



# TRAUMA AND SELF COMPASSION

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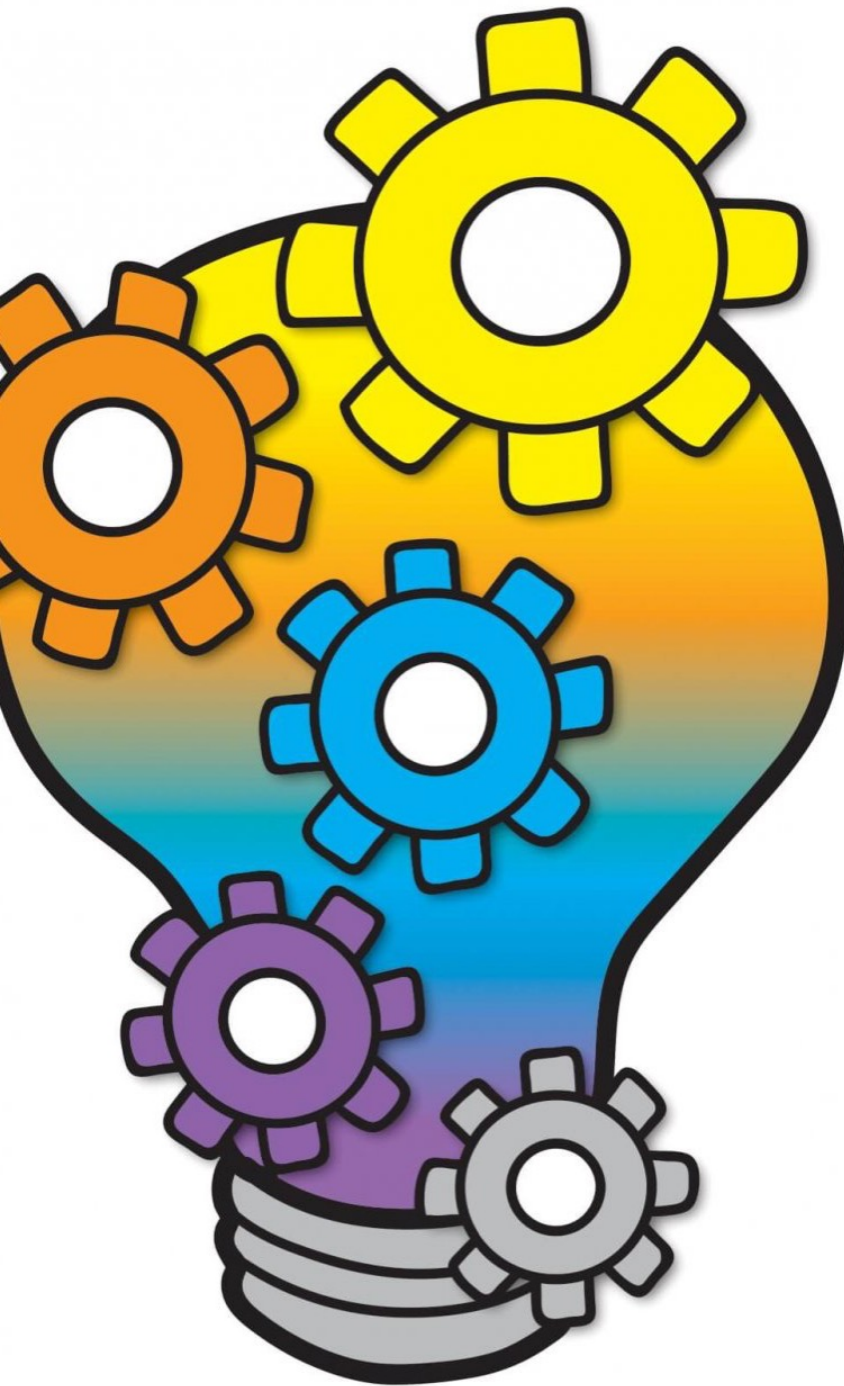
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# Territorial Land Acknowledgement

**Oki** [hello] from Lethbridge, located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Aboriginal peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our community.

\*The Blackfoot Confederacy comprises the Kainai, Piikani, Amskapiipikani, and Siksika First Nations





# GOALS FOR TODAY

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- What is trauma?
- Why is it important to know about trauma as a teacher?
- What are trauma characteristics and strategies?
- Why is it important to know about trauma and compassion?
- What is self-compassion?
- What are some simple self-compassion exercises?
- What can become my self-compassion mantra and reflection?

# Look after yourself....

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- As we move through this presentation and you engage in understanding trauma & self-compassion, stay attuned to your own progress and feelings.
- Reflecting on the impact of trauma and a lack of self-compassion can evoke feelings of distress or concern.
- Be sure to monitor your own emotional reactions to this material. Seek out support from colleagues or others at your school or EAP service. Please let me know if I can help.



# WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT TRAUMA?

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Trauma is painful in the immediate and long-term. It is elusive to “pinpoint” or to predict the consequences.

Even after the stressful or traumatic situation has passed, brains and bodies continue to react as if the stress is continuing. They become self-protective. They spend a lot of their energy scanning their environment for threat. Their bodies act as if they are in a constant state of alarm. Their brains are endlessly vigilant.

This is true of individuals of all ages.

# WHAT IS TRAUMA?

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- Trauma may arise from a single or repeated adverse event that can interfere with a person's ability to cope and integrate the experience;
- it is the experience or witnessing of a real or perceived threat to life, physical well-being or sense of self



# TRAUMA IS...UNIQUE TO EVERYONE

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- Trauma is an experience that is emotionally painful, distressful, or shocking, which can result in lasting emotional and physical effects, every person's reaction is different to a traumatic event - the impact is contingent on the person's ability to cope with the traumatic event.

# WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW THIS AS A TEACHER?

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- Teachers must consider that students may experience difficulties in many areas of their life due to traumatic experiences and trauma responses.
  - e.g., academic difficulties, behaviour and emotional regulation in the classroom
  - e.g., difficulties with routines, completion, relationships
- Teachers and staff members assistance with traumatized youth can result in vicarious trauma
- Teachers and schools can provide connection and routine for students/staff: mitigating some of the stress and providing positive strategies

# WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW THIS AS A TEACHER?

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- Traumatized students are especially prone to difficulty in self-regulation, negative thinking, being on high alert, difficulty trusting adults, and inappropriate social interactions.
- They often haven't learned to express emotions healthily and instead show their distress through aggression, avoidance, shutting down, or other off-putting behaviors.
- These actions can feel antagonistic, immature, out of control or hostile to teachers



## WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW THIS AS A TEACHER?

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- Trauma overwhelms a person's ability to feel safe. It often leaves survivors feeling out of synch with the rest of the world. Unresolved anxiety, turmoil, and emotional pain create a sense of "being different."
- So, trauma survivors often turn to isolation and self-criticism to cope. The analytical brain goes into hyper drive, trying to second-guess, explain, adapt. *"I must deserve this. What can I do better? How can I stop hurting? What's wrong with me?"*
- May lead to misunderstandings, ineffective interventions, and missed learning time.



TO HEAL TRAUMA, ONE  
MUST UNLOCK COMPASSION

- And so, untreated trauma can give rise to a brutal inner critic.
  - It may seem that trauma survivors feel safest only when operating within bounds of joyless self-judgment and seek safety in being alone.
- Healing trauma means addressing entrenched self-denying responses that turn kind gestures away.
  - So, if we would heal trauma, where do we go from here?
- One of the *most powerful* tools to heal trauma is also one of the most overlooked. It's the power of compassion.
- **Being compassionate** is something we are all capable of doing. . .we will return to this after a few additional slides on trauma and some trauma regulating activities



# Grounding Technique

## - 5, 4, 3, 2, 1

### Breathing fast? Feeling anxious? Can't concentrate?

This technique will take you through your five senses to help center you into the present. This is a calming technique that can help you get through tough or stressful situations.

**Take a deep belly breath to begin. Slowly inhale then exhale.**

5.

**LOOK:** Look around for 5 things that you can see, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I see the computer, I see the cup, I see the pen.

**Take a deep belly breath to begin. Slowly inhale then exhale.**

4.

**FEEL:** Pay attention to your body and think of 4 things that you can feel, and say them out loud. For example, you could say, I feel my feet on the rug, I feel my back against the chair I am sitting on, or I feel the sun on my face.

**Take a deep belly breath to begin. Slowly inhale then exhale.**

3.

**LISTEN:** Listen for 3 sounds. It could be the sound of traffic outside, the sound of typing or the sound of your tummy rumbling. Say the three things out loud; "I hear...."

**Take a deep belly breath to begin. Slowly inhale then exhale.**

2.

**SMELL:** Say two things you can smell. It could be the smell of your tea, or your lotion. If you can't smell anything at the moment then name your 2 favorite smells. Say the two things out loud; "I smell...."

**Take a deep belly breath to begin. Slowly inhale then exhale.**

1.

**TASTE:** Say one thing you can taste. It may be from the meal you just had, a sip from something, or the toothpaste from brushing your teeth. If you can't taste anything, then say your favorite thing to taste.

**Take a deep belly breath to begin. Slowly inhale then exhale.**  
**Take another deep belly breath to end.**



1

## FIVE FINGER *breathing*

Starting at the bottom outside edge of your thumb, breathe in and use your index finger to trace up to the top of your thumb. When you breathe out, slowly trace down the other side of your thumb.



Begin here, at the outer edge of your thumb.



This easy activity can help you feel calm by focusing your attention to your breath. Matching mindful movement with your breathing can be soothing. Take your time!

2

Keep breathing in and out, tracing up and down on each finger for a total of five breaths until you reach the other side of your hand.

# TRAUMATIZED STUDENTS

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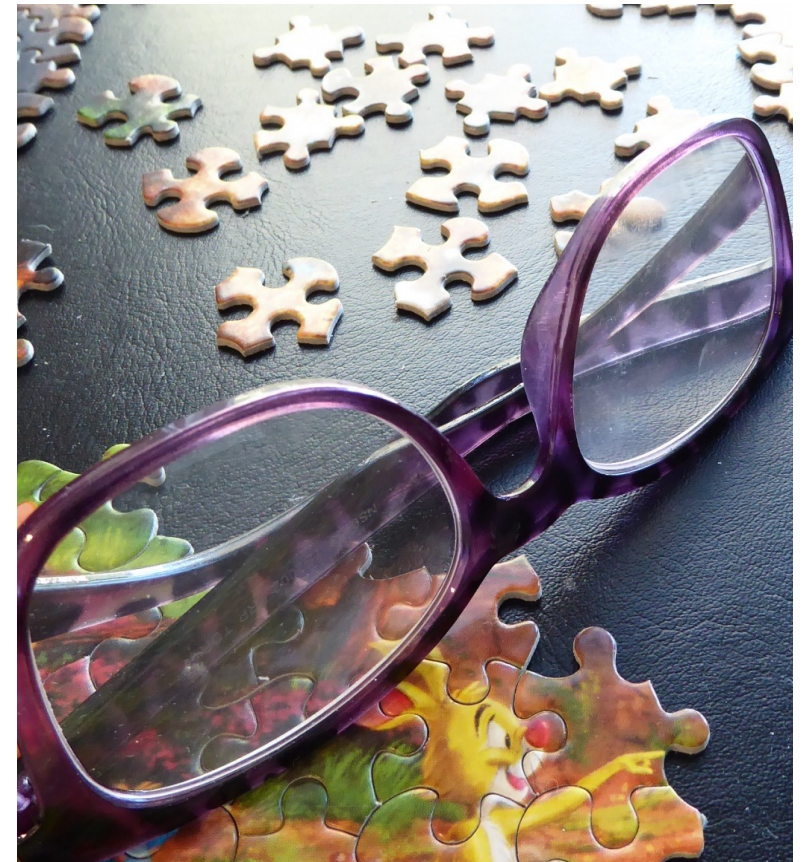


- Traumatized and stressed youth have little space left for learning
  - constant state of tension and arousal can leave them unable to concentrate, pay attention, retain and recall new information
  - behaviour is often challenging in the school environment
  - struggle to make positive peer relationships.
- Without considering trauma, we run the risk of “not seeing”, misunderstanding and mislabeling the core issues that our students may be facing.

