

# **“Bullying,” School Climate & Restorative Practices: What are the Connections and What Do These Look Like in Practice**

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**CT State Department of Education**

**Leadership Team, National School Climate Council**



OPENING CIRCLE!!

# Introduction: How do I Know What I Know?

- Brief background
  - Experience
  - Education
- My “day” job at the Connecticut State Department of Education
  - Turnaround Office
  - School Climate Improvement, Restorative Practices, Bullying and Character Education
    - Professional Development
    - “Bullying” Complaints

# Lessons Learned from My Own Bullying Inquiry Log

- Eleven years worth of data...trends are clear
- Approximately 2345 *unique* inquiries
  - Bullying knows no demographic boundaries
  - Bullying takes ALL forms without patterns
  - Bullying affects all grade levels
    - Very slight increase in the middle school years
  - Bullying overwhelmingly involves children with special needs (IEPs & 504 Plans)
    - Children who are “different”
  - The family perceptions about what is happening to the child is in a *separate universe* from what is objectively happening at school

# Making Schools Safer by Passing State Anti-Bullying Laws: Reactive vs. Preventive

1999	2001	2002	2003	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
GA	CO	CT	AR	AZ	ID	DE	NE	AL	MA	ND	SD
	LA	NJ	CA	IN	SC	IA	KY	NC	WI	HI	
	MS	OK	RI	MD	AK	IL	UT	WY	NY	MI	
<u>2000</u>	OR	WA		VA	NM	KS	FL				
NH	WV		<u>2004</u>	TX		MN	MO				<u>2015</u>
			VT	TN		OH					MT
				ME		PA					
				NV							

*Missouri's Law originally only pertained to "Cyber-Bullying"*  
*CT and WY: Only two states that combine (the problem of Bullying and (the solution of creating positive) School Climate in the same legislation*

**120 - 150+ total amendments throughout the country!!!!**

**SCHOOL CLIMATE TASK FORCE SEATED IN 2016**

# Public Act 11-232 (CT)

- Effective July 1, 2011
- Safe School Climate Coordinator
  - District level
- Safe School Climate Specialist
  - School level
- Safe School Climate Committee
  - School level
- School Climate Assessments
  - 2014 Amendments: Common Student Survey Questions

# Public Act 11-232 (CT)

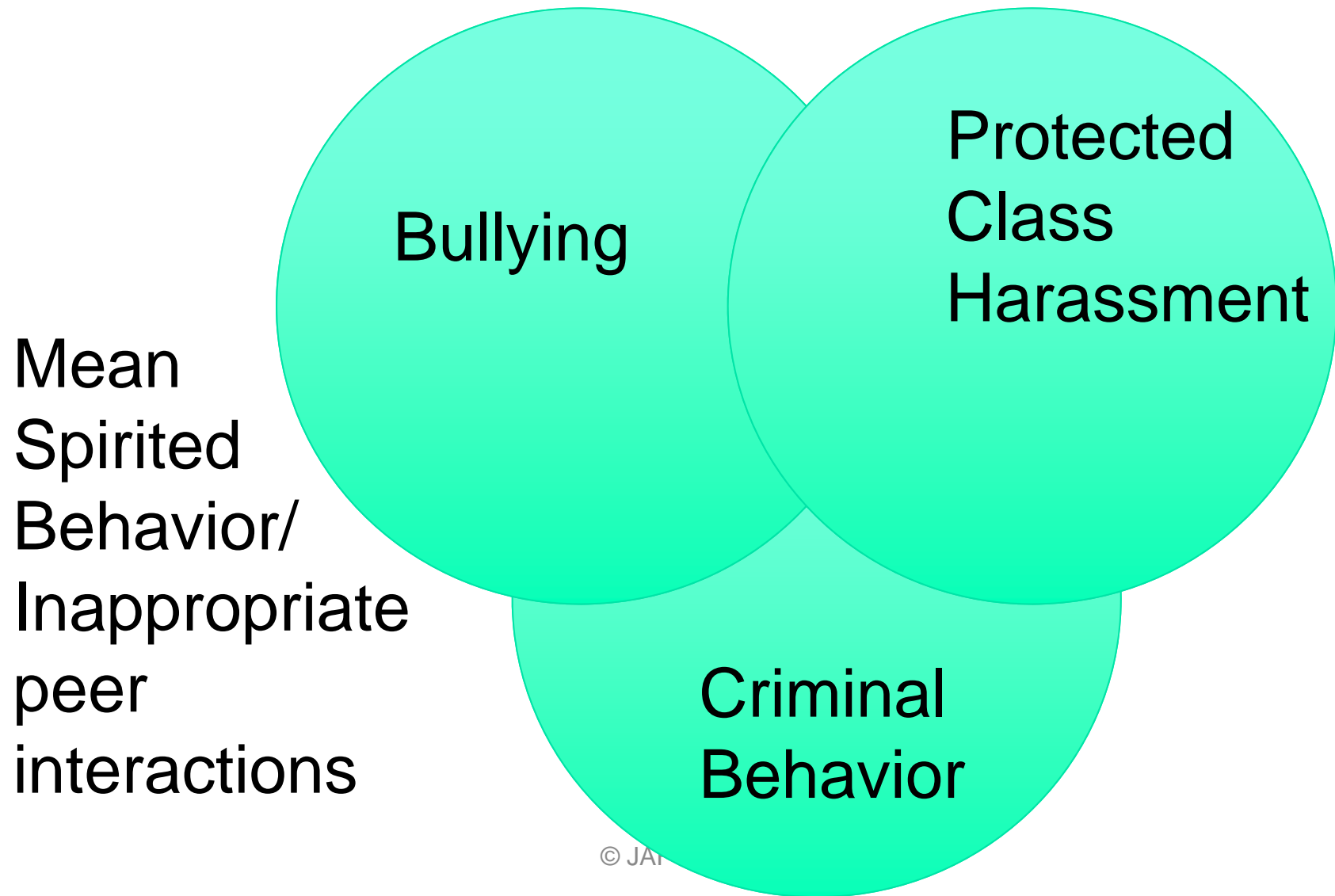
- Defines bullying
  - Student to student only
  - Enumerates targeted groups
    - Confuses protected with non-protected classes
- Procedure for filing bullying complaints
- School employees must be “trained”

# 2014 Amendments: Five (Six) Statutes

- P.A. 11 – 232
- P.A. 13 – 3
- P.A. 14 – 172
- P.A. 14 – 232
- P.A. 14 – 234
  - Teen Dating Violence added
  - Culturally Responsive Curriculum added
  - Minor procedural changes to investigations and notifications
- P.A. 14 – 196



# The World Of Inappropriate Behavior

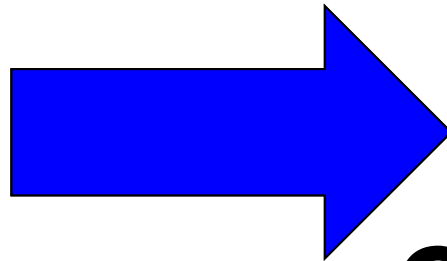


**Understanding and  
working effectively  
requires 3 Critical  
Paradigm Shifts in  
Thinking and Leadership**

# Pivotal/*Paradigm* Shift in Thinking & Engaging

**Fixing  
Problems  
& Putting  
Out  
Fires**

*(reactive)*



**Developing  
Character  
&  
Creating the  
Climate\*\***

*(pro-active)*

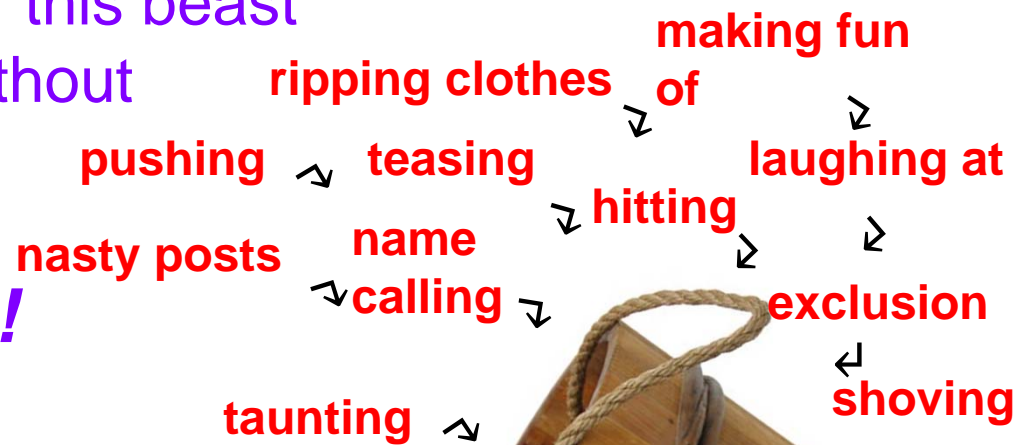
# Why NOT Look Through The Lens of “Bullying Prevention?”

