

Monica Wightman, MSW, LCSW
DPI – State Coordinator: Project AWARE
Monica.Wightman@dpi.wi.gov

Sue McKenzie, MA
WISE and Rogers InHealth
smckenzie@rogershospital.org

Advancing Adult Compassion Resilience

A Toolkit for



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 Wellness, Compassion Fatigue, and Compassion Resilience beyond today



Why do this work?



1. Vision of a compassionate culture
2. Impact on staff
3. Impact on leadership



Rationale

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

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

CONTACT US
414-865-2455
WISE@wisconsin.gov

TOOLKITS
Schools
Healthcare
Community

LEGAL
Privacy Policy
Terms & Conditions

BROUGHT TO YOU BY
wise AND ROGERS
and strong all in force
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

compassionresilencetoolkit.org

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

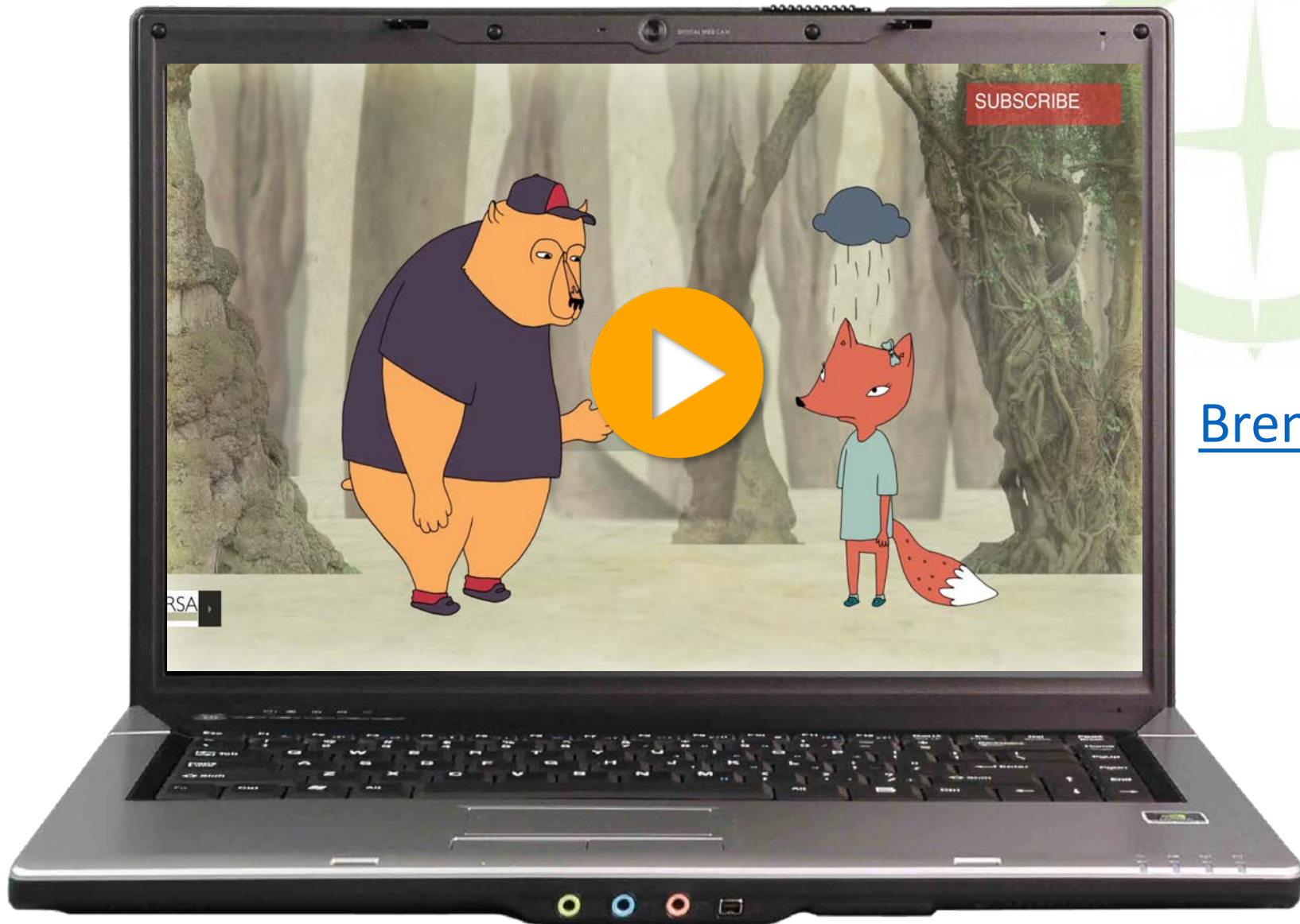
The ONLINE toolkit is free, flexible and available to you at any time.

