



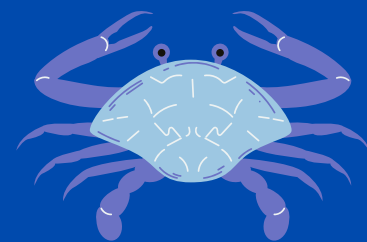
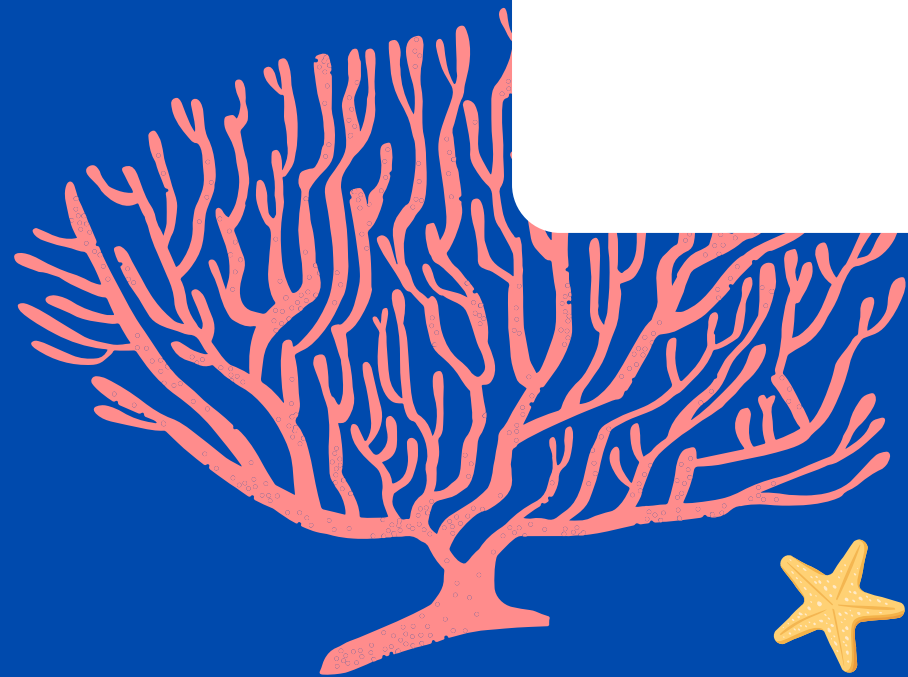
The Need for Trauma Informed Approaches (TIAs) at DRHS

