

Whether In-Person, Remote, or Hybrid, Creating Safe Learning Environments Is Our Top Priority!

Patricia A. Ciccone, C.A.G.S., L.P.C.

Jo Ann Freiberg, Ph.D.

School Climate Consultants, LLC



Safe Schools = Successful Students



Covid-19 Pandemic

Many children were &
still are sheltering at
home which is a
place that is not safe*



**Safe Schools =
Far more than**

**PHYSICAL safety:
*masks, face shields,
sanitation efforts,
distancing, hand
washing, plexiglass
dividers, etc.***



Pre-Covid-19 “Normal”

- Old “normal” was not safe for some students
- We have a serious challenge, moral imperative and *awesome* opportunity to create a “new normal” that is...
 - Safe* for each and every student
 - Inclusive* of each and every student

* Physically, emotionally, intellectually, racially, ethnically, culturally, etc.



Institutional Betrayal

“Institutions like schools, churches, health and human services, and the military may inflict harm on people who depend on them for safety and well-being.”

Carly P. Smith & Jennifer J. Freyd,
“Institutional Betrayal,” *American Psychologist*
vol. 69, no. 6, 2014



Institutional Betrayal is alive and well even in CT



It can no longer be the elephant in the room



Have we lost our way?

**Focusing on academics to
the (near) exclusion of a
child's social/emotional
needs?**



Emotional Intelligence

Human beings are creatures of emotion.

For several centuries and until recently, the evolution of human thought has emphasized intellect and reason. Our culture has disparaged emotion as a weakness [especially for boys], an unpleasant reality that humans should strive to overcome with thoughtfulness and intelligence.

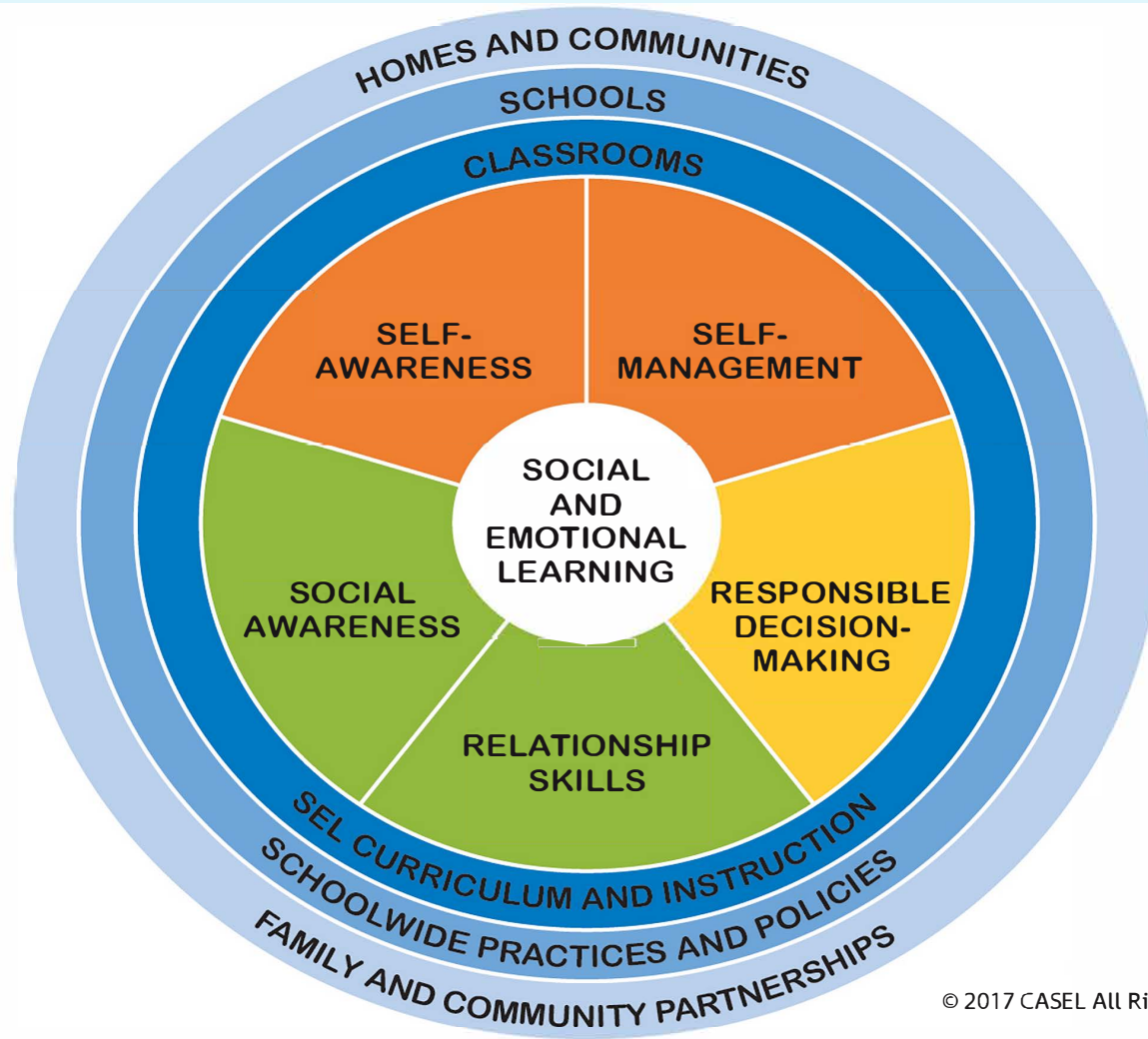
Ted Wachtel in

Real Justice: How We Can Revolutionize Our Response to Wrongdoing

pp. 126-8, pp. 126



CASEL Competencies



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A Jaded View

“SEL” is defined differently by different people...it almost seems to stand for anything *non-academic*

I see SEL as an outcome, rather than something to teach*

** Developing Social & Emotional Intelligence*



Maslow Before Bloom

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY
FOR CHILDREN
(MUST MEET BASIC NEEDS)

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY
CANNOT BE ACCESSED
UNTIL FUNDAMENTAL
NEEDS ARE MET



Need to meet  so that children can access their learning 



American Schools have *always* had two goals...

1) Raise *smart* people,
&

2) Raise *good & resilient* people...