Building Our Compassion Resilience

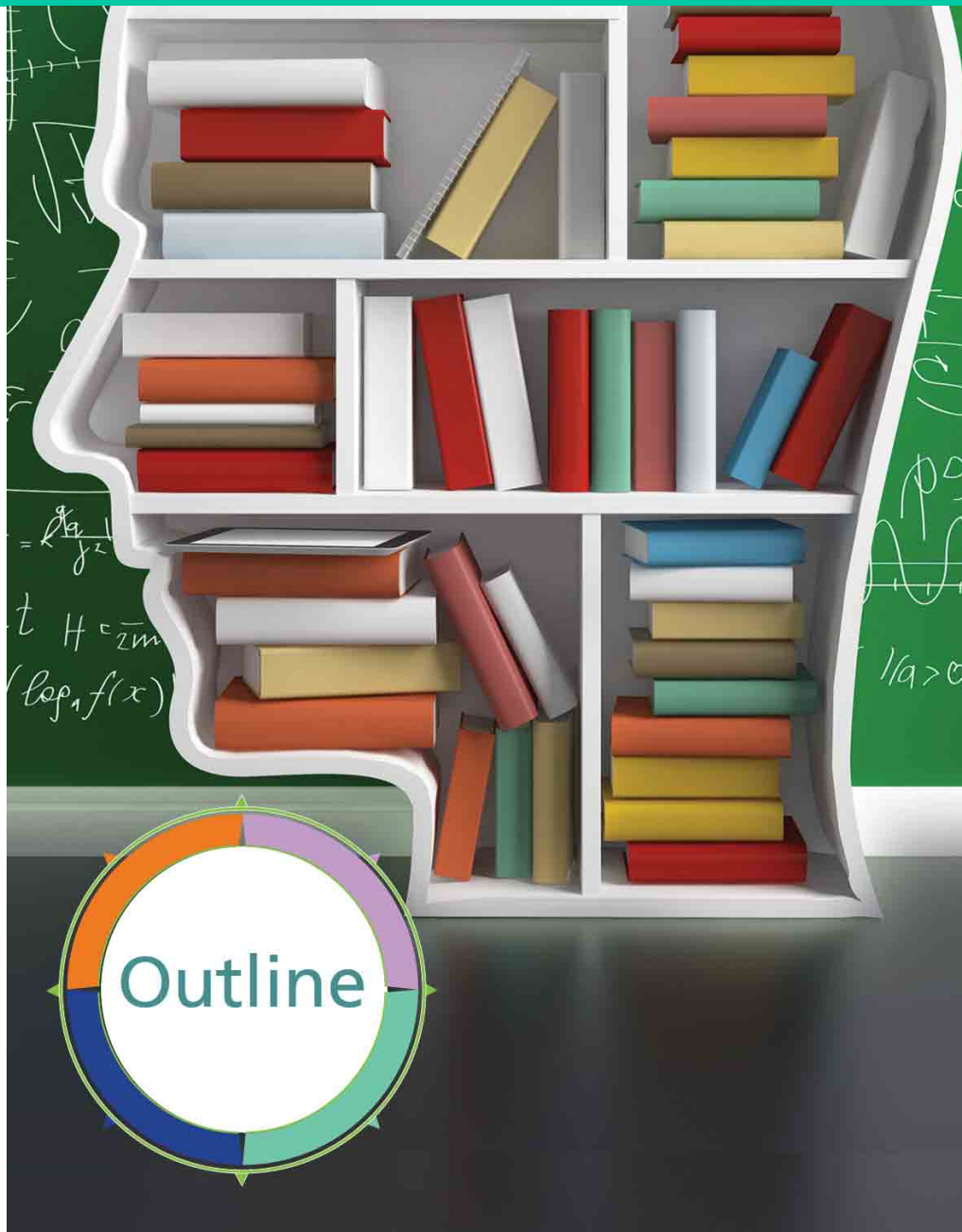


- The power to return to a position of empathy, strength, and hope after the daily witnessing of the challenges families face in our community and the realities of the workplace.
- To be optimistic in an imperfect world.





[Brene Brown's Empathy Video](#)



Preface

- Introduction
- Rationale for the Compassion Resilience Focus and Approach – Leadership and Staff
- Implementation Guidance for School Leaders and Toolkit Facilitators

Content Sections

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

Appendix

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



How we got to this topic...



