

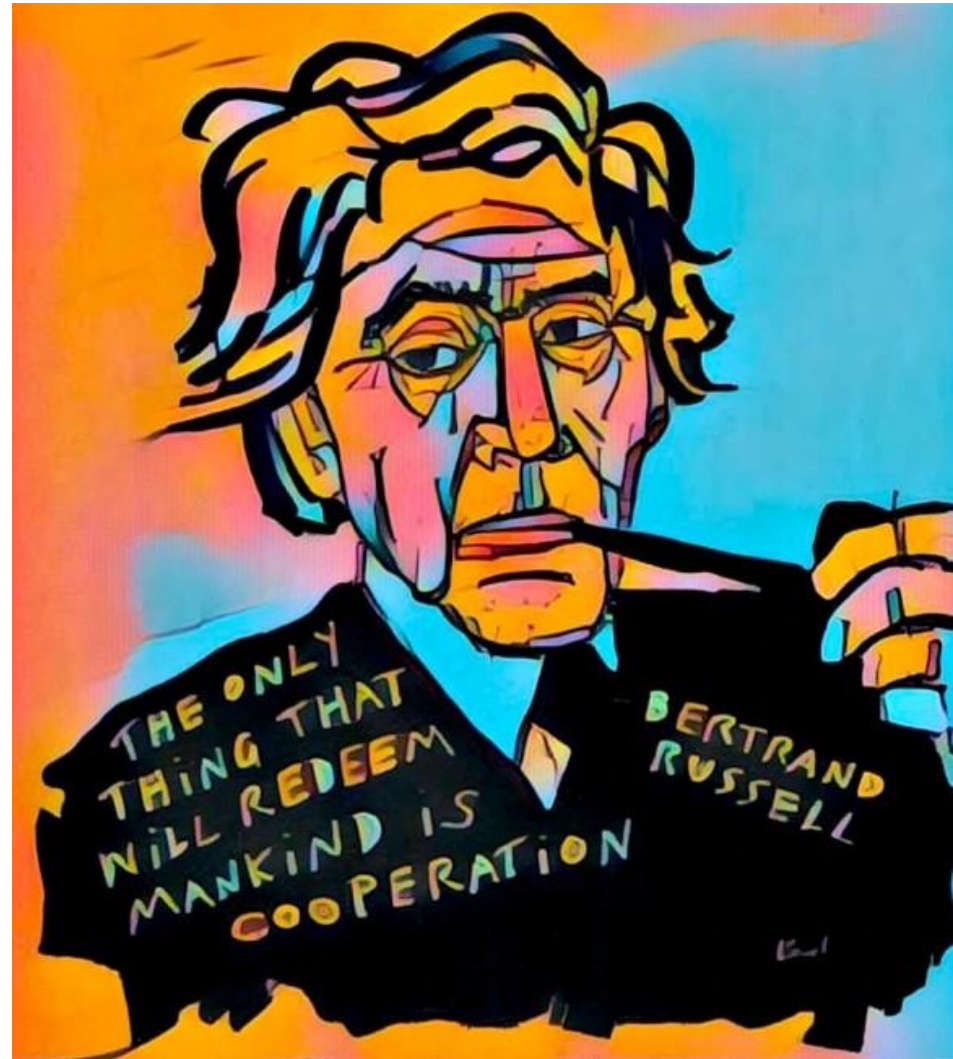
Integrating Trauma Informed Thinking into a Continuum of ADR

Veronica Coates
Elizabeth Engelken
Aubrie Fulk
Anjanette Pelletier



Agenda and Objectives

- ✓ Understand the principles of Trauma Informed Thinking
- ✓ Consider communication breakdown and its role in ADR
- ✓ Identify your organization in the context of the Dispute Resolution continuum
- ✓ Understand the impacts of secondary trauma and the importance of self care
- ✓ Develop a list of next steps and strategies which support communication and ADR in your current setting
- ✓ *Learn and Reflect in a SAFE space*



Perspective Shift - Trauma Informed Thinking

FROM

"What is wrong with you?"

TO

"What has happened to you?"

Provides context, fosters compassion

Helps us to see strengths in face of adversity



Who is in the Room?

Building Trust and Empathy

Tell Your Story Redux!

Turn to a neighbor and spend about two minutes each introducing yourself to each other - tell your life story!



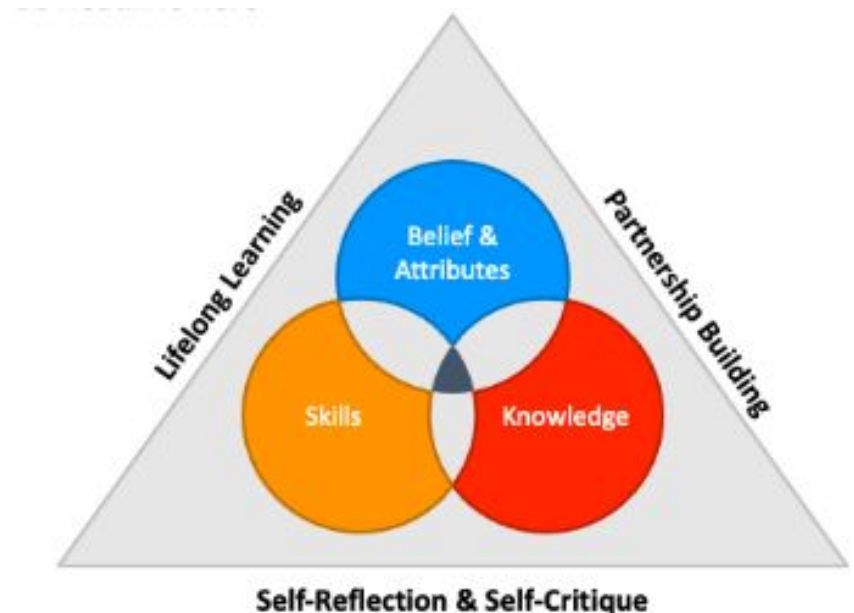
Trauma Informed Principles

- **Understanding Trauma and Stress**
- **Compassion and Dependability**
- **Resilience and Recovery**
- **Safety and Stability**
- **Collaboration and Empowerment**
- **Cultural Humility and Responsiveness**



Principles of Cultural Humility

- Maintain lifelong learning
- Engage in continuous self-reflection
- Become comfortable with *not knowing*
- Build collaborative partnerships
- Recognize power or privilege dynamics



*Facilitative Take Away:
Every meeting presents an opportunity to practice Cultural Humility.
Explicit reflection and preparation can combat implicit bias and will
support building relationships.*

What Happens When Communication Breaks Down?

