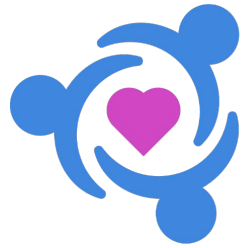




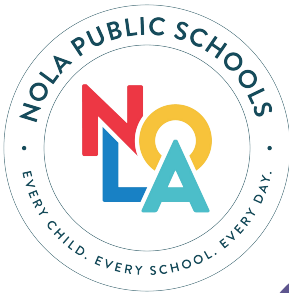
COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Challenges associated with children's exposure to trauma and the importance of fostering resilient outcomes among youth

Louisiana Statewide Children's Advocacy Institute
May 13th, 2026



COALITION FOR COMPASSIONATE SCHOOLS



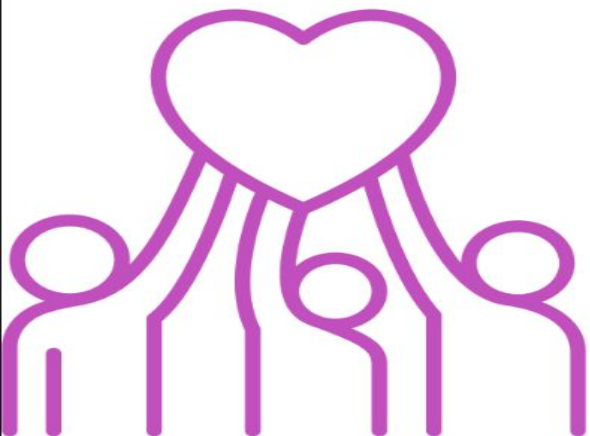
SAMHSA Award #6H79SM085077-01M001



COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Our Vision

Flourishing school systems that
are rooted in community,
healing, and human-centered
approaches.



Our Mission



COALITION FOR
COMPASSIONATE
SCHOOLS

Build the capacity of schools, students, and parents to create transformative change in education through the adoption, implementation, and sustainment of trauma-informed, healing-centered practices.



Learning Objectives

- Recognize the impact and challenges of trauma on children's development
- Respond to trauma using research-based strategies that foster healing and resilient outcomes

WHAT IS TRAUMA

The harmful interruption of **safety, agency, dignity, or belonging.**

Overwhelms our ability to **cope** with or **integrate** our experience of an event.

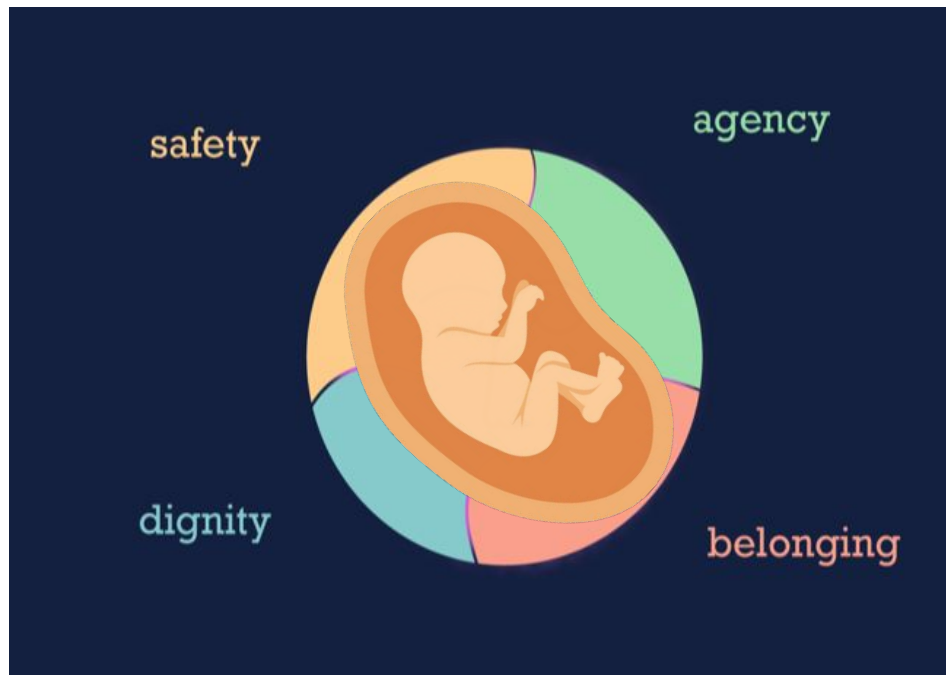


Is embodied at multiple levels: **individual, collective, systemic, intergenerational** and/or **historical**



