



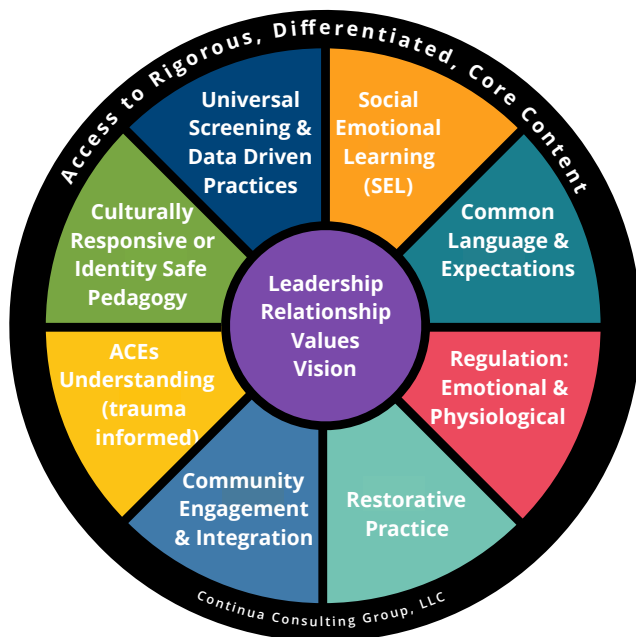
Healing-Centered T-MTSS

Tier 1 Guidance for Spring 2020

Educational Leaders have been placed in a critical but elusive and sometimes confusing role of communicating consistent, community-wide, universal expectations during a time of national crisis and long term shut downs. Uncertainty can be traumatic and anxiety levels in our communities may be high. Leaders have the opportunity to alleviate fears and support a sense of hope by clearly communicating what's known and what's yet to be determined.

Continua has incredible respect for the selfless and important work that leaders like you are doing every day. As mental health and systems implementation experts, we recommend a few of our Anchor Concepts to keep in mind when planning for and disseminating universal expectations to your student, staff and family constituents:

Trauma-Informed Multi-Tiered Systems of Support
Tier 1 Main Components



T-MTSS Anchor Concepts

- Common Language and Practice
- High Expectations with High Support
- Collective Efficacy
- Predictability
- Fidelity of Implementation

1. Common Language/ Common Expectations:

The universal, Tier 1 response to Covid-19 at the Federal and State levels has at times been contradictory and often lacking in alignment. While we can't control the decisions made above us, and we recognize that in many cases you are the messenger of decisions you didn't make but are expected to enforce, it is important that you decide internally what will be expected of your community and commit to messaging it consistently. We've seen examples of this where district leaders are ensuring that all messages to principals are routed through a few key central office players to ensure alignment, or where principals are helping teachers understand exactly how and how not to contact families. A few additional tips for Common Language and Expectations:

- a. Less is More- just like in school-wide expectations, try to stick to 3-5, and use them every time you message (like health, hope and safety for ex).
- b. Alignment, alignment, alignment.
- c. When you can't ensure a consistent answer, be honest and state what is yet to be determined, provide a timeline for when more can be established, even if estimated.



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2. Predictability:



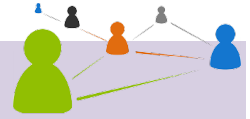
Now, more than ever, ALL members of your community are in need of predictable elements to their daily routine, after losing so many components of their “normal” lives. Predictability can show up many ways- maybe its a standing check in for staff that you offer daily or weekly, always at the same time. Perhaps its a consistent day of the week that families and staff hear a short, supportive and informative message from your office via email and robocall. Predictability occurs for students when teachers open and close online class sessions with a greeting, online virtual restorative “circle” or other SEL check in. Predictability lowers cortisol levels and anxiety, which helps to support self regulation.



4. Resilience and Hope:

While many aspects of our work moving forward are yet to be determined, we know this: our kids, staff and communities are incredibly resilient. We will get through this, and we will learn things in this process that make us better educators and better human beings in the future. Students and staff are learning new skills, and all of us are slowing down in ways our bodies and planet can benefit from. Keep your communities hopeful and remind them of their belief in each other and themselves by modeling your belief in yourself and your staff. Messages of resilience and hope, consistently received, will help all of us endure this moment feeling supported and connected.

3. Relationships:



Engaging in virtual collaboration and social distancing can feel quite unnatural and alienating for some of our most extroverted students and colleagues, while some internalizers may actually flourish in this time of isolation. In either case, continuing to Establish, Maintain and Restore (EMR) our relationships is critical for the resilience and health of our communities. One of the biggest challenges of this moment in time is communication, especially with our most vulnerable populations. Tap into the relationships that your staff have cultivated and include those bilingual para-educators, office managers, Student Support Advocates, and other support staff who may not always participate in cabinet or leadership team meetings, but, who often have some of the most trust in your organization with the students and families you are most concerned about. Pay attention to who is receiving communication and who will require additional efforts, gather data on this and enlist members of the team to help.

We're here to help.

Continua Consulting Group is here to support your leadership during this challenging time. Please let us know how we can help, and please, take good care of yourself right now. You and your communities deserve healthy leadership, which starts with you!