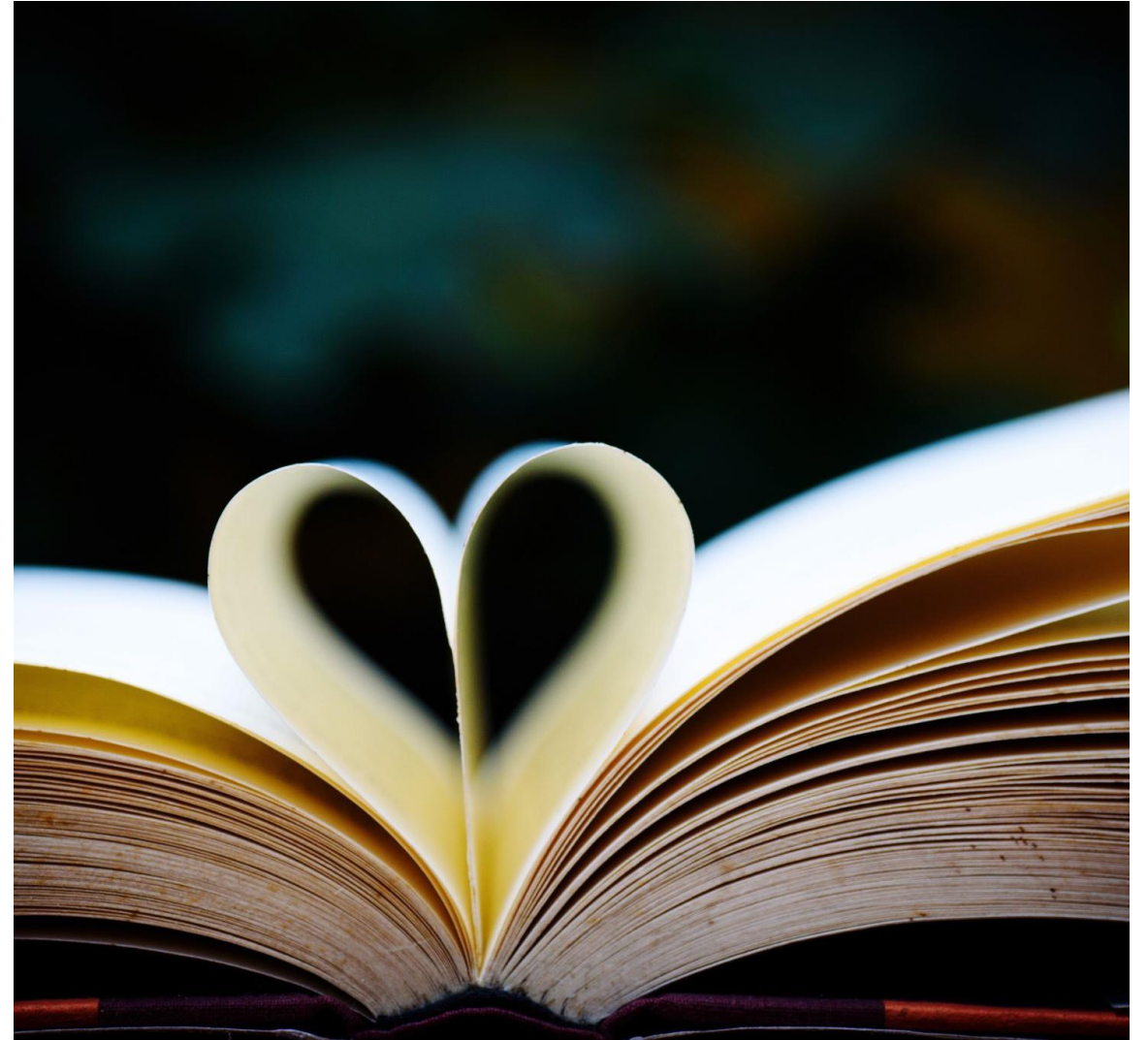


Leading A  
Systemic  
Approach to  
Wellbeing



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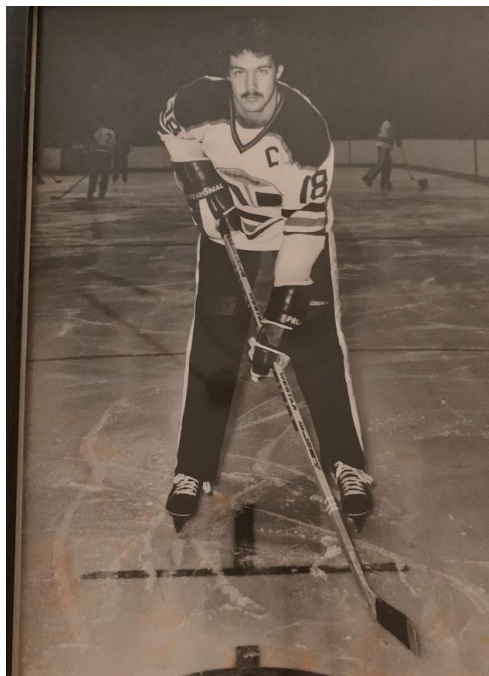
With Gratitude



# Introduction Slide



**Gail Markin**  
Author, Speaker and  
Consultant for Workplace  
Wellbeing  
Practice Support Coach  
with BC Children's  
Hospital's School Health  
and Wellness Team



**Chris Smeaton**  
Retired Superintendent  
and Education  
Consultant



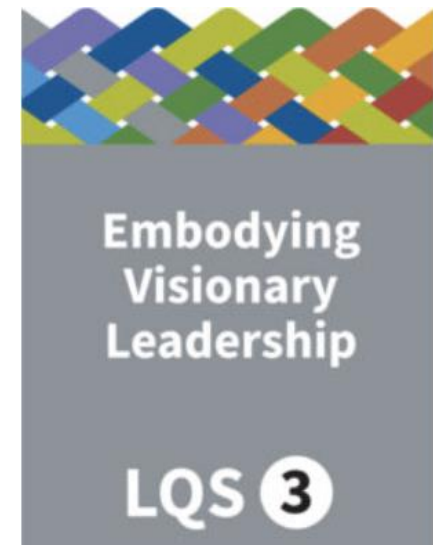
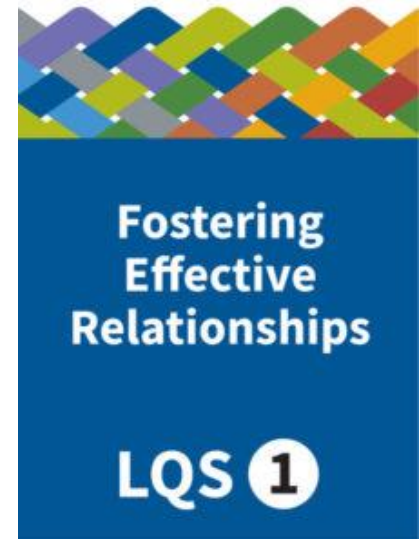
**Cynthia Shelley-Lewis**  
Assistant Superintendent  
of Inclusive Learning

