

School Mental Health & School Nursing:

A Powerful Collaboration for Student and Staff Well-Being

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Introductions



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SHARPEN YOUR FOCUS

1. Before beginning work, focus your mind on this breathing shape.
2. Breath in and out to match the movement of the shape.
3. If you become distracted, focus your mind back to the shape.



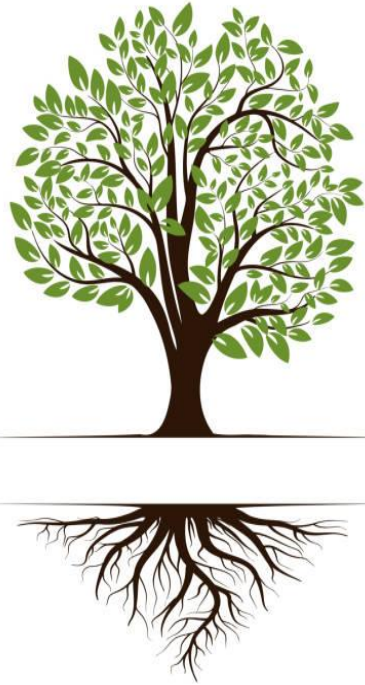
Participant Google Folder



[Link to Google Folder](#)

Learning Goals

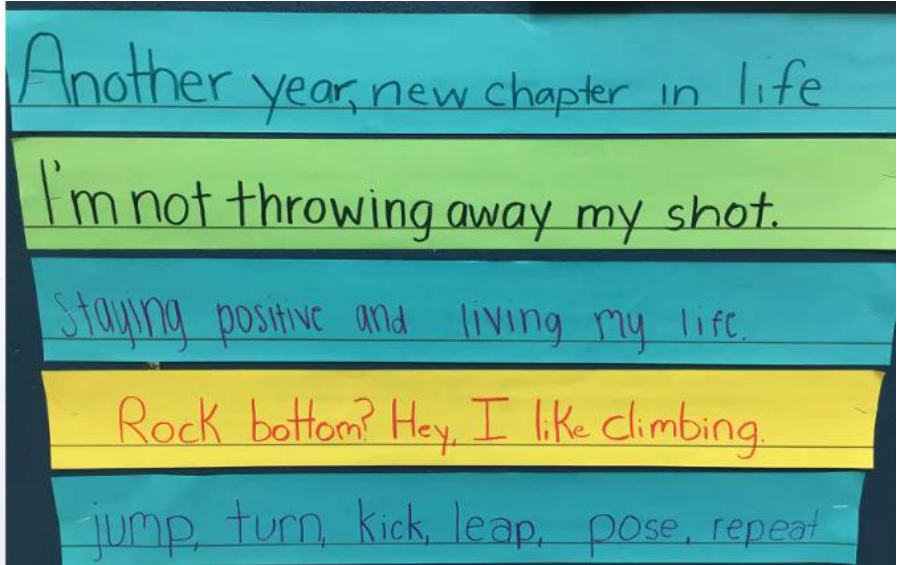
- Engage in self-reflection related to attitudes and beliefs about mental health
- Understand the role of the school nurse in the comprehensive school mental health system
- Identify tools for increasing your mental health literacy and skills
- Identify mindsets and skills useful in student mental health crises
- Experience compassion resilience exercises to attend to your own well-being



