



Establish-Maintain-Restore Guide

Establish-Maintain-Restore (EMR) is a research-based system for building health student-teacher relationships. It is built upon research investigating general healthy relationship qualities and practices, with adaptations to meet the unique dynamic between teachers and students. It has been investigated within schools and has been determined to be quite effective when implemented with fidelity. In addition, it has even demonstrated success with teachers building relationships with students who are culturally and linguistically diverse compared to themselves.

Since EMR is a whole system, it would be too overwhelming to provide the full protocol and all its accompanying resources. If you are interested in receiving the full training and support, we recommend contacting its developer Dr. Clayton Cook (current email: crcook@umn.edu) and his colleagues for more information.

However, its practices can still be of use. This activity is meant to be a surface-level, initial effort guide to implementing EMR as an individual by providing an overview of the practices from the protocol. In other words, it is an ongoing activity. We **highly encourage you to also review the PLC protocol and implement EMR as an ongoing practice with your PLC team.**

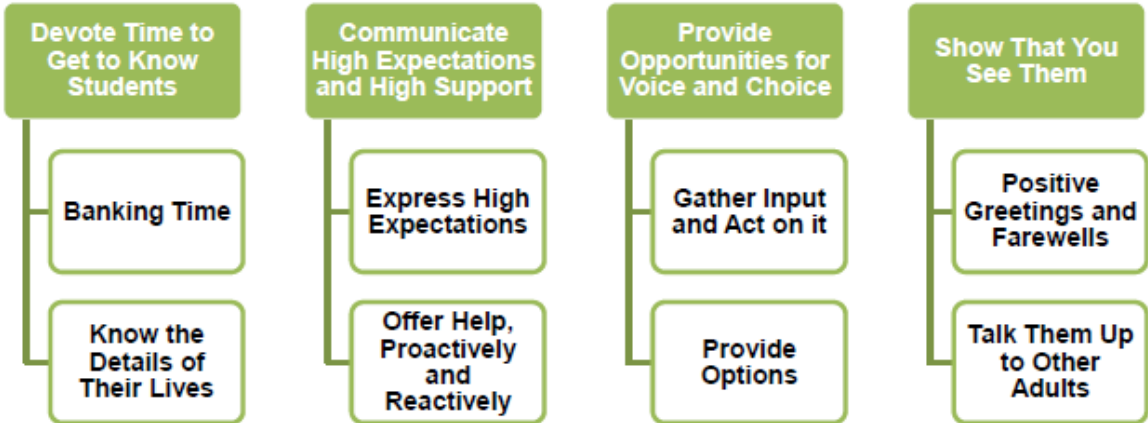
Section 1: Knowing the Stages

EMR divides the student-teacher relationship into three stages: an Establishment stage, a Maintain stage that is an ongoing process, and Restore stage when the relationship is damaged and needs repaired to return to the Maintain stage.

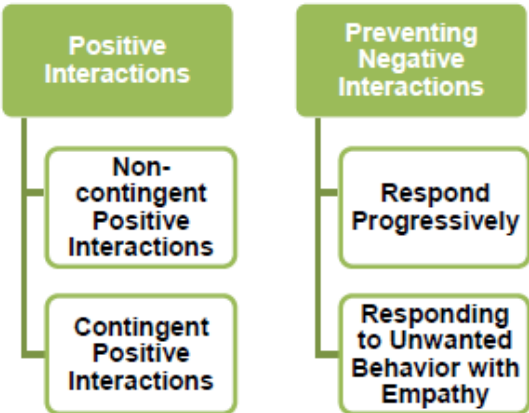
Each stage is accompanied by very specific practices that can be implemented in person or remotely. See the figure on the next page.

Bracket of EMR Practices

ESTABLISH



MAINTAIN



RESTORE



Before learning the practices themselves, we need to identify which students are in each stage relative to ourselves. In other words, some students might be in the Establish stage for you but have already moved onto the Maintain stage with another educator. That is okay and normal. EMR will help you set reasonable goals for building those relationships one-at-a-time.

Section 2: Identifying the Stages

The first stage of any relationship involves intentional efforts to get to know the other person. The goal is for each person to feel a sense of belonging, connection, trust, understanding, and acceptance of the other. The relationship remains in the Establish stage until these qualities have a solid basis. For many of us, these qualities are easy to establish with some individuals and more difficult with others. We all have our own temperaments, personality quirks, and preferences, and these can be accounted for when building any relationship.

The second stage of a relationship is an ongoing process of balancing each other's needs and maintaining the above qualities once established. It, too, is intentional. For students and teachers, that means ongoing efforts to assess the relationship, providing positive interactions, and validating each other. This helps Maintain that connection.

