

National PBIS Leadership Forum | October 22 - 23, 2025 | Hilton Chicago    @PBISForum #pbisforum

5c- “Facilitation of Resilience Building for Educators & Youth in Crisis”

Presenters:
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Astrum Health, LLC

- Topic: Crisis Response / Recovery
- Keywords: Trauma, Social Relationships, Social Skills

The National PBIS Leadership Forum is a technical assistance activity of the Center on PBIS  PBIS Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports



1

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize and Identify common signs and expressions of stress, trauma and burnout.
2. Develop a personal coping plan to use when needed
3. Connect the brain and body response with experiential control through the CALM and CARE models.
4. Recognize and implement best-practices for supporting students in crisis and crisis recovery.



National PBIS Leadership Forum

2

Facilitation of Resilience Building for Educators & Youth in Crisis:

COPE, CALM, CARE[®]



 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SCIENCES
CONSULTATION
EST 2013
Kira Mauseth, Ph.D.

3

Agenda

Contextual Factors and Contributors	Naming the problem and specific issues
What to prioritize for educators	What to prioritize for students




4



"A problem never exists in isolation; it is surrounded by other problems in space and time. The more of the context of a problem that a scientist can comprehend, the greater are their chances of finding a truly adequate solution."

-Russell Ackoff

5

Contextual Factors

01

Since 2020, there have been multiple large-scale events that have significantly impacted collective health and wellbeing

02

Events have been co-occurring on a local, regional, national and global basis

03

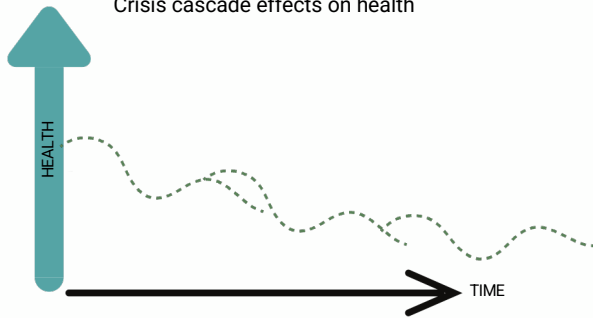
Our exposure to and witnessing of catastrophe has taken new forms

04

The speed of information and news bombardment plays a role in overwhelm and disaster fatigue

6

Crisis cascade effects on health



7

Over
time

- Resources are stretched or depleted
- Energy wanes
- Challenges build on themselves - social, economic, educational etc

AND

- coping skills improve
- relationships are honed / filtered
- resilience develops
- priorities shift

8

It helps to increase your understanding of what happens during and after crises and disasters:



Resilience is not a vague concept. It can be measured and operationalized.



Most people are immediately distressed, and most people recover.



Expressed distress is NOT predictive of future diagnoses, what people are exposed to, and what they experience is.

9

Neurophysiology

The human brain and body respond in known and predictable ways to stress and trauma. There are often similar responses to exposure in single incidents or over longer periods of time. **The limbic system is activated when we perceive a threat, and additional processes are engaged in an effort to keep us alive and safe.**







10

The relationships among trauma, panic, and stress

	Stress	Trauma	Panic
• Activates the sympathetic nervous system	✓	✓	✓
• Influences the limbic system	✓	✓	✓
• Releases cortisol (stress hormone)	✓	✓	✓
• Releases adrenaline		✓	✓

• Benoit, E. C., Park, T. P., Big-Cane, M., Alexander, A. R., Mink, R., Gordon, C. D., & Robinson-Hay, R. (2019). Time course of panic disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder onset. *Social psychiatry and psychiatric epidemiology*, 54(5), 439-447. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-019-01801-1>

• Wang, L. Y., & Mink, M. R. (2015). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Relationship Between the Fear Response and Chronic Stress. *Chronic stress (Phoenix Park, Calif.)*, 1, 1435340770297. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24747077.2015.1040000>

• O'Leary, M., & Scahill, S. (2019). The Role of the Limbic System in the Pathogenesis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 58(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-201901000-00001>

11

1

Too much cortisol is bad for brain and body

Benoit, E., Benoit, E., Mink, M., & Kessler, N. N. (2019). The Role of the Limbic System in the Pathogenesis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 58(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-201901000-00001>

2

Mental and physical health of parents and caregivers (including stress and cortisol levels) impacts children