Our mindset can be the biggest challenge



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

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



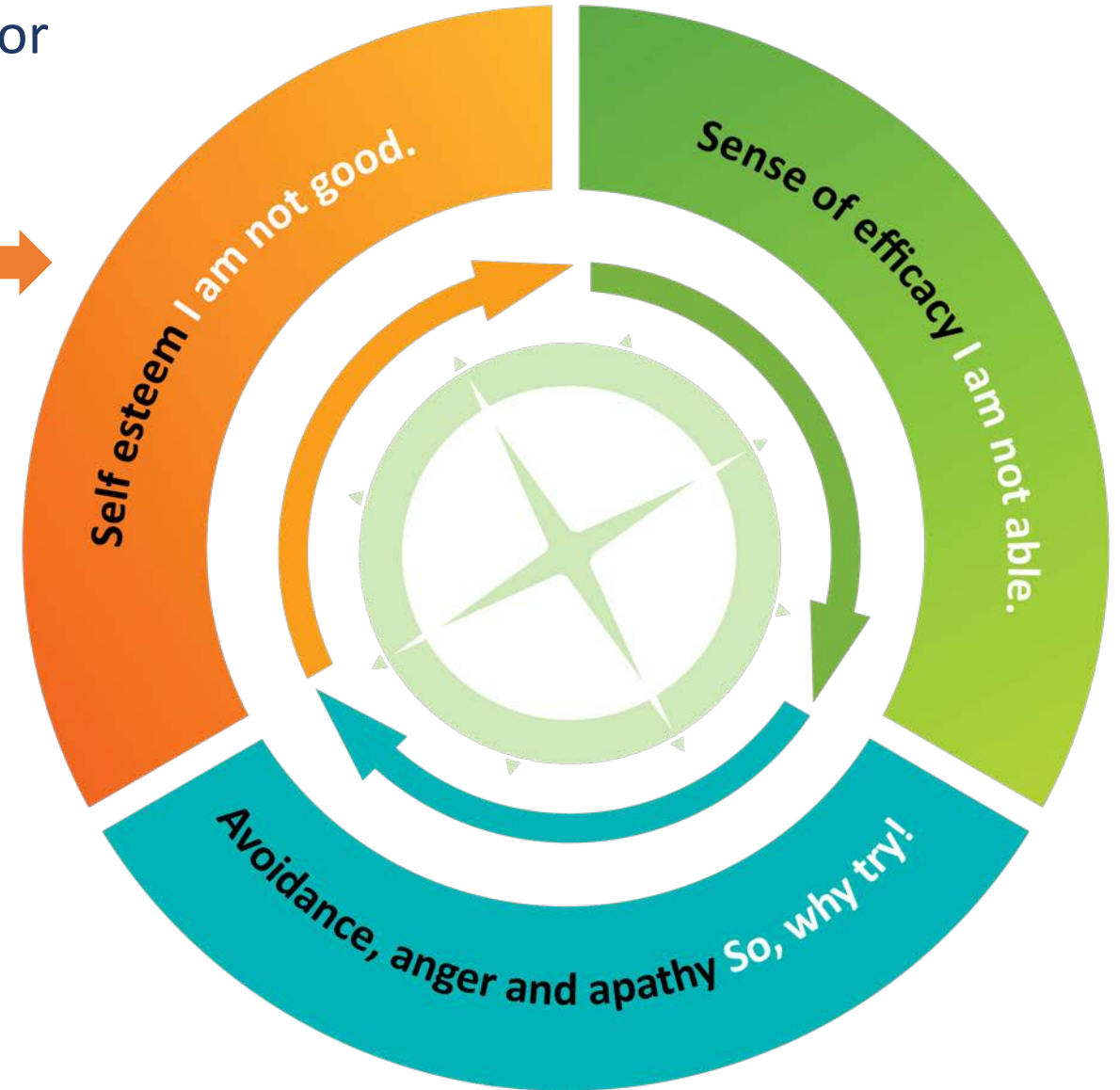
Kids/adults/colleagues do well if they *can* ...

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/>

False ideas such as stigma and external behavior motivation (If you wanted to, you would)

Feelings of Shame



Complications of Trauma

Prefrontal Lobes

Rational thoughts

What can I learn from this?

Limbic

Emotions

Am I loved?

Brain Stem

Survival instinct

Am I safe?



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 emotional resonance and initial cognitive appraisal.
3. **Seek to understand** – Suspend appraisals. Listen for understanding. Move towards generous interpretations of another’s behavior.
4. **Cultivate compassion** – Genuine concern develops based on what you come to understand. This leads to a growing desire/intention to help.
5. **Discern best action** – Work with the person to figure out what would actually be helpful to them rather than what you think would be helpful or was helpful to you in past, similar circumstances.
6. **Take action** – Be aware that intention alone is not compassionate action.

Combined from the works of Monica Worline and Jon Katzenbach, Carolin Oelschlegel, and James Thomas

Compassionate Action: Scenario 1



A colleague 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.

