

# EMPATHY MAP

LEADERSHIP IN RESPONSE TO THE  
PANDEMIC! – CONVERSATION BETWEEN  
NAN MENON AND DONALD SEELEY

Design Thinking and Organizations

NANDINI MENON  
JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY



# FOCUS ON HUMAN VALUES – LEADERSHIP GOAL DURING COVID 19 PANDEMIC

1

OBSERVE CAREFULLY!



2

UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS  
OF THE STAKEHOLDERS



3

BUILD RELATIONAL TRUST



**Interviewee – Mr. Donald Seeley, Principal of Cedar Hill Prep School (16-year veteran) – Management and Leadership during the Pandemic from March 2020 until now! Crisis Management and Leadership!**

**Questions? – These questions were shared with the Principal prior to the interview. Probing questions were spontaneous (please listen to the interview – Duration - 38 minutes).**

What were your thoughts in March 2020 on how we could manage the school under COVID 19 circumstances?

What governed these thoughts? (Thoughts, Emotions, Motivations). What initial solutions did you contemplate? (Thoughts, Emotions, Motivations)

What solutions were finalized? (Thoughts, Emotions, Motivations);

What challenges did you experience when you shared the solutions? (What was said to you; What were the spontaneous reactions) (Thoughts, Emotions, Motivations). Do you think people who were scared – continued to be scared?

What are the challenges you expected (people? facility) (Thoughts, Emotions, Motivations). Despite all the upgrades in the facility, it did not seem to alleviate the fear? Your comments.

What are the challenges you did not expect (fellow Admins; Teachers; Students/Families) (Thoughts, Emotions, Motivations)

What unexpected viewpoints did you confront? Did you foresee some of these viewpoints? (Thoughts, Emotions, Motivations)

How prepared were you for the-

- Emotional state of teachers, parents and families
- Logistical aspects? –
- Communication
- Trust issues

Empathetic Leadership





## Quotes/Defining Words

**Self Awareness** - NOT CONCERNED FIRST; SEEMED FAR AWAY; BUT CONFLICTING REPORTS FROM STATE, NATION AND CDC - CREATED CONFUSION

WE PROVIDED TOOLS AND A PLAN - GAVE OPTIONS! **WAS CONFIDENT WITH THE GAME PLAN! GIVING BOTH OPTIONS VIRTUAL AND FACE TO FACE WAS THE BEST OPTION!**

## Building Emotional Trust -

IT WAS NOT SMOOTH SAILING. BEING COMPASSIONATE HELPED MAINTAIN STAFF.

JUST A SMALL NUMBER OF TEACHERS WERE VERY NERVOUS - BUT MAKING THE VIDEO - LOOSENED MOOD; PROVIDING FLEXIBILITY- NERVOUS FOLKS FELT BETTER. WE DID NOT LOSE EMPLOYEES.



## ACTIONS/BEHAVIORS

**GAME PLAN FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY** IN FACE-TO-FACE SCHOOL SITUATION

**FLEXIBLE OPTIONS TO ATTEND SCHOOL** - FACE TO FACE OR VIRTUAL FOR STAFF AND STUDENTS

## STRATEGIZING/COMMUNICATING

TO MAINTAIN HEALTH AND SAFETY IN PREMISES! MAINTAIN SCHOOL STANDARDS AND FULL SCHOOL SCHEDULE (8:00-4:00 PM WITH ALL SPECIALS)



## THOUGHTS

**HOW TO HANDLE BEHAVIOR OF STAKEHOLDERS** - RESISTANCE; CONFUSION, BEING HESITANT TO BELIEVE; PRESSURE; APPREHENSION; HOW TO BUILD TRUST;

**HOW TO BE RE-ASSURING**; SUPPORT WORKING PARENTS; How to provide solutions that work.

**HOW TO ENSURE STUDENTS CAN STILL HAVE A NEAR NORMAL SCHOOL EXPERIENCE** - GRADUATION DAY; TRIPS; SOCIALIZATION



## FEELINGS

**UNDERSTANDING FEELINGS OF STAKEHOLDERS** - FEAR; DISCOMFORT; CONFUSION; PRESSURE; RESISTANCE; HESITANCE; EMOTIONS FROM COVID WERE DIFFERENT!

