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Advancing Adult Compassion Resilience

A Toolkit for



Developed in partnership with:



Goals for today



Build your capacity to shape a compassionate and resilient organization/family

Explore leadership/staff and parent/family practices that establish and maintain compassionate cultures

Continue these important discussions about staff/family culture and wellness, compassion fatigue, and compassion resilience beyond today



**Why do this work to increase compassion in
our families and workplaces?**



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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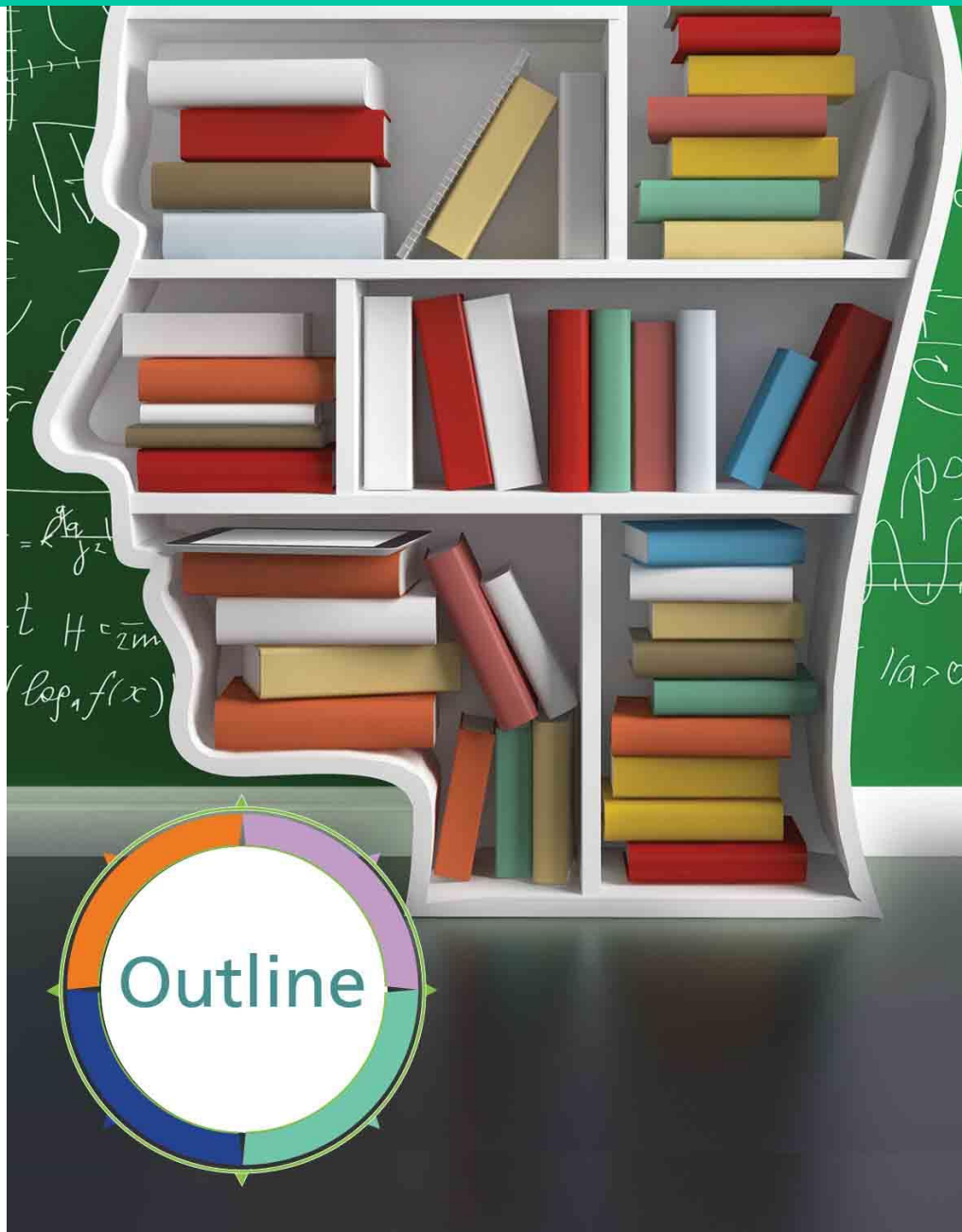
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Community

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compassionresilencetoolkit.org

- NOT an intervention for people who “who need it most”
- The **ONLINE** toolkit is free, flexible and available to you at any time.