The last stage is when qualities of a healthy relationship diminish either from a lack of interaction, communication breakdowns, or a specific critical event. It is characterized by a lack of any one of the qualities first established—most often, trust. Although both the Establish and Restore stages have instances of where some healthy quality is lacking, the Restore stage is different in that those qualities *at one point* existed.

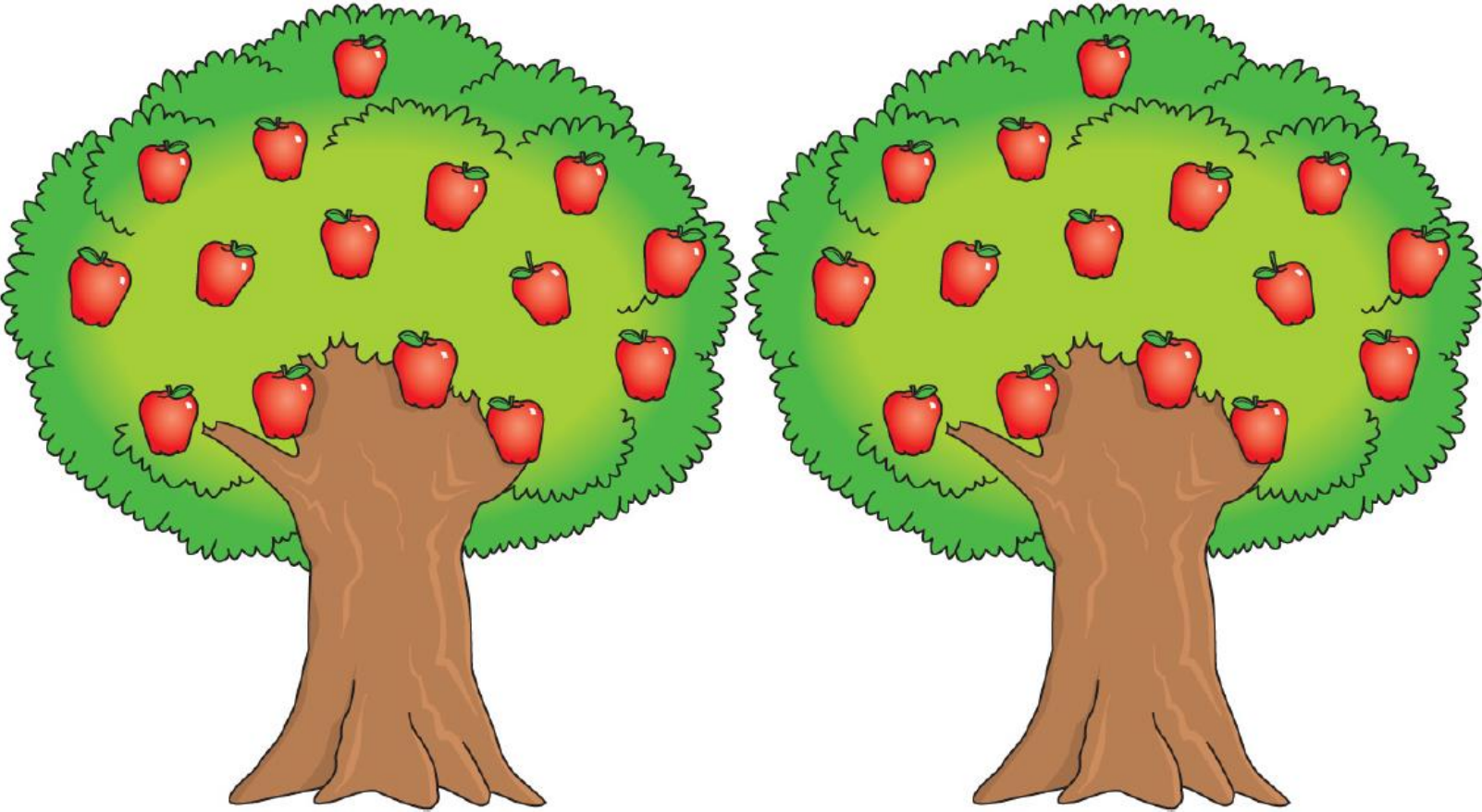
Now that you know what each stage is characterized by, use the student roster on the next page to begin identifying where you think your relationships are at. We do not need to be accurate; just give your best guess. Fill out all your student names and put a mark at the stage you think the relationship is at. If you need more space, make a copy!

