

# SUPPORT GUIDE FOR SCHOOL LEADERS: RESPONDING TO THE CRISES FACING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

JANUARY 2025



# Introduction: A Call to Lead with Courage and Compassion

*Dear Colleague,*

I will never forget the day she came to me, her small frame dwarfed by her oversized backpack, her glasses perched slightly askew on her nose. A third-grader—bright, brilliant, and brave beyond her years—looked up at me with wide, tearful eyes and asked a question that no child should ever have to ask.

## **"Mr. Martin, will you let them take me?"**

She was referring to the federal agents rumored to be coming into schools, detaining and arresting families who looked like hers—Black, Brown, and immigrant families who had already faced unimaginable hardships to be here. As the Principal of the Michael J. Perkins PK-5 School in Boston, I had heard the stories, seen the fear spreading among my students and families. But it wasn't until that moment that the weight of my responsibility truly hit me.

I knelt down to her level, placed my hands on her shoulders, and said, **"Not on my watch. Do you see how big I am? Do you know Mr. Martin doesn't play?"** She stared at me, searching my eyes for truth, for safety, for the assurance that I could protect her. Then, she hugged me, tightly, as if clinging to the only lifeline she had. Her younger siblings soon joined, wrapping their small arms around me.

And though I gave her the best reassurance I could in that moment, the truth was, I didn't know if I could keep my promise. I didn't know if the school bus that took her home that afternoon would bring her back to me the next day. And that uncertainty—that helplessness—has stayed with me ever since.

It is moments like this that remind me why we, as educators and leaders, do what we do. Schools are supposed to be sanctuaries. We are supposed to be protectors—not just of learning, but of hope, safety, and dignity.

Today, we find ourselves in a time when these questions are resurfacing, when families are facing fear and uncertainty at levels that threaten the very fabric of our communities. And once again, our students, staff, and families are looking to us for answers, for leadership, and for unwavering support.

This is why I created this guide. It is a response to the little girl who asked me if I would let them take her. It is a call to action for every educator, every school leader, and every community partner to rise to this moment with courage, compassion, and clarity.

This guide is not just a collection of tools and resources; it is a blueprint for how we can come together to protect the children and families who rely on us. It is a reminder that our roles extend far beyond the classroom or the principal's office—we are the guardians of their dreams, their dignity, and their futures.

***I know this work is hard. I know the weight is heavy. But I also know that together, we can build the kind of sanctuary our students and families deserve. Let us lead with empathy, with strength, and with the unwavering belief that every child has the right to feel safe, valued, and seen.***

In solidarity and hope,

*Craig Arons-Martin*

**Founder, CCM Education Group**

**2018 Massachusetts Elementary Principal of the Year, Nationally Distinguished Principal**

**2009 Boston Educator of the Year**

# Support Guide for School Leaders: Responding to the Crises Facing Immigrant Children and Families



## Overview:

This guide is designed to equip school leaders in grades PK-12 with tools, strategies, and compassionate communication to navigate the challenges of supporting immigrant children and families during the ongoing crises of detainment and arrests. As educators, we hold a unique and powerful responsibility to create safe, supportive environments for all children, especially those most vulnerable. This guide provides practical steps, resources, and sample language to ensure school leaders can address the emotional and physical safety of their students, build trust with their communities, and take proactive steps to protect immigrant families.

## By using this guide, school leaders will:

- Strategize on how to communicate effectively with students, families, staff, and community partners.
- Access tools for creating safety and well-being plans tailored to their school communities.
- Gain actionable steps to foster emotional regulation, resilience, and empowerment among immigrant children.
- Collaborate with staff and external organizations to ensure holistic support for families impacted by the crises.

# HOW THIS GUIDE IS ORGANIZED



## **Introduction: A Call to Lead with Courage and Compassion**

**Overview of the guide and its purpose in supporting school leaders during times of crisis.**

## **Empowering Students: Building Knowledge and Resilience:**

- Tools and strategies to help students understand their rights, regulate emotions, and feel supported.

## **Supporting Families: Strengthening Safety and Advocacy**

- Resources and guidance for creating family safety plans and connecting families to critical supports.

