



Facilitating Resilience through Trauma Informed Practice

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Office of Children & Youth in Transition



Office of Children & Youth in Transition (CYT)

We support students:

- experiencing homelessness
- living in foster care
- military connected
- with refugee status
- returning to SDUSD from Juvenile Justice facilities

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CHILDREN AND YOUTH
IN TRANSITION



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Session Agreements

- Be respectful and attentive
- Notice thoughts and stay curious
- Use your graphic organizer to support your engagement
- Assume positive intentions
- Practice kindness with yourself & others
- Keep the learning environment “brave”
- Focus on what we can control
- Demonstrate a culture of learning
- Share ideas and resources freely to build collective capacity



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Objectives

1. General understanding of the definition of trauma and how it affects the brain—and the student-teacher dynamic
2. General understanding of how Trauma Informed Practices facilitate resilience through:
 - a. Building Safety
 - b. Enhancing Connections
 - c. Attaining Self-Regulation
 - d. Promoting Self Efficacy
 - e. Promoting Hope
3. Introduction of strategies for self-care



Barriers & Rights for Youth in Transition

- *Barriers:*
 - a. high mobility, chronic absenteeism, mental and physical health issues, challenges accessing school and exposure to trauma
- *Rights:*
 - a. Immediate enrollment
 - b. School of origin
 - c. Transportation (homeless and foster youth)
 - d. Supports for graduation
 - i. partial credits
 - ii. modified diploma



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What is one word
that you think of
when you hear the
word, "trauma"?



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How Does Trauma-Informed Practice Help You Improve Students' Experience?

- Students are more likely to feel safe in their learning environment
- Students are more likely to engage in the content
- Students are more likely to feel a sense of belonging at school



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What is Trauma?

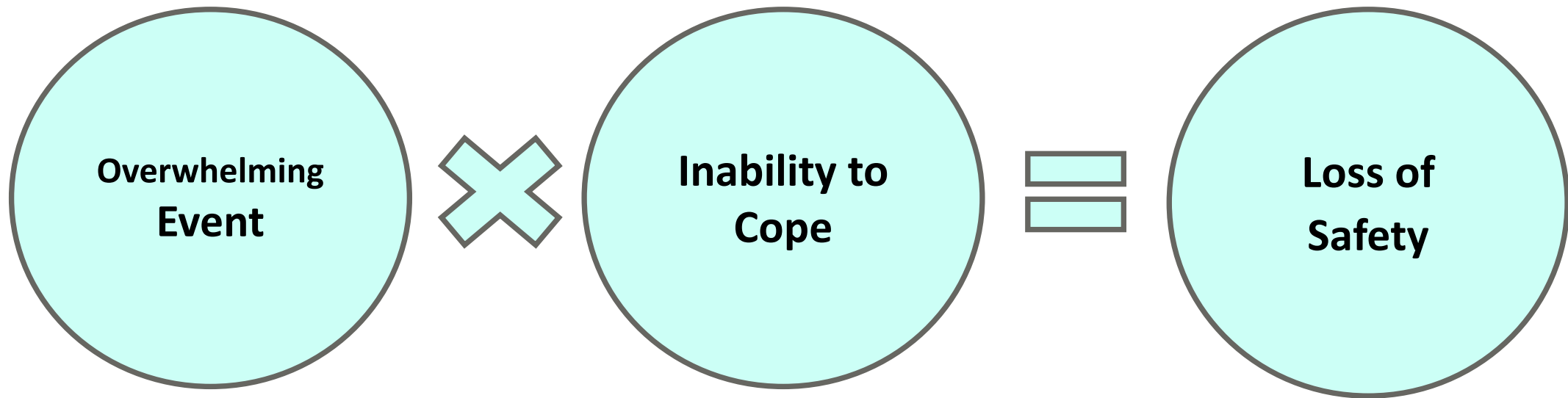
*“Individual trauma results from an **event, series of events, or set of circumstances** experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.” (SAMHSA)*

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Associations.](#)



