

TIER 1 REALITY CHECK

What Does Every Student Actually Experience?

A 10-Minute Protective Conditions Reflection for School Teams

10-MINUTE TEAM EXERCISE: 1 Reflect on experience — 2 Look for consistency — 3 Identify evidence — 4 Find one gap — 5 Choose one action

PROTECTIVE CONDITION	WHAT SHOULD STUDENTS EXPERIENCE?	HOW CONSISTENT IS IT?	WHAT EVIDENCE DO WE HAVE?	WHERE IS THE GAP?
Safety & Predictability	Students experience environments, routines, and adult responses that feel safe, clear, and reasonably predictable.	☐ CONSISTENTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY ☐ NOT SURE		
Connection & Belonging	Students have meaningful connection to adults, peers, and the school community — and feel that they belong.	☐ CONSISTENTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY ☐ NOT SURE		
Emotional & Coping Skills	Students have repeated opportunities to build and practice emotional awareness, regulation, coping, problem-solving, and help-seeking skills.	☐ CONSISTENTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY ☐ NOT SURE		
Supportive Adults	Students know who they can turn to, and experience adults who notice, listen, and respond supportively.	☐ CONSISTENTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY ☐ NOT SURE		
Access to Help	Students know how to ask for help and can access appropriate support when they need more.	☐ CONSISTENTLY ☐ SOMETIMES ☐ RARELY ☐ NOT SURE		

NOW ASK: FOR WHOM IS THIS TRUE?

Across classrooms? ☐ Consistently ☐ Inconsistently ☐ Not sure
Across grade levels? ☐ Consistently ☐ Inconsistently ☐ Not sure
Across student groups? ☐ Consistently ☐ Inconsistently ☐ Not sure
Across adults / settings? ☐ Consistently ☐ Inconsistently ☐ Not sure

Where might a student's experience depend on which classroom, adult, grade, or setting they happen to encounter?

HOW DO WE KNOW?

What tells us students actually experience these conditions?

☐ Student voice / survey data ☐ Climate / connectedness data
☐ Implementation / fidelity data ☐ Attendance patterns
☐ Behavioral data ☐ Screening / well-being data
☐ Classroom observation ☐ Staff feedback
☐ Family feedback ☐ Other: _____

What evidence reflects what students experience — not simply what adults report providing?

FROM REFLECTION → ACTION

Our strongest protective condition:

Our biggest gap:

Where experience may be inconsistent:

ONE THING WE WILL STRENGTHEN:

WHO OWNS IT?

BY WHEN?

HOW WILL WE KNOW STUDENTS ARE EXPERIENCING IT?

Don't ask only: "Do we have Tier 1?"

Ask: "Do our students experience it — and how do we know?"

GROUNDING IN: SAMHSA trauma-informed principles • CDC school connectedness research • National Center for School Mental Health Tier 1 guidance • ISBE / Resilience-Supportive Schools Roadmap

This is a team reflection and planning tool — not a validated assessment, score, or diagnostic instrument.