



Adult Resilience First:

The Missing Link in Student Mental Health

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Tense or Upset



What happens inside of you?

Do you want to fix it, escape it, defend yourself—or fight back?

We have to start with the adults.



2008 – Founded for K–6 SEL

2018 – Widespread adoption → serving 250,000 children in 38 states

2019 – Pivoted to **adult resilience** after recognizing critical gap

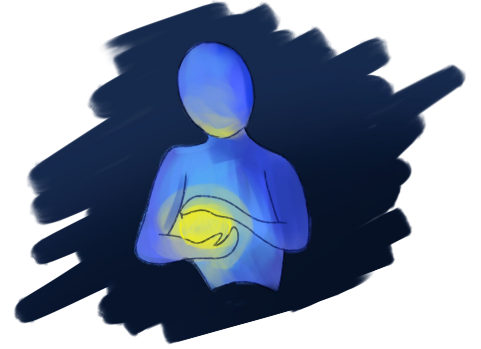
2020 – Launched *We Are Resilient™* and began supporting teams and leaders across many sectors. More than 6,000 trained.

2024 – Published *The Heart of Resilience*

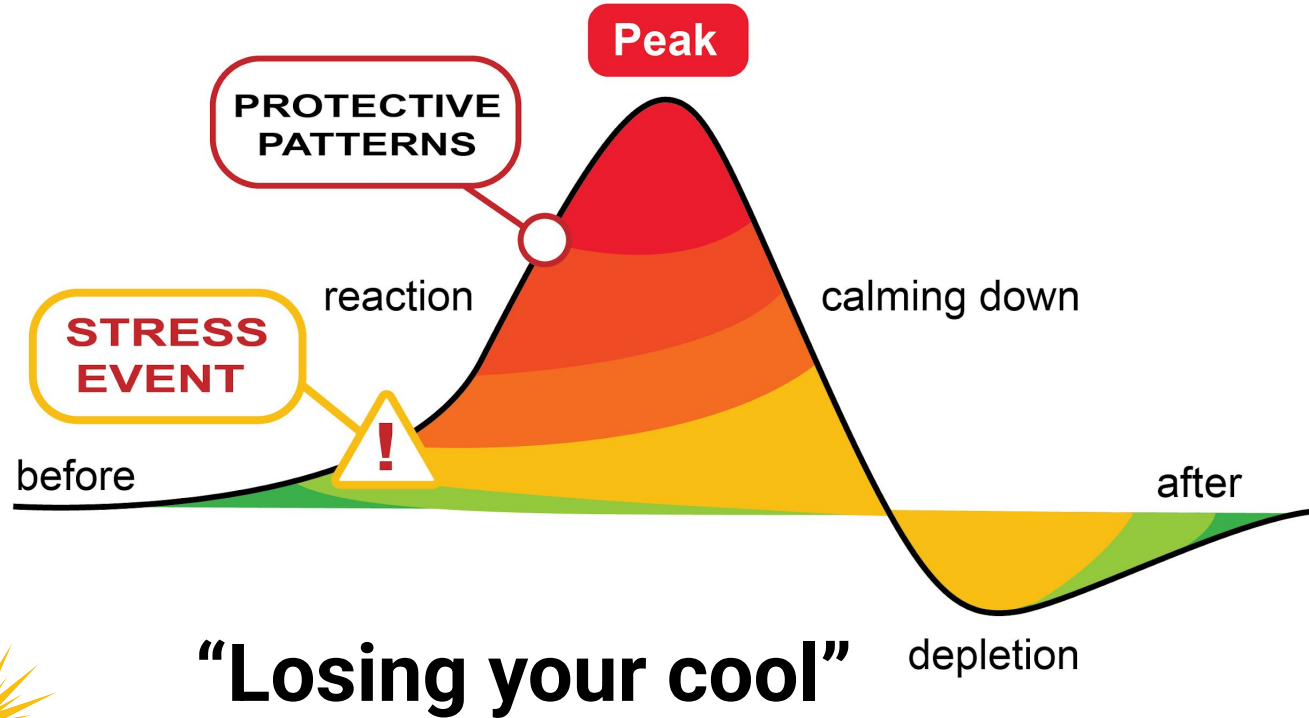


Why Do We Do Unhelpful Things?

- Under pressure, our brains shift into protection.
- These reactions are called **Protective Patterns**.



Noticing our Stress Reaction



“Losing your cool”



Emerge when we feel vulnerable.

Physically, emotionally,
socially, mentally, economically...



Evolved to **protect us.**

We all have protective patterns



What's Your Style?



Avoiding

Attacking?



Common Patterns



Distrusting

Doubting or being critical of yourself or others



Hypervigilance

Seeing potential danger everywhere



Hyper-Caretaking

Over prioritizing others to the detriment of yourself



Avoiding

Withdrawing from specific relationships or situations



Defending

Reacting by digging in your heels to self-protect



Attacking

Being aggressive—feels like a personal attack



Hyper-Caretaking

Over-accommodating, not expressing needs, resentment later

“Let me make everyone happy.”



How can it help?

- Helps others
- Creates **connection**
- **Feeling of being needed**

How it can harm

- **Neglects your needs**
- Doesn't honor **self-reliance** and **capacity of others**



DOVETAIL

Noticing the Stress Reaction in Others



What's
happening
here?

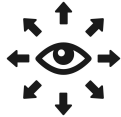


Behaviors **protect us.**

We All Have Them



Distrusting



Hypervigilance



Hyper-Caretaking



Avoiding



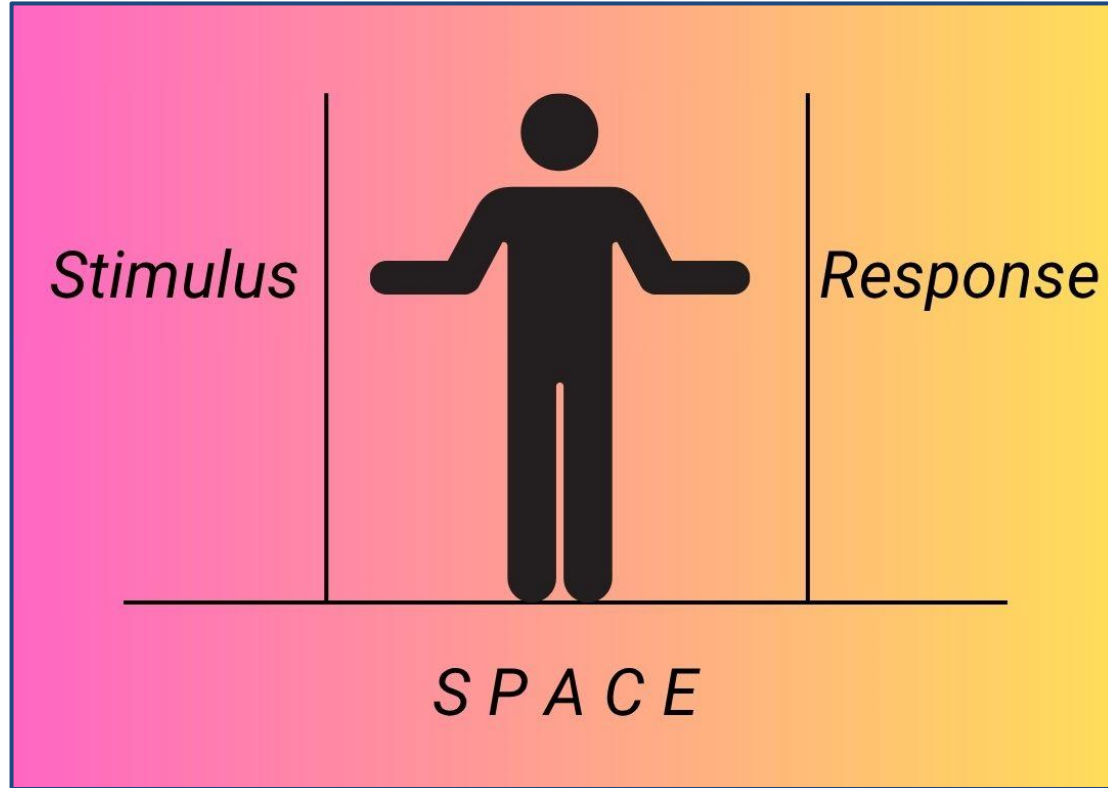
Defending

