

# Building a Practice to Support Educator Wellness

## Session I

Natalie Fikac | South Southwest MHTTC

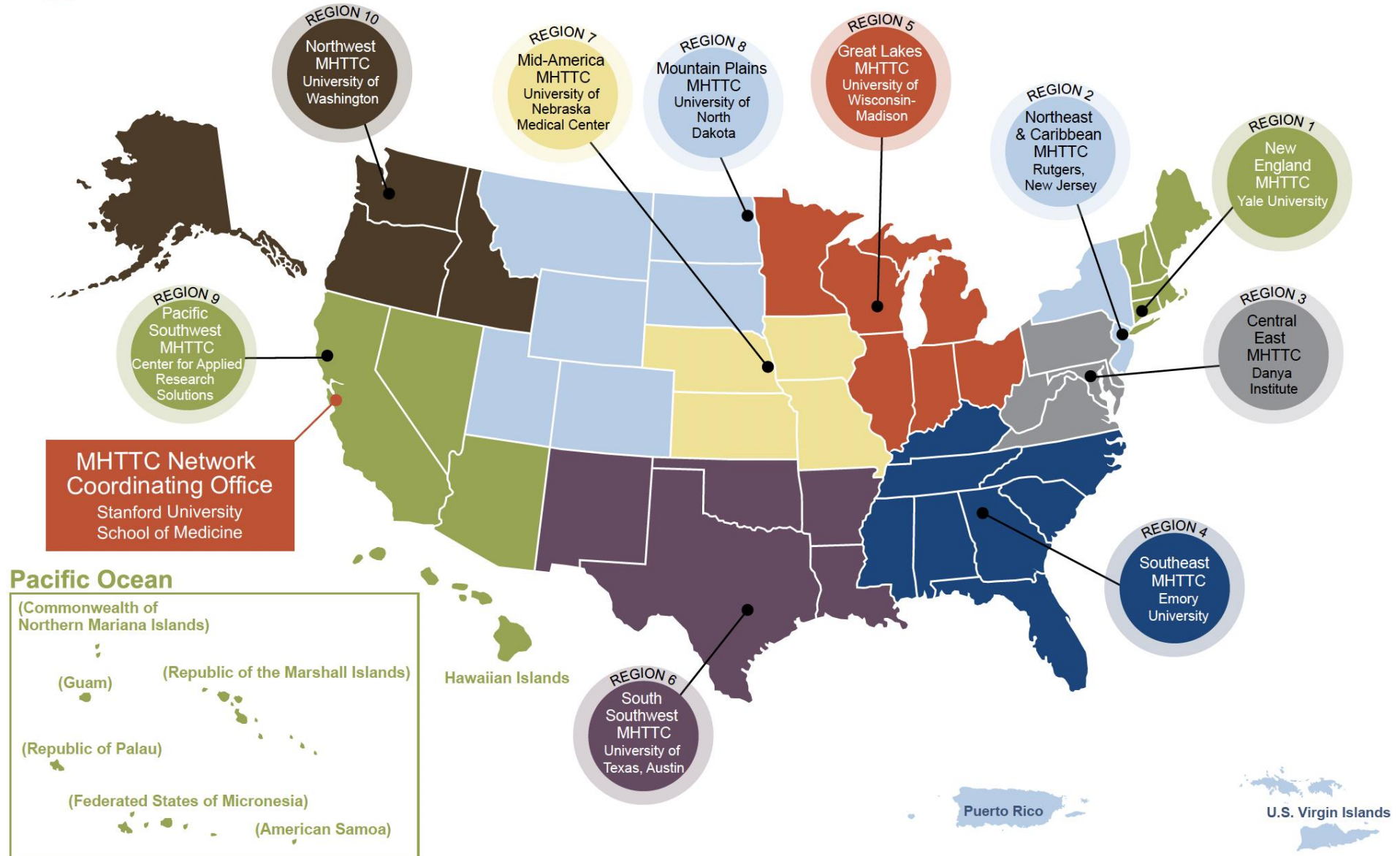




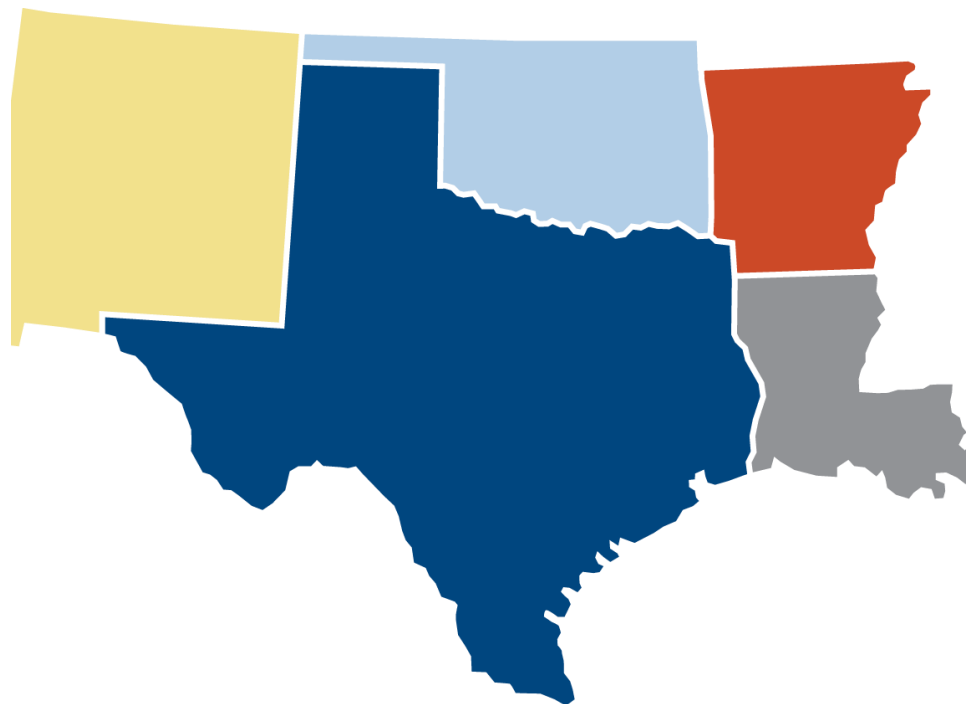
# MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