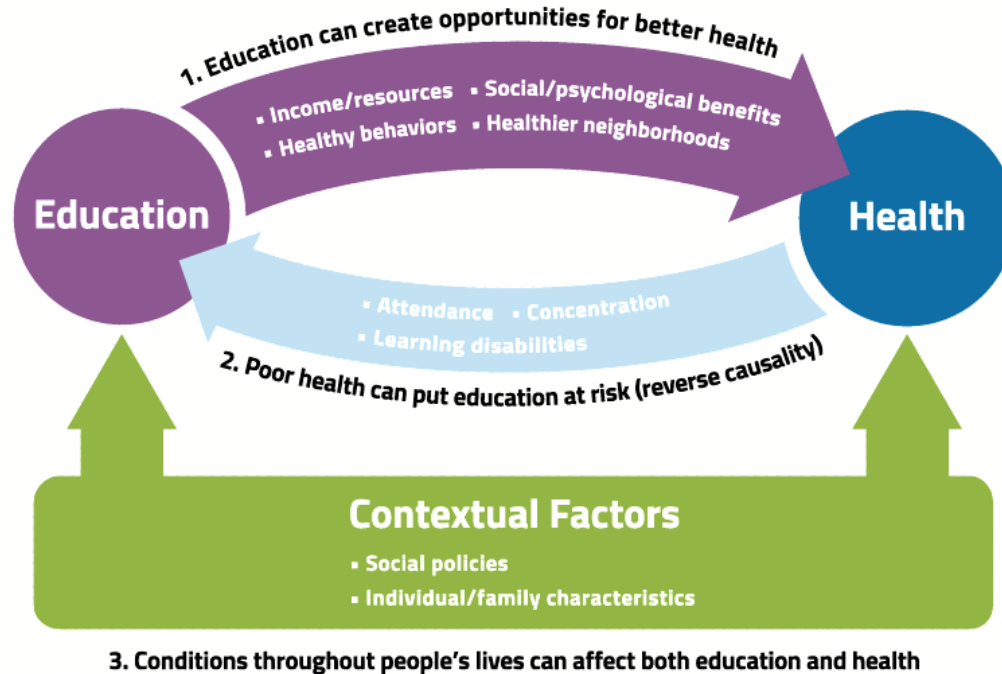


Opening Activity: 6 Word Story

- Compose a six-word story that conveys your thoughts about, understanding of, or experiences related to mental health.
- If you choose, share your story.



Health & Education

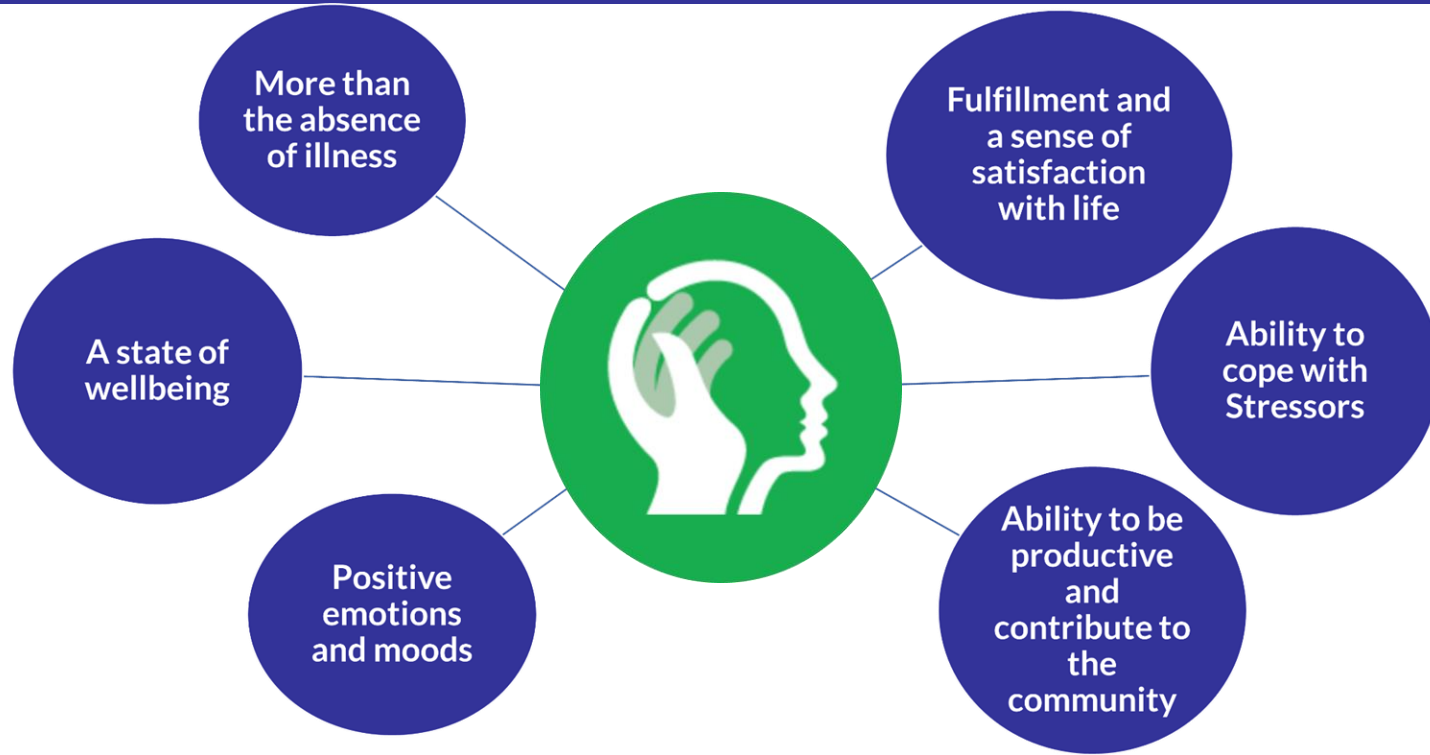


What is Mental Health?

