

"I'm a Teacher, not a Therapist!"

Decreasing Overwhelm & Empowering Educators in Serving Students/Youth with Impacts of Trauma, Neurodivergence and Other Causes of Chronic Challenging Behavior

Please see
handout slide #2
for Presenter
Bios

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Bowman Consulting Group
 Newberg, OR • Orange County, CA • Charlotte, NC • www.bowmanconsultgroup.com
 Rick Bowman, M.A., Clinical Psychology, Cert CPS Trainer, Certified Trauma & Resilience Practitioner – Clinical (CTRP-C®)
 Doris Bowman, M.S., Education/Special Ed, Cert CPS Trainer, Advanced Cert Trauma & Resilience Practitioner – Education (ACTRP-E®)
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Presenter Bios

Rick Bowman's qualifications include the following:

- M.A. in Clinical Psychology
- Certified Trauma & Resilience Practitioner – Clinical (CTRP-C®)
- Certified Professional of "The Resilient Heart: Trauma-Informed Practices" @HeartMath Institute
- Certified HeartMath® and "The Resilience Advantage" Trainer
- Certified Trainer in Collaborative Problem Solving @MGH (Think:Kids, Mass Gen)
- K-12 licensed school administrator in the state of Oregon

Rick's background includes leadership positions in the U.S. Military, business, mental health and education. He's functioned as a clinical consultant for mental health clinics and human service agencies, and has also provided speaking/consultation internationally in Russia, Cuba & Jamaica. He's held positions of Clinical Psychologist, Community College Professor, Assistant Principal, Alternative Education Coordinator, Student Services Director, and Assistant Executive Director of a non-profit organization providing educational services to students with severe behavioral and emotional challenges.

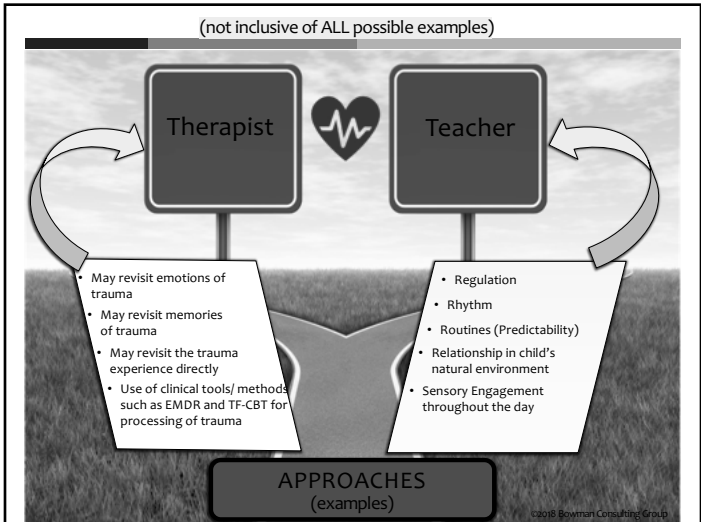
Doris Bowman's qualifications include the following:

- M.S., Education / Special Education
- Advanced Certified Trauma & Resilience Practitioner – Education® (ACTRP-E)
- Advanced Certified Trauma & Resilience Practitioner – Clinical (ACTRP-C®)
- Certified HeartMath® and "The Resilience Advantage" Trainer
- Certified Professional of "The Resilient Heart: Trauma-Informed Practices" @HeartMath Institute
- PCI Certified Parent Coach® & Appreciative Inquiry Coach
- Certified "Stress & Well-Being Assessment" Provider@HMI
- Certified special educator & administrator in the state of Oregon
- Certified Trainer in Collaborative Problem Solving @MGH (Think:Kids, Mass Gen Hosp, Child Psych.)

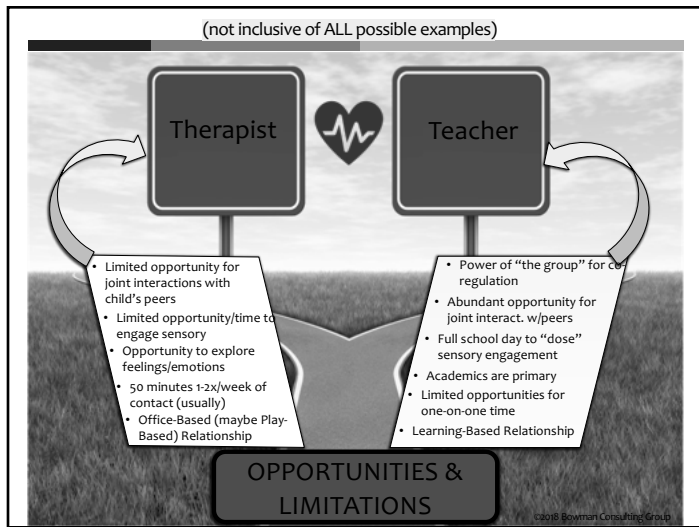
Doris has co-authored "Going to Bed is Easy Now", and "Going to School is Easy Now", the first two in a series of children's books designed to support children with challenging behavior (www.easynowbooks.com). She has over 20 years' experience working with and supporting children/youth with challenging behaviors and their families.

