

# Calm Bodies, Calm Minds: Trauma-Informed Tools for the Classroom

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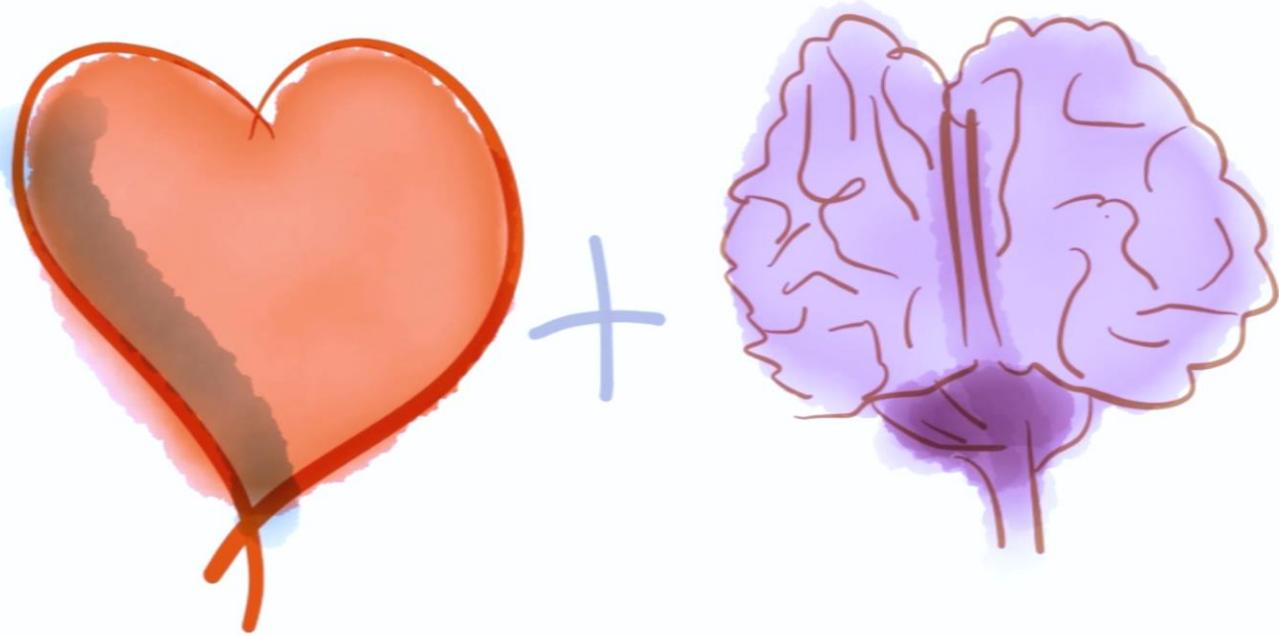


# Learning Objectives

- Basic overview of trauma and it's impact on a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical self
- Overview of yoga and mindfulness and it's impact on individuals that have experienced trauma
- The impact of yoga and mindfulness in the classroom
- Trauma-Informed mindfulness tools for the classroom



# Childhood Matters: Bridging Hearts and Minds



# What is Trauma? (THE “WHY”)

- Exposure to a traumatic event (i.e., threatened death, serious injury or sexual violation)
  - Direct experience
  - Witness the traumatic event in person
  - Learns of traumatic event
  - Experiences first hand repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details
- **Overwhelms a student’s ability to cope**
- Can result in feelings of terror, helplessness, and powerlessness (prolonged stress response)
- Interferes with a student’s sense of control, connection and meaning

<https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>, DSM-5 (2013)

# NCTSN

The National Child  
Traumatic Stress Network

- Community Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Early Childhood Trauma
- Medical Trauma
- Natural Disasters
- Neglect
- Physical Abuse
- Refugee Trauma
- School Violence
- Sexual Abuse
- Terrorism
- Traumatic Grief
- Complex Trauma

<http://www.nctsn.org>



# NCTSN

The National Child  
Traumatic Stress Network

- **Complex Trauma-** exposure to multiple or prolonged traumatic events and the impact of this exposure on their development.

- Chronic
- Begins in utero or in early childhood
- Typically within the primary caregiving system
- Types of repetitive/chronic trauma exposure:
  - Psychological maltreatment
  - Neglect
  - Physical & Sexual Abuse
  - Domestic Violence



# Prevalence in the United States (WHY?)

- 1 out of 25 children experience some form of endangerment each year
- More than 2 million children per year experience significant physical or emotional neglect
- 1.3 million women are physically assaulted each year by an intimate partner (*Emerson & Hopper, 2011*)



# Prevalence Continued

- More than 2/3 of U.S Children reported experiencing a traumatic event by age 16
- 1 out 4 school aged children have been exposed to a traumatic event
- Approximately 2 out of 3 children have been exposed to violence
- 1 in 10 report being exposed to violence 5 or more times <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

# Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACE)

- Studies the correlation between childhood maltreatment and later-life health and well-being
- The study asks adults and adolescent how many ACE that occurred during childhood
- <http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2015/03/02/387007941/take-the-ace-quiz-and-learn-what-it-does-and-doesnt-mean>



## ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

## NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

## HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



Divorce

# Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire

## Finding your ACE Score ma hbr 10 24 06

**While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:**

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** ...

Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?

**or**

Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_

2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often** ...

Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?

**or**

**Ever** hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever**...

Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?

**or**

Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?

Yes No

If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Did you **often** feel that ...

No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?

**or**

Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?

