

# Training Guide for Using Data to Promote Equity in School Discipline

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## WORK SESSION

# Using Reflection Groups to Learn How Families and Educators View Their School or District

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**NOTE:** These materials are part of a series, “**Using Data to Promote Equity in School Discipline,**” which comprises an introduction and four work sessions. To access the introduction/planning document, the other work session training guides, and the accompanying PowerPoint presentations, visit <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/news/equity-school-discipline.asp>

The materials available in this series include:

- *Introduction: Planning and Facilitating Work Sessions to Improve School Discipline*
- *Work Session: Revising School Discipline Policies and Procedures to Promote Equity*
- *Work Session: Using School Discipline Data to Pinpoint Concerns and Track Progress*
- *Work Session: Using Reflection Groups to Learn How Families and Educators View Their School or District*
- *Work Session: Identifying Strategies to Promote Equity in School Discipline*

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# Using Reflection Groups to Learn How Families and Educators View Their School or District

The reflection group process is designed to help school and/or teams gather information from families and educators about how they view the school's learning environment and discipline practices. The materials in this work session explain how to plan and organize a reflection group. They also provide respectful ways to ask families and educators about school climate and discipline practices—what's working, what's not working, and ways the school could be more welcoming and inclusive. Finally, they provide guidance on recruiting reflection group participants, establishing group agreements, and recording meeting notes. In this work session, teams will have the opportunity to discuss why listening to the perspectives of educators and families is important for improving school discipline. Teams will also learn how to plan and facilitate "reflection" groups in their setting.

## Objectives

1. Understand why the perspectives of educators and family members are essential for improving equity in school climate and school discipline.
2. Plan a reflection group to learn more about what educators and/or families think about school climate and school discipline.
3. Practice conducting a reflection group with peers (recommended if the facilitator has experience conducting reflection groups with educators and/or family members).

## KEY TERMS

**DATA INDICATORS:** Data that provide information about progress toward a desired goal or outcome, such as reducing suspensions or racial disproportionality in exclusionary discipline.

**EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE:** Discipline actions that remove students from classroom instruction, including in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion, or removal to an interim alternative education setting.

**NONEXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE:** Discipline actions that assign additional support or punitive consequences to students without removing them from classroom instruction.

**PLAN-DO-STUDY-ACT:** A continuous improvement process that uses data to pinpoint concerns, identify interventions, develop an action plan, monitor progress, and adjust interventions as needed.

**REFLECTION GROUPS:** Focus groups that are designed to help school teams gather information from families and educators about how they view the school's learning environment and discipline practices.

## Who should participate?






School and/or district teams that are responsible for school climate and discipline practices should plan the reflection groups. The team should include members who are representative of the cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity of students served. District team refers to a district-level team that is planning and/or implementing districtwide changes in school discipline policies and practices. Members of the district team should represent the various stakeholder groups that are involved in school discipline, including district administrators, school administrators, teachers, data analysts, and education specialists.

School team refers to a school-level team that is planning and/or implementing school-level changes in school discipline policies and practices. Members of the school team should represent the various stakeholders, including school administrators, teachers, specialists, data analysts, other education specialists and, if appropriate, a district representative.

## Organizing the work session

Each member should have a copy of materials used in each work session. A list of the materials you will need to facilitate this work session is provided below (table 1).

**TABLE 1.**  
**Reflection groups materials**

Materials you will find in the work session materials	
	<p>Facilitator’s annotated agenda</p> <p>Suggest reviewing and, if needed, adjusting the schedule to meet audience needs.</p>
	<p><i>Using reflection groups to learn how families and educators view their school or district</i> presentation slide deck. See talking points by clicking orange icon in upper left corner of page.</p>
	<p>Handout 1: <i>Using reflection groups to learn how families and educators view their school or district (information brief)</i></p>
	<p>Teamwork activity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handout 2: <i>Reflection group planning form</i></li> <li>• Handout 3: <i>Reflection group agreements–English and Spanish versions</i></li> <li>• Handout 4: <i>Reflection group–parents and family members</i></li> <li>• Handout 5: <i>Reflection group–educators</i></li> </ul> <p>Suggest making paper copies for all team members.</p>
	<p>Work session evaluation</p>



## AGENDA

# Using Reflection Groups to Learn How Families and Educators View Their School or District Work Session

This annotated agenda provides a suggested schedule for a three-hour work session, including time-line, description, and list of accompanying resources and materials for each activity. This agenda is designed for work sessions attended by multiple school or district teams, but the activities could easily be used to coach a single team. In preparing for any work session, you should adjust the schedule to match the number of participants and their content knowledge and experience level.

