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UPCOMING TRAININGS
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- 09/06 | Addressing Problematic Sexual Behaviors in Children & Adolescents
- September Protective Factor: Knowledge of Parenting & Child Development 09/13 Webinar - or - 09/27 Workshop
- 09/15 | Leading through Change
- 09/16 | Intro to Motivational Interviewing
- 09/28 | Addressing Implicit Bias
- 10/04 | Parenting Traumatized Infants & Toddlers

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Trauma-Informed Leadership: The Balance of Compassion & Accountability

Presenter: Lisa Conradi, PsyD

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CALTRIN
California Training Institute

Speaker SPOTLIGHT

LISA CONRADI, PsyD
EXECUTIVE DIRECTIOR
CHADWICK CENTER FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego

- Executive Director of the Chadwick Center, a children's advocacy center which houses one of the largest trauma treatment centers in the nation
- Significant experience supporting service systems to become more trauma-informed, including leading implementation of trauma-focused evidence-based practices
- Licensed clinical psychologist trained on evidence-based trauma-focused treatment practices, including Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- Co-author of the recent book, Trauma-Informed Assessment with Children and Adolescents: Strategies to Support Clinicians

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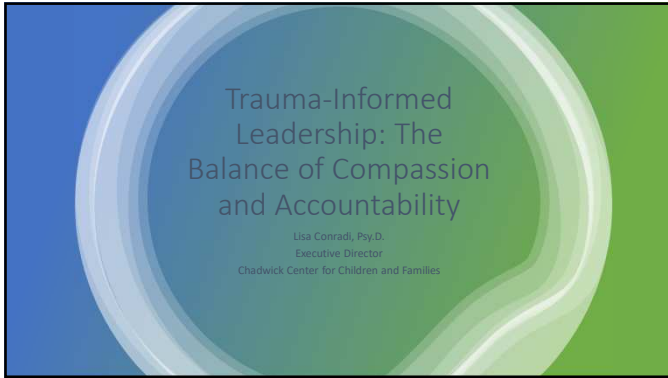Trauma-Informed Leadership: The Balance of Compassion and Accountability

Lisa Conradi, Psy.D.
Executive Director
Chadwick Center for Children and Families

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Poll Question #2: How Many Staff do you Supervise/Roll up to you?

- 1-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- More than 20

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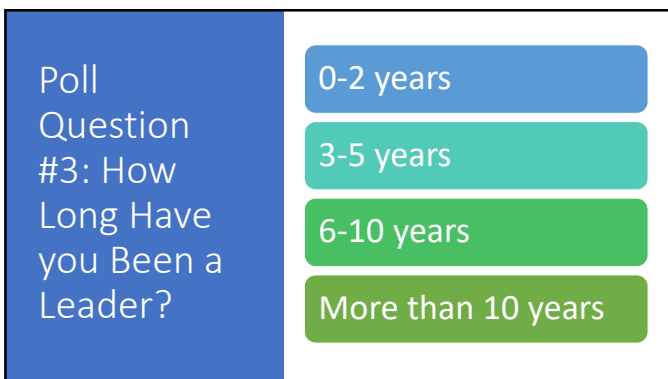**Poll Question #3: How Long Have you Been a Leader?**

- 0-2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years
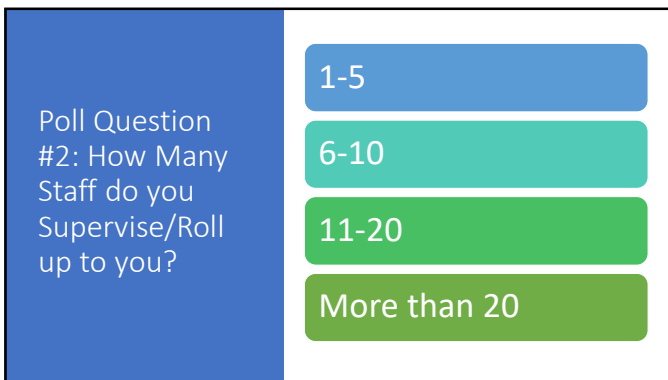
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What are we going to talk about today?