## **Equipping Staff: Fostering Confidence and Care**

- Professional development, wellness resources, and frameworks for empowering educators.

## **Leading with Purpose: Tools for School Leaders**

- Practical steps for developing communication plans, advocating for resources, and fostering mindfulness in leadership.

## **Community Partnerships: Building a Network of Care**

- Guidance on collaborating with community organizations, legal aid groups, and advocacy partners.

## **Resource Hub: Links to Essential Tools and Supports**

- Comprehensive list of digital resources for students, families, staff, and school leaders.

## **Closing: A Commitment to Equity, Safety, and Belonging**

- Inspirational closing message and a call to action for school leaders to rise to the moment.

## **Partnering with CCM Education Group: Strategic Support for Schools**

- How CCM Education Group can provide tailored advisory, training, and strategic planning to empower your school community.

“History  
has its  
eyes on  
you.”

LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA  
(PUERTO RICAN-AMERICAN COMPOSER  
AND PLAYWRIGHT)

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# EMPOWERING STUDENTS

BUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND  
RESILIENCE

Tools and strategies to help students understand their rights, regulate emotions, and feel supported.



# Empowering Students: Building Knowledge and Resilience

**Affirmation:** Every student in my school has the right to feel safe, valued, and capable. By equipping them with knowledge and resilience, I am helping them navigate challenges with strength and confidence.

## Outcomes

- Students feel confident asserting their rights in a calm, respectful manner.
- Students develop emotional regulation skills to handle stress and anxiety.
- Peer support groups foster a sense of belonging and community.

## Introduction

Our students are looking to us for guidance—not just in their academics, but in understanding the world around them. We have an incredible opportunity to empower them with the knowledge of their rights and the tools to regulate their emotions during stressful times. It’s about more than teaching; it’s about instilling confidence, resilience, and the assurance that they are not alone. This section gives you practical ways to create those safe spaces for your students and to help them feel both seen and capable.

## Action Plan

- Implement student rights education lessons tailored to age groups using the S.T.A.Y. acronym (Safety, Tools, Awareness, Your Rights).
- Introduce emotional regulation practices such as mindfulness, grounding exercises, and journaling.
- Set up peer support or advisory groups where students can share feelings and learn coping strategies.
- Create a “calming corner” or safe space in classrooms for students to use when they feel overwhelmed.

## Communication Plan

- Share the plans with staff to ensure consistent messaging and practices across classrooms.
- Send a letter or email to families explaining how the school is empowering students to navigate these challenges.
- Post visual reminders like posters or infographics in classrooms and common areas to reinforce lessons.

## Resources

- [ACLU Student Rights Resources](#)
- [GoNoodle Mindfulness Activities](#)
- [Zones of Regulation Resources](#)
- [Mood.Org](#)

## Reflection Questions

- Are students demonstrating an increased awareness of their rights?
- Do students appear more confident and emotionally regulated in stressful situations?
- What feedback are we hearing from students about these lessons?

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# SUPPORTING FAMILIES

STRENGTHENING SAFETY AND  
ADVOCACY

Resources and guidance for creating  
family safety plans and connecting  
families to critical supports.



# Supporting Families: Strengthening Safety & Advocacy

**Affirmation:** By supporting and equipping families, I am fostering a stronger, more connected school community where every family feels valued and prepared.

## Outcomes

- Families feel empowered to create and implement safety plans.
- Families have access to trusted legal and mental health resources.
- Increased trust and engagement between families and the school.

## Introduction

Families are the foundation of our school communities, and in times like these, they need us more than ever. As leaders, we can help families feel prepared and supported, even in moments of fear or uncertainty. Whether it's sharing a simple safety plan, connecting them to community resources, or just listening to their concerns, these actions make a world of difference. This section provides tools and language to help you strengthen the trust and bond with your families while giving them the resources they need to feel empowered.

## Action Plan

- Gather input from:
  - Social workers, counselors, and community liaisons.
  - Parent-teacher organizations or advisory councils.
  - Local advocacy groups and legal aid partners.
- Identify the most pressing needs and concerns from your families through surveys, focus groups, or town halls.
- Distribute Family Safety Plans with templates that include emergency contacts, code words, and document preparation.
- Host family workshops on topics like “Know Your Rights” and emotional well-being.
- Connect families with local legal aid organizations and mental health resources.