Content Sections

1. Compassion in Action
2. Wellness, Compassion Fatigue, Self-Compassion, Compassion Resilience
3. Compassion Fatigue Awareness, Connection to Trauma, and Assessment
4. Systemic Drivers of Compassion Fatigue
5. Expectations from Self and Others
6. Compassionate Boundary Setting
7. Contract for Positive Staff Culture
- 8-11. Self-Care Strategies – Mind, Spirit, Strength and Heart
12. Compassionate Connections with Parents

Appendix

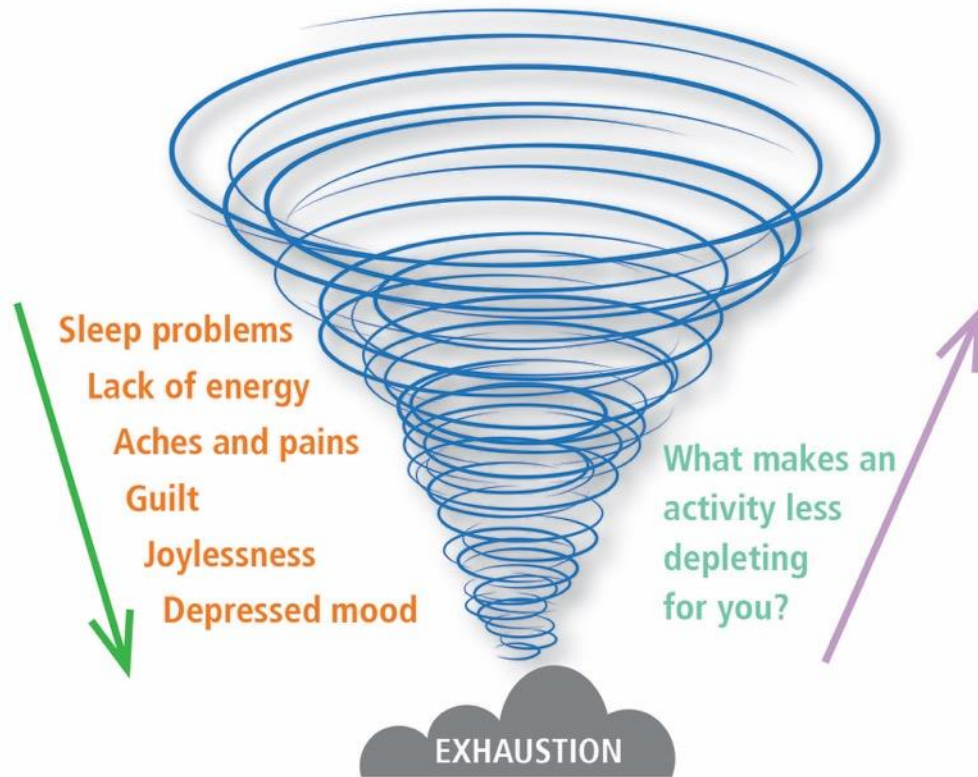
- Foundational Beliefs about Behavior
- Supporting Change Efforts of Others and Ourselves
- Dealing with Significant Staff Disclosure or Crisis
- Stress throughout the Career Cycle



How we got to this topic...

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.



