



Trauma-Informed Practices for Schools

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Tribal Youth Resource Center
www.TribalYouth.org

▶ BEFORE WE BEGIN:

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- **Established** in Fall 2007 to serve as a Treatment and Services Adaptation Center (Cat II) within the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)
- **Represents** a national expansion of the previously funded Montana Center for Childhood Trauma (BOR approved, 2004)
- **Mission:** *In respectful partnerships with tribes, NNCTC will implement, adapt, evaluate and disseminate trauma interventions to decrease the social, emotional, spiritual and educational impact traumatic experiences have on American Indian and Alaska Native children.*

[National Native Children's Trauma Center \(nnctc.org\)](http://nnctc.org)



▶ OBJECTIVES

- Understand the impacts of trauma on students
- Identify some best practices in responding to trauma-impacted youth
- Identify possible interventions within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports



▶ WHAT IS TRAUMA?

The **experience** of a real or perceived threat to life or safety

or to the life or safety of a loved one

Causes an **overwhelming** sense of terror, horror, helplessness, and fear.

Fight, Flight, Freeze



TYPES OF TRAUMA

Historical: events of genocidal intent experienced by a people based on their collective identity

Acute: single event

Chronic: multiple different types of event or same type of event experienced repeatedly

Complex: ongoing or repeated trauma exposure + long-term and developmental effects

Secondary: the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another



IMPACTS OF TRAUMA

- Hyperarousal
- Re-experiencing
- Avoidance or Numbing
- Changes in Affect
- Sense of Foreshortened Future
- Cognitive Distortions

Fight, flight, freeze....survival mode



▶ CONCEPTS OF TRAUMA INFORMED SYSTEMS

The Four “R’s”

The Four “R’s”

Realizes the widespread impact of trauma

Recognizes trauma signs and symptoms

Responds by integrating knowledge about trauma into all facets of the system

Resists re-traumatization of trauma-impacted individuals



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SAMHSA, U.S DHHS, 2014

▶ Trauma-Informed Principles and Approaches

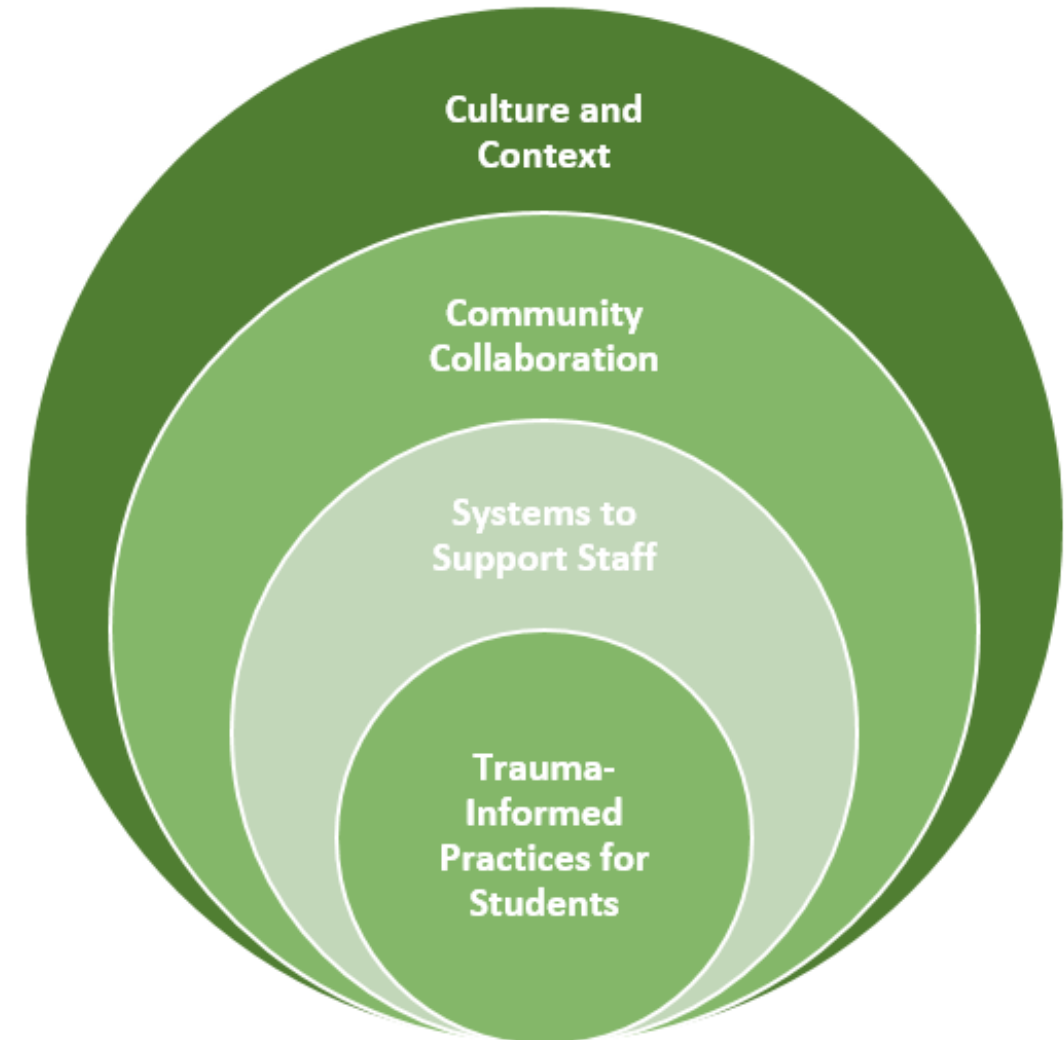
- **Trauma Awareness** – incorporates an understanding of trauma into all aspects of service
- **Emphasis on Safety** – emphasizes physical and emotional safety for those served
- **Opportunities to Rebuild Control/Empowerment** – creates predictable environments emphasizing the importance of choice to build a sense of self efficacy and personal control
- **Strength-Based Approach** – focuses on strengths rather than deficits, on the future and skill building to further develop resiliency

