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Betsy Kindall ([00:08](#)):

I'm Betsy Kindall.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:10](#)):

I'm Nicole Fairchild.

Stacy Moore ([00:11](#)):

And I'm Stacey Moore.

Betsy Kindall ([00:12](#)):

And this is Arkansas AWARE, a project to advance wellness and resiliency in education.

Stacy Moore ([00:20](#)):

Welcome back everybody. Today we are continuing on into season four and we are going to talk today a little bit about deescalation and techniques around escalation and deescalation because quite frankly, that has been definitely a topic of conversation lately.

Nicole Fairchild ([00:39](#)):

It's something that maybe I overlooked to some degree. I don't know if until this year we talked about it directly as its own important skill set.

Stacy Moore ([00:53](#)):

Yeah. And super important because in crisis prevention, intervention training, they... Something they definitely hit hard more so than the hands on techniques.

Betsy Kindall ([01:00](#)):

Well, I was just fixing to say, we're talking about deescalation, not as it relates to restraint.

Stacy Moore ([01:06](#)):

Right.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:07](#)):

Yes. Correct.

Stacy Moore ([01:07](#)):

But very similar. I mean yes, because you're going to have that with when you have to put hands on definitely. But anytime somebody is having intensifying emotions and escalating and going up hill on that curve, then we've got to deescalate somehow. And so however that looks. Escalation and at the top of that hill, if you imagine a bell curve and we're going up that hill and we're... Rollercoaster ride and you're at the top of that rollercoaster ride, it could get really ugly.

Betsy Kindall ([01:36](#)):

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Mm-hm.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:36](#)):

It could.

Stacy Moore ([01:36](#)):

Depending on how much we escalate.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:39](#)):

So I feel like there's actually two topics here.

Betsy Kindall ([01:44](#)):

So when you do that laugh, I'm always like, oh boy.

Nicole Fairchild ([01:47](#)):

What's coming? So the first is this. As I've mentioned, I did a lot of the ACEs training this summer. And I have incorporated into it the hand model of the brain from Dr. Dan Siegel, where he talks about how your amygdala is your thumb coming in over your palm and when you put your four fingers over your thumb, that's like your prefrontal cortex. And when you're in a fight, flight, freeze response, you flip your lid. Your prefrontal cortex is not functioning in the same way because your amygdala is in charge. Right? Amygdala like Water Boy.

Stacy Moore ([02:22](#)):

You're not thinking.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:24](#)):

You're not.

Stacy Moore ([02:24](#)):

I'm going to have to watch that evidently.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:26](#)):

You are missing a lot of references.

Betsy Kindall ([02:27](#)):

I think your brain cells would die.

Nicole Fairchild ([02:29](#)):

That's how most of America learned the word amygdala. I promise.

Stacy Moore ([02:32](#)):

Oh, okay. I learned it in psychology class.

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Nicole Fairchild ([02:37](#)):

So when you flip your lid, what we've got to do, and we've said this a lot in our trauma savvy classrooms training, is get people back online. Go get your prefrontal cortex back online, go back to your upstairs brain, your learning brain, learning mode. And it never occurred to me to ask this question until the summer. It was really interesting. So I would say to all the educators in the room... And for a couple of these I had groups of over a hundred. I want you to think about the last time you were escalated and you flipped your lid. How long does it take for you to come back to a state of regulation?

Stacy Moore ([03:17](#)):

And what does that mean?

Nicole Fairchild ([03:18](#)):

Personally.

Stacy Moore ([03:19](#)):

Because me, I'm thinking, is my body and my mind and we're back at baseline.

Nicole Fairchild ([03:23](#)):

Like you're to a point where you could take a test.

Stacy Moore ([03:27](#)):

It almost reminds me of working out where you do the cool down and they say, "Okay, is your heart rate back to normal?"

Nicole Fairchild ([03:32](#)):

Yeah. When I say, "Yeah, you're regulated," I mean, you could take a spelling test, you could read a poem and interpret whatever's going on there. I'm talking about that because we're talking about education.

