



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING
& MENTAL HEALTH ACADEMY

March 31, 2020

Supporting Students' SEL and Mental Health Needs in the COVID-19 Era

Organizations in Partnership

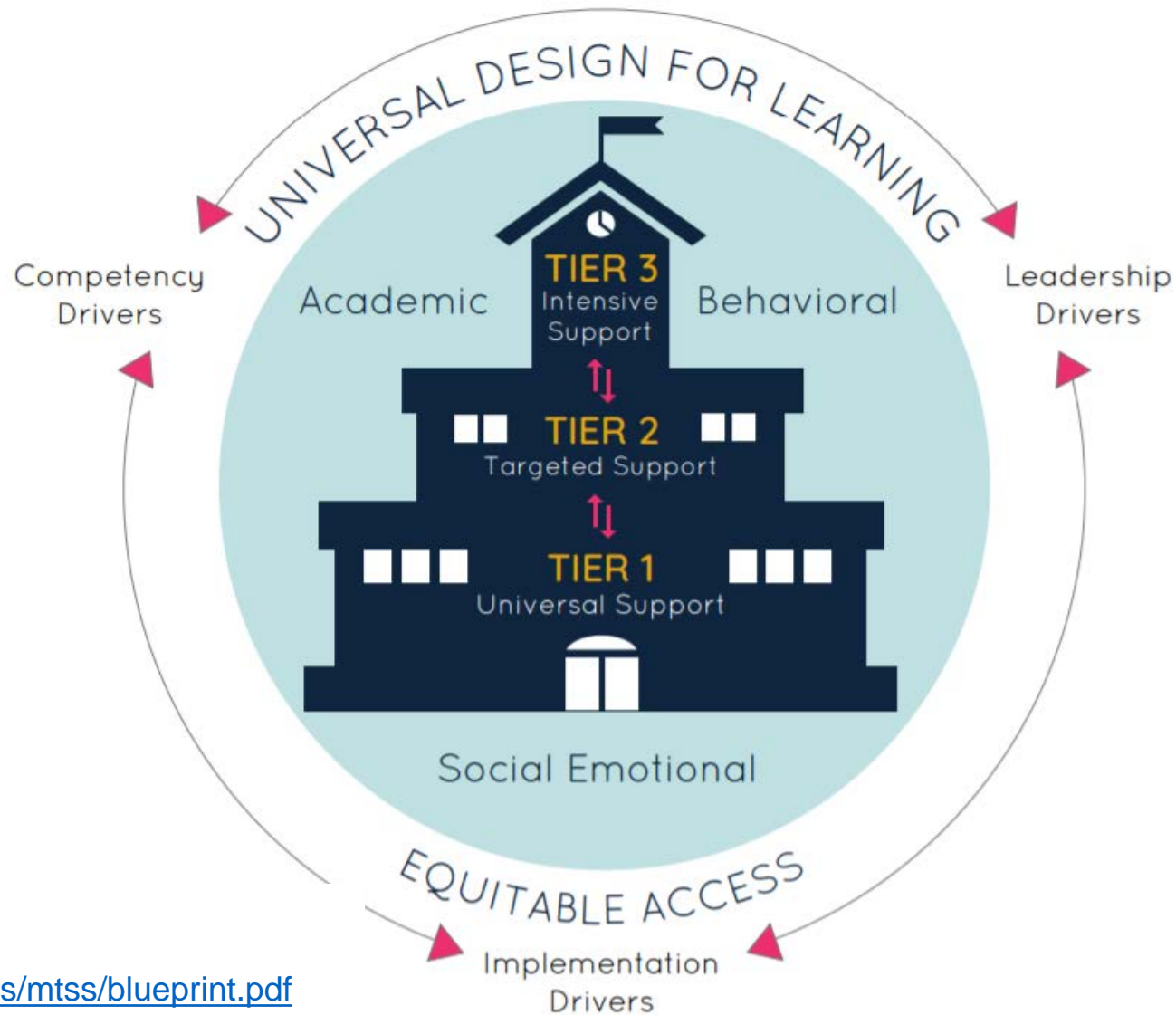


Overview of Today's Webinar

- 1 Expert speakers on how districts can address the social, emotional and mental health needs of students in the era of COVID-19
- 2 Representatives from Massachusetts' districts on their response to the crisis, and opportunities to share your own efforts
- 3 Discussion of what's needed next