Next, we need to figure out if there are any barriers that are preventing some relationships from being Established or Restored. Often, those barriers include some emotional reaction, a bias, a past event, lack of time, etc.

Use the Equity/Triage tree tool on the next page. To use this tool:

1. Write down the names of students you connect with easily on the lowest apples. These are your “low hanging fruit”; they take little effort to connect with.
2. Write down names of students you have struggled to Establish with or need to Restore. Put them in the middle and top apples. These are the students for you that are difficult.
3. Draw a line that roughly divides the apples into those 3 sections so it is easier to see.
4. Adopt the mindset of a scientist and look for patterns. What is it about your low-hanging students that requires less intentional effort to Establish and Maintain with? What about the middle and top students? In what ways might race/ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, spiritual beliefs, parental background, and even your own personal history with the student explain their position?
5. Use the PLC form (at the end of this guide) to set a goal for building those relationships. Make sure to use the table at the end that helps you walk through those barriers.

Equity/Triage Tree Reflection Tool



Section 3: Learning the Practices

Each stage has research-supported strategies for helping move the relationship through that stage. These practices are easy-to-implement, adaptable, and effective. There are also subtle nuances when considering personal and cultural barriers. Below we provide a brief review of select strategies (4 Establish, 2 Maintain, 2 Restore). As we mentioned earlier, if you want more support in mastering these strategies and incorporating them into a whole-team/whole-school effort, please consider reaching out to the EMR developers for assistance.

ESTABLISH: 1. Devote Time to Get to Know Students

1a. Banking Time



Purpose

Intentionally carve out time to spend with students and get to know them as people. Develop understanding of the students' experiences in and outside of school. This practice helps students feel safe, accepted, and respected. Banking time makes it easier to challenge students, give constructive feedback, and correct behavior later on.

Educators say:

- *"I just notice it pays dividends. It helps so much later on when I build trust that way, I can utilize it later when I'm asking people to do more hard work."*
– 9th Grade English Language Arts Teacher
- *"[After banking time] I noticed students who used to seem uninterested in class or kind of have a bad attitude about things, change in that they start to engage more, or laugh or joke more, and participate more in the lessons and the activities."*
– 9th Grade Social Studies Teacher

Banking Time Close Up

- 1. Find an existing window of time to connect with the student.**
 - a. During school
 - i. During quiet, independent work
 - ii. Student shows up early to class
 - iii. Keep student after class
 - iv. During hallway transitions
 - b. Before or after school
 - i. Walk in the hall or outside
 - ii. Play catch, shoot hoops, work on something outside
- 2. Ask an open-ended question.**
- 3. Actively and reflectively listen.**
 - a. Show that you are paying attention
 - b. Reflect what the student is saying back to them to show you are following along
 - c. Share information about yourself when relevant, while keeping appropriate boundaries
 - d. Identify similarities between you and the student if they arise in the conversation
- 4. Express interest or empathy in what the person is saying.**
 - a. Give your full attention, ask follow-up questions, nod along, etc.
 - b. Put aside your point of view
 - c. Try to put yourself in your student's shoes: How does this student see his/her experience? Generally, and with respect to the topic at hand?
 - d. Expressing empathy doesn't mean you agree with a behavior or choice (e.g., playing videos games late into the night), but rather, that you seeking to understand the perspective, motivation or feeling that results in the behavior (e.g., the fun and challenge of playing video games).

ESTABLISH: 2. Communicating High Expectations & Support

EMR

2a. Express High Expectations



Purpose

All students need to know that their teachers have high expectations for them and believe in their ability to grow and develop. Many students, however, experience nagging questions of their own academic self-worth. This is particularly true of students who have had negative experiences with school or whose groups have been marginalized by the education system. Find natural opportunities (e.g., when providing academic feedback) to explicitly communicate high expectations and high belief in the student's ability to meet the expectations.

Educators say:

- *"This is a no brainer. Students need to know that you believe in them and it's my job to let them know. I get lots of traction with students when I do this."*
– ELL Teacher
- *"This is what's needed, especially with students of color who haven't been successful and feel very labelled as an unsuccessful student or a disruptive student."*
– 9th Grade Math Teacher

Express High Expectations Close Up

1. **Express specific and high-level expectations. Be clear what your expectations for success entail.**
 - a. For example: show up to class on time, participate in class activities, and be respectful to peers
 - b. Academic performance: turn in work on time, demonstrate growth in performance over time, and be okay with struggling/failing
2. **Make explicit a fundamental belief in the student's ability to meet those expectations.**
 - a. *"I'm giving you these comments as feedback because I have very high expectations for my students and I know that you can reach these expectations. My feedback is my way of saying that I believe in you as a student."*

ESTABLISH: 3. Provide Opportunities for Voice & Choice

3a. Gather Input and Act on It



Purpose

When teachers provide students some degree of control over what happens in class, students feel more connected to class and respected by the teacher. Solicit feedback from students about how things are going in class, how things are going with them in general, and specific recommendations to improve aspects of class. Incorporating their feedback shows that you value their input.

