

# S.E.R.V.E.

**Start Intentionally.** Engage Relationally. Respond with Empathy. Values Practiced Daily. Exit Intentionally.

## S - Start Intentionally

We know that first impressions are very important. What if we thought about the start of every class as an opportunity for a daily first impression? How are we creating consistency weekly and monthly? How do we start our year a bit more thoughtfully? When we shift our paradigms, we begin to start every relationship and every day a little more intentionally!

### FOUR AT THE DOOR + ONE MORE (DAILY)

Intentionally greet students at your classroom door each day and/or period. Be intentional with our Four at the Door + One More model:

**#1 Eye to Eye:** Intentionally look students in the eye as they are entering your class. This makes the statement that “I see you” each day, even if they don’t make eye contact with you.

**#2 Name to Name:** Learn the names of your students and use their names as they enter. While you are at it, learn the names of other students passing by your room throughout the year.

**#3 Hand to Hand:** As much as possible, connect with students using handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, elbow bumps, etc.. Remember that connection is crucial and offering this kindness might be the only unconditional love your student receives all day.

**#4 Heart to Heart:** Connect with your students as human beings each day before they enter as students. Ask questions about their weekend, their hobbies, or how their day is going.

**+ One More:** When students enter, have an entry task on the board or the screen ready to go that helps them get focused and right to work. It can be a review question from the day before or an anticipatory set for that day’s content.

### GOOD NEWS (WEEKLY)

Choose a day of the week that you are committed to starting with ‘good news.’ Dedicate the first 2 minutes of class to sharing positivity and gratitude. Model it by sharing some good news for you this week. Is your favorite TV show on today? Did your dentist tell you that you’re cavity free? Do you have an exciting event coming up? Spend those first few minutes of class asking students to share their good news with you and their classmates!

### NAMES ARE IMPORTANT (YEARLY)

To start the year, give each student (or a parent if it is a younger student) a notecard and ask them to write out their name phonetically and turn it back into you. Instead of guessing how to say certain names and having some students experience their name said incorrectly (which may happen to them often!), get it right the first time by being intentional.

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## E - Engage Relationally

In a recent study from the Stanford Center for Opportunity Policy in Education, they found that the schools that put an intentional focus on relationship-building and the explicit teaching of social-emotional skills had students who reported a more positive, caring school climate. The students also reported greater engagement in school and were more likely to say that they came to school because they were a) invested in their schoolwork, b) it was a place to see their friends, and c) their teachers expected them to succeed. The study showed that students were more likely to report that they were motivated to come to school because their social-emotional needs were supported. How can we put an intentional focus on relationship-building in our schools across all groups? Those critical *staff to staff* relationships that serve as a role model for how students treat each other, the *staff-to-student* relationships that build trust and lay the foundation for inspired learning, the *student-to-staff* relationships that help young people see the adults in the building with more empathy, the *student-to-student* relationships that create community and helps students find common ground so they can navigate their similarities and differences in healthy ways, and of course the *school to family* relationship that is critical for long-term impact.

### TEMPERATURE CHECK (WEEKLY)

Choose a day of the week to do a 'Temperature Check' of your students as an entry task. Have students write down:

- Their name
- Identify on a scale of 1-5 how they are doing that day
- Give the option to put why they put the number they chose

Whether they are submitting electronically or on paper, be sure you keep the information secure so no one else can see it. Complete these Temperature Checks once a week in an agreed on, potentially rotating, period so you have a regular pulse of what is happening in your classroom and in your students' lives. If you identify a student is needing extra support, be sure to find time in your class that day to check-in with them individually and potentially help connect them with any resources they may need.

### THE STUDENT BECOMES THE MASTER

Hand each student a notecard and ask them to write down their name and one thing that they could teach you. Use your new-found knowledge intentionally by asking students about what they put on the card, especially with students whom it has been harder to connect with in a positive way.

### MY WHY

Write a letter to your students telling them why you became an educator, what your hopes and dreams are for them, how you want them to feel each day in your classroom, and what you are committed to with them as their teacher. After writing the letter, read it to all of your students at least two different times during the school year.

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## R - Respond with Empathy

While we'd like for all of education to be a proactive effort, inevitably we face a lot of situations daily where we have to be reactive - where we must respond to the students around us. CharacterStrong educators respond with empathy to the students they serve. If we want students to understand core subject areas, they have to feel UNDERSTOOD first. Whether we "like" them or not, we must Love the people around us.

### THE PROMPT METHOD



PROMPT<sup>1</sup> is a method of systematically responding to problem behavior and preserving the relationship with the student.

**Proximity Control** - Being mobile in the classroom and standing next to or being near the student(s) exhibiting the problem behavior. There is no need to ruin the flow of instruction or verbally reprimand the student. Up to 40% to 50% of classroom problems behaviors are corrected by proximity to the student(s).

**Redirection Strategy** - A correction procedure that involves giving the student an instruction/direction that has a high probability that the student will follow and comply. Goal is to disrupt and put an end to the problem behavior by gaining compliance. Between Proximity and Redirection, up to 70% to 85% of problem behaviors can be addressed.

**Ongoing Monitoring** - Two-prong process: 1. Capitalize on social learning theory: monitor and reinforce peers who are exhibiting the desired behaviors. 2. Capitalize on the power of shaping behavior: don't lose sight of the student whose behavior you are trying to correct. The aim is to shape behavior in the desirable direction by praising and positively recognizing the student for getting his or her behavior back on track.

**Prompt Expected Behavior** - A verbal command that communicates precisely what you want the student to do (e.g., "I need you to start working on your essay by writing your introductory sentence.") This is not a threat or a description of the problem behavior. Prompt needs to be positively stated, one command at a time, and given as a statement and not a question. It is key that this is delivered privately in a kind, fair, firm, and consistent manner.