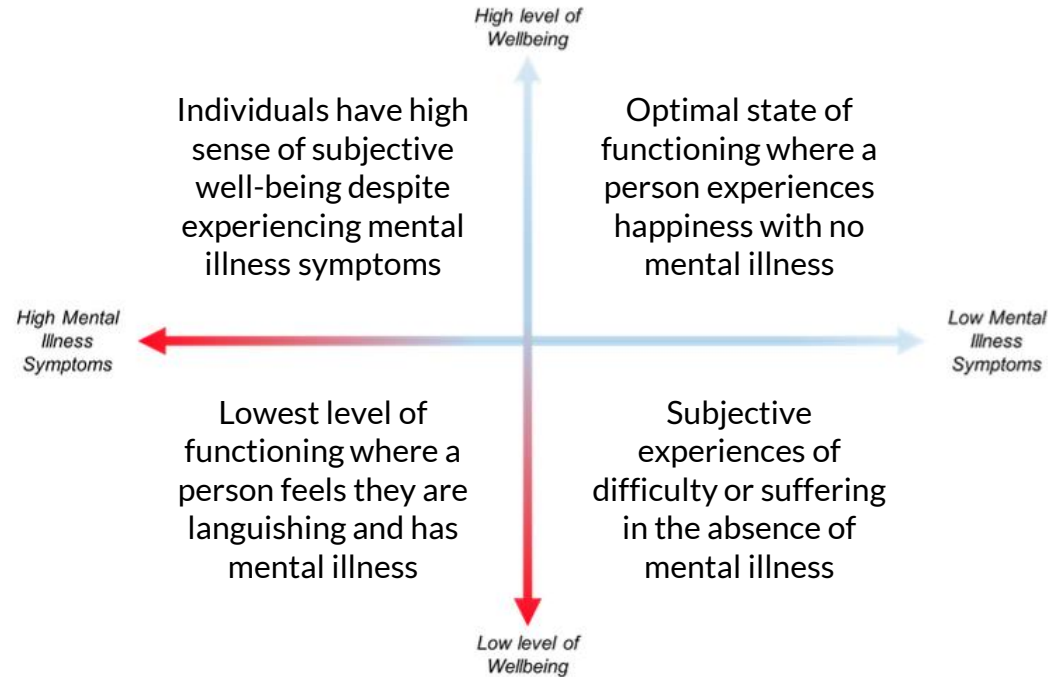
- Something **everyone** has, from infancy to adulthood
- Affects how people **think, feel, and act**
- **Complete mental health** = the absence of mental health challenges + high levels of social, behavioral, and emotional wellbeing (Greenspoon et al. 2017).



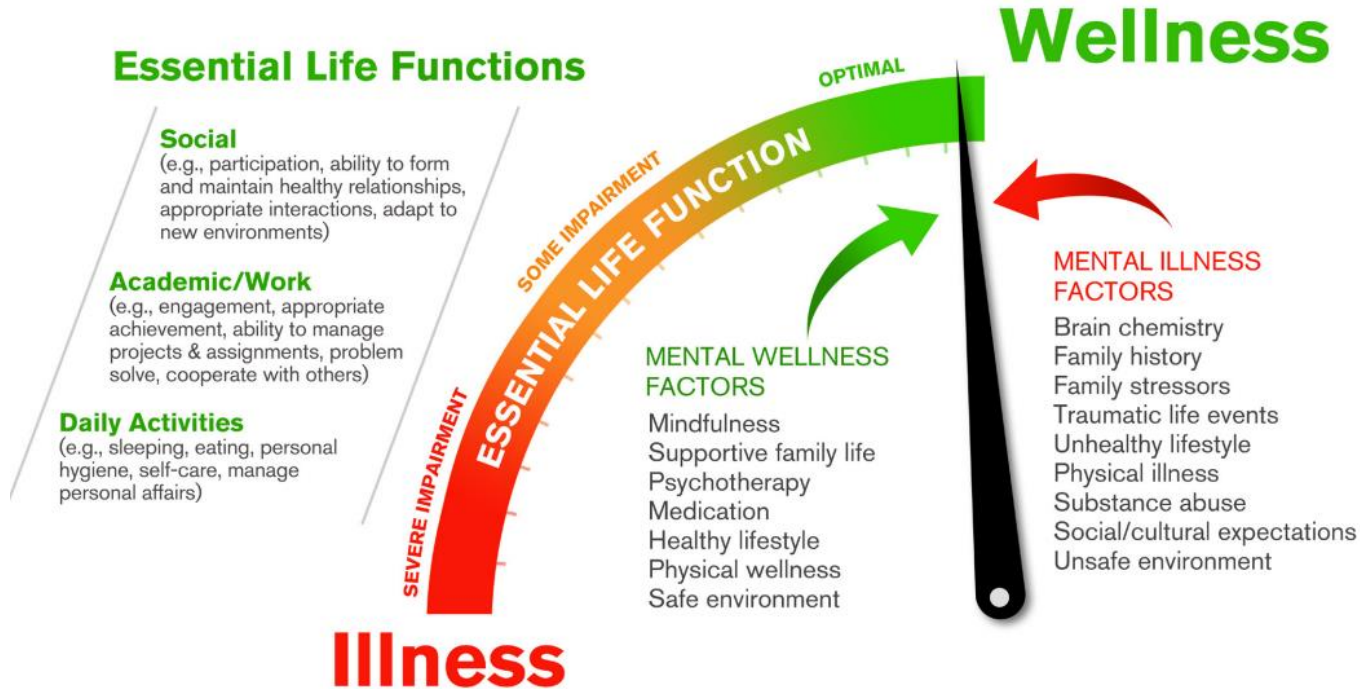
Defining Mental Health



Mental Health: Dimensional



Mental Health: Continuum



What Influences Mental Health?



