

<b>IMPROVING SCHOOL CLIMATE: CT CODE OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR EDUCATORS</b>
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**Minimum Time Required: 60 minutes**

**Slide #2: CT Code Preamble Learning Task**

*Individually, read the preamble. Underline words / phrases that speak to your work in school climate.*

- ▶▶ Ask participants to share the words / phrases that they underlined. Repeat the words / phrases for emphasis.

**Slide #3: CT Code Section b (1) (A) Learning Task**

*In a small group, read the following section of the code:*

*Section (b): Responsibility to the Student, sub-section (1) (A)*

- ▶▶ Ask someone to read the section aloud for the group.

**Slide #4: R-E-S-P-E-C-T Learning Task**

*As specific as possible, describe what each of the following looks like, sounds like and feels like.*

- *Respect and uphold the dignity and worth of students*
  - *Respect each student as an individual human being*
  - *Deal justly and considerately with students*
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- ▶▶ Have the three statements posted on separate pieces of flip chart paper. Ask participants to take a flip chart marker and write their responses on each piece of paper. If possible, play “Respect” by Aretha Franklin as participants move from one paper to the next (you may need to play 2-3 times).

- ▶▶ Once participants are finished writing their responses, ask for 3 volunteers (this is a low-risk volunteer opportunity). Have one person stand next to each page and read the responses aloud for the group.
- ▶▶ Process any comments or questions that the group may have.

### **Slide #5: CT Code Synthesis**

*How does the code link back to our non-negotiables? (see Climate/Culture module)*

*How does the code link back to the School Climate Development Model? (see Climate Development Model module)*

- ▶▶ Ask each question separately and wait for the group to respond.
- ▶▶ Our second list of non-negotiables is all about respect and upholding the dignity & worth of students. It is designed to deal justly & considerately with all.
- ▶▶ After you have asked the second question, flip to the next slide.

### **Slide #6: School Climate Development Model**

- ▶▶ We must respect each student in all our actions, no matter what quadrant we are working in.
- ▶▶ Creating the climate, the lower two quadrants, is all about respecting students.

### **Slide #7: CT Code Section B, 1 (c)**

*Section B, 1 (c) Nurture in students lifelong respect and compassion for themselves and other human beings, regardless of race, ethnic origin, gender, social class, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.”*

Nurturing respect & compassion for others – teaching students to be kind to each other and modeling this behavior as adults – should be the focus of our energy.

### **Slide #8: Adults Often Ignore “Bullying” Behavior**

“The playground [is] the most likely site for victimization [bullying].” 71% of elementary school children who are involved in bullying experience it on the playground.

*Gwen M. Glew, MD, et al., “Bullying, Psychosocial Adjustment, and Academic Performance in Elementary School,” Arch Pediatric Adolescent Medicine. 2005;159:1026-1031*

### **Slide #9: “Negligent Privacy”**

Read this quote out loud while participants are reading it on the screen.

“Negligent privacy occurs when those who supervise and monitor children do not remain vigilant and unwittingly provide the opportunity for victimization to occur. Negligent privacy can occur on a playground filled with second graders, in a crowded high school cafeteria, during a youth group camping trip or even 10 feet away from a teacher in a classroom. Simply put, negligent privacy occurs when adults are not paying close attention to children under their care.”

Weakfish: Bullying Through the Eyes of a Child

By Michael Dorn, p. 62

Safe Havens International, Inc.

[www.safehavensinternational.org](http://www.safehavensinternational.org)

Children can be extremely “sneaky,” and be mean to others either when adults are not looking or even directly within their view. It is very important to know what to look for so that all children truly are safe. When physically mean acts occur, adults are usually more aware that they must be stopped. It is relatively easy to observe fights, shoving, pushing, hitting, tripping, slapping, and other behaviors that involve outward and inappropriate physical contact. Children are much more concerned about adults helping them to be **emotionally** safe. And, adults are less likely to be as observant in instances of exclusion, name-calling, teasing, taunting, threatening, intimidating, and other similar hurtful acts.

Negligent privacy happens when adults are not paying close enough attention to all forms of mean spirited and cruel behaviors: physical, emotional and intellectual. **No**

***child likes to be the target of any kind of meanness, no matter the form it takes.***

Some children will “play along” and indicate that they enjoy the hurtful attention, but inside, they are crying; every one of them. Any time something mean is witnessed by supervising adults, it must be stopped...the first time. “Kids will be kids,” “Children just do this,” “We were just joking around,” “Lighten up! Don’t take it so seriously,” and “It’s no big deal” should become phrases of the past. Children desperately need adults to make sure that the conditions for negligent privacy never occur. This does take practice, and the kind of “vigilance” that supports all forms of safety and protects and supports children to play, socialize and learn in healthy and happy environments.

### **Slide #10: Calvin & Hobbes**

Read “one of my favorite cartoons” out loud.

### **Slide #11: Lessons from Calvin & Hobbes**

This cartoon represents something that is all too familiar...we’ve ***all*** experienced Calvin’s fate at one time or another; some of us to a greater extent, but nonetheless, we’ve “been there.” Since virtually all children see us as being “too old to understand,” it is incumbent upon each and every one of us to let them know that we have also been at the receiving end of peer cruelty (teasing, name-calling, exclusion, etc.) as well as physical aggression. Don’t steal their thunder as you tell them your story...be brief and move on to theirs, but if they know that you do understand and really care about their pain, they are much more likely to tell/share what happened, not see it as trivial, and be willing to let you help them solve these problems.

### **Slide #12: Research on Playground Supervision**

There has been some fascinating and profound research conducted in Canada, led by Professor Wendy Craig. These researchers asked adults what their perceptions were about their intervention capabilities, especially in playground settings (not unlike what the Calvin and Hobbes cartoon depicts). Adults believed they knew what they were looking for, intervened and were successful in those interventions. Cameras were then installed along the perimeter of the playground and the action videotaped. What these tapes revealed is that adults do not know what to look for (what counts as hurtful

behavior) and when they did intervene, the success rate was abysmal. What the tapes also revealed is that when children intervene on their own behalf (“Hey, stop it!”), the behaviors ended within 10 seconds. Students are more successful interventionists than are adults. What this research informs us is that adults need to have a much better handle on what hurt looks, feels and sounds like. They also need to assist children when necessary. Finally, since children do a very good job on their own, they need to be empowered to intervene as often as possible. This involves not only teaching them the skills necessary, but also giving them permission to so do.

### **Slide #13: Video - John Stossel / Playground Safety**

This video showcases the work of Wendy Craig. Notice that everything is couched under the label of “bullying.” In the Bullying module, great care is taken to argue that the concept of bullying is “toxic” and that currently, everything is bullying and thus nothing is bullying. Since Columbine, the language of “bullying” has replaced descriptions of behaviors. Consequently, view this video understanding that it is recommended that the content of the clip be treated positively, but that the language of bullying not be used. The one other element that we recommend not be implemented is the fixed chart that says “when you do this...then this will happen.” When such a rigid set of consequences is in place, there leaves little, if any room for context and differing circumstances. Allow time for comments after the video is played.

### **Slide #14: “Create an Emotionally and Physically Safe Learning Environment”**

This obligation is in our CT Code of Professional Responsibility.

### **Slide #15: “Climate / Culture Model**

Again, it is all about the relationship. The more nurturing and compassionate our relationships are – on all levels- the more positive our school climate will be.

### **Slide #16: The Student is the Foremost Reason**

Enough said...