



Pennsylvania
Department of Education



Don't Eat the Students

Interactive session designed to help education and nonprofit professionals reflect on the emotional toll of service-based work

Presented by Dr. Kyle Morris-Sol

January 20, 2026



Welcome & Introductions

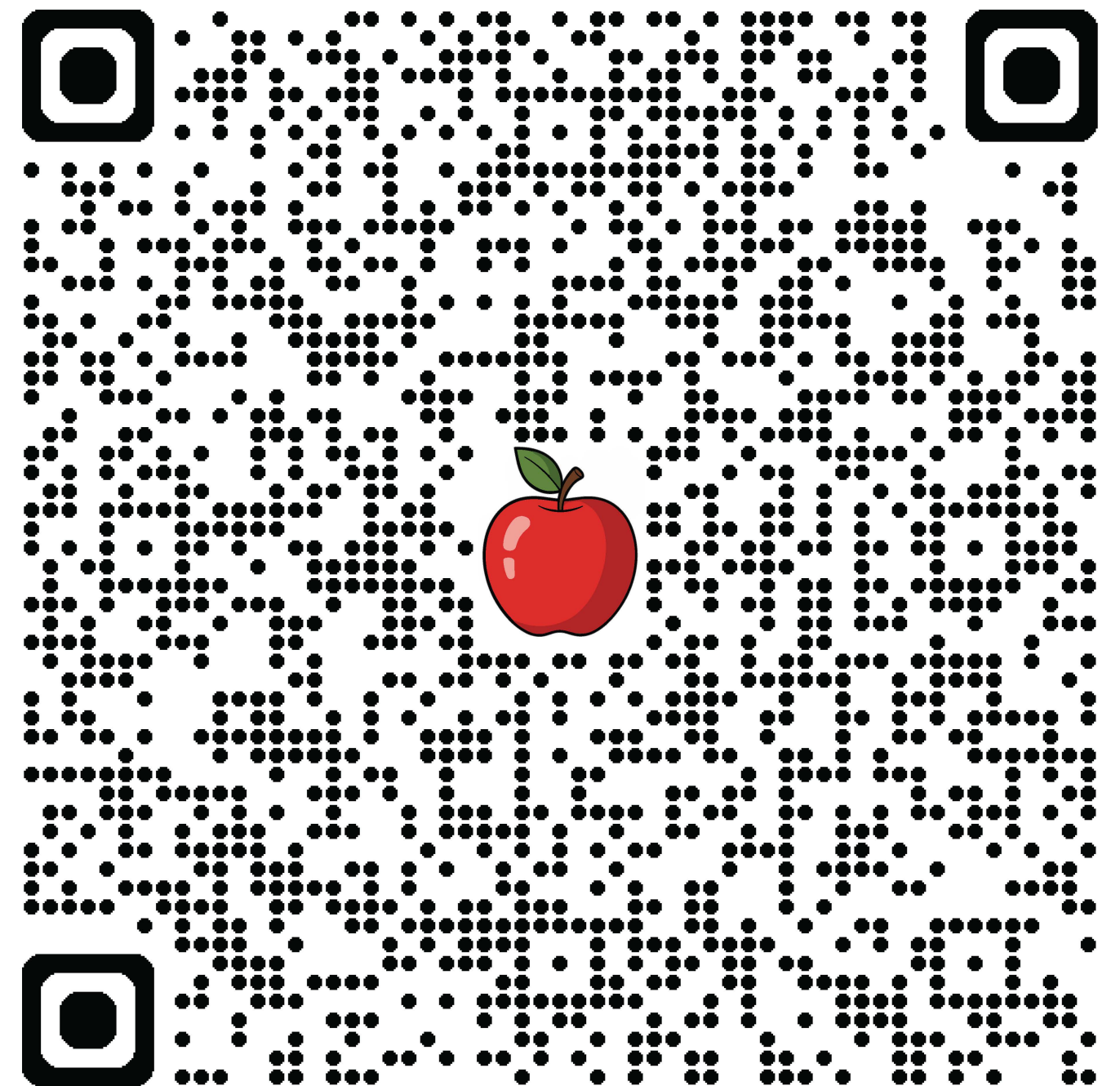
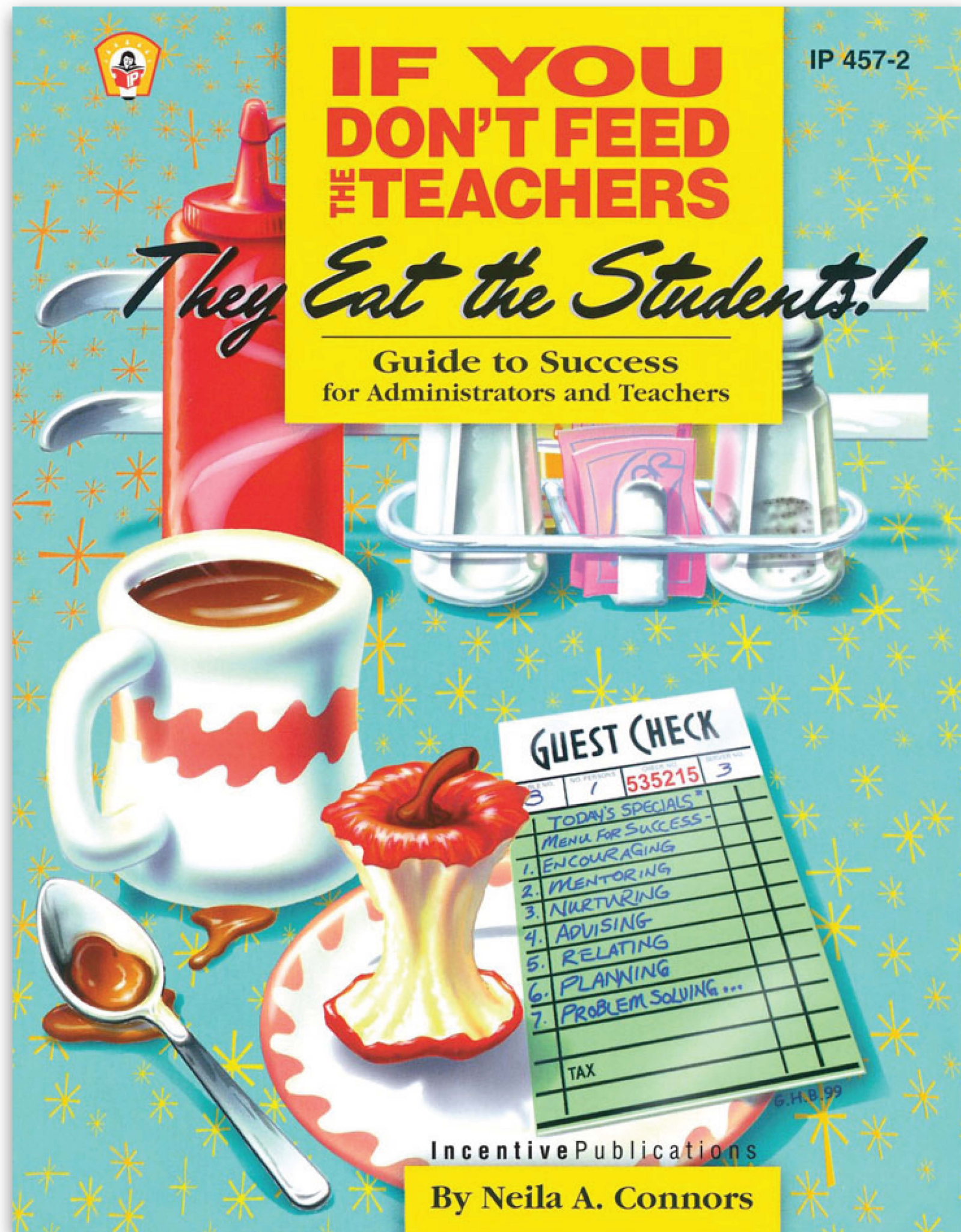
Thank you for joining! Practitioner Wellness impacts most aspects of students' success...