## Communication Plan

- Provide families with a dedicated point of contact at school for questions or concerns.
- Use newsletters, emails, and social media to share resources like [ILRC Red Cards](#) and [Mass Legal Help Guides](#).
- Host information nights to walk families through the safety plans and connect them with community partners.

## Resources

- [Family Preparedness Plan - ILRC](#)
- [MIRA Coalition Resources](#)
- [Lawyers for Civil Rights](#)

## Reflection Questions

- Are families aware of the resources and supports available to them?
- How are families responding to the safety plan workshops?
- What additional supports do families need from the school?

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# EQUIPPING STAFF

FOSTERING CONFIDENCE & CARE

Professional development, wellness  
resources, and frameworks for  
empowering educators.



# Equipping Staff: Fostering Confidence and Care

**Affirmation:** When I care for and equip my staff, I am creating a ripple effect of safety, inclusion, and well-being that reaches every student and family in our school.

## Outcomes

- Staff feel confident and equipped to address student and family needs.
- Staff well-being improves through consistent wellness practices.
- A stronger sense of teamwork and support among staff members.

## Introduction

Our staff are on the frontlines, carrying so much of the emotional and operational weight of this work. As school leaders, we need to be their strongest allies—providing not just direction, but care and encouragement. This section is about equipping your team with the tools, training, and wellness practices they need to thrive, not just survive. When our staff feel confident and supported, it trickles down to every student and family they interact with. Let's make sure they know they're not carrying this weight alone.

## Action Plan

- Involve the following:
  - Teachers, support staff, and paraprofessionals.
  - SEL coordinators and professional development leads.
  - Mental health professionals, such as counselors and social workers.
  - Assess staff needs through surveys or team discussions to identify gaps in training or support.
- Offer professional development on trauma-informed practices, SEL, and restorative justice.
- Implement wellness initiatives, such as mindfulness workshops, peer support groups, or wellness days.
- Use the C.A.R.E. framework (Create, Assess, Respond, Empower) to guide staff in fostering safety and inclusion.

## Communication Plan

- Share training schedules and wellness resources in staff meetings and emails.
- Provide ongoing updates on available supports, such as counseling or mindfulness sessions.
- Encourage feedback from staff on what additional resources they need.

## Resources

- [Headspace for Educators](#)
- [Ivy Child International Resources](#)
- [The Embodiment Institute](#)
- [Educating Mindfully](#)

## Reflection Questions

- Are staff using the tools and strategies provided in training?
- What feedback are staff sharing about the wellness initiatives?
- How can we further support staff in their roles?

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# LEADING WITH PURPOSE

TOOLS FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP  
TEAMS

Practical steps for developing communication plans, advocating for resources, and fostering mindfulness in leadership.

# Leading With Purpose: Tools for School Leadership Teams

You are the heartbeat of your school community, and the way you show up in times of crisis sets the tone for everyone else. Leadership isn't about having all the answers; it's about clarity, communication, and connection. This section is full of practical tools to help you craft your messaging, advocate for resources, and lead with intention. You don't have to do it all alone—lean on these strategies to guide your next steps with confidence and purpose.

## Your Game Plan

### 1. Step-by-Step Process for School Leader Engagement

#### Step 1: Prepare Yourself

- Reflect on your values and commitment to your school community.
- Ground yourself with mindfulness techniques (e.g., deep breathing) to remain calm and focused.
- Develop a clear message of empathy, strength, and action.

#### Step 2: Talk to Your Staff

**Objective:** Provide clear communication, establish trust, and empower staff to support students.

#### Sample Opening Statement:

*"Thank you for the work you do every day to make our school a safe and welcoming space. Right now, we are facing challenges that require us to come together to support our students, families, and each other. I want you to know that I am here to listen, to lead, and to work alongside you as we navigate this together."*

#### Topics to Cover:

##### 1. Clarify the Current Situation:

- Explain the school's plan for supporting students' rights and well-being.
- Highlight the importance of creating safe, inclusive spaces for all.

