

SELPA Trauma Informed Presentation 2026

Beyond Awareness: Experiencing Trauma-Informed Practice in Schools

Increase student engagement by creating safe, predictable environments, building strong relationships, and supporting regulation.



Welcome! Please pick up your materials & take a seat.



Color Cards



Number Card



Soda Can

don't open your soda can, yet



Then, please find a seat and make yourself comfortable.



MEET YOUR

PRESENTER

Sandra Ruiz ♥



PROFESSIONAL ROLE

Coordinator of Mental Health & Student Services
Integrating mental health and education since 2001



AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Student mental health & wellness systems
- Trauma-informed practices in schools
- Risk assessment & intervention
- Building supportive school climates
- Student advocacy & empowerment



APPROACH

Student-centered and relationship-driven. Supports are tailored to developmental and emotional needs through collaboration with staff, families, and community partners.



PASSION

Creating systems where students feel supported, valued, and empowered to navigate challenges with confidence.



CREDENTIALS & EDUCATION



M.S. in Psychology



M.A. in School Leadership



PPSC
(Pupil Personnel Services Credential)



Preliminary Administrative
Credential



Licensed Marriage &
Family Therapist (LMFT)



FUN FACT

Coffee lover, nature enthusiast, and the unofficial social events coordinator for my 9-year-old son.





PERRIS UNION
HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

**INSPIRE.
EMPOWER.
ACHIEVE.**

MEET YOUR

PRESENTER

Jennifer Navarro 



PROFESSIONAL ROLE

Educationally Related Mental Health Therapist
Integrating mental health and education since 2014



AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Child and adolescent development
- Crisis intervention and risk assessment
- Trauma-informed practices in schools
- Special education collaboration
- Student advocacy and empowerment



APPROACH

Student-centered, trauma-informed approach that focused on building trust, fostering resilience and supporting the whole child through collaboration with families, teachers and community partners.



PASSION

Addressing barriers to create a safe and inclusive environment where every student feels seen, heard, and empowered to success both academically and emotionally.



CREDENTIALS & EDUCATION



B. A. in Psychology
B. A. Child Development



Master of Social Work



PPSC (Pupil Personell Services Credential)
• Child Welfare and Attendance
• School Social Work



Licensed Clinical
Social Worker (LCSW)

FUN FACT



Beach lover, dog
mom and baking
enthusiast



STUDENT ADVOCATE



COLLABORATOR



EMPOWERING FUTURES

Community Invitations



Come as You Are

Your thoughts and feelings are welcome here. **Bring your doubts, fears, and failings** as well as your convictions, joys, and successes. Be as present as possible.

Speak Your Truth with Kindness

Notice what has heart and meaning for you. **Speak your truth** in ways that respect others' truths using "I-statements." Respond with curiosity and open questions.

Listen with Compassion

Turn from judgement to wonder and compassionate inquiry: "I wonder why they feel this way?" Listen without interpreting, correcting or debating.

Take Space and Make Space

Be mindful of how much you share. **Invite other voices.** Aim for equity of voice to help create a welcoming and supportive learning community.

3 Signature SEL Practices

Creating Effective, Engaging, and Purposeful Learning Conditions



Inclusive Welcome

Setting the Tone

- Welcoming and supportive learning community.



Engaging Strategies

Sense Making,
Transitions,
Promote Learning.



Intentional Close

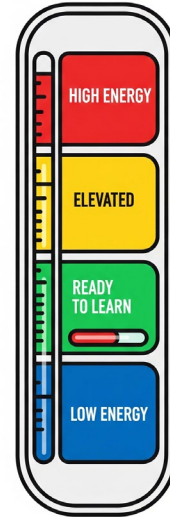
Reflections
and Looking
Forward.