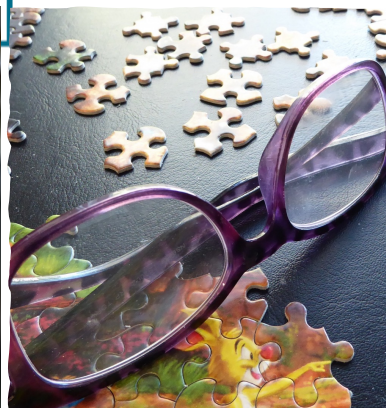
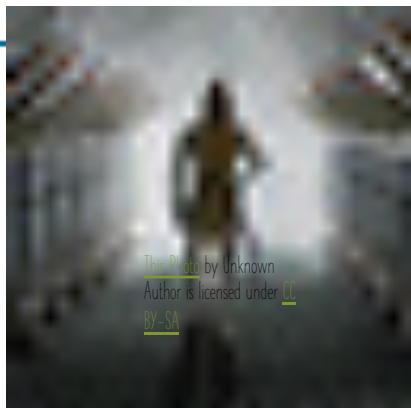
# UNDERSTANDING THE BEHAVIOUR ORIGINS

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- Students exposed to trauma—particularly ongoing trauma from a young age—develop survival strategies to manage traumatic experiences.
- Their brains and bodies adapt based on these experiences and survival skills in ways that may be misinterpreted by others.
- Trauma-related behaviors can be frustrating for adults, especially when they jeopardize a student's success. However, these behaviors often make sense in the context of a youth's experiences ...
- When we put on our “trauma glasses” and consider the role trauma may be playing in how a student is behaving, we start to think and talk about students and their behaviors differently.



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



# TRAUMA IS MORE THAN TRIGGERED BEHAVIOUR - IT AFFECTS THE WHOLE PERSON



- Emotional
  - Loss of pleasure from activities, shock, fear, emotional numbing, hypersensitivity, helplessness, sadness, despair, guilt, grief, anger, phobias
- Physical
  - Sleep issues, startle response, somatic complaints, hyperarousal, gastrointestinal problems, decreased appetite, decreased libido, headaches, fatigue,
- Interpersonal and Behavioral
  - Aggression, cries easily, risk taking, social withdrawal, tantrums, avoids trauma reminders, alienation, school impairment, relationship violence, school avoidance, isolation, social skill deficits, "immature" behaviour, disrupted employment
- Cognitive
  - Anxious, nightmares, memory impairment, faulty decision making, poor concentration, decreased self-esteem, distortion, confusion, disbelief, intrusive thoughts/memories

# TRAUMA'S THREAT OR STRESS RESPONSES

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- Our brain is designed to detect potential threat and help the body react in ways that will keep us safe. We respond to threat by what is most likely to keep us safe in the moment.
- These 4 F's can cause issues if we are unable to compete the trauma response or if we are in this response from sustained/chronic stress.

**Fight:** Anger outbursts, controlling, bullying, explosive behaviour

**Flight:** Overthinking, panicking, anxiety, perfectionism, restlessness

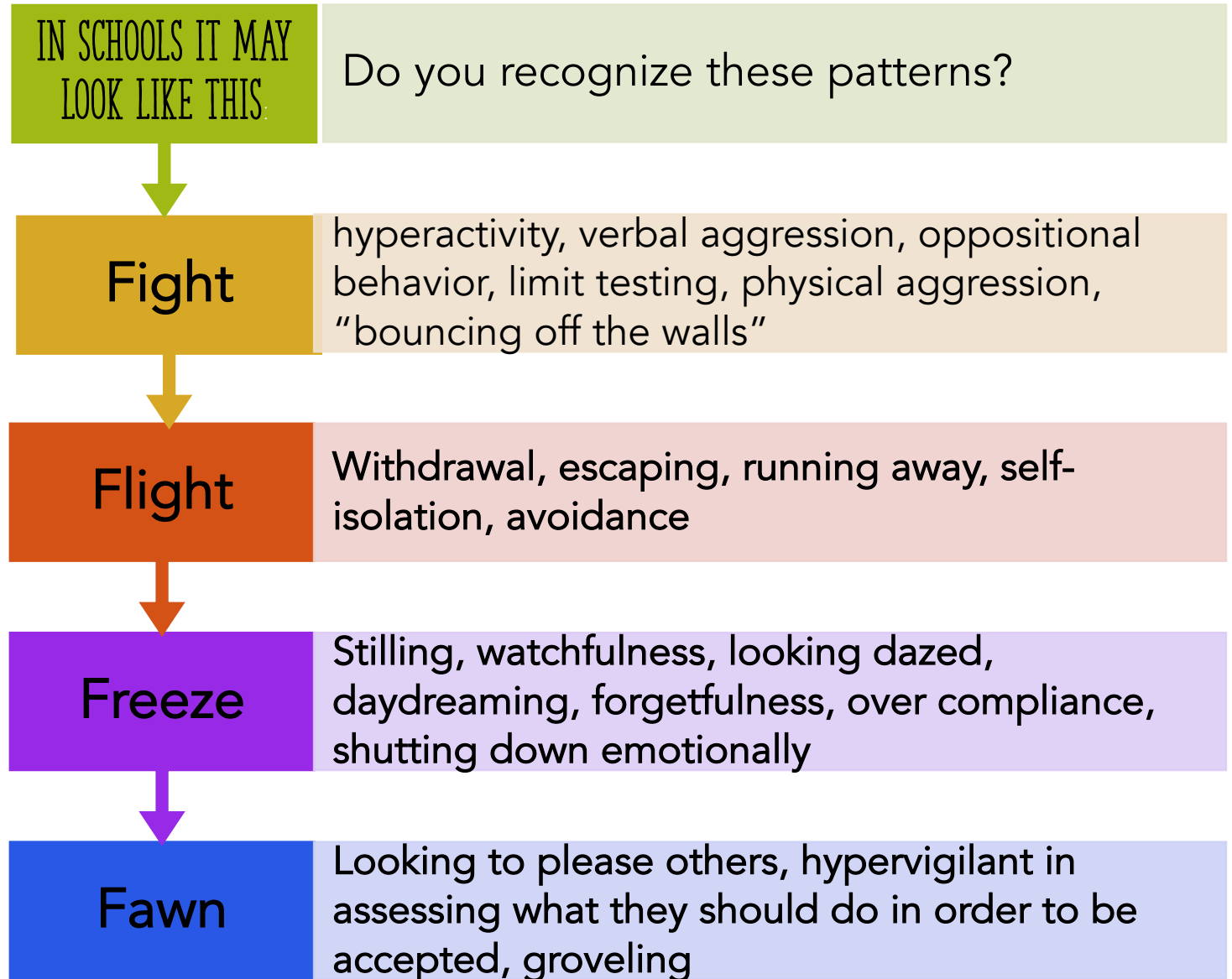
**Freeze:** Difficulty making decisions, dissociation, isolation, numbness

