

RESEARCH COLLABORATION PROSPECTUS

THE SSCC FRAMEWORK™

Steady • Scan • Connect • Close

A Research Agenda for Relationship-Centered School Safety, Adult Regulation, and Everyday Student Interactions

STEADY Regulate yourself first.	SCAN Read the moment with intention.	CONNECT Preserve dignity and build trust.	CLOSE Clarify what happens next.
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CURRENT EVIDENCE STATUS The SSCC Framework™ is an evidence-informed framework currently undergoing systematic evaluation. Its component ideas are grounded in established research; the specific four-part sequence has not yet been established as an empirically supported intervention.

Prepared for potential research collaborators, doctoral candidates, school districts, universities, and implementation partners.

Jessica Rose Mathy, Ed.D.
Developer of The SSCC Framework™

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An Invitation to Study the Framework

The purpose of this prospectus is to invite careful, ethical, and independent inquiry into The SSCC Framework™. It is not a claim that the framework has already been proven. It is a transparent research agenda for determining what the framework does well, for whom, under what conditions, and with what limitations.

RESEARCH POSTURE The goal is not to design a study that “proves” SSCC. The goal is to subject the framework to systematic evaluation, publish results whether favorable, mixed, or null, and revise the model in response to evidence.

The Core Research Opportunity

Schools increasingly recognize that physical safety, emotional safety, belonging, adult-student relationships, and fair, supportive responses to behavior are interconnected. However, school professionals often need a brief, memorable process they can use during ordinary interactions - especially when time is limited, emotions are elevated, and policy or accountability must still be upheld.

SSCC organizes established principles into a portable four-step interaction lens: adults first steady themselves, scan the situation and context, connect while preserving dignity and maintaining boundaries, and close with clarity and follow-through. The original contribution is the synthesis, sequencing, language, and application of these ideas to everyday school interactions.

The Problem Space

The proposed problem space is not that schools lack theories about relationships, regulation, restorative practice, school connectedness, behavior support, or trauma-responsive education. The problem is the persistent research-to-practice gap between broad principles and what an adult can reliably remember and do in a brief, real-time student interaction.

- Evidence supports the importance of school connectedness and student-adult relationships, but connectedness is multidimensional and inconsistently operationalized across studies.
- Professional learning may increase awareness without producing sustained use, especially when implementation supports, coaching, fidelity tools, and organizational alignment are limited.
- School staff frequently must balance dignity, curiosity, boundaries, safety, and accountability in seconds rather than in a formal counseling session.
- Many evidence-informed approaches are comprehensive systems or specialized practices; fewer tools are designed as a brief, cross-role, in-the-moment cognitive scaffold for teachers, administrators, campus supervisors, and safety personnel.

- A concise framework may be useful, but memorability alone is not evidence of effectiveness. Its feasibility, acceptability, fidelity, mechanisms, outcomes, and possible unintended effects require study.

A Defensible Statement of Need

SUGGESTED PROBLEM STATEMENT Although school connectedness, supportive adult-student relationships, restorative approaches, and positive behavior supports are associated with important student outcomes, school professionals may lack a shared, portable interaction process that translates these principles into consistent moment-to-moment practice across roles and settings. Research is needed to determine whether the SSCC Framework™ is understandable, feasible, acceptable, usable, implemented with fidelity, and associated with changes in adult practice and student experience.

What the Existing Evidence Supports

Evidence domain	What is reasonably supported	What SSCC still must demonstrate
School connectedness	Connectedness is associated with academic, behavioral, health, and psychological outcomes and may function as a protective factor.	Whether SSCC changes student perceptions of connectedness or help-seeking.
Adult-student relationships	Universal approaches can improve relationship quality; stronger relationships are associated with engagement and fewer disruptive outcomes.	Whether SSCC improves observable or reported interaction quality across different adult roles.
Supportive management and caring	Specific caring, autonomy-supportive, and positive management practices are empirically linked with connectedness-related outcomes.	Whether SSCC increases consistent use of these practices in everyday moments.
Restorative and relationship-centered practice	Dignity, perspective-taking, impact, accountability, and repair are established principles.	Whether the Connect and Close elements are used appropriately without weakening boundaries or safety response.
Implementation science	New school practices should first be tested for acceptability, appropriateness, feasibility, usability, fidelity, and sustainability.	Which supports are required for SSCC adoption and sustained implementation.
Adult regulation	Adult emotional and behavioral regulation is conceptually relevant to de-escalation, co-regulation, and professional judgment.	Whether the Steady component changes adult behavior or interaction trajectories in school settings.

Conceptual and Practice Foundations

SSCC is best described as an integrative practice framework rather than a new grand theory. Framework development is legitimate when the developer clearly identifies the underlying knowledge base, defines the framework's unique contribution, avoids claiming ownership of established concepts, and tests the resulting synthesis empirically.

SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS AND BELONGING Students' perceptions that adults and peers care about them, that they belong, and that school is a supportive environment.

STUDENT-ADULT RELATIONSHIP RESEARCH The quality, consistency, trust, warmth, fairness, and conflict patterns that shape student engagement and behavior.

TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE AND REGULATION-INFORMED PRACTICE Attention to adult regulation, context, triggers, felt safety, and avoiding unnecessary escalation.

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES Understanding impact, preserving dignity, accountability, repair, reintegration, and relational follow-through.

PBIS AND MTSS Prevention, explicit expectations, tiered support, data-informed decision-making, and coordination across adults and systems.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE Adult and student self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE Systematic study of adoption, fidelity, feasibility, acceptability, contextual fit, adaptation, and sustainability.

The Original Contribution of SSCC

- The four-part sequence: Steady, Scan, Connect, Close.
- A common language intended for multiple school-based adult roles rather than one profession only.
- A rapid decision scaffold for ordinary interactions before, during, and after difficult moments.
- The explicit integration of adult regulation, contextual observation, dignity-preserving accountability, and intentional closure.
- Portable implementation tools, including a pocket reference card, scenario rubric, fidelity checklist, and reflection log.

ATTRIBUTION BOUNDARY The SSCC organization and application are presented as Jessica Rose Mathy's original synthesis. The underlying concepts - including connectedness, restorative questions, regulation, PBIS, MTSS, and relationship-centered practice - are established bodies of work and should be cited accordingly.

A Preliminary Theory of Change

The theory of change below is provisional and should itself be tested. It describes a plausible pathway rather than a guaranteed causal chain.

INPUT	ADULT PROCESS	INTERACTION	PROXIMAL OUTCOMES	DISTAL OUTCOMES
Standardized SSCC training + tools	Regulation, observation, language, follow-through	Greater clarity, dignity, consistency, curiosity	Self-efficacy, fidelity, trust, perceived support	Connectedness, climate, help-seeking, behavior

The further an outcome is from the immediate interaction, the more alternative explanations must be considered. For that reason, early studies should prioritize implementation and proximal outcomes before making claims about discipline, violence prevention, or whole-school safety.

Research Questions by Development Stage

Stage 1: Concept and content validation

- Are the four components clear, distinct, relevant, and comprehensive?
- Do experts identify conceptual gaps, unsafe interpretations, or role-specific limitations?
- Can the framework be operationalized into observable behaviors?

Stage 2: Feasibility and acceptability pilot

- Is training acceptable, appropriate, feasible, and usable?
- Can participants apply SSCC accurately to scenarios?
- Which components are most and least frequently used?

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- What barriers and facilitators influence implementation?

Stage 3: Preliminary outcome evaluation

- Does participation correspond with changes in knowledge, self-efficacy, scenario performance, or reported practice?
- Are changes sustained four to eight weeks later?
- How do students perceive adult interactions after implementation?

Stage 4: Comparative effectiveness

- How do outcomes differ between SSCC-trained and comparison groups?
- Does implementation quality mediate outcomes?
- For which roles, students, and contexts does the framework appear most useful?

Stage 5: Scale and sustainability

- Can SSCC be implemented across multiple schools with fidelity and appropriate adaptation?
- What leadership, coaching, and systems conditions support sustainability?
- Are there unintended effects or equity differences?

Recommended First Study

WORKING TITLE A Mixed-Methods Pilot Study of the Feasibility, Acceptability, and Preliminary Outcomes of the SSCC Framework™ for School-Based Professionals

Design

A pragmatic, single-group pretest-posttest-follow-up mixed-methods pilot is appropriate for the first systematic evaluation. This design cannot establish causality, but it can determine whether the intervention and its measures are ready for a larger controlled study.

- T1: Baseline survey and scenario assessment before training.
- Intervention: Standardized 60-90 minute training with guided practice and pocket card.
- Implementation: Four to eight weeks with brief weekly logs and two reinforcement contacts.
- T2: Immediate post-training survey and repeated scenario assessment.
- T3: Follow-up survey, fidelity/use measure, interviews or focus groups, and optional student-perception data.

Potential Participants

A first pilot should use a reasonably coherent participant population so findings are interpretable. A sample of approximately 30-60 school-based professionals across two to four sites may be sufficient for feasibility estimation and preliminary effect sizes, although formal power analysis would be required for confirmatory hypotheses.

- Campus supervisors and school safety personnel.
- Assistant principals, deans, and behavior administrators.
- School resource officers or district safety staff, where appropriate.
- Counselors, social workers, behavior specialists, and MTSS/PBIS personnel.
- Teachers may be studied in a separate or stratified cohort because their interaction contexts differ.