There has *never* been any kind of choice between them...both are important



RESILIENCY

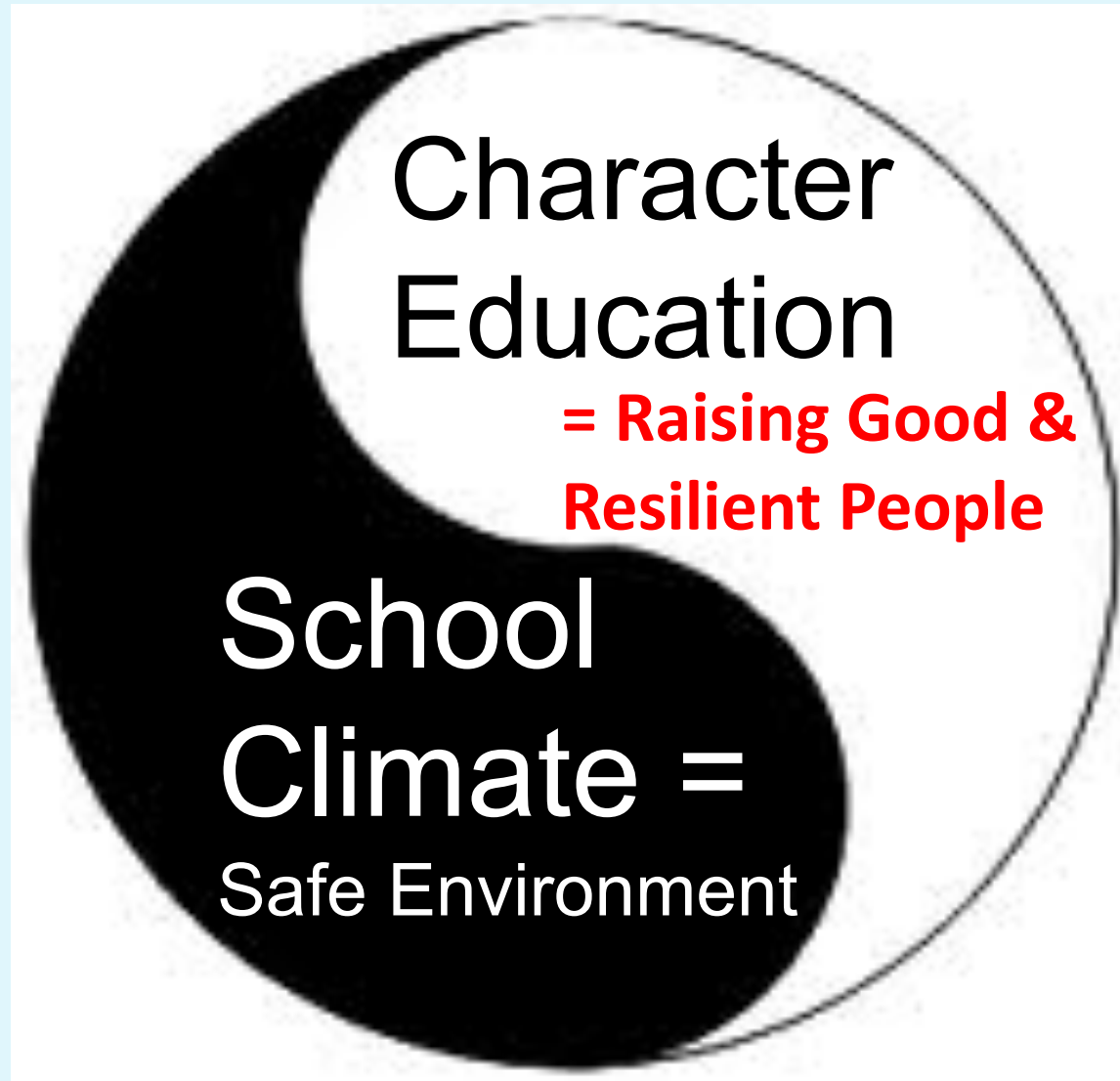
*“Resiliency can be defined as the capability to spring back, rebound, successfully adapt in the face of adversity, and develop social and academic competence despite **exposure to severe stress...or simply the stress of today’s world.**”*

Nan Henderson / Mike Milstein

Resilience is not something you are born with – it gets built over time



Inextricably Interconnected & Interrelated



Social Distance Vs. Physical Distance?



We must be

physically
distanced...yet
(highly) *socially*
connected!



Connection....is the *opposite of:* *Trauma* *Loneliness* *Addiction*

“Trauma is the root cause of addiction”
Robert Pynoos, M.D., Semel Institute, UCLA



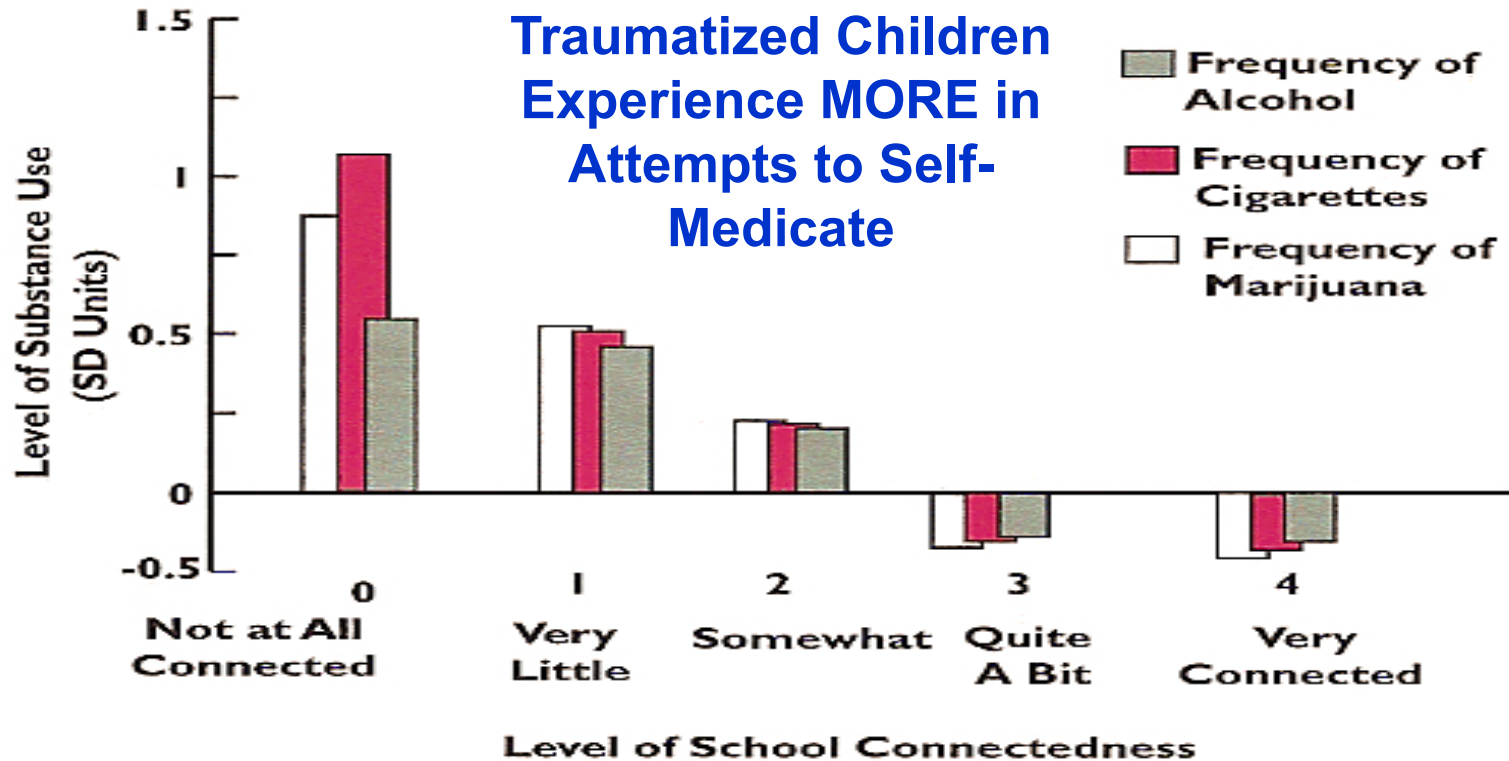
Solutions: School Connectedness

- **I feel close to people at this school**
 - Peers
 - Every student should have a caring adult
- **I am happy to be at this school**
 - A “destination”
- **I feel like I am part of this school**
 - A sense of belonging
- **The adults at this school treat students fairly** (not identically)
 - Fairness = Listening
- **I feel safe** (*physically, emotionally and intellectually, culturally, etc.*) **in this school**



