

# Trauma- informed Practices:

Building Teachers'  
and Students'  
Resilience in  
Stressful Times



Webinar  
February 2, 2023

If you can see the  
slide and hear the  
music, you are all set.

**Welcome! We will begin shortly.**

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# Thank you for joining us

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Please introduce yourselves in the chat box

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- Your role in the educational sector



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# Thank you for joining us



**Suzanne Bouffard**

Senior Vice President  
Communications and  
Publications

Learning Forward

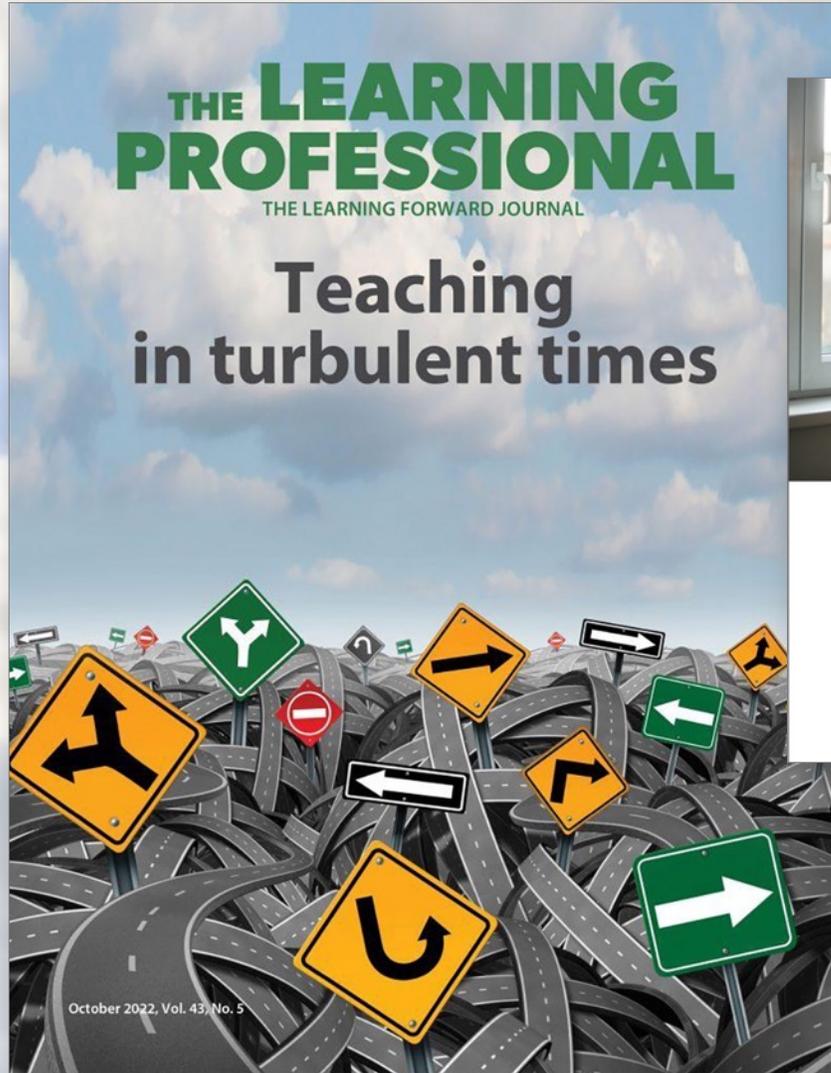


How  
are  
YOU?

# Mindful moment



# Trauma-informed practice and professional learning



## What to do when the kids aren't alright

BY GINGER CHRISTIAN, MEGAN QUINN, AND VIRGINIA FOLEY

In the aftermath of the acute phases of COVID-19, some schools are adopting trauma-informed, high-leverage practices to help educators and students cope with the psychological impact of the pandemic's devastation. Scattered approaches are not enough.

We need systemic approaches to ensure that all educators and students can benefit from trauma-informed practices. East Tennessee State University and Union County Schools recognized the value of developing and sustaining a partnership to build strategies and leadership capacity for trauma-

informed systems. Seeing the need for professional learning, coaching, and assessment tools, the professors and researchers at the Strong Brain Institute and Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis Department developed a five-year strategic partnership with the school district. Through this partnership, we are

34 | The Learning Professional | www.learningforward.org

October 2022 | Vol. 43 No. 5



RESEARCH REVIEW  
Elizabeth Foster

## TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES HELP EDUCATORS, STUDY FINDS

Understanding the mental health of everyone in schools is critically important, especially now. According to a recent Gallup poll, "More than four in 10 K-12 workers in the U.S. (44%) say they 'always' or 'very often' feel burned out at work." Notably, "within the K-12 employee population, teachers are the most burned out, at 57%" (Madden, 2022). And according to a recent survey of U.S. principals, assistant principals, and high school students by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, about three-fourths of school leaders (73%) and students (74%) reported that they needed help with their mental or emotional health last year (NASPP, 2022).