Can be **acute, chronic, cumulative, complex**

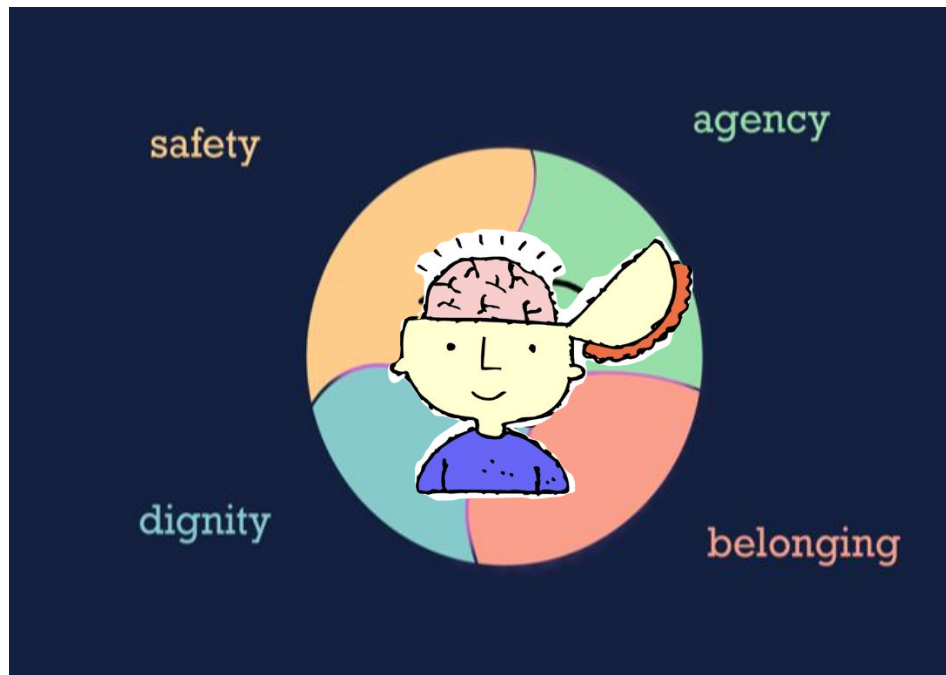
I invite you to take a journey with me from the womb to the world.



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Adaptations to Chronic Trauma



Thinking & Learning Adaptations

- Difficulty paying attention, problem solving, setting goals, taking perspective, retrieving prior learning
- Difficulty thinking clearly
- Difficulty storing, consolidating, and retrieving new information

Adaptation to Chronic Trauma



Behavior Adaptations

"A highly sensitive stress-response system constantly on the lookout for threats can produce patterns of behavior that are self-defeating in school: fighting, talking back, acting up, and, more subtly, going through each day perpetually wary of connection with peers or teachers."

-- Paul Tough, 2016

Behavioral Adaptations to Chronic Trauma

How do we **recognize** the signs of trauma and the need for behavioral or emotional supports in students?

	Recognize Signs	Worldview Adaptations
Fight	• Easily frustrated, overwhelmed, or “set off” • Unpredictable emotional reactions	• “The world is dangerous, and I have to protect myself.” • “If I don’t stand up for myself, no one else will.” • “People will hurt me if I let my guard down.”
Flight	• Physical withdrawal (head on desk, sleeping) • Frequent check-outs or requests for breaks	• “The world is overwhelming, and I need to escape to stay safe.” • “I can’t handle this, so it’s better to avoid it.” • “If I don’t get involved, I won’t get hurt.”
Freeze	• Zoning out, daydreaming	• “The world is unpredictable, and I don’t know how to respond.” • “No matter what I do, it won’t make a difference.” • “It’s safer not to make a choice.”
Fawn	• People pleasing, overly affectionate, doing over and beyond what is necessary	• “If I keep others happy, I’ll be safe and accepted.” • “If I’m agreeable, people will like me and won’t hurt me.” • “My worth depends on keeping others happy.”