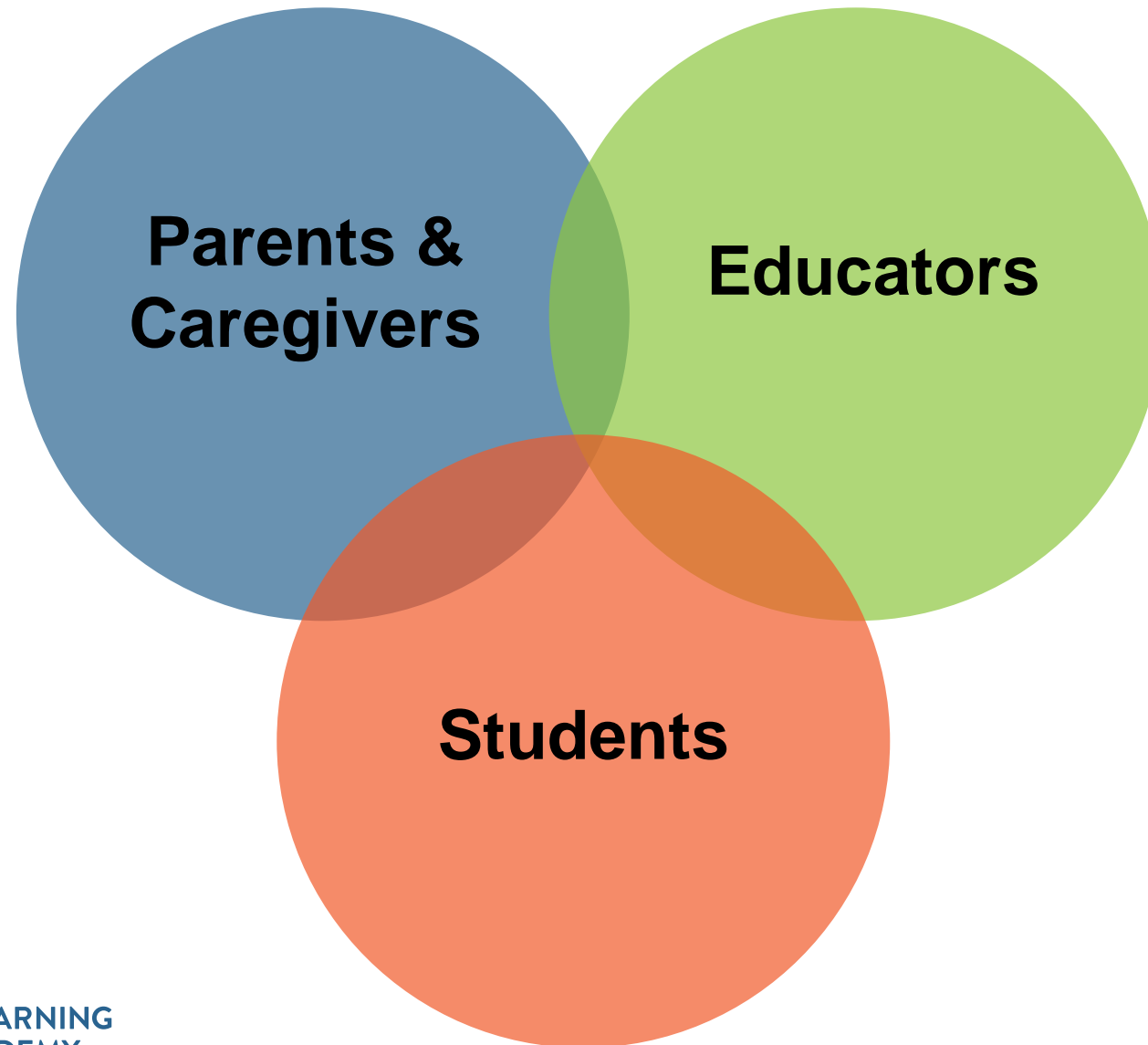


MTSS for SEL & Mental Health



Source:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/blueprint.pdf>

Our Focus



Today's Speakers

Shai Fuxman, Ed.D.
Co-Director, SEL &
Mental Health Academy,
Education Development
Center

**Jennifer Myers, MA,
LPC**
Violence & Trauma
Training Development
Manager, Education
Development Center

Gina Kahn, Ed.D.
Director, Safe and
Healthy Students
Programs, Hampden-
Wilbraham Regional
School District;
Consultant, Walker

**Richard Fournier,
Ed.M.**
Co-Director, SEL &
Mental Health Academy,
Transforming
Education



Supporting Student and Staff Mental Health

Resilience is Universal



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING
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Possible Impacts of COVID-19-related Changes on Mental Health*

- Concerns related to basic needs such as food
- Pandemic related fears, anxieties, and worries
- Changes to or lack of a routine often impact sleep, concentration, memory, attention, emotions
- Isolation related to changed social connections
- Increased screen time can impact sleep, brain chemicals, and relationships
- Different coping strategies/skills available
- Challenging family dynamics

*Consider individual, family, and community factors

Look for Those at Greatest Risk for Trauma

- Community risks
- Neglect/abuse in home environment
- Substance misuse in home or community
- Previous exposure to violence or traumatic experiences
- Higher ACEs score prior to pandemic
- Recent loss or complicated grief
- Family health issues
- Risk for suicidal thinking/behavior (including impacted by a suicide loss)