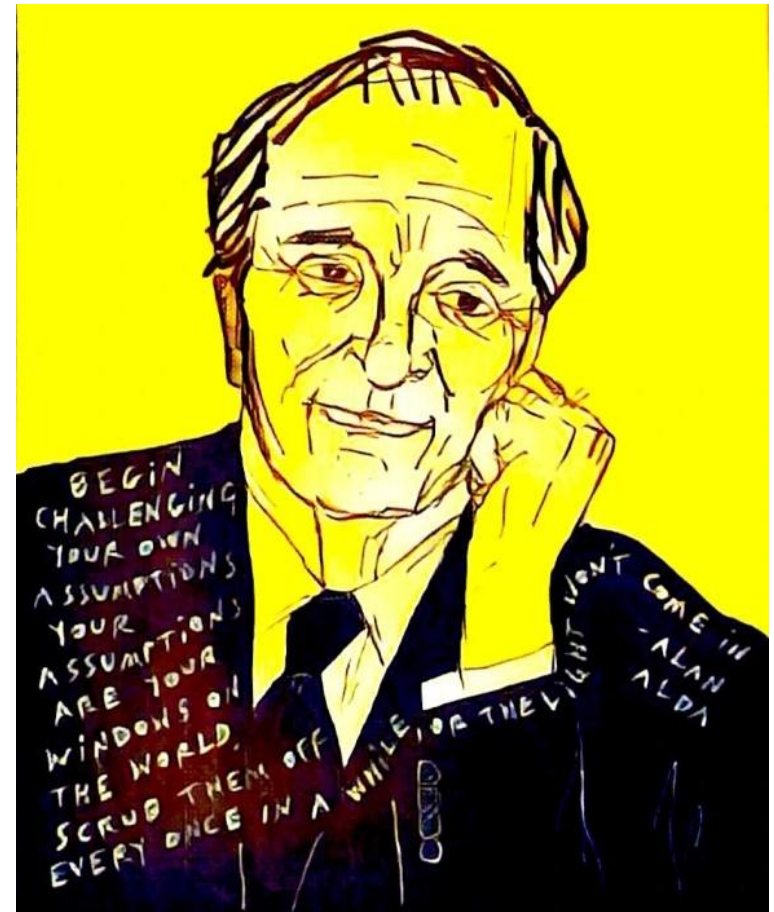
- Trust is lost
- Communication breaks down
- Relationships are damaged
- Selective Attention
- Self-fulfilling Prophecy Mode -
You get what you expect



Real Life Practices

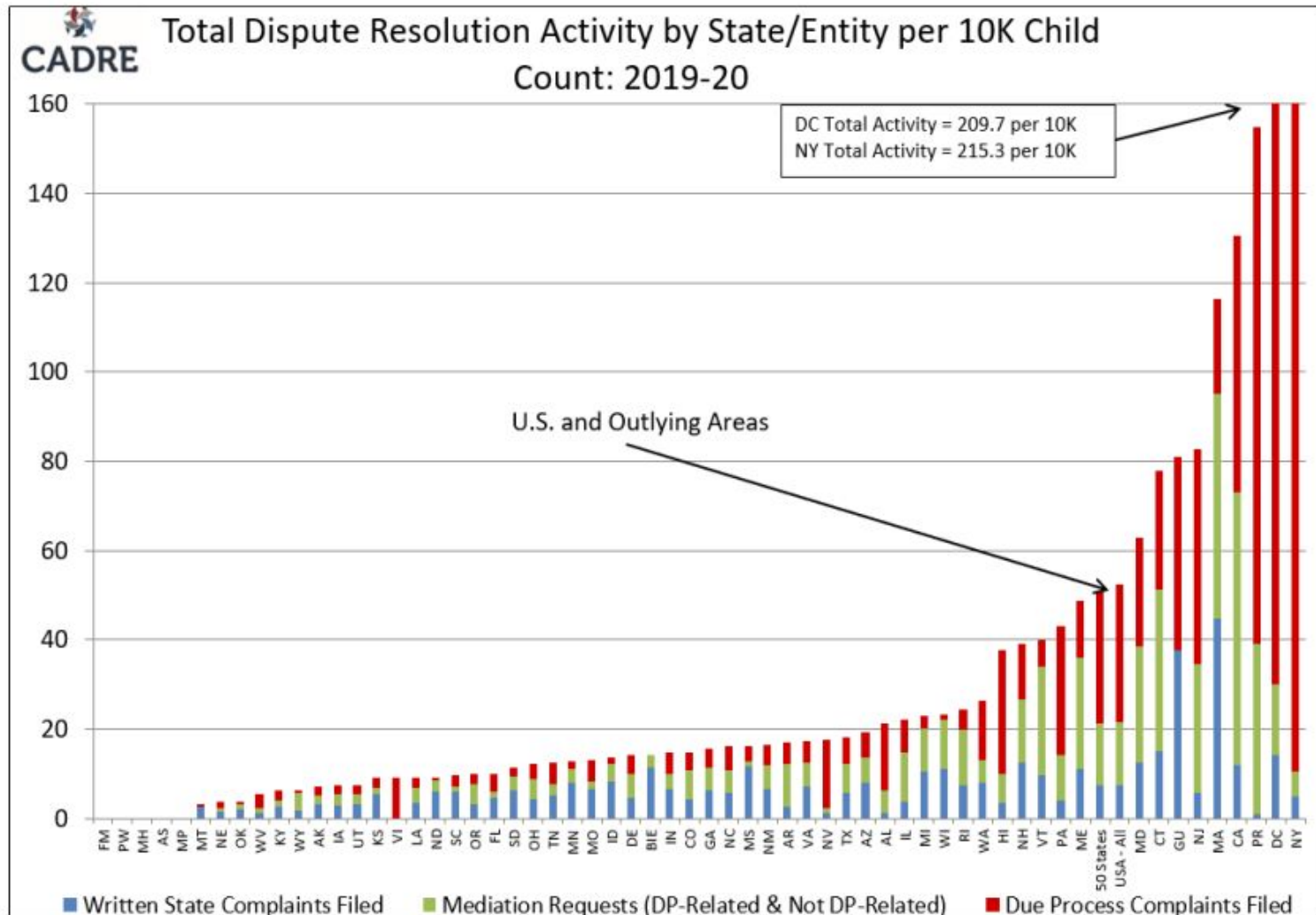
Current ADR within your role & system

- How has ADR been impacted by the pandemic and all the school disruptions encountered in the past two years?
- What is working well?
- What do you need to enhance the continuum of ADR in your region?
- How do you see this interfacing with your general education partners? Family partners? Advocacy partners? Attorneys?