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The Power you Possess in being a "Teacher, not a Therapist"

Dr. Bruce Perry puts it this way:

"...most people think about therapy as something that involves going in and undoing what's happened. But whatever your past experiences created in your brain, the associations exist and you can't just delete them. You can't get rid of the past.

Therapy is more about building new associations, making new, healthier default pathways. ... the old road stays, but you don't use it much anymore. ... And that takes repetition, and time; honestly, it works best if someone understands how the brain changes.

Teachers, parents and other important figures in a child's life have the power to build new associations also!

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Ordinary Role... Extraordinary Powers...!!

❑ The Power of Mindset & Empathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Power of Proactivity & Intent ❑ The Power of a Growth Mindset ❑ The Power of Understanding/ Examining Private Logic ❑ The Power of Curiosity (& true Empathy) ❑ The Power of Neutrality & Validation 	❑ The Power of Empathy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Power of Empathy as an "action verb", not just a "state" ❑ The Power of Neutrality ❑ The Power of Validation
❑ The Power of (Felt) Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Power of Relationship, ❑ The Power of Connection & Belonging 	❑ The Power of Resilience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Power of a Coherent State ❑ The Power of Sustainable, Renewing Energy/Emotions ❑ The Power of Pattern-Matching ❑ The Power of Care vs. "Overcare"
❑ The Power of Regulation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Power of Self(Staff)-Regulation ❑ The Power of Building Self-Regulation ❑ The Power of Building Co-Regulation 	❑ The Power of Skill-Building <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Power of Small Successes ❑ The Power of Intrinsic Motivation
❑ The Power of Predictability <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ The Power of Patterning (the SRS) ❑ The Power of Dosing (of Empathetic Interactions) ❑ The Power of Rhythm & Ritual 	

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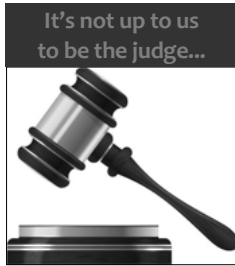
How we define trauma matters...

Individual trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening, and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional or spiritual well-being.

**The experience can be
REAL or PERCEIVED.**

Source: National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors, Inc.; All rights reserved.

Trauma is any experience(s) that overwhelms/surpasses our capacity to cope, and has lasting effects emotionally, mentally, psychologically, spiritually or physiologically



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The Power of Mindset

When I see behavior, I....

- ☐ think “what has happened to you?” instead of “what’s wrong with you?”
- ☐ become genuinely curious, not making assumptions or judgements
- ☐ understand that the behavior is likely driven by sensory responses in the child, not cognitive/conscious decisions
- ☐ look deeper than explanations of “getting and avoiding” to underlying skill deficits that make it hard to respond adaptively
- ☐ begin to approach it with proactivity & intention, planning for how to support the child's regulation in order to gain access to their cortex (thinking brain)

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Power of Intent & Proactivity

Power of Intent =

- ☐ My intent is to always maintain (and attempt to build) my relationship with the child **regardless of their response**
- ☐ My intent is to understand & work **WITH the child's nervous system**, and not against it



Power of Proactivity =

- ☐ Address the child's over-sensitized SRS through purposeful, playful activities and responses that are designed to **generate and sustain regulation** (up front) as opposed to consistently reactively responding to challenging behavior
- ☐ Purposefully planning a “learning day” that includes multiple opportunities for **generating co-regulation** in the classroom
- ☐ Purposefully planning situations that provide a **sense of control for the child** impacted by trauma

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The Power of Understanding Private Logic

If we don't know what their private logic is, we don't know how we can help them... It's their narrative ("trauma story" and associations) about themselves and everyone/everything around them based upon past experiences:

- How they see themselves
- How they see others
- How they see the world around them

What does private logic look like?

- They **don't** know why they do the things they do!
- They can often do things simply because those things are congruent with their private logic...

