

Mindfulness for Teachers in Difficult Times

Building Resilience with Compassionate Teaching



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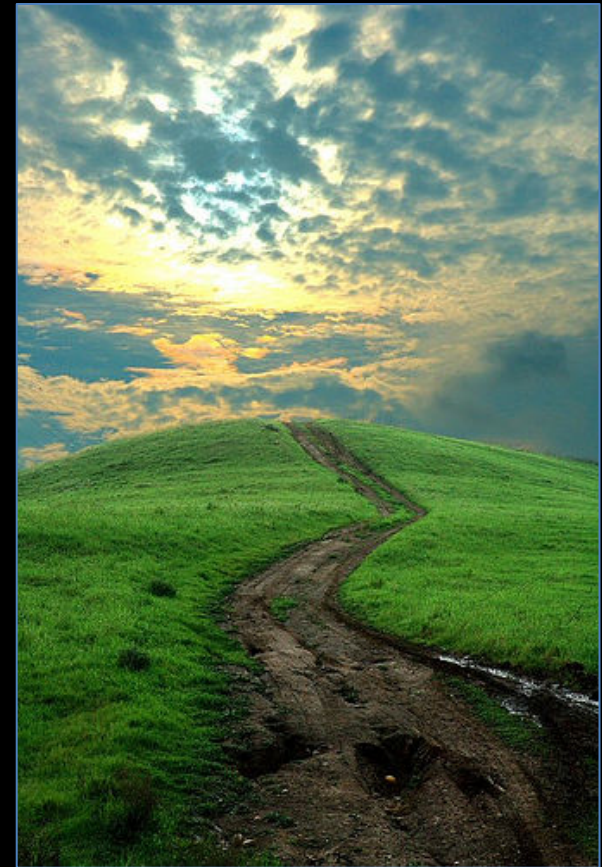


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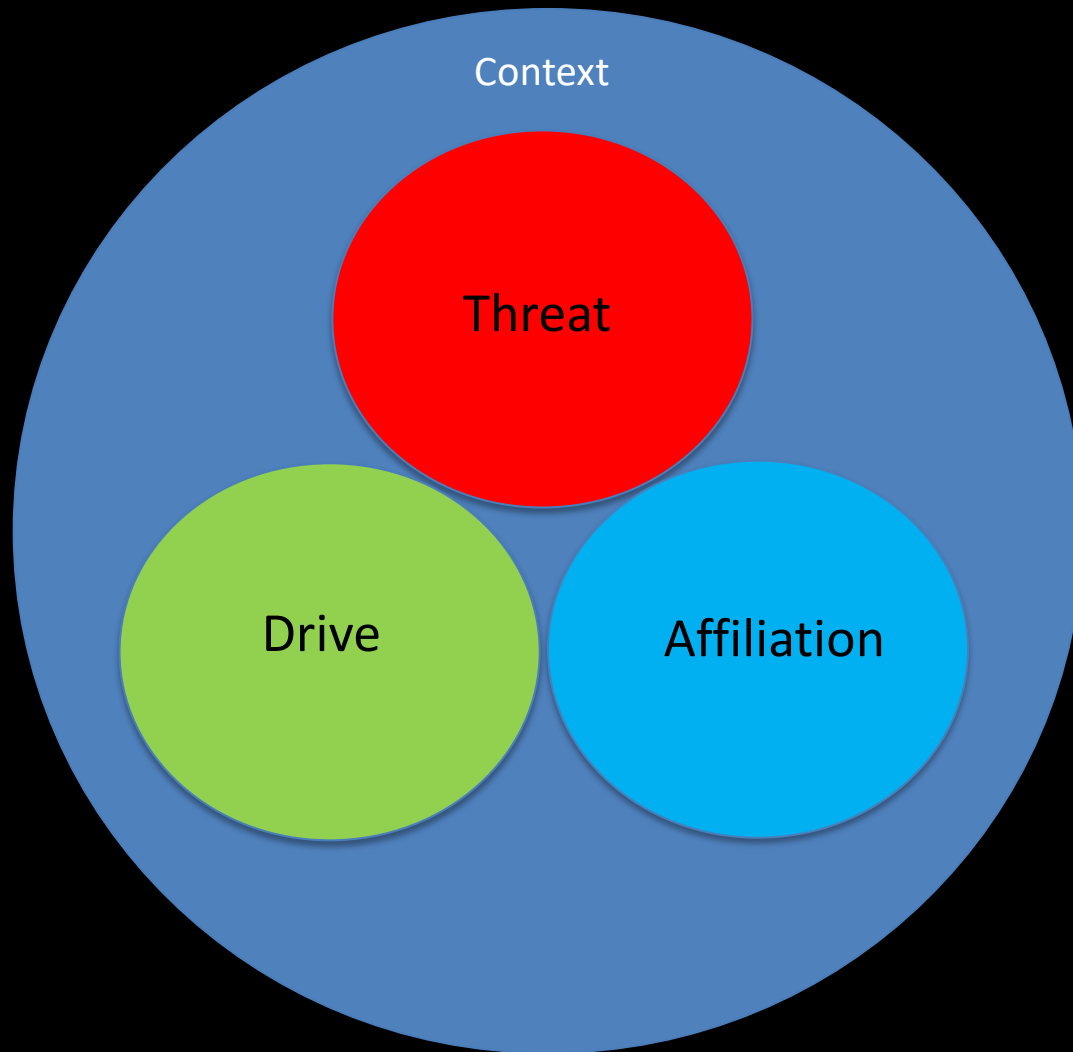
CURRY SCHOOL of EDUCATION
and HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Roadmap