## MHTTC Network



# South Southwest Technology Transfer Centers (Region 6)



**Serving Arkansas, Louisiana  
New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas  
and Tribal Communities**



**MHTTC**

**SSW Mental Health TTC  
University of Texas Austin  
[mhttcnetwork.org](http://mhttcnetwork.org)**

**Funded by**



**The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:**

**STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL**

**INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES**

**HEALING-CENTERED AND  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE**

**INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS**

**PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS**

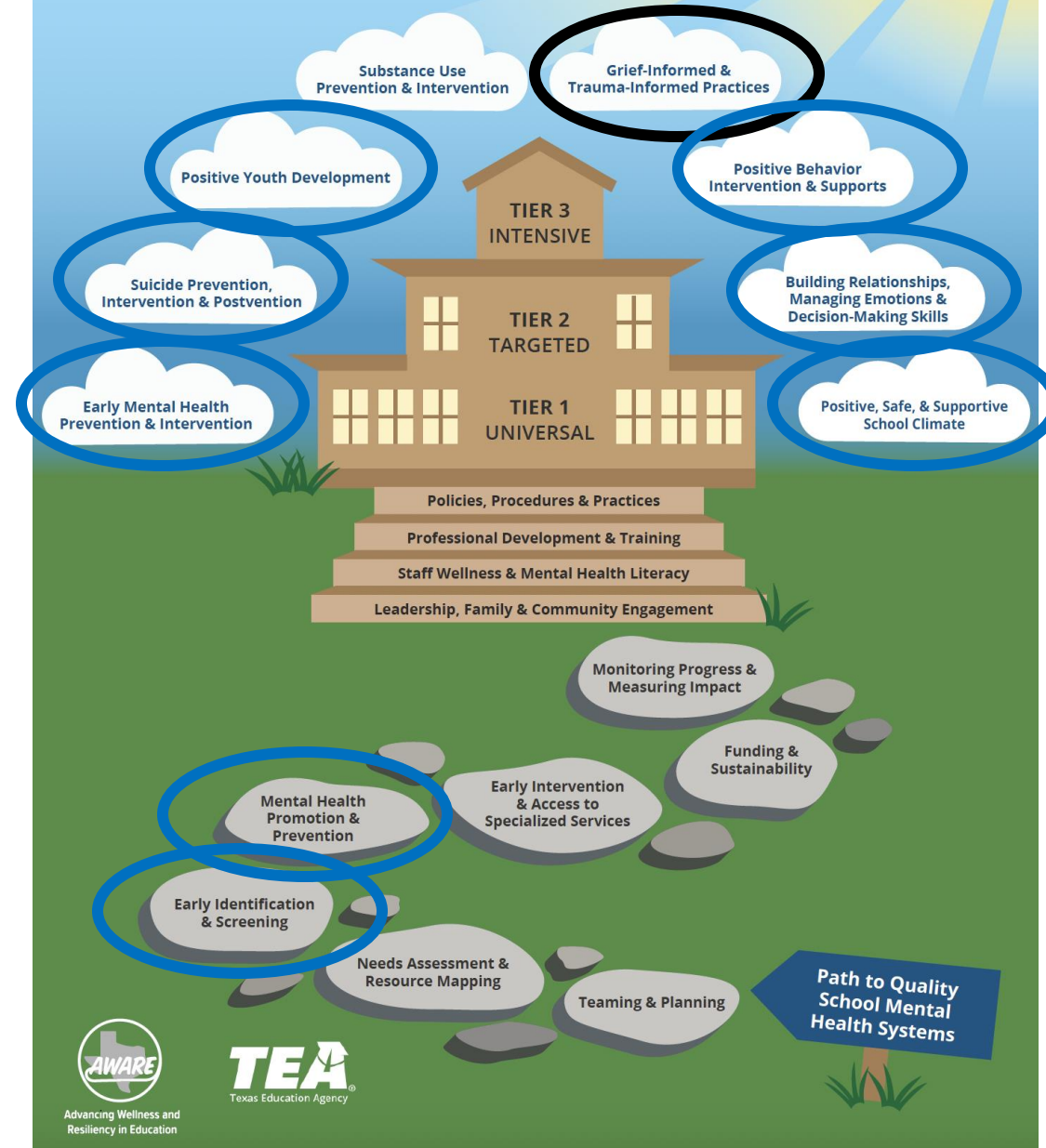
**NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS**

**RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE**

**CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS**

# Texas School Mental Health Framework

## Essential Elements for a Safe and Supportive School



# Topics

- **What is trauma?**
- **How trauma affects educator wellness.**
- **How schools can address educator wellness.**
- **Stress management and resiliency strategies (SMART).**
- **Reset & recharge strategies for educators.**
- **Wellness planning tool.**





**Senate Bill 11 &  
House Bill 18**

# The Texas Education Agency Continuing Education and Training Clearinghouse

SB 1267 requires that the board of trustees of a school district and the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school, to the extent applicable, review the Clearinghouse and adopt a professional development policy that must:

- Be guided by the recommendations for training in the Clearinghouse;
- Note any differences in the policy adopted by the district or school from the recommendations in the Clearinghouse; and
- Include a schedule of all training required for educators or other school personnel at the district or school.