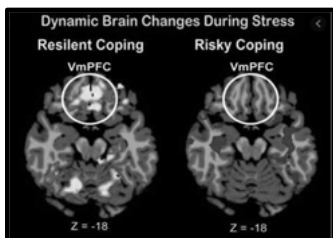
Source: STARR Commonwealth

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The Power of Safety

Safety: The Gateway to the Cortex



➤ If a child does not feel safe and we are "trauma-informed", we understand that reasoning with the child (going directly at their cortex with logic and persuasion) will not change their sensory response.

➤ It becomes our responsibility to use methods to regulate and build relationship first AND engage the child in sensory activities to alter their sensations of fear, terror, feeling unsafe and powerless to do anything about what is happening.

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Wired for Connection

From the beginnings of our lives, we depend upon others for connection, social interaction and regulation



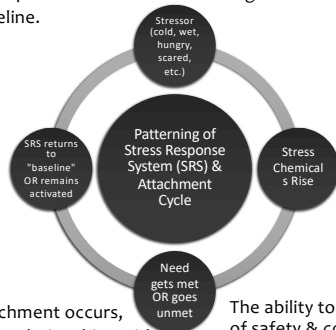
Developmental Trauma can be thought of as the chronic disruption of connection

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STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM: When needs are predictably met by the caregiver, the SRS is patterned to return back to baseline.

When needs are unpredictably met, the SRS remains elevated for far too long, becoming more vulnerable & sensitized



ATTACHMENT: When healthy attachment occurs, the child associates relationships with safety, developing a template for how they approach all relationships

The ability to experience feelings of safety & connection is built upon ongoing experiences of co-regulation with a regulated adult

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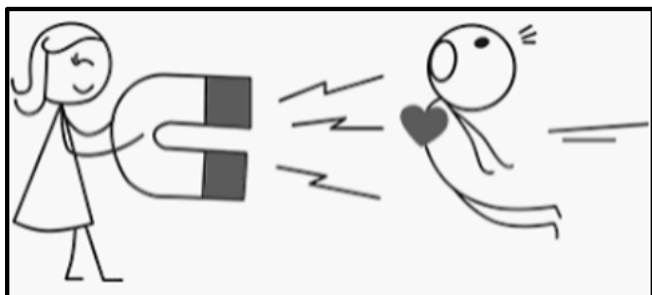
Missed Connections

Experiencing persistent danger/lack of safety = shift from “connection” to “protection”



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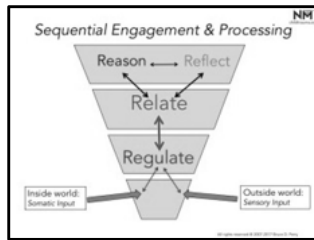
The same nervous system that prepares us to fight, flight or freeze from whatever or whomever is frightening us also prepares us to **fight our way toward** the activity, place, or the person that is safe, attuned to us, curious about us, and attentive to our needs...

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The Power of Regulation

You have power to facilitate & support regulation in students, while also being able to teach academics/content.

- This power is, in part, based upon your own ability to remain regulated, especially when the student is in a dysregulated state
- Learning can **ONLY** occur when the child's brain and nervous system are experiencing safety & regulation.



You CAN'T cheat the brain!
OR the nervous system!

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The Power of (Self-)Regulation

Caring for staff IS caring for kids...

- We all know a dysregulated adult cannot regulate a dysregulated student
 - They're actually more likely to trigger/dysregulate them
- Telling/demanding of staff that they "must be regulated" doesn't work...
- How can staff become more regulated, less stressed & depleted, more resilient?

Adults need training in strategies to build their personal and professional resilience & self-regulation:

- Strategies to self-regulate in-the-moment
- Strategies to build & sustain energy and capacity for resilience and self-regulation long term
- Strategies to set a new nervous system "baseline"



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The Powers of Empathy, Neutrality & Validation

The Power of SHOWING Empathy (as an action verb, not just a state):

- ☐ Empathy is regulating (emotionally and physiologically)
- ☐ Helps the child (and YOU) gain access to their cortex
- ☐ Neither agreeing or disagreeing, it's trying to understand and validate the truth that the child is operating from a perspective based upon past experiences

The Power of Neutrality:

- ☐ Neutral (noticing) statements – "I noticed you got 3 sentences written; how did you do that?"
- ☐ Neutral responses – "I hear you; it sounds like this is really frustrating right now."
- ☐ Curious questions – "I'm really wondering how you did both steps of that work?"

