

Breakout session 2

Integrating trauma-sensitive approaches and social and emotional learning (SEL)—to create safe, supportive, and culturally responsive schools

Kathleen Guarino, senior technical assistance consultant, AIR

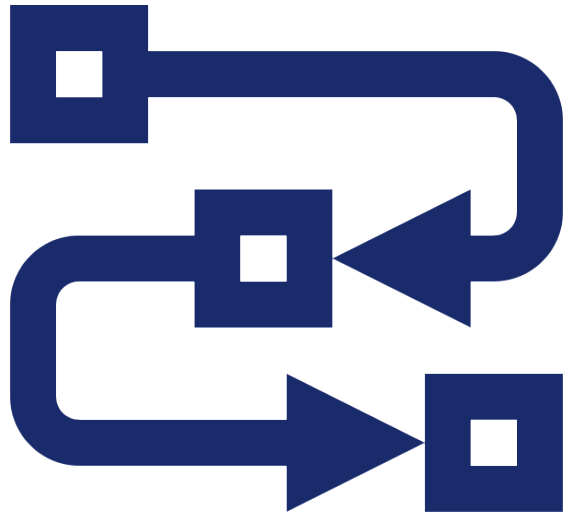
Dr. Wehmah Jones, senior researcher, AIR

Terrence Pruitt, Founder/Principal Consultant, Project Restore Initiative

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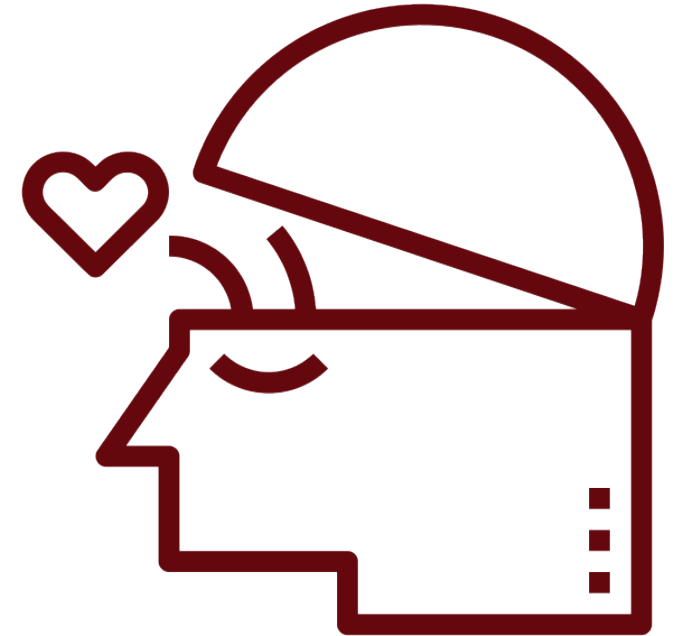
What is social and emotional learning?



Process



Practices



Competencies

Source: Process by Rflor, partnership by Vectors Market, and Open Mindedness by Becris from the Noun Project.

Collaborative for Social, Emotional and Academic Learning

The **5** Key Competencies of Social Emotional Learning



Recognize one's own feelings, interests, strengths, and limitations



Regulate emotions and manage daily stressors



Take perspectives of others and appreciate similarities and differences



Exhibit prosocial behavior and demonstrate positive social skills in order to develop meaningful relationships



Make ethical decisions and strengthen the ability to develop appropriate solutions to identified problems

Image source: Pasco County School District (adapted from www.CASEL.org)

What is trauma?

Trauma: An **event**, a series of events, or a set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening; overwhelms a person's ability to cope; and has adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