In addition, there is increased discussion since the start of the pandemic among educators at all levels about how adverse childhood experiences impact teaching and learning. Childhood stress can cause students to have challenges with executive functioning and emotional regulation, impulsivity, communication, and attention — all of which have an impact on classroom behavior and relationships. (See more about trauma's impact on learning in "What to do when the kids aren't alright" on p. 34 of this issue.) Recent heightened attention to equity issues has underscored the need to address stress and trauma to ensure that all students' social and emotional needs are met so that all students can succeed in school.

In this context, it is important to look to the evidence about whether and how investments in professional learning designed to address and support students' and educators' social and emotional health lead to positive results. One such approach is called trauma-informed practice. Trauma-informed practice takes the approach that students' challenging behaviors could be due to previous or ongoing trauma and therefore focuses on the student's need for support, rather than attributing the behavior to defiance or disrespect and responding with discipline or exclusion.

Research suggests that building knowledge and understanding about trauma can improve educators' relationships with students, increase the use of positive approaches to student behavior and learning, and potentially reduce teachers' stress and burnout.

A recent study yields promising findings about how professional learning that addresses educator awareness about trauma as well as trauma-informed approaches can positively impact educator outcomes with regard to supporting students, burnout, and self-efficacy.

### METHODOLOGY

MacLachlain et al. researched a whole-school trauma-informed program in Northern Ireland called the Compassionate Schools approach. The Compassionate Schools program is

20 | The Learning Professional | www.learningforward.org

October 2022 | Vol. 43 No. 5

A universal approach to trauma-informed practice is important because we cannot always see which students have experienced trauma and its impacts.

designing a pre-K-12 resilient schools district model so students will receive a continuum of services through

activation of the stress response can lead to impairments in learning and memory (National Scientific

effects can persist into adulthood if not addressed. Fortunately, it is possible to reverse

grounded in growing evidence about the positive effects on students and educators who engage with trauma-informed practice and is supported by a free handbook designed to be integrated with existing curricula. The goals of the whole-school program are to improve social and emotional learning, improve academic skills of students, and increase the well-being of staff. The intervention studied was a two-day professional learning focused on an introduction to the program, information about how trauma impacts a child's ability to learn, the goals of a trauma-informed approach, self-care guidance for teaching staff, trauma-informed classroom strategies, and the importance of community engagement. The professional learning also included a discussion of how teacher-student interactions that reflect compassion and empathy can increase student resiliency. The research questions were:

1. Would a two-day professional learning in trauma-informed approaches change school personnel attitudes related to trauma-informed care, and would any changes made be maintained at a six-month follow-up?
2. Would the professional learning influence school personnel's levels of compassion fatigue, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress at a six-month follow-up?

This research compared attitudes and compassion fatigue among 216 educators using two scales: the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) and the Professional Quality of Life (Pro-QoL). Quantitative data from the scales was augmented by

The Compassionate Schools program is grounded in growing evidence about the positive effects on students and educators who engage with trauma-informed practices.

Qualitative data from focus groups, the first study of a whole-school trauma-informed program to use a control group in the research design, adding to the rigor of the study and the value of the findings. Ninety-eight educators participated in the professional learning, while the 118 in the comparison group were put on a waitlist to engage in the professional learning post-study. Researchers use this waitlist control group strategy when it is considered ethically important to not deny one group of educators the professional learning about valuable knowledge and skills. The researchers also surveyed both the 98 participants and the control group six months after the professional learning to determine if any changes were maintained over time.

**SURVEY RESULTS**  
The MacLachlain research found that the program improved educators' attitudes toward trauma-impacted students and resulted in a decrease in educator burnout among those who participated. These effects lasted when researchers surveyed the educators six months later.

The original participants showed significant positive improvement in overall scores and all subscale scores over three administrations of the ARTIC scale, which is used to assess

attitudes among school staff about working with trauma-impacted individuals, including readiness to implement trauma-informed practices, potential barriers, and attitudes toward over time. The validated instrument includes Likert-scale items such as "students are doing the best they can with the skills they have" and "each day is uniquely stressful in this job."

The positive changes remained six months after the workshop, with participants noting that they were now more aware of the profound impact trauma can have on students and a belief that the training had assisted them in their ability to deal with "disruptiveness in the classroom." The research also found that educators in the intervention group experienced a slight reduction in burnout immediately after the professional learning and maintained that improvement six months out.

**FOCUS GROUP FINDINGS**  
Seventeen members of the teaching staff also participated in focus groups about their experiences with the Compassionate Schools program. Semistructured conversations invited the educators to talk about work-related changes following the professional learning, as well as about personal growth, barriers related to implementing the trauma-informed framework and position, and self-care. Overall, the focus groups corroborated the quantitative evidence from the surveys, revealing that "the trauma-informed CS training workshop had a positive effect on teaching staff perspectives, attitudes, and behaviors, which led teachers to adapt their roles

October 2022 | Vol. 43 No. 5

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# Participants will ...

