

Native STAND

Students Together Against Negative Decisions


CREATING AND MAINTAINING A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

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OBJECTIVES

- 1. Describe a positive learning environment**
 - 2. List 3 ways to create and foster a positive learning environment**
 - 3. Practice responses for common classroom management challenges**
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BRAINSTORM

What does a positive learning environment look like?




CRITICAL WAYS TO CREATE AND FOSTER A POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- ✓ Expectations/Norms
- ✓ Model, Model, and Model!
- ✓ Predictable schedule (as much as possible)
- ✓ Know your audience




EXPECTATIONS

- Built into Native STAND with the constitution
 - Different than usual classroom rules...it allows youth to have control over creating a positive learning environment
 - Keep to a minimum
 - Use simple, positive wording
 - Have the group decide consequences
 - Keep the rules posted and amend as needed
 - Consider reviewing expectations daily for first several meetings, then periodically
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MODEL

- ❑ Model what you want to see
 - Expectations apply to you also!
 - Open and non-judgmental
 - Eager to learn with/from the youth
- ❑ Keep healthy boundaries
- ❑ Sometimes it's the little things that set the tone...
 - Greet students at the door when they come in
 - Use their names (not just when they are in trouble 😊)
 - Take an interest in their lives...music, hobbies, etc.

SCHEDULE

- ❖ Prepare your materials
 - ❖ Avoid down time!
 - ❖ Consider where they are coming from...
 - After lunch = start with energy/movement
 - After gym = start with calming activity
 - Math = start with something with interactive
 - ❖ Have procedures in place for common situations:
 - What to do when you finish your task early
 - What to do when you have a question
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Know your Audience

Let's remember that we are working with youth....

- Who are in the midst of figuring out who they are
- Whose brains are still under development
- With varying emotional, mental and physical health
- From different home and neighborhood environments
- From different types of families
- Under strong influence from peers
- Exposed to various role models
- Exposed to media filled with violence, sex, and instant gratification

WHAT ABOUT THOSE YOUTH WHO CHALLENGE THE POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

Examples?



NO MATTER WHAT...

DO:

- ✓ Stay calm
- ✓ Refer to the constitution
- ✓ Come from a place of concern
- ✓ Make sure consequences are logical
- ✓ Address the more serious issues in private
- ✓ Try to get to the root of the behavior
- ✓ Acknowledge when someone/group is meeting expectations

DON'T:

- ◆ Respond in an emotional/angry state
- ◆ Threaten
- ◆ Issue an unreasonable punishment
- ◆ Call out/embarrass them
- ◆ Continue to give attention to a select few and neglect the rest of the group

LET'S PRACTICE!

**BREAK UP INTO GROUPS OF 3-4 AND
PLAN AN APPROACH FOR YOUR
SCENARIO**




RAY

Ray cannot sit still. He's constantly moving around to talk to his friends. He is easily distracted when you are giving directions and he tends to get other students off-task.



APPROACH FOR THE HYPERACTIVE ONES


- When giving directions make frequent eye contact and be physically near them
 - Ask them to repeat instructions back to you
 - Provide with structured, high-activity tasks
 - Acknowledge when on task
 - Ensure that there is an activity or segment where they can release some energy
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KAI

Kai ALWAYS has a response, story, or advice to give. Her intentions are good but many times she gets off-topic and the other youth have stopped giving input because they know she will have something to say.



APPROACH FOR THE DOMINATE ONES

- **Strategically interrupt them before they go off-topic and ask what others think**
 - **Give gentle reminders when necessary that you'd like to give others a chance to share**
 - **Give them a role during discussion (i.e. write down group ideas)**
 - **Don't forget to express appreciation for enthusiasm**
 - **Talk to them in private and ask for ideas on how to get the others in the group to share more**
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TALA

Tala seems extremely shy. She never says anything during class discussion.

She frequently doodles but is reluctant to do any group work.




APPROACH FOR THE QUIET ONES

- Could be very shy or could be going through something...try to get to know this kind one-on-one
 - Allow them to write/doodle as long as they aren't disrupting or breaking a group norm.
 - This may be a calming activity for them and they may still be listening.
 - Check in on them during group work to track their progress.
 - Acknowledge talents
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PACO

Paco shows doesn't take the core messages of the program seriously. He seems to enjoy the hands on activities with his peers (when he shows up) but when it involves any reading or writing he distracts the group with off-topics remarks. He "jokes" that he doesn't have future goals...he just plans to party everyday like his brother when he gets older.

Approach for the “Unmotivated” Ones

- When they dismiss important things (like goals), use it as an opportunity to highlight what they do well and encourage them
 - In private, ask about family/home life
 - State that it’s OK to choose a path different from parents or siblings, it doesn’t make them a “sell-out”
 - Relate the lessons to expressed interests
 - Maximize hands-on activities
 - Praise efforts and accomplishments
 - Consider incentives to spark some competition
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JORDAN

Jordan usually arrives late. He doesn't like to participate, saying he'd rather be somewhere else. When you try to engage him in an activity, he gets irritated and argumentative.



APPROACH FOR THE ANGRY ONES

- ❖ Validate feelings when expressed
- ❖ Consider more individualized activities when irritated
- ❖ Catch them meeting an expectation and acknowledge it
- ❖ Talk with them in private and try to get to the root of their anger
- ❖ In direct response to unacceptable behavior, Take a breath and:
 - ❖ CALMLY move closer to them and face them directly
 - ❖ Provide them with clear options: Join the group respectfully, put your head down and relax until you are ready to join, or face the consequence
 - ❖ CALMLY wait for a response.
 - ❖ If they do not comply, RELAX and WAIT.
 - ❖ When they respond with the appropriate behavior say, “Thank you,” and leave with an affirmative SMILE.