Minutes	Activity and description	Resources/materials
10	Introductions Review agenda and objectives	Slides 1–4
10	Suggested icebreaker activity: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Ask participants to find a partner and agree on two goals for school discipline (other than maintaining physical safety).</li><li>2. Ask them to write the goals on the board/chart paper. For smaller groups, suggest telling participants they can't duplicate answers. For larger groups, suggest telling participants that they need to write down one original goal but can make a check next to their second goal if it is already written down.</li><li>3. Popcorn discussion of the ideas that the group generated.</li></ol>	Slides 5–7
10	Plan-Do-Study-Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Describe the Plan-Do-Study-Act process and how reflection groups can provide helpful information about school discipline concerns.</li></ul>	Slides 8–10
20	Presentation: Family engagement <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss why learning the perspectives of families and educators can inform improvement decisions.</li><li>• Share data on parental involvement in school activities and volunteer opportunities among families from different racial backgrounds.</li><li>• Turn and talk on why some families feel more welcome to volunteer and engage in school activities than others. Discuss types of information that reflection groups could provide to better understand how to engage all families.</li></ul>	Slides 11–17

40	<p>Planning a reflection group</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask each team to review the reflection group questions for parents and family members (Handout 4) or educators (Handout 5). Lead a brief discussion on their reactions to the questions and protocols</li> <li>2. Refer the participants to Handout 2: Planning a reflection group and review main sections or steps in planning a reflection group</li> <li>3. Coach the team on completing the Reflection group planning form.</li> </ol>	Handouts 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 Slides 18–25
<p>Share Handout 1: <i>Using reflection groups to learn how families and educators view their school or district (information brief)</i>  Share Handout 2: <i>Reflection group planning form</i>  Share Handout 3: <i>Reflection group agreements—English and Spanish versions</i>  Share Handout 4: <i>Reflection group—parents and family members</i>  Share Handout 5: <i>Reflection group—educators</i></p>		
15	Break	
50	<p>Practice facilitating an educator reflection group</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Discuss how reflection groups could help your team plan ways to improve school climate and discipline.</li> <li>2. Review Handout 5: <i>Reflection group—educators</i></li> <li>3. Facilitate a practice reflection group with 6–8 participants. Lead a discussion on possible benefits, surprises, and challenges.</li> </ol>	Handout 3 Handout 5 Slides 26–30
<p>Refer to Handout 3: <i>Reflection group agreements—English and Spanish versions</i>  Refer to Handout 5: <i>Reflection group—educators</i></p>		
15	<p>Summarizing common themes, follow-up and next steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask participants to discuss the following questions in teams or small groups. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who will summarize the common themes and list the recommendations?</li> <li>• How will you ensure the privacy of the reflection group participants?</li> <li>• Who will receive the summary of common themes and recommendations? How will the summary be shared?</li> </ul> </li> </ol>	Handout 2 Slide 31
15	<p>Ask teams to answer the following questions about the work session:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has been one benefit of today's work session?</li> <li>• What is a challenge you have encountered and how might you solve it?</li> <li>• What is one step you can take to gather additional data or begin implementing improvement strategies?</li> </ul>	Participant evaluation Slide 32





## HANDOUT 1

# Using Reflection Groups to Learn How Families and Educators View Their School or District

Planning and implementing school improvement involves gathering and continuously looking at data that will increase your understanding of the problem. Learning how families and educators view a problem can provide valuable insights—and its potential solution. For example, families and educators can share important perspectives on why some student groups are more likely to receive suspensions. They can also provide information about communication difficulties, bullying/harassment problems, or cultural misunderstandings that may lead to suspensions but may not be in discipline data reports. Through dialogue, leaders can gain a deeper understanding of the root causes that are within the school's ability and control to change.

## What is a reflection group?

Reflection groups provide opportunities for participants to share their perspectives of the school community. The first reflection group should focus on learning how educators and families view their school (what is working, what is not working, and recommendations for strengthening the school community). Later, as reflection groups become part of the school culture, participants may be brought together to discuss issues or problems. Participants may discuss a topic that directly affects them, or they may provide insight into an issue that school leaders want to address.

Reflection groups are not focus groups that collect data for evaluation purposes. They are also not intended to be a substitute for situations that require a trained mediator, a third-party facilitator, or legal counsel. If a situation involves legal or due process proceedings, the district should follow established policies and procedures.