The screenshot shows the top portion of the TEA website. At the top left is the TEA logo (Texas Education Agency). To the right are links for "A - Z Index" and "Contact". Below this is a navigation bar with five icons and labels: "About TEA" (Texas map icon), "Texas Schools" (schoolhouse icon), "Academics" (book icon), "Finance & Grants" (calculator icon), and "Reports & Data" (bar chart icon). Below the navigation bar is a breadcrumb trail: [Home](#) / [About TEA](#) / [Leadership](#) / [State Board for Educator Certification](#). The main content area features a large blue banner with the text "Continuing Education and Training Clearinghouse" in white. Below the banner, a paragraph states: "As required by SB 1267, 87th Texas Legislature, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) approved a **Continuing Education and Training Clearinghouse (Clearinghouse)**, regarding specific trainings that school districts and open-enrollment charter schools provide for educators and other school personnel."





# Definitions to Consider

Acute Trauma

Adverse  
Childhood  
Experiences  
(ACEs)

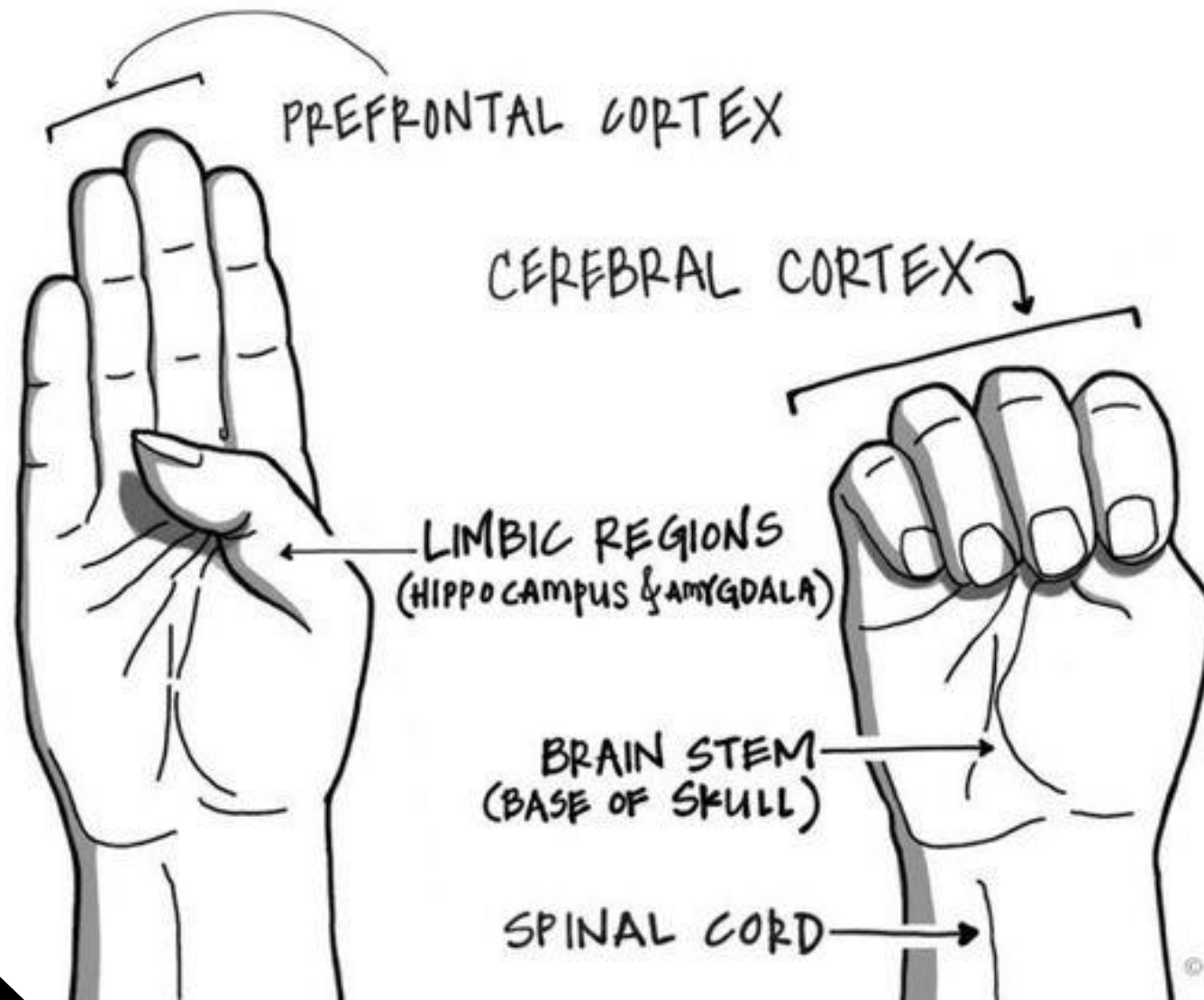
Chronic Trauma

Complex Trauma

Toxic Stress

Vicarious  
Trauma

# Hand Model of the Brain





# Wellness

An **active process** of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthy and fulfilling life. **Wellness is** more than being free from illness, it is a **dynamic process of change and growth**. **Wellness is being balanced – physically, intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally**. Strategies that focus on promoting wellness, including mental and behavioral health, contributes to a sense of emotional well-being.



# 8 DIMENSIONS OF WELLNESS

## EMOTIONAL

Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships.

## FINANCIAL

Satisfaction with current and future financial situations.

## ENVIRONMENTAL

Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being.

## SOCIAL

Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system.

## INTELLECTUAL

Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills.

## SPIRITUAL

Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life.

## PHYSICAL

Recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep, and nutrition.

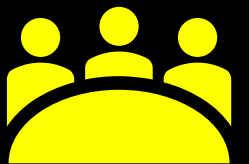
## OCCUPATIONAL

Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one's work.





