



# Advancing Adult Compassion Resilience

A Toolkit for



Schools and  
Health & Human  
Services

Toolkit url: [Compassionresiliencetoolkit.org](http://Compassionresiliencetoolkit.org)  
For ongoing support: [WISE@wisewisconsin.org](mailto:WISE@wisewisconsin.org)

Developed in partnership with:





## Goals for today



1. Build your capacity to shape the ongoing evolution of a compassionate and resilient school community
2. Explore leadership and staff practices that establish and maintain compassionate cultures
3. Mobilize curiosity to continue these important discussions about Staff Culture and Wellness, Compassion Fatigue, and Compassion Resilience beyond today



# Why do this work?

A vision of a compassionate culture





# Rationale – School Perspective

1. Educator resilience and student achievement
2. Teacher/leader retention
3. Role of collegial supports and leadership
4. Economic impacts
5. Organizational commitments
6. Job satisfaction
7. Innovation





# Rationale Healthcare Perspective

Work climate and associated burnout predict:

- Patient and caregiver safety
- Clinical outcomes
- Patient experience
- Turnover
- Financial vitality

[IHI Framework for Improving Joy in Work](#). 2017.

Dyrbye, et al. *Burnout Among Health Care Professionals: A call to explore and address this underrecognized threat to safe, high-quality care.*

NAM.edu/Perspectives 7/5/2017.



# Toolkit Introduction



Compassion Resilience

Compassion Resilience How Does It Work? Get Started

## Advancing Adult Compassion Resilience: A Toolkit For Schools

Compassion Resilience How Does It Work? Get Started

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wise END STIGMA TOGETHER AND STAYING ALL AT HOME  
ROGERS IN HEALTH  
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

[compassionresilencetoolkit.org](https://compassionresilencetoolkit.org)

- A tier one approach to staff compassion resilience
- NOT an intervention for staff who “who need it most”

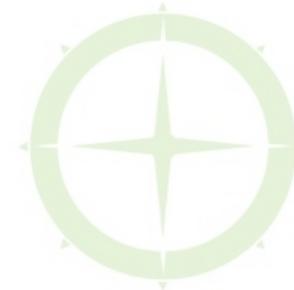
**The ONLINE toolkit is free, flexible and available to you at any time.**



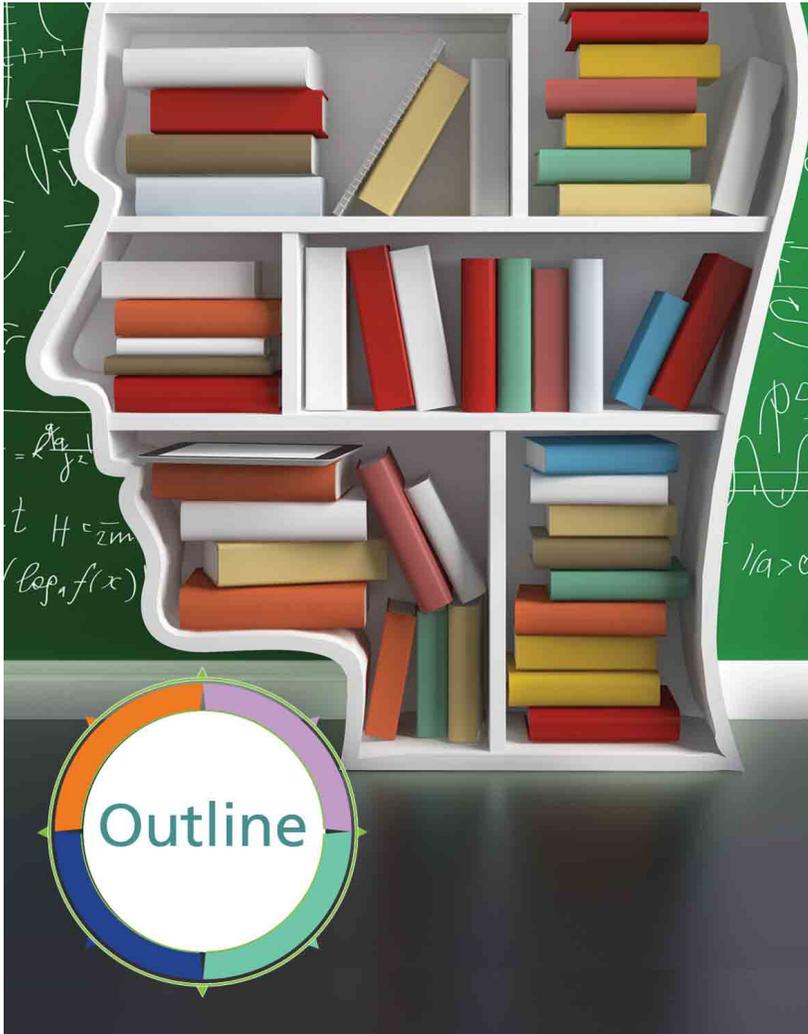
# Building Our Compassion Resilience



- The power to return to a position of empathy, strength, and hope after the daily witnessing of the challenges families face in our community and the realities of the workplace.
- To be optimistic in an imperfect world.



## To achieve the goal of consistent compassion, we focus on tools to:



1. Understand what it means to act with compassion and recognize when we are not
2. Minimize what leads to compassion fatigue and maximize what makes us resilient (individual, team and systems)
3. Set clear, realistic and aspirational expectations for ourselves and others
4. Set personal boundaries to support our ability to meet those expectations
5. Create a sense of accountability in all team members for the culture of our organization
6. Put strategies into practice that build and maintain our well-being



How we got to this topic...