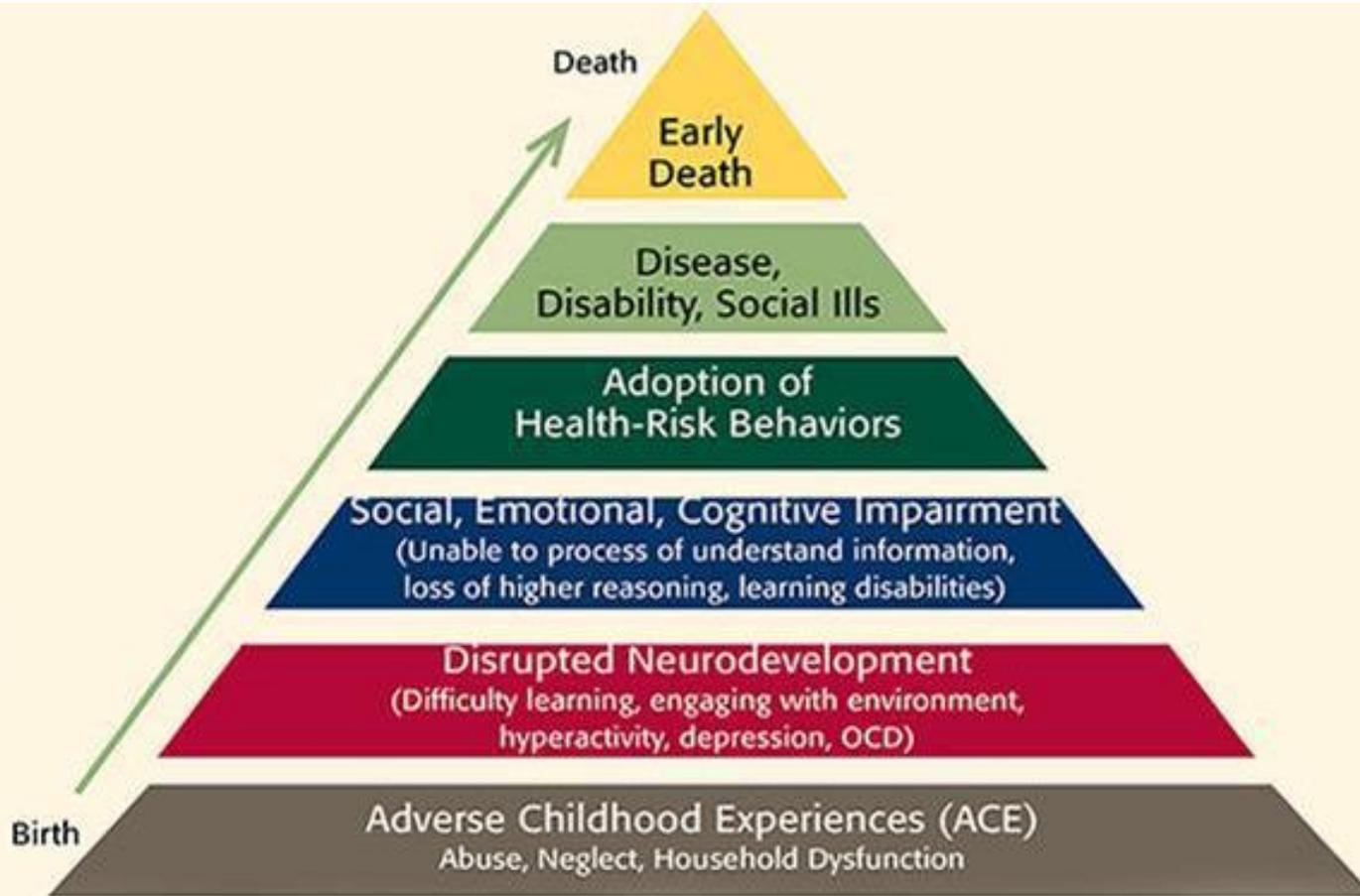
Yes No

If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_

5. Did you **often** feel that ...  
You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?  
**or**  
Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
7. Was your mother or stepmother:  
**Often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?  
**or**  
**Sometimes or often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?  
**or**  
**Ever** repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill or did a household member attempt suicide?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
10. Did a household member go to prison?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_

**Now add up your "Yes" answers: \_\_\_\_\_ This is your ACE Score**

# ACEs (WHY?)



Slide From: <http://notonourwatch.net/the-ace-study/>

# ACEs

- **ACEs are common**
  - 28% of study participants reported physical abuse
  - 21% reported sexual abuse.
  - Many also reported experiencing a divorce or parental separation, or having a parent with a mental and/or substance use disorder.



Photo from <http://cascw.umn.edu/portfolio/category/online-modules/>

# ACEs

- **ACEs cluster**

- Almost 40% of the Kaiser sample reported two or more ACEs and 12.5% experienced four or more.
- Because ACEs cluster, many subsequent studies now look at the cumulative effects of ACEs rather than the individual effects of each.

# ACEs

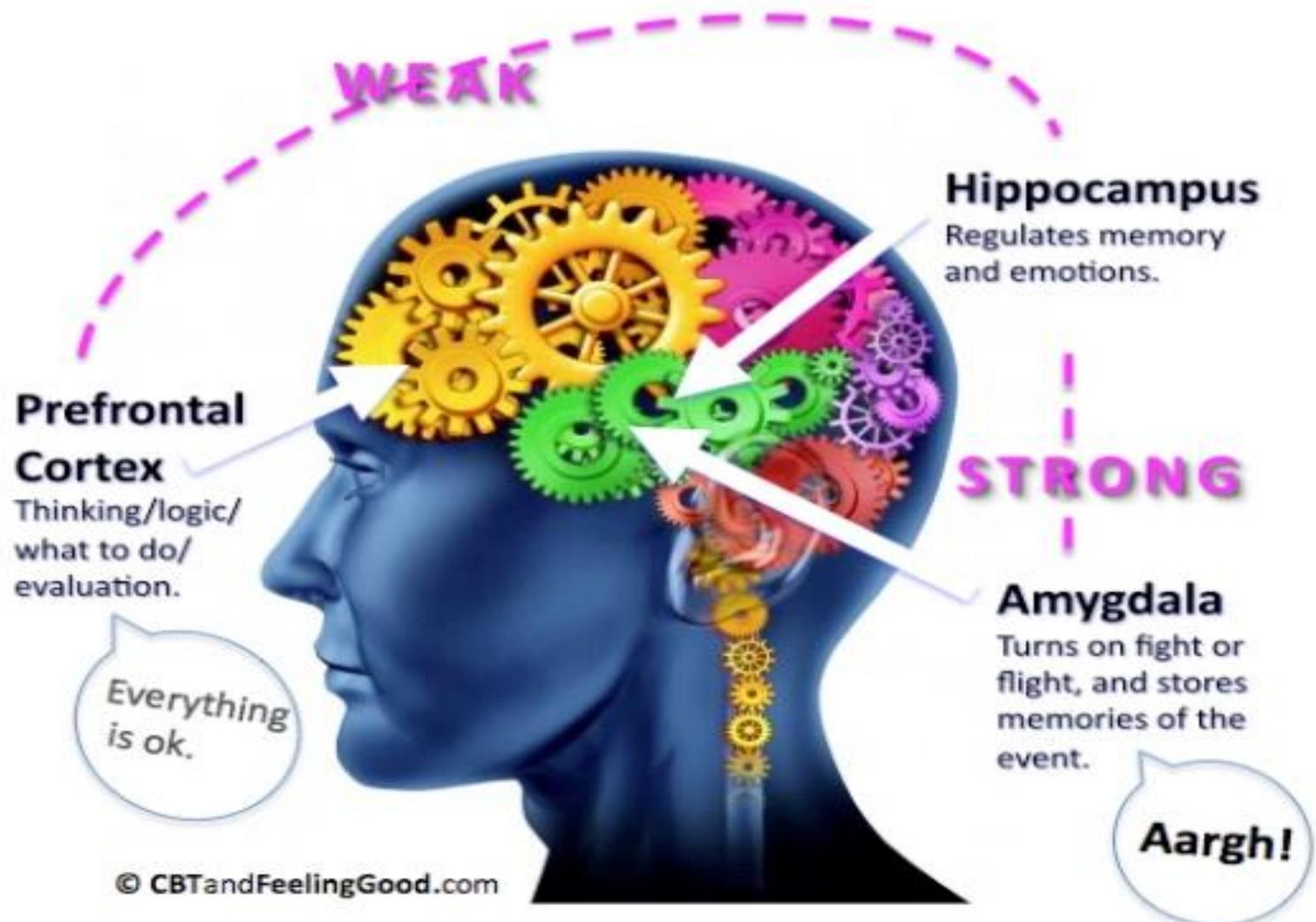
- **ACEs have a dose-response relationship with many health problems.** As researchers followed participants over time, they discovered that a person's cumulative ACEs score:
  - Has a strong, graded relationship to numerous health, social, and behavioral problems throughout their lifespan, including substance use disorders.
  - Many problems related to ACEs tend to occur together.