Priority Outcomes and Measures

Construct	Priority	Possible method	Interpretation boundary
Acceptability, appropriateness, feasibility	Primary	Validated brief implementation scales + open response	Supports implementation readiness, not effectiveness.
Knowledge and conceptual accuracy	Primary	Knowledge items + scenario rubric	Shows learning and application to hypothetical situations.
Self-efficacy	Primary	Pre/post role-specific confidence scale	Self-report may not reflect actual behavior.
Fidelity and use	Primary	Weekly logs, checklist, observation, artifact review	Requires clear operational definitions.
Interaction quality	Exploratory	Observation coding, role-play, student report	Observer and social-desirability bias must be addressed.
Student connectedness or adult support	Exploratory	Validated student survey	Requires adequate exposure and student consent/assent processes.
Discipline or safety indicators	Exploratory only	Administrative data with contextual controls	Cannot be attributed to SSCC in a small uncontrolled pilot.

Scenario-Based Assessment

A scenario-based measure can evaluate whether participants can translate the framework into decisions rather than merely recall the acronym. Responses may be scored with a rubric.

- **STEADY:** Identifies an adult regulation action appropriate to the moment.
- **SCAN:** Separates observable facts from assumptions and identifies missing context or protective factors.
- **CONNECT:** Uses language that preserves dignity while stating a boundary or expectation.
- **CLOSE:** Clarifies outcome, next step, follow-up, and relational continuity.

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Implementation Package to Standardize

- Facilitator guide and standardized slide deck.
- Participant workbook and scenario practice activities.
- SSCC pocket reference card.
- Implementation fidelity checklist.
- Four- to eight-week reflection or use log.
- Reinforcement messages or microlearning prompts.
- Facilitator training and delivery checklist.
- Adaptation log documenting changes made for role or context.

WHY THE POCKET CARD MATTERS The card is not merely promotional material. It is an implementation support whose use, usability, recall value, and influence on fidelity can be examined empirically.

Research Designs for Doctoral Candidates

QUALITATIVE DESCRIPTIVE STUDY Explore how school professionals experience and apply SSCC during difficult student interactions. 12-20 participants; interviews, logs, artifacts; reflexive thematic analysis.

MIXED-METHODS FEASIBILITY PILOT Estimate acceptability, feasibility, usability, and preliminary change in knowledge or self-efficacy. 30-60 participants; pre/post/follow-up surveys plus focus groups.

INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT STUDY Develop and validate an SSCC knowledge, fidelity, or scenario-performance measure. Expert review, cognitive interviews, pilot testing, factor analysis in a larger sample.

QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL STUDY Compare trained and matched comparison groups on adult practice and student perception outcomes. Multiple sites; baseline equivalence; multilevel or repeated-measures analysis.

IMPLEMENTATION CASE STUDY Study how leadership, role clarity, coaching, and school climate affect adoption. One or more sites; observations, interviews, documents, fidelity data.

STUDENT VOICE STUDY Examine how students interpret adult use of dignity, clarity, fairness, and follow-through. Student interviews/focus groups or validated surveys with appropriate protections.

EQUITY-FOCUSED STUDY Examine whether implementation or perceived impact differs by student identity, disability, language status, or disciplinary history. Adequate subgroup representation and explicit equity safeguards.

Sample Dissertation Problem Statements

IMPLEMENTATION GAP It is not known how school-based professionals experience the feasibility and usefulness of a brief relationship-centered interaction framework after professional learning.

PRACTICE CONSISTENCY GAP It is not known whether a shared interaction framework can increase consistency in how different adult roles regulate, interpret, communicate, and follow through during student interactions.

MEASUREMENT GAP There is limited evidence regarding how to measure adult application of relationship-centered, dignity-preserving interaction practices in brief school encounters.

STUDENT PERCEPTION GAP It is not known how students perceive adult interactions in schools implementing a structured process intended to combine connection, clarity, and

accountability.

SUSTAINABILITY GAP It is not known which organizational conditions support or hinder sustained implementation of a brief relationship-centered framework following initial training.

Ethics, Conflicts, and Research Independence

Because the framework developer may receive professional, reputational, or financial benefit from positive findings, this interest must be disclosed. Credibility will be strengthened by independent investigators, preregistration where appropriate, transparent measures, and publication of unfavorable or null findings.

- Obtain IRB or ethics review before recruitment or collection of research data.
- Separate session feedback, marketing testimonials, and research participation.
- Make participation voluntary and unrelated to employment evaluation.
- Prevent supervisors from accessing identifiable responses whenever possible.
- Disclose the developer's intellectual-property and professional interests.
- Use independent data collection, analysis, or auditing when feasible.
- Prespecify primary and exploratory outcomes.
- Report adaptations, missing data, attrition, fidelity, and adverse or unintended effects.
- Avoid coercive recruitment of employees, students, or professional contacts.
- Do not claim safety, violence-prevention, or disciplinary effects beyond the design and data.