What influences Mental Health?



Economic Stability

Includes influencers such as poverty, employment, food security, and housing security.



Education Access and Quality

Includes influencers such as graduation from high school, enrollment in higher education, general educational attainment, language and literacy, and early childhood education.



Social and Community Context

Includes influencers such as community cohesion, civic participation, racism and discrimination, conditions in the workplace, and incarceration.



Healthcare Access and Quality

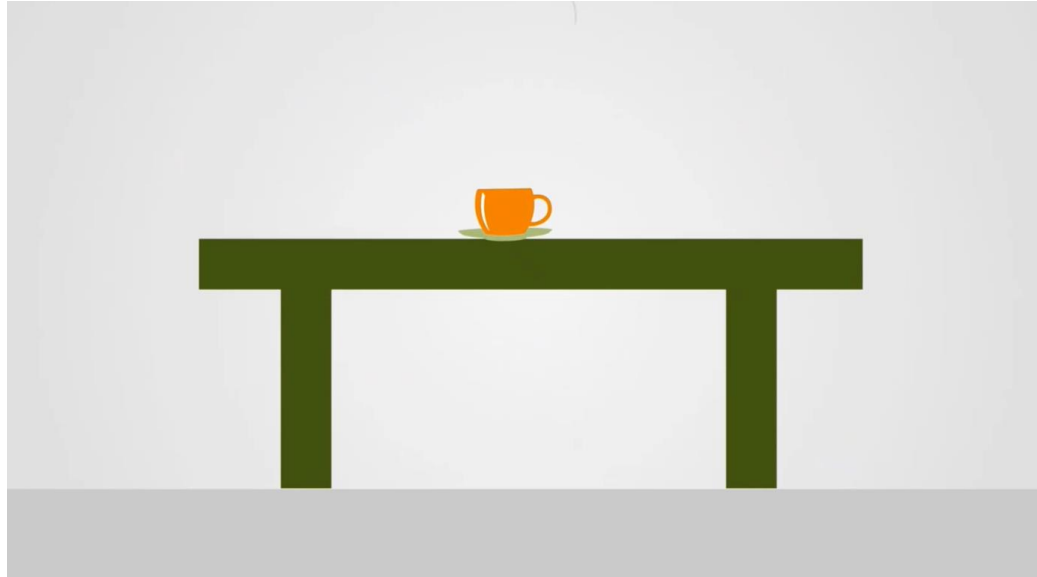
Includes influencers such as access to healthcare and primary care, health insurance coverage, health and mental health literacy.



Neighborhood and Built Environment

Includes influencers such as quality of housing, access to transportation, availability of healthy foods, air and water quality, and neighborhood crime and violence.

