



**Waterloo Catholic
District School Board**
Quality, Inclusive, Faith Based Education

Building a Trauma Informed Approach through Connection, Regulation & Wellbeing

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Building a Trauma Informed Approach through Connection, Regulation & Wellbeing



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1. The Why?

Tier 1 Mental Health Plan

2. The What?

Three Priorities:

1. Trauma- Informed Classroom Approaches
2. Identity Affirming Social Emotional Learning
3. Staff Wellness

3. The How?

Process:

- Focus on Leadership
- Focus on Safe Schools
- Focus on School Based Mental Health & Wellbeing Champions
- Focus on Student Services
- Focus on Program Services
- Tools & Tricks

4. Impact to Date

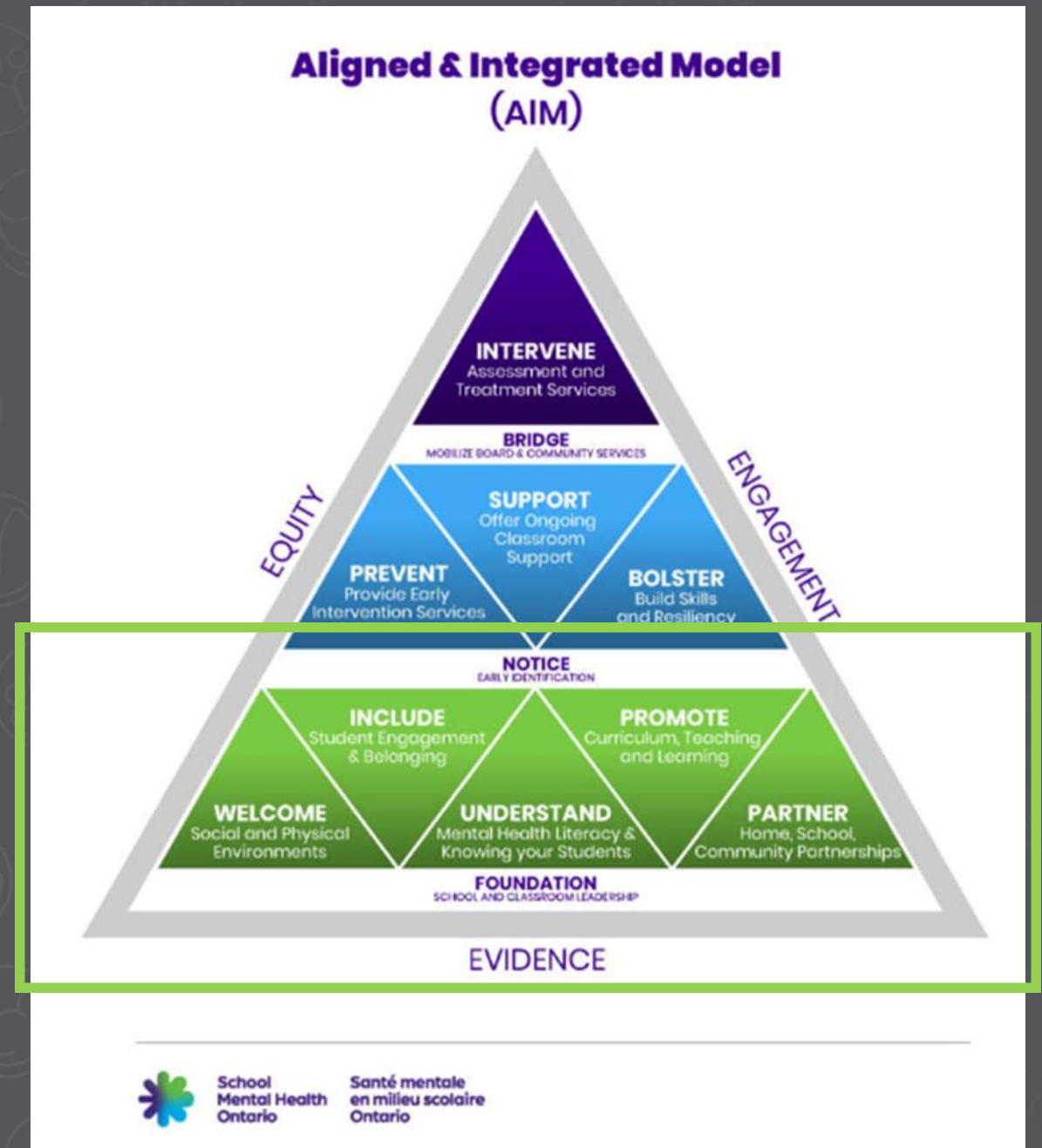
5. Questions

Tier 1 Mental Health

The Aligned and Integrated Model (AIM), which outlines a multi-tiered system of support for Ontario schools

Tier 1 – is good for all – Tier 1 is the foundational everyday work school staff do to welcome and include students, to understand them and build knowledge of mental health, to promote mentally healthy habits and to partner with parents, students and other staff to create a supportive environment.

