

# Building Compassion-Based Relationships with Caregivers

## Section 12

### Compassionate Connections with Caregivers Activity

1. Give an example of a challenging behavior by a student's caregiver (select one that is relevant to what your staff have experienced.)
2. Ask staff to talk in pairs about their initial thoughts about the potential meaning of the behavior and how they would respond.
3. Have six different perspectives on the same family from different people in the family's life written on cards. Pass out the cards to six different people in the group and ask each person to read his or her description to the group. Continue until all six perspectives are read.
4. Now ask the pairs to make any revisions in their planned response based on the broader perspective.
5. Discuss as a whole group. Did insight into the family change your response? How? What, if anything, will you need/would like from others in or outside of the school to make a positive connection with this caregiver?

#### Example:

**Challenging behavior:** Parent has not returned the calls, texts, or emails you have sent about your concerns about your student's sadness during the school day. Every day he has a period of sadness either first thing in the morning or the last half-hour of the day.

#### Other perspectives:

**Grandmother:** "He's always been a pouty kid, but he is OK. I just distract him when he gets sad. Food works pretty well."

**Pastor:** "He is a live wire with us. Loves to play with the kids in Sunday School."

**Last year's teacher:** "I had a hard time at first getting a call back, but after she showed up to see him perform in the school music concert and I connected with her, she would text with me. I never had a chance to talk about his sad moods though. Those seemed to be short-lived last year."

**Big sister:** "He's just sad that he is the only boy at home and I get to go to my cousin's house after school because they are all girls and he has to go to the after-school program."

**After-school program leader:** "He seems tired after the long school day. I usually just let him hangout with me and rest and talk. He likes to talk about cars. He loves the fancy ones and knows a lot about them. Mom always picks him up on time. I don't know much about her."

**Police liaison:** "Yes, I know of that family. The mom has a brother in the next town and a sister living here. The brother's son died by suicide two years ago."