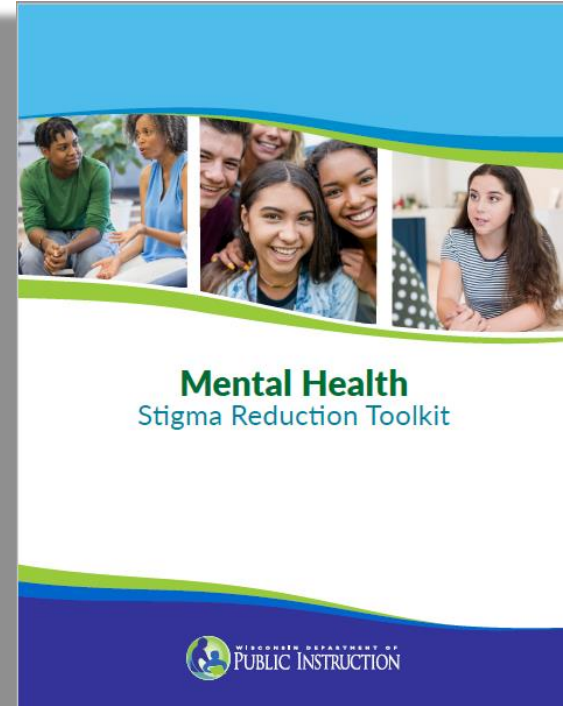
Levelness of a Table



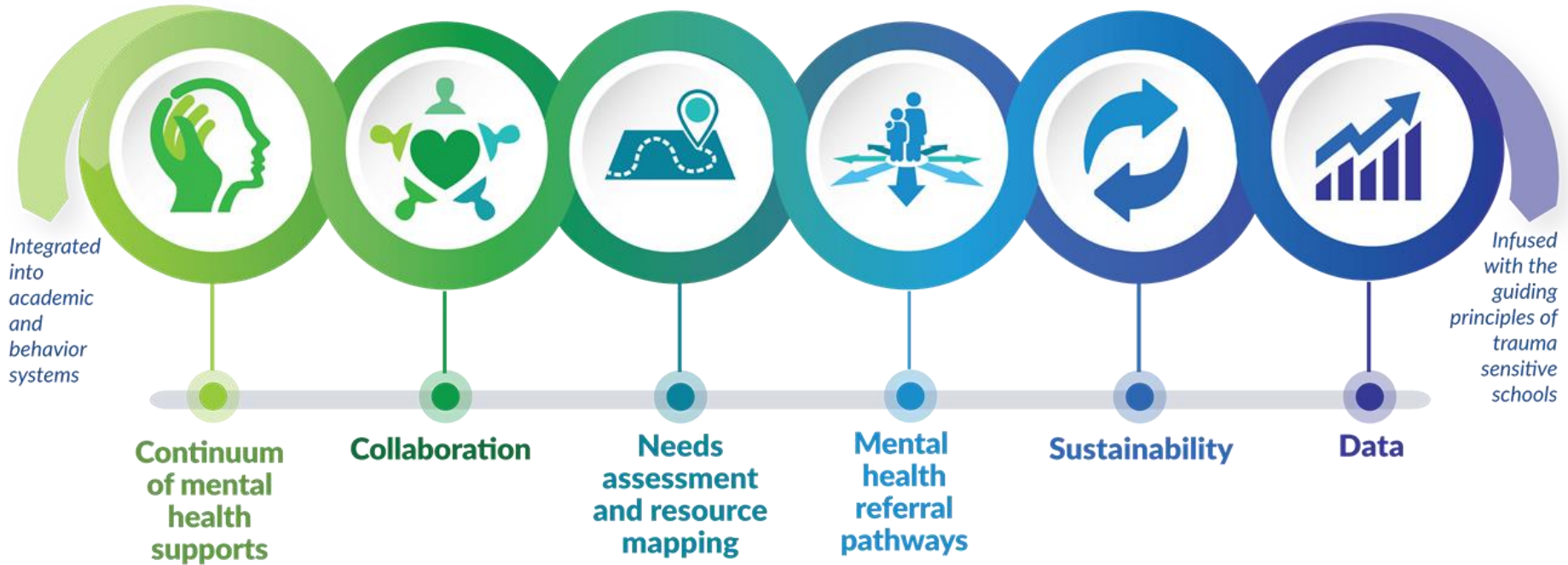
<https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/toolkit/talking-about-child-mental-health-in-tennessee/>

MH Literacy: Tools to Get Started

- [Stigma Reduction Toolkit](#)
- [MH Literacy Units of Instruction](#)
- [YMHFA Training](#)
- [TSS Online Professional Development System](#)



Wisconsin's Comprehensive School Mental Health Framework



What is your Role in Supporting Student Mental Health?

Build positive relationships

Create safe, supportive, welcoming classrooms

Teach and model SEL Skills

Identify and refer students in need of services

Collaborate with school and community MH professionals

Use strategies to help support students with MH concerns in the classroom



Mental Health Promotion



Early Intervention



Treatment

Fixing Systems, Not Students

Mental health is an individual student problem that takes time and resources to address.



VS

Mental health is an asset for students, families, schools, and communities. Investing in CSMHS leads to a stronger, healthier, more equitable community.



Fixing Systems, Not Students

Having conversation about mental health with students is only the job of Student Services staff.



VS

Everyone understands and is committed to their role in promoting well-being in the school-community and are supported in playing that role.



Break



Perspective Shift

Discipline is to
teach, not to
punish

Open dialogue
about mental
health is the
norm

Behavior is
communication

People do well
if they can

Social
Influencers must
be addressed to
improve mental
health

Mental health
is an asset

Adult wellness is
as important as
student wellness

The Connection Between Perspective Shift and Fatigue

A Driver of Compassion Fatigue

Students/colleagues do well if they *want to* ...

1. Manipulative
2. Just wants attention
3. Not motivated
4. Doesn't care

Students/colleagues do well if they *can* ...

1. Coping in the way they know how
2. Lack skills required
3. Something in their way
4. Together we can figure



<https://www.livesinthebalance.org/>

And Toolkit Appendix

Stages of Compassion Fatigue



Stages of Fatigue Table Conversation

1. What feelings or experiences might lead a person to a particular stage of fatigue? What might contribute to a person feeling stuck in a particular stage of fatigue?
2. How would that impact a person's ability to show compassion to themselves? Their colleagues? Their students?
3. Consider sharing an insight with the larger group.