Stacy Moore ([03:45](#)):

Which is huge in itself, Nicole, because we look at somebody and we think, oh, they're fine now. But inside there could be all kinds of things. So to be able to take a test, you're talking about a different level.

Betsy Kindall ([03:57](#)):

I'm just thinking about times where I've been at a place where I couldn't function in that way. It depends on how big of a situation is that.

Stacy Moore ([04:06](#)):

Yes.

Nicole Fairchild ([04:06](#)):

Yeah.

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Betsy Kindall ([04:07](#)):

There's times where you may be distracted, but there's times you're simply offline, is how you used it. Like you can't function. I'm not talking, I need to go away and I just need to get ahold of myself.

Stacy Moore ([04:21](#)):

It reminds me of the levels on skiing or it reminds me of the this was a hill, this was a mountain. That's like when you were saying that.

Betsy Kindall ([04:28](#)):

And this is a bunny slope.

Stacy Moore ([04:29](#)):

That's what it was making me think of. Are these different sizes of things where there's that escalation, deescalation, but how high or how intense that goes can vary.

Nicole Fairchild ([04:36](#)):

Right. And so the example I was giving was a full fight, flight, freeze response. So you've had a full on fight, flight, freeze response. Educators, how long would it take for you to be regulated enough to learn something, to take a test on something. So tell your neighbor. And then I ask. I'm scanning the room. Raise your hand when I get to the number. You would say five minutes, no hands, 10 minutes, no hands, 15 minutes, maybe one hesitant hand, 20 minutes. I'm talking about a room full of over a hundred people. 20 minutes, 25, 30, 45-

Betsy Kindall ([05:10](#)):

So as an adult, why-

Nicole Fairchild ([05:13](#)):

-one hour, half a day. How many of you guys just need to go home? Half the room raises their hand.

Stacy Moore ([05:18](#)):

But it's also like, what are we doing in that time? So what are we doing in that deescalation time? Am I just sitting there expecting to get better? If I can get on my treadmill, I'll be back a lot quicker than if I just have to sit there and stew in it.

Betsy Kindall ([05:30](#)):

Whereas me, the treadmill is the last thing I'm thinking about.

Stacy Moore ([05:34](#)):

I needed my treadmill yesterday.

Nicole Fairchild ([05:38](#)):

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So when you think about an escalated kid in the classroom, what do they have access to to regulate their body? And what is our expectation? Is our expectation that they're going to return to baseline in five minutes and be ready to learn?

Stacy Moore ([05:51](#)):

I have an example but I hadn't even thought about it until this time. And I want to make it a little bit where people can't figure it out. I'm not very good at that, about being sneaky. I'm not good at being sneaky anymore.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:04](#)):

No. So this was from a hundred years ago.

Stacy Moore ([06:06](#)):

This was from a hundred years ago, but it was 9/11.

Betsy Kindall ([06:09](#)):

When my granny wasn't walking.

Stacy Moore ([06:11](#)):

But it was 9/11. And so we had just witnessed that on TV and some educating professionals thought, we got to get people back in structure. So we're going to go back to class. So college students all go back in, we're going to learn. We're going to have class. We got to keep the structure.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:29](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([06:30](#)):

Oh, I was a school counselor at that point. So I totally get where you're coming from.

Stacy Moore ([06:34](#)):

And so the structure was emphasized and done, but we weren't there guys.

Betsy Kindall ([06:38](#)):

No. And our students weren't there.

Stacy Moore ([06:43](#)):

Whatever we talked about that day, I have no clue.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:46](#)):

Well, and honestly using that example, it makes me think about the times that we've come into schools after a death.

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Betsy Kindall ([06:51](#)):

Yes.

Nicole Fairchild ([06:52](#)):

And so, yeah.