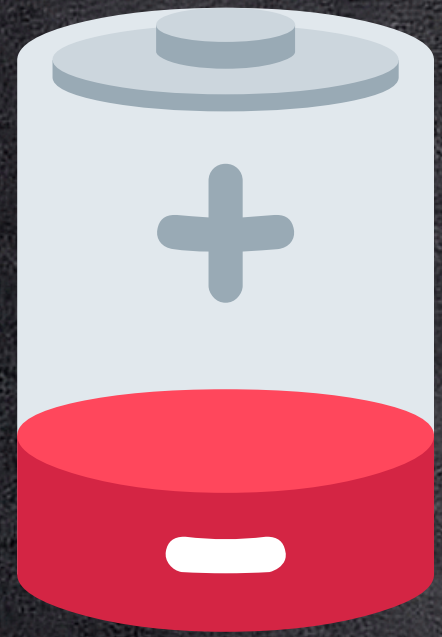
Please share your name and affiliation in Chat:

Joined today by Dr. Kyle Morris-Sol, founder of the ECO Foundation (Education Cultural Opportunities Foundation)









School & Role



“Battery Percentage”

INTERNET -OR- HOT WATER





Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: When educators' basic needs (rest, safety, belonging) are unmet, they struggle to support student growth, leading to emotional unavailability and diminished instructional presence*

Erikson's Psychosocial Theory: Burnout can shift staff from generativity (purpose-driven support) to stagnation (withdrawal), limiting their capacity to mentor and motivate students**

Basic Needs Insecurity & Institutional Climate: Food, housing, and financial stress affect staff well-being and school culture. When institutions neglect adult wellness, it leads to higher turnover, lower trust, and reduced student success***



POLL

PARTY

Which of these is closest to you when
you're stressed?



