

PERMISSION TO FEEL

From Theory to Practice to Systemic Change in Schools

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#PermissionToFeel

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Opening Quote

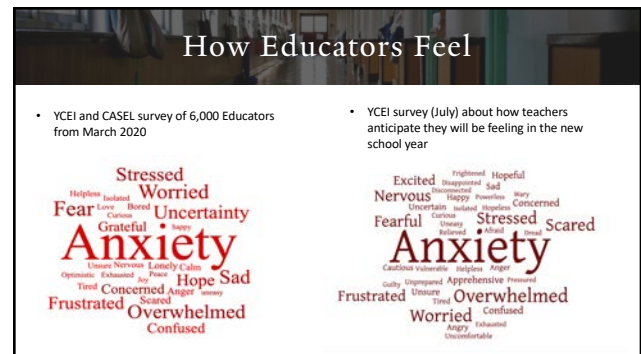
*And **once the storm is over**, you won't remember how you made it through, how you managed to survive. You won't even be sure, whether the **storm** is really **over**. But one thing is certain. When you come out of the **storm**, you won't be the same person who walked in.*

- Haruki Murakami

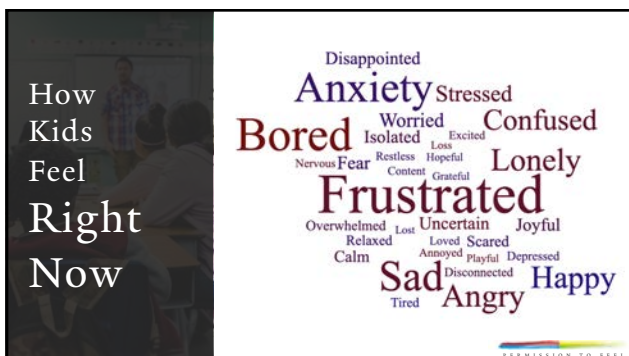
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COVID-19

67%
 Increase in # of parents who reported feeling anxious or depressed all day

Compared to 2018 U.S. adults in April 2020 were

8xs
 more likely to report **serious mental distress**

42%
 Increase in children's externalizing behaviors

Our **BIPOC** communities have

- Higher chance to contract virus due to inequitable treatment
- Greater need for food & shelter
- Less access to quality healthcare
- Higher mortality rates: Black Americans have greatest mortality rates (3x higher than White Americans)

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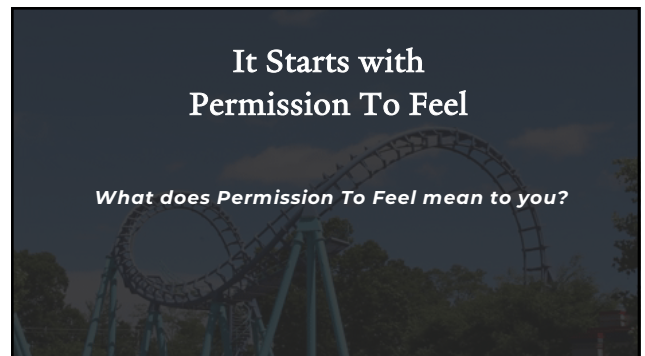
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Steps for Lasting Impact

- **Learn the science of emotion and emotional intelligence**
 - Emotions are information, not "disruptive"
 - SEL is about using all emotions wisely to achieve desired outcomes

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Emotions Matter



- Attention, memory, and learning
- Decision making
- Relationship quality
- Physical and mental health
- Performance and creativity

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Emotion Scientist vs. Emotion Judge

An Emotion Scientist...

- Accepts *all* emotions as information
- Sees emotions as ephemeral
- Is open, curious, and reflective
- Is in learner mode (investigates)
- Wants to get "granular"
- Has a "growth mindset"

An Emotion Judge...