a presentation prepared by the Agenda Gap Digby youth



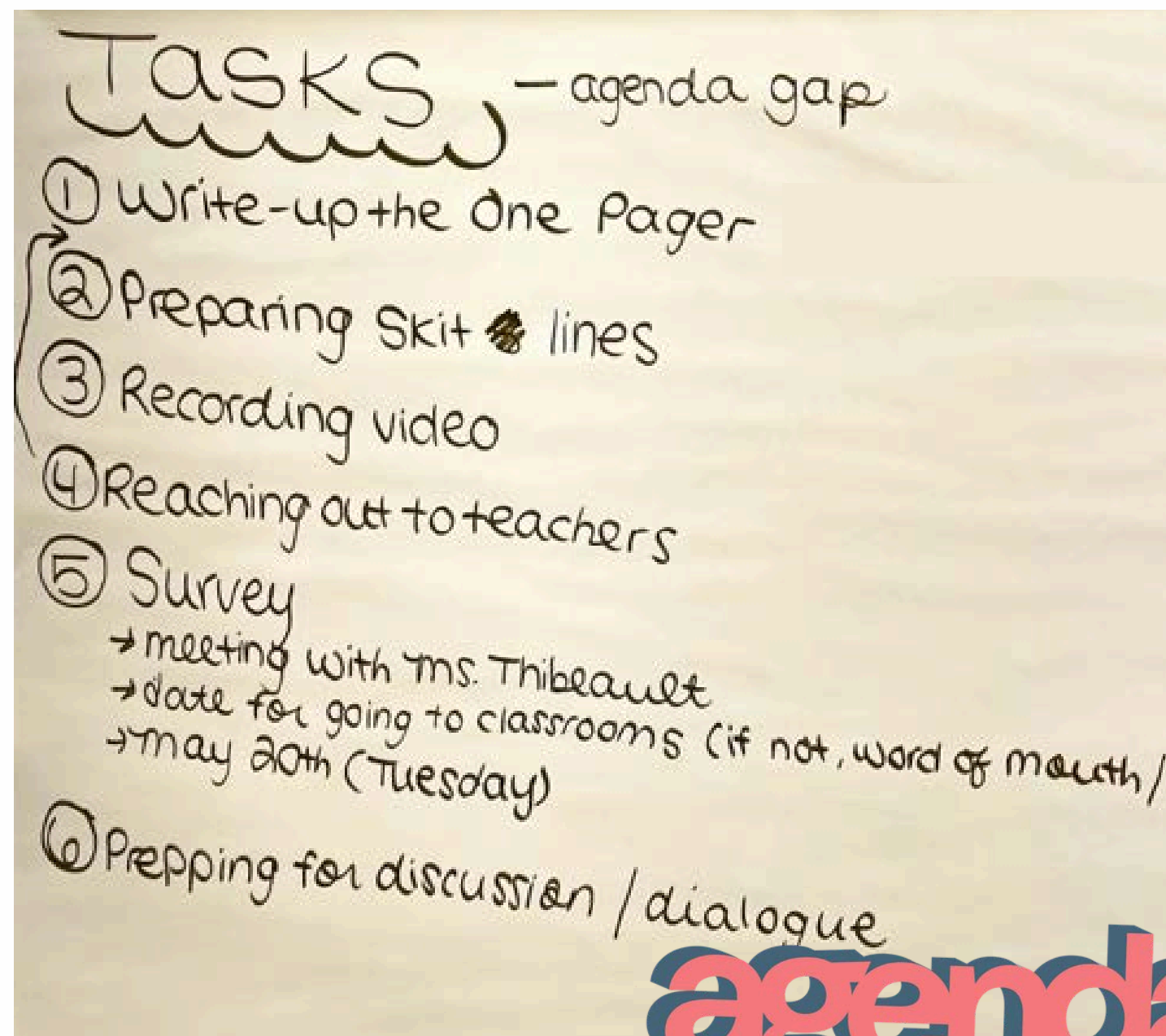
mission statement

We, the Agenda Gap of DRHS, set out to strengthen mental health support in schools and build better relationships between students and staff. We are a group of diverse students from different homes and environments who are brought together by a common goal, that being to improve the quality of life in the town of Digby and make things better for those who will come after us.



Our mascot:
"Agent
Gap"





List of “priority tasks” we developed during a session.



What is Agenda Gap?

MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM

- Youth-led mental health promotion program based out of UBC.



- Groups in various locations in Canada, including nearby Yarmouth!
- Met for 2 hours weekly over the course of 6 months.

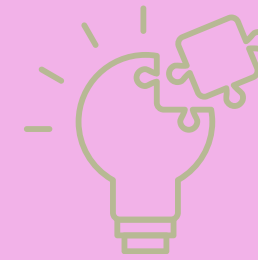
What We've Done as a Group:



Relationship Building

Built strong, supportive connections through bonding activities and by working together!

Openly discussed mental health challenges and explored solutions as a group.



Problem Solving

Mapped out safe spaces and trusted people in our lives. Noticed a lack of school-based resources and connections.

Identified **trauma-informed approaches** as a way to address the challenges we face in school.



Ally Engagement

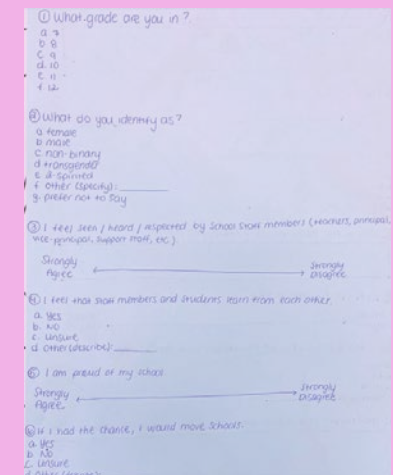
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Interviewed public health experts about trauma informed approaches.