#1

#2

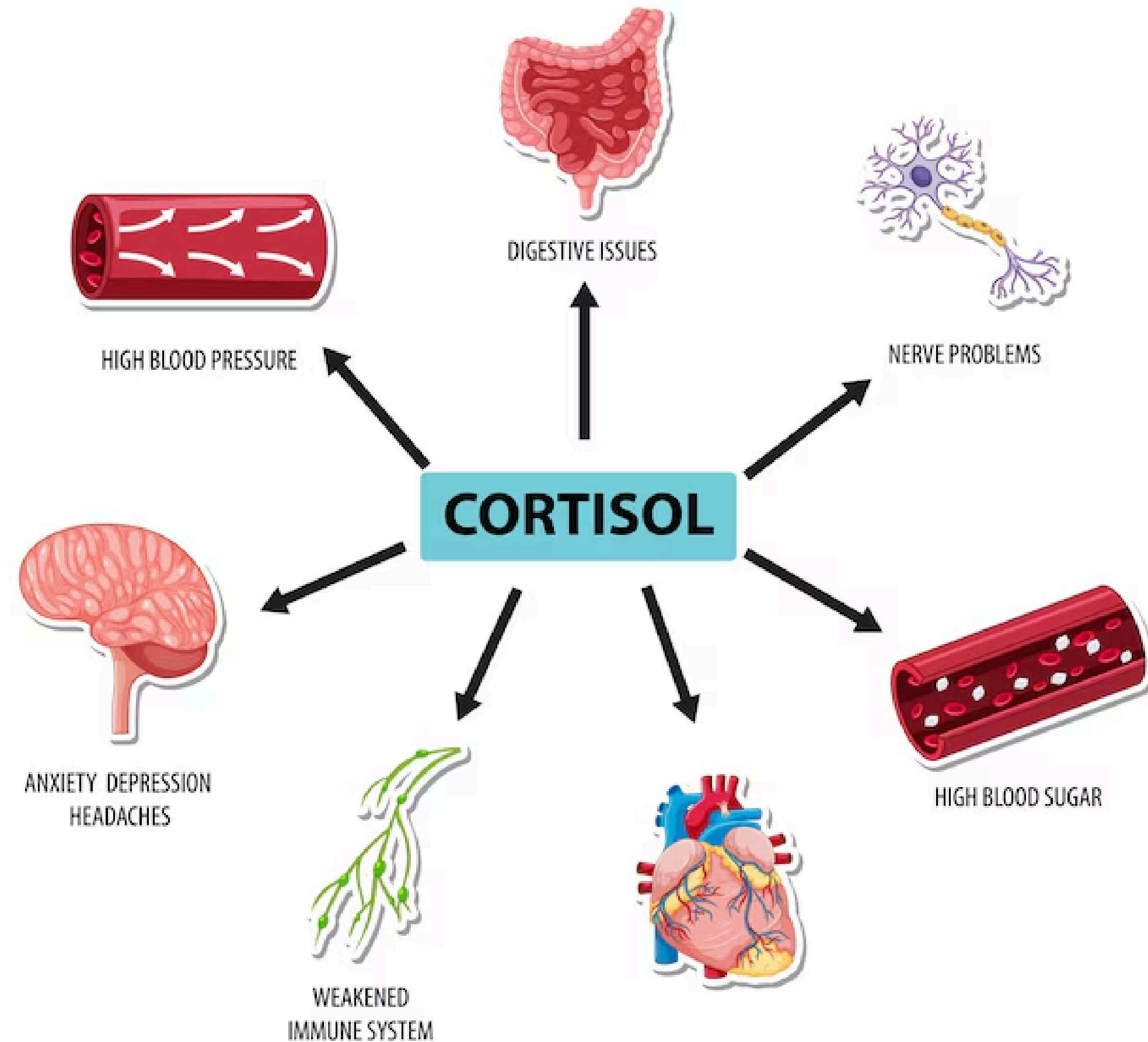
#3

#4

WHAT IS STRESS?

THE PHYSIOLOGICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL RESPONSE TO INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL STRESSORS (TRIGGERS). STRESS INVOLVES CHANGES AFFECTING NEARLY EVERY SYSTEM OF THE BODY, INFLUENCING HOW PEOPLE FEEL AND BEHAVE.

**CORTISOL IS OFTEN
CALLED THE "STRESS
HORMONE" BECAUSE
THE BODY RELEASES IT
IN RESPONSE TO
STRESS TO HELP
MANAGE YOUR BODY'S
FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT
RESPONSE**



Window of Tolerance

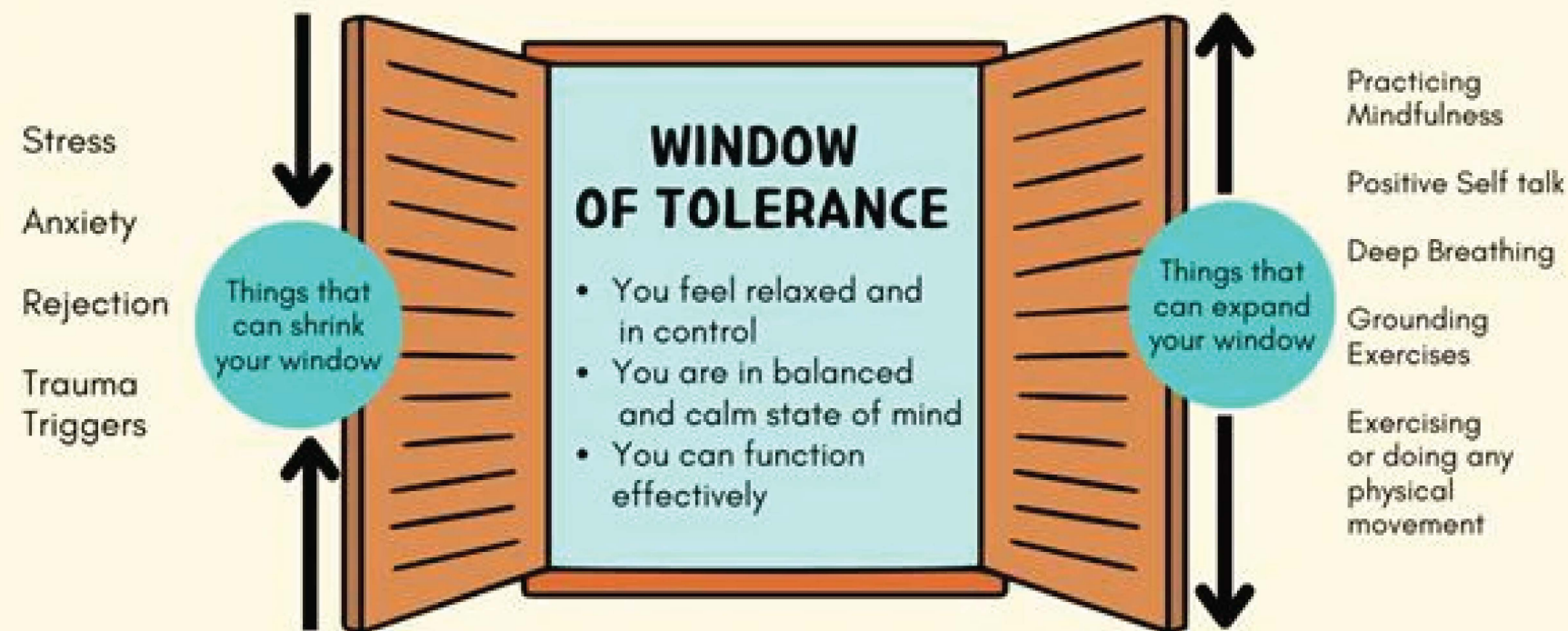
When people are within their window of tolerance, they are in a psychological space that allows them to perform daily activities without their emotions and thoughts overwhelming or interfering with their functioning.



HYPERAROUSAL

FIGHT / FLIGHT RESPONSE

- Attacking or confronting
- Becoming angry or irritable
- Hurling insults
- Engaging in blame
- Difficulty in trusting other people
- Running away or hiding
- Quitting
- Being in denial
- Experiencing anxiety
- Sabotaging oneself

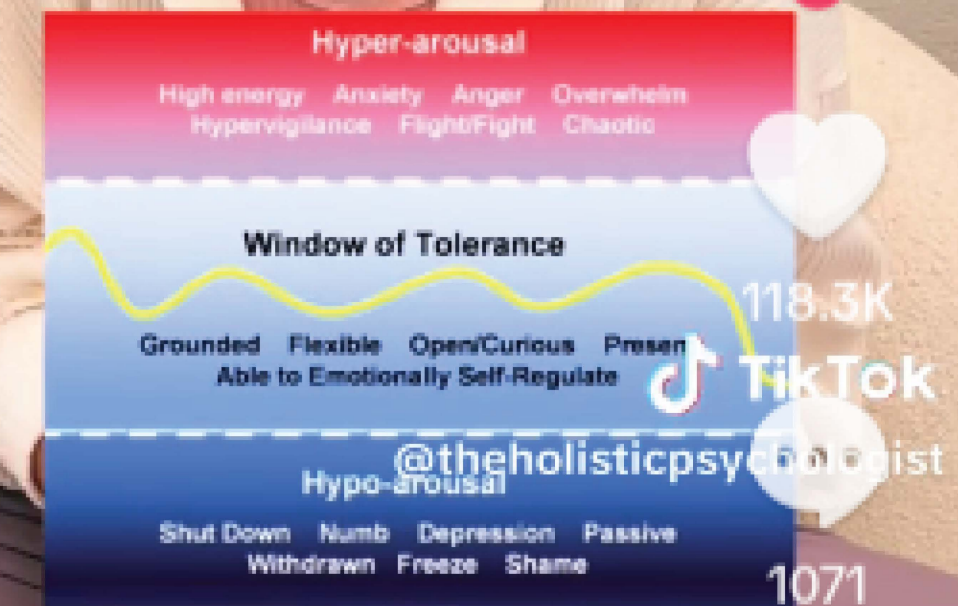


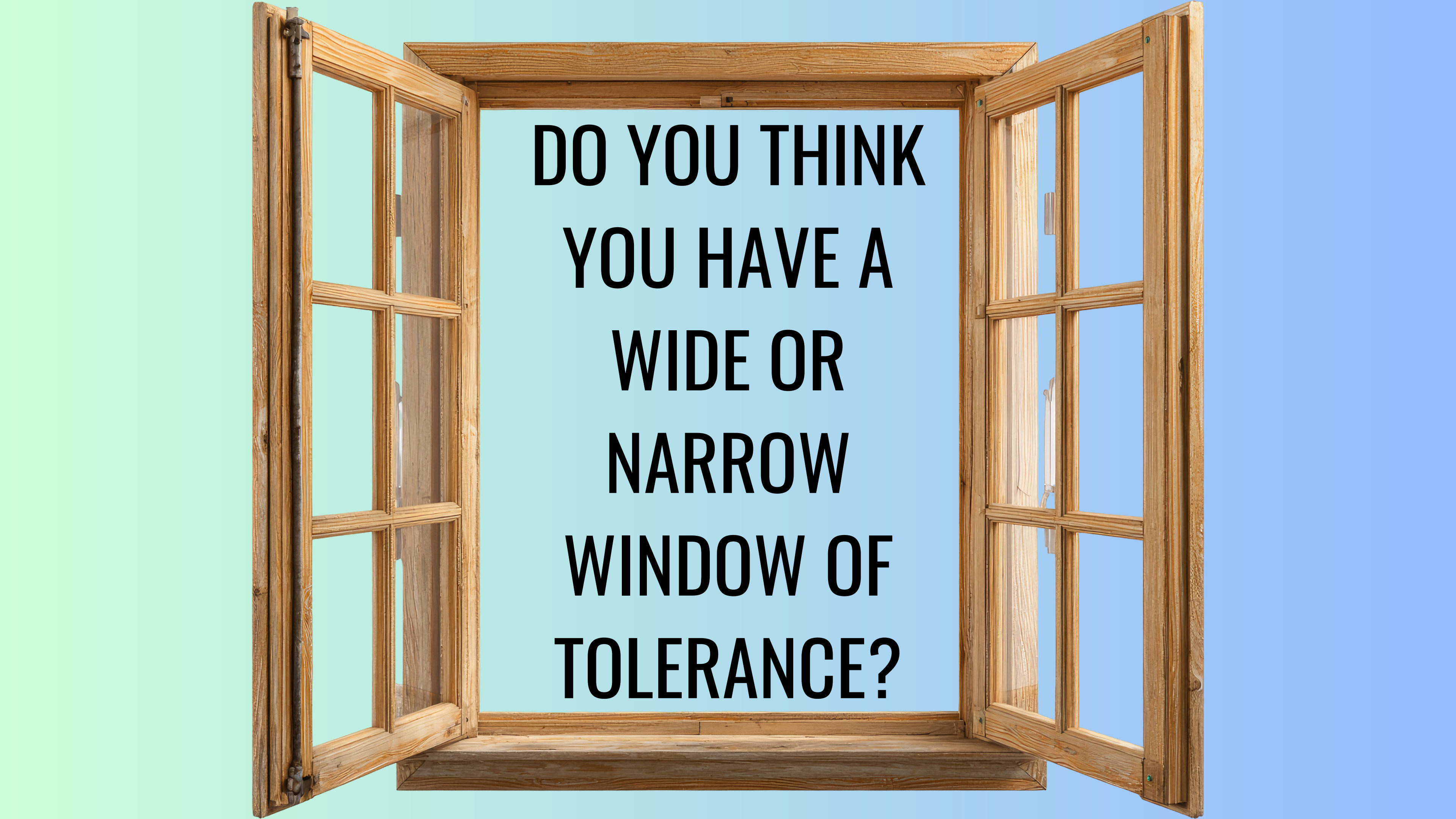
HYPOAROUSAL

- Surrendering or becoming compliant
- Feeling empty or numb, like you are shutting down
- Experiencing detachment
- Rationalizing or justifying behaviors or situations

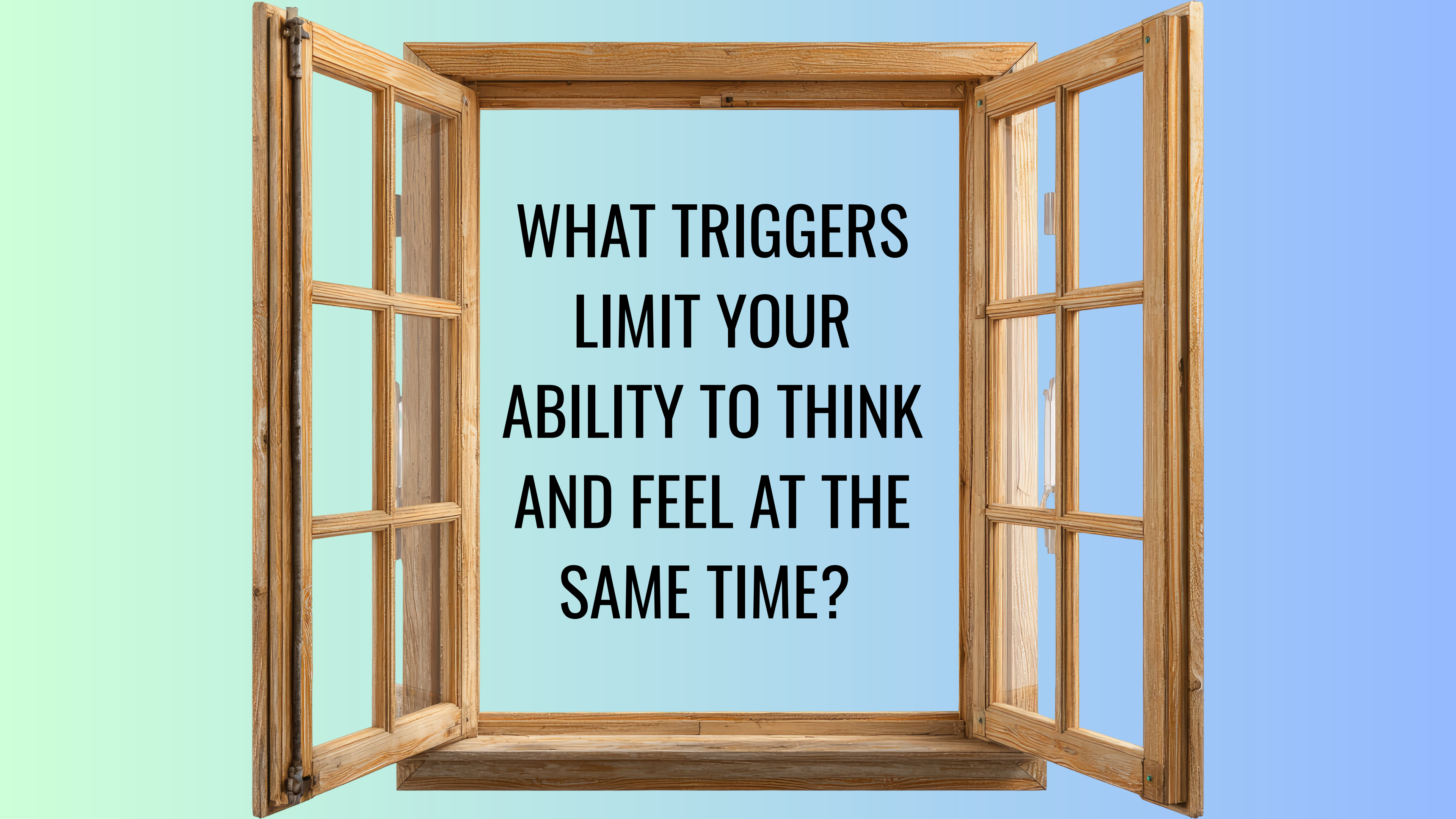
YOUR WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

the window of tolerance is how much stress or stimulation



An open wooden window with a light blue background. The window is made of light-colored wood and has multiple panes. The text is centered in the window frame.

**DO YOU THINK
YOU HAVE A
WIDE OR
NARROW
WINDOW OF
TOLERANCE?**

An open wooden window frame is centered in the image. The frame is made of light-colored wood and is open, revealing a light blue background. The window is divided into several panes by wooden muntins. The text is centered within the window frame.

**WHAT TRIGGERS
LIMIT YOUR
ABILITY TO THINK
AND FEEL AT THE
SAME TIME?**

HEALTH



> ALERT <





<https://linktr.ee/gettherapy>

linktr.ee

Talk2Some1.org

SCAVENGER HUNT

An "Energy Drink"

A "Pillow"

A Pic of a Loved One

A Screwdriver



UNHEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS

- Avoiding problems
- Emotional eating
- Oversleeping
- Overworking/busy-ness
- Withdrawing socially
- Substance use (alcohol/drugs)
- Excessive screen time
- Suppressing emotions
- Lashing out/anger
- Negative self-talk
- Procrastination
- Doom scrolling
- Skipping meals
- Staying indoors all day
- Avoiding responsibilities
- Overcommitting to others
- Ignoring physical pain
- Self-isolation
- Constant multitasking

HEALTHY COPING MECHANISMS

- Talking with a trusted person
- Mindful eating & hydration
- Regular rest/sleep routines
- Time management & task prioritizing
- Healthy social support & connections
- Somatic therapy (body-based healing)
- EMDR therapy (trauma reprocessing)
- Journaling, reflection, expressing feelings
- Breathwork (4-7-8, box breathing)
- Positive affirmations & self-compassion
- Micro-steps & action starters (1 minute rule)
- Binaural beats & calming sound therapy
- Going into nature (sunlight, grounding)



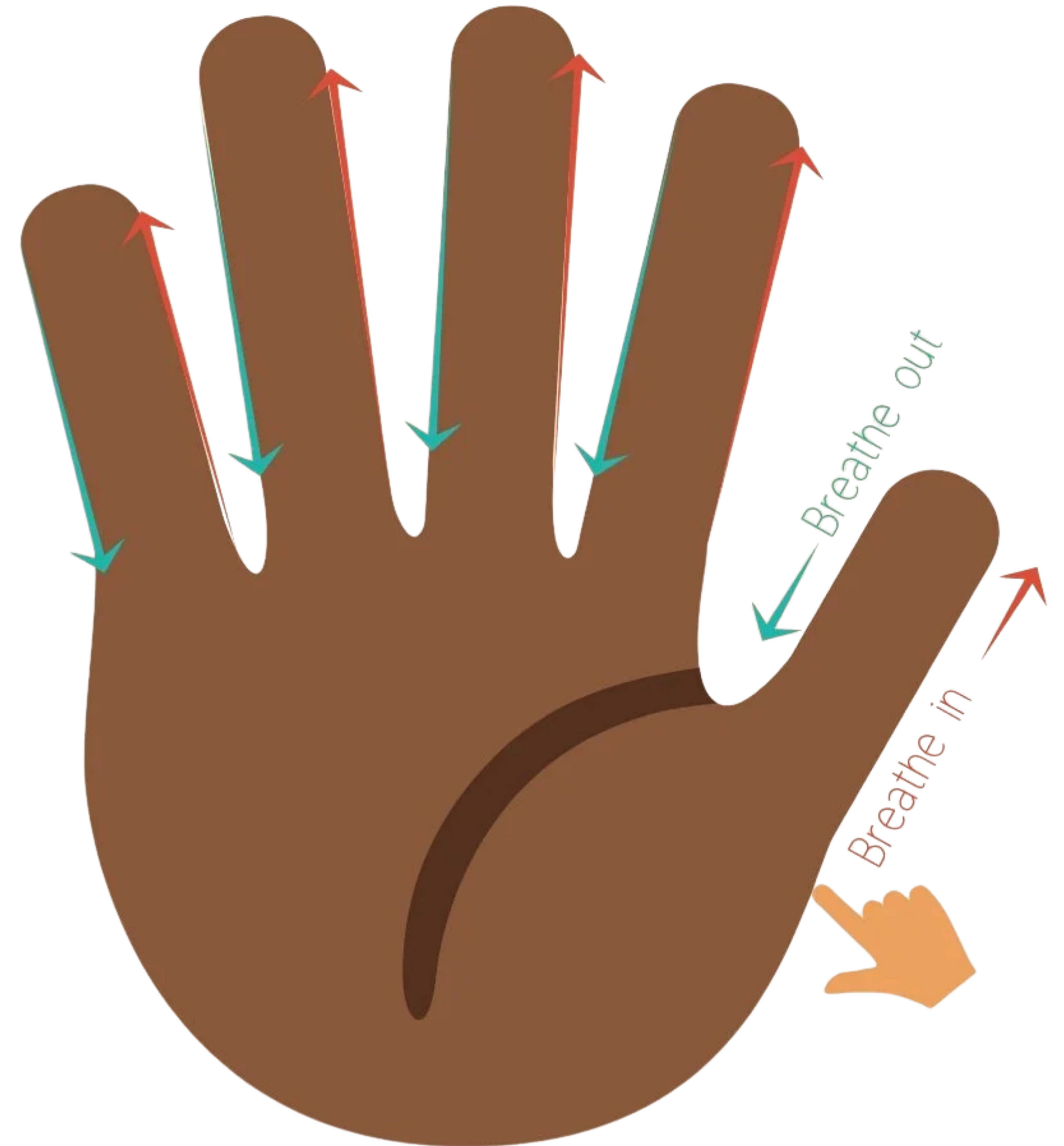
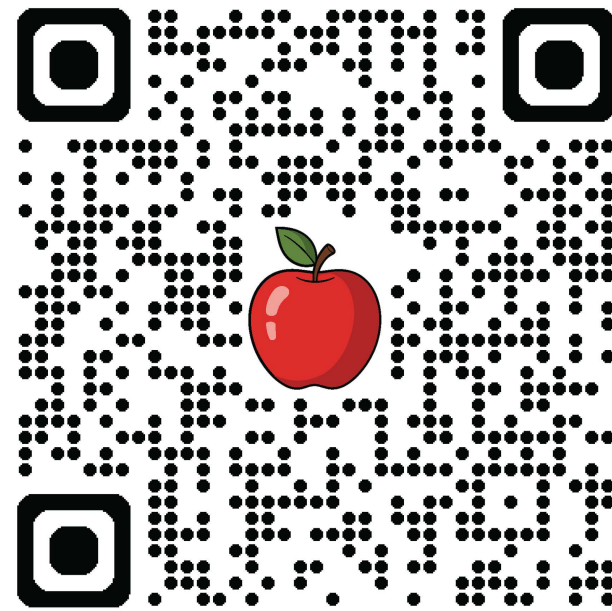
5 Finger Breathing



[Watch video on YouTube](#)

