



Examples of a *Strong Adult Posture* at Tier 3



Tier 3 individualized practices

Intensive, individualized practices that prioritize **safety, connection, and collaboration** to meet complex needs.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



SAFETY FIRST
Always prioritize safety for all.



RELATIONSHIP DRIVEN
Connection is the foundation.



NEURODEVELOPMENTAL LENS
Understand behaviour as communication.



COLLABORATIVE
Work together for consistent support.



STRENGTHS BASED
Focus on abilities, build on strengths.

- 1  **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).
- 2  **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).
- 3  **Being familiar** with the student's profile, needs and triggers to avoid unnecessary blowouts.
- 4  **Not being alienated** by their behaviour and keeping the posture of a nurturing provider.
- 5  **Being neutral, steady, and grounded** when intervening and keeping the students' wellbeing in mind.
- 6  **Backing away from conventional discipline** (in attempt to negatively punish or forcefully control the behaviour) and ultimatums, which may trigger the student further.
- 7  **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).

- 8  **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).
- 9  **Ensuring that the designated adults** familiar with the student's case are the ones who are intervening with them when the situation has escalated.
- 10  **Relying on the power of teamwork** to share the weight and responsibilities (this will help adults keep their posture intact).
- 11  **Implementing the safety plan** when needed. All students need to feel safe and taken care of.
- 12  **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.
- 13  **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**.
- 14  **'Bridging'** by making the relationship (not the behaviour) the bottom line and restoring the connection following any fallouts.
- 15  **Reassuring** the student that you are there for them and they can always come to you for help.



A strong adult posture is grounded in connection, consistency, and compassion.
It's not about perfect responses, but about a **purposeful presence**.



SAFETY
Create physical and emotional safety.



PREDICTABILITY
Use routines, structure, and predictability.



REGULATION
Support co-regulation and self-regulation.



CONNECTION
Build trusting relationships.



TEAMWORK
Share the weight. Support one another.



PLANNING
Plan ahead. Implement safety plans.



BELONGING
Foster inclusion, respect and dignity.



Examples of de-escalation strategies



Removing any audience. If possible, taking the student for a walk or accompanying them to a safe and private space.



Honouring the student's personal space (needing to consider individual differences in terms of tolerance for physical proximity).



Being mindful of our verbal, non-verbal and paraverbal cues (e.g., triggering language, tone/volume of voice, speech rate, body positioning, facial expression, sudden gestures, walking fast towards the student, etc.)



Being aware of our level of stress, affect, emotional intensity, and type/level of energy reflected.



Avoiding intense eye contact (this can feel quite threatening to some students). Sitting side-by-side or standing at an angle can help with this.



Demonstrating active listening; reducing the amount of talking and allowing for moments of silence.



Being empathetic and non-judgmental; focusing on the emotion(s) experienced by the student rather than their behaviour.



Offering support or a pause; trying to accommodate and reassure the student.



If possible/available, providing a space for them to let off steam.



Examples of de-escalation strategies



Avoiding getting caught in a power struggle, anticipating potential refusal from the student and perceiving their challenging questions/comments as needing to vent.



Moving away from trying to teach a lesson or reason with the student, especially when their behaviour appears erratic and irrational.



Setting simple, concise, and realistic limits by offering options/alternatives in a supportive manner; being careful to not overload with too many directives.



Allowing time/space for decision making (not pressuring for an immediate response) and choosing wisely what is insisted upon.



Coming alongside the student's frustration, by naming and validating it.



Sometimes, using humour, when appropriate, can be helpful to diffuse the situation.



Not taking it personally; being careful to not overreact (lenses and mirrors).



Ensuring that adults passing by don't step in and impose themselves in an ongoing intervention.



Having another adult support or step in if the situation is not defusing. It's okay for the adult to tap out if they are being triggered.