Wang, L. Y., & Mink, M. R. (2015). Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: The Relationship Between the Fear Response and Chronic Stress. *Chronic stress (Phoenix Park, Calif.)*, 1, 1435340770297. <https://doi.org/10.1080/24747077.2015.1040000>

3

Humans can learn to modulate and manage cortisol; this has a very positive effect on mental and physical health

Benoit, E., Benoit, E., Mink, M., & Kessler, N. N. (2019). The Role of the Limbic System in the Pathogenesis of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, 58(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1097/00004583-201901000-00001>

12



Bottom line

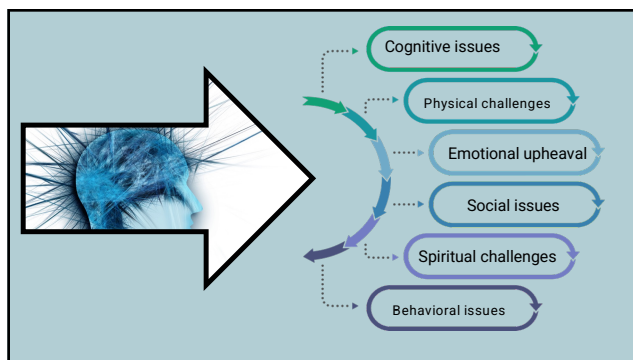
1. Crises may no longer feel cyclical. We may not be experiencing a "break" from them.
2. Crisis and threat increase cortisol (the stress hormone) in the body.
3. The experience of constant crisis or threat has known impacts on brain and body functioning for kids and adults.
4. There are significant mental and physical benefits to actively working on our management of stress.
5. While we may long for a "quick fix" when we are already tired, there is benefit to reworking the techniques that psychological science knows are effective in the reduction of cortisol and stress.

13

Naming the problem and specific issues



14



15

Website: We use cookies to improve performance
Me: same

Me and my bestie dealing with our problems through memes instead of actual therapy



I am resilient, I can handle so many things in life but

divasdialoguee

Our team made a fake calendar invite called "Team Sync: Emotional Support."
It was just 30 minutes of memes and mild screaming.
One VP joined by mistake.
Stayed the whole time.
Sent a meme after.
Next quarter, our mental health budget doubled.
The invite is still going strong.
Lesson:
Your sanity deserves a recurring meeting.

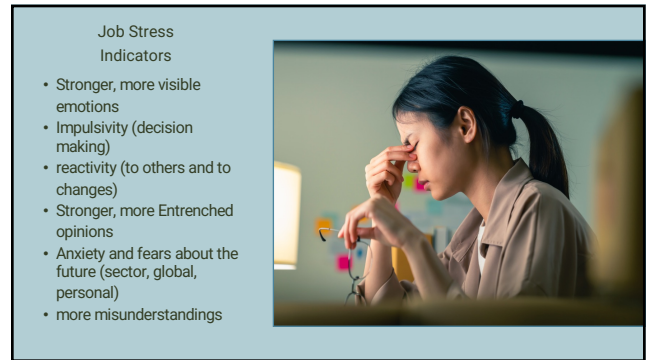
delilahsdawson

Yesterday, I emailed a psychiatrist and a tattoo artist. Whoever gets back to me first wins, and that's how we do self care in the Year of Our Lord 2025.

16



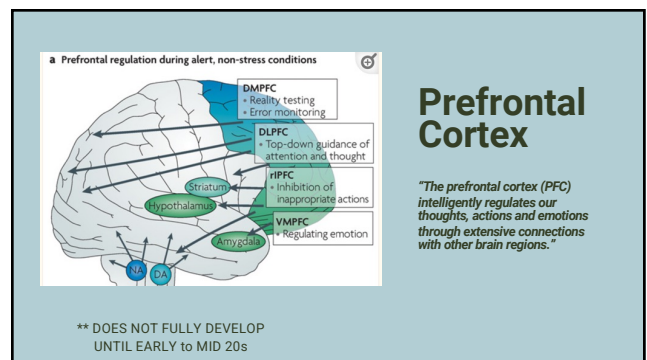
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18