It leaves people feeling **helpless, vulnerable, and out of control.**

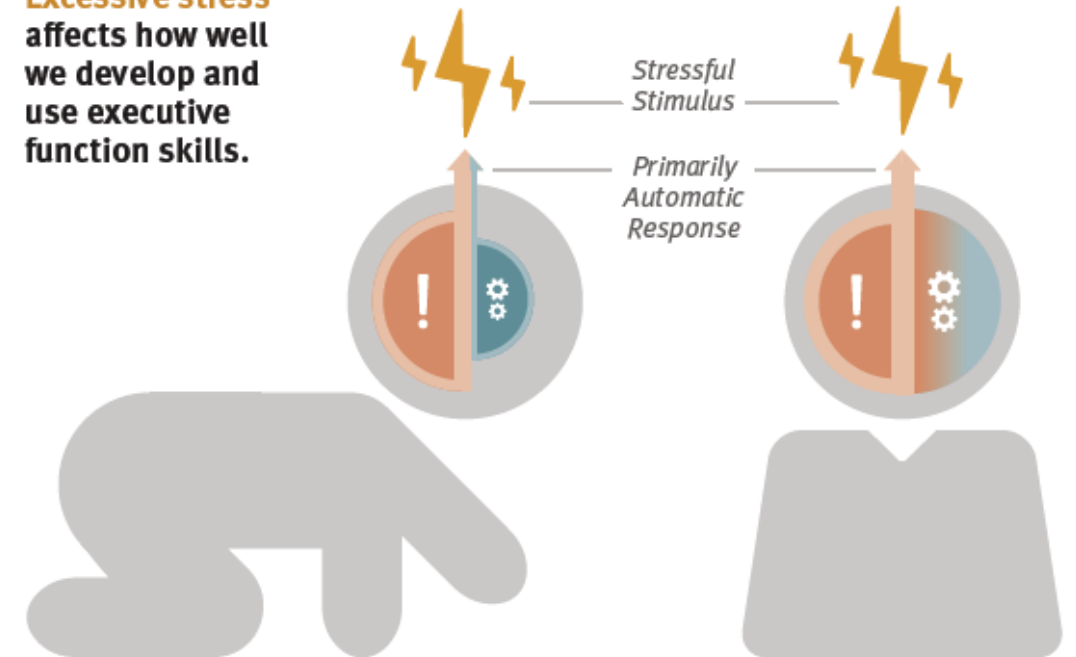
Trauma and social and emotional development

Exposure to trauma may negatively affect the following:

- Our capacity to self-regulate.
- Our awareness of self and others.
- Our ability to engage socially and form relationships.
- Our ability to attend to information, accurately assess situations, and make decisions.

Image source: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/deep-dives/adult-capabilities/>

Excessive stress affects how well we develop and use executive function skills.



Early Childhood

Severe, frequent stress redirects children's brain development away from planning and impulse control toward building the capacity for rapid threat response.

Adulthood

Excessive stress overloads adults' ability to use executive function and intentional self-regulation skills, leaving them to rely primarily on automatic responses.

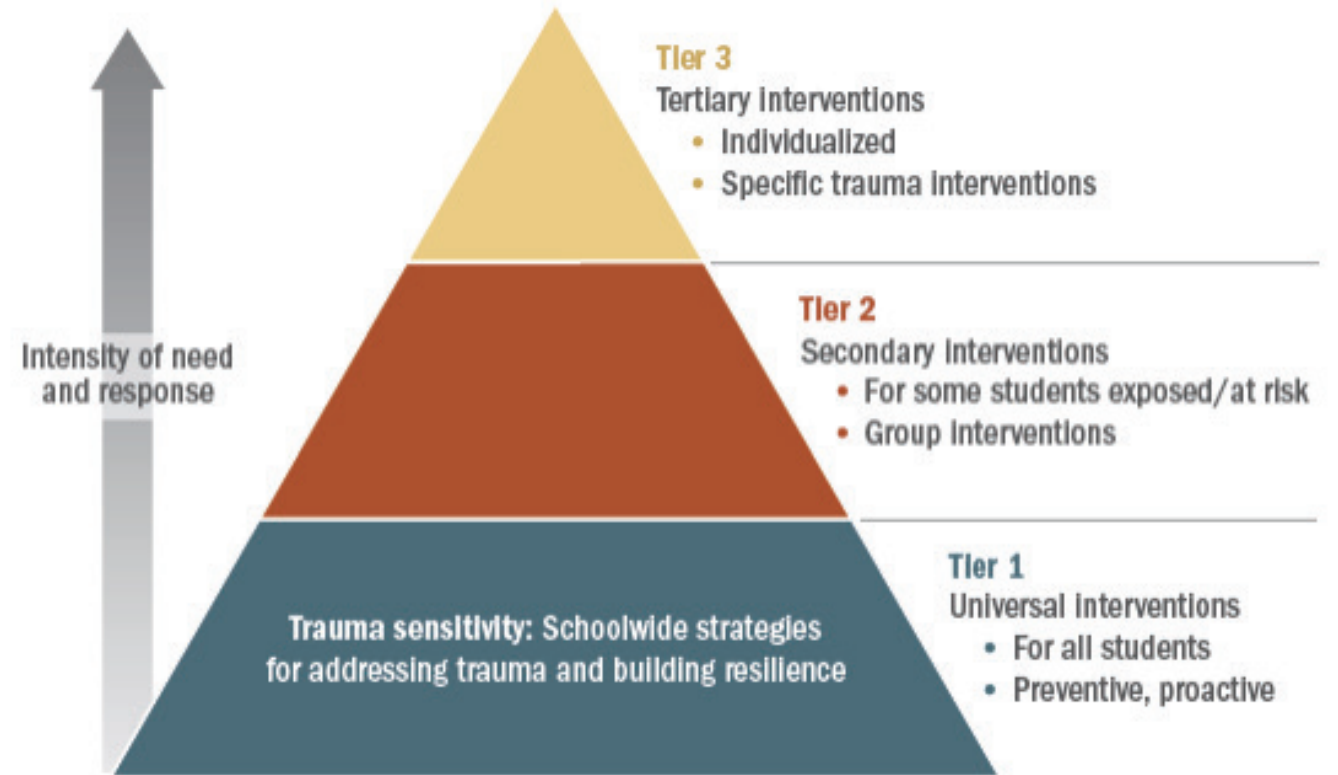
Why are schools addressing trauma?