Substance Abuse & Connectedness

Students Who Feel Connected to School are Less Likely to Use Substances



Self Medication: Dull the Pain

Hartford Courant, 10-6-19

In an article about Priest sexual abuse...

“More recently, as an attorney, I represented a young man who as a teenager was sexually abused by a priest. He turned to alcohol and drugs in an unsuccessful effort to ease his pain.”

John N. Montalbano, Middletown, CT Attorney

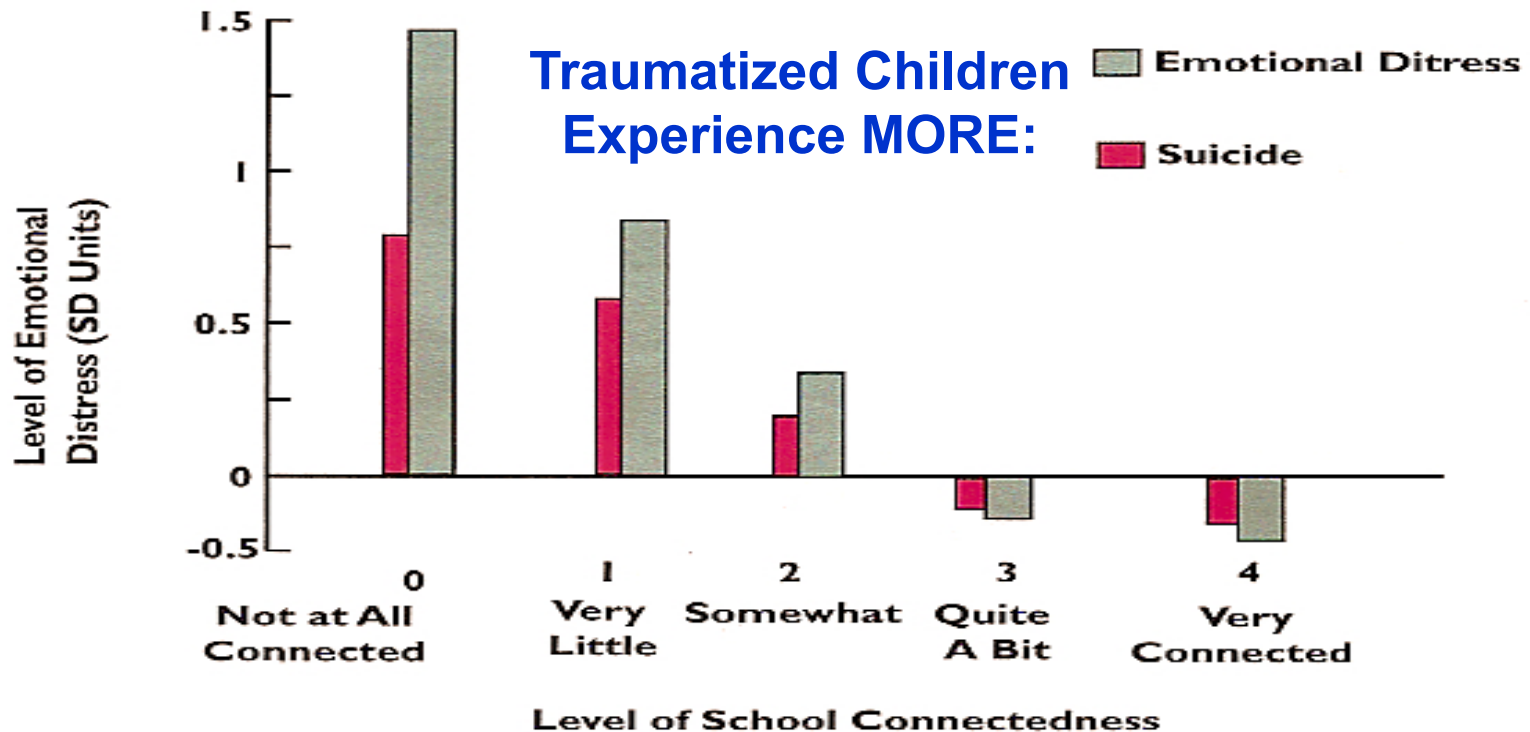
“It’s hard to get enough of something that almost works.”