Hopper et al., 2010

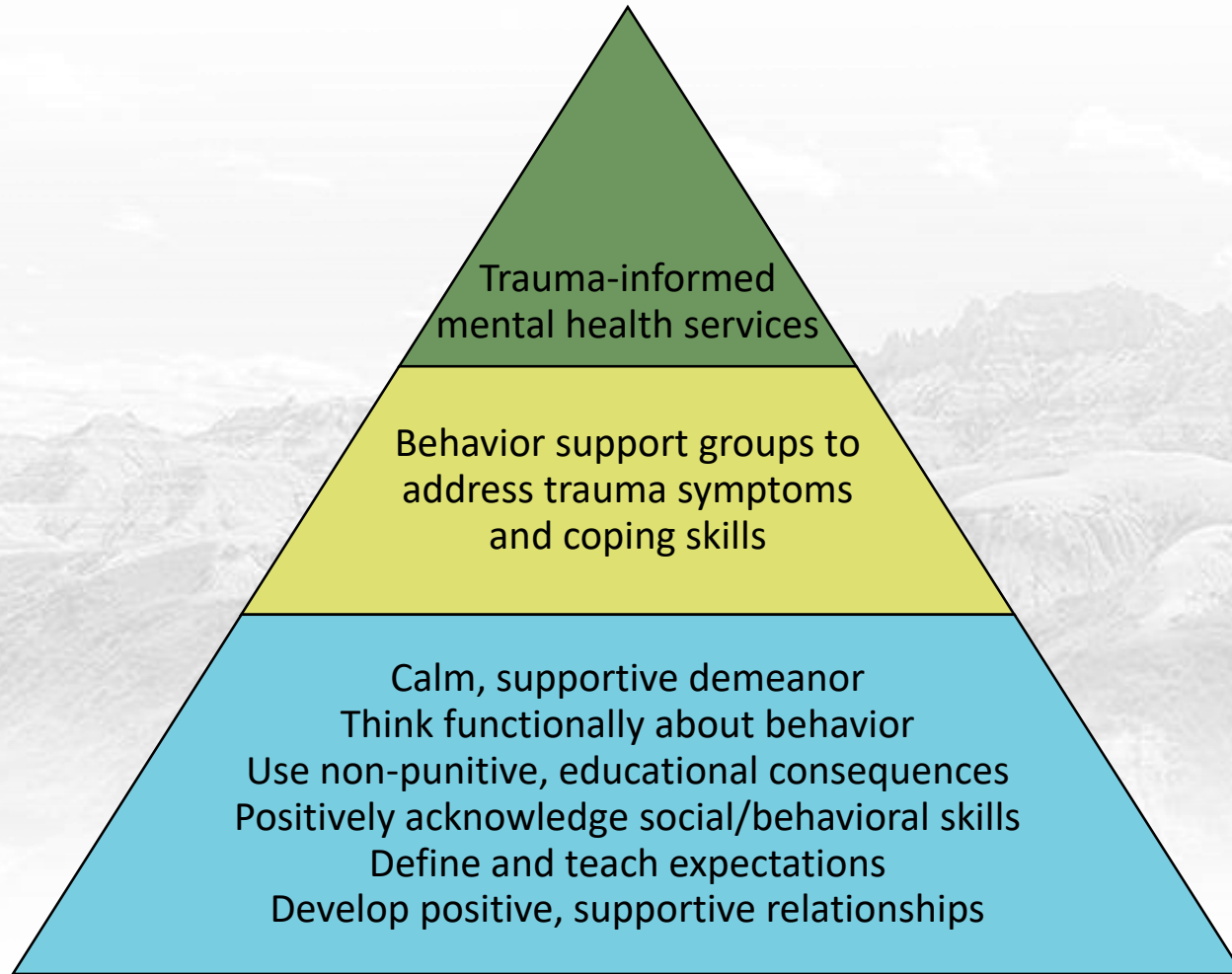


▶ 4 CORE FEATURES OF TRAUMA-RESILIENT SCHOOLS

- Culture and Context
- Community Collaboration
- Systems to Support Staff
- Trauma-Informed Practices to Support Students



TRAUMA-INFORMED SCHOOL PRACTICES



- Clear expectations
- Teach social skills
- Encourage/praise
- Non-punitive, educative consequences
- Understand function of behavior
 - trauma lens
- Team based approach
- Consistency
- Positive relationships
- Safe climate
- Adults model being regulated
- Whole school approach