Limbic System	
Vinay K. Datta et al., The limbic system, <i>Indian Journal of Psychiatry</i> 2007 Apr;49(2):125-34 doi: 10.4103/0019-5545.32244 PNAS 2011;108:19630-19637 DOI:10.1073/pnas.1106100108 https://doi.org/10.1093/ips/psn018 PMID 21827118	
Areas	Functions
Cingulate gyrus	Autonomic functions regulating heart rate and blood pressure as well as cognitive, attentional and emotional processing.
Parahippocampal gyrus	Spatial memory
Hippocampus	Long-term memory
Amygdala	Anxiety, aggression, fear conditioning; emotional memory and social cognition.
Hypothalamus	Regulates the autonomic nervous system via hormone production and release. Secondly affects and regulates blood pressure, heart rate, hunger, thirst, sexual arousal and the circadian rhythm sleep/wake cycle.
Mammillary body	Memory
Nucleus accumbens	Reward, Addiction

19



20

COPE model starting points



The basics: broadly accessible CBT skills with some specific tactics related to coping plans and ideas.

- Just like gears in any system, thoughts, feelings and behaviors within people are all connected.
- By changing one, you can change the other two.
- Feelings are the easiest to notice, but harder to change than thoughts or behaviors.
- By changing unhealthy thoughts, behaviors and reactions intentionally, we can develop positive feelings and take ownership over our wellbeing.
- The question is this- how can you RESPOND in a new or different way?

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25

COPE THINKING SKILLS

CHECK for your automatic reactions and responses to other people and situations. Check yourself for your thought patterns to develop insight and awareness.

OBSERVE the emotion and behavior connected to the reaction. Pay attention to the circumstances around your response.

PLAN an alternative thought, reaction or response

EXECUTE positive change through practice and repetition

26

CREATING A (good) COPING PLAN: General Considerations



Anticipation of our 'exposures' to stressful events, as well as creating and working a deterrent plan is one of the most effective ways of reducing symptoms and new incidents of disorder.

Let's take a note from not making "new years resolutions" and set the right kinds of goals.

Also, only pick things that you actually WANT to do.

27

Active Coping Concepts



Things that increase dopamine, Serotonin, oxytocin, or endorphins in a HEALTHY way.



Intentional choices that GIVE YOU SOMETHING (energy, good vibes, warm feelings) back.



Keep it VERY simple.

28

Personal Coping Plan[®]

Active Behavioral Health Tactics for Deployment, Response and Everyday



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29

How to know when I need to use my plan

Signs (What others can observe about me)	Symptoms (What I experience)	Situations (My personal 'red flags' or 'hot button' issues)

30

COPING OPTION	Things I can do in 10 mins or less	Things that are sensory oriented (sight, sound, touch, taste, smell)	Things that require being home or having uninterrupted time	Things that involve support from others (people, pet, resources)	Neurological pay off (Dopamine, Serotonin, Endorphins, Oxytocin)

31

Resources

People I can count on

Quotes that inspire

Places I feel safe / comfortable

Things I am looking forward to

Don't forget...

32



What is AWE

Thank you to Piper Sangston & Abby Asplund-Smith, Bellevue SD for sharing!

Awe is the feeling of being in the presence of something vast that transcends your understanding of the world.

33

The Science of Awe



Studies have found that feelings of awe can be accompanied by heart rate changes, goosebumps, and the sensation of chills, and there is some evidence that awe may even decrease markers of chronic inflammation.

- <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.617715/full>
- https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/eight_reasons_why_awe_makes_your_life_better
- https://www.templeton.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/White-Paper_Awe_FINAL.pdf
- https://ggsc.berkeley.edu/images/uploads/GGSC-JTF_White_Paper_Awe_FINAL.pdf

34



- Viewing something giant such as a mountain range or ocean
- Discovering something tiny such as the world seen through a microscope
- Contemplating a piece of music or art
- Taking "awe walks" in nature or neighborhood
- Choose an unfamiliar experience
- Practice Mindfulness
- Learn about inspiring people
- Watch videos about inspirational figures
- Witness acts of goodness

35

CALM your mind and body by:

CONTROLLING. ATTENDING. LISTENING. MANAGING.