##### 2. Empower Staff:

- Share resources on how to recognize and address student stress or fear.
- Offer training on mindfulness, trauma-informed practices, and restorative justice.

##### 3. Create a Feedback Loop:

- Invite staff to share concerns or suggestions for supporting students.

#### Questions Staff May Ask:

- What do we do if a student expresses fear about their safety or family?
- How do we handle inquiries from outside authorities on campus?
- What resources can we provide to students and families?

#### Step 3: Talk to Your Support Staff

**Objective:** Align with counselors, social workers, and support staff to create a cohesive plan.

#### Sample Language:

*"As we prepare to support our students and families during this time, I want to partner with you to ensure we are meeting their emotional and physical needs. Your expertise is critical to our response, and I want to create space for collaboration."*

#### Collaborative Planning Topics:

- Create systems for check-ins with students showing signs of distress.
- Identify community partners who can offer therapeutic or legal support.
- Develop a schedule for mindfulness moments or social-emotional learning (SEL) activities.

# Leading With Purpose: Tools for School Leadership Teams

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## Your Game Plan, Continued

### Step 4: Talk to Parents

**Objective:** Build trust and share actionable steps families can take to feel supported.

**Sample Language:**

*"We know this is a challenging time for many families. Our goal is to ensure that every child feels safe, supported, and valued here at school. We also want to provide you with the tools and resources you need to feel confident in supporting your child."*

**Key Points to Address:**

- Share the school's safety and wellness plan.
- Provide information on available supports (e.g., social workers, workshops, family resources).
- Encourage parents to reach out with concerns or questions.

**Questions Parents May Ask:**

- What is the school doing to keep my child safe?
- Who can I talk to if my family needs additional help?
- What do I tell my child if they're afraid?

### Step 5: Talk to Students

**Objective:** Reassure students and provide them with tools to navigate uncertainty.

**Sample Language:**

*"This is your school, and you are safe here. We know some of you may have questions or concerns, and I want you to know that we are here to listen and support you. It's okay to feel worried, but you are not alone."*

**Activities to Support Students:**

- Host advisory groups or circles to allow students to express their feelings.
- Incorporate daily mindfulness practices (e.g., breathing exercises or gratitude reflections).
- Create a mood board or suggestion box for students to share how they feel or what they need.

**Questions Students May Ask:**

- What should I do if I feel scared or worried?
- Can I talk to someone if I need help?
- How can I help my friends who feel upset?

### Step 6: Engage with Community Partners

**Objective:** Build a network of external support to address diverse needs.

**Sample Language:**

*"Our school is stronger when we work together. We want to partner with local organizations, faith leaders, and out-of-school time providers to offer additional resources for our students and families."*

# Leading With Purpose: Tools for School Leadership Teams

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## Your Game Plan, Continued

### Step 6: Engaging with Community Partners, Continued

#### Actions to Take:

- Host workshops or community events with partners (e.g., Know Your Rights sessions).
- Establish a referral system for families to access mental health or legal aid.

### 2. What to Ask for from District Support

- Legal guidance on responding to outside authority inquiries.
- Training for staff on trauma-informed practices and SEL.
- Funding for additional social workers or counselors.
- Access to district-wide mental health resources or partnerships.

### 3. Remember what Supports are Within Your Control

#### Emotional Safety:

- Daily mindfulness or meditation sessions for students and staff.
- Advisory groups for peer support.
- Restorative circles for conflict resolution.

#### Physical Safety:

- Clear protocols for handling interactions with outside authorities.
- Secure campus policies to protect students and staff.

#### Social and Emotional Well-Being:

- Workshops on self-care, resilience, and emotional regulation.
- Staff potlucks or wellness days to build morale and connection.
- Check-ins for students, families, and staff to assess their needs.

### 4. Closing Reflection for Leaders



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# COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

BUILDING A NETWORK OF CARE

Guidance on collaborating with  
community organizations, legal aid  
groups, and advocacy partners.





# Community Partnerships

## Building a Network of Care

**Affirmation:** By building strong, intentional partnerships, I am creating a safety net for my students and families that extends beyond the school walls. Together, we will foster belonging, equity, and care.

