractions
* Assign weekly reviews and updates on your schedule or calendar
* Prioritize your assignments when studying. Get into the habit of beginning with the most difficult subject or task and then move on to the less difficult
* Postpone unnecessary activities that will interrupt your studying time until the work is done
* Identify resources to help you, such as the library, internet resources and text book
* Review notes and readings just before entering the class and right after class

**Academic goal setting**To the students:

* Identify your short and long term goals and put them in writing
* State your goals positively - do not use negative language in stating your goals
* Make your goals attainable and reachable
* Describe how you will achieve your goals
* Make your goals personal, to suit you, not to please others
* Reward yourself by buying yourself a gift or praising yourself for a job well done
* Be persistent, don’t give up

**Listening Skills**

To the students:

* Face the speaker, sit up straight or lean forward slightly to show your attentiveness through body language
* Maintain eye contact, to the degree that you all remain comfortable
* Respond in ways that show that you understand. Raise your eyebrows. Say words such as “Really,” “Interesting,” as well as more direct prompts: “What did you do then?” and “What did she say?”
* Focus solely on what the speaker is saying. Try not to think about what you are going to say next. The conversation will follow a logical flow after the speaker makes her point
* Keep an open mind. Wait until the speaker is finished before deciding whether you disagree. Try not to make assumptions about what the speaker is thinking
* Even if the speaker is launching a complaint against you, wait until they finish before you defend yourself

**Classroom Management (classroom rules and school rules)**

To the teacher:

* Classroom rules /expectations must be clear, concise, and explicit so that students can understand them and how to behave in order to follow them
* Rules/expectations must be systematically and situationally taught to students in ways that help them learn how to engage in them and why they are important
* Classroom rules/expectations must be evaluated for their effectiveness and be consistently and fairly reinforced both by teachers and by students themselves, through the application of self-evaluation techniques
* Students who comply with classroom rules/expectations receive praise and recognition for doing so, and those who have not followed rules receive an appropriate, previously outlined consequence

**Self- Regulation**

To the teacher:

* Model self-control and self-regulation in your words and actions when you are frustrated with a classroom situation.
* Provide structure and predictability. Children with self-regulation problems are internally "unstructured." The more freedom and flexibility they have, the more likely they are to demonstrate uncontrolled behaviors.
* Anticipate transitions and announce changes in classroom schedules.
* Reward children with good self-regulation capabilities with freedom and flexibility that will offer them opportunities for spontaneous, creative play and learning.
* Try to identify the most "reactive" and impulsive children and keep them apart from each other. Pairing children who face these challenges can escalate the problem.
* Impulsive and aggressive children can create an atmosphere of chaos and fear that inhibit the capacity of other children to learn. Re-direct inappropriate words and actions. Your actions will make the rest of the children feel safer.

**Healthy lifestyles:**

To the teachers:

* Explain to the students the importance of healthy food and healthy eating habits.
* Speak about balanced meals that consist of carbohydrates, proteins and vitamins and minerals.
* Speak about different ways of exercise to improve your health.
* Communicate the importance of good oral hygiene and optimal ways to brushing teeth by explaining that we brush our teeth at least twice a day, visit the dentist every 6 months at least, floss and eat healthy with sufficient amounts of calcium.
* Explain the importance of hand-washing as a way to prevent disease.
* Talk about general cleanliness in all school settings.
* Explain the importance of wearing clean clothes and bathing regularly.
* Conserve water: explain to the students that Jordan is very poor in water and that there are simple behaviors they can do to help conserve water.
* Explain to the students the diseases related to smoking and that smoking is not cool.
* Explain to the students that there are smoking cessation clinics that will help them to quit smoking.