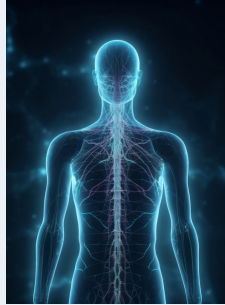
- Control breathing and heart rate
- Attend to the present moment
- Listen to your thoughts & feelings
- Manage stressors with active techniques

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36

**For the CALM model
we will cover:**

- Understanding of basic physiology and physical responses to stress and trauma
- How we can learn to modulate or control those responses
- Healthy physical regulation



37



38

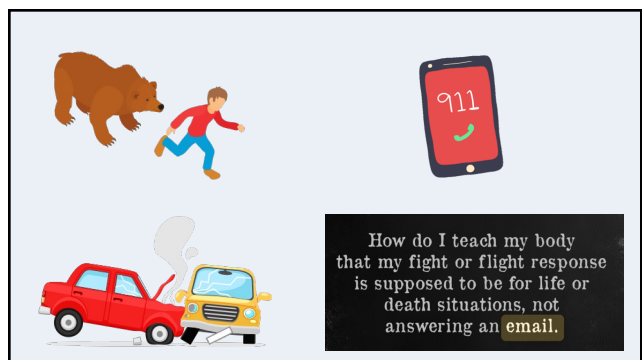
The sympathetic system controls “fight, flight or freeze” responses. In other words, this system prepares the body for strenuous physical activity (for safety and defense or survival) The parasympathetic system calms the body and regulates “rest and digest” functions.



Gas = sympathetic NS
Brake = parasympathetic NS

McCorry LK. Physiology of the autonomic nervous system. Am J Pharm Educ. 2007 Aug 15;71(4):78. doi: 10.5688/aj710478. PMID: 17786266; PMCID: PMC1959222.

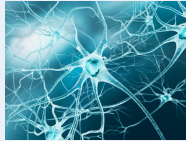
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40

The vagus nerve is the main contributor of the parasympathetic nervous system.

The vagus nerve represents the main component of the parasympathetic nervous system (75%), which oversees a vast array of crucial bodily functions, including control of mood, immune response, digestion, and heart rate....vagus nerve stimulation is a promising add-on treatment for treatment-refractory depression, posttraumatic stress disorder, and inflammatory bowel disease. **Treatments that target the vagus nerve increase the vagal tone and inhibit cytokine production. Both are important mechanism of resiliency.**



*cytokines help regulate the immune system and inflammation

Reif S, Kupfersberg A, Rogler G, Wadler G. Vagus Nerve as Modulator of the Brain-Gut Axis in Psychiatric and Inflammatory Disorders. *Front Psychiatry*. 2018 Mar 13;9:44. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2018.00044. PMID: 29592176; PMCID: PMC5889129.

Wassenaar JA, Reddy V, Varaschik M. *Anatomy, Autonomic Nervous System*. [updated 2023 Jul 24]. In: StatPearls [Internet]. Treasure Island (FL): StatPearls Publishing; 2024 Jan. Available from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK532845/>.

41

What we are looking for with CALM:

- Awareness of the sympathetic nervous system activation
- Awareness of the power we have to activate the parasympathetic nervous system via the vagus nerve
- The skill development to control the way our bodies respond to various circumstances



42

CALM skills menu

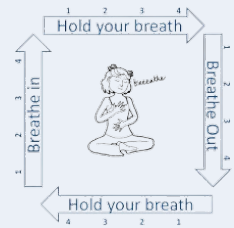
- Basic deep breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Mindfull/ Sensory Awareness
- Biofeedback / Heart rate Pulse checking
- Tapping / EFT



43

Basic Deep Breathing (also square breathing or 'tactical breathing')

- Assume a comfortable position
- Close your eyes if you are comfortable doing so.
- Breathe slowly in through your nose, feeling the air in your lungs expand down towards the stomach; pushing the diaphragm out as your lungs fill up with air.
- Slowly count to three and release the breath during another three count.
- Repeat.



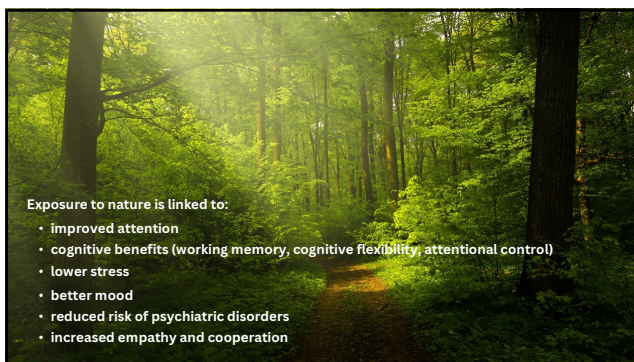
44

"STUDY FINDS
REWATCHING THE SAME
TV SHOWS OR MOVIES
REPEATEDLY IS AN
EXCELLENT FORM OF
NERVOUS SYSTEM
REGULATION"