# A Driver of Compassion Fatigue

## False beliefs about behavior



*Kids/adults/colleagues do well if they want to ...*

- 1. Manipulative
- 2. Just wants attention
- 3. Not motivated
- 4. Doesn't care



*Kids/adults/colleagues do well if they can ...*

- 1. Coping in the way they know how
- 2. Lack skills required
- 3. Something in their way
- 4. Together we can figure

<https://www.livesinthebalance.org/>

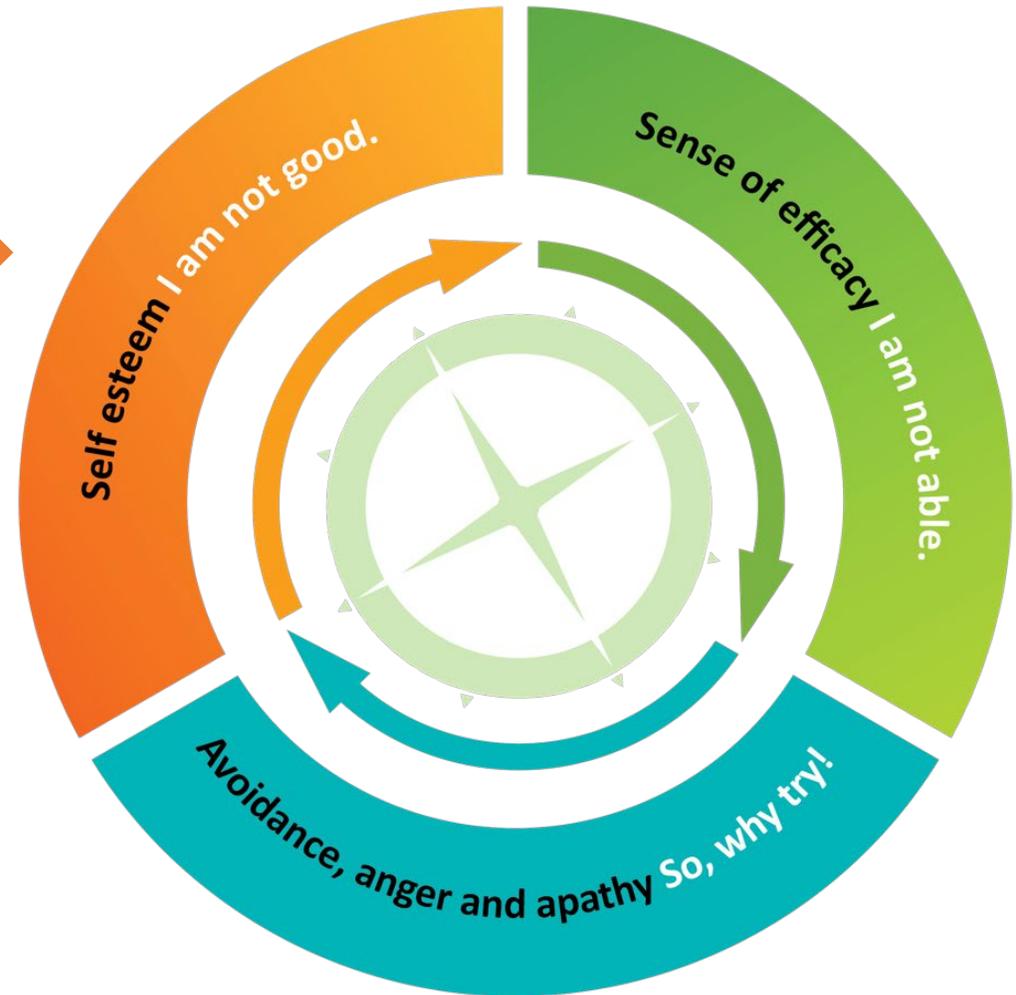
*And Toolkit Appendix*



Belief that all behavior is externally motivated impacts how others see themselves AND how we see ourselves



## Feelings of Shame





## Another Driver of Compassion Fatigue

The trauma informed care/trauma sensitive schools movement has had an unintended consequence for many – an open and unprotected heart. The toolkit builds the skills to maintain open and protected hearts.



# Section 1: Steps for Compassionate Action



1. **Notice** – Be present in the moment and able to recognize signs of distress.
2. **Self-check** - Be aware of your initial thoughts and feelings.
3. **Seek understanding** – Listen with curiosity to comprehend the other’s perspective, feelings and strengths.
4. **Cultivate empathy** – Develop genuine concern based on what you have come to understand.
5. **Discern best action** – Co-plan with the person to figure out what would be helpful to them.
6. **Take action** – Be aware that intention alone is not compassionate action.

*Combined from the works of Monica Worline and Beth Lown*

# Compassionate Action: Scenario 1



A colleague shares with you that one of her 8 year old students/clients is really on her mind. His family struggles and he has so much potential. He is shut down and acting out with tears and tantrums. Recently, he hit her and she didn't tell her supervisor to avoid consequences for him. She loses sleep and wakes up with him on her mind. She tells you that she may be the only one who can get through to him. She is considering an outing with him on a Saturday to give his family a break. She clearly cares, and she is definitely stressed.

# Connect and Reflect



1. **Notice** – Be present and able to recognize signs of distress.
2. **Self-check** - Be aware of your initial thoughts and feelings.
  - What emotions arise for you in relation to this scenario?
  - What might your initial judgments be?
3. **Seek to understand** – Listen with curiosity to understand the distress from the other’s perspective. (feelings and strengths)
  - What strategies do you use to encourage the person to open-up with you?
4. **Cultivate empathy** – what emotions can you relate to?
  - Have you ever wanted to go beyond professional boundaries to assist someone? Has this ever caused you distress?
5. **Discern best action** – What do they believe is the next helpful step?
  - Is it possible that through your listening and highlighting strengths, this person may arrive at the best next step for themselves?
6. **Take action**

## Section 2: Definitions for the Work

- Compassion
- Compassion Resilience
- Compassion Fatigue
- Wellness
- Self-Compassion\*\*





## Section 3: Compassion Fatigue



- Secondary trauma and burnout
- Gradual lessening of compassion over time
- Avoid trying to understand what people face
- Become less effective in our roles
- Life satisfaction decreases



**ZEALOT** — We are committed, involved, and available, ready to problem solve and to make a difference. We are willing to go the extra mile.



**IRRITABILITY** — Anger and cynicism, diminished creativity, sadness, feeling helpless or hopeless.

**RENEWAL vs. PATHOLOGY** — Leaving the profession, physical and mental illness, chronic symptoms or hardiness, resiliency, transformation.