BE AN EMOTIONAL CONTAINER

Be an Emotional Container

Respond Calmly & Appropriately

Demonstrate Control

Be Willing to Tolerate Strong Emotions

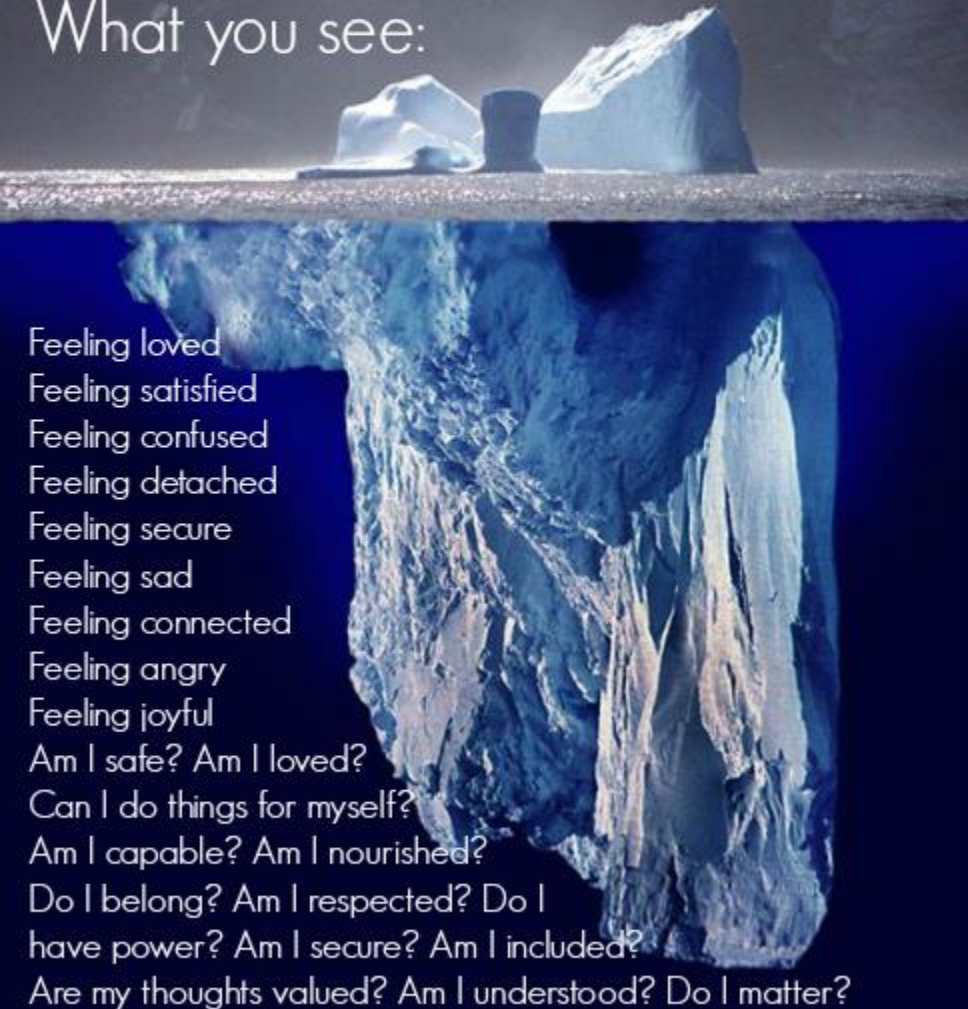
Depersonalize Behaviors



This can be Your Greatest Gift

A Child's Behavior is an Iceberg

What you see:



(What's really going on)

www.KellyBartlett.net

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOR

- Identify the problem behavior
- Assess where and when it is a problem
- Assess where and when it is NOT a problem
- Assess what happens before and after the behavior
 - Clues? Triggers?
- Determine what the child is attempting to communicate or needing - What's the function?
- Identify what YOU can do to help
- Continue to monitor

▶ POSITIVE, TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS

- Having at least one solid and trusting relationship with a supportive adult is the single most important protective factor for children.
- Three conditions:
 - The support is unconditional
 - The person shows stability
 - The child trusts the person



▶ CREATING SAFE ENVIRONMENTS

- Predictable Routines
 - Warnings of Changes
- Clear Expectations
 - Defined and Explicitly Taught
- High rates of positive feedback
- Provide choices
- Educational Approach to Discipline
 - Model behavior, teach, provide feedback
 - Refrain from scolding, berating, threatening

Safety

Predictability

Choice

Support

EXPLICITLY TEACH SELF-REGULATION SKILLS



- When do we **Teach** regulation skills?
 - When students are calm
- When do we **Model** regulation skills?
 - As often as possible
- When do we **Pre-Correct/Remind** for use of self-regulation skills?
 - Before we predict a child may get dysregulated (e.g. during a transition)