- Unaddressed trauma negatively impacts learning and academic success.
- Schools risk misunderstanding, mislabeling, misdiagnosing, retraumatizing.
- Schools can help to prevent and mitigate the negative effects of trauma.
- Educator trauma negatively affects job performance and morale.
- Addressing trauma can positively effect students, families, staff, and schools.

Trauma-sensitive schools

A **trauma-sensitive school** is one in which all aspects of the educational environment—from workforce training to engagement with students and families to procedures and policies—are grounded in an understanding of trauma and its impact and are designed to promote resilience for all.

Multi-tiered Approach to Addressing Trauma In Schools



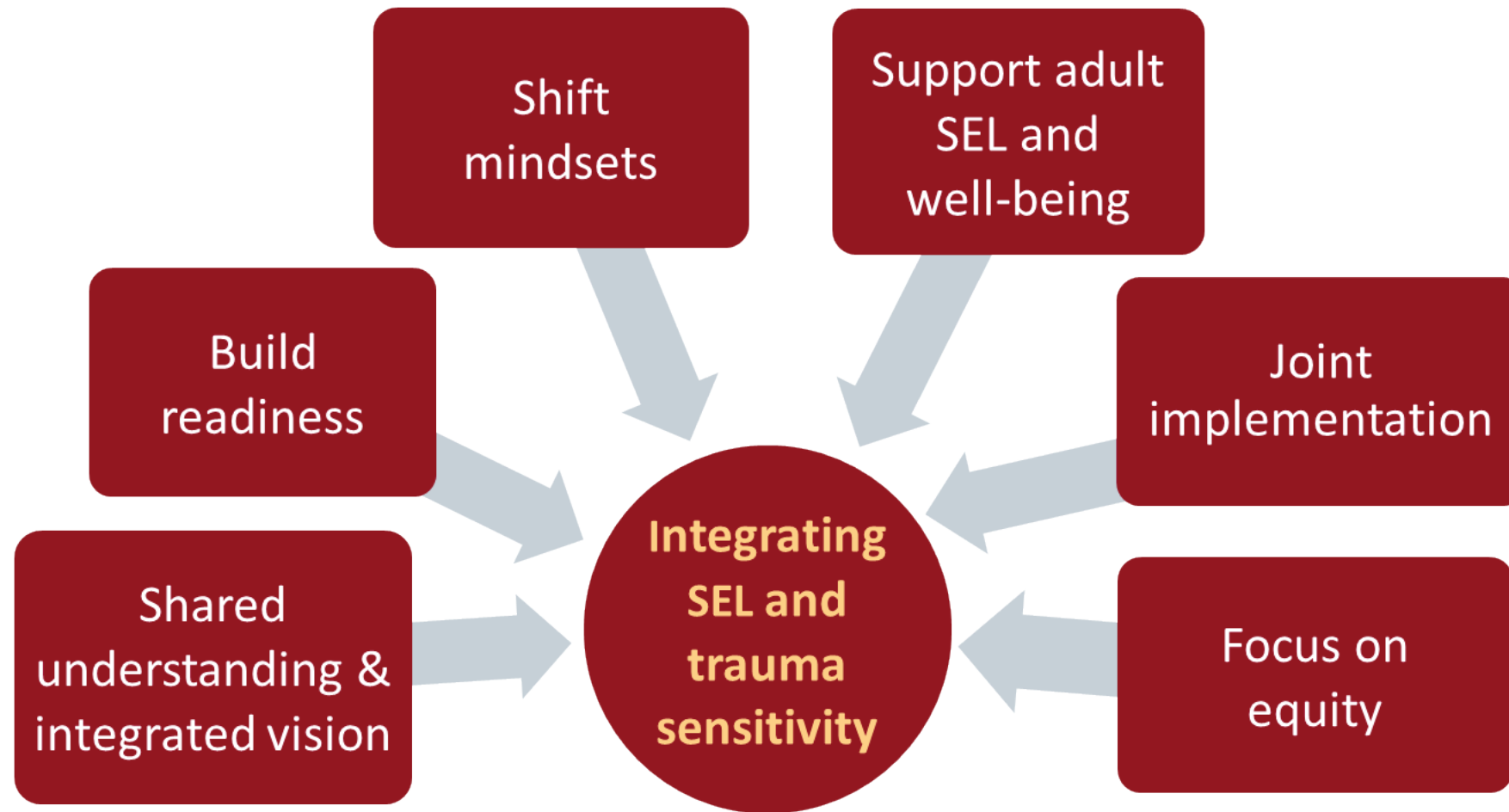
(American Institutes for Research, 2018)