# Compassion Fatigue's Path

*(Cycle is from work of Eric Gentry, PhD, 2012)*



**WITHDRAWAL** — Overwhelmed by complexity, chronic exhaustion, physical illness, difficulty empathizing, feeling numb to other's pain, absenteeism.



**ZOMBIE** — A sense that you can't ever do enough, inflated sense of importance, sleeplessness, sense of persecution.





IMPORTANT  
REMINDER!

Compassion fatigue is a  
NORMAL response to  
complex and overwhelming  
circumstances.

And, we can prevent and intervene  
early to lesson the impact.





## A Break for our SPIRIT

When do you feel most alive, most like yourself? What are you doing?  
What or with whom are you surrounded?



# Team Conversations to Build Compassion Resilience



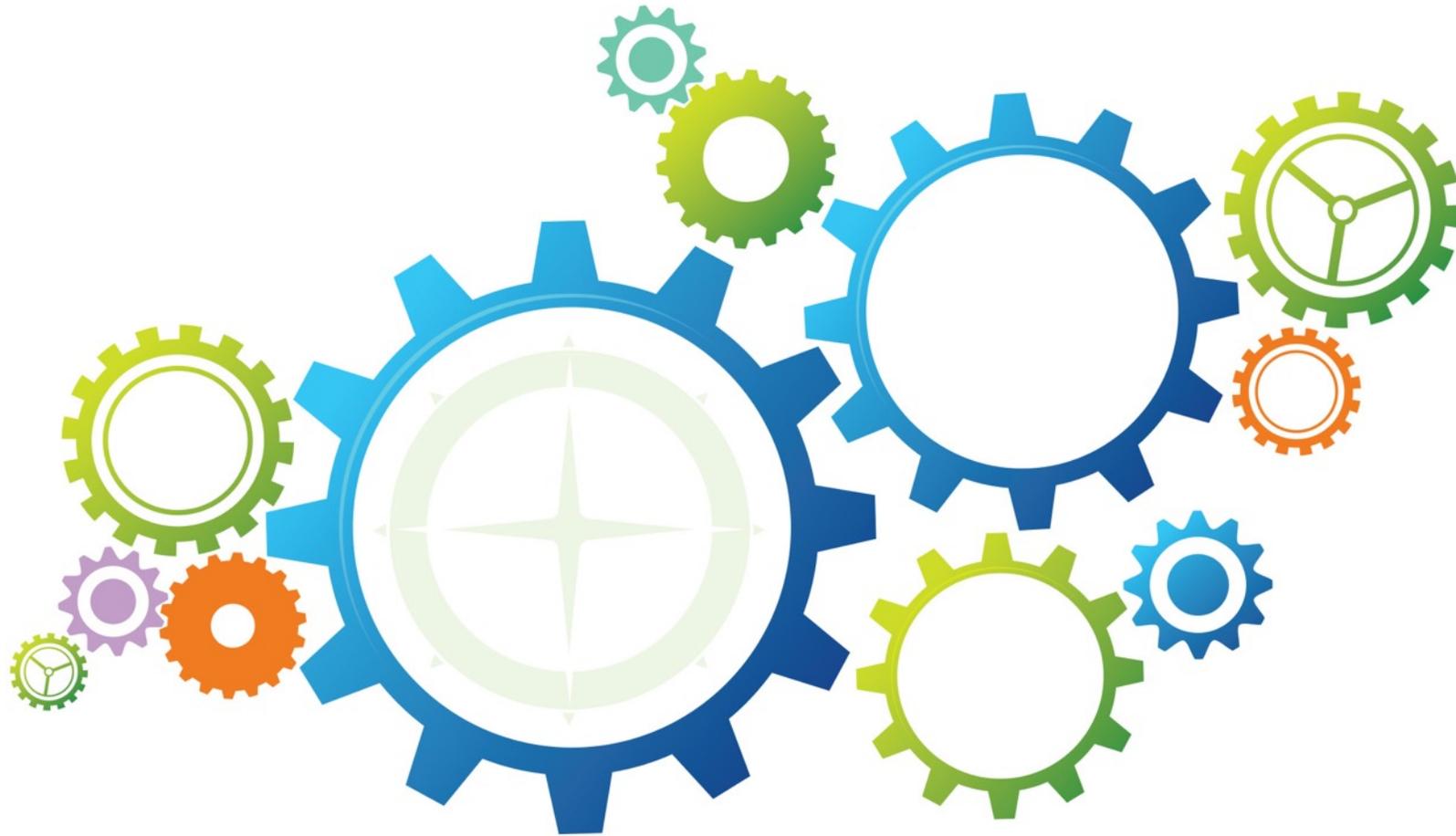
**Section 4:** Drivers and Locus of Control

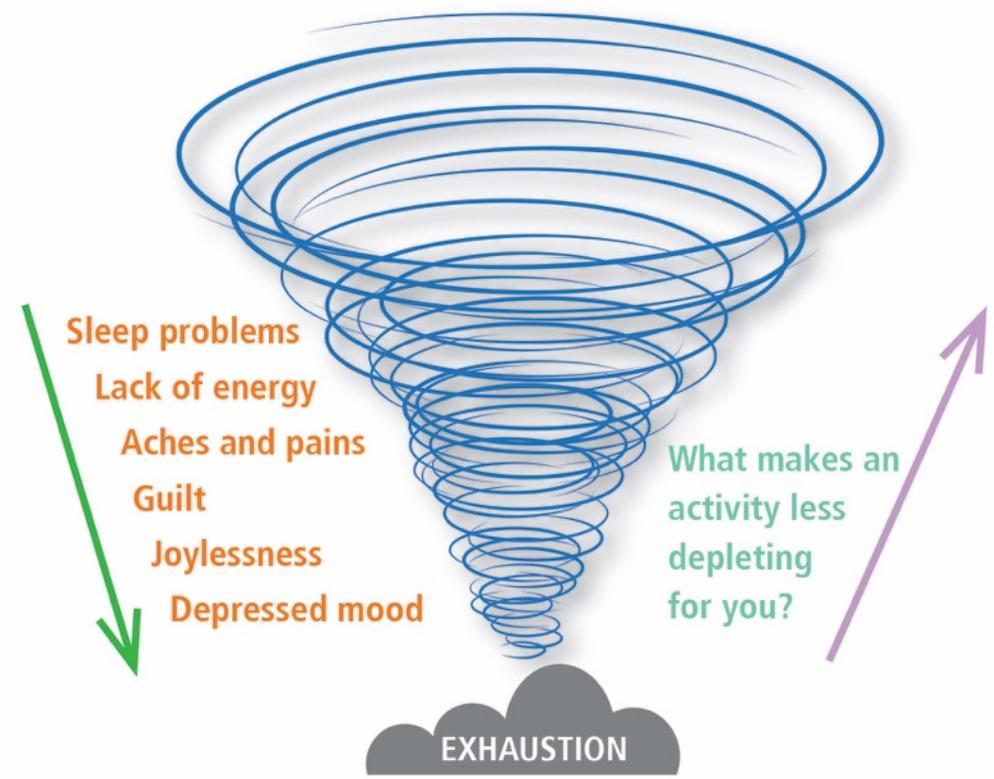
**Section 5:** Expectations — realistic ones of yourself and others — what is enough and what can I hope for? Exposure to recovery.