- When do we **Prompt** student to use regulation skills?
 - When triggered or escalating or as needed

OVERVIEW OF STUDENT SUPPORTS

	Tier I: Social Emotional Learning Curriculum	Tier II: Counseling Intervention	Elementary Students	Middle School/High School
CBITS-AI		✓		✓
Bounce Back		✓	✓	
Bounce Back For Classrooms	✓		✓	
STAR	✓			✓



COMMON ELEMENTS OF ALL FOUR



Increase Resiliency

- Understanding of stress/trauma
- Self-care
- Relaxation
- Self-Regulation
- Utilizing support systems/Cultural Identify
- Problem-Solving
- Helpful thoughts
- Learning readiness



Decrease Effects of Traumatic Stress

- Feelings of isolation
- Anxiety level
- False Alarms
- Avoidance
- Impulsivity
- Negative thinking
- Hypervigilance

▶ DIFFERENCES

CBITS-AI and Bounce Back

- Tier II counseling intervention
- Trauma Narrative/Exposure
- Need a clinical staff to facilitate
- Can be facilitated by non-clinical staff
- Small group setting
- Group selection via screenings and interview

STAR and Bounce Back for Classrooms

- Tier I social emotional learning curriculum
- No exposure therapy/ limited self-disclosure
- Can be facilitated by an educator or other school staff
- Facilitated as lesson plans in the classroom setting
- No group selection

▶ COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTION FOR TRAUMA IN SCHOOLS FOR AMERICAN INDIAN YOUTH

- Tier II group counseling intervention
- Part of a trauma informed school system
- Lead by counselors
- Small group 4-10
- 10 group sessions
- 3 individual sessions
- Based upon cognitive behavioral therapy components



[Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools \(CBITS\) for American Indian Youth | RAND](#)

