Promoting Wellness In the Suzuki Triangle

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This session will explore the concept of wellness and the ways in which Suzuki teachers promote wellness in students and parents and between them. It will describe some frequently encountered challenging situations for Suzuki teachers and Suzuki families. It will explore some concepts which may be helpful in looking at these situations and improving the quality of experience of all members of the triangle.

Introduction of topic

Definitions: Suzuki triangle, wellness, wellness in the Suzuki triangle

I. Recognizing that Suzuki teachers are influential by teaching life skills, learning skills, promoting excellence, self and mutual understanding, the experience of beauty, and healthy communication along with instrumental and musical skills.

1. Activity #1: discuss in dyads ways in which Suzuki teachers promote wellness

2. Definition of the concept of subjective experience

3. Exploring goals, hopes and fears of Suzuki teachers (Taylor, Terry and Toby), parents (Parker, Pat and Payton) and students (Sam, Sasha and Skyler).

4. An example of healthy, rewarding experiences and dynamics (Sam, Parker and Taylor)

II. Challenges and frustrations experienced by Suzuki teachers. What is happening? What is each person's experience in the triangle?

1. Activity #2: dyads discuss some commonly encountered frustrations

2. Responses to frustrations

3. An example of challenging dynamics (Sasha, Pat and Terry). What is difficult or frustrating for the teacher? What could be happening?

4. An example of more challenging dynamics (Skyler, Payton and Toby). What could be happening?

III. Four helpful concepts:

1.Trying to understand the dynamics: developing the ability to be an observer and refrain from blaming others or ourselves

2. Empathy

3. Self-compassion

4. “Goodness of fit”: teaching approach and student’s learning style, developmental stages, parent and child’s sensory styles, communication, expectations, and needs.

IV. Applying these concepts

1. Examples A, B and C. Activity #3

2. An extreme example: situation D

Conclusion: complexity as a positive.

Françoise Pierredon did her initial studies in piano, music education and clinical psychology in France. She studied in Matsumoto with Dr Suzuki and Dr Kataoka for two years and has been a Suzuki teacher and teacher trainer since 1983. She has taught in various settings and has been interested in teaching students according to their needs, styles and interests, and developing collaborative relationships with parents. She is currently working as a clinical counselor in the Therapeutic Preschool Program and the Trauma Healing Center of the Cincinnati Children’s Hospital Department of Psychiatry. She enjoys working with Suzuki teachers to develop ways to address challenges in their communication with students and/or parents.

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