

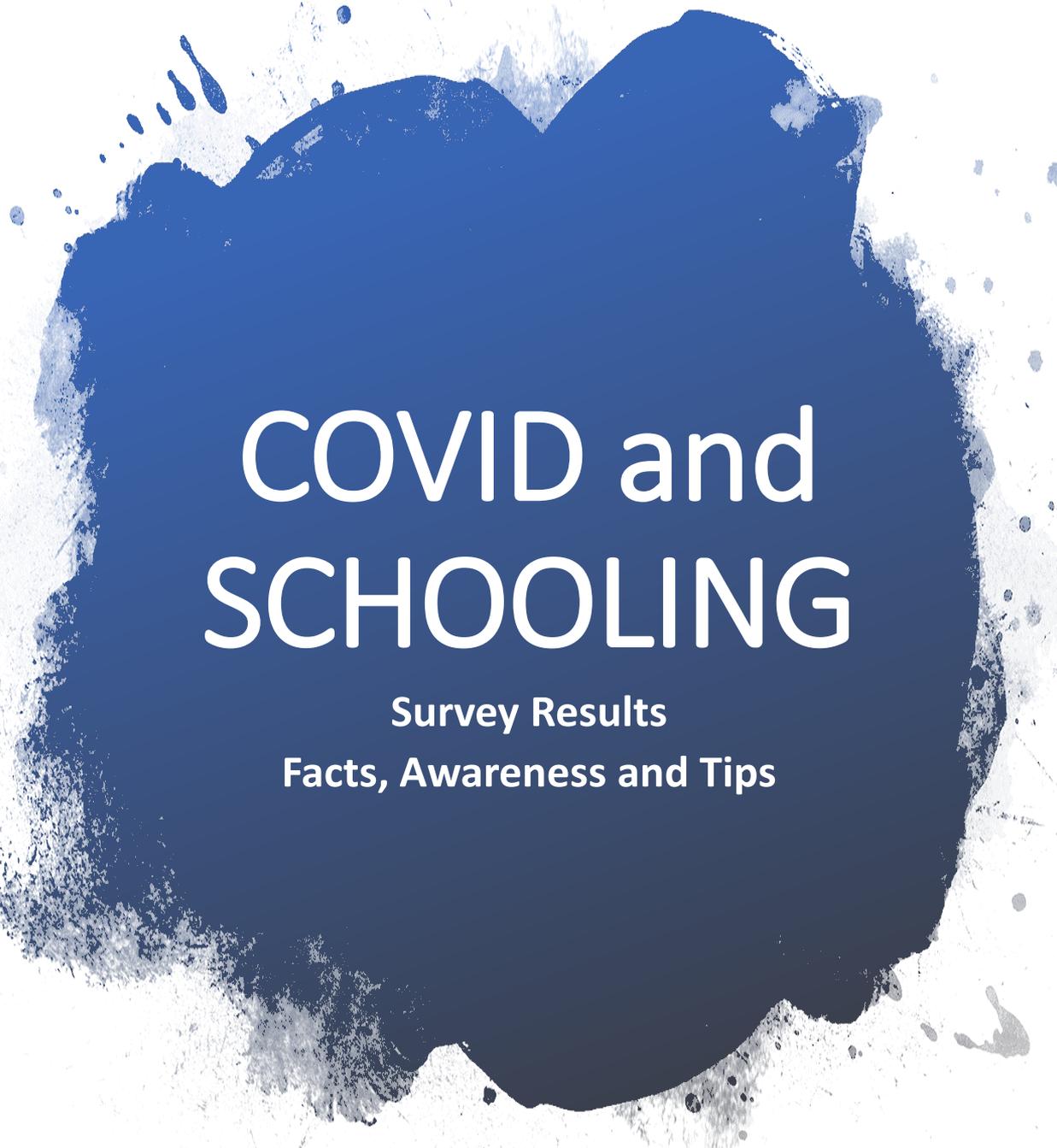


# Beyond Backpacks and Lunchboxes: Supporting A Child's Educational Needs Upon Returning From a Worldwide Pandemic

Sue Badeau, [www.suebadeau.com](http://www.suebadeau.com)

