

# *2 Seconds, 2 Minutes, 2 Hours: Building Relationships and Connecting with Kids*

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Knowledge is Power  
Consulting & Wellness Services



# Session Agenda

- Ice Breaker & Introductions
- Bouncing Billy
- An introduction to attachment
  - Importance
  - Barriers
- Attachment in the school/ classroom
- Developmental assets
  - The asset of relationships
- Connecting
  - 2 seconds
  - 2 minutes
  - 2 hours



# Introductions

My name

My role



If I were to be *marooned on a desert island*,

I would take:

\_\_\_\_\_ (thing)

\_\_\_\_\_ (person)



**WHY?**

# BOUNCING BILLY

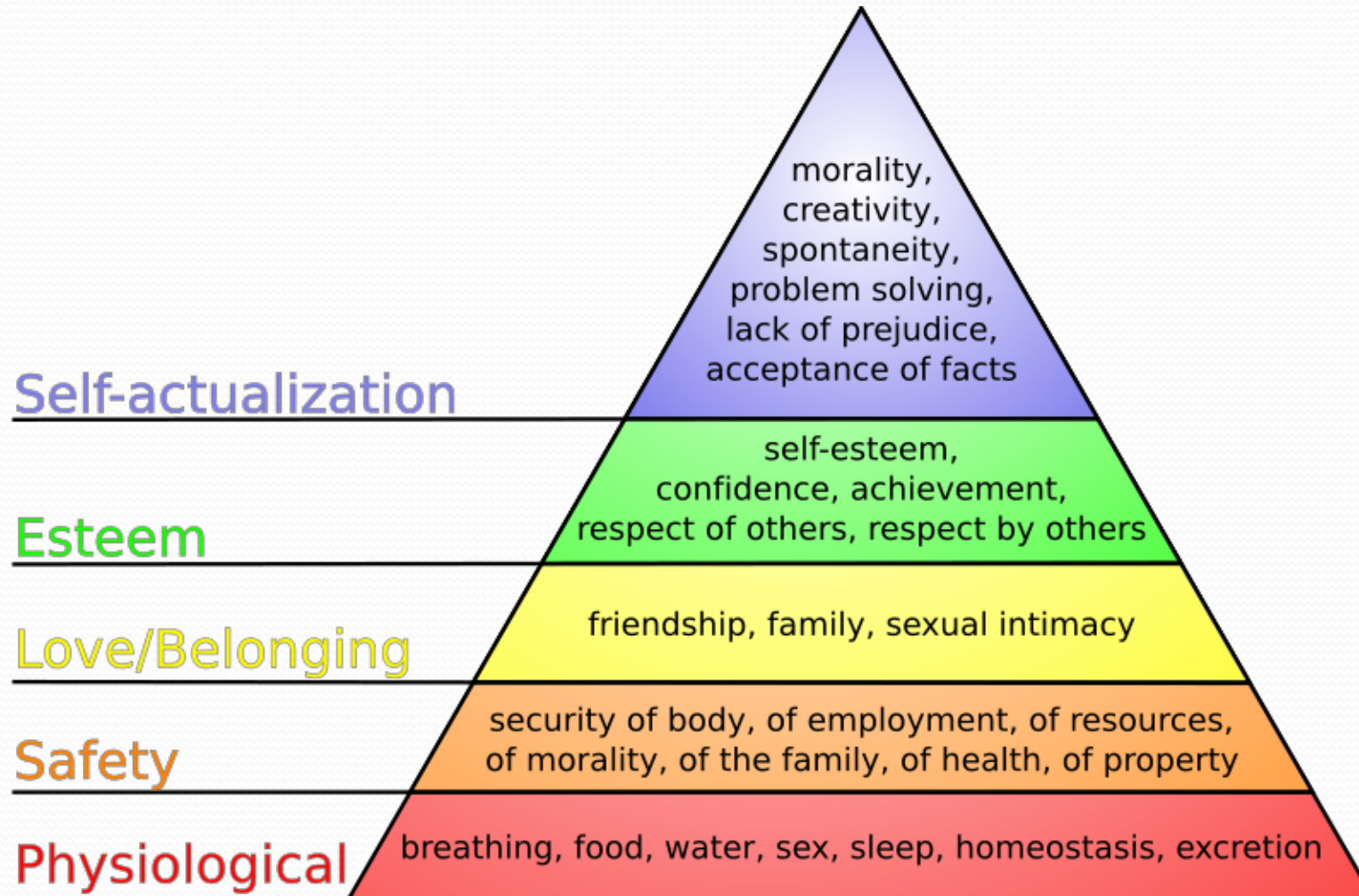


# Reflection Questions....

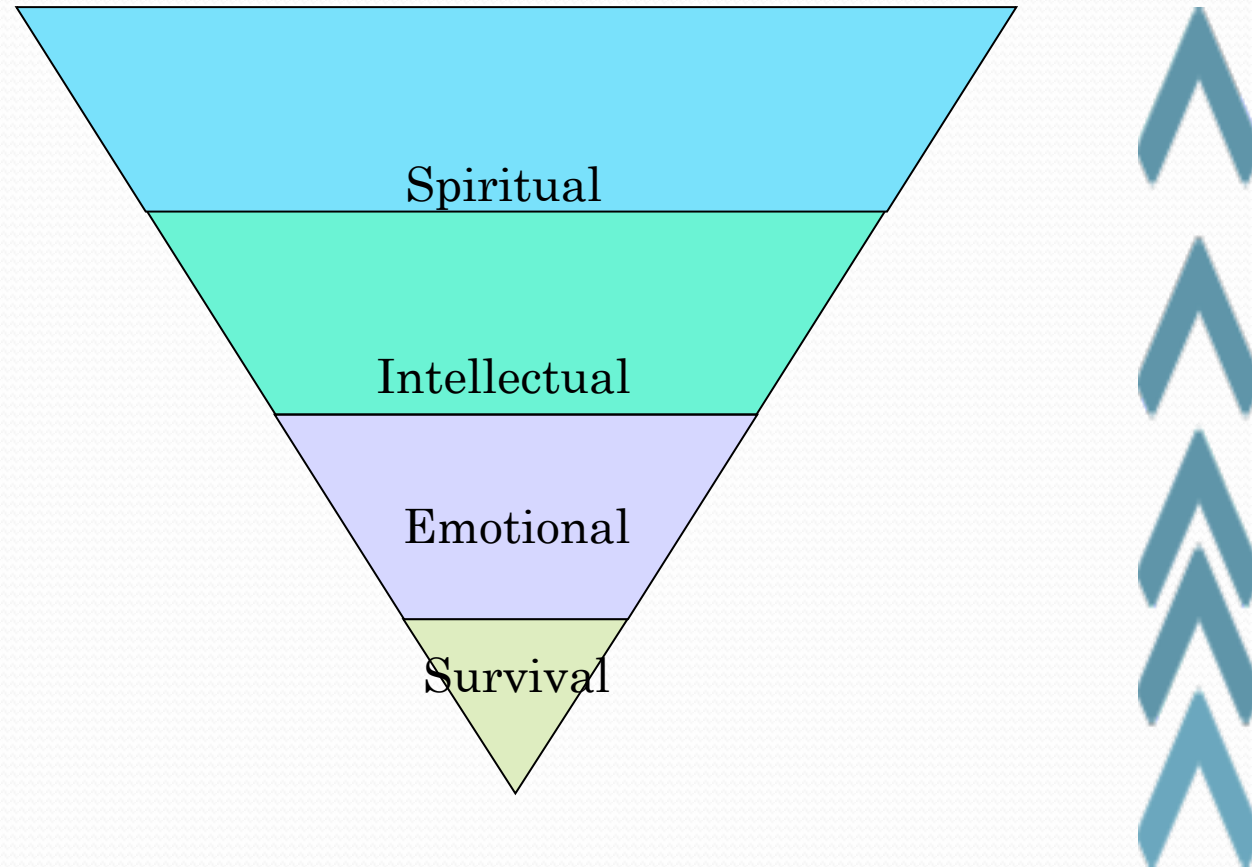
1. Who touched Billy?
2. For how long did you touch Billy?
3. How soft or how hard did you touch Billy?
4. Was it tough not to leave your chair?
5. Who didn't touch Billy?
6. Why not?
7. Would Billy have gotten where he needed to without us?
  - Roles?
  - Expectations?
  - Not interested?