### Outcomes

- Families feel supported and connected to critical resources.
- A strong network of care is established between schools and community organizations.
- Increased trust and collaboration between families, staff, and local partners.

### Introduction

You're not in this alone. One of the most powerful things we can do as school leaders is to tap into the resources and expertise of our broader community. By building strong partnerships with local organizations, faith leaders, and advocacy groups, we create a safety net that extends beyond our school walls. This section shows you how to foster those relationships so that families, staff, and students know there's an entire network standing with them. Together, we can do so much more.

### Action Plan

- Identify and partner with local organizations, such as legal aid services, mental health providers, and faith-based groups, to address families' unique needs.
- Host workshops, such as Know Your Rights or family wellness nights, in collaboration with community partners.
- Establish a referral system to connect families to community resources efficiently.
- Build a resource directory with contact information for key organizations and share it widely with your school community.

### Communication Plan

- Send a monthly newsletter to families and staff highlighting available resources and upcoming workshops in partnership with local organizations.
- Host a schoolwide meeting or town hall to introduce key community partners and explain their roles in supporting families.
- Use visual displays, such as posters and bulletin boards, to highlight community resources available to students and families.

### Resources

- [MIRA Coalition - Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition](#)
- [Lawyers for Civil Rights](#)
- [National Immigration Law Center \(NILC\)](#)
- [211.org - Nationwide service connecting individuals to local resources.](#)

### Reflection Questions

- Have we identified all relevant community organizations that could support our students and families?
- Are families and staff aware of the resources and partnerships available to them?
- How can we improve the accessibility and visibility of these partnerships in our school community?

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# RESOURCE HUB

TOOLS & SUPPORTS

Comprehensive list of digital resources for students, families, staff, and school leaders.



# Resource Hub

"Sometimes the hardest part of this work is knowing where to start. That's why I've gathered the best resources for you, your staff, your students, and your families in one place. Whether it's a simple safety plan, legal guidance, or a mindfulness tool, this section gives you easy access to what you need to take action. Think of it as your one-stop shop for everything you'll need to move forward.

## Supporting Students' Social, Emotional, and Mental Health

As educators, you are often the first to notice when students are struggling. This guide provides resources and strategies to support the social, emotional, and therapeutic needs of elementary, middle, and high school students, ensuring they feel safe, heard, and cared for.

### 1. Strategies for Immediate Emotional Support

**Check-Ins:** Start each day or class with a simple emotional check-in (e.g., "How are you feeling today?"). Use tools like mood charts or emojis.

#### Digital Resources:

- **GoNoodle Mindfulness Activities** - <https://www.gonoodle.com/tags/WwJzlw/flow>
- **Zones of Regulation Resources** - <https://zonesofregulation.com/>
- **Mood.Org** - <https://www.mood.org/>

**Safe Spaces:** Designate a calming corner or space in the classroom for students to take a break when overwhelmed. Include sensory tools like stress balls, coloring materials, or weighted items.

#### Digital Resources:

- **Edutopia - Mindfulness Spaces** - <https://www.edutopia.org/article/creating-mindful-space-self-regulation/>
- **Smiling Mind** - <https://blog.smilingmind.com.au/how-a-mindful-space-can-support-your-students>
- **South Salem High School** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFo4WAuhvtc>
- **CASEL - High School Peace Room** - [https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/2020.11.10\\_High-School-Peace-Rooms\\_FINAL.pdf](https://schoolguide.casel.org/uploads/sites/2/2020/11/2020.11.10_High-School-Peace-Rooms_FINAL.pdf)
- **TrevorSpaces for LGBTQIA Teens & Young Adults** - <https://www.trevorspace.org/>
- **AASA Safety & Crisis Plans** - <https://www.aasa.org/resources/resource/school-safety-crisis-toolkit>

**Grounding Techniques:** Teach simple techniques such as deep breathing, mindfulness exercises, or the 5-4-3-2-1 grounding method (e.g., identifying senses: 5 things they see, 4 they touch, etc.).

