



# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

---

**RESILIENT**  
COASTAL GEORGIA



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## About the Resilient Georgia Regional Grants

[Resilient Georgia](#) has been working with 16 regions across Georgia to provide an emphasis on trauma-informed awareness and care, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and child sexual abuse prevention training as a basis to transform systems and procedures crossing both public and private sectors.

- Resilient Georgia serves as a supportive and guiding resource during each region's planning and implementation process.
- These regional action plans each address the behavioral health needs of individuals birth through 26 years old and families in the community and surrounding counties using the Collective Impact framework (a diverse, robust and well-planned public-private partnership).
- Trauma-Informed Care, ACEs and child sexual abuse prevention can be the basis for systemic changes in a community. Each region has identified how one or more of these content areas are delivered to diverse community members through formal training, education, marketing and communications.
- Round 1 grants were awarded in Nov 2019 to regional coalitions based out of Athens, Augusta, Macon, Savannah and surrounding areas. Round 2 grants were awarded in July 2020 to regional coalitions based out of Albany, Columbus, Rome, Thomasville and surrounding areas. Round 3 grants were awarded in March 2021 to regional coalitions based out of Clayton, Cobb, Gwinnett, Valdosta and surrounding areas. Round 4 funding was awarded in December 2021 to regional coalitions based out of Atlanta, Brunswick, Gainesville, and Waycross and the surrounding areas.
- In their third and fourth years of partnership with Resilient Georgia, coalitions have bolstered their work to create bold, systemic, sustainable change in consistent ways across statewide issues, to affect policy, systems and environmental (PSE) change and incorporated a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) lens in their action plans.

## Coalition Mission



Visit our website to learn more at <https://resilientcoastalga.org/> and follow us on Facebook [@ResilientCoastalGa](#)



## Summary

Resilient Coastal Georgia Coalition is a strong collaborative committed to fostering trauma informed policy, systems and environmental change to cultivate resilience in the coastal regions of Georgia. Our work centers around:

1. **Community Partnerships:** We collaborate with local governments, non-profits, businesses, and community members to develop innovative solutions and strategies for a resilient region
2. **Target Populations:** The coalition's efforts are primarily aimed at vulnerable and marginalized populations living in the coastal Region of Georgia ensuring they have access to resources and opportunities for building resilience.
3. **JEDI Commitment:** Resilient Coastal Georgia Coalition is deeply committed to Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI). We strive to ensure our initiatives are inclusive and equitable, addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by all community members, regardless of their background.
4. **Sustainable Change:** Our long-standing goal is to create lasting, sustainable changes to improve the region's trauma informed practice across systems and promote social justice, ensuring a better future for all residents of coastal Georgia.

Resilient Coastal Georgia developed a Collective Impact Model to guide our efforts in 13 rural counties, 1 urban city and suburban areas in the region, with targeted groups including:

- Public School System
- Out of School Network, including YMCA, Faith Communities, Libraries, Recreation Centers and Youth Serving Organizations
- Judicial and First Responder Organizations, and
- Behavioral health providers.

We have been purposeful with engagement of Steering Committee and Work Group selection. Our coalition demographics are: 60.3% Black/African American, 34.9% White, 2.4% Asian, 2.4% Hispanic.

## Leadership Team and Contributors

**Molly Lieberman**, Executive Director, Loop It Up Savannah,  
Core Team, Steering Committee and Co-Chairs School Work Group

**Maureen McFadden, LCSW**  
Core Team, McFadden Therapy and Consulting Services, LLC, Core Team

**Lizann Roberts, M.A. C.C.**, Executive Director  
Core Team, Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, Inc., Chatham Family Connection Collaborative

**Vira Salzburn**, Program Director, Safety & Resilience Programs  
Core Team, Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council



### Steering Committee Leadership

**Dawn Baker**, News Anchor, WTOG News, Co-Chair of Steering Committee

**John Bush**, Director of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, City of Savannah, Co-chair  
Judicial and First Responder Work Group

**Rita Harris**, Community Outreach Coordinator, Live Oak Public Libraries, Co-Chair Out of School  
Work Group

**Alisha Markle**, Chief Deputy, Court Administrator, Chatham Co. Juvenile Court, Co-Chairs Judicial  
and First Responder Work group

**Rev. Andre Osborne**, Pastor First Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church and Co-chairs Out of  
School Work Group

**Tahisha Wright, M Ed.**, Principal of the School of Humanities at Juliette Low Elementary, Co-  
Chairs School Work Group

### Coalition Partners

**Public:** Chatham County – Juvenile and superior Courts, District Attorney’s Office, City of  
Savannah – Human Services, Neighborhood Engagement, Recreation Department Diversity,  
Equity and Inclusion, Police Department, The Front Porch (Multi-agency resource center)  
Chatham County Youth Intercept

**Private:** Next Step Evaluation, Front Porch Improv, Heart Property Solutions

**Academic:** Georgia Southern University, Savannah Technical College

**Community Organizations:** First Tabernacle Missionary Baptist Church, Overcoming By Faith,  
Live Oak Public Libraries (Chatham, Effingham, Bryan and Liberty Counties) and St. Thomas  
Episcopal Church.

**Non-profits:** YMCA of the Coastal Georgia, United Way of the Coastal Empire, Parent University,  
Family Promise, Brightside Children’s Advocacy (CASA), Mediation Center of the Coastal,  
Coastal Ga Indicators Coalition, Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council, Loop it Up  
Savannah, Deep Center, Chatham Savannah Authority for the Homeless, Park Place Community  
Outreach, Frank Callen Boys and Girls Club

**Healthcare providers:** Gateway Community Service Board, Georgia Department of Health -  
Coastal Health District, Memorial Health/HCA

**Juvenile Justice:** Chatham County Juvenile Court and District Attorney’s Office

**First Responders:** Chatham County Emergency Services, Savannah Fire, Savannah Police,  
Chatham County Police, Port Wentworth Police, Garden City Police

**Early Childhood Education:** Child Care Resource and Referral, Greenbrier Children's Center,  
YMCA of the Coastal Empire,

**Parents & Caregivers:** Parent University,

**Schools and Educational Centers:** Savannah Chatham Co. Public School System, Brantley Co.  
Public School System, Bryan Co. Public School System, Effingham Public School System

**Youth Serving Organizations:** Deep Center, Park Place Outreach, Greenbrier Children’s Center,  
Loop It Up Savannah, Chatham County Youth Intercept, The Front Porch and Frank Callen’s Boys  
and Girls club

**Georgia Family Connection - Region 12:** Bacon, Bulloch, Brantley, Bryan, Camden, Charlton, Effingham, Glynn, Liberty, Long, McIntosh, Pierce, Ware

**Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning – Southeast Region**

**Georgia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities – Region 5**

**Georgia Department of Family and Child Services – Chatham**





### Message from the Principal Investigator(s) *(optional)*

On behalf of Resilient Coastal Georgia, we value ongoing collaboration with community partners and Resilient Georgia, recognizing the privilege of working alongside dedicated individuals and organizations. With our core mission of building a resilient region, we are committed to the well-being of children and families by creating and supporting policies, systems and environmental change that prevent ACE's and supports individuals impacted by trauma. We are deeply thankful to Resilient Georgia for the opportunity to strengthen our communities, recognizing the invaluable support and learning environment this partnership provides.

### Key Impacts/Accomplishments

- 55 Community Resilience Model (CRM) training sessions conducted providing over 55.5 hours of training to 1,345 individuals throughout Chatham county and the region.
- 30 Resilience Enhancement and Leadership Model (REALM) training sessions conducted providing over 62 hours of training to 355 individuals throughout Chatham County and the region.
- Organizations trained in CRM and REALM included: School staff/teachers, Community providers, Court staff and attorneys; city staff; community volunteers; and law enforcement professionals.
- Over 250 individuals participating in the CRM training have reported significant growth in knowledge and understanding of trauma and resiliency in the post evaluation.
- Over 170 individuals participating in the REALM training reported significant growth in knowledge and skills related to stress and managing stress responses based on the post evaluation.
- Partner stakeholders all cited the Resilient Coastal Georgia collaborative as a key component of building community capacity to address resiliency and trauma responsiveness throughout the county and a key component that needs to be continued to allow all partners to continue to engage and collaborate to provide a county wide responsive support network.
- The Resilient Coastal Georgia website had over 2,800 site visits during the year. This website contains resources and soothing activities for youth and adults.



- 1650 Resilient Coastal Georgia backpacks and resource kits were distributed to individuals and families throughout the community.
- 165 Handle with Care referrals were completed in Chatham County.
- Regional counties who implemented Handle with Care had over 80 Handle with Care referrals during 2023.
- 167 Kindergartners from a Title 1 school were exposed to positive experiences with First Responders through the “Touch the Truck” event
- 15 Mindfulness zones set up at 9 elementary, 3 middle schools, 1 high school and 2 early learning centers.
- 12 Mindful Monday School-wide weekly practice training sessions serving 411 school personnel.
- 7 schools receiving small group Mindfulness Zone Sessions. (350 students)
- 7,275 Mindfulness Zone Program student participants, ages 4-18.
- 2,025 Mindfulness Zone Workbooks printed and distributed
- 400 Mindful Monday card decks printed and distributed.
- Partnership with Georgia Southern University to begin formal evaluation of the Mindfulness Zone Program





## Description of Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) and Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)- Related Efforts

### Prevention/Intervention

The Mediation Center (TMC) provides numerous conflict-related services; from conflict prevention and education to mediation and other restorative conflict-resolution methods.