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TRAUMA = LOSS OF SAFETY



Taken into foster care, through the eyes of a child

Source: FYSCPTAP



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Trauma Vocabulary

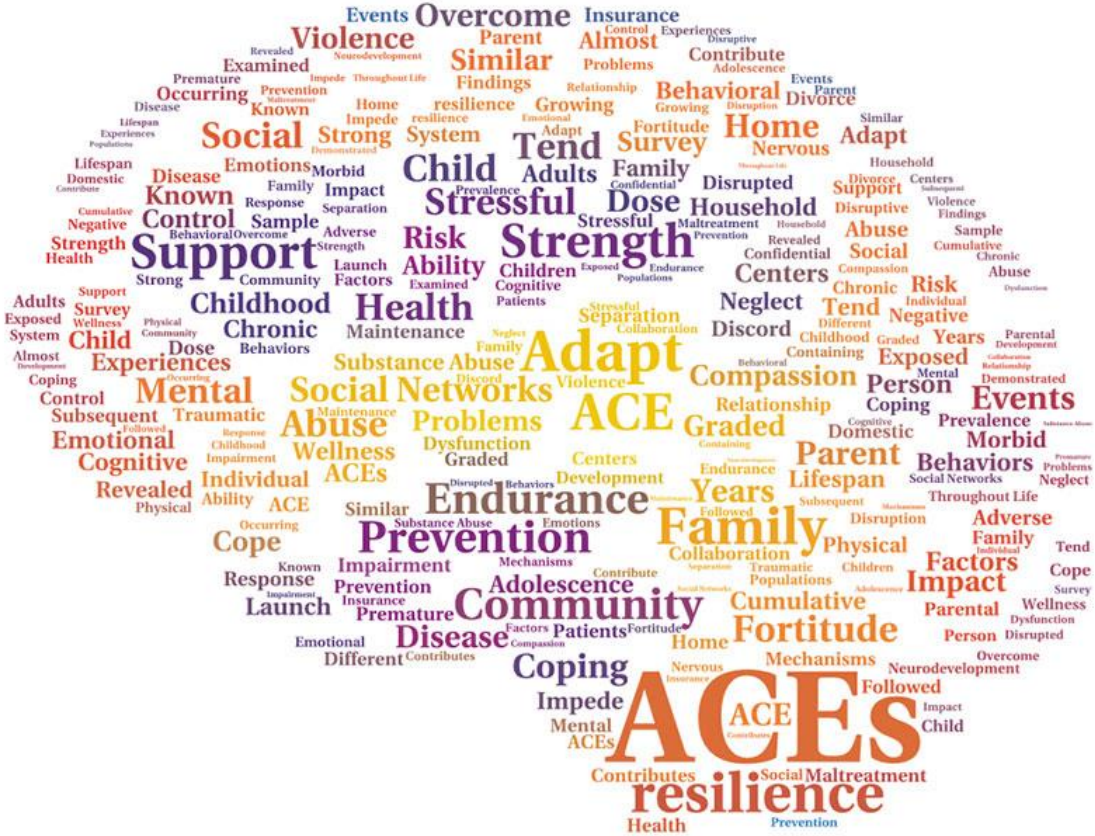
- **Acute Trauma:** A single time limited event
- **Chronic Trauma:** Multiple traumatic exposures and/or events over extended periods of time
- **Complex Trauma:** Multiple traumatic events and the impact of exposure of these events (often occurring within the care-giving system)
- **Traumatic Stress/Vicarious Trauma:** Exposure to the trauma of others by providers, family members, partners or friends in close contact with the traumatized individual.

Trauma and Resilience: An Adolescent Provider Toolkit; Adolescent Health Working Group 2013



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Adverse Children Experiences Study (ACES)



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“How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime”

CA Surgeon
General
Dr. Nadine
Burke-Harris



“The Deepest Well” - Healing the Long-term Effects of Childhood Adversity



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Additional Adverse Experiences

- Racism
- Effects of COVID-19
- Community/School violence
- Homelessness
- Loss of a loved one
- Man-made or natural disasters
- Accidents
- Terrorism
- War
- Any others?



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Trauma & the Brain

"If you change the experience, you change the brain."

