

September 12, 2024

# Applying a Trauma-Informed Approach to Nutrition Education

for Newcomer Service Providers

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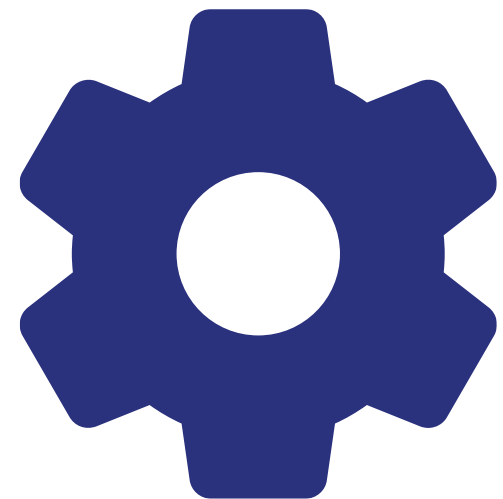
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Chat



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Chat



Raise Hand



Q&A

Leave Meeting





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Chat



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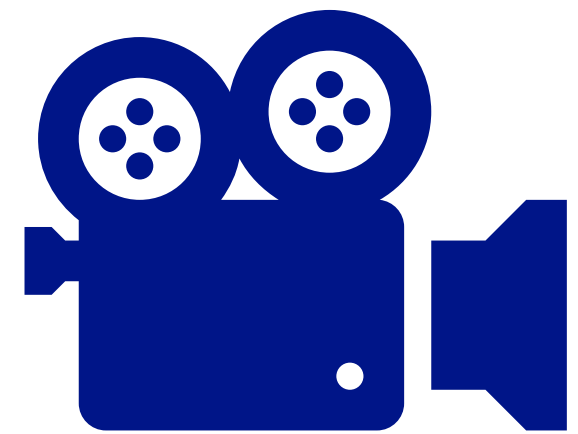


Q&A

Leave Meeting



**Today's webinar will  
run for 90 minutes  
and is being recorded.**





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The webinar transcript, along with the recording, will also be posted on the Switchboard website.





**Last, we ask that you kindly complete our webinar satisfaction survey at the conclusion of our session.**







**This short, 5-question survey helps us here at Switchboard continuously improve our training and technical assistance offerings to you all.**





# **Thank you for joining today's training!**

We will begin momentarily.



# Today's Facilitator



## **Eugenia Gusev**

Assistant Director,  
Summer EBT/ SUN  
Bucks, Maryland  
Department of Human  
Services.

# Today's Speakers



**Monica Bhagwan**

Director of Curriculum,  
Leah's Pantry



**Diana Cardenas**

Training Specialist,  
Leah's Pantry



**Eunice Rivera**

Senior Program Coordinator,  
Leah's Pantry



**The Leading Voice For  
Trauma-Informed  
Nutrition Education**

*Envision communities where everyone  
can cultivate a healthy relationship with  
food and their bodies.*



# Leah's Pantry



**Implements and creates innovative programs** that explore our relationship with food, support health, and build resilience.



**Builds capacity of partner organizations** to align nutrition security efforts with trauma-informed principles.



**Starts conversations to expand the frame** and include impacts of trauma on our nutritional health.

# Learning Objectives



By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

## DESCRIBE

ways that newcomers have multifaceted and complex experiences with food

2

## EXPLAIN

the relationship between positive and adverse experiences and nourishment

3

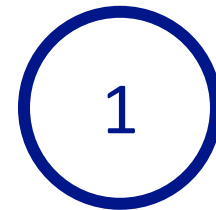
## DESIGN

trauma-informed nutrition education programs that respond to positive and adverse experiences and that incorporate the different ways we relate to food

4

## APPLY

practical approaches for delivering trauma-informed nutrition education to newcomers with compassion and connection



# **Newcomers' Experiences with Food**

A Complex and Multifaceted Relationship



# Food Is Complicated

- Our relationships with food are complicated by our culture, ancestry, health, income, biology, family... and almost anything that happens to us in life.





**HEALTH:** Nourishing my body and my mind matters

**SOCIAL:** Food connects me with my culture and community

**SACRED:** Food is part of my spiritual beliefs and practice

**AESTHETIC:** A meal can be a work of art

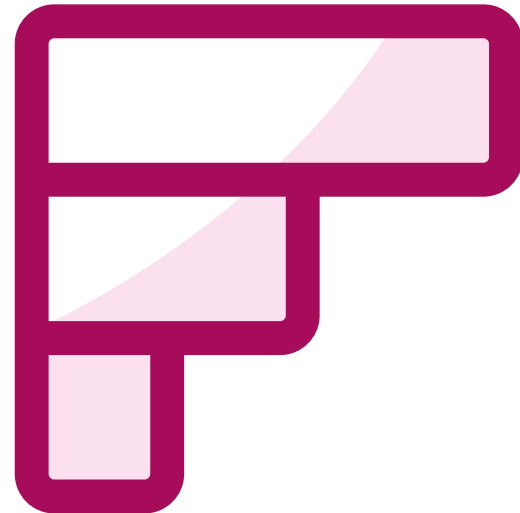
**MORAL:** Eating should be a morally and ethically responsible act