Vincent Felitti, M.D., ACE Study Co-Principal Investigator



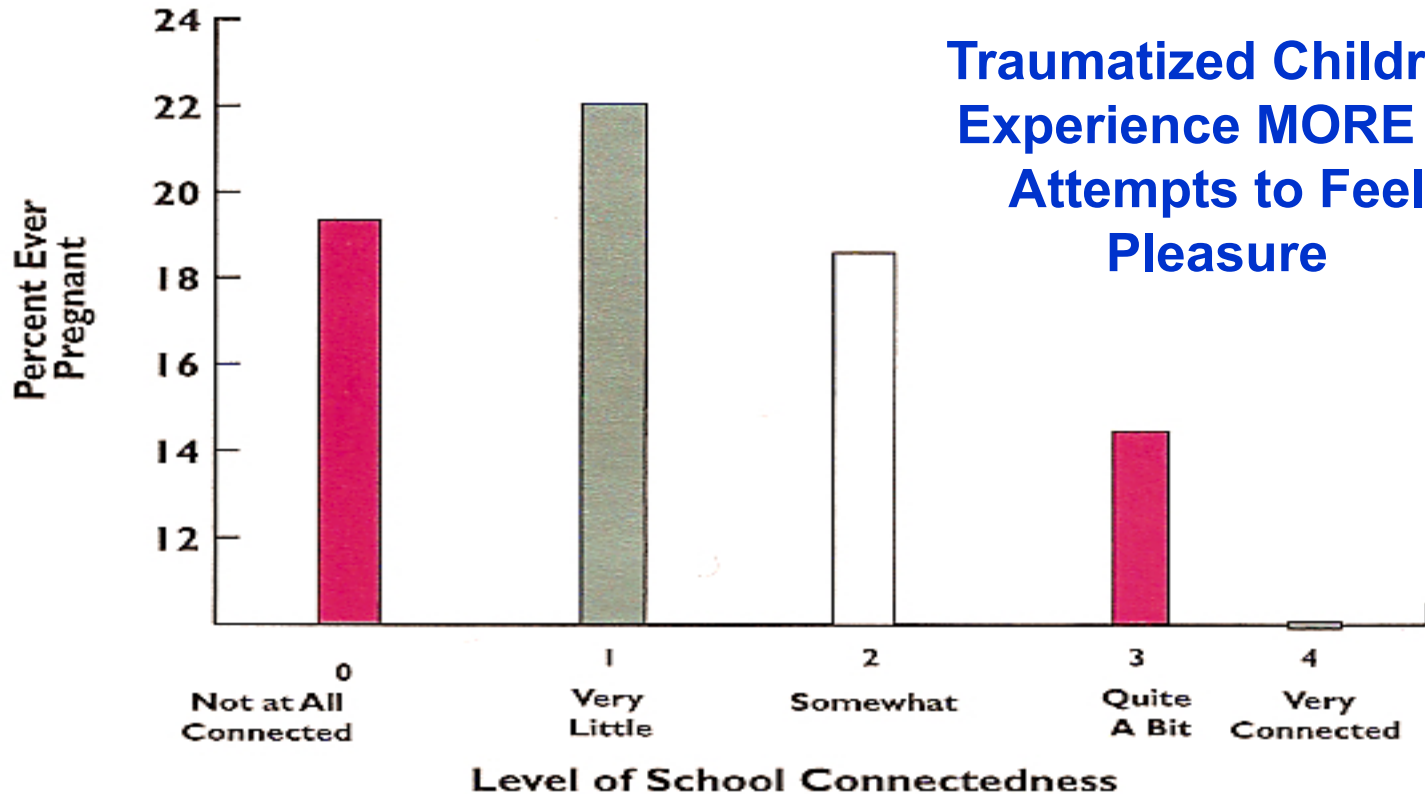
Emotional Distress & Connectedness

Students Who Feel Connected to School Experience Less Emotional Distress



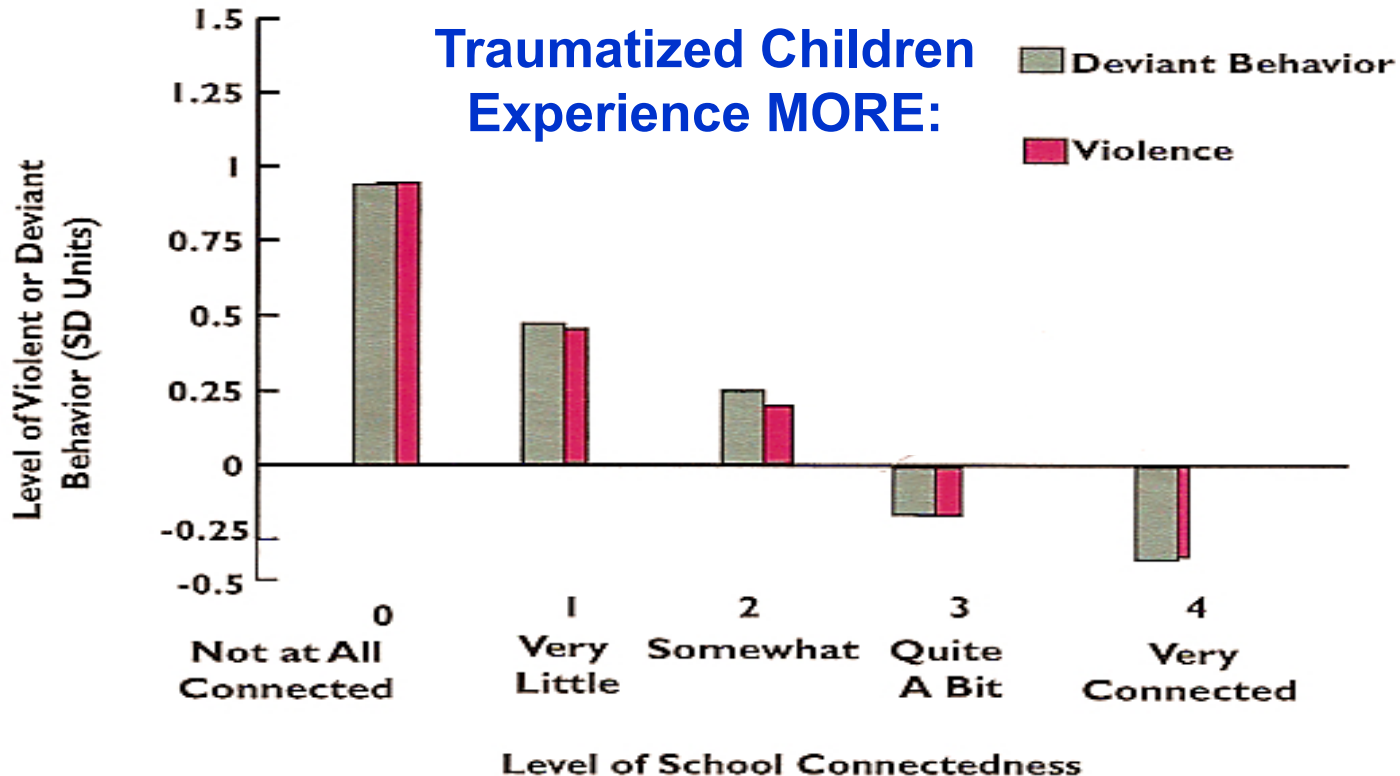
Risky Sexual Behaviors & Connectedness

Students Who Feel Connected to School Are Less Likely to Become Pregnant



Violence/Deviant Behavior & Connectedness

Students Who Feel Connected to School Engage in Less Violent or Deviant Behavior



Children with Significant Stress/Trauma: Changes are Clear

In schools & community settings, it is **32+ times more likely** to *have learning and behavior issues*

- Acting out in school, afterschool settings, etc.
- Calling out in class, teams, groups, etc.
- Running out of class, programs, etc.
- Hitting someone near student
- Can't pay attention
- Impulse control problems
- Difficulty regulating behavior

Typically, in schools, Friday is the worst day at school for acting out, followed by Monday

- Having to leave the relative safety of school (on Friday) and re-entering the school routine from more chaotic weekends (on Monday)



Environments: Adverse-Free

Every office, classroom, hallway, cafeteria, playground, parking lot, bus stop, playing field, locker room, etc., should be:

- Physically safe
- Emotionally safe
- Culturally safe
- Intellectually safe
- Predictable and consistent
 - No surprises
 - Understood and expected routines



Our Moral & Practical Imperative: How We Operate MATTERS!



