Our Schedule

- Foundational concepts
- Practice scenarios with coaching
- Debrief
- Next Steps
Defining Success

- Seek partnership
- Represent your organization well
- Communicate clearly
- Gain some resolution or closure
- Minimize emotional impact on you/your staff
- Do Good. Well.
Understanding the Players

Parents…
- Care deeply
- Have a lot of emotion

You…
- Have ownership & passion
- May also have a lot of emotion
- Are invested in your students’ success
# Understanding the Players

**Parents...**
- Are on-sighting parenthood
- May not hear everything you are saying
- Perspective may be distorted by more pressing concerns

**You...**
- May be new to all or part of the situation
- May be tired from long hours of work
- Perspective may be distorted by other things happening in your program
# Understanding the Players

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Before the Call

- Write a script
- Be aware of your timing
- Promptness matters
- Have a plan for voicemail
- Get a coach
## During the Call

<table>
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<th>Do</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
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<td>If true, tell them their child is not injured</td>
<td>Promises you can’t deliver</td>
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<tr>
<td>State the problem and the decision</td>
<td>Lying</td>
</tr>
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<td>Know your policies regarding expulsions and refunds</td>
<td>Giving your personal phone number</td>
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<td>Maintain a consistent point of contact</td>
<td>Field staff talk to parents</td>
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During the Call

Listen

Empathize

Ask Questions

Follow Up (make a plan)
During the Call

Potential helpful phrases

- “She may not have accomplished all she was hoping, but she did accomplish…”
- “He was respected by his peers for…”
- “One thing we learned is sometimes the best learning comes from the consequences of unpleasant experiences.”
- “I understand that it is hard to…”
- “What I need from you right now is to…”
During the Call

If things become challenging…

- L.E.A.F.

- Avoid baited hooks

- Allow for silence (breathing is good)

- Be thoughtful about saying, “I’m sorry.”
Ending Calls

- Review important information and ask them to paraphrase
- Clarify the outcome and next steps
- End with structure – schedule and try to be responsible for the next call
After the Call

- In the case of divorced or split parents, consider calling both parties.

- Document promptly.

- Anticipate a follow-up call.

- Debrief with your coach.
Coping Strategies and Emotional Armor

- Debrief calls and incidents
- Practice regularly
- Pass the call up if you are not succeeding or are losing your mind
Coping Strategies and Emotional Armor

- Remind yourself...
  - Do good. Well.
  - They are just doing their job as a parent
  - This will end soon and these people are (likely) a small part of your life
Legal Considerations

- Confidentiality
- Parents of minors are entitled to information
- Avoid any appearance of coerced statements
- You are not charged with making an iron-clad legal case
Parent Styles

The BLAMER

- “It’s your fault.”

- Response: stick to the facts
Parent Styles

The VICTIM

“"This is so hard for us. You must be able to help. Can you…”"

Response: empathy, but clarity
Parent Styles

The DENIER

- “That couldn’t have happened.”
- Response: stick to the facts—stay clear of an arguing trap.
Parent Styles

The DISENGAGED

- Emotionally not present, or not willing to engage with the situation

- Response: clarify next steps; ask the parent to repeat the situation and plan back to you.
Time to PRACTICE!

(after you get instructions and take a break)
Practice Scenarios

- Work in teams (one caller, one observer/coach)
- Take a few minutes before each call to read the scenario and make a quick plan
- Both parents and callers have a prep sheet
- You will initiate some calls, and will receive some calls
Practice Scenarios

Each call will be about 10 minutes, followed by 5-10 minutes of coaching from the parent.

Do a quick review of learning in your team after each call.

Goal is for everyone to make at least two calls.
Practice Scenarios

- Scenarios always have glitches stemming from theoretical information.

- Roll with the punches for the sake of the learning!
We will gather back together at 11:15
Okay, how’d it go?
Looking Ahead

- Identify 2 characteristics of potential parents that are likely to hook you into angry or defensive communication. Write down a strategy for responding to each.

- Identify 3 pieces of information you want to have written down before making your next parent phone call about a behavioral incident. Do the same for a medical incident. Incorporate those lists into your next staff training.

- Identify 2 people who can serve as coaches for you in preparing for or debriefing parent phone calls. Contact those people in the next 6 months about being a resource for you in the future.
Thank you, and good luck!

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