Section 2: Definitions for the Work

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



Compassionate Action: Scenario 2



A staff person is showing signs that they may be addicted to gambling. His work performance is slipping but prior to this he has been an excellent employee. As the school administrator, you have growing frustration with his lowered engagement with students, families and colleagues. He comes to you to tell you that yesterday a child fell and seemed OK but then the mother called him to say that the child's arm is broken. He reports that he did everything after that to follow school policies when a child is hurt. He says that he is coming to you just to be sure you knew and to verify that he did everything needed to follow-up. You wonder if the accident was due to negligence on the part of the staff person.



Connect and Reflect



1. **Notice** – Be present and able to recognize signs of distress.
 - What times or situations in your day are you most likely to have things get in the way of you being present?
2. **Self-check** - Be aware of your emotions and initial cognitive appraisal.
 - 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 concerns/distress from the other’s perspective.
 - How might you invite the person to share information with you? What strategies do you use to encourage them to open up with you?
4. **Cultivate empathy**
 - What situations do you find most difficult for you to tap into your genuine empathy?
5. **Discern best action**
6. **Take action**

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.

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 hardiness, resiliency, transformation.



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



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

IMPORTANT
REMINDER!

Compassion fatigue is a
NORMAL response to
ABNORMAL circumstances.

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



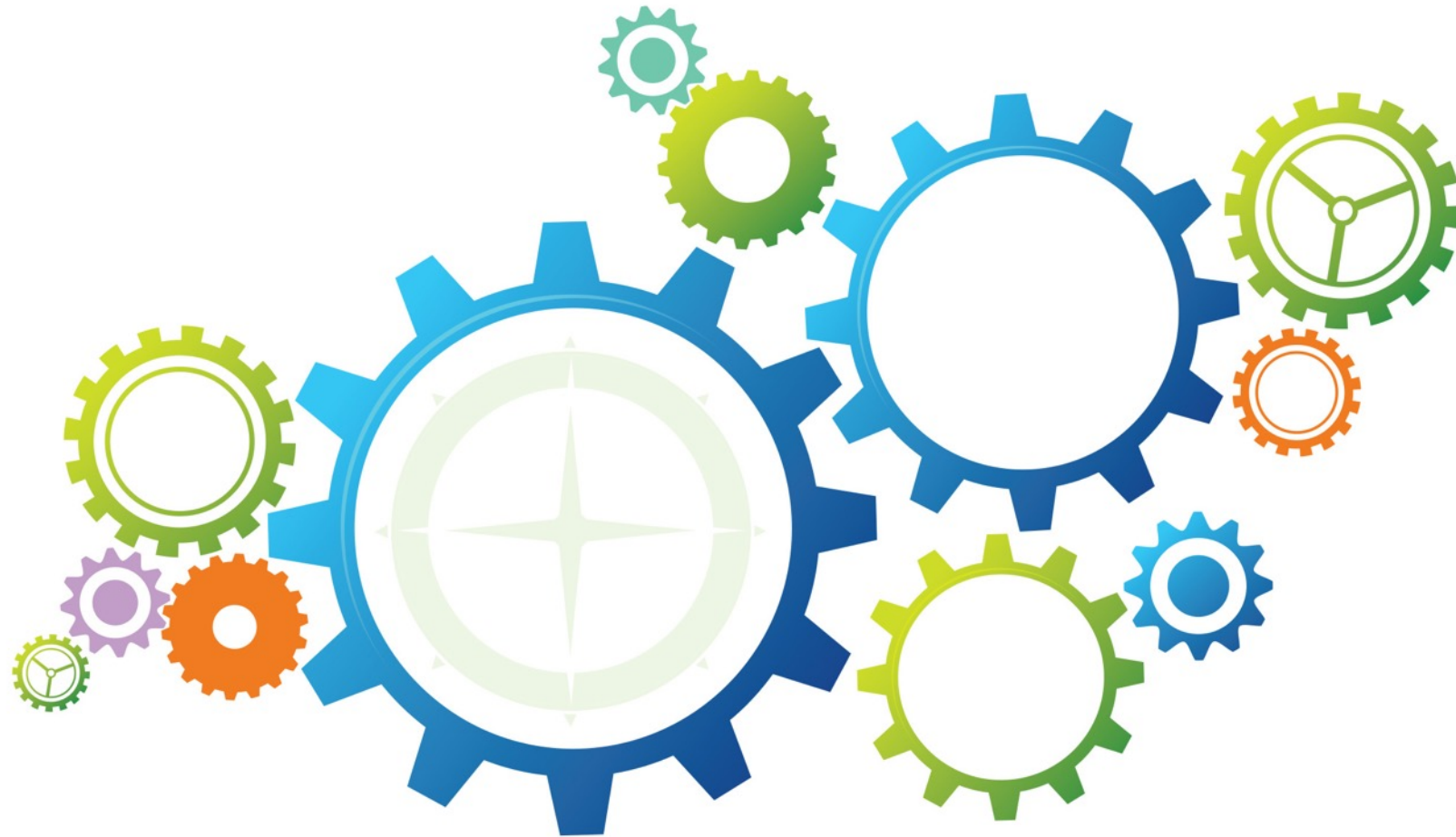


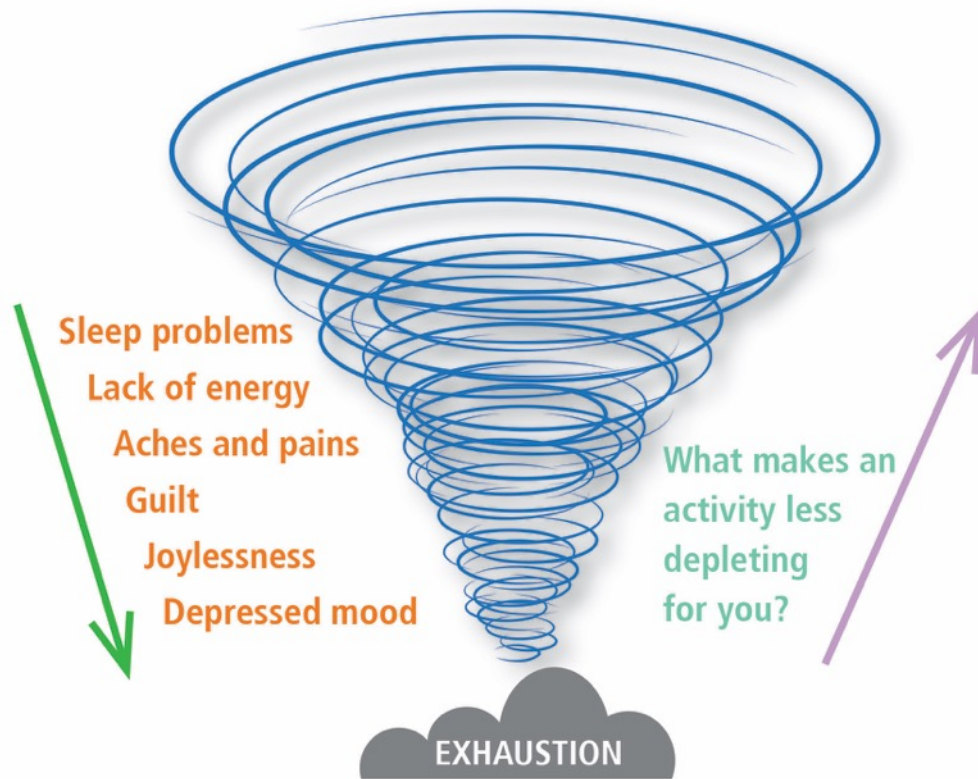
A Break for our SPIRIT

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



Section 4: System Drivers of Compassion Fatigue





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?



Strategies to Build Compassion Resilience



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

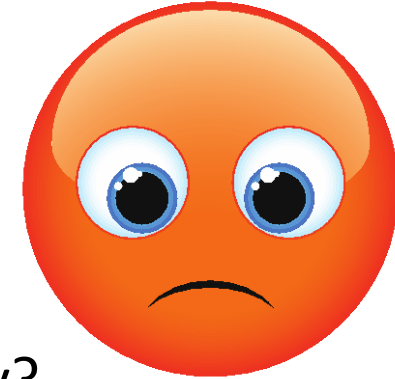
Section 7: Staff culture — connect with colleagues and others in community

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

Section 12: Connect with parents



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?
- An activity from the toolkit...

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



A Break for our MIND



From Unrealistic Expectations to Helpful Affirmations

- Think of one unrealistic expectation that you have of yourself.
- Think of one unrealistic expectation that someone has of you.
- Take a moment and consider an affirmation for each of these that you can use when you feel the expectation coming into play.





