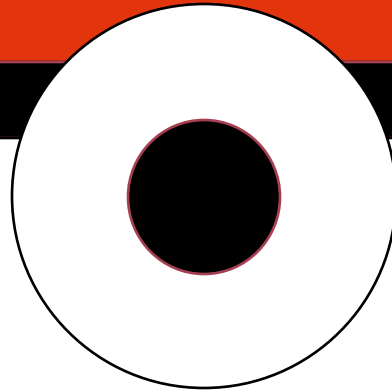


Therapeutic Tools in a Trainer's World:



Pokémon in School-Based Mental Health

Rene Hernandez, MSCP, LSP, CGT

AGENDA

INTRODUCTION

THERAPY BOOTCAMP

HISTORICAL

UNDERPINNINGS

IMPORTANT

TERMINOLOGY

POKEMON GAMES

POKEMON SHOWS

POKEMON MOVIES

POKEMON CARDS

POKEMON MANGA

POKEMON EVENTS

GENERAL TECHNIQUES

CBT TECHNIQUES

BIBLIOTHERAPY

DBT TECHNIQUES

NARRATIVE THERAPY

SFBT TECHNIQUES

MOTIVATIONAL

INTERVIEWING



The background of the image is a dark gray, almost black, field. Overlaid on this is a complex, abstract network of white dots and thin white lines. The dots are of varying sizes and are connected by lines of varying lengths, creating a sense of a dynamic, interconnected system. The network is denser in some areas and more sparse in others, with some lines crossing each other. The overall effect is one of a digital or molecular structure, possibly representing a data network or a chemical molecule.

INTRODUCTION



WHO AM I AND WHY SHOULD YOU CARE WHAT I HAVE TO SAY?

- Graduated from UT Tyler
- Unique blend of LPC and LSSP Programming
- In my 13th year of Practice
- Currently work as a bilingual School Psychologist in Denton ISD
- Trained Practicum and Internship students
- (TASP): Outstanding School Psychologist of the Year (Masters Level), November 2023



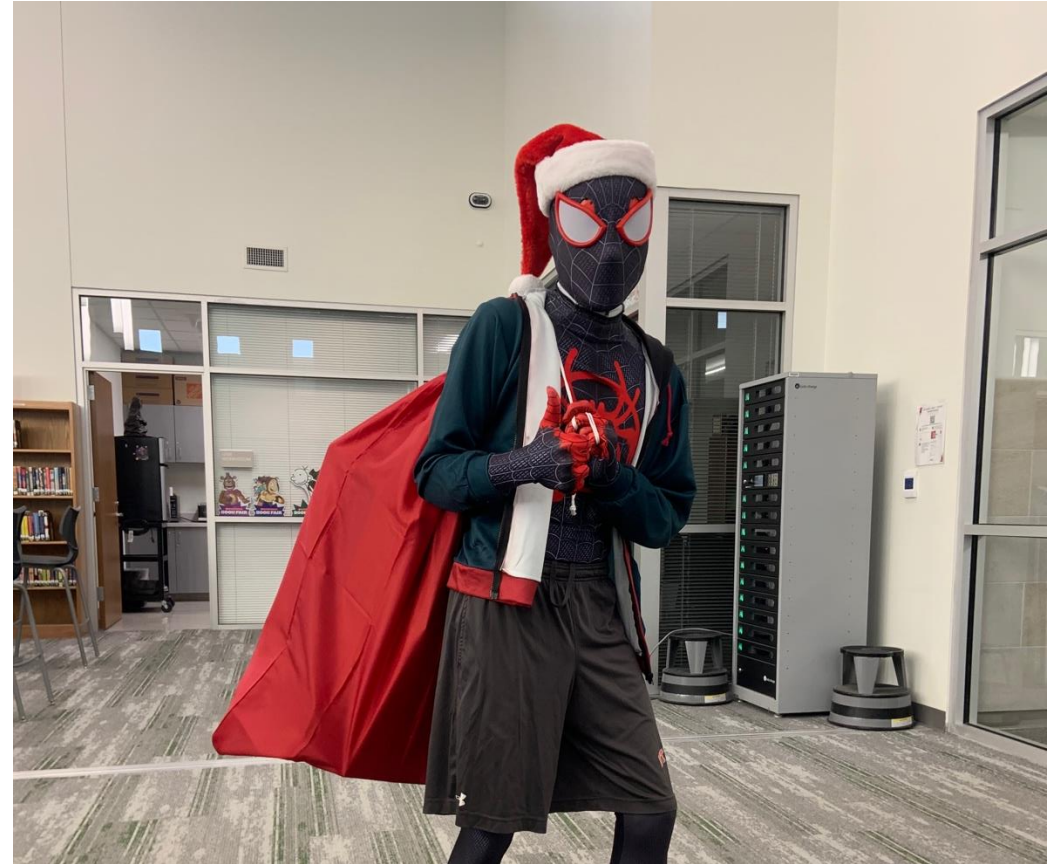
ALSO...