► Rationale for Creating CBITS-AI

- CBITS alleviates the symptoms of traumatic stress for AI/AN students
- Portions of this manual should be altered to fit the need of the students better

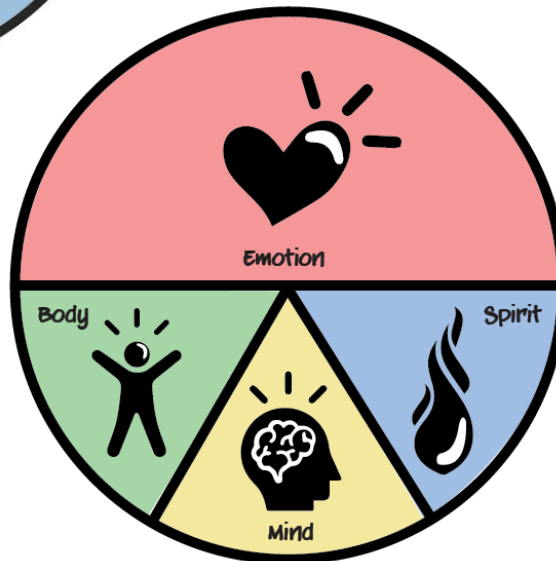
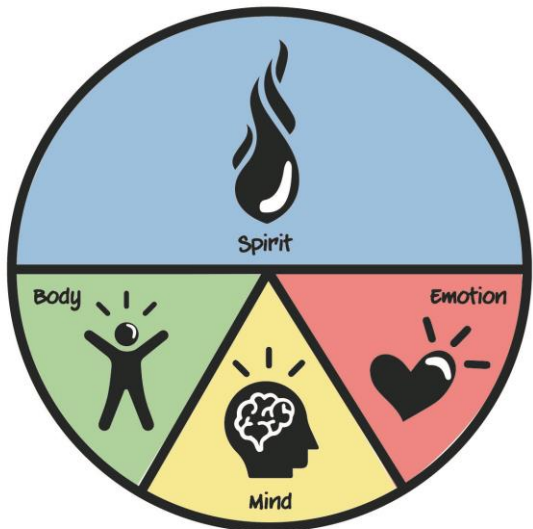
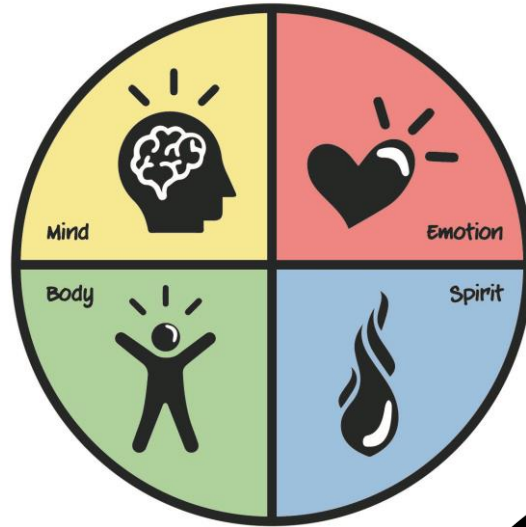
Purpose

- Provide examples of modifications and ideas for further exploration



EXPLANATION OF CBITS

Balanced Wheel vs Imbalance



We will:

- Learn some exercises that make you FEEL better and less nervous or upset
- Learn some ways to THINK about things that will help you feel better
- Learn some ways to pay attention to your spirit and BELIEFS about spirituality
- Learn some ways to DO things so that you are able to do everything you want to be able to do and not feel upset when you do it

IMAGINAL EXPOSURE TO STRESS OR TRAUMA: INDIVIDUAL SESSION(S)

- Techniques
 - Explain rationale for session, bison story or coup story
 - Elicit trauma narrative with **present anxiety** rating
 - Re-tell trauma narrative (leads to habituation)
 - Identify piece for, imagining in group, drawing or writing in group, talking about in group