**Savannah's Day of Peace:** The Mediation Center hosted the inaugural Peace in the Park on September 25, 2022, as a peacebuilding initiative with the concept of building relationships and strengthening community. Savannah's Day of Peace 2023 was held on October 1, 2023 and included with 45 community resources and over 500 community members who engaged at the event. The event culminates in a peace walk and human peace sign to commemorate the day. At Savannah's Day of Peace, living rooms are setup in the park and facilitators lead conversations on topics of interest. Peacebuilders working in the community to build bridges across divides are nominated and the awardees are acknowledged on stage at the event. A total of 12 Peacebuilders have been acknowledged in 2022 and 2023 from elected officials, first responders, faith leaders, community leaders, advocates, emerging youth, and young adult categories, as it is through peacebuilding that the roots of the conflict can be understood and relationships strengthened.



[Link to additional Savannah's Day of Peace pics.](#)

The Mediation Center of the Coastal Empire provides **Restorative Justice** work within several of our Chatham County Public High School and Middle Schools. This intervention is implemented in schools to address serious altercations between students, is a proactive approach aimed at resolving conflicts successfully. Before any intervention takes place, a thorough pre-work process is conducted with each student involved to gauge their willingness to contribute to a positive resolution. This approach has demonstrated considerable success in preventing the escalation of physical and verbal disagreements among students. The Mediation Center, in collaboration with Resilient Coastal Georgia (RCG), has undertaken training initiatives for community partners in Restorative Justice. Beginning in year 4 and set to conclude in year 5, this ongoing effort involves the training of facilitators within various organizations. Live Oak Libraries in Chatham, Effingham, and Liberty Counties, as well as YMCA chapters in Effingham, Chatham, and Glynn County, along with Youth Minister leaders, will be the initial groups to undergo this training. By equipping these organizations with trained facilitators, they will be better equipped to address and resolve the more serious conflicts occurring within their respective areas, thereby fostering a more congruous and supportive environment.



**"Love on the High Day"** emerged as a vital intervention in response to a distressing incident at Savannah High School and Early College, involving an active shooter hoax that left students, teachers, parents, and law enforcement initially unaware of its falsity. This traumatic event left those involved in a state of fear, anger, and concern over the potential consequences. In swift response, Resilient Coastal Georgia (RCG) mobilized community partners and engaged with the school's principal to develop and implement a trauma-informed community response.



During the advisory period for the youth, various activities were introduced, including trauma-informed yoga led by a certified instructor from the Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council (CCSNPC), Real Talk sessions delivered by members of the Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement, and an 8-week ACTS course offered by CCSNPC. These efforts culminated in a one-day event aptly named "Love on the High Day," which was meticulously planned over three months with the active participation of the youth. They took charge, designing and creating T-shirts, arranging for a student DJ, hosting a band performance, and welcoming community partners to support and encourage them. The results were profound, as the event allowed the youth to celebrate themselves and take pride in their school. Furthermore, it solidified a trusting relationship between the high school's leadership and RCG, underlining the power of community-based interventions in fostering resilience and healing in the face of adversity. Link to local press coverage - [Love on the High - WJCL](#)



**The "Zen Den"** mindfulness room stands as a testament to the power of collaboration, emerging from a partnership between Chatham County Juvenile Court, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, and the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, all integral partners of the Resilient Coastal Georgia initiative. This serene space offers a much-needed haven for court staff who often bear the weight of secondary trauma, which can manifest as various forms of stress. As one staff member aptly put it, "We endure a lot of secondary trauma that we kind of withhold, and it comes out in different other levels of stressors. And so, with the help of this Zen room, our hope is, is that when we're feeling stress at the office, this will allow us the opportunity to just take a little breather, feel more comfortable and re-energize to what we need to do for our youth and families and moving forward through the day." This collaborative effort demonstrates a commitment to the well-being and resilience of those who serve the community, recognizing the importance of self-care in order to continue effectively supporting youth and families. [WTOC - Zen Den](#) [SavMorningNews - Zen Den](#)





## Advocacy and Policy

Members of the RCG Steering Committee and the Out of School Network, recognize the importance their staff receiving the CRM training. As a result of RCG's work in bringing this training to our community, policies in multiple agencies regarding their training requirements for existing staff and new employees is now in place.

- **Mediation Center of the Coastal Empire**
  - Employee Handbook now states staff must complete CRM training within the first year of employment.
  - Youth volunteers are also required to take Youth Mental Health First Aid Training.
- **YMCA of the Coastal Empire** - Increased community partnerships to bring support services to the families we serve.
  - Hired 2 Youth Behavior Specialists (YBS) and have put procedures in place to utilize their skills to keep children connected to programming who might otherwise have faced expulsion.
  - Hired two staff support specialists who run Professional Learning Communities helping YMCA staff to be more effective in serving all students through engagement and prevention.
  - YBS have been trained to offer CRM.
  - All new Y childcare staff are required to take 3 hours of DECAL credited CRM training within the first 90 days of employment.
  - Implementing Conscious Discipline in Y Child Learning Centers and recently sent our two YBS to Conscious Discipline training specializing in children with autism.
  - Increased the number of Family Engagement events to increase parental partnership in education.
- **Live Oak Public Libraries** – Chatham, Effingham, and Liberty Counties
  - Existing and new staff are required to complete CRM training.
- **Brightside Child and Family Advocacy**
  - Existing and new staff are required to attend CRM training.
- **Parent University**
  - Worked with a community volunteer who is part of the RCG Out of School Network partnered with Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church and now offers workshops in Spanish, promoting a sense of belonging for members of the Spanish speaking community



## Research

During this year Resilient Coastal Georgia has continued with active evaluation throughout the implementation. Below is a brief summary of the evaluation efforts that have been conducted so far.

### Evaluation planning efforts

The workgroups continued to review and refine the guiding outcomes that they are working toward.

**Workgroup 1 – Schools**  
Trauma responsive schools that parents, teachers & students feel supported in

- 15 mindfulness zones established
- 7,100 students reached
- 411 School Personnel trained
- 20 Schools and Early Learning Centers Engaged

**Workgroup 2 – Out of School Resources**  
There will be a greater use of resources and more connected community resources

- 1,650 Resilience bags distributed
- 31 community organizations and 3,447 people trained
- 2800 website visits

**Workgroup 3 – Judicial and First Responders**  
Reduced Recidivism and greater use of diversion and support

- 252 law enforcement/first responders trained
- 260 Front Porch diversions
- 171 BHU interventions
- 245 HWC referrals

The evaluation team worked with each group to develop evaluation tools that are being utilized by each of the workgroups. Some workgroups experienced challenges with other key partners in having the evaluation tools implemented or in receiving responses to surveys distributed with resource bags. These include:

- Sign in and registration forms that are used at trainings to maintain a consistent and real-time list of the number of people trained, demographics of the individuals trained, and locations of the training.
- Google analytics on the website allow for tracking the number of unique site visitors and number of visits so that this can be tracked longitudinally for each of the pages. In addition, analytics allow for examination of which pages people come to first to understand which resources are resulting in community members accessing the page.
- The CRM training established retrospective pre/post-test utilized after each training and this data is shared with the evaluator.
- The Mindfulness Zone team established and is currently refining pre-post assessments collected from all students who participate in the mindfulness zone classrooms as well as from teachers and administrators at schools where the zones are in place.



- Interview and focus group protocols have been established and are being planned for the spring to gather more information from parents, students, administrators and staff about the environments within the schools.

### **Key Stakeholder interviews**

The evaluation team has completed over 6 key stakeholder interviews, with more planned and being conducted through the winter. The interviews utilized a similar protocol to the baseline interviews last year, which includes the perceptions of need within the community, defining what trauma informed and engaged organizations really look like concretely, how well the initiative is currently being implemented and what stakeholders would like to focus on in future developments.

Interviews have been conducted with representatives from the judicial system, the school system, community partners, and other key stakeholders. More interviews will be conducted through the winter and spring to expand this understanding and gather more information about perceptions on trauma informed community agencies and engagement.

Below are some of the key highlights from the interviews conducted to date about the importance of resiliency and trauma for the community:

- All of the partners interviewed indicated that trauma and ACEs are a significant challenge and issue in the community. They also discussed the importance of organizations and individuals becoming more trauma responsive in both professional and personal engagements.
- Respondents also discussed how important it was for community organizations and partners to continue to communicate with each other and work together to address trauma and to create a trauma responsive community.
- Schools and the judicial system were both discussed as key hubs however all stakeholders discussed the importance of working with partners throughout the community and to fully engage family members.
- The partners also discussed the importance of being trauma responsive with each other and with colleagues as well as with the constituents that they work with in various ways.
- Several of the respondents indicated that the trauma challenges had become greater due to COVID and a collaborative response is the most important way to address and improve the trauma responsiveness of the community overall.

The stakeholders were asked about the importance of addressing resiliency and ACEs in the community. All of the respondents indicated that the issue was a key area for all of the community, the stakeholders and the community. They also discussed the importance of collaboration to create a more resilient and supportive community.

- One respondent discussed the importance of including the focus on how individuals throughout the community respond to each other as well as how the organizations and the staff at each respond to the clients, patients and constituents they support and serve.



- The respondents also talked about the challenges in addressing resiliency and ACEs in the community because it is not something that many people are talking about. The challenge is in acknowledging the challenges and providing support to the individuals throughout the community.
- All respondents indicated that the majority of the action has happened in the school system so far, but there is still much work to be done within the school and within the other community serving organizations.
- The focused CRM and REALM training and penetration into key organizations (like first responders and the school system) has been really important and needs to be continued and expanded.

Stakeholders were asked to provide feedback on what trauma responsive systems looked like specifically. This year, respondents were much more specific in describing trauma responsive systems and felt that many of the organizations had made significant progress toward becoming trauma responsive but had a long way to go to become fully responsive.

