

# TRAUMA INFORMED CONSIDERATIONS FOR SCHOOL RE-ENTRY

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September 17, 2020

Greater Rochester Area School Psychologists

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## Some Basics

- It's ok to be tired, exhausted, and overwhelmed
- It's ok to not be at your best
- It's ok that your relationships and priorities have changed
- It's ok if you zone out as I'm talking (I won't even notice)

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## Collective Trauma

- Shared experience
- Potential for long-term, intergenerational impacts
- Significant potential to exacerbate inequities
  
- Pros and Cons

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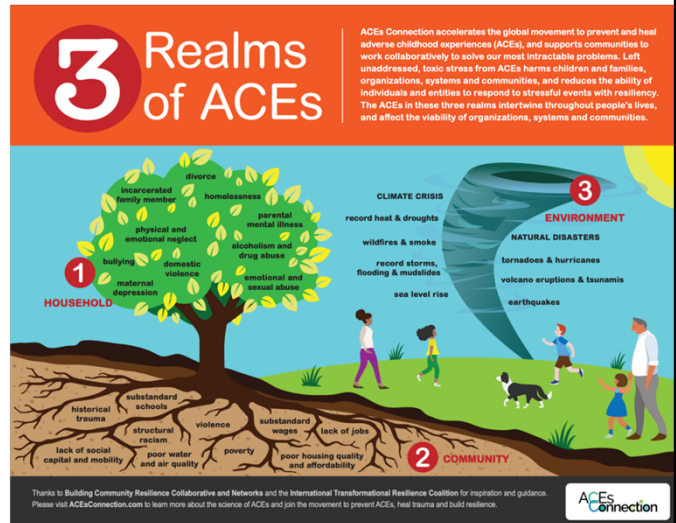
## Learning From Previous Collective Tragedies - Families

- Driven by desire to return to normal life
- Many children feel neglected
- Looks are deceiving
- Closer yet further apart
- Change in values

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# Considering Inequity

- BIPOC inequity; LGBTQ+ inequity
- Chronic, multi-layered adversity



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# Considerations for Returning to School – COVID

Supporting the Social, Emotional, Mental and Behavioral Health During Re-Entry

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## What is Trauma?

- SAMHSA defines trauma with 3 key principles:
  - Event *or* experience....
  - that an individual *interprets or perceives* as threatening or harmful to their well-being, and...
  - Causes *functional impairment*
- **Trauma is subjective**

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## Common Elements of TI Schools

- Tier 1
  - Whole school safety programming
  - Whole school prevention programming
  - Whole school trauma programming
  - Classroom-based strategies
  - Community context
  - Staff self-care
- Tier 2
  - Early intervention trauma programming
- Tier 3
  - Targeted trauma programming

Treatment and Services Adaptation  
Center for Resilience, Hope, and  
Wellness in Schools

Free assessment tool:  
<http://theshapesystem.com/trauma/>

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## Staff Needs & Well-Being



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## Grief and Loss

- Social connections
- Familiar routines
- New experiences
- Sense of safety
- Trust in our systems to care for us
- Loss of people in our lives
- Anticipatory grief

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## The Stress Experienced Now Is Real and Unprecedented

- Actual comments on social media

“Maybe they’ll be interested in going back once they’re furloughed”

“Just wait when they start firing [teachers] when the district realizes it doesn’t need them, just the little videos they make”

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## Added stress of...

- Uncertainty/unpredictability
- Fear
- Feeling Unsupported & underappreciated
- Change in job structure and function
- Personal and financial liability
  
- Administrators have unique challenges to decide about:
  - School funding
  - Workforce retention
  - Academic planning

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## Add this on to existing stress and risk

Among a sample of 2,149 **teachers** in Maine that completed the survey, how many reported at least 4 out of 10 ACEs on the ACE screener?

