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Member Resource

Title:	
Shared by: (Your Name, State, Country)	
Email Address:	
Type of Activity or Resource:	
Objective:	
Recommended Age Group:	
Materials Needed:	
Time:	
Additional Notes:	

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Orange and Blue Card Activity

Submitted by Dr. Melissa Cain, Ohio, USA

Type of Activity: Consciousness-raising activity

Objective: To raise awareness of the power of language to send both positive and negative messages.

Recommended Age Group: Teachers, adaptable for students

Materials Needed: orange and blue sticky notes, markers, display board

Additional Information: This activity is derived from William Purkey's "A Blue and Orange Card Metaphor for Counselors" (p. 50 of [We're All At Risk: Inviting Learning for Everyone](#) by Judy Brown Lehr and Craig Martin). Participants brainstorm positive and negative comments teachers make to students and examine them for the true messages they send, i.e. that people are valuable, able, or responsible (or the negative counterpart).

Time: ½ to 1 hour

Procedure:

1. Ask participants to get into small groups and brainstorm typical things they have heard teachers say to students. As examples, "Great work!" or "Don't tell me you forgot your homework again!"
2. Ask them to write each statement on a sticky note. Put the positive statements on blue sticky notes and the negative ones on orange ones. Sometimes the context of the comment determines whether it is positive or negative, as in the statement, "You are just like your brother."
3. Then ask each group to sort their sticky notes to see if they can figure out categories related to the messages they are conveying to children.
4. Ask the groups to share their categories and discuss the results.
5. Then, put the following categories up on the wall or white board: Blue Cards: Able, Valuable, Responsible and Orange Cards: Incapable, Not Valuable, and Irresponsible.
6. Ask participants to put their sticky notes under the category that best fits the message each conveys. You will find that the messages all fit one of the categories.
7. Finally, tell the participants that, according to William Purkey in "A Blue and Orange Card Metaphor for Counselors" (p. 50 of [We're All At Risk: Inviting Learning for Everyone](#) by Judy Brown Lehr and Craig Martin), it takes 12 positive messages to overcome a negative one.
8. This activity would be easily adapted to students by asking them to examine what they have overheard students say to each other and could lead to productive discussion on the language of bullying.