- “Bullying” is a *TOXIC* School Concept: A True Conversation Closer
  - No school/institution wants to have any of it (bullying)
  - No parent/guardian/care giver will admit their dependent is one (bully)
  - No individual will own up to being one (bully)
  - Everyone avoids these terms except the Target/Target’s family (“She/he has been bullied,” or “I’ve been bullied”)

Bullying is “one bucket” thinking...any form of inappropriate behavior is either BULLYING or it is NOT BULLYING... and because of this, **everything is bullying!!!! And when everything is bullying...NOTHING is bullying!!!!**

**The way out of this practical dilemma is to focus NOT on bullying, but on school climate improvement...**

the ultimate remedy for this beast called, “**bullying.**” Without making this switch, we’re all living in **BULLIMANIA!!!!**



**Bullying.....!!!!**





# Why “School Climate” ?

- On-going Issues with labels/titles and Content
  - Character/Moral Education
  - Moral Community
  - Religious Education
  - Social/Emotional Learning
  - Citizenship or Civics
  - Bullying Prevention
  - Service Learning
  - Whole Child Education
- Politically correct: everyone is supportive
- No one questions the “content” of lessons
  - School climate is “ephemeral”
- Not perceived as a separate subject - integrated into all subject matter

# A Call To Action: Improving School Climate

*Improving school climate is among the most effective ways of improving the lives of youth, preventing violence and creating physically, emotionally and intellectually safe, supportive and positive learning environments*



Years of focusing on what is ***absolutely necessary*** for optimal learning to occur...

- Positive and meaningful ***relationships*** between and among all school community members
- Learning environments that are ***physically, emotionally and intellectually safe***

School Climate: ***The Character and Quality of School Life*** (safety, interpersonal relationships, teaching and learning, leadership, environment and leadership)

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# Focus on School Climate (Improvement)

- Forward thinking perspective
- Comprehensive approach
- Standards-based
- Foundation for student success
- Strength-based perspective
- Fosters student, family, faculty/staff engagement

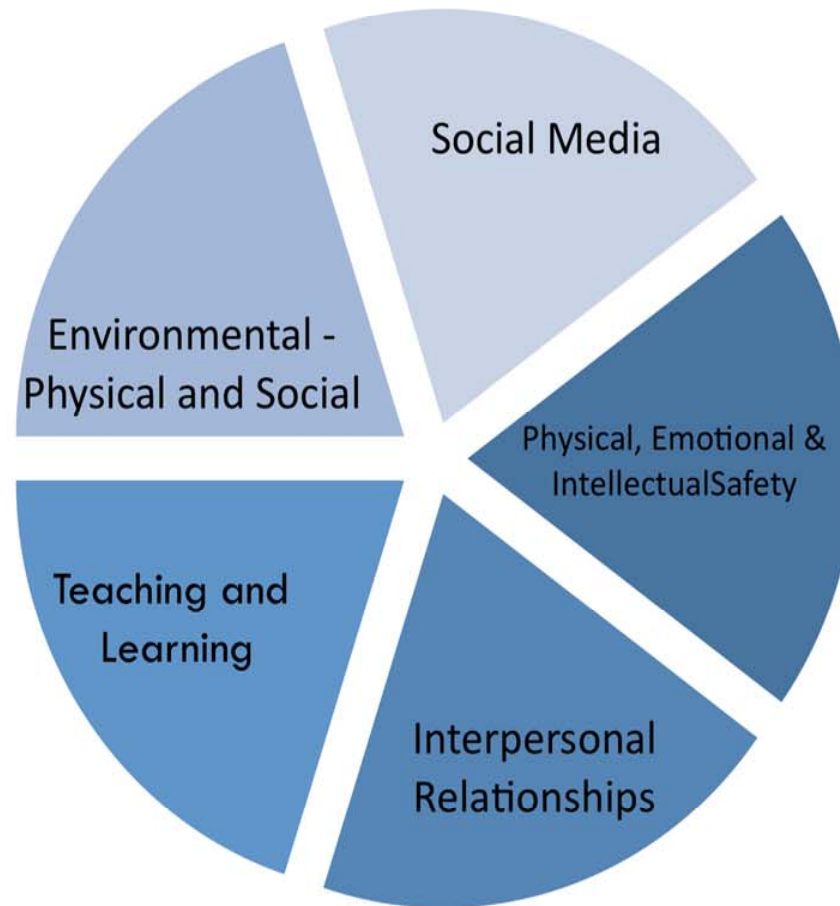
# **\*\*School Climate**

Simple definition:

***The Character and  
Quality of School  
Life***

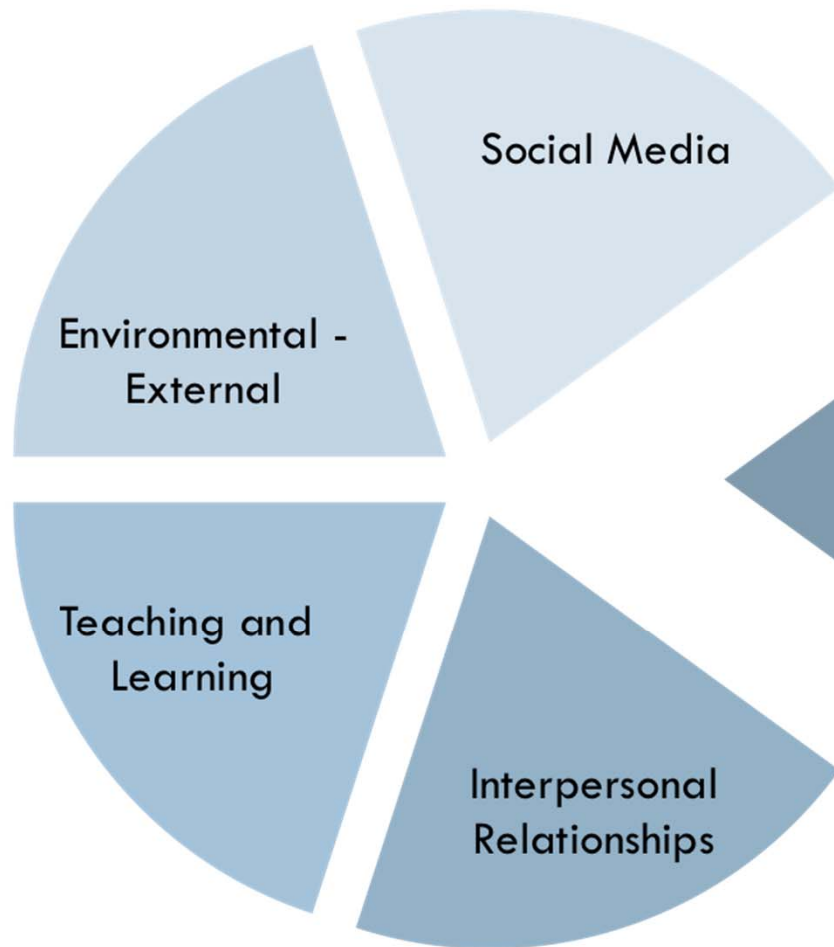
# **DIMENSIONS OF SCHOOL CLIMATE**

# School Climate: Key Dimensions\*\*



\*\* Strong, Positive Leadership in embedded and assumed in every dimension

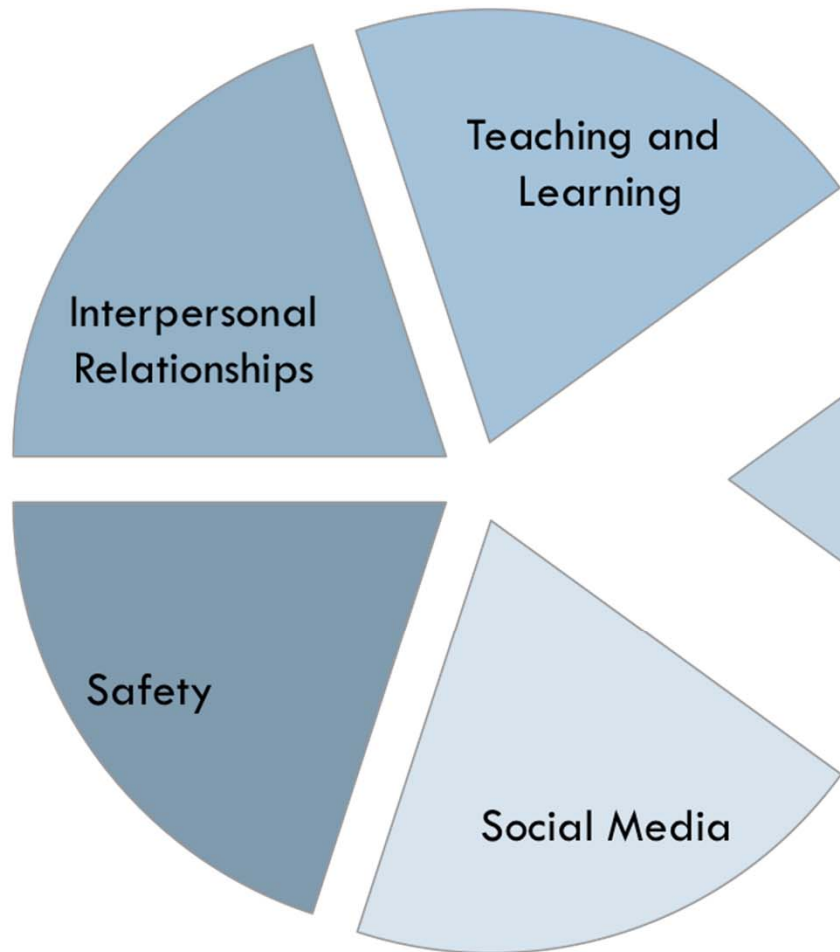
# School Climate: Key Dimensions



## Safety

- Rules and Norms
- Sense of Physical Security
- Sense of Social-Emotional Security