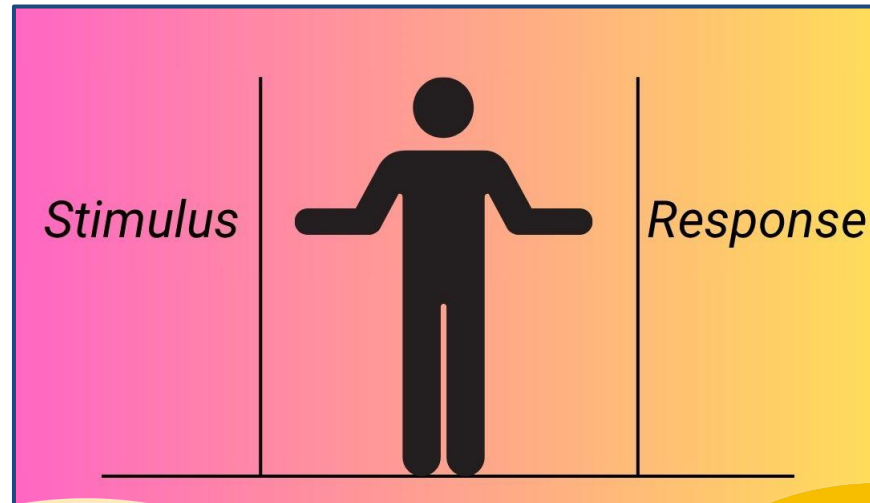


Attacking

Which pattern shows up most for you?

The Space In-Between





SPACE

Curiosity



Stops

**Judgments
Expectations
Assumptions**

Choice



**What options
do I have?**

Courage



**Which response reflects
who I want to be?**



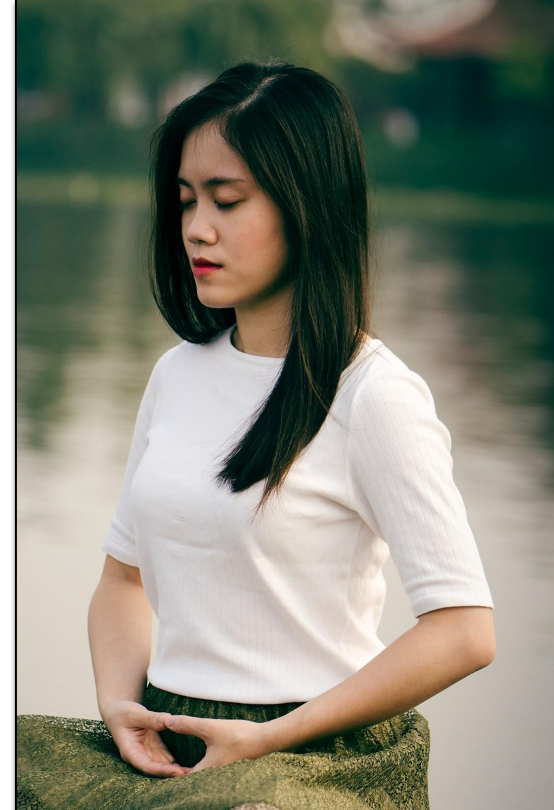
Noticing Myself

Body Check-In

- Pause
- Notice body sensations
- Notice any emotions, images, thoughts



Breathing Mindfully



New Possibilities



Adult Resilience Is Essential for Student Mental Health



Practice: Become **better**
(micro-practices are key!)

Model: Authenticity and vulnerability so
others can learn from you.

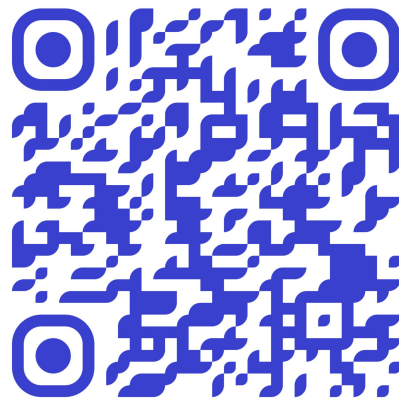
Coach: Mentor using **curiosity, compassionate questions, and encouragement.**

Go deeper

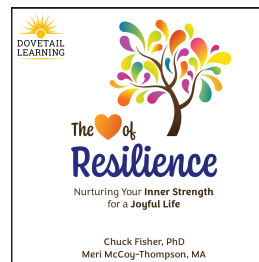
- New App!
- Team trainings
- Free resources + school implementation guide
- *The Heart of Resilience*: Audiobook, book



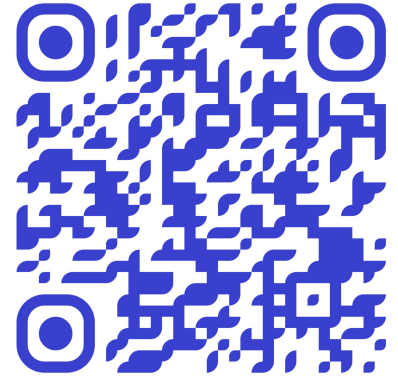
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Thank you!



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