Stacy Moore ([06:58](#)):

I don't know why I bring that up, but I thought that to me, when you were speaking of that, that was an example of when we were not back online. We still needed to talk. We needed access to information. We wanted all these other things, but then we needed... And maybe it was what the people above us needed, was to provide some kind of control or structure.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:21](#)):

Oh, maybe? Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([07:21](#)):

Oh, I'm sure. Yeah. Because most people out there remember where they were and I was in a library with kids who were crying and we were in there early enough that we watched them fall.

Stacy Moore ([07:37](#)):

Yes.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:37](#)):

Oh dear.

Betsy Kindall ([07:38](#)):

Yeah. We watched them fall together. And I remember saying out loud, "You will remember this moment for the rest of your life." I remember saying that out loud, but what was fascinating is everybody was like, "Hurry back," like we were just going to carry on the day.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:52](#)):

Yes. Yep, yep.

Betsy Kindall ([07:53](#)):

And it was like, this was probably not the best response.

Nicole Fairchild ([07:56](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([07:56](#)):

I mean, let's recognize that we're all in shock here and we need some time to... What do you say?

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Nicole Fairchild ([08:04](#)):

Come back online. Yeah, get back into your learning brain.

Stacy Moore ([08:08](#)):

But you think about-

Betsy Kindall ([08:09](#)):

That's a really good example.

Stacy Moore ([08:10](#)):

Well, when you think about students and at that time, were they ready to fight, flight or freeze? I bet you saw all three. I thought... You were like, we're going to get them. People are trying to leave and then people that just don't know what to do. And so I bet you had all three reactions to that.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:22](#)):

Yeah. And I don't know if... When I'm making that point, I'm not necessarily talking about that.

Betsy Kindall ([08:27](#)):

Providing solutions.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:28](#)):

Well, I'm not providing solutions. I'm just saying, I don't know what's going to be okay in your classroom.

Stacy Moore ([08:34](#)):

Yes.

Betsy Kindall ([08:34](#)):

But I think the first step is recognizing that we need some time-

Nicole Fairchild ([08:38](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([08:38](#)):

And we're not all back online, even though we might look like it.

Stacy Moore ([08:41](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:41](#)):

Yeah.

Stacy Moore ([08:42](#)):

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And do we allow that period of grace? And it's not even really grace, it's just-

Nicole Fairchild ([08:47](#)):

It's human.

Stacy Moore ([08:48](#)):

It's human for sure. But do we allow that?

Betsy Kindall ([08:52](#)):

And the answer right now is no.

Stacy Moore ([08:53](#)):

We don't normally.

Betsy Kindall ([08:54](#)):

We don't.

Nicole Fairchild ([08:55](#)):

And I'm afraid that that's when we get into these situations where we fracture our rapport and we don't repair it and we fracture and we fracture and we fracture and we fracture. And then we look at that student and we say, "It's up to you to win back my approval."

Stacy Moore ([09:11](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([09:12](#)):

And they're not in a spot where they can do it.

Stacy Moore ([09:14](#)):

No, they're not in a spot where they can do it. And if they get in trouble, then we want reason with them while they're heightened. We want to talk them and talk them and talk them. And if you try to talk to me at that point, it's not going to be real effective. It may go south.

Nicole Fairchild ([09:29](#)):

Stacy, if I start to see your eye twitch, I'm like, I'm out.

Stacy Moore ([09:32](#)):

Yeah. Like Stacy, go get on your stinking treadmill. That's a good indicator.

Betsy Kindall ([09:39](#)):

But it's fascinating though that you found your thing.

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Stacy Moore ([09:42](#)):

Yeah. And that's what's so weird is that I always heard, as I was in trainings and things like that, for physical, for deregulation and for stress relief and for when you're super angry or frustrated or you have people who are, that boys tend to need to get that out physically. Well, I am definitely not a boy, but I definitely, that has what works for me, because if not, it stays in my brain or I just dwell on it and it blows up.

Stacy Moore ([10:12](#)):

But if I can wear myself down physically, which I do worry about in our schools and I say this a lot in my trainings or that we get angry at school and what do we do? How do we get back online? We've kept our job so there's something that we've done. But for our students, when they get angry, do we let them have those same outlets, like talk to a friend or go outside or just get away?