ERIC JENSEN



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How Our Brains Work

Limbic system

- Supports emotion, behavior, motivation

Amygdala

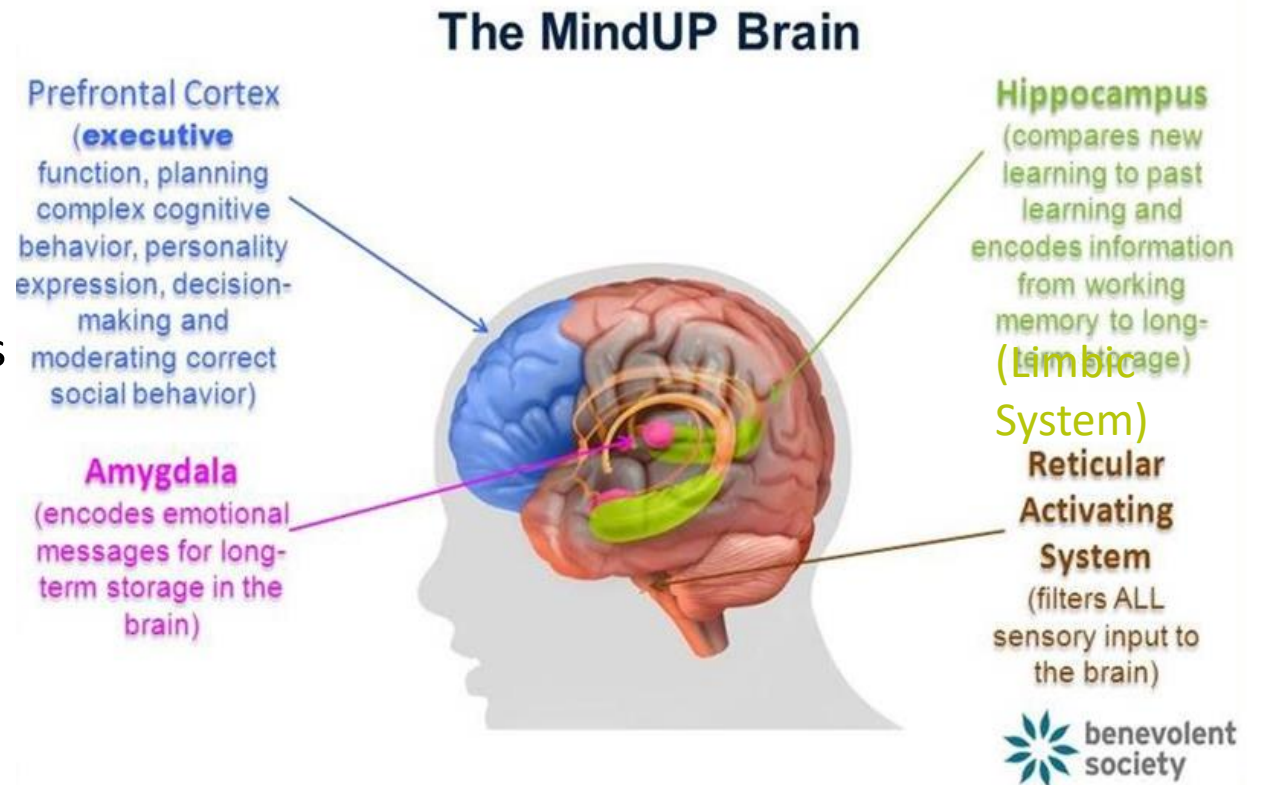
- Alarm System
- Reacts to fear, danger, and threat

Hippocampus

- Manages response to fear and threats
- Storage of memory and learning

Pre-frontal cortex

- Higher level functioning
- Decision-making
- Rational Thinking/Logic
- Fully Developed at age 25



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Trauma and Learning

Survival Brain

- The survival brain seeks to anticipate, prevent or protect against the damage caused by potential or actual dangers.
- **Semi-permanent** state of fight or flight when there is likely high levels of the stress hormone **cortisol**

Learning Brain

- The learning brain is engaged in **exploration**. As new knowledge is acquired new neuronal/synaptic **connections** made.



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Triggers...



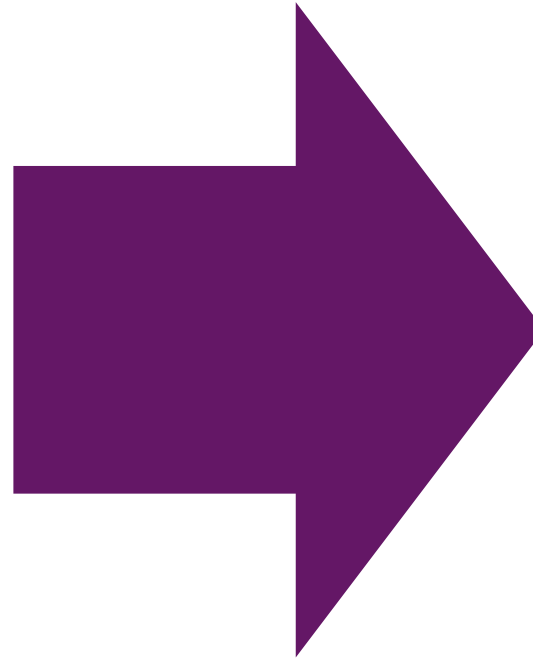
- Triggers include seeing, feeling, or hearing something that remind us of past trauma.
- Triggers activate the **alarm system**. (Amygdala)
- When the alarm system is activated, but there is no danger, it is a false alarm.
- The response is **involuntary**.



Looking Beyond the Behavior

Looks like ...

- Oppositional
- Overly compliant
- Outburst
- Anger
- Depressed
- Argumentative
- Rapid escalation



May be an attempt to...