## Planning and organizing a reflection group

Making sure a reflection group runs smoothly and accomplishes its goals requires planning and organization. A successful reflection group that is respectful of people's time requires planning. It includes determining a purpose for the group; deciding who should attend; and scheduling the time, location, and other details.

## Determine the purpose

Determining what the team hopes to learn and how it will use this information is the first step in planning. The purpose of the reflection group will influence choosing who should attend, selecting the facilitator, and developing the questions to ask. It will also influence the day, time, and location of the reflection group. As stated earlier, the first group or two should focus on building trust for the reflection group process by making sure everyone feels safe to share information and that what they say makes a difference. Asking teachers or families about difficult issues that have no easy answers should not be the subject of your first reflection group. However, establishing reflection groups as routine in your setting could make discussions about emotionally or politically sensitive subjects easier over time. Some questions your school or district team may consider include:

What information does the team hope to gain? Is your goal to start building the groundwork for honest conversations about school climate and discipline? If so, focusing the reflection group on learning how educators and families generally view their school is a good place to start.

Is there an issue or problem the team wants to address? Do you have educators and/or parents who know one another, work well together, and want to address an issue or problem? If so, consider choosing educators and/or parents who know and work together and want to address the issue.

## Create a team

Conducting a reflection group is a team effort. In addition to the people coordinating the event, the team will need to identify a facilitator, note taker, and timekeeper before the reflection group (table 1). The timekeeper can be a group participant, but it is better if the note taker is not a participant so he or she can focus on recording notes. It is also helpful if the team includes members who are familiar with the cultural traditions and home language of the participants.

## Table 2. Roles and responsibilities of the reflection group team

Role	Responsibilities
Facilitator	Assigning a note taker and timekeeper. Reviewing the group's purpose and agreements. Remaining neutral while guiding the discussion. Keeping the discussion focused on the topic. Ensuring everyone feels respected and is following the group agreements. Helping group reach consensus as needed.
Note Taker	Recording key points of the group discussion. (Depending on the group's preferences, notes may be written on poster board, projected so everyone can see them as they are written, or recorded on a computer or paper.)
Timekeeper	Keeping the group on schedule to allow time for completing the agenda.
Participants	Responding to questions as desired. Respecting and listening to the opinions of others. Following the group agreements.

### Choose a facilitator

Effective facilitation is important to the success of a reflection group. Some people are naturals. Others need to learn the skills necessary for good facilitation. Most of us fall somewhere in the middle. The person who facilitates a group should be skilled in active listening and can remain neutral while guiding the discussion. To encourage open conversation, the facilitator should not have authority over the participants. The principal may not be the best choice for educator groups. Instead, a school counselor, teacher, or other education professional skilled in facilitation might be a better choice.

Principals, teachers, or school counselors may facilitate parent or family groups if they have positive relationships with the participants and can remain neutral in response to criticism about the school. Teachers or others who provide services directly to students or their families should not facilitate family reflection groups. It is always helpful to choose, if possible, facilitators who can talk with parents and families in their first or home language. Questions to consider when choosing a facilitator include:

- Is the person respectful of others, regardless of racial, ethnic, or cultural background?
- Does the person remain open-minded to others' opinions, even if he or she disagrees?
- Is the person skilled in active listening, probing for understanding, and reflection?
- Can the person remain neutral and refrain from contributing to a conversation on the proposed topic?
- Is the person aware of the body language and tone of voice—of others, as well as his or her own?
- Does the person have skills in defusing situations and dealing with difficult conversations?
- Is the person in a position of authority that could prevent participants from sharing their honest opinions?

## Review the protocols

As a team, review the protocols to make sure the questions reflect the needs and will be understandable to the participants. Discuss ways to prevent or address any challenges that could arise during the reflection group. Some questions to consider include:

- a. Do any of the questions need to be clarified, edited or adapted for the setting?
- b. Do you anticipate challenges related to any of the following?
  - Obtaining written or verbal consent
  - Causing participants concern or distress
  - Explaining and/or following the reflection group agreements
  - Taking a confident and empathetic position to deal with difficult situations that may arise
  - Following up on participants' input and requests

## Select and invite participants

The planning team should invite 8–10 participants to attend the reflection group. The selected participants should have a wide range of perspectives and opinions about the topic. It is also helpful if participants are willing to listen to the opinions of others and have some personal investment in improving the school or addressing the problem. Individuals who know the participants should invite them to the reflection group. Suggestions on how to invite families and educators by telephone or in person are in Handouts 4 and 5, respectively.