- 3 Survival Systems
- Understanding Stress-Adaptation
- 3 Keys to Compassionate Teaching
 - Cultivating supportive relationships
 - Creating safe spaces
 - Building on strengths by supporting adaptation
- Building Resilience with Mindful Compassion



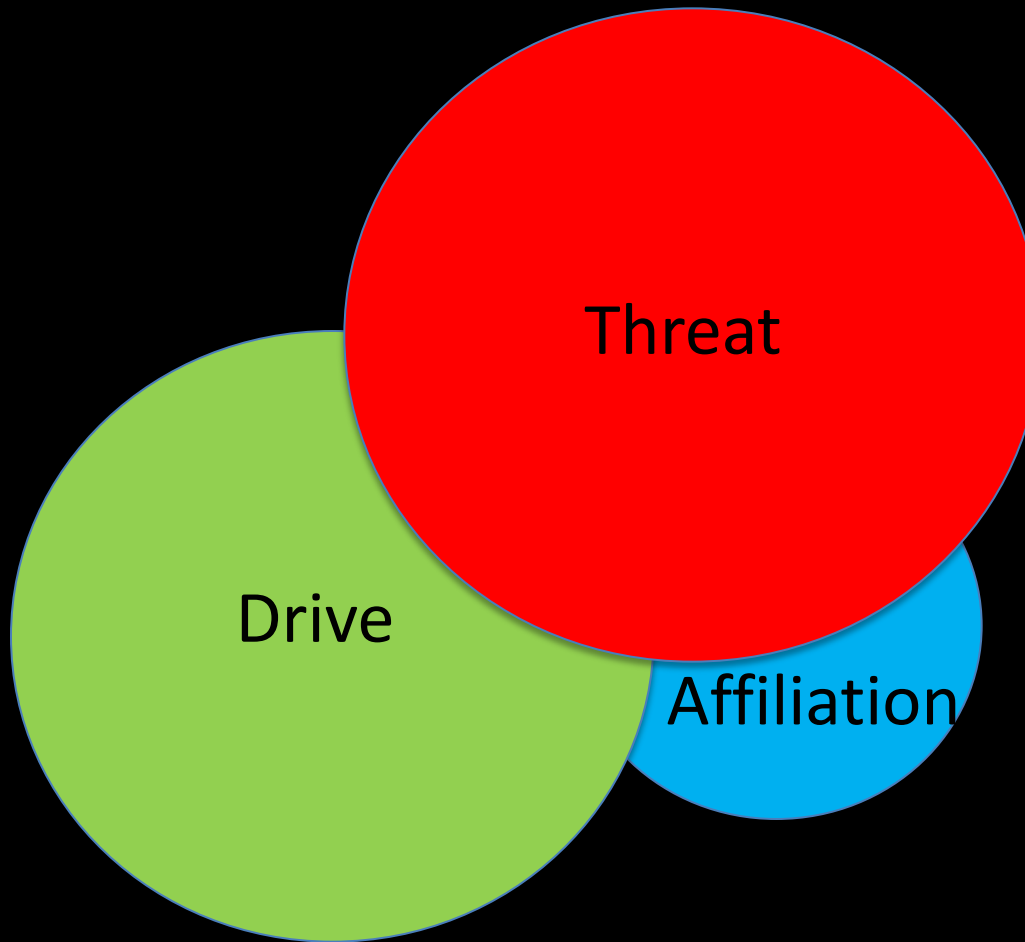
3 Survival Systems



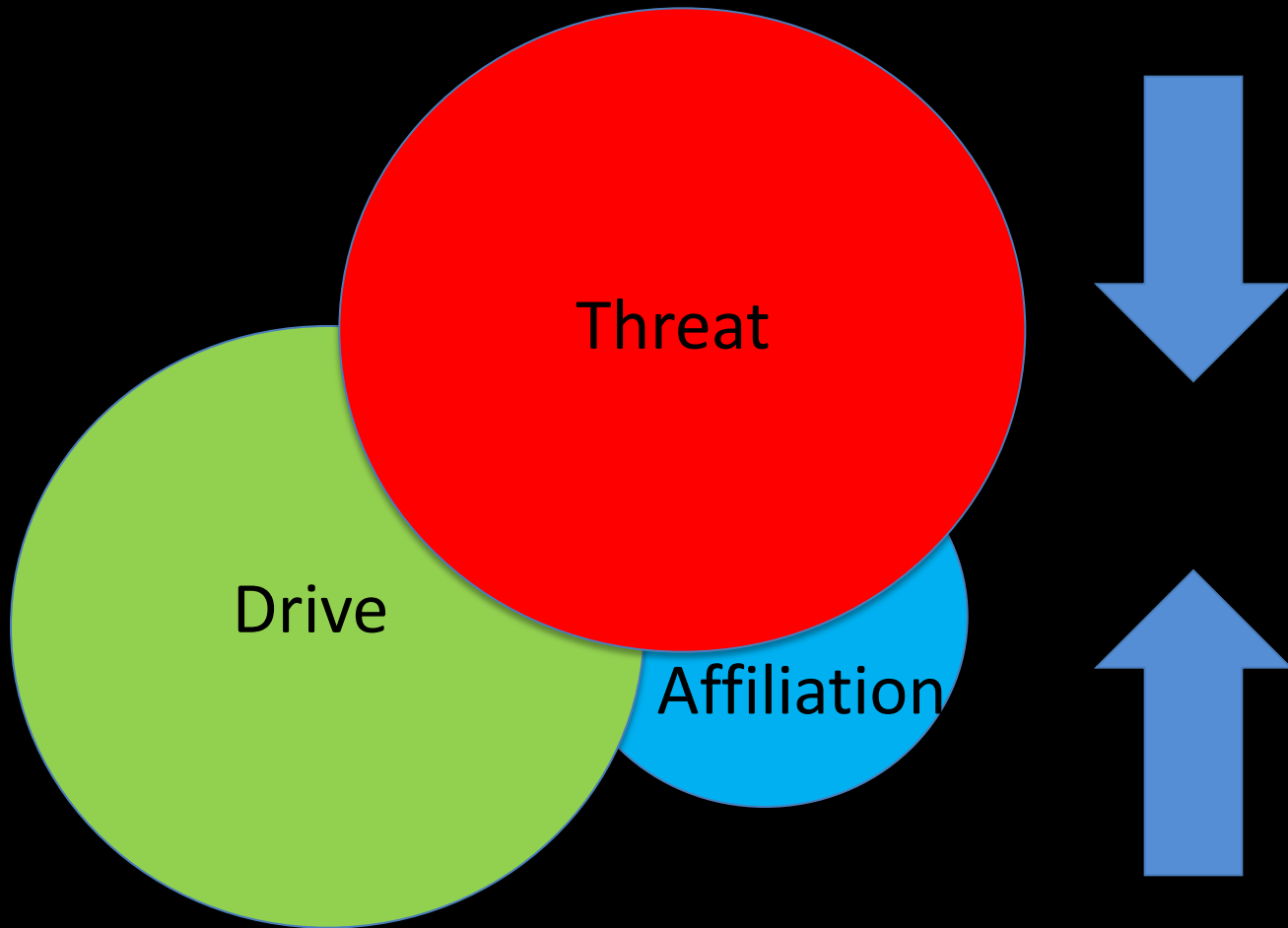
3 Survival Systems



3 Survival Systems

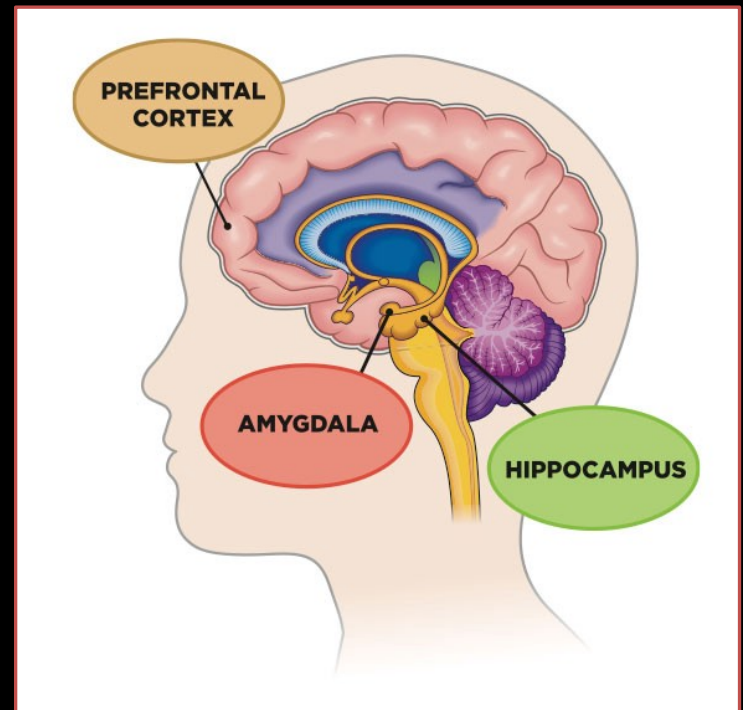


3 Survival Systems



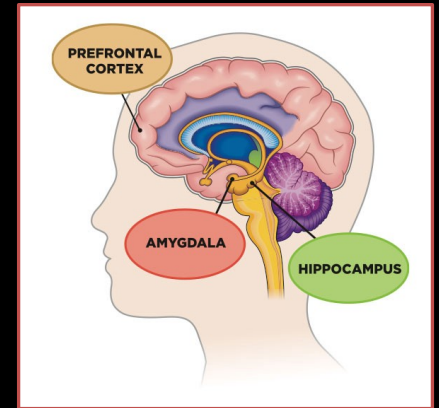
Learning and the Brain

- Pre-Frontal Cortex (PFC)
 - Regulates: Inhibits, focuses, modulates attention
 - Executive functions: planning & goal setting (working memory)
 - Social decision-making: perspective taking, mentalizing



