

# Social-Emotional Learning at School Psychosocial Support

Quality holistic learning for refugees and  
internally displaced children



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## Agenda

- Reconnect
- Stress & trauma and their effects on schooling
- The place of PSS in schools
- PSS Pyramid of Interventions
- Closing Reflections



2

## Learning Objectives for today



At the end of the day, you will be able to:

- recognize the effects of stress and trauma on student learning and social behavior
- recognize the role of PSS in promoting student resilience in crisis contexts.
- distinguish different psychosocial support needs
- classify needs and interventions according to the pyramid of PSS-SEL interventions
- propose appropriate and applicable PSS interventions in your own context



3

## Resources

This material is developed using open resources, including :

- **The INEE Training Module on PSS-SEL**  
<https://inee.org/resources/inee-pss-sel-training-module>
- **Psychological first aid: A guide for actors in the field**  
<https://www.paho.org/fr/node/44399>
- **Helping Traumatized Children Learn**  
<https://traumasensitiveschools.org/trauma-and-learning>



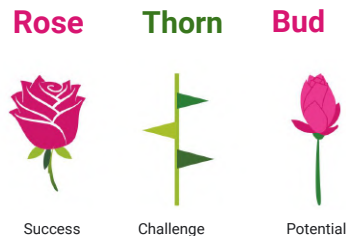
4

## How's it going? - Rose, thorn and /or bud

**Rose** = A highlight, a **success**, a small victory or something positive that happened.

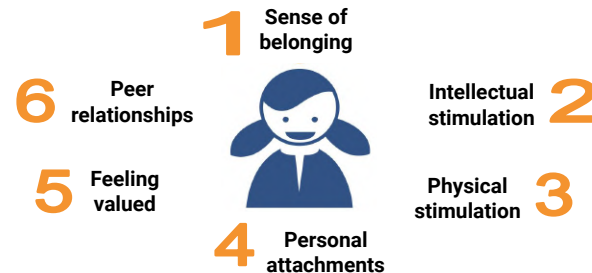
**Thorn** = A **challenge** you've been through or something you need more support with.

**Bud** = New ideas that have **potential** or something you can't wait to learn more about or experience.



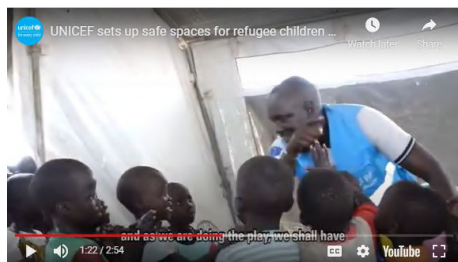
## Review: Psychosocial Support (PSS)

Processes and actions that promote holistic well-being of individuals



## Example of a PSS intervention

[Activities to overcome trauma - UNICEF](#)



Full Article:  
<https://www.unicef.org/uganda/stories/playing-singing-drama-storytelling-help-refugee-children-heal-traumatic-experiences>

# Stress and trauma

## Why are we talking about stress and trauma?



## Reflection: What is stress?



1. What situations cause stress?
2. How does a stressed person feel physically?
3. How does a stressed person feel emotionally?
4. How do people who are stressed act?

## Types of stress symptoms



**Physical symptoms** refer to the reactions of the body.  
(example: headache or stomach ache)

**Emotional symptoms** refer to emotions and states of mind.  
(example: feeling overwhelmed)

**Cognitive symptoms** refer to the ability to think and process information.  
(example: difficulty concentrating)

**Behavioural symptoms** refer to actions.  
(example: biting your nails)

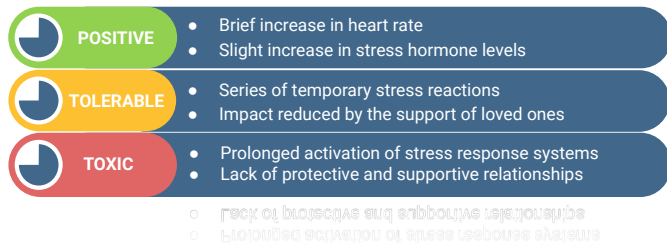
## Activity: Types of stress symptoms

In small groups, you have 3 minutes to classify some common symptoms of stress.

? Can you think of any other symptoms of stress?

physical how your body feels	emotional your emotions and state of mind	cognitive how you think and process information	behavioural your actions

## Stress levels



## Stress and learning don't mix!

Researchers have shown that **low** and **medium** levels of the stress hormone, cortisol, improve learning and improve memory, while high levels of the stress hormone have a detrimental effect on learning and memory.

for more details: <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/the-science-of-fear-ainissa-ramirez>

## Stress in crisis contexts



Discuss the following questions in small groups

1. What are the crisis situations that have affected you or your students?
2. What have been the effects of the crisis on people's lives and their daily experiences?
3. What types of stress symptoms have you observed?
4. What symptoms of stress have you observed in your own behavior?

## Quick Role-Play - Stress management

Imagine that you are a refugee student. You are in a new place without your family. You are attending a new school with new people and a new school program.