I'm a huge nerd

I currently sponsor my campus Anime Club

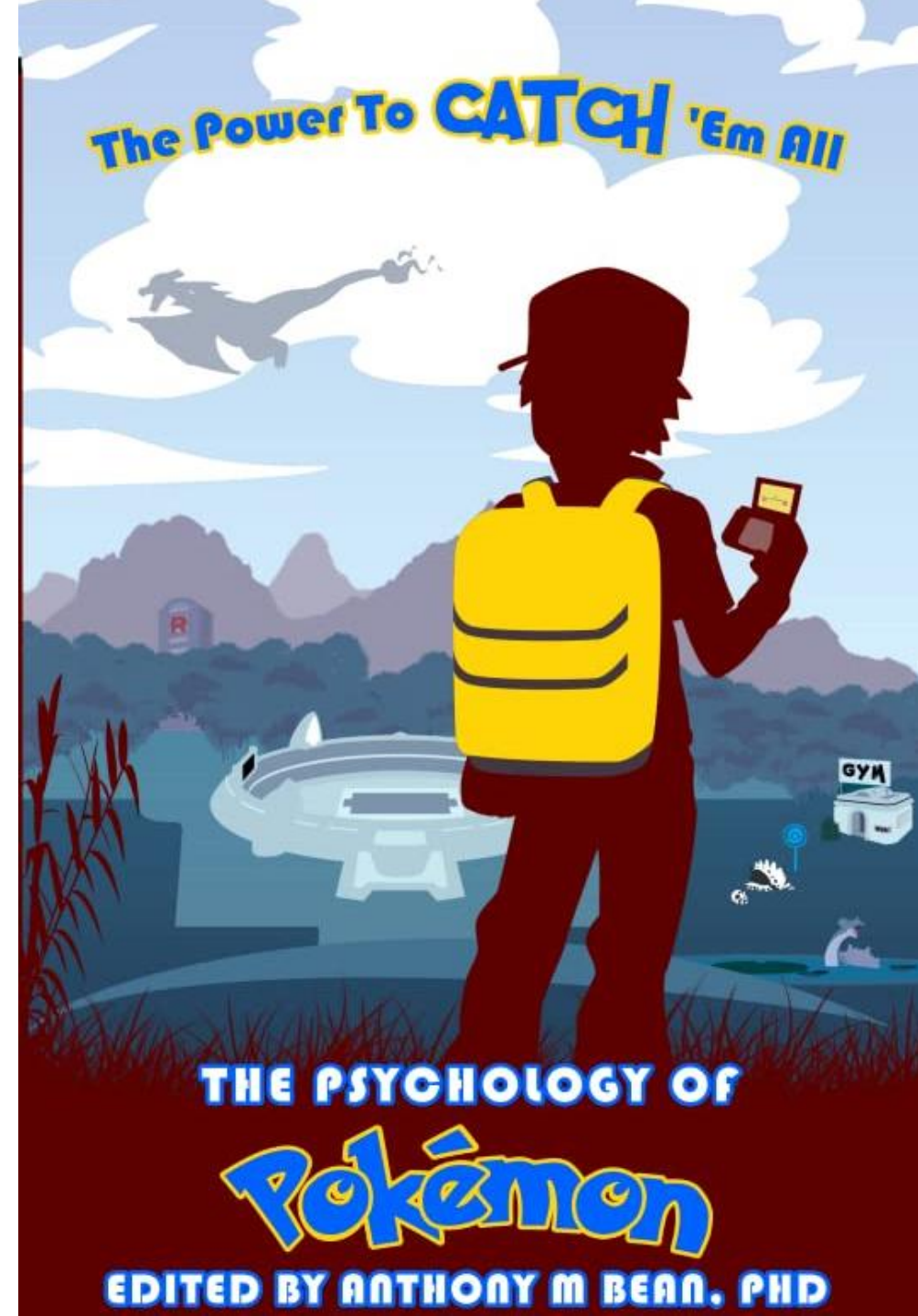
Areas of interest in geek culture include

- Anime
- Manga
- Dungeons and Dragons
- Video games (RPGs)
- TCGs



A QUICK THANK YOU

- A lot of the background for this training comes from work done by Dr Anthony Bean. Additional details were taken from trainings provided by other providers in the certification program.
 - “The Power to Catch ‘em All: The Psychology of Pokémon”
- Dr Bean has does training with DFW-RASP
- The Certified Geek therapist program by Leyline
- <https://geektherapeutics.com/certified-geek-therapist/>



OBJECTIVES

TODAY'S OBJECTIVES ARE-

1. HAVE AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE POKÉMON FRANCHISE AND BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN ITS HISTORY & CULTURAL RELEVANCE
2. BE ABLE TO UTILIZE POKÉMON AS A RAPPORT BUILDING TOOL
3. BE ABLE TO IDENTIFY AT LEAST 3 TECHNIQUES CENTERING THE POKÉMON FRANCHISE THAT CAN BE BENEFICIAL TO THEIR STUDENTS.

WHAT TODAY IS & ISN'T

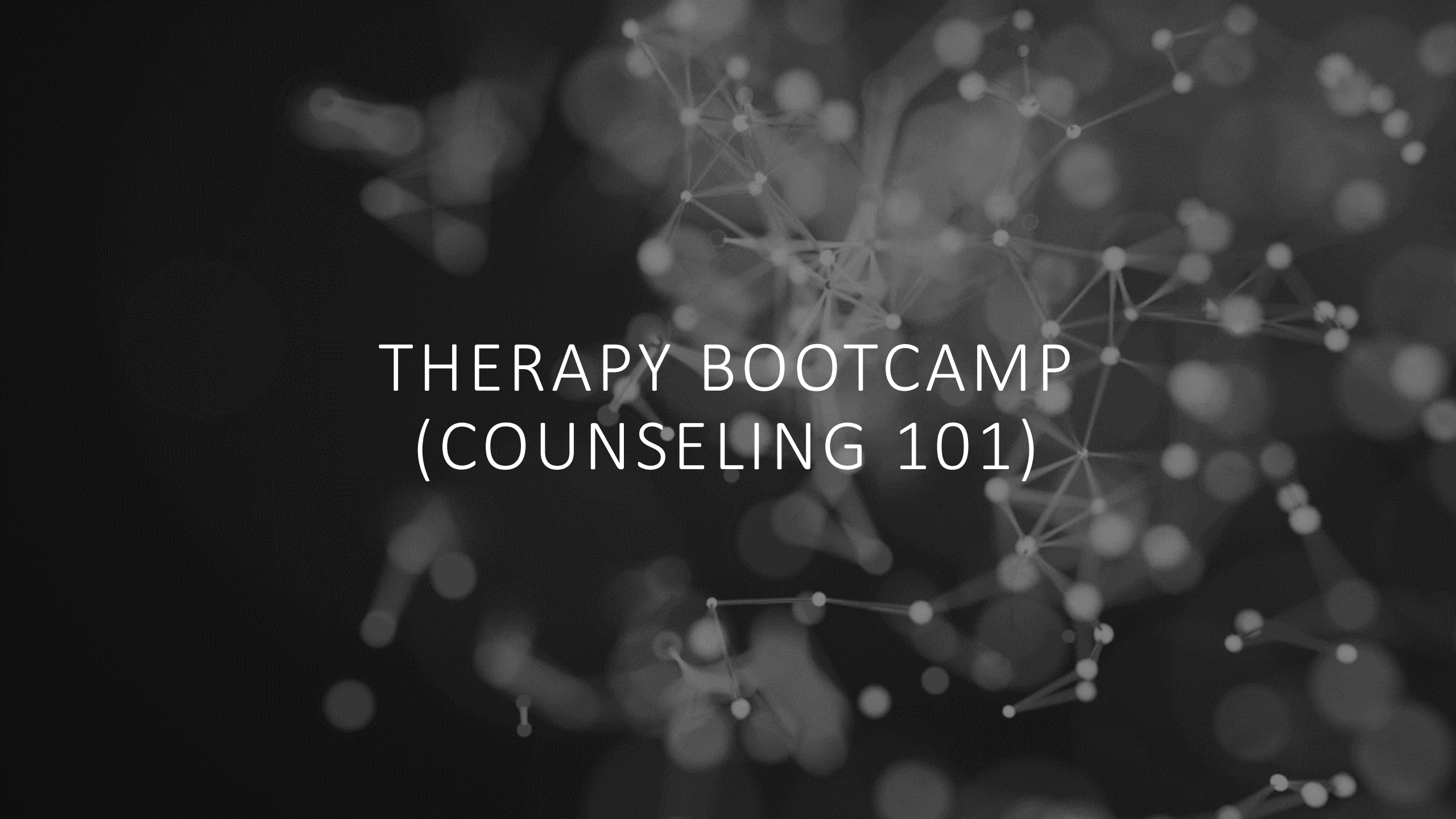
What Today Isn't:

- A Manualized Approach
- A Step-by-Step Guide

What Today is:

- An Intermediate overview of the Pokémon World
- A set of ideas on how to use Pokémon in Therapy
 - This is a lens through which to look at your students
- A discussion on engaging students where they are to improve the therapeutic alliance

These slides are really dense, and that's by design. They're intended to be useful to you even when I'm not standing here talking with you.