Importance of integrating SEL and trauma sensitivity

Parallel implementation efforts risk:

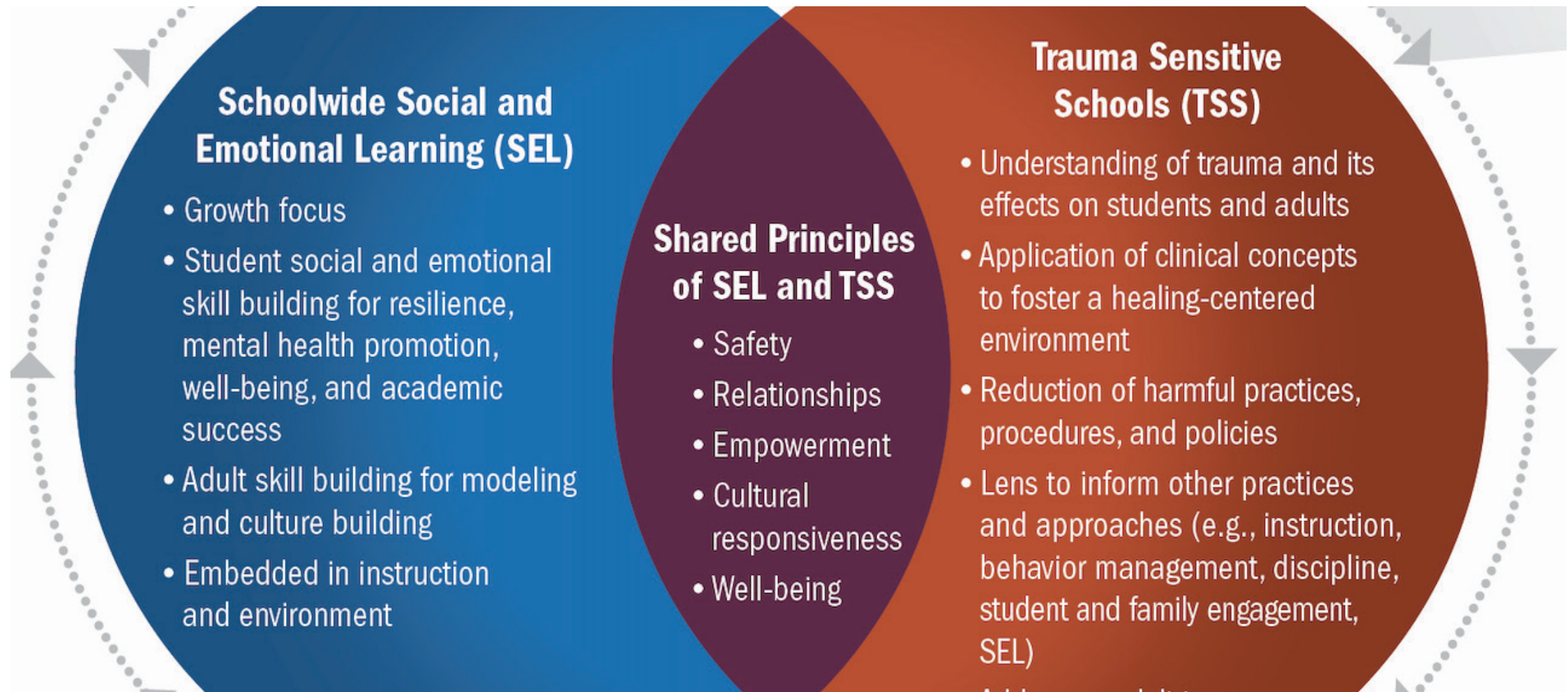
- Incomplete understanding of each approach (terms used interchangeably).
- Fragmented implementation.
- Confusing or contradictory messages.
- Sense of competing priorities (for example, time and focus).
- Intervention/initiative fatigue.