How to Support All Students

- Develop a plan for all – Tier 1 mental health supports
- Inform parents about if and how to talk to kids in a developmentally appropriate way
- Apply trauma-informed principles
- Manage expectations of tasks
- Stay connected in the student's language & style
- Boundaries might look different
- Develop & keep a routine
- Be consistent, clear, & predictable
- Assist in identifying and labeling emotions
- Look for signs



Indicated Supports (Tiers 2 & 3)

- Develop a plan for each student already identified as higher need for mental health supports
 - Tier 2 and 3 mental health supports
 - Review all students and who might be higher need given the situation
- Provide extra support
 - Consider higher ACEs, past trauma, suicide risk, special needs and learning disabilities
 - Isolated and disconnected students
 - Those without or concerned about basic needs

Indicated Supports (Tiers 2 & 3), continued

- Use connectors
- Wrap-around and work as a community team
- Apply basic emotion, thought, and behavior regulation skills
 - Mindfulness
 - Cognitive-behavioral approaches
 - Distress tolerance techniques

**For all Mental Health and SEL needs, use your networks.
Consult.
We're here to help.**

National Resources

- CDC – Tips to keep children healthy while school is out
- DOE – Q&A on providing services to children with disabilities during the coronavirus disease 2019 outbreak
- Mindful Schools – Mindfulness classes for kids (Tues, Weds, & Thurs)
- National Association of School Psychologists – Health crisis resources
- National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH) – COVID-19 Resources
- Child Mind Institute – Talking to kids about coronavirus



Considerations and Strategies for Schools

The Risk is ISOLATION.

The Goal is CONNECTION.

*“... the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”
~ Brené Brown, *The Gifts of Imperfection**

The Challenge is ADAPTABILITY and FLEXIBILITY within STRUCTURE.



Infrastructure for Addressing Mental Health Needs

1. Use existing school emergency operations plan and critical incident response protocols

- Clarify roles and responsibilities around mental health/ social-emotional supports
- Facilitate collaboration with key community partners for a continuum of services
- Coordinate across all functions

2. Clarify expectations and mechanisms for student outreach by mental health staff

- Develop flow charts for addressing more intensive needs
- Anticipate and plan to address barriers to communication and outreach
- Consider district policies and ethical guidelines surrounding alternative service delivery practices

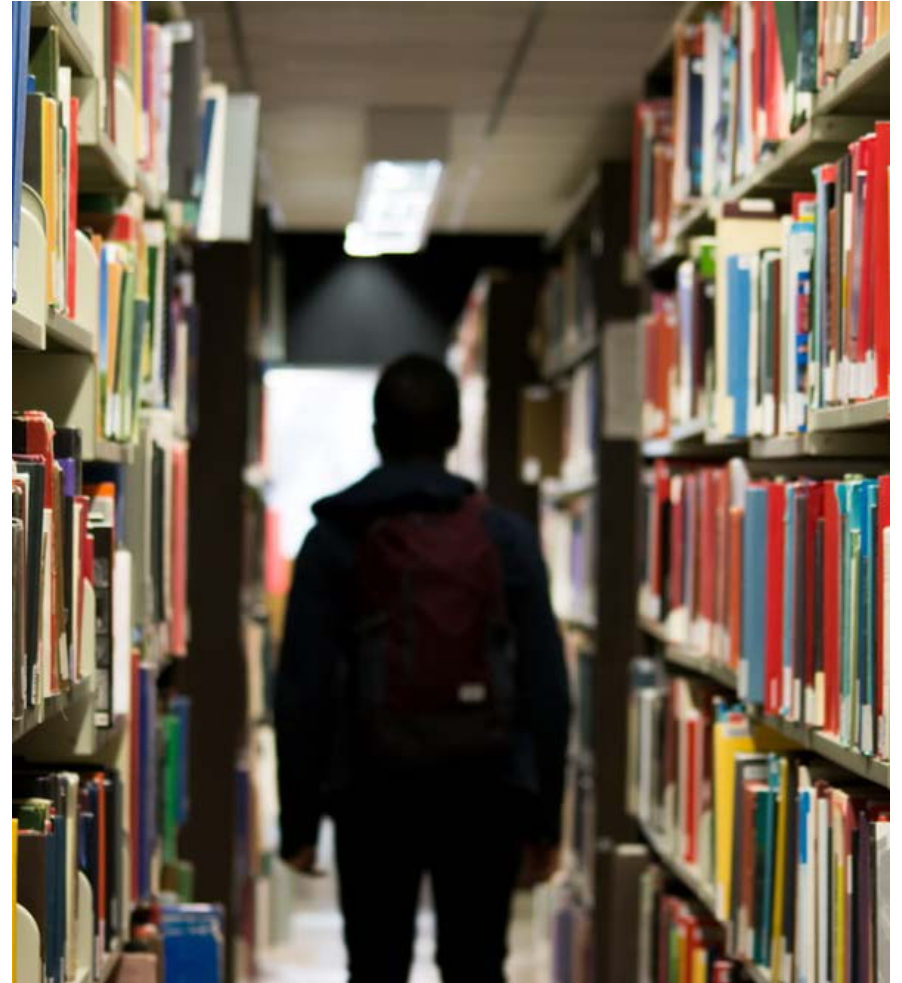
Infrastructure for Mental Health, continued

3. Expect the unexpected

- Periodically reassess/modify the plan
- Mobilize a crisis team in the event of a critical impact event, related/not-related to COVID-19

4. Plan for the return to school

- Review data to identify and front-load supports
- Anticipate training/ professional learning needs in evidence-based SEL-informed programs



And... Keeping It Simple

“Guiding Principles– From the Principal!

