How to build belonging in schools - the importance of the School Leader - Counselor relationship in achieving this goal.

Graeme Scott - Executive Chairperson, The MARIO Framework

MARIO FRAMEWORK

Graeme Scott

- 37 years working in education, 25 of these in school leadership
- Founding Director of the Middle East's first fully sustainable, solar-powered school
- Principal of the International School of the Hague
- Head of a UK state school rated 'outstanding' by inspectorate
- Deputy Head of School at International School Bangkok
- Executive Chairperson of The MARIO Framework
- Educational Consultant
- Trustee of a UK Multi-Academy Trust with 16 schools

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What we'll cover

- Where are we post-Covid 19?
- Building a Culture of Care and a Sense of Belonging
- Relationship between Leadership and Counsellor

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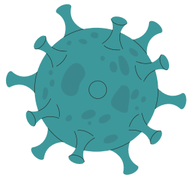
Where Are We Now?



Dramatic Decline in Student Well-Being Post COVID-19

"Disruptions to learning have continued to negatively impact students well past the initial hits following the spring 2020 school closures."

Kuhfeld, Soland, Lewis, 2022

"Emerging evidence suggests the pandemic has negatively impacted children's mental health."

Education Endowment Foundation, 2022

"International schools report post-COVID 19 increases in wellbeing issues (70%) and mental health issues (58%)."

COBIS Research Study, 2022

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Where Are We Now?

'Approximately half of adult mental health disorders begin during adolescence. International evidence indicates that CYP's mental health was already deteriorating before the pandemic, with increasing proportions of teenagers experiencing symptoms of distress or anxiety, or engaging in self-harm.'

Barker et al. 2021

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Unmanaged Mobility

- Unmanaged mobility negatively impacts students academically, socially, emotionally, physically and spiritually (Hattie, 2009)
- Students who change schools several times do worse in literacy and numeracy than their peers (NSW Education Dep't, 2016)

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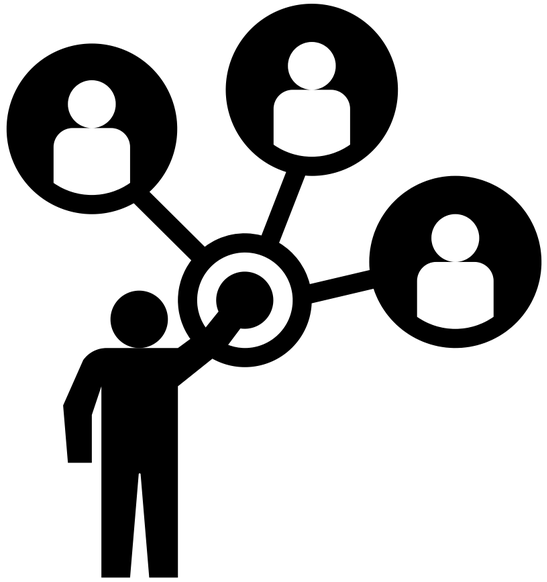
Social connectivity and relationship-building skills in childhood support future successful relationships as an adult.



Can we build a culture where connectivity and relationships are prioritized - a sense of belonging?