- Individual responsiveness to each other, colleagues, and clients/constituents was seen as the cornerstone of truly trauma responsive organizations.
- Many of the respondents felt the schools were the greatest example of trauma responsive systems but felt that they still had a lot of work and training to do to become fully responsive.
- Trauma informed and responsive organizations were seen as being curious and supportive of individuals while working to fully understand the why behind their request and to understand the root causes and find supports.
- All of the respondents indicated the organizations need to work collaboratively to address the issue and to improve the environment for everyone in the community.
  - *An organization not just focused on outcomes or behaviors that are presented but are dedicated to understanding the why of what has happened to that person and having empathy for what has happened.*
- Chatham County Schools and Gateway were both listed as organizations that have comprehensively adopted safety management curriculum and begun incorporating de-escalation and trauma training for all new staff.
- Respondents also discussed the importance of staff and team members with lived experience who can relate and engage with the individuals they are serving
- Regular check in points, building in supports and resources for staff as well as clients and constituents was seen as key components of trauma responsive systems.

When asked about the capacity within the County currently to prevent ACEs and address trauma, all respondents listed the work being done by Resilient Coastal Georgia as one of the strengths.



- The extensive training of first responders has been a key response and many of the respondents indicated that they appreciated being able to let more people know about the extensive training that was available.
- The expanding crisis response unit and the behavioral health unit and advisory boards were also seen as some of the key examples of how the community is working together to implement trauma informed practices and be more cohesive in addressing trauma in the community.
- The collaborative nature of Resilient Coastal Georgia was seen as really critical and a significant strength in the community because it allows the partners to work together, share ideas and connect more intentionally with other resources. The willingness of all partners to work together was also listed as a significant component.
- Respondents also mentioned the importance of continuing the work and expanding all of the training, particularly with the turnover rates among many of the key stakeholders (like first responders and child welfare workers).
- The overall capacity within the community is still low given the need throughout the community, the demand is higher than capacity still. The community needs more trainers and to continue training individuals and supporting first responders and front-line workers throughout the community.

Respondents also provided feedback on the perceived improvements and supports that are needed within the ongoing work in the community:

- Continue the work of Resilient Coastal Georgia to train and support staff as turnover is occurring. Also, RCG continues to keep people engaged together which is critical.
- More leadership support and engagement with the workgroups to create detailed checkpoints so that energy does not get lost.
- The initiative has become much stronger and focused, and the want to maintain that energy moving forward.
- Continually seeking ways to support the front-line staff and help to reduce the exhaustion and secondary trauma.

There are several populations and areas that the respondents indicated were currently underserved throughout the community.

- Spanish speaking, Black, and Brown communities are still underserved throughout the county.
- Youth with mental health challenges are underserved due to workforce issues and the long wait lists for services. The limited capacity and resources for mental health professionals result in challenges for those seeking services and for those providing the services with burnout and exhaustion.
- Need more engagement with younger individuals rather than focusing on neighborhood association meetings which are largely attended by and focused on older individuals.





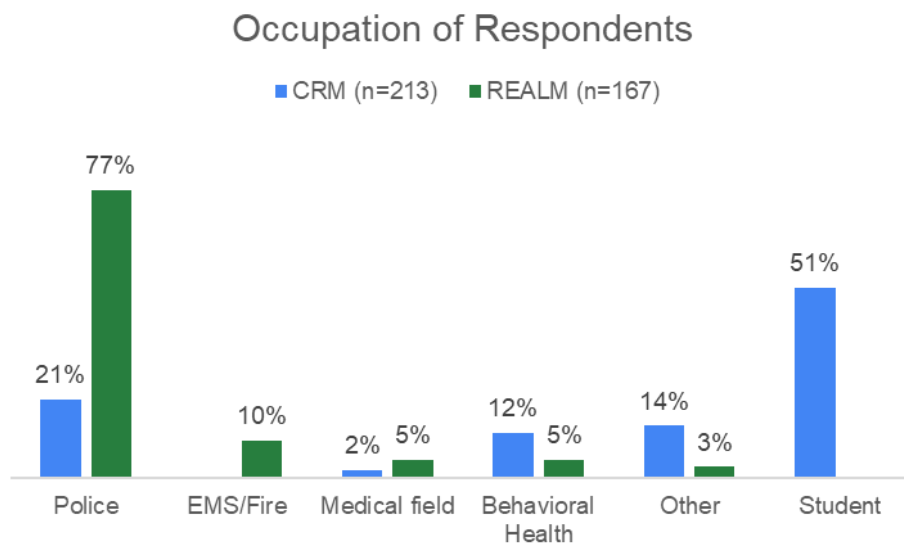
- The south and west side of the city and areas and other high poverty neighborhoods are experiencing high levels of trauma.
- The Spanish speaking and immigrant communities are still struggling, Savannah is not a welcoming place for most immigrants. They need more advocates and engagement with those communities.

Some of the other issues and topics that the respondents discussed included:

- Would like to see more engagement from the business community, housing authority and housing developers, and from specific neighborhoods like the Gullah Gee Chee communities.
- Greater involvement from faith communities, Human Resource Management organizations, expanding it to help the community understand it as an issue not just a social service organization issue.

### Community Resiliency Model training evaluations

A retrospective pre/post evaluation is being utilized with the CRM training and the developed REALM training. Surveys were completed by CRM 256 participants and by 178 REALM participants. The graph below shows a breakdown of the occupations of evaluation respondents. Most of the REALM training sessions were targeted at law enforcement and first responders. The CRM training was offered to a wider community audience and included more students and general community members as well as law enforcement officers.





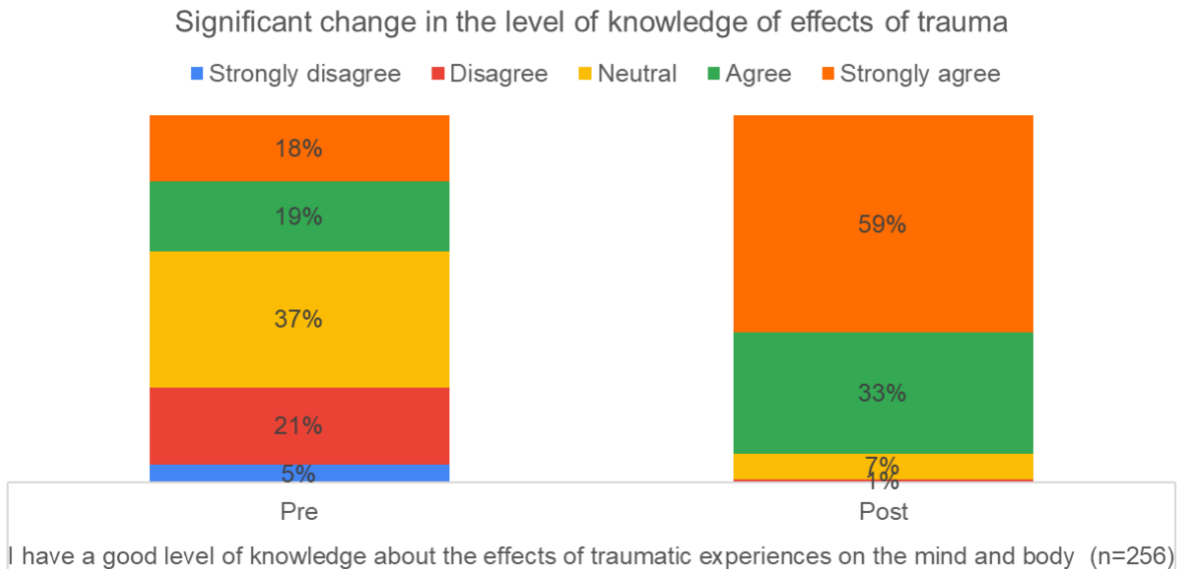
The REALM trainings lasted for between 1 hour and 3 hours with the majority being 2 hour training sessions. The primary target audience were police and other first responders.

The CRM trainings lasted for between 1 hour and 4 hours with most being 1.5 hour long. Over half of the trainings were offered in partnership with Savannah State University. For each of the trainings, participants were asked to indicate how their knowledge and understanding and how much it had changed since before the training. The findings from these questions will be shown specific to each training type.

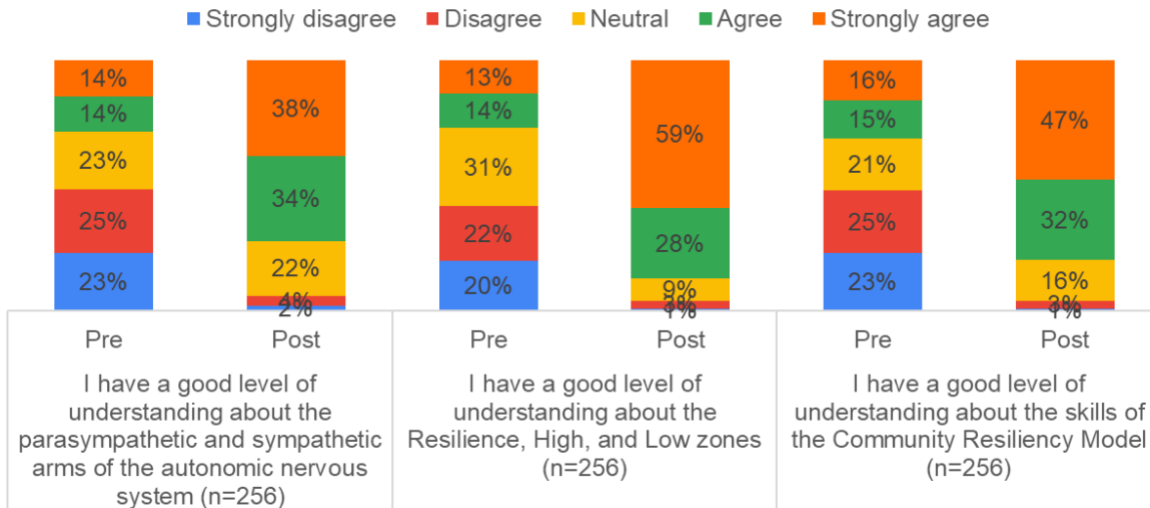
### CRM Training Evaluations

The majority of the respondents indicated an increase in knowledge from prior to attending to the training.