1. *Take care of yourself and your family.*
2. *Everyone is anxious about not having answers.*
3. *Do your work, follow a routine - this normalcy will help.*
4. *Contact your teachers, they want to hear from you.*
5. *Wash your hands.*
6. *Stay home.*
7. *You may feel lonely, but you are not in this alone.”*

Steve Hale, Principal
Minnechaug Regional High School
Family Communication 3/29/20



Focusing on Our Own Mental Health

Resilience:

The capacity to bounce back—
to positively adapt...

particularly when confronted
with stressful or adverse events



Focusing on Our Own Mental Health, continued

Compassion fatigue:

- The personal impact of ongoing exposure to the emotional or physical pain of others
- Can impact Physical, Emotional, Behavioral, Cognitive, Interpersonal, Spiritual or Professional functioning of those that are called upon to help

Self-care:

- The set of conscious actions take to maintain physical, mental and emotional well-being
- The pathway to resilience

How Schools Support Staff Self-Care

1. Acknowledge personal and professional stresses
2. Create and model routines that incorporate time for simple stress-reduction strategies (e.g., mindfulness activities, time for sharing)
3. Validate concerns and identify individuals in the organization that will be able to provide support while solutions are being developed
4. Ensure that training is available for any new skills or expectations that might be needed



How Schools Support Staff Self-Care, continued

5. Include self-care as a component of available professional learning experiences
6. Include sharing of self-care ideas
7. Encourage optimism and resilience
8. Develop and communicate resources that can address ALL domains of self-care, such as Employee Assistance Programs



National Resources

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Crisis Support Resources

- Samaritans – 1-877-870-4673 <https://samaritanshope.org/>
- MA 211- Call 2 Talk – 508-532-2255 or text C2T to 741741 - <https://mass211.org/call2talk/>
- Crisis Text Line – Text “HOME” to 741741
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1-800-273-8255 <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
- National Sexual Assault Hotline – 1-800-656-4673 <https://www.rainn.org/>
- National Domestic Violence Hotline - 1-800-799-7233 <https://www.thehotline.org/>
- The Trevor Project – 1-866-488-7386 <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/>
- Trans Lifeline – 1-877-565-8860 <https://www.translifeline.org/>



Federal Guidelines: Telehealth

Guidance has been issued by several federal departments regarding the use of technology for telehealth including telemental health (allowing for more non-public facing platforms to be used), communications about personally identifiable information (under FERPA), and where telehealth can be conducted (for instance if a private location is not available. It is best to check directly with your local, state, and federal departments, boards, and governing bodies. Several links with specific guidance are included here:

- **OCR Issues Bulletin on Civil Rights Laws and HIPAA Flexibilities That Apply During the COVID-19 Emergency**
 - FAQs on Telehealth and HIPAA during the COVID-19 nationwide
 - SAMHSA COVID-19 Public Health Emergency Response and 42 CFR Part 2 Guidance
- **FERPA and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)**
- **HIPAA, Civil Rights, and COVID-19**
- **Questions and Answers on Providing Services to Children with Disabilities During the Coronavirus Disease 2019 Outbreak (March 2020)**
- **US Dept of Education COVID-19 Information and Resources for Schools and School Personnel**

Telehealth/Virtual Service Delivery Resources

- [National Association of School Psychologists](#)
- [American Counseling Association](#)
- [Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards](#)
- [National Association of Social Workers](#)
- [National Board for Certified Counselors](#)
- [School Social Work Association of American](#)
- [American School Counselor Association](#)
- [American Psychological Association](#)
- [American Psychiatric Association](#)
- [Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#)





Relationships as a Source of Strength and Stability

Relationships Matter

“**SEL** helps children survive and cope in various situations...While not all kids will experience trauma, they will all face challenges at some point in their lives, so all can benefit from learning skills for managing adversity.

A **trauma-sensitive environment** that supports kids' need to feel safe and supported—paired with strong adult social-emotional competencies and SEL supports for students—helps ensure kids will cultivate healthy student behaviors and have opportunities to thrive in the face of difficulties and hardships.”

Kim Gulbrandson
Committee for Children

Relationships Matter

Strong relationships can provide the responsiveness, scaffolding, and protection can support children who are feeling the effects of traumatic events. A study on positive childhood experiences found that having *two* non-parental adults show genuine interest in children can help offset the effects of adverse experiences, as did feeling supported by friends (Bethell et al., 2019).

Positive relationships with caring adults can help buffer students from the effects of trauma and chronic stress, making trauma-informed schools "healing places."