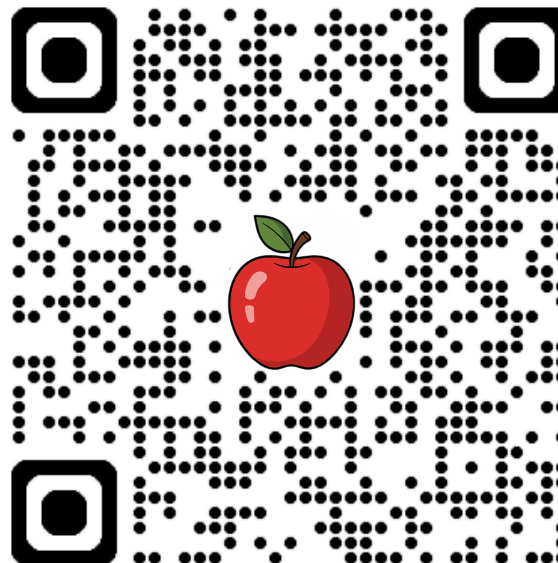
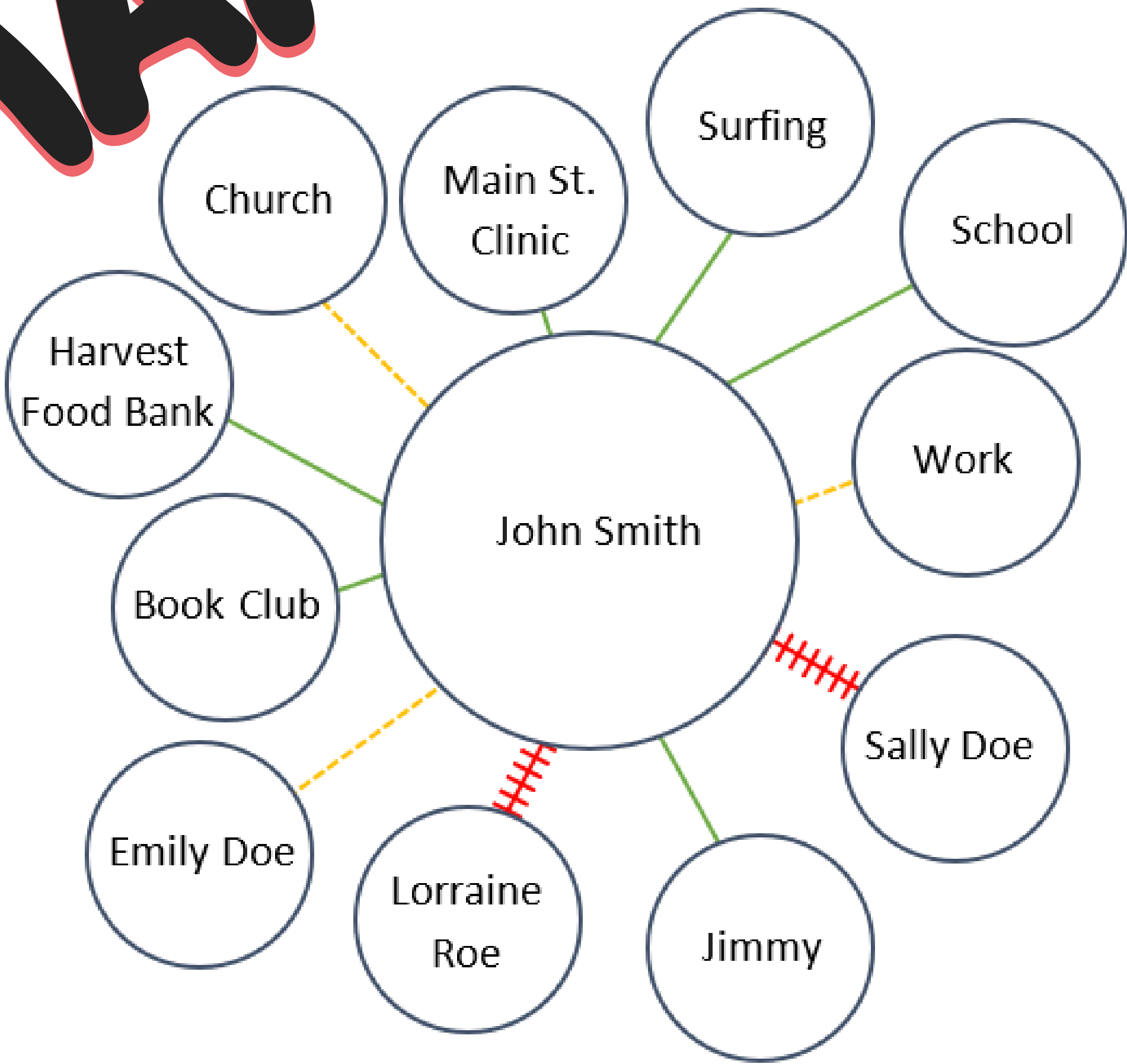
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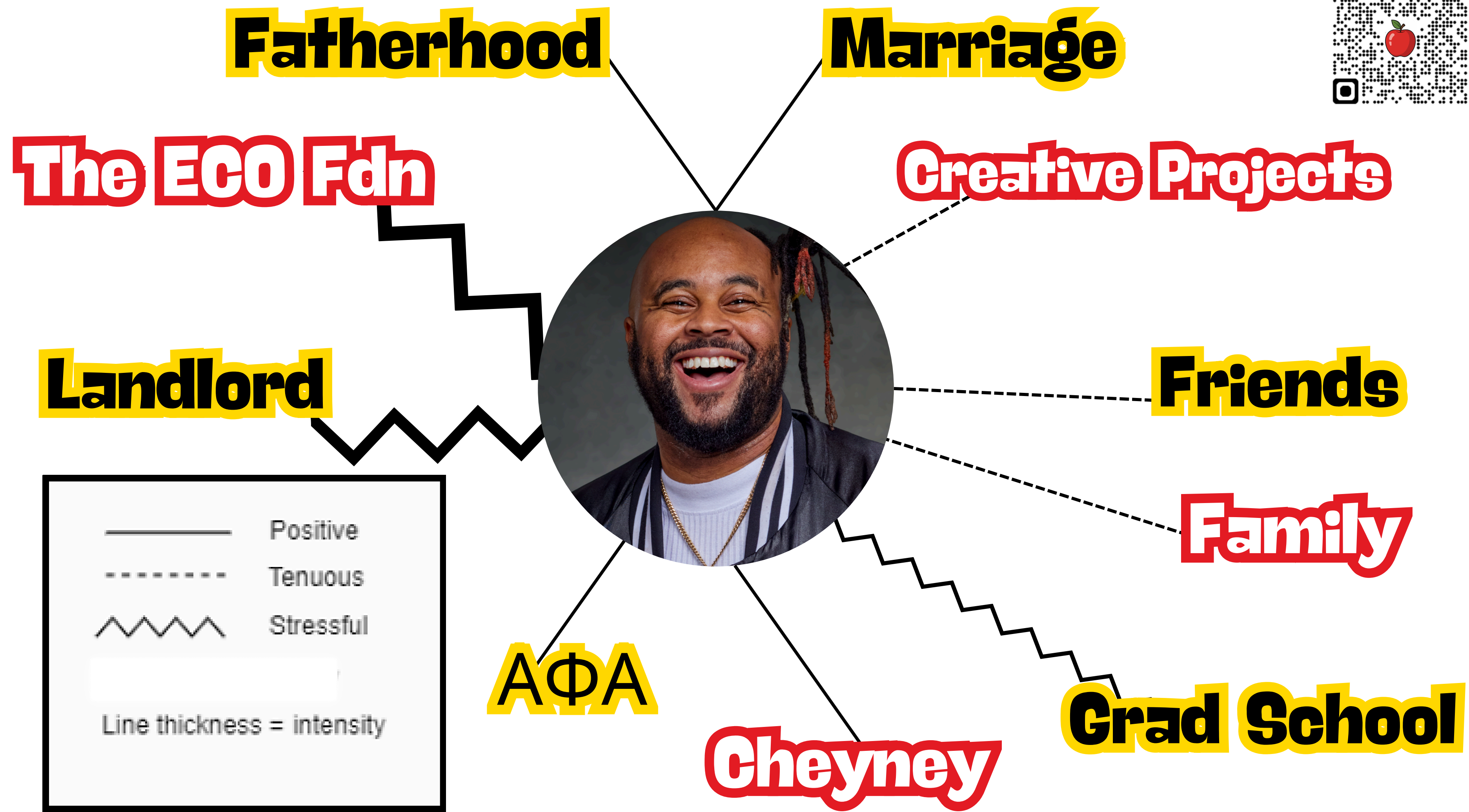
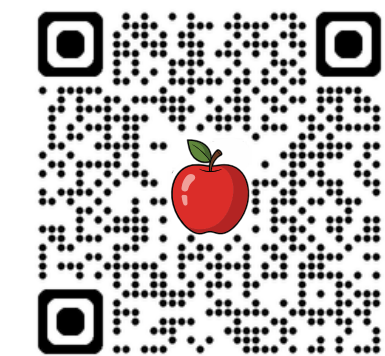
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EcoMAP