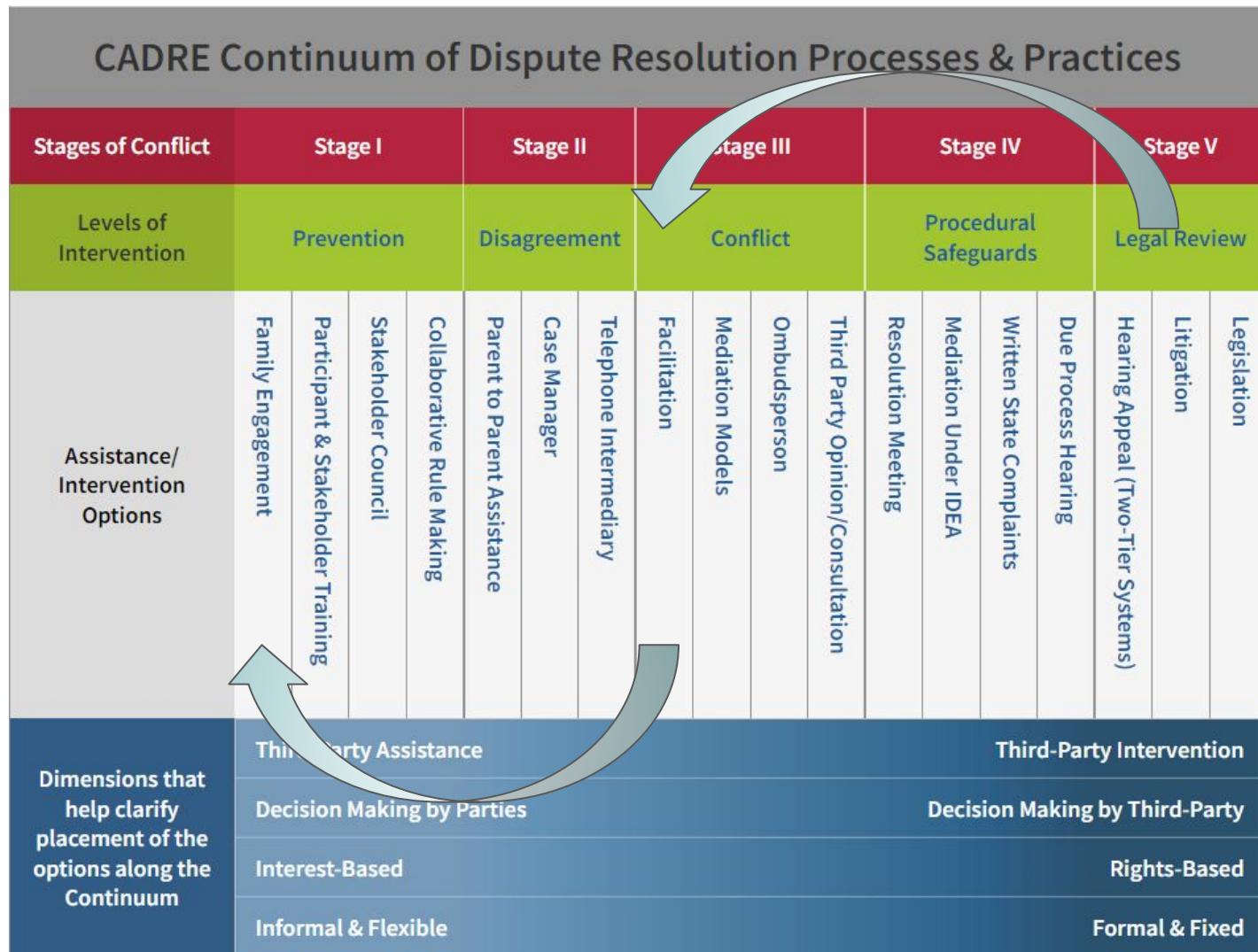


Requests
for due
process
and
mediation
were
increasing
before
COVID-19

Use of
dispute
resolution
options are
increasing
nationwide



We need to move from being reactive to conflict and litigation to dispute prevention and comfort with conflict engagement at the earliest possible stage of the CADRE Continuum



Dispute Prevention and Engagement

“Learning about the psychobiology of stress, toxic stress, and trauma is liberating for people. It gives us explanatory reasons for some of the puzzling behaviors we engage in and the feelings that can come to dominate us.”

(Bloom, 2013, p.48)

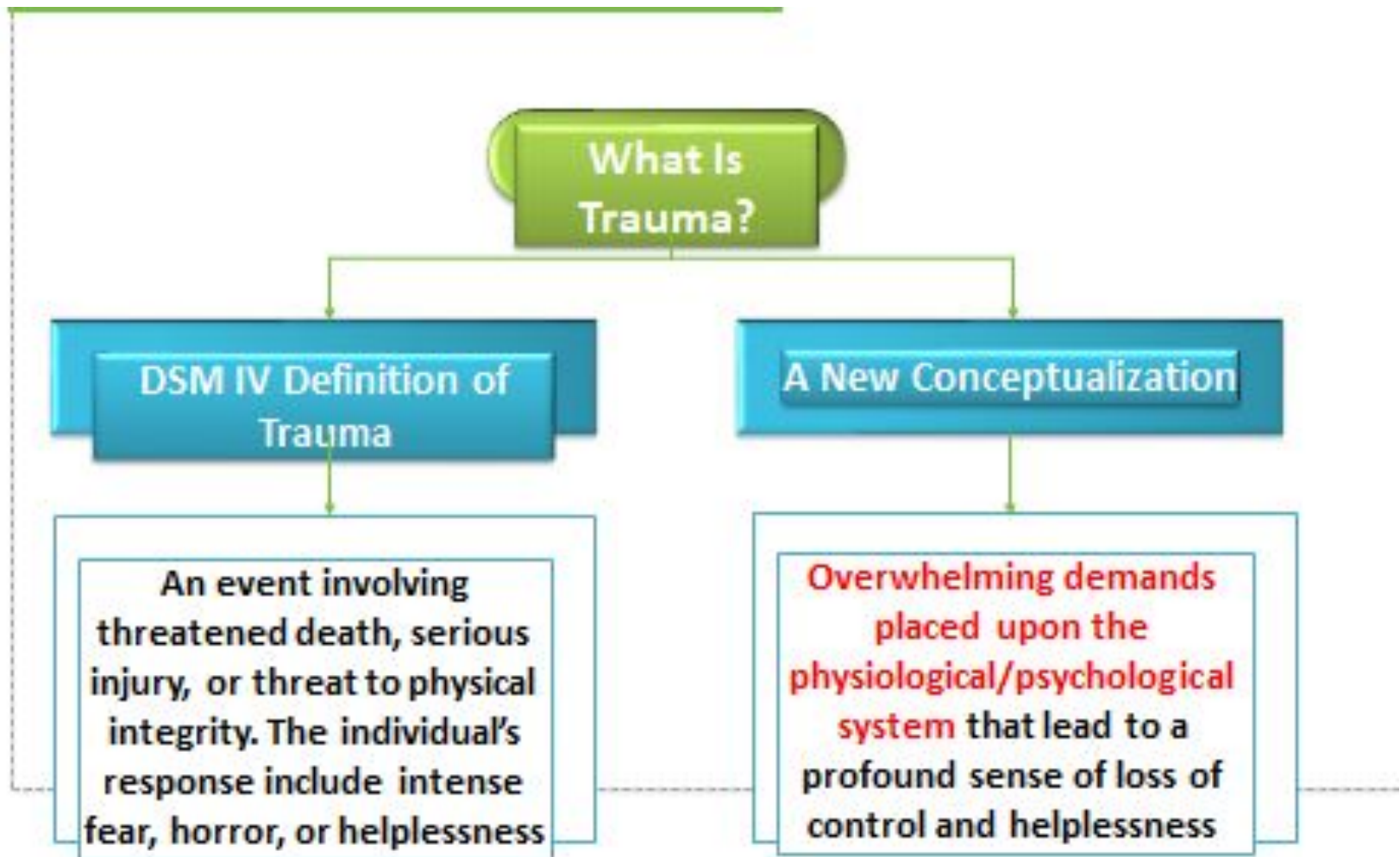
The Stress Response Continuum

Positive Stress	Tolerable Stress	Toxic Stress
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Normal and essential part of healthy development▪ Brief increases in heart rate and blood pressure▪ Mild elevations in hormonal levels▪ <i>Example:</i> Final exam Playoff game.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Body's alert systems activated to a greater degree▪ Activation is time-limited and buffered by caring adult relationships.▪ Brain and organs recover▪ <i>Example:</i> Death of a grandparent, car accident.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Occurs with strong, frequent or prolonged adversity▪ Disrupts brain architecture and other organ systems▪ Increased risk of stress-related disease and cognitive impairment▪ <i>Example:</i> abuse, neglect, caregiver substance dependence or mental illness