KQED; MindShift

Relationships Matter

Strong relationships are foundational for learning. Intentionally building connections with students, having a personal regard for them as individuals, and facilitating meaningful peer interactions creates caring communities.



Building Relationships: Working & Learning Outside the School

- Adult – Adult (Students' family, colleagues, staff, leadership)
- Student - Student
- Adult - Student

“I define connection as the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.”

Brené Brown



Relationships: Equity & Greater Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging involves the perception that one has a rightful place in a school community.

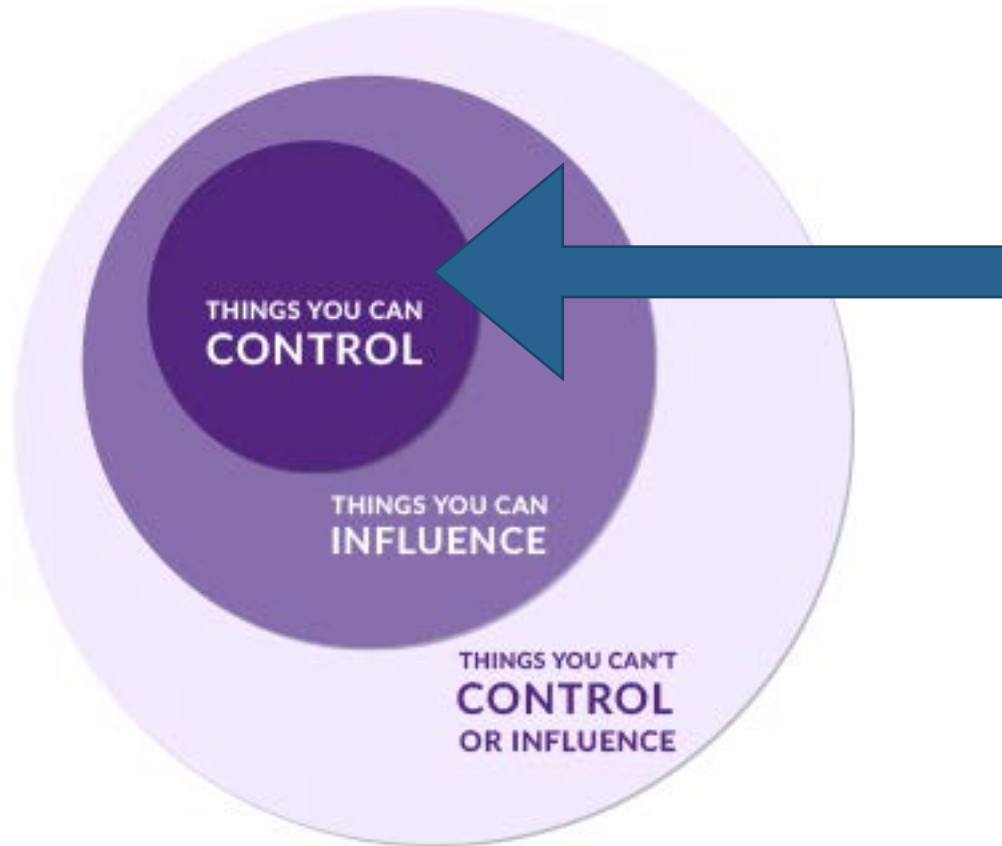
“When students are uncertain about whether they belong, they are vigilant for cues in the environment that signal whether or not they belong, fit in, or are welcome there. They may also be concerned about confirming a negative stereotype about their group. This hyper-vigilance and extra stress uses up cognitive resources that are essential for learning, diminishing their performance and discouraging them from building valuable relationships.”

Source: Mindset Scholars Network

Relationship Strategies and Approaches

- Make explicit connections between school and home communities such that regular, two- way, positive communication is a norm.
- Form honest, authentic relationships between students and teachers that foster complex understandings about one another in order to disrupt inequitable and deficit-based views.
- Learn about, include, and celebrate various cultural and racial/ethnic backgrounds year- round.
- Create activities and structures that continuously build strong relationships between students throughout the school year, rather than just during orientation.
- Resolve conflict through restorative approaches that promote empathy and understanding