# Trauma & The Brain

## (WHY?)

- During a perceived traumatic experience, the brain activates its **SURVIVAL CIRCUIT**:
- Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS)
  - Fight, Flight or Freeze Response
    - Fight
    - Flight
    - Freeze





Slide From: <https://iveronicawalsh.wordpress.com/2014/04/11/a-cbt-look-at-fight-or-flight-when-the-tail-wags-the-dog/>

# Survival Mode (WHY?)

- **Competing Demands**
  - Survival vs. Learning
  - Difficult to learn when your resources are dedicated to surviving



# Sequence of Intra- and Interpersonal Engagement:

- Survival Mode Sequence

• Regulate → Relate → Reason

- In schools- Our default is to

• Reason → Relate → Regulate

# Impact of Complex Trauma (WHY?)

- Smaller brain size and structure
- Fewer neural connections
- Hyperarousal/Hypervigilance
- Difficulties with Learning, memory, and emotional regulation
- Difficulties trusting others and forming healthy relationships
- Increased behavioral issues
- Dissociative Responses
- Increased risk of mental illness
- Lower Self-Esteem
- Focus on survival vs. future orientation
- Increased risk for other system involvement

# Reactions To Trauma (Classroom)

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## Body Response

## Classroom Presentation

### RE-EXPERINCEING

- Flashbacks
- Intrusive Thoughts
- Nightmares

### RE-EXPERINCEING

- Sleepiness
- Trouble Concentrating
- Tearfulness
- Decline in Academics

### HYPER-AROUSAL

- Hyper-vigilance
- Irritable Outbursts

### HYPER-AROUSAL

- Overreaction
- Easily Startled
- Somatic Complaints

### AVOIDANCE

- Emotional Numbing
- Behavioral Inhibitions
- Dissociation

### AVOIDANCE

- Creating Distractions
- Absenteeism
- Resistance

### NEGATIVE IMPACT IN COGNITION

- Anger
- Depression/Sadness
- Withdrawal

### NEGATIVE IMPACT IN COGNITION

- Social Withdrawal
  - Moodiness and Irritability
  - Negative Self-Image
  - Emotionless or numb
-

# Trauma Effects Learning (WHY?)

- Childhood trauma stands in the way of academic success for millions of children, especially those in underserved communities.
- The following have a high correlation with exposure to trauma:
  - Low literacy
  - High dropout rates
  - Repeating grades
  - Low achievement
  - School-to-prison pipeline



# Trauma Effects Learning

- Research shows that childhood trauma can physically alter the developing brains and bodies of children
  - Can affect cognition and behavior for decades
  - Leads to symptoms similar to those of veterans returning home from war with PTSD



<http://www.samhsa.gov/capt/practicing-effective-prevention/prevention-behavioral-health/adverse-childhood-experiences>

Photo from <http://cehdvision2020.umn.edu/cehd-blog/children-of-domestic-violence/>

# Legal Implications

## Peter P. et al. v. CUSD

### (WHY?)

- Public Counsel, a national pro bono law firm, and Irell & Manella LLP filed a lawsuit on behalf of five students and three teachers in the Compton Unified School District (CUSD).
- [Student Experience](#)
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azUX-Hg-k\\_Y&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=azUX-Hg-k_Y&feature=youtu.be)
- Outcome of Lawsuit summarized
  - <http://www.publiccounsel.org/stories?id=0172>
- [Lawsuit Webpage](#)
  - <http://www.traumaandlearning.org/summary--key-documents>



Trauma & Learning

Peter P., et al. v. Compton Unified School District, et al.

# Peter P. et al. v. CUSD

- The lawsuit seeks a remedy centered on proven models of trauma-informed learning being adopted by districts across the country.
- The model includes:
  - Adequate **mental health and counseling service** for the highest need students;
  - **Trauma-informed training** and support for all educators and school staff;
  - Teaching children **skills to cope** with their anxiety and emotions; and
  - Implementing **positive school discipline and restorative strategies** that keep children in school and create a safe and welcoming environment.

# Peter P. et al. v. CUSD

- “Today, Hon. Michael W. Fitzgerald denied in full Defendants' Motion to Dismiss, argued at the first hearing on the landmark class action complaint on Aug. 20, 2016.
  - In a 41-page ruling denying the Defendants' motion to dismiss the case,
  - the court recognized for the first time that complex trauma can constitute a disability that public schools have an obligation to address through the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).”

# Know Your WHY?

- Jon Gordan- “One word that will change your life”
- **WHY?**



# Trauma & The Brain

## Key Concepts from Bruce Perry, MD

- **Resilience:** Not everyone exposed to adverse experiences is traumatized
- **Plasticity:** The amazing ability of the brain to learn, grow, and change in response to environment (particularly in response to relationships)
- **Recovery:** Brains respond to repeated stimuli; use-dependent development
- **Brain Activity:** The brain has to be active in order to learn
- **Hope:** Even as adults, our brains are capable of learning and changing

*We have the capacity to promote healthy neurodevelopment!*

■ Bruce D Perry © 2004--  
2015

# Principles of Trauma-Informed Care (The “WHAT”)

## **Safety (Emotional/Physical)**

*Ensuring physical and emotional safety*

## **Choice**

*Maximizing consumer choice and control*

## **Trustworthiness**

*Maximizing trustworthiness through task clarity, consistency, and interpersonal boundaries*

## **Collaboration**

*Maximizing collaboration and sharing of power*

## **Empowerment**

*Prioritizing empowerment and skill-building*

(Harris & Fallot, 2001; Guidelines for Community Mental Health Agencies)

# Attuned Representational Model of Self (ARMS)



From Cook-Cottone, 2015, 2017

# Why Embodied Practices?

- Are embodied which is the opposite effect of traumatic experiences
- Offer tools and strategies for personal empowerment
- Once skills are developed tools can be generalized independently
- Can be used effectively and safely for most students
- Can benefit all students not just those who have experienced trauma