- Learn about how trauma and adverse childhood experiences affect learning and behavior
- Understand what trauma-informed practice is and why it benefits all students
- Learn how districts are helping teachers and staff learn about and implement trauma-informed practices
- Explore a systemic framework for implementing universal trauma-informed practice
- Discover steps to make schools more trauma sensitive and restorative

# Let's check in

1 How would you rate the levels of stress and trauma among STUDENTS in your setting this academic year?

- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Extreme

2 How would you rate the levels of stress and trauma among STAFF in your setting this academic year?

- Low
- Moderate
- High
- Extreme

3 How familiar are you with the concept of trauma-informed practice?

- I had never heard of it before this webinar
- I've heard of it but don't know much about it
- I'm somewhat familiar with it
- I apply it in my work on a regular basis

# Panel discussion



**Ginger Christian**

Assistant Professor  
Educational Leadership  
and Policy Analysis  
Department

East Tennessee State  
University

Johnson City, TN



**Kevin Graham**

Principal  
Unicoi County  
Middle School  
Erwin, TN



**Victoria E. Romero**

Author; Independent  
Educational Consultant  
Seattle, WA



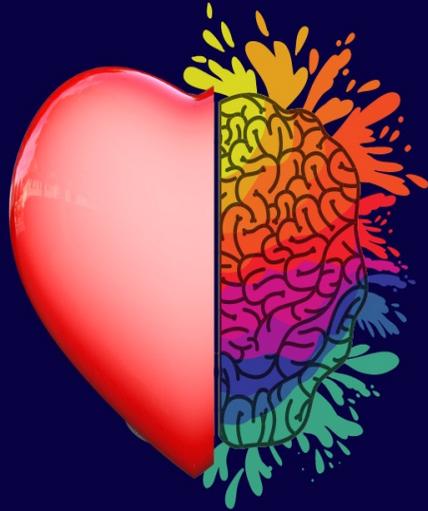
**Sue Kim**

Doctoral Candidate  
School Psychology  
University of  
Western Ontario  
London, Ontario  
Canada