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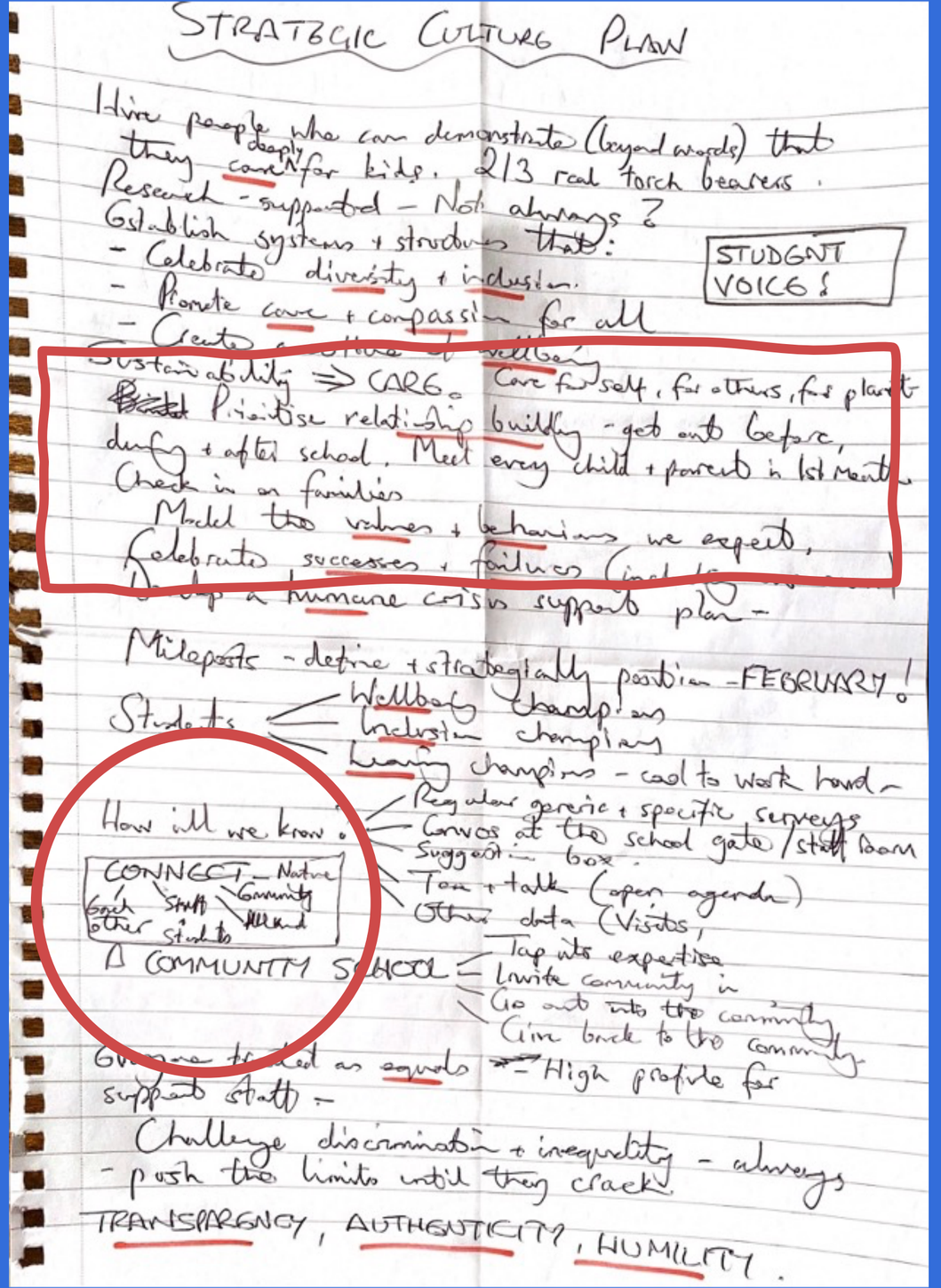
Culture

"Culture eats strategy for breakfast"...and lunch...and dinner

Drucker

MARIO FRAMEWORK

Culture



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A Culture of Protective Resilience

"*A supportive and trusting relationship with the teacher is related to higher resilience in students.*"

Diers (2015)

"*A relationship exists between the well-being of adults and their experiences with teachers during childhood and adolescence. Accordingly, teachers should be intensively trained to establish a relationship with their students that is characterized by appreciation and empathy.*"

Dittmann & Forstmeier (2022)

Student ⟺ Student

Student ⟺ Adult

Student ⟺ Community

Student ⟺ Technology

Student ⟺ Nature

Student ⟺ Themselves

A Culture of Connections

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A Strategy

- Wellbeing and belonging is everyone's responsibility (repeat)
- Reflect this in your M,V & V
- Build your strategy
  - (V + SEL + M = CoC)
  - (Care for Self; Care for Others; Care for our Planet; Connections)
- Build your alliances
- Involve your Community
- Be relentless

International School Counselor Association

Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families

Greater Good Science Center

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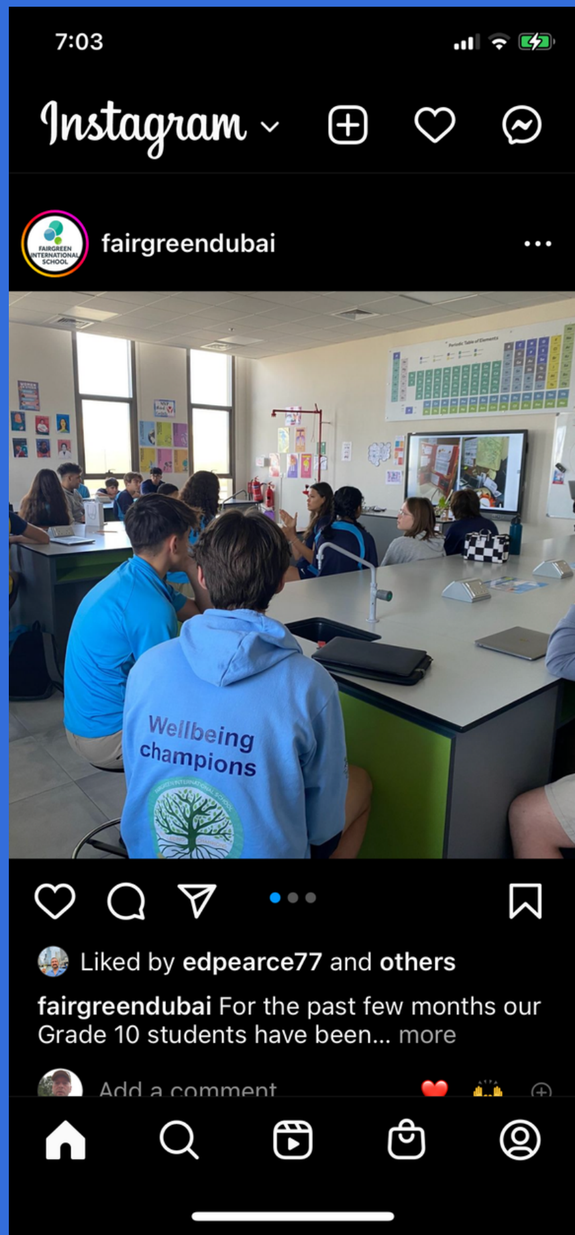
A Core Group of Carers

