National PTA®
Connect For Respect
Student Leader's
Guide

Leadership: Stepping Up

What does it take to be a C4R leader?

Take a look at this list of what strong leaders do. Which of these do you do already, and which ones could you "step up" to make your C4R projects even more successful?

Welcome and include others.
- Be friendly to everyone.
- Stay positive. Ignore negative comments or attitudes.
- Keep an open mind.

Listen to all perspectives.
- Give whoever is talking your attention. No texting or side conversations.
- Paraphrase what people have said to show that you understood.
- Ask follow-up questions.

Build a team and gain consensus.
- Help the team stay on task.
- Keep discussions respectful.
- Address conflicts quickly and directly—don't let problems fester.
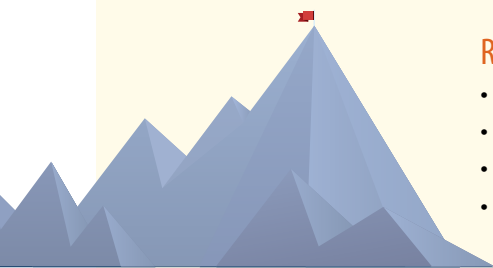- Focus on the team's shared goal.
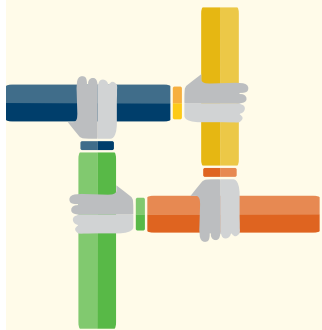
Inspire others.
- Don't be afraid to show your passion.
- Keep it genuine.
- Be dependable—do what you say you'll do.
- Share credit and thank others for doing their part.

Resolve to make a difference *no matter what*.
- Find creative ways to overcome challenges.
- Be realistic. Big changes don't happen overnight.
- Be flexible—bend, don't break.
- Never give up!
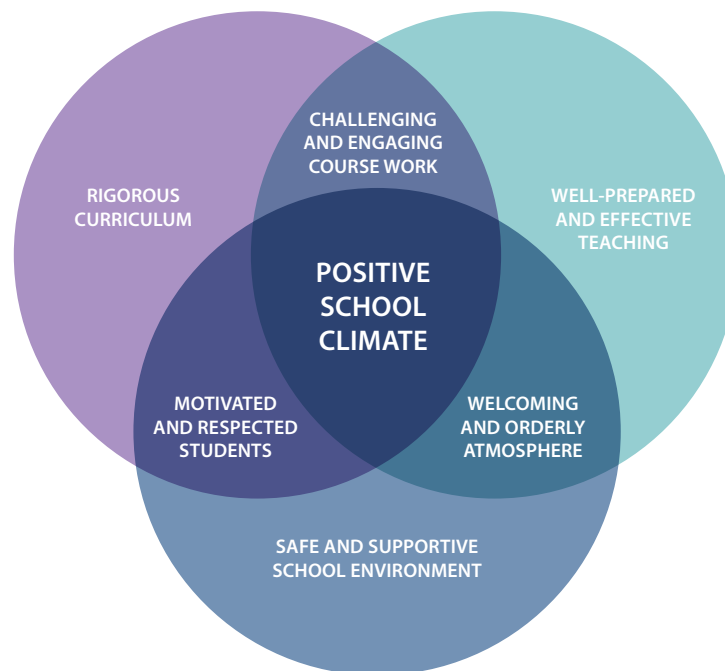
C4R: Connect for Respect

Concerned about bullying at your school? Connect for Respect (C4R) will help you make a difference. It doesn't happen overnight, and it's bigger than just making people aware of the problem.

Bullying isn't just about a few kids. It affects (and reflects) the whole "school climate"—basically, how it feels to be at school. When the climate improves, there is less bullying. *Everyone* feels more comfortable, safe and respected. (Cohen & Freiberg, 2013)

Students have a lot to gain from a positive school climate:

• Classrooms and hallways are safer.

• Kids feel better about themselves.

• Grades and test scores improve.