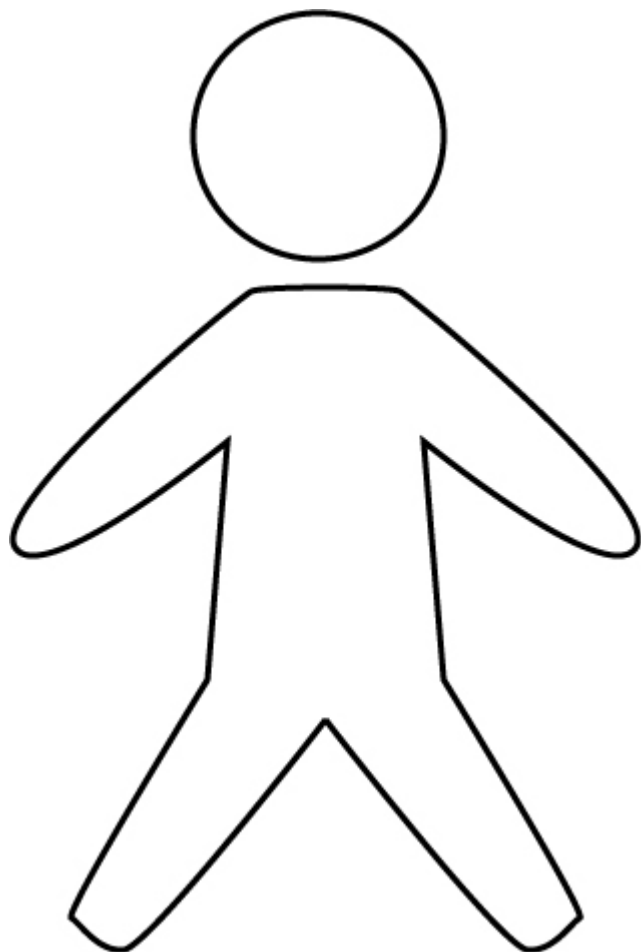


▶ BOUNCE BACK IS:

Concerned with the impact of trauma on elementary school students and hopes to build resilience to help students bounce back to a quality level of functioning and wellbeing in their school and community. It is:

- Based on the best available science
- 10 group sessions, 3 individual sessions, 3 parent sessions
- Tailored for the school setting
- Designed for children and families of diverse ethnic and social backgrounds
- [Learn More – BounceBack – The Center for Resiliency, Hope, and Wellness in Schools \(traumaawareschools.org\)](http://traumaawareschools.org)