- Avoid rejection
- Avoid emotions
- Build up
- Depression/Deny hurt feelings
- Anger turned inward
- Test relationship
- Heightened alarm system

Looking Beyond the Behavior



Trauma glasses off	Trauma glasses on
Manipulative	
Lazy	
Resistant	
Unmotivated	
Disrespectful	
Attention-Seeking	



River

Looking Beyond the Behavior



Trauma glasses off	Trauma glasses on
Manipulative	<i>Getting needs met in ways that have worked in the past. Doing whatever is necessary to survive.</i>
Lazy	<i>Overwhelmed. Lacking the skills to make decisions about what to do first or to organize.</i>
Resistant	<i>Mistrustful of others due to history of being hurt by others. Scared to make progress and then lose everything.</i>
Unmotivated	<i>Depressed. Fearful. Overwhelmed. "Frozen."</i>
Disrespectful	<i>Feeling threatened, unsafe, out of control.</i>
Attention-Seeking	<i>Feeling disconnected, alone, or unheard by others. Looking for connection.</i>

Trauma-Informed Approach



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UNDERSTANDING THAT

TRAUMA **EXPLAINS** BEHAVIOR

IT DOES NOT **EXCUSE** BEHAVIOR



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A Mindset Shift When Thinking about Student Behaviors

From...

What's wrong with you?

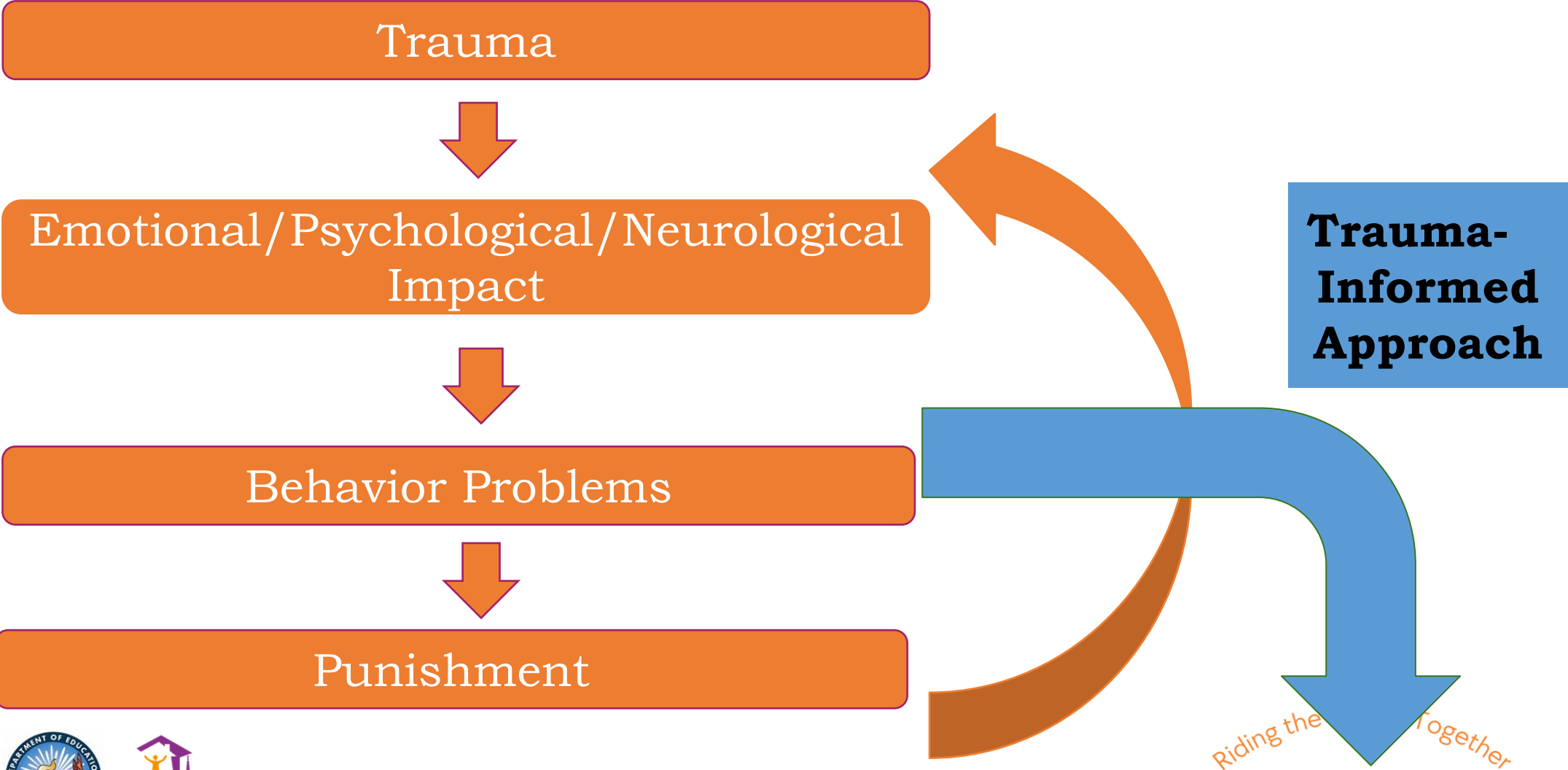
To...