Gathering Data

Developed a survey to find out how other students felt



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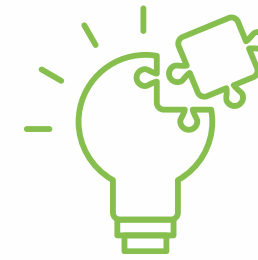
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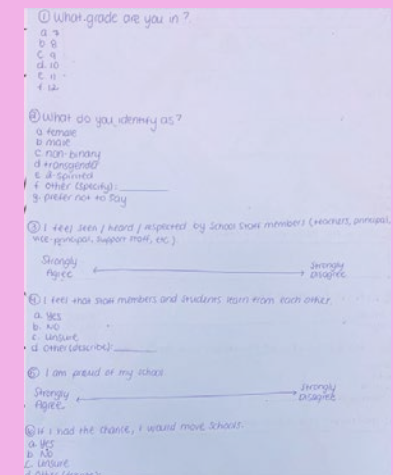
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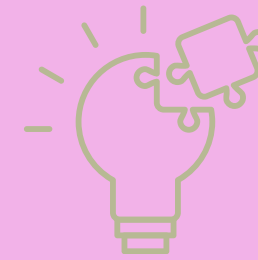
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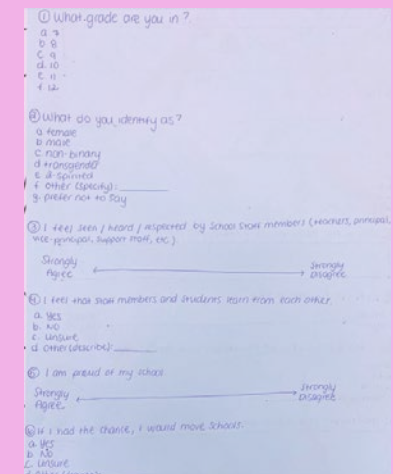
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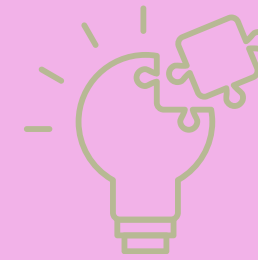
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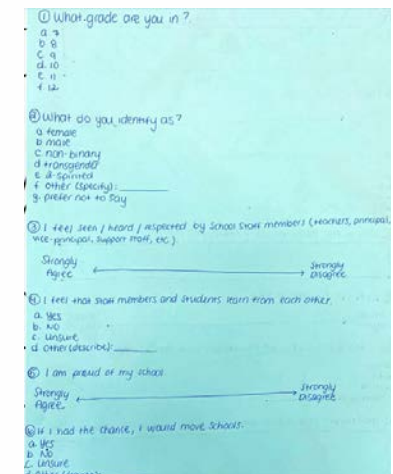
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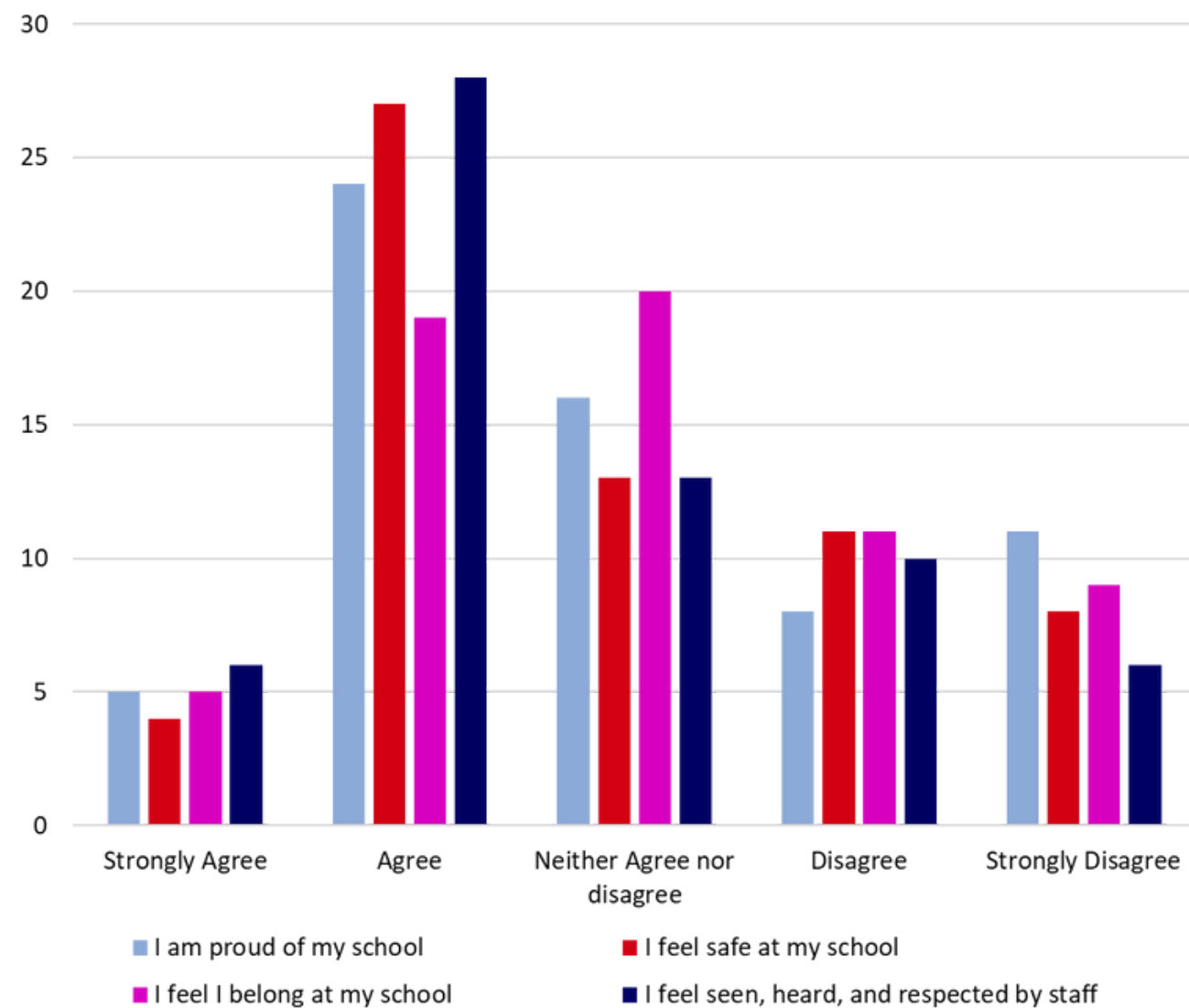
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Survey Findings