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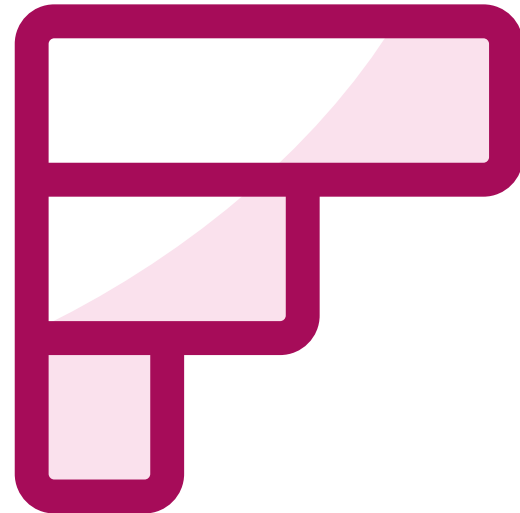


**Meaning of Food in Life-Moral**  
**Which statement most resonates with you? Please choose one.**

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

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**Meaning of Food in Life-Health**  
**Which statement most resonates with you? Please choose one.**

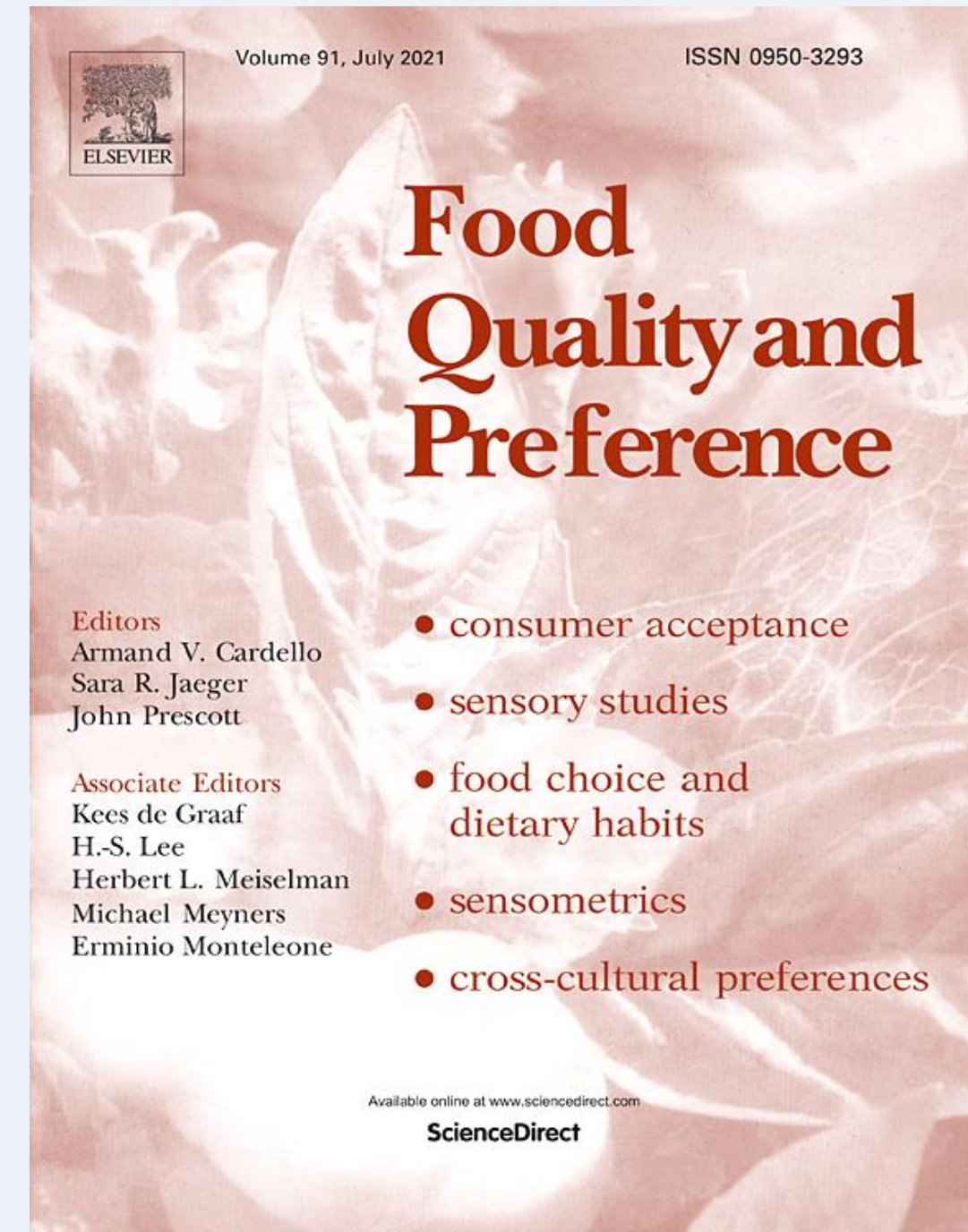
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# Surprising Discoveries

## About the Drivers of Dietary Habits

- **Social** and **Moral** domains drive healthy eating
- **Aesthetic** domain (with Health domain being less important) drives indulgent eating behaviors
- **Sacred** domain (with Aesthetic domain being less important) drives functional food behaviors



Arbit, N., Ruby, M., & Rozin, P. (2017). Development and validation of the meaning of food in life questionnaire (MFLQ): Evidence for a new construct to explain eating behavior. *Food Quality and Preference*, 59, 35–45.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0950329317300332?via%3Dihub>

Kokkoris, M. D., & Stavrova, O. (2021). Meaning of food and consumer eating behaviors. *Food Quality and Preference*, 94, 104343. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0950329321002263>



# Awareness of the Meaning of Food in Our Lives

How do you think about and interact with others who hold a different meaning of food?