# PK–12 District Resilient and Trauma-Informed Systemic Model

## East Tennessee State University and Unicoi County Schools

### The Resilient Schools Project



*"Building Hearts and Minds  
for the Present and the Future"*

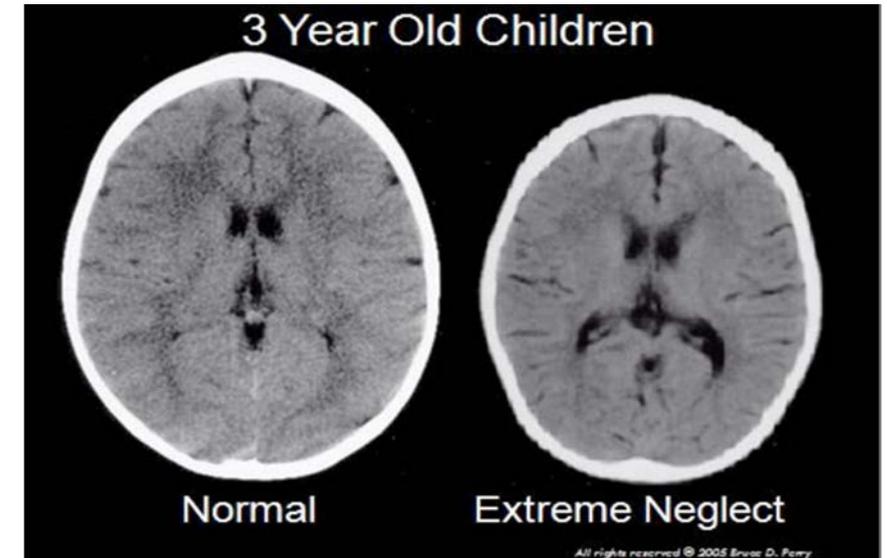
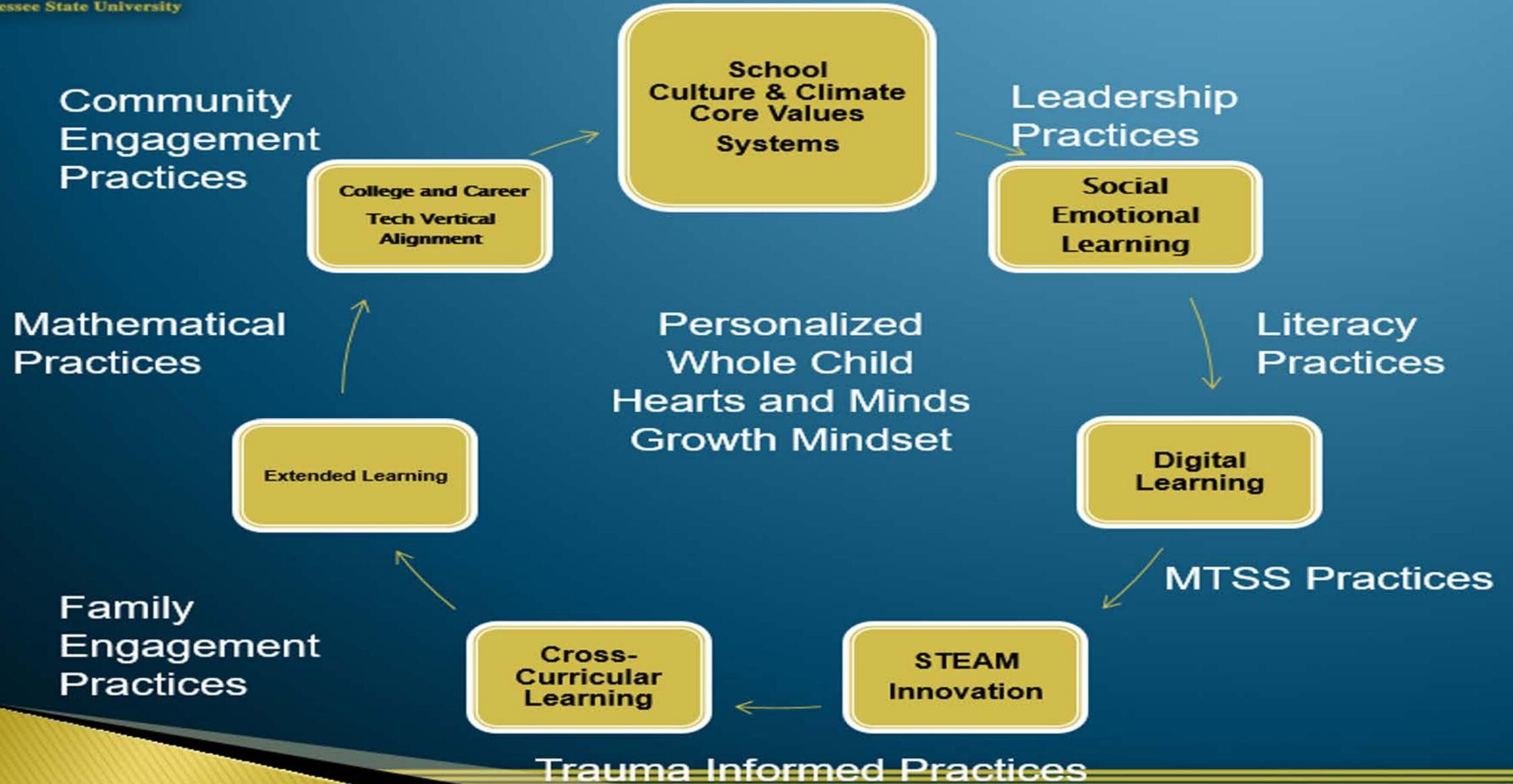


Fig. 2: Impact of neglect on brain development: These images illustrate the impact of neglect on the developing brain. The CT scan on the left is from a healthy three-year-old child with an average head size (Perry, 2008).



# Resilient Schools Framework

## A Learner First Framework (Christian & Foley, 2022)



# A Three-Year Strategic Plan Leading, Research, and Systems

Elementary to Middle to High School to College and Careers  
Grand Designs at a Gradual Pace



- All staff complete ACE's training
- Resilient Schools (RS) Surveys
- Identified Tier 2 and Tier 3 students with RS Data Report
- Summer school sessions

- Define and demonstrate positive school culture and core values
- Bridge from ODR to class with restorative process
- Establish reset and calm spaces

- Expand restorative practices to Tier 1
- Sustainable onboarding for professional learning for all faculty and administrators
- Personalized student success plans for intervention and celebrations

Research with high-leverage practices guide Resilient School implementation teams



EAST TENNESSEE STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Research and High-Leverage Practices

## Research Tools and Resources: Action Research Cycle

- *Resilient Schools Mid-Year Student Success Survey* for school leadership team members
- *Resilient Schools: Changing School Culture Survey* for all faculty and staff in March of each year
- *Resilient Schools Data Report* – each semester
- Qualitative student-centered questions will be provided to administrative teams to review student feedback about available resources specific to school culture, climate, and trauma-informed care.

## Resources:

- Resilient Schools Core Values
- Resilient Schools Student Success Plan





Fostering Educator Resilience positively impacts student academic achievement & socioemotional development (Cipriano et al., 2020; Herman et al, 2008)

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and CASEL Study on Teacher Well-being (Cipriano & Brackett, 2018; 2021)

A Systemic Review of Teacher Well-being (Haseber & Waber, 2021)

## Impacts on practice

<b>Attention, memory, and learning</b>	Stress disrupts concentration and interferes with learning new things.
<b>Decision-making</b>	People in unpleasant moods tend to evaluate individuals, places, and events negatively.
<b>Relationships</b>	Teachers who display frustration and anger or are withdrawn often alienate students, and that can influence students' sense of safety and belonging in the classroom and their ability to learn.
<b>Health and well-being</b>	There are direct links between stress and many diseases like hypertension, depression, weight gain, addictions.

