

Teens and Trauma

“To a worm in horseradish, the whole world is horseradish!”

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of two overlapping, semi-transparent green arrow shapes pointing to the right. The top arrow is a lighter shade of green, and the bottom arrow is a darker shade, creating a layered effect.

TRAUMA

Pulling it all together

Brain-Body-Worldview-Help and Healing-Schools Role and Impact

Several Steps to Get Our Arms Around It

Get a working definition.

Connections to fight or flight, anxiety, depression.

Distinction from each-variation of Ping Pong.

Defining Trauma

Why must we define?

What Trauma is Not

Anxiety does not equal trauma

ACES does not equal trauma--ACES-pointer to a wide range of things(trauma is specific and a done deal)

ACES is also very household or family focused.

EBD does not equal trauma

What Trauma Is

1. Memory of an overwhelmingly painful emotional experience

2. A physiological change in the brain.

3. Can be a one time event or a chronic situation with a “straw that broke the camel’s back”

Overwhelming Painful Emotional Experience

Leaving a **strong emotional imprint** When the memory comes back, the same strong emotion comes with it. Thinking about it affects the brain and body as if the person is **back in** the actual situation.

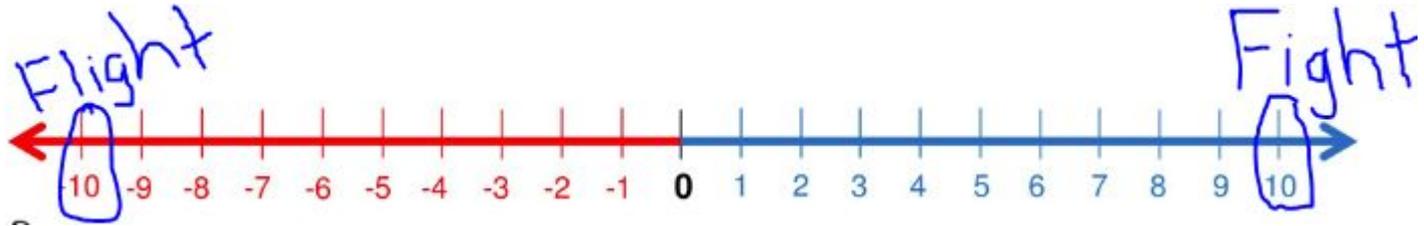
A physiological change in the brain.

“He is suffering from memories” Freud 1895

The strong “overwhelming” emotion is **embedded** and attached to the deeply painful memory. (Darwin, Freud, Pavlov)

Talking about fight
or flight, anxiety,
depression and Ping
Pong.

Fight or Flight Continuum



Becomes the DSN (Default State Network)

Think Muscle Memory

With a bigger challenge (Next Slide)

Really-Fight, Flight or Freeze

Studies on the Idling Brain

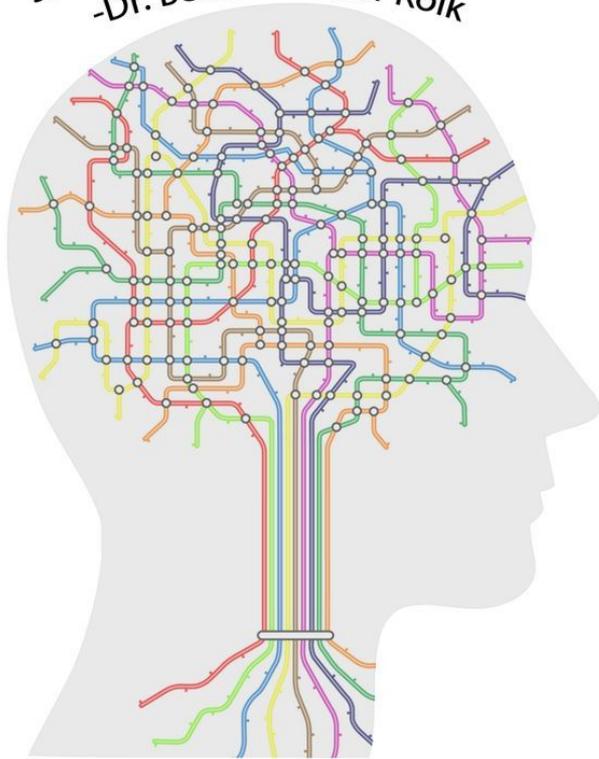
Polyvagal Theory

10th Cranial Nerve or VVC-Ventral Vagal Complex

Mammalian Brain-Limbic Brain

Reptilian Brain

**"Our brains continually form maps
of the world - maps of what is
safe and what is dangerous."
-Dr. Bessel van der Kolk**



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Fight, Flight or Freeze--Automatic built
in responses to perception of threat.