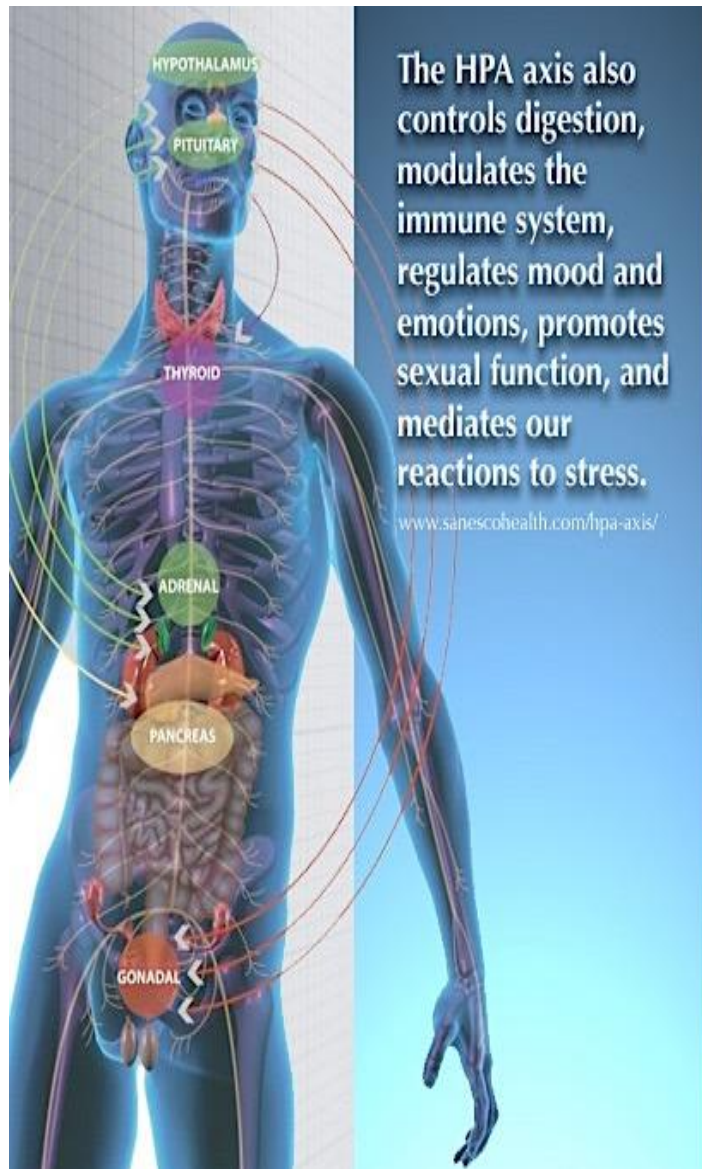
**Intense, prolonged, repeated, unaddressed;
Child or family vulnerabilities, limited supports, devel. delays**

**Social-Emotional buffering, Learned skills, Parent/Child
Resilience, Early Detection, Effective Intervention**

Defining Trauma

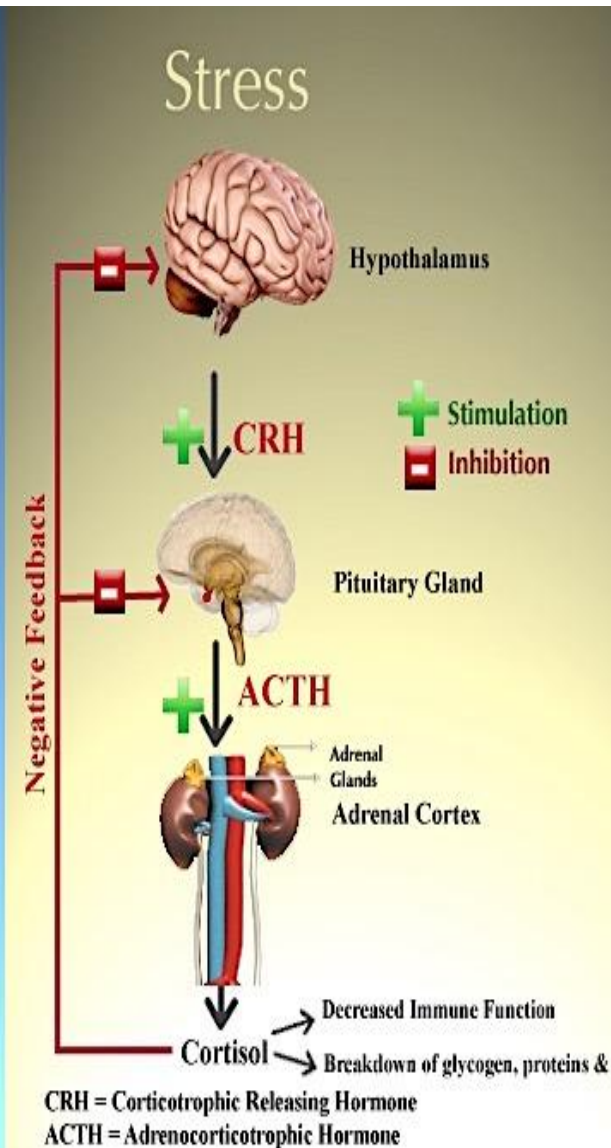


The Biology Of Secondary Trauma



The HPA axis also controls digestion, modulates the immune system, regulates mood and emotions, promotes sexual function, and mediates our reactions to stress.

www.sanescobehalth.com/hpa-axis/



Working with high trauma populations can lead to increased illness, burnout, and feelings of overwhelming stress.

THINKING BRAIN

- Concrete thought
- Abstract thought
- Reasoning
- Empathy
- Inhibitory response

EMOTION BRAIN

- Emotional reactivity
- Self Regulation
- Mood regulation
- Memory
- Attachment
- Affiliation

SURVIVAL BRAIN

- Heart rate
- Sleep
- Breathing
- Appetite
- Blood flow
- Muscle
- Tension



Secondary Trauma





COMPASSION

- We all start with a natural compassion for children
- We understand the context they bring with them

EMPATHY

- Our compassion yields trust, trust yields stories from children
- We are able to feel the pain of the children

SECONDARY TRAUMA

- Ongoing empathy in the face of other's pain has an impact
- We gradually take on the physiological and emotional reality of others

COMPASSION FATIGUE

- To survive our own trauma we begin to employ survival strategies
- This leads to numbing and withdrawing, as well as compromised empathy

Connecting ACES to the work of ADR

The Pair of ACE's

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Maternal Depression

Emotional &
Sexual Abuse

Substance
Abuse

Domestic Violence

Physical &
Emotional Neglect

Mental Illness

Divorce

Incarceration

Homelessness

ADVERSE COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTS

Poverty

Discrimination

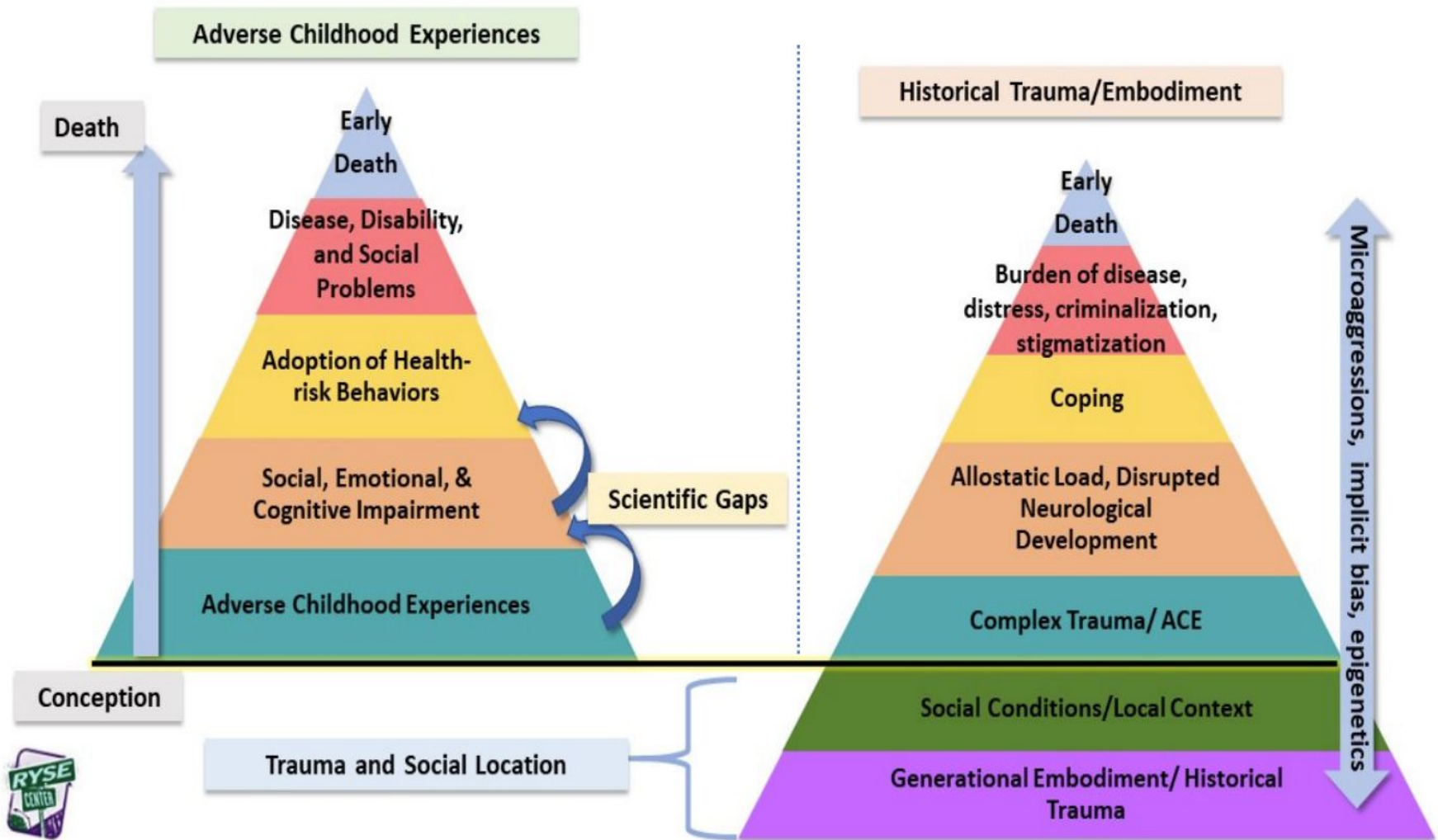
Community Disruption

Violence

Poor Housing
Quality & Affordability

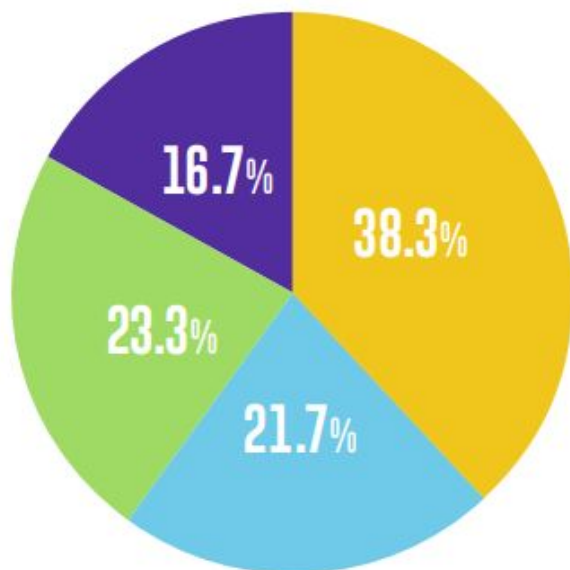
Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital

Impact of Trauma and Social Location



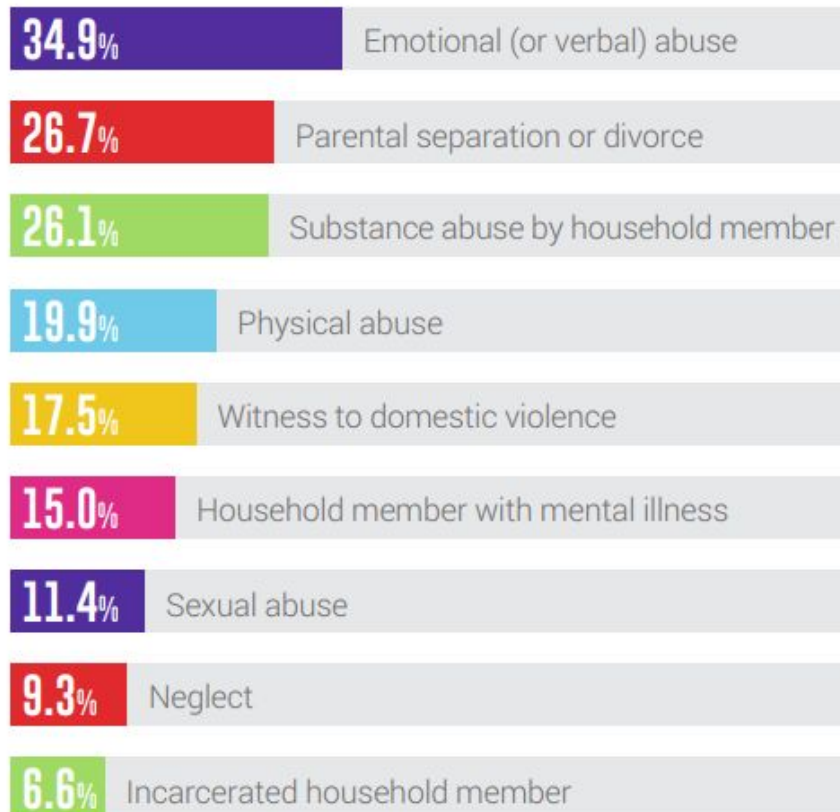
KEY FINDINGS

In California, **61.7%** of adults have experienced at least one ACE and **one in six**, or 16.7%, have experienced four or more ACEs. The most common ACE among California adults is emotional (or verbal) abuse.



Prevalence of number of ACEs among California adults

Most common ACEs among California Adults



Most common ACEs among California adults

What Can WE Do? Growth Mindset

- Build Resilience
- Safety
- Self Soothing
- Social and Emotional Competence
- Social Support Systems

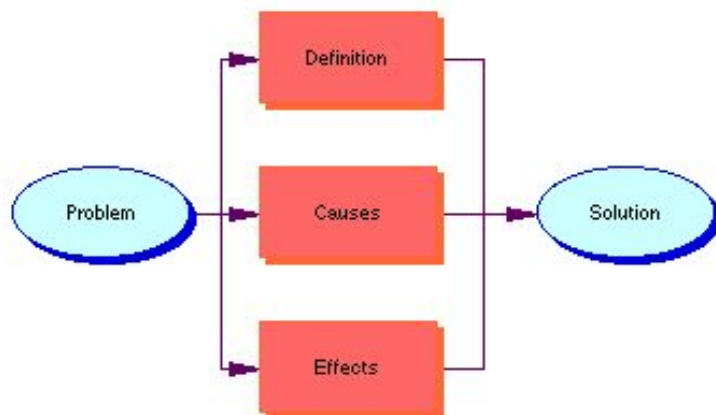


Padlet Link [Trauma Informed Principles](#)
Padlet Link [Mindsets Matter: Growth Mindset, Cultural Humility and Design Thinking](#)

“Be Hard on the Problem, Not on the People”

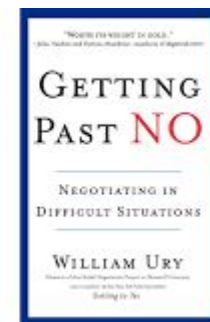
- Addressing Conflict
- Maintaining the Relationship
- Mapping the Problem, Mapping the Solution (can be a useful, proactive, innovative tool during an IEP)
- Understand YOUR own Conflict Style
 - [CLICK HERE](#) for Conflict Styles Survey

Problem-Solution Map



Joint problem-solving is soft
on the people, but hard on
the problem.

WILLIAM URY



Self Reflections and Trauma Literacy

- What responsibility do we have to understand the effects of trauma in our work, specifically around conflict?
- How does our own trauma affect our ways of engaging?
- Have you noticed the effects of traumatic experiences in yourself during conflict?
- Have you noticed the effect of traumatic experiences among others during conflict?



“A client's ability to mediate exists on a mental continuum with ABLE on one end and UNABLE on the other. Unfortunately, an increase in dysregulation is associated with an inability to have a successful mediation. The amygdala is the driving force for the mediation and the system is not able to be regulated during the mediation process. Mediators need to be less focused on agreement and practice acceptance of the client's placement on the continuum.”

Dawn Kuhlman

Trauma Informed Mediation Model

Dawn Kuhlman's Trauma-Informed Mediation (TIM) framework focuses on emotion regulation and brings a compassionate lens to understanding others. It also provides a basic understanding that the environment and life events (perceived or real) have an impact on brain functioning.



Resources:

- ★ [Informing About Trauma Informed Mediation with Dawn Kuhlman, Meditation Station Podcast](#)
- ★ [The Neuroscience of Conflict: Defensive v. Non Defensive Communication](#)
- ★ [Dawn Kuhlman's M.A.R.C.H Mediation Virtual Training](#)
- ★ [Harnessing the Power of mindfulness in Mediation by Selina Shultz and Robert Creo](#)

Trauma Informed Mediation

Setting Up the Space

Setting up the space is key

- ❖ Considering table set up and including round tables, considering snacks and water
- ❖ Having comfortable meeting spots for pre-meetings
- ❖ Space that allows people to take a break.

[The Art of Gathering by Priya Parker](#)
[Selina Shultz's Conflict Lab -- Pittsburgh](#)



Trauma Informed Mediation

❖ ***Brain/Body Dysregulation***

- Consider whether participants are operating out of prefrontal cortex or amygdala (fight/flight/freeze)

❖ ***Empowerment and Recognition***

- Offer choices and create space for the parties to have empathy with each other.
- Listen and validate

❖ ***Mindfulness of cognitions, emotions, and behaviors***

- Supports all parties, including the mediator, to increase self awareness and to identify which behaviors are helpful and harmful to the process
- Mediators can use mindfulness techniques with parties to assist in regulation such as deep breathing and sitting in silence

Trauma Informed Principles In Systems

Understanding Trauma & Stress

Individual



- Increase your understanding of trauma through attending trainings, reading, and research and share your knowledge with others
- Find out your ACE score and your resiliency score, visit: <https://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score/> to learn more
- Make a list of what happens when your stress is too high and what can help

Organizational



- Provide trainings on trauma, resilience, and recovery
- Make informational material (brochures, posters, readings, etc) on the impacts of trauma and stress readily available within the organization
- Post a sign reminding us to shift from “What is wrong with you?” to “What has happened?”

Without understanding trauma, we may adopt negative and unhealthy behaviors and beliefs. When we understand trauma and stress we can act compassionately and take well-informed steps toward wellness.

Facilitative Take Away:

Consider the impact of trauma on participants and approach meetings with a sensitivity to these issues.

Cultural Humility & Equity

Individual



- Regularly reflect on the ways your cultural, social and racial identity informs your thinking and acting
- Increase your knowledge of implicit and structural bias, oppression, racial equity, and racial justice through attending relevant trainings, reading and research, take an implicit bias test : <https://implicit.harvard.edu/>

Organizational



- Value diversity & practice inclusive behaviors
- Include a variety of people from different backgrounds to participate in organizational evaluations, planning, decision-making and hiring. Make it the norm to ask “Who is missing from the table?”
- Identify a cultural consultant or specialist that you or your staff can consult with, as-needed.

Trauma unpredictably violates our physical, social, and emotional safety resulting in a sense of threat and need to manage risks. Increasing stability in our daily lives and having these core safety needs met can minimize our stress reactions and allow us to focus our resources on wellness.

Facilitative Take Away:

Be aware of cultural and equity issues. Explicitly prepare for and consider responses via this lens.

Safety & Stability

Individual



- Identify a professional boundary that you can improve and clarify, such as not doing, checking or sending emails after work hours.
- Schedule meetings and events on your calendar with a 30 minute cushion before and after to allow time to commute and connect with others
- Commit to personally notifying clients/staff about changes that impact them before they are announced.

Organizational



- Have transparent decision-making rules for meetings, projects, and products
- Do environmental scans on a regular basis to identify needed repairs (e.g. broken lines, electronic safety hazards), and cleanliness (e.g. everything clearly labeled, no graffiti, sharp objects, etc.) Have consumers help with walk throughs and be on a safety committee. Post results to website.

We come from diverse social and cultural groups that may experience and react to trauma differently. When we are open to understanding these differences and respond to them sensitively we make each other feel understood and wellness is enhanced.

Facilitative Take Away:

Set the stage for ensuring the environment promotes a feeling of safety and stability in physical and psychological realms.

Compassion & Dependability

Individual



- Treat yourself with kindness, gentleness, support, and understanding. Use mindfulness to recognize when you are struggling and ground yourself in the here and now, acknowledge that you are not alone in your humanity, and then be kind to yourself in your struggle. What advice and support would you offer a friend if they were in your situation? Offer yourself this same support.
- Don't overcommit: Be optimistic about what's achievable while being realistic about challenges
- Offer to help an overwhelmed coworker with a difficult task or a piece of their workload.

Organizational



- Cross train staff and have succession plans for when there are staffing shortages or changes
- Maintain consistency in practice and policy, when changes are needed make sure staff and clients have been provided adequate notice

Trauma is overwhelming and can leave us feeling isolated or betrayed, which may make it difficult to trust others and receive support. When we experience compassionate and dependable relationships, we establish trusting connections with others that foster mutual wellness.

Facilitative Take Away:

Self-Care and Support are crucial for successful systems.
Relationships are key for successful meeting outcomes.

Collaboration & Empowerment

Individual



- Build connection: learn about the work of other colleagues, teams, departments, and agencies
- Learn about and understand the stress responses of those on your team, and let them know what you need when you look “distressed” (creating accountability healing partners)
- Create a quarterly “community” meeting where the clients you serve are welcomed to provide their feedback and input on your services.

Organizational



- Create mini-retreat teams or groups that participate in regular healing activities, such as lunch walks, social lunches, art time, or other activities that allow others to connect
- Have a common policy and procedure folder with all the policies and procedures written in plain language and available for everyone

Trauma involves a loss of power and control that makes us feel helpless. When we are prepared for and given real opportunities to make choices for ourselves and our care, we feel empowered and can promote our own wellness.

Facilitative Take Away:

Develop the capacity of your team - including parents and students.
Empower others to take active roles and to build solutions.

Resilience & Recovery

Individual



- Find wellness practices that you can integrate into your life that fit your style such as using breathing practices in your day at regular intervals, or stand up and stretch for 5 minutes every hour (set an alarm bell to remind yourself)
- Offer a weekly private or public thank you to specific coworkers for their effort and support.

Organizational



- Promote a culture of learning
- Show staff their well-being is important and valued

Trauma can have a long-lasting and broad impact on our lives that may create a feeling of hopelessness. Yet, when we focus on our strengths and clear steps we can take toward wellness we are more likely to be resilient and recover.

Facilitative Take Away:

Build opportunities for wellness into meetings. Anticipate needs and work to fulfill them in small ways. Take time after meetings to reflect and renew.

Bringing Trauma Informed Practices into Social/Political Organizations and Education

- Create environments and relationships where interactions can be consistent, safe, and familiar. Our brains DON'T like surprises
- Develop shared agreements on what to do if people get activated. Avoid re-traumatizing people and respect boundaries
- BOUNDARIES=SELF CARE
- Avoid pressuring people to “tell their story”
- Build in rituals and mind/body somatic experiences
- Remove threats, including systemic ones
- Be aware that we all have personal history, and trauma can be unrecognized, unmanaged, activated, and could alter the dynamic in significant ways
- Help build resilience - sustaining communities to withstand, adapt, and recover from adversity, including building resilience communities
- Learn Trauma Informed conflict management skills

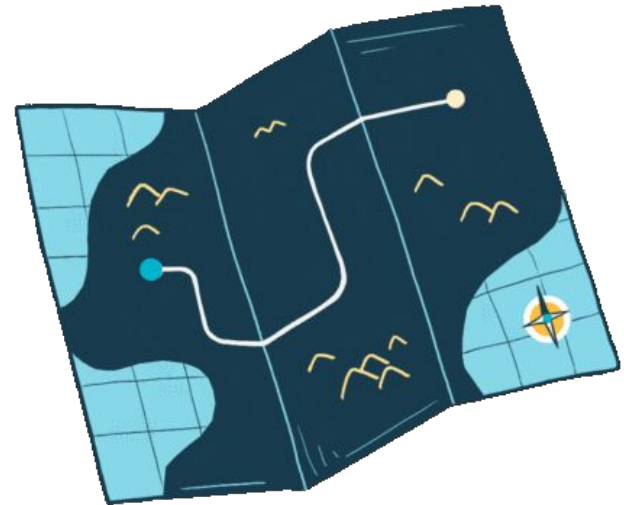
California ADR: Advocacy Journey

ADR COVID Dispute Prevention & Resolution and Learning Recovery Plans

Distance Learning



Legislative Advocacy for
students with disabilities



Dollars to address Learning
Recovery and Dispute
Prevention & Resolution

March 13, 2020 -
COVID-19 Pandemic

California State Budget (2021) Awards over ½ Billion Dollars Towards Dispute Prevention & Learning Recovery Efforts!

\$100 Million Statewide

Dispute Prevention and Dispute Resolution - Special Education (CA Dept of Education)

\$450 Million Statewide

Learning Recovery Support - Special Education (CA Dept of Education).

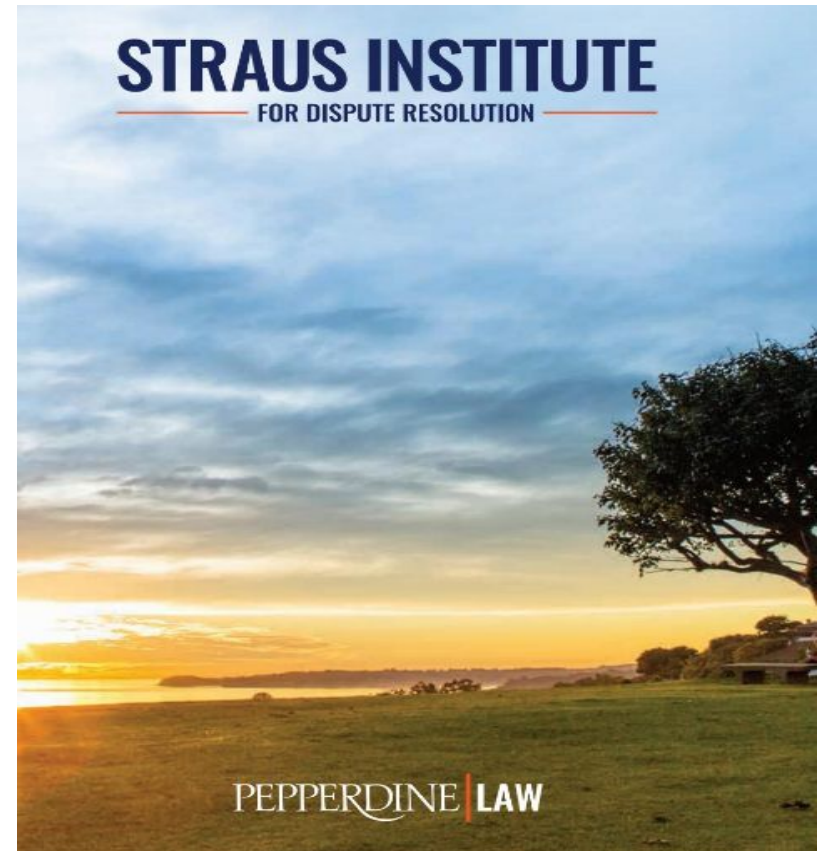
- A win for ADR champions.
- Systemic leveraging of new skills and opportunities for conflict engagement
- No dollars to be spent on attorney fees!

Mindfulness in the Context of Dispute Resolution

Practical Mindfulness: *Clear and Calm in the Heat of Conflict*

- Mindfulness for Conflict Resolvers
- Brain Science in Mediation
- Taking STOCK
- Why Mindfulness Fosters Ethical Behavior

“Pain is mandatory, suffering is optional” Buddha



Straus Institute: Statewide Partnership!

The California [SELPA Administrators Association](#) has partnered with Straus Institute to offer a certification in [Mediating the Litigated Case](#), curated with a special education lens.

Each cadre has up to 50 educational professionals.

The Straus Institute has also offered other trainings specifically designed for special educators as well!



PEPPERDINE | LAW

STRAUS INSTITUTE
— FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION —

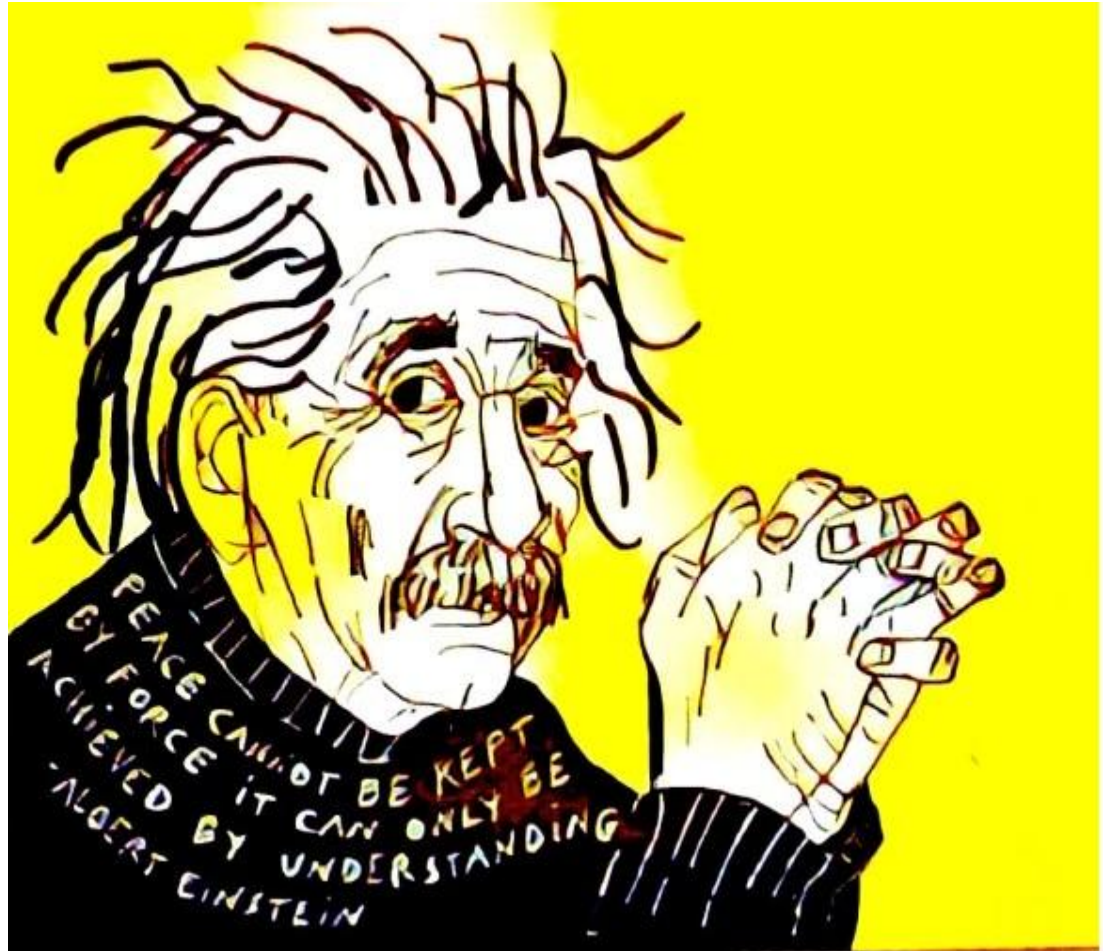
Theory into Practice: Making the Money Count

- \$ Hire an ADR Director/Coordinator/Leader: Commit dollars and action to allowing that person to be NEUTRAL
- \$ Provide ADR and conflict management training to support/clerical staff Adjust job descriptions for enhanced opportunity for mediation (i.e. School Psychologists -- can we change them to conflict managers?)
- \$ Find ways to prevent disputes that build peace and equity
 - e.g., translating documents into native languages, rebuild websites with resources
- \$ Offer conflict resolution and ADR training to parents families without staff present
- \$ Cross train in a region and share neutral mediators
- \$ Integrate SEL/Equity work into ADR
- \$ Video library of presentations
- \$ Train people in “Mapping”
- \$ We want to hear your ideas!



Elbow Partner Conversation

- Imagine an ideal ADR program with your current staffing. What does that look like? What changes would need to be made?
- Now Imagine your ideal ADR program with no barriers (endless support, staffing, money!) What would it look like?



Self Care for Educators

“Any educator who works directly with traumatized children and adolescents is vulnerable to the effects of trauma—referred to as ‘**compassion fatigue**’ or ‘secondary traumatic stress’. The best way to deal with compassion fatigue is early recognition.”

-Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators, NCTSN

- Be aware of the signs
- Don't go it alone
- Recognize compassion fatigue as an occupational hazard
- Seek help with your own traumas
- If you see signs in yourself, talk to a professional
- Attend to self care

SELF CARE

Dealing With Emotions

Personal Steps

- Slow things down
- Maintain neutral stance
- Stay calm
- Emphasize listening
- Raise awareness
- Revisit the Process Agreements

Process Steps

- Do a process check
- Use interventions
- Use a structured protocol
- Use a chart or third point
- Create closure

Connecting the Dots-Practicing PEARLS

Partnership

"Let's work together."

Empathy

"That sounds frustrating."

Apology

"I'm sorry that happened."

Respect

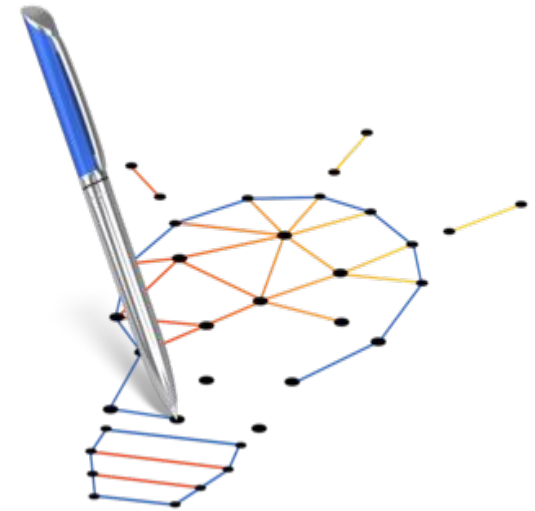
"You have obviously worked hard on this."

Legitimation

"It makes sense that you feel this way."

Support

"Let's see what we can do."



Distraction for Educators

“ACCEPTS”

Activities – sports, exercise, hobbies, watch a movie, walk a longer distance than normal

Contributing – engage or share in activity that primarily serves others

Comparisons – think about people who are suffering more than you, think about how much the student has suffered

Opposite Emotions – if angry, watch a comedy, if scared watch something daring, if sad, listen to upbeat music, if anxious, listen to calming music

Pushing away – mentally put the emotion in a box, or on a shelf to deal with later, “Turn down the volume of the problem.”

Thoughts – sing song lyrics you don’t quite remember, decide which profession everyone you pass does, mentally decorate a future home, landscape a portion of your yard

Sensations – keep a sensory box on your desk just for you

Self-Soothe with 5 Senses

Vision – go somewhere inspiring or look at inspiring pictures; create a scrapbook of inspiring visual images

Sound – music, nature sounds

Smell – cooking, lavender, citrus, floral, essential oils, candles

Touch – comfortable clothes, preferred fabrics, foot or hand massage

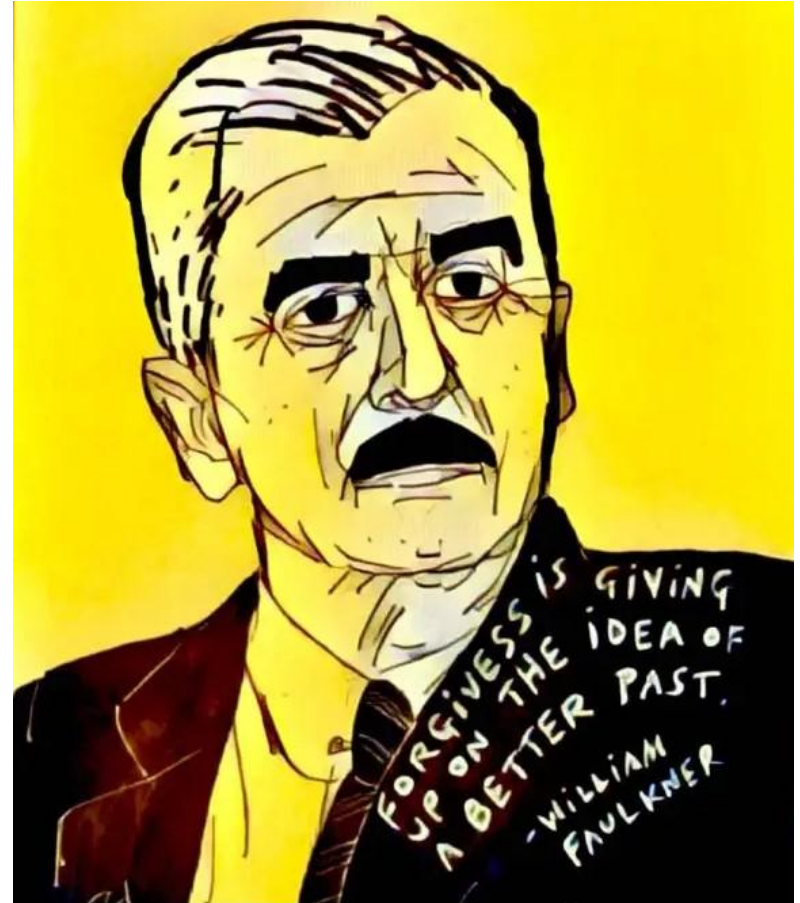
Taste – favorite food, hard candy or mint, carbonated water

3 minute mindful breathing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SEfs5TJZ6Nk>

Sharing Back and Take Aways

- What are your takeaways?
- What are your next steps?
- Where do you see the continuum of ADR working beyond just special education disputes? How can this work transcend our system?
- Can you see the roles of staff change or adapt to the use of some of these models?



Closure Activity

Summarize your learning today in the form of one of your senses metaphorically or realistically:

Visual Representation ~ *a strong visual or color*

Sound ~ *a song or lyric*

Smell ~ *a specific smell*

Touch ~ *a texture or object you felt*

Taste ~ *a comforting or favorite food*

Questions or Comments?

Veronica Coates

vcoates@tehamaschools.org

Elizabeth Engelken

eengelken@sonomaselpa.org

Aubrie Fulk

afulk@tehamaschools.org

Anjanette Pelletier

anjanettep@sscal.com

Thank you!