Articulate why a trauma-informed approach to leadership is important across organizations

Outline the principles of a trauma-informed leadership approach

Provide concrete skills and strategies on effectively implementing a TI Leadership approach

Highlight the challenges and pitfalls that leaders will likely come across when they implement this approach

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Leader Snapshot: Maria

Maria is a Director at a mid-size Family Resource Center located in Central California

She has been at the FRC for 15 years and held various positions, becoming Director in November 2019

She has 7 direct reports but 30 staff who role up to her

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Leading during COVID-19

Maria has seen profound shifts in her staff and workforce in the past 2 ½ years

She has had 30% turnover of her staff and is struggling to retain her existing staff members due to issues with pay, equity, and flexibility

Her engagement scores have gone down and she is struggling to both meet the needs of her staff while also meeting business needs.

Sound familiar?

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What are Current Issues Faced by Maria as an FRC Director?

Type your thoughts in the Chat

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Let's Talk About Trauma

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A Traumatic Experience . . .

- Threatens the life or physical integrity of a person or of someone important to that person

- Causes an overwhelming sense of terror, helplessness, and horror

- Produces intense physical effects such as pounding heart, rapid breathing, trembling, dizziness, or loss of bladder or bowel control

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Historical Trauma

- A "trauma" or wounding; the trauma is shared by a group of people, rather than an individually experienced
- The trauma spans multiple generations, such that contemporary members of the affected group may experience trauma-related symptoms without having been present for the past traumatizing event(s) (Mohatt et al., 2014).

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Intergenerational Trauma

- Refers to a specific experience of trauma across familial generations but does not necessarily imply a shared group trauma" (Mohatt el al., 2014).
- Intergenerational trauma reflects the impact of trauma across generations. When parents experience trauma it can impact their parenting and their decisions to keep their children safe.

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Collective Trauma

- Refers to the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society
- The tragedy is represented in the collective memory of the group, which includes both a reproduction of the event, but also an ongoing reconstruction of the trauma in an attempt to make sense of it.

Hirschberger, 2018

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Syndemic Trauma

- A syndemic refers to two or more health problems that coexist at the same time or concurrently
- A syndemic trauma refers to two major traumatic events that occur at the same time
- Scholars have argued that we are currently experiencing a syndemic trauma – the co-occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic and grappling with racial justice issues (Powell, 2020)

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Traumatic Stress Response Cycle

Stress Hormones

The Body's Alarm System

Traumatic Event

Traumatic Stress
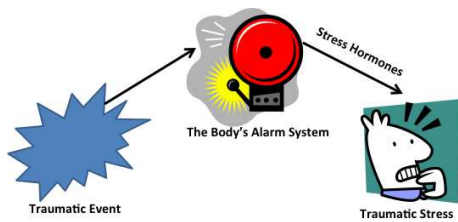
Source: Georgetown University Center for Child & Human Development. (n.d.). *Stress and the developing brain: The stress response*. Retrieved from Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation website: http://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/trauma/mod2_1.html

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Why is this Important?

- When individuals are in a "reactive" mode, they are activating the "fight, flight, or freeze" parts of their brain, or the emotional centers:
  - Those in "flight" might be calling out more often, increased absences, leave for another job
  - Those in "fight" mode might be disagreeing with every decision, pushing back on everything
  - Those in "freeze" mode might be "checked out" and not engaged, just trying to survive
- When they can step back and reflect, it activates the "cognitive' part of their brain, or the frontal lobe, creating opportunities for more innovation and problem-solving

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Trauma and the Current Workforce

Our collective experiences of COVID-19 has created a collective trauma

COVID, along with many of the racial justice issues impacting our staff, has created a culture of syndemic trauma

A trauma-informed leadership approach is essential to truly meeting the current needs of the workforce

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What is Trauma-Informed Care?