**Section 6:** Compassionate boundary setting

**Section 7:** Staff culture — connect with colleagues and others in community

# Section 4: System Drivers of Compassion Fatigue and Resilience





# A Break for our MIND and STRENGTH

What are different ways your colleagues approach an activity that is typically depleting for you but not for them?





## Section 5: Expectations



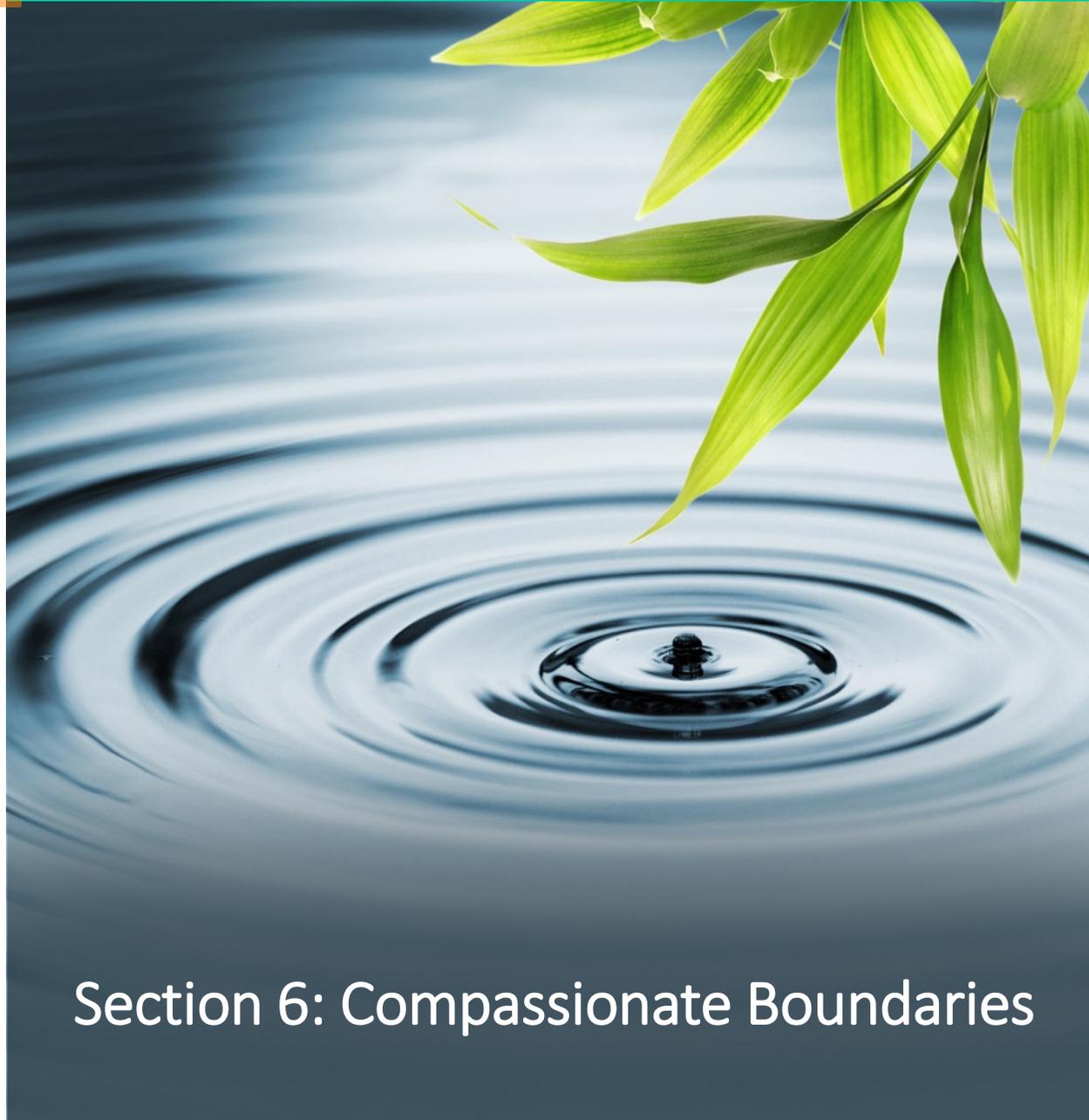
1. What positive role do expectations play?
  2. What impact has your unrealistic self-expectations had on your well-being?
  3. What has the impact been of others' unrealistic expectations of your capacity?
  4. How do you assess if expectations are being set at a helpful aspirational level?
- An activity from the toolkit...





# Expectations: Remind ourselves of the resilience in our families and colleagues





“Compassionate people ask for what they need. They say no when they need to, and when they say yes, they mean it. They’re compassionate because their boundaries keep them out of resentment.”

