



# Be R.E.A.L.

Recognize + Empathize + Acknowledge  
+ Listen

MASE Fall Leadership Conference 2021  
Amy Ernst, Julie Fred, and Amy Johnson

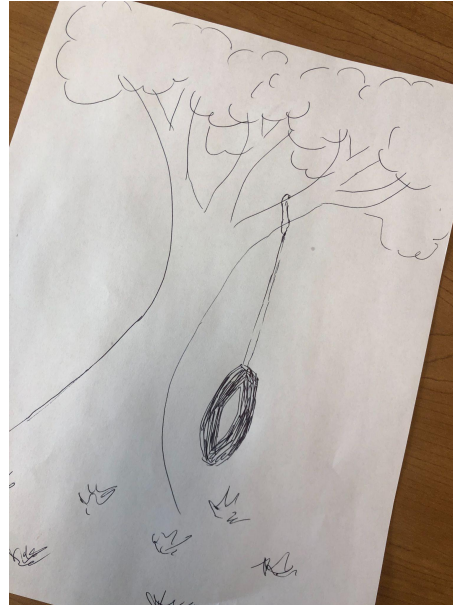


# Purpose of Session

- Hear from other Directors how they supported staff and each other
- Participate and share your story
- Sharing of resources and samples
- Giveaways that support self-care!

# This is a Brave Space today.

Before we start, we are going to [Draw a Tree.](#)



# Why draw a tree?

Break the ice.

Get to know who you are as a person.

Start conversations.

It is fun. ;)

# Recognize

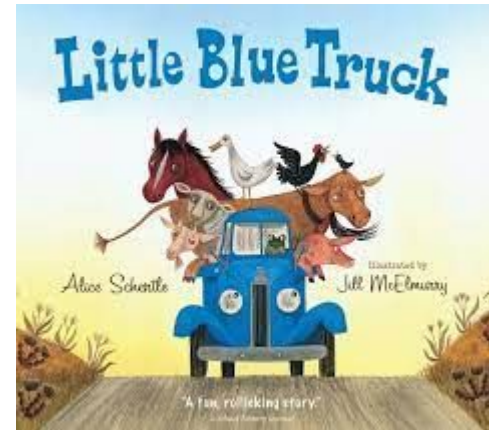
Know your staff.

Relationships

Understanding the team personality.

Who is the leader among the team? Could be positive or negative.

Trust.



# Emphasize



Brene Brown on  
Empathy

# Comparative suffering..

- Individuals make sense of their own pain or frustrations by comparing it to others
  - It helps to establish perspective (Brene)
  - But be careful: it can minimize the experience or feelings of someone
  - Comparative suffering can also walk us right into a feeling of being burnt out or resentment. (ie: not seeing your parents for Christmas)
  - Comparative suffering can also lead you into judging other people's suffering. (ie: friend who complained about salary)
- 
- Examples: Job Duties, Loss, Everyday struggles

# Amy Cuddy's stages of a crisis

Pandemic Flux Syndrome

Collective Mental Health Toll

“Surge capacity”

“Affective forecasting errors”

“Return to normal” - what is “Normal?”





*“All in all, if you’re experiencing increased sadness or anxiety along with an urge to dramatically change something about your life — some of the markers of pandemic flux syndrome — be assured you’re not alone. Many people are feeling such tensions. Although human beings are more **resilient** than we generally appreciate, it will take time for many of us to stably recover, to reflect and recalibrate.” ~ Amy Cuddy*

# Acknowledge

Intentional work with the leadership team supporting staff (beyond vision)

“When a leader’s appeal rests on a vision alone, leadership is not whole. And the limitations of such visionary leadership become painfully obvious in times of crisis, uncertainty, or radical change. Take the coronavirus pandemic. No one had anything like it in their “Vision 2020.” Crises always test visions, and most don’t survive. Because when there’s a fire in a factory, a sudden drop in revenues, a natural disaster, we don’t need a call to action. We are already motivated to move, but we often flail. What we need is a type of holding, so that we can move purposefully.”