**What do you  
do to take  
time for self-  
care and  
wellness?**



**What gets in the way of you taking time for self-care and wellness?**





# Texas Education Agency's Educator Wellness Guidance Document



**TEA**  
Texas Education Agency

**Educator Wellness: Equipping Staff to Return to School**

August 20, 2020

(512) 463-9000    disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov    tea.texas.gov/coronavirus

**STRONG START**  
2020-21

### Introduction and Overview

*The COVID-19 pandemic has suddenly changed the field of education and affected school communities, students, and staff in a variety of ways. Texas students and school staff will enter this new school year changed. It is critical that school staff feel connected, supported, and equipped amidst the unknowns that lie ahead. Staff well-being, including mental and emotional health, must be a top priority during the return to school. Strategies to support staff and student well-being must be integrated along with instructional continuity when making plans relative to both in-person and remote learning environments. School communities possess a unique opportunity to begin the school year with a clear focus on promoting wellness and resiliency which is now more important than ever.*

**Background:** TEA's Highly Mobile and At-Risk Student Programs Division conducted a Virtual Listening Tour with nine LEAs during Spring 2020 to better understand the complex needs and challenges experienced by educators, to identify training and guidance needs, and to cultivate innovative strategies and solutions that can be shared with all schools. Division staff also studied national best practices and guidance provided by multiple organizations that promote well-being in schools.

Resources released will support local education agencies in their preparation for 2020-2021 school year and beyond. The purpose of this "Equipping Staff" guidance document is to provide school leaders with step-by-step instructions and best-practice guidance to ensure that school staff members are equipped to handle the dynamic needs of students upon return from COVID-19. This resource outlines an intentional and thoughtful process to support staff well-being through planning, assessing, building, and training for a strong and safe start to 2020-2021.

The ethos and environment of the school will have an impact on staff well-being.