## Schedule the date, time, location, and other logistics

The details matter. Be proactive and mindful when scheduling the reflection group. Consider dates that do not conflict with community and cultural events, holidays, and work commitments. Choose a location that is comfortable, easy to get to, and free from distraction. The space should easily accommodate the participants without being so large that the group seems impersonal. The reflection group should meet for no longer than 60–75 minutes. However, it could be part of a larger school event.

**Group participants appreciate refreshments.** For family meetings, providing snacks or a meal may provide some relief for a family's busy schedule. Providing child care may make it easier for some families to attend. Finally, arranging supports to accommodate any diversity in language, ability, or cultural background should occur during the early planning stage.

## Conduct a one-week check in

About a week before the reflection group, it is a good idea for the team (facilitator, note taker, time-keeper, and coordinator) to meet briefly to review the facilitator protocol, schedule, and roles. The coordinator should make sure the team receives an electronic and a paper copy of these materials. The note taker should get copies of the notes template. (The materials for educator and family groups are in Handouts 4 and 5, respectively.) This is also a good time to remind participants about the date and time of the reflection group.

## Day of the reflection group

Start early. The arrangement of the room influences the comfort of participants. The team should arrange the furniture so participants can converse easily with the facilitator and one another. Be intentional about creating a connected space. Use your knowledge about the participants to decide whether they should sit in a circle or at tables. Set up a table for refreshments and post the group agreements. For family groups, make sure the space for students has fun activities. It should also be close to the reflection group, so students can connect easily with their parents if needed.

## Facilitating the reflection group

The general outline of the reflection group is the same for both educator and family groups. Following introductions, the facilitator should explain the purpose of the group and review the five group agreements (table 2). The facilitator should obtain written or verbal consent if required by district policies. Next, the facilitator should ask questions as outlined in the protocols (Handouts 4 and 5).

**Table 3. Reflection group agreements and explanations**

Reflection group agreements	Explanation
We are here to listen.	We want to spend our time learning more from you. If you have a question, we will write it down, so we can answer it later.
We hope everyone will participate.	I may call on you to make sure you feel included, but your participation is voluntary.
There are no “right” or “wrong” answers.	Everyone’s opinion is important. In fact, we want to hear different opinions!
We will respect everyone’s ideas and privacy.	Please do not share what others say outside of this room unless you have their permission.
We will report safety concerns to the principal.	We will write down safety concerns and report them to the principal.

Before ending the group, provide a two- to three-minute overview of the main themes discussed and items that require follow-up. Thank the group members for their willingness to volunteer their time to participate. Do a quick scan to see if any participants appear upset or concerned. If so, try to check in with them before they leave or make a note to connect with them the next day.

## Strategies for dealing with difficult situations

The reflection group protocol will help the group by offering questions and probes to focus participants on the discussion topic. While hosting a reflection group, however, the facilitator may encounter participants or situations that distract from the flow of discussion. Setting the group rules and expectations at the beginning of the reflection group can reduce the chances of distractions. If difficulties do arise, ways that can help refocus the group are in table 3.

**Table 4. Strategies for dealing with difficult situations**

Difficult situation	Strategy
Participants who dominate the discussion	Redirect the discussion to another person or another topic.
Lack of participation by group members	Directly ask members if they have anything to add to the discussion or ask additional questions.
Participants who are reluctant to share	Ask participants to write down their answers to the question.
Participants who are argumentative	Resist the urge to argue back. Acknowledge the participants' feelings and offer to discuss further after the end of the group to identify a next step for addressing their concerns.
Participants who are defensive	Restate that the purpose of the group is to find solutions through discussion and that sharing their perspective is important and valuable to the outcome of the reflection group.
Participants who ask the facilitator questions about the issue	Remind the participants that your role during the reflection group is to facilitate. Asking the participants to share their response to the question(s) can help to refocus the discussion back to the topic at hand.

Sources: Brown University, Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, n.d.; Vogelsang & McGee, 2015.

In productive discussions, conflicts will sometimes arise—which may cause distractions or create problems if the facilitator does not address them early or skillfully. The facilitator should take a confident and empathic position to prevent participants from interrupting one another, speaking simultaneously, or feeling frustrated. Diligence to reviewing and reinforcing the group agreements is essential. Additionally, to keep discussions on track (or to bring them back on track), facilitators can list the questions they want to cover on the board or summarize the discussion on the board as it proceeds. Stopping and asking a participant to summarize where the discussion is when it appears to go off track may also help (Brown University, Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning, n.d.).

