

# Responding to Discrimination and Harassment

SB23-296 Training – Module 2 for All School Employees

# Agenda for this Module

- Responding in the Moment
- Supportive Measures and Other Concrete Actions

# A reminder on our basic concept from C.R.S. § [22-1-143](#)

[Offensive Unwelcome Conduct or Communication]

+

[Connected to a Protected Class]

+

[Meeting a Defined Standard of Harm or Impact to the Student]

=

Discrimination or Harassment under C.R.S. § [22-1-143](#)

# Responding in the Moment

# Best Practices for Responding in the Moment

## 1. Intervene Immediately and Calmly

- Why: Acting quickly shows that discrimination or harassment is not tolerated.
- How: Stay calm and firm. Interrupt the behavior, even if you are unsure of all the details.

## 2. Separate and De-escalate

- Separate the students.
- Focus on de-escalating any tension and keeping all students safe.

# Best Practices for Responding in the Moment

## 3. Listen Actively and Name Next Steps

- When a student chooses to report a concern to you, listen actively and repeat back what you hear and understand. Let them know you are taking the situation seriously and what next steps will be.

## 4. Avoid “Victim-Blaming”

- Avoid questioning the behavior, clothing, or tone of the person that experienced the harm; suggesting the reporting student provoked or was responsible for the situation or misunderstood the situation; minimizing the harm; or telling the student to change something about themselves to prevent future incidents.

# Blaming vs. Supporting

## Instead of saying...

“Why didn’t you walk away?”

“Try to ignore it next time.”

“You just have to be more careful.”

“If you dress like that, people are going to say things.”

“They didn’t mean it that way.”

## Try saying...

“Thank you for telling me—this took courage.”

“We don’t want you to feel unsafe or harassed. Let’s talk about next steps together.”

“You have the right to feel safe and respected here.”

“No one has the right to make comments about your appearance in a demeaning way.”

“Even if they didn’t intend something, I want to focus on how it impacted you.”

# Best Practices for Responding in the Moment

## 5. Document the Incident

- As soon as it is safe and appropriate, write down exactly what you saw and heard, noting date, time, location, people involved, and any steps taken.

## 6. Report Through Proper Channels

- Follow your school's reporting protocol (to administration, counselors, Title IX coordinator, etc.).
- When the harassment is based on sex, it is particularly important to get that information to your Title IX coordinator immediately because there are specific protocols that must be followed.



# Best Practices for Responding in the Moment

## 7. Recognize the impact of trauma

- Over two-thirds of children in the U.S. have reported experiencing at least one traumatic event by age 16, and more than 60% of Americans have experienced at least one Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE), with 16.7% having experienced four or more.
- These experiences affect our fundamental sense of safety, trust, and belonging. They affect how we are impacted by additional harms.
- When we respond to discrimination and harassment, we can compound existing trauma if we aren't careful. Or we can be a safe and supportive space that allows for healing.



## Core message

**“In our school, everyone deserves respect. If we see or hear discrimination or harassment, we take action — every time.”**

# Supportive Measures and Other Concrete Actions

Supporting students after a report of discrimination or harassment.

These are often referred to as “supportive measures.”

## A note of caution...

- Some supportive measures can be provided immediately. Others should only be implemented after an investigation and finding is made.
- Consult with your designated contact on the appropriate timing for supportive measures.

## Supportive Measures

### 1. Safe Environment Adjustments

- **Classroom Seating Changes:** Move students away from each other in shared classes.
- **Schedule Adjustments:** Change class schedules, lunch periods, or bus routes to reduce contact.
- **Safe Entry/Exit Plan:** Allow the student to arrive early or leave late to avoid interactions.

## Supportive Measures

### 2. Academic Support

- **Assignment Extension:** Provide flexibility for assignments or tests if the situation has affected their focus.
- **Tutoring Services:** Offer extra academic help to keep the student on track.
- **Quiet Spaces:** Provide access to a quiet room for breaks if the student is feeling overwhelmed.

## Supportive Measures

### 3. Counseling and Emotional Support

- **School Counselor Sessions:** Regular check-ins with a counselor or psychologist.
- **Peer Support Programs:** Connect the student with safe peer groups or mentoring programs.
- **Crisis Intervention:** Immediate access to mental health support if needed.



## Supportive Measures

### 4. Communication Supports

- **Designate a Point of Contact:** Designate a staff member the student can check in with regularly.
- **Regular Updates:** Keep the student and their family informed (within privacy limits) about the school's steps and any changes.
- **Interpretation:** For families with limited English proficiency, ensure availability of interpreters and translation of documents. Don't rely on student to translate for family.

## Supportive Measures

### 5. Monitoring and Safety Measures

- **Increased Adult Supervision:** Add supervision in hallways, cafeterias, or other areas of concern.
- **Behavioral Contracts:** Use agreements to reinforce boundaries and safety expectations.
- **Threat Assessments:** When there is a potential ongoing threat to the student or school, convene a multi-disciplinary team to conduct a threat assessment and evaluate risk and what is needed to mitigate risk.
- **Safety Plans:** Develop a formal safety plan tailored to the student's specific needs.

## Supportive Measures

### 6. Restorative Options (if appropriate)

- **Mediation (voluntary):** Facilitate conversations to address harm and promote understanding.
- **Community Circles:** Bring in supportive conversations to rebuild a sense of belonging.
- **Community Service or Required Learning for the Student that was Found to have Caused the Harm:** Assigned learning or other required actions to ensure that student learns about the impact of their actions.

With each concrete action you take to respond to the harm caused by discrimination and harassment, you make a difference. Thank you.

