



## **Sentence Stems for Connected Communicators**

### **To Show Authentic Listening:**

- “I think I am hearing you say. . . Did I get that right?”
- “Let me make sure I have this right. . .”
- “Can you help me make sure I understand? Are you saying. . .?”

### **Determining the Function of a Behavior:**

- “Tell me a little about what happened.”
- “What were you thinking about or feeling when it happened?”
- “Tell me more about what’s going on.”
- “What was going on for you right before that happened?”
- “What were you hoping would happen?”

### **Getting to Know Younger Students:**

- What’s your favorite part of the day?
- If you could wish for three things, what would they be?
- What is something that cheers you up when you are sad?
- What do you think is the best part of being a grown-up? Being a kid?
- If you could eat only one food for the rest of your life, what would it be?
- If you had a magic wand, what is the first thing you would do with it?
- What is something you are really good at?
- What is the funniest joke you know?

### **Getting to Know Older Students:**

- What is your favorite after-school activity? What do you like about it?
- What school rule do you wish would be eliminated? Why?
- What are you most proud of?
- What kind of movies do you like to watch? Why?
- If you had to pick just one cause to fight for, which one would it be?
- What advice would you give to adults about how to make the world a better place by the time you are an adult?
- What is most exciting about what comes after high school? What do you find most stressful about it?
- What advice do you have for students getting ready to start at the high-school/middle school?



### **Caring Out Loud**

- I care about you.
- You're awesome!
- I'm so glad you are here.
- This class is better because you are in it.
- Your success is important to me, because you are important to me.
- You matter.
- You're a rock star!
- I am so impressed by you
- I am so glad you are in my class/on my bus/on this team at our school.
- You are such a cool kid!

### **To Encourage Student Reflection: Sitting in the Fire:**

- I can see you are having some big feelings. That's really normal and understandable. It seems like maybe you wish you might have done something differently. I wonder what that might be?
- Oh wow - that was kind of a big deal. How are you feeling about this now?
- Hmm . . . that really hurt your classmate's feelings. Was that your intention?

### **Examining Intention vs Impact:**

- I understand it wasn't your intention, however, the impact of your actions caused . . .
- I get that's not what you meant, but it made them feel . . .
- I know you didn't mean to, but their feelings are really hurt.

### **Avoiding Power Struggles:**

- I care about you too much to argue.
- I'll talk to you when your voice sounds like mine.
- "This is important, and I want to discuss it with you. We are going to have to wait until we are both feeling calmer. Let's circle back to this towards the end of class."
- Avoid asking a question if there isn't a choice! Use "You can" or "You may" statements (e.g. You can take a seat, you may get a pencil).
- Use diffusers: "I hear you," "Good point," "Noted"
- "I need your help. What ideas do you have to fix this problem?"



- “This is an important discussion. Let’s connect on a solution that will work for both of us after class.”
- I wish. . .(that you could do that thing, or didn’t have to do that thing)

## **Care Out Loud Strategies**

**Intentionally greet each student when they arrive:** This can be as simple as greeting students with a smile and saying, “Hi Jamar, I am so glad to see you today.” If you can be the bus loop or the front door to welcome students as they arrive at school, do it! If you are the bus driver, you are setting the tone for the day! This serves more than one purpose. The students feel valued when we greet them by name, and we notice that we feel more connected all day long.

**Say an individual goodbye as students leave:** Taking the time to end class with a positive exchange can make all the difference. The first and last things we hear stick with us the longest. Take advantage of this by using this time to remind students you care about them. Student pick up is a great time to build relationships with students and their families. Get out there and say goodbye.

**Get to know students using writing or interviewing:** Many teachers have students write a letter introducing themselves to the teacher, or some version of this at the start of the year. With younger students, using interviews, surveys, or drawings can also be effective ways to get to know your students right away. Consider the following writing or interview prompts:

- What is something you would like me to know about you?
- Tell me about the people you live with.
- What helps you learn best?
- What are you good at? What’s hard for you?



**Keep the conversation going:** When we ask students to write to us, we write back! This is the first opportunity to provide personalized feedback on what makes them awesome. Make as many connections as you can to what they shared about themselves. For example, “It is so cool that you like to swim; I have always loved to be in the water.” You might want to develop a system for keeping track of these tidbits so you can rely on them later when you need to break the ice!

**Provide meaningful praise on their work and their progress:** Sharing with them how impressed you are of their growth and accomplishments will fill students with pride. This will also make it more likely they’ll keep it up.

**Celebrate their birthdays- no matter how old they are:** We are never too old to appreciate being wished a happy birthday! Before the year starts, make sure each student’s birthday is calendared, either publicly or on the teacher calendar, and establish a birthday tradition. In the classroom, maybe the student gets a small prize and the class sings happy birthday. Maybe the birthday student selects part of the lesson for that day. Maybe you all get a small treat. At the school level, share birthdays over the loudspeaker, have a monthly birthday lunch bunch, or send a positive note home to the birthday student’s family. If you have a digital reader board, add birthday students to the running announcements. Whatever it is, the key piece is to acknowledge their special day, and let them know we are glad they were born.