Poll 1





# COVID and SCHOOLING

Survey Results  
Facts, Awareness and Tips



# COVID & SCHOOLING: What we know about the pandemic's consequences for education so far helps us plan next steps:

- **Learning and development have been interrupted and disrupted for millions of students.** More than 1 million students with special educational needs did not get services from 504 or IEP
- **The pandemic has exacerbated well-documented opportunity gaps that put low-income students at a disadvantage relative to their better-off peers.**
- **One of the most critical opportunity gaps is the uneven access to the devices and internet access critical to learning online.**
- **The pandemic has exacerbated the limitations of standardized tests, which reward a narrow set of skills and more affluent students who have access to specialized instruction.**



# COVID Impact on Youth in foster care – example from one study in one state

- 26% disengaged from school
- 44% of caregivers, need more support in meeting the educational needs of youth in their homes.
- 37% of students with identified special education needs disabilities have not received special education services.
- 10% have had IEP (Individualized Education Programs) assessments and meetings delayed.
- 25% of youth in care have lost academic progress
- 22% have one or more unmet basic needs (housing, food, clothing, etc.).
- 11% have experienced a placement change of which half also resulted in a school change

# COVID and SCHOOLING

- What we know about the pandemic's consequences for education so far helps us plan next steps:
  - One third of US teachers are at highest risk of severe illness and death from COVID
  - Educators concerned about meeting all the needs of their students while maintaining their own health and well-being AND that of their own families are at increased risk of significant impacts from Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)
  - One third of K-12 teachers say that the pandemic experience is causing them to seriously consider changing their profession
  - Teachers are working harder and longer hours, enjoying their work less, feeling less supported, and two thirds feel serious health and safety concerns about being in the classroom

