Restorative Approaches to Communication

• Take a deep breath
• Count to ten, if necessary
• Ask yourself, “Is this a good time to address this issue”?
• You are not alone. Call on a push-in helper, if needed
• Address issues privately
• Consider what the function of the behavior might be
• Validation: In the moment, do not try to fix it or give a lecture. Listen.

When speaking to someone who has caused harm:

• What happened?
• What were you thinking about at the time?
• What have you thought about since?
• Who do you think has been affected by what you did? In what way?
• What do you need to help make things right?
• How can we make sure this doesn’t happen again?

When speaking to someone who was harmed:

• How can I help you?
• What do you need?
• What did you think when it happened?
• What have you thought about since?
• How have you been affected?
• What’s been the hardest part?
• What’s needed to make things right?
• How can we make sure this doesn’t happen again?

Going a bit deeper...

• Was it the right or wrong thing to do?
• Was it fair or unfair?
• What exactly are you sorry for?
• If you had to do it over, what could you do differently?
What is driving the behavior?
Questions for the adult to reflect on:

- What is driving the behavior?
- What does the child need?
- How can I change my perspective?
- What keeps me only looking at the behavior?
- What is the behavior communicating right now?
- What in the environment could be triggering this behavior?

Validation

- Don’t try to fix it
- Don’t give life lessons or a lecture
- Try using one of these validation statements:
  - What can I help you with?
  - What do you need to feel safer?
  - I hear you. That sounds hard.
  - How did that make you feel?
  - It sounds like you are really struggling

De-escalation Strategies

- Breathe! Be calm and you will help the student be calm
- Be aware of your tone of voice & personal space
- Mirror words to help the child reflect and feel heard
- Redirect behavior by providing choices for alternative options for replacement activities

More Sample Statements

- This must be hard for you. How can I help?
- I’m here. Let’s talk about it together.
- It’s ok to feel… (all emotions…)
- I understand that something is upsetting you, and you do not want to talk about it. That’s ok. How can I help you make today better?