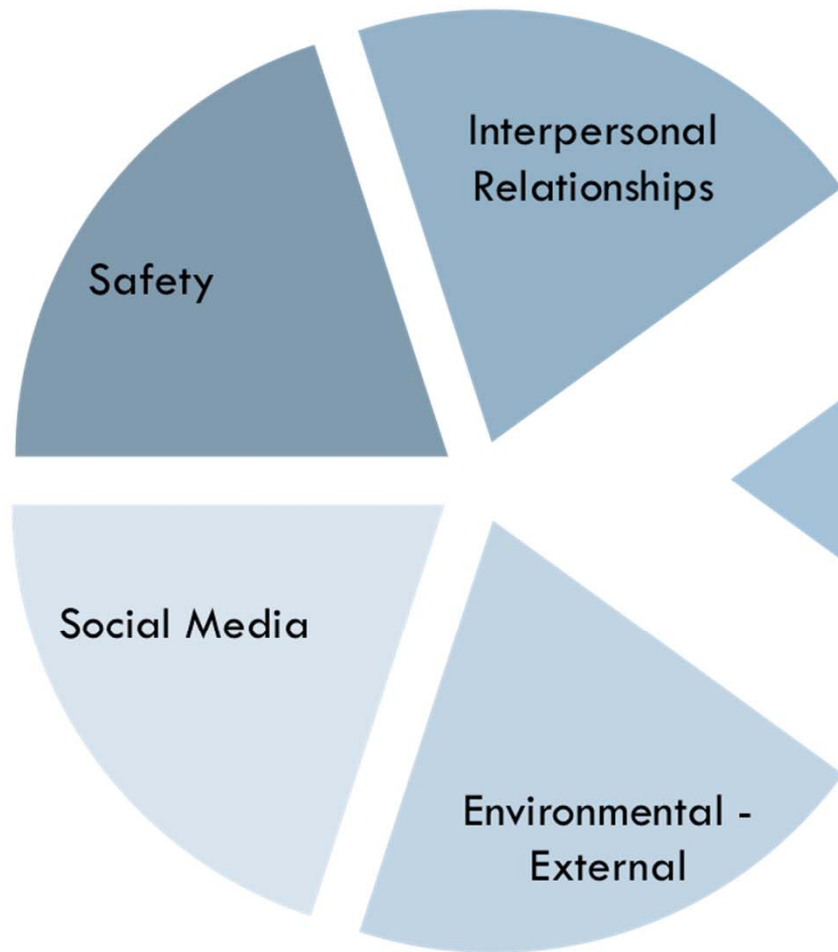
# School Climate: Key Dimensions



## Interpersonal Relationships

- Respect for diversity
- Social support – adults
- Social support – students
- Professional relationships
- Strong bonds to school
- Effective/Available support
- Leadership

# School Climate: Key Dimensions

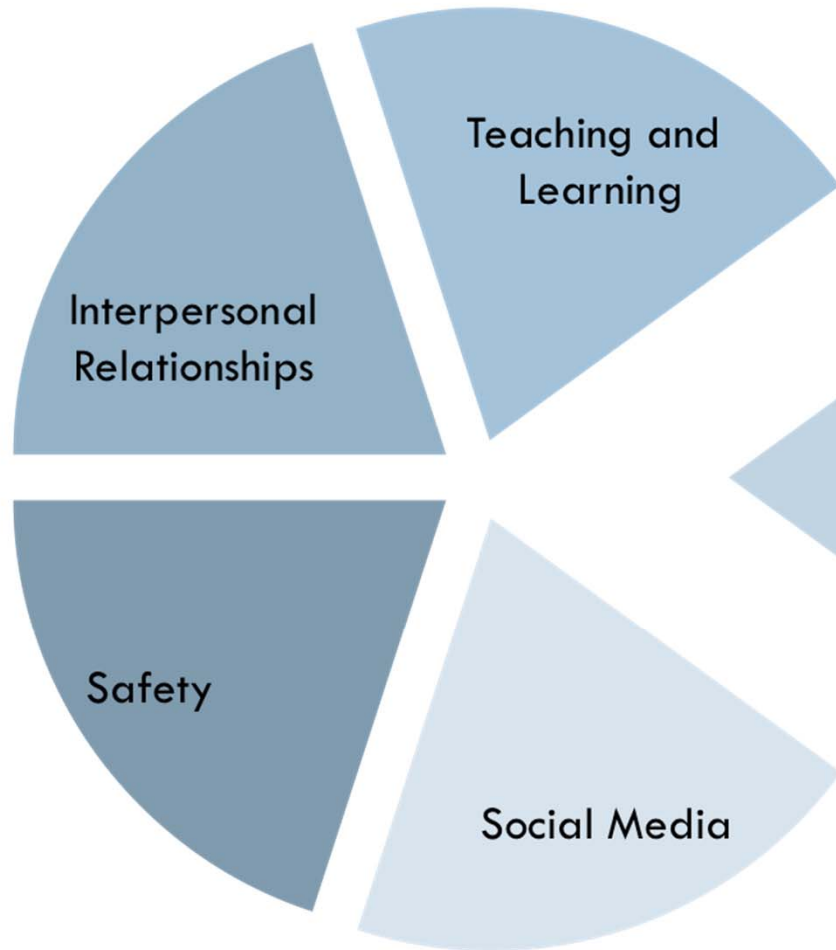


## Teaching and Learning

- Support for learning
- Academic, Social, emotional, and civic learning
- Leadership