#### Digital Resources:

- **Headspace for Educators** - <https://www.headspace.com/educators>
- **Ivy Child International** - <https://ivychild.org/resources/>
- **The Embodiment Institute** - <https://www.theembodimentinstitute.org/>
- **Educating Mindfully** - <https://www.educatingmindfully.org/>

### 2. Resources for Elementary Educators

#### Curriculum Recommendations:

**Learning for Justice:** <https://www.learningforjustice.org/classroom-resources/lessons/exploring-young-immigrant-stories>

**Immigrant Learning Center:** <https://www.ilctr.org/about-immigrants/ilc-publications-and-resources/best-books-about-immigrants-and-immigration/>

**Urban Assembly:** <https://www.urbanassembly.org/what-we-do/overview>

**CASEL:** <https://pg.casel.org/>

#### Therapeutic Activities:

Emotion flashcards to help students name and express their feelings.

- **British Council for Learning English** - <https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/print-make/flashcards/feelings-flashcards>

"Feelings journals" where younger children can draw or write about their emotions.

- **Safer Schools** - <https://oursaferschools.co.uk/2020/10/07/emotions-journal/>

#### Mindfulness Practices:

"Take Five" breathing exercise: Students trace their fingers while breathing in and out slowly.

- **CALM** - <https://www.calm.com/blog/5-4-3-2-1-a-simple-exercise-to-calm-the-mind>
- **Mr. Jordan Grinstein, MA Based Yoga & Mindfulness Teacher** - <https://www.youtube.com/@jordangrinstein4002>

# Resource Hub

Sometimes the hardest part of this work is knowing where to start. That's why I've gathered the best resources for you, your staff, your students, and your families in one place. Whether it's a simple safety plan, legal guidance, or a mindfulness tool, this section gives you easy access to what you need to take action. Think of it as your one-stop shop for everything you'll need to move forward.



## 3. Resources for Middle and High School Educators

### SEL Curriculum Recommendations:

**RULER (Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence):** Focuses on recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions.

- **RULER** - <https://rulerapproach.org/>

**Facing History and Ourselves:** Helps students explore identity, diversity, and empathy through historical and contemporary contexts.

- **Facing History & Ourselves - Historical Empathy** - <https://www.facinghistory.org/ideas-week/how-historical-empathy-helps-students-understand-world-today>

### Peer Support Activities:

Create peer-to-peer listening groups for students to share and support each other. Facilitate restorative circle discussions to address conflicts and foster belonging.

- **Resilient Futures Guide** - <https://www.resilientfutures.us/resources/educator-guide-creating-and-facilitating-peer-to-peer-support-groups-in-secondary-schools>
- **Center for Supportive Schools** - <https://www.supportiveschools.org/peer-group-connection-high-school>

### Stress Management Tools:

Introduce apps like Headspace or Calm for guided meditation.

Offer short mindfulness breaks during the day (e.g., 1-minute meditations or gratitude reflections).

- **PBS Learning Media - Healthy Minds, Thriving Kids Series** - <https://mass.pbslearningmedia.org/collection/healthy-minds-thriving-kids/>
- **Calm:** <https://www.calm.com/schools>
- **Headspace:** <https://www.headspace.com/educators>
- **Smiling Mind:** <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>
- **Dreamykid:** <https://dreamykid.com/>
- **Insight Timer:** <https://insighttimer.com/>

## 4. Therapeutic Supports Available in Schools

### Social Workers and Counselors:

- Ensure students know how to contact these professionals. Provide reminders through class announcements, posters, or newsletters.

### School-Based Groups:

- Offer support groups for grief, anxiety, or identity exploration (e.g., LGBTQ+ support groups).

### Collaborations with Community Partners:

Partner with local organizations offering free or low-cost therapy sessions, wellness workshops, or crisis support.