**Give them choice and ownership in their education:** Wherever we can provide students choice, we should. Are there different ways to demonstrate their learning for a particular standard? Could there be a vote on an important decision for the class or school? What if the class works together to establish classroom agreements? How could a school administrator or teacher use classroom circles to gather information about an important decision? This is their education, and we want them to know it belongs to them.



**Ask for feedback and use it:** When we ask students for feedback, it lets them know we care what they think because we honor and respect them. Get feedback early and often, and share with them how you will use it. That means you need the information before the school year ends!

## **Connecting Through Conversation Planning Guide**

**Who:** Who is best positioned to have this conversation? If it is you, what do you already know or need to know about the student to facilitate the conversation?

**What:** Describe the purpose of the conversation. What are some key ideas or talking points that must be communicated?

**Where:** What level of privacy is required?



**When:** How much time do you need? How urgent is the conversation? Consider the impact on student learning.

### **Apologizing after an ASLO**

**Acknowledge that a mistake was made:** Make it clear what you are apologizing for. Name the action, and when it happened.

**Express regret that it happened:** This is the literal apology. Most of the time this means saying “I’m sorry” or “I apologize.”

**Vow not to be a repeat offender:** If you apologize and then turn around and do it again, it will seem as though you weren’t really sorry. Only apologize if you intend to change the behavior, otherwise it will further erode trust. If, despite your best intentions, you find yourself repeating the behavior, you will need to do some deeper reflection to understand why so you can change moving forward.

**Guess at how it made them feel:** Take a guess and what kind of impact your actions may have had on the student. Saying something like “I imagine you might have felt. . . when I . . .” should do the trick.

**Check in to see if you got it right:** By letting them know you understand what they are feeling, you are demonstrating their feelings are valid and important.



**Make it right:** Ask the student if there is anything you can do to repair the situation or rebuild trust. Then do that thing!



## **Responses to Common Student Move: Denial**

**Help Me Help You:** Remind them that you are on their side. Always. Let them know that you really want to help them figure this out, but you can't help them if they are not being honest with you.

**Lay Out the Evidence:** If you know this student did the thing, lay out all of the reasons you know this. If it was reported by another educator, ask why they would lie about something like this. It is a good idea to start with something like, "I'm confused, because I was told or I saw this behavior and you are telling me something different. Help me understand."

**Take Your Time:** This is a good time to allow students to think it through. Saying something like, "It is clear you need some time to consider how to best tell me what is going on. I'm going to leave you here to think about what you want to tell me. While you are thinking, remember that we all make mistakes, and the only way forward is to be honest and take responsibility." This is also a good time to indicate that in some way you are going to gather some additional evidence. For example, "I'm going to go check with Ms. Julie, because what you are telling me and what she told me are different."

**Give an Out:** Students are now struggling with the fact that they told you a lie on top of whatever the behavior is. Saying something like, "I can understand why you might have been nervous about being honest with me. It takes a lot of courage to admit when you have made a mistake. When we talk to your parents about this, I want to be able to say that you took responsibility. I am giving you another opportunity to be completely honest."

**Lay Out the Consequences:** When a student is not being honest, explain the consequences for the dishonesty that will be in addition to what the consequences may be for the original infraction. Explain that any time spent on additional investigation and the lack of integrity will be taken into account when determining next steps. You might say, "Well, it seems like I have more investigating to do. I am going to talk to all of the other witnesses involved. This will take me a lot of time, and that's okay *if* you are telling the truth. It's really important for you to know if the results of my investigation indicate that you are not being honest with me, there will be additional consequences. Before I do that, I want to give you another opportunity to tell the whole truth now."







## **Connected Communicator Behavior Planning Guide**

**Consider the function, or purpose, of the behavior. If you are not sure, engage in a connected conversation utilizing the following sentence stems.**

- Tell me a little about what happened.
- What were you thinking about or feeling when it happened?
- Tell me more about what is going on.
- What was going on for you right before that happened?
- What were you hoping would happen?

**Identify the function, or purpose, of the behavior utilizing E.A.T.S.**

- Escape
- Attain Connection
- Tangible Gain
- Sensory Needs or Stimulation

**“A student's behavior is what they did, not who they are.” Bare & Burns pg. 19**



### **Examine the A.B.C.s**

Antecedent (what happened leading up to the behavior):

Behavior (duration and intensity):

Consequences (outcomes):

### **Make a Plan**

Prevent (What can we change in the environment and/or adult response?):

Teach (What replacement skills or behaviors need to be taught?)

Reinforce (How will we reinforce the behaviors we want to see?)