Stress and the Brain

- Stress may impair the development of self-regulation
- Interferes with learning
- Over time may cause learning and behavior problems
- Especially for those exposed to risk factors
- Social support may be protective
- Teacher stress affects students



Trauma, Chronic Stress, Toxic Stress

- A single incident
- Ongoing adversity
- Individual differences in impacts
 - Personality
 - Health
 - Age
 - Poverty, racism, inequity compound effects



Threat



Trauma, Chronic Stress, Toxic Stress

- Adaptations
 - Hyperarousal
 - Avoidance/Dissociation
 - Negative thoughts/beliefs
 - Re-experiencing
 - Insecure attachment



What's Wrong With Him? vs What Happened to Him?



Threat



3 Keys to Compassionate Teaching

- Cultivating supportive relationships
- Creating safe spaces
- Building on strengths by supporting adaptation

Affiliation



3 Keys to Compassionate Teaching

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Affiliation



Affiliation System

- Critical importance of belonging to human survival and flourishing
 - a basic human need based in the parent-child bond
 - Feel seen and accepted for who you are
 - Given opportunities to make valuable contributions to the community
 - Having one's contributions valued
 - Recognizing and honoring the value of diverse facets of humanity



3 Keys to Compassionate Teaching

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Affiliation



Create Safe Spaces

- During normal times:
 - Promoting physical and psychological safety
 - Trustworthiness and transparency
 - Peer support
 - Collaboration and mutuality
 - Empowerment, voice, and choice
 - Cultural, historical & gender issues

(SAMHSA, 2014)



Create Safe Spaces

- During difficult times:
 - Confinement is stressful for everyone
 - Everyone is dealing with some level of trauma
 - Fear
 - Uncertainty
 - People with trauma histories may suffer more
 - Home may be low resourced



3 Keys to Compassionate Teaching

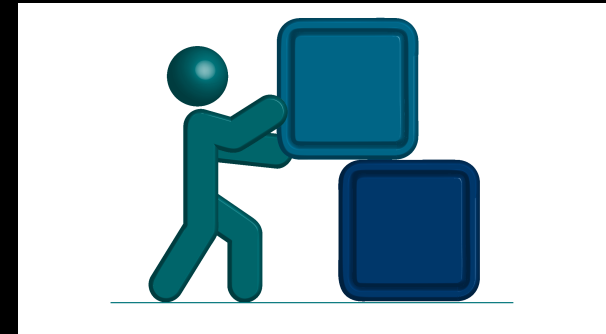
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Affiliation



Build Upon Strengths

- Identify students' existing strengths.
- Honor, value, and acknowledge these strengths.
- Help students become aware of their strengths.
- Build instructional programming that boosts social ties and networks by drawing from students' strengths



How Can We Do This?



Building Resilience with Mindful Compassion

- Understanding context
- Building resilience
 - Self-care
 - Emotional mastery
- Practicing mindfulness
- Cultivating compassion



What is Resilience?

- The ability to
 - Flourish in the face of adversity, ambiguity, and rapid change
 - Creatively respond to challenges
 - Grow and learn to adapt quickly
 - Recognize the constantly changing nature of reality



GRACE:

Practicing Compassion in Difficult Times

- G Gather your attention
- R Recall your intention
- A Attune with self and other
- C Consider what will serve
- E Engage, enact, end

Emotions & the Brain

- Emotions are adaptive functions that engage biological, cognitive and behavioral processes designed to promote survival



Function of Emotions

- “Negative,” unpleasant or uncomfortable
 - Trigger stress response
 - Narrow focus
 - Reinforce negative perception with thoughts
 - Limited, conditioned reactivity
- “Positive,” pleasant or comfortable
 - Build resources (relationships, resilience)
 - Broaden focus
 - Openness, awareness of others’ perspectives and context
 - Creative responses

Negativity Bias and Survival



Gratitude Practice



Savoring Positivity

- Positive emotions “undo” the effects of negative emotions
- By savoring moments of love, joy, inspiration, gratitude, awe, and other positive emotional states we build resilience.



