



## Nurturing Support Centre /Intervention Room

### Intervention Practices to Consider – Prevention & Intervention

#### MORNING ENTRY:

For some of our students, getting to school is a daily challenge. Their home situations are *highly charged/alarming/dysfunctional/.....?* For this reason they require a “pause” upon arrival to help them ground themselves and be able to put forth their best effort. This requires being greeted by an adult with a warm invitation and to have time, a safe place and a listening ear. They have much that needs to be shared in order to be able to refocus and head into the day that awaits them.

#### Check-In:

- Students who come to the NSC/Intervention Room or support staff go to them for Check-Ins as they require additional support, more than what their classroom teacher is already providing. They are identified by administration, teachers and support staff.
- This is a time of warm connection meant to welcome the student within the school environment and to get a pulse on how he/she is feeling and anticipating their day.
- Within the discussion – inquire about how the start-up morning routine went at home, the travel to school, arrival at school. Inquire if they ate breakfast, have snacks and a lunch. This provides an opportunity for the child to express his/her emotions, be heard, feel supported and transition into the classroom.
- Review the child’s morning routine and the group’s schedule in order to help them follow through on upcoming adult requests. Ensure that the student has the required school materials and intervention tools that he/she needs. If something is missing, please provide generously.
- Provide encouragement and support for the day in manageable pieces. Convey that they can return to see you during the day if needed.
- Let them know the next time you will connect with them.
- Check communication between home and school to be aware of incoming information that may have an impact on how their day will unfold. Relay pertinent information to the adults who are involved with the student.
- If you sense a need for ‘more’ support, plan to reconnect at another point in the day. Some students require Check-Ins regularly at different targeted times in the day (ex. before, during or after recess and lunch, end of day, when a substitute teacher is present).
- If the assigned adult is absent, a back-up person is required. Preventive, scheduled Check-Ins can greatly reduce struggles and conflicts within the day.

#### Sheltered Homeroom:

- Identified students come to the NSC/Intervention Room at the start of the school day because they are unable to cope with the morning entry transition with their group both on a behavioral and emotional level. Duration is generally for 20-30 minutes.
- Students are identified by administration, teachers and support staff.
- Provides a supportive contact with an adult and allows staff to get a “pulse” on how the student is doing – “Check-In”
- How did their morning go: At home? On the bus?
- Are they hungry? Having some food to offer students is key, this helps to transmit the message that you are there for them and are taking care of them.

- Do they have all their supplies for the day?
- Do they have their lunch?
- Is there anything else that they may be missing?
- If something is missing, staff can help to provide what is needed
- Staff can help the student navigate their day if they are anticipating struggles ahead.
- Have a copy of the student's class schedule, help them anticipate adult requests in a positive manner by reviewing what is coming up in the day.
- Check home-school communication – be aware of incoming information that may have an impact on how their day will unfold.
- Relay pertinent information to the adults who are involved with the student.
- Provide encouragement and support for the day in manageable pieces.
- If staff sense a need for 'more' support, plan to reconnect at another point in the day
- Inform the teacher of the student's emotional state – be allies, support the student together!
- Wrap-up the interaction by giving the student a warm smile and, if wanted, a 'High-5' or Fist Pump, as a point of connection and encouragement!

## RECESS:

Recess is an opportunity to go outside, get fresh air and switch gears from the cognitive work that takes place within the classroom. For many students this is a welcomed time where laughter and pleasure intermix with social interactions and physical activity. However, for some students, this is an overwhelming, challenging and frustrating time. Play is not playful, social interactions are hurtful and they struggle to navigate this maze. Adults need to step in, become their compass, to help them interpret and understand social norms. Coaching, providing clear guidelines and expectations will go a long way to help these students learn, grow and play in a safe manner during recess time. Below are a few intervention options that school teams can consider:

### Supported Recess:

- Identified students gather to meet a designated adult in a predetermined location at the onset or a few minutes prior to the beginning of recess.
- An area of the playground is reserved for Supported Recess, it can be delineated by using cones. This visual reference is beneficial for students inside and outside of the area.
- Prior discussion has taken place where a variety of games are considered and specific ones are chosen, in advance, put on a weekly schedule so the students involved in 'Supported Recess' know in advance the game that will be played on a given day. A schedule is posted in a predetermined location for all to see.
- "Free Play" can be part of the schedule where students have access to equipment for play. The adult supervises the play ensuring that everyone is safe and enjoying themselves.
- How the games are played, rules and sportsmanship are discussed during a scheduled intervention time. They are named before the onset of each recess, prior to the game being played.
- The adult supervises the game, coaches and encourages good sportsmanship, following the rules and having fun!
- Acknowledge student efforts as they return materials and head into the school.
- At the end of recess, a short debrief may be done to point out what went well and to prime good intentions to do things differently next time.
- If there are particular struggles with one or a few of the students, these will be discussed during a scheduled intervention time to solicit good intentions and to provide the students with alternate ways of reacting.

