



New England (HHS Region 1)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

# Using the School Compassionate Culture Analytic Tool for Educators to Inform the Childhood-Trauma Learning Collaborative

Austin, TX  
November 8, 2019

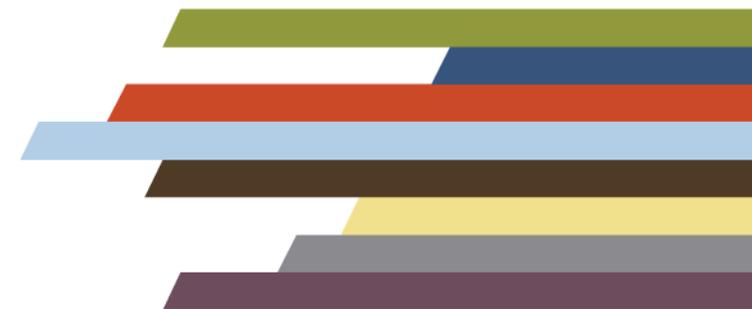
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**CHRISTINE MASON, PH.D.**

CENTER FOR EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT



# Agenda

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Welcome and Introductions

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Background and Context

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Overview of the S-CCATE

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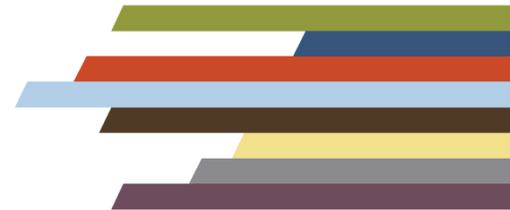
Using the S-CCATE in the C-TLC

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Sample S-CCATE Results

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Using the S-CCATE to inform our work





# Children and Trauma

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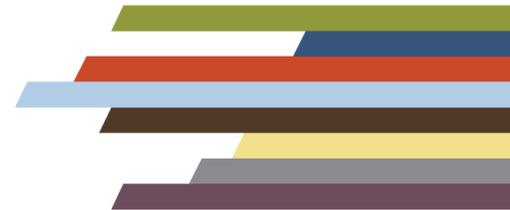
1 in 4 children experience trauma before the age of 4, and 6 in 10 before the age of 18.

When children live in poverty, neighborhoods of high crime, or experience racism and discrimination, the frequency and severity of their trauma will be even greater.

Significant trauma exposure can undermine normal development and lead to cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and educational challenges.

As children move into middle and high school, trauma exposure increases the risk of behavioral health disorders, risk taking behaviors, educational failure, and violence.

Without intervention, the consequences of trauma persist into adulthood.



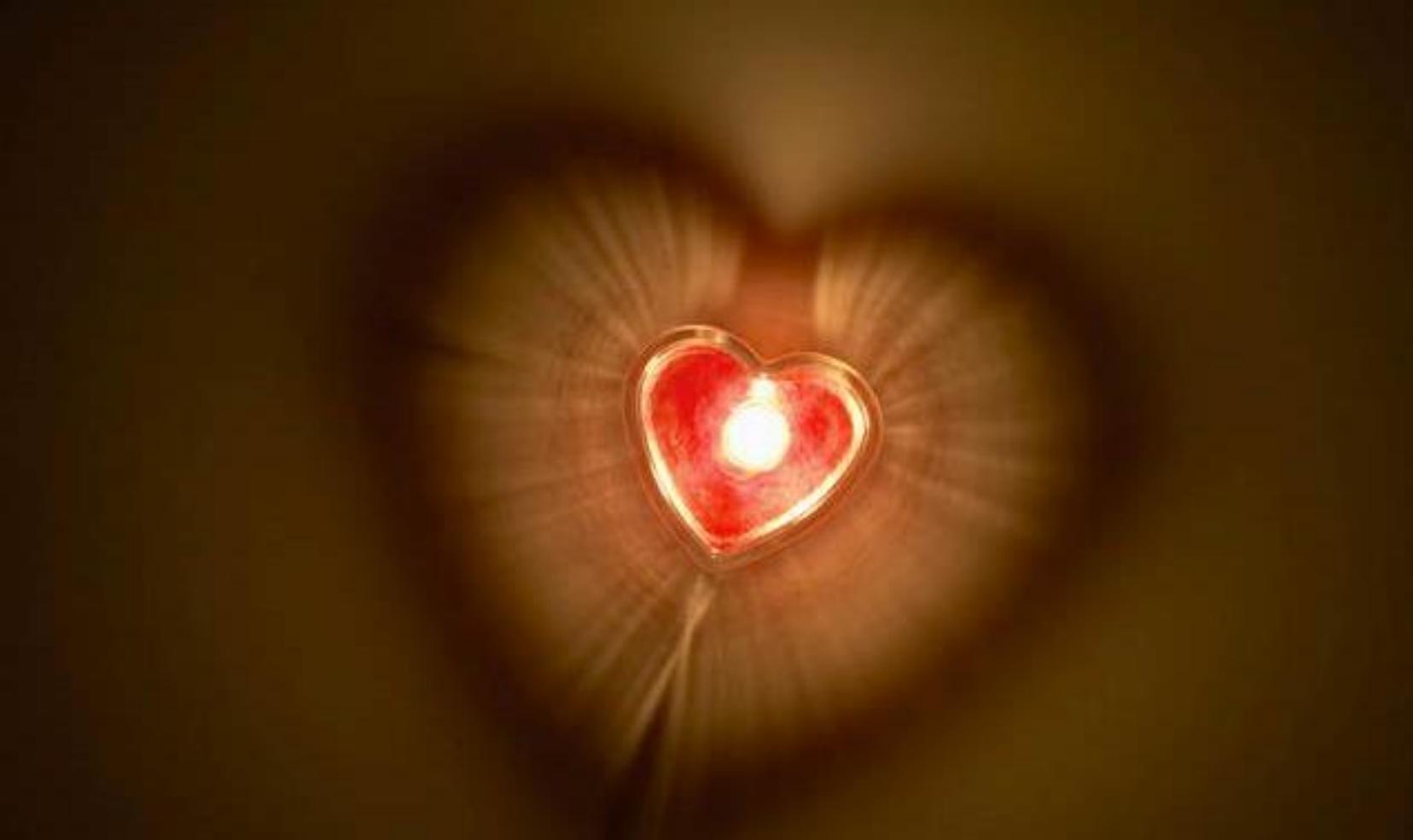
# Trauma-Informed School Based Mental Health