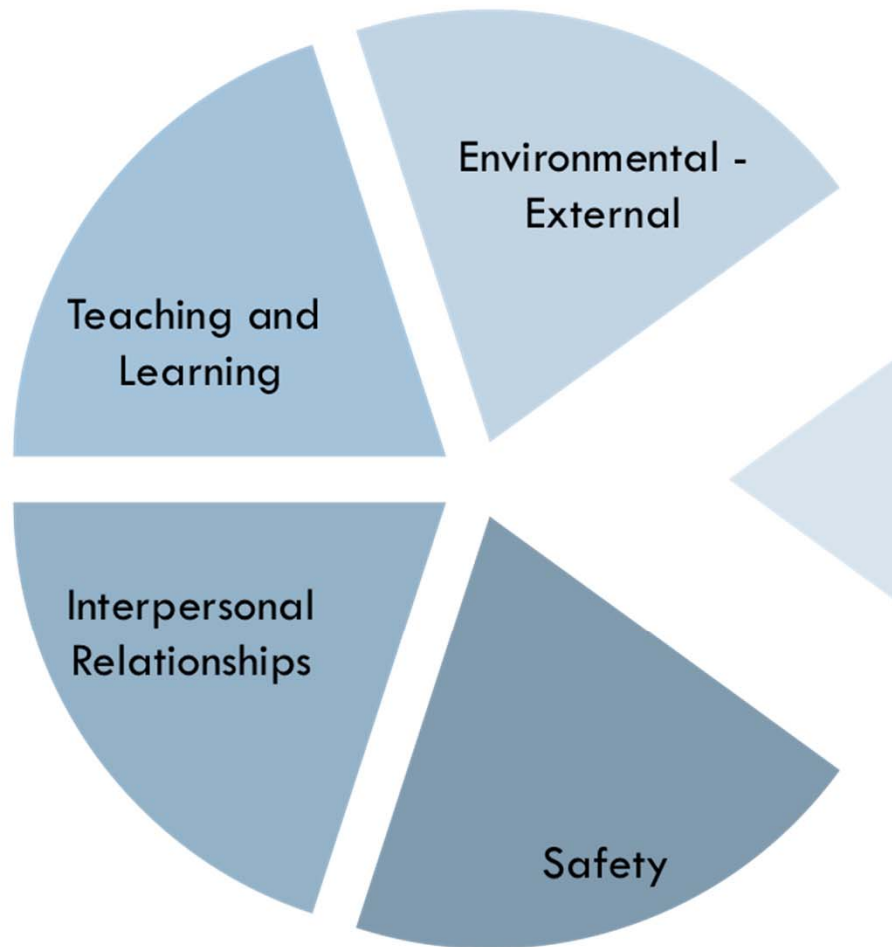
# School Climate: Key Dimensions



## Environment

- School Connectedness (social environment)
- Physical Surroundings

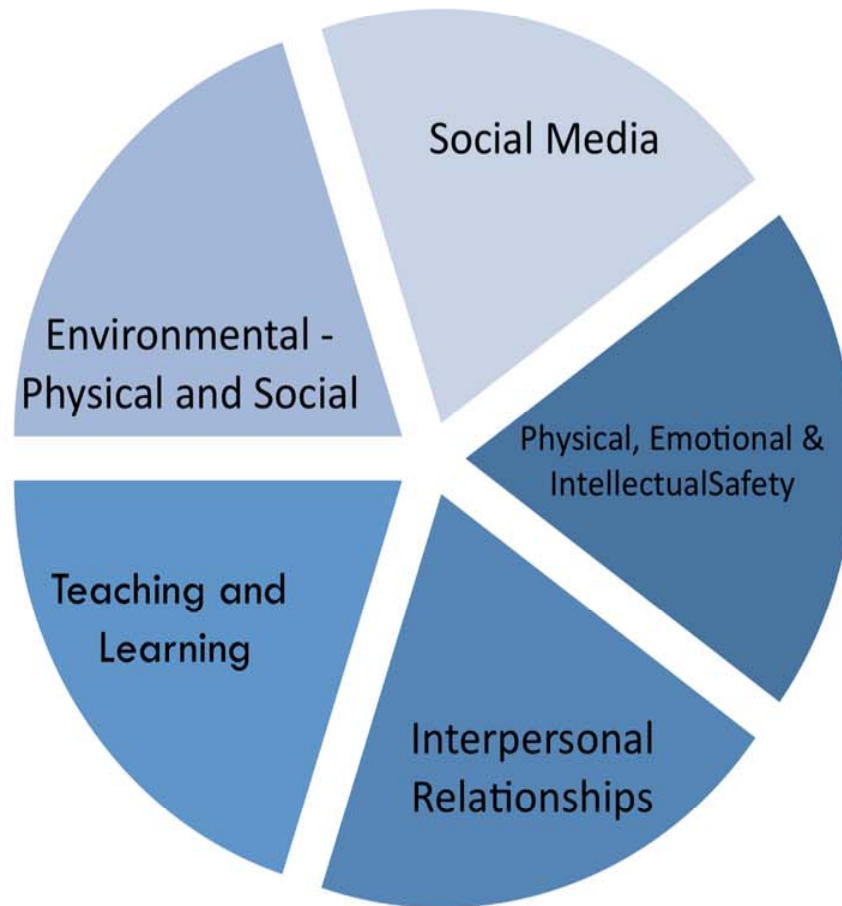
# School Climate: Key Dimensions



## Social Media

- Sense that students feel safe when online or on electronic devices

# School Climate: Key Dimensions\*\*



\*\* Strong, Positive Leadership in embedded and assumed in every dimension

# National School Climate Standards: Finalized March 2010

“There is growing appreciation that school climate –

**the quality and character of school life**<sup>1</sup>

– fosters children’s development, learning and achievement. School climate is based on the patterns of people’s experiences of school life; it reflects the norms, goals values, interpersonal relationships, teaching, learning and leadership practices, and organizational structures that comprise school life.”

<sup>1</sup>This definition of school climate was consensually developed by members of the National School Climate Council (2007). **The terms “school climate”, “school culture”** and “learning environment have been used in overlapping but sometimes quite different ways in the educational literature. Here, we **use the terms interchangeably.**

# National School Climate Standards

*Present a vision and framework for a positive and sustainable school climate. They compliment national standards for Content, Leadership and Professional Development and the Parent Teacher Association's National Standards for Family School Partnerships*

# National School Climate Standards: Endorsements

- American School Health Assoc.
- ASCD (Assoc. for Supervision & Curriculum Development)
- Character Educ. Partnership
- Nat' l Network of Educ. Renewal
- Nat' l School Boards Assoc.
- Public Education Network
- School Mental Health Project
- Search Institute
- FairTest
- Nat' l Assoc. of School Psych.
- American School Counselors Assoc.
- Committee for Children
- Pacer Center
- Teaching Tolerance
- Nat' l Rural Educ. Association
- Nat' l Org. for Youth Safety
- National PTA
- CT Juvenile Justice Alliance
- Futures without Violence
- iKeep Safe (Internet Keep Safe Coalition)
- Nat' l Cntr. for Student Engagement
- **Westbrook, CT Public Schools**
- Portland, CT Public Schools

# Model School Climate Policy

- “Umbrella” policy for all other relevant legislation and policies
  - Used for *all school and district improvement*...not just school climate
  - Nearly a 1 ½ year process
- Unanimously adopted March 19, 2014
- CT Assoc. for Boards of Educ. Policy # 5131.914
- Shipman & Goodwin Education Law Firm review
- Model for other CT districts and states
- Model for the National School Climate Center

# Standard One

The school community has a shared ***vision*** and plan for promoting, enhancing and sustaining a ***positive school climate***.



# Standard Two

The school community sets *policies* specifically promoting (a) the development and sustainability of social, emotional, ethical, civic and intellectual *skills, knowledge, dispositions and engagement*, and (b) a *comprehensive system to address barriers to learning* and teaching and reengage students who have become disengaged.

# Standard Three

The school community's *practices* are identified, prioritized and supported to (a) promote the learning and positive social, emotional, ethical and civic *development of students*, (b) enhance *engagement in teaching, learning*, and school-wide activities; (c) address barriers to learning and teaching and reengage those who have become disengaged; and (d) develop and sustain an *appropriate operational infrastructure* and capacity building mechanisms for meeting this standard.

# Standard Four

The school community creates an ***environment*** where all members are welcomed, supported, and ***feel safe*** in school: socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

# Standard Five

The school community develops meaningful and engaging ***practices***, activities and norms that promote ***social and civic responsibilities and a commitment to social justice.***

# SCHOOL CLIMATE DEVELOPMENT MODEL

# Time

From the cards provided, select the one that represents the area you spend the majority of your time on.

# Putting it Together

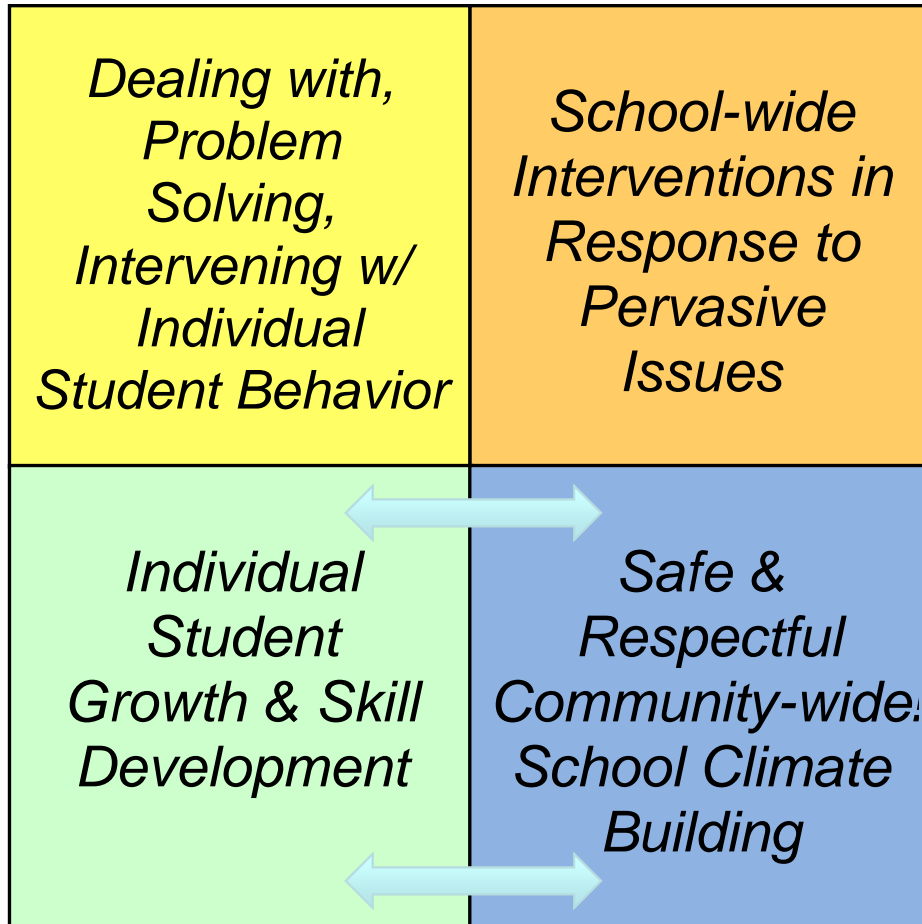
Using the grid provided, place the four cards in the area that best matches title with description.

<u>Individual Intervention</u>	<u>School-Wide Community Intervention</u>
<u>Individual Development</u>	<u>School-Wide Community Development</u>

