

Beyond Bullying: Creating a Culture of Respect in Learning Environments

March 11, 2020 (Snow date March 13, 2020)

Keynote Presentation

“I Am from Here,” a VTNEA film on racial justice

Panel discussion with students and educators featured in the film

Morning Workshops

A – Racial Equity in Vermont: What Can Schools Do

To discuss the film and what is happening with racial justice in Vermont

Presenters: Students and faculty, featured in the film, “I Am From Here,” and others who have had direct experience with racism.

Focus: A film highlighting people who are “living the situation” presents a reality that can only be imagined by those not experiencing racism. Hearing from these people promotes better understanding.

- Raise awareness of issues of racism in Vermont
- Explore/listen/watch ways that students experience racism in Vermont schools
- Develop a racial justice toolkit -what can your school do to address racism

B – Inclusion Through Youth Activation: Students Changing School Culture

Unified Champion Schools promote social inclusion by bringing together young people with and without disabilities through sports, inclusive clubs, and community-wide initiatives that foster youth leadership.

Presenters: Special Olympics Vermont Youth Activation Student Committee members

Focus: Unified Champion Schools are based on evidence that students who “play unified” become better at helping others, standing up for each other, and sharing responsibility. They gain patience and the ability to compromise.

- Socially inclusive climates are free from teasing, bullying, and exclusion of any group.
- Students with disabilities are routinely included, and feel a part of all social activities.
- Students without disabilities will hold positive attitudes toward peers with disabilities.

C - Theater Activities for Developing a Sense of Self, Others, and Community

Theatre games and activities are a creative way to develop connection and community.

Presenter: Tracy Vicory-Rosenquest, Teaching Artist, The Flynn Center for the Performing Arts

Focus: Using highly engaging theatre games and activities to:

- Demonstrate how theatre games encourage choice, collaboration, community building, and
- Engage participants to activate their joy, empathy, and voice

D – Understanding the Language of Bias

Participants will consider different ways prejudice and discrimination, such as sexism, classism, racism (among others) happen in schools and in society. Understanding the meaning of words related to bias, and learning how they show up in different settings will make it easier for everyone to talk about and understand their own and others’ experiences.

D description – continued on Page 2-

Presenters: Student Leaders from A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE Peer Training Program

Focus: Students will come away with:

- An understanding that prejudice and discrimination come in many forms
- Increased understanding of the meanings of new words
- Examples of individual and systemic prejudice and discrimination

E – Team Building: Alternatives to Hazing in the World of Athletics

Presenters: Marybeth Lennox-Levins, Associate Professor of Sport Management, Castleton University, a former DIII women’s soccer player from SUNY Binghamton, and Katy Feeney, Sport Management Graduate Assistant, Castleton University, will present strategies they have learned in their combined 25 years of experience in coaching and athletic leadership.

Focus: Understanding how to build a strong and positive culture for success within an athletic team

- Gain a heightened awareness of hazing as a form of bullying in athletics
- Understand hazing’s negative effects on individuals and on teams
- Explore the most effective ways to eliminate hazing and build team cohesion

F – Social Media Makes Me Feel

Social media can be challenging – knowing what to say or anxiously awaiting for that one person to “like” your Instagram post. How do you feel when someone makes negative comments about you or one of your friends on any platform, and what can you do about it? We will discuss how you can use social media to your advantage and find alternatives to spending so much time worrying about it.

Presenter: Dave F. Brown, Ed. D., Educational Researcher and Author

Focus: Discuss issues about the use of social media and hear about strategies for healthy use

- Identify the challenges of being on social media
- Identify the parts of social media that cause frustration or concern
- Learn how to use social media in a healthy way

G – Beyond the Sticker: Ally-ship for LGBTQ+ Youth

All students deserve to feel safe, healthy, and supported at school; though, for many students this may not be the case.

Presenter: Outright VT Youth and Amanda Rohdenburg, Associate Director at Outright VT

Focus: To join with peers in activities and conversations about how you can make things better, safer, and *freer* for LGBTQ+ youth in your school

- Review terms, definitions, and concepts related to gender and sexual identity
- Learn about the current realities for LGBTQ Vermont youth
- Skill-up for showing up as an active ally for queer and trans youth in your communities

H – Disrupting for Justice– Students Organizing Against Racism (S.O.A.R.)

All students have the right to peacefully assemble, as one of a variety of approaches to effect change, raise awareness, and promote discussion related to bullying/harassment/racism issues, to impact our local and global communities.