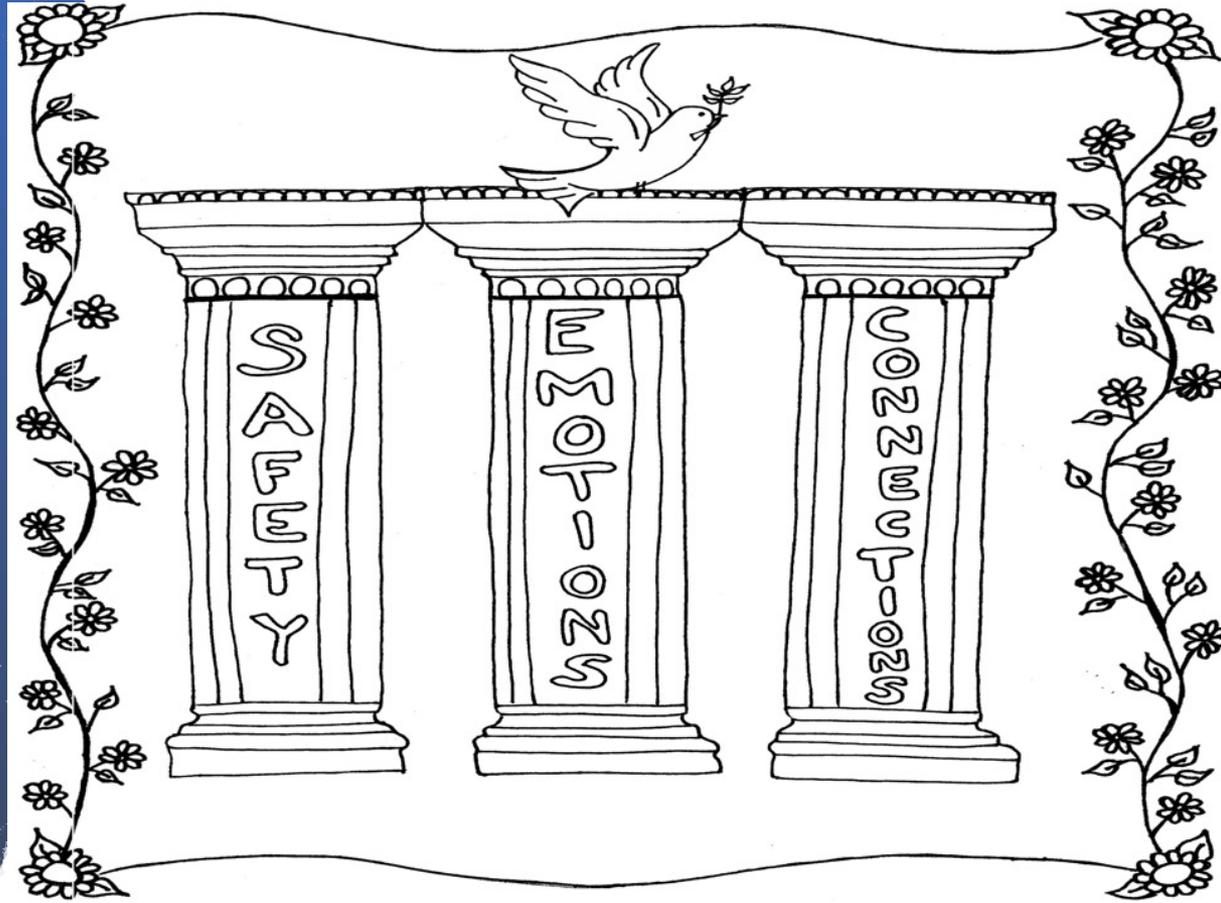


## IT WASN'T ONLY COVID

The past 1-2 years have highlighted many other areas of disparities and injustice in our communities especially related to race, ethnicity, and language

Political upheavals have left communities increasingly polarized

What do Children & Adults Need right now?