### **Extended Recess:**

- Identified students meet the technician 10-15 minutes prior to recess. They are given additional recess time as it is deemed that the physical output is needed for them to be able to manage themselves well later into the day.
- Prior to going outside, the student is coached with specific cues to help him/her do their best when playing and interacting with others when they come out.
- The students have the benefit of more time to play but are also given more time to expend pent up energy and release frustrations!

### **Sheltered Recess:**

- Identified students come to the NSC/Intervention Room during recess because they are unable to cope within the larger group on a behavioral and emotional level.
- Students are identified by administration, teachers and support staff.
- Coming to the NSC/Intervention Room is twofold, provides a safe calm place, where social interactions are emotionally safe. Adults supervise and coach appropriate interactions to help children experience, learn and grow.
- It is important that there be a schedule for Sheltered Recess, some require a 'shelter' a few days/week, others require more. The schedule should be posted in a predetermined location for all to see.
- Clarity of 'who' comes 'when' is beneficial for the students and the adults. Otherwise, students come to the NSC/Intervention Room requesting to come, are frustrated with a refusal or anxious with the ambivalence of not knowing if they will be able to come or not. For the adults, this helps them focus on who is present and not managing the groups of children trying to come to the NSC/Intervention Room and being required to make decisions on the spot.
- Students have access to games and intervention materials in the different areas of the NSC/Intervention Room. They range from building & creating games, fine-motor crafts, sensory activities, yoga, physical games, etc. The students are encouraged to explore the range of materials available and share their impressions of personal benefit.
- Enquire whether students know how to play the different games or how to build or make creations with the different materials. Offer to help, provide a demonstration to help them get started.
- It is key that coaching and intervention take place during this time period in order to help the student learn skills that will help him/her return to the larger group.
- Some students may struggle long term, other alternatives may need to be looked into for them to grow in stages, for example interest clubs.

## **LUNCH:**

Lunchtime is similar to recess, however the added component of eating lunch in the cafeteria or a classroom also presents challenges for many students. Some enjoy the camaraderie and the boisterous energy, however many struggle with the loudness, too many people within a defined space, the range of smells, the frustrations and emotional tug-of-war with friendships and the lack of safety felt when too many elements overwhelm them.

### **Supported Lunch – Eating time:**

- Identified students gather to meet a designated adult in a predetermined location at the onset or a few minutes prior to the beginning of lunch. These are students who are not able to manage the noise level and close physical proximity of eating in the cafeteria or their classroom.

- Have a structure and routine to the lunch period is key. (Ex. Sit down to eat, when finished eating clean-up area, then go choose a game to play) Knowing what is expected of them, helps sensitive students manage this time frame more successfully.
- Encourage discussions, keeping the noise level at a 'talking level' is important.
- Have a range of games from which the students can choose from, individual, some played in dyads, some in small groups. Implement a routine of '*Clean-up what you use*' to help children be responsible.
- Playing games with students is a great way of deepening your connection with them and understanding their viewpoint in situations. You can also encourage older students to teach younger students how to play the games. A mentoring relationship can be beneficial for both the mentor and mentee.
- Some students need a 'social break' during lunchtime and benefit from an individual game, craft or building activity that they can engage in over time.
- Having a range of fine-motor activities and drawing/coloring materials can be an asset.
- Adult supervision is required at all times to ensure that conversations are emotionally safe and support can be provided when frustrations and/or conflicts arise.
- Acknowledge student efforts as they return materials and head outside to play or back to class at the end of the lunch hour.
- At the end of lunch, a short debrief may be done to point out what went well and to prime good intentions to do things differently next time.
- If there are particular struggles with one or a few of the students, these will be discussed during a scheduled intervention time to solicit good intentions and to provide the students with alternate ways of reacting.

#### **Supported Lunch – Outdoor play time:**

- Please refer to the Supported Recess information above, the same information would apply for the Supported Lunch – Outdoor play time.

