

# CHECK YO SELF

Tools for Culturally Responsive &  
Trauma-Informed Family Collaboration



Facilitated by Jay Butler, EdS



**This Resource Guide Belongs To:**

# RESOURCE GUIDE

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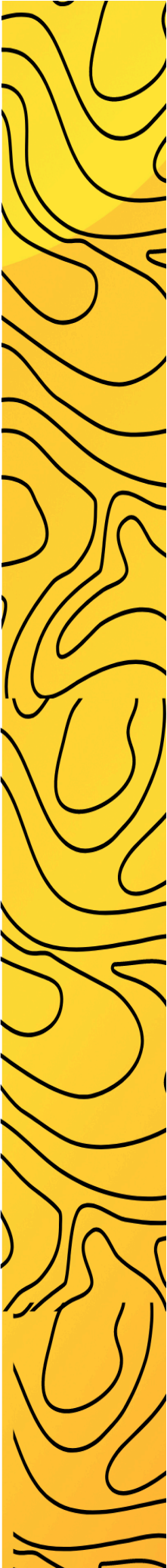
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## A Note of Gratitude

Thank you for attending my session, *"Check Yo Self: Tools for Culturally Responsive & Trauma-Informed Family Collaboration."* I greatly appreciate your time and commitment, especially considering the vital role you play in supporting families and students every day. Your dedication to fostering meaningful family partnerships and creating supportive environments for all students is truly commendable.

I hope the information shared during the session proves useful in your practice and helps strengthen your connections with the families you work with. As we discussed, these tools are designed to make collaboration more effective, empathetic, and empowering for everyone involved.

You are welcome to share this resource guide with colleagues and other school teams who might benefit from this approach. Should you or your school community have an interest in further professional development or learning opportunities on culturally responsive and trauma-informed practices, please don't hesitate to reach out. I would be happy to collaborate further and support your ongoing efforts to create inclusive and compassionate school environments.

Thank you again for your hard work and dedication!

Warm regards,  
**Jay Butler, Ed.S.**  
School Culture Specialist  
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### About Jay Butler

With over ten years of experience, Jay Butler has worked with educational institutions, organizations, and communities to build systems that empower marginalized groups and foster resilience. She has served as a youth minister, therapeutic foster parent, special education teacher and currently works as a School Culture Specialist in East Tennessee. In this role, she partners with school leaders to create inclusive environments alongside families and communities. As a Ph.D. student and RISE Scholar at the University of Tennessee, her research focuses on collaborative practices in special education. Her expertise includes culturally inclusive systems,

trauma-informed and restorative practices, special education, and care systems for foster and adopted youth. She also provides leadership and strategy consulting through her company, Edjaycation Solutions, LLC.

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**Session Abstract:** This session will equip you with culturally responsive, trauma-informed, and asset-based rapport-building strategies to establish emotional safety and support empowerment for families from historically marginalized communities. Participants will engage in interactive activities, including case studies, role-playing scenarios, and collaborative discussions, to develop practical skills for partnering with students and families.

## Objectives, Strategies/Tools, & Resources

1. Review the layers, levels, and differing perspectives of culture	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#">Identity Sun, Cultural Iceberg, Six Domains of Differing Perspectives</a></li><li>2. <a href="#">Extended Explanation of Cultural Iceberg</a></li></ol>
2. Discuss the relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences and Adverse Community Experiences	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. <a href="#">Practical Guide for Implementing a Trauma-Informed Approach</a> (graphics featured in presentation)</li></ol>
3. Explore tools for assessing individual and institutional blind spots	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>2. <a href="#">Tennessee Leaders for Equity Playbook- Equity Mindset Shifts</a></li><li>3. <a href="#">Ladder of Inference Model</a></li><li>4. <a href="#">Ladder of Inference- TedTalk</a></li><li>5. <a href="#">Ladder of Inference Article (with case study)</a></li><li>6. <a href="#">Differing Perspectives Reflection Guide</a></li></ol>
4. Discuss four barriers and bridges to rapport-building with families	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>7. <a href="#">Family Collaboration Case Studies</a></li><li>8. <a href="#">Example of Family Introduction</a></li><li>9. <a href="#">Learned Helplessness</a></li><li>10. <a href="#">Ways to Listen- Tool for Active Listening</a></li><li>11. Guiding Document for Family Collaboration (next page)</li></ol>

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## Guiding Document for School Psychologists: Reflection and Self-Assessment for Family Interactions

This guide helps school psychologists reflect on their practices and prepare for interactions with families by addressing common barriers and building positive, actionable bridges for collaboration. The document is organized around proactive strategies, followed by the rationale for their importance.