## Recording notes

Asking families and educators to share their views and recommendations about school climate and discipline comes with the responsibility of using the information to guide improvement decisions. Comments shared during a reflection group may be recorded in several ways. A notetaker may record the comments through written or typed notes. If this method is used, it is helpful to write down comments using the exact wording used by the participant. Another method is to have the facilitator or notetaker write key points or comments on chart paper during the discussion. This method allows the participants to review the comments and correct or clarify written statements if needed. Factors to consider when choosing the method for note taking include size of the group, translation needs of participants, or preference of the facilitator. In either case, having a separate notetaker allows the facilitator to focus on guiding the conversation.

## Summarizing and sharing common themes

Summarizing the participant's comments into common themes should be completed as soon as possible after the reflection group is complete. Team members may summarize the findings by grouping comments into common themes about "what is working" and "what is not working" in the school's discipline practices. Once the grouping is complete, the team should write a sentence describing the theme of each grouping. The reflection group summary should include a list of all recommendations suggested by the participants. Whether reporting the common themes verbally or in writing, care should be taken to protect the privacy of the participants.

Team members will need to decide who should receive the summary of the common themes and recommendations, and how it will be shared. When possible, we recommend sharing any written summary with stakeholders in person to avoid misinterpretation of the common themes and to answer any questions that arise. In addition to team members and other stakeholder groups, it is helpful to share a summary with reflection group participants to show that your team valued their perspectives and that care was taken to protect their privacy.

## Follow-up and planning next steps

An important step in the reflection group process is timely completion of promises made to participants. Following up on participants' requests sends the message they are important, and that the reflection group is a valuable way to communicate suggestions or concerns. The reflection group team should also meet to review the group process to identify things that worked and areas of improvement. Please refer to *School discipline data indicators: A guide for districts and schools* (Nishioka, 2017) for suggestions on using reflection group data as part of the Plan-Do-Study-Act continuous improvement cycle.

## Conclusion

The perspectives of families and educators provide data that are essential to planning school improvement strategies. They can provide insight on the root causes of discipline disparities and potential solutions to address this problem of practice. Reflection groups provide a process to help schools collect these data to inform their important work.



## HANDOUT 2

# Questions to Guide Planning and Improvement Decisions in School Discipline

Reflection groups are one way to start conversations with educators and families about what is working to welcome and respect students and families. It is also a time to learn more about what is not working and recommendations on ways to strengthen relationships within your school community. This worksheet will walk teams through the process of planning a reflection group.

School or district	Date
Facilitator	Coordinator (if different)
Date	Location

What do we want to learn?

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Who will be there:  Families  Educators  Students  Other \_\_\_\_\_

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Participant list and contact information			
Name	Telephone	Email	Confirmed



## Planning and organizing a reflection group

- 1. Determine the purpose. What information does your team hope to gain from the reflection group? How can the reflection group help build the groundwork for honest conversations about school climate and discipline?**
- 2. Create a team.** In addition to the people coordinating the event, the team will need to identify a facilitator, note taker, and timekeeper before the reflection group
- 3. Choose a facilitator.** Who should facilitate the reflection group? For each potential facilitator, consider the following:
  - Is the person respectful of others, regardless of racial, ethnic, or cultural background?
  - Does the person remain open-minded to others' opinions, even if he or she disagrees?
  - Is the person skilled in active listening, probing for understanding, and reflection?
  - Can the person remain neutral and refrain from contributing to a conversation on the proposed topic?
  - Is the person aware of the body language and tone of voice—of others, as well as his or her own?
  - Does the person have skills in defusing situations and dealing with difficult conversations?
  - Is the person in a position of authority that could prevent participants from sharing their honest opinions?
- 4. Review the protocols.**
  - a. Do any of the questions need to be clarified, edited or adapted for your setting?
  - b. Do you anticipate challenges related to any of the following?
    - Obtaining written or verbal consent
    - Causing participants concern or distress
    - Explaining and/or following the reflection group agreements
    - Taking a confident and empathetic position to deal with difficult situations that may arise
    - Following up on participants' input and requests
- 5. Select and invite participants.**
  - a. Who should participate in the reflection group? Who will obtain any written consent forms required by your school or district?
  - b. Who should invite participants to come? How will you invite them to participate?

**6. Schedule date, time, location, and other logistics.**

- a. Where and when should the reflection group happen?
  
- b. What will you provide in terms of snacks or child care (when appropriate)?
  
- c. How will you accommodate diversity in language, ability, or cultural background e.g., arrange for a translator?