#### Examples:

- **Big Brothers Big Sisters**
- **Local Boys & Girls Clubs**
- **Community Mental Health Centers**
- **Local Yoga, Martial Arts, and Athletics Centers**
- **PureSpark.Com** - <https://yourpurespark.com/>
- **Mass Gov Resources** - <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/find-a-cbhi-provider>

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## 5. Additional Tools for Educators

### Self-Care for Educators:

- Join professional support networks (e.g., educator mental health webinars, peer groups).
  - **Educating Mindfully** - <https://www.educatingmindfully.org/>
  - **Center for Mindfulness & Compassion** - <https://www.chacmc.org/connect>
- Take advantage of free resources like:
  - **Virtual Well-Being Kit** - <https://doingwell.mit.edu/wellbeingkit-2/>
  - **Mass General Hospital** - <https://www.mghcfpwb.org/self-care-activities>

### Professional Development:

- Attend trainings on trauma-informed practices or restorative justice techniques. Learn to recognize signs of mental health challenges like anxiety, depression, or trauma.
  - **Boston Children's Hospital - The Clough Foundation Training and Access Project (TAP)** -
    - <https://www.childrenshospital.org/programs/boston-childrens-hospital-neighborhood-partnerships/training-and-access-project-tap>
  - **International Institute for Restorative Practices** - <https://www.iirp.edu/continuing-education/free-webinars/>
  - **National Center for Restorative Justice Training** - <https://ncorj.org/training/>

## 6. National and Online Resources

- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)**: Free tools and guides for trauma-informed teaching.
  - <https://www.nctsn.org/>
- **The Trevor Project**: Crisis intervention and support for LGBTQ+ youth (text/chat available).
  - <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
- **Crisis Text Line**: Free 24/7 support for students and educators (Text HOME to 741741).
  - <https://www.crisistextline.org/>
- **Immigrants Rising**
  - <https://immigrantsrising.org/resource/mental-health-resources-for-undocumented-people/>

## 7. How to Collaborate with Families

- Share a family safety plan template and tips for supporting emotional well-being at home.
- Host workshops or send home resources on building resilience and stress management for children.
- Provide families with contact information for school counselors, local therapists, and community supports.

### Your Role Is Critical

You are a pillar of safety and support for your students. By using these resources, fostering open communication, and prioritizing well-being, you can help create an environment where all students feel safe and cared for, even in the most challenging times.

**Remember:** Support is available for you, too. Don't hesitate to lean on your colleagues, school leadership, and local networks. Together, we can make a difference.



# STAY

S.T.A.Y. stands for Safety, Tools, Awareness, Your Rights – a framework to help students navigate challenging situations with confidence and calm.  
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## SAFETY

Focus on personal safety by knowing your trusted adults, creating a family plan, and staying aware of your surroundings



## TOOLS

Use tools like mindfulness, grounding exercises, and breathing techniques to stay calm during stressful situations.



## AWARENESS

Stay aware of your emotions and environment. Recognize when you need help and know how to seek support.



## YOUR RIGHTS

Understand your basic rights, such as the right to remain silent and to ask for a trusted adult. Practice asserting these rights respectfully.



# CARE

C.A.R.E. stands for Create, Assess, Respond, Empower – a framework for teachers to support well-being and safety in the classroom..

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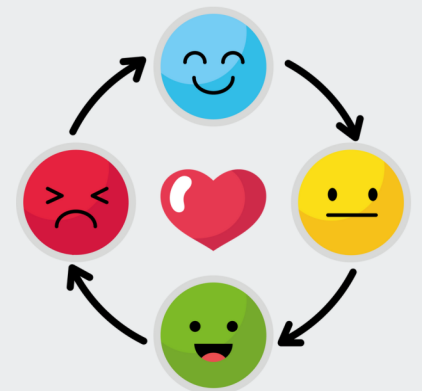
## CREATE

Create a safe and inclusive environment through daily rituals of belonging, affirmations, and mindful practices.



## ASSESS

Continuously assess students' emotional states through check-ins, mood charts, and observation.



## RESPOND

Respond proactively to student needs by providing emotional support, practicing trauma-informed approaches, and using de-escalation techniques when necessary.



## EMPOWER

Empower students with tools for emotional regulation, advocacy, and self-confidence through consistent SEL practices and open communication.



# FAMILY SAFETY PLAN PREPAREDNESS TIPS

Essential Tips to Keep Us Prepared!