- Views emotions as "error" and weak
- Sees emotions as "permanent"
- Is critical, closed, and ignores emotion
- Is in knower mode (makes attributions)
- Clumps emotions as good or bad
- Has a "fixed mindset"

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Steps for Lasting Impact

• Understand that SEL skills are hard, not "soft" skills

- We need to change the "reward" system to include SEL skills which lead to important life outcomes (SAT scores and grades get you into college).
- Research shows 30-40% of jobs require SEL skills, but only 42% of employers believe new graduates are prepared for the workforce with these skills
- All adults are trained in the skills for personal and professional development



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The RULER Skills

- R**ecognizing emotions in self and others
Understanding causes and consequences of emotions
Labeling emotions accurately
Expressing emotions
Regulating emotions effectively

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Big 7 Emotion Regulation Strategies

- PERMISSION TO FEEL
- PHYSIOLOGICAL REGULATION (breathing, mindfulness)
- SELF-CARE (sleep, nutrition, exercise)
- SELF-CARE (doing things you enjoy)
- HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS (staying connected)
- MANAGING YOUR THOUGHTS (managing negative self-talk)
- ROUTINES AND RITUALS

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Steps for Lasting Impact

• Move beyond the goal that "happiness" is the "answer"

- People who constantly strive to be happy often feel worse over time
- SEL is about acknowledging and accepting all emotions (e.g., stress management vs. eliminating all stressors) and finding greater balance



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Steps for Lasting Impact

• Have greater balance in the “core” curriculum

- How many hours are spent on “core” subjects vs. explicit instruction in SEL skills?
- Move beyond “what gets assessed gets taught” model (SEL underlies all learning)
- Acknowledge that too much testing can hinder student motivation and attitudes about school

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
1	RULER	RULER	RULER	RULER	RULER
2	Literacy	Gym	Science	History	Math
3	Math	Literacy	History	Math	Science
4	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
5	RULER	Math	Literacy	Gym	Literacy
6	History	Science	Math	Science	Math
7	Science	History	Gym	Literacy	RULER

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Steps for Lasting Impact

• Educate families in SEL

- Let kids be kids!
- Spend more time with kids!
 - The average teenager spends **6 hours per day** using tech
 - Anxiety & depression are correlated with time spent using tech
 - Teenagers now prefer to communicate via text than face-to-face
- Monitor mixed messages: “self-care matters, but be an expert in everything”



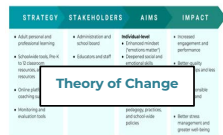
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Steps for Lasting Impact

• Eliminate “quick fix” mentality and focus on systemic change

- Put an end to the “train and hope” model
- Move from single constructs like mindfulness to a developmental model
- Move from fragmented and piecemeal to a more systemic approach
- Employ better systems (metrics) to track implementation and outcomes



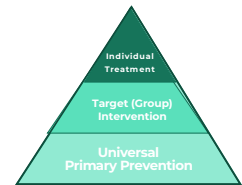
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Steps for Lasting Impact

• Focus more on prevention so there is less need for intervention

- Intervention models do not reduce the number of new “cases”
- Building protective factors to promote good mental health reduces the burden on multiple forms of disease and improves life outcomes



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Steps for Lasting Impact

• Overhaul outdated and often harmful policies and educate policymakers

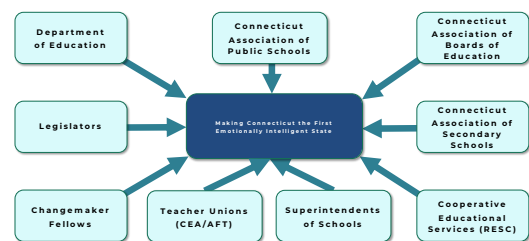
- US is the only country that hasn't signed the UN Convention on the Rights of Children
 - Corporal punishment is still allowed in 19 states
 - Many bullying policies focus on protecting schools, not children
- We need a greater focus on structural issues that perpetuate inequities including stigma and racism
 - Not everyone has equal permission to feel



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A Statewide Approach for CT



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Social and Emotional Learning



Moving from a piecemeal approach...

- Rules
- Assemblies
- Classroom kits
- Simple lessons
- Flavor of the month

...to a systemic approach
using a train-the-trainer
model

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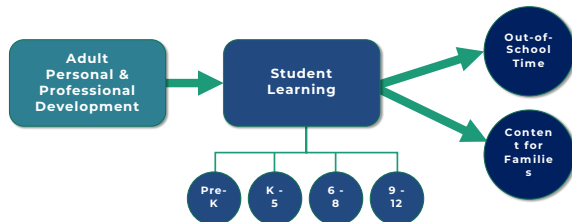
The RULER Approach