Relationship Strategies and Approaches



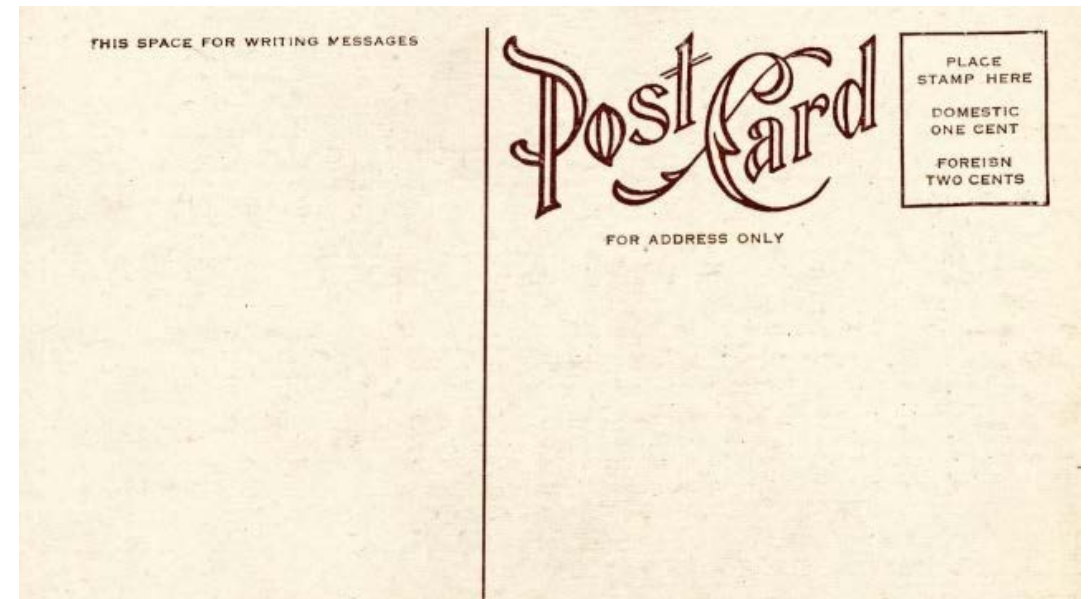
- Identify own emotions
- Ask about the emotions of other adults or students
- Provide opportunities for students to express their emotions with teacher and peers (and families)
- Model how to deal with those emotions with other adults and peers (and providing opportunities for students to model these with peers)
- Provide opportunities for meaningful, positive peer collaboration
- Gather information from students in one-to-one settings or small groups



Relationship Strategies and Approaches

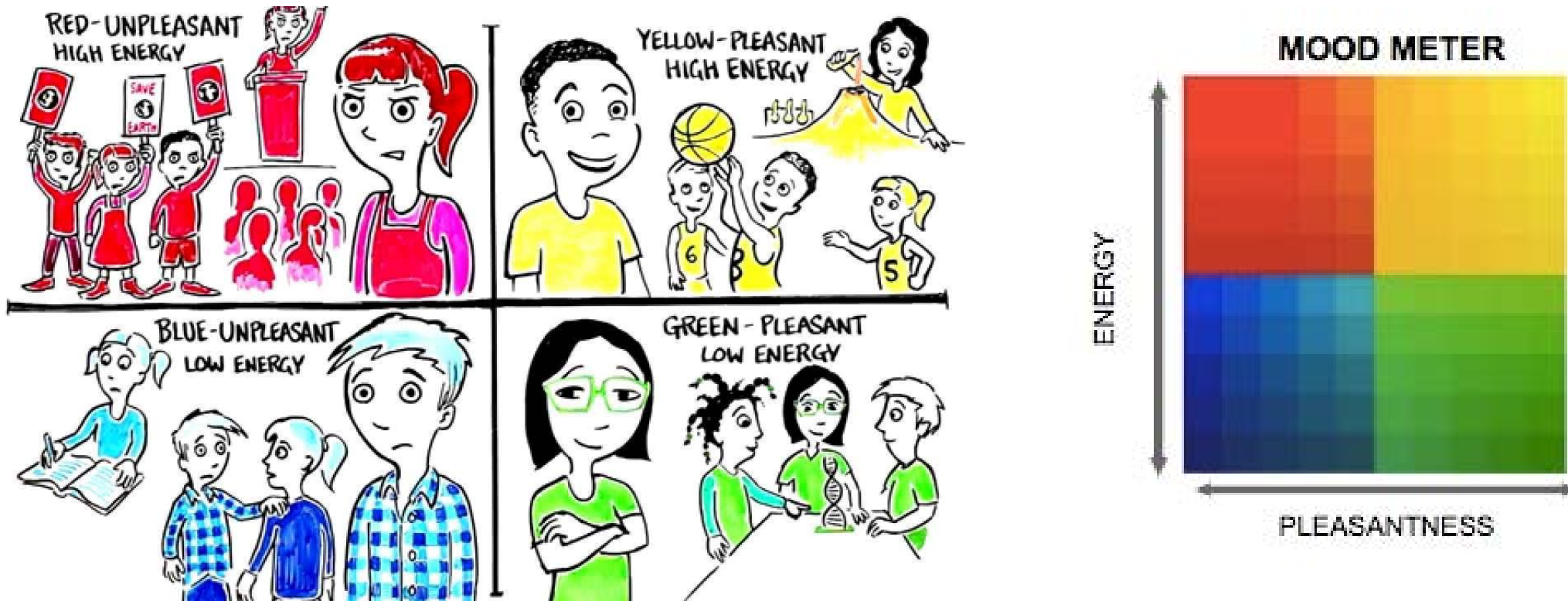
If not the classroom or school, other potential platforms for relationship building for adults, students, and families:

- Phone Call
- Computer, Laptop, Tablet -- virtual learning, virtual peer collaboration, emails
- Postcards / Letters – writing, drawing
- Youtube videos



Relationship Strategies and Approaches

Check Student Emotions



Relationship Strategies and Approaches

Check Student Emotions

Example: As we prepare to start the lesson (or come back together), take a moment to notice where you are on this emoji chart.