Freeze-has been called the **tragic
adaptation.**

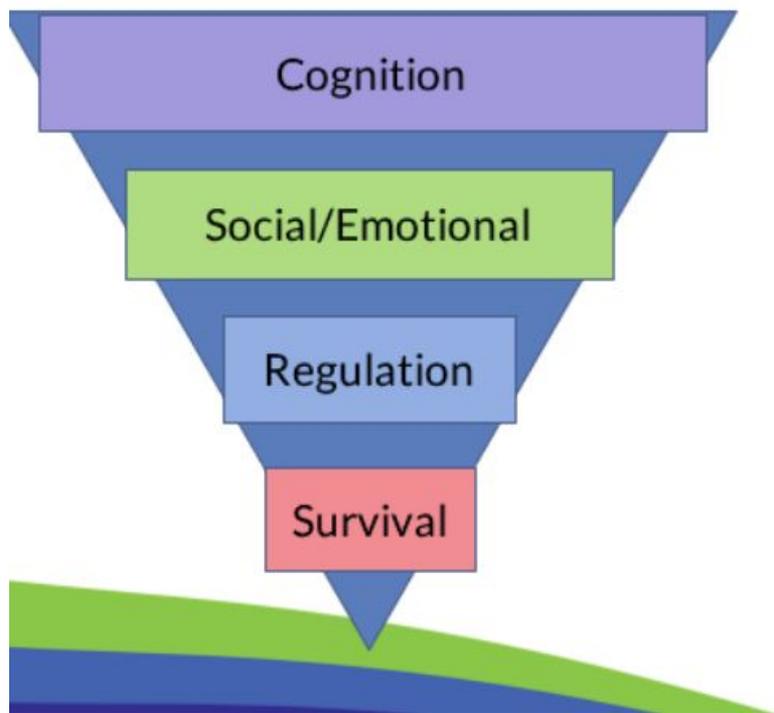


Shutting Down of the Prefrontal Area of Frontal Lobes

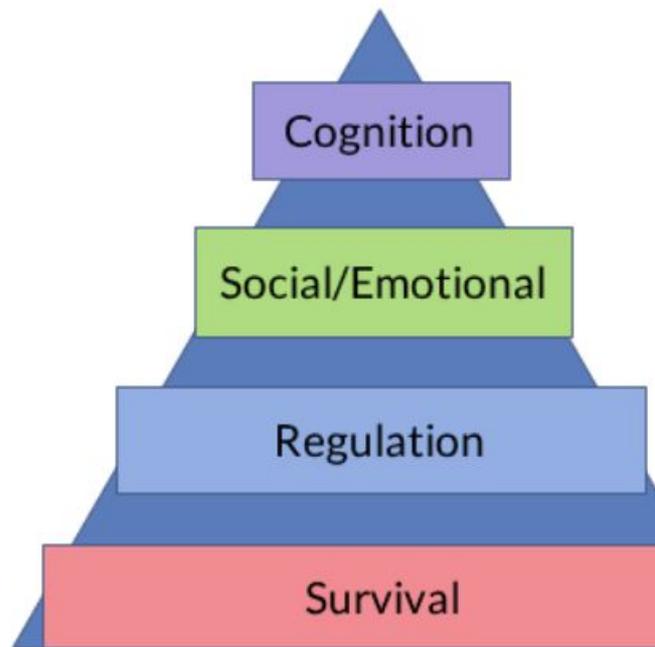
- Organizing experience into logical sequences.
- Identifying cause and effect.

Trauma and Brain Development

Typical Development



Developmental Trauma



Muscle Memory vs. Default State Network



Differences between Anxiety and Trauma

- 
- Attached to a memory
 - Ping-pong vs. **default state status**
 - DSN is more extreme-(**always** detecting threat)
 - More likely to go into “Freeze”



General Symptoms of Trauma

- **Nightmares-more than 30 days**
- **Flashbacks**
- Fight of Flight
- Disassociation
- Cutting
- Avoidance behaviors (Reptilian brain--learned helplessness)
- Exaggerated negative beliefs about the world

Source: NASRO

Clear evidence of DSN at work.