7 Promises

Safe Person & Seven Promises

By displaying this decal, I promise to:

1. Acknowledge that reaching out for support is a strength.
2. Listen and react non-judgmentally.
3. Respond in a calm and reassuring manner.
4. Reflect back the feelings, strengths, and ideas I hear when listening.
5. Ask how I can be helpful and respond as I am able.
6. Do what I can to connect to other supports if asked.
7. Maintain confidentiality and communicate if exceptions exist.



Empathy through Listening to Understand

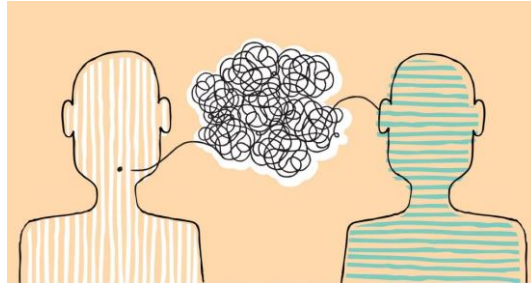
Listening to each other
(3 min each)



Repeating/Rephrasing Activity

Promise #4: Reflect back the feelings, strengths, ideas I hear when listening.

Repeat or rephrase what you heard in order to check for understanding. Call attention to concrete examples of their resilience and strength. Listen for action they believe would be helpful and are ready to take.



Activity: In pairs, each person share a current challenge you are facing. When sharing, the other person in the pair will practice repeating/rephrasing, stating the examples of strength/resilience they hear, and point out what next steps they heard the person thinking about taking- without giving advice. Take turn so both can share and listen.

Showing Reliability

Promises We Can't Keep	Promises We Can Keep
This won't ever happen to you again.	There are a lot of people who want to help you. I will always care about you.
I can fix this.	I am here to help you. It is my job.
You don't have to worry anymore.	This is not your fault. What has happened to you is not fair and I am sorry you have to deal with this.
I won't let you down.	You don't have to cope with this alone.
It will be okay.	It sounds like there are some really hard things going on that you wish would stop.

Emotional Regulation Plans

I Need Help: Planning Worksheet

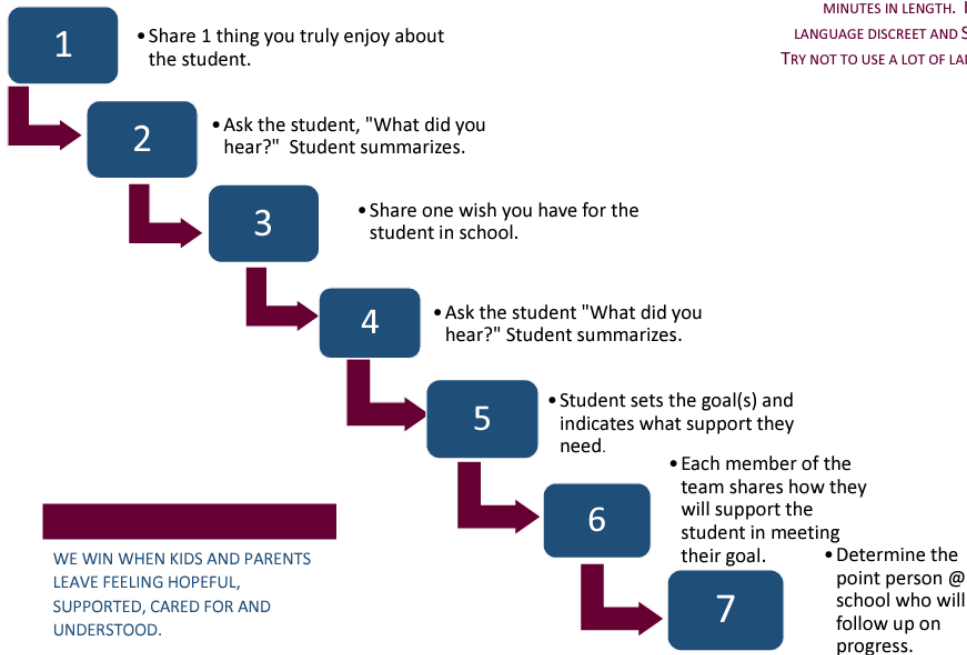
This Happens:

 <p>Feeling left out</p>	 <p>No one is listening to me</p>	 <p>Work is too hard</p>	 <p>Yelling or hearing mean words</p>
 <p>Ok Not Ok</p> <p>People get too close or touch me</p>	 <p>Losing a game</p>	 <p>I am tired</p> <p>I am hungry</p>	<p>Something Else</p>

Teacher Care Meetings

Teacher Care Meetings

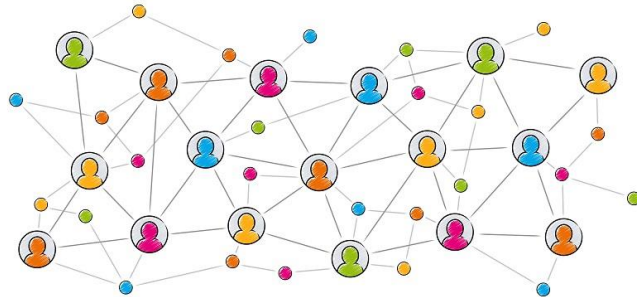
MEETINGS SHOULD BE ABOUT 20 MINUTES IN LENGTH. KEEP THE LANGUAGE DISCREET AND SIMPLE. TRY NOT TO USE A LOT OF LANGUAGE.