## Conduct a one-week check-in

**1. Check-in meeting.**

- a. Who will coordinate the one-week check-in meeting with the facilitator, note taker, time-keeper, and coordinator? It is a good idea to review the facilitator protocol, schedule, and roles.
  
- b. Who will make sure the team receives an electronic and a paper copy of these materials? Copies of the notes template should also be sent to the note taker.

**2. Reminder calls and/or emails to participants.**

- a. Who will make reminder calls and/or emails to the participants?
  
- b. Who will invite additional participants, if needed?

## Day of the reflection group

### 1. Set up early.

- a. Who will be responsible for arriving early to arrange the room? Participants should sit together in a circle or at a table so that everyone can hear and participate freely in the conversation. For family groups, ensure the space for students is close to the reflection group so that students can connect easily with their parents if needed.
- b. Where will you set up the refreshments?
- c. How will you display the group agreements?

### 2. Facilitate the reflection group.

- a. How will you greet the participants? If translation is required, how will you coordinate communication with the translator?
- b. How will you make sure that any written or verbal consents required by the district are obtained?

### 3. Record notes.

- a. Who will record notes?
- b. How will this be done e.g., summarize themes on chart paper, written notes, and/or audio recording?

## Summarizing and sharing common themes and recommendations

### 1. Summarizing common themes.

- a. Who will summarize common themes and recommendations?
- b. How will you make sure that the privacy of the reflection group participants is maintained?
- c. When will a summary of the common themes and recommendations be available?

### 2. Sharing the summary of common themes and recommendations.

- a. How will the summary of common themes and recommendations be shared with the reflection group members?
- b. Who else will receive the summary of common themes and recommendations? How and when will it be shared?

## Follow-up and planning next steps

### 1. Thank the participants. Who will thank the participants for attending the reflection group?

### 2. Schedule a debrief meeting.

- a. Who will schedule a debrief meeting with the team and others about the reflection group discussion?
- b. Who will be responsible for following up with participants about any requests or promises that surfaced during the reflection group?
- c. What are next steps for scheduling the next reflection group?



## HANDOUT 3

# Reflection Group Agreements

### Reflection Group Agreements–English

## Reflection Group Agreements

School staff members are here to listen.

We hope everyone will participate.

There are no right or wrong answers.

We will respect everyone's ideas and privacy.

Safety concerns will be reported to the principal.

### Reflection Group Agreements–Spanish

## Grupo de Reflexión

“Acuerdos.”

Los empleados de la escuela están aquí para escuchar.

Deseamos que todos participen.

No hay respuestas correctas o incorrectas.

Respetaremos todas las ideas y su privacidad.

Preocupaciones de seguridad serán reportados al/la director/a de la escuela.



## HANDOUT 4

# Reflection Group—Parents and Family Members

## Sample Invitation Script for Parents and Family Members

*Below is a sample script to invite parents and adult family members to participate in the reflection group. You are welcome to use this as a guide but do not feel obligated to do so.*

Our [school/district/program] wants to make sure parents, students, and community members feel welcome in our school. We would like to ask you to join a meeting with [number of participants (6–8)] other parents and family members. At the meeting, [name of leader] will ask what you think about our school—what works and what is not working. We also want to learn about ways teachers and families can work together to improve our [school/district/program]. We are asking you to help because you know our school and our students.

The meeting will take about an hour. We will be taking written notes, but we will not write down your name to protect your privacy.

Please know you do not have to attend the meeting, but we would really appreciate your help. What you think is very valuable, and we think the conversation we have at the meeting will help improve our school.

