



Compassionate Responding to Student Behaviors Reflection Guide

Educators can promote equity in mental health referral practices by managing our biases and their impact on our disciplinary responses. Biases can lead to us punishing behaviors that warrant a mental health response and/or misinterpret developmentally or culturally appropriate behavior as a problem.

Here are some questions to support educators with reflecting on their disciplinary practices and how these practices may relate to student identity and culture.

What are some behaviors that I tend to punish or respond to with exclusionary discipline practices (i.e., office referrals, suspensions)?

How might culture or identity relate to the behaviors I punish?

How might culture or identity related to the behaviors I label as a mental health or disciplinary problem?

What are patterns of behavior that impact student social, emotional, and/or academic functioning that would warrant a mental health referral?

Below are some questions educators can consider in the process of responding to student behavior with compassion.

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?

Prepared March 2022 by Miranda Zahn for the MHTTC Network and NCSMH. All material, except that taken directly from copyrighted sources, is in the public domain and may be reproduced or copied without permission from SAMHSA or the authors. Citation of the source is appreciated.



MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