It is important to build a culture of trust where school staff feel valued and know how to access support.

tea.texas.gov

f t i c

# MTSS Team

**A multidisciplinary student support team, including school staff and community partners, convened to assess needs; identify and align resources; plan and coordinate mental & behavioral health services and supports with academic supports; collect data; monitor progress; and practice continuous quality improvement.**

# Professional Development & Training Needs

**Select and plan training that supports the well-being of educators annually.**

**Focus on practical, research-based strategies, tools, and tips** that educators can immediately implement in both remote and in-person settings.

**Use data** to inform additional training and support needs of staff.

**Encourage a culture of continuous learning, reflection, engagement, and self-improvement** within the learning community.

**Equip staff with grief and trauma-informed care resources** for remote or in-person classrooms.

Provide opportunities to **innovate and reflect as a team.**



# Stress Management & Resiliency Training Concepts

- Gratitude
- Mindful Presence
- Kindness



# Reset & Recharge Strategies for Educators

- Schedule time for **rest**.
- **Recognize** overwhelm and exhaustion.
- **Model** good working practices and self-care to encourage a healthy work/life balance.
- **Communicate clearly** to address needs.
- **Encourage** a sense of community among staff.
- Provide opportunities to **connect**.



# Let's Check In





# **Exemplar School Districts**



## Resilience Strategies for Educators:

Techniques for Self-Care and Peer Support

Train-the-Trainer

TRAININGS BY REQUEST

### Building a Self-Care Action Plan

Vicarious (secondary) trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout can be prevented. Doing so, however, requires a conscious effort to practice individual self-care strategies on a regular basis, both personally and professionally, to assist in managing vicarious stress.

Here is one example of how to build a self-care plan. There are six categories. These include:

#### 1. Physical Self-Care:

The things I do to take care of my body in healthy ways. Examples include: sleep; nutrition; exercise; and, regular health care visits. How well do you take care of yourself physically? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself physically.

A.

B.

C.

#### 2. Emotional Self-Care:

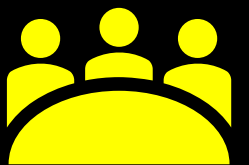
The things I do to take care of my feelings in healthy ways. Examples include: maintaining personal and professional support systems; counseling and/or therapy as needed; journaling; and, talking about feelings in health ways. How well do you take care of yourself emotionally? Identify three activities that you currently do and/or plan to engage in from this point forward to take care of yourself emotionally.

A.

B.

C.

# Building a Self-Care Action Plan







*Talk to  
yourself like  
you would talk  
to someone  
that you love.*

*Brené Brown*

# Building a Practice to Support Trauma Informed Campuses and Classrooms

## Session II

Natalie Fikac | South Southwest MHTTC

# Topics

- **What is trauma?**
- **How trauma affects students and families**
- **How schools can address trauma**
- **Campus and classroom strategies to address trauma**







# Definitions to Consider

Acute Trauma

Adverse  
Childhood  
Experiences  
(ACEs)

Chronic Trauma

Complex Trauma

Protective and  
Compensatory Experiences  
(PACEs)

Toxic Stress

Vicarious Trauma

# MTSS Team

**A multidisciplinary student support team, including school staff and community partners, convened to assess needs; identify and align resources; plan and coordinate mental & behavioral health services and supports with academic supports; collect data; monitor progress; and practice continuous quality improvement.**



# The Impact of Trauma on Students

- Physical
  - Physical complaints including headaches and stomachaches.
  - Difficult sleeping or eating.
  - Aches and pains that make it difficult to interact with others.





# The Impact of Trauma on Students

- Behavioral
  - Intense and ongoing emotional upset
  - Depressive symptoms
  - Anxiety
  - Noticeable behavioral changes
  - Difficulties with attention
  - Higher rates of office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions
  - Decreased ability to:
    - Focus and concentrate
    - Recall and remember
    - Organize and process information
    - Plan and problem-solve





# The Impact of Trauma on Students

- Academic
  - Greater tendency to be misclassified with developmental delays or referred for special education services.
  - Three times more likely to drop out
  - Greater absenteeism.
  - Greater likelihood of performing below grade level, and lower GPAs.
  - Decreased reading ability.
  - Language and verbal processing deficits.
  - Delays in expressive and receptive language.





