

Core Posture Tenet: Maintain a calm, caring, and grounded leadership presence. Prioritize emotional safety, predictability, and relationship over behavioral control across all tiers.

TIER 1: UNIVERSAL

Proactive Foundation & Hierarchy (All Students)

CARING LEADERSHIP

Providing a caring leadership posture (warm, confident, taking the lead, taking responsibility, setting clear limits, being consistent with expectations while remaining flexible, being calm and grounded before responding).

HEALTHY HIERARCHY

Intentionally building relationships without befriending students (they need that natural healthy hierarchy to feel safe and taken care of).

CURIOSITY & AUTHENTICITY

Approaching students with authenticity, curiosity and interest, rather than with judgment.

STRUCTURES & ROUTINES

Relying on the key elements to effect change: structures, routines, etc. (these are preventive/proactive at Tier 1 and establish a predictable foundation).

TIER 2: TARGETED

Emotional Safety & Grounding (Some Students)

PRIORITIZE EMOTIONAL SAFETY

Understanding that when a student at Tier 2 is overwhelmed emotionally, which results in behavioural manifestations, the first step and priority of the adult should be to re-establish a sense of safety for the student (whether by managing the circumstances and environment, or by co-regulating with the student).

ESSENTIAL ADAPTATIONS

Relying on the key elements to effect change: structures, routines, predictability, respite, movement, being preventive/proactive, etc., including adapted scheduling if needed (these are essential at Tier 2).

PRESSURE SENSITIVITY

Being careful with applying pressure towards a task accomplishment, which could be triggering the student.

SELF-REGULATION & STANCE

Being calm and grounded before responding to an upset student, and not taking their behaviour personally. Being mindful about displaying neutral/gentle facial expressions, a non-threatening stance, a stable voice volume, tone, speech rate, or talking too much.

TIER 3: INDIVIDUALIZED

Intensive Stance & Non-Punitive Care (Few Students)

DYSREGULATION REALITY

Understanding that when a student at Tier 3 is triggered and dysregulated, they are not receptive to our interventions in the moment (must focus on establishing safety for all first).

NON-NEGOTIABLE SUPPORTS

Relying on the key elements to effect change: structures, routines, predictability, respite, movement, being preventive/proactive, etc., including adapted scheduling if needed (these are non-negotiable at Tier 3).

NURTURING PROVIDER POSTURE

Not being alienated by their behaviour and keeping the posture of a nurturing provider. Being neutral, steady, and grounded when intervening and keeping the students' wellbeing in mind.

NO CONVENTIONAL DISCIPLINE

Backing away from conventional discipline (in attempt to negatively punish or forcefully control the behaviour) and ultimatums, which may trigger the student further.

Intervention Principle: Regulate before reasoning. Manage circumstances, speak concisely, maintain comfortable physical proximity, and protect peer learning.

TIER 1: UNIVERSAL

Boundaries, Communication & Flexibility

EXPLICIT EXPECTATIONS & LIMITS

Conveying explicitly what is expected of them (with the help of visuals if needed) and establishing coherent and concrete limits and boundaries (without getting upset if the students push back).

CONCISE COMMUNICATION

Speaking clearly, giving information and instructions in a concise and clear manner (they may get lost in lengthy explanations).

ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Managing the circumstances and the environment rather than trying to directly control student behaviour (relying on co-regulation and de-escalation strategies if needed).

ADAPTABILITY & BACK-UP PLAN

Adjusting when things don't go as planned (making it look like as if it was your plan all along) and ensuring to have a backup plan as an alternative solution.

TIER 2: TARGETED

De-escalation & Timing

TIMING OF INTERVENTIONS

When a student is upset, waiting until a more appropriate time to address the situation (when the student has returned to a regulated state and is open and receptive) - Relying on co-regulation, as well as de-escalation strategies, if needed, to defuse the situation.

PEER GROUP CONTAINMENT

Conveying to other students that you are aware the student in question is upset, that you are handling the situation, and they can focus on their own task at hand.

CO-REGULATED NEEDS COMMUNICATION

Actively engaging the student in communicating their needs and where they are at in their emotional regulation process, while understanding students at Tier 2 may require co-regulation support to do so.

TIER 3: INDIVIDUALIZED

De-escalation & Profile Awareness

PROFILE, NEEDS & TRIGGERS

Being familiar with the student's profile, needs and triggers to avoid unnecessary blowouts.

ATTUNED DE-ESCALATION & DISTANCE

Relying on co-regulation, as well as de-escalation strategies if needed to defuse the situation. Keeping a safe and respectful distance that feels comfortable for the student (being attuned to the student's non-verbal shifts in facial expressions and demeanour).

PEER GROUP CONTAINMENT

Conveying to other students that you are aware the student in question is upset, that you are handling the situation, and they can focus on their own task at hand.

ADULT POSTURE PRACTICE GUIDE

Multi-Tiered Relational & De-escalation Practices for Educational Staff (Part 3: Individual Attunement, Teamwork & Reconnection)

PAGE 3 • ATTUNEMENT & RECONNECTION

Post-Crisis & Relational Principle: Make the relationship (not the behavior) the bottom line. Restore the connection after fallouts, rely on team support, and tailor pacing to the child.

TIER 1: UNIVERSAL

Attunement & Regulation Process

PERSONAL SPACE & PROCESSING TIME

Honouring the student's personal space and providing enough time for them to assimilate and complete the task at their own pace.

ENGAGING NEEDS COMMUNICATION

Actively engaging the student in communicating their needs and where they are at in their emotional regulation process.

DIFFERENTIATED ADULT EXPECTATIONS

Being mindful that the adult expectations may vary depending on the student's profile, maturity level and individual differences.

TIER 2: TARGETED

Relational Bridging & Reassurance

RELATIONAL BRIDGING

'Bridging' by making the relationship (not the behaviour) the bottom line and restoring the connection following any fallouts.

REASSURANCE & AVAILABILITY

Reassuring the student that you are there for them and they can always come to you for help.

TIER 3: INDIVIDUALIZED

Safety Plans, Ongoing Co-Regulation & Bridging

STAFF ALIGNMENT & SAFETY PLAN

Ensuring that all staff working with the student are on the same page concerning the student's profile, needs, triggers, and support measures in place (making the time to co-create a Student Action Plan/Safety Plan in order to share best practices and to increase a more coherent approach). Implementing the safety plan when needed. All students need to feel safe and taken care of.

DESIGNATED RESPONDERS & TEAMWORK

Ensuring that the designated adults familiar with the student's case are the ones who are intervening with them when the situation has escalated. Relying on the power of teamwork to share the weight and responsibilities (this will help adults keep their posture intact).

ONGOING CO-REGULATION SUPPORT

Actively engaging the student in communicating their needs (keep in mind they may not be self-aware or available to do so) and where they are at in their emotional regulation process, while understanding students at Tier 3 rely on ongoing co-regulation support.

UNCONDITIONAL BRIDGING

'Bridging' by making the relationship (not the behaviour) the bottom line and restoring the connection following any fallouts. Reassuring the student that you are there for them and they can always come to you for help.