What happened?



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Resist Retraumatization in Schools



Trauma Informed Practices

building
safety

enhancing
connections

self-
regulation

building
efficacy

promoting
hope



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SAFETY Provides a Sense of Control

- It is helpful to **give students choices** and not ultimatums
- **Limit the number of adults** involved; too many educators participating can cause confusion or mixed-messages
- Provide adequate **personal space**; if the student tells you to back off, give them more space
- Keep verbal interactions calm and **use simple, direct language**
- Engage them in a semi-**private conversation**, instead of in front of classmates



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Building Safety

Physical Safety

- ❑ **Structure:** predictable, consistent routines
- ❑ **Supervision:** eyes, ears, proximity to students
- ❑ If you need to **redirect** a student in the hallway, introduce yourself
- ❑ **School & Classroom Rules/Policies**
- ❑ **Anti-Bullying Policies**

Emotional Safety

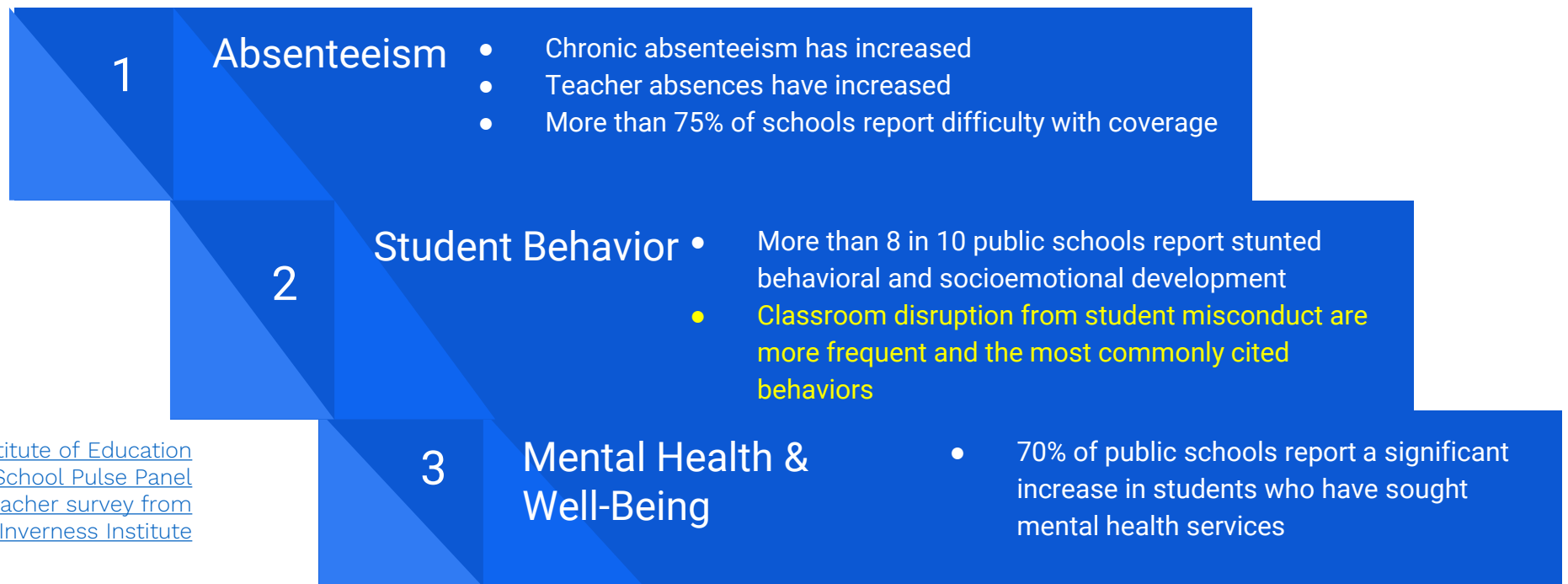
- ❑ **Sense of Belonging & Significance (Self-Esteem):**
“I can do this; I belong here”
- ❑ **Greet Students by name**
- ❑ **Providing Choices**
- ❑ **Strengths-based approach**



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SAFETY Addressing Pandemic Related Trauma

In what ways are you seeing continued impacts of the pandemic on students or families and how they engage in school?