Integrating SEL and trauma sensitivity: How do we get there?



Source: Osher et al. (in press).

Develop a shared understanding and integrated vision



Source: Osher et al. (in press).

Build readiness

Motivation

- Willingness or desire to implement an intervention.
- Willingness to engage in self-exploration (for example, of own biases, social-emotional competencies).
- Staff beliefs, attitudes, and concerns.

General capacity

- How well a school/district is currently functioning (for example, Is there a strong foundation on which to implement a new intervention?).

Intervention-specific capacity

- Knowledge or skills that are specific to SEL and TSS.

Momentum

- Build on existing buy-in, activities and climate

Shift mindsets

Traditional perspective

- **Judgmental:** Understands behaviors as the result of individual deficits (what’s wrong with you?). Uses negative labels.
- **Power over/obedience:** Views adult authority and control as critical to student success.
- **Individual:** Focus for change is on the individual. Solution is for youth to “fix” their behavior.
- **Deficit-based/reactive:** Focuses on reducing problem behaviors. Minimal crisis prevention planning or debrief for learning.

Trauma-sensitive, SEL perspective

- **Curious:** Considers whether behaviors may be ways of coping with traumatic experiences. Negative labels replaced.
- **Power with/collaboration:** Encourages student and family choice and control.
- **Environmental:** Takes a more holistic view and considers how external factors influence youth.
- **Strengths-based/proactive:** Focuses on identifying/promoting strengths and opportunities for growth. Prevent crises/retraumatization.

Shift mindsets

Traditional perspective

- **Punitive:** Punitive discipline is the primary approach.
- **Siloed:** Support for students exposed to trauma should be left to counseling professionals.
- **Operate from dominant culture:** Adopts a “one-size-fits all” approach based on the perspective of the dominant culture.
- **Academics only**

Trauma-sensitive, SEL perspective

- **Restorative:** Positive, strengths-based approaches to discipline are used most often.
- **Integrated:** Assumes a shared responsibility for addressing trauma.
- **Cultural humility:** Seeks to understand and convey respect for diverse cultural values and beliefs and integrates culturally responsive services.
- **Academic and social and emotional learning**

Support adult SEL and well-being

The **competencies** that adults need to manage stress and create a safe and supportive classroom environment

The **skills** and **mindsets** that adults need to effectively embody, teach, model, and coach student SEL

The overall **well-being** and **emotional state** of adults in school settings

Sources: Jennings & Greenberg (2009). ; Schonert-Reichl (2017). ; Schonert-Reichl, et al. (2017).

Research on educator social and emotional competencies

- Teacher social and emotional competencies strongly influence learning conditions and students' motivation to learn (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).
- Educator stress deeply affects their mental health and well-being, job satisfaction, job turnover, and student outcomes (Greenberg et al., 2016).
- Students learn SEL skills better when educators can effectively model these skills (Berman et al., 2018).
- Teachers who were mandated to teach SEL but did not cultivate their own practice worsened their students' social and emotional skills. However, teachers who enhanced their own social and emotional skills improved not only their own well-being but also the social, emotional, and academic development of their students (Reyes et al., 2012).

Initiate a joint implementation process



Joint teaming to support
adoption



Combined professional
development and
application



Integrated monitoring
and evaluation

Defining equity

Equity is about fairness; it ensures that each person gets what they need. It is about taking deliberate actions to remove barriers and obstacles that hinder overall well-being: policies, practices, and procedures that are informed by cultural and linguistic competence to promote and facilitate positive outcomes for all.

Focus on equity

- Expand the equity lens to include a more robust conceptualization of what equity means and how to achieve it.
- Commit to culturally responsive practices.
- Commit to eliminating inequities fueled by various forms of communal and systemic traumas.
- Support student agency.
- Equip people individually and collectively to collectively break down the systems that perpetuate inequities and counter institutionalized privilege and prejudice.

Discussion question

What strategies are you using to integrate SEL, trauma sensitivity, and/or other related initiatives in your classroom, school, or district?



Breakout summary, thank you, and conclusion

Laura Shankland, REL Southwest

Terrence Pruitt, Founder/Principal Consultant, Project Restore Initiative

Contact Information for Terrence Pruitt

Email: terrence@projetrestoreinitiative.com

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/in/terrencepruitt/>

Twitter: [@TerrenceAPruitt](https://twitter.com/TerrenceAPruitt)