#### **Sheltered Lunch:**

- Identified students come to the NSC/Intervention Room during lunch because they are unable to cope within the larger group on a behavioral and emotional level.
- Students are identified by administration, teachers and support staff.
- Coming to the NSC/Intervention Room is twofold, provides a safe calm place, where social interactions are emotionally safe. Adults supervise and coach appropriate interactions to help children experience, learn and grow.
- It is important that there be a schedule for Sheltered Lunch, some require a 'shelter' a few days/week, others require more. The schedule should be posted in a predetermined location for all to see.
- Clarity of 'who' comes 'when' is beneficial for the students and the adults. Otherwise, students come to the NSC/Intervention Room requesting to come, are frustrated with a refusal or anxious with the ambivalence of not knowing if they will be able to come or not. For the adults, this helps them focus on who is present and not managing the groups of children trying to come to the NSC/Intervention Room and being required to make decisions on the spot.
- Students have access to games and intervention materials in the different areas of the NSC/Intervention Room. They range from building & creating games, fine-motor crafts, sensory activities, yoga, physical games, etc. The students are encouraged to explore the range of materials available and share their impressions of personal benefit.
- Enquire whether students know how to play the different games or how to build or make creations with the different materials. Offer to help, provide a demonstration to help them get started.

- It is key that coaching and intervention take place during this time period in order to help the student learn skills that will help him/her return to the larger group.

Some students may struggle long term, other alternatives may need to be looked into for them to grow in stages, for example interest clubs, sports teams.

## END OF DAY:

### Recap:

- Students who come to the NSC/Intervention Room or support staff go to them for “Recap” as they require additional support, more than what their classroom teacher is already providing. These are students who struggle to organize themselves and become overwhelmed with end-of-day transitions. It is preferable that the person who has done the “Check-In” be the same person who does the “Recap.” If not, assign one person consistently.
- The students are identified by administration, teachers and support staff.
- The “Recap” is a short time of reflection on different parts of the day to help the student name issues that occurred. Help the student find the words to name their frustrations and/or how they’re feeling. We don’t need to ‘fix’ all that did not go well during the day. Naming and expressing are key elements in processing life’s challenges. Sometimes students just need a place and time to “vent.”
- Double check that they have all their required materials for the evening (ex. Lunch box, agenda, homework, etc.)
- Provide support that helps the student believe in themselves and enables them to take risks in their learning and social interactions.
- BRIDGE the time that you are not together, putting the focus on your next point of connection. ‘Tomorrow is a new day. I look forward to seeing you \_\_\_\_\_ (name when and where).’
- Relay important information to adults who work with the student to keep them informed and for them to be ready to support the student the next day.

### Sheltered Recap:

- Identified students come to the NSC/Intervention Room because they struggle to organize themselves and become overwhelmed with end-of-day transitions. This is generally for a 20-30 min. time frame at the end of the school day. It is preferable that the person who has done Sheltered Homeroom be the same person for the Sheltered Recap. If not, assign one person consistently.
- Administration, teachers and support staff identify these Sheltered Recap students as they actively struggle emotionally and behaviorally, even with help, to navigate this transition within their class group.
- The “Recap” is a short time of reflection on different parts of the day to help the student name issues what occurred. Enquire about their day, break it down in segments. Ask open questions that will encourage them to reflect and share. Help the student find the words to name their frustrations and/or how they’re feeling. How did they manage these frustrations? Do they need the help of an adult with this? Can you help them? What went well during the day? What did they enjoy most?
- We don’t need to ‘fix’ all that did not go well during the day. Naming and expressing are key elements in processing life’s challenges. Sometimes students just need a place and time to “vent.”
- Enquire, what do they need to get done for the next day? Double check that they have all their required materials for the evening (ex. Lunch box, agenda, homework, etc.)

- Check school-home communication – be aware of outgoing information that may have an impact on how their evening will unfold. Get a ‘pulse’ on how they anticipate their evening, staff can help the student navigate their evening if they are anticipating struggles ahead. Relay important information to adults who work with the student to keep them informed and for them to be ready to support the student the next day.
- Provide support that helps the student believe in themselves and enables them to take risks in their learning and social interactions.
- Wrap-up the interaction by giving the student a warm smile and, if wanted, a ‘High-5’ or Fist Pump, as a point of connection and encouragement!
- BRIDGE the time that you are not together, putting the focus on your next point of connection.  
‘Tomorrow is a new day. I look forward to seeing you \_\_\_\_\_ (name when and where).’

The staff in the NSC/Intervention Room provide a continuum of support and intervention. The key is in matching the support available to the student’s presenting needs. It is important to keep in mind that children will grow as they benefit from intervention and support. The adults need to read these signs and adjust interventions accordingly. However, we should also keep in mind that life events may occur and that students who demonstrated signs of growth and were requiring less support from the NSC/Intervention Room may need to return for more or different support due to these circumstances. The team in the NSC/Intervention Room should consistently be providing a warm heartfelt invitation to all students and maintain good communication with the remainder of the school team in order to validate their information and findings to provide the best overall care to all students seeking support in the NSC/Intervention Room.