

Milton Public Schools

June 17th, 2021

Behaving Equitably

How can we change?

This year has been a challenge in so many ways. Some have been traumatized by the loss of companionship due to quarantining. Some have been traumatized by the forever loss of a loved one. Some have been traumatized by the fear of exposure. It would take an entire encyclopedia to list all of the ways many have experienced trauma this year.

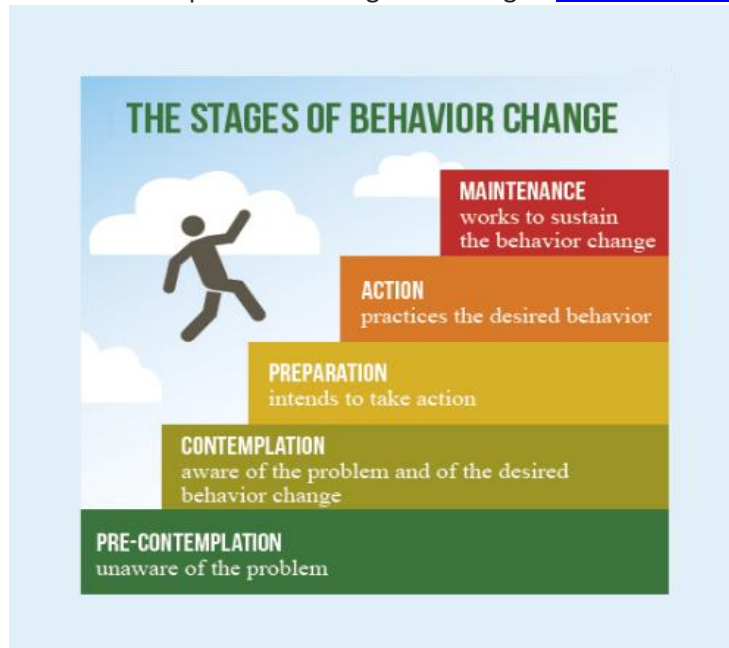
Many children have loving families who protected them during these scary times. However, there were many who did and do not have the same experience. What type of traumas and how much trauma did these children experience? If all parents/guardians/caregivers were equipped to love their children, we would not need state or federal child services to step in to remove children from abusive households. I have heard many parents/guardians/caregivers say, "Providing social-emotional support and behavioral education is not the school's role but the parent's/guardian's/caregiver's role." I do not necessary disagree with this statement. As I too believe it is a parent's/guardian's/caregiver's role to provide social-emotional support and behavioral education. However, where do children who don't have a parent/guardian/caregiver and/or a consistent source of support get such education? In addition, is the way a parent/guardian/caregiver provide social-emotional support and behavioral education the same in every household? Does every parent/guardian/caregiver from every culture teach the same thing? What happens when children who are taught to "behave" and/or receive support in diverse ways come to school and must coexist, collaborate, and learn as a collective?

A parent asked, "What is the purpose of equity and diversity training?" If you are assuming that every child starts at the same place, learn the same beliefs, have the same skills, taught to behave the exact same way, have the same needs and wants the same supports, I can understand why you would think there is no need to have diversity training. We know that is not the case because we live in the United States of America. We pride ourselves on the having the right to live, believe, and stand for different ideas. If that is at the core of being an American, then how can we assume we are the same, have the same privileges, challenges, and needs? And in order to serve ALL learners that come from these diversified ways of being, we need to learn to respect what these differences are and how to respond to them without inflicting harm. Acknowledging the differences is not the problem. The problem is how people respond to these differences. Without investigating how an individual and the collective historically responds to differences, we cannot pin point what needs to change and do the work to make and sustain change.

Change has been a hot topic in the education world. [Change](#), if used as a noun, is defined as, "the act or instance of making or becoming different." But what does change look like? What are the behaviors

that are needed to make and sustain change? What are the different phases one must go through in order to change?

Here is a visual presentation of the phases of change according to [Transtheoretical Model of Change](#):



The next step after being unaware is to be aware of the problem and of the desired behavior change. According to this theory, this is the step that must take place prior to any preparation if we intend to make and sustain change. If you want learners to not be a “bully”, they must be aware and explore what bullying is and have the desire to change those behaviors. If you want someone to not be a “racist”, they must be aware and explore what racism is and have a desire to change those behaviors. If you want someone to not be a “victim”, they must be aware and explore what being a victim is and have the desire to change those behaviors. If you want a learner to be “self-reliant”, they must be aware and explore what self-reliant is and have a desire to change the behaviors that make them dependant. If you want your child to do (and be) better, you must be aware and explore those behaviors and have the desire to change those behaviors that negatively impact him/her/they. So in order for learners to make America better, they must be aware and explore what America needs to do better with and have the desire to make America change those behaviors.

Changing behavior is not easy. It requires a lot of practice even after you make preparations and implement the change. Part of our Equity mission is to be equitable with how this change can be made and sustain with individuals and the collective.

Upcoming Events that helps bring about Equity

- Please join us and share this event with your networks - Our 3rd community reading of Frederick Douglass’s famous speech-“What to the Slave is the 4th of July,” on Thursday June 24th, with a beginning reception at 6:30 in person and on Zoom and the event at 7, at Forbes House Museum, 215 Adams St. Lower mills Milton.

Register here:

<https://forms.gle/Fe4wUr2uY3ash8C27>

- [A Proclamation from the Town of Milton](#)

Quality Review

The plan is to report the findings in the July school committee. Although the research component of the review is complete, Cambridge needs time to compile the results and create a presentation to present to the community.

We are continuing our campaign to get educators for the Steering Committee. If you are an educator in Milton and want to be part of making the Milton School District a more equitable place, please fill out this [form](#). This Committee requires a 2 year commitment and will require 4-6 hours a month of your time. If you have any questions please email sprak-martins@miltonps.org.



Thank you for keeping up with Equity and reading this Newsletter. The Newsletter will resume in the next school year. However, the Director of Education Equity will be around this summer so feel free to reach out if you have any questions and/or concerns.

Happy summer,

Somaly Prak-Martins