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How Do We Know?

In truth, we usually can't know for sure but....there are pointers.

The idling brain(**what happens during sleep**) is likely the biggest.



Wrap Up So Far

- Deep, lasting, emotional imprints on the brain
- The person's physiology is actually changed. Research PET Scans, MRIs, Brocca's area, Brodmann's area 19, "fight or flight" system
- Simple soundbites of advice no longer work

The Body Keeps Score

Our Biography becomes our Biology





The Nervous System

- Nervous system-The vagus nerve network is often overworked and compromised
- **Heart, lungs, digestive tract and liver are closely connected to the vagus nerve**

Impact on the Body

Sleeping

Difficulty falling asleep

Difficulty staying asleep

Nightmares

Eating

Rapid eating

Lack of satiety

Food hoarding

Loss of appetite

Toileting

Constipation

Encopresis

Enuresis

Regression of skill



More on the body

- Somatic complaints are common
- Often seen as hypochondriac
- Can turn in to diagnosable conditions.



Other Common Outcomes

Anxiety/Depression Combo

ADHD Speculation

Often Overmedicated

Drugs and Alcohol

Questions or
Thoughts to Share

Trauma and Teens-Part II

“To a worm in horseradish, the whole world is horseradish!”

This might be met with resistance.

Trauma is Unique in Mental Health

The only condition that was almost always “intentionally” inflicted.

Youth have a unique dynamic with Teen Trauma

The goal is to place a person back in the situation in which trauma originated.

**Then, it also
becomes about
worldview!**

The view-it is a hostile world affects everything. Be part of something bigger than yourself. Motivation to contribute to school, community, world.

Impact on Worldview

Optimal Development

- Nurturing and stable attachments with adults
- Belief in a predictable and benevolent world/generally good things will happen to me
- Feeling of positive self-worth/ others will see my strengths
- Optimism about the future
- Feeling that I can have a positive impact on the world

Developmental Trauma

- Basic mistrust of adults/inability to depend on others
- Belief that the world is an unsafe place/bad things will happen and they are usually my fault
- Assumption that others will not like me
- Fear and pessimism about future
- Feelings of hopelessness and lack of control

3rd and toughest domino-The person has to want to get better--but the person needs something to get better for.



Help and Healing

CHALLENGES

- There is a general shortage of practitioners and facilities--referring to a “higher level of care” assumes that care is readily available.
- The overwhelming pain being experienced was, in most cases, intentionally caused.
- Traditional counseling methods may not work-or may meet resistance.
- Takes humility and patience from the student/patient
- Worldview comes into play-need to have something to get better for.

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Help and Healing

A Positive Development

- More practitioners are adopting techniques to *directly* affect the physiology of the brain.



Help and Healing

MINDFULNESS-YOU COULD CALL IT A TIER ONE INTERVENTION

1. Body Scan
2. Relaxation
3. Yoga
4. Meditation

Requires a great deal of patience.

Interesting correlation between third eye and pineal gland.