Stacy Moore ([10:35](#)):

I mean, those are things that educators told me that they do. And so when we've got students who are deescalating, or trying to, in their classrooms, what do we allow or do we think they're just supposed to get back with it? And their bodies are not ready. Their minds are not ready.

Nicole Fairchild ([10:51](#)):

No, that's right. And I know you did some specialized deescalation training this summer.

Stacy Moore ([10:56](#)):

Yes we did.

Nicole Fairchild ([10:57](#)):

Yeah, what was some of your takeaways from that? From providing that?

Stacy Moore ([11:01](#)):

It was really fascinating. We talked about the art and science of deescalation. And so there's a science to it, which is your body responds.

Nicole Fairchild ([11:08](#)):

Mm-hm.

Stacy Moore ([11:08](#)):

So even if somebody is upset with you and you're trying to help them deescalate, that the way that you are going to have a physical response to what's coming at you. To their emotions, to their heightened state, that our bodies are primed to react to that, to keep us safe. So if somebody's cussing at us, yelling at us, throwing things, our bodies automatically, just knowing going in that the science is that our bodies are going to respond.

Nicole Fairchild ([11:34](#)):

Yeah.

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Stacy Moore ([11:34](#)):

We're going to, whether that be our hands are going to shake or our heart's going to start beating fast or we're-

Nicole Fairchild ([11:40](#)):

Something.

Stacy Moore ([11:41](#)):

We have a reaction sight typically.

Betsy Kindall ([11:42](#)):

So do you think that's true? What I told Donnie earlier when we were talking about one of the keys to when you're wired a little hot or in times of deescalation is to have a plan?

Stacy Moore ([11:54](#)):

Oh, yes. So in that, we quote in one of our trainings about, if you can predict it, you can prepare for it.

Betsy Kindall ([12:01](#)):

Right.

Stacy Moore ([12:02](#)):

What we can hear-

Betsy Kindall ([12:02](#)):

You can't always predict it.

Stacy Moore ([12:03](#)):

We can't always prevent it and you can't always predict it, but we can think ahead to go, okay, I'm going into this meeting or this parent's coming at me and they're really elevated and so how can I prepare myself? I'm not going to take it personally, right?

Nicole Fairchild ([12:16](#)):

Yeah, number one, don't take it personal.

Stacy Moore ([12:18](#)):

But I think knowing our bodies have that response... So we did this activity that was supposed to help raise their bodies a little bit naturally.

Betsy Kindall ([12:25](#)):

And did you cuss at someone?

Stacy Moore ([12:27](#)):

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No, I didn't. Yeah, no. That's a taboo topic for professional development, but no. No, I did not. Now if they did, they did, but we tried to get their heart rate up so they could get that experience of, you see your bodies will react. And so we talked about mirror neurons and how biologically we're wired. And so if we can be... The bad news is that if they come in hot on you, coming in hot, Betsy. If they come in hot on you, that your mirror neurons are going to want to reciprocate that. But if you can know ahead and prepare and be the sense of calm or the source of calm, then their mirror neurons are going to be picking up on that.

Nicole Fairchild ([13:05](#)):

That's right.

Stacy Moore ([13:06](#)):

And so if we can use that science, but then the art... And Nicole, you always speak so eloquently about this, but I can hand you things and I can tell you this, but how you do it, having the empathy, being able to not agree with anything you're saying right now, but I'm just listening.

Nicole Fairchild ([13:24](#)):

I'm so curious.

Stacy Moore ([13:25](#)):

Yes. And having the art, having somebody that comes up beside you when you're super elevated and just knowing how to be.

Betsy Kindall ([13:33](#)):

Yeah. That's what I was going to say, that's what you always say. It's not how you do it, it's how you are.

Stacy Moore ([13:37](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([13:37](#)):

How to be that person.