What might you need to be fully present and ready to re-engage for the next part of the morning?



Relationship Strategies and Approaches

Wise Critical Feedback for Students

Purpose: Reinforce high expectations and the belief in a student's potential through every instance of feedback

When providing written or verbal feedback to students, be sure to communicate:

1. that you're providing this feedback because you have high standards for the student, and
2. that you believe in the student's ability to meet those standards.

Yeager, D. S., Purdie-Vaughns, V., Garcia, J., Apfel, N., Brzustoski, P., Master, A., & Cohen, G. L. (2014). Breaking the cycle of mistrust: Wise interventions to provide critical feedback across the racial divide. *Journal Of Experimental Psychology: General*, 143(2), 804-824.



Relationship Strategies and Approaches

Check in with Students and/or Adult Peers or Staff

Empathy Interviews

“Psychologists define empathy as the ability to understand and feel what someone else is feeling. You’ve probably heard someone say that they can “identify with” another person. When they say this, they likely mean that they understand that person’s experience and feel along with them – feel their pain or joy. That’s empathy.”

Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, 2019

Relationship Strategies and Approaches

Check in with Students and/or Adult Peers or Staff

- Empathy interviews allow users to speak about what is important to them.
- They focus on the emotional aspects of the interviewee
- They allow interviewers to gain insights on how people behave in given environments
- They can reveal solutions you might not have discovered otherwise, or unmet needs and challenges you might be overlooking
- Empathy interviews are about getting deeper
- They're about making the interviewee feel at ease so he or she can speak from the heart
- They offer interviewers a chance to observe body language and reactions of the subjects. This allows for spontaneous questions based on observations

Relationship Strategies and Approaches

Check in with Adult Peers or Staff

Relationship Mapping

Purpose: Identify which students have strong connections with adults, and make a plan for how to “see” every student

NAMES	Name & Face	<u>Aca-</u> <u>demics</u>	Personal Story	Family
Student Name 1	✓✓	✓		
Student Name 2	✓✓✓✓	✓	✓✓✓	
Student Name 3				
Student Name 4	✓	✓	✓	✓
Student Name 5	✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓
Student Name 6	✓			✓
Student Name 7	✓	✓		✓
Student Name 8	✓			✓✓
Student Name 9	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Student Name 10		✓	✓	
Student Name 11	✓✓			
Student Name 12	✓			✓
Student Name 13	✓	✓✓		

Relationships Matter

“Every moment matters. Every interaction with a child has a reaction in that child. Even as we keep working to address the many social and cultural factors we need to address to prevent negative experiences, we should be focused on proactive promotion of the positive. In particular, there's a need to promote that "through any door" kind way of being. **So that wherever a child goes...to school...they're met with warm adults who purposely try to see and respond to them and meet their needs for care and guidance.”**

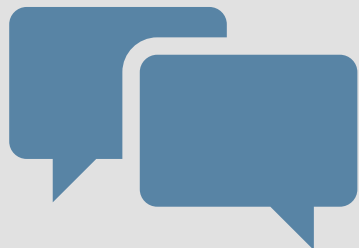
Christina Bethell

Positive Childhood Experiences Researcher



A Focus on Massachusetts

What are some strategies that you are employing in your school or district to support the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students, staff and families?



**SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING
& MENTAL HEALTH ACADEMY**

Hear From Your Peers

John Crocker

**Director of School Mental
Health & Behavioral
Services,
Methuen Public Schools**

Mario Florez

**Chief of Social,
Emotional and
Behavioral Learning,
Holyoke Public
Schools**

Lauren Reppucci

**Social Emotional
Learning Coordinator,
Seven Hills Charter
School, Worcester**



Questions & Answers

*Reminder:
submit your
questions via
the Q&A
submissions
pod*



Massachusetts-Specific Resources

Mental Health and Well Being

Home Families Students Staff Calendar Partners

Mental Health and Well Being

Updates and resources to promote good mental health hygiene during school closure, eventual return and recovery from COVID-19 from the school counseling and social emotional learning departments PK-12 of a number of Massachusetts School Districts. Please share widely! This page is updated regularly.

Ep. 6.19.5 Rooted In Love Copy link

ROOTED IN LOVE

HOW TO CARE FOR YOURSELF WHILE PRACTICING PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- EAT HEALTHFULLY** to keep your body in top working order.
- EXERCISE** Workout at home or take a solo jog around the neighborhood.
- PRACTICE RELAXATION THERAPY** Voluntarily tensing and relaxing muscle groups can help you relax voluntarily when feeling overwhelmed or anxious.
- LET LIGHT IN** Increased exposure to light can improve symptoms of depression. Open the shades and let more sunlight in.
- BE KIND TO YOURSELF** Treat yourself with the same compassion you would a friend.