**Fawn:** People pleasing, no boundaries, codependent, overwhelm

- These impact learning and the ability to process information since the brain is in survival mode.



# TRAUMA PROTECTION AND SURVIVAL RESPONSE



# COUNT ON YOURSELF

1 2

## Breathing Meditation

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This is an adaptation of Pali, a technique of breath counting in Buddhist meditation. It focuses on drawing mental attention to breathing by counting inhalation and exhalation cycles numerically. Meditation is focused on one thing - to gently and deliberately withdraw our attention from distractors - by stilling the mind. Deliberately counting has powerful effects on decreasing the internal chatter of inattention.

Plus it's simple. Sit down, relax, close your eyes, and quietly count in your head while breathing rhythmically. Slow with long, controlled inhales and exhales. When counting with real intention, your mind naturally starts to align with the counting and withdraws from thought, anxiety, and other distractions. By slowly bringing your mind back to the count, again and again, you start to train your awareness, and build your meditation practice.

I recommend silent counting on each long exhalation, beginning at 1, another long exhalation for 2 and so forth, with a conclusion at 10. As some may want to increase this number, recall that meditation practices are personal and individualized. Do what works for you. Finish by taking a deep breath, open your eyes, stretch, and congratulate yourself on your meditation practice.

Note: This is an excellent grounding activity for anxiety reduction. An adult can mirror the regulated breathing with verbal counting for youngsters.



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# Calm at Hand

*Created by Dr. Noëlla Piquette*

What is great about using your hand to help create calmness is that you always have this tool with you. You can reduce anxiety and increase your tranquility while attending a lecture, talking on the phone or in a virtual meeting, listening to your kids, or lining up at a bank by using these 5-minute calmness techniques. Select one of the following discreet strategies.



## 1. Pressure Points

Simply use the thumb of one hand and press around the palm of the other hand. Do this slowly and deliberately with fairly strong pressure. Then find these two pressure points to press firmly and make small circles for a count of 5 for each point: press thumb on the line where your thumb becomes your wrist as well as the fatty part of your palm between your thumb and your index finger in the fatty portion of your palm. Repeat. It's very soothing.

## 2. Palm Push

By pushing your palms together and holding for 5 to 10 seconds you can reduce your anxiety as this movement orients you in space and provides you with something else to focus on. In addition, it can strengthen your wrists and arms. This palm push can be followed up with fingertip-to-fingertip pushes, gently pressing each pair from your thumbs to the baby fingers to continue the stress relief. Repeat. It's very calming.

## 3. Hand Massage

Rub your favorite cream into your palms or mimic the use of lotion. Massage each joint and the webbing between each finger in a slow, flowing movement. Then clench and release your fists and wrists. This 5-minute TLC hand massage and stretch will help relieve anxiety and tension.

You may want to pair your "Calm at Hand" strategies with breathing regulation techniques such as long slow breaths in and out or mentally counting out your inhale (1, 2, 3, 4) and exhale (1, 2, 3, 4) cycles. This may optimize your tension reduction.



# PROTECTIVE FACTORS CAN MITIGATE THE CONSEQUENCES OF TRAUMA

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- Safe, stable, nurturing relationships
- Support for families and individuals in need
- Parental resilience
- Caregiver knowledge and application of positive parenting skills
- Supporting child's social and emotional skills
  - Resilience - tools to respond to the challenges of life
  - Empathy - ability to understand and share the feelings of others



# HOW TO SUPPORT A STUDENT WHO HAS EXPERIENCED TRAUMA?

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TOP 2 = EVERYDAY in EVERY SITUATION to HELP THEM TRUST

- **Connection:** Demonstrate the experience of being connected to others and to community as it is healing.
  - Inviting them to join, talk, acknowledge others/themselves, share, enjoy, communicate
- **Care:** Demonstrate the experience of being seen, understood and being valued as it is an antidote to trauma symptoms.
  - Validation, attunement, interest, affect matching



# WHAT STRATEGIES CAN BE PUT INTO PLACE FOR THE STUDENT TO FEEL...SAFE? EMOTIONALLY REGULATED? ABLE TO LEARN?

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- Their capacity to learn is significantly compromised, their neurobiology is stressed, relationships feel unstable, and emotional states are in flux. They find it difficult to stay calm or regain a state of calm if they feel distressed or perturbed, elements of threat and uncertainty are present, their behaviour rules them.
- Strategies
  1. Understanding their emotions
  2. Understanding where the behaviour is coming from
  3. Connecting with them
  4. Avoiding triggers

# SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN THE CLASSROOM

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- The main role is to help the child feel safe in the classroom, while also remaining in control.
- Goal of helping the child discover strengths and learn positive behaviors via:
  - Teach concept of choices
  - Maintaining control [self regulation, double checking for “intent”]
  - Watch nonverbal behavior [deduce what they are thinking, feeling, etc.]
  - Act as a historian [reminder of the good things and positive behaviours]
  - Use positive behavior supports [antecedent, behavior, consequence]

# SCHOOL AND TEACHING PRACTICES THAT WILL INCREASE STUDENT LEARNING

- 
- Establishing healthy relationships
  - Emotionally safe spaces; increased safety to decrease trauma triggers
  - Conveying hope, compassion, collaboration, and respect; boundaries established and reinforced
  - Focusing on important routines and conversations, ones that matter
  - Connecting = The experience of being connected to others, to community is healing.
    - Establishing trust. Establishing safety



# EMOTIONALLY SAFE PLACES



- Emotions influence the ability to process information and to accurately understand what we encounter. Thus, it is important to create positive, emotionally safe classroom environment to provide for the optimal learning of students.
- Some strategies: Address how a situation could have been handled better [admit that you or they are human]...Post student work. ... Have non-negotiables. ... Admit when you don't know. ... Read with your students. ... Remain calm at all times. ... Take every opportunity to model kindness. ... Circulate. ...Do what you say and say what you do.... Connect.
- Demonstrate that you care: The experience of being seen, understood, and being valued is an antidote to trauma symptoms. Show you care by discussing the 4 f's (triggers & response) and how to deescalate and regulate



Build in flexibility for time, for choices, for comprehension and inquiries, for review of p-s steps, and for cognitive/emotional breaks

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## MAKING AN EMOTIONALLY SAFE SPACE

Have written plans for children that are made accessible to relevant school staff to ensure consistency and predictability for children both within and outside the classroom

Provide praise that is concrete, specific and delivered with a neutral tone.

Provide “cool down” time and space for the student that is not described as discipline.

Create spaces for the student to move into and still be part of the class group.

Create tactile corners (pillows, rocking chair, stress balls) to support students in class activity, and to calm them.

# SAFE SPACE - CREATION OF A CALM BOX



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## **Include stuff that will soothe, stimulate or ground:**

- **TOUCH:** Slime, putty, stress ball, squishies, beanie toys, fidget toys, fluffy toys, bendy or tactile key chains, marbles
- **TASTE:** Sour candy, mints, gum, pkg of hot chocolate
- **SMELL:** Scented lip balm or hand cream, candles, body spray, essential oils, potpourri
- **SOUND:** Music box, foil, bell, tambourine, shaker toys, headphones and mindfulness links on phone
- **SIGHT:** Decorations, bubbles, glitter, marbles, costume jewellery, beads, etch-a-sketch, crayons, colouring book, pictures of loved ones, affirmation quotes.

## EMOTION REGULATION STRATEGY

### Relax in Under a Minute

1. Scrunch up your face, and release
2. Raise your eyebrows a few times
3. Drop your jaw
4. Roll your shoulders
5. Shake out your hands
6. Take two deep breaths
7. Repeat as needed

@parentselfcare



# SCHOOL WIDE TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

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All adults in the school are:

- Aware of how trauma impacts learning
- Committed to practices in and relationships that support safety and collaboration
- Reducing the negative effects of trauma for their students

Trauma informed practices builds on:

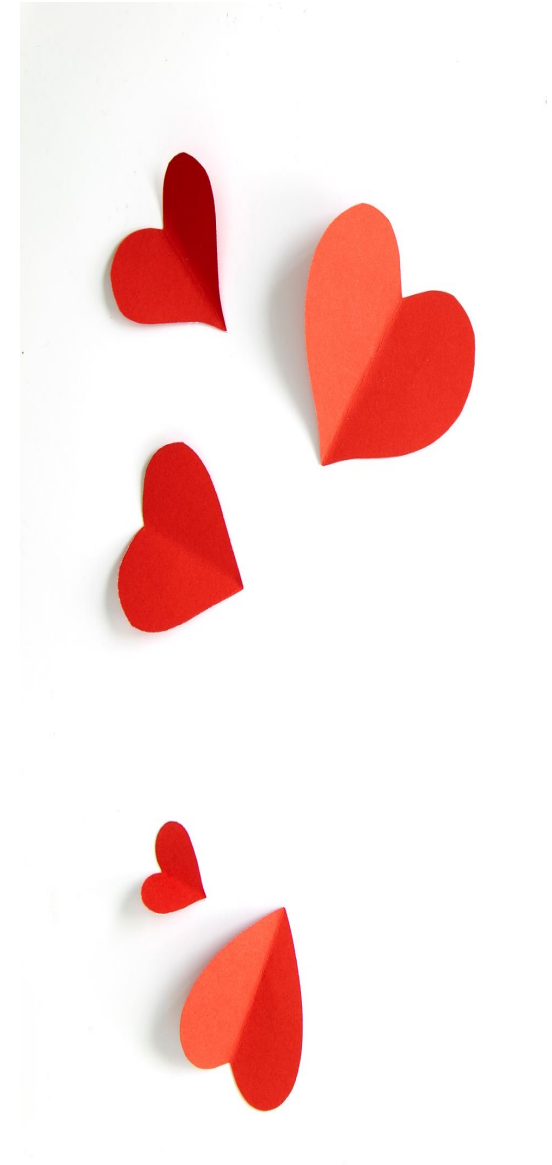
- Awareness of how trauma affects the brain and the body
- Understanding the importance of safety in the school environment
- Willingness to collaborate with others
- Shifting from *"What is wrong with this student?"* to *"What has happened to the student?"*