Sources: [Institute of Education Sciences 2022 School Pulse Panel](#)
[Veteran teacher survey from The Inverness Institute](#)



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SAFETY Addressing Pandemic Related Trauma

- **Normalize taking things slowly;** Students are relearning how to learn and be in school
- **Offer pro social opportunities;** Students are relearning how to socialize or getting social stimulation from peers for the first time in years
- Focus on each person as an **individual whose unique perspective** is central in working with them

Sources:
Dr. Pamela Cantor, Turnaround for Children &
Learning for Justice via The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)



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SAFETY De-escalation Space

- ❖ Establish a quiet, safe place in the classroom/office
- ❖ Have some sensory materials for students
- ❖ Have pleasant colors, pictures of nature, mandalas, etc. in the classroom
- ❖ Incorporate music into the classroom that is playing in the background



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Enhancing Connections



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Enhancing Connections



The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.

Bruce D Perry

PICTUREQUOTES.COM





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Enhancing Communication: How Do We Respond to Students?

- Focus statements addressing student's behaviors
- Open-ended questions used to understand, teach, & empower
- Use "I" statements (instead of *starting* with "You")
- Stay away from "always" and "never" statements
- 1-on-1

Examples:

"I care about you. What is going on today?"

"I'm concerned when I hear a student teasing another." "How would it feel if you were to be teased?"

"What could you do to repair the situation with your classmate?"

Sleeper-Triplett, J. (2010). *Empowering Youth: Your Guide to Coaching Adolescents and Young Adults for Coaches, Parents and Professionals*



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Enhancing Connections: 2 by 10 Strategy



Teacher focuses on most challenging or hard to reach student.

Two minutes per day for 10 days in a row, teacher has a personal conversation with the student.



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Enhancing Connections: 6 Ways to Check-In

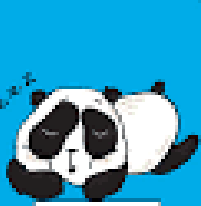
1. Mindful Check-in
2. Numerical Check-in
3. Open Check-in
4. One or Two Word Check-in
5. Metaphorical Check-in
6. *Deep Check-in



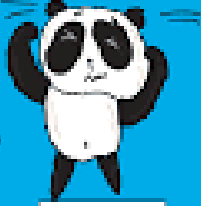
How Do You Feel Today?



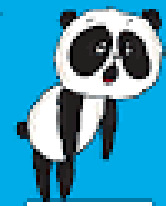
happy



tired



strong



bored



scared



mad



sad



silly

Mood Indicators



On a scale of Cat, how are you feeling today?



Enhancing Connections: Circles

Community Circle

- Creates connections
- Sense of safety
- Can be student-directed or teacher-directed

Restorative Circle

- **Brings together the 3 parties to resolve a conflict:**
 1. Those who have acted
 2. Those directly impacted
 3. The wider community

Enhancing Connections: Family and Caregiver Partnership

- Trauma can be:
 - Epigenetic (e.g. Holocaust, 9/11)
 - Intergenerational (e.g. history of racial discrimination)
 - Genes are not destiny; they are changed by **context**
- Caregivers with negative school experiences
- The Cycle of Poverty
 - Greatest predictor of adult homelessness is homelessness in childhood

Sources: [Turnaround for Children Toolbox](#),
[Forbes article](#),
& Dr. Richard Lerner



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Enhancing Connections: Family and Caregiver Partnership

Communication

- Bidirectional
- Proactive AND reactive
 - Kudos, compliments, etc.
- Sharing [psychoeducational material](#) with caregivers after sharing about an incident at school their student was involved in: prompts, key questions
- Sharing [strategies](#), [routines](#), good habits with caregivers to **avoid chronic absenteeism**

Inclusive Partnership and Shared Power

- Making district resources known
- School team collaboration to address student concerns
- Connecting caregivers to **support networks** and **parent ed**
 - SPED Ombudsmen
 - [Family Engagement](#)
 - PTA



Source: [Turnaround for Children Toolbox](#)

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Attaining Self-Regulation



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Attaining Self-Regulation

- ❑ In order for students to achieve self-regulation, students must feel **safe and connected!**
- ❑ Trauma directly influences how a student develops their **coping skills**
- ❑ Deprivation and neglect in early childhood prevents the development of the ability to self-regulate
- ❑ The first step to teaching self regulation is teaching **self awareness**



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Self-Regulation: MINDFULNESS

*Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be **fully present**, **aware** of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us*



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Self Regulation: Mindfulness

- Mindfulness helps students **create new neural pathways** through learning how to develop the ability to **choose their responses** rather than instinctively react.

- How do you feel now? (identify a feeling word). How much? (from 0-5)
- What can I do in class today to stay focused?
- Did I demonstrate my best effort today by holding myself to a high standard?

- What were you feeling in the moment?
- What can you do differently next time?
- How will that strategy help you?