ATION FOR



A Trauma Lens for Student Behavior

We shift our perspective from

"What's wrong with that child?"
to

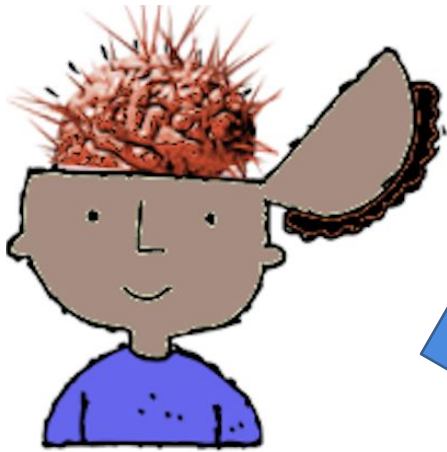
"I wonder what that child needs"
and

"What's possible for this child?"



Healing from Individual Trauma

We can go from this...



Emotional
Regulation



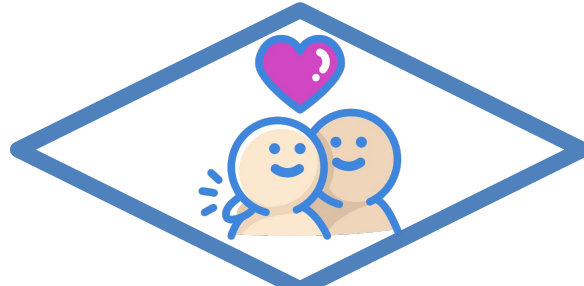
Supportive Relationships



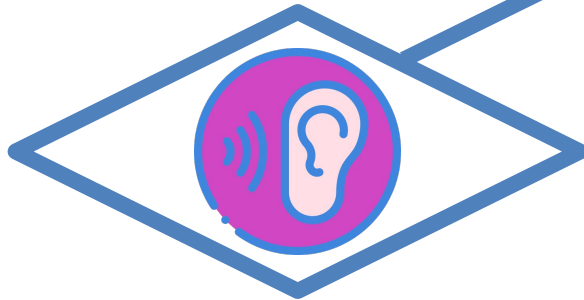
..to this!