# SECONDARY TRAUMA - VICARIOUS TRAUMA

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- Vicarious trauma is a process of change resulting from empathetic engagement with trauma survivors. Anyone who engages empathetically with survivors of traumatic incidents, is potentially affected.
- We can address it and sometimes even prevent vicarious trauma by paying attention to our ABCs:
  - **Awareness** of our needs, emotions and limits.
  - **Balance** between our work, leisure time and rest.
  - **Connection** to ourselves, to others and to something greater (i.e., spirituality)





# SECONDARY TRAUMA SYMPTOMS

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- Feeling emotionally drained
- Being unable to tolerate emotion
- Loss of energy and pleasure
- Second-guessing yourself
- Feeling continually overwhelmed
- Having difficulty leaving work at work
- Taking the work personally
- Feeling negative
- No longer able to empathize with others
- Looking for danger and threats
- Questioning your ability to help or to be in this job
- Having more trouble communicating well
- Experiencing more interpersonal conflicts
- Feeling that your work is of poorer quality
- Lack of motivation
- Having dreams/nightmares about work
- Thinking about others' traumatic experiences
- Feeling detached or disconnected



# STRATEGIES FOR VICARIOUS TRAUMA

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- Increase your self-observation - recognize and chart your signs of stress, vicarious trauma and burnout.
- Maintain a healthy work/life balance - have outside interests
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish: avoid wishful thinking.
- Don't take on responsibility for your students' wellbeing but supply them with strategies and tools to look after themselves.
- Take regular breaks, take time off when you need to.
- Take care of yourself emotionally: engage in relaxing and self-soothing activities, nurture self-care.
- Look after your physical and mental wellbeing.
- Use peer support and opportunities to debrief.
- Take up training opportunities.
- Engage in group or individual therapy.

# COMPASSION AND TRAUMA RESILIENCY

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All individuals need to have strong compassion resilience skills that will balance out the stress, distress and trauma they experience in their lives. It is helpful to plan to address the needs of staff while addressing the needs of students and in similar ways. Staff , like students, all need:

- A physically, emotionally and identity safe environment to work in.
- Healthy relationships with their peers, administrators and supervisors as well as their students and their families.
- Instruction on how to implement new strategies and how to take care of themselves and monitor their own internal processes to remain calm.
- The processes and procedures they need to follow to secure more support if needed.

# COMPASSION RESILIENCY



In any trauma-sensitive resilience-oriented plan for a school or district, there needs to be a parallel process between for students and educators to ensure everyone's compassion resilience.

- heart = relationships and emotions
- spirit = core values, rest and play
- strength = care for the body, stress resilience
- mind = school, work, organization

# COMPASSION RESILIENCY ACTIVITY: HOW IS YOUR SELF-CARE?



HOW IS MY SELF-CARE?  RANK: (circle one in each category)	<b>HEART</b> Relationships 1 2 3 4 5  Emotions 1 2 3 4 5	<b>SPIRIT</b> Core values 1 2 3 4 5  Rest & play 1 2 3 4 5	<b>MIND</b> School/work 1 2 3 4 5  Organization 1 2 3 4 5	<b>STRENGTH</b> Care for body 1 2 3 4 5  Stress resilience 1 2 3 4 5
<b>HEART</b>	Relationships			
	Emotions			
<b>SPIRIT</b>	Core values			
	Rest & play			
<b>MIND</b>	School/work			
	Organization			
<b>STRENGTH</b>	Care for body			
	Stress resilience			
Notes				

# TRAUMA AND SELF COMPASSION

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- Someone who has experienced trauma is feeling vulnerable and going through the process of emotional and physical healing. Typically, they do not have self-compassion.
- Many trauma survivors feel shame and guilt
  - of their experience, their lack of action to prevent or stop the trauma, or the fact that they just don't feel the same afterwards. Shame is about judging yourself negatively and questioning one's own worth.
  - it's a powerful emotion and sabotages recovery, undermining efforts to recover.
- One of the remedies for this judgment or criticism is **self-compassion**

# REFLECTION: TRAUMA AND SELF COMPASSION

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- Trauma at its core affects a person's capacity to be self compassionate and trauma recovery is about nurturing and growing that ability. Our ability to be compassionate depends on our ability to be self compassionate.
- Trustworthy and authentic relationships are the heart of recovery. The relationship we have with ourselves is just as crucial to healing as our ties to the people around us.
- However, treating ourselves kindly can be quite a foreign concept. Giving ourselves some slack can be viewed as making excuses for ourselves or encouraging self pity. But it isn't.



# SELF COMPASSION IS NECESSARY FOR HEALING

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- Many trauma survivors instinctively fear the emotions of self-compassion because they are intense and sometimes overwhelming. To feel compassion for oneself is to look at how others treated you with kindness for your feelings.
- Fear of self-compassion is also linked to fear of facing the memories of what happened long ago because you were mistreated during a time when you needed and deserved love and compassion.
- Healing and self-compassion go hand-in-hand. One cannot have one without the other.
- It is easier for many survivors to feel compassion for someone else; thus, they can understand and remember the warmth and connection they felt. However, when asked to aim that same level of care toward themselves, many feel they do not deserve the same pleasant treatment.





## SELF COMPASSION IS NECESSARY FOR HEALING

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- Self-compassion is necessary to heal from complex trauma because we need it to silence the inner critic, show compassion toward others, and do good self-care.