As shown in each of the following graphs, participants also reported increases in knowledge on key aspects of trauma, resilience and CRM.

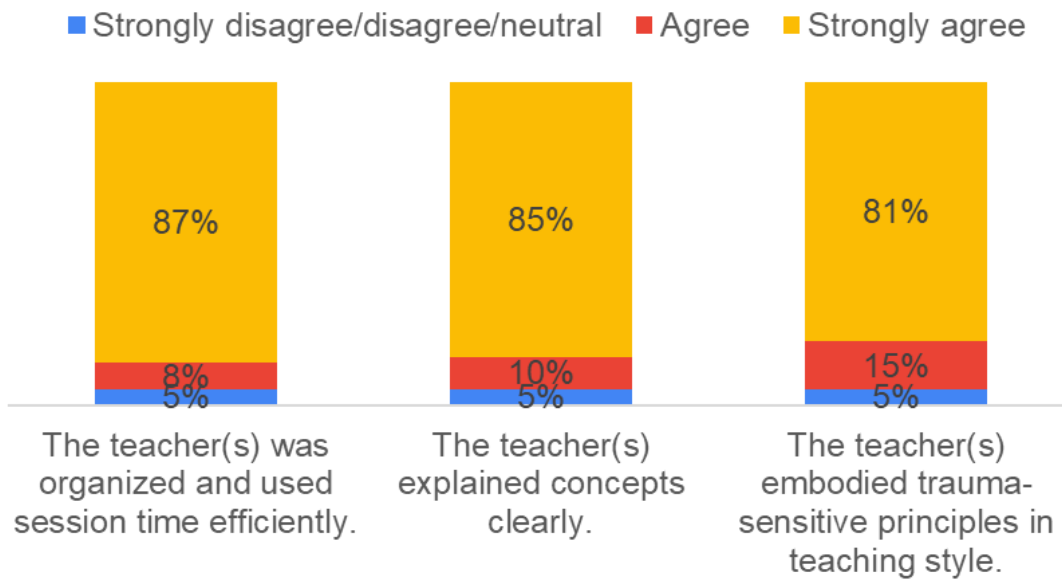


### Significant change in the level of understanding



Participants also provided very positive feedback about how well organized the courses were, how knowledgeable and effective the teacher was in conveying the key information. As seen in the figure below, none of the participants indicated dissatisfaction with the teacher knowledge or style.

### Teacher Evaluation

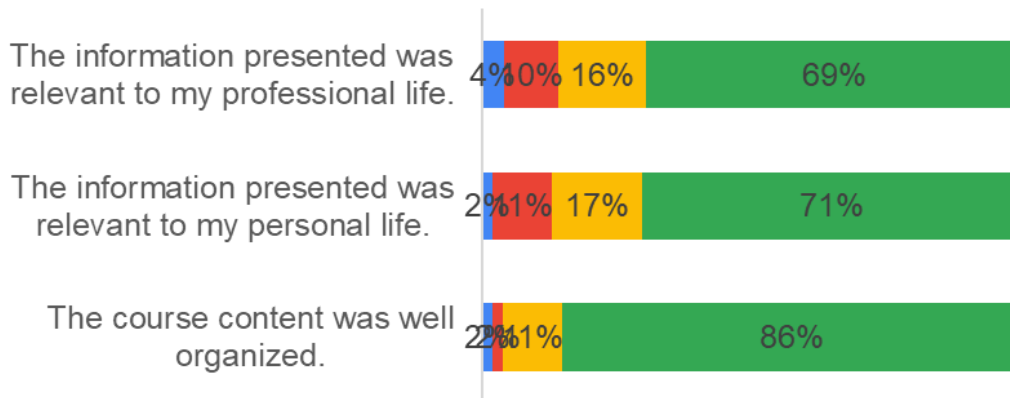




Participants also indicated that they were very satisfied with the organization and content included in the training and that the training was very relevant to their personal and professional work.

### Course satisfaction

■ Strongly disagree/disagree ■ Neutral ■ Agree ■ Strongly agree



### REALM (SPD and Chatham Fire/EMS)

Please give an example of how you can use the information from this training for yourself and/or others?

- Learn to handle stress differently (I've had prior stroke) so I was very interested in this.
- Remembering to take a breath and stop in a moment of overwhelming stress
- To communicate better with my wife
- I will use this knowledge to effectively and appropriately interpersonally interact with my co-workers
- Help handle future stressful situations better and improve my communication with others
- I can use the calming techniques when dealing with stressful calls I go to.

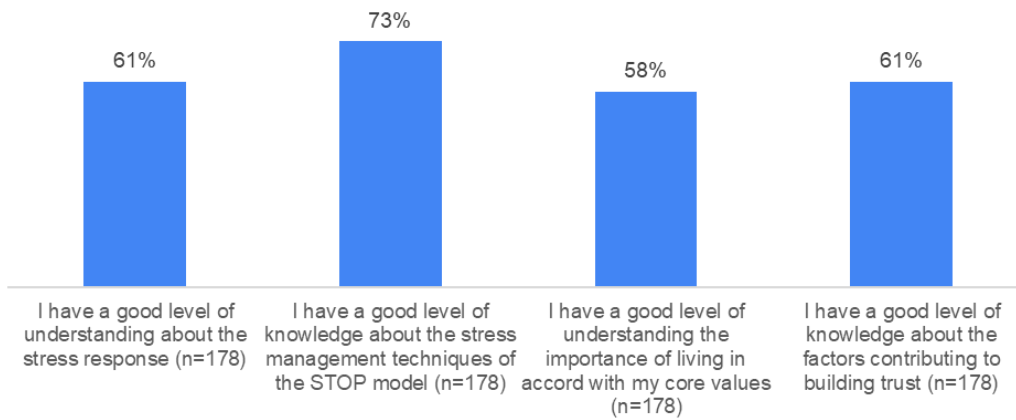
These evaluations indicate that the CRM training is changing the knowledge and attitudes of the participants. Three-quarters indicated they would recommend the training to a colleague and 81% indicated the training was excellent. Engagement in the training has been very productive and the training is reaching the target audience. Plans for future years include follow ups with training participants using either an additional survey or qualitative feedback via focus groups or interviews to gather more information about how the participants have utilized the training in their daily work and lives.



**REALM Training**

Most of the respondents indicated a change in knowledge or understanding after the REALM training.

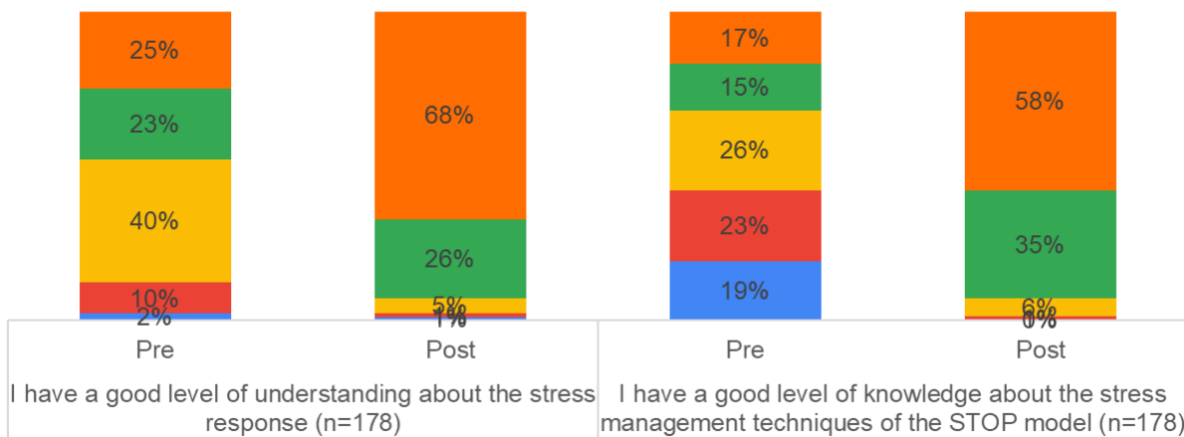
Percent reporting increases in knowledge



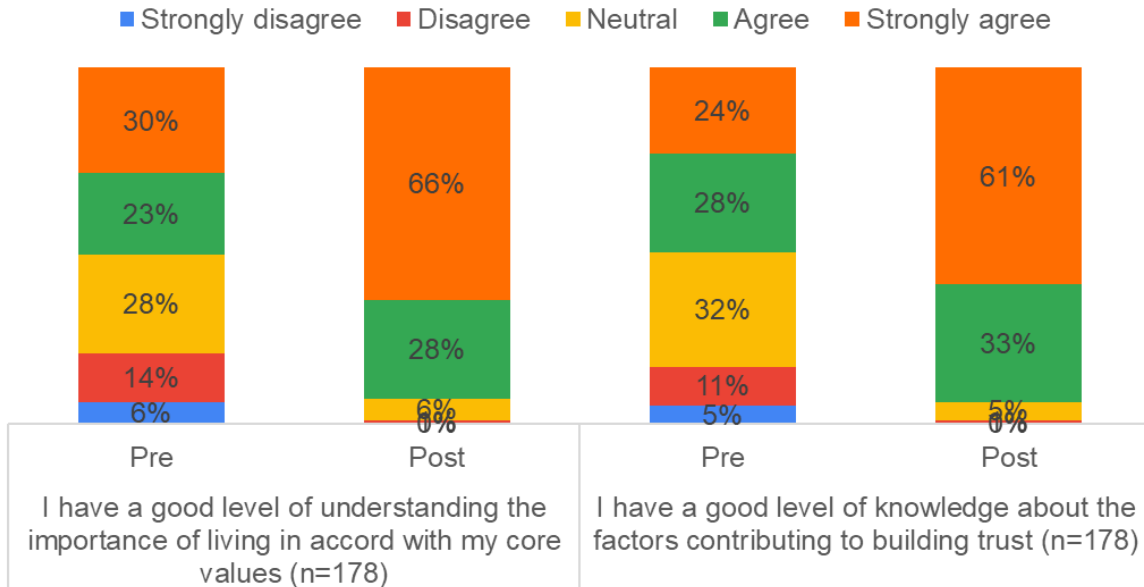
The respondents indicated changes in knowledge of stress, impacts of stress and how to manage their own stress using established techniques.