**Annalee Nutter**  
Superintendent of FMPD

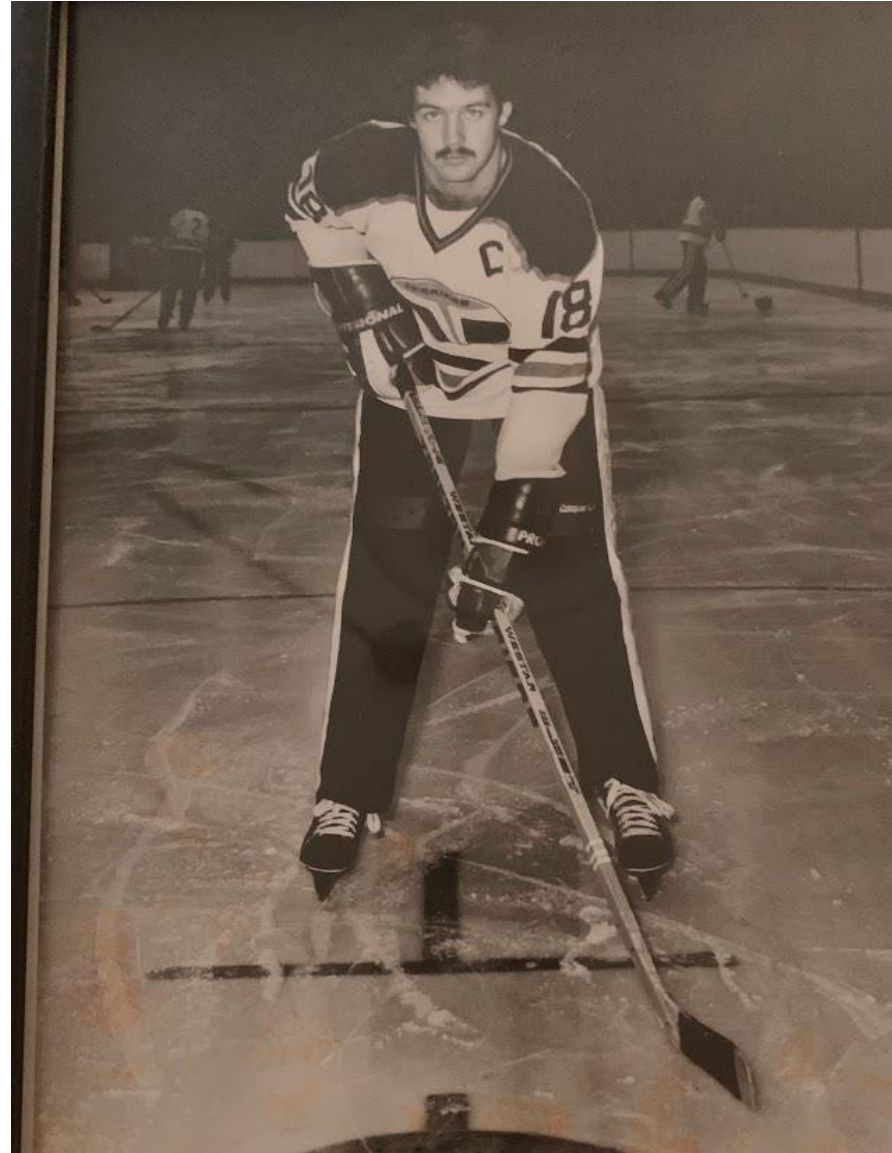


# WHAT WE WILL DO TOGETHER

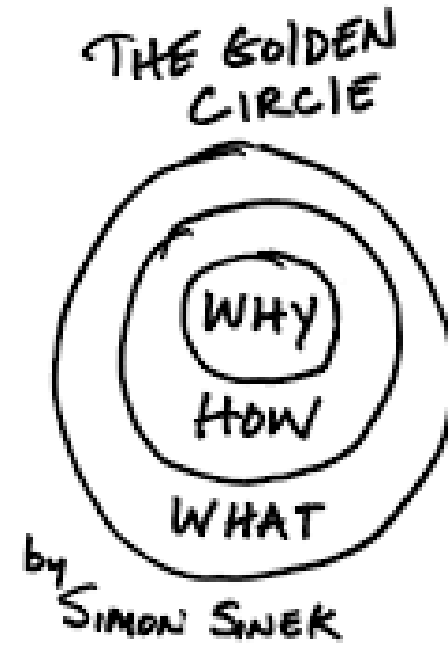
- Why?
- The 3 Interconnected Parts of Wellbeing
- Psychological Safety
- Research
- Practice



WHAT HAVE  
WE  
INHERITED?