Trauma Informed Techniques

Oatmeal and Heart Health Analogy





Trauma Informed Techniques

1. EMDR Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing
2. Brainspotting
3. NET

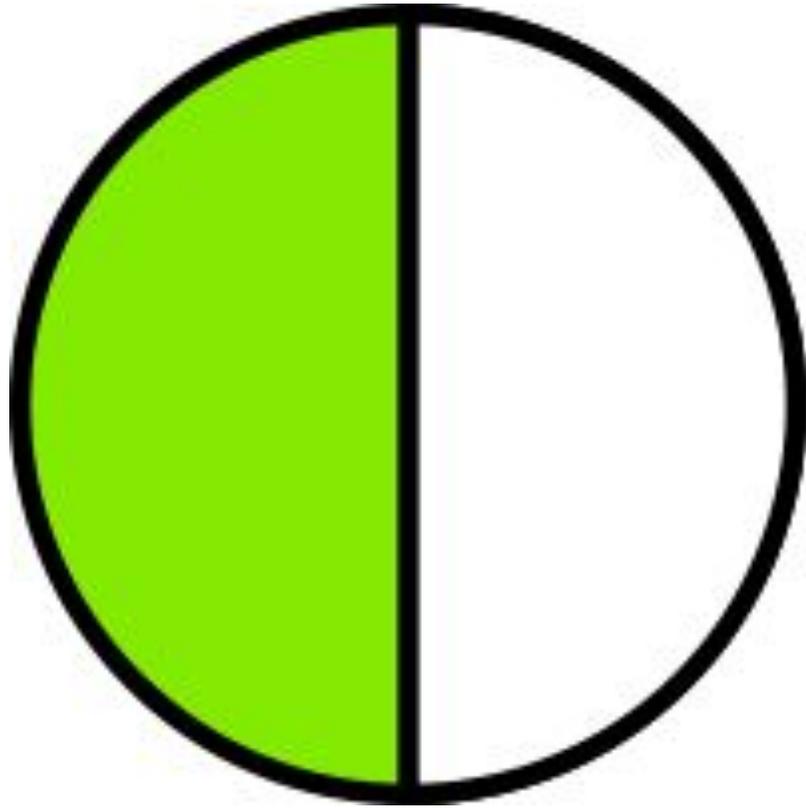
- Remember, if there is trauma, sound bites or snippets of wisdom are unlikely to move the needle much. (Talk therapy may have its limits.)
- The person has to buy in. Not a gimme when it involves the brain.



Where do schools come in?

A three pronged approach

1. Know the school environment matters
2. People over Programs-**It's an awareness**, not a curriculum.
3. When you do program, program w/ an eye toward what matters

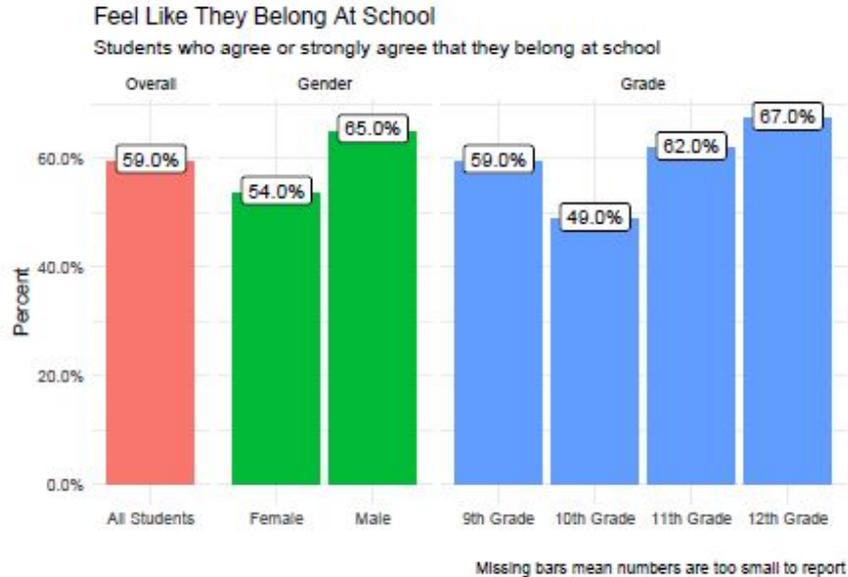


Nature and nurture-the school environment matters.

School Connectedness

Students who feel connected, included, and engaged at school generally do better academically and socially. Strong school connectedness can also buffer young people against anxiety, depression, and peer pressure.

The chart below shows how students responded to a question asking them to what extent they “feel like [they] belong at this school?”