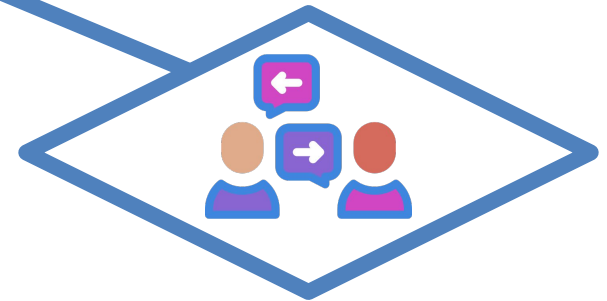
Developmental Relationships



Strengthening Relationships



Active Listening



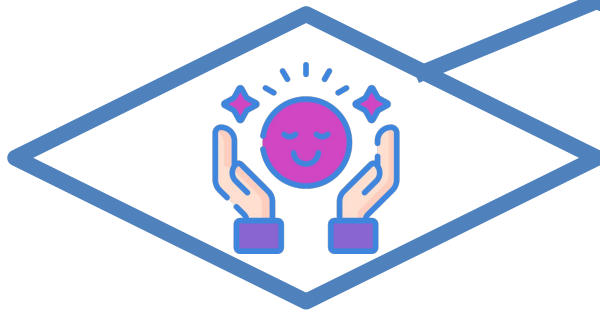
Reframing Conflict



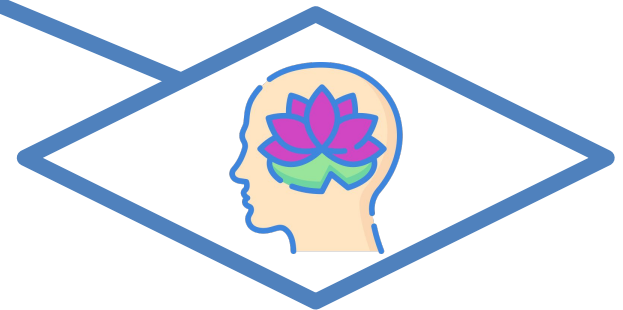
Psychoeducation



Emotional
Regulation



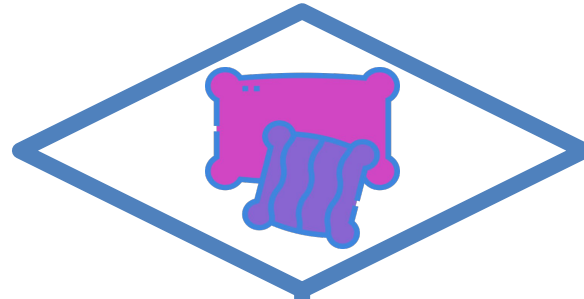
Gratitude & Positive
Self-Talk



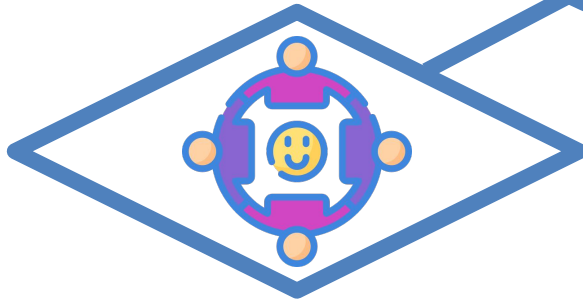
Mindfulness &
Movement



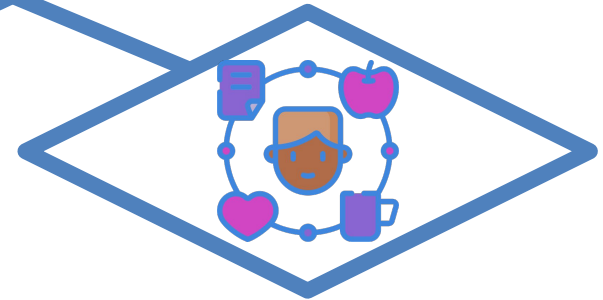
Regulation &
Calm Down Areas



Safe & Supportive
Environments



Restorative Practices



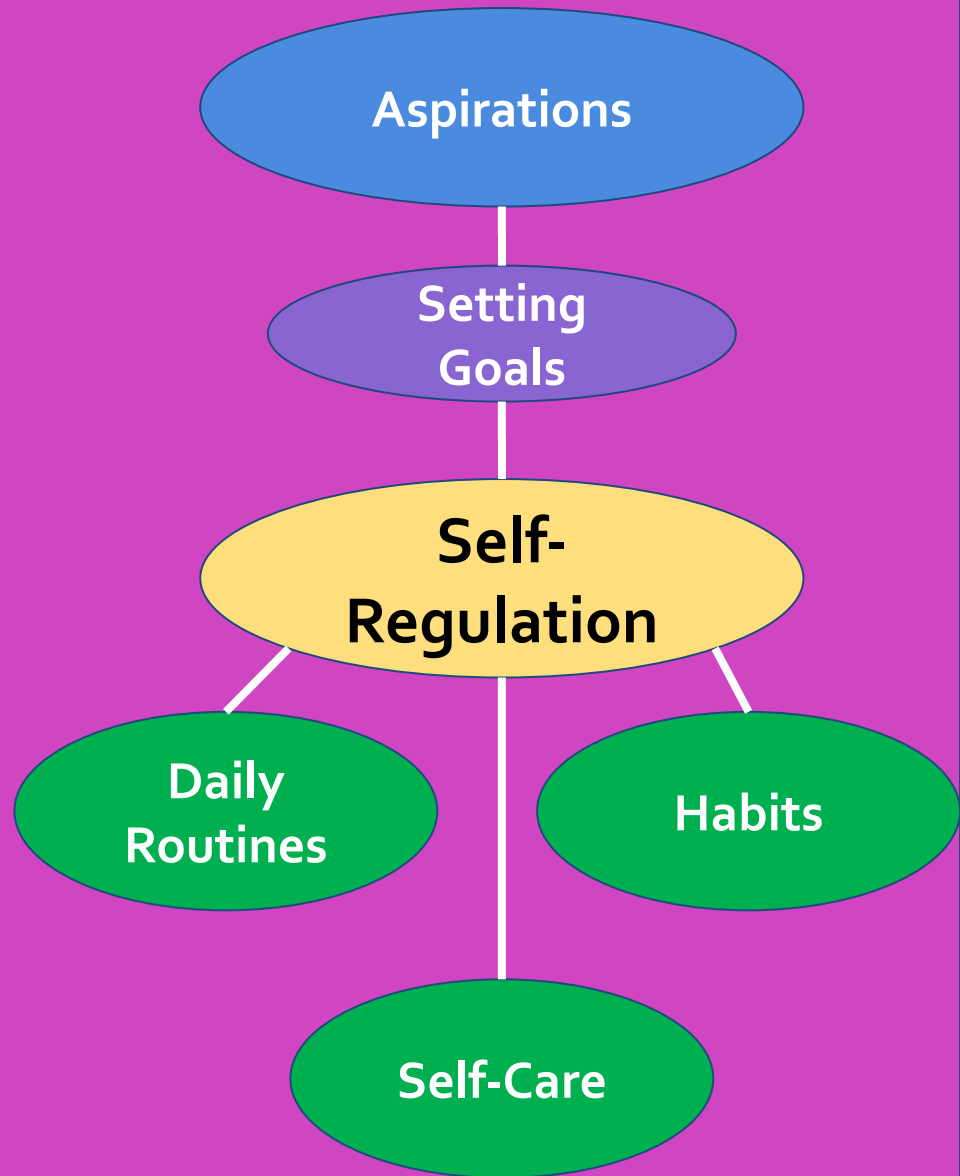
Rituals & Routines



Self-Regulation

The act of **managing thoughts and feelings** to meet goals such as coping with strong feelings, controlling impulses, learning, and getting along with others.

Murray, D.W. (2017)





Supporting Students with Self-Regulation

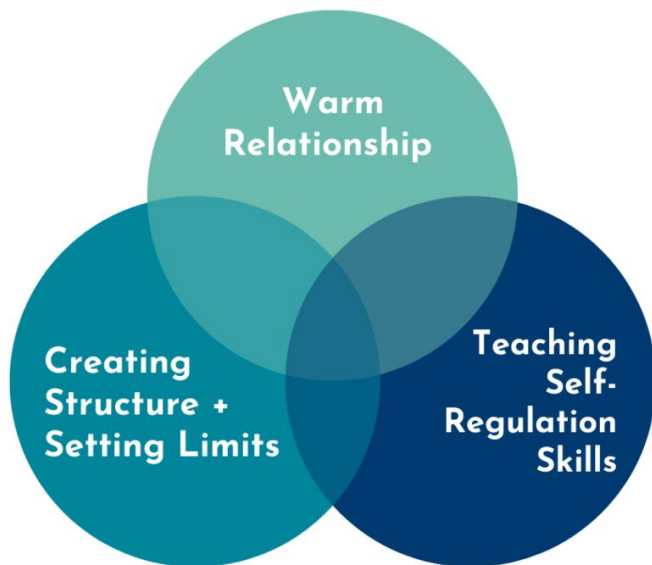


Students need multiple tools and modeling to build regulation skills.

Examples:

- ✓ Movement or sensory breaks
- ✓ Use of calm-down spaces
- ✓ Teaching emotional vocabulary
- ✓ Breathing exercises or visuals
- ✓ Pre-corrects and check-ins

3 pillars of co-regulation



Co-Regulation

A **mutual act**, an exchange of calm between two people. Co-regulation involves teaching young people through empathy and modeling calmness in the face of stress.

Co-Regulating Moves



Set the scene

Using lighting as a cue – dimmer to bring the energy down, brighter to bring the energy up



Monitor volume and tone

When a situation is escalating, keeping a quiet or moderate volume with a serious, calm, steady tone



Check your physical presence

Getting on students' eye level to balance power



Use reflecting language

Naming the emotions students express as a way to show you are listening to or seeing them



Prompt strategies and choices

Remind students of available supports or strategies, when they might not be at their best



What To Teach Children: The Brain



- “Upstairs brain”/
The Wise Owl
(Pre-frontal cortex)

- Responsible for thinking, planning, and learning.