Most of the mental health work in schools is at this level.





MDi

Middle Years
Development
Instrument

HUMAN
EARLY LEARNING
PARTNERSHIP





Social & Emotional Development

MEASURES

Optimism
Empathy
Prosocial Behaviour
Self-Esteem
Happiness
Absence of Sadness
Absence of Worries
Self-Regulation
(Short and Long Term)
Responsible
Decision-Making
Self-Awareness
Perseverance
Assertiveness
Citizenship and Social Responsibility



Physical Health & Well-Being

MEASURES

General Health
Eating Breakfast
Meals with Adults at Home
Frequency of Good Sleep
Body Image



Connectedness

MEASURES

Adults at School
Adults in the Neighbourhood
Adults at Home
Peer Belonging
Friendship Intimacy
Important Adults



Use of After-School Time

MEASURES

Organized Activities
- Educational Lessons or Activities
- Youth Organizations
- Sports
- Music or Arts
How Children Spend their Time
After-School People/Places
Children's Wishes and Barriers



School Experiences

MEASURES

Academic Self-Concept
School Climate
School Belonging
Motivation
Future Goals
Victimization and Bullying



Tier 1 Mental Health

Middle Years Development Instrument



Mental Health Leadership Development

**Trauma-Informed
Classroom Practices**

**Social & Emotional
Learning for
Students**

Staff Wellbeing

Data to Action

Wellbeing can be improved through Trauma Informed Classroom Practices and Social Emotional Skill Building

Moving to Action: Trauma Informed Classroom Practices



CONNECTEDNESS

MEASURES

- Adults at School
- Adults in the Neighbourhood
- Adults at Home
- Peer Belonging
- Friendship Intimacy
- Important Adults



This figure illustrates how MIE measures align with frameworks for trauma-informed practice, using the framework developed by the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (2017) as an example.



SCHOOL EXPERIENCES

MEASURES

- Academic Self-Concept
- School Climate
- School Belonging
- Motivation
- Future Goals
- Victimization and Bullying

Moving to Action: Social Emotional Learning



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

MEASURES

- Optimism
- Empathy
- Prosocial Behaviour
- Self-Esteem
- Happiness
- Absence of Sadness
- Absence of Worries
- Self-Regulation (Calm & Long Term)
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Self-Awareness
- Resilience
- Assertiveness
- Citizenship and Social Responsibility

CASEL SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING SKILLS

MIE MEASURES (Years 6-9)



Optimism
Self-Awareness
Academic Self-Efficacy
Self-Esteem

Self-Regulation
Resilience
Health Habits

Responsible Decision-Making
Social Responsibility

Assertiveness
Prosocial Behaviour
Friendship Intimacy
Peer Belonging

Empathy
Important Adults (school, home, community)

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Thompson et al. (2017)

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Trauma Informed Classroom Practices

Trauma-Sensitive
Schools help
children feel safe, be
connected, get
regulated and learn.
(Alexander, 2016)

Don't underestimate
your role in this, and
the power of
relationships in
mitigating the impact
of trauma for our
students.



What's a Trauma-
Informed School?

What is Trauma?



A Trauma Definition...there are many

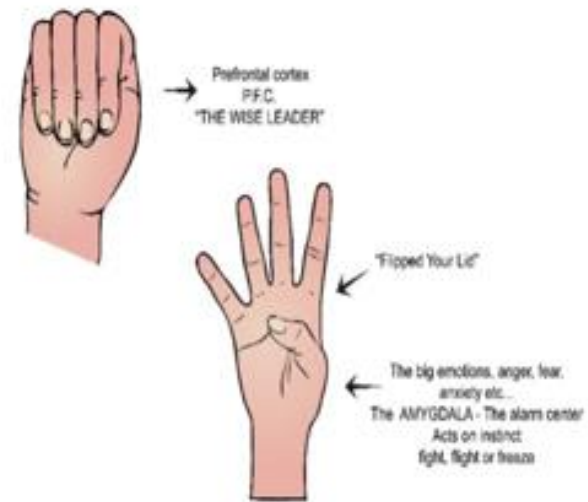
Trauma is a psychic wound that hardens you psychologically that then interferes with your ability to grow and develop. ... **Trauma** is not what happens to you, it's what happens inside you as a result of what happened to you. **Trauma** is that scarring that makes you less flexible, more rigid, less feeling and more defended."