**Self- Efficacy:**

To the teachers:

* Challenge negative thoughts; teach children to identify and challenge negative thoughts that undermine students‘ belief in their ability to master a task
* Challenge negative thinking by helping students to first identify the negative thought and then to use evidence to prove why the negative thought is inaccurate
* Replace the negative thought with a positive, truthful idea
* Teach goal setting. Teaching students how to set realistic goals and strategies for persisting in achieving those goals when they encounter obstacles helps them to experience greater mastery in life.
* Notice, analyze, and celebrate successes. Increase self-efficacy by teaching youth to identify successes and to accurately assess their contribution.
* Build positive self-perceptions; positive perceptions create positive emotion by focusing on students’ strengths, and by giving positive affirmations.
* Use process praise, in which students are praised for their efforts and the strategies they used to bring about a success. Emphasizing effort and strategy helps children focus their attention on variables they can control: how hard they try and the strategies used.
* Provide opportunities for mastery experiences. Give children opportunities to control their environment.
* Create opportunities for students to make decisions. Having them use and practice their skills, and try different paths to achieve their goals will help them build self-efficacy. This requires genuinely knowing the student’s strengths and being able to link those to their goals.

**Positive Social Interaction:**

To the students:

* Foundation Skills: Maintain eye contact and appropriate personal space - do not stand too close to the person you are speaking to or too far away. Understand gestures and facial expressions, so if, for example, your friend is angry, you do not want to open up a subject that will make him/her angrier.
* Interaction Skills: Resolve conflicts and always de-escalate situations with your friends and colleagues. Take turns and learn how to begin and end conversations by determining appropriate topics for conversation.
* Affective Skills: Identify other people’s feelings and recognize the feelings of others. Demonstrate empathy by saying something like “I understand what you are going through,” or, “It must be a very difficult time for you.” Decode body language and facial expressions - if a person is frowning you do not want to share more sad news with him/her. And finally, determine whether someone is trustworthy or not.
* Cognitive Skills: understand community norms and determine appropriate behavior for different social situations. For example, some communities are offended if you do not drink their coffee.

**Assertiveness:**

To the student:

* Body language: Level and maintain eye to eye contact; stand in an upright, open posture with feet solidly planted.
* Voice: Your voice should be firm, clear and audible. Make sure you use a reasonable tone that does not quiver and is not sharp or loud.
* Words: Stick to the point and do not digress off the subject; stay focused; make points rationally; use "I" statements; and take responsibility for yourself.

**Bullying Prevention:**

To the students:

* Inform a trusted adult about the bullies you meet.
* Inform your teacher or school counselor about any bullies. Remember this is not considered tell-tailing.
* If you decide to stand up to a bully try not to show fear or anger. The bully likes to see you scared.
* Talk to the bully calmly, tell him/her to stop his/her behavior, and then walk away
* A sense of humor sometimes helps in escaping a bully’s wrath.
* Avoid unsupervised areas of school. If you have to go, always make sure you are accompanied by a friend.
* Do not bring expensive items or large sums of money to school; carry just enough to get you through the day.
* Sit with a group at all times and avoid sitting alone.
* Take a different route to school.
* Contribute in activating school policies regarding bullying and violence and cooperate with the school staff.
* Bystanders have the power to play a key role in stopping or preventing bullying. They could call for help, report the incident to an adult or directly intervene.

**Problem solving:**

To the teachers:

* Give yourself time to prepare. Inquiry-based learning involves much more preparation time than other lessons. It is important to give yourself proper time.
* Use collaborative learning. Try dividing your class into small groups. Give each group a question that they will work on together, and then let them develop a project based on the question that supports their answer. The question could be related to the lesson unit of the curriculum.
* Age-appropriate activities. This approach to learning works well with any age group and with any subject. The key is to make sure that you develop lesson plans that are age-appropriate. Do not expect a 7 year old to solve a mathematical problem of a 10 year old. Always remember your age group’s developmental milestones when preparing your material.
* Develop good questions. Your job is to develop strong questions that are applicable to your lessons. Make sure your questions are open-ended, giving students the ability to think out of the box.
* Incorporate discovery into lessons. Giving students a chance to discover things on their own can make concepts click so they understand what is being taught. Add questions to your lessons whereby students have to explore to find the answers.
* Incorporate observation into lessons. "Seeing is believing." Some students gain an advantage in learning when they have the opportunity to observe what is being taught
* Use measurement in lessons; when students are given a chance to measure progress it helps them learn important concepts.
* Incorporate hands-on activities in lessons. Any opportunity to let students work with their hands is a good way to use inquiry-based learning. Hands-on activities can be used in all subjects.