THERAPY BOOTCAMP (COUNSELING 101)



THERAPEUTIC BOOTCAMP

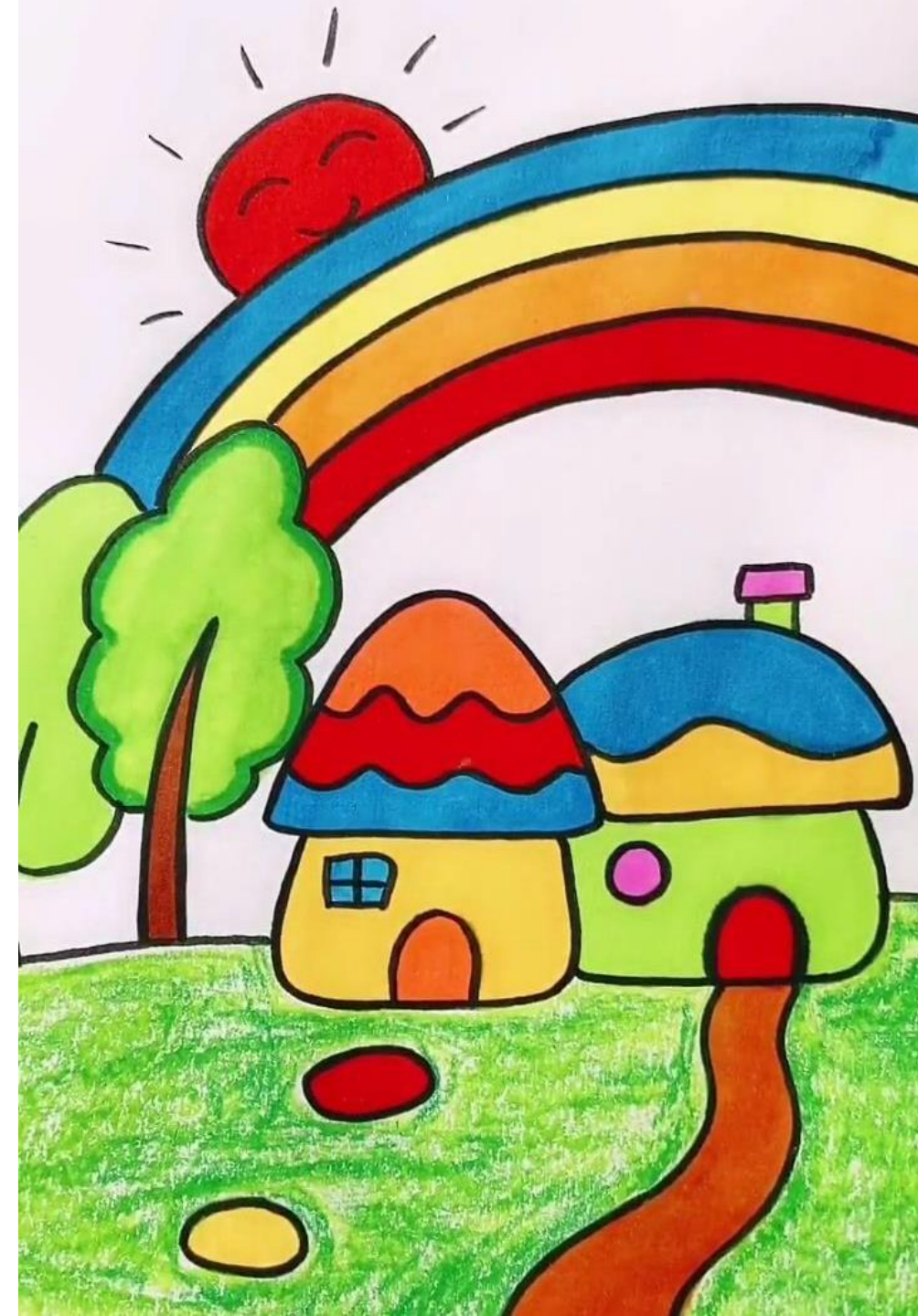
- We know that the quality of the therapist-client alliance predicts the continuation of therapy (as opposed to drop out) and improvement in client functioning. Research indicates that therapists should try to combine the qualities of professional expertise and empathic warmth-science and heart- in their interpersonal style with clients.
- We want to use language that appeals to the student in front of us. But this goes beyond using the developmentally appropriate word for “sad” in context.
- Most clients do not connect well with reserved, distant counselors. The treatment alliance is strongest when the client perceives the therapist as a real person who is fully engaged, present, and authentic in the relationship.
- Therapists whose moment-to-moment fluctuations in physiological arousal mirror those of their clients are rated as more empathic by those clients. We cannot be chameleons, but we can adjust our style; being soft and gentle with a shy, anxious child and being rougher, jauntier, and more casual with a rebellious adolescent.



THERAPEUTIC BOOTCAMP CONT.

The comfort level of a young child is less a function of their abstract understanding of therapy than their visceral sense of what it is like to be with the therapist AS A PERSON. Asking questions about favorites is a way to help us enter the child's world, and giving our own answers helps clients get to know us. We don't need to be all business all the time.

Clinicians tend to focus on problems, because that is why the clients come to see us, but assessment (and work) should also include attention to positive aspects of the child's life. Treatment should make use of a client's strengths. Therapists need to find a balance between focusing on therapeutic work and allowing the client to pursue topics and activities of their choosing.



THERAPEUTIC BOOTCAMP CONT.

The therapeutic relationship is the cornerstone of progress

- “Across studies, the largest portion of outcome variance not attributable to preexisting client characteristics involves individual therapist differences and the emergent therapeutic relationship between client and therapist, regardless of technique or school of therapy.”

“You can’t rearrange the furniture if they don’t let you into the room”- Dr. Lasser

- When you understand the things your student/client likes, you can use that for CONNECTION.





HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO OUR TOPIC?

- The Largest portion of outcome variance [in therapy] not attributable to preexisting client characteristics involves individual therapist differences and the emergent therapeutic relationship between client and therapist, regardless of technique or school of therapy.
- You can't rearrange the furniture if they won't let you into the room.
- When you understand the things your student/client likes, you can use that for CONNECTION.



The background is a dark gray field filled with a complex, interconnected network of small white dots and thin white lines. The dots are scattered across the frame, with some forming dense clusters and others standing alone. The lines connect these dots, creating a web-like structure that suggests a global or digital network. The overall effect is one of depth and complexity.

HISTORICAL UNDERPINNINGS



WHAT IS POKÉMON?



