



Reflective Thinking Questions for Identifying Students in Distress

Students' behaviors are often a reflection of environmental stressors, difficulties in relationships, or attachment, and a sign of unmet needs. They may also reflect a response to system-level issues like racism, poverty, food or housing insecurity, school climate and safety, or community violence. These unmet needs, stressors, and attachment disruptions can contribute to significant distress and dysregulation in students, making it difficult for them to engage and learn.

Guiding Questions to Reflect on as You Consider Students Behavior Include:

What unmet needs might that the student be expressing through behavior?

What unmet needs might my student be expressing through behavior?

How do my beliefs, values, and biases impact my relationships with students and my response to their behaviors?

How do my student's past relationships, including with family and teachers, affect their relationship with me and others in the classroom?

How are system factors, like racism, poverty, or school climate, contributing to my student's behaviors?

How do past and current circumstances influence my students' feelings and behaviors?

How do my beliefs, values, and biases impact my relationships with students and my response to their behaviors?

How do my students' past relationships affect their relationship with me and others?

What can I do to reach out and respond to my student's needs?

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How do past and current circumstances influence my students' feelings and behaviors?

How are system factors, like racism, poverty, or school climate, contributing to my student's behaviors?

After you have completed your reflection, circle back to the student's behavior. If you believe the student is in distress, connect with the student, have an open conversation, and if appropriate, provide resources and strategies that support mental health.

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