

SAMPLE EMPOWERING RESPONSES

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AVOID “SET UPS”: Instead of saying, “Did you _____”, say, “I notice that you _____” Proceed with any of the following:

INVITE RESPONSIBILITY: “What is your plan?”

CURIOSITY QUESTIONS: “What were you trying to accomplish? How do you feel about what happened? What ideas do you have to solve the problem?”

EXPRESS YOUR LIMITS: “I’m not willing to bail you out. I respect you too much to rescue you. Let me know if you would like my help to figure out a plan for the future,” or, “If you need my help with your assignment, please let me know in advance”

VALIDATE FEELINGS: “I can see that you are very upset.”

LISTEN WITHOUT FIXING OR JUDGING: “I would like to hear what this means to you.”

CONTROL YOUR OWN BEHAVIOR: “I’m feeling too upset to talk about this right now. Let’s put it on the class meeting agenda so we can talk about it when I’m not so emotional and get help from the whole class.”

LET GO OF THEIR ISSUES: “I hope you’ll go to college, but I’m not sure it’s important to you. I have faith in you to figure it out. I’m willing to brainstorm with you, but will not control or rescue.”

AGREEMENT NOT RULES: “Could we sit down and see if we can work on a plan that we can both live with to solve this problem?”

CHOICES: “What would help you right now—to put this on the agenda, to take some positive time out, to go to the Peace Table, or to use the Wheel of Choice?” (Offer only two choices per your intuition.)

RESPECT AND ENCOURAGE: “I have faith in you to learn from your mistakes and figure out what works for you in your life.”

ASK FOR HELP: “I need your help. Can you explain to me why it isn’t important to you to do your homework?”

SHARE YOUR FEELINGS: “I feel _____ about/when _____ because _____ and I wish _____” (Share without expecting anyone else to feel the same or grant your wish. This is a great model for students to acknowledge their feelings and wishes without expectations.) “I feel upset when your homework isn’t done because I value education and think it could be beneficial in your life, and I really wish you would do it.”

JOINT PROBLEM SOLVING: “What is your picture of what is going on? Would you be willing to hear my concerns? Could we brainstorm together on possible solutions?”