Plant Dog Human Activity

Overview

This is a simple way to frame a conversation with students about Health Promoting Schools (HPS) and get them thinking about upstream approaches and how we can influence the conditions within school to enable students to thrive. It takes about 10 minutes to complete.

Optional Supplies: *Fake plant, picture of a puppy, flipchart paper/markers*

Outline

HPS is about making positive changes to the school environment so that all students are able to thrive.

- Write words "Thrive" and "Survive" on the whiteboard and ask students to describe the difference between them.
- Key Point: We don't just want students to survive at school, we want them to thrive. This means we want them to feel their best, which will then allow them to do their best.

Let's think about what other living things need to thrive...

(1) What does a plant need to thrive? (We usually have a fake plant prop) [Write answers down on flip chart paper]

- The right amount of water
- The right amount of sunlight
- Healthy soil

Discussion

- *What happens if our plant starts to look unhealthy? E.g., It's kind of drooping, or turning brown. Do we get angry with the plant and tell it to do a better job of growing? No, we generally understand that it is our responsibility as the caregiver to create the best conditions that will enable the plan to thrive.*
- *Not all plants need the same amount of water or sunlight to thrive, so sometimes we need to put in extra effort to figure out the unique needs of a plant.*

(2) What does a dog need to thrive? (Option to show your own puppy or a friend/family members for personal connection. We also ask for a show of hands for how many students have or have had a pet dog before - usually it's most of them!)

- Nutritious food
- Water
- Daily exercise
- Play/fun/toys
- Love and affection

Discussion

- *What happens if you don't take your dog out for a daily walk, or don't play with it? Sometimes they will develop behavioural issues like jumping, biting, etc. It is our responsibility as the dog's caregiver to create the right conditions that enable the dog to thrive.*

(3) What do humans need to thrive?

- Nutritious food + water
- Movement - at least one hour day of moderate to vigorous physical activity
- Adequate sleep - 9-11 hours/8-10 hours
- Love and affection
- Play/fun
- Shelter
- Support and understanding
- NOTE: Students often have more to add to this list

Discussion

- *What happens when humans don't have access to these things? (Various answers- anxiety, depression, behavioural issues, medical issues, etc.)*
- *In the same way that it is a pet owner's responsibility to create the best conditions for their dog to thrive, it is the school's responsibili*ty to create the best conditions for students to thrive while they are at school.

Closing Message:

UpLift is an opportunity for students to tell adults what those ideal conditions are that they need in order to thrive. It is also an opportunity for students to play a leadership role in creating those conditions by choosing projects that will make their school a healthier, happier place to be.