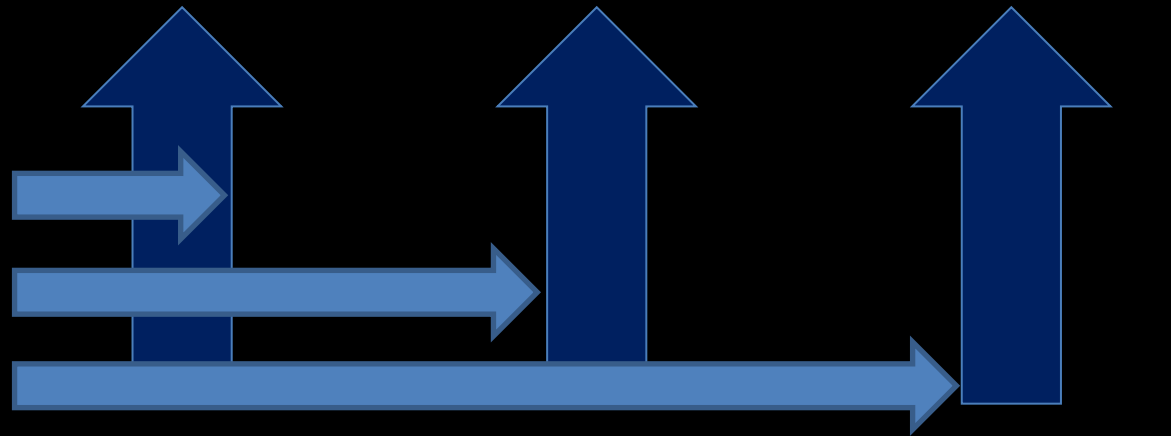
Critical Importance of Self-Care





- Self Care
- Emotion Awareness
 - Didactic lessons on nature of emotion
 - Emotions in relation to teaching & learning
 - Experiential exercises to promote emotional awareness
- Mindfulness
 - Mindful awareness practices
 - Mindful walking
- Empathy & Compassion for self and other
 - Caring practice (*metta*)
 - Mindful listening exercises
- Applications of these to teaching through discussion and role plays

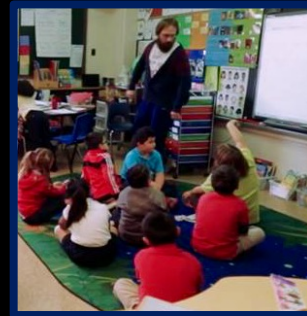




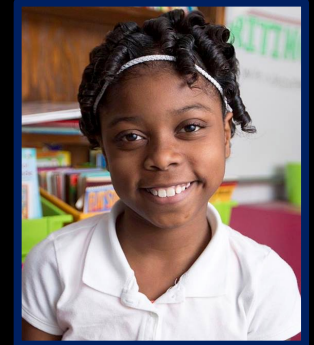
Teacher Improvements



Classroom Improvements



Student Improvements



Psychological
Distress
Time Urgency
Mindfulness
Emotion
Regulation

Emotional
Support

Engagement

Teacher Improvement

- The CARE program promotes teachers' social and emotional competence and well-being.
- Long-term impacts on mindfulness, psychological distress, and emotion regulation
- Teachers with higher levels of psychological distress at baseline showed improved in emotion regulation (relative to declines among high risk teachers in control group)