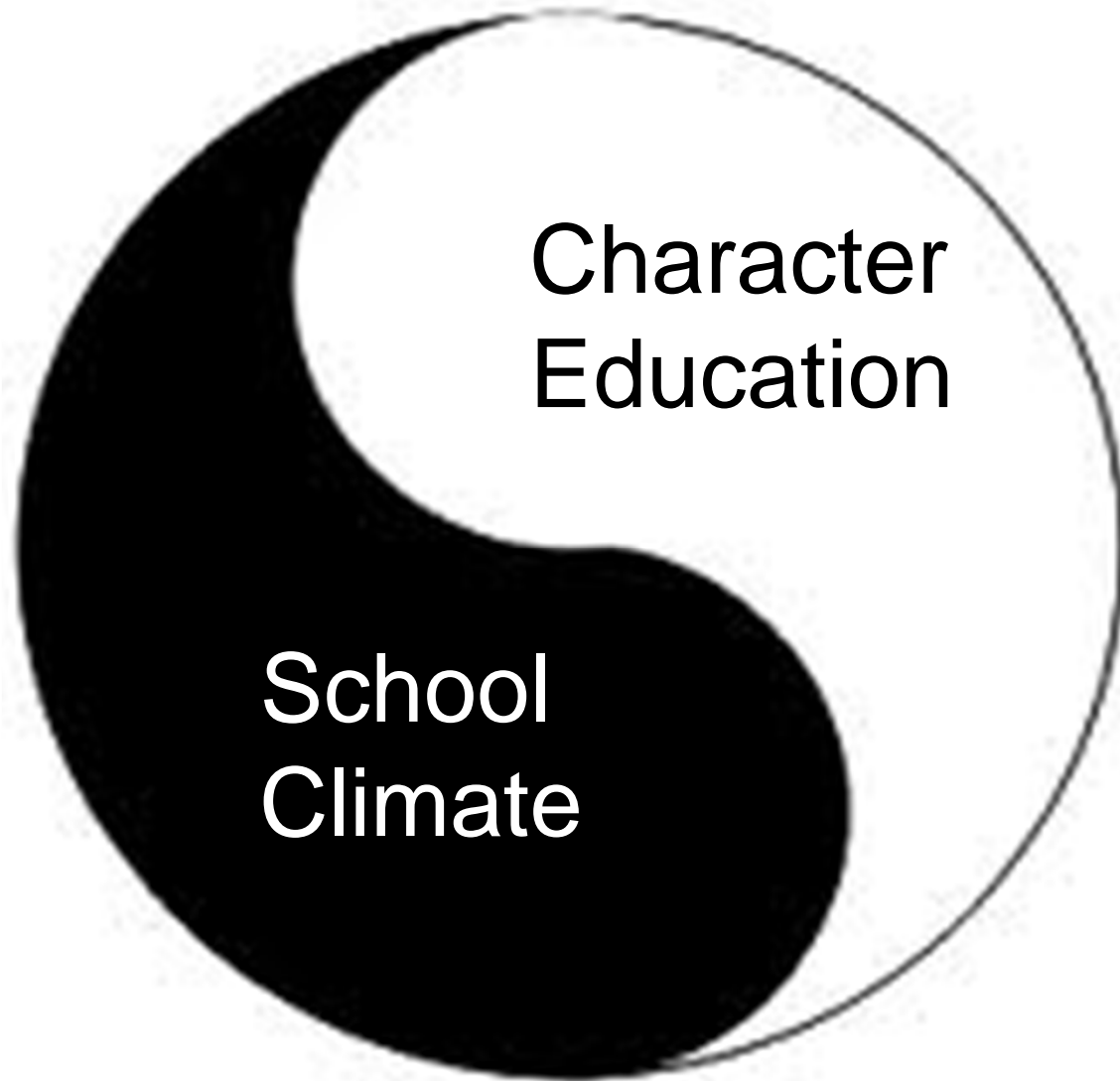


Development **PURPOSE** Intervention!


Individual **FOCUS** Environment!



Inextricably Interconnected and interrelated



<p><u>Individual Intervention</u></p> <p>(Reaction to <u>individual</u> inappropriate behavior)</p>	<p><u>School-Wide Community Intervention</u></p> <p>(Reaction to <u>pervasive</u> inappropriate behavior)</p>
<p><u>Individual Development</u></p> <p>(Character Education/ Development)</p>	<p><u>School-Wide Community Development</u></p> <p>(School Climate Improvement/ Moral Community)</p>



The First Bookend of Research

# SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS

# School Connectedness: Simple Measures

- I feel close to people at this school
  - Peers
  - Every student should have a caring adult
- I am happy to be at this school
  - A “destination”
- I feel like I am part of this school
  - A sense of belonging
- The teachers at this school treat students fairly (not identically)
  - Fairness = Listening
- I feel safe (*physically, emotionally and intellectually*) in this school

The Second Bookend of Research

# **School Shooters**

# School Shooter Commonalities

- ◆ Five necessary (not sufficient conditions)
  - ◆ **Marginalized by their Peers**
    - ◆ Teased, ridiculed, excluded, etc.
    - ◆ Subjected to homophobic slurs
  - ◆ **Under the “Radar Screen”**
    - ◆ Marginalized by the adults who could have helped them
    - ◆ No caring adult they could count on
  - ◆ **Very Rigid Parameters for being Acceptable**
    - ◆ Being “different” is not acceptable
  - ◆ **Personal Problems**
    - ◆ Mental health conditions
    - ◆ Family instability
  - ◆ **Easy Access to Guns**

# Tragedy Vs. Solution Aligned

- Students at Risk Factors (School Shooters)
  - No Caring Adult
  - Alienated from School Culture
  - Peer Marginalization
- Connectedness Factors
  - Close to people at school
    - Special adult connection
  - Happy to Be at School
  - Feeling a part of the school
    - Sense of belonging at school
  - Adults treat students fairly
  - Sense of (physical, emotional and intellectual Safety) at School



*“I’ve come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom [school]. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher [administrator], I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s [adult’s] life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal. **In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child [adult] humanized or dehumanized.**”*

Haim Ginott, Teacher and Child

# Paradigm Shift

## ■ From Punitive



## ■ To Restorative

- Rule broken
- Establish guilt or innocence
- Suppress misbehavior
  
- Authority driven disciplinary action
  
- Accountability = Punishment
  
- Using fear of punishment and exclusion to motivate positive behavior (or the use of “carrots”)

- Who has been harmed and how
- Address needs
- Recognize misbehavior as a learning opportunity
- Those impacted determine resolution collectively in Circles
- Accountability =
  - Understanding the impacts
  - Taking responsibility
  - Suggesting ways to repair harm
- Positive Behavior results from the opportunity to make amends and honorably reintegrate

# *The Road goes ever on and on... The Hobbit*



*It's a dangerous business,  
walking out one's front door*

# The Restorative Practices Journey...

*If you want to go there fast...  
go by yourself*

*If you want to go far...  
take someone **with** you*

***Restorative Practices represent a philosophy that recognizes the importance of prioritizing the relationships and connections between and among all people within a school community and provides a framework for creating positive school climate and culture.***

# Restorative Practices: Primary Channels

## ■ Pro-active

- Strengthen relationships
- Develop community

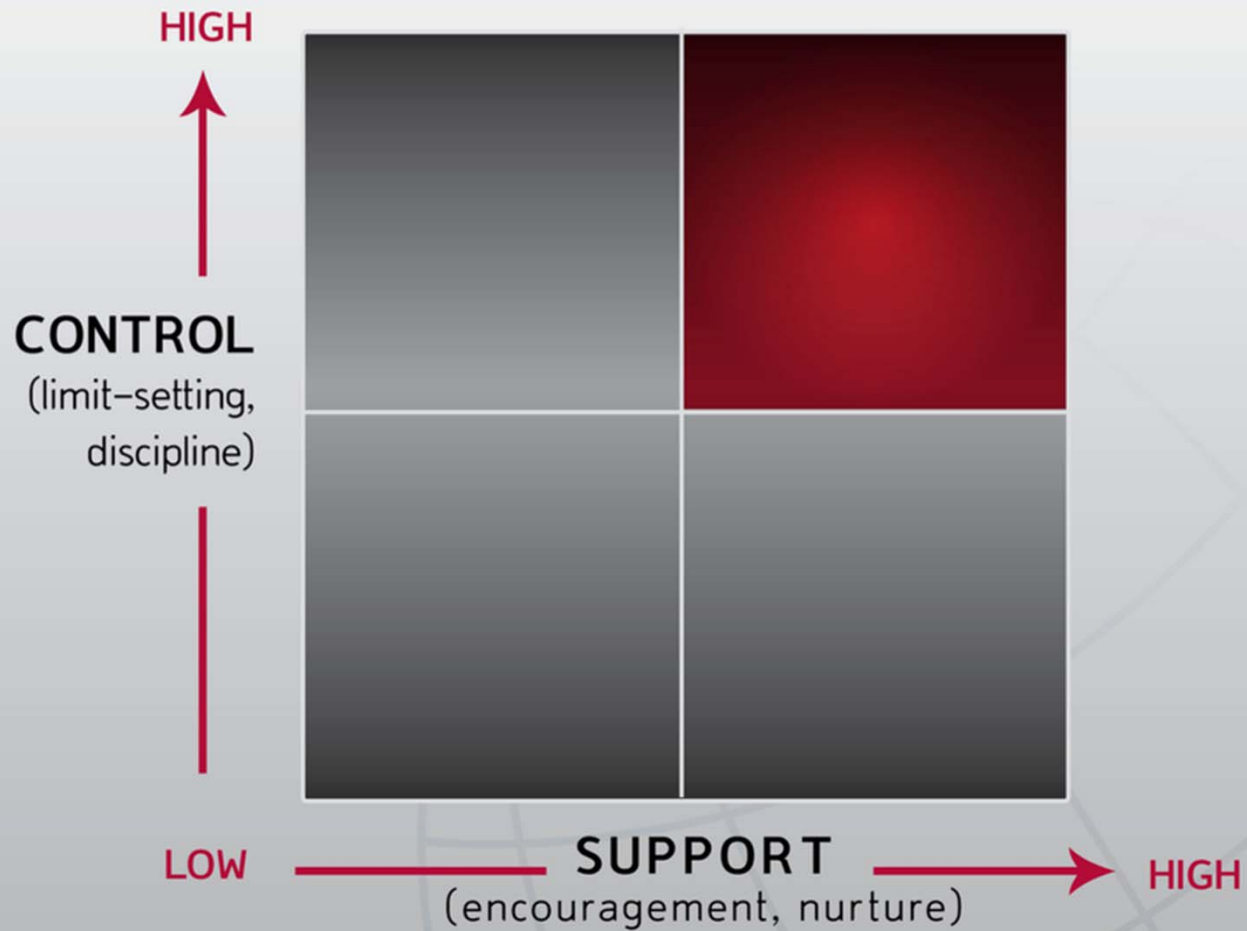
## ■ Responsive

- Manage conflict and misbehavior
- Meet needs
- Repair harm
- Restore relationships

**" Human beings are happiest, healthiest and most likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in authority do things *with them* rather than to them or for them."**