**Teaching Interaction** - Corrective teaching procedure that attempts to turn instances of ongoing problem behavior into a teachable moment. This has been shown to prevent escalated behavior and preserve the relationship with the student. It is key that this teaching interaction is delivered in a calm, yet firm manner. Steps to Teaching Interaction:

- *Start with an empathy statement* - "I understand that class can be boring sometimes and I don't want you to feel this way because I don't like to be bored out of my mind either. I can work with you to address the boringness, BUT..."
- *Label the inappropriate behavior* - "Right now you are talking out loud and distracting other students from learning."
- *Describe the appropriate alternative behavior* - "Instead of talking out loud, I need you to start working quietly on the assigned work and then we can work together to make the boringness go away."
- *Provide a rationale for appropriate behavior* - "When you work quietly on your work, you and the other students can get your work done, which means you don't have to take it home and you'll get a better grade in the class."
- *Deliver a warning or consequence* - "Here's the deal, I'm going to give you one minute to think about the choice you want to make. You can either start working on the assigned work, take a brief break and then start working, or you can keep distracting other students and I'm going to take some of your time after class."
- *Deliver feedback or praise* - "In my eyes, you definitely made the right choice. It's okay to take a brief break once in awhile and then get back to work and not distract other. Thank you."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cook, Clayton R., Diana Browning Wright, Frank M. Gresham, and Matthew K. Burns. Transforming School Psychology in the RTI Era: A Guide for Administrators and School Psychologists. Horsham, PA: LRP Publications, 2010. Print.

<sup>2</sup> Cook, Clayton, and Diana Browning. Wright. RTI in Restrictive Settings: The TIERS Model for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disorders. Horsham, PA: LRP Publications, 2009. Print.

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## V - Values Practiced Daily

We need to be reminded more than we need to be taught. If we want to get better at anything, we must MAKE time to practice - we must make time for the things that are most important to us. Parkinson's Law says that "work expands so as to fill the time available for its completion." We need to make character a part of our consistent work and create time in our day and in our curriculum to reinforce these values and give space to PRACTICE them. At CharacterStrong, we do this through CharacterDares in our Advisory and Leadership Curricula. We do this through relational entry tasks like Compliment Creations. We do this through a consistent accountability tool like our CharacterCard. Most importantly, we must role model what the process of working on character looks like using the Staff Weekly CharacterDare as a guide.

### THE CHARACTERDARE PROCESS



The CharacterDare process is a consistent way to put abstract values into practical action. Each week, introduce a new CharacterDare that challenges students and staff to put character into action.

S.E.R.V.E. STAPLE

#### Identity Alignment

Write down 5 things you want to be about and/or value. Go back through your past 20 posts on social media and see if they fit those 5 things.

Are you in leadership, but half of your statuses are about partying? Do you stand for kindness, but occasionally get involved in drama? Do you want to be trustworthy, but sometimes tweet gossip? Honesty is about aligning your online, offline, and ideal selves to make sure you're the same person in all areas of your life.

Honesty

#### THE MAGIC RATIO

Be intentional each hour of the day to give praise, compliments, and have friendly conversations instead of negative interactions like punishment or reprimands.

DARE THIRTY-TWO

The goal of this week's dare is to increase the number of positive interactions and comments with students as compared to negative interactions. Keep a scorecard near your teaching station and, each time you catch yourself doing a positive or negative interaction, make a tally to increase both your awareness and intentionality.

#### Truth or Dare

What do you think about the previous Dare?

Reflect on your experience with the previous Dare.

Kindness

#### WORK ON BEING INTERESTED IN WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY.

PRACTICE IMPULSE CONTROL BY HOLDING YOUR TONGUE TODAY AND GIVING OTHERS A CHANCE TO SHARE.

DAY 11: PATIENCE

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## E - Exit Intentionally

Trust isn't just built through words, but through structure as well. When we are intentional about how we start and end each day or class period or each week, we create a feeling of safety because we are creating a consistent and predictable experience. For students who don't have stability or consistency at home, this work can be critical to their psychological safety.

### ESTABLISH-MAINTAIN-RESTORE (MONTHLY)

Establish-Maintain-Restore (EMR) is a guiding practice for teachers to create and support effective relationships with their students. EMR is a specific framework for understanding the teacher-student relationship in which three dimensions of relationship are highlighted: *Establishing* the relationship through positive interactions, *Maintaining* the relationship with continued support and encouragement, and *Restoring* the relationship following episodes of teacher-student conflict.

Take a class roster and, next to each name, either label it with an (E) for still Establishing a relationship, (M) for Maintaining a relationship, or (R) for in need of Restoring the relationship. Next, pick one student with an (E) an (E) and one student with an (R) to intentionally go after this week to build or restore the relationship.

### TRUE STORY FRIDAY (WEEKLY)

Tell students during the week that on Friday you are going to be doing "True Story Friday" where you will allow them to throw out a topic and you will tell them a story about your life connected to that topic. Topics need to be school appropriate and, in advance, think of two to three really solid stories that you could connect to almost any topic. In the last five minutes of class, open up "True Story Friday" and make it even more fun by running out of time in the middle of the story and tell students that they will have to wait till next Friday to hear the end of the story.

### MAKING A SANDWICH (DAILY)

Each class period this week, intentionally exit with a set of response prompts, a video clip, quote, or reading that you share and then spend a minute or two discussing as a class. When we intentionally start and end class by reviewing what was just covered (while incorporating consistent relational strategies), it is called "emotional sandwiching." It helps students retain knowledge and feel more connected to your class.