**Reaction  
To Traumatic  
Exposure**

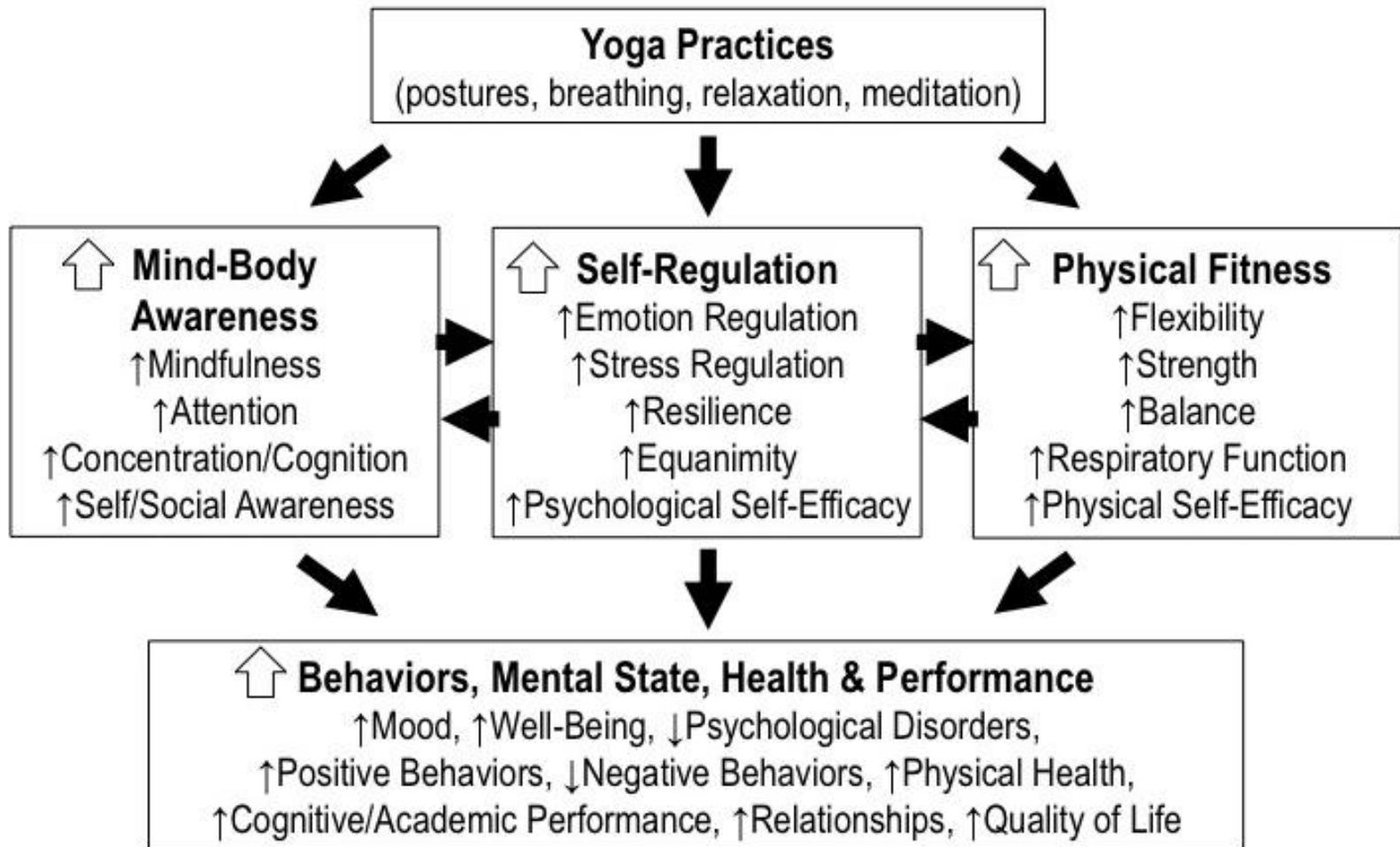


- (a) Hyper-arousal
- (b) Avoidance/Re-experiencing
- (c) Alterations in Cognition

**Yoga and  
Mindfulness  
Practice**



- (a) Embodied Practice
- (b) Engagement in the Present Moment
- (c) Re-mapping Cognitions



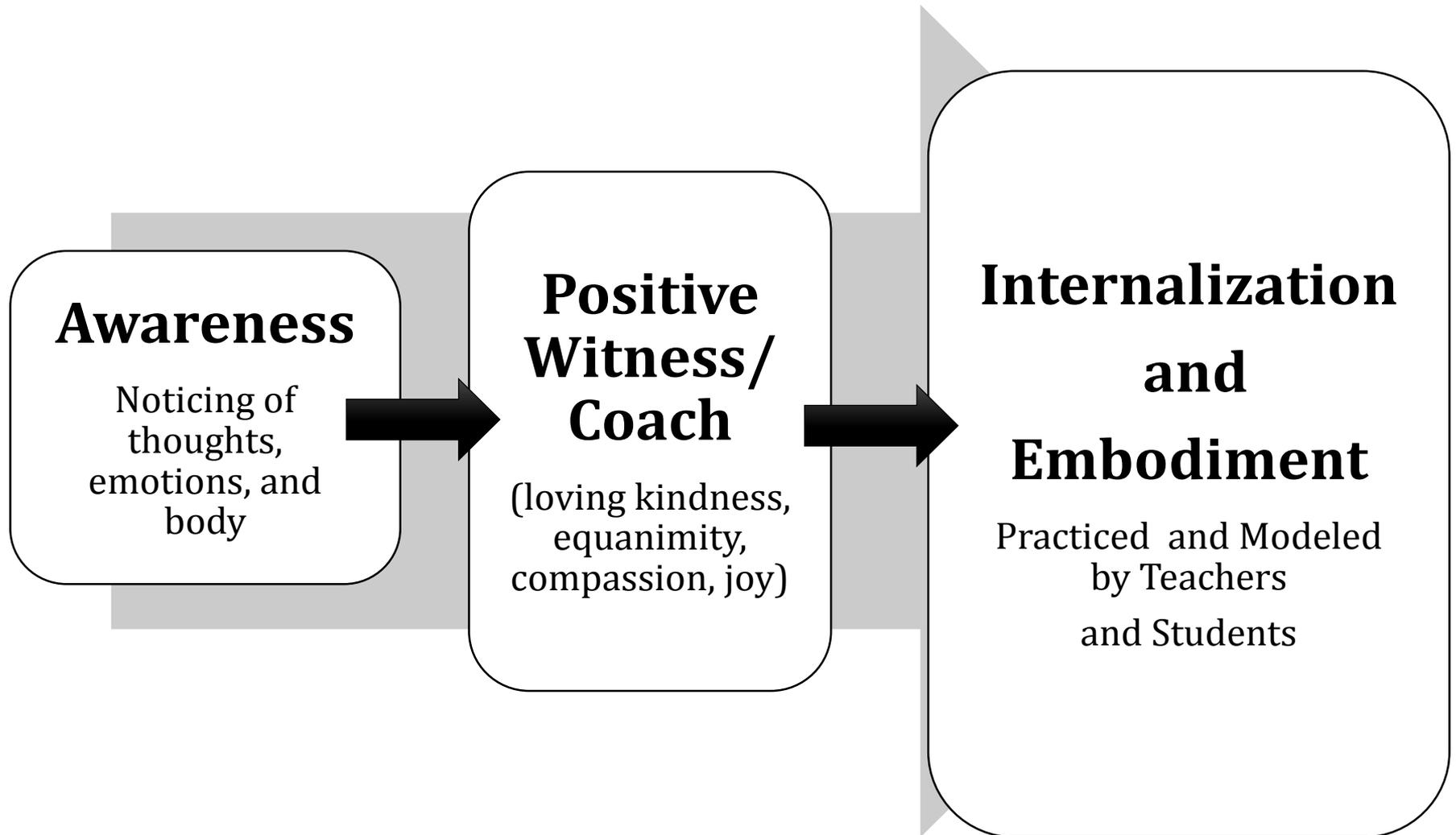
Butzer, B., Bury, D., Telles, S., & Khalsa, S. B. S. (2016). Implementing yoga within the school curriculum: a scientific rationale for improving social-emotional learning and positive student outcomes. *Journal of Children's Services*, 11(1), 3-24.