Ted Wachtel

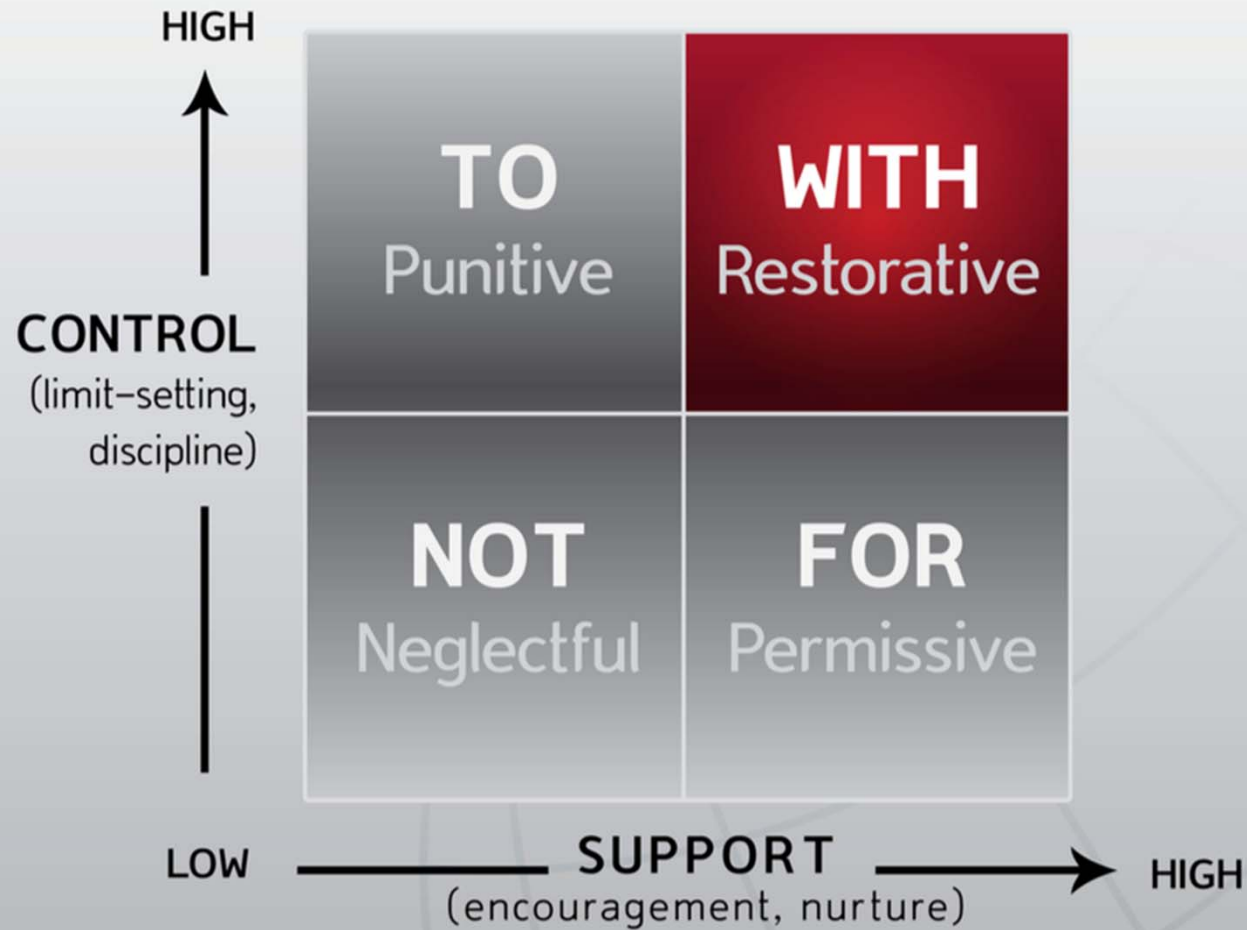
# SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW



Adapted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel from Glaser, 1969



# SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW



Adapted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel from Glaser, 1969

**Adult Responsibility and  
Looking Through a  
“Restorative Practices”  
Lens**

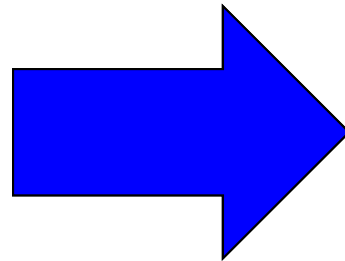
**(another paradigm shift in  
thinking and leading)**



# ***Paradigm Shift for Adults***

**Focusing on  
changing  
student  
behavior**

**(reacting to &  
teaching  
students skills)**



**Adult  
actions and  
reactions  
determine  
student  
behavior  
**(Adults matter)****

# Filling Tool Boxes and Getting Off The Isle of Punishment!

- Many (unfortunately) believe that if there is not a “punishment” then nothing happens
- There are miles and miles of **restorative consequences** between the Isle of Punishment and the Isle of Permissiveness
- Academic skill needs **must** be treated identically as social/behavioral needs
  - Educators **never** give up on academic skill learning
  - Behavior is almost always treated differently

# **CONSEQUENCES!!**

***Responses to inappropriate behaviors do not have to be “punishing” consequences***

***Responses to inappropriate behaviors should be consequential ...***

***What is the difference??***

**“Punishing” consequences are...**

***Exclusionary... Repetitive without result...***

***Feel ‘painful’ without behavior change...***

***Meaningless... Often elicit rage in perpetrator... Often elicit fear in target***

**Consequential Responses are ...**

***Educative... meaningful... ethical...***

***thoughtful... logical... character***

***building... restorative for the***

***community... and restorative for the individuals involved***

# The Nature of Restorative Practice

## ■ Restorative Practices is not:

- A program or a curriculum
- A discipline system
- Reactive
- Punitive

## ■ Restorative Practices ARE:

- A way of thinking and being
- About changing school climate and culture
- Proactive and responsive
- Relational



# Create Balance: Restorative Practices Achieve Both

- The Outside Approach:  
**SECURITY**
  - Security focused
  - Adult driven
  - Punitive policies
  - Control oriented
- The Inside Approach:  
**CLIMATE**
  - Relationship focused
  - Student centered
  - Formative/Restorative
  - Focused on changing social norms

# Key Points of Restorative Practices

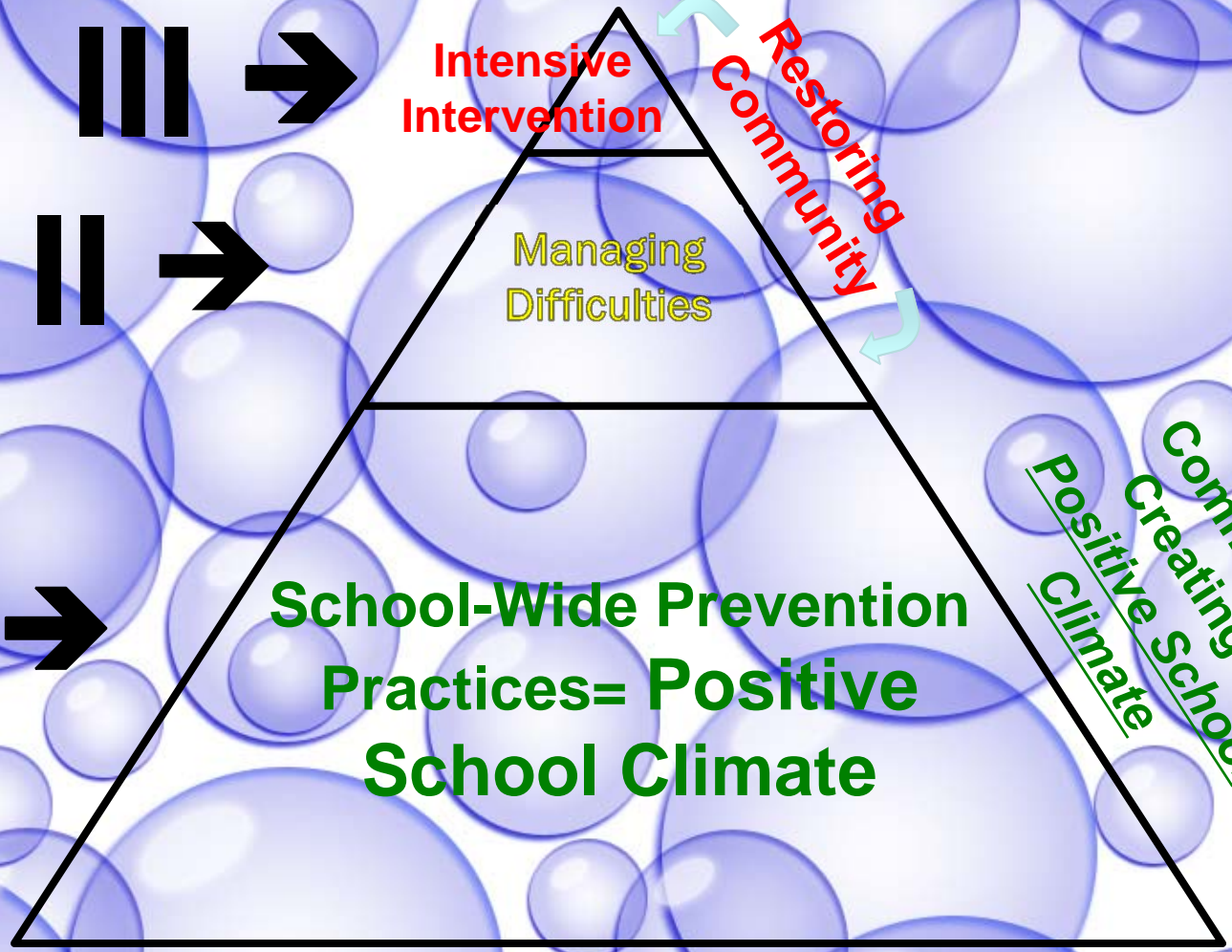
- The root cause of most misbehavior is a result of our disconnected world
- Build community and respond to conflict and misbehavior restoratively
- Authority works **“WITH”**
  - Not “to” or “for”
- Continuum of practices
- Paradigm shift from *punitive* → *restorative*