surveyed 69 students at DRHS



LESS THAN HALF of students said they are *proud of their school*, that they *feel safe at school*, and that they *feel seen, heard and respected by staff*.

ONLY 25% agreed/strongly agreed that they feel they belong at DRHS.

A class that I learn a lot in looks like, feels like, and sounds like...

- "To me it feels like a quiet space I can work with friends, use hand on stuff and a good amount of one on one time"
- "Where most of my friends are, so I feel respected"
- "Learning with pictures, diagrams, lots of conversations about the topic"
- "Students not talking over the teacher and being respectful of each other"
- "Pictures, paced, laughter, bunch of oo and wows"

Why this Issue Matters:

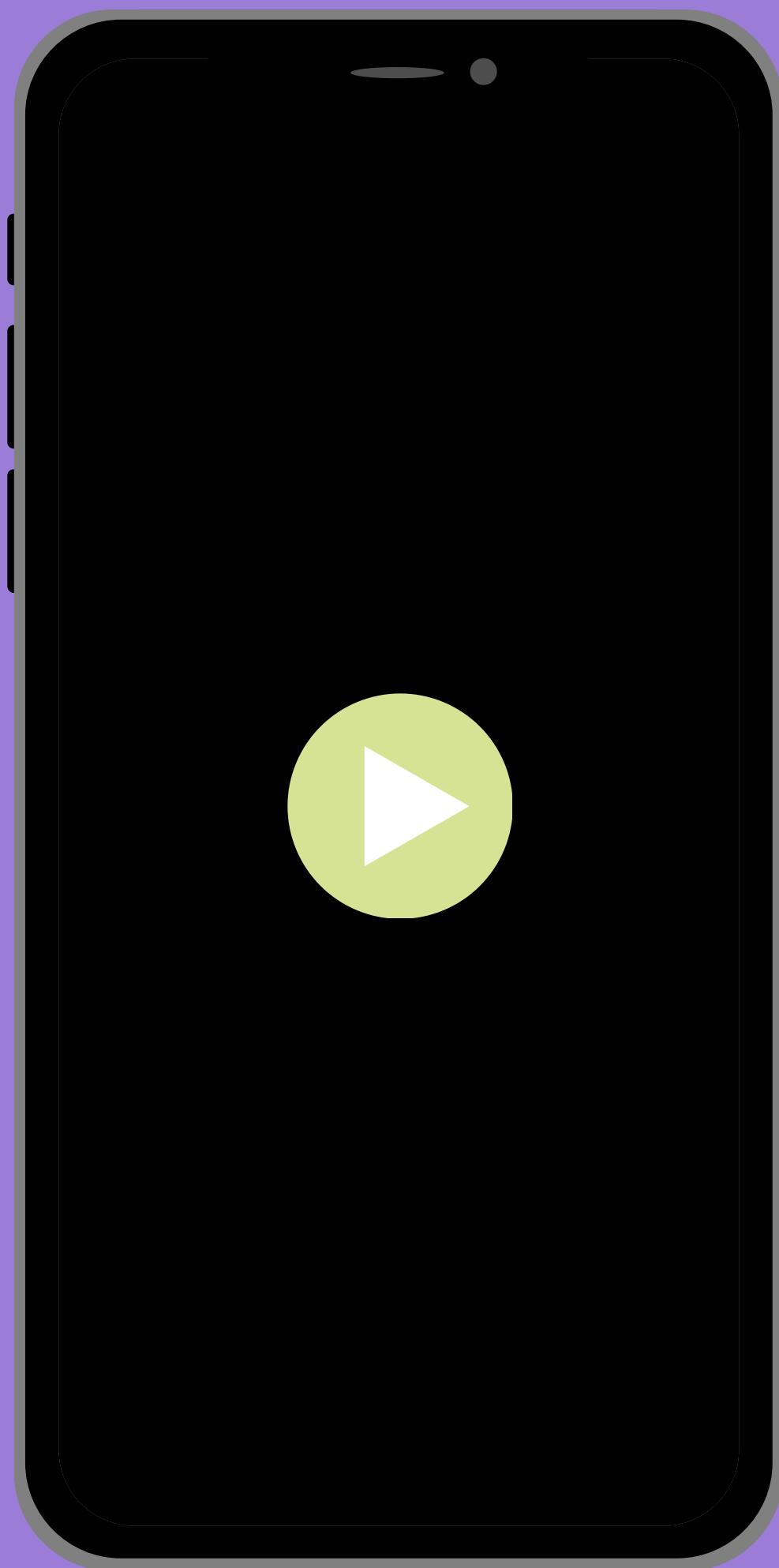
- Students deserve to **have a voice** in school decisions!
- Sharing feedback helps staff understand students' experiences.
- Schools can be a key support system, especially for students facing challenges.
- Feeling heard reduces stress, boosts learning, and **supports mental health**.
- Listening and offering help can truly change lives.



With plans to graduate early I've had to find alternatives to certain projects, [teacher's name] in particular has done an amazing job at helping me work through this and create fun, exciting, and still valid work - DRHS survey response

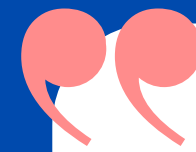
Example 1:

Negative Interaction with Teacher and Administration

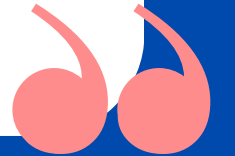


Why Trauma Informed Approaches (TIAs)?