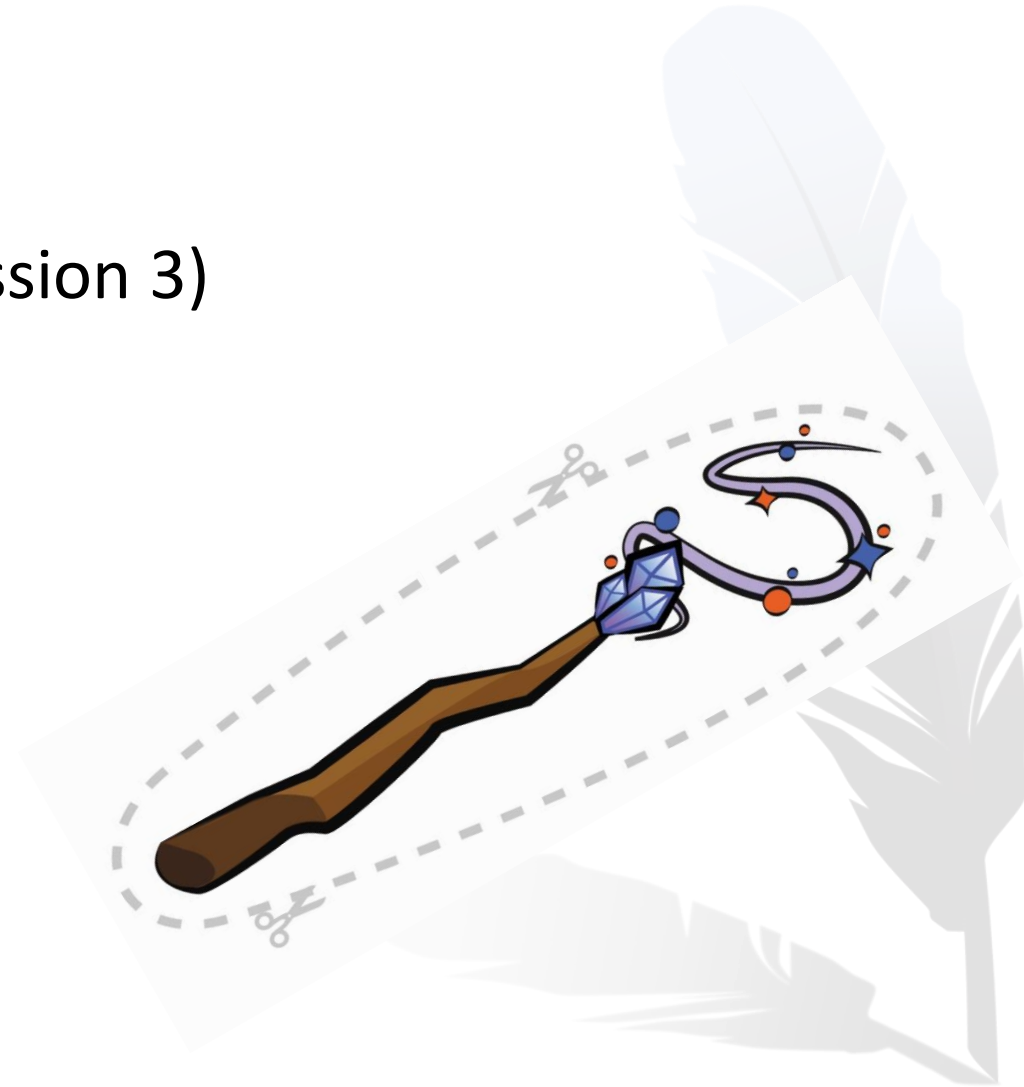
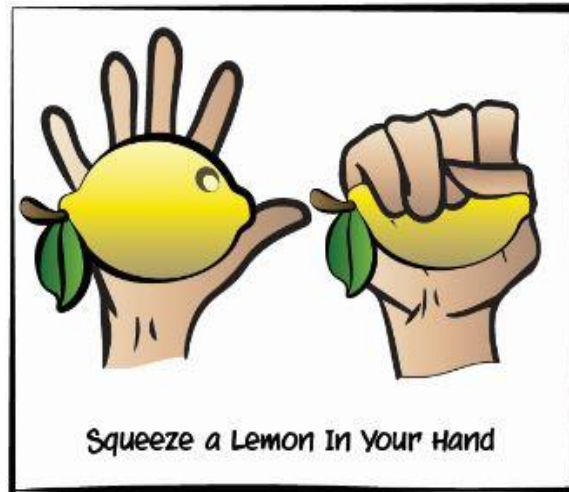
BODY FEELINGS WORKSHEET



Use Body Feeling Poster

▶ RELAXATION TRAINING

- Deep Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (starts in session 3)
- Body Scan (session 6)



▶ SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

- Targets ALL students
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
 - “the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions.” (CASEL, 2019)



▶ WHAT IS BOUNCE BACK FOR CLASSROOMS (BBC)?

- Adapted from Bounce Back and Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Schools (CBITS)
- Designed as a Social Emotional Learning Curriculum for 2nd-5th grade
- Designed for use by classroom teachers, school counselors, and professionals that work with youth
- Twelve 45-50 minute lesson plans
- Each lesson plan builds upon the previous
- Lesson plans focus on 1-3 skills
- Lesson plan format: EXPLAIN the skill, DEMONSTRATE the skill, PRACTICE the skill, TRANSFER OF LEARNING



LESSON 2: FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, AND ACTIONS TRIANGLE

Skill

- Define feelings, thoughts, and actions and understand the connection between the three
- Transfer of Learning: Fill in your own triangle



▶ LESSON 7: GENERATING HELPFUL THOUGHTS

Skills

- Identifying helpful and unhelpful thoughts
- Generating helpful/courage thoughts
- Transfer of Learning: Double Bubble



LESSON 10: SOCIAL PROBLEM-SOLVING

Skills

- Identify coping strategies to regulate feelings
- Take action steps
- Transfer of Learning: Identify rise in feelings and actions