Educator says:

- “[This practice] is important to have the students feel like they’re being listened to.”
– 9th Grade Science Teacher

Gather Input and Act on It Close Up

- 1. Identify topics that students would find relevant to give input about.**
 - a. Ask students what topics matter to them
 - b. Create a menu and have students select
 - c. Generate a list of topics together and rotate across weeks
- 2. Determine the best ways to gather the input.**
 - a. Single, pairs, or groups of students
 - b. Electronically – Google Form, Kahoot, Quizziz
 - c. Paper – student writes
 - d. Voting – anonymous or public
- 3. Review the input.**
 - a. Look for themes
 - b. When deciding what to do about the input, consider feasibility and relevance to sense of safety and learning
- 4. When you’re new to this, negative feedback will hurt at first, but will become easier over time.**
- 5. Develop a feasible plan to act on the input.**
 - a. Develop a plan you can realistically follow through on. Identify what, when, for whom, and for what purpose

ESTABLISH: 4. Show That You See Them

4b. Talk Them Up to another Adult



Purpose

Before trust has been built, direct compliments can be off-putting for some students. They may think there's an ulterior motive. When students hear that you've said something positive about them to another adult, this can seem more credible to them. Communicate that you're paying attention to them in a favorable way and appreciate something they did in class.

Educators say:

- *"Particularly with students who probably don't get positive communication home. Sometimes going around them and saying something positive to their parents ahead of time, out of the blue. Parents will go home and say, 'Your teacher sent me this email saying you did this really cool thing in class!' And then the student comes in and automatically, 'You emailed my parents. They were so happy to see that about me.'"*
– 9th Grade Social Studies Teacher

Talk Them Up to another Adult Close Up

- 1. Identify something that the student did, said, or achieved.**
 - a. A specific behavior
 - b. Something that conveyed about themselves that you think is noteworthy
 - c. Something they said to others in class that was respectful, demonstrated keen understanding or eagerness to try
 - d. Something the student got better at because of effort in class
 - e. Something they show persistence with
- 2. Identify another adult to deliver the positive recognition through.**
 - a. Outside of school – parent, relative, other respected adult in the student's life
 - b. Inside of school - another teacher, administrator, school counselor
- 3. Communicate this to the other adult and ask them to recognize the student.**
 - a. Use email, phone, text, written note, or in-person conversation
 - b. Emphasize the importance of them recognizing the student
 - i. *"Make sure you tell him good job."*

MAINTAIN: 1. Positive Interactions

1a. Noncontingent Positive Interactions



Purpose

This practice shows that you value and care about students, regardless of what they did previously or how they are performing in the moment.

Educator says:

- *“Regardless of the student’s behavior the previous day, I try my best to find opportunities to let students know I care by taking small windows of time to say hello and check in about how it’s going. This seems to get the point across, that I notice them.”*
– 9th grade Math Teacher

Noncontingent Positive Interactions Close Up

- 1. Greetings & farewells**
 - a. Remember that greetings and farewells are ways people show they care about the presence of another person
 - b. These can be powerful, especially if the student struggled in class
- 2. “How’s it going?” check-ins**
 - a. Take a brief moment to check in about how things are going in and outside of school
 - i. “What’s been going on that you’ve found fun lately?”
 - ii. “How’s it going, anything cool happening?”
 - iii. “What do you think about class?”
- 3. Find opportunities for laughter and fun**
 - a. Interspersing opportunities for students to have fun in class creates a positive experience that stands out for students
 - i. Play games as a group
 - ii. Allow students to do something unexpected like take a break
 - b. Shared laughter is a form of social connection
 - i. Laugh with, not at students
 - ii. Be careful when using sarcasm

MAINTAIN: 2. Preventing Negative Interactions

2b. Respond to Unwanted Behavior with Empathy



Purpose

Ultimately, we can influence another person's behavior but we can't control it. Responding with empathy can turn a potential "incident" into an opportunity for connection. Start with empathy to reduce the likelihood of triggering the student's fight or flight response.