Burnout	Compassion fatigue	Vicarious traumatisation
<p><b>Signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Anger</li> <li>• Frustration</li> <li>• Negative reactions towards others</li> <li>• Cynicism</li> <li>• Negativity</li> <li>• Withdrawal</li> </ul>	<p><b>Signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sadness &amp; grief</li> <li>• Avoidance or dread of working with some patients</li> <li>• Reduced ability to feel empathy towards patients or families</li> <li>• Somatic complaints</li> <li>• Addiction</li> <li>• Nightmares</li> <li>• Frequent use of sick days</li> <li>• Increased psychological arousal</li> <li>• Changes in beliefs, expectations, &amp; assumptions</li> <li>• Detachment</li> <li>• Decreased intimacy</li> </ul>	<p><b>Signs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety</li> <li>• Sadness</li> <li>• Confusion</li> <li>• Apathy</li> <li>• Intrusive imagery</li> <li>• Loss of control, trust, &amp; independence</li> <li>• Somatic complaints</li> <li>• Relational disturbances</li> </ul>
<p><b>Symptoms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Psychological</li> <li>• Cognitive</li> <li>• Relational disturbances</li> </ul>	<p><b>Symptoms (mirror PTSD)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Headaches</li> <li>• Digestive problems</li> <li>• Muscle tension</li> <li>• Fatigue</li> <li>• Psychological distress</li> <li>• Cognitive shifts</li> <li>• Relational disturbances</li> <li>• Poor concentration, focus, &amp; judgement</li> </ul>	<p><b>Symptoms (mirror PTSD)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Psychological distress</li> <li>• Cognitive shifts</li> <li>• Relational disturbances</li> </ul>
<p><b>Triggers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal characteristics</li> <li>• <b>Work-related attributes</b></li> <li>• <b>Work organisational characteristics</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Triggers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal characteristics</li> <li>• Previous exposure to trauma</li> <li>• Empathy and emotional energy</li> <li>• Prolonged exposure to trauma material of clients</li> <li>• Response to stressor</li> <li>• <b>Work environment</b></li> <li>• <b>Work-related attitudes</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Triggers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal characteristics</li> <li>• Previous exposure to trauma</li> <li>• Type of therapy</li> <li>• <b>Organisational context</b></li> <li>• <b>Resources</b></li> <li>• Re-enactment</li> </ul>

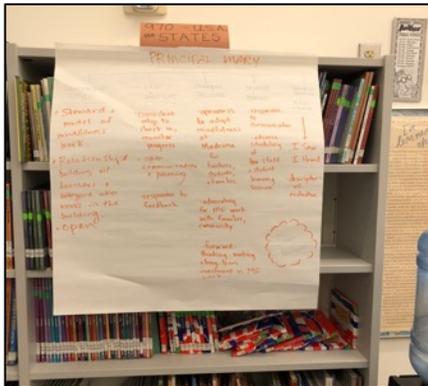
# We can be intentional about creating a culture that boosts good stress hormones

## Eustress signs

- Provides productive energy
- Helps increase focus
- Increases motivation
- Is often experienced as excitement
- Feels manageable
- Improves performance
- Associated with confidence
- Expectation of a positive outcome



	Stressful Activities	Suggested Supports
AUGUST – NOVEMBER	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Staffing</li> <li>2. Tri-days</li> <li>3. Master/Student schedules (MS/HS)</li> <li>4. Open house/Curriculum night (EL)</li> <li>5. Parent/Teacher conference (EL)</li> <li>6. 1<sup>st</sup> day of school/1<sup>st</sup> week of Kdg. (EL)</li> <li>7. Teacher evaluations/Goal setting</li> <li>8. Sept. student assessments</li> <li>9. Special Ed (schedules/resources-EL)</li> <li>10. Uncertainty about expectations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Early timeline; mandatory hiring training; spreadsheet listing people who have been trained; roadmap</li> <li>2. Help with prioritizing; scheduling/implementation; consistent communication; resources in advance; administrative planning time</li> <li>3. Share examples of master schedules 6/7/8. Extra support staff from Central Office in bldg.</li> </ol>



Teachers share social-emotional needs with principal



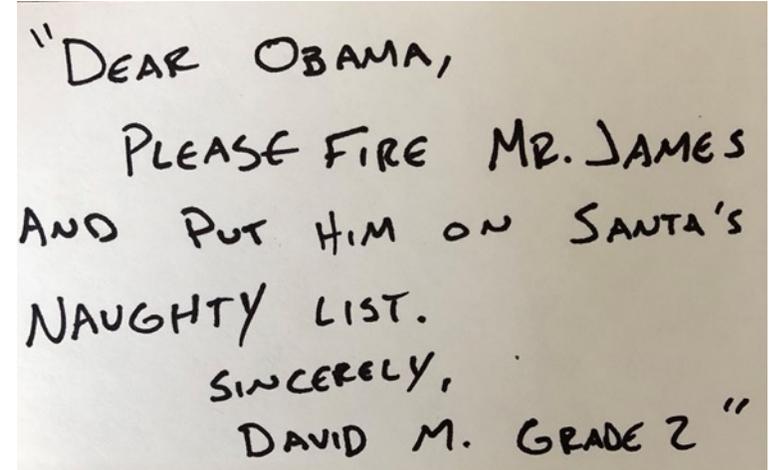
Principals share most stressful times during the year with district administrators & suggestions for support