1. Use your words (Stop, I need space. I don't like it when you _____.)



2. Use your *Courage* thoughts: "I can do this! Just stay calm."



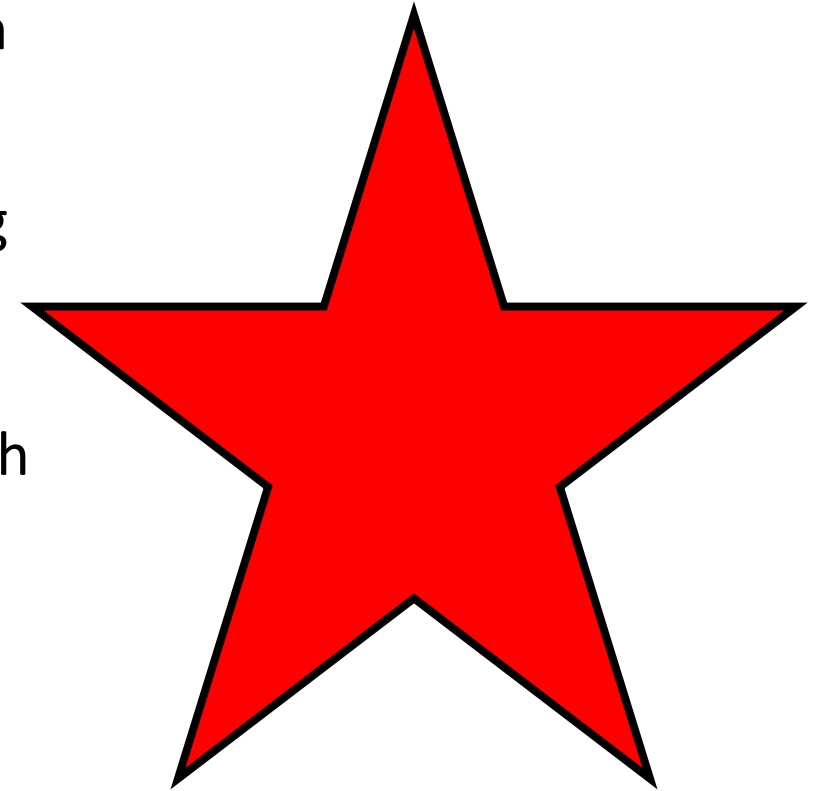
5. What goes around comes back around. So just walk away.



7. Relax your body.

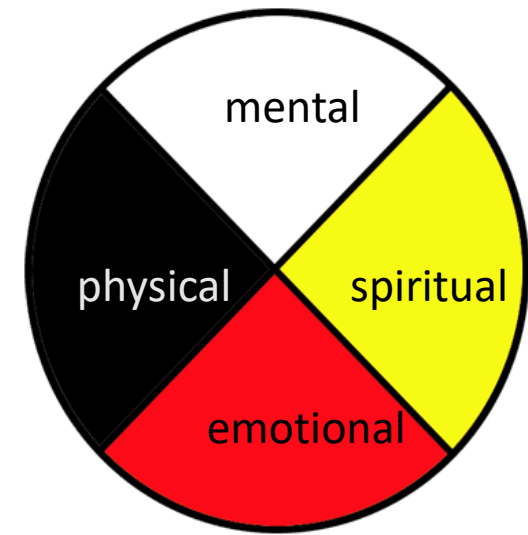
▶ STAR OVERVIEW

- Designed as a Social Emotional Learning Curriculum for middle and high school-aged youth
- 4 lessons; 1 per week
- Based upon evidence-based principles for treating trauma
- Designed for use by classroom teachers, school counselors, and professionals that work with youth
- Not therapy, but psychoeducational
- Designed for use in the classroom
- Recommend use of co-facilitators



COMMON REACTIONS

- Upsetting Images
- Feeling Tense or Geared up
- Avoiding people places things that are reminders of loss or event
- Nightmares
- Upset stomach, headache
- Difficulty sleeping
- Not wanting to spend time with family and friends
- Questioning God/Creator
- Feeling guilty



- Being jumpy
- Easily Startled
- Not wanting to talk about what happened
- Having a hard time looking ahead and planning for the future
- Lost purpose in life
- Not wanting to attend ceremony or church
- Feeling neither good nor bad, just numb
- Difficulty concentrating

▶ PYRAMID PLAN

CAUTION:
Is this plan safe? Yes, I am only going during the day with an adult

9-10 Anxiety Level: Play basketball with friends and my older cousin during the day. I may need to do this 10 times.

6-8 Anxiety Level: Walk on to the courts with a group, including my adult cousin. I may need to do this 8 times.

4-5 Anxiety Level: Walk near the courts with my adult cousin. I may need to do this 5 times.

1-3 Anxiety Level: Drive by the courts. I may need to do 3 times.



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