Trauma-informed, child-centered interventions improve resilience, learning, and achievement for children who have experienced trauma.

Schools are ideal settings to provide support to ameliorate the effects of trauma and amplify protective factors.

Availability of educated and nurturing adults within schools can meet the mental health needs of children.

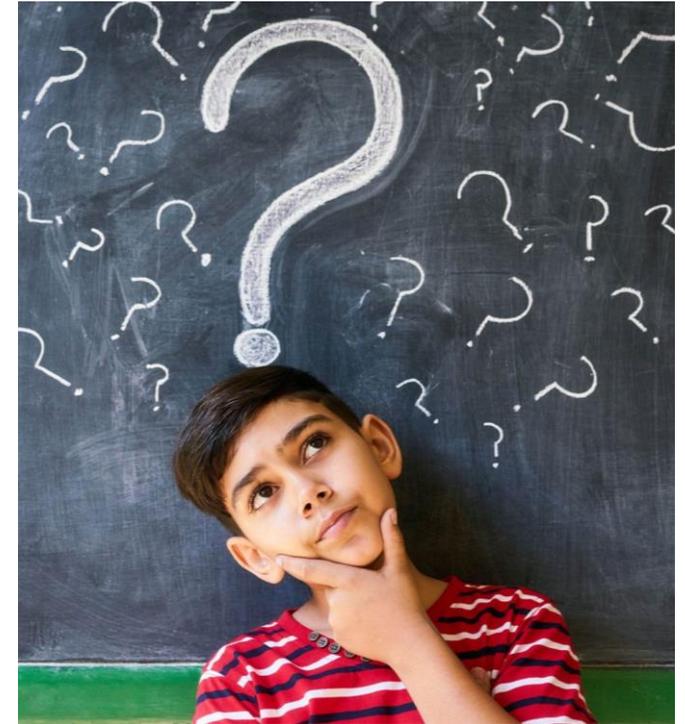




**Cultivating Mindfulness, Compassion, and Heart Centered Learning Environments to Combat Trauma and Stress**

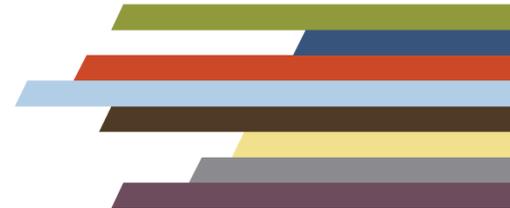
# Where Can Schools Start? What Is A School-Infused Approach?

