



# A TRUSTED SPACE<sup>®</sup>

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*Navigating Storms*

# UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

**Discussion & Activity Guide**



## Film Overview

Introducing "Navigating Storms: Understanding Mental Health," the latest episode in the Trusted Space series. This episode was crafted to be a crucial tool for educators and parents to facilitate meaningful conversations to help students understand and navigate their mental health.

Navigating Storms acknowledges the pressing emotional challenges students face and provides a comprehensive look into the scientific aspects of mental health. Students are offered insights from leading experts on how the brain functions, including the amygdala's role in fight-or-flight responses and the significance of basic well-being practices in emotional and social health.

This episode is an invaluable resource, encouraging open and empathetic discussions about mental health among educators, parents, and students. It aims to demystify mental health issues, offering strategies for coping and understanding, and fostering a supportive community for students to thrive emotionally and intellectually.

Share "Navigating Storms: Understanding Mental Health" within your educational and familial communities to initiate transformative conversations about mental health. This episode, brought to you by All It Takes in partnership with CalHOPE and the California Department of Health Care Services, is a vital step in the journey toward understanding and navigating the complexities of mental health in the educational ecosystem.

### Maximize This Film With Your Team

Ideal for students grades 6-10 with success in grades 4-12 depending on your population.

This film serves as a powerful catalyst for initiating meaningful conversations with your students about mental health. It delves into the less-explored aspects of mental well-being, shedding light on the challenges faced by young individuals. Through personal narratives, expert insights, and real-life examples, the film emphasizes the significance of fostering supportive environments where open dialogue about mental health is not only encouraged but embraced. It aims to empower students to recognize that struggles with mental health can improve, and it highlights the trusted individuals within the school community who can provide the necessary support.



## Class & Small Group Activities & Discussion

**Time:** 60 minute session, or broken into 3, 20-minute sessions.

**Prep Time:** 20 minutes: pre watch the film and gather materials

Have 60 minutes? Do all three below in flow. Need to break it up, no problem!

**Day One - 20 minutes:** Show film and discussion.

**Day Two - 20 minutes:** Summarize the film, do Flip Our Lids and Trifecta Plus.

**Day Three - 20 minutes:** Teach how to manage your lids with Notice Choose Act®.

### Introduce and show the film **15 minutes**

Let students know you have viewed the film.

Ask them to watch for the following (this helps them pay attention and have a stake in it):

- What does flipping your lid mean to you?
- What is a Trifecta Plus?
- What or who do you relate to in this film?

### Flipping Our Lids Activity **15 minutes**

**Set up and materials needed:** markers, index cards, paper (optional) dividing students into groups of 4 or 5.

1. Divide the students into 4 or 5 groups, ensuring a diverse mix of perspectives.
  - A. One way to do this:
    1. Ask students to get into groups of 4-6 - have them sit (not stand)
      - a) Ask students within each group to each pick one of the following (use any words you want, staying away from competitive things - ie: sports), sun, moon, stars, asteroids, water, air, fire, earth, colors, etc.
      - b) Have students one group at a time stand when you call their category - send each group to their own areas/tables to work together. Watch for defectors as they catch on to what you are doing!
2. Distribute index cards and markers to each group.

3. Using index cards to document, ask students to take 2 minutes (use a timer) and write down, draw, or represent in your way a response to this question:
  - A. "What is a trigger that often flips your lid (an intense emotional response/pop off/yell argue/fight/run away/shutdown) and do you ever notice it coming on?"
4. Ask students to share in their groups what they have expressed on their cards. Each person's participation can be a full share, minimal share, or a pass - the point is that they say something purposefully.
5. After each group shares within, take a few full group shares and offer reflections for them to ponder as the session ends. Ex: student shares that their lid flips easily when a parent asks them to do chores. Leader responds with, "That makes so much sense, I remember being triggered when I was a young person. How many others of you are triggered by your parents asking you to do something you do not want to do?" Get hands and ask students to pause a moment and silently reflect on what they are noticing.
6. End of session if broken into 20-minute deliveries.

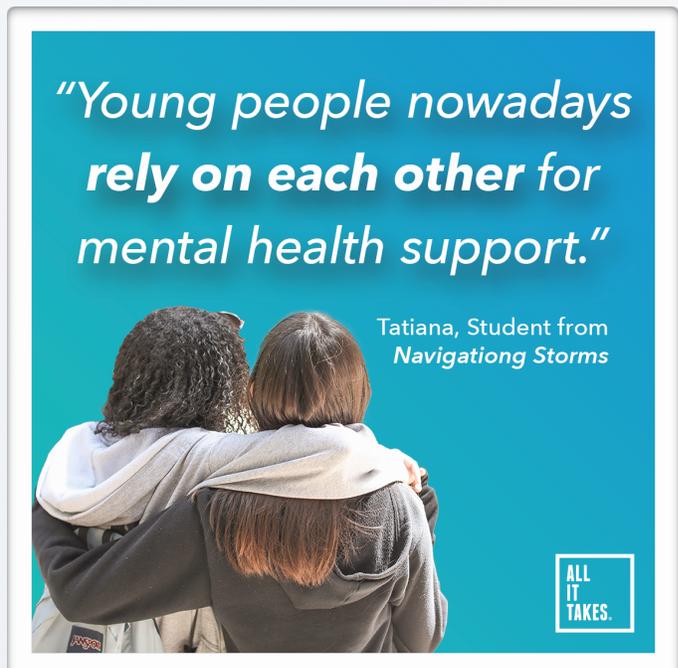
## Trifecta Plus - Vote With Your Feet **10 minutes**

**Set up and materials needed:** Large post-it posters, markers.

Write the Trifecta Plus tools on 4 posters and hang them in 4 corners of the room:

- SLEEP
- HEALTHY FOOD
- EXERCISE/OUTDOORS
- STAYING CONNECTED/HUGS

Review the Trifecta Plus concept with your students: These are the 4 things that Marcy talks about in the film - the 3 plus 1 things that we can do to keep our lids from flipping.



### **Part 1:**

1. Ask your students to walk to the poster that they sometimes or often use to calm down or reset.
2. Observe the groups of students gathered at each poster and 'notice' out loud what you see. Ex: Looks like a lot of you are very comfortable utilizing SLEEP as a tool to keep you from flipping your lid. Or, not a lot of you spending time exercising or getting outdoors.
3. Ask: Is there anything that surprises you about where you are and who you are with?
4. Ask: As you look around the room, what do you notice in general?

### **Part 2:**

1. Ask your students to walk to the poster that seems like the hardest, or least likely, for them to use.
2. Ask those who gather at each poster to have a group conversation about 'why' they find this one unlikely or hard to try.
3. Ask each group to share one thought they discussed with the larger group.

### **Part 3:**

1. Ask students to walk to the poster that they don't typically do but feel could make a difference for them.
2. Ask the groups to discuss some of the ways they might be able to get themselves to take little, or big steps, in doing something new to reduce lid flipping!
3. Ask each group to share one thought they discussed with the larger group.

# NOTICE CHOOSE ACT®

## The Framework For Decision Making

### **25 minutes**

Notice Choose Act® (NCA) is a decision-making framework that facilitates mindful observation (awareness), purposeful consideration (intention), and concrete actions (results) that deliver positive outcomes that individuals and groups feel proud of. NCA develops agency, accountability, resilience, and empathy for self and others as people learn to use the model to create the life they want in all circumstances.

This lesson is an introduction to the NCA Framework. There are many layers to this simple yet powerful framework - use this lesson as a springboard and watch for more lessons in the A Trusted Space resources.

### **NOTICE - Teach the concept of Awareness**

To better understand and intentionally improve any situation, both within us and outside of us, we need to first conscientiously NOTICE what is happening. To change, we must notice and name what we are feeling, for instance: happy, frustrated, tired, joyful, angry, calm, etc. Very often we are not NOTICING - we are only reacting to emotions and feelings without thinking about where those reactions are originating from.

In reference to the film and the concept of NOTICING, have your students work in groups on large poster paper as follows:

1. Break the poster into three parts (boxes, columns - let them be creative)
2. In section one have them write NOTICE at the top and then ask students to write down (one thing from each group member) all the things they NOTICED in the film that they could relate to, have felt, or experienced, etc.
3. Once they do this, have one speaker from each group share with the larger group a couple of insights they NOTICED in writing down the group's thoughts.  
*Alt:* can also have the groups just read out loud all that they have written down.

## CHOOSE - Teach the concept of Intention

Once we have clearly detailed what we NOTICE (in any situation inward or outward) we can begin to CHOOSE what we want. If we notice that we are feeling successful, confident, and happy we might want to stay the course of our current actions. However, if we find that what we notice is less than ideal, for instance feeling unsuccessful, disengaged, unhappy, anxious, etc., we can begin to consider what we would like to be experiencing instead.

1. In the poster's second section (box, column - etc), have students write the word CHOOSE at the top.
2. Now ask students to write down (one thing from each group member) all the things they notice from the film or the first section they wrote, that they would like to feel or act differently about. For example, if students noted they noticed that they could relate to students in the film who struggle with mental health, or maybe don't feel confident, or easily flip their lids, maybe they would write in the CHOOSE section that they would instead like to:
  - A. Feel okay not feeling okay
  - B. Feel confident
  - C. Stay calm when triggered
  - D. Be helpful to a friend who is struggling
  - E. There are many options here
3. Once they do this, have one speaker from each group share with the larger group a couple of things the group identified as 'CHOOSING instead.' Alt: can also have the groups just read out loud all that they have written down.

## ACT - Teach the concept of Results

NOTICE and CHOOSE are both cerebral, they live and are considered, in our minds only. No results happen until we embrace the third step in the framework, ACT. This is often challenging to acknowledge because people want to think of Intention (choose) as what's important and it can come across as an excuse for results that do not happen as desired. At times we hear things like this:

*'I had the right intention, so it isn't my fault.'*

*'I didn't mean to do that so I shouldn't face these consequences.'*

*'It's my mental health that caused me to throw that chair, I didn't mean to.'*

Once we have clearly detailed what we NOTICE (in any situation inward or outward) and what we CHOOSE instead, we can explore the reality of getting results. Results only happen when we ACT - when we transition thinking (notice and choose) into action is when what we 'choose instead' is possible.

1. In the poster's final section (box, column - etc), have students write the word ACT at the top.
2. Now ask students to recall the Trifecta+ from the film and write the four things down - don't tell them at first, see if the groups can remember with each other.
  - A. Sleep
  - B. Food/Nutrition
  - C. Outdoors/Exercise
  - D. Connection - including safe hugs
3. Now ask students to come up (as a group) with 3-5 more concrete actions that can be added to the Trifecta+ that would help get them from what they notice to what they choose. Often students have been taught some coping strategies and yet don't really explore using them and the results demonstrate this. Samples of what students might write are:
  - A. Journaling
  - B. More breathing techniques
  - C. Counseling - talking to a trusted adult
  - D. Drawing / Painting / Singing / Poetry
4. Ask student groups to share a few of the ACTION steps their group came up with.
5. Once the posters are complete give each student an index card, or scrap paper, or have them write in their notebooks the following:
  - A. I Notice that sometimes I would like this \_\_\_\_\_ to change about my mental, emotional, or behavioral health.
  - B. I Choose to feel like this instead\_\_\_\_\_.
  - C. These are the 3 ACTIONs that I am willing to do right away to move what I notice to what I choose.
  - D. Sign it as, 'I deserve to feel like I choose to, love, \_\_\_\_\_ ' (sign name)

# NOTICE.

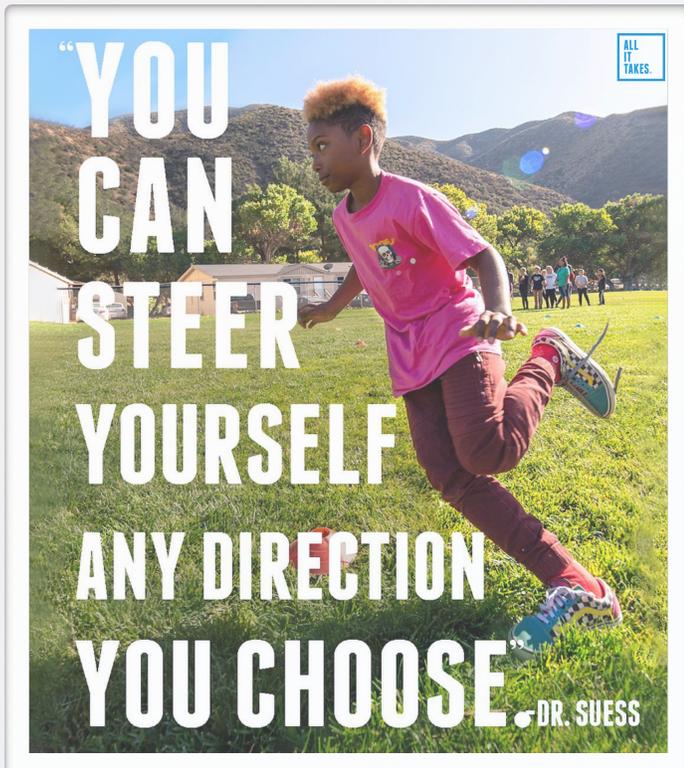
Recognition of Opportunities to Improve  
Situations or Create New Ones.

# CHOOSE.

Purposeful Consideration of Options.

# ACT.

Matching Actions That Deliver Desired Results.



**Giving this a try?  
How did it go?**

**What support could you use?  
We want to hear from you  
so we can create better  
versions of our work!**

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