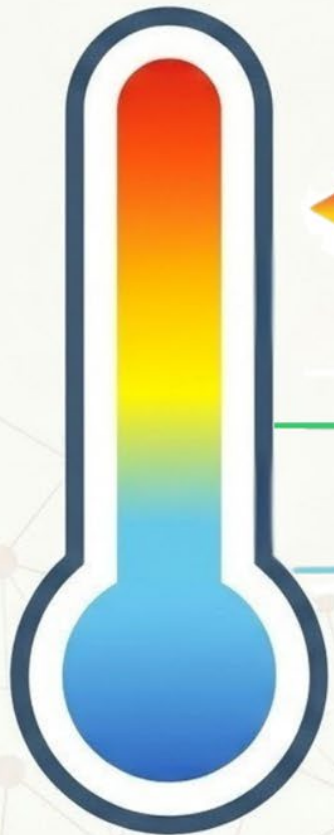
Inclusive Welcome

Check in with yourself

Using the color cards, how are you feeling in this moment?



Emotional Thermometer: Gauging Your State



RED ZONE (High Energy/Intensity)

Intense Emotions: Angry, Out of Control, Panic, Explosive. **Needs Immediate Regulation.**



YELLOW ZONE (Elevated Energy/Alertness)

Heightened Emotions: Anxious, Excited, Frustrated, Silly, Nervous. **Needs Caution & Coping Skills.**



GREEN ZONE (Ready to Learn/Optimal)

Optimal State: Calm, Focused, Happy, Content. **Ready to Engage.**



BLUE ZONE (Low Energy/Down)

Lowered Emotions: Sad, Tired, Bored, Sick, Depressed. **Needs Rest & Support.**

Participant Notice

SESSION ACTIVITY NOTE



Some activities in this session are designed to help you experience **moments of stress**, followed by strategies to return to a **regulated state**.

PERSONAL GUIDANCE



Please participate in a way that feels right for you. You are always welcome to **step back, take a break, or observe**.

Your well-being comes first.

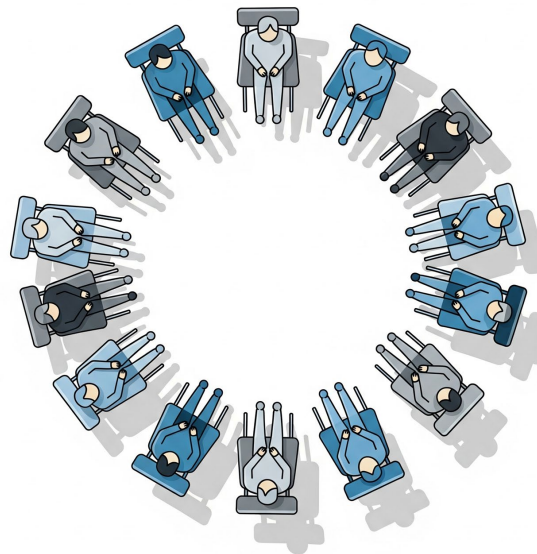
Activity Instructions



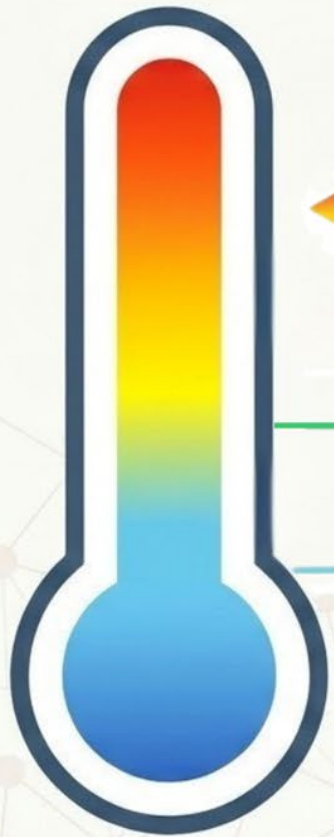
1. Check your **number card** provided at the entrance.



2. Find your **corresponding seat** and settle in for the session.



Emotional Thermometer: Gauging Your State



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inhale



ACCUMULATED STRESS & REGULATION ACTIVITY



STEP 1: REFLECT

Think of a student you currently work with.



STEP 2: IDENTIFY STRESSORS

How many stressors might this student be experiencing?
Factors impacting learning, behavior, or emotion.