Significant change in the level of knowledge of stress and stress management

Strongly disagree Disagree Neutral Agree Strongly agree

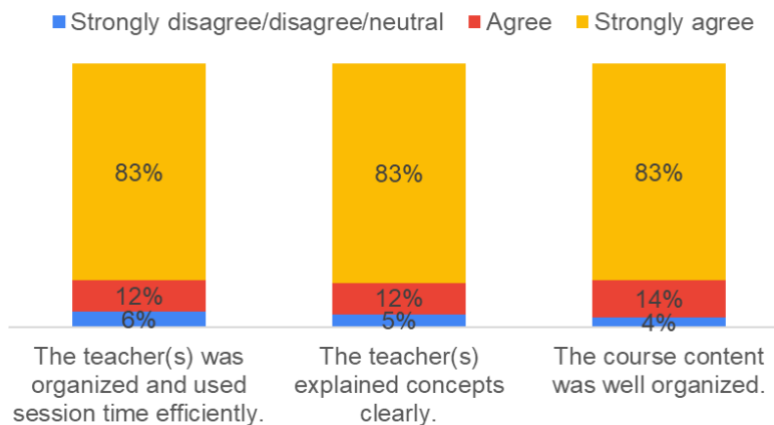


### Understanding of trust and living with core values



The respondents were very satisfied with the teacher and with the content that was presented. The majority of the respondents strongly agreed with that the teacher was knowledgeable, clear, and that information was well organized.

### Teacher and Course Assessment





### **CRM Qualitative Feedback**

- This was a really good workshop. I feel like I can use the skills to better my own life then start to branch out and help others with find their resilience zones.
- Ask questions to help others find a balance between high/low and get more in touch with how feelings/stress manifest in the body
- To use it on my children and adolescents with anxiety and other mental health issues
- Helping my children create opportunities to be present when they are feeling upset.
- Excellent workshop! I learned a whole lot in just 90 minutes!
- I've been using tracking all day, and incorporating the idea of mindfully recognizing moments of pleasure (to wire my brain to recognize them more readily.)

The majority of the respondents indicated that they would recommend this program to others (70%), that they were likely to use some of the skills in their own work (90%) and that overall 75% of them rated the training as excellent.

### **Survey of Regional Partners – Family Connection Collaborative**

A Google form survey was utilized to gather qualitative data from the regional partners participating in the development of Handle with Care. Data was provided by 11 of the participating counties in the coastal region. Below is a brief summary of the information provided.

Participating counties:

- Bacon
- Brantley
- Bryan
- Camden
- Charlton
- Effingham
- Glynn
- Liberty
- Pierce
- Ware
- McIntosh\*

Of the counties who responded, only 3 have fully implemented Handle with Care. In one county, HWC has been fully implemented since June 20, 2022, in the other two HWC was implemented in October 2022. The other six counties indicated it was not fully implemented.



The counties where HWC is fully implemented, experienced 310 notifications (80, 220, 10) communicated to the school this year. One county indicated that the HWC program has been very successful and that all the stakeholders were very supportive, and a second county indicated the implementation was seamless. A third county stated that while they are in the implementation phase, some first responding agencies have not taken the steps to fully implement training. Two other counties reported that the stakeholders are excited but either no notifications have been sent or the collaborations are still being established. One county that is still in the implementation stage indicated that they were considering expanding into early care and learning with the local Coastal Community Action Authority. The second indicated that they are in discussions with the county Head Start and the Police Department and have begun meetings between the two. None of the other counties indicated plans to expand into early care and learning.

Some of the challenges encountered include:

- Getting officers to remember and carry out the notification steps (2 counties)
- Waiting for a new CAD 911 system that was planned for January 2023 but has not yet started and referrals will be occurring through that system.
- Getting all the key partners and stakeholders engaged and involved with the progress.

For the other counties where it has not been fully implemented, reasons include:

- It has been tabled completely
- HWC requires an extra step in reporting which has slowed down implementation.
- Meetings with schools have been easier to schedule and get on board. Police and sheriff's offices have been more challenging to schedule meetings with. In almost all counties, schools are on board but the police are slower to engage (4 counties).
- One county has indicated that while all partners have agreed in principle, they are waiting for directives from the high-ranking decision makers in the organizations so they have not been able to move forward yet.

Of those who have not implemented yet most do not have a set start date yet (5 counties), the other two counties indicated that they anticipated January 2024 as the start date. One county has completely moved it from the planning table.

Seven of the 11 counties indicated that they were committed to continuing the work and the project moving forward.

All of the counties reported that the Board of Education and various law enforcement groups (police, local sheriff offices) were engaged or they were planning to engage to fully implement HWC and continue the project.





### **School and Early Learning Center Based Mindfulness Zones & Mindfulness Programming**

In Chatham County, we have 15 fully equipped Mindfulness Zones. This breaks down to 9 elementary, 2 middle schools, 1 high school and two Early Learning Center wellness spaces.

The spaces are used in different ways at each location, however common uses include small group sessions with school counselors and/ or Loop It Up staff, class sessions, calm down space.

Loop It Up Savannah's Mindfulness Zone curriculum has been further developed to include over a dozen Early Learning and Elementary level units, each based on a children's book, and including 20 mindfulness and wellness activities including yoga, mindful movement and games, arts based activities, reading and comprehension based activities as well as mindfulness and wellness exercises and practices. The Mindfulness Zone curriculum is currently being used in 15 schools in Chatham county.

Additionally, throughout 2023, Loop It Up developed a new layer of programming called Mindful Monday, which offers weekly wellness practices accompanied by writing, drawing and discussion prompts. The Mindful Monday program is currently being used by 12 schools in Chatham County.

Loop It Up Savannah has continued to partner with several non-public school Early Learning locations who were part of the 2022 Early Learning Pilot program to offer ongoing Mindfulness Programming and resources. These locations include Greenbriar Children's Centers two early Learning sites (Windy's Pre-School and W.W Law Pre-School), Habersham St. YMCA and West Broad Street YMCA.

Loop It Up Savannah has entered into a relationship with Georgia Southern University college of education to evaluate the Mindfulness Zone Program and Curriculum. Currently this relationship includes survey creation and data evaluation for and from participating teachers, students and school leadership. Additionally, the curriculum will be evaluated and backed up with evidence based sources. This will be a multi-year relationship.

**IMAGES of Mindfulness Zone Program:**



**Data available from 2023 Data Mindfulness Zone Programming**

**Pre-Survey Results - School A. Mindfulness Zone School-Wide Daily Morning Implementation by Teachers - Quarter 1, 2023**

In the first quarter 379 students participated in the program at School A (Elementary). 327 pre-surveys, and the data from 224 of those are included in this report. The 224 surveys represent a sample of roughly equal numbers of students in grades 1 through 5.

Following are the pre-survey instructions and questions:

**Think of a problem or worry you have.**

1. **Does this problem or worry make something hard at school or home?**  
173 of the 224 sampled (77%) responded yes.
2. **Does this problem or worry make it difficult to get along with friends, classmates, teachers or family?**  
122 of the 224 samples (54%) responded yes.



### **Can you draw or write about what makes you feel better?**

Not all students answered this question in words, but made drawings that most indicated their connections with other people who were helpful to them, or places that made them feel better, such as playgrounds, gardens, the beach, or their homes.

Some students gave more than one example of something that makes them feel better.

Written responses included the following:

1. Connections with other people were among the most often cited – 43 said family, 32 said friends, and 8 said teachers
2. Both offering and receiving gestures of kindness or affection were cited by 10 students
3. Being at home: 2 students
4. Being alone: 5 students
5. Schoolwork and reading: 5 students
6. Making art and listening to music: 9 students
7. Spending time outdoors and playing sports: 24 students
8. Sleeping and eating: 15 students
9. Passive activity such as watching TV or playing video games: 8 students
10. Playing with friends, family, and pets: 16 students
11. Mindfulness skills learned in the Mindfulness Zone program: 6

### **Observations**

On the whole students were more articulate and specific about what they considered to be problems they faced than they were previously. The range of problems shared indicates a level of growing ability to identify problems and comfort in sharing them with others. Among the problems identified:

1. Fears about illness and death
2. Conflicts with friends
3. Fear of punishment for misbehavior
4. Fears about safety
5. Fears about not doing well in school or not being able to graduate to the next grade
6. Distress about being bullied
7. Distress about being body-shamed
8. Noticing their emotional circumstances such as worrying all the time and that nothing makes them feel better

The above data is a sample from our **Mindfulness Zone School-Wide Daily Morning Implementation by Teachers**. This layer of the program has occurred consistently at three SCCPSS Elementary Schools, serving a total of **1,825** student participants.