Trauma-informed care seeks to:
- **Realize** the widespread impact of trauma and understand paths for recovery;
- **Recognize** the signs and symptoms of trauma in patients, families, and staff;
- **Integrate knowledge** about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
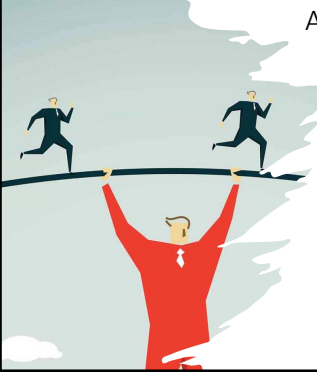- Actively **avoid re-traumatization**.

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What Does it Mean to be a Trauma-Informed Leader?

A trauma-informed leader is an individual who integrates the key principles of trauma-informed care into their leadership style

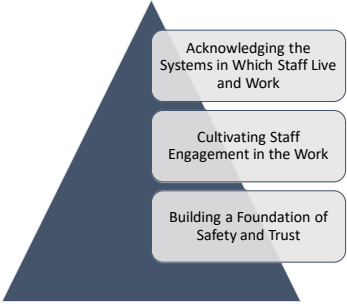Involves effectively balancing compassion and accountability

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A Trauma-Informed Leader...

- Creates physically and psychologically safe teams and environments
- Builds trust between and among team members
- Facilitates multiple opportunities for transparent communication
- Engages in the "tough" conversations when needed
- Demonstrates compassion for staff experiences
- Holds staff accountable with clear boundaries and expectations
- Has a space to be vulnerable and take care of themselves

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Trauma-Informed Leadership Process

Acknowledging the Systems in Which Staff Live and Work

Cultivating Staff Engagement in the Work

Building a Foundation of Safety and Trust

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Building a Foundation of Safety and Trust

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Safety

Physical – Freedom from threats of violence, whether from self or others. Physical safety includes being aware of risks in the environment and taking steps to ensure basic physical safety when there is a threat.

Psychological – The ability to be safe within one's own identity and the sense of feeling safe with other people and in one's community. Your ability to create psychological safety in an interaction may increase the comfort that the person feels during the process

Definitions adapted from Bloom & Farragher, 2013

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Team Psychological Safety

A shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.

Edmondson, 2019

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What Psychological Safety is NOT

Psychological safety is not about being nice (or making people happy)

Psychological safety is not a personality factor

Psychological safety is not just another word for trust

Psychological safety is not just about lowering performance standards

Edmondson, 2019

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The Benefits of Psychological Safety

- **Encourages speaking up**: Psychological safety alleviates concern about others' reaction to behaviors or actions that have the potential for embarrassment.
- **Enables clarity of thought:** When the brain is activated by fear, it has less neural processing power for exploration, design, or analysis.
- **Supports productive conflicts**: Psychological safety allows self-expression, productive discussion, and the thoughtful handling of conflict.
- **Mitigates failures**: A climate of psychological makes it easier, and therefore more common, to report and discuss errors.

Edmondon, 2012

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The Benefits of Psychological Safety, Continued

- **Promotes innovations**: Removing the fear of speaking up allows people to suggest the novel ideas and possibilities that are integral to developing innovative products and services.
- **Removes obstacles to pursuing goals for achievement performances**. With psychological safety, individuals can focus on achieving motivating goals rather than on self-protection.
- **Increases accountability**: Rather than supporting a permissive atmosphere, psychological safety creates a climate that supports people in taking the interpersonal risks necessary to pursue high standards and achieve challenging goals.

Edmondon, 2012

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Psychological Safety and Team Engagement

	Low Standards	High Standards
High Psychological Safety	Comfort Zone	Learning and High-Performance zone
Low Psychological Safety	Apathy zone	Anxiety zone

Edmondson, 2019

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Signs that a Workplace is Psychologically Safe

A leader or manager knows that psychological safety is present when:

- People on a team say such things as:
  - "We all respect each other"
  - "When something bugs me, we're able to confront each other"
  - "Everyone in our group takes responsibility for what we do."
  - "I don't have to wear a mask at work, I can be myself."
- People talk about mistakes and problems, not just successes
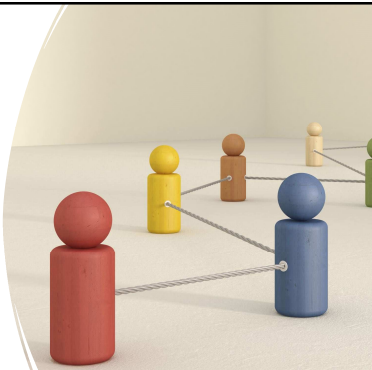- The workplace appears to be conducive to humor and laughter

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Increasing Psychological Safety

- Promote self-awareness
- Demonstrate concern for team members as people
- Actively solicit questions
- Provide multiple ways for employees to share their thoughts
- Show value and appreciation for ideas
- Promote positive dialogue and discussion
- Be precise with information, expectations, and commitments
- Explain reasons for change
- Own up to mistakes

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Trust and Transparency

Organizational operations and decisions are conducted with transparency and the goal of building and maintaining trust among staff, clients, and family members of those receiving services.

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Trust Defined

Choosing to risk making something you value vulnerable to another person's actions.

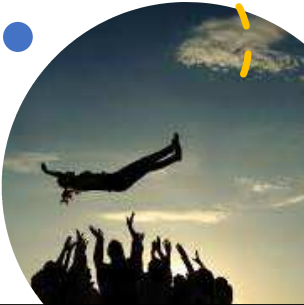Feltman, 2021, p. 9

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BRAVING

- **Boundaries**: You respect my boundaries, and when you're not clear about what's okay and not okay, you ask. You're willing to say no.
- **Reliability:** You do what you say you'll do. At work, this means staying aware of your competencies and limitations, so you don't overpromise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.
- **Accountability**: You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.
- **Vault**: You don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, and that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.

Brown, 2018

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BRAVING, Continued

- **Integrity:** You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them.
- **Nonjudgment:** I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgement. We can ask each other for help without judgment.
- **Generosity:** You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others.

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Increasing Trust

- Consistency – checking in, following up
- Have the hard conversations
- Question (and encourage staff to question) the "stories we tell ourselves"
- Doing what you say you will do (being dependable and consistent)
- Being approachable and friendly (people trust leaders they like)
- Championing authenticity, empathy and humanity.
- Showing support for your team members, even when they make mistakes (and admitting to your own)

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Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help

These are integral to the organizational and service delivery approach and are understood as a key vehicle for building trust, establishing safety, and empowerment.

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What is Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help?

Mutual support is when staff provide support to one another in a mutually agreed upon way. This can include social support, task assistance, and/or feedback on tasks and strategies

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Strategy #1: Offer Task Assistance

Examples of task assistance include working with team members on their assignments, rerouting some or all work to other members, and filling in for a team member, as needed.

All of these actions allow team members to function more effectively as individuals and as a team.

Task assistance is more helpful when it is specific and aligned with the offerer's skillset

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Strategy #2: Facilitate Opportunities for Social Support

- Social support refers to activities that allow team members to remain committed to the team, especially at times of emotional turmoil (e.g., when conflict arises). Social support can take a number of forms that can include:
  - Being an ally to them when they need someone to help advocate for them or their ideas
  - Reassuring their worth and value to the team-tell them how much you and the other team members appreciate them
  - Listening to their problems and offering guidance – if they ask for it.

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Video: Offering Social Support
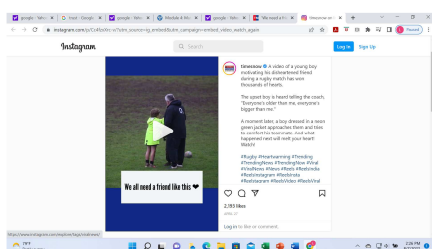
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Provide Feedback

- **Positive feedback** - Reinforces good behaviors by telling people when and how they have done a good job. By acknowledging a job well done or a good behavior, people are more likely to feel appreciated and repeat those behaviors

- **Negative Feedback** - Information about a person's areas for improvements. This type of feedback should always be respectful and constructive. Negative feedback provides people with valuable information about areas for improvement so that the feedback recipient can clarify expectations and use feedback to improve.