## Creating a culture of caring support fosters resilience (Who, if not us?) Tap in/Tap Out – Gives staff time to recharge



## Second-order change is sustainable change in school culture

- Encourage all staff to add a wellness goal to professional goals; ID a wellness partner
- Add/Take Away: Before you ask staff to do something new, figure out what you can take away
- Encourage staff to seek district, private resources if they feel symptoms of burnout or compassion fatigue
- Maintain a section of staff newsletter with links to wellness tips (counselors know best)
- Use fund-raising apps to hire yoga instructors, masseuse, qi gong instructors
- Write three Good Things daily for 15 days; send a colleague a random appreciation text ([Bite-Sized Resiliency Video Series](#), Dr. Bryan Sexton)
- Open/close meetings, before/after long holidays, with wellness check-in, sharing humorous stories, healthy snacks, breakfast
- CELEBRATE the little things



"DEAR OBAMA,  
PLEASE FIRE MR. JAMES  
AND PUT HIM ON SANTA'S  
NAUGHTY LIST.  
SINCERELY,  
DAVID M. GRADE 2"

## Resources

[Restoring Teacher and Principal Well-Being Is an Essential Step for Rebuilding Schools: Findings from the State of the American Teacher and State of the American Principal Surveys | RAND](#)

[DonorsChoose: Support a classroom. Build a future.](#)

[Professional Quality of Life Measure \(ProQOL 5.0\) \(alchemer.com\)](#)

[Compassion Fatigue: Symptoms To Look For \(webmd.com\)](#)

[Burnout: Symptoms, Risk Factors, Prevention, Treatment \(verywellmind.com\)](#)

[Self-Care Assessment \(buffalo.edu\)](#)

[Resources | Equity and Education \(buildingresilienceinstudents.com\)](#)

[How 'positive stress' can help you be happier, more productive at work \(cnbc.com\)](#)

<https://youtu.be/edWChEmHEnU> Mindfulness: Stop and Notice Self



Building Resilience In Students Impacted by ACEs – Resource  
(updated with short articles/videos 1<sup>st</sup> Sundays)



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# Impact of trauma-informed training and MindUP on teacher attitudes and well-being

Sue Kim, M.A.

*Centre for School Mental Health,  
University of Western Ontario*

Financial contributions by:



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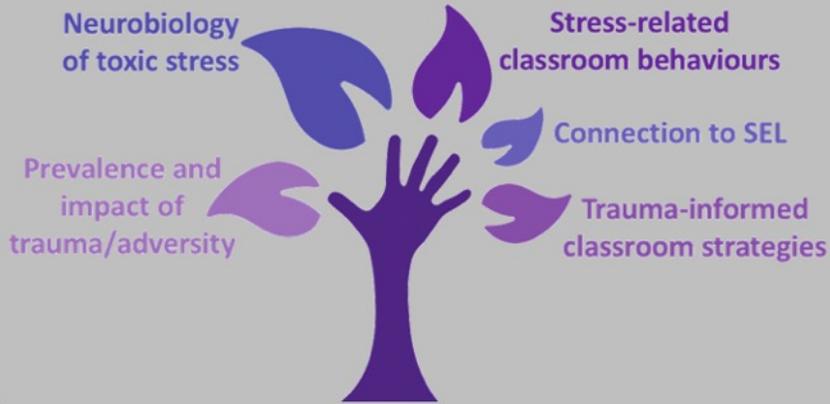
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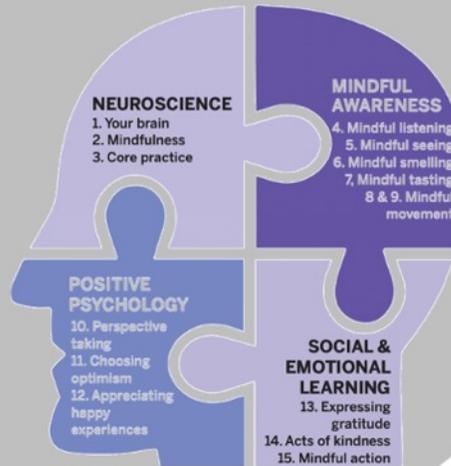
# TRAUMA-INFORMED TRAINING