Los Angeles County
Office of Education



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Self-Regulation: In the Classroom

Create procedures in your classroom that model and practice a variety of self-regulatory activities:

- ❑ Music
- ❑ Mindfulness activities
- ❑ Games (that focus on self regulation)
- ❑ Movement
- ❑ Art
- ❑ Journaling
- ❑ Daily Check-Ins
- ❑ Flexible Seating



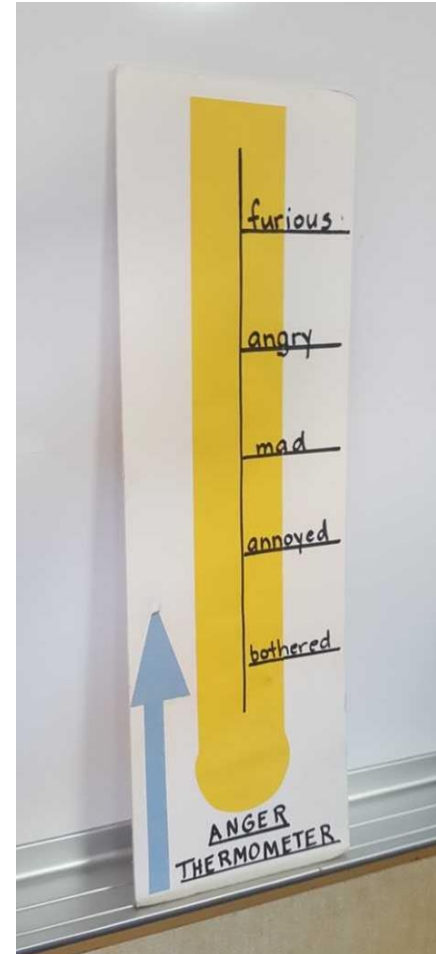
Self-Regulation: Self-assessment



I chose this Emoji because

.....

.....



My In-Control Scale

1	 I lost it! I need a break!
2	 I'm beginning to loose it!
3	 I'm feeling a little unsure.
4	 I'm feeling pretty good!
5	 I'm feeling just fine!

Self-Regulation: Teaching Social-Emotional Vocabulary

- ★ Confidence
- ★ Coping skills
- ★ Resilience
- ★ Self-regulation
- ★ Grit
- ★ Self-esteem
- ★ Empathy

➤ Emotions

- Happy
- Sad
- Hurt
- Angry
- Afraid
- Excited



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Building Self-Efficacy



Building Self-Efficacy

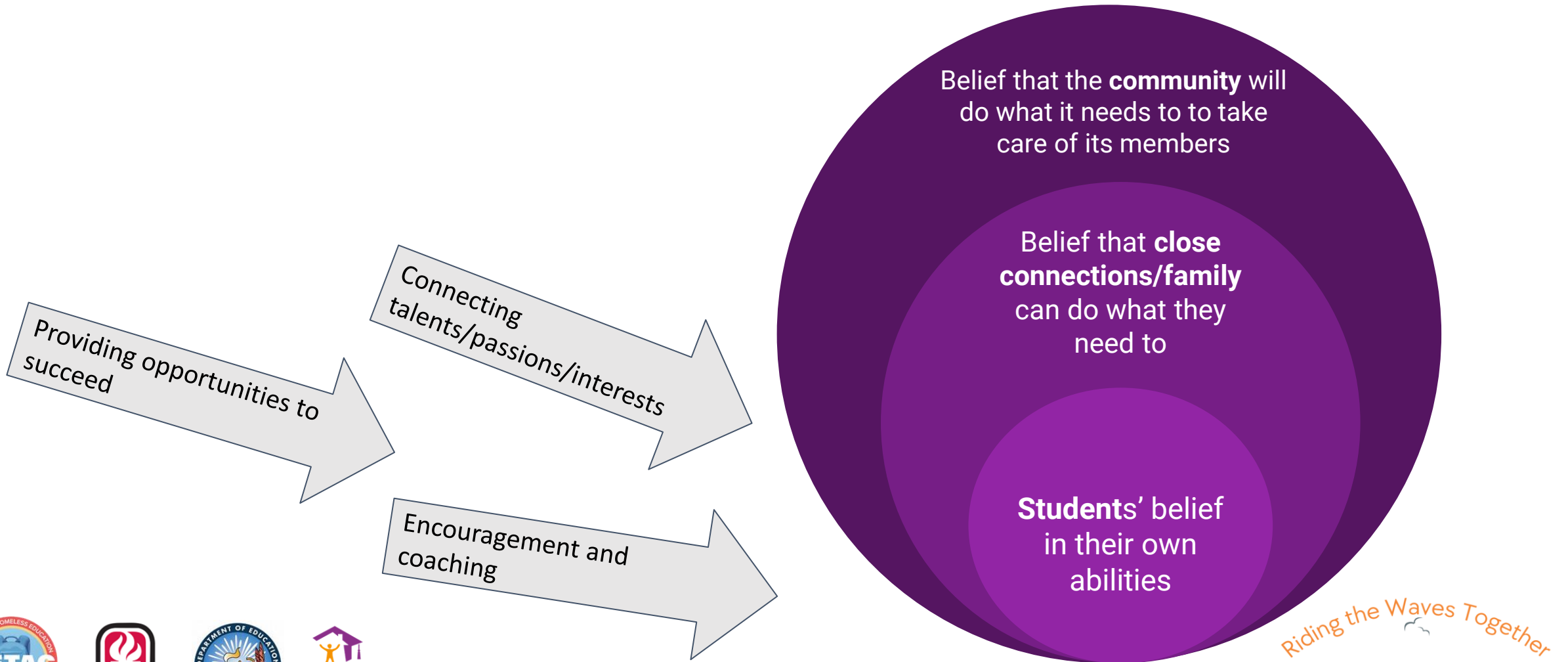
“Disenfranchised people need more than resilience; they need **empowerment and agency.**”