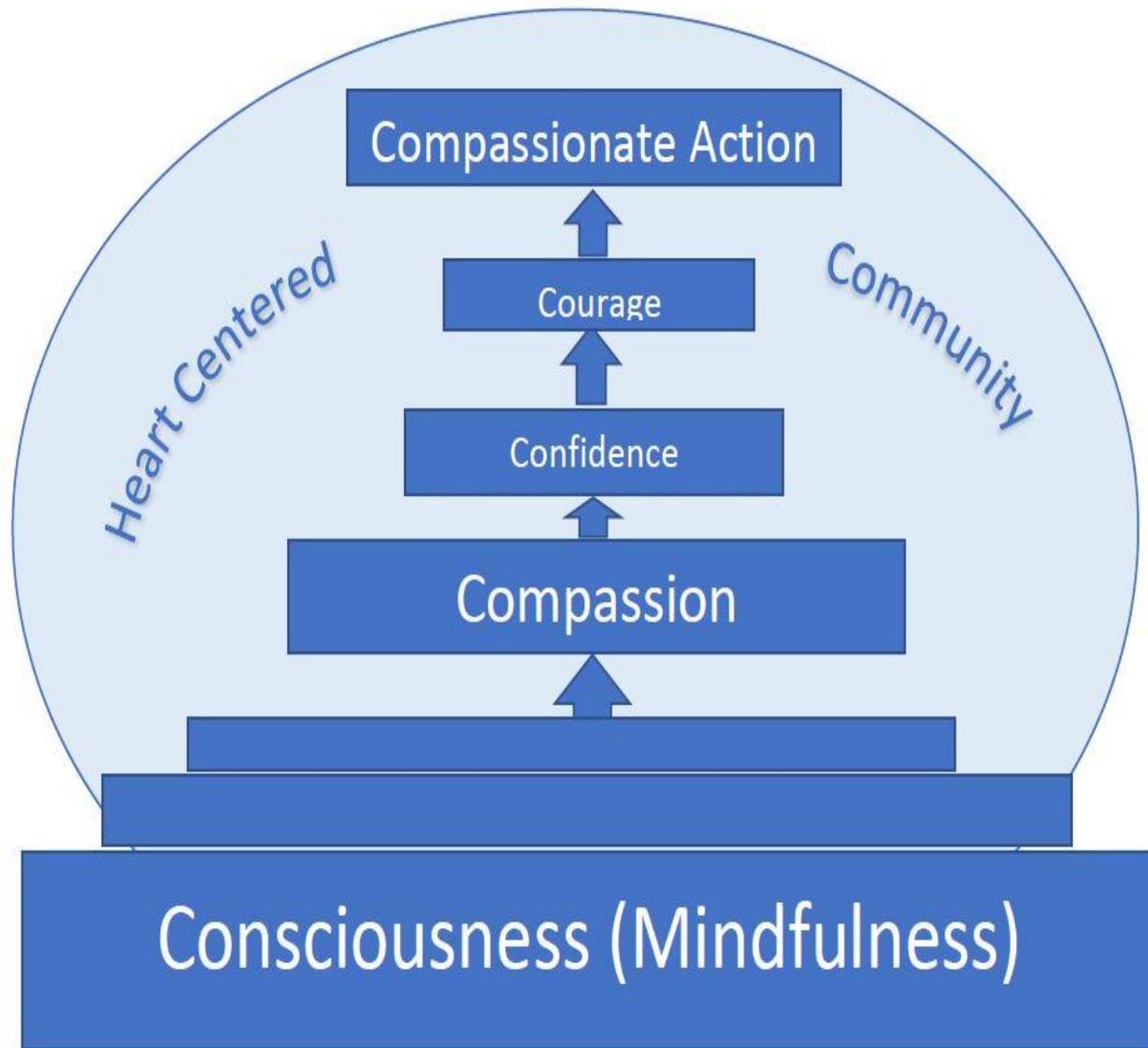
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- Developed by the Center for Educational Improvement
- 40 item, validated, online school culture assessment
- Both the S-CCATE and the S-CCATE Supplement are based on current research
- Online platform and users' manual available at: [s-ccate.org](http://s-ccate.org)





The S-CCATE stems from the 5 components of Heart Centered Learning (the 5 Cs)

## LEADERSHIP & A COMPASSIONATE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Strengthening how the principal, the school environment, and policies contribute to a compassionate school culture



## The 5 Cs:

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- The S-CCATE Assessments are uniquely designed for schools to guide teams of educators and whole school communities through the process of transformational change.
- Based on current research regarding factors that improve well-being, executive functioning, and neuroplasticity among children and youth—all of which help students gain resiliency, alleviate trauma, and overcome barriers to learning and decision-making.
- Designed to support and guide school communities through the process of transformational change toward increased compassion and health.

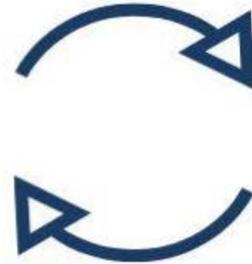
## CONSCIOUS AWARENESS OF EMOTIONS & STRESS



Using neuroscience and neuroplasticity to explain how trauma, stress, and vulnerability interact, and how mindfulness can support positive outcomes in traumatized populations

## COURAGE & RESILIENCY

Demonstrating appropriate risk-taking, gratitude, and constructive feedback



## CONFIDENCE & POSITIVITY

Applying teacher's awareness of student stress and abuse to understanding how to adjust instruction to provide more student support

## UNDERSTANDING OF EQUITY

Promoting student awareness of discrimination, poverty, and injustice.



- Use 2-3 times during the academic year, beginning with S-CCATE.
- With both instruments, teachers rank their perceptions of their knowledge, skills, and implementation of compassionate components in classrooms, as well as their perception of student and schoolwide strengths and needs.

# Sample S-CCATE Questions

- Students show empathy for others.
- Teachers and administrators further participation and a sense of belonging (e.g., connectedness to the larger school community) for all students.