## Parents and Adult Family Members: Reflection Group Protocol

Suggested Time	PARENTS AND ADULT FAMILY MEMBERS Questions and suggested ways to ask for more information
10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduce yourself and explain your role</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Ask all family members to share their first name and the grade(s) of their child/children</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Thank the family members for coming and explain the reason for the meeting</li></ul> <p><i>We want to make sure families, students, and community members feel welcome and respected in our school. We would like to ask you what you think about our school—what works and what is not working. We also want to learn how our teachers can improve their relationships with your children and with you. Our meeting will take about an hour. We will take notes, but to protect your privacy, we won't write down your names. Please know there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Whether you answer a question is totally up to you. However, we would really appreciate your help. What you think is valuable, and we believe our conversation will help us improve our school.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review guidelines</li></ul> <p><i>Before we get started, I would like to review a few guidelines to help everyone feel comfortable sharing information about our [school/district/program]. These guidelines are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>We are here to listen.</b> We want to spend our time learning more from you. If you have a question, we will write it down so we can answer it later.</li><li>- <b>We hope everyone will participate.</b> I may call on you to make sure you feel included, but it is up to you as to whether you want to share information. Your participation is voluntary.</li><li>- <b>There are no "right" or "wrong" answers.</b> Everyone's opinion is important. In fact, we want to hear different opinions!</li><li>- <b>We will respect everyone's ideas and privacy.</b> Please do not share what others say outside of this room unless you have their permission.</li><li>- <b>We will report safety concerns to the principal.</b> We will write down safety concerns and report them to the principal.</li></ul>
15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate the reflection group</li></ul> <p>What do school or staff members say or do to make families and students feel welcome or respected in our school? In the classroom?</p> <p><i>Suggested probing questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- What types of activities do you like to attend or do in school? In class?</li><li>- What is one thing we can do to help families feel more welcome or respected?</li></ul>
10 minutes	<p>Are there things the school staff members say or do that make families feel unwelcome or disrespected? Make students feel unwelcome or disrespected?</p> <p><i>Suggested probing questions</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Can you share an example of what happened?</li><li>- Have you told anyone about this concern? What happened?</li></ul>

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**15 minutes** How does the school tell families about positive things students are doing? What works well? What is not working?

How does the school tell families about problems students are having? What works? What is not working?

How do families tell the school they are unhappy with something that happened in school?

*Suggested probing questions*

- Was the school helpful or not helpful? Why?

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**10 minutes** What could teachers do to improve their relationship with families? With students?

*Suggested probing questions*

- What is the most important thing teachers could do to improve their relationship with you? With students?

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**5 minutes**  Thank the participants, answer any questions, and explain next steps

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## Spanish: Reflection Group Take-Home Sheet

### Grupo de Reflexión

*Gracias por hablar con nosotros hoy. Si tiene otras ideas, por favor escribalas en este papel y entréguelo al director de la escuela.*

1. Cosas que maestros y empleados de la escuela hacen que ayudan a las familias y estudiantes sentirse bienvenidos y respetados en esta escuela
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Razones que familias o estudiantes se han sentido que no son bienvenidos o respetados en esta escuela.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Cosas que maestros y otros empleados de la escuela pueden hacer para ayudar a las familias y estudiantes sentirse más bienvenidos y respetados en esta escuela.

# Parent or Family Reflection Group Note-Taking Sheet

**What do school or staff members say or do to make families and students feel welcome or respected in our school? In the classroom?**

**Are there things the school staff members say or do that make families feel unwelcome or disrespected? Make students feel unwelcome or disrespected?**

**How does the school tell families about positive things students are doing? What works well? What is not working?**

**How does the school tell families about problems students are having? What works? What is not working?**

**How do families tell the school they are unhappy with something that happened in school?**

**What could teachers do to improve their relationship with families? With students?**

**Safety concerns or questions that require follow-up from the school**





## HANDOUT 5

# Reflection Group—Educators

***Below is a sample script to invite teachers and other educators to participate in the reflection group. You are welcome to use this as a guide but do not feel obligated to do so.***

A priority for our [school/district/program] is to ensure we provide a welcoming and positive learning environment for students and staff members. [I/We] would like to invite you to participate in a reflection group to help us learn about the successes and challenges of building positive relationships with students from diverse cultural backgrounds. We also hope to learn more about recommendations that could improve our school for every student. [I/We] recommended you for this reflection group because of your knowledge about our [school/district/program] and the students we serve.

Your participation is voluntary, and your decision will not affect your relationship with our [school/district/program]. If you decide to participate, you are free to withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.

If you decide to help, you will join a group of [number of participants (6–8)] colleagues from our [school/program/district]. The reflection group will meet for about an hour. To record all the information shared during the group, we would like your permission to record written notes. Please know we will not record anyone's name in the written notes. We will also ask the group participants to keep the information shared during the group confidential, but we cannot guarantee everyone will do so. We appreciate your time and involvement in this reflection group, as your opinions and ideas will provide valuable information about our school and ways to improve our school climate.