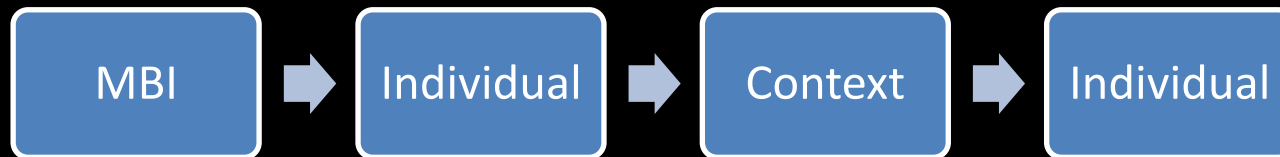
Classroom Improvement

- Mindfulness-based interventions delivered to individuals may have “downstream” effects on the classroom social environments they inhabit.
- CARE resulted in observable improvements in the quality of classroom interactions or protected against declines



Student Improvement

- CARE has a direct positive impact on teacher-reported student engagement.
- Students with low social skills at baseline showed improvements in reading competence
- Students of teachers with low mindfulness at baseline showed improvements in motivation and reading competence



Questions?



Mindfulness for Teachers

SIMPLE SKILLS for
PEACE and PRODUCTIVITY
in the CLASSROOM



Patricia A. Jennings

The Mindful School

Transforming School Culture
through Mindfulness and
Compassion



edited by Patricia A. Jennings
associate editors: Anthony A. DeMauro and Polina P. Mischenko

THE TRAUMA-INFORMED CLASSROOM



BUILDING RESILIENCE WITH
COMPASSIONATE TEACHING

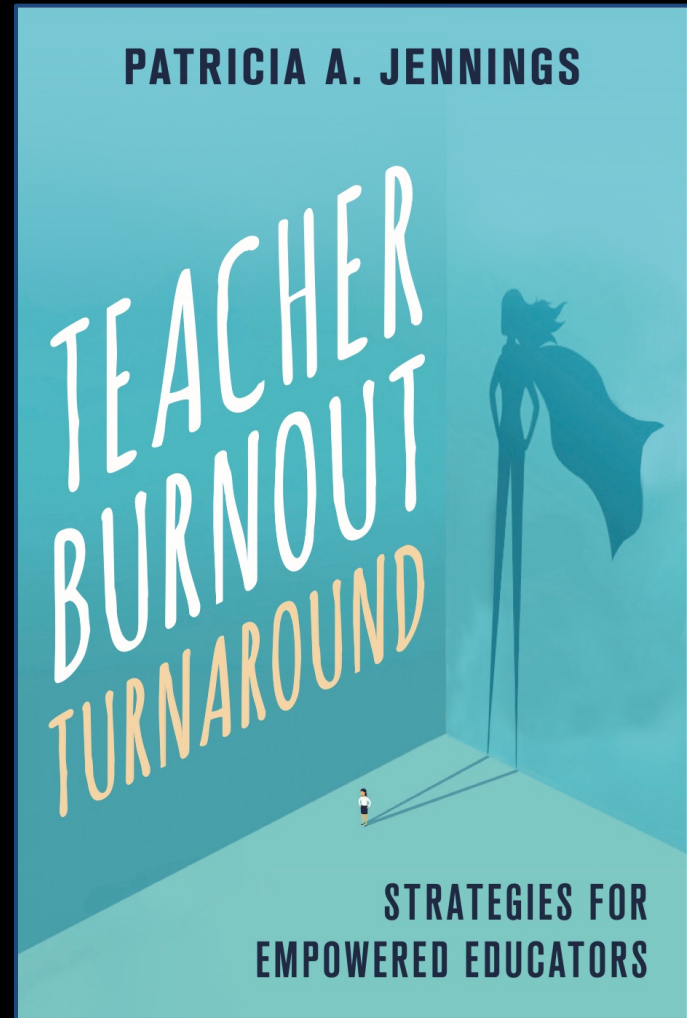
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Mindfulness in the PreK – 5 Classroom



HELPING STUDENTS STRESS LESS AND LEARN MORE

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Forthcoming in
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