

Chapter One: Using the Tools Activity

Stepping Into the Work

The very crux of what it means to be a school leader who orchestrates within the community with magnanimity, deference, and grace for all its members is epitomized in the principles and practices of identity safe ideas. This book is intended to introduce you to them, and educational leaders can then further avail themselves of the many resources in each chapter. These resources will carry you further toward a deeper understanding of all the aspects for an identity safe school. Take the time to learn more about identity safety, stereotype threat, privilege, micro-aggressions, and anti-racist education, and you will prosper in your ability to inform all your actions in a way that will resonate with and benefit those who depend on your support. You can use the following questions to reflect on your practice as an identity safe educator and leader and refer to them as you read the book.

Educate Yourself

1. How can you broaden your education about identity safety? What topics are still unfamiliar to you? Which ones have you studied but may need to update or explore further in order to address it with full cognizance in your school?

Ask Yourself

1. What are your areas of strength as a leader?
2. Can you identify areas where you will benefit from more growth?
3. What will you do to bolster your areas of growth?

Know Your School Community

1. Who do you consider your allies at your site?
2. Who have you not reached out to yet? How can you connect with these persons?
3. Who are your mentors or people you can confide in, either at the school or in your personal life?
4. How can you frame all community members in a positive light when they are the topic of discussion?
5. How can you guard sensitive information in ways that respect those for whom the information affects?

Assess Your School for Identity Safe Practices

1. In what ways does your school already embody identity safe principles? Consider classrooms, the school yard, and your school families.

2. What areas on your campus can you recognize that need attention? Where does it feel unsafe, and what can you do?

Assessing your school will be more fully examined in Chapter 7: Planning and Implementing Schoolwide Identity Safety.

Pace Yourself

You can start small and grow. Change can be a slow process, depending on who is on board and the level of change that is needed. Especially in the beginning when meticulous attention is required, it can make perfect sense to take it a step at a time. To begin, you can ask yourself these questions:

1. What are your starting points?
2. How will you measure progress?
3. What entry points can you use in your school practices and policies to initiate and implement different aspects of identity safety?

Entry points for identity safety are explored fully in Chapter 6: Coherence and Congruence