Educator says:

- *"I want to respond to students in ways I'd hope people would respond to me if I make a mistake. I appreciate it if people first try to understand my perspective before jumping in and telling me what to do."*
– Art Teacher

Responding to Unwanted Behavior with Empathy Close Up

1. Express empathy

- a. Put yourself in the student's shoes. Understand the perspective and feelings underlying the behavior.
- b. Begin the interaction with the student with an empathy statement. Convey that you are seeking to understand the reason, motive, or emotion underlying the behavior of concern.
 - i. Ask for the student's perspective:
 1. *"What's going on?"*
 - ii. Take a guess about what might be contributing to the behavior:
 1. *"You don't seem to want to work with that group."*
 2. Having to take a guess can push you to try to see the student's perspective
 3. Don't worry about being wrong. Students will typically correct you.

2. Label the behavior of concern

- a. Give a factual description of the behavior of concern in objective, observable terms
 - i. *"You're using your phone that it shouldn't be out."*

3. Label the alternative, desired behavior

- a. Describe the alternative, desired behavior that you'd like to see instead of the behavior of concern
 - i. *"I'd like you to put your phone away and work on the assignment."*

4. Provide a rationale

- a. Explain the impact the behavior is having
 - i. *"Having your phone out can be distracting to you and to other students."*

5. Create a decisional dilemma for the student

- a. Lay out two choices the student can choose from, the consequences associated with each one, and give the student "Think Time" (a little time and space to come up with a decision).
- b. *"There are couple of choices you can make and the decision is yours. You can do XXX, or you can do YYY. I'm a big fan of XXX, and it will allow me to come back and make the situation better for you. I'm going to give you a little of time to think about what you want to do."*

6. Follow through

- a. If the student chooses the desired behavior, make sure to recognize it

RESTORE

1. Letting Go Conversation

EMR



Purpose

If a student is worried that you're angry with them, this takes up brain space that can be used to learn. Even if you have resolved to let go, students may not know that and may still wonder if you're holding a grudge. Make it explicit to the student that you're letting go.

Letting Go Conversation Close Up

Steps and examples	Write your own version
<p>1. Internally find ways to let go.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ask yourself: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. "Am I holding on to something that I need to let go?" ii. "What can I do to let go of the thoughts and feelings I'm harboring towards the student?" 	
<p>2. Briefly think through how you want convey this to the student.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Ex: "Hey, yesterday was rough, but I'd like to start over today." 	
<p>3. Find a time to have a private conversation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Before class starts b. During class c. After class d. During homeroom or advisory 	

RESTORE

3. Mutual Problem Solving

EMR



Purpose

Working with students to identify solutions is more effective than telling students the solution. This gives students a sense of agency. It also gives both teachers and students a chance to understand one another's perspective. This strategy is helpful with students who have strong opinions. Allowing collaboration can help diffuse a potential power struggle.

Mutual Problem Solving Close Up

Steps and examples	Write your own version
<p>1. Start with an empathy statement.</p> <p>a. <i>"You're not doing much of the work in class. I'm sensing you're finding that the work is boring. Is that true? What's up?"</i></p>	
<p>2. Express your perspective while diffusing the power struggle.</p> <p>a. Ask yourself: What is my concern about this?</p> <p>i. <i>"I want students to do the work so they can learn and get a passing grade in my class."</i></p> <p>b. Diffuse the power struggle</p> <p>i. <i>"I'm not saying you have to..."</i></p> <p>ii. <i>"Nobody can make you... if you don't want to"</i></p> <p>iii. <i>"It's up to you whether"</i></p>	
<p>3. Collaborate to identify possible solutions.</p> <p>a. Invite ideas from the student</p> <p>i. <i>"How do you want to address the situation?"</i></p> <p>ii. <i>"What do you feel like is the best way forward?"</i></p> <p>iii. <i>"You have this need or desire, and I have this need or desire, and the class has this need or desire. And what do you propose we can do to make this work out?"</i></p>	
<p>4. Pick an idea, try it, repeat.</p> <p>a. <i>"I'll do X, and you'll do Y."</i></p>	

Section 4: Implement as a Team

EMR can be successful when implemented individually. It is more successful, though, as part of a regular school-wide practice. It allows educators to support one another, learn from one another about how to connect with specific students, breakdown particular EMR strategies and share strategies for implementing it more successfully, and facilitates ongoing goal-setting and progress monitoring. This practice really begins with the PLC.

With the permission of the EMR developers, we have included the entire monthly PLC EMR protocol for you to use. It can be implemented in person or remotely. After the protocol are some suggestions for maintaining student relationships when engaged in remote/distance learning practices.