Wise Owl
(Prefrontal Cortex)



- “Downstairs brain”/
The Guard Dog
(Amygdala)

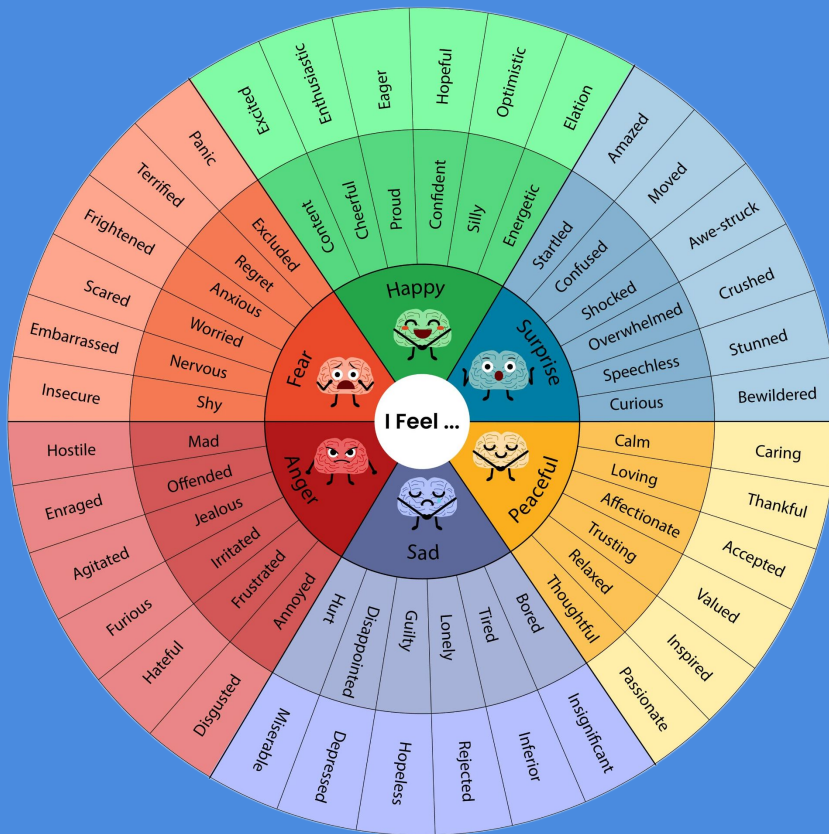
- Responsible for survival, threat detection, and emotions like anxiety and fear.



Guard Dog
(Amygdala)

(Siegel, D. J., & Bryson, 2012)

What To Provide Students: Feelings



- Feelings wheels / mood meter
 - “Name it to tame it”
- Read-alouds or stories and discussion about regulation and strong feelings.
- Posted visuals - emotion vocab chart, breathing techniques, how to ask for help, etc.

Elements	Actions	Definitions
1. Express Care Show me that I matter to you.	• Be dependable..... Be someone I can trust. • Listen..... Really pay attention when we are together. • Believe in me Make me feel known and valued. • Be warm..... Show me you enjoy being with me. • Encourage Praise me for my efforts and achievements.	
2. Challenge Growth Push me to keep getting better.	• Expect my best Expect me to live up to my potential. • Stretch Push me to go further. • Hold me accountable ... Insist I take responsibility for my actions. • Reflect on failures Help me learn from mistakes and setbacks.	
3. Provide Support Help me complete tasks and achieve goals.	• Navigate..... Guide me through hard situations and systems. • Empower Build my confidence to take charge of my life. • Advocate..... Defend me when I need it. • Set boundaries Put in place limits that keep me on track.	
4. Share Power Treat me with respect and give me a say.	• Respect me Take me seriously and treat me fairly. • Include me Involve me in decisions that affect me. • Collaborate Work with me to solve problems and reach goals. • Let me lead Create opportunities for me to take action and lead.	
5. Expand Possibilities Connect me with people and places that broaden my world.	• Inspire Inspire me to see possibilities for my future. • Broaden horizons Expose me to new ideas, experiences, and places. • Connect..... Introduce me to more people who can help me develop and thrive.	

Question & Answer



Survey



<https://bit.ly/3Occ7fH>



Thank you & Keep in Touch!

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anthony@cforcs.org