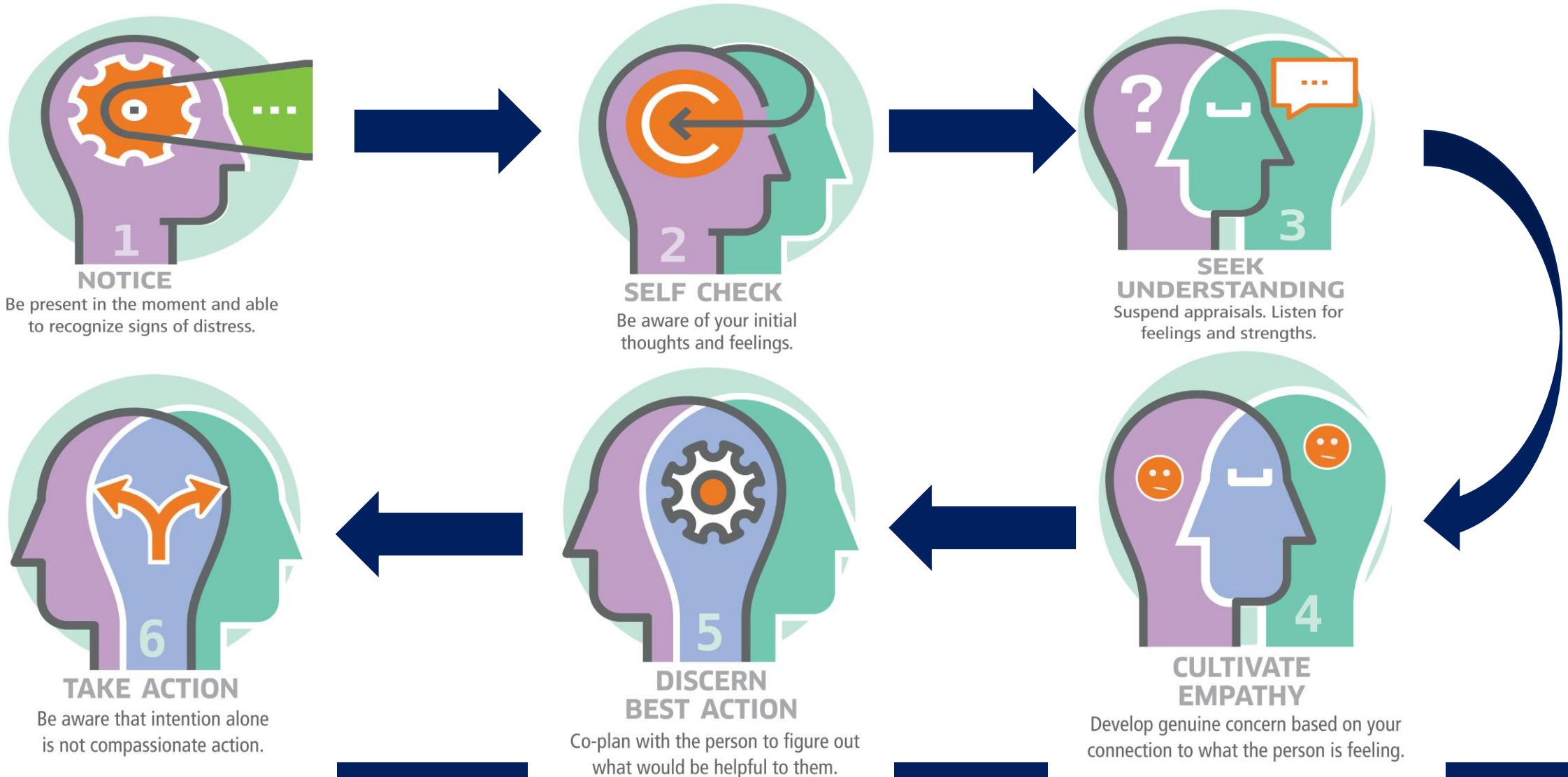


Perspective Shifting

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



Session 1: Compassionate Action Steps



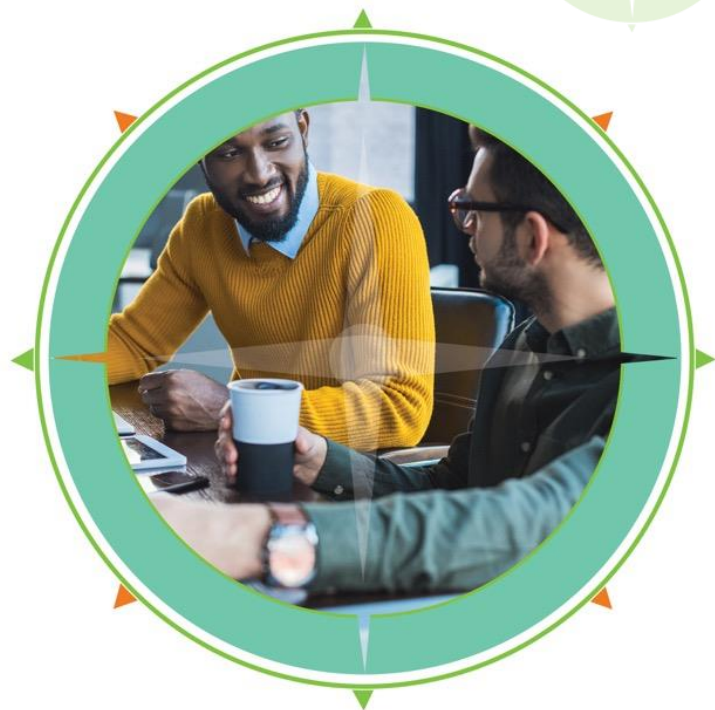
Compassionate Action: Scenario 1



A friend who is a teacher shares with you that one of her 8 year old students is really on her mind. His family struggles, and he has so much potential. He is shut down in class and acting out with tears and tantrums. Recently, he hit her and she didn't tell the principal to avoid consequences for him. She worries at night, 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**
2. **Self-check** - Be aware of your emotions and initial thoughts. (set them aside)
 - What emotions and initial judgments arise for you in relation to this scenario?
3. **Seek to understand** –Listen with curiosity to understand the concerns/distress from the other’s perspective.
 - What strategies do you use to encourage them to open up?
4. **Cultivate empathy**
 - What feeling is this person experiencing that you can relate to in order to tap into your genuine empathy?
5. **Discern best action**
 - What strategies do you use to help you not to become a “fixer” for the other person? How do you invite them to share what they need in the moment and connect to their wisdom?
6. **Take action**