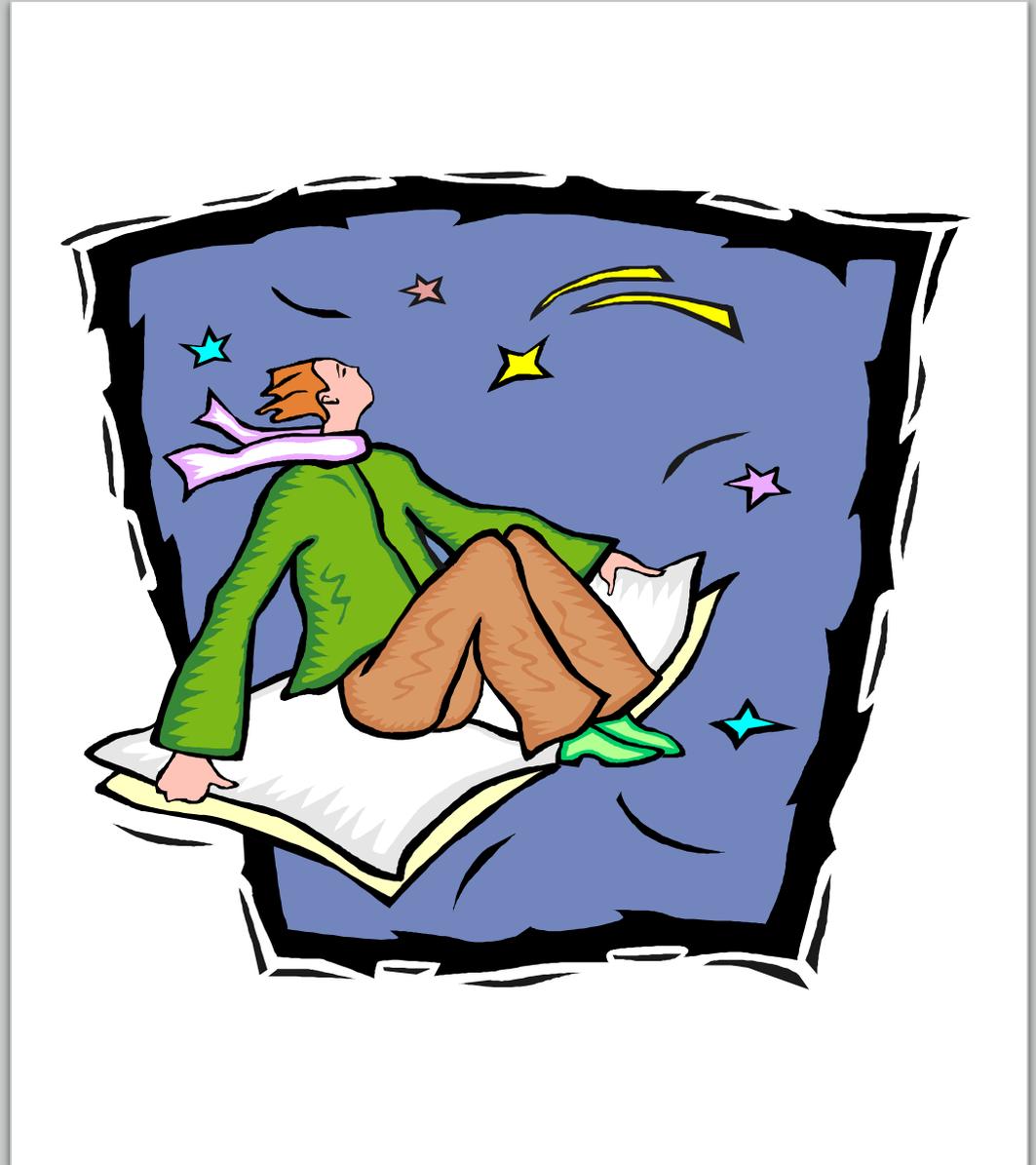
# More than Backpacks and Notebooks

I am really different – no one  
can understand my life

I am “2nd rate” so I am  
doomed to fail

I’m too far behind, I will never  
catch up

Trauma triggers are lurking  
everywhere and  
pop out when least expected



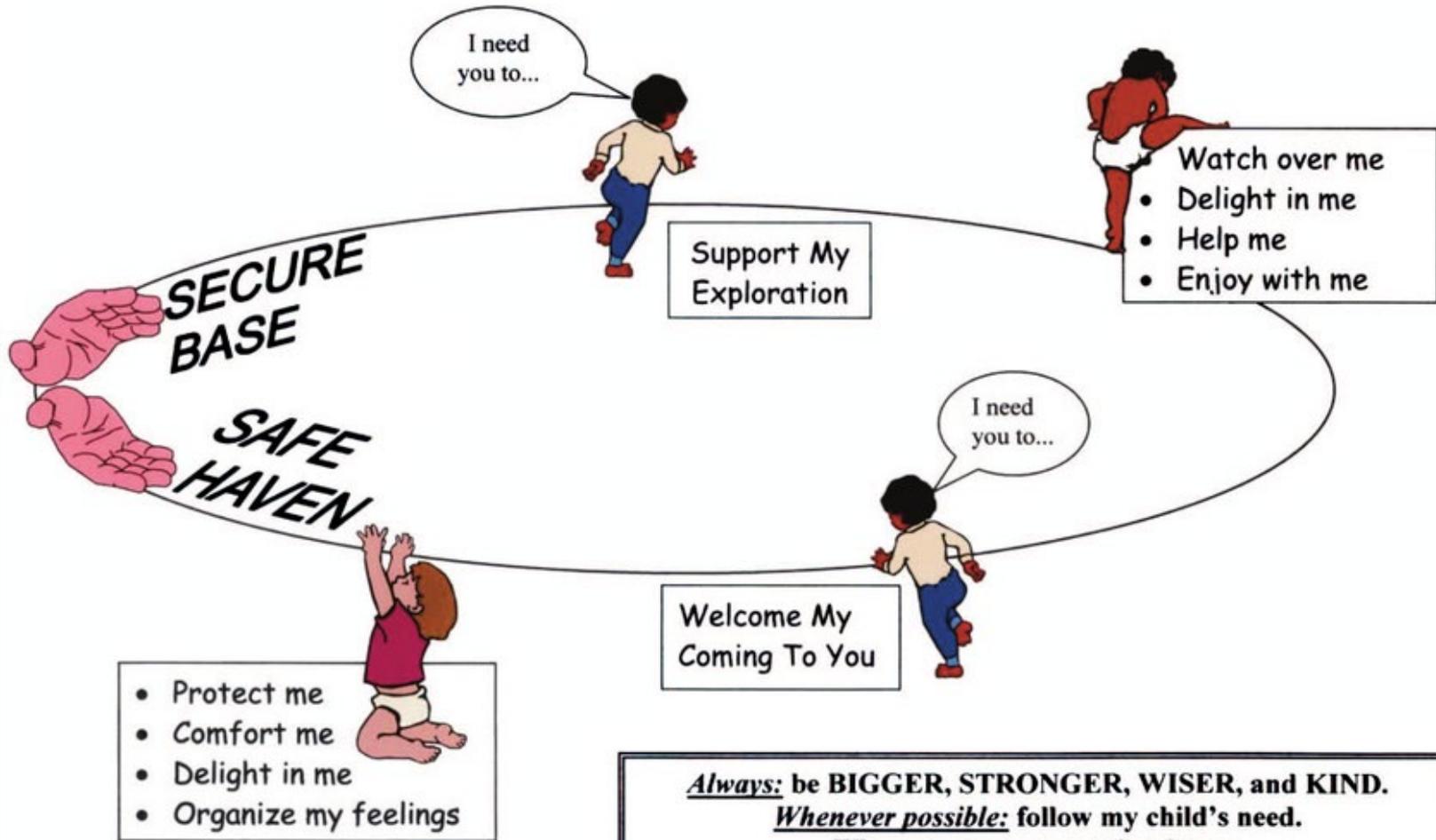


# Impact of Fantasies, Fears & Trauma

- Self Fulfilling Failure prophecies
- Grief, loss, separation anxiety & trauma triggers make concentration difficult
- May demonstrate trauma symptoms masking as ADD/ADHD, ODD or other behavioral or mental health issues
- May experience frequent psychosomatic symptoms
- Easily launched into survival mode
- Social anxiety - “I don’t/can’t fit in”; “Nobody likes me” or “Nobody will likes me if they know my real story”
- Falling behind academically
- Missed special education needs
- Mis-labeled or placed in special education