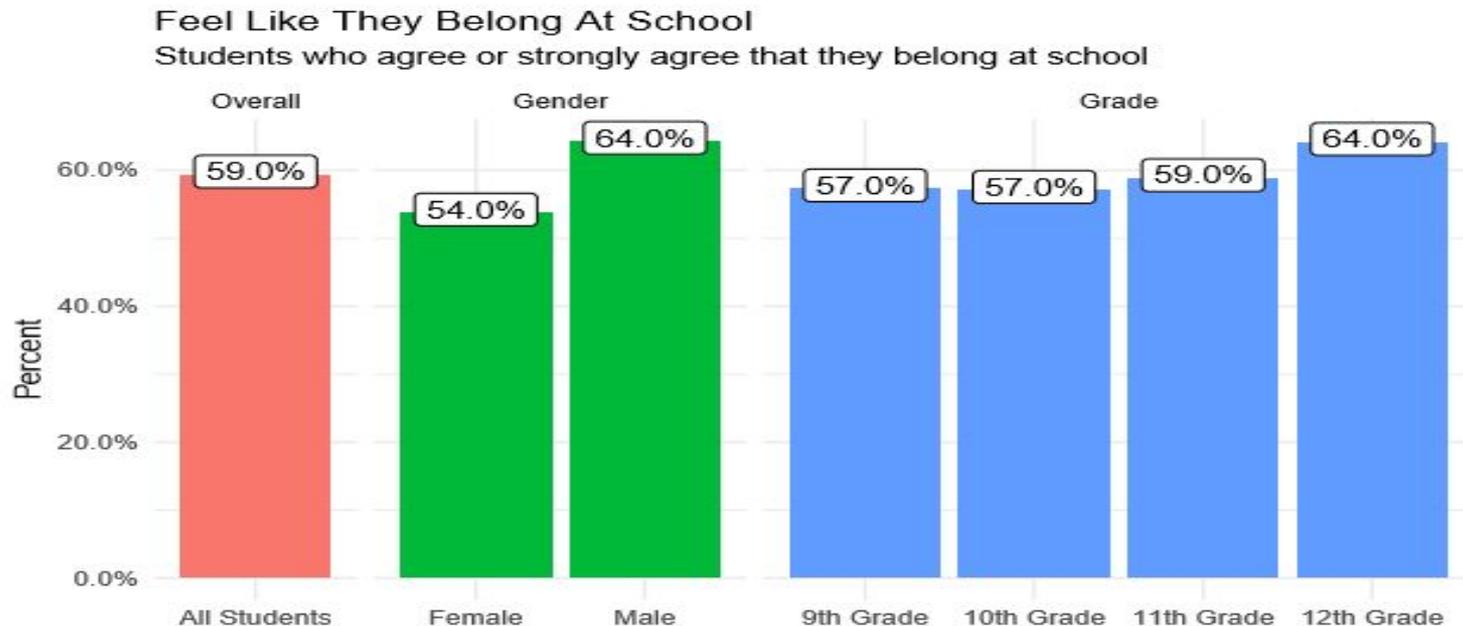


15% Clearly Negative

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CESA LEVEL DATA

Table 4. Feel Like I Belong at My School (Strongly Agree/Agree) by Demographic Variables for Each Survey Year (Q14)[Ⓞ]

	2018	2019
All Grades	57%	60%
Grade Level		
Grade 9	57	60
Grade 10	55	58
Grade 11	55	60
Grade 12	60	62
Gender ^{1,2}		
Female	53	55
Male	61	66

