



getting to the heart of learning

a program of the Wellesley Centers for Women

Core Values and Guiding Principles

Affirmed February 2008

We are dedicated to the following values as cornerstones of our organization, and we endeavor to exemplify and act in accordance with these values at all times.

1. Social Emotional Learning and Development

We believe that an intentional focus on social and emotional learning—the development of fundamental competencies to recognize and manage emotions, develop empathy and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible and healthy decisions, stand up for self and others, and constructively handle conflict is critical to academic success, personal and professional fulfillment, and the development of a just, caring, and equitable society.

2. Learning through Relationships

We believe that positive relationships lay the foundation for highly effective teaching and learning. Based in trust, empathy, caring and respect, these relationships create the opportunity for personal risk-taking, interpersonal connection, community-building and social change. We believe strong connected relationships strengthen our social and emotional health and wellness.

3. Identity and Inclusion

We understand that in a pluralistic society there exist multiple dimensions of identity that both connect and separate us. We believe that safe and caring communities are environments where members actively explore, acknowledge, and honor the complex issues of identity and inclusion, work collectively to address bias, discrimination and oppression in its many forms, and promote value and respect for the inherent worth and dignity of every person.

4. Safe and Caring Environments

We believe that all children and adults deserve safe and caring learning environments that attend to the social and emotional health and well being of all. All members of a community are responsible for creating these environments, rooted in the values of democracy, cooperation, mutuality, inclusion, and equity.

5. Youth Leadership and Development

We believe young people care about themselves and others, have the power to exercise leadership, solve problems, and positively contribute to their educational environments, their communities and their world. Every young person has an essential role in fostering safe and caring environments that support social emotional learning and academic achievement for all members of their community.

6. Growth and Innovation

We believe that growth for individuals and organizations is a life-long open-ended process and that reflection, critical thinking and inquiry are key ingredients to successful learning and development. We are committed to creativity, innovation and responsiveness leading to new and improved methods of effectively supporting educational environments for young people and adults.

7. Integration of Research, Theory, and Practice

Our work is grounded in the nexus of research, theory and practice and we are committed to contributing to the research and theoretical underpinnings of the field. We also believe that when we ourselves practice the principles of healthy social and emotional development in our relationships, we are most effective as educators, practitioners and leaders.

8. Collaboration and Shared Leadership

We believe in the value and contribution of all members of an educational environment—students, educators, specialists, support staff, administrators, families, and other community members. We value the experience, strengths and wisdom of the individuals and communities with whom we work and continually strive to improve our service by encouraging and modeling shared leadership and collaboration.