# Attachment



# HOW DOES THE BRAIN WORK ?



**All Information & Ability Moves UP though  
the brain NO MATTER WHAT!**

# Attachment?



- Attachment: close emotional relationship between two people (characterized by mutual affection and a desire to maintain proximity)
- Bowlby -the father of attachment theory
  - infant attachment behaviors are controlled by a distinct, goal-corrected behavioral system, which has a "set goal" of maintaining proximity to a nurturing adult and a biological function of promoting the child's security and survival (Bowlby, 1969)

- Secure attachment requires consistent and predictable parenting (a safe base).
- Through attachment children learn:
  - Basic trust (the concept of safety....which allows the brain to develop further)
  - Regulation of impulses and emotions
  - Balance between autonomy and dependence
  - Empathy



# What Might Affect Attachment?

- Thoughts?
- Ideas?
- Experiences?



# Barriers to attachment

- Child- illness, temperament, conditions such as ADHD, autism, disability
- Parent-difficulty providing or caring for the child (due to marital conflict, family violence, personal abuse, life stressors, health conditions), neglect, abuse
- Environment-unemployment, divorce, poor housing, traumatic events, children in institutional care, changing caregivers



# Clues?

- How would you recognize a child who may need a secure attachment with an adult?



- Children will form many attachments

- Often these attachments are with things (favourite toys, games, cell phones) or peers

- Peer groups become extremely important

- Often children will form really strong attachments with their peers when they do not have any strong, secure adult attachments. They will seek out what they lack

- Children and adolescents NEED secure attachments to caring adults



# ATTACHMENT IN THE SCHOOL & CLASSROOM



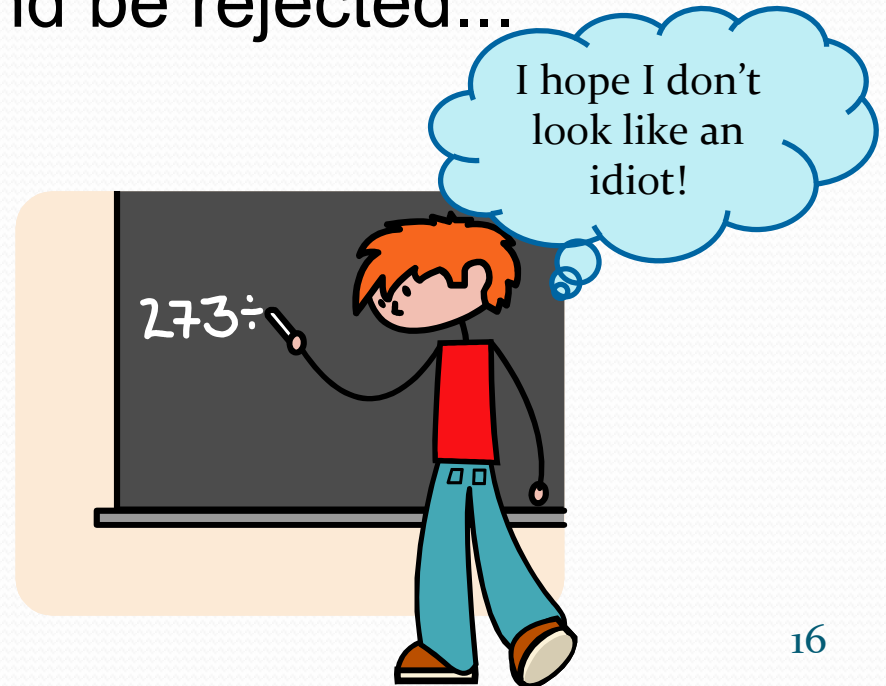
# ● #1 If we can form secure attachments with students we help to provide the conditions children need to grow and develop