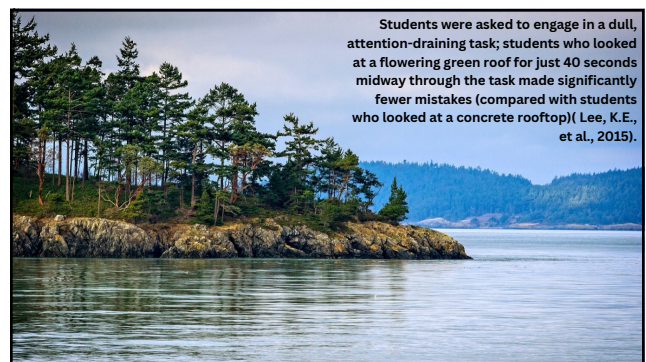
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46



47



48



49



50

CARE by being:

CONNECTED, ADAPTIVE,
REASONED, ENGAGED

- Connected to other people or ideas
- Adaptive to change
- Reasoned with choices or purpose for growth
- Engaged in mindful living

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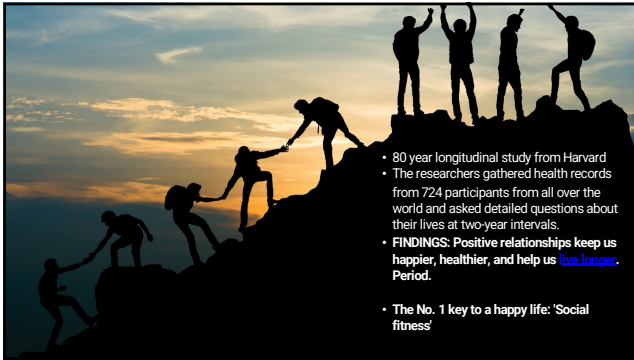
51

CARE: C = CONNECTED

- Connect with other people, ideas, activities, groups or causes that stimulate your personal growth and support you.
- Connections are essential and very meaningful, even if small.
- QUALITY is better than QUANTITY here.

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52



- 80 year longitudinal study from Harvard
- The researchers gathered health records from 724 participants from all over the world and asked detailed questions about their lives at two-year intervals.
- **FINDINGS:** Positive relationships keep us happier, healthier, and help us [live longer](#). Period.
- **The No. 1 key to a happy life: 'Social fitness'**

53

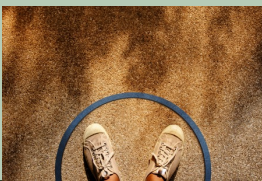
Sources of Support in My Life

MY RELATIONSHIP WITH	Safety & Security	Learning & Growth	Emotional Closeness & Confiding	Identity Affirmation & Shared Experiences	Romantic Intimacy	Help (Practical & Physical)	Fun & Relaxation

* Robert Waldinger, MD, is a professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, and director of Psychotherapy at Massachusetts General Hospital. He is a practicing psychiatrist and also a co-author and author of "The Good Life: Twelve Lessons on How to Live Well."
* Kelly McGonigall, PhD, is the associate director of the Harvard Study of Adult Development, and a practicing therapist with experience training in health and clinical psychology at Harvard Medical School. He is also the author of "The Upside of Stress."

54

A note about healthy boundaries



- Credit and Responsibility
- Opportunities for others to learn and grow
- Letting others into your 'house', or not inviting them back

55

CARE: A = ADAPTIVE

- Adapting to change, particularly when it is unexpected and / or negative is very difficult for most of us.
- Mental and physical health and happiness are associated with the ability to be flexible and adapt to change by adjusting yourself to new situations and circumstances.
- This doesn't mean compromising core values, it means figuring out a way to make them work.