- A. 6%
- B. 8.5%
- C. 11%
- D. 14.5%

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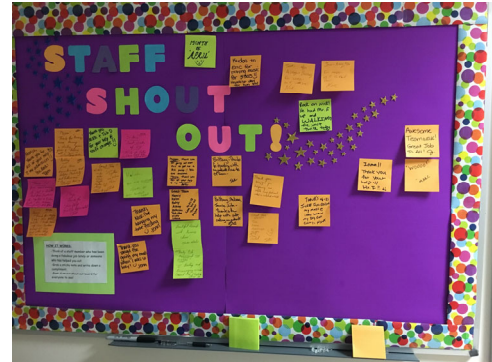
## Establish Systems to Address Secondary Traumatic Stress

This is a **SYSTEMS-LEVEL**, Tier 1 effort -  
not an individual responsibility alone

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# School-Wide Efforts to Address Secondary Traumatic Stress

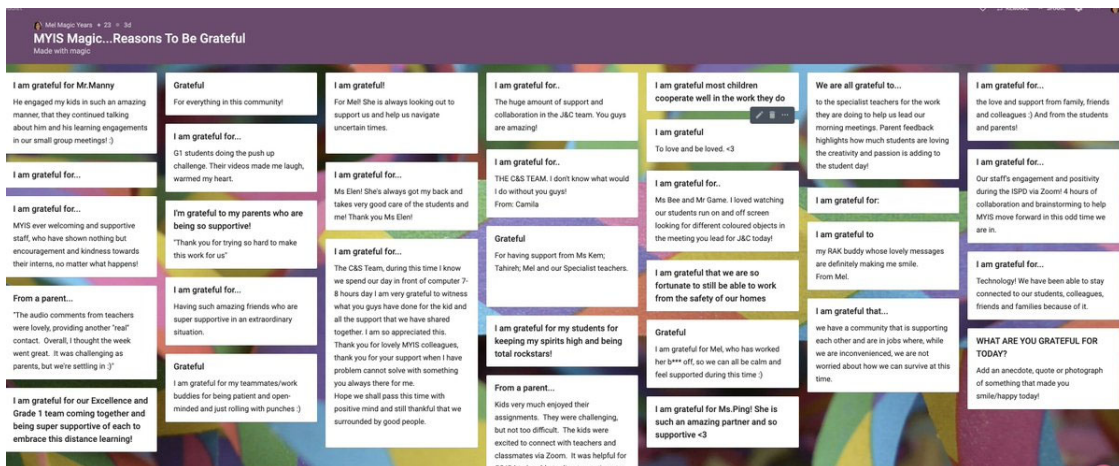
- Trauma-informed schools also support the adults
  - Pinch hitters
  - “Buddy” classrooms
  - Reducing stigma around mental health
  - Recognizing and awarding each other
    - SHOUT-OUT WALL for staff
  - Adequate “substitute” pool
  - Allowing “self care in the background”



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# Virtual Gratitude or Shout-Out Wall

Padlet.com



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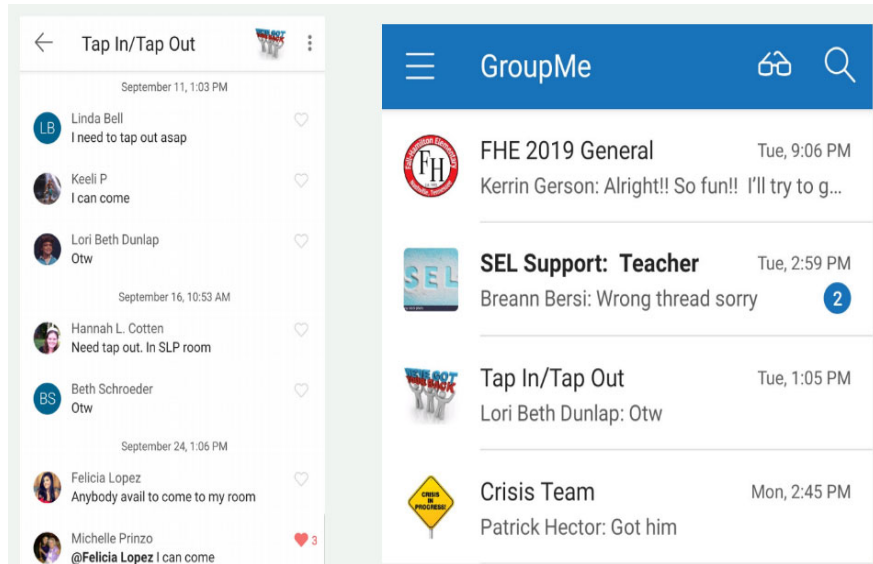
# Peer support