[Effective Crisis Leadership](#)

# Holding

“In psychology, the term has a specific meaning. It describes the way another person, often an authority figure, *contains* and *interprets* what’s happening in times of uncertainty. Containing refers to the ability to soothe distress and interpreting to the ability to help others make sense of a confusing predicament.”

- Interpret data
- Give direction
- Reassure
- Orient
- Stick together.

Tell people what will change and how they will be able to do their work...provide clarity....offer interpretations

What are the key priorities?

Who needs to do what?

# Interpersonal Holding

Offer and Model it : Let yourself be in the present.

Offer permission to feel what you're feeling and curiosity to consider different ways to understand our circumstances and imagine our future

Acknowledge distress and difficulty without giving in to powerlessness.

## Effective Crisis Leadership



# Listen



Share your story

# WRITE...PASS...ADD

**What is one positive discovery that you or someone you know made during the pandemic?**

Write for one to two minutes then pass to the right and the next person adds to the comments until the paper returns to the original writer.

# Special Ed Teacher Support

**Essential Question 1:** How can our district increase support for special ed teachers allowing for maximum engagement in continuous improvement and ultimately strengthening our retention of high quality staff?

**Essential Question 2:** How can we provide beginning special education teachers with comprehensive professional learning support?

Exploring and discussing topics related to special education teaching conditions

Systemic work on continuous improvement

Retentions strategies

Book: Supporting the wounded educator

# Marble jar analogy





So now what...

*Processing our feelings and acknowledging the “hard stuff” allows us to grow in our compassion, therefore helps us be emotionally resilient and be there for others.*

Being vulnerable and accepting someone's vulnerability is the glue that holds us together

How can we do that for each other?

How can we do that for our students?

Thank you for being vulnerable.