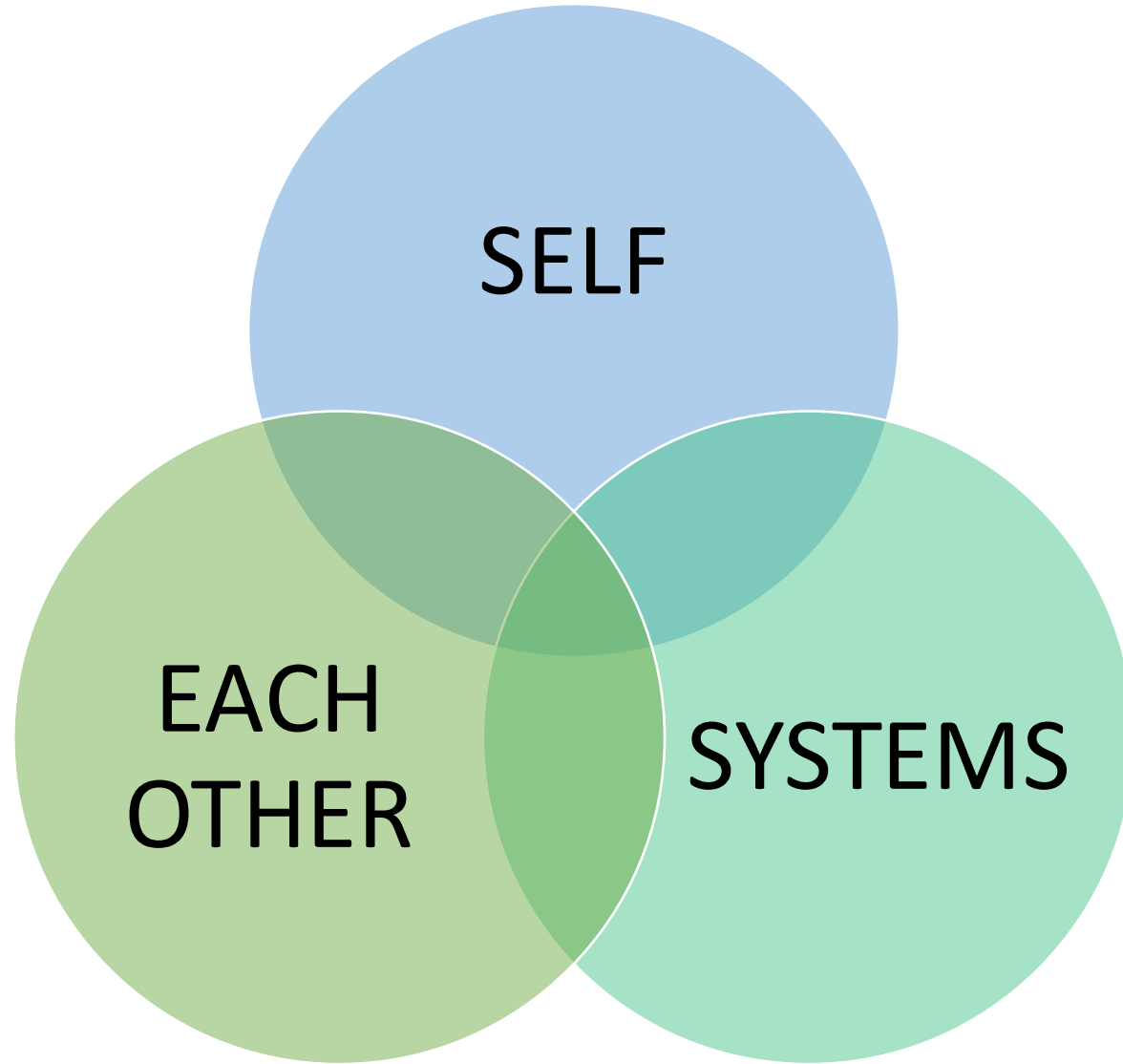


# WHY WORKPLACE WELLBEING?



There comes a point where we need to stop just  
pulling people out of the river. We need to go  
upstream & find out why they're falling in.  
Desmond Tutu



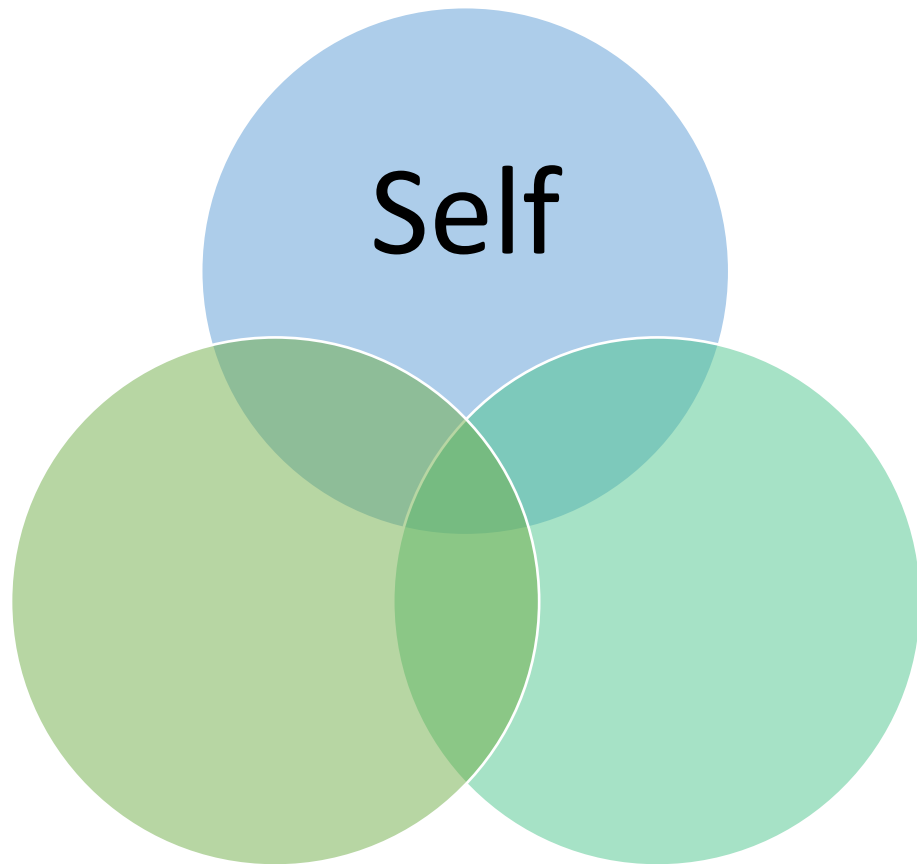


**SELF**

**EACH  
OTHER**

**SYSTEMS**

# Taking care of our own well-being



- The Beauty
- The Danger
- **SELf**-Care

# Self-Awareness

*“Self-awareness is  
the meta skill of the  
21<sup>st</sup> century.”*

- Tasha Eurich,  
Organizational Psychologist



# Internal Self-Awareness

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Feeling

Thinking

Acting

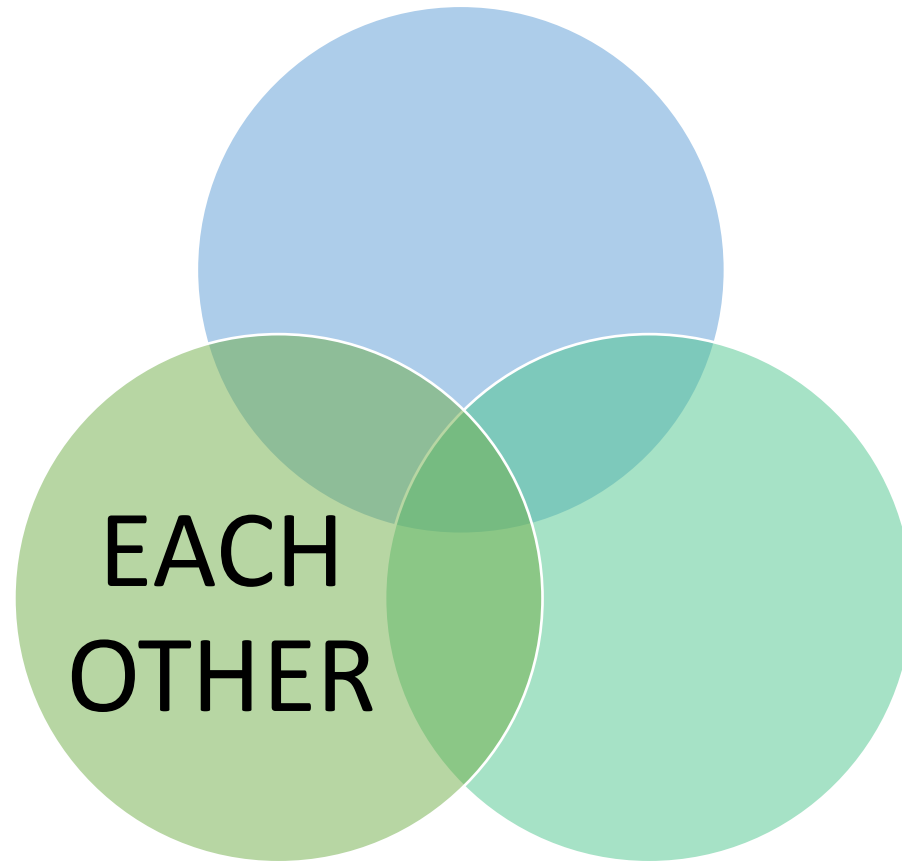
- Understanding of our own emotions
- Our strengths and weaknesses
- Our values
- Our impact on others