Gabor Mate



How does Stress & Trauma impact our Students?

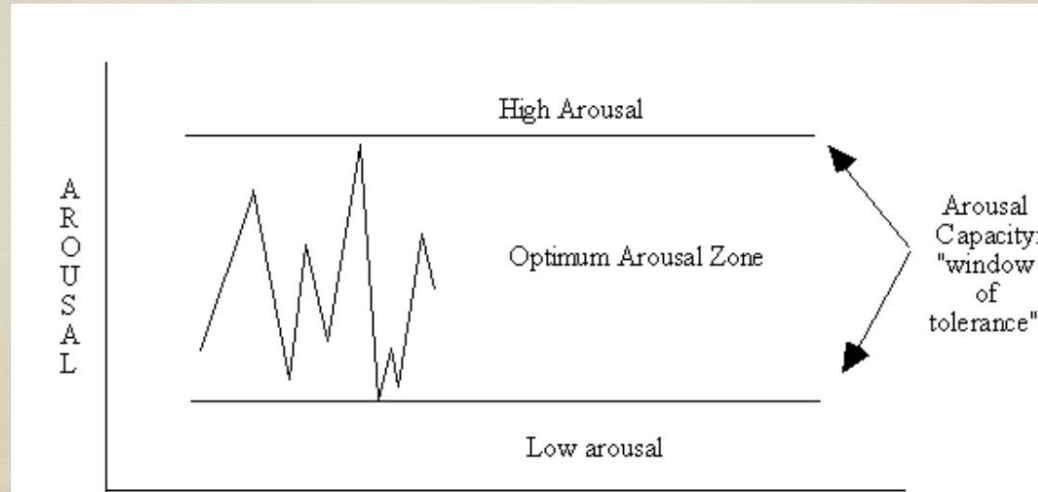
Dan Siegel's Hand Model Flip Your Lid



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Window of Tolerance

Window of Tolerance



Nervous System Arousal After Trauma

"Too much" Arousal:

Emotionally reactive, impulsive
Hypervigilant, hyperdefensive, rejection sensitivity
Difficulty sleeping, nightmares
Hyperactive, restless or explosive aggressive behavior