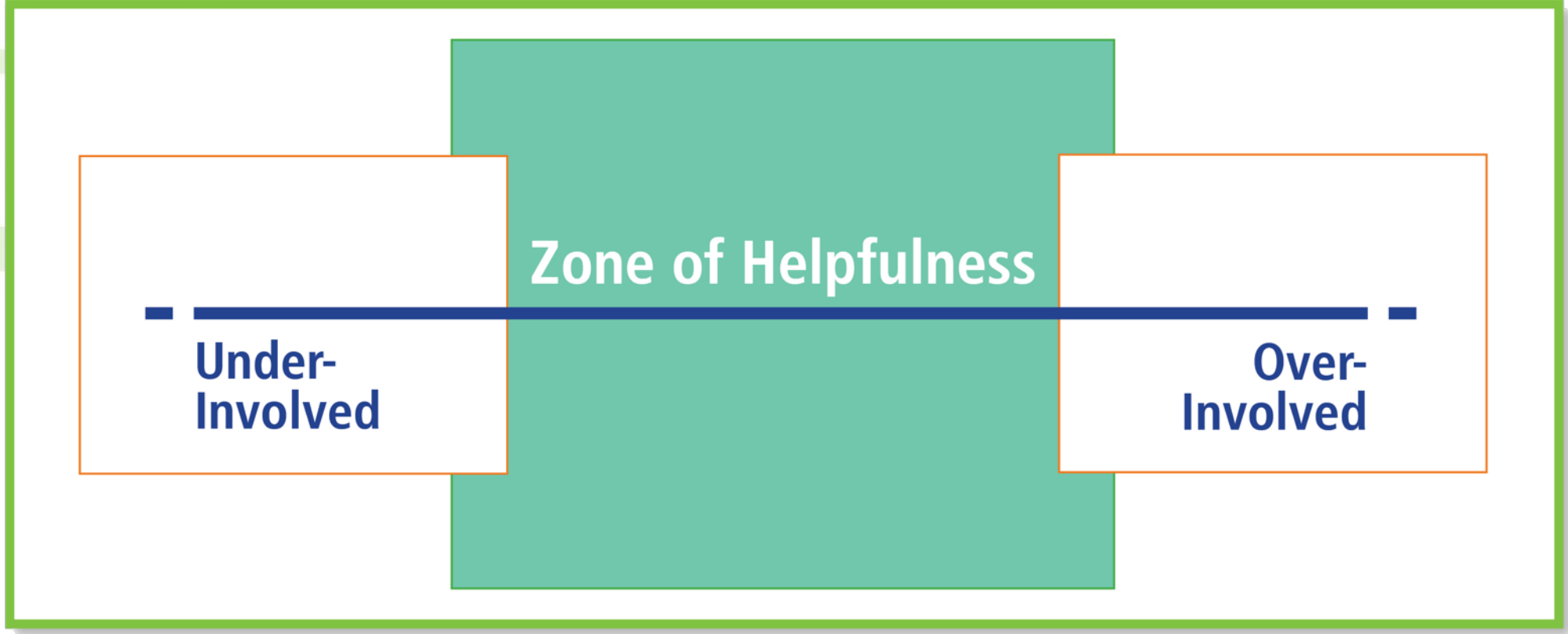
Section 6: Compassionate Boundaries



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







[Brene Brown's Boundaries Video](#)

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 or near 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.



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?
- What are my limitations (my role, skills, current capacity, etc.) to meet the person's expressed desires/perceived needs?
- What organizations or colleagues 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

MIND



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

SPIRIT



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

STRENGTH



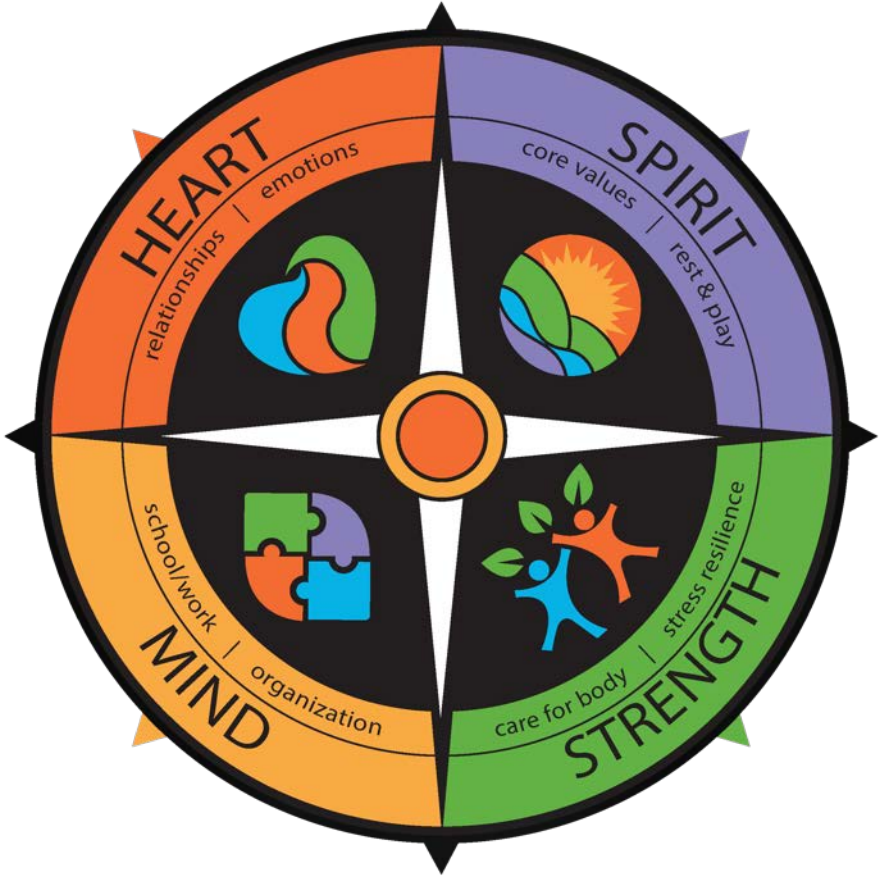
- **Stress Resilience:** deal positively with the challenges of life
- **Care for My Body:** build healthy habits around your physical well-being, and to end unhealthy habits