Two Years of County Level Data

Mental Health Concerns

Students who reported any mental health concerns, by sense of school belonging

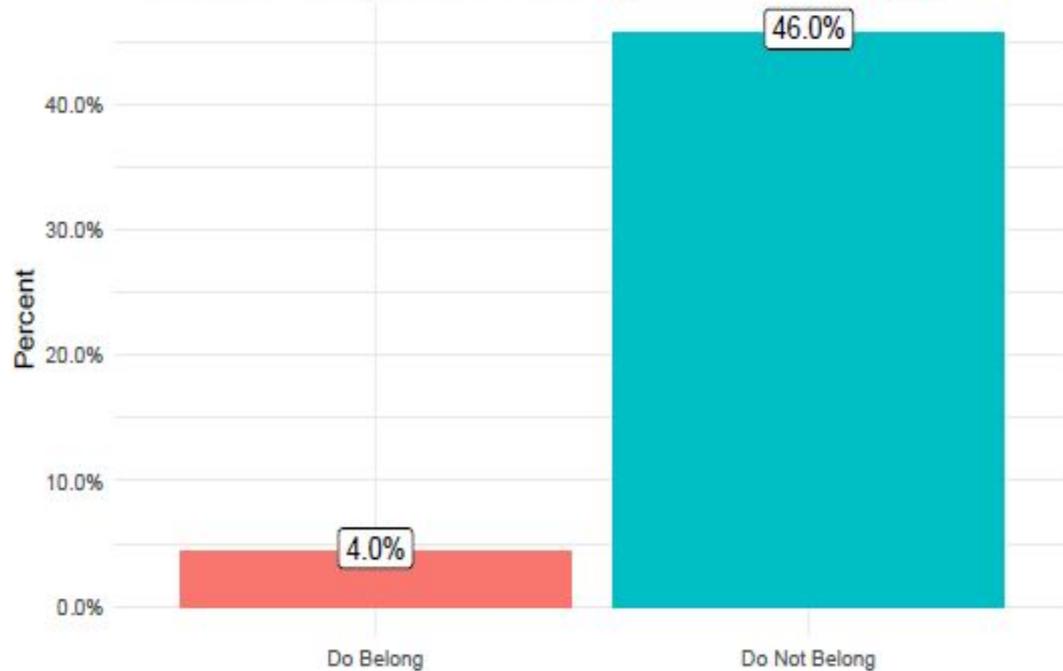


Missing bars mean numbers are too small to report

YRBS-The school environment matters-A Huge Disparity

Considering Suicide

Students who seriously considered suicide, by sense of school belonging



This directly reflects peer to peer interaction.

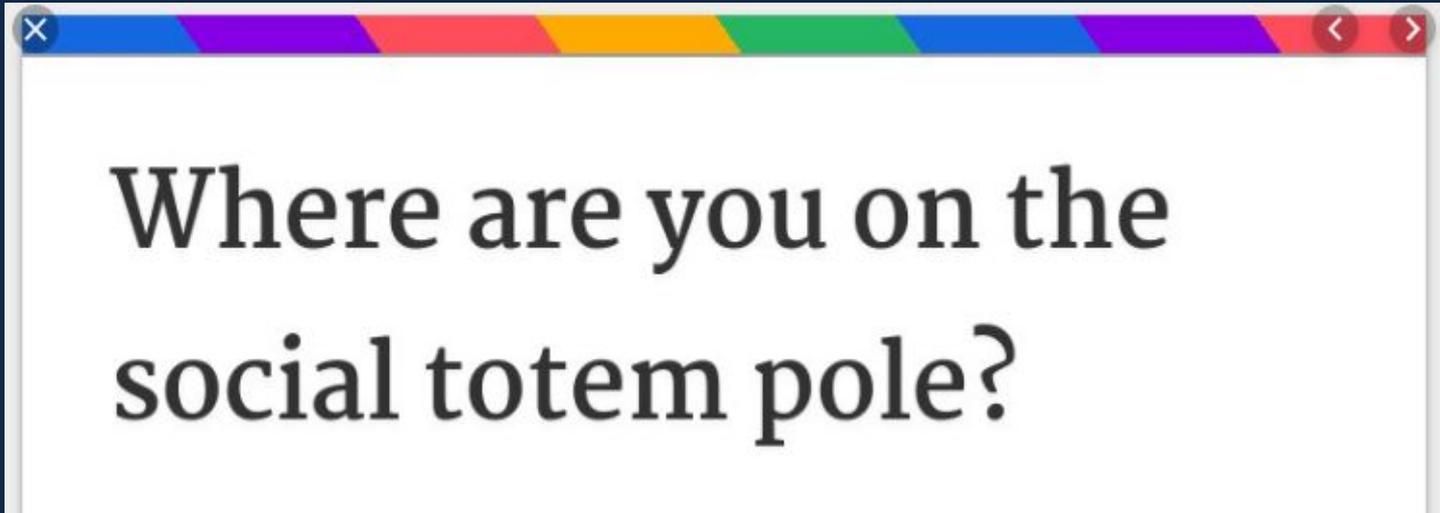


Why Does School Matter That Much?

Statistically as much as ACES

1. Adolescence-More time at school than at home
2. The Social Totem Pole The High School Hierarchy

A Powerful Question



Where are you on the
social totem pole?

People over Programs

The Personal Touch has Power.

The Teeter Totter-Keeping the traumatized afloat. Ping Pong
Similarly, (upon re-entry) person first, pupil second.



EMPATHY, EMPATHY, EMPATHY and
then more EMPATHY



Empathy



Empathy is the capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing from within their frame of reference, that is, the capacity to place oneself in another's position. Definitions of empathy encompass a broad range of emotional states. [Wikipedia](#)



Beyond the circle of
your three or four
best friends!!!



Final Thoughts and Questions