Questions? Something to add? Please contribute your thoughts and resources to the shared document linked [here](#). Contact our partners and the editors will take a look at it! Educators seeking PDPs, contact your district rep and ask how

<https://sites.google.com/arlington.k12.ma.us/mentalhealthandwellbeing/>



Massachusetts-Specific Resources



Find Behavioral Health Services

HOME ▾ SERVICES ▾ LIBRARY ▾ INSURANCE ▾ SUPPORT & ADVOCACY ▾ MY ACCOUNT ▾ EMERGENCY

⚠ IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) [READ MORE](#)



<https://massachusetts.networkofcare.org/mh/>



SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING
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Resources from Our Partners:



edc.org/resources-covid-19-crisis

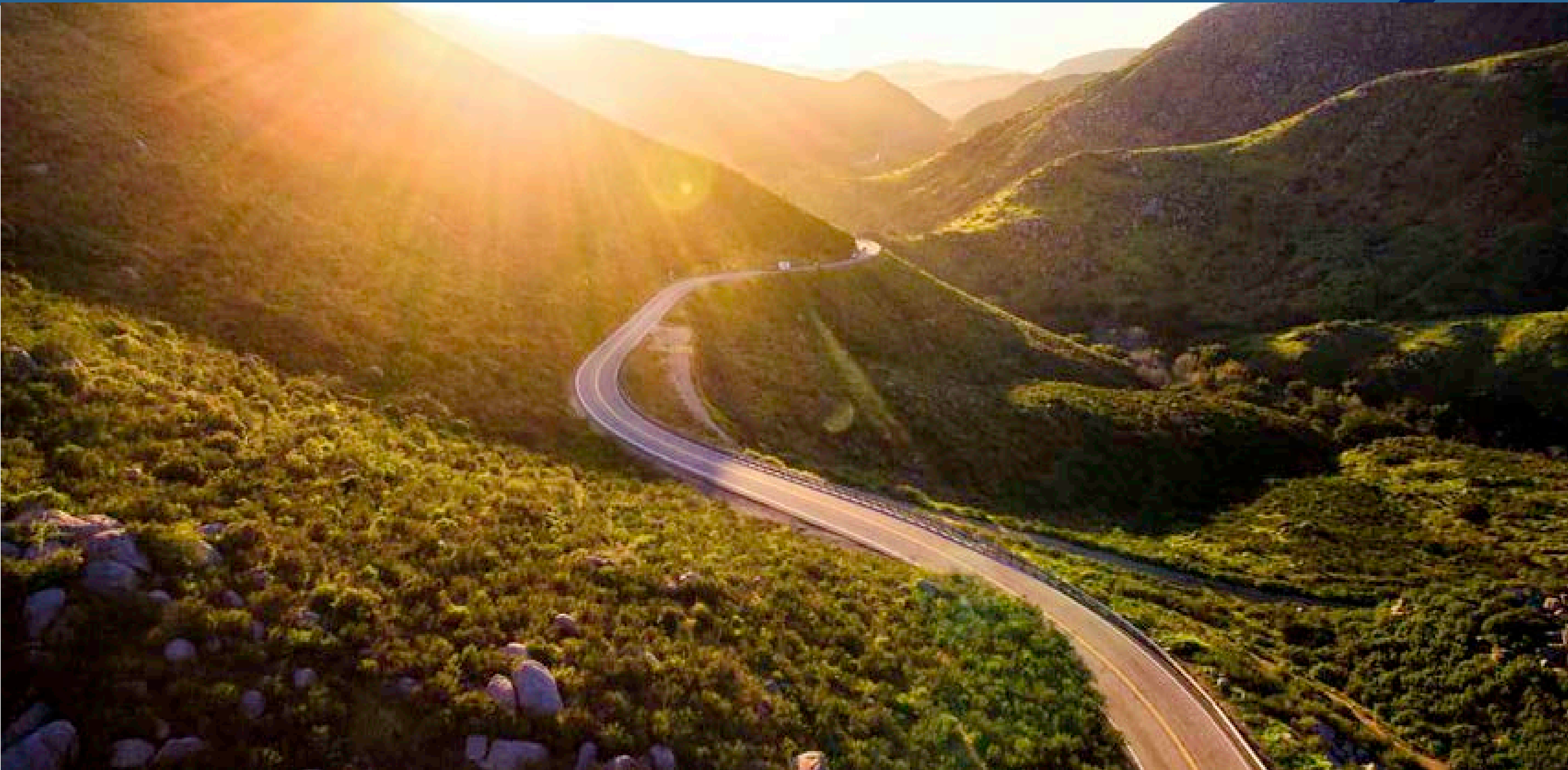


walkercares.org



transformingeducation.org

What's Next?





SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING
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Thank You! We want your feedback!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SELMentalHealthC19Webinar>