HEART



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

The Compass Wellness Practices Assessment





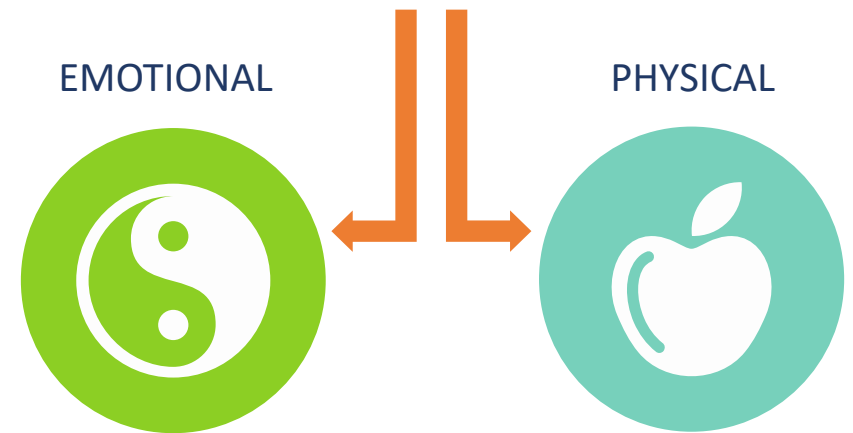
Building my capacity for resilient
relationships with others and
myself through self-compassion

*You will never speak to anyone more
than you speak to yourself in your
head. Be kind to yourself.*



Out of Balance?

Your first clue

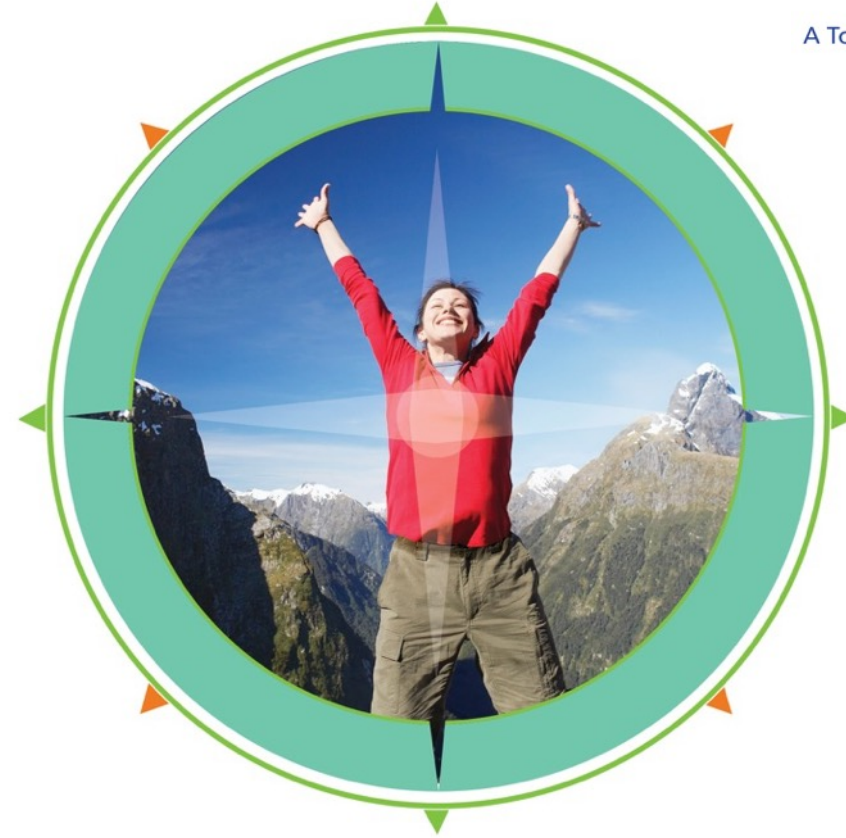


1. Avoid
2. New perspective
3. Adjust lifestyle

How do you think about *your* behavior?



