

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Instructions: This activity is designed to help educators see the school environment through the worldview of a student who experiences overwhelming stress or anxiety. Pretend for a day that you are a student who sees the world as a dangerous place, where people cannot be trusted, and you are not safe. Try to experience a typical school day from this vantage point. What do you notice in each of the environments listed below that confirms or contradicts your belief that the world is unsafe? Take notes on what you observe. Sample questions are provided but are not meant to be the only observations that could be made. You can use the last page to add observation areas. Finally, make notes about what would need to change to help you feel safe in each of those environments.

Observation Area	Sample questions	Observations (that confirm or contradict a negative worldview)	What needs to change?
Transition to school	What experience does a child likely have on the way to school? What do they see in the neighborhood? How do they see adults treating each other? How do peers interact? How do they arrive?		
Arrival at school	How do students enter the school building? Is there order or chaos? What is the noise level? How predictable are the events that happen (same every day)? Who first interacts with students? How do they interact? Does this change if a student is late? What is the first thing that happens when a student enters the classroom?		

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Classroom	What are the routines of the classroom? What are the visual cues and routines that communicate that everyone belongs to the classroom community? How is behavior corrected? How are diverse learning needs met? What is the sensory environment of the room (visually, auditorily, touch/space, opportunity for movement)? What else do you notice?		
Lunchroom	What happens in the lunchroom? What is the sensory environment? What happens if a student does not have lunch or money for lunch? How is behavior corrected? How is seating determined?		
Transitions between activities/ classrooms	Are transitions predictable? Are transitions foreshadowed? How are changes in routine supported?		

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Playground/recess or other less structured time	How do peers determine recess activities? Are all students included? What are the potential areas of threat or unpredictability? How do students get help?		
Behavioral supports	How is behavior reinforced and supported? Is this the same throughout all school environments? How are consequences used and with which students?		
End of day	How does the day end? How do we say goodbye? How do we predict what will occur the next day?		

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