Reflection

Think about a student who you currently work with who is intense or challenging. Imagine doing a teacher care meeting with them.

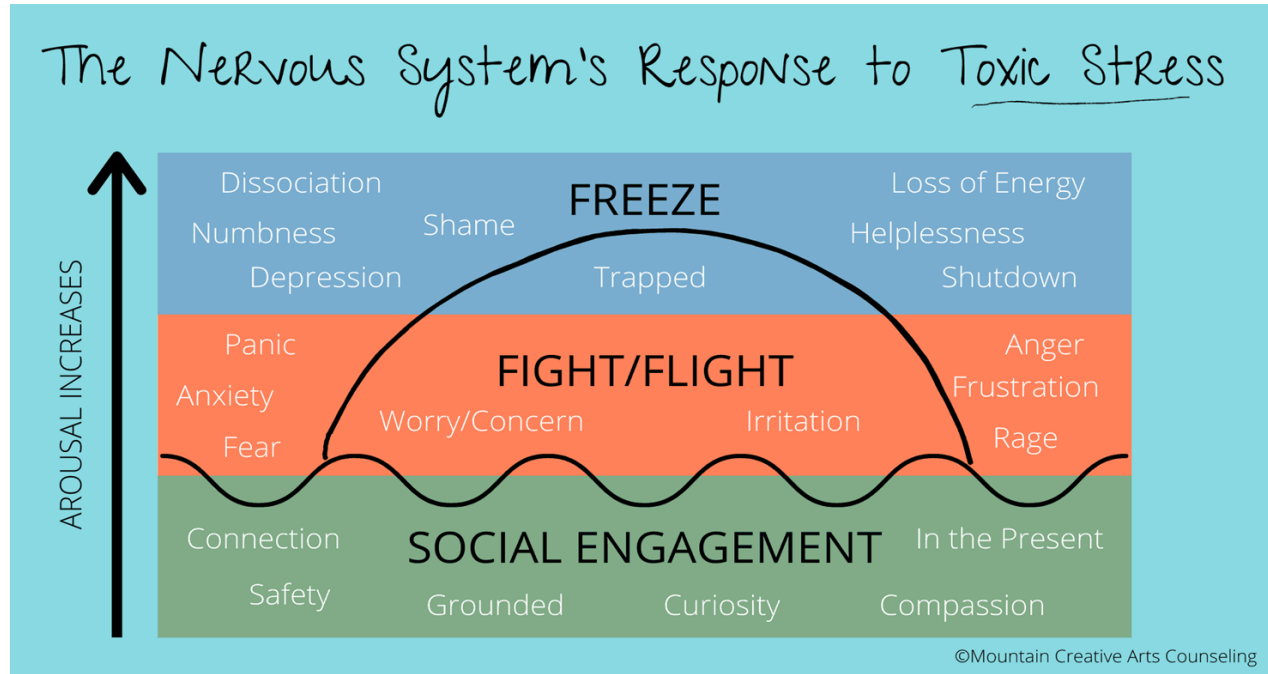
- Who would you invite to be part of this teacher care meeting?
- What is one thing that you enjoy about the student?
- What is one wish you have for the student in school?
- What interventions or supports may be implemented after the meeting?



Break



The Trauma-informed Perspective of a Crisis



The Stages and Skills of a Crisis

Stage One in Crisis Response Define the Problem

Empathy and Nonjudgment

Partnership – meet the person where they are

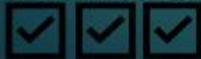
Evocation – ask questions

Compassion – listen to understand their perspective

Support autonomy – discover their agency to make the next decision

Choose wisely what you insist on

Check for understanding



Focus on Feelings

Guide the focus to calm mind and body – we are here together to understand the problem

Co-regulation

Validation

Reflection of feelings over facts

“You aren’t sure what to do next with your son. It’s confusing.”

“You love your daughter and have tried so many things to turn things around.”

Allow time

Slow down your words (short, simple, clear)

Elicit many communication choices

Calm your body – posture and proximity matter

Be willing to say it again

Resist problem solving prematurely

Allow time for supportive silence

Allow time for decisions

The Stages and Skills of a Crisis

Stage 2 and 3 in Crisis Response Provide Support & Ensure Safety

Provide Support throughout all the Stages!

Check in with yourself

Pay attention to what is coming up for you

How do you stay grounded and intentional during times of heightened stress?