STEP 3: CONSIDER

Deepen understanding of the student if you struggle to identify stressors.



STEP 4: SIMULATE

Shake the soda can once for each stressor identified.



Accumulated Stress & Regulation Activity



Pause & Reflect



Step 1: Check In

How are you feeling
right now?



Step 2: Act or Wait?

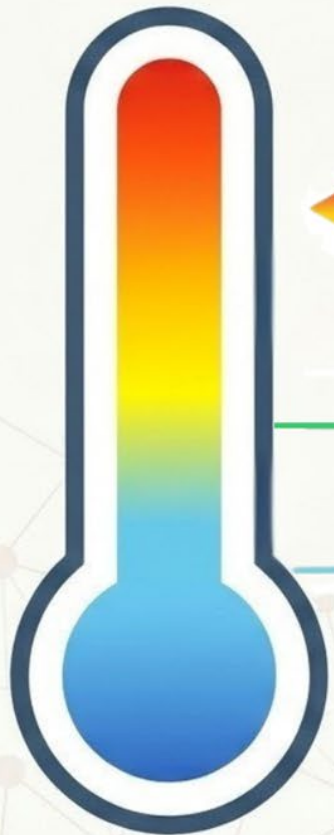
Would you open the
can immediately?
Would you wait?



Step 3: Reflect

Why?
Deepen insight into your
choice.

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PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (PMR)

Lead this guided mindfulness exercise.



1. Prepare

Find a comfortable position.
Close your eyes.
Focus on your breath.



2. Tense

Choose a muscle group (e.g., hands/arms).
Squeeze tightly for 5 seconds. Focus only on the tension.



3. Release

Relax quickly and completely. Notice the difference in sensation.
Let tension dissolve.



4. Breathe & Scan

Pause for 10-20 seconds, enjoying the feeling of relaxation. Repeat with other muscle groups.

Creating Trauma-Informed Learning Environments



Safety & Predictability

Trauma-informed frameworks emphasize safety and predictability as foundational for student engagement.

SAMHSA, 2014



Consistent Routines

Consistent routines and reduced uncertainty help prevent trauma-related stress responses.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network



Clear Expectations

Structured environments with clear expectations improve engagement and reduce behavioral disruptions.

Institute of Education Sciences

Why It Matters in Trauma-Informed Schools



Psychological Safety

Creates physical and psychological safety



Emotional Regulation

Supports emotional regulation



Reduced Threat

Reduces uncertainty and perceived threat



Student Engagement

Increases engagement and decreases behavioral disruptions





Making the Connection

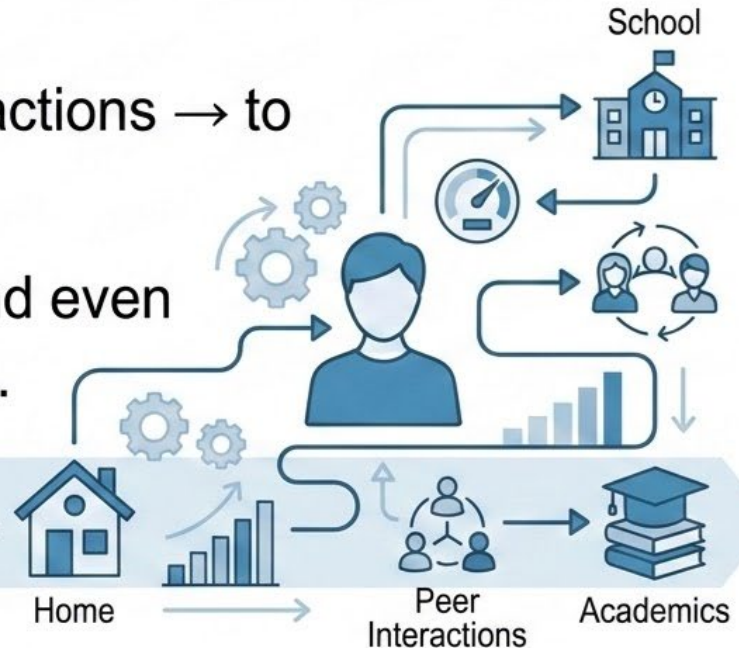
Students don't get to "set the can down."