Section 2: Definitions for the Work



- Compassion
- Compassion Resilience
- Compassion Fatigue
- Wellness
- Self-Compassion



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.



What Is Self-Compassion?



Self-Kindness

Be loving towards ourselves
instead of self-critical.



Common Humanity

Everyone suffers. You are
not perfect. No one is.
You are not alone.



Mindfulness

Notice our struggle. Feel it,
instead of being reactive.
Be with it, avoiding
self-judgment or overreaction.

When you feel like you have fallen short,
how do you practice self-compassion?

Section 3: Compassion Fatigue



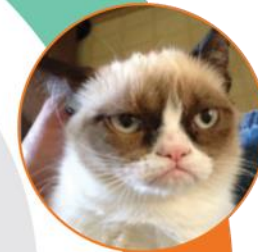
- Gradual lessening of compassion over time
- Avoid trying to understand what people face
- Become less effective in our roles
- Life satisfaction decreases



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.



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



Compassion Fatigue's Path

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

Renewal vs. Pathology

COMPASSION RESILIENCE

LEAVE PROFESSION

RENEWAL vs. PATHOLOGY


Leaving the profession, physical and mental illness, chronic symptoms or hardness, resiliency, transformation.



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

A yellow sticky note with a slight shadow, tilted at an angle. It contains the text "IMPORTANT REMINDER!" in blue, hand-drawn capital letters.

IMPORTANT
REMINDER!

A light green compass rose with a four-pointed star in the center and small triangles at the ends of the points.

Compassion fatigue is a
NORMAL response to
COMPLEX and OVERWHELMING
circumstances.

And, we can prevent and intervene
early to lessen 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?



Strategies to Build Compassion Resilience



Section 4: Drivers of fatigue and What can we control?

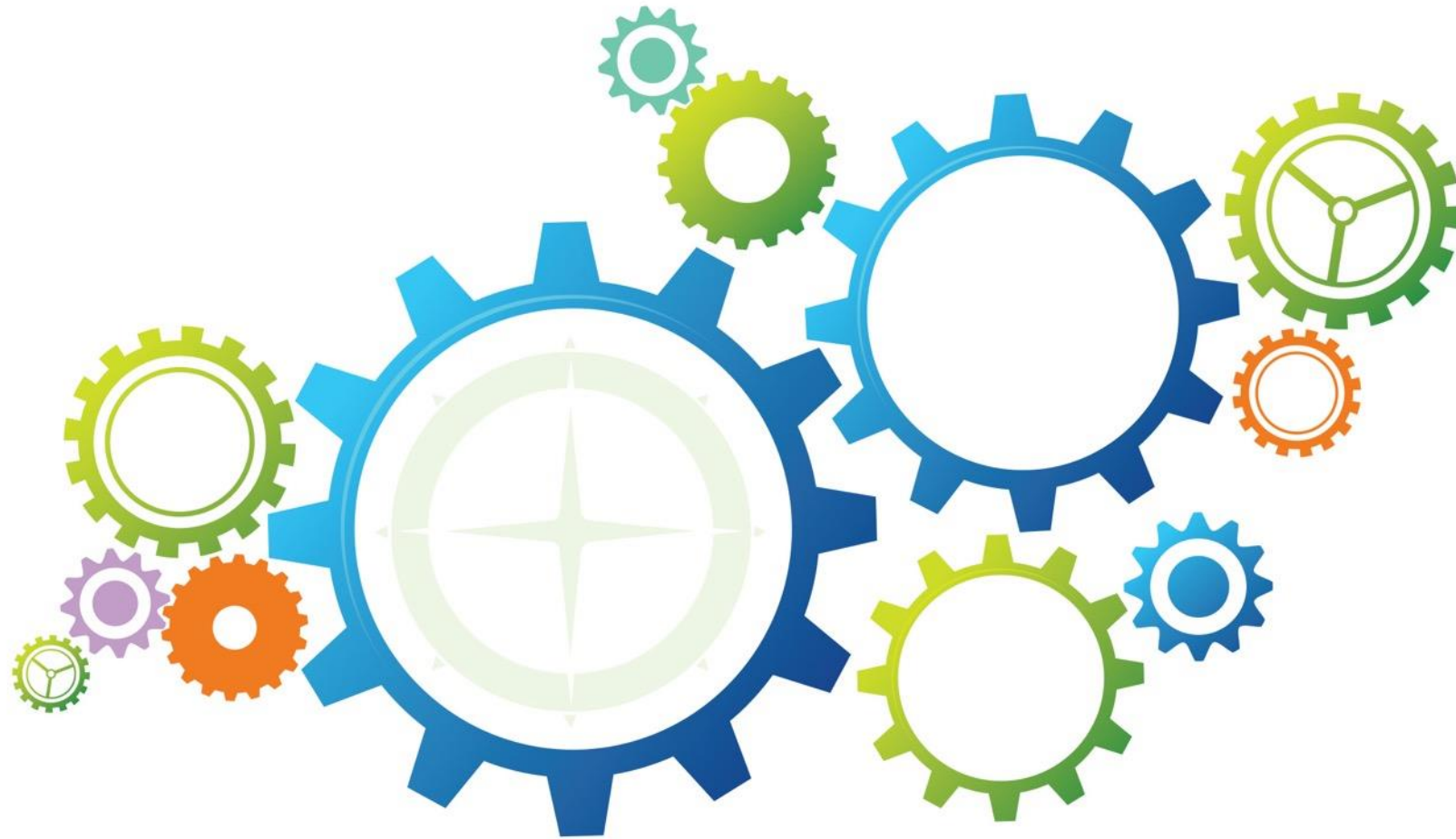
Section 5: Expectations — realistic ones of yourself and others — what is enough and what can I hope for?
Exposure to recovery.