# External Self-Awareness

- How others see us
- How we fit into the world
- Live with intention



# Supporting each other



# A partner exercise





# Mirror Neurons

# Biologically Hardwired For Connection

## Cyberball Social Exclusion Task

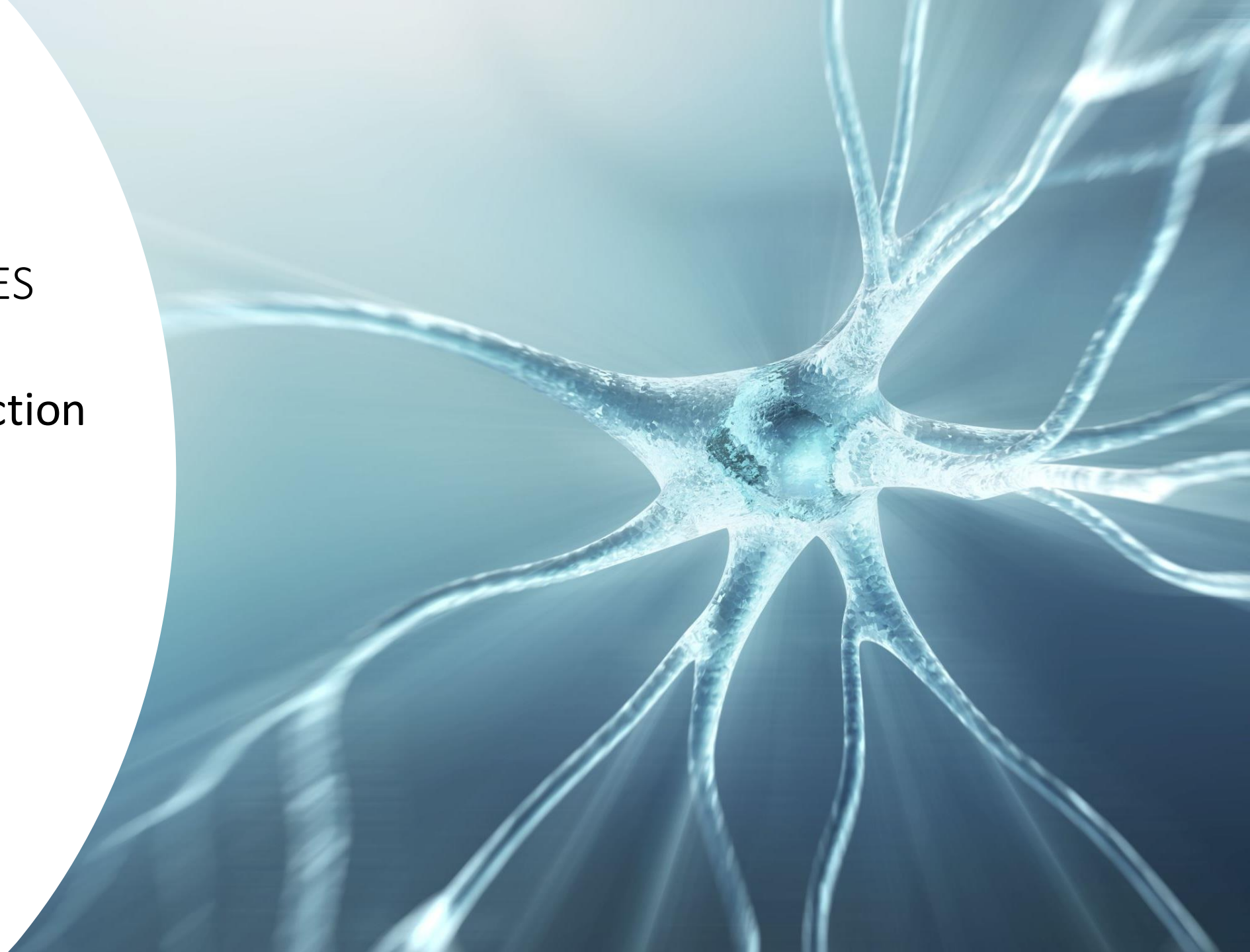
Computer Players



Participant's 'hand'

# OUR AMAZING BRAINS AND BODIES

- Pain of Disconnection



# Connection Rewards



# Creating Relationship Based Workplaces

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- Lead with Relationship
- Collective Vision/Collective Accountability
- Psychological Safety



# Building Effective Relationships

- A superintendent establishes a welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environment by building positive and productive relationships with members of the school community and the local community.



# Psychological Safety

- Psychological safety is the belief that the environment is safe for people to share their perspectives or to ask questions without fear of being rejected, shamed, or punished in some way for doing so.
- It is the belief that the space one is in, is safe for interpersonal risk-taking.
- (Edmondson, 2019)