Positive	Tenuous/Weak	Stressful
		





“I discuss historical ways of conceptualizing joy. I define joy as the ancestors defined it...

Joy was wellness, healing, and justice. The ancestors needed joy then, and we ALL need it now.”

G H O L D Y M U H A M M A D

FOREWORD BY PHARRELL WILLIAMS

*Unearthing
Joy*

A Guide to Culturally and Historically
Responsive Teaching and Learning

 **SCHOLASTIC**



[Watch video on YouTube](#)

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**BREAKOUT
SESSION**

H

**How can you
intentionally use **joy**
as a strategy to better
engage students in
your work?**

**SHARING
IS
CARING**







Home



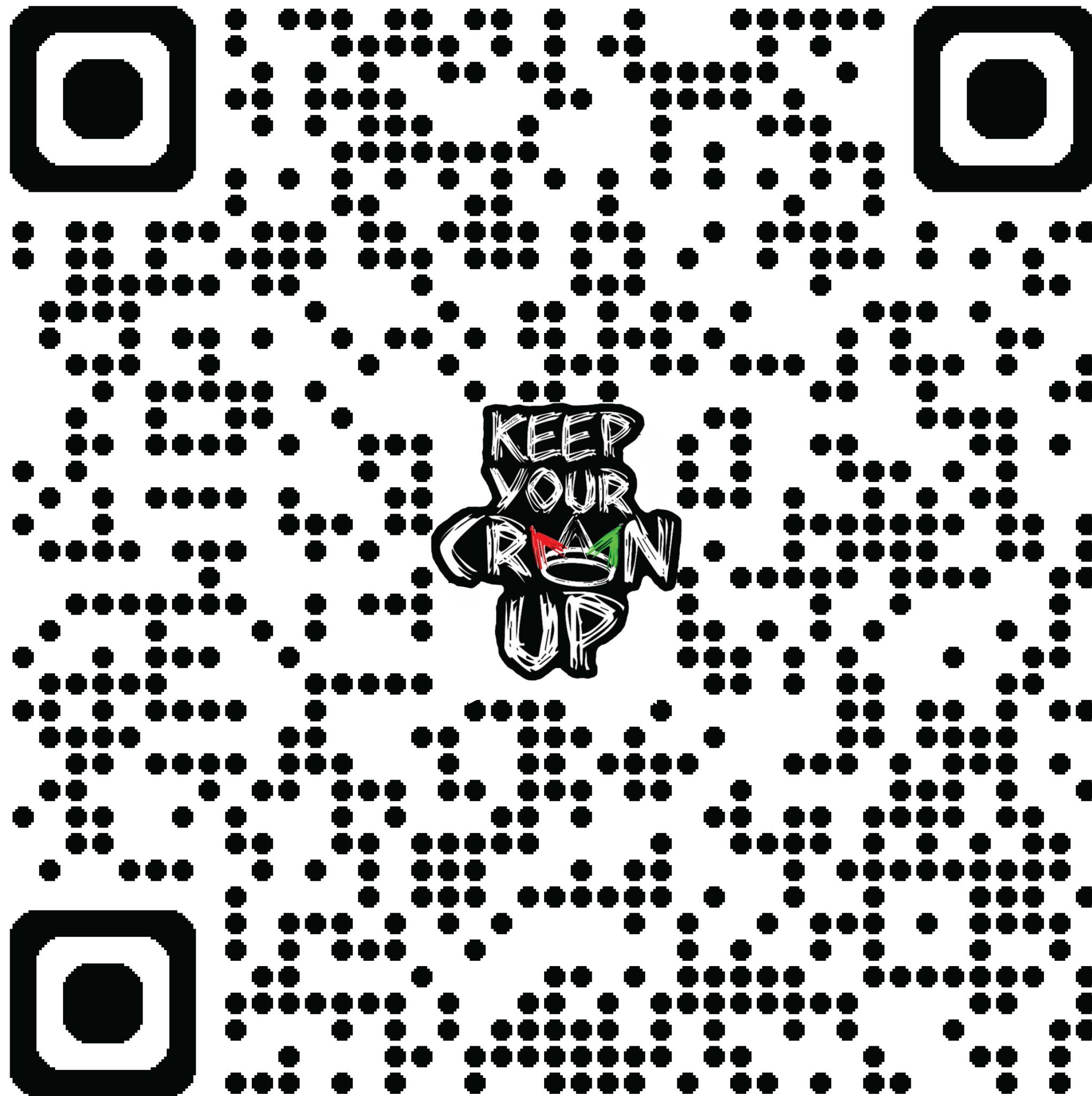
Kyle Morris-Sol, Ed.D.

Conductor | Edutainer | Servant

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, United States

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Pennsylvania
Department of Education



Opportunities & Next Steps

Who, What, Where, and When to
connect for PA EmpowerU network

Learn More & Engage

Upcoming Network Webinars

- **Feb 5, 2026 10:30-Noon:** PA CARES guidance webinar
[Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)
- **March 2026: Reimagining Possibility:** A Trauma-Informed, Student-Led Model for Healing, Learning, and Career Pathways
Registration coming soon!



PA EmpowerU Convening

April 7th 2026

Day-long, in-person, free to attend

Register Today!



Join the **PA EmpowerU** Network



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Thank You

for joining us to
Empower Pennsylvania, together!