# **Integrate the Mechanism of Change for Yoga and Mindfulness**

(THE “HOW”- the missing piece)

- Cultivate **present moment awareness**
- Development of the **witness and coach**
- Encourage students **to notice** their physical presence (sensations, muscle tension, heart beat, breath)
- Use **interoceptive awareness** as a tools for decision making
- Emphasize **physical emotional awareness in decision making**
- Increased **intentionality** in actions (problem solving model)

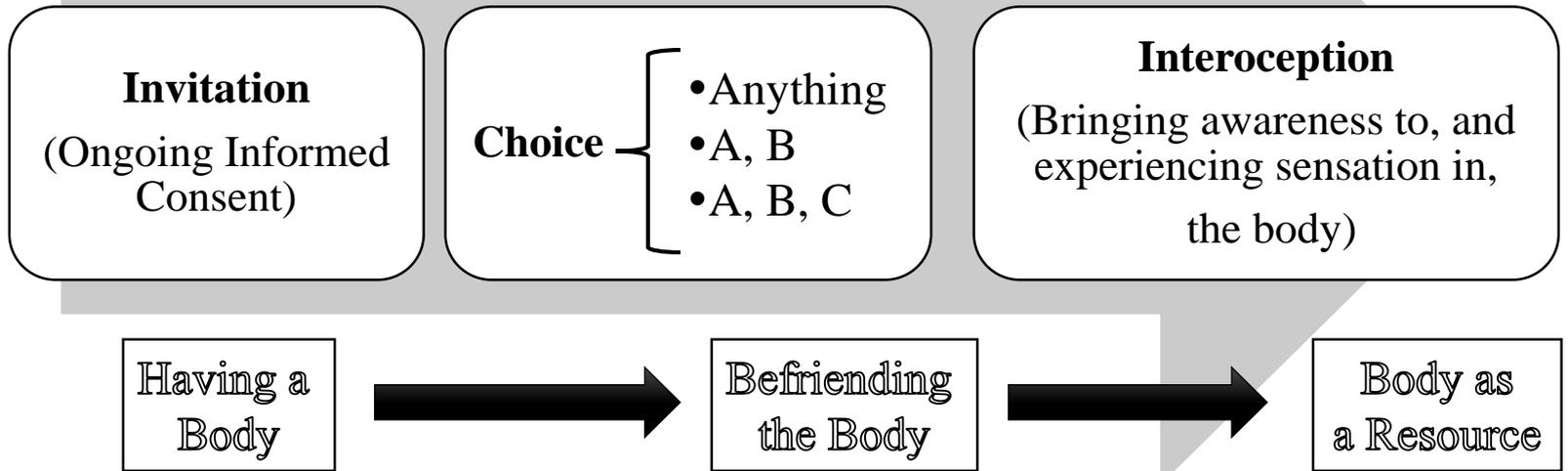
# Mindful Teacher and Student (Cook-Cottone, 2017)



**Acceptance and Change Dialectic**  
(Balance between Non-directional Relational Space and Directionality in the Methodological Sequence)

**Safe and Accepting Relational Space**  
*(Non-directional; Continuously Fostered)*  
Shared Authentic Experience in the Present Moment  
**Prioritize-** Client Agency/Safe Relationship over Form

**Methodological Sequence (Practice of Forms) →**  
*(Directionality; Step-by- Step Process)*  
Agency through Choices and Embodied Experience



# **YIS/AYP Approach**

## **(Calm Bodies/Calm Minds)**

- Based on the body of research on mindfulness, yoga, and trauma
- Prioritizes safe practice of positive embodiment
- Emphasizes choice and agency- personal ownership of growth (“I can”)
- Emphasizes personal empowerment (“I can”)
- Encourages collaborative and supportive context (distinction between help and support)
- Includes **ME– WE– US**

# Mind-body Wellness Helps Trauma Survivors in Somalia

## Voice of America (2017)

<http://www.voanews.com/a/mind-body-wellness-helps-trauma-survivors-somalia/3688501.html>



# Growth Zone

- The 10 Principles for Growth were created to help you create the space between stimulus and response.
- They are aligned with all published research and books on trauma-informed yoga.
- These principles are for use in the GROWTH ZONE and help you create a GROWTH MINDSET.

# I Create the Growth Zone



# 10 Principles For Growth

“Between stimulus and response there is a space. **In that space is our power to choose our response.** In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

-Victor Frankl

## 10 Principles for Growth

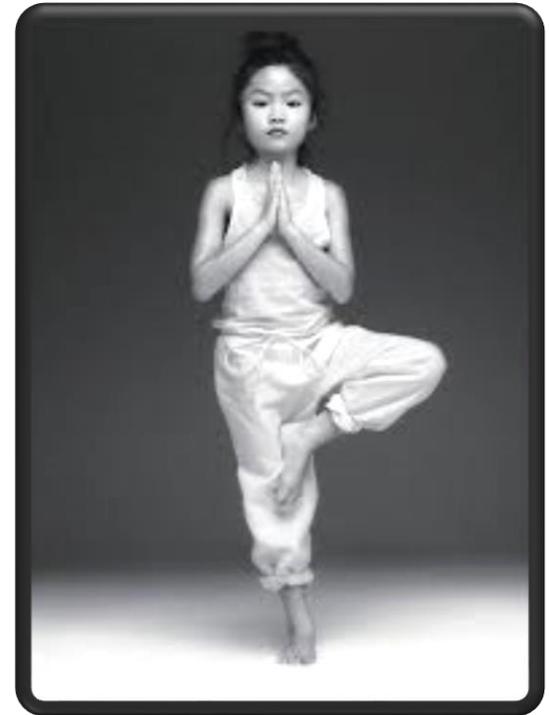


(Cite as Yoga in Service, Cook-Cottone, et al., 2016  
10 Principles for Growth)

# Part I: Physical Basics

## (Kids: Me and My Body)

- WORTH
  - **I am worth the effort**
  - (kids- I am always worth it)
- BREATH
  - **My breath is my most powerful tool**
  - (kids- My breath is powerful)
- PRESENCE
  - **I work toward presence in my body**
  - (kids- I can connect with my body)
- FEELING
  - **I feel so that I can heal**
  - (kids- It's okay to feel my feelings)