Brené Brown



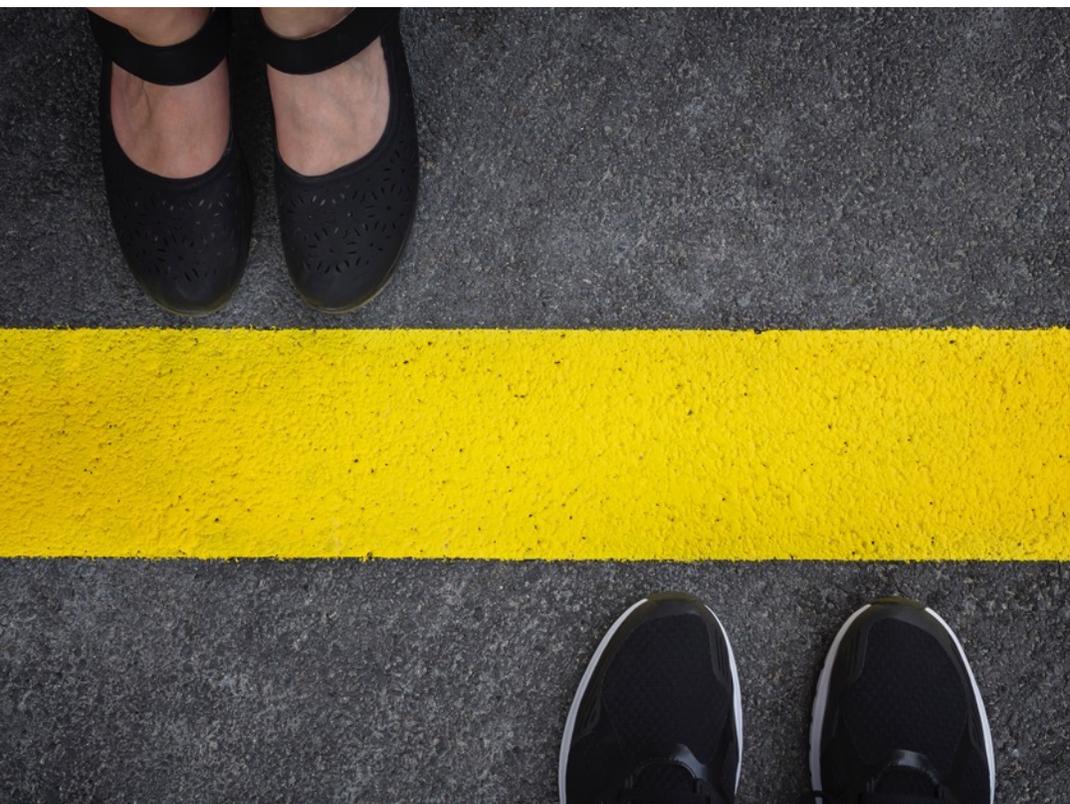
## Section 6: Compassionate Boundaries



**Helpful  
Adult  
Behaviors**



# Tips for Setting Compassionate Boundaries



1. Know what you want to say “Yes” to in your life (values and priorities).
2. Be proactive. Have “meetings” to discuss boundaries. Structure offers safety for both sides.
3. Just say it! Don’t make them guess. Use simple and direct language.
4. Reinforce by pointing out the violations **IN THE MOMENT**.
5. Give explanations that are specific, relevant to the other person, and offer shared solutions.
6. Back up your boundary with action. If you give in, you invite people to ignore your needs.

# Boundary language examples:

To respond to angry student:

- “I want to work with you to figure this out. It will be hard if our brains are not calm enough to think. How about we take a 5 minute break.”

To say no to extra commitments:

- “Although our district goals are really important to me, I need to discuss what can come off my plate or what I can do in a different manner in order to take on anything new. I am working on how to balance my family’s needs and my workload.”



## Breaking Down Boundaries and Setting New Ones in Our Personal Lives



## Section 7: Staff Culture

# Connect with colleagues and others in the community



- Do we have a staff culture agreement?
  - Example
- Other conversations on this topic include:
  - What are my limitations (role, skills, capacity) to meet expectations of my role?
  - What colleagues or organizations can offer services that I cannot?
  - What is my level of belief in the capacity of others on “my team?”
  - What do I need to do to increase my knowledge of and belief in the capacity of others?

# A Break for our HEART



## Commonalities

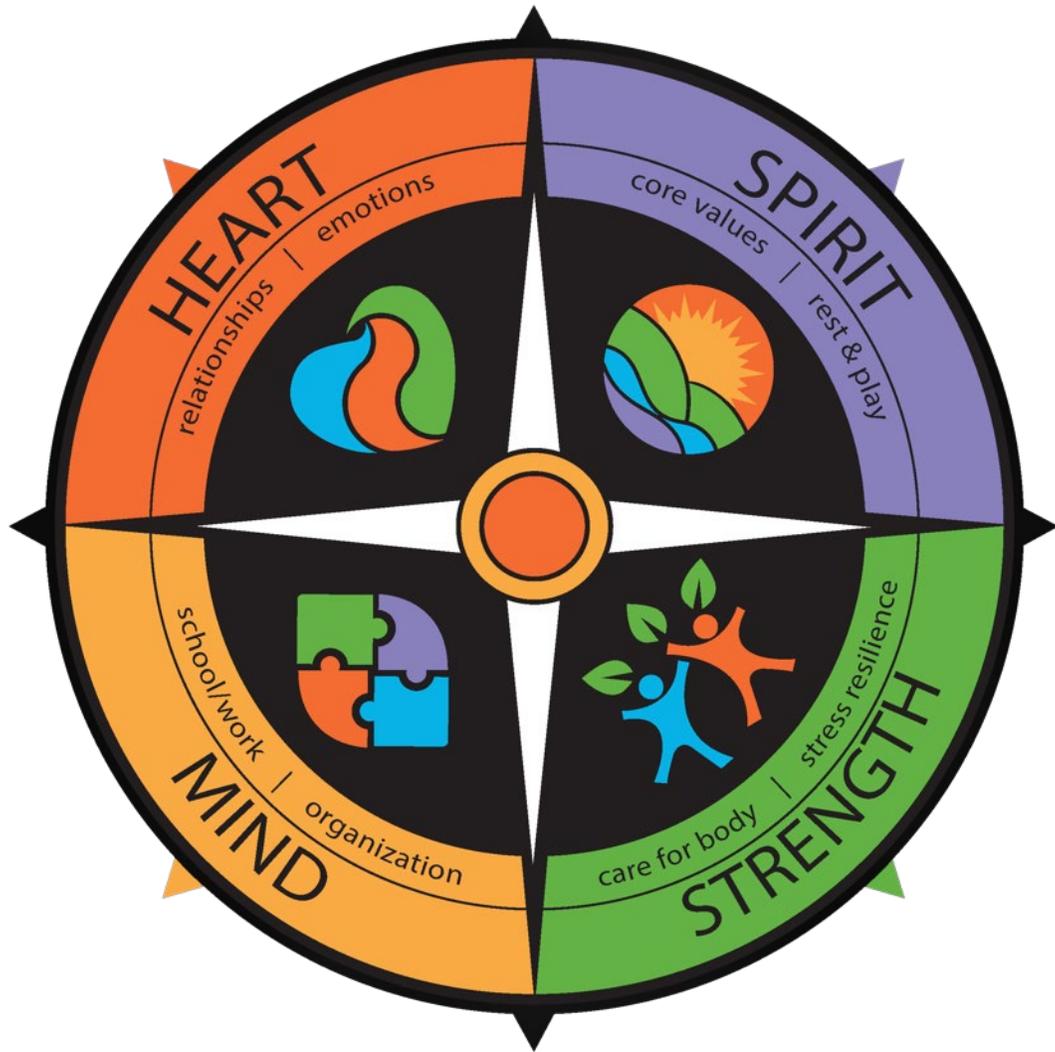
**Step 1:** “Just like me, this person is seeking happiness in his/her life.”