Half-day, in-person training



# MINDUP

Mindfulness-based SEL program for Pre-K~Gr.8



## PROCEDURE



**October**

Trauma-Informed Training



**October-May**

Teach MindUP



**June**

Focus Group

17 focus groups with 59 educators



# 1) Educators viewed certain challenging behaviours in the classroom as symptoms of trauma/adversity

*“It really makes you step back and really think about the child and why they’re doing what they’re doing, what’s going on, or what might be causing that behaviour.”*

*“I still remember, from the trauma workshop, ‘Why this child? Why now?’ ... I say that to myself, when I have a child that's misbehaving.”*



## 2) Educators emphasized relationship-building, established a safe learning environment, and endorsed an empathy-focused approach

*“When they come into my room, ... I want to **make it a safe place** for them to be because, for some, it’s the safest place they have. ... I’m more likely to notice and take the time to ... **make a connection with each kid** ... I started doing **morning check-ins** with the kids.”*

*“At the beginning of the year, I thought that every child that had a behavioural issue had to be dealt with in one way. I’ve learned ... that **it’s not always that disciplinary measure.**”*

*“...you should be **loving and nurturing** to kids who come in [and] **have none at home.**”*

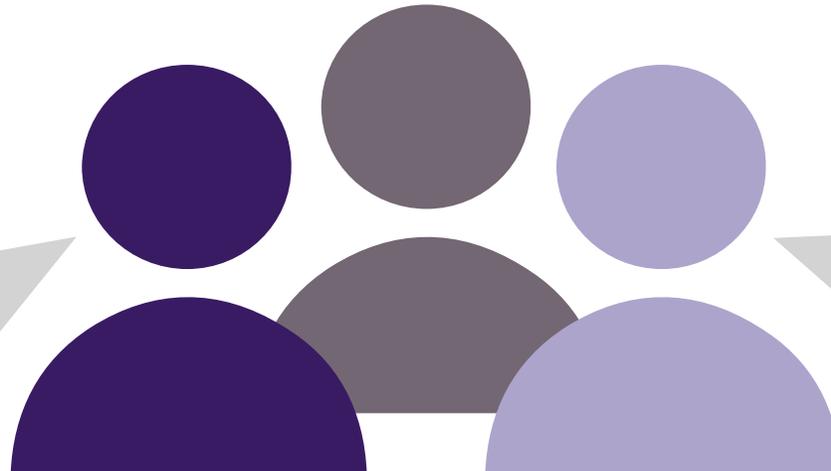


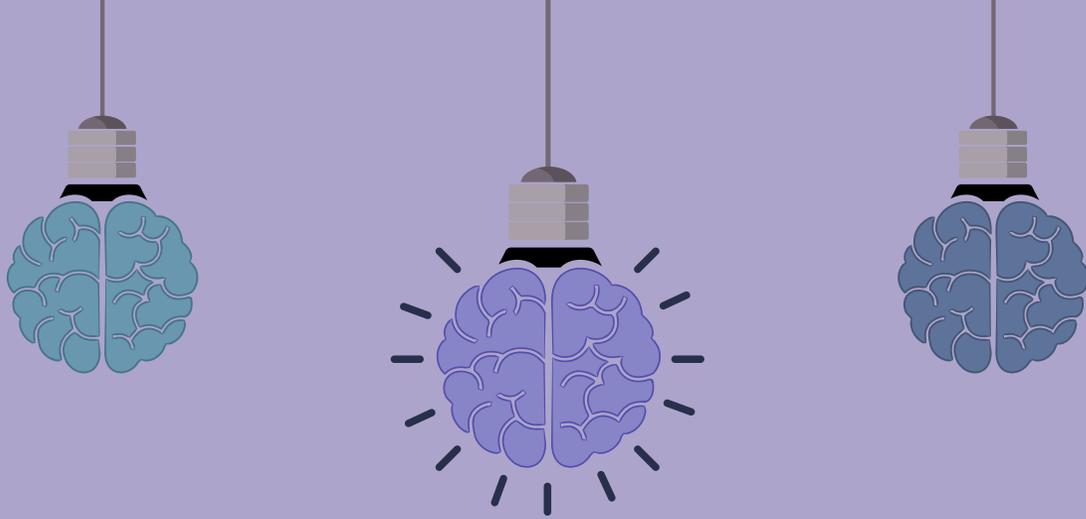
### 3) Educators reported increased sense of personal accomplishment and engagement in self-care

*“The [MindUP] techniques that we used, the **deep breathing [and] thinking of a happy memory**, ... a lot of them are able to do that now. ... Whereas **before, nothing seemed to work.** It took forever for them to calm down.”*

*“**It’s not just them that needs the brain break, it’s me.** That has really changed for me as a teacher, for **getting a handle on my own frustrations that are inevitable in teaching.**”*

*“**I’m more relaxed.** ... [When I’m] getting flustered, ... [I] remind [myself], ‘**I just need to breathe and keep calm.**’ ... [MindUP has] definitely **helped reduce my stress. Even just the pace of how I teach.**”*





# Why this child? Why now?



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## MindUP for Young Children

For more information about our research project, please visit:  
<https://www.csmh.uwo.ca/research/mindup.html>