Section 6: Compassionate boundary setting

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

Sections 8-11: Self-care strategies – Mind, Spirit, Strength and Heart

Section 4: System Drivers of Compassion Fatigue



Drivers of Fatigue & Resilience Parents

Drivers of Fatigue

Children's sleep schedule

Fewer supports/resources during COVID 19

Multiple Demands

Finances

Lack of personal space and time

Barrage of media/news

The weather

Virtual schooling for kids

Kids' Stress

Lack of connection

Constantly changing/conflicting information

Mental Health

Work/life Balance

Unrealistic Expectations from Others and Self

Drivers of Resilience

Seeing kids blossom

Being outside

Breaks from media/news

Connection and creativity with family

Exercise

Quality time

Faith

Home improvements

Mindfulness

Yoga

Family Dinners

Laughter

Music

Cooking

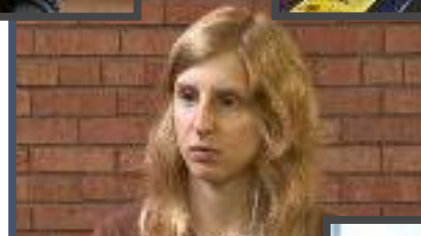


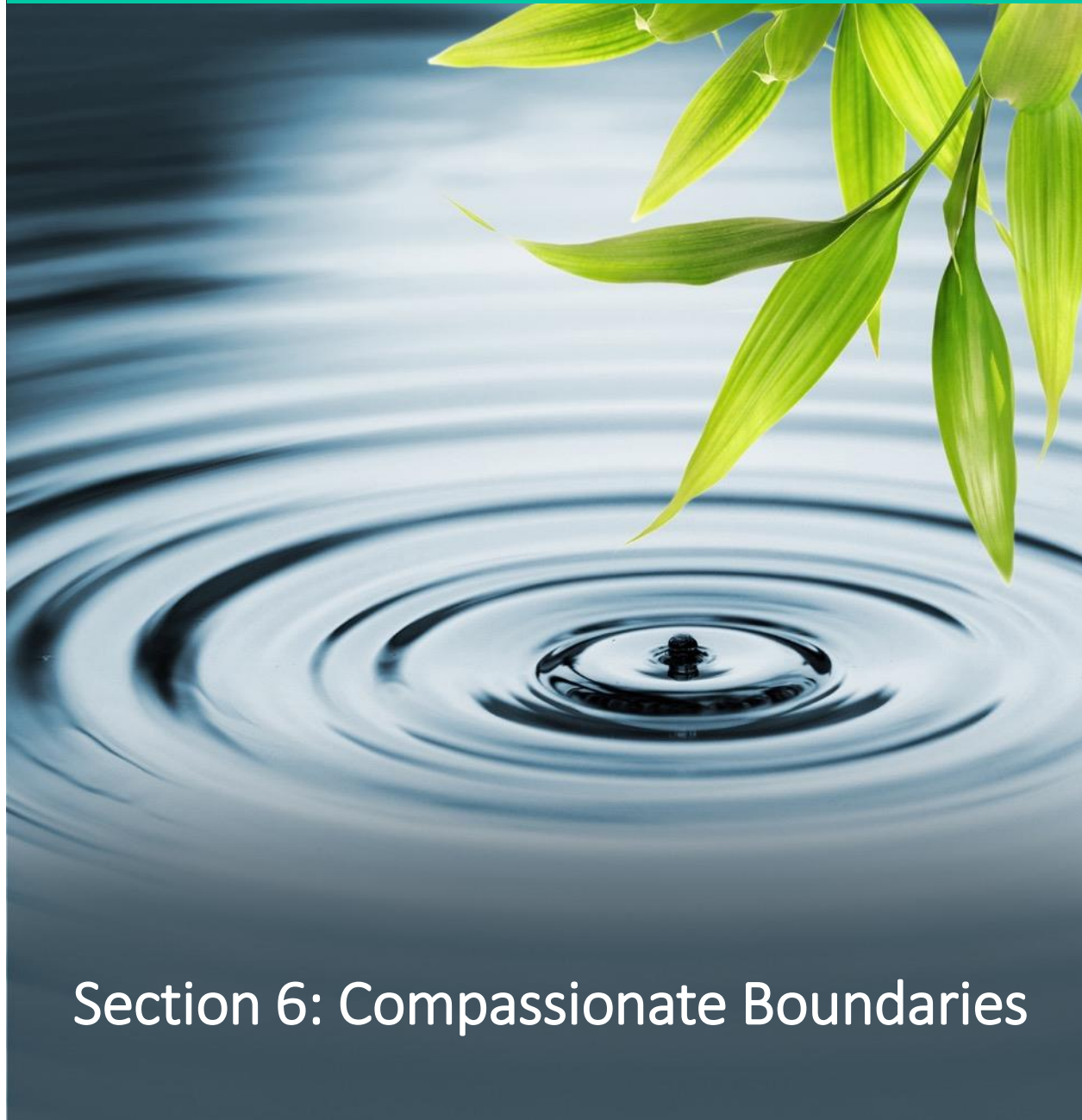
Section 5: Expectations



- What positive role do expectations play?
- What impact has your unrealistic self-expectations had on your well-being?
- What has the impact been of others' unrealistic expectations of your capacity?
- How do you assess if expectations are being set at a helpful aspirational level?

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





Section 6: Compassionate Boundaries

And then I learned
the spiritual journey
had nothing to do with being nice.
It had to do
with being real and authentic.
Having boundaries.
Honoring and respecting my space first,
others second.
And in this space of self-care,
being nice just happened, it flowed...
not motivated by fear,
but by LOVE.