General exercises for developing self:

**Silencing the inner critic** - learn to recognize and confront your inner critical statements because they foster overwhelming feelings of fear, self-hate, hopelessness, and disgust with oneself: catch yourself and reframe thoughts

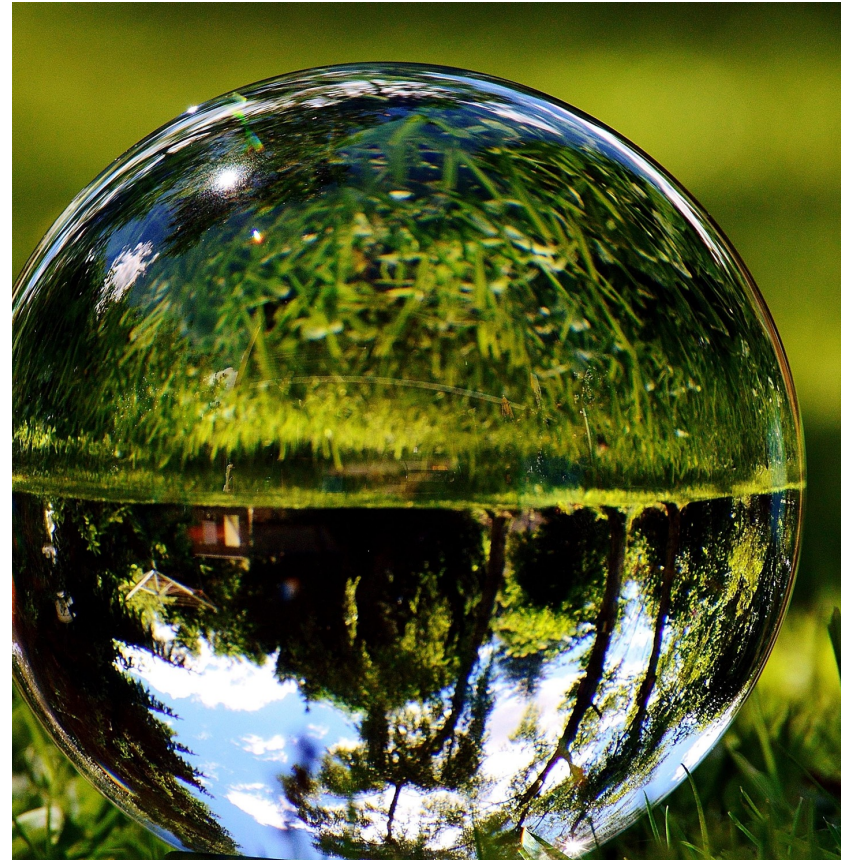
**Show compassion toward others** – when being harsh on themselves, that behavior spills over into their relationships: show respect, demonstrate dignity, and love toward others

**Good self care** - serves as a daily reminder that you are worthy of attention, focus, and self-love: helps you make a better version of yourself physically and mentally

# TRAUMA REACTIONS = COPING

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- The way you cope with trauma is something you learned for survival. You are not struggling because something is *wrong* with you. Your coping skills — even the most problematic ones — make sense because of what has *happened* to you in your life.
- Compassion is inherent in the understanding that your situation *makes sense* given your history. Where compassion flows, true healing can begin.



# SELF-COMPASSION ACTIVITY

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How would you  
treat a friend?  
Record your  
thoughts and  
reactions

# 10 min activity HOW WOULD YOU TREAT A FRIEND?

Encourage you to record your ideas privately for future reflection

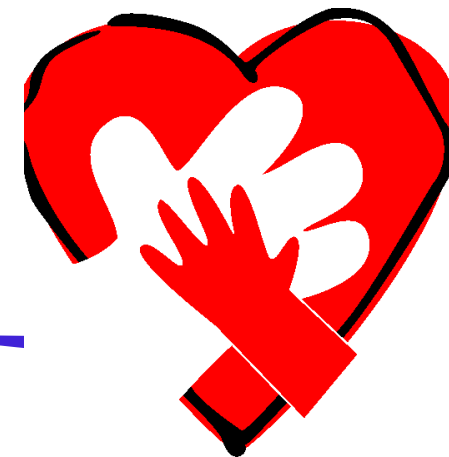
It's easy to give our friends love, compassion, and understanding, even when they make a mistake or fail. It is much harder to extend that same understanding compassion to ourselves when we make a mistake. Perhaps we can start showing ourselves more compassion.

- 1. Think about times that a close friend feels bad about oneself or struggling in someway. How was your respond to your friend in this situation? Write down what you typically do, what you say, and note the tone in which you typically talk to your friends.
- 2. Now think about times when you feel bad about yourself or are struggling. How do you typically respond to yourself and your situations? Please write down what you typically do, what you say, a note the tone in which you talk to yourself.
- 3. Do you notice a difference? If so, ask yourself why. What factors or fears come into play that lead you to treat yourself and others so differently?
- 4. Please write down how are you think things might change if you responded to yourself in the same way you typically respond to a close friend when you're suffering..

Being mindful of how you are treating yourself can be a positive step towards treating yourself like a good friend – with love, compassion and kindness

# HOW TO PRACTICE SELF-COMPASSION

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**Recognize that you are not alone in your suffering**

- Whatever you are experiencing is a part of being human. Though the experience likely feels very personal to you now, there are many others struggling with the same feelings that you are. Suffering is entirely human and entirely normal.

**Consider the compassion you would offer to someone you love.**

- Think about someone you love and imagine that they were experiencing what you are now. How would you treat them? What words of support would you offer? What would your body language or overall energy be like? Note what compassion would look like in this situation if you were tending to the struggles of someone you care about dearly.

**Offer yourself that same loving kindness.**

- Finally, direct the compassion you envisioned in the last step towards yourself. What words might you need to hear right now? How might you shift your posture in order to be more embracing of yourself? Is there any healing touch you can offer to yourself, such as a hand on the heart

# SELF-COMPASSION ACTIVITY

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## INNER CRITIC

Record the ideas that you can  
reflected upon and will use.  
This should be practiced often

This is meant to practice over the long term and will require several sessions to be truly impactful. Keep up with all three steps.