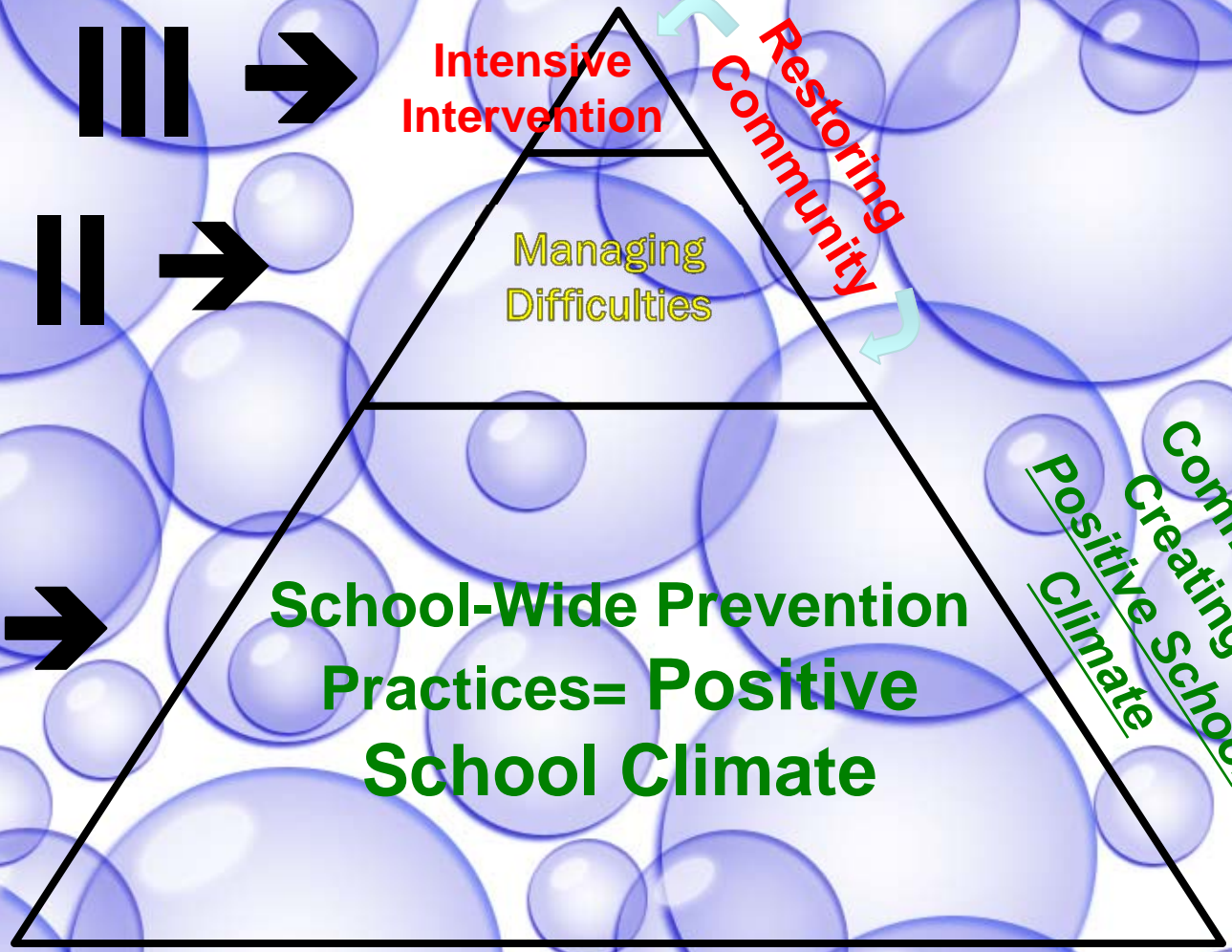
# Positive Outcomes of Implementing Restorative Practices

- Reductions in the number and intensity of fights and physical altercations
- Fewer classroom and cafeteria disruptions
- Drastic reduction in the number of students suspended and expelled, as well as referred out of the classroom
- Higher academic performance including standardized test score increases
- Greater sense of physical, overall safety in the school
- A more positive school climate for students and school personnel
- Healthier relationships among and between students and adults – including parents and guardians
- Increased and more meaningful communication

***“One of the goals of implementing restorative practices school-wide is to build a cohesive, caring school community that allows for improved and increased communication. This includes setting a school climate that promotes healthy relationships, identifies common values and guidelines, develops social-emotional understanding and skills, and promotes a sense of belonging to the school community.”***

Alameda County School Health Services





# Restorative Practices Triangle

In a small group, put the provided cards together to create a triangle that represents the levels and activities that comprise the Restorative Practices Triangle.

III



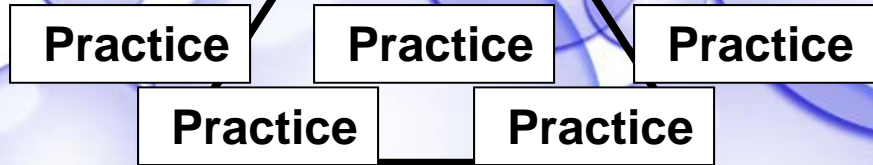
Title & Definition (2 cards)



II



Title & Definition (2 cards)



I



Title & Definition (2 cards)



Each Practice also has 2 Cards: Title & Description





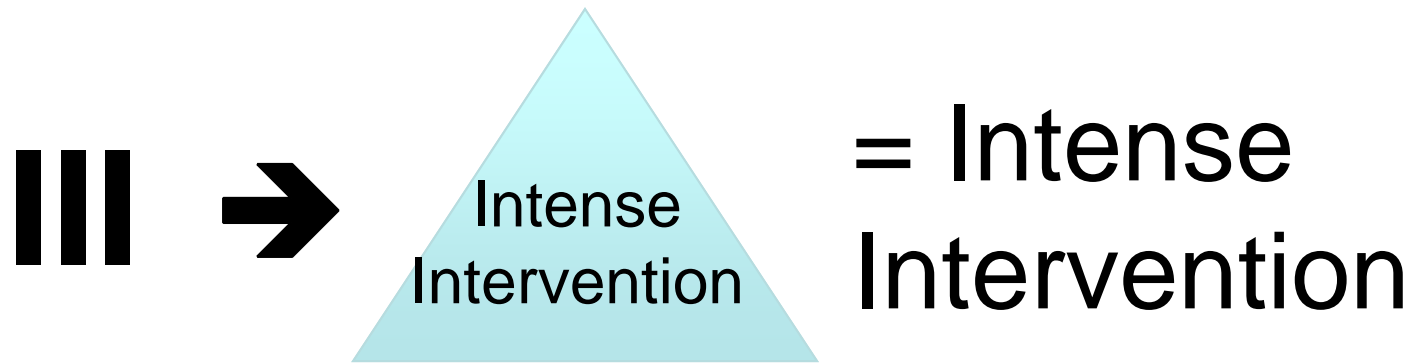
The Foundation  
of Restorative Practices  
**School Climate**

= School-Wide  
Prevention  
Practices

***Building a cohesive,  
caring school community  
that allows for improved  
and increased  
communication***



***Responding to situations  
with a restorative intention;  
represents a shift in  
thinking; behavior issues  
provide youth with  
teachable moments***



***Focusing on rebuilding relationships and repairing harm***



= School-Wide  
Prevention  
Practices

- **Relational Practices**

- Working to understand how individuals in the classroom or school community relate to one another

- **“Circles”**

- Coming together to facilitate student and teacher connectivity

- **Routines**

- Creating classroom values, such as working agreements/social contracts, adhering to them, discussing them and questioning them (continually over time)



- **Problem-Solving Circles**

- Brings people together to give voice to every individual; makes space in the classroom to resolve conflict and solve problems

- **Restorative Conversations**

- Having informal conversations using restorative language to repair or prevent harm

- **Hallway Conferences/Conversations**

- Quick conferences/conversations to understand how people were affected and take steps to prevent harm

- **Restorative Conferences**

- Meeting formally to prevent harm, enable people to resolve differences, and build social-emotional capacity through empathy

- **Peer and/or Adult Mediation**

- Appropriate neutral third party supports those in conflict to come to a mutually acceptable resolution, or to find a way of moving forward

# Restorative Questions

- Can you explain what happened?
- How did it happen?
- What was the harm?
- Who do you think was affected?
- How were you affected?
- How were they affected?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- What needs to happen to make things right?
- How are you doing now in relation to the event and its consequences?
- What were you looking for when you chose to act?
- What would you like to offer and to whom?

