

Emotional Safety

The Emotional Safety section is intended to support teachers by:

- identifying some of the benefits of emotional safety in learning environments;
- identifying specific areas of focus that can contribute to an emotionally safe environment; and
- providing examples of instructional strategies that teachers can reflect on and implement.

When students feel emotionally supported, they are more likely to fully engage in the Physical Education program, form positive relationships, and take healthy risks. Being aware of and prioritizing emotional safety can contribute to a learning environment where students enjoy, engage, and thrive.

Physical and emotional safety are interconnected elements that are integral to program planning and the implementation of the Health and Physical Education curriculum, and are critical for effective learning. Focusing on both physical and emotional safety contributes to a student's feeling of safety and a sense of belonging.

In order to do this, the [Emotional Safety Considerations](#) were established to encourage teacher reflection and strengthen their daily practices (e.g., instruction, assessment, evaluation, and relationship building) to better support every student's well-being and sense of belonging.

Benefits of Emotional Safety

- Students feel more **assured** when safety practices prioritize their emotional and physical safety, creating and maintaining a sense of belonging in physical activities to the best of their ability.
- Students feel more **empowered** when teachers take the time to seek input from them and understand their individual strengths, abilities, experiences, and needs.

- Students feel more **represented** when activities, instructional strategies, and decisions made reflect their diversity, experiences, learning styles, interests, and abilities.
- Students feel more **respected** when there is time, opportunity, and resources to support meaningful participation in physical activity that is connected to their experiences, background, and needs.
- Students feel more **understood** when there are open lines of communication and/or opportunities to discuss planning/programming and areas of need with their teacher.

For more information on designing an inclusive Health and Physical Education program, visit Ophea's [**Culturally Responsive and Relevant Pedagogy in Health and Physical Education**](#) resource.