Students *just like you*, working with PTA members and school staff, have the power to make it all happen. That's what C4R is all about. (National School Climate Center, 2014)

CHALLENGING
AND ENGAGING
COURSE WORK

RIGOROUS
CURRICULUM

WELL-PREPARED
AND EFFECTIVE
TEACHING

POSITIVE
SCHOOL
CLIMATE

MOTIVATED
AND RESPECTED
STUDENTS

WELCOMING
AND ORDERLY
ATMOSPHERE

SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE
SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Credit: *Positive School Climate illustration courtesy of The Whole Child Blog (Harris, 2013)*

Our approach:

Build your team. Don't go it alone. Partner up with PTSA members, students, teachers, and others in order to divide the work.

CHECKLIST

Assess the school climate from the perspective of students, families and school personnel. Your school may already have existing tools to help you. See PTA.org/C4R for templates and sample surveys to help you.

Engage the school community at *Connect for Respect* forums where students, families, school staff and community members come together to learn about the results from a school climate assessment and develop next steps.

Develop an action plan to educate and empower family members and students, create safer and more supportive environments, and enact and enforce effective anti-bullying policies.

Empower students, family members and others to implement strategies that reflect the community's unique strengths, needs and existing school climate efforts.

Find tools and templates online at PTA.org/C4R to guide you through the C4R steps.

Action: Putting Ideas Into Motion

How will your team make it happen?

You've built your team, assessed your current school climate, and engaged your school community in a dialogue. Now what? Part of making your action plan come to life is thinking creatively about implementing the solution. The possibilities are endless! Start with one of the following suggestions, or work with your team to come up with something all your own.

- **Promote Respect.** Hold a contest and give awards for the entries with the most creative messages about preventing bullying or supporting each other at school. Entries could be short videos, posters, or songs. This could be a great way to start getting others excited about *Connect for Respect*.

- **Share your insights with adults.** Host an assembly for the school community that includes both students and adults to help adults understand what feels most helpful to students affected by bullying. (See *http://www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org/#/listen/advice-gone-wrong*). Or, help PTA leaders select an assembly theme and speaker that will appeal to your peers.

- **Evaluate the current school climate.** Use provided assessment tools at pta.org/C4R to work with your school and gauge the strengths and weaknesses of your school climate. See how one school documented their challenges with video interviews: *http://niot.org/nios/lesson/activity-guide-documenting-communities-through-interviews-and-film*.

- **Advocate for better policies.** Partner with your Student Government organization to advocate for better school climate policies with school leaders if none are currently in place. Refer to the Department of Education's Guiding Principles on current best practices: *http://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/school-discipline/guiding-principles.pdf*

- **Be role models** for younger students. Arrange a presentation with your team for a younger class on the importance of standing up to bullying. See if this may qualify for volunteer hours or school credit. You may also be able to arrange a mentoring program with the younger classes—work with teachers to coordinate scheduling. See how this student mentored younger students after she experienced bullying firsthand: *http://www.niot.org/nios-video/profile-youth-leader-alana*.

- **Become peer advocates.** Research has shown that some students are at a higher risk to become targets of bullying. Students with disabilities, LGBT students, or students who are perceived as different in some way are often more likely to get "picked on." Work with school counselors and your C4R team to develop a peer advocacy program. For example: *http://www.pacer.org/bullying/resources/students-with-disabilities/peer-advocacy.asp*.

References

Bradshaw, C. & O'Brennan, L. (2013). Importance of School Climate. National Education Association Research Brief.

Cohen, J. & Freiberg, J.A. (2013). School climate and bullying prevention. In Dary, T. & Pickeral, T. (ed) (2013). School Climate Practices for Implementation and Sustainability. A School Climate Practice Brief, Number 1, New York, NY: National School Climate Center.

Harris, Kit (2013). The Whole Child Blog. ED Pulse Poll Results: What Do You Feel Should Be the Primary Goal of Improving School Climate? Retrieved from http://www.wholechildeducation.org/blog/ed-pulse-poll-results-school-climate

National School Climate Center (2014). School Climate: What is School Climate and Why is it Important? Retrieved from http://www.schoolclimate.org/climate/

Stopbullying.gov (2014). Who is at Risk: Effects of Bullying. Retrieved from www.stopbullying.gove/at-risk/effects/index.html

Connect For Respect
C4R

Go online. Connect for Respect. PTA.org/C4R is your one-stop shop for tools, links, and other helpful items to get your C4R project up and running.

Tweet #PTAC4R to connect with other *Connect for Respect* teams across the country.

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