## IIRP Restorative Questions I (To respond to challenging behavior)

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- What has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

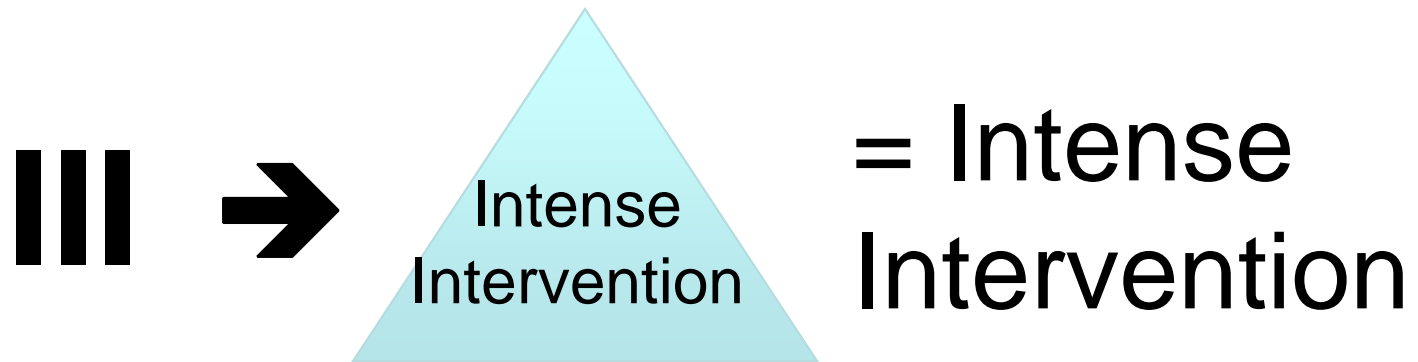
## IIRP Restorative Questions II (To help those harmed by other's actions)

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

# Questions Never to Ask Children....

- Why did you do that?
- ***What*** were you thinking?





- **Intervention Circles**

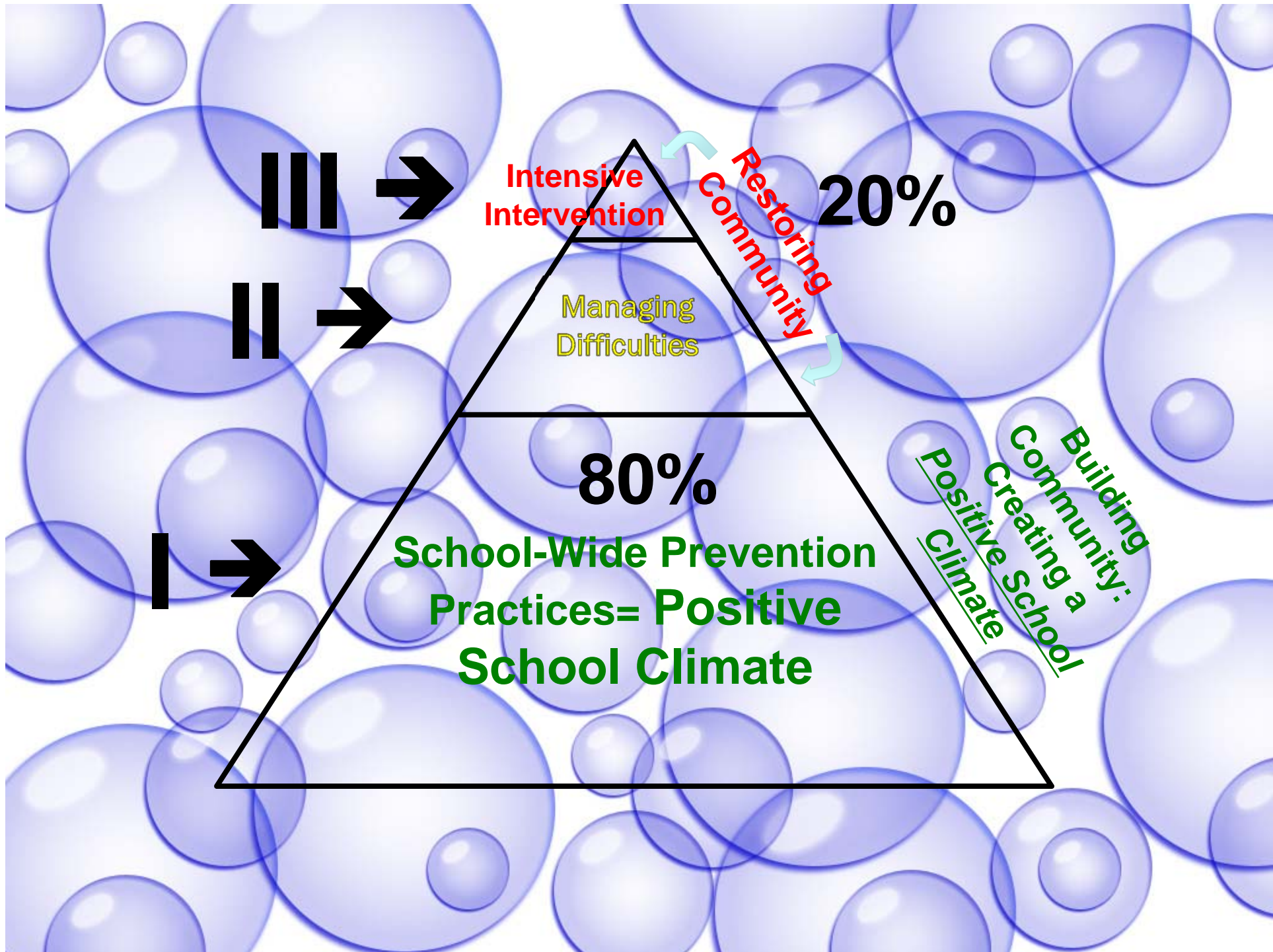
- Brings people together to make space in the classroom to resolve conflict and solve problems at the intense level

- **Special (Stipulated) Circumstances**

- Considering the individual and contextual issues to come to an agreement that provides appropriate consequences and honors the principles of Restorative Practices

- **Restorative Conferences**

- Meeting formally with those involved to repair harm, enable resolution of differences, and build social-emotional capacity through empathy



**Intensive Intervention**

**Restoring Community**

**20%**

**Managing Difficulties**

**80%**

**School-Wide Prevention Practices = Positive School Climate**

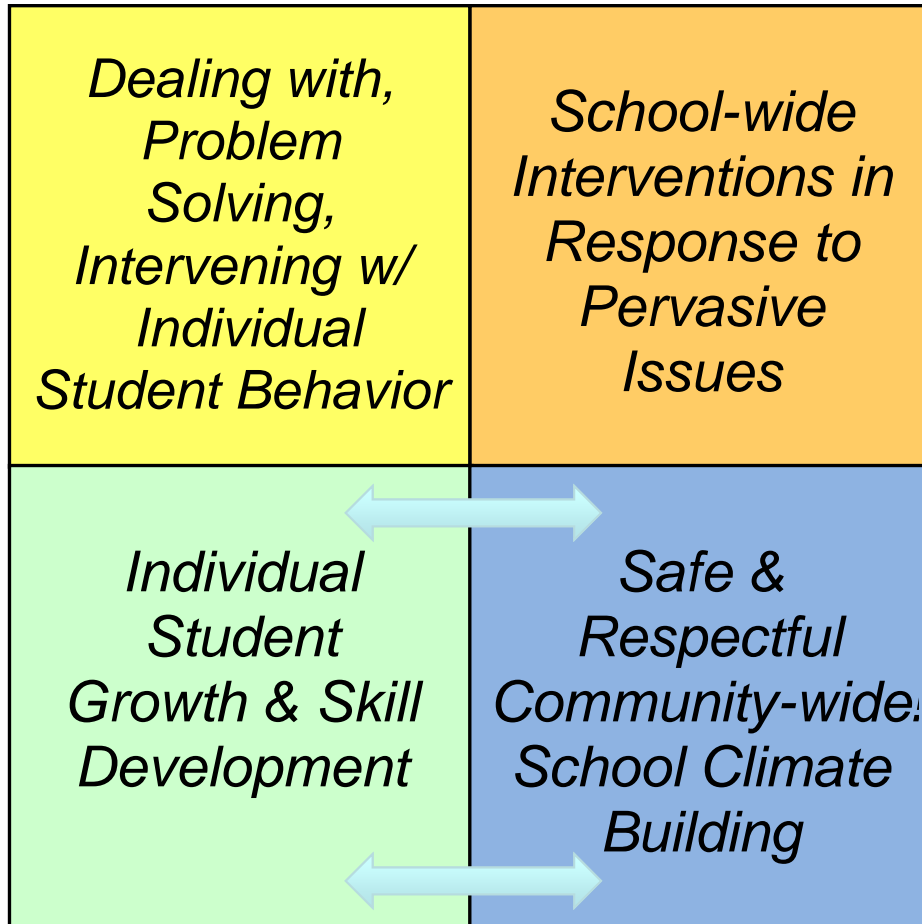
**Building Community: Creating a Positive School Climate**

# Strategic, Incremental Implementation

- Create 3 year roll-out plan including strategies for:
  - Gaining buy-in
  - Training
  - Experimentation
  - Ongoing learning
  - Monitoring progress and gathering feedback
  - Updating policies and procedures
  - Reporting out progress

Development **PURPOSE** Intervention!

Individual **FOCUS** Environment!





Horton, the Elephant  
says....

***“A person’s a person, no matter how small”***



# Adult Modeling: *We Are All Models...We might As Well Be Good Ones*

- Language Use
- Moral/Ethical Behavior
- Demonstrating Compassion
- Living Core Values
- Listening
- Mentorship, not Friendship
- Conflict Resolution
- Display of Common Courtesy



CLOSING CIRCLES!!



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