- What are **positive** ways to manage this stress?
- What are **negative** ways to manage this stress?

# Trauma

This section is adapted from  
<https://traumasensitiveschools.org/trauma-and-learning>



17

## Example - The children of Moria Refugee Camp-Greece

Watch this short Video from Doctors Without Borders:

<https://www.msf.org/psychotherapy-children-lesbos-greece?component=video-242586>



18

## Trauma and learning

Trauma is a response to one or more extremely stressful events where the ability to cope is significantly compromised.

The effects go beyond school performance.

### During childhood

Social difficulties  
 Emotional difficulties  
 Academic difficulties



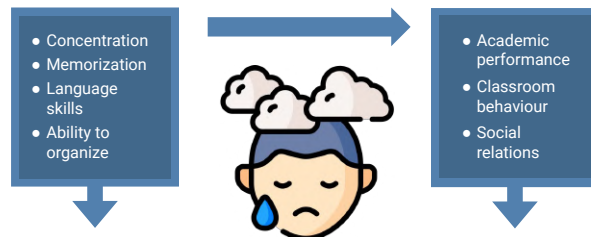
### In adolescence

Social difficulties  
 Emotional difficulties  
 Academic difficulties  
 +  
 Self-destructive practices



19

## The impacts of trauma on students



20

## Reflection: Supporting traumatized students in your class



In crisis and displacement contexts, at least one student may have experienced a traumatic event without you knowing about it.

These students and the whole group need your support and guidance to overcome their difficulties.

*Take a few minutes to think of what you can do to support traumatized students*

## What can I do as a teacher?

- COLLECTIVE**
  - It is an individual and collective work that involves all the staff of the school.
- SLS**
  - Provide a safe space for well-being and learning
  - Ensure a sense of security
- PSS**
  - Build relationships
  - Provide social and psychological support
- SEL**
  - Provide opportunities to develop social and emotional as well as academic skills

## Resilience

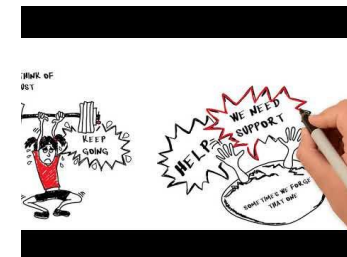
**Resilience** is the ability to cope with stress and adapt to challenges. Resilience occurs when protective factors that promote well-being are more powerful than risk factors that cause harm.

What are the factors that promote resilience?



## Resilience for you too!

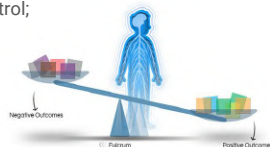
Learn more about resilience for teachers at  
<https://www.wholeeducation.org/resilience-what-does-it-mean/>



## The role of SEL and PSS in promoting resilience

Research has identified a common set of factors that predispose children to positive outcomes in the face of significant adversity:

- Supportive adult-child relationships;
  - *for example with you, the teacher*
- The development of a sense of self-efficacy and self-control;
- Opportunities to strengthen adaptive skills and self-regulatory capacities;
- explain that failures are opportunities to learn.
- The mobilization of sources of faith, of hope and cultural traditions.



Source: <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/>



25

## Sharing experience



26

## Reflection: How can PSS benefit those who have gone through traumatic events?



*Individual activity - then group discussion*

- Take a few minutes to think about a student who has experienced a traumatic event and the signs he / she is presenting.
  - Identify the student's needs
  - Think about how this student might benefit from your psychosocial support.
  - Does he / she need the support of other people instead?
- Use the table on the following slide to identify needs and suggest interventions
- Remember the confidentiality rule: you must not name or identify the student
- In your opinion, what is the teacher's role in the psychosocial support of his students?

Source : The INEE Training Module on PSS-SEL



27

## Give examples of interventions

Student's Needs	Possible interventions to improve student well-being
Sense of belonging	
Intellectual Stimulation	
Physical stimulation	
Personal relationships and attachment	
Feeling valued	
Peer Relationships	

28

## Psychosocial support needs and interventions

Children's needs	Possible psychosocial interventions
A sense of belonging	Establish an educational structure where children feel included.
	Promote the restoration of cultural and traditional childcare practices, to the extent possible.
Peer Relationships	Offer a reliable and interactive routine, through school or other organized educational activities.
	Offer group and team activities (sports, theatre, etc.) that require cooperation and dependence on each other.
Personal attachments	Employ teachers who can establish appropriate care relationships with children.
	Provide opportunities for social integration and unity by teaching and respecting all cultural values, regardless of background.
Intellectual stimulation	Improve child development by providing a variety of educational experiences.
Physical stimulation	Encourage recreational and creative activities, both traditional and new, through games, sports, music, dance, etc.
Feeling valued	Create opportunities for expression through individual or group discussions, drawing, writing, theatre, music, etc. that promote pride and self-confidence.
	Recognize, encourage and congratulate children.