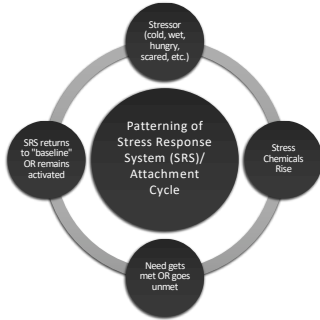
The Power of Validation (Where "Secondary Wounding" occurs):

- ☐ We fail to "validate" when adults in the environment respond to the child in ways that communicate that their behavior is viewed as "who they are" rather than as a result of "what they've been through"

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The Power of Predictability

Predictability → → How we work to **re-pattern the SRS** in small doses



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Power of Dosing = Repatterning the Stress Response

Positive doses of “relational stress”

- Supportive
- Non-judgmental
- Often involves a question to engage them
- Infused with empathy/curiosity



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The True Achievement Gap

“This is the true achievement gap,” Perry said, after describing a hypothetical child who lives with an unreliable caregiver, experiences violence in his home, and then has trouble taking a test at school the next day.

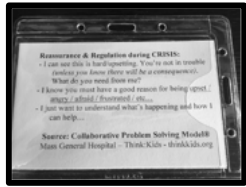
“That gap is not about race, shitty teachers or bad curriculum; it’s about a **sensitized stress response system**...” Perry said.

“Inside the Bruce Perry Show” -The Chronicle of Social Change, 5/28/18
<https://chronicleofsocialchange.org/news-2/inside-the-bruce-perry-show>

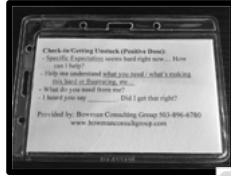
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The Power of Predictability & Empathy Predictable Empathetic Interactions from Adults



We're consistent in all responses to the client/student – i.e., use of the same, consistent, non-threatening, empathetic statements by all adults in the environment when they see a particular client/student begin to struggle



Example: Spontaneous Plan B intervention from the Collaborative Problem Solving®(MCH) approach:

“Something about (expectation) seems hard/stressful right now... How can I help? Is there something you need?”

Link to FREE Download of this Staff Intervention (Dosing) Lanyard Card:
<https://bowmanconsultgroup.com/social-emotional-behavioral-goal-bank/>



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The Power of Resilience & Coherence

Conventional (Traditional) Thinking:

Resilience (viewed as recovering after a challenge) is a “trait” and not a “state”

(RE-)Defining Resilience:

“ Resilience is the capacity to prepare for, recover from and adapt in the face of stress, challenge, trauma or adversity”

-- The HeartMath Institute

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- ☐ The Power of Creating a Coherent State
- ☐ The Power of Sustainable, Renewing Energy/Emotions



Coherence

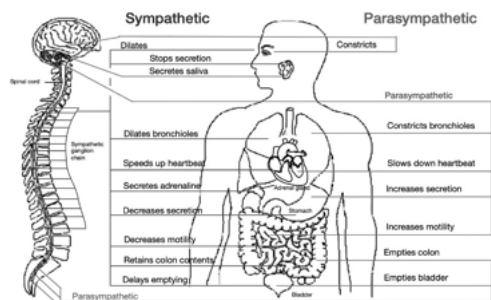
An optimal state in which the heart, mind and emotions are aligned and in sync.

Physiologically, the immune, hormonal and nervous systems function in a state of energetic coordination.

HeartMath
© 2018 HeartMath

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Autonomic Nervous System



Changes in either branch of ANS affect the way the heart beats, beat-to-beat.

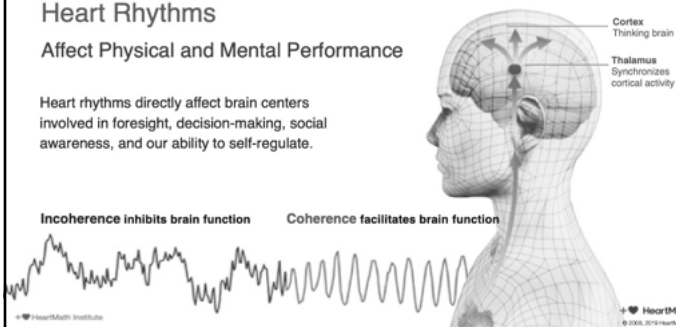
→ → Any emotion we feel changes activity in the ANS branches and influences all body systems. ← ←

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Heart Rhythms

Affect Physical and Mental Performance

Heart rhythms directly affect brain centers involved in foresight, decision-making, social awareness, and our ability to self-regulate.



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YOU HAVE THE POWER TO...

❑ Choose your SUPPORTS: Who you turn to

Reflection: Who are your Peers who will commit with you to working to generate renewing emotions and to holding one another accountable?

✓ Who can you go to when you need to “reset”/re-regulate?

