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## ***Helping Hands, Strong Minds***

"To teach something, you have to organize the content in your mind, think about the most logical way to present it and come up with analogies to help illustrate your points. That requires the kind of deep processing that helps you learn." --Dr. Daniel Willingham, Ph.D. (Author: *Why Don't Students Like School?*)

We have been struggling to find a way for our students to have more chances to contribute within our school. Although we seem to have sporadic opportunities, they do not always feel authentic. In fact, there tends to be a negative feeling, rather than true purpose.

Solutions can come to us when we least expect it. This is the case with the opportunity we are creating within our school. By allowing 8<sup>th</sup> graders to work with younger students through triage, our new program is evolving. Our goal is to create an 8th grade mentor group. This group is comprised of 8th graders who have struggled with behaviors during their time at North Middle school. Although they are not required to be in the independence stage, they are in partnership with adults and selected by teachers.

In the beginning, 8<sup>th</sup> grader students meet with me a few weeks during SOAR time. Just as the teachers use a script when they first start using BIST with students, my goal is for the students to create a script to use while working with their triage partners (mentees). The script is fashioned around each Goal for Life and the BIST philosophy. Using kid friendly language, we are creating a question jar (one for each goal). The purpose behind the script is to provide

the mentor with a guide to keep them on track by asking questions to help the student manage their Goal for Life. The question jar allows the triage partner (mentee) to grab a question for the mentor, as a means of starting the conversation.

Allowing the triage partner (mentee) to grab the question, allows for a partnership "we're in this together" as opposed to feeling as if the mentor has all of the power. However, creating an opportunity where the questioning is random but focused on the life skill keeps the conversation on track while adding an element of fun.

The triage partners (mentees) are comprised of students who have been identified as struggling with one of the Goals for Life by the BIST log, teachers or behavior records. These meetings between the mentors and mentees will occur once a week during SOAR time. I believe that as the mentors share their stories, experiences and ways to cope, the mentee will be living their struggles through someone else's difficulties. We hope that by knowing how someone else's shoes feel, it will help them get in step with their own. Our goal for this program is to help give our students a sense of purpose. As Marty says "in order for an individual to be generous they need to feel that they have something to give." This we hope, will shine a light on their ability to contribute to others and feel that they have a place in this world.

*Submitted by: Stephanie Kallas,  
Recovery Room Facilitator  
Grain Valley North Middle School*

<b>Belonging</b>		
<i>Normal</i>	<i>Distorted</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Attached	Gang Loyalty	Unattached
Loving	Craves Affection	Guarded
Friendly	Craves Acceptance	Rejected
Intimate	Promiscuous	Lonely
Gregarious	Clinging	Aloof
Cooperative	Easily Misled	Isolated
Trusting	Overly	Distrustful

	Dependent	
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<b>Generosity</b>		
<i>Normal</i>	<i>Distorted</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Altruistic Caring Sharing Loyal Empathetic Pro-Social Supportive	Noblesse Oblige Indulgent Plays Martyr Co-Dependent Over-Involved Servitude Bondage	Selfishness Affectionless Narcissistic Disloyal Hardened Antisocial Exploitative

### *Reclaiming Youth at Risk*

By Larry Brendtro, Martin Brokenleg, Steve Van Bocken

#### Benefits of daily contribution:

- Building a relationship with an adult
- Increasing connection to the building
- Guiding students to reflect on their influence on the building as connection is increased
- Providing daily sense of purpose
- Requiring active engagement of the student on a daily basis
- Allowing students to practice following directions daily in a less intimidating environment
- Any adult in the building can help with contribution

#### Individual Activity:

Look at the information from *Reclaiming Youth at Risk* above and identify students who are exhibiting these characteristics. Commit to bringing them in for discussion.

#### Questions to ask:

1. List three strengths of yours at school.
2. List three things that are a struggle for you at school.
3. If you could talk to any adult in this school, who would it be? If they were sick, who would a second person be? If they were at a meeting on the same day, who would be a third person?
4. What is the most difficult part of the school day for you?

Utilizing the student's answers, implement a daily job with an adult the student has a connection with or in a classroom, contributing with other students. The job can be in an area of strength or struggle. However, consider these factors when

problem-solving the type of job. We want the job to be at a level where the student can feel success, rather than frustration.

**Building Activity:**

Reflection: How do adults perceive daily contribution in our building? Relationship-based only or practice of following directions through relationship? Do we base contribution on a contingency of "good day;" allowing the student to contribute only if he/she has been successful or do we build it into the student's day daily because they need it? How can we stay committed to giving kids what they need?

Create a t-chart of contribution.

<b>List ways students can contribute with adults in our building</b>	<b>List ways students can contribute with other students in our building</b>

## **BIST Spotlight!**

A tip for the safe seat:

Keep a copy of think sheets and menu of restitution visible above the safe seat to help students problem-solve. **Kudos to Ms. Jarvis from Mill Creek Elementary, Belton, MO!**



### **Administrator/District Staff Meeting Dates:** (To establish communication at the building and district level)

**January 27, 2014 8:00-9:30 AM at Ozanam (No Charge)**

**March 31, 2014 8:00-9:30 AM at Ozanam (No Charge)**

**May 12, 2014 8:00-9:30 AM at Ozanam (No Charge)**