Igniting Passion For Learning Through Relationships
Amanda Blair and Kumal LaCasse

Kumal is from London and moved to Great Falls when he was 16. Relationships are what kept striving to graduate.

Amanda Blair was a Helena girl who found solace and comfort from school and teachers. This inspired her to want to help other kids find that safety in schools.
Why talk about Relationships and Social Skills

If we do not have relationships with our students we cannot build the social skills.

Who needs to have social skills?

Everyone, but in our society not everyone has social skills. Our students come to us without social skills and often without a sense of belonging. Our students need this, I have watched a student going from saying as soon as he turns 16 he will drop out, now he fights with his mom to stay in school.
What are Relationships?

We talk about creating relationships with kids all the time. But when did we take the time look at what relationships mean to us and to our students.

What is your definition of a relationship?

When you think of a good relationship how does it make you feel physically. When you think of the people you have a good relationship with what does it make you feel emotionally.
Your turn

What students do you have or can you think of that need to have a relationship or social skills to feel a sense of belonging.
Poor relationships?

What about that one kid? They are on your last nerve and bang you snap. We are all human and it happens.

What do you do? What would you want someone to do if that happen to you?

How do you save the relationship?
Campfire

It seems so simple, but this little exercise tells us so much about a student and how to handle them throughout the day. It builds relationships with students and staff. It helps us be prepared for a blow out or a melt down.

We ask 4 simple questions

1) What is something that good that happened to you last night?
2) What is your goal for the day?
3) What is your coping skill to help you attain your goal?
4) Who would you like to give a compliment and what is that compliment?
**Rules for Campfire**

Everyone gets a turn

Compliments must be sincere and not about physical, such as nice shoes or I like your lanyard.

No talking when a peer is talking

Everyone in the circle gets a compliment

Goal is academic and specific
Your Turn Break up into groups 10-15 Minutes
Report Back  (Personal Use)

How do you feel it went?

What do you think you could do to make this better for you?

Is this a quick check in you could do with a colleague or a spouse in the morning?
Report Back (Classroom)

How do you think you could adjust this to fit your classrooms?

Do you have any ideas for improvements?

Do you think knowing your students chosen coping skill for the day would be beneficial?
Coping Skills

Coping Skills can come in all forms. It is whatever works for that person that helps them get through their day.

Our students trust us to share their coping skills. We have a list of over a hundred on our board.
What Coping Skills do your Students Use?
Keeping in Mind Coping Skills

We are going to talk about the power of 3. This is very powerful. A triangle, earth, water, and fire, the graces, and the holy trinity. We could go on for along time talking about the power of three.
Calling, Obstacles and Broken Wholeness With Doctor Henderson
Obstacles

There are lots of obstacles that we perceive to have. Sometimes the problems are large 911 some time they are small, a broken pencil.

How our students perceive these problems in their own way and within their own past experiences.
Walk and Talk

The walk and talk is a favorite coping skill of my students. It is ideally performed with 3 people; 2 listeners and one talker. We need others to help keep us honest, because we are amazing at self deception. We need community and this helps us feel apart of no matter how broken we are.

When I originally started practicing this it was in a class with Dr Henderson. It was during a really dark time in my life.

But it was one skill that helped me be able to sit and listen to my students and build a relationship with them.
Walk and talk Continued...

The person with the problem walks and talks for 5-10 minutes while the other 2 just listen.

When they are done walking and talking they can continue walking or they can sit. But the other two ask guiding questions.

Guiding questions with no judgement and no ulterior motive other than keeping the other person’s well being uppermost in mind.

Finally, What is said in the walk and talk stays in the walk and talk
Your turn

We will break up into groups of 3. You each will take time to walk and to listen. We will regroup in 45 minutes to see how things went.

Yes this is a long time, it is meant to stretch you and allow you to feel uncomfortable, but it is important to move through the uncomfortableness and share what is on your mind.
Return and Debrief

How did it go?

What happened? Did the communication feel authentic and real?

What is your relationship like with the people you were with?
What do the Coping Skills and walk and Talks Actually do

They enable us to connect with those that cannot be connected. When we are connected we can teach, empathy, self control, responsibility, engagement, cooperation, problem solving, goal setting, and many more soft skills. These are the skills that students must have to have a sense of belonging in the world.
What do we use to teach these

We use the Character and Freedom Curriculum, The Emotional Intelligence Curriculum for teens 13-18, and the Montana Youth Transitions Curriculum. We also use a variety of videos, such as Soul Pancake, and Big Bang theory. We do role playing. We also learn from our students as the do testimonies and interviews.
Empathy is a difficult idea to teach. We are teaching connections.

Empathy is not sympathy.

Empathy is connections.
Self Control

We have students that have kicked out windows, yelled for no apparent reason. How do you teach self control?

1) We do testimonies and with a sense of community critique each other and hold each other to a great level of honesty
2) Role Play
3) Quizzes
4) What do you do in your class?
Responsibility

1) How does it look when someone is responsible?
2) Watch the video on responsibility at a job interview. Through MTTY
Cooperation

1) Students define cooperation
2) Students tell us what it is like when someone does not cooperate with them
3) How do teachers define cooperation.
4) Growth Mindset
Problem Behaviors

What are problem behaviors? We have the students define those. Then we have them look at what behavior can we replace the problem behavior. Then our community help each other choose the replacement behavior instead of the behavior that does not work for the person anymore.
Thanks for Coming