**Step 2:** “Just like me, this person is trying to avoid suffering in his/her life.”

**Step 3:** “Just like me, this person has known sadness, loneliness and despair.”

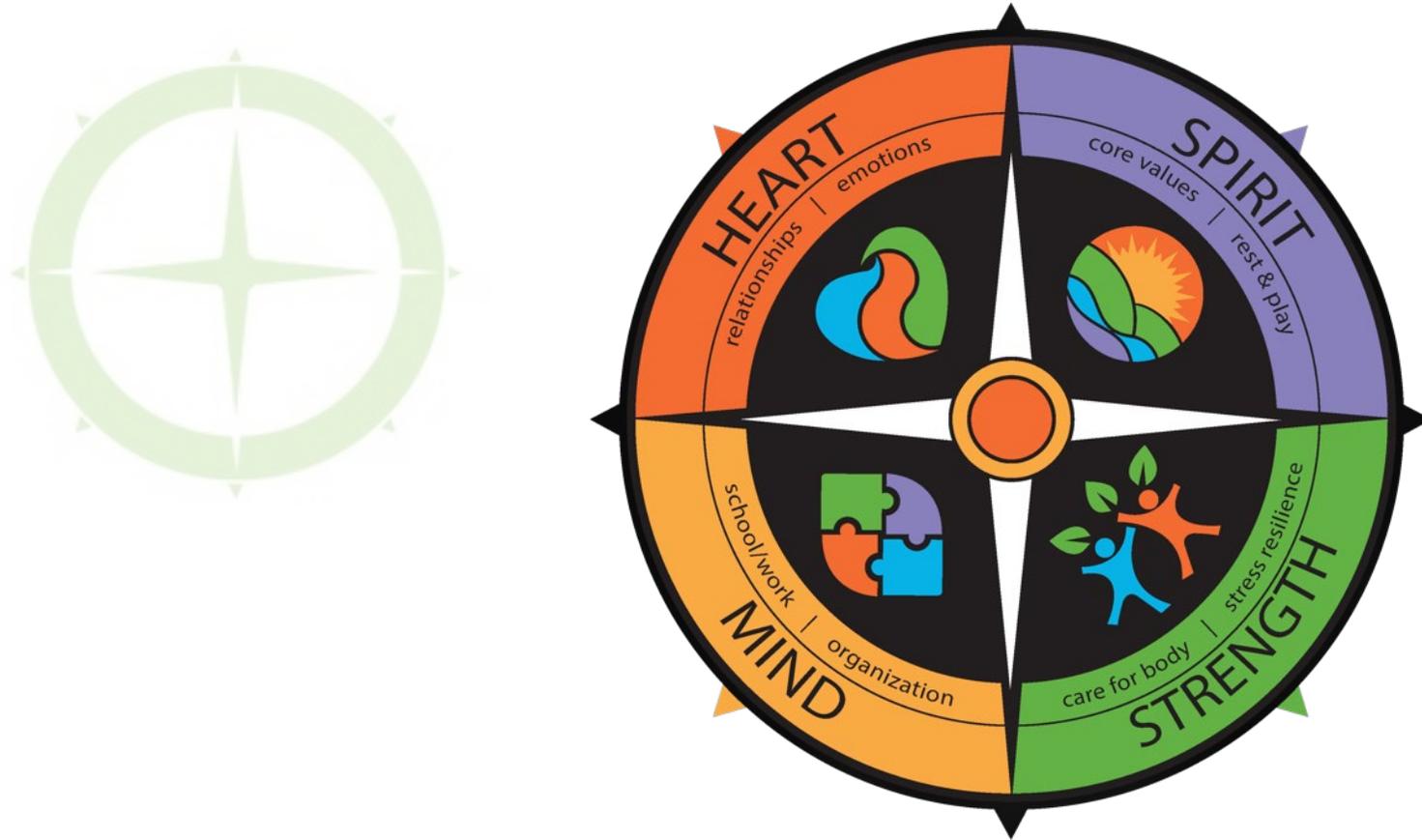
**Step 4:** “Just like me, this person is seeking to fill his/her needs.”