# Why Psychological Safety?

- Practice and Research
- Wellbeing
- Learning and Growth
- Responsibility



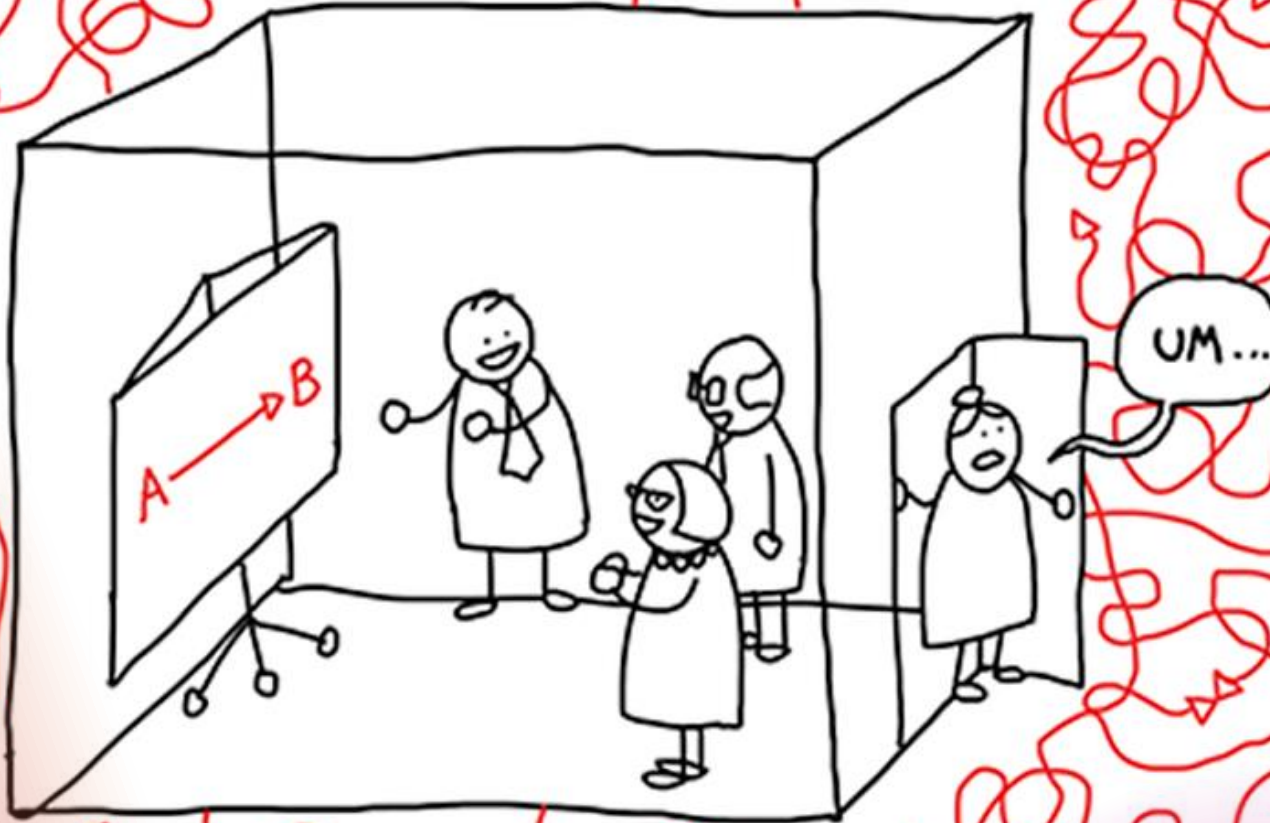
## The Problematic

- Principals and vice principals are essential to communication between schools and school districts and to driving school change (Flessa, 2012)
- Many of them are not feeling safe to share wisdom and ask questions at the school district level (Wang, 2022).

The background is a dark teal color with a repeating pattern of colorful speech bubbles. Each bubble is a different color (red, yellow, purple, grey) and contains a white question mark. The bubbles are scattered across the entire frame.

# A question for you

Why don't people speak up?

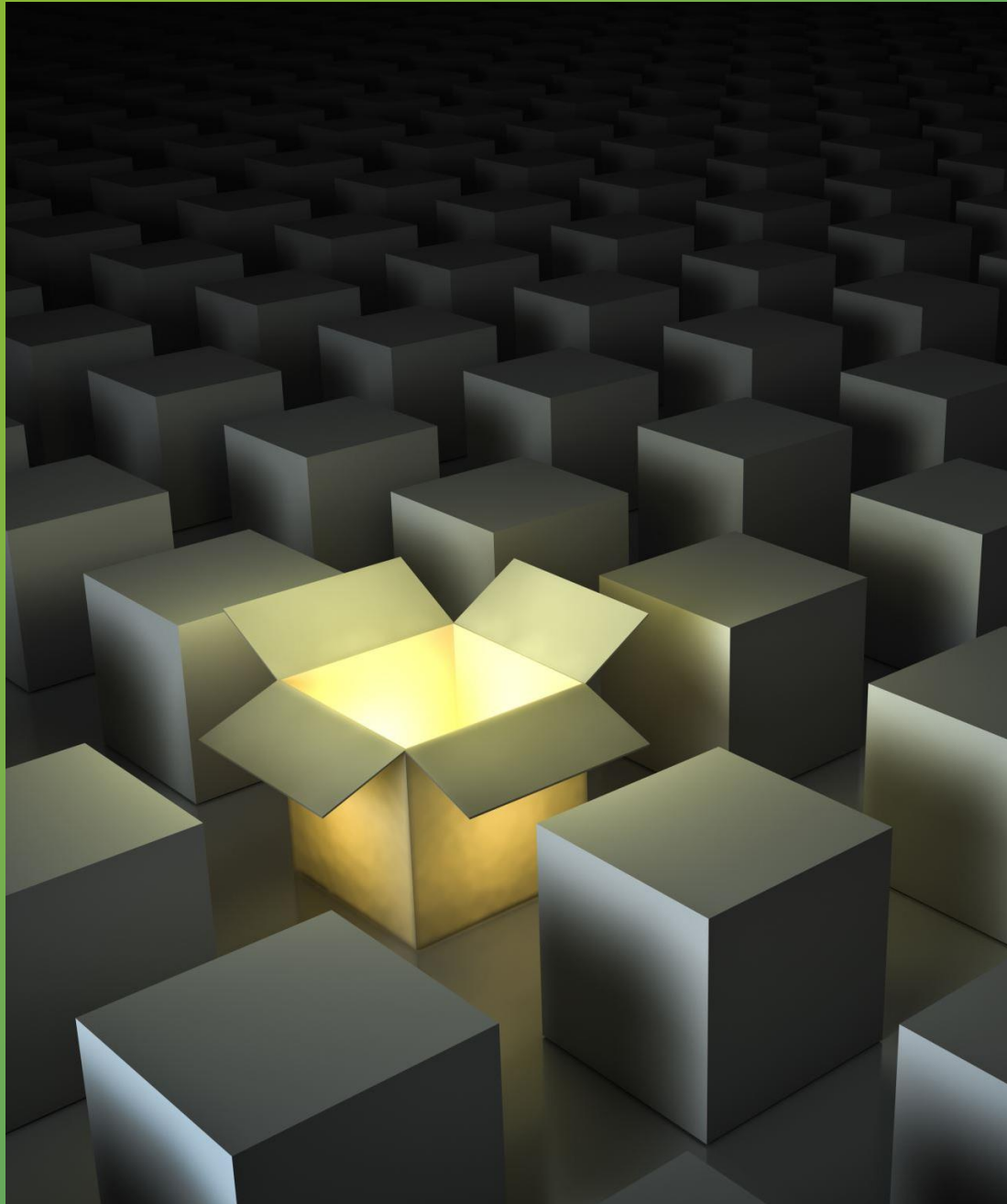


## Findings

### Impacts on Psychological Safety

- Meetings and Relationships
- Fiduciary Duty
- Power and Hierarchy
- Unwritten and Unexamined Workplace Rules

### Unintended Consequences



# When you should wonder....

- Open or Closed
- Secrets
- Silence
- Parking Lot meetings
- Work arounds/subversive leadership
- When the Emperor has no clothes



# Analysis to Action

- Challenges discourses and long-standing practices
- Does not assign blame
- Makes disjunctures visible
- Makes proposals for change

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Details of Suggested Actions</b>
<b>Create a district culture of psychological safety</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Explicitly teach the impact of psychological safety and how to create it in the workplace</li></ul>
<b>Design psychologically safe meeting structures and practices</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Design meetings to include collaboration and reflection</li><li>● Co-create group norms</li><li>● Embed the expectation of and opportunities for feedback</li><li>● Normalize and plan for mistakes and conflict</li></ul>

## **Redistribute social power**

- Create cross-role learning opportunities
- Design diverse committees and projects
- Provide opportunities for shared or distributed leadership and decision-making
- Review institutional practices to align them with present values

## **Clarify terms and expectations**

- Clarify fiduciary duty and what that looks like in practice
- Share clear criteria for success and advancement
- Create and/or clarify growth opportunities beyond formal advancement