Source: [Loss, Trauma, and Resilience](#) by Dr. Boss



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Building Self-Efficacy



Source: Redmond, 2010

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Promoting Hope



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What is Your Hope?

Take a moment to post a stickie and share your hope for your students



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Self-Care



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Self-Care: Finding the Time

2-5 Minutes

- ★Breathe deeply
- ★Stretch
- ★Get some fresh air
- ★Eat a healthy snack
- ★Doodle/color
- ★Listen to an uplifting song
- ★Chat with a friend/colleague
- ★Sing out loud
- ★Drink tea

10 Minutes

- ★Get grounded
- ★Meditate
- ★Clean up/organize your work
- ★Dance
- ★Take a brisk walk
- ★Work on a puzzle, search-a-word, etc
- ★Take your pet for a walk
- ★Take a nap and recharge

30 Minutes

- ★Get a massage
- ★Exercise
- ★Eat lunch with a coworker
- ★Read a non-work related literature
- ★Spend time in nature
- ★Practice yoga
- ★Watch your favorite TV show
- ★Cook/bake something you love
- ★Arts & crafts/scrapbook

Self-Care: Compassion Satisfaction



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Self-Care Resources:

x [SDUSD Staff Wellness:](#)

Meditations

- x [Guided Meditations for Caregivers](#)
- x [Guided Meditations from USCD Center for Mindfulness](#)

Movement

- X [Blogilates with Cassey Ho](#)
- X [Yoga with Adrienne](#)
- X [Qigong with Kseny](#)
- X [Tiffany Rothe Workouts](#)

Healthy Eating

- X [Eating Bird Food](#)
- X [Ways to Boost Immunity](#)



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Self-Care Resources:



X School District Supports:

X School District Employee Assistance Program:

X Veba Schools CA: #619.398.4220

■ <https://www.vebaresourcecenter.com/>

X Community Supports:

X NAMI San Diego - Warm Line, Resources, Support Groups

■ Friends Resource Helpline: (619) 543-1434 – Monday through Friday, 9 am-5pm

■ Warmline: (619) 295-1055 – 7 days/week, 3:30pm-11pm (except major holidays)

X San Diego Crisis & Access - 24 hr/7 days a week

X 1-888-724-7240



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What is one word that you think of when you hear the word, "healing"?



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Have Patience

- Change happens very slowly
- Trust that efforts are being noticed and appreciated



Lean on Me

Sometimes in our lives we all have pain
We all have sorrow
But if we are wise
We know that there's always tomorrow
Lean on me, when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on
Please swallow your pride
If I have things you need to borrow
For no one can fill those of your needs
That you won't let show
You just call on me brother, when you need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem that you'll understand
We all need somebody to lean on

Lean on me, when you're not strong
And I'll be your friend
I'll help you carry on
For it won't be long
'Til I'm gonna need
Somebody to lean on
You just call on me brother, when you need a hand
We all need somebody to lean on
I just might have a problem that you'll understand
We all need somebody to lean on
If there is a load you have to bear
That you can't carry
I'm right up the road
I'll share your load
If you just call me (call me)
If you need a friend (call me) call me uh huh (call me) if you need a
friend (call me)
If you ever need a friend (call me)
Call me (call me) call me (call me) call me
(Call me) call me (call me) if you need a friend
(Call me) call me (call me) call me (call me) call me (call me) call me
(call me)



ing the Waves Together

Thank you!

CHILDREN AND YOUTH
IN TRANSITION



SAN DIEGO UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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