**Mindful Monday Participation Numbers - Fall 2023**

Classroom teachers, paraprofessionals, counselors and specials teachers all participated in our Mindful Monday training sessions this fall. (Total number of participants to date: 411)

Total Number of Mindful Monday Student Participants: 6400

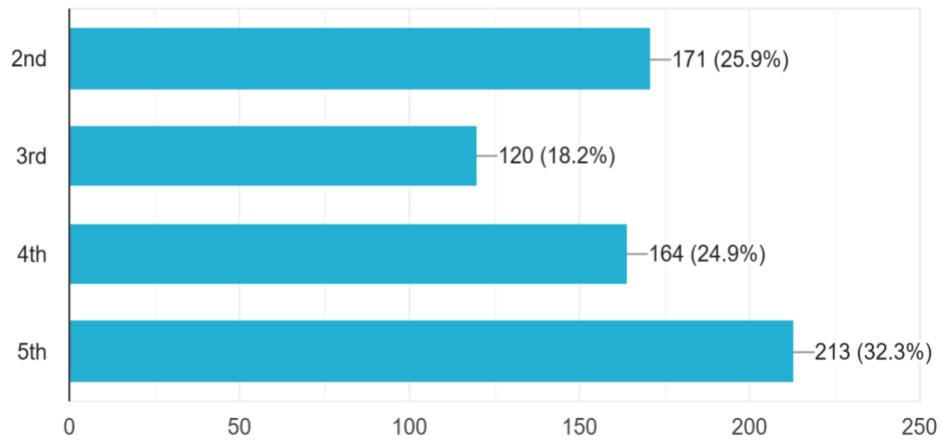
Mindful Monday	CLASSROOM COUNT/ # of Teachers	PARAS	COUNSELORS / ADMIN	SPECIALS TEACHERS	STUDENTS
WILLIAMS	21	6	2	4	525
SHUMAN	23	2	3	4	575
HAVEN	20	2	3	4	500
FORMEY	20	20	3	4	500
SAVANNAH HIGH	36	2	5	4	900
BUTLER	24	6	3	4	600
HODGE		2	2	4	0
JULIETTE LOW	32	8	4	4	800
PULASKI	26	2	3	4	650
SOUTHWEST ES	4	2	4	4	100
GADSDEN	24	8	3	4	600
GARDEN CITY	26	8	4	4	650
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>256</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>6400</b>



**2023 Fall Semester Survey Results - Sample of Student participants in the Mindfulness Zone School-Wide Daily Morning Implementation by Teachers - 2nd-5th Graders, Schools A, B & C**

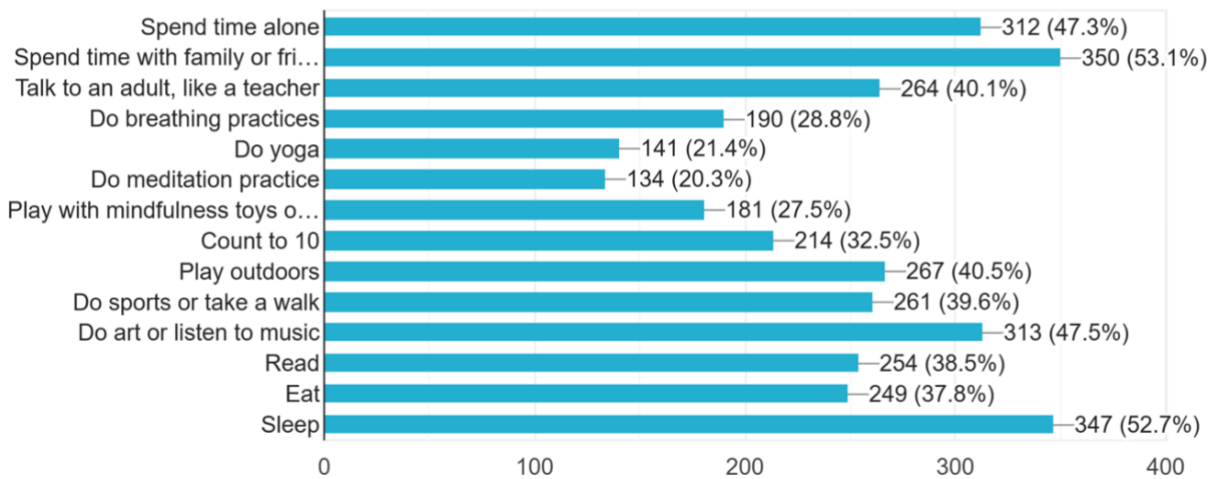
What grade are you in?

659 responses



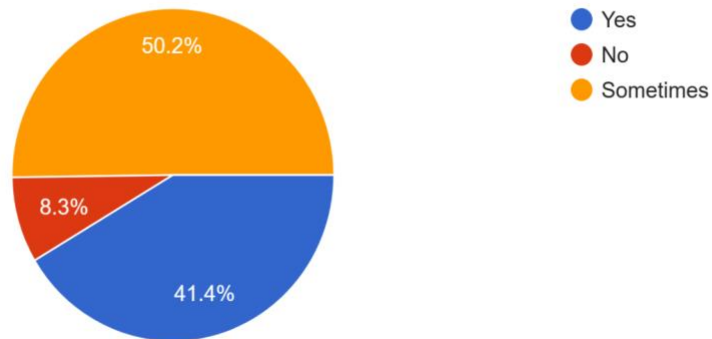
Are you able to do any of the following things to help you solve the problem and feel better? Choose all that apply!

659 responses



Do any of the things you chose help you get along better with other people?

659 responses



### Environmental

Schools Displaying increased amount of SEL materials creating a climate of care and support for students, families and teachers:





## Training

**Mindful Self-Compassion** (Gateway and Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council - CCSNPC) 719 individuals have attended MSC sessions in 2023 (3,813 since program launch) including 1) MSC retreats for staff from Children’s Advocacy Centers of Georgia, Wellroot Family Services (Tucker, GA) Juvenile Court, and Parent University; 2) awareness sessions for SCCPSS educators and administration staff, Union Mission/Phoenix House residents, and St. Joseph’s/Candler Hospital nurses, Georgia Southern University Advisors and Safe Shelter



SCCPSS participants at the MSC workshop, 2023

## **ASIST – Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training** (CCSNPC)

Offered monthly at Gateway’s Behavioral Health Crisis Center, 136 individuals have been trained in 2023, including behavioral health providers, staff of youth-serving organizations, law enforcement, SCCPSS employees, and Mercer University Medical Students

- In March, 15 individuals completed the 5-day *ASIST Training for Trainers*, including 6 people from Mercer University School of Medicine, 7 people from Gateway Community Service Board, 1 person from the Mediation Center of Coastal Empire, and 1 person from Front Porch Improv (ACTS Leader). Since then, Mercer University has made plans to implement ASIST for school faculty/leadership and medical students.



ASIST Training for Trainers, 2023

## **A.C.T.S. – Adolescents and Children Transforming Savannah/Trauma Drama** (CCSNPC) This is an evidence-based improv-based intervention program for children and youth affected by ACEs and trauma that engages participants in cooperative play activities, improv techniques, and theatrical skits to promote opportunities for self-expression, cognitive flexibility, creative problem solving, conflict resolution, and enhanced sense of personal agency.



ACTS Facilitator training, 2023



To date, 270 youth have attended the 8-10 week programs in 2023 (1693 since program launch) in 5 schools (Shuman Elementary, Chatham Academy, Savannah High School, Godley Station Middle School, West Chatham Middle School) and 2 community centers (Crusaders and Eastside community centers). 2 high-risk youth-serving organizations (Park Place Outreach and Youth Intercept), and Effingham YMCA.

In addition, Front Porch ACTS instructors completed all the train-the-trainer requirements and implemented their first ACTS Facilitator Training in April developing 14 new facilitators (in photo)

**CRM - Community Resilience Model (Planning Council, Gateway, YMCA of Coastal GA)**

The CRM focuses on building trauma-informed and resilient individuals and communities. 1,345 individuals have been trained in 2023 (1,895 since program launching) from various community organizations, including 1-3-hour CRM workshops and 6-hour CRM for Guides training. We now have 12 CRM trainers established at the following organizations: Live Oak Public Library, YMCA of Coastal GA, Gateway Community Service Board, Department of Public Health/Coastal Health District, City of Savannah, Mediation Center of the Coastal Empire, Chatham County Safety Net Planning Council, Savannah State University, plus community volunteers, including a Spanish-speaking CRM trainer to support CRM delivery to Spanish-speaking community.

**REALM – Resilience Enhancement and Leadership Model (CCSNPC)**

REALM training focuses on skills building in the 3 realms of resilience: personal, interpersonal, and organizational. REALM is offered to the Savannah Police Department officers as a part of their annual 40-hour mandatory training. 355 individuals have been trained in 2023 in Chatham County, including 252 SPD officers, 80 nurses at St. Joseph/Candler Hospital, 23 Chatham EMS employees, and 20 educators at SCCPSS. Additionally, 25 participants trained in a virtual REALM workshop hosted by the United Way of Valdosta. Training recording here: <https://youtu.be/r-Pt6ebZldU>.



*Tara Jones, REALM Instructor, Receiving Certificate of Appreciation from the SPD Training Unit*

*The SPD REALM training receives favorable feedback from the officers teaching them practical skills in self-regulation, communication, and trust-building.*





**TSY - Trauma-Sensitive Yoga (CCSNPC)**

A total of 20 providers, yoga teachers and therapists, have been trained, in a TSY Facilitator Training in March 2023. (43 facilitators since launching) TSY has been offered in 10 schools, 3 community centers, Park Place Outreach (a youth homeless shelter), Juvenile Court, maternity home, SAFE shelter for women, Hospice Savannah, Lakeside Youth Crisis Stabilization Center, Savannah Police Department (Mandatory Training for SPD Patrol School), and Gateway Behavioral Health Crisis Center with over 200 classes offered with over 1,500 participants involved.



*TSY Facilitator Training in April 2023.*



*TSY at Savannah Early College (left) and Tactical Yoga at the SPD (right)*

**Connections Matter (Greenbriar Children’s Center)**

Working through a Community Transformation Grant with the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) 40 individuals have received the Connections Matter Training through Parent University.