- The Pokémon world is a vibrant and imaginative universe where people and creatures called Pokémon live side by side. These creatures come in all shapes and sizes, each with their own powers, personalities, and types—like fire, water, psychic, or electric. In this world, people called trainers form bonds with Pokémon, train them, and sometimes compete in friendly battles that test skill and teamwork.
- Beyond the battles, the Pokémon world is about exploration, friendship, and growth. Characters travel across regions, meet new people, help others, and learn from their challenges. It's a world that blends adventure with heart, where relationships matter as much as winning. Whether you're aiming to be a champion, a breeder, a researcher, or just someone who cares for Pokémon, there's a place for you in this universe.

HISTORY

1996

Origins in Japan: Pocket Monsters and Game Freak

- Pokémon began as a pair of video games—Red and Green—released in Japan by Game Freak and Nintendo for the Game Boy in 1996.
- Inspired by creator Satoshi Tajiri's childhood love of collecting insects, the original game centered on capturing and training creatures known as Pokémon.
- The idea of "linking" Game Boys to trade Pokémon emphasized social connection, an early nod to relationship-building.

1999–2000

The Rise of the Trading Card Game

- The Pokémon Trading Card Game (TCG) added a new dimension of interaction and strategy, expanding the franchise beyond screens.
- Cards became a schoolyard social currency, sparking discussions around competition, fairness, and collection habits.

Global Breakthrough: Pokémon Red & Blue + Anime

- Pokémon launched in North America with Pokémon Red and Blue in 1998, followed closely by the animated series starring Ash Ketchum and Pikachu.
- The TV show emphasized perseverance, friendship, and moral growth, making it an early source of indirect social-emotional modeling.
- The "Gotta Catch 'Em All" slogan became a pop culture mantra.

1998–1999

Cultural Controversy and Endurance

- Despite being banned in some schools due to trading disputes or religious concern, Pokémon survived media panic by continuing to evolve.
- New generations of games (Gold/Silver, Ruby/Sapphire) introduced complex emotional themes, including grief (e.g., Pokémon Tower), loyalty, and identity.
- The franchise remained developmentally relevant, growing in complexity as its original target audience aged.

2000s

TIMELINE

Cross-Generational Appeal and Expanded Media (2010s)

- With over 700 Pokémon by the early 2010s, the franchise had become multi-generational as parents who played as kids were now introducing it to their children.
- The anime continued alongside manga, mobile games, and theatrical releases like Detective Pikachu (2019).

Pokémon Go and the Real World (2016)

- Pokémon Go, an augmented reality (AR) mobile game, was released in 2016 and became a cultural event.
- It promoted physical activity, community engagement, and outdoor exploration, aligning with therapeutic goals like behavior activation and social reintegration.

Recent Generations (2020s)

- Newer games like Sword/Shield, Legends: Arceus, and Scarlet/Violet introduced open-world elements, deeper character customization, and themes of diversity and inclusivity.
- Storylines now include emotional nuance (i.e. loss, self-doubt, and team dynamics) creating clear therapeutic entry points.

Pokémon as a Cultural Language

- Pokémon is no longer just a product, it's a shared symbolic language among children, adolescents, and adults.
- Characters like Pikachu, Eevee, and Bulbasaur become avatars of emotions and concepts, helping students externalize feelings and build narratives.

Pokémon Today: Over 1000 Creatures and Counting

- As of 2025, the franchise includes over 1,000 Pokémon, with global tournaments, community days, anime reboots, and educational tie-ins.
- It continues to evolve to meet the needs of both children and the adults who care for them, making it a unique tool in therapeutic work.



IMPORTANT TERMINOLOGY

POKÉMON JARGON

Pokémon – The creatures of the franchise, each with unique traits, abilities, and evolutionary paths.

Poké Ball – A spherical device used by trainers to capture and store Pokémon.

Pokédex – A digital encyclopedia that records information about every Pokémon a trainer encounters.

Trainer – An individual who catches, trains, and battles Pokémon on their journey to become stronger.

Gym Leader – A skilled Pokémon trainer who runs a Gym and challenges other trainers with specialized battle teams.

Elite Four – A group of four powerful trainers that serve as the final challenge before one can become a Pokémon Champion.

Team Rocket – A recurring villainous organization known for their humorous, yet persistent, attempts to steal rare Pokémon.

Evolution – The process through which Pokémon transform into stronger or different forms, often changing their abilities.

Legendary Pokémon – Rare and powerful Pokémon that are deeply embedded in the lore and mythology of the franchise.

Shiny Pokémon – Pokémon that appear in alternate color variations, prized for their rarity and unique appearance.

Pokémon Center – Facilities where trainers can heal and care for their Pokémon after battles.

Move – The techniques or attacks that Pokémon use during battles.

Ability – A unique trait that grants Pokémon special powers or benefits in battle.

Nature – An attribute that influences a Pokémon's stat growth by boosting one stat while lowering another.

Breeding – The method by which trainers can produce new Pokémon, often passing down inherited traits.

Master Ball – A rare type of Poké Ball that guarantees a successful catch, regardless of the Pokémon's strength.

Nuzlocke Challenge – A self-imposed set of rules aimed at increasing the difficulty and emotional stakes of playing Pokémon games.

POKÉMON

The main creatures of the franchise, each with unique traits, abilities, and evolutionary paths



POKÉ BALL

A spherical device used by trainers to capture and store Pokémon. Different balls exist with different properties



POKÉDEX

A digital encyclopedia that records information about every Pokémon a trainer encounters and/or catches.



POKÉMON TRAINER

An individual who catches, trains, and battles Pokémon on their journey to become stronger.

Not everyone in the Pokémon universe takes a Pokémon related job. But those that do don't HAVE to be trainers. There are other jobs such as Pokémon breeder, Pokémon coordinator, and Pokémon professor.



GYM LEADER

A skilled Pokémon trainer who runs a Gym and challenges other trainers with specialized battle teams. They are usually leaders in their communities.



ELITE FOUR

A group of four powerful trainers that serve as the final challenge before one can become a Pokémon Champion. They are usually highly skilled trainers who have themed or specialized teams. The elite four varies by region/game.



TEAM ROCKET

A recurring villainous organization known for their humorous, yet persistent, attempts to steal rare Pokémon.