**Design open communication plans and create collective accountability**

- Reinforce collective goals
- Share decision-making and increase opportunities for input
- Make non-confidential information open and accessible
- Consider sharing problems widely for diverse ideas and input
- Create open communication channels up and down the system hierarchy

**Create mentoring programs that model psychological safety**

- Establish or continue mentoring opportunities
- Embed psychological safety into all mentoring programs

# Discussion

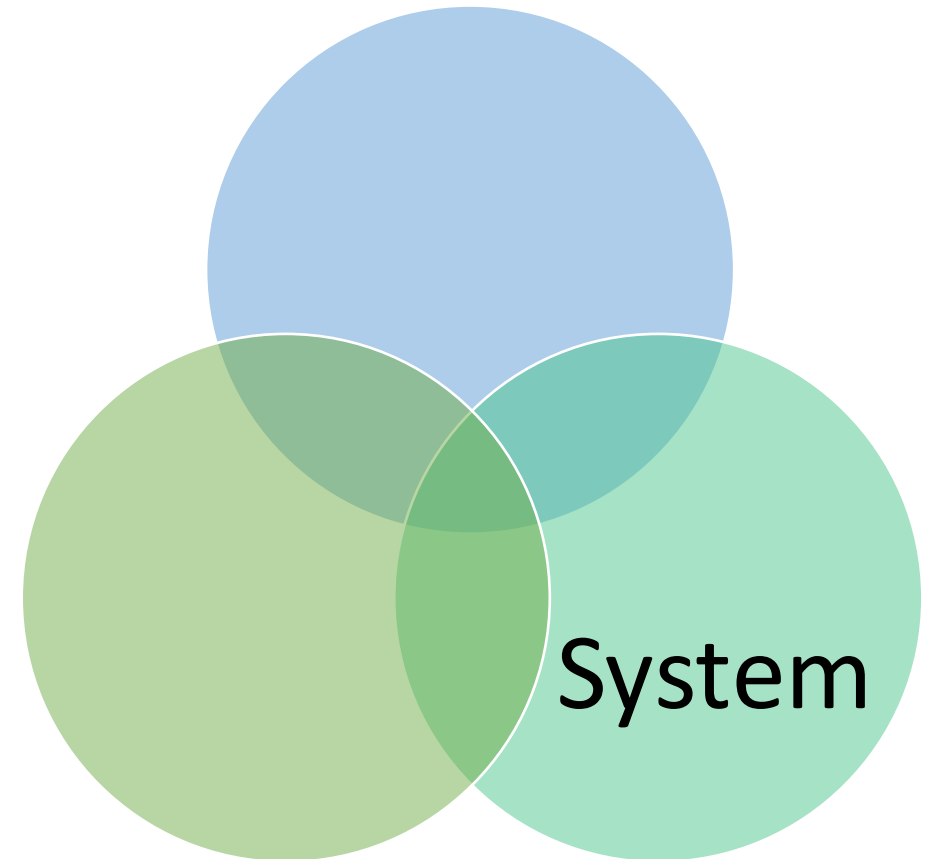
- How do we create psychological safety on our teams and in our organizations?
- How does this show up in your practice?
- What are some of the possible barriers?



# Systems

*“You do not rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems.”*

- James Clear,  
Author, Atomic Habits



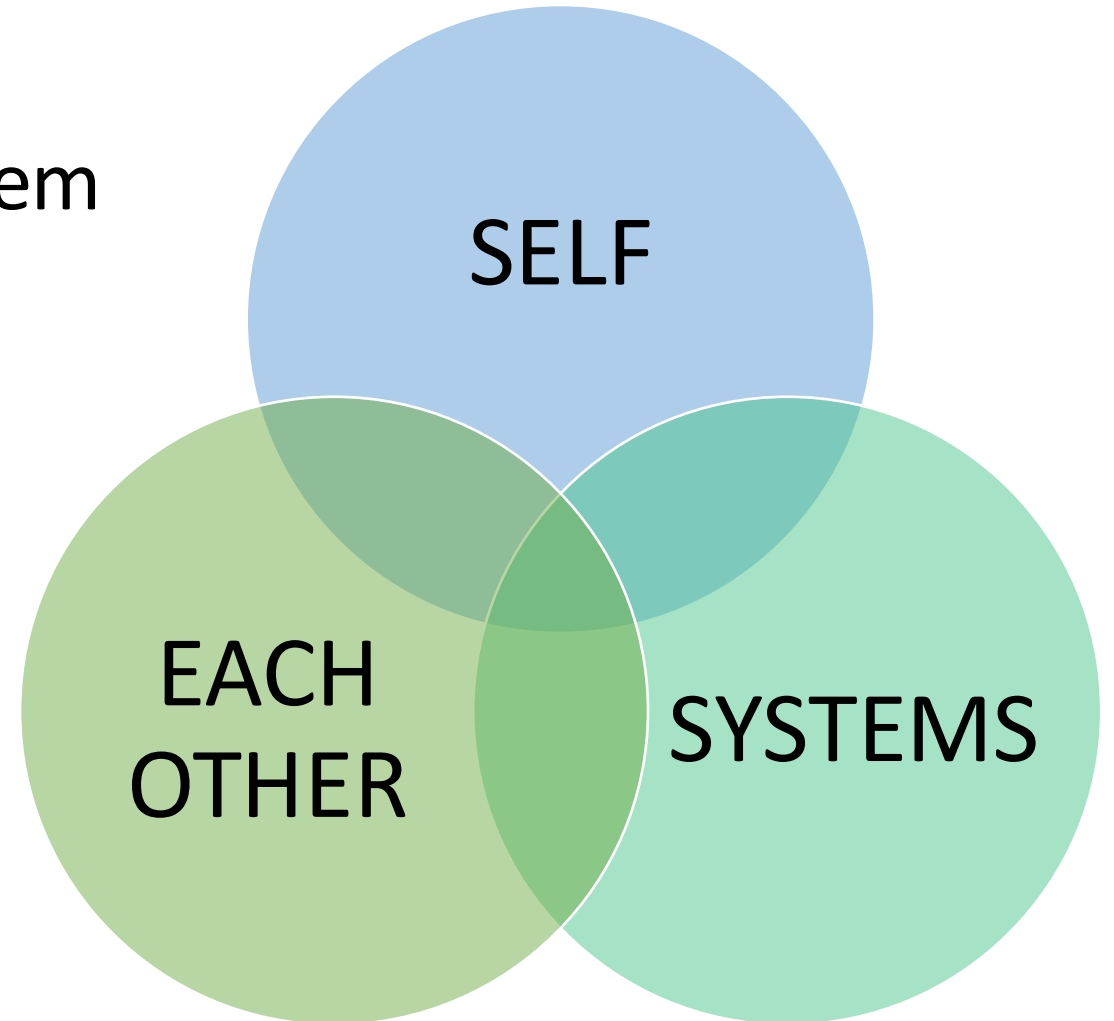
# Human-Centred Systems

What practices,  
policies and ways of  
being support  
well-being?