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56

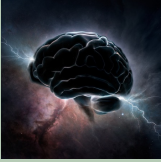
TYPES OF ADAPTABILITY



Cognitive
Use different strategies or frameworks



Emotional
Vary your approach towards dealing with others based on your (and their) emotional state



Dispositional
Transparent realism; acknowledge the negative, but focus on options

<https://www.uci.org/articles/leading-effectively/articles/adaptability-10-ideas-3-factor-5/>
<https://www.uci.org/articles/leading-effectively/articles/adaptability-10-ideas-3-factor-5/>

57

How to develop adaptability

- Focus on curiosity- ask a lot of questions
- Don't get "stuck" on the one way of doing something
- Look to others for support and new ideas
- Develop insight about how you react to change
- Try new things; teach yourself that new isn't threatening

58

CARE: R = REASONED

- Use critical thinking to carefully evaluate choices and behaviors.
- Plan to devote your personal energy towards being the best person you can be, based on the characteristics you would like to develop. Spending energy on behaviors that are inconsistent with who you want to be results in discomfort and unhappiness.
- Spending time identifying your core values can help with this.





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59

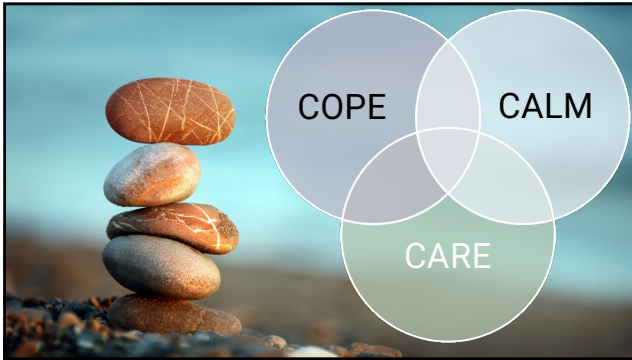
CARE: E = ENGAGED

- Engage actively in mindful living.
- Developing a commitment to a person, idea, group or activity that is bigger than yourself, and using that commitment to find purpose and motivation in your life is an important part of caring for yourself and enjoying mental health.



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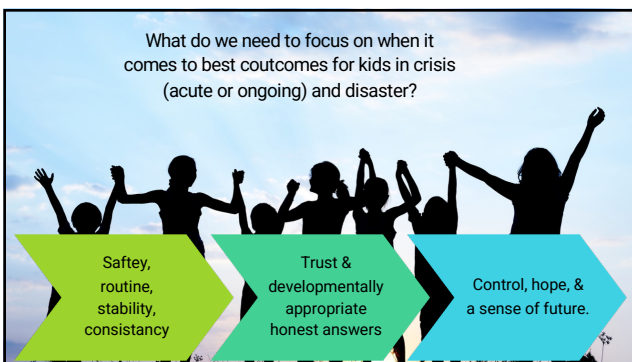
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61



62



63

SAFETY IS ESSENTIAL TO WHOLE BRAIN AND BODY HEALTH

1. Humans (kids and adults) can't learn when they don't feel safe, on a physiological level.
2. The classroom may be the only safe place for many students.
3. When the external environment is in constant crisis, what are your options for increasing consistency, calm and sense of safety in the day-to-day classroom environment?

64

**Ideas for establishing safety
through routines and expectations:
things you probably already do**

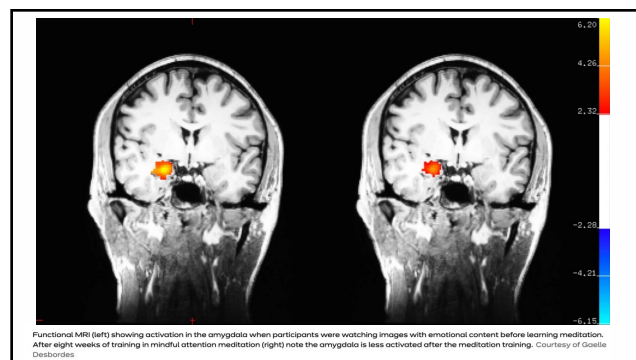
- 1**
Positive greetings
- 2**
A daily / weekly schedule that is visible and consistent
- 3**
Jobs and contributions that students can count on

65

**The benefits of orienting to "right now"
increase a sense of safety**

- 'Tuning in' to the present moment (mindfulness, deep breathing, meditation) is related to decreases in anxiety and depression.
- Being oriented about right now reminds us that we are not currently under 'threat'.
- Mindfulness can improve cognitive functioning and emotion regulation for people who are experiencing grief and bereavement.
 - *** Mindfulness and meditation as practices are not "one size fits all", and they can be triggering for some people.