Educators See Behavior

*“It’s not bad behavior...
It’s behavior asking for
help”*

Gabor Maté, M.D.,

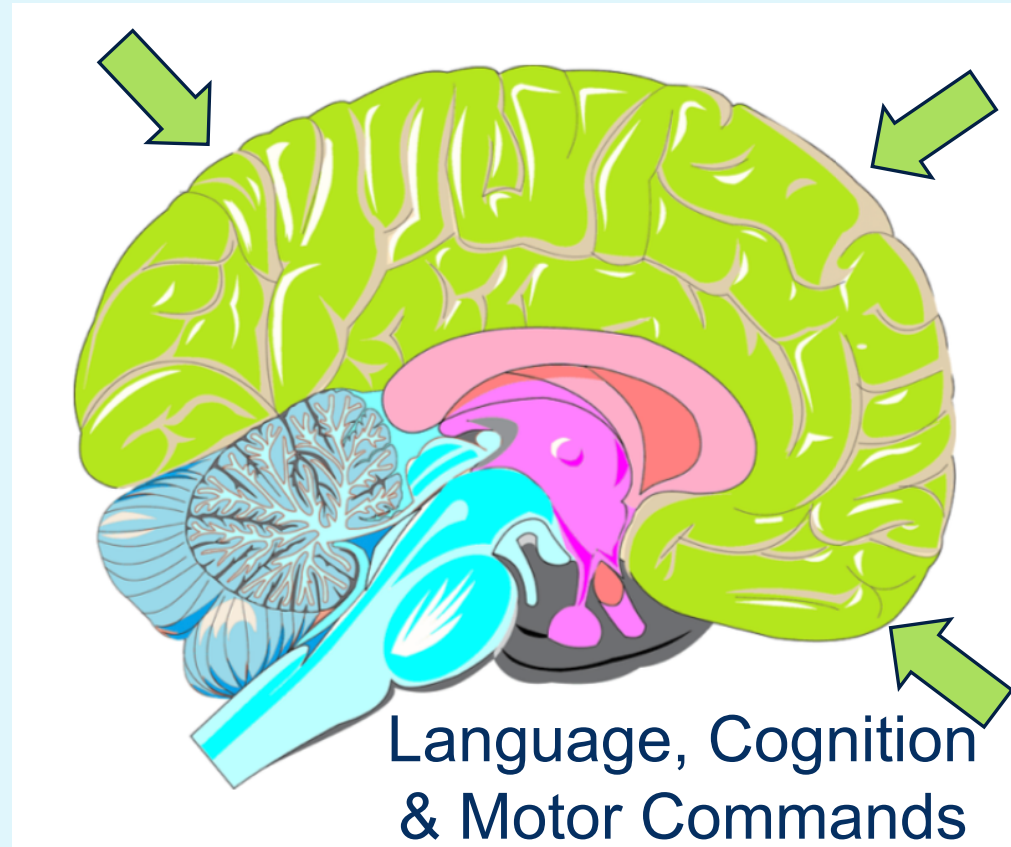
In The Realm of Hungry Ghosts



The Neocortex: 76% of the Brain

Executive Functioning

Flexible Thinking
Decision-Making
Working Memory
Self/Impulse-Control
Following Directions
Handling Emotions
Paying Attention
Regulating Emotions
Delaying Gratification
Self-Monitoring
Spatial Reasoning
Sensory Perception
Abstract Thinking
Starting Tasks & Staying Focused
Organizing, Planning & Prioritizing
Understanding Different Points of view



“Punishing” Misbehavior

- Increases children’s stress
- Diminishes adult to child relationships
- Does nothing to teach more productive skills
- Labels the very children who need caring relationships and a safe environment
- Normalizes and confirms a life of trauma
- Confirms that adults don’t care about them
- Does not get to the root of the problem
- Perpetuates the cycle of traumatic adversity



The Solution Rests in Creating Classrooms & Schools That Are...

Destinations for ALL

Caring & Nurturing

Happy & Inclusive

Predictable & Engaging

Calm & Peaceful

Successful & Risk Taking

Productive Struggle

Stress-Free & Respectful

Collaborative & Trusting

Active Learning Centers

Structured & Cooperative

High Quality Work

Welcoming & Safe

True Positive Communities

Supportive & Accountable

Intrinsically Motivating

...RESTORATIVE!!!



Retributive Vs. Restorative

RETRIBUTIVE (Retribution/Punishment)	RESTORATIVE
Offense defined as violation against the School Code of Conduct; Violation against System/Program	Offense defined as harm done to person(s) or the school community
Focus on establishing blame & guilt	Focus on solving problems & repairing harm
Victim(s) is/are largely ignored	Victim's rights & needs are fully recognized
Offender(s) is/are passive	Offender(s) is/are encouraged to take responsibility
Accountability = Punishment (as stated in the Student Handbook/Minimum Standards/Zero Tolerance Policies ("Doing Time"))	Accountability = Demonstrating empathy & helping to repair harm (making amends...this is <u>harder</u> and more impactful than "doing time.")
Focus on offender's past behavior...looking at patterns and keeping score	Focus on harmful consequences of offender's behavior to repair the harm and be done with/move beyond it.
Stigma of "violation" largely irremovable; minor infractions add up	Stigma of "crime" removable through appropriate actions of offender
Little, if any encouragement for repentance	Repentance encouraged & forgiveness possible
Professionals/Written Policies determine consequences as justice	Direct involvement of those affected determine justice in a way that honors the context and makes amends, and learning occurs
Strictly rational approach; rules are followed and when broken there are pre-determined consequences	Allows & encourages free expression of emotion, and the compromised executive functioning; Does not re-traumatize the already impacted offender



ALWAYS Held Accountable

Children need “*chill time*”... they don’t need to
“*do time!*”

*Accountability = Amends,
Repair, Restoration, etc.*

(Doing THIS is much harder
than “doing time”)



At its core, working restoratively is about building relationships and community...providing high expectations [General Patton] and the support necessary to meet them [Mr. Fred Rogers]...not just for some, but for all, child and adult alike. We have a moral and practical imperative to work this way from this moment forward



Unfortunate Label

“Restorative” Practices (RP)