**PERSONAL FEELINGS** - ANXIETY; COMPASSIONATE FOR OTHERS FEELINGS; APPREHENSION; UNCERTAINTY WEIGHED ON ME!

**UNDERSTANDING TEACHER CONCERNS** - MANY NEVER TAUGHT VIRTUAL; DID NOT KNOW ZOOM; WERE GREAT TEACHERS; RECOGNIZING EXHAUSTION DUE TO VIRTUAL TEACHING (DIFFERENCE IN TEACHING ENGAGEMENT IN BOTH)

## ACTIVITIES

**TRAINING – TEACHER IN SERVICE DAYS**

**EMOTIONAL SUPPORT – MAKING A FUN VIDEO WITH STAFF - LOOSENED MOOD AND NERVOUS FOLKS FELT BETTER.**

## NEEDS

## FACILITATING IMPLEMENTATION

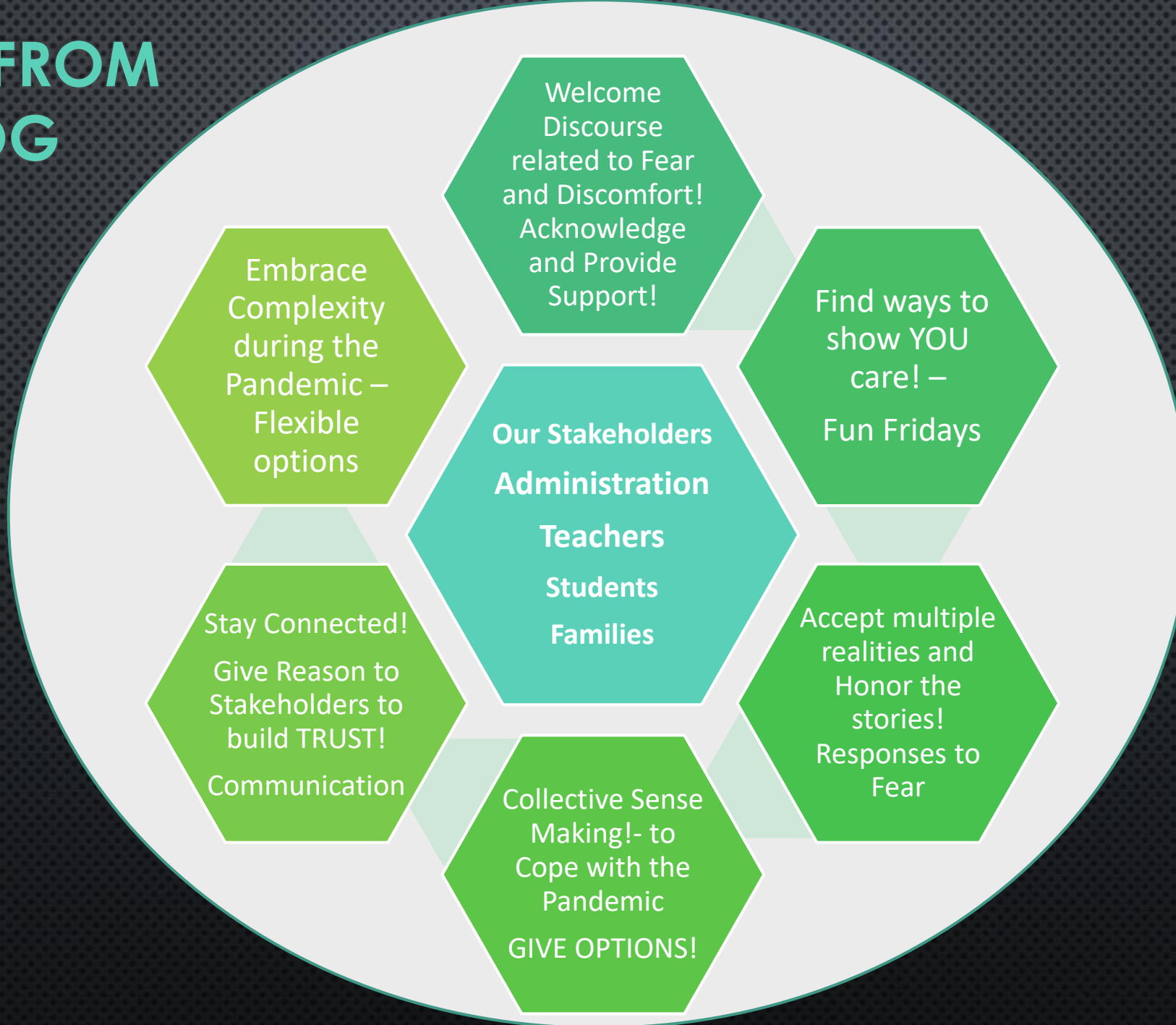
**INCREASING HEALTH AND SAFETY PROCEDURES IN PHYSICAL FACILITY –**  
UV AIR PURIFICATION; UV WANDS IN CLASSROOM; INCREASE CLEANING STAFF

**LISTENING TO TEACHERS NEEDS AND STRESS POINTS –**  
PROVIDING SOLUTIONS TO SUPPORT TEACHERS – FLEXIBILITY IN TEACHING - VIRTUAL OR FACE TO FACE

**PROVIDING TOOLS AND A PLAN TO STAKEHOLDERS–**  
GAME PLAN – SAFETY AND HEALTH PLAN



# INSIGHTS FROM THE DIALOG





**THANK  
YOU!**