A matter of motivation



A matter of ability
and supports

When I am known, included and supported.

Reversing Shame and Blame

~~COMMISSION
FATIGUE~~



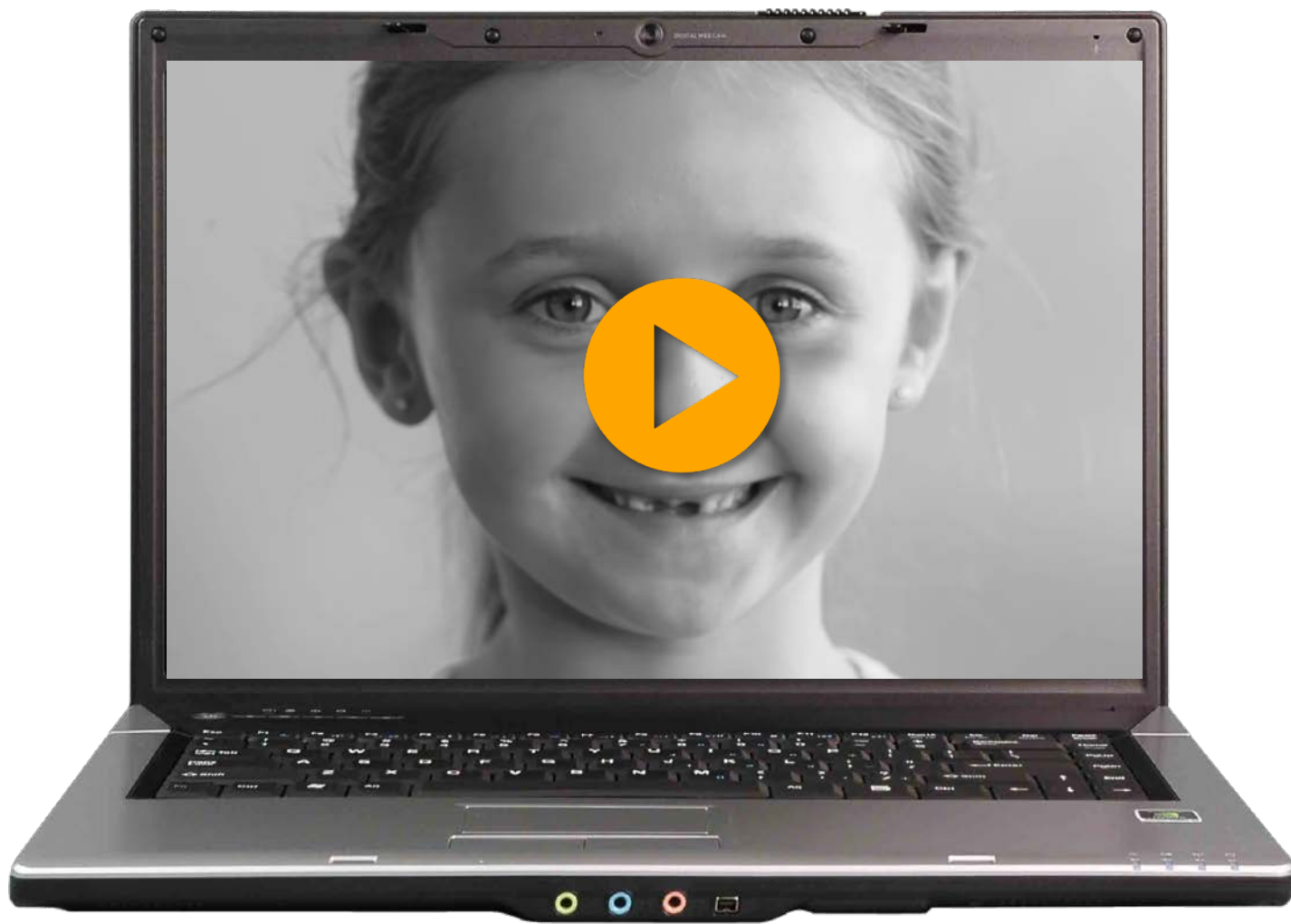
Section 12: Compassionate Connections With Parents





Next Steps:

Building My and My School'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, families and each other.

CompassionResilienceToolkit.org
smckenzie@rogershospital.org
Monica.Wightman@dpi.wi.gov



Developed in partnership with:

