



Structured Experience Processing Protocol (SEPP)

Use this 3-phase model after a critical incident, leadership challenge, or emotionally charged experience (e.g., teacher misconduct, community conflict, staff turnover, policy breakdown).

PHASE 1: Reconstruct the Event



Goal: Objectively walk through what happened, start to finish.

Strategy: Conduct a Situational Timeline Review

Steps:

- ✓ List the key events or decision points in chronological order
- ✓ Identify who was involved and what information was available at each stage
- ✓ Note the actions taken — and **why** they were taken
- ✓ Reflect on the **outcomes** (intended and unintended)

Prompt Examples:

- What started this chain of events?
- At what point did the situation escalate or shift?
- What actions brought clarity or added confusion?



Tool: Use a “Leadership Timeline Map” to plot actions, actors, decisions, and outcomes.

PHASE 2: Reflect on Leadership & Culture



Goal: Understand how your leadership and the school culture influenced the event.

Strategy: Guided Reflection

Categories to Reflect On:



Your leadership choices

- What leadership traits helped or hindered the situation?

- Were my values clearly expressed in my decisions?

The school culture's role


- Did the school's norms, routines, or blind spots contribute to this outcome?
- Were there early warning signs we missed?

Communication & Trust


- How did communication flow — and where did it break down?
- How was trust gained or lost during this time?

Prompt Examples:

- What did I learn about myself as a leader through this experience?
- What feedback did I hear — and how did I receive it?
- How would I guide a colleague through this if it happened to them?

 **Tool:** Use a reflection journal, voice notes, or a Google Doc to record raw thoughts, emotions, and insights.

PHASE 3: Extract Lessons & Build Forward

 **Goal:** Transform the experience into lasting leadership growth.

Strategy: Create a Personal Growth Plan


Steps:

- ✓ Identify 1–2 core leadership lessons
- ✓ Set one short-term and one long-term goal based on what you've learned
- ✓ Decide what needs to change systemically (policies, team roles, culture norms)

Prompt Examples:

- What specific skills or habits do I need to strengthen?

- What systems or expectations need to be refined?
- Who can help me lead better next time?

 **Leadership Debrief Tip:** Debrief the experience with a mentor, coach, or trusted peer. Use the opportunity to receive feedback, gain perspective, and share accountability.

 **Tool:** Use a **Leadership Growth Template** that includes:

- Key lessons
 - Goals
 - Timeline
 - Stakeholders
 - Resources needed
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OPTIONAL: Team Reflection Exercise

After a shared team challenge, consider leading a **staff or leadership team debrief** using these 3 questions:

1. What happened — and how did it feel at the time?
2. What did we do well as a team?
3. What do we want to do differently moving forward?

Keep the tone **supportive, not punitive**. This builds a culture of **learning, not blame**.

Final Reminders for Reflective Leaders

- ✓ **Don't rush the reflection** — processing takes time and space
- ✓ **Document what you learn** — growth fades without follow-up

- ✓ **Model vulnerability** — your willingness to grow inspires your team
- ✓ **Embed lessons into systems** — don't just reflect, *act*

"You don't grow by avoiding the hard stuff — you grow by making meaning out of it."