66



67

TRUST



Include children and youth in decision making and discussion of concerns and options at a developmentally appropriate level (academic, social, medical)



Allow them active participation in cultural, family and community practices, rituals, ceremonies, etc (particularly around grief and loss)



Don't hide the truth from children or youth, or lie to them. Be honest, and share things at an appropriate emotional level.

68



69

For young children



Finding ways that they can actively participate in the home or classroom - having a 'job' to do is helpful.

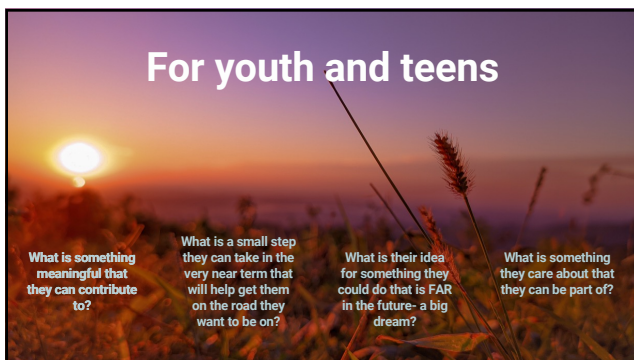


Help them engage in imaginative play where they can think creatively

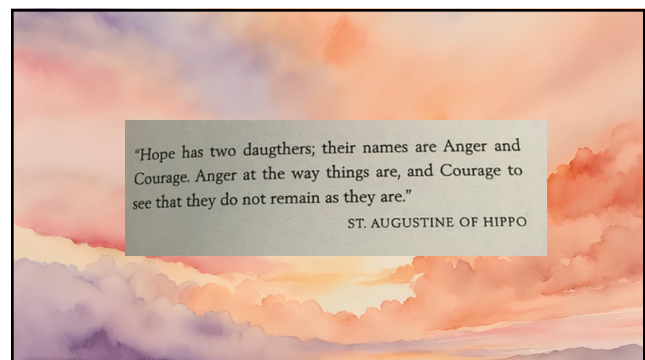


Help them find and seek out new opportunities that may be available: new friendships, hobbies etc.

70



71



72

Other considerations



Safety and good decision making for teens



Healthy Control

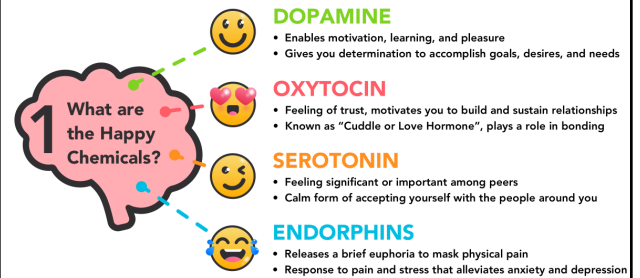


The good brain chemicals

73

GET YOUR DAILY HAPPINESS CHEMICALS

The happy brain chemicals that make you feel good



74

2 How Deficiency Affects You

- procrastination
- low self-esteem
- lack of motivation
- low energy or fatigue
- inability to focus
- feeling anxious
- feeling hopeless
- mood swings

DOPAMINE

- feeling lonely
- stressed
- lack of motivation
- low energy or fatigue
- disconnect of relationships
- feeling anxious
- insomnia

OXYTOCIN

- low self-esteem
- overly sensitive
- anxiety/panic attacks
- mood swings
- feeling hopeless
- social phobia
- obsession/compulsion
- insomnia

SEROTONIN

- anxiety
- depression
- mood swings
- aches and pains
- insomnia
- impulsive behavior

ENDORPHINS

3 How to Increase Happiness Levels

- meditate
- daily to-do list
- long term goals
- food rich in L-Tyrosine
- exercise regularly
- create something: writing, music, or art

- physical touch
- socializing
- massage
- acupuncture
- listening to music
- exercise
- cold shower
- meditate

- exercise
- cold showers
- sunlight
- massage

- laughter/crying
- creating music/art
- eat dark chocolate
- eat spicy foods
- exercise/stretching
- massage
- meditate

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75

Educators figuring out how to take care of ourselves is NOT optional. It is "mission critical"



- Model what you want to see. Children and other people copy what they SEE not what they are told.
- Establish and maintain healthy boundaries for yourself.
- What works for YOU in terms of coping?
- Remember resilience: Purpose, Connection, Adaptability & Hope.
- Keep in mind the context we are living with.

76