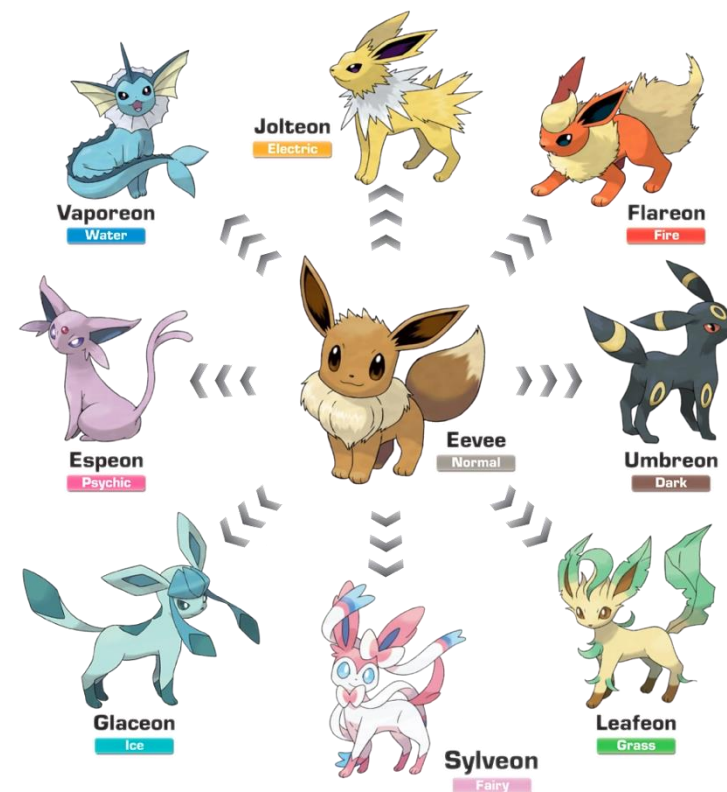
One notable quality about the anime series is that Team Rocket is usually met without anger.



EVOLUTION

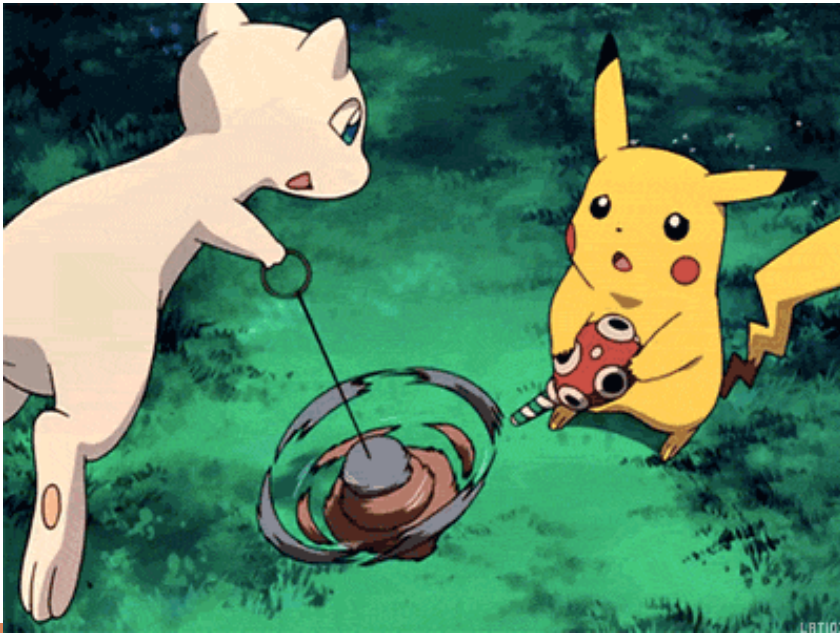
The process through which Pokémon transform into stronger or different forms, often changing their abilities.

There are a variety of ways for Pokémon to evolve, and some Pokémon evolve differently depending on what they're exposed to, when they're exposed to it, or if they have the potential to evolve at all.



LEGENDARY POKÉMON

Rare and powerful Pokémon that are deeply embedded in the lore and mythology of the franchise. They are often powerful and/or mischievous, and story arcs frequently revolve around them.



SHINY POKÉMON

Pokémon that appear in alternate color variations, prized for their rarity and unique appearance. “variant skins”.



POKÉMON CENTER

Facilities where trainers can heal and care for their Pokémon after battles.

Usually staffed by “Nurse Joy”.



MOVE

The techniques or attacks that Pokémon use during battles.

Not all moves are attacks. Moves can be used to heal, defend, or change the environment.

MOVES	
 BUG FIRE	BUG Bug Buzz PP 10/10
CATEGORY 	GRASS Solar Beam PP 10/10
POWER ---	FIRE Flamethrower PP 11/15
ACCURACY ---	FIRE Sunny Day PP 4/5
The user performs a beautiful dance. It boosts the user's Sp. Atk, Sp. Def, and Speed stats.	BUG Quiver Dance PP 20/20

ABILITY

A unique trait that grants Pokémon special powers or benefits in battle. Abilities can vary wildly in terms of effectiveness. Types of Pokémon tend to have the same couple of abilities. However, some Pokémon have hidden abilities.

 Tyranitar			Lv.60		
DEX NO.	248	Tyranitar			
HP	208 / 208				
ATTACK	244				
DEFENSE	155				
SP. ATK	119				
SP. DEF	143				
SPEED	134				
NATURE	Adamant				MOVES LEARNED
ABILITY	Sand Stream				
ITEM	Tyranitarite				
					Earthquake
					Crunch
					Rock Slide
					Dragon Dance

NATURE

An attribute that influences a Pokémon's stat growth by boosting one stat while lowering another. Frequently personality related.

 Zoroark		♂	Lv.51		
DEX NO.	571	Zoroark			
HP	138 / 138				
ATTACK	114				
DEFENSE	82				
SP. ATK	192				
SP. DEF	82				
SPEED	160				
NATURE	Modest				
ABILITY	Illusion				
ITEM	None				
					MOVES LEARNED
					Dark Pulse
					Embargo
					Taunt
					Counter

Type Matchup Chart

Types are assigned both to moves and to the Pokémon themselves. These types can greatly affect the amount of damage dealt or received in battle, so if you learn how they line up against one another, you'll give yourself an edge in battle.

		Defending Pokémon's Type																	
		Normal	Fire	Water	Grass	Electric	Ice	Fighting	Poison	Ground	Flying	Psychic	Bug	Rock	Ghost	Dragon	Dark	Steel	Fairy
Attacking Pokémon's Move Type	Normal												▲	×				▲	
	Fire		▲	▲	●		●						●	▲		▲		●	
	Water		●	▲	▲					●				●		▲			
	Grass		▲	●	▲				▲	●	▲		▲	●		▲		▲	
	Electric			●	▲	▲				×	●					▲			
	Ice		▲	▲	●		▲			●	●					●		▲	
	Fighting	●					●		▲		▲	▲	▲	●	×		●	●	▲
	Poison				●				▲	▲				▲	▲			×	●
	Ground		●		▲	●			●			×		▲	●			●	
	Flying				●	▲		●					●	▲					▲
	Psychic							●	●			▲					×	▲	
	Bug		▲		●			▲	▲		▲	●			▲		●	▲	▲
	Rock		●				●	▲		▲	●		●					▲	
	Ghost	×										●			●		▲		
	Dragon															●		▲	×
	Dark							▲				●			●		▲		▲
	Steel		▲	▲		▲	●							●				▲	●
	Fairy		▲					●	▲							●	●	▲	

TYPING

- Typing considerations add an element of strategy to the game.
- Consider using the idea that some types of “attacks” are more effective against some kinds of “problems”.
- Consider that some of us are “vulnerable” to particular kinds of “attacks”, while we’re resistant to others.
- For those students who have more of a grounding in the game, the STAB (Same Type Attack Bonus), meaning that when a Pokémon uses a move with the same type that it is, it will do more damage.