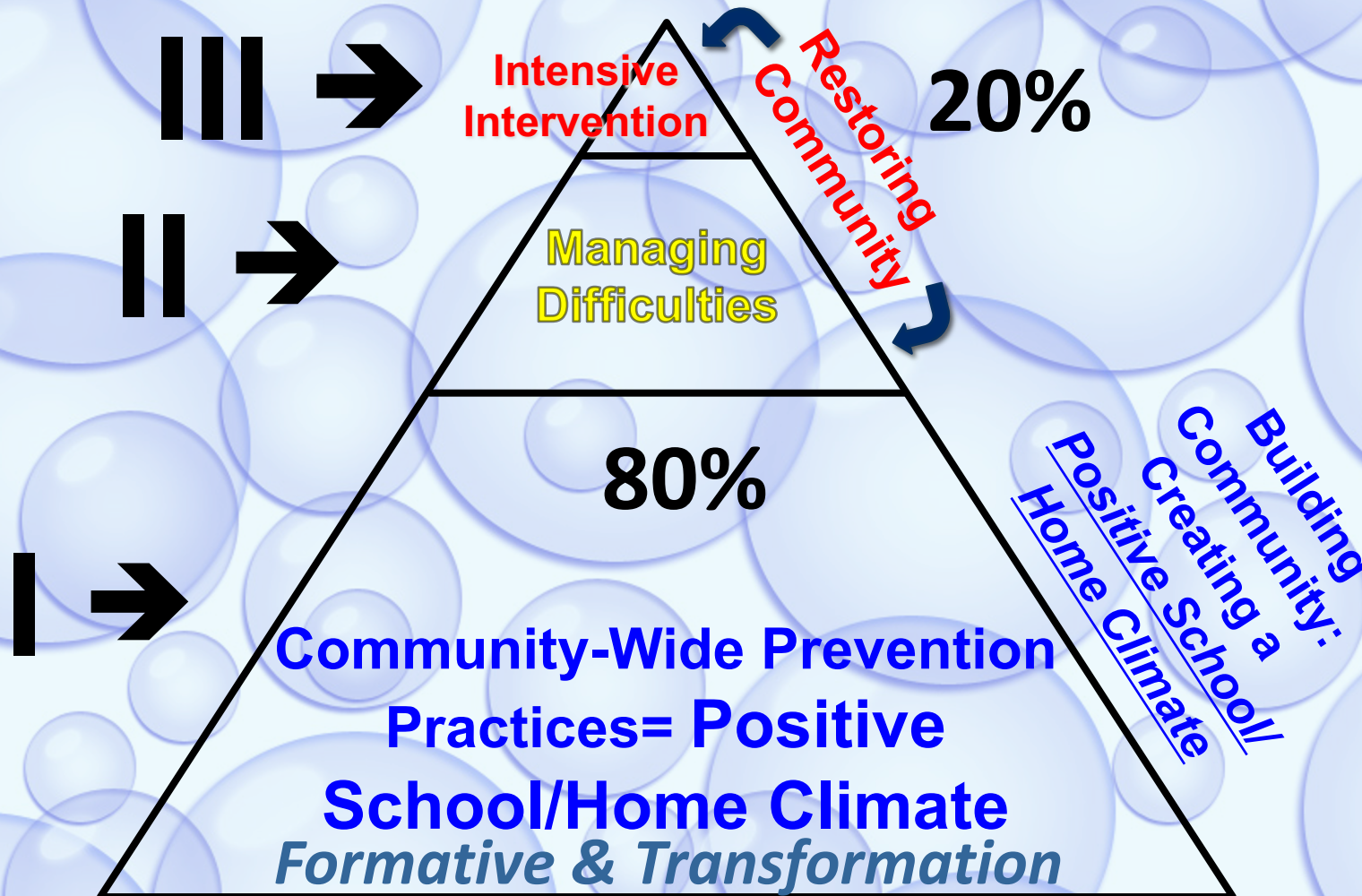
Restorative =

Restore or Repair

80% of RP is not about restoring anything! It is about *Building, Forming, and Transforming*



Restorative Practices Framework



Fundamental RP Ideas

- **Building a strong house**
 - **Inclusive, safe community**
- **Growing up to become restorative**
- **Working from the “Family Model”**

“Human beings are happiest, healthiest, more cooperative and most likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in authority do things *with them* rather than to them or for them.”

Ted Wachtel, Founder

International Institute for Restorative Practices



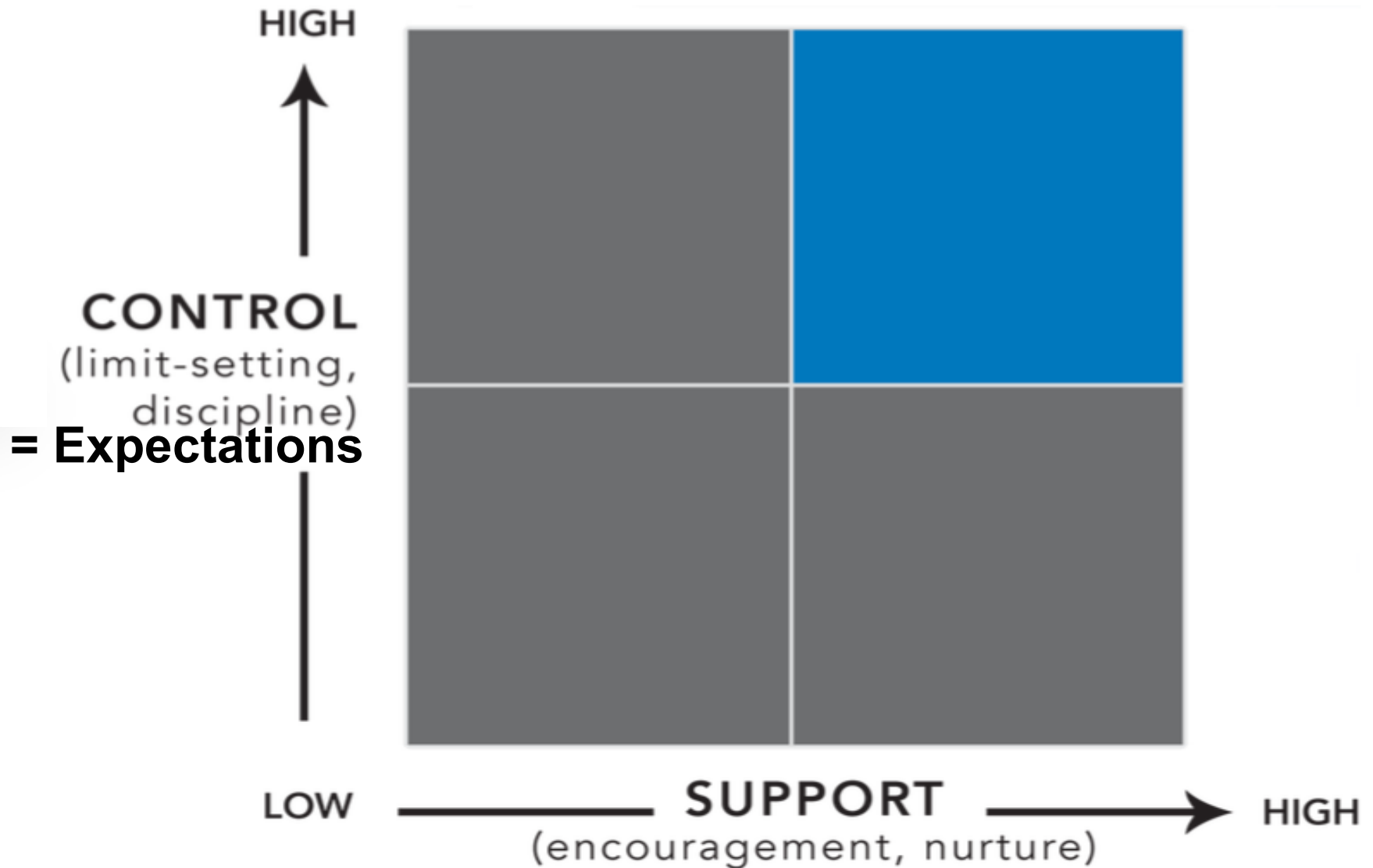
The Fundamental Hypothesis

“Human beings are happier, healthier, more cooperative and most likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things *with them* rather than to them or for them.”