# **‘Think of a Student’ Exercise**



# Trauma-informed approaches within any system aim to adhere to the “4 Rs”:

- Realizing the widespread impact of trauma and pathways to recovery.
- Recognizing trauma signs and symptoms.
- Responding by integrating knowledge about trauma into all facets of the system.
- Resisting re-traumatization of trauma-impacted individuals by decreasing the occurrence of unnecessary triggers (i.e., trauma and loss reminders) and by implementing trauma-informed policies, procedures, and practices.



A long-exposure photograph of a stormy sea. The water is dark blue and grey, with white foam from the waves. The motion is blurred, creating a sense of intense movement and turbulence. The text "Same Storm...." is overlaid in the center in a white, serif font.

**Same Storm....**



An aerial photograph of a large fleet of cargo ships scattered across a vast, blue ocean. The ships are of various sizes and colors, including red, blue, and green. The text "Same Storm.... Different Boats" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, serif font.


# Same Storm.... Different Boats



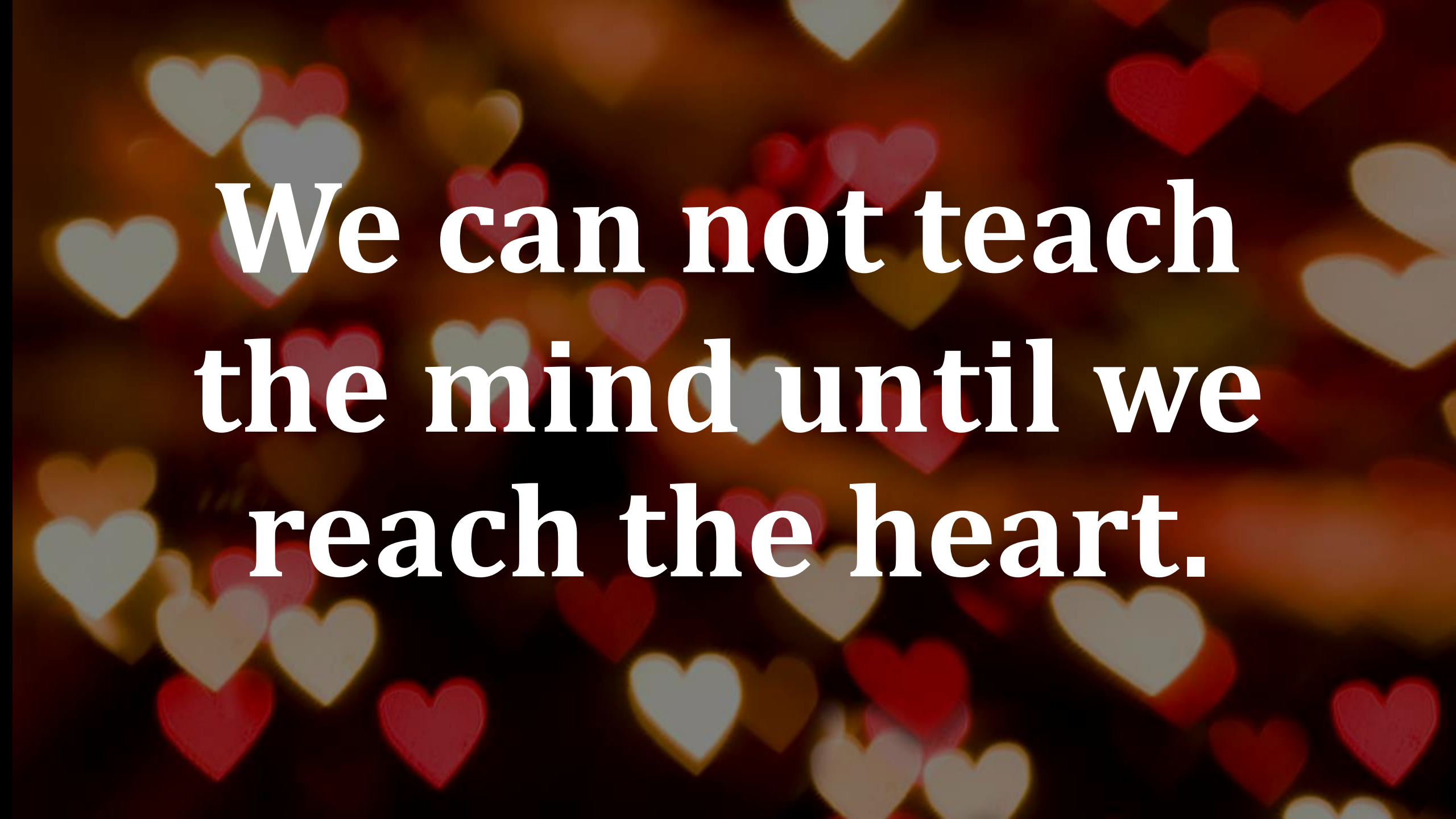
# How can schools become trauma-informed?