- Student Wellbeing Champions
- Leadership (make it a priority)
- Counselor(s)
- Teachers
- Support Staff
- Parents



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Recruitment

- Clarity around values for all stakeholders
- Recruit according to values
- Build in values to the interview and reference process
- Use counselors to support the selection process

The Head of School/Principal - Counselor Relationship

MARIO FRAMEWORK

The Head of School/Principal - Counselor Relationship

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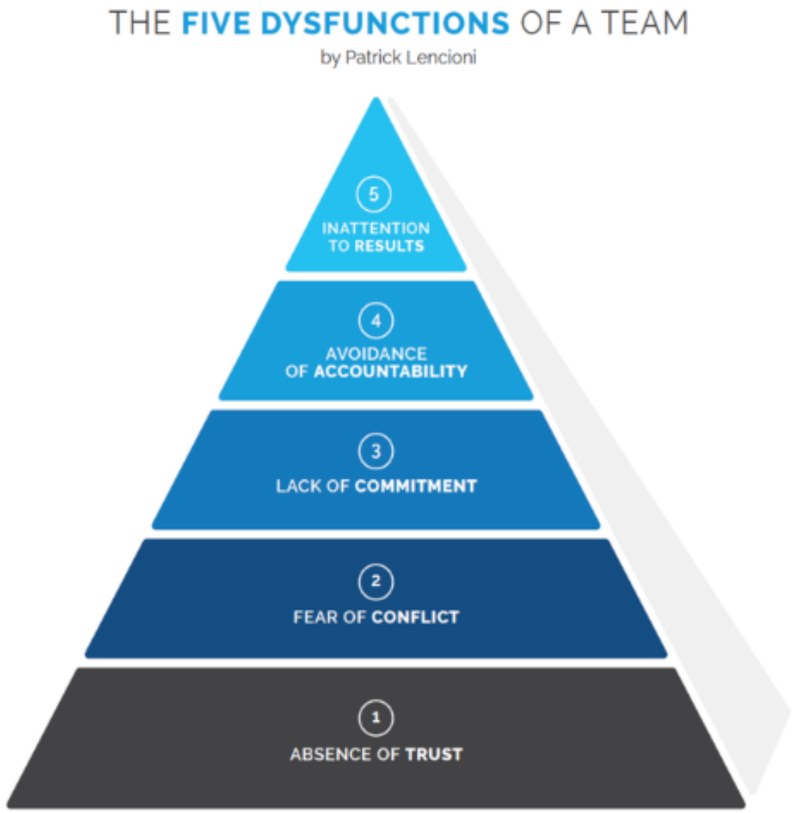
The Counselor – Leadership Relationship

- Founded on trust – model what a trusting relationship looks like
- Can be adversarial
- A professional learning opportunity for both, but particularly the administrator
- Two-way critical friending is essential - challenge & support
- School reputation can be an impediment to good practice – transparency not secrecy
- In times of crisis, you need to be aligned and in tune. No room for errors
- Better decision-making
- Safeguarding & crisis management



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Partnership between Director and Counsellor

- Trust builds over time
- Understanding our roles and staying in our own lanes
- Sense of humor
- Respect
- Critical friend
- Support and encouragement
- Vulnerability

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Human

Multiple perspectives - listen!

Strategic

Compassionate

Data-driven

Thoughtful

Reflective

Student-centered

"A school leadership team is an opportunity for school counselors to demonstrate their capacity as school leaders and implement their training in using data to identify evidence-based interventions and evaluate the effectiveness of chosen interventions."

Geiger & Oehrtman (2020)

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"So am I on the leadership team...or not?"

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Head of Year

IT/Tech Director

Principal

Director of Student Services/Support

Director of Marketing & Communications

Head of Counseling

Head of School

Admissions Director

Director of Curriculum

Vice/Deputy Principal

Consider Purpose!

- Attendance at Leadership meetings when appropriate - design the agenda around the counselor
- Counselor - HoS meetings at least once/week

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Questions

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