## Know Your Rights

### *How You Respond to Law Enforcement*

- “I want to remain silent.”
- “I want to speak to a lawyer.”
- “Do you have a warrant signed by a judge?”



## Who Do I Call If I Can't Get You?

- Make sure your children (ages 5 and up) memorize the phone number of a trusted adult or family member.
- For younger children, write these numbers on a card and place it in their backpack or pocket.



## Family Safety Plan

- Who they should contact.
- Where they can go (e.g., a relative's house, a neighbor).
- Steps to take if they are approached by authorities.



## Practice Calm Responses

- Role-play scenarios with your children to help them stay calm if they encounter authorities.
- Teach them to remain polite and avoid arguing.
- Emphasize the importance of asking for a parent or lawyer if they are questioned.



## Communicate with the School

- Share your family's safety plan with your child's school. Inform them of trusted adults who are allowed to pick up your child in case of an emergency.
- Inquire on school's policy for release of information to law enforcement.



## Keep Important Documents Ready

- Have a folder with copies of important documents for each family member, including:
  - Birth certificates, passports, and identification cards.
  - Emergency contact information.
  - A list of medical conditions or medications for children.
- Store this folder in a safe but accessible place where your children know how to find it.



**LEAD WITH COURAGE &  
COMPASSION**

**A  
COMMITMENT  
TO EQUITY,  
SAFETY, AND  
BELONGING**

**You were especially designed for  
this moment, Beloved!**



# In Closing: A Commitment to Equity, Safety, and Belonging

*Dear Colleague,*

As we navigate these turbulent times, I want to close with a message that speaks to the heart of why we lead and why our leadership matters more than ever.

The memory of that third-grade girl, her small voice trembling with fear as she asked me a question no child should ever have to ask, has stayed with me. It shaped how I see my role as an educator—not just as a teacher of knowledge, but as a protector of dignity, hope, and belonging.

Right now, many of us are holding our breath, navigating the uncertainty of this moment, and grappling with the fear that comes with it. These are terrifying times for many of us—for our students, our parents, our teachers, and our communities. And yet, it is in these moments that brave leadership becomes essential.

***Brave leadership doesn't mean we aren't afraid. It doesn't mean we have all the answers. Brave leadership is showing up, standing tall in the face of uncertainty, and offering our communities something to hold on to—hope, safety, and care. It means choosing vulnerability as our strength and compassion as our guide.***

***Our youth are watching us. They are searching our eyes for truth, for safety, and for the assurance that they matter. Our parents are looking to us for guidance and support as they navigate impossible decisions. Our teachers are relying on us to anchor them as they carry the weight of their classrooms. And our communities are leaning on us to be the calm in the storm, the steady voice that reminds them that they are not alone.***

We have been called to lead in this time, not because it is easy, but because it is necessary. Together, we have the power to create sanctuaries in our schools, spaces where every child and every family feels seen, valued, and safe. Together, we can lead with empathy and boldness, showing our communities that even in the face of fear, we will not falter.

Take a moment to ground yourself in why you chose this work. Remember the children, the families, and the colleagues who remind you of your purpose. Then, lead with that purpose. Lead with your heart. Lead with the courage to say, **"Not on my watch."**

I see you. I honor you. And I stand with you as we rise to meet this moment—together.

***In solidarity and unwavering hope,***

*Craig Aarons - Martin*

**Craig Aarons-Martin**

**2018 Massachusetts Elementary Principal of the Year &  
National Distinguished Principal  
2009 Boston Educator of the Year  
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# About Us

## CCM Education Group



CCM Education Group, under the visionary leadership of Craig Aarons-Martin, partners with educational communities to create vibrant, student-driven learning environments that promote excellence, belonging, and innovation. Through strategic collaboration and a passion for inclusive learning, CCM empowers leaders and organizations to foster transformative change and ensure equitable access to quality education.

**Looking for More Support? Reach Us At:**

**[ccmeducationgroup.co](http://ccmeducationgroup.co)**

"We are the  
next leaders.  
The ones who  
step into spaces  
with no  
blueprint and  
create one."

YARA SHAHIDI  
(IRANIAN-AFRICAN AMERICAN ACTRESS  
AND ACTIVIST)