**Step 5:** “Just like me, this person is learning about life.”



## Sections 8-11: Care for Self

# The Compass Wellness Practices Assessment





**MIND**



- **Work:** get the most out of educational, volunteer, and employment opportunities
- **Organization:** manage time, priorities, money, and belongings

**Document to Distribute:**

Mindfulness

Growth Mindsets

Organizing our schedule, commitments, workspace, etc

**Activities:**

Appreciative Inquiry Reflection on Competence

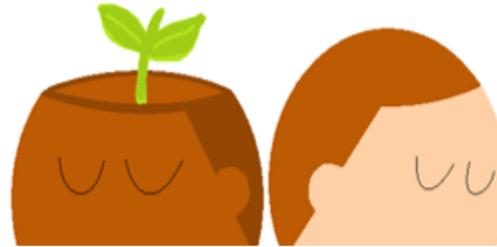
The Power of a Positive Word

Mindfulness Practices

# Section 8: MIND

*Growth Mindset* vs.

*Growth Mindset is having "the passion for stretching yourself and sticking to it, even when it's not going well"*



Fixed Mindset

"The Fixed Mindset does not allow people the luxury of becoming. They have to already be."

Dweck, Carol (2016). *Mindset*. Ballantine Books, New York, NY.

**What examples can you add below to help us understand Dweck's Growth Mindset?**

TOPIC OF MINDSET	FIXED	GROWTH
View of students' challenging behavior	Once challenging, always challenging	Behavior represents opportunity to learn a skill or solve a problem
Use of strategies in teaching	If I have tried it before and it didn't work, I am not happy about being asked to try it again	I can learn more about the strategy and apply it in a new setting



**SPIRIT**

- **Core Values:** develop a personal value system that determines your personal mission and supports your sense of meaning and purpose in your work
- **Rest & Play:** balance work and play to renew yourself

## Section 9 – a circle experience

1. What led you into your field of work?
2. Think of a leader in your current or past experience that drew a clear line between your work and the mission of the organization.
3. How could you remind yourself of that link on a daily basis?



## STRENGTH



- **Stress Resilience:** deal positively with the challenges of life
- **Care for My Body:** build healthy habits around your physical well-being, and to end unhealthy habits

## Section 10

1. [https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly\\_mcgonigal\\_how\\_to\\_make\\_stress\\_your\\_friend](https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend)
2. How does an administrator discern whether an employee would benefit from a perspective shift or other stress management techniques? (Use steps to compassionate action!)
3. Activity from one of the pilot schools- Adams Friendship Middle School – Sharing Staff Resilience



- **Relationships:** create and maintain healthy connections with others in your life
- **Emotions:** express your emotions and receive others' emotions in a healthy way