Key	●	Very effective “It’s super effective!”	×2
	No icon	Normal damage	×1
	▲	Not too effective “It’s not very effective...”	×1/2
	×	No effect “It doesn’t affect...”	×0

- Fire-type Pokémon cannot be afflicted with the Burned condition.
- Grass-type Pokémon are immune to Leech Seed and powder and spore moves.
- Electric-type Pokémon cannot be afflicted with the Paralyzed condition.

- Poison-type Pokémon are immune to the Poison and Badly Poisoned conditions, even when switching in with Toxic Spikes in play. Poison-type Pokémon nullify Toxic Spikes (unless these Pokémon are also Flying type or have the Levitate Ability).
- Ground-type Pokémon are immune to Thunder Wave and take no damage from a sandstorm.
- Flying-type Pokémon cannot be damaged by Spikes when switching in, nor become afflicted with a Poison or Badly Poisoned conditions due to switching in with Toxic Spikes in play.
- Rock-type Pokémon take no damage from a sandstorm. Their Sp. Def also goes up in a sandstorm.
- Ghost-type Pokémon are not affected by moves that prevent Pokémon from fleeing from battle.
- Steel-type Pokémon take no damage from a sandstorm. They are also immune to the Poison and Badly Poisoned

STATUS CONDITIONS/EFFECTS



Status effects are conditions that affect a Pokémon during battle, like making them fall asleep, get burned, or become paralyzed, which can limit what they're able to do. Status effects may represent setbacks like feeling stuck, tired, or overwhelmed.

Paralyzed

"When you feel frozen or stuck it's like being paralyzed. What can help you recover on your next turn?"

Burn

"When you're burned out even small things can feel painful. How can we try to feel less burned out?"

Poison

"Negative thoughts or toxic situations can be a lot like poison- they may not seem huge at first, but will wear us down over time. What's been wearing you down?"

Sleep

"Feeling exhausted or checked out can be a lot like being asleep while the world moves around us. What can we do to help keep us from getting there?"

HISTORY OF THE POKÉMON WORLD

There is a rich mythology to the world that Pokémon exist within.

Every generation generally adds additionally “legendary” Pokémon who expand on the mythology.

Legendary and pseudo-legendary Pokémon frequently fill the role of world change agents.

Link to a [good summary of the Pokémon world history](#).



POKÉMON FAN THEORIES



- Giovanni is Ash's father
 - Humans are an invasive species in the Pokémon world.
 - Or maybe they're just another kind of Pokémon. Nurse Joy & Officer Jenny as examples.
- Ash may be dead
 - Shocked by Pikachu in the Spearow attack OR the seeing Ho-oh. Ash doesn't age, and does some incredible things.
- Ditto is a failed mew clone
- The Pokémon war led to a lack of adults in the world
- Cubone wears its mothers' skull and used to be a Kangaskhan
- Venomoth and Butterfree evolutionary trees are backwards.



SO....



WHO'S YOUR FAVORITE POKÉMON?

NO, PIKACHU IS NOT A VALID ANSWER

WHY?



BULBAPEDIA



- Don't have a favorite Pokémon? Let me give you a great resource!
 - https://bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net/wiki/Main_Page
- Bulbapedia is a great way to explore almost any Pokémon concept.
- I also recommend using it to explore the favorite Pokémon or character of any given student!



POKÉMON GAMES

Want more info? Better Lists on these sites

https://nintendo.fandom.com/wiki/List_of_Pok%C3%A9mon_games

<https://www.esports.net/news/pokemon/all-pokemon-games/>

POKÉMON MAINLINE GAMES



Items with a * may not be considered mainline by some people.

WHAT MAKES IT MAINLINE?

Usually pick a starter from 3 options



Usually have a journey to collect badges



Usually centers being in Pokémon battles



MAINLINE GAMES

- CURRENT GENERATION GAMEPLAY VIDEO
 - [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=G-PQRUAH4MW&LIST=PL-7T9DOIELCQML0TWIIEBKYESH6SUXMU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-PQRUAH4MW&list=PL-7T9DOIELCQML0TWIIEBKYESH6SUXMU)
[M](#)
 - START AT 24:10 FOR BATTLE
EXAMPLE
- OLDER GENERATION GAMEPLAY VIDEO
 - [HTTPS://YOUTU.BE/HYCOTDHI0DG?SI=ARONFF9JK9CYR6Q_&T=5749](https://youtu.be/hycotdhi0dg?si=aronff9jk9cyr6q_&t=5749)
 - 1:35:49 FOR BATTLE EXAMPLE



BATTLE GIMMICKS

Generation	Gimmick	Key Feature	Debut Game
VI	Mega Evolution	Temporary evolution mid-battle	X & Y
VII	Z-Moves	One-time super move	Sun & Moon
VIII	Dynamax/Gigantamax	Giant form & Max Moves	Sword & Shield
IX	Terastallization	Type change & Tera boost	Scarlet & Violet

MEGA EVOLUTION

Introduced in: Generation VI (Pokémon X & Y)

How it works: Certain Pokémon can Mega Evolve once per battle using a Mega Stone. This changes their appearance, boosts their stats, and may even alter abilities or types.

Why it matters: Mega Evolution was the first major form-changing mechanic mid-battle and added a strong sense of spectacle and surprise to competitive play.

Therapeutic potential: Consider the idea of what makes us feel stronger.



Z-MOVES

Introduced in: Generation VII (Pokémon Sun & Moon)