**What  
happened to  
you?**



**We can not teach  
the mind until we  
reach the heart.**



# **5 Cs of Trauma-Informed Classrooms**

**Clarity  
Compassion  
Consistency  
Community  
Connection**







**“Trauma is not an excuse for behavior;  
it is an explanation for it.”**

**Dr. Bruce Perry**



**Outline five trauma-informed strategies for campuses and classrooms.**



**Develop a plan for the implementation of five trauma-informed strategies for campuses and classrooms.**





**Now.....how might we change  
the way that we lead our  
classrooms and campuses to  
ensure trauma-informed and  
healing-centered practices?**



A classroom scene with a teacher pointing at a whiteboard and students working on laptops. The teacher is a Black man with glasses, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and jeans, sitting on a desk and pointing towards the whiteboard. The students are diverse in age and ethnicity, sitting at desks with laptops open, looking towards the teacher. The background shows a whiteboard and classroom furniture.

**What works best is anything that increases the quality and number of relationships in a child's life.**

**Dr. Bruce Perry**

**Programs don't change people, relationships do.**

**Bill Milliken**





**“Resilience cannot exist without hope. It is the capacity to be hopeful that carries us through challenges, disappointments, loss, and traumatic stress.”**

**Bruce Perry**

# ANNOUNCEMENTS





## **Seasonal Affective Disorder in Schools Virtual Blog**

<https://youtu.be/yzpsEEDEtqc>

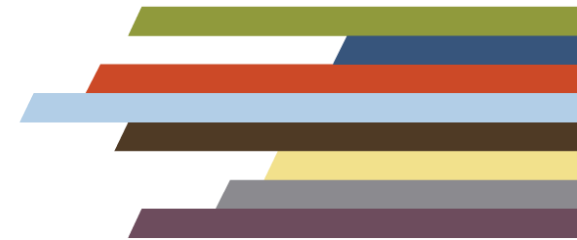
## **Mindful Self-Compassion for Educators**

*Tuesdays - January 30 - March 19, 2024 – 6:00-8:30 pm*

<https://forms.office.com/r/17iVHND4kp>

## **Mindful Self-Compassion for Educators Podcast**

*Releasing soon!*



# **Supporting Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET)**

*1.5 Day Training - January 24-25<sup>th</sup>*

<https://forms.office.com/r/bf00J2zQzP>

## **Cyberbullying Webinar Series**

*Bullying Prevention Through Empathy: Getting Kids to Care*

*January 10<sup>th</sup> at 1:00pm CT*

*Actionable Strategies for Administrators*

*April 25<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 pm CT*