### BRIDGE ONE: Build Trust Through a Trauma-Informed Approach

**Why:** Families may mistrust schools due to past negative experiences with institutions, leading to barriers in open communication and rapport.

#### Strategies and Tasks:

- **Acknowledge Trauma:**
  - ☐ Recognize the potential impact of past negative experiences with schools or other institutions.
  - ☐ Verbally express openness to hearing concerns, signaling empathy and understanding.
- **Respectful Meeting Etiquette:**
  - ☐ Start each meeting by inviting the family to share their thoughts and concerns.
  - ☐ Actively listen, avoid interrupting, and ensure the family feels heard and valued throughout the process.
- **Creative Introductions:**
  - ☐ Send a personalized video or written introduction prior to meetings to help families feel more connected.
  - ☐ Ensure your professional social media reflects cultural sensitivity and professionalism.

#### Reflection Questions:

- How do I acknowledge and address past trauma or mistrust when interacting with families?
- How do I ensure I'm creating a welcoming space for families to voice concerns and build trust?



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## BRIDGE TWO: Foster an Asset-Based Approach to Reduce Stigma

**Why:** Families may fear judgment based on stereotypes or assumptions, which can hinder open communication and participation.

### Strategies and Tasks:

- **Celebrate Family Strengths:**
  - ☐ Start meetings by highlighting the family's strengths and involvement in their child's education.
  - Example: "I can see how much you care about your child's learning, and your support really makes a difference."
- **Invite Family Supporters:**
  - ☐ Encourage families to bring individuals who play an important role in the child's life to the meeting.
- **Be Aware of Social Cues:**
  - ☐ Greet families warmly and give them your full attention, ensuring they feel valued from the moment they arrive.

### Reflection Questions:

- How do I actively celebrate and acknowledge the strengths of the families I work with?
- How do I ensure that my behavior and actions help families feel they are entering a judgment-free zone?





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## BRIDGE THREE: Use Culturally-Responsive Communication

**Why:** Families may struggle with understanding the assessment process due to language barriers or the use of overly technical language.

### Strategies and Tasks:

- **Use Simple, Clear Language:**
  - ☐ Review your communications and reports for technical terms and jargon, replacing them with plain language.
  - Example: Replace "cognitive evaluation" with "a way to understand how your child learns best."
- **Introduce Yourself:**
  - ☐ Share a video or written introduction before meetings to help families understand who you are and your role.
  - ☐ Ensure your professional and online presence aligns with cultural sensitivity and professionalism.
- **Invite Family Participation:**
  - ☐ Encourage families to involve other supporters (e.g., grandparents, community members) in the assessment process.

### Reflection Questions:

- How do I make sure my communications are accessible and understandable for all family members?
- How do I encourage active participation from the family and their support network?



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## BRIDGE FOUR: Empower Families to Address Power Imbalances

**Why:** Families may feel disempowered if they believe they have little say in the decisions being made about their child, leading to frustration and disengagement.

### Strategies and Tasks:

- **Co-Create Goals:**
  - ☐ Involve families in setting assessment goals, asking them what areas they feel should be a priority.
- **Invite Curiosity and Different Perspectives:**
  - ☐ Open each meeting by inviting families to ask questions and share their unique perspectives, ensuring all voices are heard.
  - Example: “Please feel free to ask questions or share any thoughts, even if they differ from what we’ve discussed.”
- **Share Data Transparently:**
  - ☐ Use visual aids (graphs, charts) and simple explanations to ensure that families fully understand the data and its implications.
  - ☐ Walk families through the results, making sure they comprehend and feel comfortable with the information presented.

### Reflection Questions:

- How do I empower families to take an active role in the decision-making process?
- How do I ensure that I present information and data in a way that’s accessible and transparent to families?





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## Action Plan

What I will implement in my next family meeting:

- ☐ Simplified communication strategy
- ☐ Introduction and rapport-building activities
- ☐ Trauma-informed practices
- ☐ Collaborative goal-setting
- ☐ Strength-based conversations
- ☐ Invitations for family and community supporters
- ☐ Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

## Notes



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