- Can't be someone who cycles with you in depleting emotions

✓ Don't catch the “emotional virus”

- One person's depleting emotions can affect all those around them – they're contagious



✓ Renewing emotions are contagious also!

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The Power of Skill-Building: Why choose the Collaborative Problem Solving® (CPS) Approach?

The primary CPS intervention (“Plan B”) builds skills within the context of a collaborative interaction that activates the brain with

moderate, predictable, controlled

(Dr. Perry’s criteria...)

doses of stress because it must:

- First **REGULATE**
- Then **RELATE**
- Then **REASON**

Dr. Bruce Perry, The Child Trauma Academy & Think:Kids, Massachusetts General Hospital CPS Tier 1 Training

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The Power of the CPS intervention →
It mirrors the way the brain processes information

The CPS Plan-B Intervention is an interaction in which the adult:

3) **Collaborates** on Solution = **REASONS**

2) **Shares** the adult concern = **RELATES**

1) **Empathizes** (with the child’s concern/perspective) = **REGULATES**

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The Power of Small Successes

Small Successes → → Experiences of Competence/Confidence

Experiences of Competence/Confidence → → Intrinsic Motivation

Intrinsic Motivation → → Engaged Learner

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

Competence

Autonomy

Relatedness

From: Think:Kids Collaborative Problem-Solving Level 1 Essential Found.

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“I’m a Teacher, not a Therapist!”



Ordinary Role ♦ Extraordinary Powers!!

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California Office: Tustin, CA N. Carolina Office: Charlotte, NC Oregon Office: Newberg, OR

Events Coming Up with Public/Open Seats: (Virtual Open Events in BOLD)

- 8/2/24 – Truly Trauma-Informed? Assessment & Design of Actionable Systems & Practices – Virtual
- 8/19-21/24 – Rethinking Challenging Behavior – Collab. Problem-Solving Level 1 – Portland, OR & Virt.
- 8/23/24 – Truly Trauma-Informed? Assessment & Design of Actionable Systems & Practices – Virtual
- 8/28 – 30/24 – Rethinking Challenging Behavior – Collaborative Problem-Solving Level 1 – Tempe UHSD, AZ
- 9/11-13/24 – Rethinking Challenging Behavior – Collaborative Problem-Solving Level 1 – Tempe UHSD, AZ
- 9/16 & 18/24 – Revolutionary Resilience & Self-Regulation for Educators, Providers, Students – Virtual
- 9/27/24 – Truly Trauma-Informed? Assessment & Design of Actionable Systems & Practices – Virtual
- 10/25/24 – Truly Trauma-Informed? Assessment & Design of Actionable Systems & Practices – Virtual
- 2/5/24 – Your FBA is a Fantasy! Creating Trauma-Informed FBAs/BSPs That Get Results – Virtual

See EVENTS tab of www.bowmanconsultgroup.com for registration links & more upcoming trainings

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Facebook: Trauma-Informed, Resilience & Collaborative Problem Solving Training Page

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The Power of Recognizing Overcare

What does Overcare sometimes look like?

- ☐ Performance Anxiety
 - Expectations of self and others
 - Self-Image and being judged
- ☐ Perfectionism
 - Never good enough
 - Height of Overcare
- ☐ Over-Attachment
 - Bound to another person in an unhealthy way
 - Attachment to expected results
- ☐ Projection
 - Thousands of future thoughts daily
 - Extending fears into the future
 - Foreboding joy
 - Idealistic outcomes
 - Expectancy
- ☐ Comparison
 - Appearance
 - Status
 - Choke our ability to appreciate & be grateful

➤ **Self-Reflection** (in-person) / **Poll** (virtual)

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The Power of Relationship in Resilience & Self-Regulation

YOU HAVE THE POWER TO...

- ☐ Choose your **SUPPORTS**: Who you turn to
- ✓ Who can you go to when you need to “reset”/re-regulate?
 - Can’t be someone who cycles with you in depleting emotions
- ✓ Don’t catch the “emotional virus”
 - One person’s depleting emotions can affect all those around them – they’re **contagious**
- ✓ **Renewing emotions are contagious also!**



Reflection: Who are the colleagues with whom you will commit to working on generate renewing emotions and holding one another accountable?

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PRIVATE LOGIC ACTIVITY

Use 3-5 adjectives to describe how you
believe this student views others:

Name
of student:

Use 3-5 adjectives to describe how you
believe this student views the world:

Use 3-5 adjectives to
describe how you believe
this student views themself:

What past and present experiences may have led to this Private Logic?

What behaviors might you see from the child as a result of this Private Logic?

What does this child need most from you? from us as a school team as a result?
--> How can we gradually help reshape this private logic through new experiences?