

# Mind Matters Overview

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## The Mind Matters Pinwheel | Six Major Topics

The evidence-based materials in this program build on research in neuroscience and on the work of the leaders in trauma care. The curriculum focuses on five major topics: (1) Self-Soothing, (2) Developing an Observing Self, (3) Relationship Skills, (4) Compassion for the Hijacked Brain, (5) Self-Care, and (6) Intentionality.

### 1. Self-Soothing

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Class begins with the Marshmallow Test for participants to understand the importance of intentionality. This light-hearted lesson includes four different self-soothing and emotional regulation skills.

### 2. Developing an Observing Self

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Developing an Observing Self allows us to observe and monitor events and processes, thoughts and emotions of our internal world. This observing capacity is a valuable personal tool and skill, providing a space-in-time between an event and response. This space-in-time provides an extra moment to decide how to respond to a given life event. With such tools, people are better equipped to observe, learn, and make wise choices. Participants will learn to do a Body Scan, identify emotions, distinguish thoughts and emotions, and create an Internal Journal. For many, this will be their first experience with self-study.

### 3. Relationship Skills

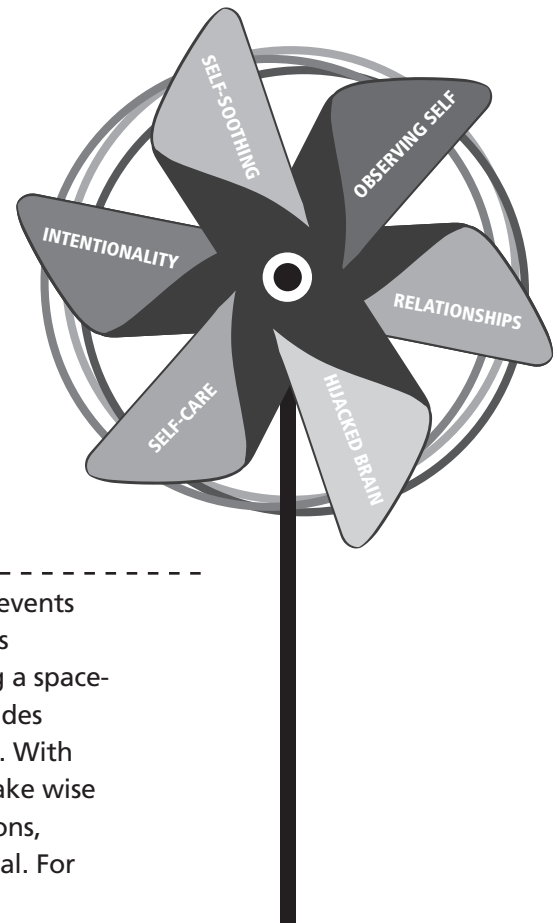
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Supportive relationships are key to recovery from trauma. The ability to build relationships is essential. Participants will learn to listen deeply and are guided in developing compassion and understanding for others. Participants will also learn how to develop a personal support system and how to ask for help.

### 4. Compassion for the Hijacked Brain

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Most participants in this program experienced trauma in their childhoods. These adverse experiences have left major effects on thinking and behavior. Overcoming trauma begins with understanding how traumatic experiences have changed the brain: emotionally, cognitively, and interpersonally. All lessons in this curriculum are directed towards growing the brain to overcome the impact of these traumas. In the Compassion for the Hijacked Brain section, participants can take the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire, if they wish. We emphasize the importance of installing a daily practice of skills that, over time, will change the brain's architecture. *Mind Matters* is a curriculum of hope.





## 5. Self-Care

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Practicing self-care is an important ingredient in recovering from traumatic experiences. *Mind Matters* self-care lessons focus on a variety of different approaches. The importance of physical activity and sleep hygiene are components of self-care that are often overlooked. *Mind Matters* recognizes that each person is different in their requirement and desire for physical activity. Participants will design a plan of physical activity based on their interests and abilities. Included is a 15-minute Chair Yoga workout. The Efficient Sleep component provides information encouraging healthy sleep habits based on current research. An innovative section on music and dance as a healing modality draws on the cultural backgrounds of the participants. Emotional Freedom Techniques (Tapping) offers an additional beneficial procedure for healing. All self-care methods from exercise to sleep and from play time to down time lead to a more balanced life.

## 6. Intentionality

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Intentionality returns our focus to the Marshmallow study in the first lesson. Here, learning to wait is presented as a component and a first step in the development of intentionality. Final lessons cover goal setting and planning for the future. Values are clarified with the Honor Shield. Participants review the entire program and then sign a personal contract committing to continued habits of practice and personal growth.