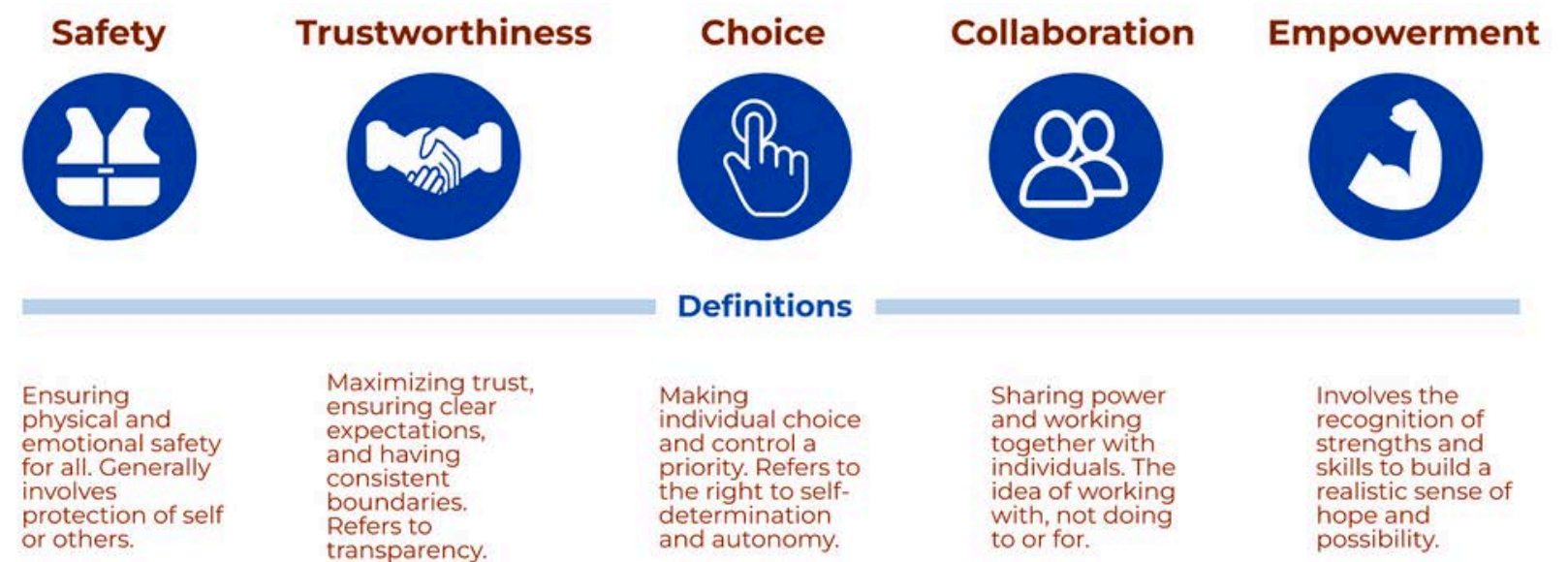
- **TIAs help teachers respond with care** and help schools become safe and supportive places for all students.
- **TIAs focus on building strong relationships** and understanding the reasons behind student behavior, instead of just punishing it.
- **Teachers need support too** - teachers can't help students if they are stressed or burned out.
- **Formal training on TIA at present is limited** - Monitoring and standards are inconsistent, often left up to individual school administrators.



A class I learn alot in feels talkative but not accusatory and inclusive. Teachers reach out on an individual level and FULLY listen but also respond, works with students and their particular needs, and ensures that the discussions cater to students interests and questions - DRHS survey response