- We all know teaching is A LOT more than simply stuffing students full of information!
- Teachers and schools help develop the child as a whole, emotionally, physically, intellectually and socially.
- School prepares children and helps them succeed in all aspects of their lives.



## ● #2 Attachment provides a secure base from which they can explore and take risks...

- Children will feel safe to try new things (math equations, writing assignments, etc.) without fear that they will fail and be rejected...



- **#3** When children are attached, they WANT to behave and please that person (whether at home or in the classroom)
- Team mentality/belonging



## ● #4 Acts as a Protective Factor

(Relationships with adults as part of the 40 developmental assets.)

- Can help them deal with stressors
- Increases resiliency
- Decreases high risk behaviour



**WHAT ARE SOME OTHER POTENTIAL PROTECTIVE FACTORS?**

# Developmental Assets

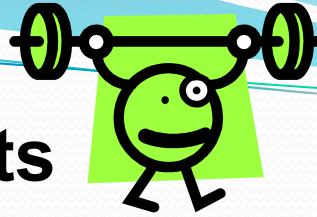


## Background

- Grounded in extensive research in youth development, resiliency, and prevention
- The Developmental Assets represent the relationships, opportunities, and personal qualities that young people need to avoid risks and to thrive.

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# The Power of Assets



- Studies of more than 2.2 million young people in the United States
- The more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in a wide range of high-risk behaviours and the more likely they are to thrive.
- Assets have power for all young people, regardless of their gender, economic status, family, or race/ethnicity.
- Levels of assets are better predictors of high-risk involvement and thriving than poverty or being from a single-parent family.

# External Assets

- **1. Family support—Family life provides high levels of love and support.**
- **2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.**
- **3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.**
- **4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.**
- **5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.**
- **6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.**
- **7. Community values youth—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.**
- **8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community.**
- **9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.**
- **10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.**
- **11. Family boundaries—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person’s whereabouts.**
- **12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.**
- **13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people’s behavior.**
- **14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.**
- **15. Positive peer influence—Young person’s best friends model responsible behavior.**
- **16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.**
- **17. Creative activities—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.**
- **18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.**
- **19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.**
- **20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends “with nothing special to do” two or fewer nights per week.**