Students are taught about the neuroscience behind drug/alcohol abuse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students regularly practice mindfulness as a path to build confidence (e.g. meditation, breathwork, yoga, mindfulness role-plays).	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Level 1: Needs Improvement	Level 2: Emerging	Level 3: Proficient	Level 4: Exemplary
Students practice appropriate risk-taking.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
My classroom environment is structured to reduce impacts of childhood stress and trauma.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Working with S-CCATE



## EMPOWER YOUR SCHOOL

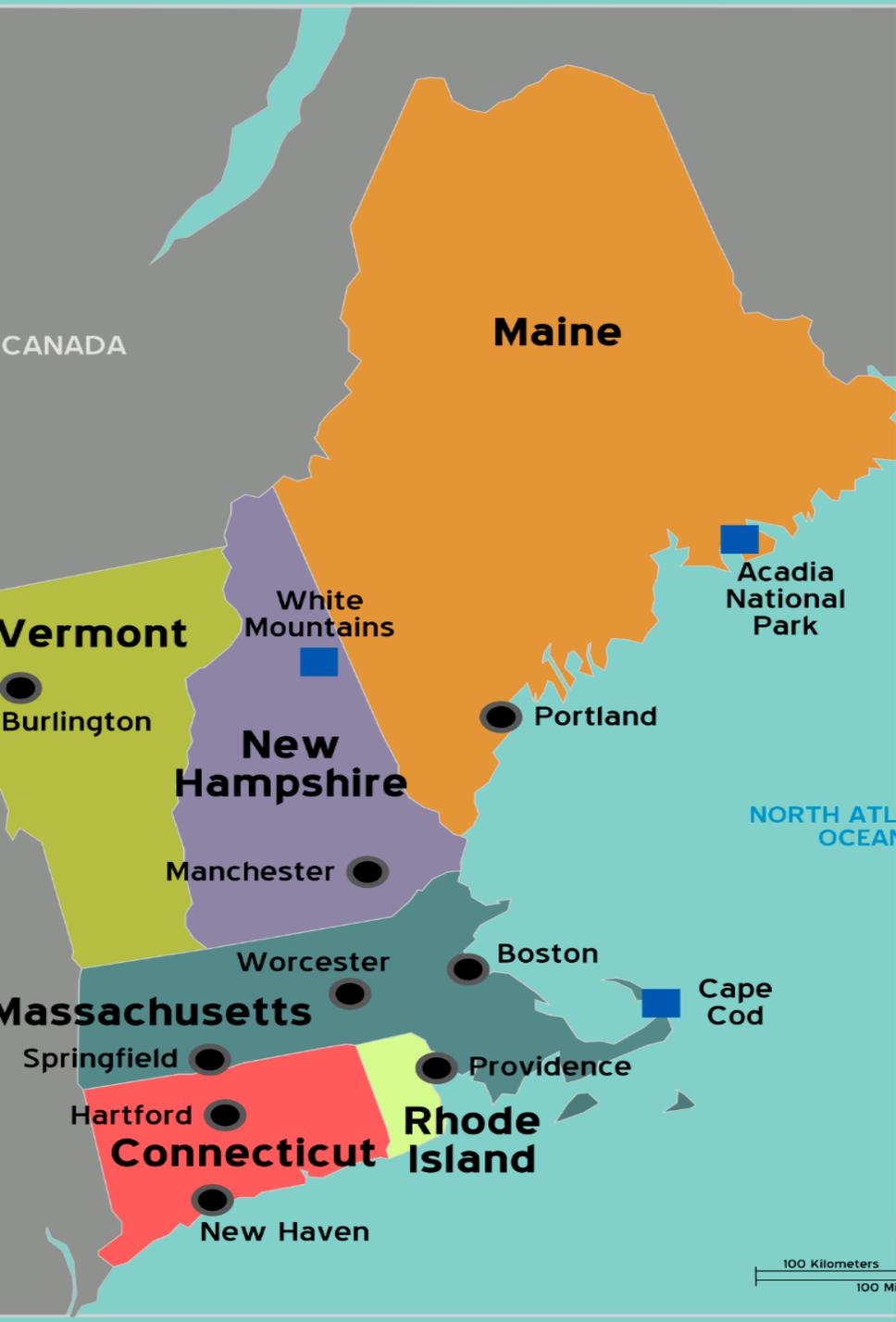
MEASURE COMPASSIONATE SCHOOL CULTURE  
FACTORS IN 12- 15 MINUTES

## THE S-CCATE VALIDATION TOOL

### LEADERSHIP & A COMPASSIONATE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Strengthening how the principal,  
the school environment, and  
policies contribute to a  
compassionate school culture



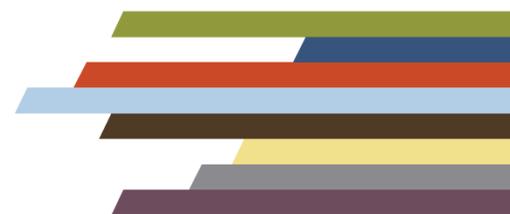


New England (HHS Region 1)

MHTTC

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Led by Yale Program for Recovery and Community Health (PRCH) and funded by SAMHSA, the core mission of the New England MHTTC is to use evidence-based means to disseminate promising practices across the New England region.