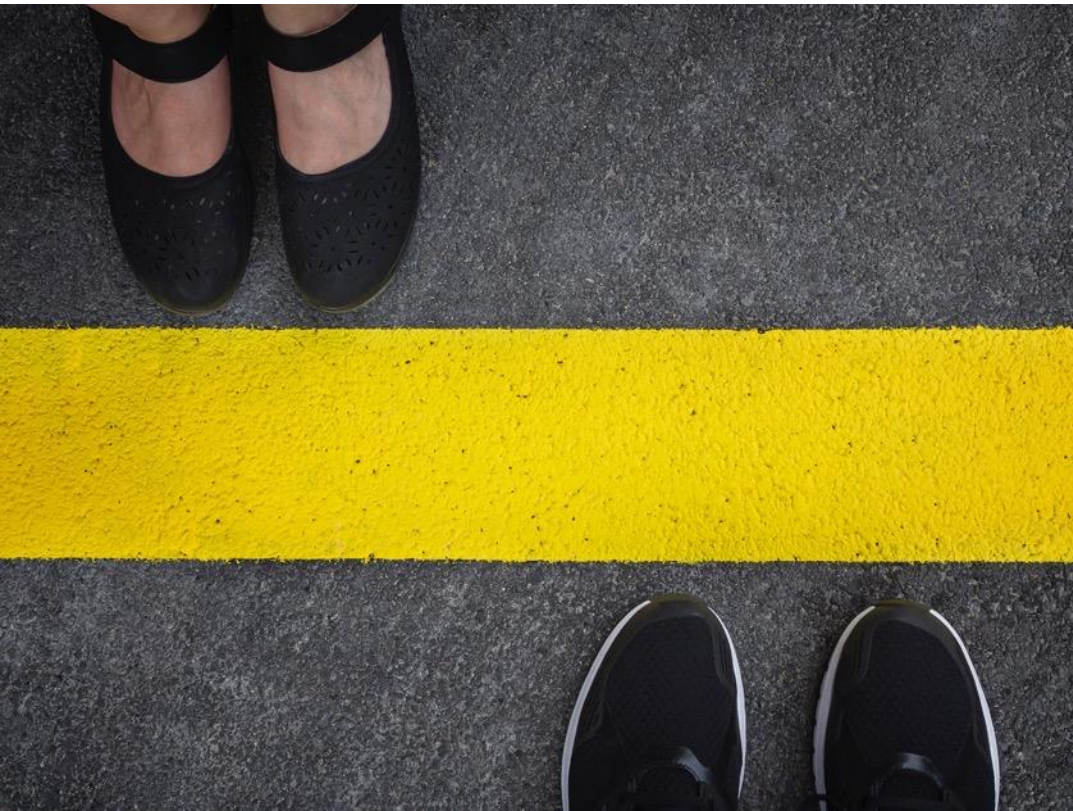
By Michelle Olak





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 youth/client or colleague:

- “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:

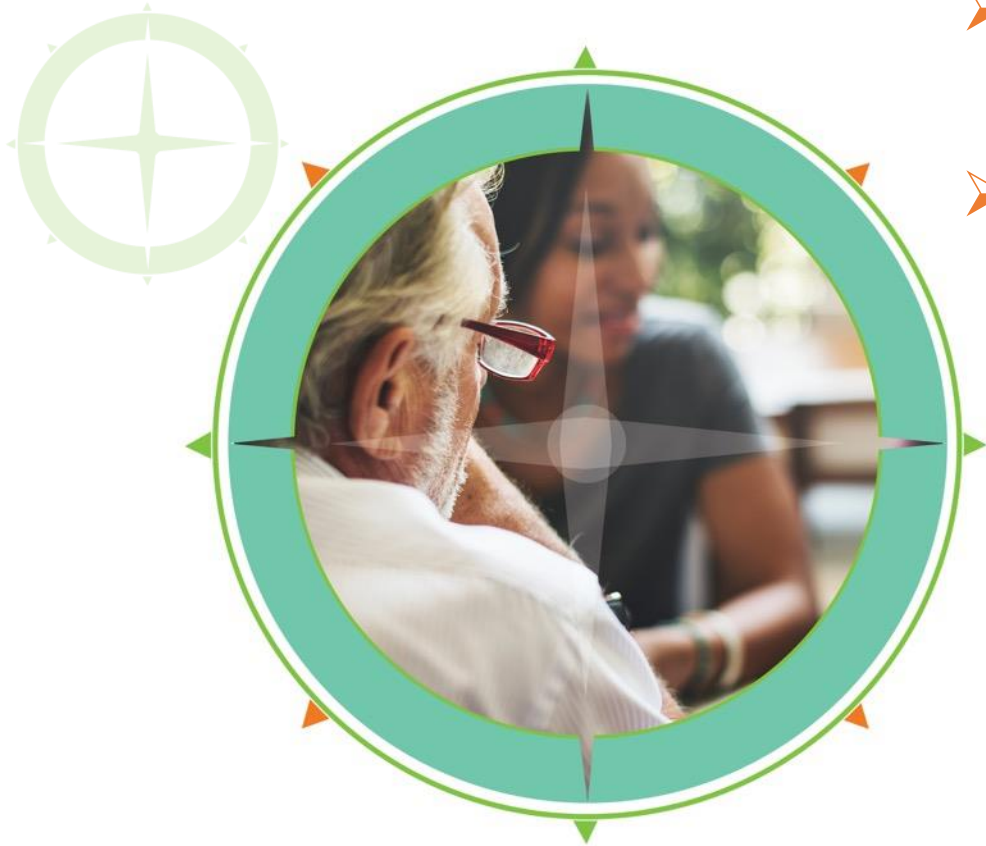
- “Although our district goals are really important to me, I need to discuss what can come off my plate or what I can do in a different manner in order to take on anything new. I am working on how to balance my family’s needs and my workload.”

“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.”