- Knowing each other – liking (or tolerating) each other
- Environment of collaboration and shared mission
- Induction/mentor/peer-pairing
- Opportunity for discussion with co-workers

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# Tap In/Tap Out

- Identify your own triggers as educators
  - From Paradigm Shift Education
  - Uses free GroupMe app



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## Self-care is a Mindset

- It can be habit-forming
- Prioritize well-being over self-sacrifice
- Avoid glamorizing the “perception of busyness”
- Set boundaries (particularly hard right now)

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## Boundary setting activity

### Is it ok to:

1. Ask for a response to an email over a weekend
2. Expect grading to get done in the evening
3. Buy lunch or snacks for other colleagues
4. Have an awards night for staff
5. Pitch in for a colleague when they are having a tough time
6. Coordinate happy hours after work

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## Boundary Setting Activity

Is it ok to:

1. Call students to remind them about assignments or tasks
2. Make home visits for parent-teacher conferences.
3. Make home visits to follow up on concerns, including attendance and poor performance.
4. Provide students with school supplies they do not have, including pencils, paper, markers, scissors, and glue.
5. Provide students with personal items they need, like food, shoes, coats, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, & money.
6. Find ways to provide students with healthy snacks without being reimbursed.
7. Babysit for students when their parents are in need.
8. Keep a student's secrets.

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## Engage in Resource Mapping

Check out <https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/resource-mapping-strategy>



### Steps and Timing

- Step 1: Pre-Planning
- Step 2: Map Resources (30 minutes)
- Step 3: Analyze Resources (30 minutes–1 hour)
- Step 4: Maintain Map and Consider Changing Resources (ongoing)

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# Organizational Assessment

- The Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organization Assessment (STSIOA)
  - [https://www.uky.edu/ctac/sites/www.uky.edu.ctac/files/stsi\\_oa.pdf](https://www.uky.edu/ctac/sites/www.uky.edu.ctac/files/stsi_oa.pdf)

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# Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale Self-Report (1999)

- <http://jjie.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/bride-secondary-traumatic-stress-scale.pdf>

- Total score:
  - Less than 28 – little to no STS
  - 28-37 – mild STS
  - 38-43 – moderate STS
  - 44-48 – high STS
  - 49 or greater – severe STS

**SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS SCALE**

The following is a list of statements made by persons who have been impacted by their work with traumatized clients. Read each statement then indicate how frequently the statement was true for you in the past seven (7) days by circling the corresponding number next to the statement.

NOTE: "Client" is used to indicate persons with whom you have been engaged in a helping relationship. Use any substitute another word that better represents your work such as consumer, patient, recipient, etc.

	Never	Rarely	Occasionally	Often	Very Often
1. I felt emotionally numb.....	1	2	3	4	5
2. My heart started pounding when I thought about my work with clients.....	1	2	3	4	5
3. It seemed as if I was reliving the traumatic experience(s) experienced by my client(s).....	1	2	3	4	5
4. I had trouble sleeping.....	1	2	3	4	5
5. I felt discouraged about the future.....	1	2	3	4	5
6. Reminders of my work with clients upset me.....	1	2	3	4	5
7. I had little interest in being around others.....	1	2	3	4	5
8. I felt jumpy.....	1	2	3	4	5
9. I was less active than usual.....	1	2	3	4	5
10. I thought about my work with clients when I didn't intend to.....	1	2	3	4	5
11. I had trouble concentrating.....	1	2	3	4	5
12. I avoided people, places, or things that reminded me of my work with clients.....	1	2	3	4	5
13. I had disturbing dreams about my work with clients.....	1	2	3	4	5
14. I wanted to avoid working with some clients.....	1	2	3	4	5
15. I was easily annoyed.....	1	2	3	4	5
16. I expected something bad to happen.....	1	2	3	4	5
17. I noticed gaps in my memory about client sessions.....	1	2	3	4	5

Copyright © 1999 Brian E. Bride.  
 Intuition Subscale (odd items 2, 3, 6, 10, 13)  
 Avoidance Subscale (odd items 1, 5, 9, 12, 14, 17)  
 Arousal Subscale (odd items 4, 8, 11, 15, 16)  
 TOTAL (odd Intuition, Arousal, and Avoidance Scores)

Intuition Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Avoidance Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Arousal Score: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total Score: \_\_\_\_\_

Chatham, Bride, B.E., Robinson, M.A., Yegulis, D., & Ficker, C.R. (2006). Development and validation of the Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale. Research on Social Work Practice, 16, 27-35.

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# ProQOL Scale (2009)

[https://proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL\\_5\\_English.pdf](https://proqol.org/uploads/ProQOL_5_English.pdf)

## Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue  
(ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

- | 1=Never | 2=Rarely | 3=Sometimes | 4=Often | 5=Very Often |
|---------|----------|-------------|---------|--------------|
|---------|----------|-------------|---------|--------------|
- \_\_\_ 1. I am happy.
  - \_\_\_ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
  - \_\_\_ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
  - \_\_\_ 4. I feel connected to others.
  - \_\_\_ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
  - \_\_\_ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
  - \_\_\_ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
  - \_\_\_ 8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
  - \_\_\_ 9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
  - \_\_\_ 10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
  - \_\_\_ 11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
  - \_\_\_ 12. I like my work as a [helper].
  - \_\_\_ 13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
  - \_\_\_ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
  - \_\_\_ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
  - \_\_\_ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
  - \_\_\_ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
  - \_\_\_ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
  - \_\_\_ 19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
  - \_\_\_ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
  - \_\_\_ 21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
  - \_\_\_ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
  - \_\_\_ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
  - \_\_\_ 24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
  - \_\_\_ 25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
  - \_\_\_ 26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
  - \_\_\_ 27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
  - \_\_\_ 28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
  - \_\_\_ 29. I am a very caring person.
  - \_\_\_ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

© B. Hudnell Stamm, 2009. Professional Quality of Life: Compassion Satisfaction and Fatigue Version 5 (ProQOL).  
/www.isu.edu/~bhtamm or www.proqol.org. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no charges are made, and (c) it is not sold.

# Addressing Social-Emotional and Mental Health Needs of Students

## Potential for Higher Rate of Certain Stressors or Adversities

- Parental substance use and abuse
- Exposure to domestic violence
- Child maltreatment
- Homelessness
- Worsening of poverty and economic gaps
- Mental health problems in family (exacerbation of existing mental health problems)
- Family separation (divorced caregivers)
- Grief/loss that could not be processed ([www.grievingstudents.org](http://www.grievingstudents.org))

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## Recognize that

- Home is not always a safe place
- The impact of masks can be significant for some
- Individual trajectories will vary – but *it's not a contest of who has it worse*
- Loss will mean different things
- Some students/families will never disclose
- The impact of an environment that minimizes social interactions will change every aspect of school
- There will be significant academic, emotional, and social regression

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## Helping Children Understand Emotions w/ Masks

- Practice in front of a mirror – teach those cues
  - Make into a game
- Use more gestures
- Label feelings more in speech
- Face people when possible



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## Disclosure

- What are the referral pathways during COVID?
- How are families and students made aware of this process?
- What services are available?
- What community options are available outside of school hours during COVID?

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## Identify those at higher risk

- Those experiencing death or loss of someone
- significant disruption to lifestyle (e.g., job loss)
- Those with a history of trauma and chronic stress
- Previous history of educational disruption (e.g., California wildfires).

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## Return to School Adjustment Risk Assessment Matrix

		Pre-COVID-19 School Adjustment		
		Positive	Variable	Negative
Shelter-in-Place Environment	Positive	Low Risk	Low/Moderate Risk	Moderate/High Risk
	Variable	Low/Moderate Risk	Moderate Risk	High Risk
	Toxic	High Risk	High Risk	Extreme Risk

- Green** = Tier 1 interventions
- Yellow** = Tier 1 and 2 interventions
- Red** = Tier 1, 2, and 3 interventions

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# Assessment and Screening

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## General guidance

- Consider systems-level assessment related to
  - School climate & school safety
  - Bullying/violence prevention efforts
  - Social, emotional, behavioral screening
- Universal Trauma Screening
  - Exercise caution– lots of considerations that make it more complicated
  - Do not use ACEs as a screener
  - Guidance for Trauma Screening in Schools document

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# UCLA Brief COVID-19 Screen for Child/Adolescent PTSD

## UCLA Brief COVID-19 Screen for Child/Adolescent PTSD ©

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ ID # \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Sex:  Female  Male  
 Grade in School \_\_\_\_\_ School: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interviewer Name/ID \_\_\_\_\_ Date (month, day, year) \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (Session # \_\_\_\_\_)

The coronavirus illness has made a lot of people very scared and worried about their own safety and health, and the safety and health of their family and friends. To help me understand how you are doing with what is happening, I'd like to ask you some questions about some ways that we know people react to this kind of danger. For me to better understand your answers, it's helpful for me to ask you a few questions first.

Have you or someone close to you gotten very sick or been in the hospital because of this illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you or someone close to you been quarantined because of having symptoms of this illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you or someone close to you been told of a positive test for this illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does someone close to you work around people who might have this illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you or a family member had to move away from home because of this illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has anyone close to you died because of this illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

If yes, can you tell me who? \_\_\_\_\_

### Military Families

Has a military member of your family been deployed to a place where people have this illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you and your family been quarantined and made to stay on your military base?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has a military member of your family been unable to return home or leave a foreign country because of being quarantined or because of having this illness?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Has anything else happened to you/your family because of this illness that has been very upsetting?  Yes  No

Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

© (2020) The Regents of the University of California. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. You may use and distribute the UCLA Brief COVID-19 Screen free of charge. You may not modify the items or use them to create a derivative work. For questions about making a translation or use in an electronic health record system, contact [info@reacttoolsindex.com](mailto:info@reacttoolsindex.com).

**[Even if no item above is scored "Yes", continue to ask the following.]**

*For your reactions to what's happening because of the coronavirus illness, TELL ME for each problem listed below the number (0, 1, 2, 3 or 4) that shows how often the problem happened to you in the past month. Use the Frequency Rating Sheet to help you decide how often the problem happened in the past month.*

HOW MUCH OF THE TIME DURING THE PAST MONTH...		None	Little	Some	Much	Most
1	I try to stay away from people, places, or things that remind me about what happened or what is still happening.	0	1	2	3	4
2	I get upset easily or get into arguments or physical fights.	0	1	2	3	4
3	I have trouble concentrating or paying attention.	0	1	2	3	4
4	When something reminds me of what happened or is still happening, I get very upset, afraid, or sad.	0	1	2	3	4
5	I have trouble feeling happiness or love.	0	1	2	3	4
6	I try not to think about or have feelings about what happened or is still happening.	0	1	2	3	4

# Relationships and Transitions

## Recognize...

- Challenge of transition will vary substantially
- Need to teach and re-teach expectations & routines
- High likelihood of exhaustion, fatigue, sleepiness

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## The Wear and Tear of Loneliness

- Review of 80 studies on loneliness and social isolation
  - Increases risk of depression and suicide up to 9 years later
  - DURATION of isolation more predictive of outcomes than intensity
- Other studies find loneliness to be a significant predictor of anxiety, depression, and PTSD since COVID started

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## Re-Connecting

- Live or virtual celebration for retired staff
- Matching peer-buddies
- Year long homerooms, advisory periods, or transition periods at the beginning of each day
- Optional social hours or social periods

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## Relational Rituals

One tough moment

One hopeful moment

Or

Best thing you ate

Worst thing you ate

Or

Stop, Start, Continue, Change

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## Relationship Mapping

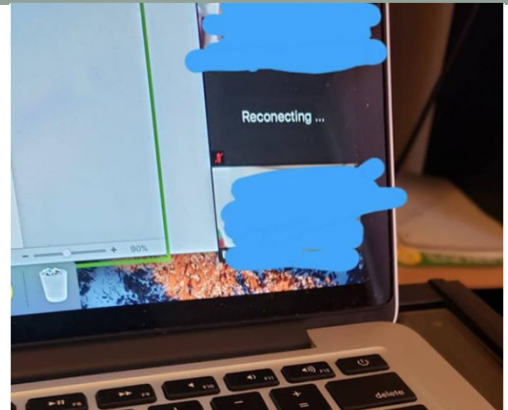
- List each student by grade
- Each staff member goes through each name and puts a mark if they have a good relationship with the students
- Identify the students that have no check marks, and make sure that some staff get to know those students

