

Culture COUNTS

Managing stress is important for all

By Dan Hesler

Author Jack Kornfield stated, "If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete." The New Year always provides a great opportunity for spending a few quiet moments reflecting on our own goals, values and beliefs. Being self-aware can help us manage our emotions during a stressful time during the work day. Working with students who have experienced complex trauma can be very stressful and can often cause stress responses for us as staff. When we start to experience these stressors in our lives, it is important to remember strategies that can help us with self-regulation. Here are some tips below:

“If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete.”

— Author Jack Kornfield

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Turn this page over to learn more about facilitating student conversations and introducing circles.

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TIPS FOR REGULATING YOUR OWN STRESS

Use self-awareness questions.

Be aware of your own triggers and tag out when needed.

Recharge your batteries daily.

Enjoy your hobbies.

Read.

Exercise.

Use positive self-talk.

Use stress management techniques (apps include Headspace, Breathe, Mindbliss).

Do yoga.

Facilitating student conversations

By **Randi Downs**

OCM BOCES teachers have been attending Total Participation Workshops led by Randi Downs and Danielle Poissant.

The work is derived from a book by Persida and William Himmele called *Total Participation Techniques: Making Every Student an Active Learner* (2017 ASCD). If students are not cognitively engaged with content, they see very little relevance between school and their lives. We need to give them the floor, let them talk about what they are learning!

At right is a strategy from the book, called the “Bounce Card,” to engage students with content while promoting a culture of collaboration. Be sure to model the phrases on the “Bounce Card” for your students!

BOUNCE CARD

Bounce

Take what your classmate(s) said and bounce an idea off it. For example, start your sentence with:

- “That reminds me of ... ”
- “I agree because ... ”
- “True, another example is when ...”
- “That’s a great point ... ”

Sum It Up

Rephrase what was just said in a shorter version. For example, you can start your sentences with:

- “I hear you saying that ... ”
- “So, if I understand you correctly ... ”
- “I like how you said ... ”

Ask a Question

Understand what your classmates mean by asking questions. For example, you can start questions with:

- “Can you tell me more about that?”
- “I see your point, but what about ... ?”
- “Have you ever thought about ... ?”

Introducing the concept of ‘circles’ to students

By **Randi Downs**

It is important to be transparent and explicit when we introduce new concepts or strategies to our classroom community. By doing this, we are being restorative.

Here is a sample statement for you to use with your students:

“We will be meeting in circles to learn ways to better communicate and build our class community. Circles help build a sense of community in which every member — students, teachers, and teacher’s assistants — feel that they are seen, heard, and respected.

We may talk about the values we share, fun facts about ourselves, have reflections on books or videos we have watched, or even solve conflict in our classroom.

The shape of the circle is important. Even if

we cannot sit in a perfectly round arrangement, we consider it a circle when everyone is able to see everyone else’s face without having to lean forward.”

(Adapted from the Open Society Institute — Baltimore)



Above: Students in Bob Shattell’s Crossroads high school class begin most days with a circle. As you can see, the arrangement does not have to be in the exact shape of a circle, but everyone has to be able to see everyone else comfortably.