**Restorative Conferencing:** (TMC) TMC provided a restorative space for over 322 youth who have caused harm or been diverted from Juvenile Court for a misdemeanor in the past two years. We define recidivism data as youth who have been adjudicated at Juvenile Court for an offense after they’ve sat in a conference with TMC. Less than 3% of youth have recidivated.



**Restorative Practices Workshops and Restorative Conferencing Facilitator Training:** (TMC) To help build capacity in our community for other youth-serving organizations, school personnel, and houses of worship, TMC provides 2-hour Restorative Practices Workshops and 14-hour Restorative Conferencing Facilitator Training. By the end of 2023 five agencies and over 40 participants participated in the training.

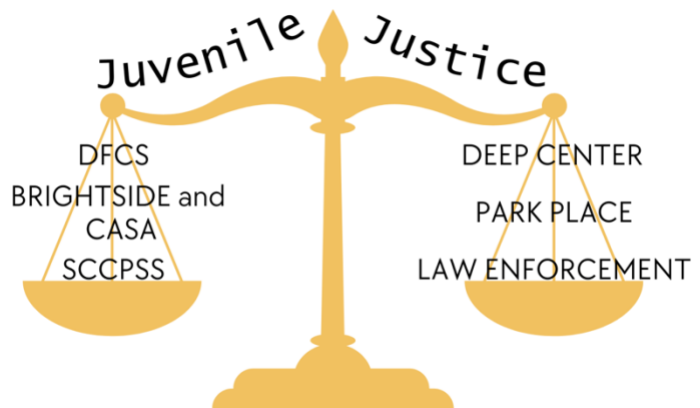
**De-escalation and Facilitated Workshops:** (TMC) TMC provided conflict-resolution and de-escalation training to over 35 agencies in the past two years.

Our current CRM trainers have been diversified in terms of race, ethnicity, and role within the community. We have 11 new CRM trainers – 1 Hispanic, 4 Black or African American, and 6 Caucasian. As stated we will expand our CRM training to include materials for Spanish speaking residents.

[Other efforts that do not fall into the categories listed above](#)

To develop a trauma-informed group of non-profit partners who interface with Chatham County Juvenile Court, including DFCS, CASA/Brightside Children's Advocacy, SCCPSS, Park Place, Law Enforcement and Deep Center, the following steps are being mapped:

- 1) Foster open lines of communication and collaboration among the non-profit partners. Encourage regular meetings, sharing of information, and joint planning to ensure a coordinated approach to supporting youth.

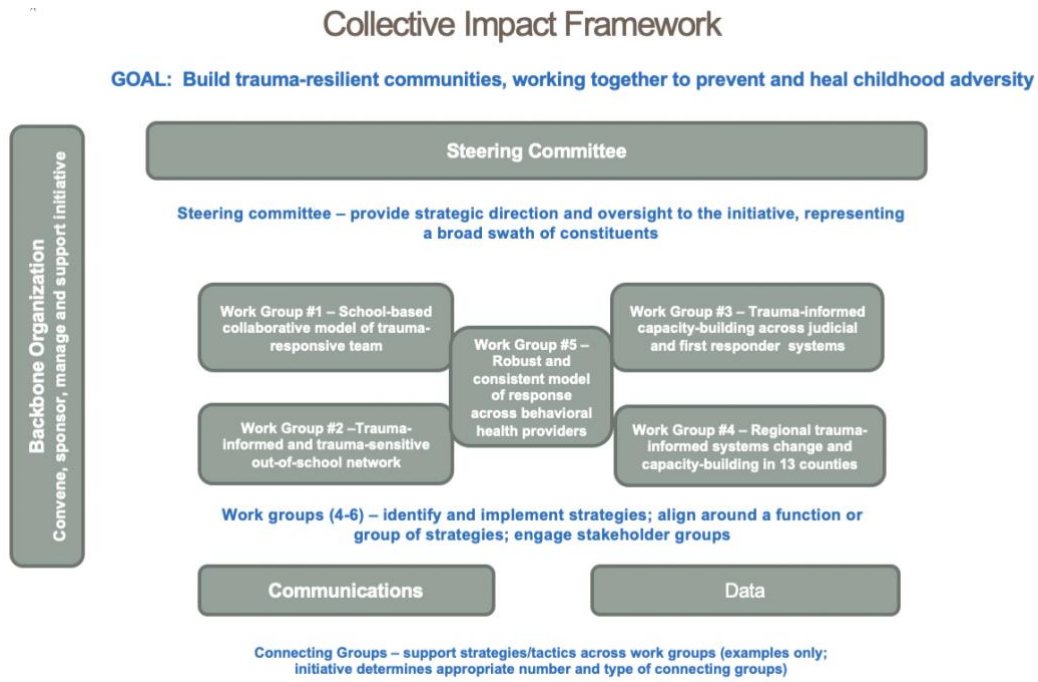


- 2) Provide comprehensive training to all staff members of the partners on trauma-informed practices. This would include understanding trauma, recognizing its signs and symptoms, and implementing appropriate interventions.
- 3) Develop standardized protocols and procedures for working with youth within the juvenile court system. Ensure that all partners are aligned in their approach and follow best practices for trauma-informed care.
- 4) Establish a system for collecting data on the outcomes of trauma-informed interventions. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the group's efforts and make necessary adjustments based on the findings.
- 5) Stay updated on the latest research and best practices in trauma-informed care. Continuously seek opportunities for professional development and improvement to ensure the group's services remain effective and relevant.



## Innovative Partnerships

As indicated for Years 3 and 4, we developed five priority areas and organized work groups to plan strategies and tactics to achieve our goals. Following is an update on each of these areas.



### Work Group #1: A school-based collaborative model of a trauma-informed team

Work group #1 had a productive and exciting school year, as we have continued to collaborate across the school system to build trauma-informed and resilient schools.

Currently, school-wide Mindfulness programs are operating in five elementary schools with over (2,500 students involved). We have set up ten physical Mindfulness Zone spaces, eight in elementary schools, one at a middle school and one at an early learning school. Small group Mindfulness programs for students in need of additional support have been implemented in a total of seven Elementary schools throughout this school year. Out of the ten locations from the Mindfulness Zones for Early Learners pilot program, we are still working actively with eight locations. Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, we piloted an Elementary Resilient School Program in five elementary schools in the Savannah Chatham County Public School System. Each school developed a resilient school map incorporate holistic elements of social emotional learning into their weekly and daily schedules, Mindfulness Zones, a small group structure for students who would benefit from additional support, *Handle with Care* follow up, and widespread training for faculty and staff (CRM, Mindfulness Zone, and/or Connections Matter). Schools also made mental health and well-being resources available to families and parents. We made progress in developing resilient school resources for Middle and High Schools, including trauma sensitive yoga programming offered at two high schools and one middle school, and



began exploring how physical mindfulness zone spaces can be most effective at the middle and high school level. We have identified both community and school district based networks where a comprehensive collection of resources can be shared and accessed by any district school that wishes to become a Resilient School. We are looking forward to doing workshops over the summer with school leadership to share these resources as well as training opportunities.

The implementation of Handle with Care continues gain momentum with 6 first responding agencies Chatham EMS, Chatham Co. Police, Garden City Police, Port Wentworth Police, Savannah Fire and Savannah Police who have signed MOU's with the public-school system to make referrals. We will continue to work with the remaining 4 law enforcement agencies for on-boarding. For the past 12 months, the Savannah Chatham County Public School system received 165 Handle with Care Referrals. We developed a Handle with Care QR code to go in a first responder's vehicle or on their laptop.



### **Work Group #2: Development of a trauma-informed out-of-school network**

This work group is comprised of organizations and providers who serve school-age children outside the confines of their school, e.g., churches, libraries, the YMCA and other recreational providers, Mediation Center, and others. Its goal is to develop an “informed village” of youth-facing organizations that are equipped with knowledge, tools, and resources to assist children and families experiencing trauma. This group focused on how to create a true trauma responsive culture within their respective organizations. The highlights of this plan include increasing the number of CRM trainers; enhancing toolkits by creating kits targeted to local Churches; and creating the capacity within the libraries and YMCA and other agencies to have facilitators trained in Restorative Justice Conferences.

### **Work Group #3: Trauma-informed capacity-building across judicial and first responder systems**

This work group is broad swath of judicial system and first responder participants. In addition to individual actions being advanced by their own organizations. This group focused on how to create a sustainable change and wanted to engage with the younger children, due to having an impact with children at an earlier age. To accomplish this the group decided to use the National Standard requirements of First Responders presentations to school children. The workgroup met with the Principal of the SCCPSS Henderson E. Formey School for Pre-K and kindergartners. The team decided to present to kindergartners. The First Responders utilized the Savannah Chatham County Public School System 6 Pillars of Character which include Responsibility, Caring, Citizenship, Trustworthiness, Fairness, and Respect. Each of these pillars was paired with a First Responder i.e., Fire Fighters were paired with Responsibility and the Police with Trustworthiness. Then each of the skills from the CRM



training was assigned to one of the pillars. Emergency Management Services (EMS) used the skill of gesturing from CRM to demonstrate how to care for yourself if you get scared when you see an ambulance or a family member in an ambulance. Presenters include a Juvenile Court Judge, Police, Fire Department, EMS and the Juvenile Court District Attorney. Each presenter was required to attend CRM training and include the CRM skill matched with their Character Pillar in their presentations.

**Work Group #4: Regional trauma-informed capacity building**

The focus of this work is catalyzing trauma-informed capacity building in 13 outlying counties. The engagement has been four-fold: monthly Peer to Peer meetings, through the Regional Manager, Lisa Brewer, CGIC has participated in six Family Connection meetings to present Handle with Care and one to one meetings with Family Connection Directors. We held a joint meeting on January 2, 2023 with Resilient Georgia partners – United Way in Glynn County and the Family Justice Center in Ware County regarding grant coordination and implementation.