<https://mcc.gse.harvard.edu/resources-for-educators/relationship-mapping-strategy>

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## Webcam Rules

- Avoid tying grades to webcam use
- Allow choices
  - Upload photo or emoji or bitmoji
  - Use of filters/backgrounds
  - Allow audio or chat options to check-in to ensure engagement
- Ask before assuming



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# Discipline

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## What Some Districts are Doing

- Workstations must be clear of foreign objects. No pajamas, hats, or hoods on screen.
  - Shelby County, TN
- Principals can block student access to email and other online programs if student is disruptive or creates an “unsafe learning environment”
  - Chicago, IL
- Intentionally spitting or coughing on someone now criminal assault
  - Houston, TX

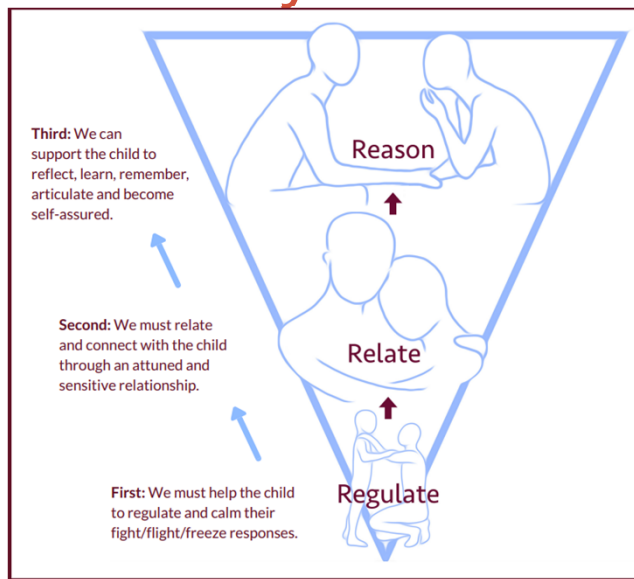
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## Discipline Considerations

- Avoid punitive/exclusionary discipline unless absolutely necessary
- Positive disciplinary practices more needed than ever
- View through trauma-informed lens
  - It affects me, but it's not about me
  - Deficits in self-regulatory skills; not willful disobedience
- Anticipate prolonged honeymoon period followed by
  - Apparent increase in equities emerging
  - Higher levels of resistance & defiance as demands increase
- Expectations at home  $\neq$  Expectations at school

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## Dr. Bruce Perry's Three Rs



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# Family Engagement

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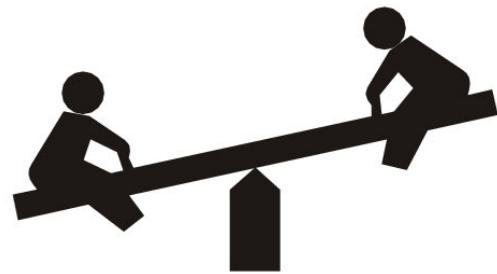
## Helping Families Helps Kids

- Survey families
- Family Education
- Structures for child care
- Give Families a Break
- Basic needs
  
- Consider existing context and trust factor

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## Academic Needs



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## Academic needs

- Assume that children are coming in with some skill gaps.
- Use classwide intervention and small groups to provide acquisition instruction
  - use that to determine who "really needs" more.
- Consider benchmarking from last winter. Expect students to be behind national benchmarks.

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## Multidisciplinary Team

- Coordinate responses
- Review and monitor guidelines
- Make decisions around use of resources
- Coordinate communications

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On a final note...

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## Maintain high expectations, though shift the focus

“If a student is hungry, tired, or scared—give them food, a nap, or a hug.”  
--Dr. Bryan Pearlman, Maslow Before Bloom



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“Everybody has a plan until they get  
punched in the face.”

-Mike Tyson



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“I fear most that everything will change.

My second biggest fear is that nothing will change.”

-Mathew Portell, school principal in Tennessee

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## Finally...

- Thank you
- Thank you for being an educator
- Thank you for caring for the kids that need it most (and the ones that don't)

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# Questions? Comments? Insults?

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