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Other Strategies to Increase Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help

Facilitating opportunities for staff to get to know and learn from one another
Peer supervision and consultation regarding cases and own responses
Also strengthened through the building of trust and psychological safety

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Collaboration and Mutuality

There is recognition that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. The organization recognizes that everyone has a role to play in a trauma-informed approach. One does not have to be a therapist to be therapeutic.

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Strategies to Support Collaboration and Mutuality

- Share the company's mission over and over again.
- Communicate your expectation for collaboration.
- Define and communicate your team's goals.
- Highlight individuals' strengths.
- Promote a community working environment.
- Foster honest and open communication.

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Collaboration and Mutuality, Continued

- Encourage creativity
- Share knowledge, insight, and resources
- Lead by example
- Get out of the office
- Invest in collaboration tools
- Celebrate and reward successful teamwork

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Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

Organization aims to strengthen the staff, client, and family member's experience of choice and recognizes that every person's experience is unique and requires an individualized approach. This builds on what clients, staff, and communities have to offer, rather than responding to perceived deficits.

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Strategies to Support Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

1

When implementing change initiatives, clearly identify touch points in which staff feedback can be elicited and integrated
- Strategic Planning efforts
- Implementation of new practices

2

Acknowledge in a transparent way the areas in which staff may or may not have control or influence

3

Create ongoing opportunities for staff to share their thoughts, concerns, feedback (separate from engagement surveys)

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Acknowledging the Systems in Which Staff Live and Work

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Cultural, Gender, and Historical Issues

The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases , offers culturally responsive services, leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.

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Strategies to Support Effectively Addressing Cultural, Gender, and Historical Issues
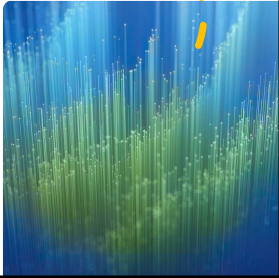
Convening of DEI initiatives and workgroups that are designed to assess current processes and create true systematic change

Create spaces for staff to share concerns or to support one another in these issues (workgroups, formal or informal)

Educate yourself on the complexity of these issues

Offer trainings and education for staff on these issues

Don't be afraid to be humble and communicate – we are all learning

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Trauma-Informed Leadership Self-Care

Leadership can be lonely
- Focus on meeting staff needs
- Organizational Requirements

Constant need to be available

Expectations that you "should" know more and do more

Incorporate strategies for self-care and peer support

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Making it Stick

- Understanding the current culture
  - Policies and procedures
  - Organizational Mission and Vision
  - Organizational Values and Principles
- Using Implementation Science Principles institute a change in the culture
  - Pilot testing
  - Small tests of change
- Active integration (i.e., practice!)
- Taking care of yourself

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Questions?

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Next Steps

Review the handout, "How to Foster Psychological Safety on Your Teams"

Review the "BRAVING" worksheet and reflect on your strengths and areas to grow
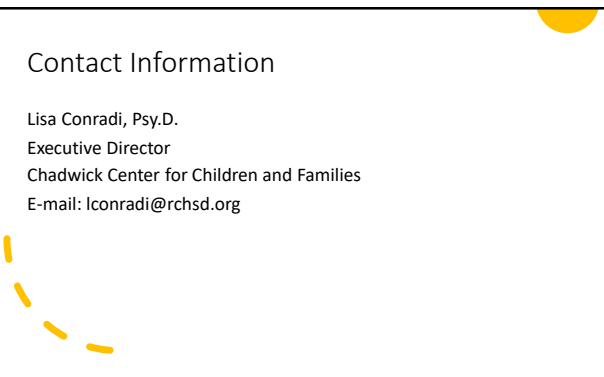
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