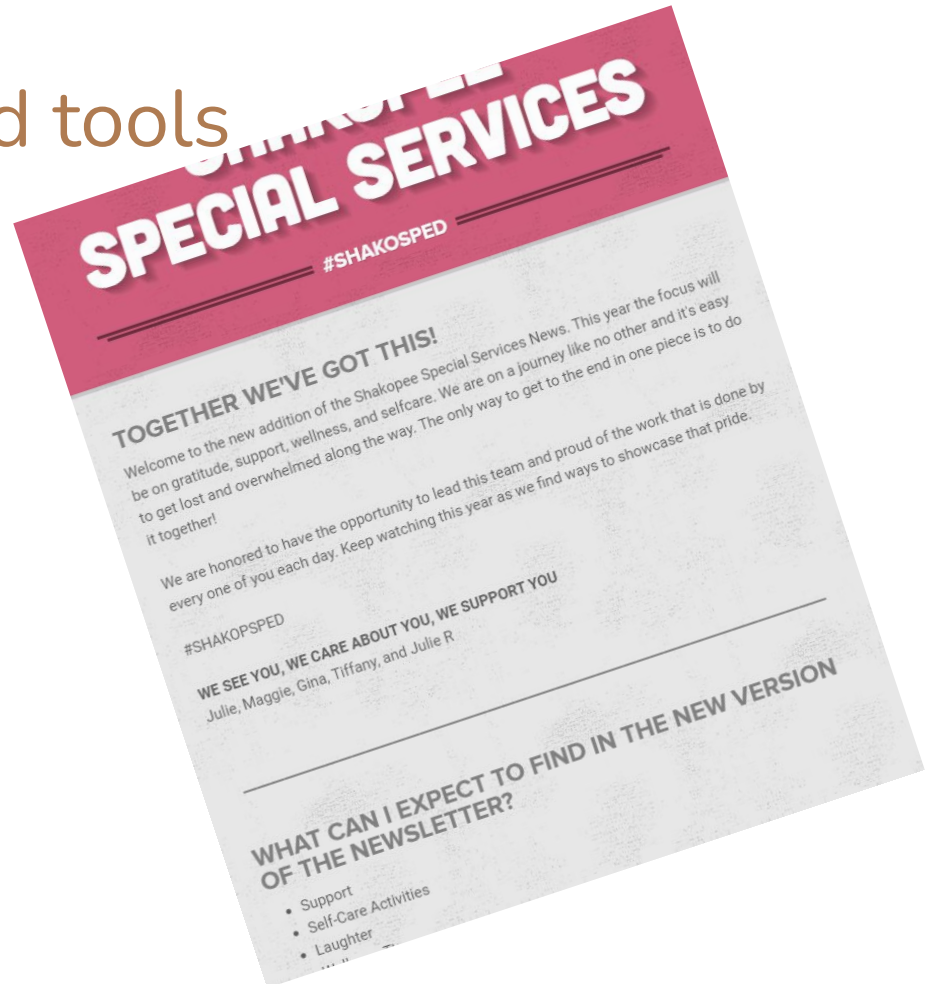


# Shared examples and tools

<https://www.smores.com/4dc2g>

<https://www.smores.com/gj07y>

[Coffee cup video](#)




# Shared Messages

## SHORT AND SWEET

APRIL 16TH, 2021

### HOPE

"Hope is the belief that your future can be better than your past and you play a role in making it so. Hope refers to our ability to develop pathways (waypower) or mental strategies that will help us achieve our goals and apply our agency (willpower) to these pathways." Chan Hellman, PhD, and Casey Gwinn, J.D. noted this definition in an article on the Aces Connection website. They also stated, "No matter the toxic stress we faced in childhood or the adversity of our lives, no matter the heartache we have endured – the goals we set, the directions we choose for our future, and the obstacles we overcome on the journey to our dreams are at the heart of well-being." I appreciate how empowering these words are. We have all experienced some hardships over the last year during the pandemic. It seems like there is finally an air of hope where this is concerned. As you return from spring break, entering the last season of the school year what goals are you focusing on that bring you hope? If you're willing to share, please leave a note in the Sped Staff Lounge: <https://padlet.com/semat10/cnsqz5eefdmvwb>



padlet

Amy Ernst + 29 6mo

### Special Ed Staff Lounge - Connection over perfection

Short and Sweet

Intentions for the Year Ahead

+

Anonymous 7mo

When you envision looking back at your career, what do you hope you've left behind? What do you hope is better because you gave

+

What goals are you focusing on that bring you hope?

+

Proud Tradition **NP** Promising Future  
NEW PRAGUE AREA SCHOOL

## Townhall Discussion "CULTIVATING GRATITUDE"

Presenters: Tony Buthe & Amy Johnson

May 5, 2021 / 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM  
Online Session

How can cultivating gratitude in my life help change my life? Come review what research has found with intentional gratitude. Listen and share stories that have made a significant impact in the lives of others.

Learn why simple habits around gratitude can change your brain chemistry and why that is important.

Townhall gatherings are open and intended for everyone. Participation is not required but recommended. Your voice needs to be heard. Come check us out! You can review the previously recorded Townhall session linked below.

## Townhall Discussion IV "TOXIC POSITIVITY"

Presenters: Tony Buthe & Amy Johnson

April 15, 2021 / 6:30 AM - 7:30 AM  
Online Session

"Toxic Positivity" is real according to the author and motivational speaker Mr. Jon Gordon. Education is not excused from this term either. When you ignore someone's feelings or have a lack of empathy, awareness, and understanding, what you believe to be positive remarks may be "toxic" to another person.

Townhall IV will focus on real positivity and encouragement vs. toxic positivity. Learn how to identify and support the difference not only for yourself, but also for your family, friends, and coworkers.

Townhall gatherings are open and intended for everyone and participation is not required, but recommended. Your voice needs to be heard. Come check us out! Special Bonus, there will be a Cup of Coffee at the end of the program that will surely change your life!

# Self-care reflection

## Self-care Reflection

Thank you for your time today.

Remember to Be R.E.A.L. and

“Stay awkward, brave, and kind.”

~ Amy, Julie, and Amy