

## Classroom Strategies: Creating Safe Classrooms to Promote Healing

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### Classroom Strategies: Creating Classrooms to Promote Healing

- Multitude of teaching strategies effective in educating diverse student learners.
  - Racially, ethnically, culturally, and linguistically diverse families and communities of lower socioeconomic status.
- Program planning should take into account underlying skills, competencies, and attitudes that improve basic psychosocial functioning across a range of life domains.
  - Individual and community needs, family dynamics
- Effective programming that supports mental health, development of coping strategies, and increased protective factors
- Empowerment resources and strategies can minimize risk of problematic behavior and increase capacity to thrive.



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### 1. Educating Diverse Students

**In the classroom it is important to understand how we differ under the layers and how we respond differently to similar situations.**

- Student-Centered Classrooms:
  - Utilize groups and offer collaborative activities in which students learn from one another.
  - Students are encouraged and engaged in contributing to the lesson plan.
- Teacher-Centered Classrooms:
  - The teacher is always the center of class activities, the sole authority figure.
  - Sometimes, students don't (or better not even dare to) ask questions, as to do so would challenge the teacher's authority.
    - In these instances, educators need to take a step back to assess how their role and presence is being perceived.



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### 1. Educating Diverse Students



Michael Bonner

• Children raised in poverty rarely choose to behave differently, but they are faced daily with overwhelming challenges that affluent children never have to confront.

- Emotional and Social Challenges
- Acute and Chronic Stressors
- Cognitive Lags
- Health and Safety Issues




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### 2. Building Programs Across Lifespan: Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

• Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is now offered in over 1,400 schools in a wide variety of communities across the United States.

• Core Components

- School-based programs
- Strong links between early childhood and schools
- Strong parental support and involvement
- Universal access
- Focus on children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development
- Strong staff training and development
- Commitment to serving working families.




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### 2. Building Programs Across Lifespan: Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

- The Virginia Department of Education offers 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers grants and technical assistance to awarded schools.
- The federal grant program supports community-based programs that provide tutoring, enrichment, and counseling during non-school hours — especially for low-income students and students who attend low-performing schools.
- Awarded grants of \$50,000 to \$200,000 a year for three years
- Priority given to schools who:
  - Partnered with a public or private community organization;
  - Serve students in schools that failed to meet state accountability standards
  - Serve students in middle or high schools
  - Serve students who attend schools with free and reduced-price lunch eligibility of 75 percent or greater.




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## 2. Building Programs Across Lifespan: Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



- Build nonacademic relationships with students.
- Support and facilitate participation in extracurricular activities.
- Offer Parent Engagement & Involvement Activities
  - Parent Education Workshops
  - Newsletters
  - Strengthen the relationship with PTA

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## 3. Empowerment & Mental Health Building

### Grounding & Relaxation Skills

- Grounding is a set of simple strategies to self-regulate, manage stress or detach from emotional pain (e.g., drug cravings, self-harm impulses, anger, sadness)
- In grounding, you attain balance between the two: conscious of reality and able to tolerate it.
- **Mental Grounding:** Mental grounding helps focus your mind.
- **Physical Grounding:** Physical grounding means focusing on your senses.
- **Soothing Grounding:** Soothing grounding means talking to yourself in a very kind way.




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## 3. Empowerment & Mental Health Building

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|---|--|
| • Breathe slowly and deeply   | • Chewing gum  |
| • Place your hand on your heart   | • Drink water  |
| • Notice your breath and heart rate   | • Body Scan/ Bio Feedback                            |
| • Positive Affirmations or Mantras  | • Touchstone or totem (lucky rabbits foot)           |
| • Notice (count or identify) things around the room, such as the color of the floors, | • Stretch  |
| • Think of something funny  | • Visualize calm places and favorite things          |
| • Make yourself smile   | • Put on lotion/ hand massage                        |
| • Flex your muscles   | • Massage pressure points                            |
|   | • Eat chocolate or something delightful              |
|   | • Think of something that you are looking forward to |




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### 3. Empowerment & Mental Health Building

- Teach Mindfulness
  - Journal Topics & Writing
  - Problem Solving
- Integrate school wide awareness initiatives
  - Bullying Prevention
  - Character Education/Character Counts
  - Mental Health Awareness




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### 3. Empowerment & Mental Health Building

- Bean Bags
- Cotton Balls
- Glitter Calming Jar
- Rubber Squeeze/ Stress balls
- Playdoh
- Timer
- Books
- Feelings Chart




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### 3. Empowerment & Mental Health Building

#### Mental Health First Aid

- Grow their knowledge of signs, symptoms and risk factors of mental illnesses and addictions.
- Can identify multiple types of professional and self-help resources for individuals with a mental illness or addiction.
- Increase their confidence in and likelihood to help an individual in distress.
- Show increased mental wellness themselves.




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### 3. Empowerment & Mental Health Building

- What are some strategies that you are currently utilizing?
  - Educating Diverse Students
  - Building Programs Across a Lifespan
  - Empowering Students & Mental Health Building
- Can you identify where you can integrate some of these strategies with your children and youth, transitional age students, and families?



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### Contact

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