Ted Wachtel, Founder
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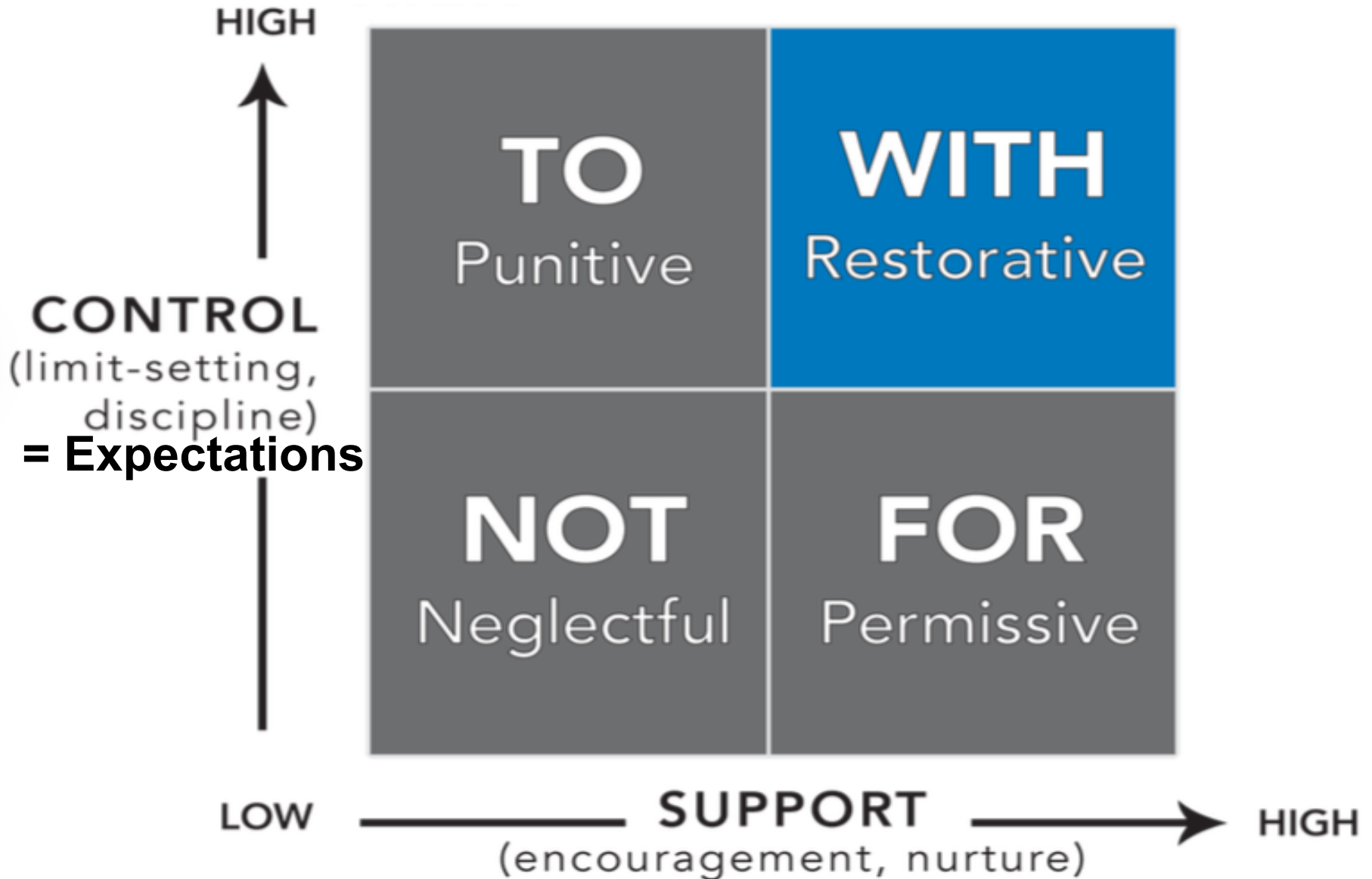


Social Discipline Window



Adapted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel from Glaser, 1969

Social Discipline Window



Working Restoratively....



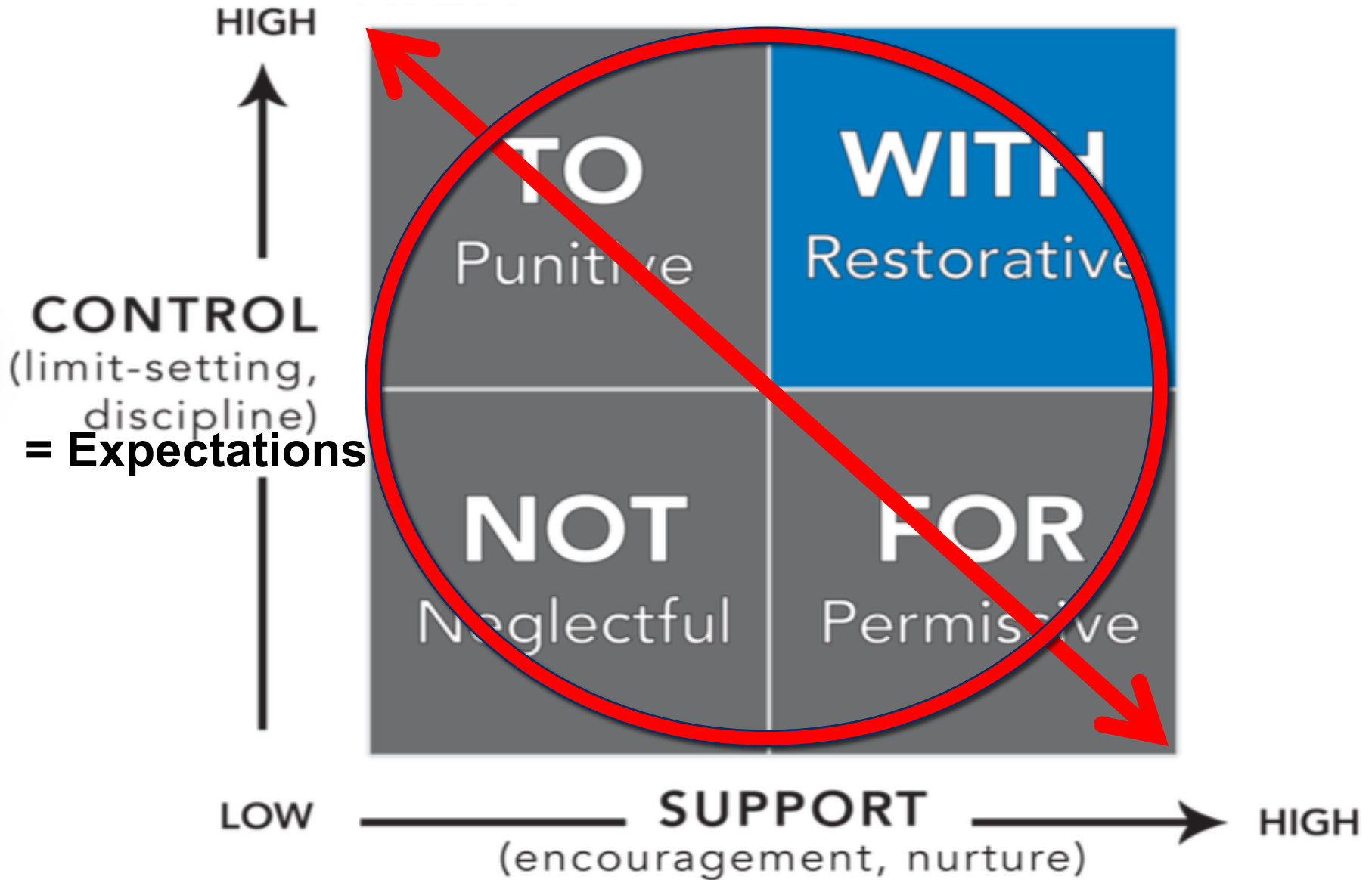
Kindness, trust, safety
& predictability