# Part II: Emotion Regulation (Kids: Me and My Feelings)

- CHOICE

- **I can find choice in the present moment**
- (kids- Right now, I can make the best choice for me)

- GROUNDING

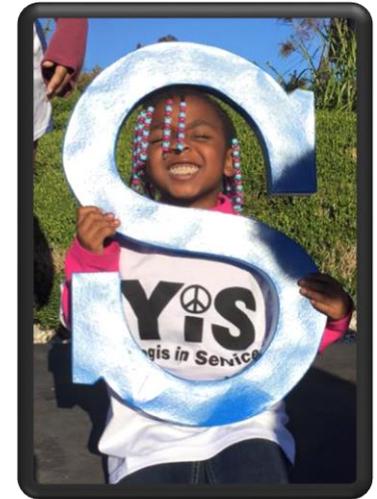
- **I can connect with my body for coping and guidance**
- (kids- I can connect with my body to steady my feelings and make choices)

- OWNERSHIP

- **I can create the conditions for safety and growth**
- (kids- I can make choices to keep me safe and growing)

- SUSTAINABILITY

- **I can create a balance between structure and change**
- (kids- I can choose when it is best to try new things)



# Part III: Your Path, My Path

## (Kids: Me and My Path)

- **SELF-DETERMINATION**

- **I honor the individual path of recovery and growth**
- (kids- My path is special and unique to me)

- **POSSIBILITY**

- **I work toward the possibility of growth and effectiveness in my own life**
- (kids- I can create my own path of possibility)



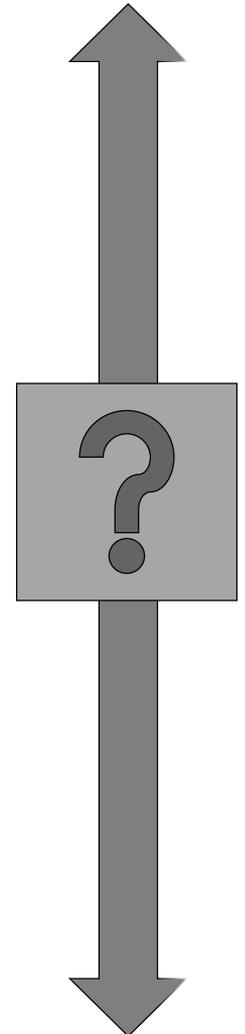
# Being a Mindful and Trauma-Informed School

## Grounding and Calming Breaths (Tool)



# Self and Classroom Awareness Scale (Tool)

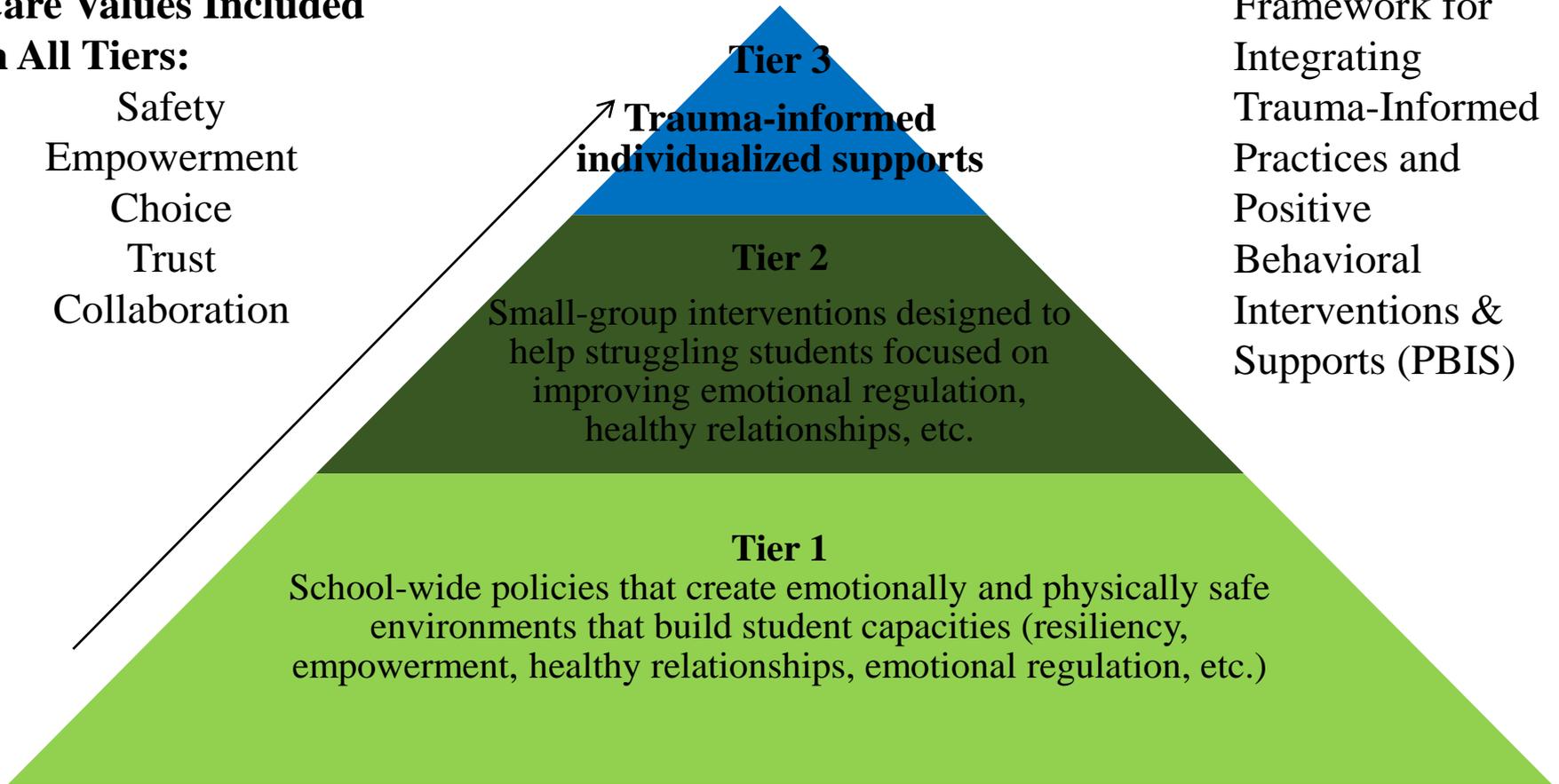
	<b>Me</b> <b>(My Classroom)</b>	<b>Witness</b> <b>(Body [breath], Emotions, Thoughts)</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>Very Relaxed</b> (rest, repair, restore)	
<b>3</b>	<b>Calm</b>	
<b>4-6</b>	<b>Actively Engaged</b> (on the side of calm and on the edge of stressed)	
<b>7</b>	<b>Stressed</b> (getting to too stressed)	
<b>10</b>	<b>Overwhelmed, Reactive</b>	



