

TIC Tip of the Month

August 2018

Positive, trauma-informed sentences can help school personnel avoid, minimize or de-escalate situations. These sentences will support a win-win (Habit 4) approach to build and maintain relationships.

“We’ll try again later.” For example, this sentence may be used when you need to take away a privilege, or stop an activity if they are getting “noisy/off task.” The sentence tells the student that they will have another opportunity to make better choices. **“Would you rather work on this after lunch or during 8th period?”** This question gives the student an opportunity to feel in control. Both options must be something that the teacher/adult finds acceptable.

“I know you wish you could...” This sentence lets the student know you are actively listening to their wants/needs. Perhaps the student wants to stay in the library rather than go to a particular class, or they want to confront a peer. This sentence is used when the student wants to do something that is NOT an option. **“I know you wish you didn’t have to...”** The goal is to validate that you understand their perspective.

“That will not work for me.” This sentence is a short and simple way of saying no, without saying “no” to a student’s suggestion. By using a caring tone of voice and body language when saying the sentence, the student will likely not feel “attacked or rejected.” The student’s suggestion can be validated by paraphrasing the student’s request, “That is an interesting idea.” If appropriate, two adult approved options can be explained to the student to create a win-win.

“Think of a solution that will work for both of us.” This statement places ownership of the problem on the student. Students need time and space to problem solve and to come up with an acceptable plan of action. The student may have protested a homework assignment. The student is required to find an acceptable alternative to demonstrate that learning has occurred. Their idea may require more effort than the original assignment.

“Can you live with that?” This sentence can be used to confirm that the student has accepted the agreement.