Are you reacting or responding?

Slow things down for yourself if needed

Assess Proximity

Gather info about where everyone is—caregiver, participants, siblings, others

Gather info about emotional state—caregiver, participant, siblings, others

Guide caller to a safe and private space--create space

Assess Environment

Gather info about the environment—access to sharps, pills, weapons, car keys

The Stages and Skills of a Crisis

Stage 4 in Crisis Response

Examine Alternatives

Provide Support throughout all the Stages!

Explore Options

Informal support network for respite—family, friends, neighbor

Explore option of creating separation/space within the home

Can caregiver and teen agree to give each other space for the rest of the day/evening?

What will care giver and teen do to actively maintain space?

Prioritize

Guide the focus on creating immediate safety

Reminder that the precipitating issue will best be discussed and addressed after safety is firmly established

Check if basic needs are being met—food, sleep

Discord?

Return to reflection, validation, support

The Stages and Skills of a Crisis



Stage 5 and 6 in Crisis Response

Make a Plan & Obtain Commitment

Provide lots of affirmation—getting here required a lot of trust, mutual understanding, teaming, and respect

Retake the temperature—how is everyone feeling?

Ask permission about following up—check in tomorrow with care giver and/or teen, debrief with caregiver and/or teen?

How are you doing and what do you need

Let's Learn from Each Other



Discussion Questions:

What stage or skills do you feel the most confident in when responding to a crisis?

Where would you like to grow your crisis response skills?

Responding to Student Disclosure

	30 second response	3 minute response	10 minute response
YOUR GOALS ARE TO:	<i>"How are you doing? It looks like you might be frustrated...?"</i>	<i>"Thank you for seeking me out today. You are really strong to ask for help. Let's see if we can start to work this out together so you don't feel like you have to deal with this on your own. Is that okay with you?"</i>	<i>"Sharing your feelings can be a really brave thing to do. Thank you so much for sharing them with me. You are not alone...I'm here to help and there are other people at school who can help us out too. We can work together so you can keep feeling safe to share and we can all help you take care of your feelings at school okay?"</i>
Acknowledge feelings and help-seeking	<i>"How long have you been feeling like that?"</i> <i>"What could we both do right now that would help?"</i>	<i>"What can I and your other teacher/s do to help you when you are feeling this way in class... and at play times? How could you ask us to help?"</i>	<i>"First, I wondered if you have told anyone else about these feelings before? What did they do? Did that help you...how?"</i> <i>"When you're with other kids at school, what have you done to take care of these feelings? How did that help you.... or them?"***</i>
Point to Internal Strengths & External Resources	<i>"Do you want to talk about it some more?"</i> <i>"If you ever want to talk to me about how you are feeling, you can find me in room.....during.....(insert location and available times). I'm here to help."</i>	<i>"What could the kids in your class do to help you when you are feeling this way in class ...and at play times? How could you ask them to help?"</i>	<i>"When you're with other teachers at school, what have you done to take care of these feelings? How did that help you....or them?"**</i> [***affirm any positive coping strategies/strengths mentioned]
Commit to next steps		<i>"Thank you for sharing how you are feeling with me. That took a lot of guts. I'd like to talk about this again soon if you think that would help. Can we talk again soon?"</i>	<i>"Now let's talk about what we can do next time you feel like this again at school. What could you do in the classroom and at play times to help with these feelings? How can I, other teachers and kids at this school help you out when you have these feelings?"</i>
Consider referral to Pupil Service Staff			<i>"Together, let's work out who we might need to tell, and why, and how they might be able to help us out some more. What would you like them to know? Would you like to tell them about how you are feeling and what we've talked about?" Suggest other sources of support within the school and next steps...</i> <i>"Thank you very much for being so honest and sharing your feelings with me. That shows just how brave and strong you are. I know we can work this out. I will see you again onat.....(insert date and location). Is that okay with you?."</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Try to use "we" and "us" language as much as possible to minimize the student's feelings of isolation and alienation and maximize feelings of hope based on a team approach. ➤ Think about where might be the best place/s in the school for follow up discussions to occur. Ideally, the student would nominate their preference i.e. a space that would minimize visibility in front of peers or would they prefer a playground conversation under the guise of something 'lighter'/less stigmatizing i.e. homework follow-up? ➤ Work to preserve the trust, safety and faith they have placed in you and the help-seeking process at your school while at the same time looking for appropriate ways to connect with the parents/family. 		

Self Compassion as Fuel

What is Self-Compassion?



Self-Kindness

Be loving towards ourselves
instead of self-critical.



Common Humanity

Everyone suffers. You are
not perfect. No one is.
You are not alone.



Mindfulness

Notice our struggle. Feel it,
Instead of being reactive.
Be with it, avoiding
Self-judgment or overreaction.

When you feel like you have fallen short,
how do you practice self-compassion?

Until we meet again...

Thank you for your
precious time and
attention.

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