# CIRCLE OF SECURITY

PARENT ATTENDING TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS



**Always: be BIGGER, STRONGER, WISER, and KIND.**  
**Whenever possible: follow my child's need.**  
**Whenever necessary: take charge.**

# CIRCLE OF SECURITY

parent attending to the youth's needs



# Support Family Resilience

- Individual resilience contributes to but is not the same as family resilience
- 4 core signs of a resilient family during times or crisis or prolonged stress
  - Maintaining membership
  - Nurturing young
  - Caring for vulnerable
  - Maintaining economic support



Created by Gregor Cresnar  
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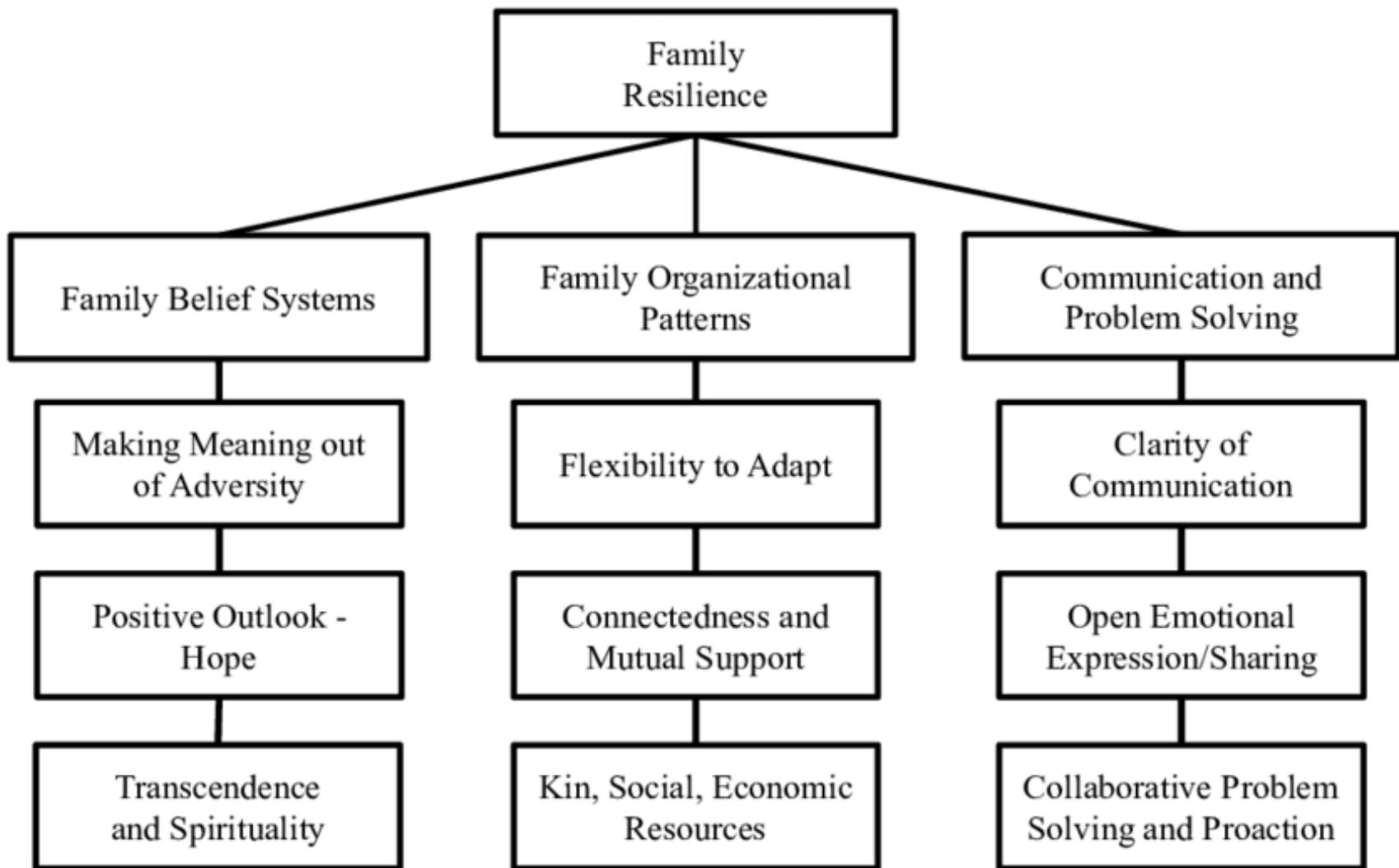
Choose To  
Resilient



