TEACHER STORY GUIDE

Pause, Understand, Decide Together

Inspired by Karla Reinhardt and her Triage Leadership Model.

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Before you begin: consult the appropriate school or district department, secure required approvals, follow school policy, and act promptly on safety, safeguarding and other time-sensitive duties.

Learning goals

- Distinguish urgent action from a question that allows consultation.
- Gather relevant perspectives before selecting a response.
- Clarify decision authority, responsibilities and review dates.

Context

Reinhardt describes three steps: Stabilize, Diagnose, Connect. This editorial adaptation applies them to a manageable, non-emergency team concern. It is not her official template or a crisis-response protocol.

Suggested adaptations (editorial, not the educator's own process)

- Suggestion: Begin with a routine concern, such as meeting participation or a communication bottleneck.
- Suggestion: Offer private written input before group discussion.

Resources

- Paper, pens and a shared planning sheet (required): Record the concern, evidence, perspectives, decision, owner and review date.
- Relevant school procedures (required): Check required actions, deadlines and decision authority.
- Digital or AI planning support (optional): Human-reviewed; exclude confidential information.

Preparation

- Choose a bounded concern and gather observable facts.
- Identify affected colleagues and clarify who decides.
- Explain how input will inform the decision and offer an accessible contribution method.

Time and cost (estimates)

- Estimate: 10 minutes preparation, 20–30 minutes discussion and 10 minutes follow-up.
- Estimate: $0–5 with existing supplies, excluding staff time.

Implementation steps

1. Stabilize: Pause briefly and notice assumptions or pressure to fix everything. Do not delay required action.
2. Diagnose: Describe what happened, separate facts from interpretations and check urgency, policy and missing information.
3. Connect: Invite relevant perspectives. Ask what others notice, what has been tried and what support is needed.
4. Compare feasible options, including constraints and likely effects. The authorized decision-maker explains the choice and rationale.
5. Assign an owner, support, deadline and review date. Share the decision with affected people.
6. Review what changed and what remains unresolved. Adjust or escalate through established channels.

Accessibility supports

- Provide the question in advance, plain language and written or spoken response options.
- Allow thinking time and private input; do not equate silence with agreement.
- Consider workload, power differences and whose perspective is missing.

Low-tech alternatives

- Use a paper planning sheet and face-to-face conversation; no account or device is required.

Assessment

- Check whether evidence, perspectives, authority and responsibilities are clear.
- Review the selected concern's outcome without inferring improved trust or reduced burnout from one meeting.

Reflection

- Whose input changed the response?
- Was consultation useful, timely and clear about decision authority?
- What should the team retain or change next time?

Variations

- Use individually for reflection or with a department team for a shared operational concern.

Optional reference: advanced requirements

- Use established specialist procedures for safeguarding, personnel matters, emergencies and formal student-support decisions. Shared input does not replace required authority.

Credits

- Model inspiration: Karla Reinhardt, interviewed by Casey Watts in The Control Trap, October 16, 2026.
- Activity, estimates and optional AI prompts are editorial adaptations, not verified Reinhardt tools.
- No educator AI use or research-proven outcomes are implied.

Links

- The Control Trap: interview and model

Optional AI planning prompts

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Copy, fill in the bracketed parts, and always review the output yourself.

AI is optional. These prompts help you plan; they do not describe how the featured educator worked. Review every output for accuracy, bias, and fit with school policy before using it with students.

1

Plan

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Plan a [MINUTES] discussion about [ANONYMIZED NON-EMERGENCY CONCERN] for [TEAM]. Include
reflection, evidence gathering and consultation within [POLICY AND AUTHORITY LIMITS].
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Teacher check: Verify urgency, procedures and decision authority. Remove confidential details.

2

Prepare

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Create a one-page planning sheet for [CONCERN TYPE] with facts, uncertainties, perspectives,
options, decision authority, owner and review date. Include [ACCESS NEEDS].
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Teacher check: Check accessibility and policy fit. Do not present it as Reinhardt's official template.

3

Improve

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Review [ANONYMOUS OBSERVATIONS] against [AGREED GOALS]. Separate evidence from interpretation
and suggest two adjustments. Do not infer trust, motivation or well-being.
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Teacher check: Verify conclusions against the record and consult affected colleagues before acting.