# Internal Assets

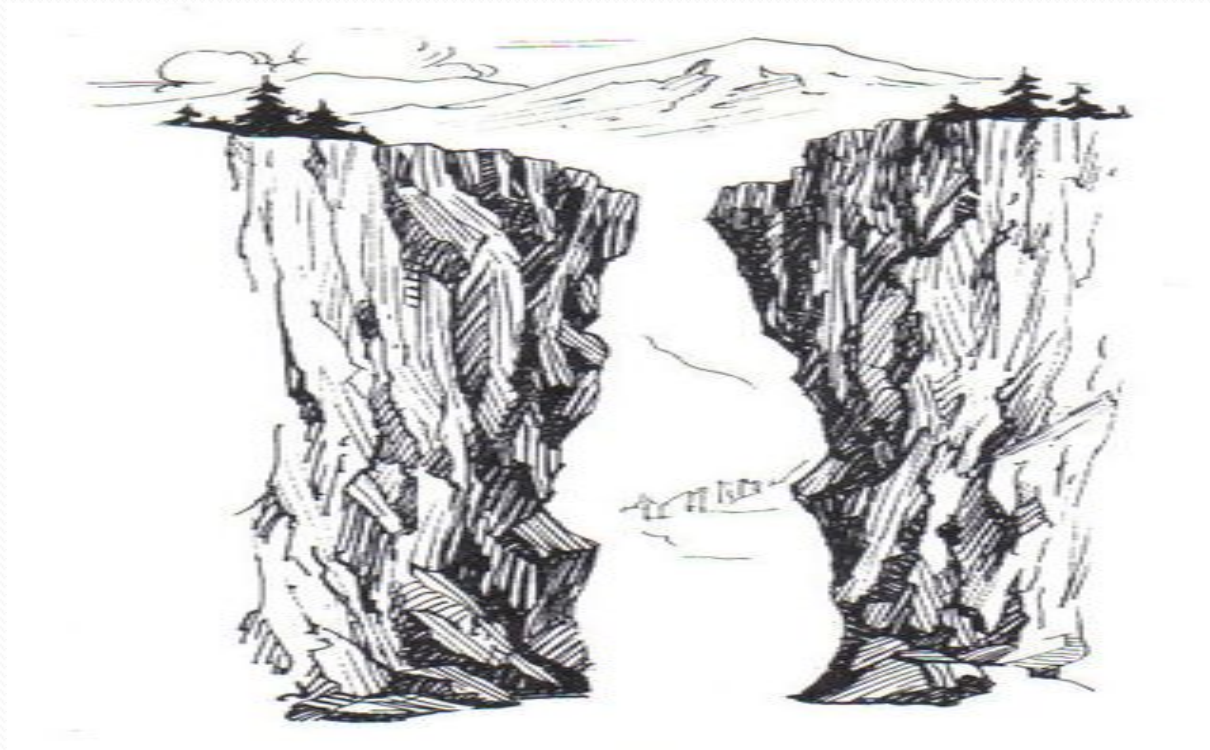
- **21. Achievement Motivation**—Young person is motivated to do well in school.
- **22. School Engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning.
- **23. Homework**—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day.
- **24. Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school.
- **25. Reading for Pleasure**—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
- **26. Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people.
- **27. Equality and social justice**—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty.
- **28. Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs.
- **29. Honesty**—Young person “tells the truth even when it is not easy.”
- **30. Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility.
- **31. Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
- **32. Planning and decision making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices.
- **33. Interpersonal Competence**—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills.
- **34. Cultural Competence**—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds.
- **35. Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations.
- **36. Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
- **37. Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over “things that happen to me.”
- **38. Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem.
- **39. Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that “my life has a purpose.”
- **40. Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

\*Data based on aggregate Search Institute sample of 148,189 students across the United States surveyed in 2003.

High-Risk Behaviour Pattern	Number of Assets			
	0-10	11-20	21-30	31-40
<b>Problem Alcohol Use</b> —has used alcohol three or more times in the past month or got drunk once in the past two weeks.	45%	26%	11%	3%
<b>Violence</b> —has engaged in three or more acts of fighting, hitting, injuring a person, carrying or using a weapon, or threatening physical harm in the past year.	62%	38%	18%	6%
<b>School Problems</b> —has skipped school two or more days in the past month and/or has below a C average.	44%	23%	10%	4%

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- **The Gap**—The average young person experiences fewer than half of the 40 assets. Boys experience three fewer assets than girls (17.2 assets for boys vs. 19.9 for girls).



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# Adult relationships and the importance of schools and teachers...

- Look at the list of developmental assets...
  - Where could/ does the role of the teacher and their relationship with the child fit in?

# Connecting...

2 Seconds...

2 Minutes...

2 Hours...

# 2 Seconds

- Greeting students
  - Saying Hello, High Fives, Wave, Smile, Nod, Use their name, touch- i.e. Hand on shoulder
  - Acknowledges their presence and importance
    - Some students lead very lonely lives, some may even go through the day at school without speaking to anyone...
  - Affects their **biology**... What's in a smile???

