

Affective Language

WHY: Affective language is crucial when working with people. If we break down the word "affective," it's how your language (or words or actions) AFFECT people. With the surge of new technology, many people have lost the ability to be empathic, compassionate, respectful, and generally, are having a more difficult time seeing how their words and/or actions are affecting people.

WHAT/HOW: When interacting with your students in class, it is crucial to use affective language, so students see how they are affecting each other and you. The following are examples of how affective can be utilized to elicit good behavior from students:

- "It frustrates me when you talk during my lesson. It makes me feel like you are disrespecting me."
- "It really bothers me when you don't do your homework. You are so much smarter than you give yourself credit for."
- "I'm going to guess it makes Johnny mad when you throw a pencil at him. Johnny, is that true?"

Affective Questions

WHY: When students are either in a bad mood or have just done something that went directly against class rules (happens all the time), they often don't know why they did what they did or why they are feeling the way they are feeling. Affective questions are set up to get more information about the situation/state of mind, so more meaningful dialogue can continue. These questions are used very strategically in formal restorative conferences and conflict resolution circles as well

WHAT/HOW: The set of questions that can be used when trying to get more information from your students for relatively minor classroom infractions and/or conflicts are as follows:

- "What happened?"
- "What were you thinking about at the time?"
- "What have you thought about since?"
- "Who do you think has been affected?"
- "What needs to be done to repair the harm?"

For more serious behavior infractions, it is crucial to have additional training – please see the **Conflict Resolution & Formal Restorative Conferences** section for more information.

Community-Building Circles

WHY: The most CRUCIAL aspect of restorative practices is building and having strong relationships. This is true for you and your students, your students with each other, as well as parents/guardians and community members. Relationship-building can be the difference between your parents "having your back" and not.

WHAT/HOW: Arrange all chairs in a circle and ask "get to know you" questions (samples on the reverse side of this paper).

Things to be mindful of:

- It can be very difficult for students to get in a circle, get to know each other without talking over each other. Be sure to get a talking piece to facilitate discussion. Whoever has the talking piece is the only one who should be talking.
- Create norms for community-building circles, so that when things get off track, you can refer to the norms
- Kids LOVE these circles – use this as an incentive during class for completing work/HW/notes, etc.

Conflict Resolution & Formal Restorative Conferences

WHY: When conflict arises, having an explicit process in place can be the difference between the conflict being repeated and not. The process outlined by IIRP and summarized in my book is extremely powerful for reducing recidivism for various conflicts/concerning behavior-related situation.

WHAT/HOW: Use affective language and the general conflict resolution script and/or formal conference script to facilitate these difficult conversations. Given the nature of these conferences **It is CRUCIAL that you have additional training before attempting to do conflict resolution circles and/or formal restorative conferences. If done improperly, they can end up causing more harm (and liability) than if they weren't done in the first place. I am available for training and/or support/mentoring/coaching – please contact me for more information.**

Community-Building Circles

STEP 1 (CHAIRS): Be sure to have enough chairs in the circle for each person. In a traditional classroom, there are often clunky desks and chairs, so the idea of moving the desks/chairs just to do a 15-minute community building circle can feel daunting. This is a perfect opportunity to get the kids up and moving – have the kids work together to move the desks to the perimeter of the classroom, then forming a circle of chairs in the center. If you have multiple classes where moving desks may be an issue, you can always take your students outside to a different spot on campus and sit on the ground, or stand, or bring chairs from the classroom.

STEP 2 (NORMS): Before you do your first circle, create norms. When in the classroom, begin a conversation about what types of behaviors, words, actions would be appropriate for a community-building circle. Explain that you are going to get to know each other, so think about how you'd like other students to treat you during this process, and we'll write down our norms to refer to if we have people not following them. (Be sure to write the norms on a large piece of paper where you can post them in class and bring them with you during future circles...)

STEP 3 (TALKING PIECE): Be sure you have a talking piece and explain that whoever is holding the talking piece should be the only person talking. I used an "ugly doll" (technical name is Fugglers) because it created a lighthearted environment where we could all laugh about how hideous it was. (Yes, it's okay to laugh with your students 😊)



STEP 4 (QUESTIONS/PROMPTS): A list of "get to know you" questions can be extremely handy. To spark some ideas, see the list below. At this point, you need to model how the circle works (tell students that you are going to model how we do this by saying, "I'm going to start, and we're going to go to the LEFT (or RIGHT).") Then read the question/prompt and answer it. It's important to tell them which way we're going circle-wise so they can be thinking about how they'll answer the question before the talking piece gets to them.

- What is your favorite song? Why?
- What is your favorite movie? Why?
- What actor/actress would you want to play you if they ever made a movie about your life?
- If you could have one song play every time you entered a room, what would it be and why?
- You discover a beautiful island where you decide to build a new society. What is the first rule you put in place?
- Would you rather win \$10,000 or let your best friend win \$100,000?
- What one invention would you uninvent and why?
- You accidentally ate some radioactive pizza and got the superpower of your choice. What do you choose and why?
- What five things would you take with you during the zombie apocalypse and why?
- Are pets better than humans? Why?
- What thoughts instantly make you feel more relaxed?
- What is your favorite color?
- Would you rather give up breakfast, lunch or dinner FOREVER?
- Is there an app you hate but still use it anyway?

STEP 5 (THINGS TO CONSIDER):

- Avoid questions that may elicit negative and/or triggering responses unless you've been trained in conflict-resolution strategies, as this can often lead to highly-charged altercations among students and/or between the students and you (more information in my book)
- There are different TYPES of circles, any can be used depending on the energy of the class:
- Sequential – each person speaks, and no one is skipped
- Non-sequential – This is a "popcorn" style circle where the talking piece is moved around in a non-sequential way
- Fishbowl – This configuration works well with particularly large groups

STEP 6 (BOOK): Don't forget to download a free copy of my book at www.withheartproject.com/book for more RP tools, strategies and resources!