# Taking Action

- Match The Solution With The Problem



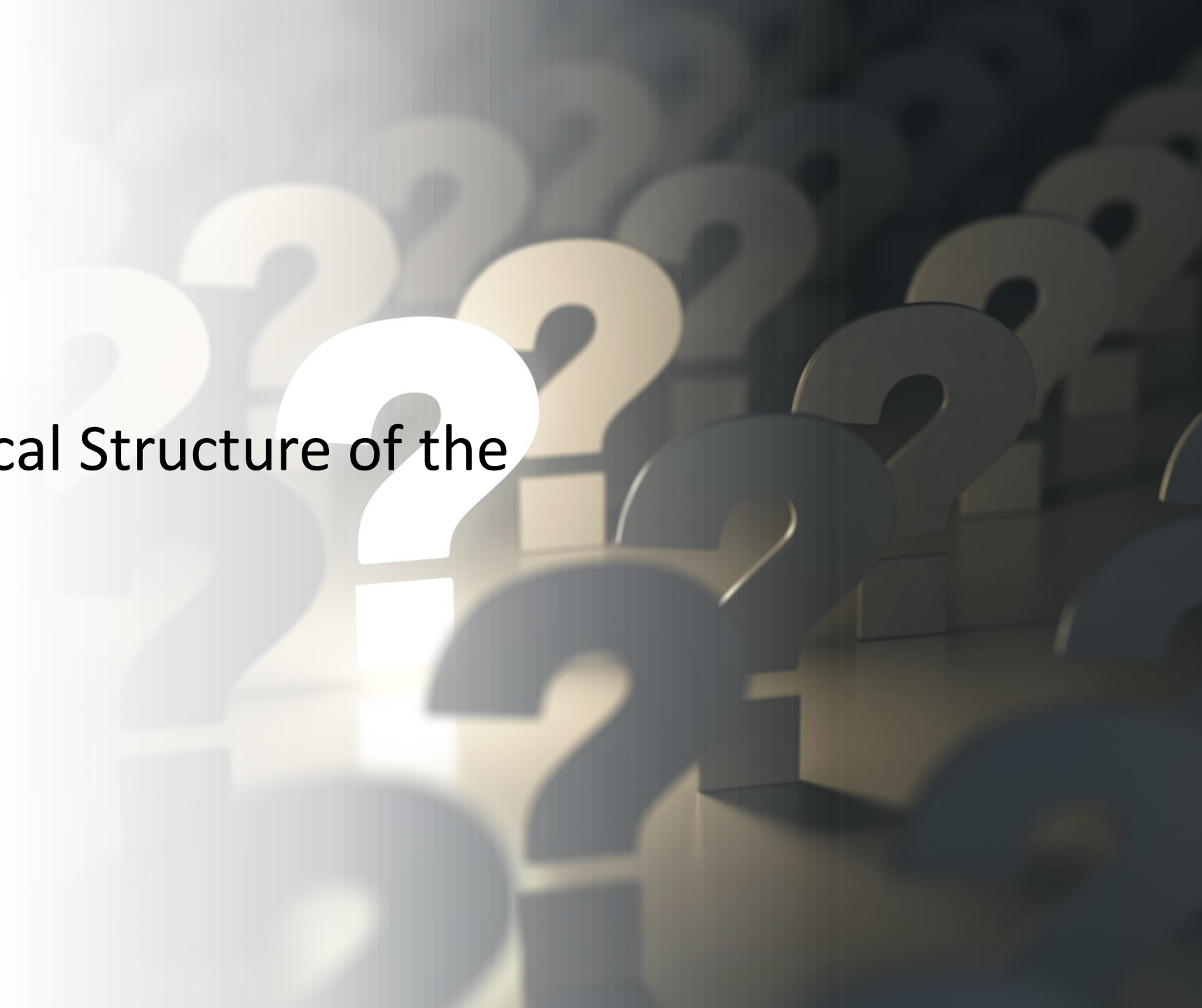


An Example

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Problem: Hierarchical Structure of the Organization

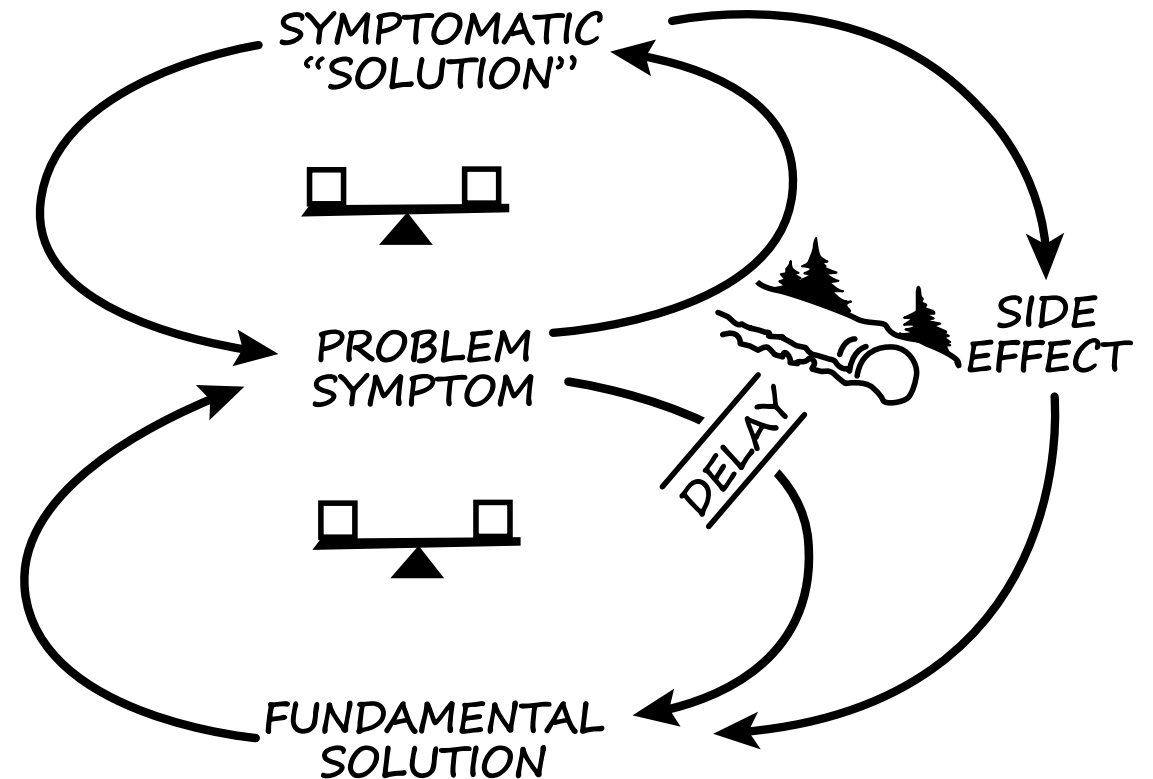
What Do You Do?