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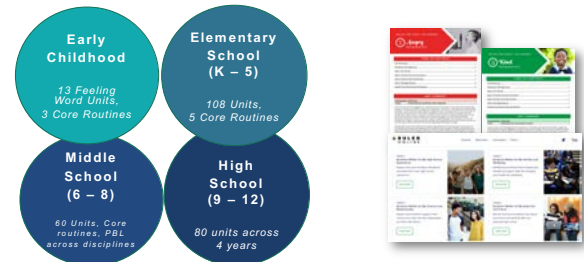
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RULER Model



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RULER: Classroom Curricula



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The Charter

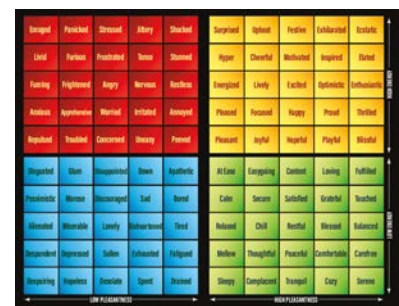
Too Many Rules, Not Enough Feelings



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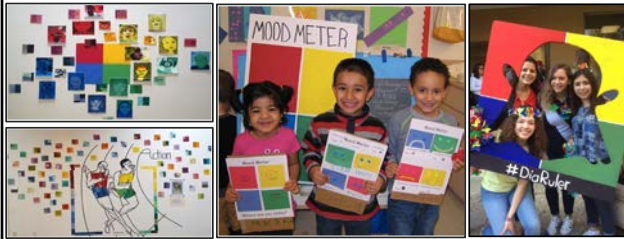
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The Mood Meter



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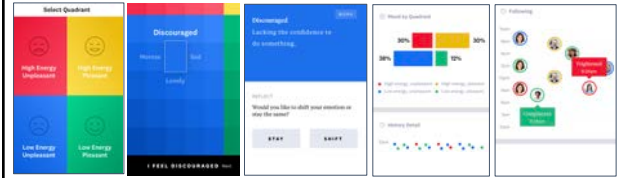
The Mood Meter



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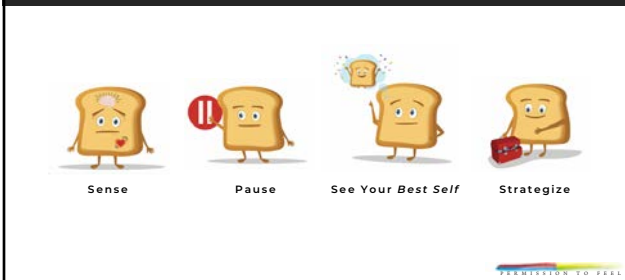
The Mood Meter App

www.moodmeterapp.com



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The Meta-Moment



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The Blueprint

From Me to We



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RULER Makes a Difference!

Students

- Less anxious and depressed
- More developed emotional skills
- Fewer attention problems
- Better academic performance
- Greater leadership skills

Teachers

- More engaging, supportive, and effective
- Less burnout and greater job satisfaction

Classrooms/Schools

- More positive climates and less bullying


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Managing Life Smartly as an Educator

- **Evaluate routines:** Consistency in wake-up time, meals, exercise, work schedule, play time.
- **Be a preventionist!** Try to surround yourself with people who are calming
- **Beware of Emotional Contagion:** It works for both pleasant and unpleasant emotions
- **Be an #UncleMarvin:** the mere presence of someone caring reduces the effects of stress and helps to reduce anxiety
- **Engage in** both "traditional" and positive empathy
- **Be the first to initiate joy, apologize, and forgive**
- **Consider your best self each morning:** How do you want to be seen, talked about, and experienced?



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Let's Put It All Together!

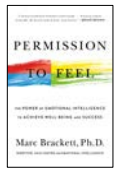
- Give yourself & others the **permission to feel**
- Strive to become an **emotion scientist**, not an emotion judge
- Emotional Intelligence is about **accepting all feelings** and **using them wisely**.
- Appreciate that developing these skills can be harder than learning traditional "hard" skills. **It's life's work**
- **Be the role model.** If you fail, be open to apologizing, forgiving, and repairing – and seeking professional help if necessary
- Focus on **systemic change** & embrace its complexity
- Don't give up building a **healthier, & more equitable, innovative, & compassionate** society so all children and adults can achieve their dreams

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Thank you!



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Between stimulus and response there is space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.
- Viktor Frankl

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