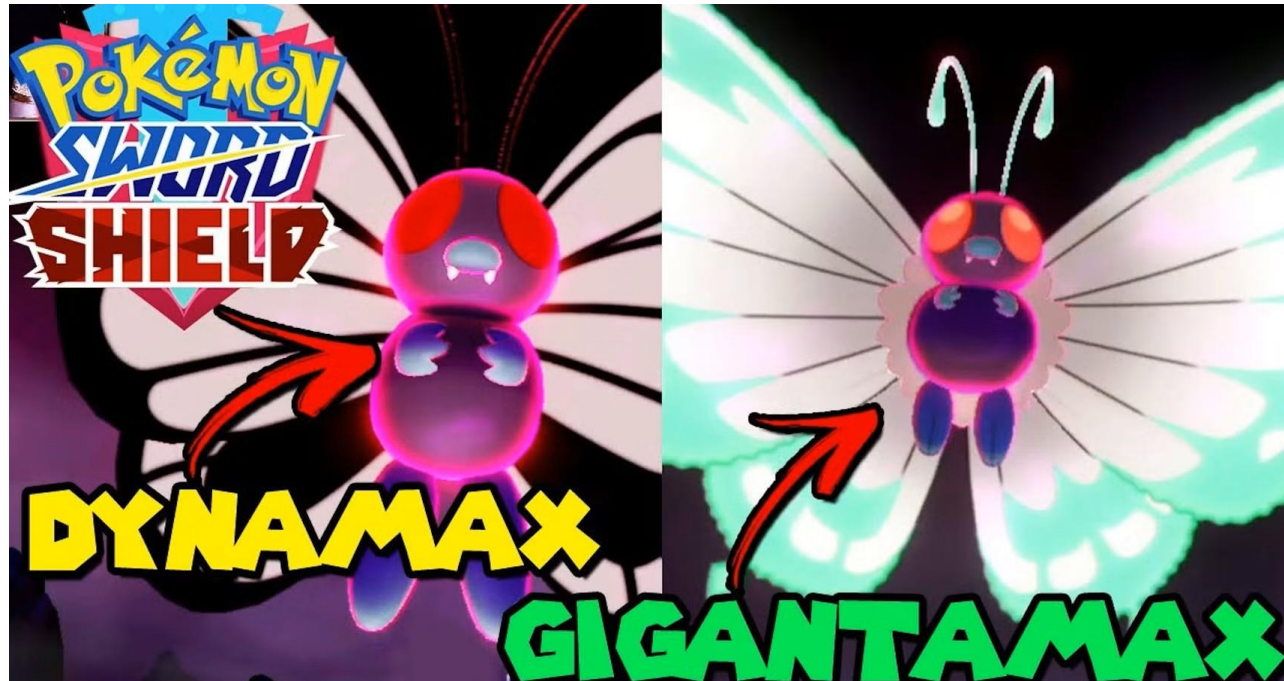
How it works: If a Pokémon holds a Z-Crystal that matches one of its moves, it can unleash a powerful one-time Z-Move during battle. Some Pokémon have exclusive Z-Moves.

Why it matters: Z-Moves emphasized personalization—every Pokémon could have a special finishing move—and introduced powerful single-use strategy.

Therapeutic potential: Consider the idea of what we all have that makes us different, and participating in things we are good at.



DYNAMAX & GIGANTAMAX



Introduced in: Generation VIII (Pokémon Sword & Shield)

How it works: Dynamaxing causes a Pokémon to grow gigantic for three turns, greatly increasing its HP and replacing moves with powerful Max Moves.

Gigantamax is a special form of Dynamax that also changes a Pokémon's appearance and grants unique Max Moves.

Why it matters: This was the centerpiece of the Galar region, designed to evoke the feeling of Pokémon stadium battles. It also emphasized timing and crowd spectacle.

Therapeutic potential: Consider the idea of places that make us feel better/stronger.

TERASTALLIZATION

Introduced in: Generation IX (Pokémon Scarlet & Violet)

How it works: Pokémon gain a crystalline form and a new type (their “Tera Type”) during battle. This boosts moves of that type and may change their weaknesses/resistances.

Why it matters: Terastallization rewards deep strategic planning and opens the door for type-based mind games, making type prediction more dynamic than ever.

Therapeutic potential: Consider the idea of what people expect when they see us versus what we consider ourselves to be, or who we truly are.



SPECIAL CASE: DOUBLE BATTLES!

Introduced in: Generation III (Pokémon Ruby & Sapphire)

How it works: Each trainer sends out two Pokémon at a time, creating a 2-on-2 battle format. Moves can target a single foe, multiple targets, or support a partner, and positioning on the field may influence how moves behave.

Why it matters: Double Battles add layers of strategy that go beyond solo play. Players must consider teamwork between their Pokémon, synergy between moves and abilities, and how to adapt when multiple threats are present at once. This format is now the standard for official competitive play due to its depth and balance.

Therapeutic potential: We frequently aren't facing things alone. What can we do to help each other? What can we do that accidentally hurts each other?



POKÉMON NON-MAINLINE GAMES

Pokémon Stadium	Pokémon Snap	Pokémon Pinball	Pokémon Stadium 2	Pokémon Puzzle League	Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Red Rescue Team & Blue Rescue Team	Pokémon Ranger
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Time and Explorers of Darkness	Pokémon Battle Revolution	Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Explorers of Sky	Pokémon Rumble	Pokémon Ranger: Shadows of Almia	Pokémon Ranger: Guardian Signs	PokéPark Wii: Pikachu's Adventure
Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Gates to Infinity	PokéPark 2: Wonders Beyond	Pokémon Rumble Blast	Pokémon Conquest	Pokémon Mystery Dungeon: Super Mystery Dungeon	Pokémon GO	Pokémon Rumble World
Pokémon Shuffle	Pokémon Duel	Pokémon Quest	Pokémon Café ReMix	Pokémon Unite	New Pokémon Snap	Pokémon Pokopia (announced)

Information on Pokémon Pokopia [here](#).

POKÉMON GO!

In 2016 Pokémon GO rapidly became a global phenomenon and set new standards for augmented-reality (AR) mobile gaming, reaching hundreds of millions of downloads and gaining massive media attention for bringing people into real-world spaces.

The game significantly reshaped how players engage with their physical environment. Research shows that the game led to measurable increases in walking and outdoor activity among players and encouraged exploration of local landmarks and public spaces.

Pokémon GO also became a social and cultural connector. Players from diverse ages and backgrounds gathered at shared locations (parks, public squares, etc.) for events, raids and meet-ups, helping to build community in ways that go beyond typical “digital-only” gaming experiences.

The game’s design and geolocation mechanics sparked interest and debate in academic and urban design circles—including how games can influence mobility patterns, access to public space, and the role of technology in everyday life. It also highlighted concerns with use of geolocation mechanics with people who have mobility concerns.

In a recent major move, the developer Niantic, Inc. sold its entire game division (which includes Pokémon GO) to Scopely, Inc. in March 2025 for approximately US\$3.5 billion, which has been controversial among players.