High Arousal

Low Arousal

"Window of Tolerance"*
Optimal Arousal Zone

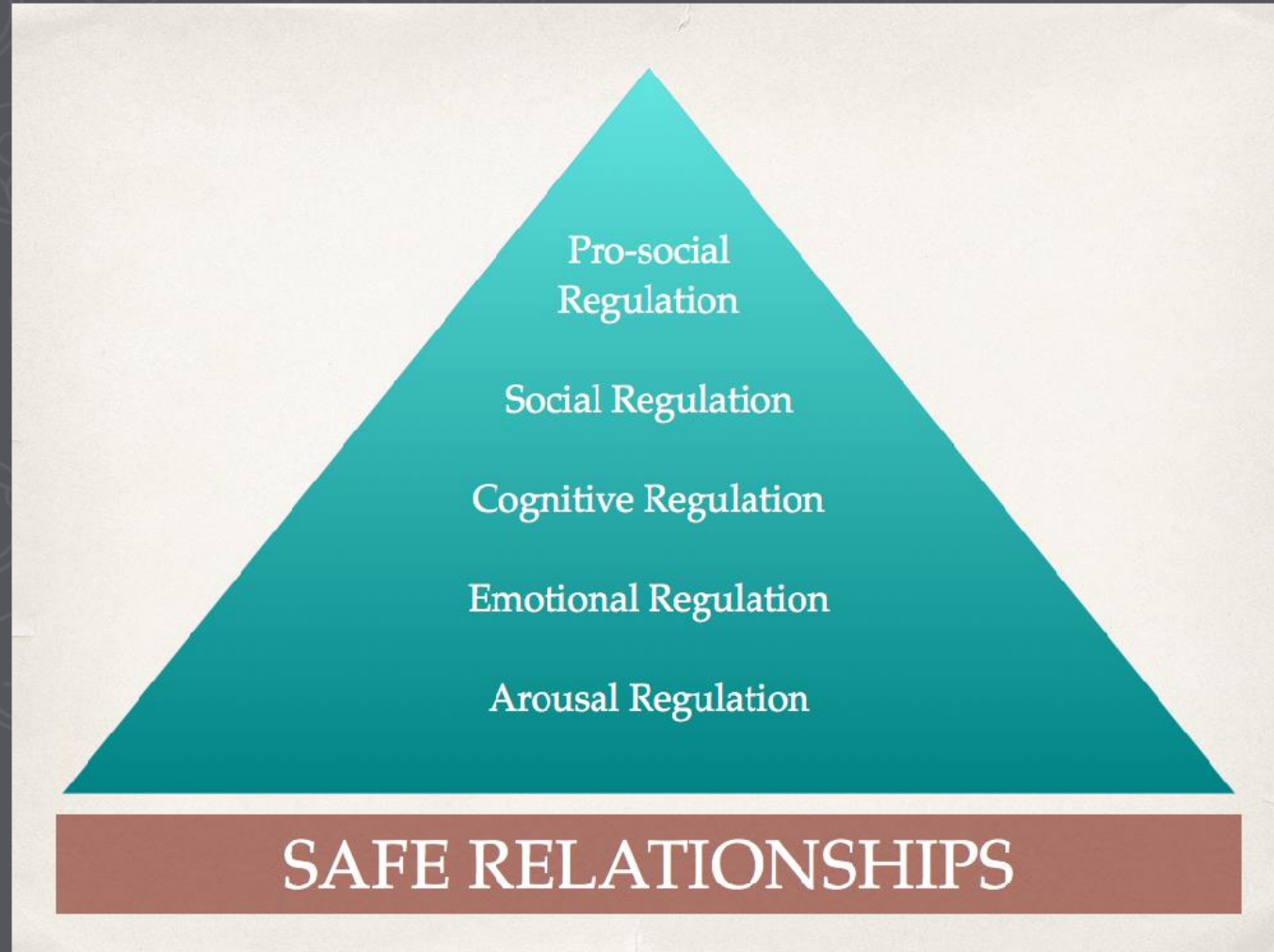
"Too Little" Arousal:

Emotionless, numb, "tuned out"
Withdrawn, disconnected, shut down
Unable to think or make an effort
"Don't care," can appear resistant or defiant