Created by Gregor Cresnar  
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# Support Family Resilience

- **4 core characteristics of a resilient family during times or crisis or prolonged stress**
  - **Hope, Optimism, Shared beliefs, values**
  - **Communicate about a wide range of feelings**
  - **Balance of consistency and flexibility**
  - **Capacity for problem solving**





# Broad Tips for Caregivers from “Experts”

- POLL TWO
- Locate learning resources.
- Identify additional resources
- Communitcate, communicate, communicate!
- Be Pro-activate about making needs and expectations clear (i.e. around mask-wearing)
- Be flexible and accepting of the needs of other students/parents and school staff

# Quick Tips for Periods of Adjustment & Transition at School at Home

Relationships matter more than school work

Know the kids and yourself, the staff and the community

Addressing post-COVID needs is more than re-starting pre-COVID approaches

Not the time to do long-term assessments although immediate assessment is needed for many students

Attend to the needs of teachers and staff as well as students



# Tips for School at Home

**Relax**

Relax the rules

**Use**

Use resources but don't get overwhelmed

**Follow**

Follow the child's interests

**MOVE**

MOVE our bodies

**Build in**

Build in some one-on-one time



# PREDICTABILITY

- Predictable Environment
- Predictable Use of Time & Routines
- Predictable Rules & Expectations
- Predictable Consequences
- *Predictable is NOT Rigid!*

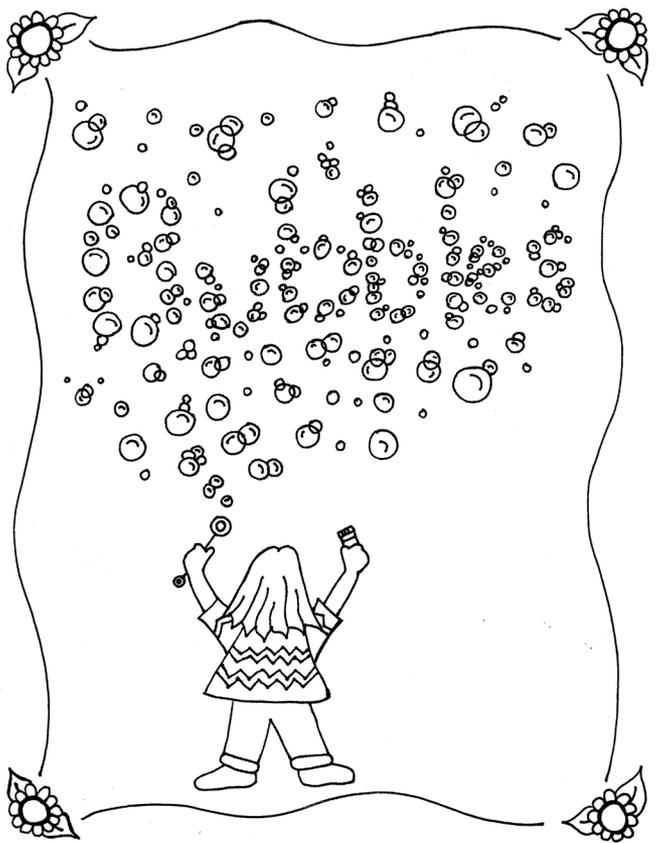
**Develop  
Strategies to  
make  
Transitions  
as calm and  
peaceful as  
possible**



# Activities & Actions:

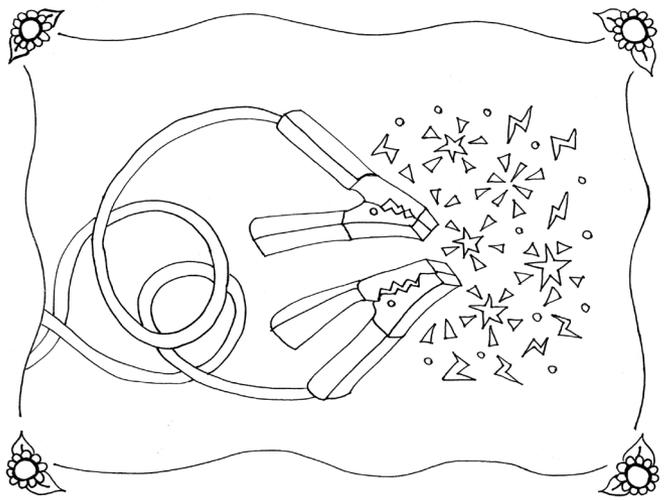
- Help child/adult to identify:
- What activities strengthen you?
- What activities calm you?
- What activities nurture your goals and ability to dream?