Nicole Fairchild ([13:39](#)):

Yeah, it's not more to do, it's how to be.

Betsy Kindall ([13:41](#)):

Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([13:41](#)):

Yeah, it's how to be. Yeah. I'm doing a lot of youth mental health first aid training and in the ALGEE action plan, they're talking a lot about giving reassurance and information. And I do always make the point that it's not just the words. If you say a reassuring statement with a just tiny little drop of sarcasm, it taints the whole thing in a hurry.

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Stacy Moore ([14:08](#)):

We need to do an example. What's a good example phrase?

Betsy Kindall ([14:10](#)):

Or even without sarcasm, you can have a look on your face, I know.

Stacy Moore ([14:13](#)):

Oh dear.

Betsy Kindall ([14:14](#)):

My kids tell me on a regular basis.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:16](#)):

One of the things that's pretty common to say, "You're not alone. You're not alone." You could say that in a reassuring way or you could be like, "Hmm, you're not alone."

Betsy Kindall ([14:29](#)):

You could say that a lot of different ways.

Stacy Moore ([14:32](#)):

Yeah. "You're not alone." We all do that. Which is not the same as the way you said it first.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:37](#)):

That's right. And the words are the same. And so you're right, there is an art is an art to it. And I think-

Betsy Kindall ([14:44](#)):

It's finesse.

Nicole Fairchild ([14:45](#)):

It is. But I think at the core, the only way you really get that down is if you are able to have a genuine care and appreciation for this human being in front of you, even if they're acting like a wild... I don't know, they're really aggressive or their reactions are out sized or whatever. But if you can look at them and have some compassion and some care, and you can only do that if you're not taking it personally, then I think that's where the art comes from. Don't you?

Stacy Moore ([15:17](#)):

I agree. But this is the thing, and we have people who've told us this this summer, was that it's very helpful for educators to know the stories of students for that very reason, but they don't often know those stories. And as a therapist, when I come in with a student, I assume the story's there.

Nicole Fairchild ([15:34](#)):

I do too.

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Stacy Moore ([15:35](#)):

I assume there's a story.

Betsy Kindall ([15:36](#)):

Shouldn't we all?

Stacy Moore ([15:36](#)):

We should for everybody. There's a story there. I do believe people do the best they can with what they have with at the time that they're there. But if we can't tell you the story, can you still find something you like about that person or have compassion for that person or assume that there's something there, there's more to it.

Betsy Kindall ([16:00](#)):

When the truth is, many times the story's worse than we ever imagined.

Stacy Moore ([16:03](#)):

That's true.

Betsy Kindall ([16:05](#)):

Which is sad.

Stacy Moore ([16:05](#)):

Somebody asked us, Nicole, this summer in one of the first youth mental health first aid trainings. Do you remember? They said, "What percent of students would you say that have behavioral difficulties or challenges in school with behavior and become a pain in our sides or become something that we really struggle with, have things going on?"

Betsy Kindall ([16:28](#)):

Were you like 110%?

Stacy Moore ([16:30](#)):

I wanted to say a hundred percent, but I was like 98, 99. I don't know. I don't want to assume I know everything.

Nicole Fairchild ([16:38](#)):

But there are stories. There are stories there and I think it is safe to make the assumption. And that's kind of the point of the ACEs training is to say, listen, there's plenty of adversity and trauma out there. You can go ahead and make a safe and general assumption that it's in your classroom.

Betsy Kindall ([16:54](#)):

Which is why when we talk about different things, especially lately and they talk about screeners for trauma, you don't need a screener for trauma. You can make the assumption that most kids in there have a story to tell and you can implement programs and supports that will benefit all of them.

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Stacy Moore ([17:13](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([17:14](#)):

That's just best practice.

Nicole Fairchild ([17:16](#)):

Yeah, that's exactly right. So there's a lot to think about there, but do either of you educators have a strategy?

Stacy Moore ([17:24](#)):

For deescalating or for which part? Or helping people deescalate?

Nicole Fairchild ([17:29](#)):

Either one.