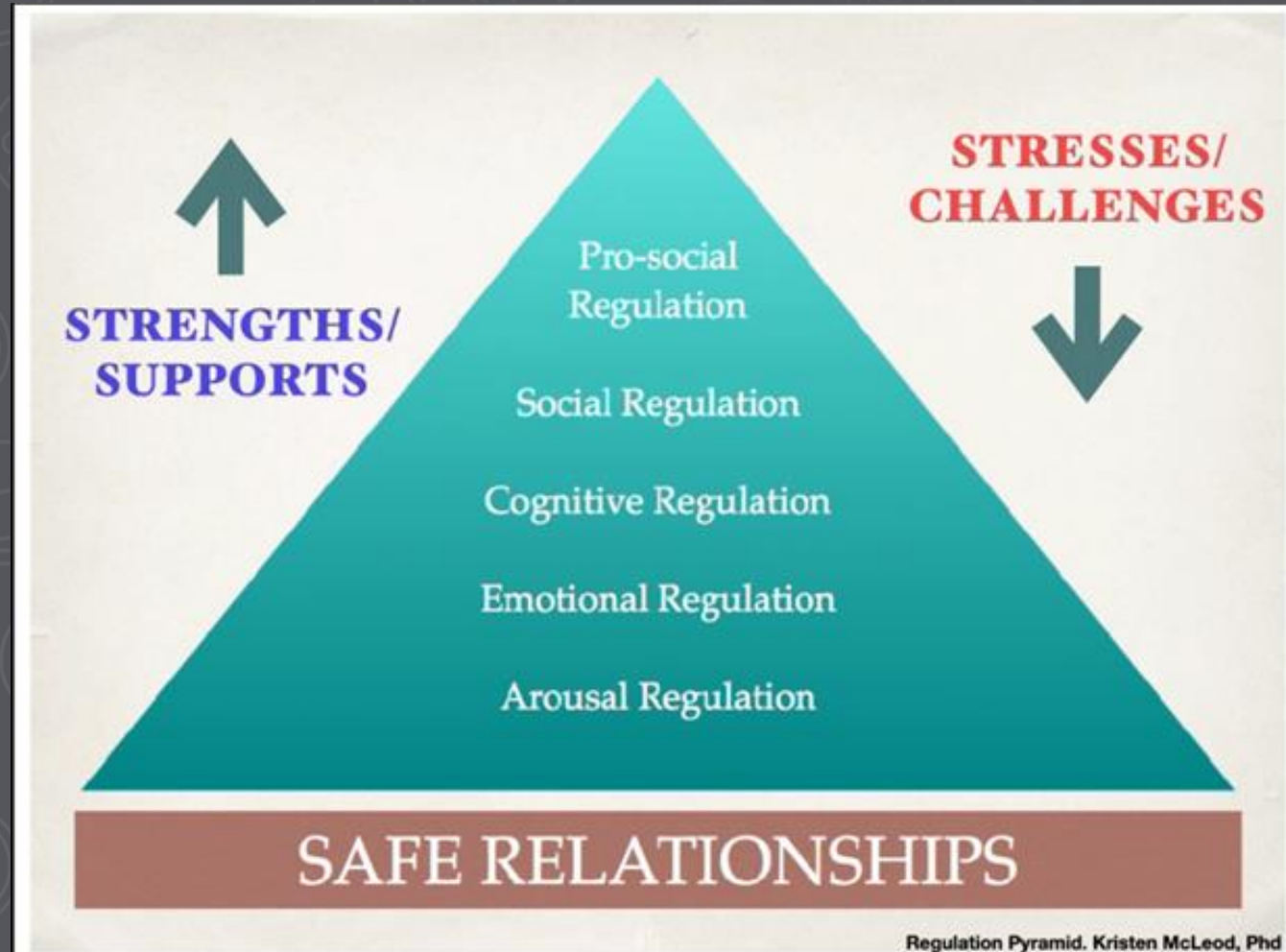
Ogden and Minton (2000)

*Siegel, D. (1999)

What are the Pressures?



What can we do?



What can we do?

These are 'Good for All' Classroom approaches that focus on understanding how students' brains are impacted by chronic stress and trauma, how we see and relate to them with curiosity and compassion and these simple shifts can create a classroom environment where students brains are available for learning.



Connection



Predictability



Flexibility



Delight



Coregulation

Let's Practice

Please review your scenario as a group

Step 1:

Sarah frequently interrupts the teacher, talks out of turn, and distracts her classmates by making loud noises.

Discuss the scenario from a traditional classroom management perspective, focusing on identifying the behaviour, rewards, consequences, and potential interventions based on behavioral principles.

How might a typical teacher respond? What are some of the beliefs underlying this approach?

Let's Talk

Step 2:

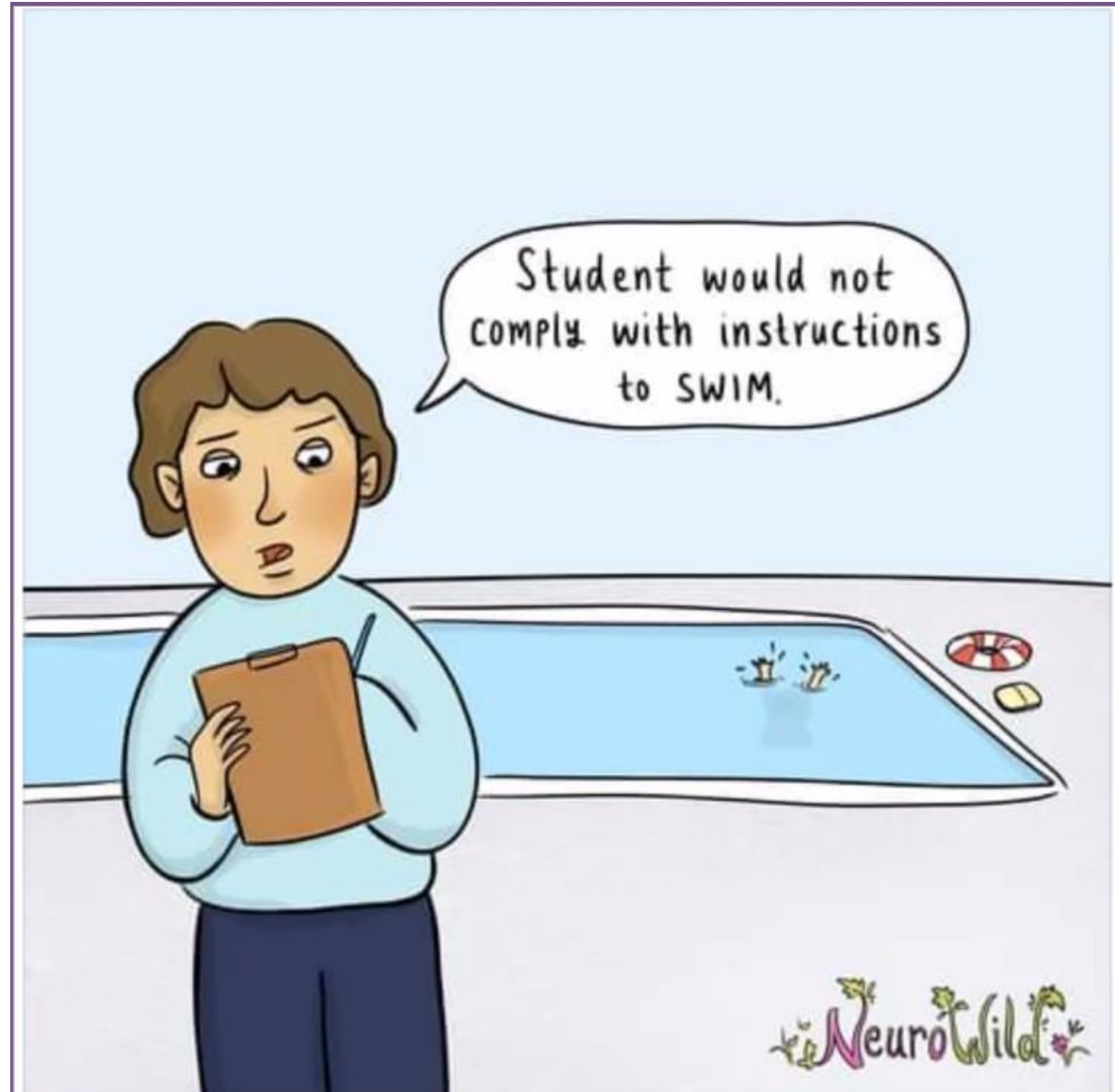
Trauma History: Sarah has experienced ongoing exposure to domestic violence at home, resulting in high levels of hypervigilance and difficulty regulating her emotions and impulses.

Discuss the same scenario from a trauma-informed perspective. Consider the underlying stress & trauma, its impact on the behavior, and strategies that prioritize safety, trust, and understanding

What are the differences between the two approaches?

What did you notice about the potential impact for the child in your scenario, if you didn't shift your approach?

Because it
just makes
sense



Building a Trauma Informed Approach through Connection, Regulation & Wellbeing



2.The What?

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Social Emotional
Learning

3.Staff Wellness

Identity-Affirming Social-Emotional Learning

Social-emotional learning that's culturally responsive helps students to develop the skills they need to overcome life's challenges and adversities throughout their life.

Explicit, whole-school efforts to teach social-emotional learning and model and reinforce skills in daily school life have a positive impact on academic achievement and on student social, behavioural and emotional wellness.



Critical and creative
thinking (executive
functioning)



Healthy relationship
skills



Identification and
management of
emotions



Positive motivation
and perseverance



Self-awareness and
sense of identity



Stress
management and
coping

Identity-Affirming Social-Emotional Learning

MDI Measures



SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Social & Emotional Development measures of the MDI are closely linked to School Mental Health Ontario (SMHO)'s Faith & Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource. Starting with these sample activities can be a great opportunity to practice embedding SEL skill building activities into your daily classroom routine. Building Social Emotional skills isn't a program, but rather a way of classroom life where skills are practiced through repetition and in relationship.