# The Childhood-Trauma Learning Collaborative

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To expand the work of the New England MHTTC, Yale PRCH has partnered with **the Center for Educational Improvement** to create the Childhood-Trauma Learning Collaborative (C-TLC) to support **school-based mental health education**



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yale  
program  
for  
recovery  
and  
community  
health



**Center for Educational Improvement**  
Heart Centered 21st Century Learning

# C-TLC

Aim: To enhance school culture and prepare school personnel to improve the mental health of school-aged children the Northeast region

## Goal 1

Foster alliances to address the needs of children and youth who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing significant trauma.

## Goal 2

Provide publicly available, free training and technical assistance to early childhood, elementary, and secondary teachers, principals, school psychologists, and other school staff.

## Goal 3

Accelerate adoption and implementation of mental health evidenced-based practices through the C-TLC for New England.

# Role of the C-TLC Fellows

- Recruit schools to complete the S-CCATE
- Use S-CCATE results to inform effective SEL practice
- Support educators to further supportive classroom climates and student health and well-being
- Ensure that all C-TLC activities are relevant and specific to needs, cultures, and experiences of all stakeholders





# Expectations for Fellows

- Commitment of **5-6 hours/month** for each Fellow
- Recruit a minimum of **5 schools** to participate 2 Fellows per state
- Monthly Informational Webinars
- Monthly New England MHTTC Leadership Learning Collaborative Meetings on preventing mental illness, reducing the impact of trauma, & the role of schools
- Quarterly Meetings with the evaluation team from PRCH:
  - Share process & performance data
  - Identify small changes to address issues or disparities in plan implementation



## Mindfulness in the classroom: One deep breath at a time...

### How mindfulness is becoming a growing strategy for managing stress and trauma in local schools:

- The collaborators say that the big reason mindfulness exercises are now being implemented in schools is because of the role mindfulness has been demonstrated to play in supporting healthy brain function.
- Better brain function leads to better cognitive responses and subsequently helps to address the rise of trauma and stress among school-aged children and their teachers.



Lee Elementary School third grade teacher Ruth LeCompte crafted a plush character named, "Washington Worrywart," whose mouth can be unzipped so that students can give it their worries, little notes written on pieces of paper with instructions that read: "Write down your hopes and fears. I will hold them safely for you while you continue your day. I will share your worrisome thoughts, hopes and fears with your teacher. Take deep breaths and relax."

# Cultivating Mindfulness, Compassion, and Heart Centered Learning Environments to Combat Trauma and Stress

**Scenario:** A few years ago, Principal Kate Retzel noticed an increase in red flags at the school from previous years: Students had more frequent and longer spans of absences, more kids were prone to outbursts, and teachers were calling out sick more frequently. At the same time, more students were experiencing challenges in their home lives, from domestic violence to food insecurity to disruption in family income due to job loss or parental separation.

**ACE:** In a clinical sense, more children in the school were experiencing collectively what the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention call Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs. As children were acting out in response to these experiences, the climate in the school became more toxic, leading to things like low morale and both staff and students missing school due to fatigued minds and stressed bodies.

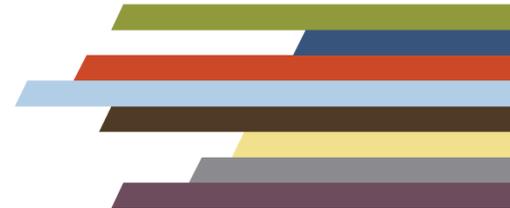
**Trauma Informed:** The principal began learning about what's known as a "trauma-informed" response to students exhibiting disruptive, destructive or distracted behaviors.

Additionally, Retzel connected with Rivers Murphy to learn more about mindfulness and a "heart-centered" approach to teaching and learning through compassion.

# Results of S-CCATE Administration in New England

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- Over 1,100 responses from March - September 2019
- Over 100 participating Schools
- Schools with at least 7 responses receive basic recommendations and action guides
- Based on recommendations, schools are implementing plans for improvement
- S-CCATE will be re-administered in 2-3 months to review progress





## Sample S-CCATE Results (Number of respondents: 15)

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<b>Conscious Awareness of Emotions &amp; Stress</b>	<b>1.78</b>
<b>Understanding of equity</b>	<b>2.02</b>
<b>Courage &amp; Resiliency</b>	<b>2.12</b>
<b>Leadership &amp; a Compassionate School Community</b>	<b>2.50</b>
<b>Building Confidence &amp; Positivity</b>	<b>2.84</b>



# Sample Interpretation of Results

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- **Strengths:** The sample elementary scored highest in the areas of Conscious Communication, Student Protection & Trauma Support, and Compassion for Self & Others.
- **Areas for Professional Development:** Human Rights & Violence Prevention and Culture & School Community.
- **Additional Information:** The Center for Educational Improvement, based on national S-CCATE data, has learned that many schools need/desire related professional development in the areas of understanding trauma, neuroplasticity and executive functioning, and mindfulness.