Presenters: Frederick H. Tuttle Middle School Students: Deng Aguek, Sten Woodward, and Veronique Tahiband, and FHTMS Teachers, Jeff Novak, Carol McNair, Gary Russell

Focus: Students from the FHTMS S.O.A.R. (Students Organizing Against Racism) are planning an interactive session geared for participants who are in various parts of their journey toward active anti-racism work. S.O.A.R. students will briefly describe their work before launching into activities designed to allow participants to:

- Reflect on their identities and the need for this work
- Improve on “Speak Up” strategies guided by the work of Teaching Tolerance
- Explore both individual and collective aspects of anti-racism work
- Create tools that can be immediately taken back to their school setting to unapologetically interrupt and disrupt racism within our school systems

I – Rumor Clinic – Stop the Rumors!

Rumors, often a source of hurtful behavior in schools, can be complicated to address. In this session, students consider how rumors start and how to prevent them.

Presenters: Lamoille Union Middle School Student Leaders, A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE Institute

Focus: Students will come away with:

- Ideas and tools to intervene in the rumor mill and create a culture of respect
- Understanding of how rumors spread and escalate

J – – Speaking Our Truth – Building Empathy Through Shared Story

Everyone has a story that is valuable. Poetry can be a means for healing and a builder of bridges – connecting people to each other’s stories and experiences in ways that humanize and cultivate greater empathy.

Presenter: Rajnii Eddins, Burlington poet, spoken word performer, author of “Their Names Are Mine”

Focus: Sharing of spoken word and candid dialogue.

- Exploration of our poetic voices
- Witness firsthand the power and potency of each other's creativity to encourage, empower and inspire.

K – Exploring Stereotypes with “The Lemon Game”

What do lemons and stereotypes have in common? Stereotyping often puts people into categories based on prejudice, appearance, and rumors. Misconceptions can lead to unfair comments and bullying.

Presenters: Williston Central School Student Leaders, trained by A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE Institute

Focus: In this workshop students will explore what stereotypes are and how making assumptions and generalizations can prevent people from seeing one another as individuals. Students will learn:

- An understanding about what stereotypes are
- Ideas about how to reduce stereotyping in their schools and
- Create a culture of respect for all people

L – Purpose and Bias in Film and Storytelling – “Mi Vida, Mi Voz”

Filmmaking and storytelling can transform our understanding of complicated issues that face our communities. It can be difficult to traverse purpose, bias, and representation, especially when making film.

Presenters: Lena Ashooh, Student at Champlain Valley Union High School, Director of “*Mi Vida, Mi Voz*” a non-profit storytelling summit for rural and migrant youth. Tim O’Leary, Co-Director of *What’s the Story? The Vermont Young People Social Action Team* & Digital Learning Leader at Shelburne Community School

Focus: Understanding film as a powerful tool for storytelling and the importance of recognizing purpose and bias when using media to elevate other people’s voices.

- Learn how to shoot an interview
- Identify the ways one might frame a story to suit their purpose
- Explore our own stories and how we might tell them

AFTERNOON WORKSHOPS

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O - How Empathy Can Change the World

Participants will explore how positive attitudes and collaboration, through play, can foster crucial understandings of one another. While we're up and moving, we will investigate brain-based research of Jane McGonigal, and the work of *Changing Perspectives New England*

Presenter: Dr. Monica McEnerny, Associate Professor of Education, Castleton University

Focus: This hands-on workshop will foster positive attitudes and collaboration among all participants.

- Explore the meaning of resilience and empathy
- Learn how play and active involvement is imperative to learning
- Discuss how to build empathy in one another

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Presenters: Peoples Academy Middle Level Student Leaders, A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE Institute

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X - Restorative Practices: Shifting the Culture of Our Schools

Restorative practices are a positive, disruptive force in realizing greater equity in education and stronger relationships. They provide greater balance and strength to youth-adult partnerships in learning, greater opportunity for building empathy, bridging differences, and strengthening more just, joyful, and sustainable communities.

Presenters: Lindsey Halman, Executive Director, UP for Learning

Focus: To learn about shifting the focus of behavior from punishments to restoring/developing relationships and gaining the capacity to succeed in moving forward

- Engage participants in a discussion through activities about the difference between punishment and restorative practices
- Practice strategies for Tier 1 – Community Building Circles
- Identify the lessons learned when a school creates a shift in culture and practices

Closing Presentation: A student-made film with important messages related to cultural understanding, inclusion, and awareness. Luke Dorfman, Jean Berthiaume, and Nellie Maley, Winooski High School’s “Culture and Community Capstone Class”