# Mirror Neurons

- Are neurons that fire in your brain not only when you do something but when you see someone else do it
- These have been linked to empathy and emotions
  - Getting angry or excited during a sports event
  - Crying at a heart-wrenching movie
- Our brains are acting as if we are the one playing the sport and or taking part in the movie
- Why is this important?
  - If seeing something done fires the same neuron in our brains as if we had done this, others reactions and actions are (biologically) linked to how we feel and act
  - Smiling at a student makes a huge impact as the students neurons will fire as if they had smiled themselves or had that emotion

# 2 Minutes

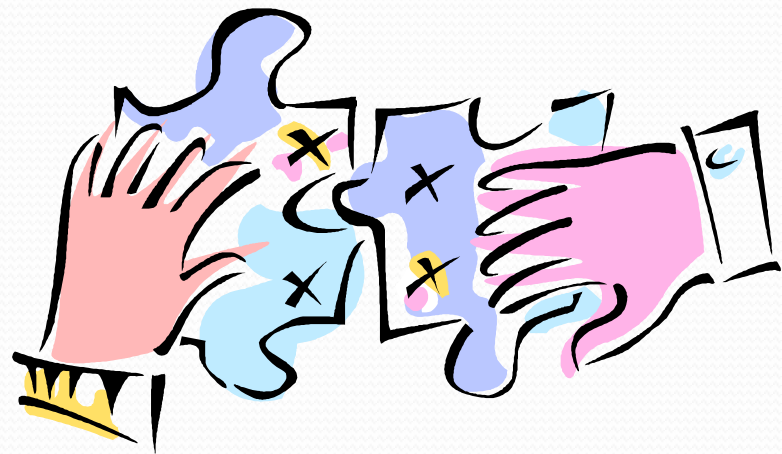
- Having a quick conversation
  - Asking how they are doing, how their weekend was, what their plans are for Christmas break
  - Congratulate them on an accomplishment
- Pay attention to their conversations with others, and use this to start your own conversation and show interest
- Show interest by playing music they like in your classroom

## 2 Hours

- Have a conversation with them... About regular everyday stuff. Get to know who they are, their favourite activities, their friends.
- Volunteer for an extra-curricular activity, being a coach allows you to get to know the students on a personal level.
- Offer extra-help/ be available. Being available helps to provide an opportunity to connect (hang around your classroom).
- Being on Supervision. Being present /available is huge!
- Go to local events where students are participating (watch a hockey game, go to the theatre).

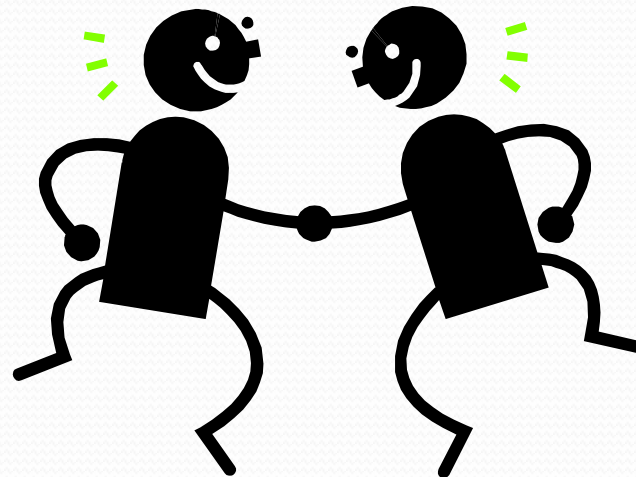
# School-Wide Promising Practices

- WHOA DAYS
- BIFFY AWARDS
- JUST SAY HI
- COMMANDO OLYMPICS
- COMMUNITY SCAVENGER HUNT
- COMMANDO MATCH



# Reflection and Sharing

- Think about the amazing and impactful ways that you create these attachments and connect in
- 2 seconds
- 2 minutes
- 2 hours



# Questions/Discussion



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