# Sample Summary by Factors

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- **Greatest Need:  
Factor 2  
Conscious Awareness of  
Emotions & Stress**  
Items related to  
neuroscience,  
drug/alcohol abuse,  
mindfulness

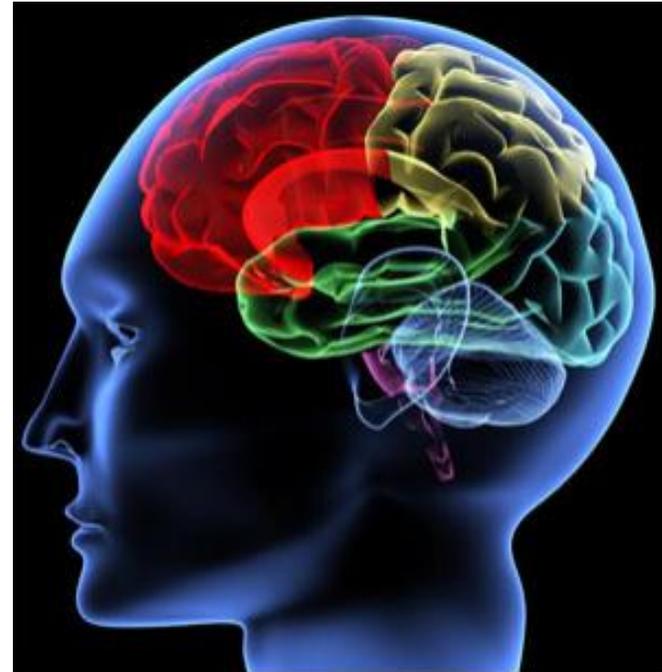


Photo credit: Copyright © 2019, Dan Koboldt

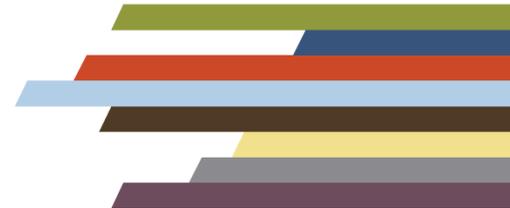


# Sample Recommendations

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**Trauma, Neuroscience, and Mindfulness.** According to S-CCATE results with 611 respondents, most responding schools in New England are not yet implementing mindfulness during the school day...

The results also show that many schools, while they are beginning to become “trauma-informed,” still have a ways to go before educators understand how to alleviate trauma and enhance student executive functioning – which will help set the stage for learning.

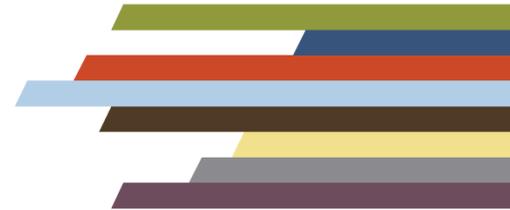




# Sample Recommendations: Understanding of Equity

Professional development for teachers should include both information on how to instruct and information on the both the immediate impact and cultural relevance for families in their community...

Reading nonfiction texts on social justice, in reading groups with community members, offers schools a broad range of possibilities to enhance a healthy dialogue about tolerance in society...Study of the role of peaceful protests, key civil rights leaders, and the influence of media, including social media, is a critical way to ensuring that students understand alternatives to violence.



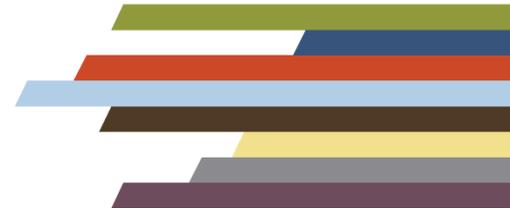


# Excerpt from Recommendations: Conscious Awareness of Stress & Emotions

Help teachers understand neuroplasticity and executive functioning, including the relationship to stress and trauma and the impact on well-being, academic learning, and decision-making...

Discuss how stress can lead to addictive behaviors when we do not learn to self-regulate...

Teachers learn and practice mindfulness, yoga, and meditation and in turn students learn these strategies... Teachers consider their own comfort level with various strategies and how to integrate these practices throughout the academic school day.



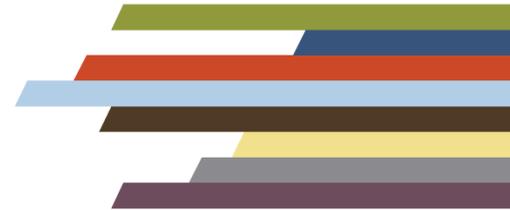


# Optional S-CCATE Action Guides (1-3 per year)

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**Each AG contains three major components:**

- Considerations for the Whole Community  
(Students, Educators/Staff, and School Leaders)
- Suggested Professional Development
- Suggested Activities