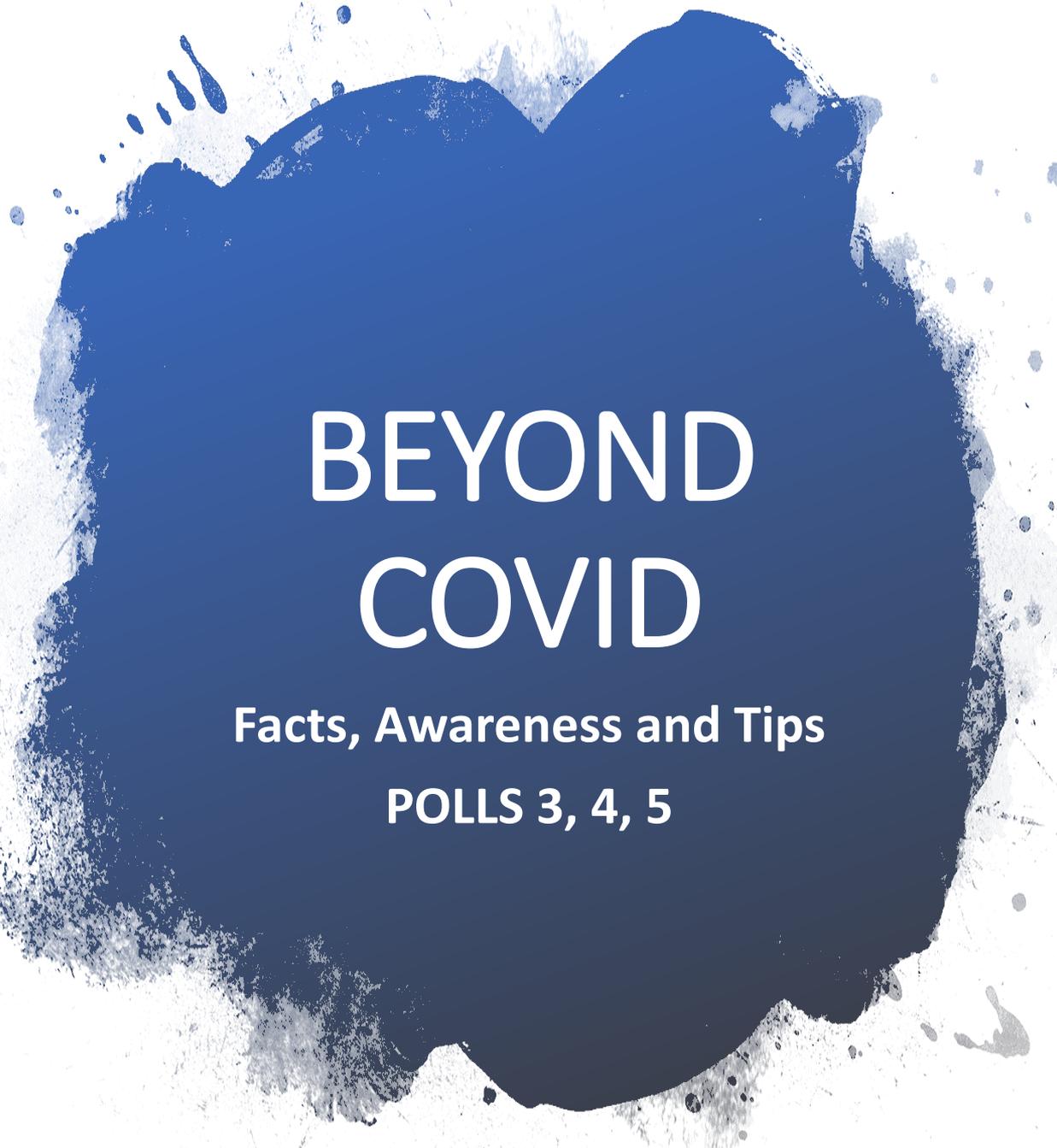
# Balance Mind, Body, Heart, Spirit, Senses:

- Re-set the brain with breathing
- Move your body
- Nurture creativity
- Laugh & Play



# Communicate & Connect

- Eat Meals Together
- Show affection (use of touch)
- Never hinge relationships on behavior



# BEYOND COVID

**Facts, Awareness and Tips**

**POLLS 3, 4, 5**



# Support Physical and Psychological Safety

- **Ensure that there is an identified “go-to” person or liaison for children and parents, especially those who are struggling or have special needs**
- **Provide choice and control wherever and whenever possible**
- **Ensure that anti-bullying, community-building, and school-climate policies and practices are inclusive of the needs of all children**
- **Ensure that with special needs, youth of color or other populations of children do not receive harsher disciplinary actions**
- **Proactively address differences in parental needs/expectations regarding issues such as vaccination and mask-wearing**

## Considerations for **indoor masking** during the 2021-22 school year

### **Factors that support masking:**

- When community incidence is high
- When substantial numbers of COVID-19 cases are being documented in the school
- When cases are growing among children in the community
- Low community or school-based vaccination coverage and/or access
- In settings that serve elementary school-aged children who are not yet eligible for vaccination
- When there are household members who remain vulnerable to severe disease from COVID-19 due to chronic illness or contraindication to vaccination
- For any unvaccinated child or adult with chronic illness that may make them more susceptible to severe disease

### **Times during the school day when masking might be prioritized:**

- During transportation to and from school on buses or public transportation (Note: this is currently a federal requirement)
- During transitions between classes in hallways
- When a large group is unable to distance (e.g., in the cafeteria waiting to purchase lunch)
- For children returning to school with respiratory illnesses following a negative COVID-19 test, at least for the duration of symptoms
- For temporary use in classrooms that have been exposed to a contagious child or staff member
- For temporary use in a school with cases identified across multiple classrooms, in order to limit transmission over a two-week period



## Support Stability

- **Prevent unnecessary school or classroom moves or teacher changes –**
- **Provide meaningful and concrete supports to caregiving families**
- **Ensure communication, engagement and collaboration between school, families and community providers**



**Support  
Well-  
Being:  
Trauma &  
Resilience**

- Provide training, coaching and supporting for ensuring schools are trauma informed, trauma responsive and resiliency focused
- Help youth learn self-regulation skills
- Provide multi-sensory tools (including designated safe spaces) for emotional expression, management and regulation

# Support Well-Being: Academic Achievement

Avoid

Avoid placing children in special education just because they exhibit trauma-based behaviors

Ensure

Ensure that youth who exhibit potential need for special education receive comprehensive, trauma-informed, individualized assessment and services

Work

Work with schools to implement credit recovery opportunities for students who have missing or incomplete credits

# TUNE-IN



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# TUNE-IN

How is the child feeling –  
anticipate concerns and  
questions

Child's understanding of  
certain information they  
heard related to COVID,  
vaccines, other issues in the  
community or country

WHO is the child worried  
about

# Use the Resources You Have

It is hard to hand-off to outside referrals, especially when there are not a lot of resources

As indicated throughout this presentation – there is much you can do

Teach and provide coping tools and skills

RELATIONSHIP with both the students and parents is paramount

Before making any referrals or hand-offs, know what the service offers and if it is appropriate for this student/family

Enlist others in advocating for services not accessible or available



# Support Well-Being: Transition

- **Fully engage youth and their caregivers in transition planning**
- **Ensure that life transition planning and school transition planning are in sync**
- **Ensure youth transitioning into adulthood have access to relevant ID, transcripts, medical documents, credit repair and related resources**
- **Provide meaningful access and resources related to a full array of post-secondary opportunities to youth including**
  - Pre-college and college
  - Technical or vocational
  - Advanced placement and credit options
  - School-to-work options



# Support Well-Being: Advocacy

- **Ensure that both youth and caregiving adults understand all of their legal rights related to education**
- **Engage students in identifying and expressing their own educational and life goals and equip them to advocate for their own goals**
- **Equip caregiving adults with tools to facilitate effective educational advocacy including IEP participation when relevant**

# Promote Broader School-Based Activities

- Use & promote positive, appropriate and sensitive language related to race, gender/sexuality, special needs, family composition
- Engage adoptive or foster parent support groups
- Provide books and resources for the classroom teacher and the library



Q & A  
and Thank you!