**Accepting diversity:**

To Teachers:

* Model tolerance and compassion. Children take their emotional cues from the significant adults in their lives. Avoid making negative statements about any racial, ethnic, or religious group.
* Avoid stereotyping people or countries. Children can easily generalize negative statements to students in their classes and community.  Be clear about your statements and biases, and help children understand their own prejudices.
* Stop any type of harassment or bullying immediately.  Make it clear that such behavior is unacceptable.  Offer alternative methods of expressing their anger, confusion, or insecurity such as playing sports, talking to the counselor or drawing or painting.
* Address the issue of blame factually.  Do not encourage or allow random blaming, but understand that self‑blame may be a way for students to feel "in control." However, explain that the actions of a few individuals cannot be blamed on any racial or ethnic group. Help kids resist the tendency to want to "pin the blame" on someone close by.
* Discuss how it would feel to be blamed unfairly by association.  Ask children if they have ever gotten in trouble for something a sibling or friend did and how they felt.  Would they like it if their entire class were punished for the actions of one student? Would that be fair?
* Emphasize positive, familiar images of diverse groups.  Identify people of diverse ethnicities, religions and/or lifestyles that children know and who have a positive place in their lives. These could be neighbors, friends, school personnel, health care professionals, members of their faith community, or local merchants.  Discuss the many characteristics, values, and experiences the children have in common with these people.
* Identify “heroes” of varying backgrounds involved in response to traumatic events.  These include firefighters, police officers, rescue workers, military personnel, public officials, medical workers, teachers, faith leaders, public figures, and regular citizens who work to help keep students, families, schools, and communities safe.
* Undertake projects to help those in need with people from diverse backgrounds.  Helping others is part of the healing process.  Working with classmates or members of the community who come from different backgrounds not only enables children to feel that they are making a positive contribution, it also reinforces their sense of commonality with diverse people.
* Learn about the diverse communities and faiths represented in your area.   In school, have children share information about their family or cultural customs to reinforce the notion that all people have special beliefs and rituals.

**Coping strategies:**

To the students:

* Let go of the problems that you have no control over.
* Make a list of priorities for your life. Start with the most important issues and move on to the less important sequentially.
* Learn to solve one problem at a time instead of trying to solve several problems altogether.
* Cope and deal with anger positively. You have the right to be angry but you do not have the right to express your anger negatively nor aggressively.
* Avoid too many stimulants like tea and coffee.
* Stop negative self-talk and replace it with positive self-talk.
* Surround yourself with friends you trust.
* Be outstanding in something you do such as a hobby.

**Conflict management and peer mediation:**

To the students:

* Define the two parties in conflict and hear their opinions on the conflict itself.
* Get to know each party’s needs and wishes.
* Ask probing questions.
* Propose several solutions to a conflict.
* Discuss positive and negative attributes of each solution without trying to force any specific solution.
* Agree on the solution that suits both conflicting parties.
* Re-evaluate the solution and the problem, and lean on that in solving future conflicts.
* Be a good listener, flexible and compassionate with others.
* Do your best to concentrate on the problem itself, not the feelings resulting from it.

**Anger Management**

To the students and teachers:

* Take a timeout: Take a few moments to breathe deeply and count to 10. Slowing down can diffuse your temper.
* Get some physical activity: exercise stimulates various brain chemicals that leave you happier and calmer than before you exercised.
* Think before you speak: Stop to think before you speak as you may end up saying something you regret later.
* Practice relaxation: Put relaxation skills to work. Practice deep-breathing exercises, imagine a relaxing scene, or repeat a calming word or phrase, such as, "Take it easy." You might also listen to music, or write in a journal.
* Stick to “I” statements: To avoid blaming others and regretting it later, use “I” statements to describe what you are going through. You could say “I am angry now and don’t want to talk about the subject until I calm down,” instead of saying, “You made me angry.”
* Learn to act and not react: Find positive and healthy ways to express your feelings instead of aggressive displays of anger such as shouting, yelling and slamming doors.