Source : The INEE Training Module on PSS-SEL

29

## PSS Pyramid of Interventions



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30

## Pyramid of Interventions

Level	Suggested Interventions	Outcomes
<b>Level 4 - Severe Psychological problems</b>	<b>SPECIALIZED SERVICES:</b> Cognitive behavioural therapy, narrative exposure therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy, acceptance & commitment therapy <i>Mental health professionals only</i>	safety mental health relationships
<b>Level 3 - Mild to Moderate Mental Health Problems</b>	<b>FOCUSED NON-SPECIALIZED SUPPORT:</b> Non-focused trauma recovery, group therapy, acceptance & commitment therapy Mental health professionals, highly trained teachers, para professionals, parents, volunteers	safety mental health relationships learning & development
<b>Level 2 - Mild Psychological Distress</b>	<b>SUPPORTIVE GENERALIZED ACTIVITIES:</b> Mindfulness, stress management, executive functioning games, art, music <i>Trained parents, teachers or volunteers</i>	safety mental health relationships learning & development
<b>Level 1 - General Population Affected by Trauma</b>	<b>BASIC SERVICES &amp; SECURITY:</b> Positive school climate, safety & security plans, risk reduction, school feeding programmes	safety mental health relationships learning & development physical health

Source : The INEE Training Module on PSS-SEL

31

## Classification Activity

Paper-based activity

Associate interventions with the relevant level of the pyramid.



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32



## PSS in the field



1. Where does the activity take place?
2. What is the activity?
3. Who runs the activity?
4. Who benefits from the activity?
5. How does this activity promote well-being?
6. What level of the pyramid does this activity address?

## Learning with case studies

In your group, read and discuss the assigned case study:

- What PSS/SEL interventions can you spot in this study?
- Who is the target group of the intervention? How do they benefit?
- Who else could benefit from this intervention? How?
- At what level of the PSS/SEL pyramid is the intervention located?

## Relaxing activity for teachers and students

*Sometimes only a few deep breaths can relax you.*

Instructions:

1. Sit or stand in a comfortable position.
2. Inhale through your nose for four seconds. I'll count to four, so follow my voice and inhale softly while I count. Exhale through your mouth for four seconds. I'm going to count to four, so follow my voice and slowly exhale as I count.
3. Use this breathing work for four breathing cycles, counting slowly.
4. Share with colleagues how you feel.



## Relaxing activity for teachers and students

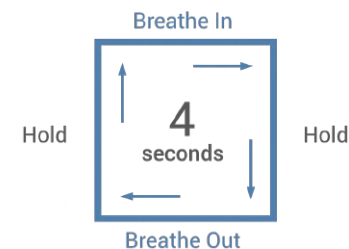
### "Square" breathing:

I will accompany you, counting for you,

1. Sit or stand in a comfortable position.
2. Inhale through your nose for four seconds.
3. Hold your breath for 4 seconds.
4. Exhale through the mouth for four seconds.
5. Keep the lungs empty for 4 seconds.

Repeat four times.

Share with colleagues how you feel.



## Our role as teachers

## Reflection: What should I do as a teacher?



*Discuss in small groups and suggest some actions to share with the others.*

As teachers of refugee and internally displaced (or disadvantaged) students,

- What would be your role in ensuring appropriate psychosocial support?
- What steps can you take?
- What would you do to promote appropriate psychosocial support in your school or more globally in your community?

## Principles of responsible aid

1. Respect the safety, dignity and rights of students
2. Adapt what we do to take into account the culture of students
3. Be aware of other interventions at the school or community level
4. **Take care of yourself**

## Actions for initial psychosocial support

### OBSERVE

- Be sure of security.
- Identify students with clearly urgent basic needs.
- Identify students in distress.

### LISTEN

- Approach students who seem to need support.
- Try to understand what their needs and concerns are.
- Listen and show empathy.

### CONNECT

- Guide students to access existing services to meet their basic needs.
- Pass on information to school officials.
- If possible, contact parents and refer them to available social supports.

## Conclusion: Review of Key Points

And now...

Suggest concrete PSS interventions adapted to your contexts

Student's Needs	Possible interventions to improve student well-being
Sense of belonging	
Intellectual Stimulation	
Physical stimulation	
Personal relationships and attachment	
Feeling valued	
Peer Relationships	

### A 3-2-1 reflection



Think about and write on a piece of paper the following:

- **3 new concepts** you discovered today
- **2 PSS interventions** that you think you can apply tomorrow
- **1 question** or concern that remains to be overcome

Discuss your answers with a colleague next to you and then all together in the group.

### Are our Learning Objectives achieved?

On a score of 1-10 how would you rate your mastery of today's objectives?

To what extent are you able to

1. recognize the effects of stress and trauma on student learning and social behavior
2. recognize the role of PSS in promoting student resilience in crisis contexts.
3. distinguish different psychosocial support needs
4. classify needs and interventions according to the pyramid of PSS-SEL interventions
5. propose appropriate and applicable PSS interventions in your own context

Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

# Thank you for your participation!

Send your questions and remarks to  
[clipmail@ceinternational1892.org](mailto:clipmail@ceinternational1892.org)



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