School Mental Health (2021) 13:55–68  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/s12110-020-09406-6>

ORIGINAL PAPER

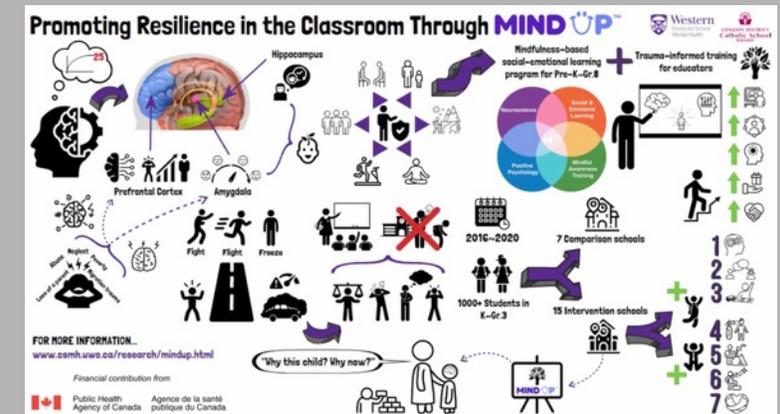
### Impact of Trauma-Informed Training and Mindfulness-Based Social-Emotional Learning Program on Teacher Attitudes and Burnout: A Mixed-Methods Study

Sue Kim<sup>1</sup> · Claire V. Crooks<sup>1</sup> · Karen Baz<sup>1</sup> · Mostafa Shokoochi<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract**  
 A trauma-informed approach can give teachers the strategies they need to help children affected by trauma reach their full potential in the classroom. Mindfulness-based social-emotional learning (SEL) programs equip teachers with essential tools to create a trauma-informed classroom, which in turn helps alleviate stress associated with supporting trauma-impacted children. Because existing research on SEL programs has predominantly focused on student well-being, there is a paucity of research examining teacher outcomes and the integration of a trauma-informed framework. The purpose of the study was to investigate the benefits of trauma-informed training and MindUP delivery on educator attitudes and burnout. Intervention educators received trauma-informed and MindUP training and implemented MindUP in their classrooms. Comparison educators did not participate in training and taught their usual curriculum. We compared trauma-informed attitudes and burnout levels among 112 educators (n = 71 intervention, n = 41 comparison) using the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) scale and the Maslach Burnout Inventory. Pre- and post-intervention quantitative data were augmented by qualitative focus group data. Results showed that educators in the intervention group reported significant decreases in emotional exhaustion, and significant improvements in the reactions subscale and overall scores on the ARTIC scale. Greatest improvements in self-efficacy and personal accomplishment were observed among educators who implemented MindUP for two consecutive years. These findings were supported by focus group data. Our results show that infusing trauma-informed training with an existing mindfulness-based SEL intervention may encourage teachers to embrace trauma-sensitive attitudes and reduce burnout.

**Keywords** Trauma · Social and emotional learning · Mindfulness · Teacher attitudes · Teacher burnout



# Discussion and Questions



Let us hear from you

**Please fill out our  
post-webinar  
survey**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/R2LN3VW>



# Mark your calendars

**Online  
course:**

**February 13, 15, 23,  
and March 2;  
2–4 ET**

**Key Roles for Coaches**

## **Webinars:**

**Thursday, February 16  
3 pm ET**

**How PL improves teacher  
and student outcomes**

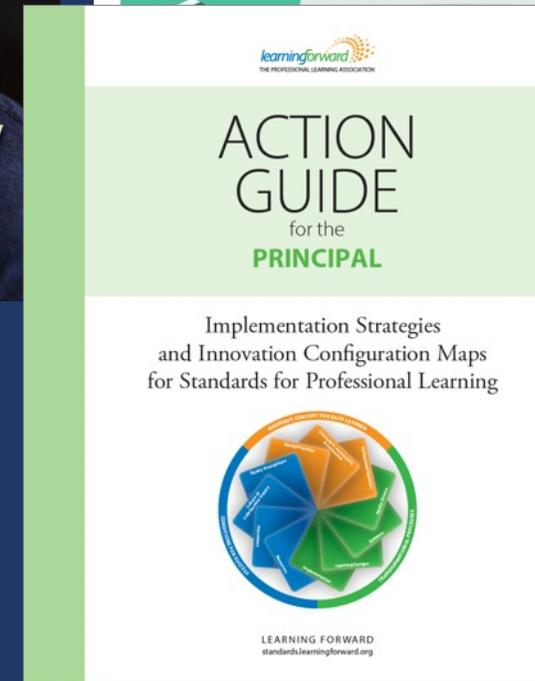
**Thursday, March 2  
3 pm ET**

**Relationally skilled leading**

# Online resources

Look for follow-up resources, including a recording of this webinar and slides:

- Read latest issue of [The Learning Professional](#)
- Check out the [Learning Forward blog](#)
- Use the [Action Guide for Principals](#)



Thank you!