<b>COPING STRATEGIES</b>	<b>P&amp;VP</b>	<b>PRINCIPALS</b>	<b>VPS</b>
<b>Talk with my family/friends</b>	55.5%	60.2%	47.6%
<b>Talk with a confidant</b>	49.2%	51.4%	45.9%
<b>Consult with other colleagues within my district/school board</b>	42.7%	48.0%	33.5%
<b>Keep silent</b>	37.2%	39.5%	33.5%
<b>Talk with my administrative team within the school</b>	32.9%	31.7%	35.9%
<b>Seek solitude</b>	26.4%	29.8%	20.6%
<b>Contact my professional association</b>	21.1%	23.2%	17.6%
<b>Use alcohol</b>	18.9%	19.1%	18.8%
<b>Do nothing</b>	18.7%	19.7%	17.1%

# Taking Collective Action

- Be clear about the problem you are solving together
- Beware of the quick fix- what is the fundamental solution?
- Embrace feedback, often and with gusto



# International Cafe

## Grieving Process

**HISTORY WALL OF YMM**

How Has Education Changed?  $1+2=3$

	1980s & 1990s (5 min)	2000s & 2010s (5 min)	2016 POST wildfire (10 min)	2020 POST COVID-19 (10 min)
In the Community				
In the Lives of Families				
Education In Schools				

**Considerations** → Technology, How We Learn/Teach, Report Cards, Relationships, Social Norms, Funding Structures, Communication Processes, Classroom Complexity, Workforce Norms, Mental Health Needs and Impacts

**HISTORY WALL - Use your Sticky Notes**

When you think about **education over time**, how has it changed?

**Timeline**  
1980s & 90s  
2000s & 2010s  
Post 2016  
Post 2020

**Consider:**  
Lives of Families?  
Structure of Schools?  
Community Norms?

**Technology**  
Internet, Email  
Cell phones  
Chromebooks/Laptops  
Pre & Post Assessment  
Social Media

**How we Learn/Teach**  
Teaching Strategies  
Relationships  
Homework  
Learning Styles  
Inclusive Classrooms

**Society**  
Family Dynamics  
MH Crisis  
Physical Health



**Thank you!**

Acceptance is required to move forward

Mindset Matters



# Our Evolving Systems

“Let's face it, the universe is messy. It is nonlinear, turbulent, and chaotic. It is dynamic.

It self-organizes and evolves. It creates diversity, not uniformity.

That's what makes the world interesting, that's what makes it beautiful, and that's what makes it work.”

Donella Meadows

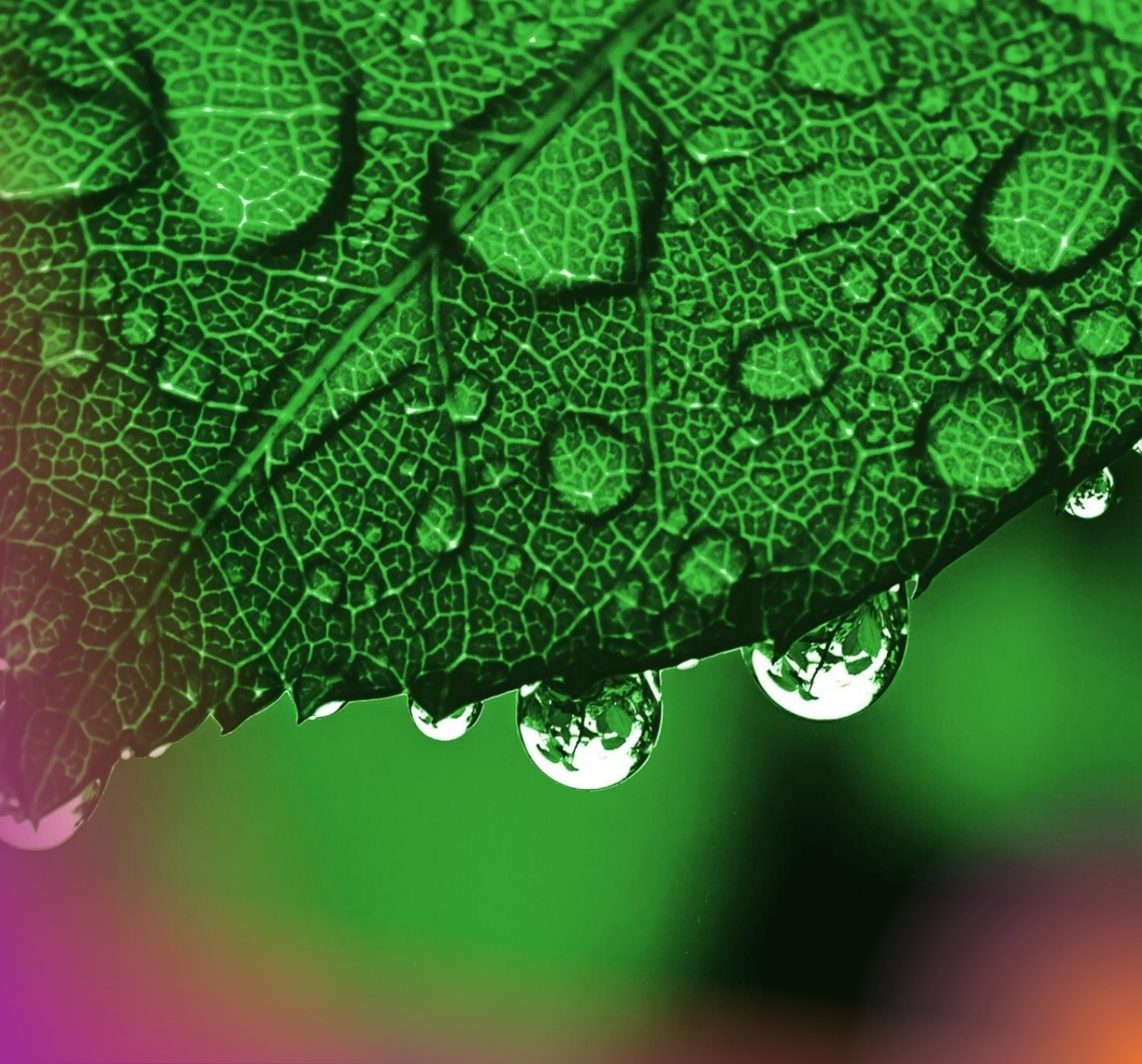
# REFLECTION

## 3-2-1 ACTIVITY

3 Things You've Learned Today

2 Questions You Still Have

1 Action You Will Start When You Get Back



“The Ability to Hold Tension in  
Life-Giving Ways.”

Parker Palmer

# An Invitation to Stay Connected

## **Gail Markin**

Gailmarkin.ca or on LinkedIn

*Beyond-Self Care: Leading a Systemic Approach to Wellbeing for Educators*

Beyond Self-Care Podcast

## **Chris Smeaton**

On LinkedIn or by email at [cdsmeaton@gmail.com](mailto:cdsmeaton@gmail.com)

**Annalee Nutter** [Annalee.nutter@fmppsd.ab.ca](mailto:Annalee.nutter@fmppsd.ab.ca)

## **Cynthia Shelly-Lewis**

Cynthia.shelley-lewis@fmppsd.ab.ca