**Health**

**Moral**

**Aesthetic**

**Social**

**Sacred**





# Afghan Women's Focus Group

July 2024

- Hear directly from newcomers about their experiences around food and resettlement
- With acknowledgment that newcomer stories are greatly varied





# Afghan Women's Focus Group

In their Own Words



*As a mother, my first priority is food, especially for my children, because when their stomachs are full then we can do a lot... both rent and food are equal as priority.*

*We all know how kids are once they eat something in school, and day after day, they get used to it. So, my children sometimes want pizzas. We do buy it for them; however, sometimes we get scared about what if it is not halal.*

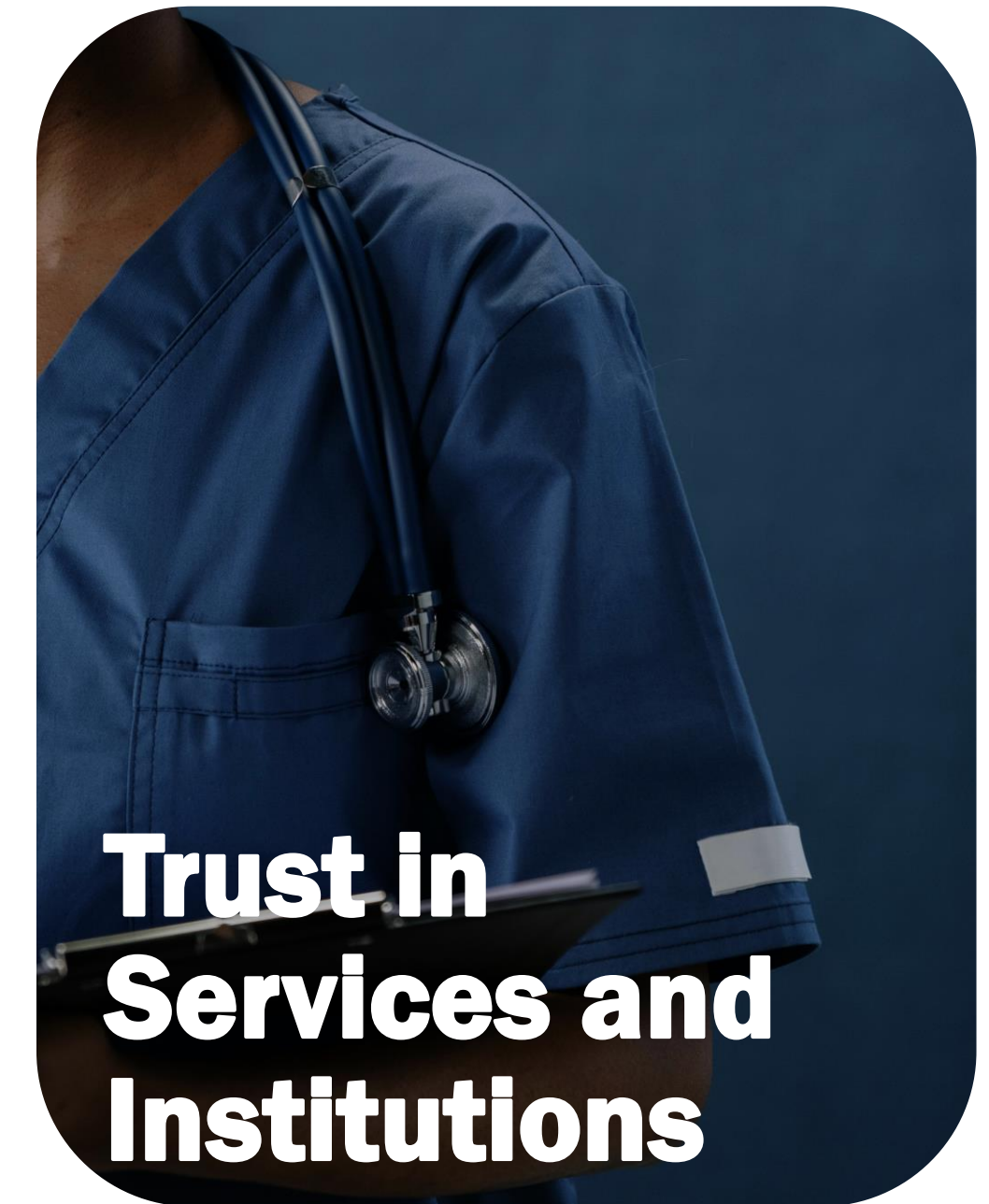
*The nutrition here and in Afghanistan I believe is different. In Afghanistan, we used to eat three times a day. When we first came here, we ate three times a day, but now that has changed. My children's eating schedule is imbalanced because of work and school. We no longer eat at the table together, because we are all not home at the same time. Whoever is home eats whenever they feel hungry.*



**In what ways might the meaning of food in U.S. culture be different from newcomers' home cultures?**

# Societal Considerations

## Overview





# Societal Considerations

## Women's Roles and Status

- Family and kinship dynamics
- Gender norms
- Rights and equality



# Societal Considerations

## Messaging and Marketing

- Commercial environment
- Perceptions about health and nutrition





# Societal Considerations

## Trust in Services and Institutions

- Perceptions of public services, such as SNAP/EBT and WIC
- Relationship to government and institutions
- U.S. Charitable Food Network
- Previous experiences of shaming or trauma when seeking help





2

# Trauma and Resilience

The Relationship Between Positive and Adverse Experiences and Nourishment

# Sources of Trauma



## Violence

and displacement



## Hunger and food insecurity

Unreliable food supply



## Loss of self-determination

and livelihood; poverty





# Trauma is the...



Event

Experience

Effect



# Grief and Loss





# Resilience



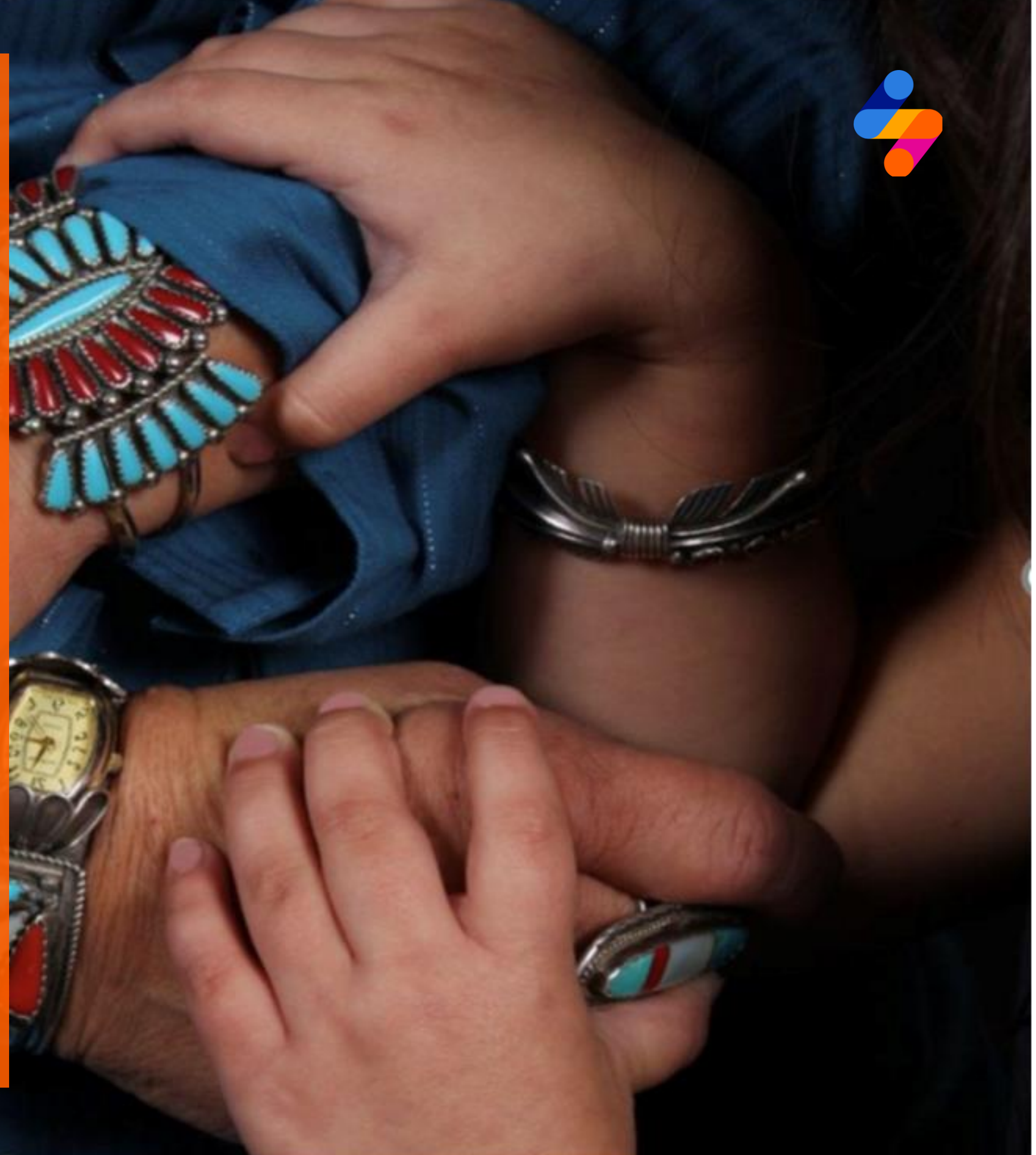
The process of the body and mind “adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress.” (Source: American Psychological Association)





# Communal Values as Protective Factors

- Agency, self-determination, and hardiness
- Collective responsibility and interconnectedness
- Supportive, caring, cohesive communities
- Traditional knowledge, values, and rituals
- Being treated as special, as valued
- Positive cultural and ethnic identity







# Healing Practices as Protective Factors

- Time in nature
- Natural daily movement
- Plant-based diet
- Spiritual practices and connection



# Reflection Questions



What protective and healing factors do I have in my life?

Which ones do I need support around?



# A Regulated Stress Response



Hyperarousal (“Fight/Flight” = attack or run away)

---

Be flexible

Self-regulate

Be curious

Make decisions

Be creative

Absorb nutrients

Relate

Heal physically

---

Hypoarousal (“Fawn/Freeze” = appease or shut down)

# Window of Tolerance

Dr. Dan Siegel



Acute or frequent  
adversity and stress  
shrink our window of  
tolerance.



Support and care  
widen our window  
of tolerance so we  
can cope with  
challenges and  
resist illness and  
disease.

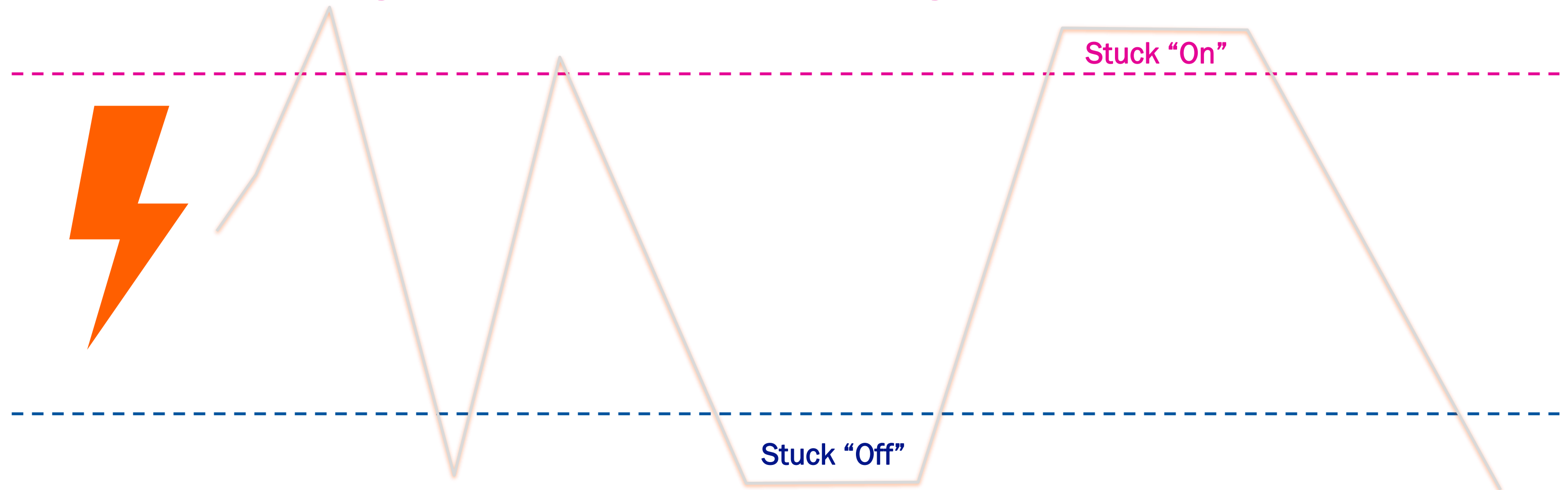


# Survival Response: Emotional Symptoms



## Hyperarousal (“Fight/Flight”)

*Anger Anxiety Chaotic Hypervigilance Hyperactive*



## Hypoarousal (“Fawn/Freeze”)

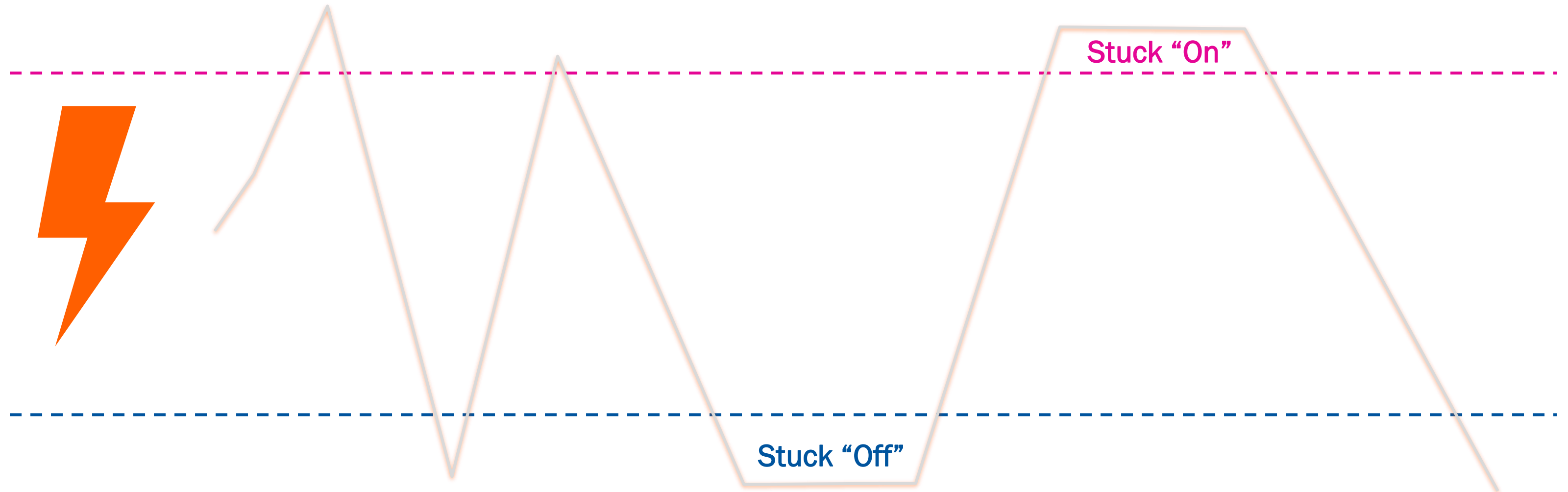
*Depression Numbness Withdrawal Shame Disconnection Lack of Motivation*

# Survival Response: Health Impacts



## Hyperarousal (“Fight/Flight”)

High blood pressure   Chronic pain   Sleeplessness   Digestive problems   Appetite changes



## Hypoarousal (“Fawn/Freeze”)

Chronic fatigue   Low blood pressure   Poor digestion   Appetite changes



**Where do food and nourishment fit into the picture of trauma and resilience?**



# Nourishment and Resilience

- A healthy body and brain support resilience
- Good nutrition is essential for good physical, mental, and emotional functioning
- Health is more than weight
- Immigrants have better health outcomes than native-born citizens (Immigrant Paradox)







**Does the food environment  
support resilience?**

# Hierarchy of Food Needs

Ellyn Satter, RD, LCSW



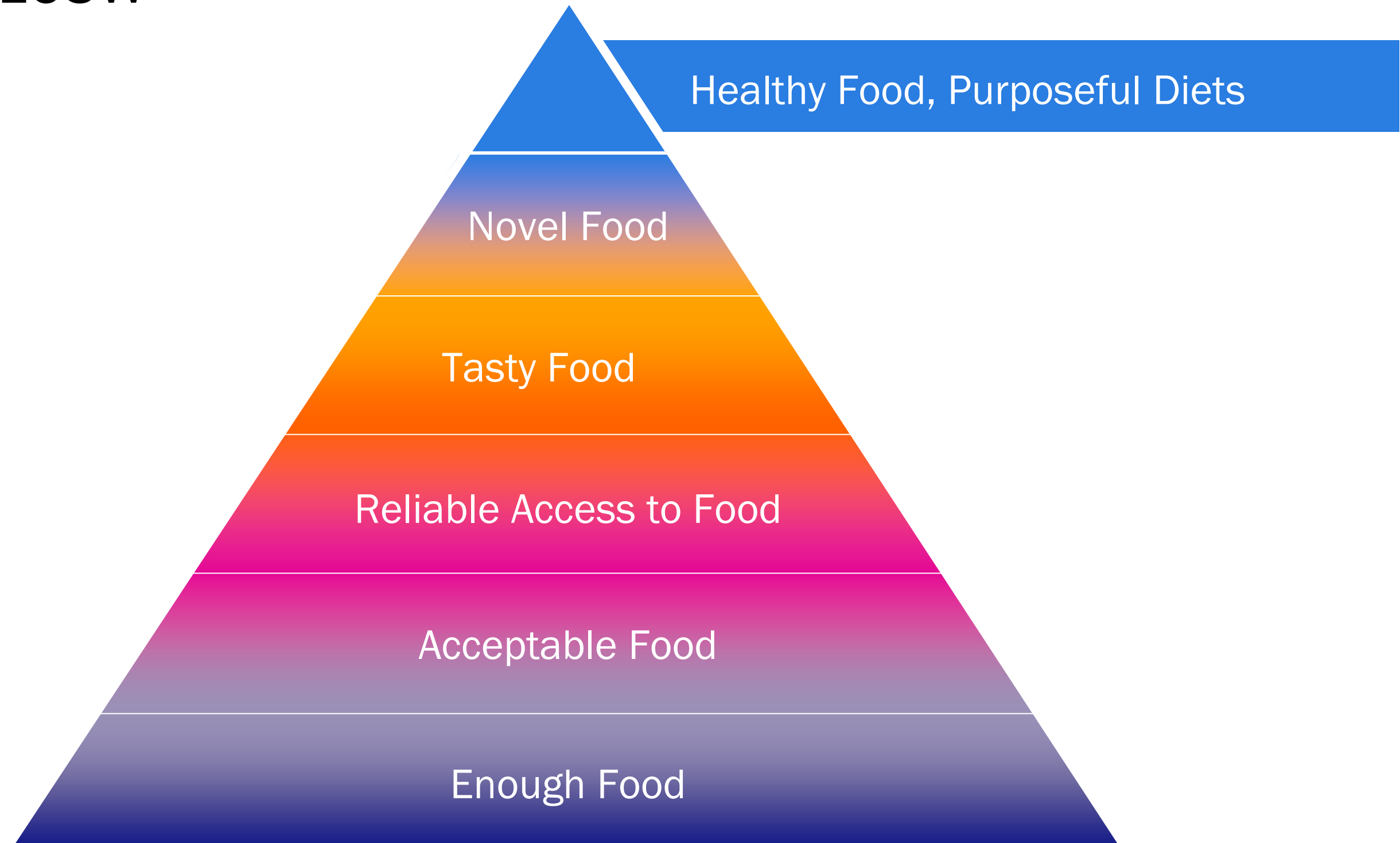
*Intentional*



*Emotional*



*Survival*

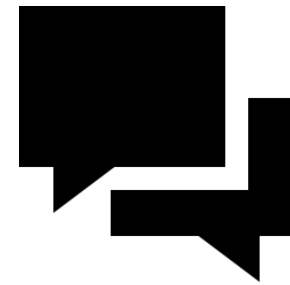




# Reflection Question

What food needs do you usually spend time talking about with clients or others?

# Focus Group Quotes



In Afghanistan, we were thinking about food, but gratefully we have that here; we are not worried about being left hungry or starving.”

Our first priority here is rent. In Afghanistan, our first priority was food because here our apartments are rental, so we first think about rent and then food.

To tell you the truth, rent comes first for my family, because if we don't pay the rent we are fined, so we lose more money. So even if the EBT card doesn't last until the end of the month, then we won't have money to use to buy food for the days we don't have our EBT.



**3 Minute Break**





3

# **Designing Trauma-Informed Programs**

that Respond to Newcomers' Positive and Adverse Experiences with Food

# Trauma-Informed Programs

## Overview



**Programmatic  
challenges**



**Programmatic  
approaches to  
addressing  
challenges**



**Incorporating a  
trauma-informed  
approach to current  
work**



# Common Nutrition Support Strategies



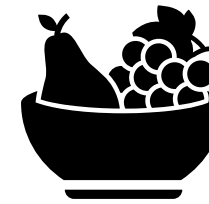
1

**Provide resources on finding free or affordable food in the community**



2

**Facilitate client access to government nutrition and food security programs**



3

**Support learning around recognizing healthier food options**



4

**Connect clients to sources of culturally appropriate foods**

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**What are some common challenges that you face when engaging newcomers around food and nutrition issues? [not the challenges newcomers face)**

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



# What Makes This Difficult?

- Insecurity and lack of trust
- Fear, judgement, and shame
- Institutional challenges
- Staff burnout and vicarious trauma





# Honesty and Transparency

- Acknowledge the tension
- Provide clarity and realistic expectations
- Address stigma, isolation, or feelings of not belonging





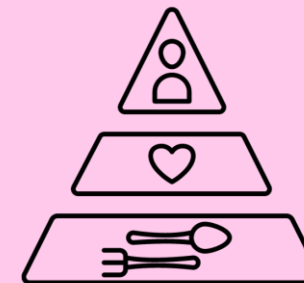
# Trauma- Informed Programs



Address practical and emotional needs for security and dignity



Reinforce agency and self-determination



Recognize and support protective factors and resilience for sustained well-being



1

# Provide resources on finding free or affordable food in the community



40	tomatoes	5/17	27
41	tomatoes	5/17	28
42	tomatoes	5/17	29
43	tomatoes	5/17	30
44	squash	5/24	31
45	squash	5/24	32
46	unknown chin pumpkin		33
47	kabocha (Chin squash)		34
48	peppers	5/24	35
49	peppers	5/24	36
50	peppers	5/10	37
51	rhubarb/strawberry		38
			39



2

**Facilitate client  
access to  
government  
nutrition and food  
security programs**



Support learning  
around  
recognizing  
healthier and  
desirable food  
options



## Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

**Serving size** 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per serving

**Calories** 230

% Daily Value\*

**Total Fat** 8g 10%

Saturated Fat 1g 5%

Trans Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 0mg 0%

**Sodium** 160mg 7%

**Total Carbohydrate** 37g 13%

Dietary Fiber 4g 14%

Total Sugars 12g

Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%

**Protein** 3g

Vitamin D 2mcg 10%

Calcium 260mg 20%

Iron 8mg 45%

Potassium 240mg 6%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



4

**Connect clients  
to sources of  
culturally  
appropriate foods  
and cooking  
supplies**





# Empowering Experiences



*“It was hard in the beginning, but once we found our needed things, it was easy to go back to our own traditional ways.”*

– Focus Group Participant



4

# **Practical Approaches for Delivering**

Trauma-Informed Nutrition Education to Newcomers



# Practical Approaches

Overview

1

## Foundation

Regulation and  
resilience

2

## Skills

Compassionate and  
strengths-based  
conversations

3

## Application

Healthy food  
choices and weight  
discussions



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**What is one word that describes how you feel about having nutrition conversations with your clients?**

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.



# Support a Regulated Stress Response

- Are you in your window of tolerance?
- Are they in their window of tolerance?



# **Cultivate and Model Resilience**

- Acknowledge vulnerability
- Show curiosity, open-mindedness, and possibility
- Have a relaxed attitude toward food
- Recognize the capacity to be wise, creative, and resourceful
- Encourage self-advocacy





# Common Topics

- Label reading
- Sugary drinks
- Processed foods
- Weight and weight neutrality







# Have Compassionate and Joyful Conversations



---

Remember the meaning of food

Let go of assumptions and outcomes

Remember kinship and social context



# Have Strengths- Based Conversations

- What skills and strengths has the client used in the past?
- What is one meaningful idea to meet their unique wants and needs right now?



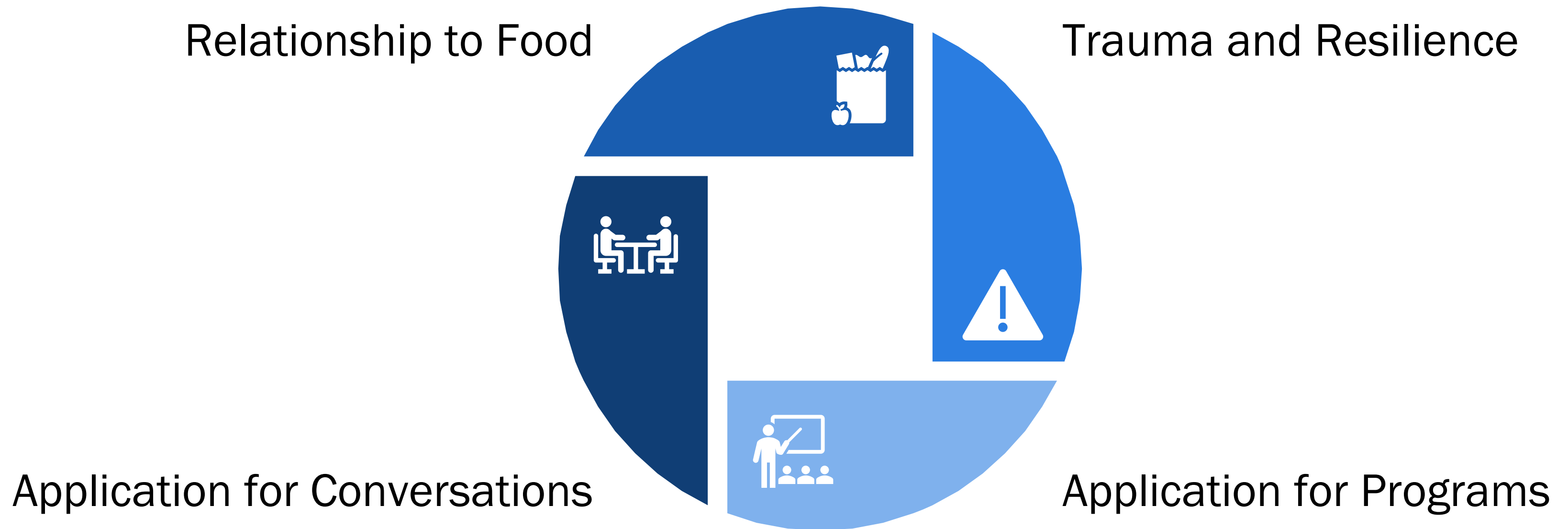
# Case Study: Reading a Food Label

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 240mg	6%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

- Are food labels important to you?
- What is important to you when you read a food label?
- How do you go about identifying healthy options from a package?
- What do you wish you could do with a food label?
- Of all the things we discussed, which one will be the most helpful this week?

# Summary



# Your Action Items



What do we need to keep in mind when supporting newcomers who may have different experiences, values, or priorities around food and life?

What is the experience of obtaining services and resources in my county?

How do I expand and nurture my relationship to food, nutrition, and well-being?





**Questions?**

Type your question in the Q&A

# Learning Objectives



Now you are able to:

1

## DESCRIBE

ways that newcomers have multifaceted and complex experiences with food

2

## EXPLAIN

the relationship between positive and adverse experiences and nourishment

3

## DESIGN

trauma-informed nutrition education programs that respond to positive and adverse experiences and that incorporate the different ways we relate to food

4

## APPLY

practical approaches for delivering trauma-informed nutrition education to newcomers with compassion and connection





# Help us help you!

Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat to access our feedback survey!

- Five questions
- 60 seconds
- Helps us improve future training and technical assistance





# Recommended Resources

- [EatFresh Mini-Course](#): *This self-paced mini-course will teach you more about basic nutrition.*
- [EatFresh.org](#): This website is a great resource for finding recipes for food that newcomers may be unfamiliar with.
- [Arbit, Ruby, & Rozin](#). (2017). Development and validation of the meaning of food in life questionnaire (MFLQ)
- [Kokkoris & Stavrova](#). (2021). Meaning of food and consumer eating behaviors.



The screenshot displays the eatFresh mobile application interface. At the top, there are logos for CalFresh Healthy Living and eatFresh. Below the logos is a navigation bar with a hamburger menu icon and a downward arrow. The main content area features a recipe for "Mango Smoothie" with a "SAVE" button. The ingredients listed are "Mango, Banana, Pineapple, Frozen yogurt, Ice cubes". Below the ingredients are four icons representing dietary preferences: "GLUTEN-FREE", "LOW ADDED SUGAR", "VEGETARIAN", and "LOW SODIUM". A timer icon indicates a 5-minute preparation time. Below the recipe, there are two promotional banners. The first banner is titled "Ask a Dietitian" and features a photo of a dietitian and the question "What should I do to feel less bloated and relieve constipation?". It includes buttons for "VIEW ANSWER" and "ASK A QUESTION". The second banner is titled "Learn More About Healthy" and features a book cover titled "EFMC ENGLISH" and the text "TAKE TI ONLINE AND DI PATHS' HEALTH". At the bottom of the screen, there is a green banner with the text "Cultivate a Healthy Lifestyle" and a "Dis" button.



# Stay Connected



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