They carry accumulated stress throughout the day—

from home → to school → to peer interactions → to academics.

Without support, that pressure builds, and even small moments can lead to big reactions.

They carry accumulated stress throughout the day—



Trauma-Informed Practices



Building Relationships

The foundation for identifying when a student moves away from their baseline behavior.



Student Support

Increases opportunities for students to seek help and receive direct feedback on behavior.

Correlation with Academic Success

Grades

Improved Performance

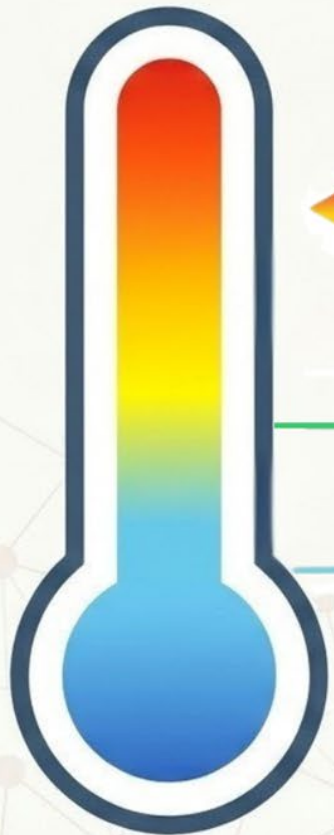
Attendance

Increased Presence

Behavior

Positive Conduct

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Mindfulness Activity

Focal Point:
Observe the subtle dance of light.



Guided Breathing:
Inhale slowly (4 counts), hold,
exhale (6 counts).

Repeat.



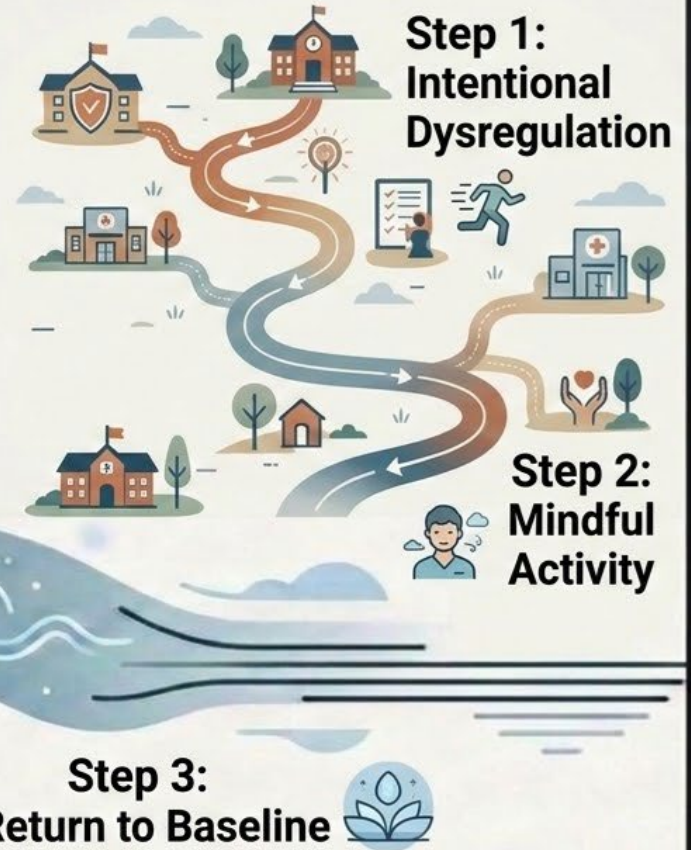
Repeat.

Debrief

Reflecting on the experience.

Experience -

- Intentional set up to dysregulate participants.
- Practice a mindful activity.
- Return to baseline.



Intentional Close



“I used to think...”



“Now I think...”