# Emerging Models for Trauma-Informed Educational Practices

**Trauma-Informed  
Care Values Included  
in All Tiers:**

Safety  
Empowerment  
Choice  
Trust  
Collaboration



# Tier 1: Interpersonal and Contextual Support

- Deliver yoga and mindfulness curriculum within the context of
  - Safe and accepting relational space
  - Shared authentic experiences in the present moment
  - Prioritization of safe relationships (four immeasurables)
    - Compassion
    - Equanimity
    - Joy
    - Loving-kindness



# Tier 1: Mindful Safety

- When safety is perceived, immediate survival is no longer paramount (Emerson, 2016)
- Otherwise, everything is a threat- even when it is not (Emerson, 2016)



# Tier 1: Mindful of Triggers



- Loud, chaotic environments
- Physical touch
- Authority figures
- Limit setting
- Uncertainty about expectations or transitions
- Emergency responders and police
- Situations that generate feelings of helplessness, vulnerability, or lack of control

Slide from <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov>

# Tier 1: Trauma-Informed Classroom Strategies

- Develop clear, predictable, consistent routines
- Plan for changes & transitions
- Set clear rules and expectations and enforce them consistently
- Utilize respectful language and tone
- Reinforce positive behaviors
- Create opportunities for choice & control within limits
- Provide options and spaces for calming down
- Consider the trauma implications within student response

# Tier 1: Focus on Choice, Agency, and Embodied Empowerment

*“No intervention*

*that takes power away from the survivor  
can possibly foster her recovery,*

*no matter how much it appears to be in her  
immediate best interest.”*

**-Judith Herman, MD**

(<http://www.sharingculture.info/recovery-from-trauma.html>)

# Tiers 2 and 3

- **Tier 2 (small groups, one-on-one, focused practice)**
  - Group yoga and Mindfulness sessions
  - Lessons designed to address specific needs (e.g., emotion and behavioral regulation, development and practice of attention skills)
- **Tier 3 (one-on-one, collaboration with specialist)**
  - One-on-one sessions specific to student needs
  - Cooperation with in school, of school therapists reinforcing mindfulness and yoga skills

## **Tier 1-3: Greeting Resistance**

- Do not take it personally (its safety seeking)
- Resistance gives you an opportunity to try something new or different next time
- Remember our goal is really just to focus on one student at a time, not all students

# Tier 1-3: Trauma-Sensitivity

- Choice: do NOT force students to participate
- Allow: do not attempt to reach everyone
- One student is a success
- Socially/culturally aligned and acceptable practices feel safe (not weird/strange)
- You are planting seeds for the future
- Be aware of your own ego

## **Tier 1-3: Trauma-Sensitivity**

- Do not force students to shut their eyes
- Avoid touch during mindfulness or yoga practice
- Avoid praising one student on their practice

# Tier 1-3: Trauma-Sensitivity

- Mindfulness/Yoga practices bring up emotions
  - Know what is within your limits and see advice when it is beyond
  - Seek support and supervision
- Mindfulness/Yoga can also trigger reactions
  - Do not try too much too fast
  - Be aware of your students
  - Do not force any student to participate

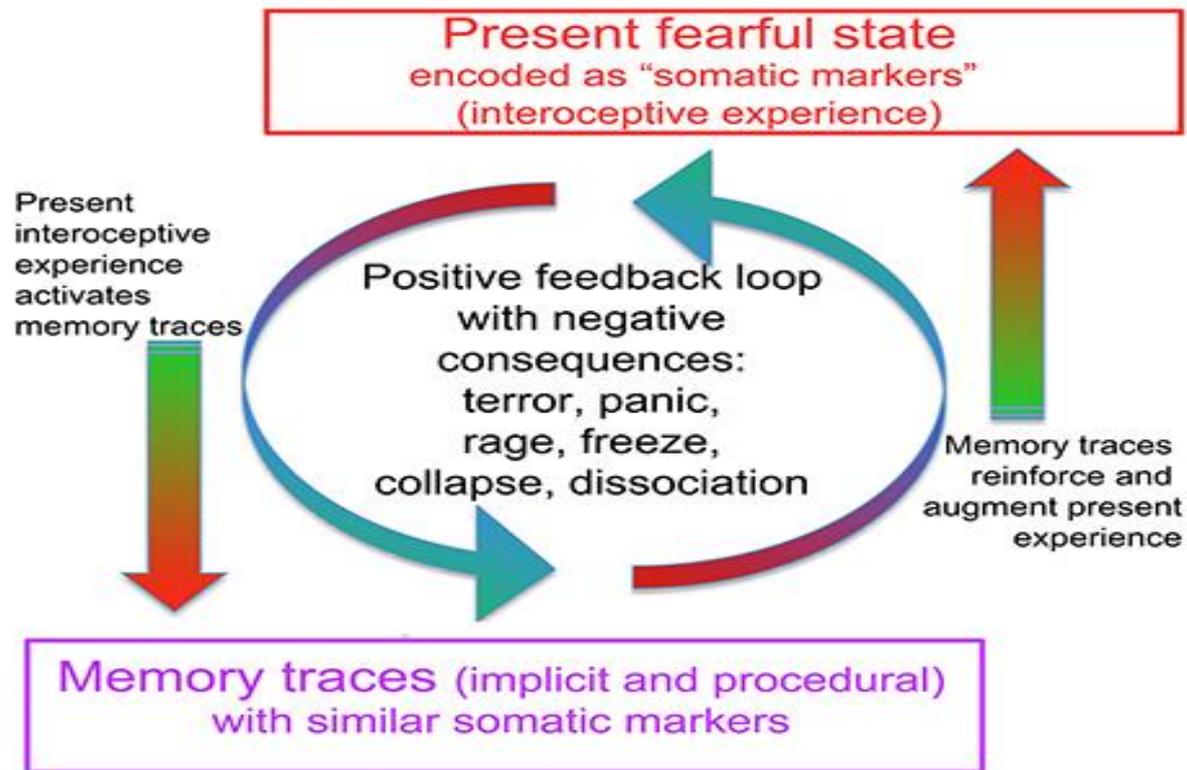
# Tiers 1-3: Physical Embodiment

- Interoceptive Awareness: Awareness of the internal state of one's body
- Work students toward an awareness of their bodies gradually and with intention
  - Asana and yoga forms
  - Activities that show the heart rate with movement and feeling
  - Move to body scans and breath work

*(Nature Neuroscience 7, 102 - 103 (2004) doi:10.1038/nn0204-102)*

# Tiers 2 and 3: Somatic Experiencing can be Re- Experiencing

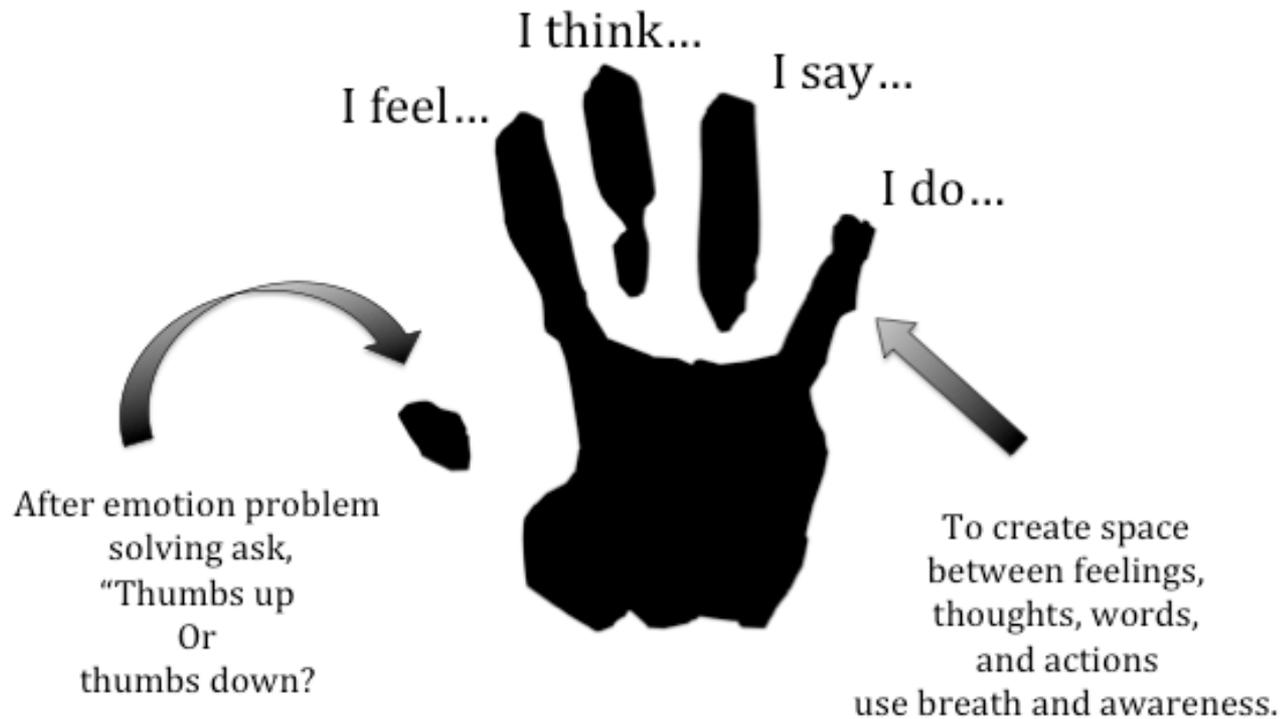
## Memory and re-traumatization



# Tiers 1-3: Self-Regulation

- **Physiological self-regulation**
  - Asana/yoga forms as a way to shift the state of your body
  - Body scan and systematic relaxation to reduce tension and holding of stress
  - Breathing exercises to notice and manage heart rate
- **Attentional Regulation**
  - Short mindful practices (meditation)
  - Focus on sound, smell, breath, mind jars, etc.
- **Emotion Regulation**
  - Emphasize choice, agency, and empowerment
  - Notice, witness (wait and engage in deeper observation), and choose effective behavior/action
  - Yoga provides active practice

# Tiers 1-3: I Think, I Feel--- I Say, I Do



# Mindfulness Based: Calm Place

- **Tier 1 (Whole Class)**

- Guided Meditation: Children visualize their own calm place
- Building their inner resource (experience of inner calm they can return to)

- **Tier 2 (Small Group)**

- Children draw a calm place first, close eyes and visualize through teacher prompts

- **Tier 3 (one-on-one)**

- Children create calm place (draw/sand/etc.)
- Close eyes and visualize while teacher describes the specifics of child's calm place:
  - Sounds, Smells, Temperature, Sights etc.

# Movement Based: Yoga Sequence

- **Tier 1 (Whole Class)**

- Short yoga sequence behind classroom chairs
- <http://www.kidsyogastories.com/chair-yoga-poses/>

- **Tier 2 (Small Group)**

- Short yoga sequence with specific focus (ie. “My breath is powerful”)

- **Tier 3 (One-on-One)**

- Teaching belly breathing using a breathing buddy
- [Mindfulschools.org/inspiration/how-to-make-breathing-buddies-with-early-childhood-students/](http://Mindfulschools.org/inspiration/how-to-make-breathing-buddies-with-early-childhood-students/)

# You are the Intervention

- *Consider that you can't give what you don't have...*
- Yoga and mindfulness practices require active practice by those who deliver the practices.



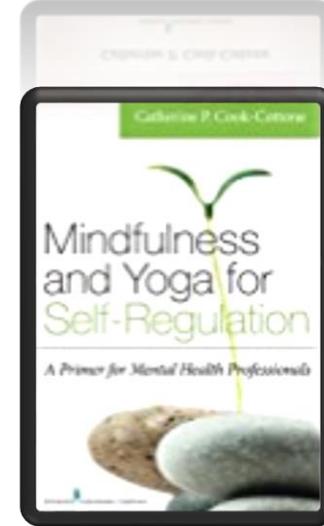
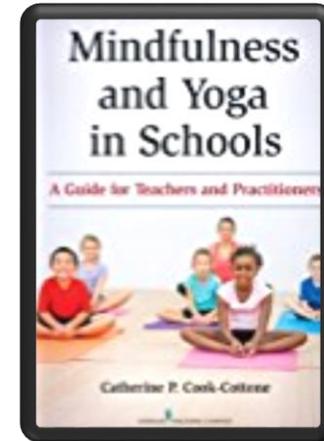
# Self-Awareness & Self-Care

It starts with YOU...

1. Understand the importance of your own self-care
2. Cultivate your own practice
3. Join or create a community that supports your practice
4. Begin formal practices, leading and practicing together
5. Begin informal practice integrating mindfulness into everyday life

# Books

- Cook-Cottone, C. P. (2017).  
Mindfulness and Yoga in Schools: A  
Guide for Teachers and Practitioners.  
New York, NY: Springer
- Cook-Cottone, C. P. (2015).  
Mindfulness and Yoga for Self-  
regulation: A Primer for Mental  
Health Professionals. New York, NY:  
Springer



# Thank You!

## 2017 Childhood Matters Conference



# Yoga Resources

(These are a few of many)

- <http://www.yoga4classrooms.com/about-yoga-4-classrooms>
- <https://yogainmyschool.com/yoga-classroom/yoga-games/>
- <http://www.mindfulteachers.org/p/free-resources-and-lesson-plans.html>
- <http://littlefloweryoga.com/programs/the-school-yoga-project>
- <http://www.nchpad.org/881/5004/Yoga~in~the~Classroom~~A~New~Kind~of~Education>

# Mindfulness Resources (a few of many)

- <http://www.casel.org>
- <https://mindfulnessinschools.org>
- <http://www.mindfulschools.org>
- [http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/research\\_round\\_up\\_school\\_based\\_mindfulness\\_programs](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/research_round_up_school_based_mindfulness_programs)
- <https://mindup.org>

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