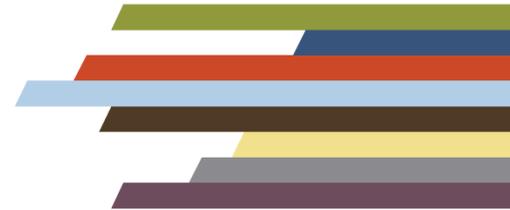


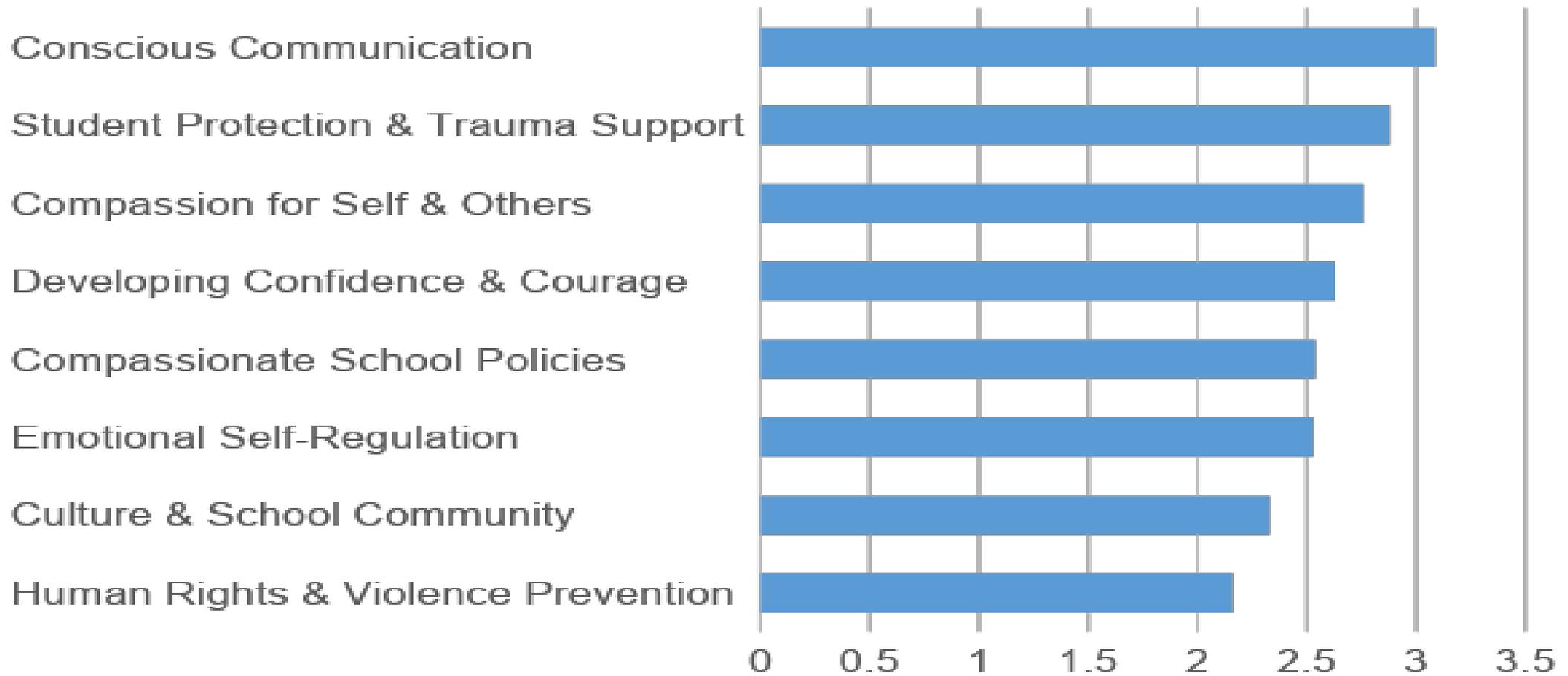
## Action Guide Activity Example

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Develop a whole-school mindfulness practice to help students gain emotional regulation skills and enhance their executive functioning.

- Consider having school mindfulness time in the same way that schools implement [\*Drop Everything and Read\*](#).
  - Set aside time for yoga at the very beginning of the day, right after lunch, or another time convenient for most classes.

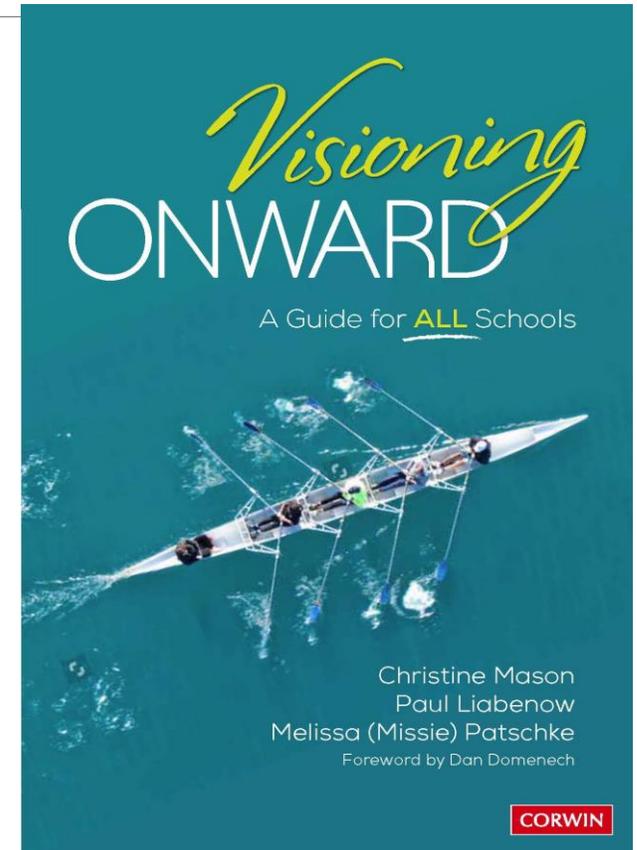
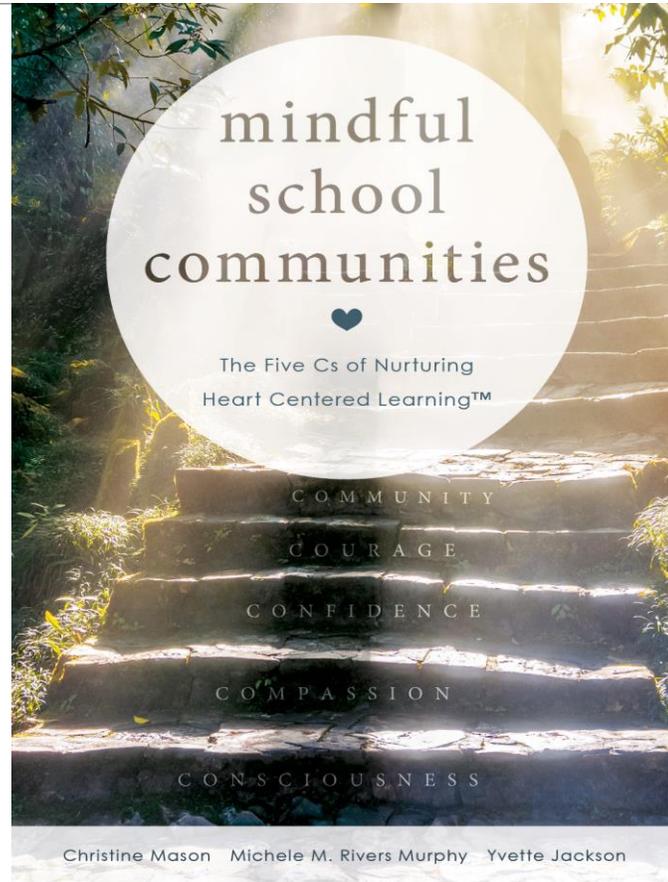
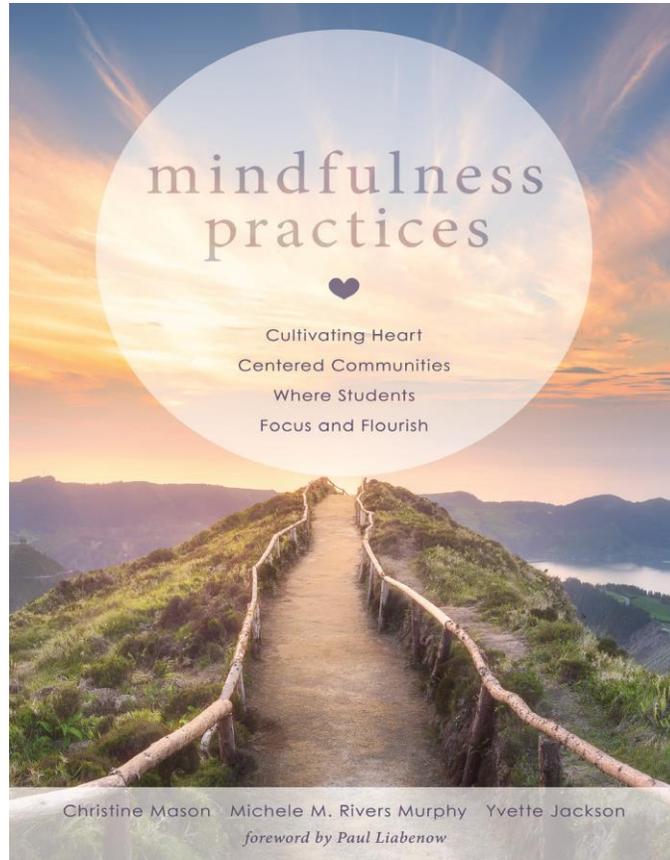




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**S-CCATE Supplement. Sample for 611 respondents, April 2019.**

# Companion Books & Virtual Book Study





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## Contact Us

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S-CCATE is available nationally – check out [s-ccate.org](http://s-ccate.org).

Contact us for the New England MHTTC program available for New England states in 2019 - 2020.

C-TLC Members receive a monthly eNewsletter on schools and mental health, technical assistance, and opportunities to participate in a series of related webinars.