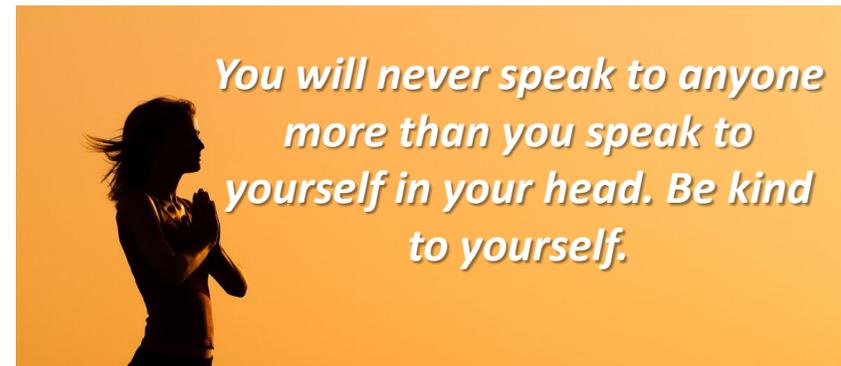
## Section 11

### Self-Compassion

1. Self-kindness vs judgment
2. Common humanity vs isolation
3. Mindful of vs over-identifying with emotions

Emotional regulation planning for adults

Relationship building with colleagues



# How do you think about *your* behavior?

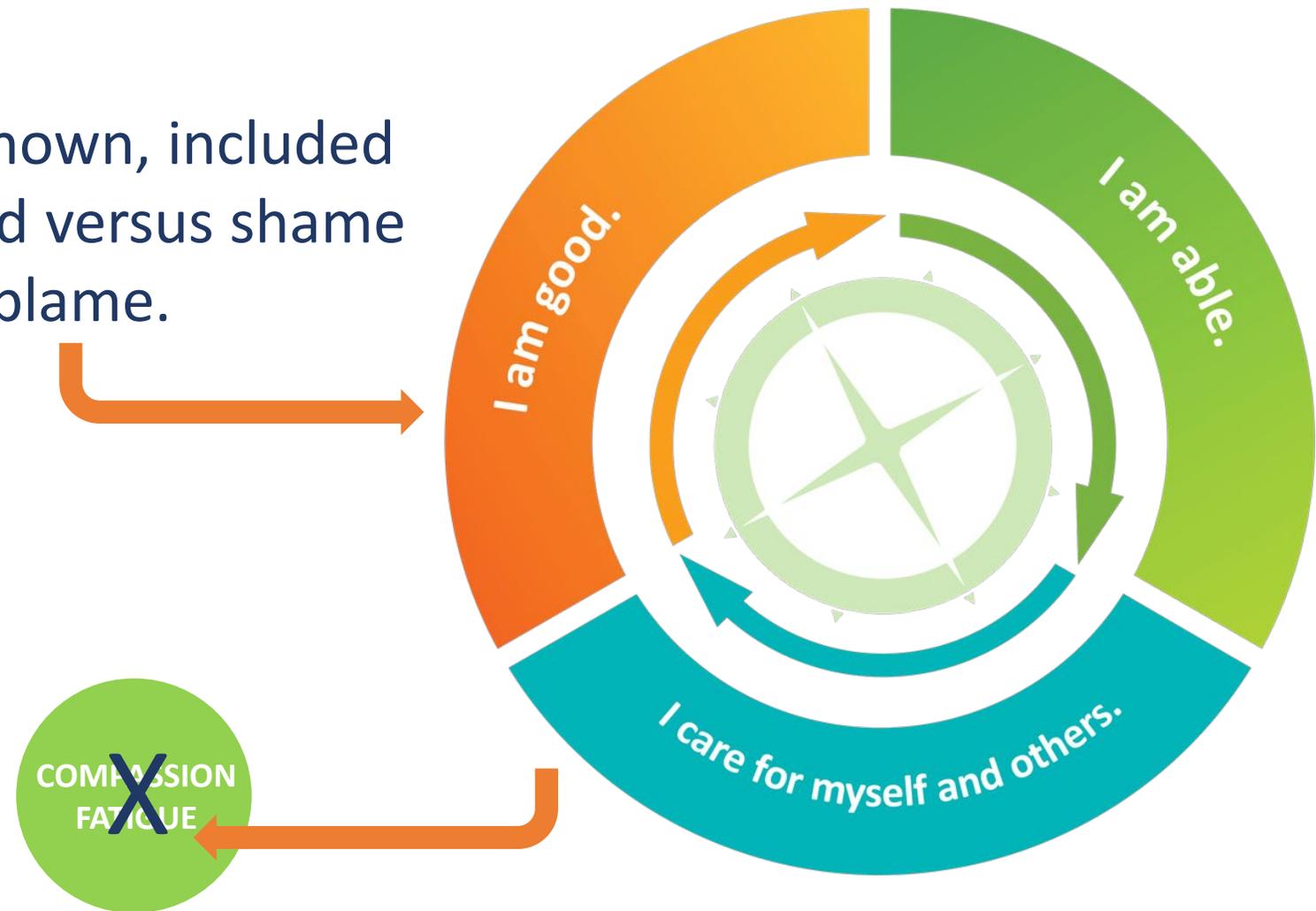


A matter of motivation



A matter of ability  
and supports

When I am known, included and supported versus shame and blame.



## Section 12: Compassionate Connections With “Tier Two”

- Perspective taking
- Communication tips
- Language choices
- Responding to attack
- Teacher care meetings – a model
- Stage of change applied to parental relationships





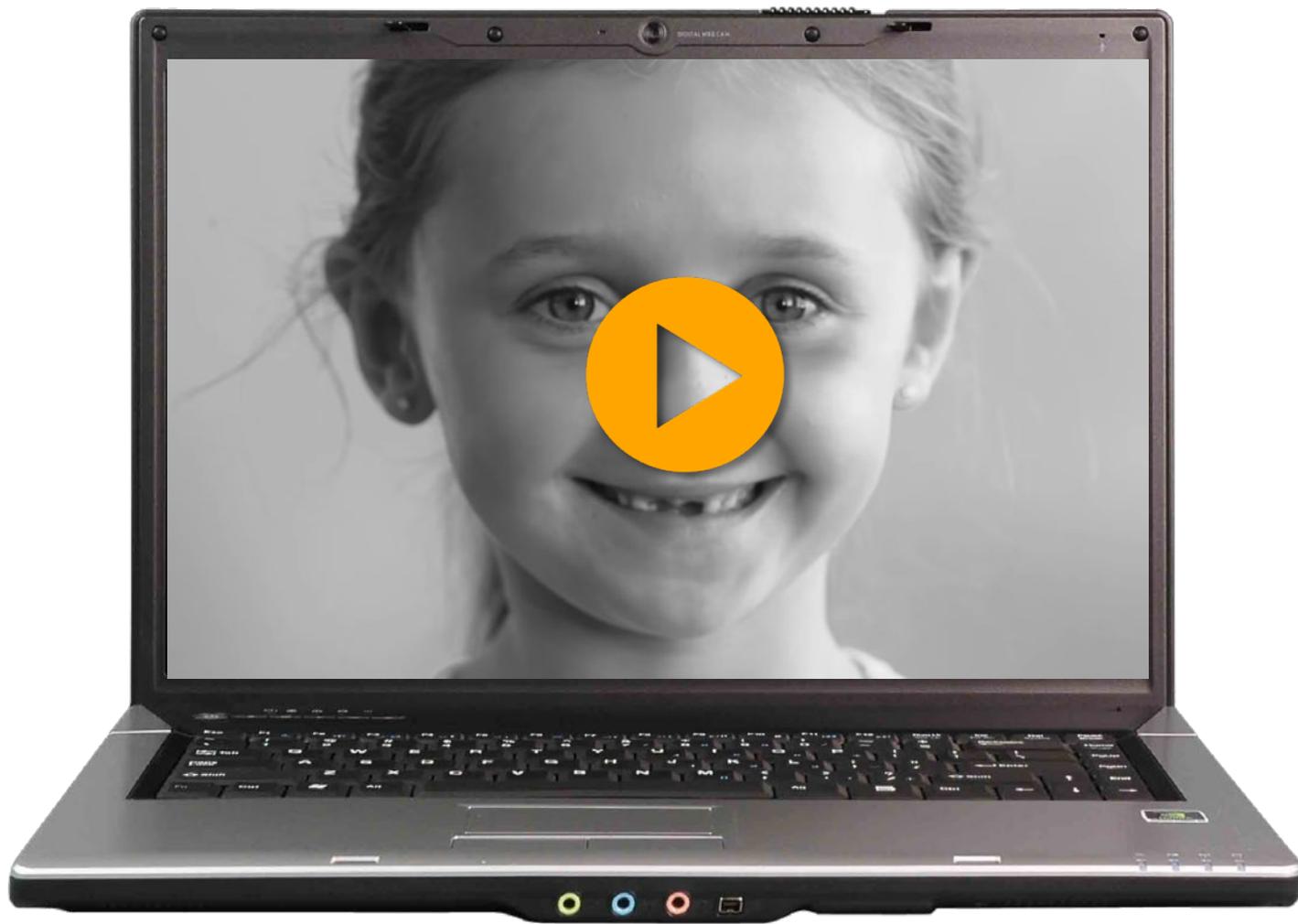
# Appendices

- 
1. Foundational Beliefs about Behavior
  2. Dealing with Significant Staff Disclosure or Crisis
  3. Supporting Change Efforts of Others and Ourselves
  4. Stress throughout the Career Cycle
- 



## Next Steps:

Building My and My organization's  
Capacity for Compassion Resilience



# A Break for our STRENGTH

Stress Resilience | Pausing

[Breathe Video](#)



Thank you for the relationships you build and the strategies you implement that improve the present and future lives of students/clients, families and each other.

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Developed in partnership with:

