

A dramatic, high-contrast image of a stormy sky. Dark, heavy clouds are illuminated from within by bright, glowing light, creating a sense of intense energy. Several bright, jagged lightning bolts are visible, particularly on the right side, adding to the storm's power. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues, purples, and bright whites/yellows from the light sources.

# The Storm Isn't Over: Ways to Support the Social Emotional Needs of Youth Today

Szu-Hui Lee, Ph.D. ABPP  
Phillips Exeter Academy





We are all on  
different ships during  
this storm  
experiencing a very  
different journey.

Look beyond what is  
seen at first glance.

# Recent observations:

## Temperature check on the youth

- Increased severity of mental health concerns
- Emotionally fragile & hostility
- Poor interpersonal skills and increased social conflicts





# Recent observations: Temperature check on the adults

- Parents are struggling too!
- Fear driven expectations and behaviors



# Factors That Have Led To These Observations

- Social media
- Narrow definition of success
- Social injustices
- COVID-19





# Key Conditions for Thriving Individuals



# Pre-requisite: Safe Space



- ✓ Affirming
- ✓ Trustworthy
- ✓ Predictable



# Permission To Feel

- Validate and hold emotions
- Stop saying “pre-pandemic” or “getting back to normal”
- Listen to understand





## Condition #2

## Permission to Act

- Skills for emotional awareness and regulation
- Opportunities to build mastery experiences

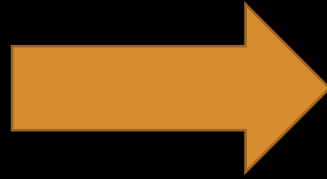
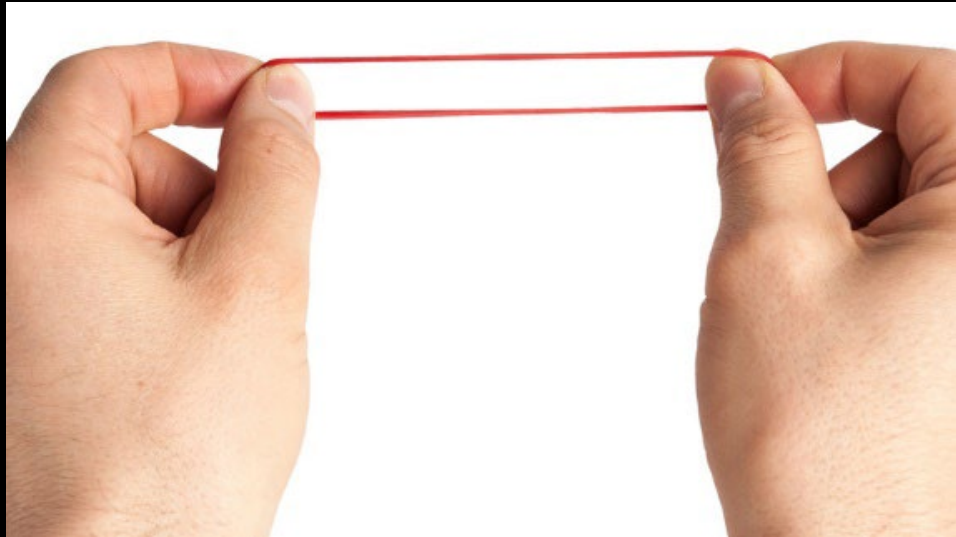


## Permission to Recover

- Commit to rest & restoration
- “Stress is not the issue, lack of recovery is.” -Dr. Ben-Shahar



# Shifting From Resilience to Antifragility



*Happier No Matter What (Ben-Shahar, 2021)*



## Permission to Give

- Practicing self-compassion
- Engage in gratitude and giving







Let's Put Some Of This To Work



# Key Conditions Check List

How many of the key conditions does your \_\_\_\_\_  
(workplace/classroom/advisory/home/relationship, etc) check off?  
Give examples.

- ☐ Pre-requisite of **safety**
- ☐ Permission to **feel**
- ☐ Permission to **act**
- ☐ Permission to **recover**
- ☐ Permission to **give**



# Create An Action Plan Toward Fostering These Conditions



- Pick one:

Permission to **feel**

Permission to **act**

Permission to **recover**

Permission to **give**

- Identify one goal to help foster a key condition for the youth you support.
- What is one action step toward achieving that goal?
- How would you know the goal was achieved?



HOW ARE YOU  
DOING?





Thank you!