Optimism

Elementary: [Practising optimism - Positive motivation and perseverance - Faith and Wellness - A Daily Mental Health Resource \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Secondary: [Practising optimism - Positive motivation and perseverance - Faith and Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource - Secondary Edition - From School Mental Health Ontario and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Empathy

Elementary: [Empathy - Healthy relationship skills - Faith and Wellness - A Daily Mental Health Resource \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Secondary: [Empathy - Healthy relationship skills - Faith and Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource - Secondary Edition - From School Mental Health Ontario and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Prosocial Behaviour

Elementary: [Healthy relationship skills - Faith and Wellness - A Daily Mental Health Resource \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Secondary: [Healthy relationship skills - Faith and Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource - Secondary Edition - From School Mental Health Ontario and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Self-Esteem

Elementary: [Mattering - Self-awareness and sense of identity - Faith and Wellness - A Daily Mental Health Resource \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Secondary: [Mattering - Self-awareness and sense of identity - Faith and Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource - Secondary Edition - From School Mental Health Ontario and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Happiness

Elementary: [Positive motivation and perseverance - Faith and Wellness - A Daily Mental Health Resource \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

Secondary: [Positive motivation and perseverance - Faith and Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource - Secondary Edition - From School Mental Health Ontario and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association \(smho-smso.ca\)](#)

School Mental Health Ontario

Practising optimism

When students are optimistic in their interactions with others and in their world view, they are more likely to experience positive relationships and have the motivation to persevere and succeed.

[Home / Positive motivation and perseverance / Practising optimism](#)

Practices



Inspirational snowfall

Division: **Primary / Junior / Intermediate**

Purpose: To provide a fun way for students to send each other positive affirmations and to encourage an optimistic outlook amongst others

Try



Positive Post-its

Division: **Primary / Junior / Intermediate**

Purpose: To support the development of kind interactions

Try

Identity-Affirming Social-Emotional Learning

Importance of the
First 10 Minutes of
the Day

Calming &
Energizing Focused
Attention Practices

SEL as Bellwork

Morning Meetings

Sensory Breaks



Getting Out in Front of
Behaviors

Muscle Relaxation

Breathing Strategies

Grounding
Techniques

Visualization

Gratitude

* Neuroeducation
of the Brain &
Nervous system

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Staff-Wellbeing

Being trauma aware involves an understanding of the importance of the teacher's state in supporting students. A regulated teacher can use their calm to coregulate students. In order for teachers to be regulated and prepared to support their class, they need what their students need – to feel valued, supported and effective in their role



Staff-Wellbeing

It takes a steady Adult to settle a Child or Adolescent

- Educator Well-Being isn't just about Self-Care, it's Self-Exploration
- The awareness to be present in ourselves is the greatest intervention we can share with our students
- Are discipline referrals an indicator of Student Behaviour.... Or Staff Behaviour?
- *We need to do our own work



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3. The How?

Process:

- Focus on Leadership
- Focus on Safe Schools
- Focus on School Based Mental Health & Wellbeing Champions
- Focus on Student Services
- Focus on Program Services
- Tools & Tricks

Process:

Focus on Leadership



MDI Data to Action
with Administrators



Trauma Informed
Education Consultant



Introduction to
Induction Group



Leading from the
Middle - Family of
Schools



Trauma Informed
Classrooms Breakfast
Club



Trauma Informed
Classrooms Course on
D2L

Process:

Focus on Safe & Caring Schools



- Education for School Leaders regarding Trauma Informed Practices
- Progressive Discipline and Trauma: Suspensions and Expulsions And Courageous Conversations
- School Audits and Tools
- Engaging Student Voice and Empowerment –Creation of additional safety factors

Process:

School Based Mental Health & Wellbeing Champions



- Monthly Meetings with Materials for leads to delivery at Staff Meetings
- 10 minutes of content focused on :
 - Staff Wellness
 - Mental Health Education
 - Embedding Social & Emotional Skill Building into schools: Elementary & Secondary
 - Trauma Informed Classroom Implementation

Process:

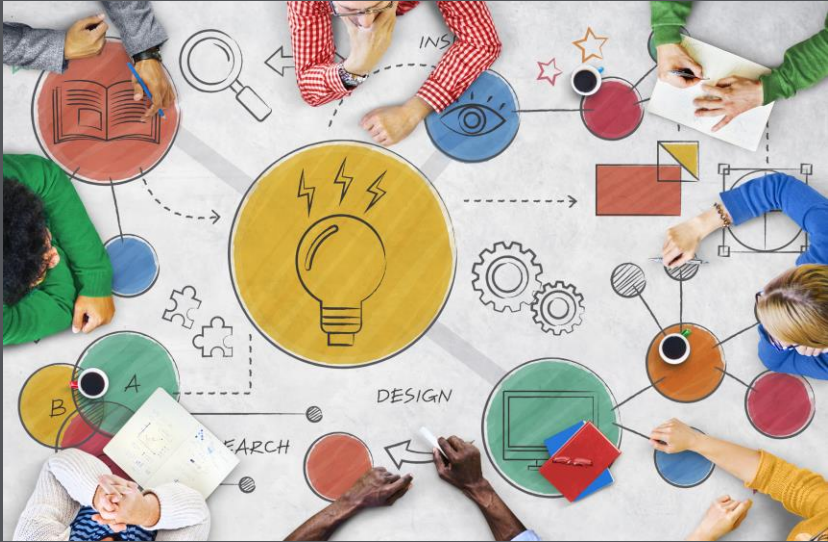
Student Services: Embed across Support Services



- Members: Social Work, Psych Consultants, SELs, BCBA's, CYWs, EAs, SLPs, etc
- Monthly Meetings with Trauma Informed Schools Consultant
- Collaborative Team members together to integrate learning to practice
- Topics included:
 - Roles
 - Attendance
 - Discipline
 - Engaging families

Process:

Program Services: Embed in Curriculum



- Kindergarten
- Literacy
- Deep Learning
- NTIP
- Faith
- Health Active Living

Tools & Tricks

CHECK MY FRAME OF MIND

- ☐ Will my current frame of mind possibly interfere with my decision making?
- ☐ How am I feeling as I enter this situation?
Do I need time?
- ☐ Is this urgent or can I wait to decide?

CHECK MY ASSUMPTION S

- ☐ Is the student history going to affect my judgement?
- ☐ Is the student ready to talk? Is the student ready to listen?
- ☐ What is the primary language of the student and/or family?



CHECK MY BIASES

- ☐ Implicit (unconscious) bias: Is a negative positive feeling/belief about race, gender, sexual orientation, or religion influencing my decision?
- ☐ Confirmation bias: Am I seeking information that supports my viewpoint?
experience with this student?

RECOGNIZE AND REMOVE BARRIERS

- ☐ Assess capacity to understand — cognitive, emotional, self-regulation
- ☐ Find preferred space to listen/talk (e.g., walk and listen/talk)
- ☐ Consider cultural norms (e.g., making kids make eye contact)
- ☐ Is there another adult who can be helpful in this situation?

Trauma Informed Classrooms
AS Andrea Snyder

Course Home
 Course Admin
 Glossary
 Content
 Portfolio
 Communication
 Mental Health ...
 FAQ

0% Expectations
+ New Unit
Visible
Add Existing
Create New

Welcome to the Course
 Module 1: Introduction to Trauma Informed Classrooms
 Module 2: CORE PRINCIPLE: Establish Connections
 Module 3: CORE PRINCIPLES: Be Predictable
 Module 4: CORE PRINCIPLE: Delight in Your Students
 Module 5: CORE PRINCIPLE: Co-Regulate
 Trauma Connections to Learning

This course provides learning on concepts related to trauma informed classroom practices, while continuing to pay attention to the connection to SEL and equity/anti racism practices. The modules were reviewed, adapted and expanded by WCDSB educators, administrators, support staff, and in consultation with our Indigenous & Equity Consultant and our Senior manager of Equity Services.

All WCDSB staff from have a role to play in being trauma informed and learning how to respond to students in a way that doesn't create further harm and promotes a safe and healing learning environment. Remember that being trauma informed doesn't happen at once, and is more of a journey or a process.

This course will contain 6 Modules that will be populated into the D2L classroom throughout the school year. Each Module will include:

- A brief 5-10 minute video by Dr. Kristen McLeod introducing you to the Topic
- A 20-30 minute over view of the topic in a SlideDeck with Voiceover that can be viewed in staff meetings or individually
- Eager to learn more? Additional optional self-directed learning is available within each of the Modules.

Student Regulation Kits



Tools & Tricks

Staff Regulation Lanyards/ Placement



Moving to Action

- What data could serve a base line?
- What resources do you already have in your board that you may be able to source?
- How do you bring your community together to de-silo so all are working from this lens?
- How will you facilitate the learning? Who, when and how?

Impact to date



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Impact of Trauma Informed
Implementation at WCDSB