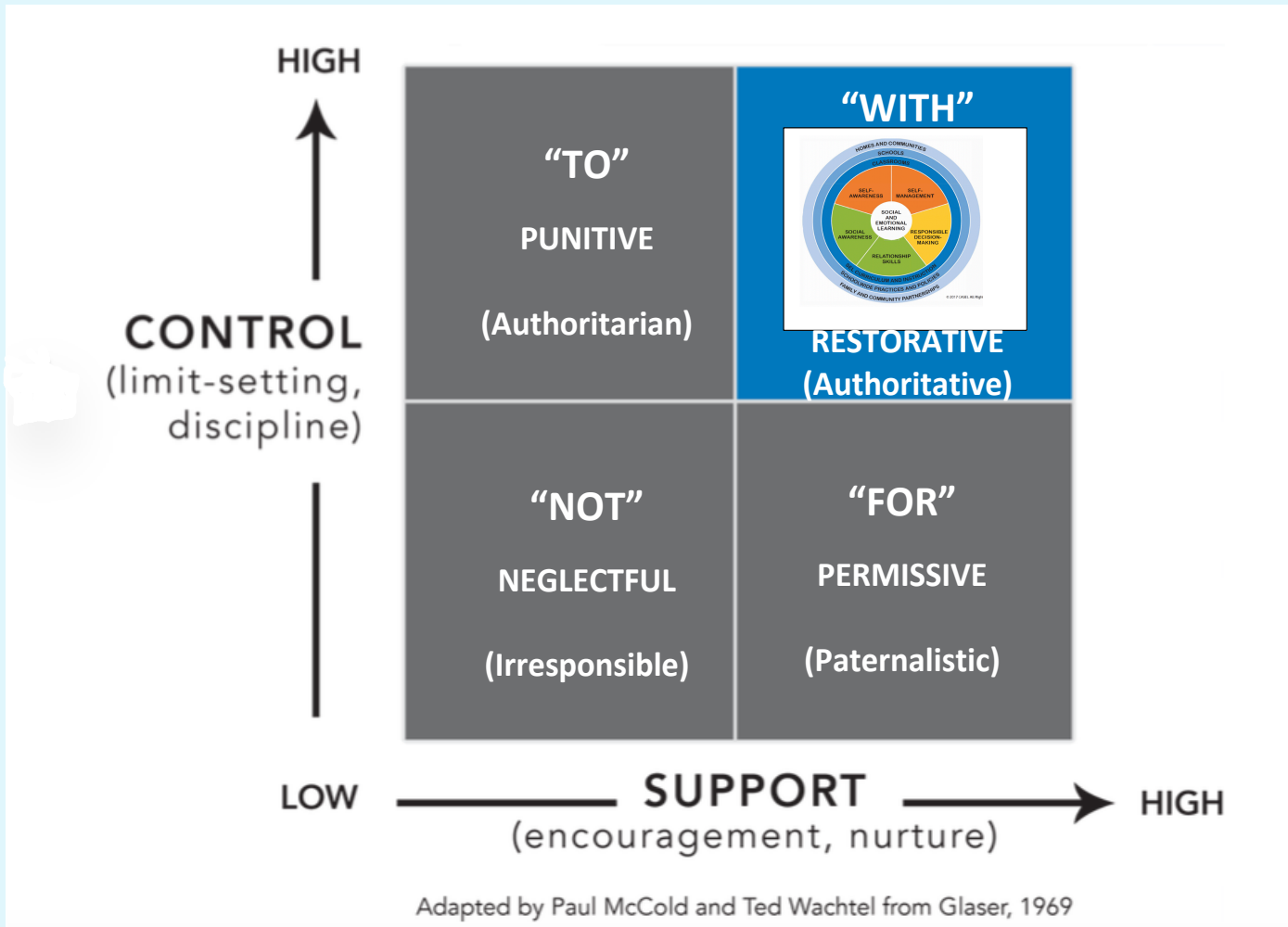
Clear expectations, rules
& boundaries



Consequences in a Restorative World



“SEL” Must Rest INSIDE A Restorative World



No More Institutional Betrayal

“No matter what model schools open with and evolve into, it is paramount that each and every educator, and those making the decisions about all of this, prioritize the emotional, social, cultural, racial and ethnic safety — as well as the physical safety —of every student. This is our moral obligation.

Not only will all children thrive, but those who have experienced physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect or racial trauma will experience respite from their unfortunate circumstances, and they too will be able to thrive. There are choices about the delivery of education; there is no choice about what our top priority must be.”

Jo Ann Freiberg, Hartford Courant Op Ed, 8-14-20



Northwestern Regional HS, Winsted, CT

In 2011-2012 our high school had chronic absenteeism of **23.7%**. With intention, we focused our efforts on improving our school climate and implementing restorative practices in our way of being. Positive relationships were at the heart of everything we did, and we focused on people over problems. Our administrative and school counseling offices became areas of refuge; places where students came to proactively problem solve situations. This shift had a major effect on our attendance and learning. In 2017-2018 our chronic absenteeism dropped to **3.1%** and our high school was honored as a **school of distinction [for academics]** in the state.



Rippowam MS, Stamford

Fall 2019: Not
Connected- As
Reported by
Teachers:

6th Grade: 38

7th Grade: 63

8th Grade: 56

Total: **157**

Winter 2020: Not
Connected- As
Reported by
Teachers:

6th Grade: 16

7th Grade: 11

8th Grade: 13

Total: **40**



Rippowam MS, Stamford

Chronic Absenteeism:

2018-2019 - 16.5%

2019-2020 - 9.7% (at the mid-point of the year)

Out of School Suspension (OSS) # of incidents

2018-2019 - 275

2019-2020 - 35 (at the mid-point of the year)



School Climate Consultants, LLC

www.SchoolClimateConsultants.com

Patricia A. Ciccone, C.A.G.S., L.P.C.
cicconepatriciaact@gmail.com
(860) 705-2852

Jo Ann Freiberg, Ph.D.
joann.freiberg@gmail.com
(860) 861-4406

