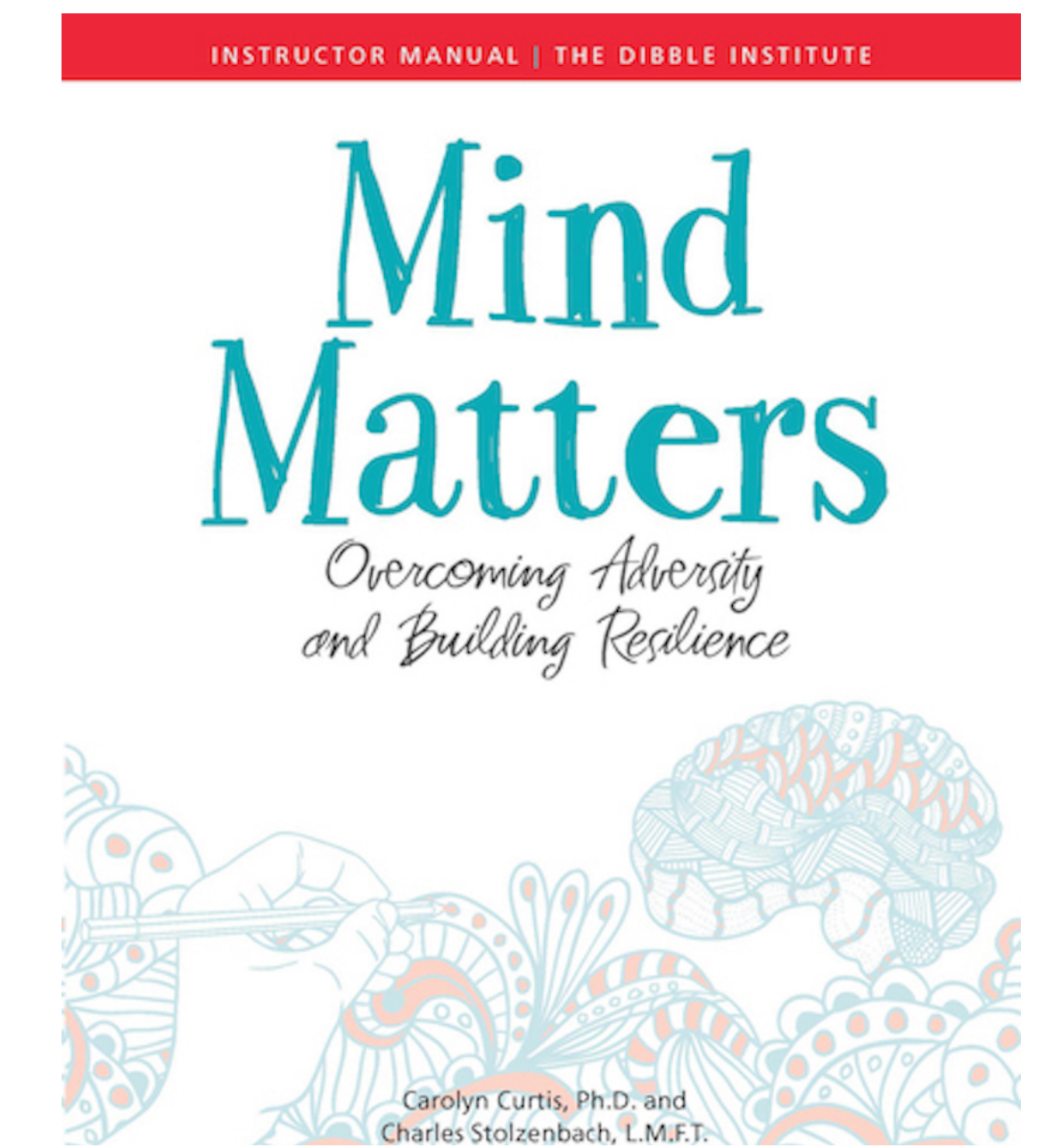


MindMatters *Overcoming Adversity and Building Resilience*

Preventing violence in Columbia County, Oregon

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Situation:

SAFE of Columbia County has served survivors of violence in Columbia County, Oregon since 1979. Among other services SAFE's staff provide violence prevention in five rural school districts.

To address violence in local schools, SAFE collaborated with superintendents, principals and teachers on a needs assessment.

Problem:

Students were struggling with emotional regulation, healthy communication, and developing healthy relationships. The schools felt that building resiliency skills before facilitating conversations on rape prevention education and teen dating violence was important.

Background:

Research shows individuals who have experienced trauma and toxic stress often have difficulty regulating their emotional responses when facing challenges in school, life, and relationships. Violence can often be a result.

Solution:

To meet the schools' identified needs, SAFE adopted the ***Mind Matters: Overcoming Adversity and Building Resilience*** program, which teaches young people skills and practices in 12 lessons that cultivate healing and encourage healthy relationships. Specifically, in each lesson students learn to address their physical, relational, and mental health needs through activities that build resilience and increase hope.

Results:

SCHOOLS

Between 2018 and 2019, SAFE facilitated ***Mind Matters*** with 665 students ages 8–18 at 11 schools in five school districts during reading periods, health classes, and advisory. Storytelling, interactive experiences, and PowerPoints were used as teaching methodology.

- Elementary and middle school teachers requested lessons on self-soothing skills, understanding emotions, empathy and the power of exercise to reduce reactivity.
- Alternative high schools requested the full ***Mind Matters*** program because it includes:
 - Learning self-soothing skills
 - Developing an observing self
 - Strengthening relationships
 - Compassion for the hijacked brain
 - Engaging in self-care
 - Living intentionally

The demand for ***Mind Matters*** classes continues to grow. The Department of Human Services (self-sufficiency and child welfare division) and the St. Helens' Summer Recreation program have asked that ***Mind Matters*** be taught to their students.

"Mind Matters supports our efforts to build and maintain trauma informed classrooms. Our teachers have learned new ways to communicate and teach self-regulation practices to students."

—HEIDI, PRINCIPAL, RAINIER SCHOOL DISTRICT

Students reported:

- Increased empathy for selves and others
- Reported use of self-soothing practices
- Their school communities are better because of ***Mind Matters***.

Principals and school staff reported:

- ***Mind Matters*** supported their efforts to build trauma informed classrooms,
- They learned new ways to communicate and teach self-regulation practices to students
- They are grateful for the instructional materials.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS:

Mind Matters classes were conducted with 120 staff at community organizations including police departments, CASA volunteers and DHS and OCADSV conferences.

Community organizations and first responders reported:

- Self-regulation practices were crucial in their efforts to mitigate vicarious trauma
- They better understand how trauma affects the brains of the individuals they serve.

Learn more

<https://www.dibbleinstitute.org/mind-matters/>

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