Publication-Safe Language

USE NOW The SSCC Framework™ is an evidence-informed framework currently undergoing systematic evaluation.

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL FEASIBILITY STUDY Initial pilot findings support the feasibility, acceptability, and perceived usefulness of the SSCC Framework™ among participating school professionals.

AVOID UNTIL SUPPORTED The SSCC Framework™ is proven to prevent escalation, reduce discipline, increase school safety, or improve student outcomes.

Research Collaboration Model

Potential collaborations may range from independent dissertation studies to multi-site university-district partnerships. The research relationship should be documented in writing before data collection.

- Framework developer role: orientation to the model, access to standardized materials, content clarification, and adaptation consultation.
- Independent researcher role: protocol development, ethics approval, recruitment, data collection, analysis, and reporting.
- Site partner role: access, scheduling, local implementation support, and protection of participant voluntariness.
- Publication agreement: authorship criteria, data ownership, review timelines, conflicts disclosure, and commitment to report results accurately.
- Intellectual-property boundary: researchers may study and critique the framework; reproduction, commercial training, or derivative products require separate permission.

Pocket Reference Card: Research and Practice Tool

The pocket card is designed for standard U.S. business-card dimensions (3.5 × 2 inches). It should be printed double-sided on durable matte stock. The front is a rapid prompt; the back reinforces boundaries and follow-through.

FRONT STEADY - What is happening in me? Slow down. Lower your voice. Breathe. | SCAN - What do I observe, not assume? Notice context, needs, triggers, strengths, and trusted adults. | CONNECT - How can I preserve dignity and maintain the boundary? Name, ask, state, offer. | CLOSE - What must be clear before we separate? Outcome, repair, next step, follow-through.

BACK Connection complements - not replaces - policy, accountability, emergency response, required reporting, and professional judgment. Use the framework only within your role, training, and site procedures.

Recommended Research Agenda

1. Complete expert review and content validation.
2. Finalize operational definitions and behavioral indicators for each component.
3. Pilot the pocket card and scenario rubric through cognitive interviews.
4. Conduct a mixed-methods feasibility study.
5. Revise training and measures based on findings.
6. Conduct a controlled or staggered implementation study.
7. Add student voice and equity analyses.
8. Evaluate multi-site implementation, sustainability, and cost.

Selected Evidence Base

The following sources were selected because they directly support the conceptual foundations or the recommended evaluation sequence. Their inclusion does not establish the effectiveness of the SSCC Framework™ itself.

Crooks, C. V., Hoover, S., Smith, A., et al. (2020). Feasibility trial of the school-based STRONG intervention to promote resilience among newcomer youth. *Psychology in the Schools*, 57(12), 1815-1829. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pits.22366>

Eiraldi, R., Comly, R., Goldstein, J., et al. (2023). Development of an online training platform and implementation strategy for school-based mental health professionals in rural elementary schools: A mixed-methods study. *School Mental Health*, 15(3), 692-709. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-023-09582-1>

Kincade, L., Cook, C. R., & Goerdts, A. (2020). Meta-analysis and common practice elements of universal approaches to improving student-teacher relationships. *Review of Educational Research*, 90(5), 710-748. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654320946836>

Marraccini, M. E., & Brier, Z. M. F. (2017). School connectedness and suicidal thoughts and behaviors: A systematic meta-analysis. *School Psychology Quarterly*, 32(1), 5-21. <https://doi.org/10.1037/spq0000192>

Peng, A., & Patterson, M. M. (2025). A review of school connectedness: Definitions, antecedents, and psychological outcomes. *Journal of School Health*, 95(9), 741-764. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.70037>

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Siebert, C., Holloway, S. D., & DuBois, D. L. (2024). Identification of important factors when measuring school climate: Latent construct validation and exploration. *Journal of School Health*, 94(1), 69-79. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13394>

Wilkins, N., Verlenden, J., Szucs, L. E., et al. (2023). Classroom management and facilitation approaches that promote school connectedness. *Journal of School Health*, 93(7), 582-593. <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13279>

Wilhelm, A. K., Bigelow, M., Hang, M., et al. (2022). Somali, Latino, and Hmong youth perceptions of school connectedness. *Health Equity*, 6(1), 508-515. <https://doi.org/10.1089/heq.2021.0095>

Research Use and Contact

Researchers interested in studying the framework should begin with a brief concept proposal identifying the population, setting, problem space, proposed design, intended measures, ethics pathway, and requested materials. The framework developer welcomes rigorous inquiry, including studies that identify limitations or needed revisions.

SUGGESTED INQUIRY LANGUAGE I am interested in exploring a research collaboration involving The SSCC Framework™. My proposed population/setting is _____. The problem space is _____. I am considering a _____ design to examine _____. I would like to discuss access to standardized materials, research boundaries, and possible collaboration.

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