Brene Brown

Section 7: Staff/Family Culture

Connect with colleagues/peers and others in the community



- Do we have a staff/family culture agreement?
 - Example
- Other conversations on this topic include:
 - What are my limitations (role, skills, capacity) to meet expectations of my role?
 - What family members, 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

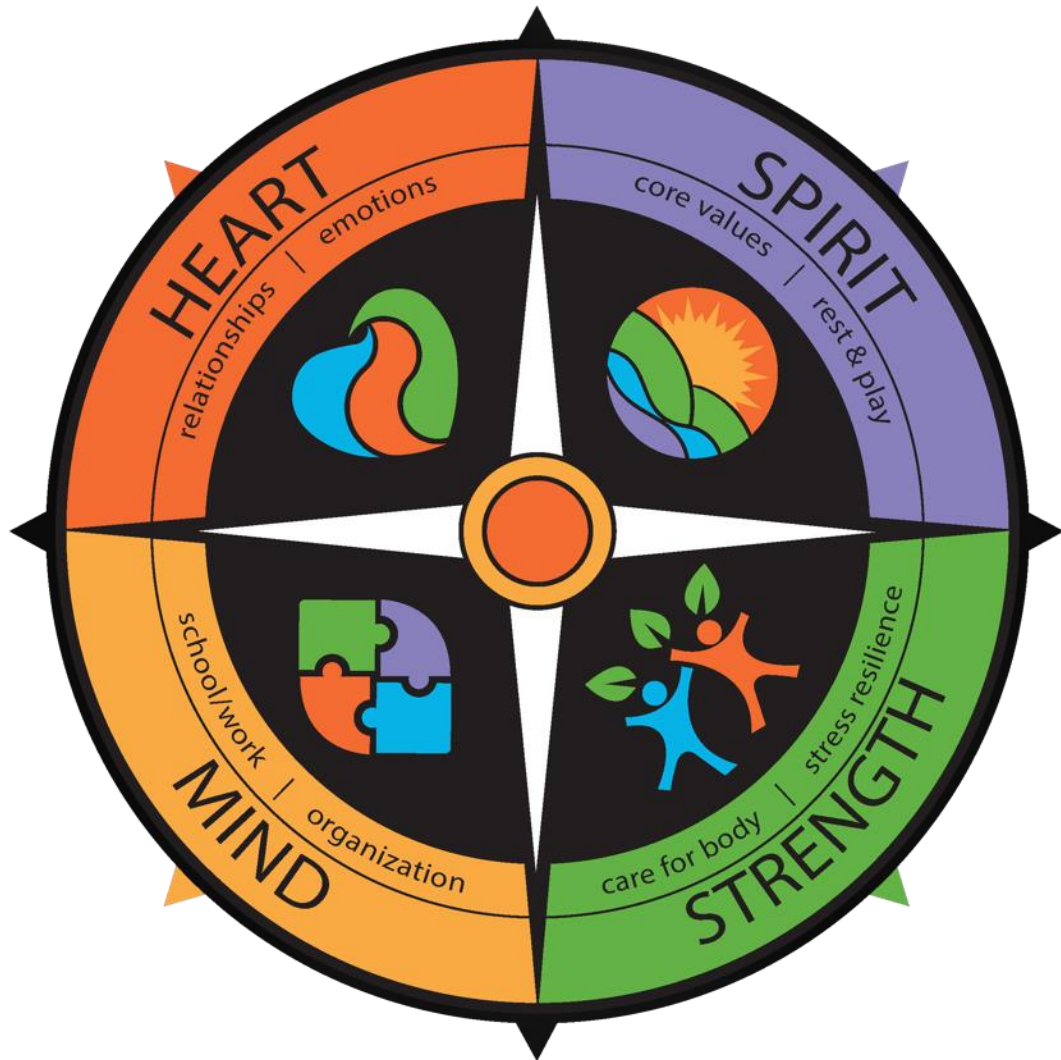
Step 1: “Just like me, this person is seeking happiness in his/her life.”

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



Mindfulness and Growth Mindset
Organizing our schedule, commitments, workspace, etc
Appreciative Inquiry Reflection on Competence

SPIRIT



Core Values aligned with the school mission
Balance work and play to renew self

STRENGTH



Stress Resilience to deal positively with the challenges of life
Build healthy habits around physical well-being and end unhealthy habits

HEART



Self-Compassion
Emotional regulation planning for adults
Relationship building with colleagues

Section 12: Compassionate Connections With Parents or Compassionate Action throughout the Life Cycle of our Child





Next Steps:

Building My and My
Organization's/Family's Capacity for
Compassion Resilience



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

Website: CompassionResilienceToolkit.org

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