



## Module 4 Considering the Connection between Behaviors and Emotional Needs

Behaviors that can be disruptive often signify distress. It is helpful when educators observe various behaviors, that we consider how the behaviors may be connected to student thoughts and feelings.

Below are some behaviors that students may demonstrate in school along with possible things the child may be thinking, feeling or attempting to communicate with different behaviors.

External Behavior	What the child may be thinking and feeling
Verbal or behavioral disruptions	"I am anxious. I need adult support."
Property damage	"I feel rejected and unloved by my peers and my teachers."
Tantrums or emotional outbursts	"I feel hopeless. I need help with feeling happy again."
Yelling	"My needs have been ignored, and I feel stuck."
Hitting, kicking or biting	"I feel unsafe. I'm worried something terrible is going to happen."
Making threatening statements	"I feel unsafe. I need support with problem-solving."
Expressing suicidal or homicidal ideation	"I am hopeless. I want to escape the pain."
Self-injury	"I feel numb. I am desperate for some relief from this numbness."
<b>Note:</b> If you believe a student is in danger of causing significant harm to themselves or others, immediately implement a plan to keep the child and others safe.	

Below are some reflection questions to guide you in compassionate responding to students displaying various behaviors.

- What feelings or emotions (sadness, frustration, fear, embarrassment, etc.) may be connected to the student's behavior?
- What are the potential causes of the behavior or emotional expression?
- What potential need may be unmet for this student?
- What would help the student get their need met?
- What can I do right now to show compassion to this student and foster safety and inclusion?