Betsy Kindall ([17:30](#)):

Yeah, I think the biggest thing, and I think you can call it whatever you want, whether it be strategy or whatever, but I think the biggest thing is is know what you're going to do when it happens. And you don't have to know when it's going to happen as long as you have somewhat of a plan. If you have a student that you anticipate there will come a time where things are going to escalate to that point, I think having a plan is the most important thing. And that plan needs to be made as a team too.

Nicole Fairchild ([18:04](#)):

Yeah, that's good.

Betsy Kindall ([18:05](#)):

So that's just my 2 cents. What do you think, Stacy?

Stacy Moore ([18:09](#)):

No, I agree. I just think when deescalating other people just trying to be calm.

Nicole Fairchild ([18:13](#)):

Don't take it personal.

Stacy Moore ([18:15](#)):

Don't take it personal and that's hard to do, but it's not about me in that moment. Something they're going through, something that my job is to help them through that. And so that's another thing we talked about a lot in our training is what is your goal here? Is your goal to win? Is it to fight this out? Is it to show your authority or is it to just simply help them reach a better state at this point?

Betsy Kindall ([18:39](#)):

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So since we're always talking about teacher wellness and wouldn't it be wise if as an adult, we knew how to calm ourselves down and deescalate ourselves? Wouldn't that be beneficial to know before we start doing that with this kid? So what are some things that you do to calm yourself down when you get worked up?

Nicole Fairchild ([19:01](#)):

And you don't have access to the treadmill.

Stacy Moore ([19:03](#)):

Breathing. Breathing, breathing, breathing, belly breathing. Five, four, three, two, one. If I can listen to music, if I can get on and listen to a podcast, which you can't always do. But if I can do that simply, and I say this simply, but we don't allow this for our students all the time, going outside. If I can get outside and just breathe and look at the sky and the clouds and how such things are greater above me and beyond me.

Nicole Fairchild ([19:31](#)):

Have some gratitude in that moment.

Stacy Moore ([19:32](#)):

Gratitude in that moment. But my breath, my perspective, stepping away, nature music, listening to other people, going and talking to other people is helpful but honestly for me, it's not my first go-to. I've got to regulate my body first, but how do people know that? What works for you? Because it could be different than what works for me. And how did you discover it?

Nicole Fairchild ([19:53](#)):

Well, and there again too, I think you've got to have a few different tools available to you. Like I got a short period of time, I don't have any privacy, I can go outside, I can't go outside. Which tool am I going to use?

Stacy Moore ([20:04](#)):

Yeah.

Betsy Kindall ([20:05](#)):

I think it's a big deal that you can even, and our kids too, like with one of my daughters, recognize that okay, I'm angry. I am not okay. And so I think number one, that's the first step. But I also think for me, I do a lot of those things that you mentioned and sometimes I isolate a little bit, but as parents, I try to help my own kids who are having those struggles. And I even am honest with the fact that this is what works for me. You're going to have to find out what works for you.

Nicole Fairchild ([20:35](#)):

I think that's the thing to do

Stacy Moore ([20:37](#)):

And even crying.

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Betsy Kindall ([20:38](#)):

Oh yeah.

Stacy Moore ([20:39](#)):

We're given that skill for a reason.

Nicole Fairchild ([20:41](#)):

That's a great release.

Stacy Moore ([20:43](#)):

There is something... I don't know, Nicole, you may know, physiologically that happens just with the release of those tears.

Betsy Kindall ([20:49](#)):

Yes, there is. I've heard that recently, but I don't remember where I'm going to have to look that up. Yeah.

Nicole Fairchild ([20:53](#)):

That's good. We may come back to you with more details about tears.

Betsy Kindall ([20:57](#)):

Absolutely.

Stacy Moore ([20:58](#)):

All right. Thanks for joining us. And we hope that you've learned a little bit about deescalation, not just for yourself, but for your classmates or your students in your class or your own children. So we will see you next time on the AWARE podcast.