**Work Group #5: Development of a robust and consistent model of response across behavioral health providers**

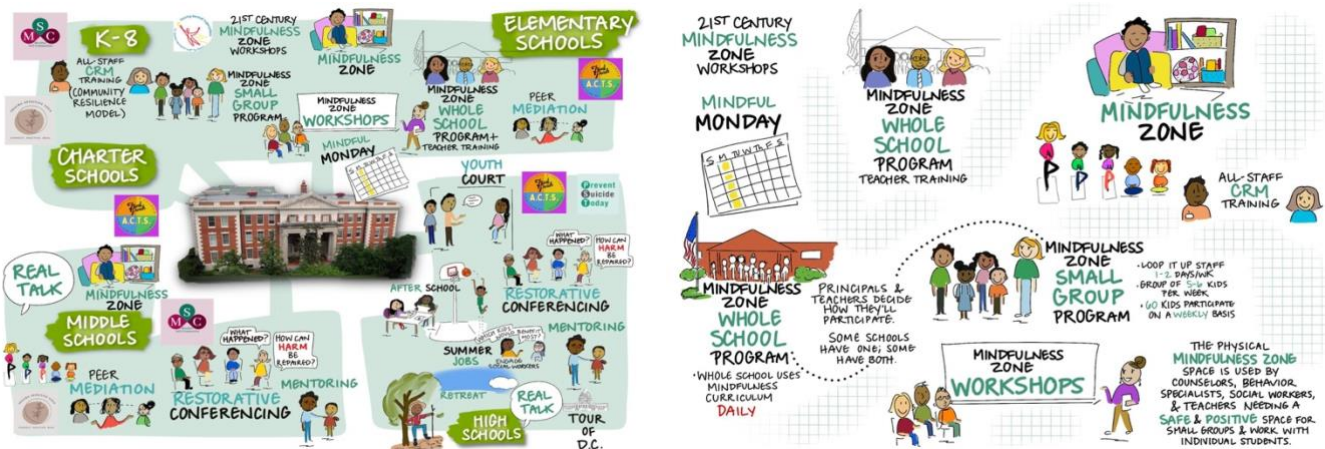
The goal of this group is to define, identify and help organizations measure what it means to be a trauma-informed organization, i.e., what are the explicit and implicit signals communicated to clients that let them know that it is a trauma-sensitive environment, and how all local providers can achieve this. Additionally, how can all providers participate in “warm hand-offs” across the network of providers, so that referrals are not dropped nor lost.

**Commitment to JEDI:** Resilient Coastal Georgia is working to ensure that a racial equity lens is ever-present in our deliberations, action planning and in our media. To that end, the Steering Committee and all the work groups (except for #4, and two of the work groups have added individuals with lived experience as members, so that they can help formulate and critique strategies that will have resonance with their intended audiences. Ten members of our Steering Committee and Work Groups also serve on the Health, Criminal Justice and Education Committees of REAL - Racial Equity And Leadership Task force seated by Mayor Van Johnson. The work of the Task force is informing the work of Resilient Coastal Georgia. Members of our team joined City of Savannah staff as part of a National League of Cities (NLC) –The Southern Cities Economic Inclusion (SCEI) initiative is a partnership between National League of Cities (NLC), the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. NLC has launched the Southern Cities Economic Inclusion initiative to support cities in building their capacity to implement economic inclusion strategies that close racial economic equity gaps through city-led strategies that expand economic opportunities for residents and businesses of color.

Our coalition demographics of our Steering Committee and Workgroups are: 60.3% Black/African American, 34.9% White, 2.4% Asian, 2.4% Hispanic.

## Spotlight

Resilient Coastal Georgia (RCG) partners engaged INKY Brittany a graphic recording artist who captures important work through her illustrations. In bringing this work to life RCG discovered out of the 55 Savannah Chatham County Public Schools, 53 of the schools had one of more of our RCG community partners working with the scholars and staff in a variety of ways. The illustration of this work was presented to Dr. Ann Levett, School Superintendent and Ms. Bernadette Ball-Oliver by RCG to highlight the work and discuss what we should focus on moving forward. Some of the next steps identified included providing CRM training at Coaches Clinics for all school coaches, partnering with the school systems Wellness Center and working to bring Restorative Justice Practices to teachers and counselors. The presentation helped to solidify and demonstrate the significant and critical role RCG and our community partners are representing in the school system.





## Inspired Action

**Website:** [www.resilientcoastalga.org](http://www.resilientcoastalga.org)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/ResilientCoastalGA>

**Touch the Truck** event was picked up nationally in 42 markets from Savannah to Hawaii [Touch the Truck](#)

**Love on the High** [Love on the High](#), RCG worked with a local PR firm to provide the public and media with information regarding our initiative.

**Brake the Stigma Car Show** - [Brake the Stigma 2023](#)

**Youth Resiliency Techniques** – [Youth2Youth](#)

To be used in 42 EMS vehicles and Juvenile Court Lobby

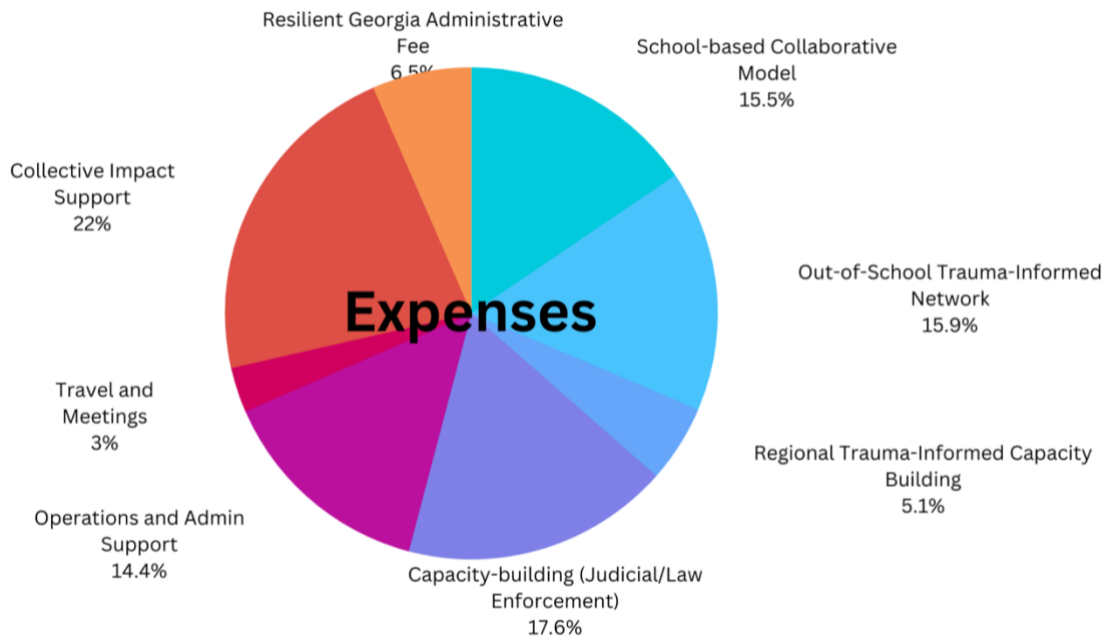
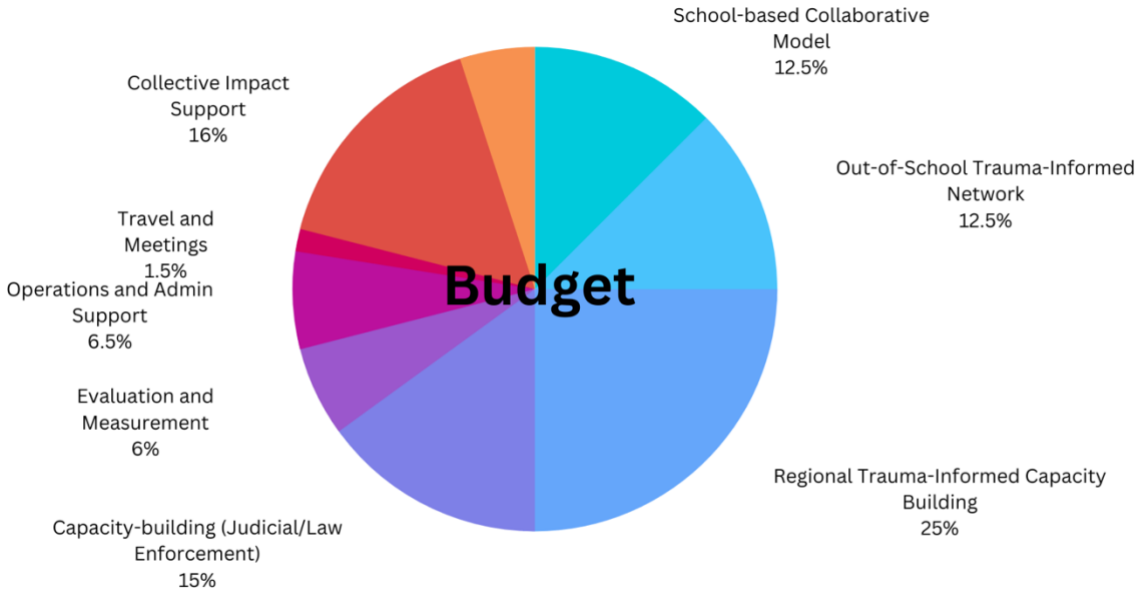
**Resilient Youth Theater Performance** during the Suicide Awareness Month 2023 - [Young Warriors](#)

**TEDxSavannah 2023** - Jonalyn Lavarias (TSY Instructor) [How the women's shelter inspired me](#)





## Income and Expenses





## Other Donors/Funding Sources

**\$451,000**  
funding match