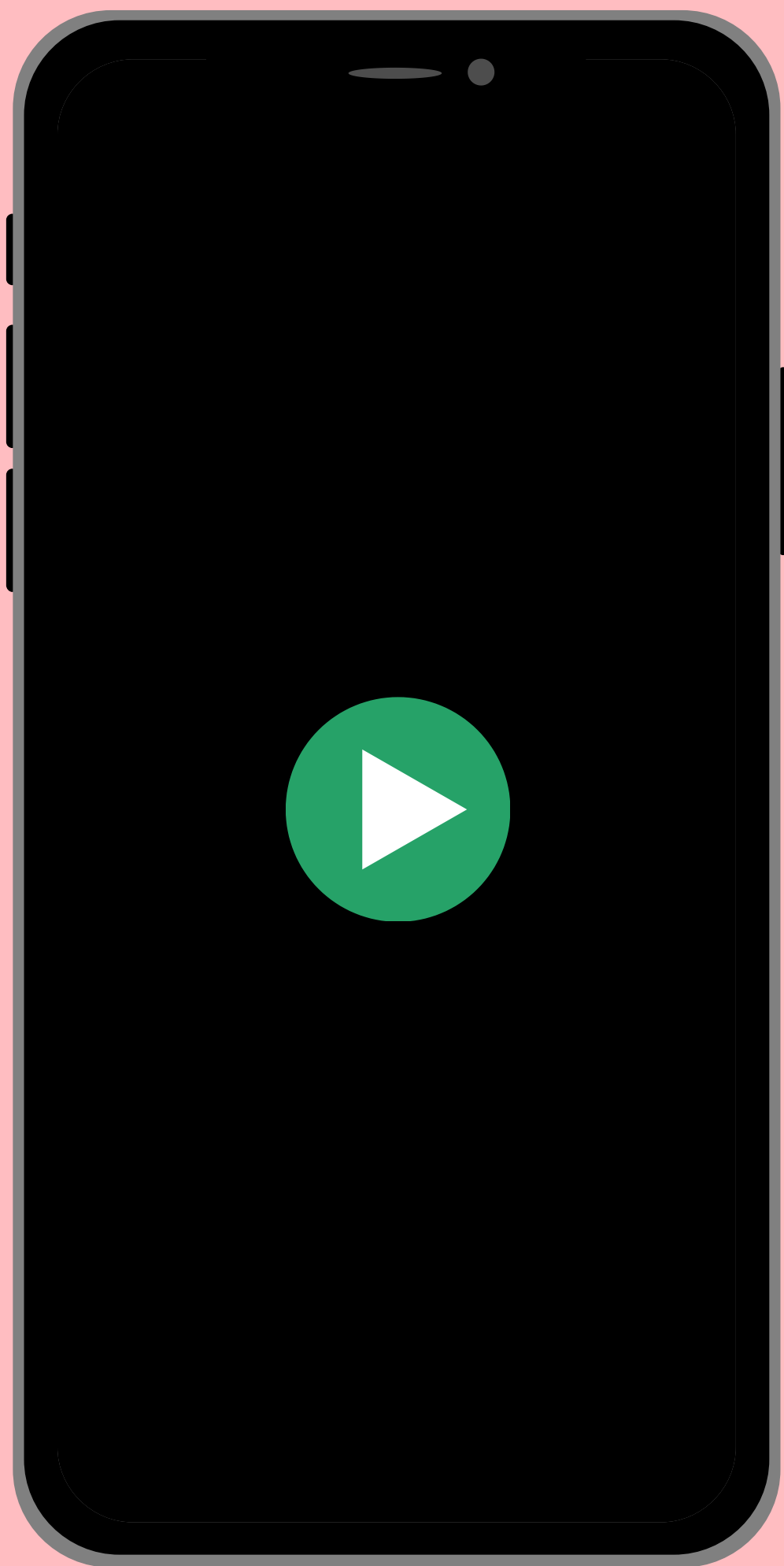


Values/Principles of Trauma-Informed Practice



Example 2:

Trauma Informed Interaction With Teacher



Calls to Action



CALL 1

Increase school staff's awareness of trauma and its impact on student wellbeing and learning.



CALL 2

Mandate trauma-informed training as a core component of professional development for all teachers.



CALL 3

Provide opportunities for students and teachers to build trusting relationships and get to know one another through fun and engaging activities.



thank you!



1 **FREE NS Health E-learning series:**
Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) e-Learning Series <https://library.nshealth.ca/ED-Mental-Health-Addictions/TIC#s-lg-box-16646625>

1



2 **Gov NS Trauma Informed Practice Discussion Guide:**
https://novascotia.ca/dhw/addictions/documents/TIP_Discussion_Guide_1.pdf

2



3 **St FX: MEd with Mental Health Focus, Trauma Informed Practice course:**
<https://www.stfx.ca/sites/default/files/documents/Master-Education-StFX-Mental-Health-Concentration-2024.pdf>

3



4 **Alberta Trauma Training Initiative E-learning series:**
<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/info/page15526.aspx>

4



5 **The Brain Architecture Game (Education on how trauma impacts the brain):**
<https://dev.thebrainarchitecturegame.com/>

5



6 **Trauma Sensitive Schools website:**
https://traumasensitiveschools.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Focus-Group-Report-July_2019-Final.pdf (youth voices report)

6