## Educators: Reflection group protocol

Suggested Time	EDUCATORS Questions and suggested ways to ask for more information
<b>10 minutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Introduce yourself and explain your role</li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Thank everyone for coming and explain the reason for the reflection group<p><i>We want to make sure staff members, parents, students, and community members feel respected at our school. We would like to ask you what you think about the relationships in our school—what is working, what is not working, and ways to strengthen our relationships with students and families. This meeting will take about an hour. We will take notes, but to protect your privacy, we will not write down names. Please know there are no “right” or “wrong” answers, and your participation is voluntary. We really appreciate your help. What you think is valuable, and your insights will help us plan how to improve our school.</i></p></li><li><input type="checkbox"/> Review guidelines<p><i>Before we get started, I would like to review a few guidelines to help everyone feel comfortable sharing information about our [school/district/program]. These guidelines are:</i></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>We are here to listen.</b> We want to spend our time learning more from you. If you have a question, we will write it down so we can answer it later.</li><li>- <b>We hope everyone will participate.</b> I may call on you to make sure you feel included, but it is up to you as to whether you want to share information. Your participation is voluntary.</li><li>- <b>There are no “right” or “wrong” answers.</b> Everyone’s opinion is important. In fact, we want to hear different opinions!</li><li>- <b>We will respect everyone’s ideas and privacy.</b> Please do not share what others say outside of this room unless you have their permission.</li><li>- <b>We will report safety concerns to the principal.</b> We will write down safety concerns and report them to the principal.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>15 minutes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate the reflection group<p>What do <b>staff members</b> do to help students feel respected? Are you interested in learning any of these strategies? What strategies do <b>you</b> use to build positive relationships with students?</p><p><i>Suggested probing questions:</i></p><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Think of a student or group of students from a different racial, linguistic, or cultural background than yours. What did you say or do to connect or build a relationship with that student/group?</li><li>- Are the strategies the same for all students?</li></ul></li></ul>

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**10 minutes** What challenges do you have in building positive relationships with every student?  
Are there things that happen in school that may cause students to feel unwelcome or disrespected?

*Suggested probing questions:*

- What contributes to these problems?
- What are some of the challenges students face in school?
- What did you say or do to help them succeed in your classroom?

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**15 minutes** How does the school tell families about positive things students are doing? What works well? What is not working?

How does the school tell families about problems students are having? What works? What is not working?

How do families tell the school they are unhappy with something that happened in school?

*Suggested probing questions:*

- What factors influence the quality of relationships between teachers and students who are from different racial, linguistic, or cultural backgrounds?
- What do you think causes or contributes to differences in how discipline is used in your school?
- Can you describe an example of a discipline situation or problem?
- What seemed to make the situation better? What escalated the situation or made it worse?

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**10 minutes** What would help improve the teacher-student relationships in your school?

*Suggested probing questions:*

- What is the most important thing that teachers or other educators do to improve their relationship with families? With students?

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**5 minutes**  Thank the participants, answer any questions, and explain next steps

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## **Educators Reflection Group Note-Taking Sheet**

**What do staff members do to help students feel respected? Are you interested in learning any of these strategies? What strategies do you use to build positive relationships with students?**

**What challenges do you have in building positive relationships with every student? Are there things that happen in school that may cause students to feel unwelcome or disrespected?**

**How does the school tell families about positive things students are doing? What works well? What is not working?**

**How does the school tell families about problems students are having? What works? What is not working?**

**How do families tell the school they are unhappy with something that happened in school?**

**What would help improve the teacher-student relationships in your school?**

**Safety concerns or questions that require follow-up from the school:**



## About the *Training Guide for Using Data to Promote Equity in School Discipline Series*

REL Northwest developed this series of training and work session materials to help schools and districts improve their school discipline policies and practices. Specifically, the series provides guidance on using data to identify areas of concern related to the overuse of exclusionary discipline or disproportionality in assigning discipline to student groups, such as students of color or students with disabilities. The series also helps teams use evidence to identify interventions, develop an action plan, track their effectiveness, and inform improvement decisions.

There are five parts in this series: a planning guide and facilitation materials for four work sessions, each of which is described below. The work session materials are designed to be flexible and modular. Schools or districts that are in the beginning stages of improving their school discipline may find all the work sessions useful. Other schools or districts that are already using evidence-based school discipline systems and/or regularly using data to guide school discipline improvement may only need selected work sessions—or even parts of a session—to address specific needs. The materials available in this series include:

- *Introduction: Planning and Facilitating Work Sessions to Improve School Discipline*
- *Work Session: Revising School Discipline Policies and Procedures to Promote Equity*
- *Work Session: Using School Discipline Data to Pinpoint Concerns and Track Progress*
- *Work Session: Using Reflection Groups to Learn How Families and Educators View Their School or District*
- *Work Session: Identifying Strategies to Promote Equity in School Discipline*

To access the introduction/planning document, the other work session training guides, and the accompanying PowerPoint presentations, visit <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/news/equity-school-discipline.asp>

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