1. Notice when you were being critical of yourself and take note of the words, tone, phrases, etc. that you use with yourself. It's easy to be critical of oneself and hard to notice all the factors. The goal of the step is to simply get a sense of how you talk to yourself when being critical or negative. It can be emotionally challenging to confront the reality of how you talk to yourself. It might bring up a lot of difficult, intense emotions but remember that the next two steps are meant to help you become more positive about yourself. You'll get there!
2. Now challenge the negative self talk. Begin to talk back to the critical voice in your head without using the same critical tone. Tell your voice are you understand that the voice is nervous, anxious, or worried about getting hurt, but that it is causing you unnecessary pain. Ask the critical voice to allow your compassion itself to speak for a few minutes.
3. Work on reframing the observations made by the critical voice. Put them in a more positive perspective; be that unconditionally compassionate friend. For example, after a disagreement with a friend, let your compassionate self take over and say something like "I know you made a mean comment to your friend and that you feel bad about it. You thought that it would feel good to get that off your chest, but you just felt worse after, I want you to be healthy, so please think about calling your friend in apologizing. It will good good to make up and be friends again." You can even hear this positive self talk with loving physical gestures, like stroking your arm for giving yourself a hug.

Engaging in this kind of positive self talk can help you start be more kind to your self, which will eventually lead to genuine feelings of warmth and love for yourself.

# SELF COMPASSION ACTIVITY

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5 min Activity

Creating your  
own mantra

# COMPASSION MANTRAS

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Orally or silently repeat :

I am here for you.  
I am supporting you.

I see you.  
May I be kind to myself.

May I accept myself.

May I continue supporting myself.

I love you.  
I forgive you.

May I take joy in my progression as a  
human

Dr. Kristin Ness:

- May I be safe.  
May I be peaceful.  
May I be kind to myself.  
May I accept myself as I am.

\*WHAT WILL YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR PERSONAL MANTRA?

List 3+ to begin with

# SELF-COMPASSION ACTIVITY

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10 MIN MEDITATION  
GET COMFORTABLE AND RELAX INTO YOUR CHAIR

# Self-compassion Meditation

Sitting up in a relaxed and comfortable manner...take a deep slow breath and a long exhale. Finding your breath ... just noticing your natural breath as it travels in and as it moves out Maybe just noticing what's around you the sounds that you hear without pushing anything away. Now close your eyes. Make sure you are comfortable, sit back, breathe long inhalations and exhalations, feeling your lungs expand and resettle. Today's meditation is focusing on positive feelings and emotions. I really want you to feel the words more than to just hear them. I want you to receive the words, to be open to those vibrations. Exhale slowly. The first word we're going to focus on is simple. The first word is love. Feel love deep into your heart as you exhale. Send love to those that are near and dear to you. Breathe in love. Nourish your own body with love. Exhale. Send more love to those around you... exhale... invite love to come into you ... feel love washing over you...feel love filling you...remember how this feels, to give love and to receive love ...to experience love experience ...deep inhalation and a long slow exhalation

Now place your hands on your heart space. Keep them there as you collect and feel the love of the important people in your life. Feel your heart filling with that love. Feel how the love for yourself is added. Breathing love in and out slowly, calmly, ... staying in the moment.....The second word, also related to love, is compassion....breathe in compassion... for yourself and for others....exhale compassion ... creating compassion... allow that to go little bit deeper as you breathe in compassion ... feel compassion for yourself... we show compassion for others... as you exhale share that compassion and understanding for others to yourself ...feel compassion... knowing that we all make mistakes... exhale compassion ...open yourself to receive compassion... to create space for your body ..mind.. heart as you open yourself to feel compassion washing over you...filling you.. Invite yourself to come to this present moment ...the present moment where find calmness and stillness ...patience and gratitude.. begin to notice the feeling of compassion... some forgiveness, strength and kindness ... taking a deep breath in... releasing and letting go of any negative thoughts... taking a moment to think about what you can say to yourself to feel self-compassion ... feel the depth of love that you have for yourself....tell yourself “I see you... I love you”.... take a deep breath in and as you exhale accept the compassion that others have for you... acknowledge that we are all just humans trying our best and that you are enough.... take a deep breath in and with the exhalation remember that the universe is here supporting you and your most genuine good... allow yourself to just release and let go what no longer serves you in order to open yourself up to more love ... to joy... take another breath exhaling out .. the affirming “the love I give to others, I also give to myself...I am worthy of divine love and compassion”. Gently rub your hand back and forth to generate heat...keep rubbing... then open your hands to cover your eyes... breath in deep ....with a long exhale ... let your hands fall from your eyes

May we stay in this moment of love, of grace, of acceptance of ourselves

When you feel that message of kindness settling into your body ...and when you're ready .. you can bring your attention back to the room... back to alertness

Thank you so much for joining me

If you are doing this with a class for the 1<sup>st</sup> time – begin with a shorter meditation and eyes open.

Younger students should begin with choral speaking simple mantras, creating 2 or 3 thought mantras and then moving into breathing exercises with their mantras prior to simple meditations. Personally, I would not do my longer meditations with them.

# TRAUMA & SELF-COMPASSION ACTIVITIES

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## Strategies covered today:

- Trauma
- Breathing for regulation
- Grounding exercise
- Supporting students to feel safe & regulated
- Teaching practices to increase student learning
- Vicarious trauma
- Compassion



## Activities completed & to continue practicing:

- Compassion resiliency: Self-care
- How would you treat a friend?
- Changing your critical self-talk
- Mantra
- Meditation

# SUMMARY

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- Trauma healing is connected to self-compassion
- Shame and guilt must be reframed:
  - survival skills were needed
  - reflect it back to self-compassion
- We are our own worst critics – treat yourself with the same loving kindness that you would show your friends
- Students and yourself: Care and Connection
- Need an emotionally safe place
- Self- care
- Practice self-compassion
- Teach self-compassion



What resonated for you? Big take away point?

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON COMPASSION

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# Thank you!



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Please email

- Questions....
- Comments....
- Follow up....
- Inquiries about PD

Congratulate yourself for being a positive change agent - ensuring that every child—no matter the context and no matter the situation—feels seen, empowered, and safe in your classroom. Please be self-compassionate and self-loving. xo

This has been my pleasure. Please do stay connected!

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