POKÉMON SHOWS

POKÉMON SHOWS

Want more info?
Better List on this
site

<https://www.pokemon.com/us/animation/seasons>

Pokémon: Indigo League (1997-1999)	Pokémon: Adventures in the Orange Islands (1999)	Pokémon: The Johto Journeys (1999-2000)	Pokémon: Johto League Champions (2000-2001)	Pokémon: Master Quest (2001-2002)	Pokémon: Advanced (2002-2003)
Pokémon: Advanced Challenge (2003-2004)	Pokémon: Advanced Battle (2004-2005)	Pokémon: Battle Frontier (2005-2006)	Pokémon: Diamond and Pearl (2006-2007)	Pokémon: Diamond and Pearl Battle Dimension (2007-2008)	Pokémon: Diamond and Pearl Galactic Battles (2008-2009)
Pokémon: Diamond and Pearl Sinnoh League Victors (2009-2010)	Pokémon: Black & White (2010-2011)	Pokémon: Black & White Rival Destinies (2011-2012)	Pokémon: Black & White Adventures in Unova and Beyond (2012-2013)	Pokémon: XY (2013-2014)	Pokémon: XY Kalos Quest (2014-2015)
Pokémon: XYZ (2015-2016)	Pokémon: Sun & Moon (2016-2017)	Pokémon: Sun & Moon – Ultra Adventures (2017-2018)	Pokémon: Sun & Moon – Ultra Legends (2018-2019)	Pokémon Journeys: The Series (2019-2020)	Pokémon Master Journeys: The Series (2020-2021)
		Pokémon Ultimate Journeys: The Series (2021-2023)	Pokémon Horizons: The Series (2023-present)		

MAJOR CHARACTERS



MAJOR THEMES

- Perseverance
 - Growth through failure is a consistent theme across shows. Ash doesn't win a championship until the series was ready to be done with his story.
- Friendship and Trust
 - Not only among humans, but also between humans and Pokémon. Even the “bad guys” frequently have good relationships with their Pokémon.
- Diversity
 - Different characters routinely choose different paths.
 - Different kinds of pokemon are helpful and valuable depending on the situation.
- Teamwork / Communication
 - Ash frequently only succeeds with the help of his friends.

USEFUL EPISODES

- “Charmander – The Stray Pokémon” ([Season 1, Episode 11](#))
 - Charmander is left behind by a careless trainer.
- “Bulbasaur and the Hidden Village” ([Season 1, Episode 10](#))
 - Bulbasaur acts as a guardian of injured Pokémon
- “Go West Young Meowth” ([Season 2, Episode 16](#))
 - A flashback shows Meowth’s difficult early life, being bullied and learning to speak.
- “Ignorance is Blissey” ([Season 3, Episode 13](#))
 - Jessie recalls her time training as a nurse Pokémon. This episode shows how people change and deserve compassion, even if they’ve made mistakes.
- “The Battling Eevee Brothers” ([Season 1, Episode 37](#))
 - Eevee’s trainer, Mikey, is being pushed by his older brothers to evolve Eevee, but he wants to keep it just the way it is.
- “The Apple Corp!” ([Season 4, Episode 22](#))
 - Ash and friends come across a group of wild Aipom stealing apples from a local orchard.



Pokémon TV ✓

@OfficialPokémonTV · 1.15M subscribers · 536 videos

Welcome to the official Pokémon TV YouTube channel, where you can explore the world of ...more

pokemon.com

Subscribe



POKÉMON MOVIES

POKÉMON MOVIES

Pokémon: The First
Movie – Mewtwo
Strikes Back (1998)

Pokémon: The Movie
2000 – The Power of
One (1999)

Pokémon 3: The Movie
– Spell of the Unown
(2000)

Pokémon 4Ever: Celebi
– Voice of the Forest
(2001)

Pokémon Heroes: Latios
and Latias (2002)

Pokémon: Jirachi – Wish
Maker (2003)

Pokémon: Destiny
Deoxys (2004)

Pokémon: Lucario and
the Mystery of Mew
(2005)

Pokémon Ranger and
the Temple of the Sea
(2006)

Pokémon: The Rise of
Darkrai (2007)

Pokémon: Giratina and
the Sky Warrior (2008)

Pokémon: Arceus and
the Jewel of Life (2009)

Pokémon: Zoroark –
Master of Illusions
(2010)

Pokémon the Movie:
Black—Victini and
Reshiram and White—
Victini and Zekrom
(2011)

Pokémon the Movie:
Kyurem vs. the Sword of
Justice (2012)

Pokémon the Movie:
Genesect and the
Legend Awakened
(2013)

Pokémon the Movie:
Diancie and the Cocoon
of Destruction (2014)

Pokémon the Movie:
Hoopa and the Clash of
Ages (2015)

Pokémon the Movie:
Volcanion and the
Mechanical Marvel
(2016)

Pokémon the Movie: I
Choose You! (2017)

Pokémon the Movie:
The Power of Us (2018)

Pokémon: Mewtwo
Strikes Back—Evolution
(2019)

Pokémon the Movie:
Secrets of the Jungle
(2020, Japan; 2021,
International)

Want more info?
Better List on this
site

<https://www.pokemon.com/us/animation/movies>

POKÉMON MOVIE SUMMARIES

Pokémon: The First Movie – Mewtwo Strikes Back

- Plot Summary:
 - Scientists create Mewtwo, a powerful clone of the mythical Pokémon Mew. Mewtwo becomes bitter after realizing he was created to serve others. He lashes out, trying to prove he's superior by challenging human trainers and cloning their Pokémon. Ash and his friends get caught in the middle. The climax centers around a battle between originals and clones—but ends with sacrifice and understanding.
- Therapeutic Themes:
 - Identity and purpose – Mewtwo asks: “Who am I?” This can resonate with students questioning their place in the world.
 - Anger and trauma responses – Mewtwo's rage is a reaction to mistreatment and existential confusion.
 - Empathy and connection – The film teaches that shared experience—not origin—defines one's value.

Pokémon: The Movie 2000 – The Power of One

- Plot Summary:
 - A collector named Lawrence III disrupts the balance of nature by trying to capture the legendary bird Pokémon Articuno, Zapdos, and Moltres. This throws the world into chaos. Ash becomes the “Chosen One” in a prophecy that says a human must help restore balance with the aid of Lugia, another legendary Pokémon.
- Therapeutic Themes:
 - Responsibility and agency – Ash is just a kid, yet plays a critical role in saving the world. This reinforces that children can make meaningful contributions.
 - Balance and cooperation – The three birds represent forces that need to coexist. The metaphor can be applied to emotions or peer dynamics.
 - Teamwork across differences – Human and Pokémon must collaborate to fix what's broken.

POKÉMON MOVIE SUMMARIES

Pokémon: The Movie 3 – Spell of the Unown

- Plot Summary:
 - A young girl named Molly loses her father, a Pokémon researcher. Using mysterious Pokémon called the Unown, she creates a fantasy world to cope with her grief—complete with dreamlike versions of her parents. Ash and his friends must help bring her back to reality and help her confront her feelings.
- Therapeutic Themes:
 - Grief and loss – Molly's actions are a literal fantasy response to trauma. This makes the movie ideal for discussing emotional defense mechanisms.
 - Reality vs. fantasy – A powerful metaphor for children who retreat into imaginary worlds when overwhelmed.

Pokémon 4Ever – Celebi: Voice of the Forest

- Plot Summary:
 - Ash meets Sam, a boy from the past who was transported to the present along with Celebi, a time-traveling Pokémon. Celebi is hunted by an agent of Team Rocket who wants to corrupt its power. The film blends time travel, nature themes, and memory, and ends with Sam returning to his rightful timeline.
- Therapeutic Themes:
 - Trauma and healing – Celebi is injured and frightened, reflecting how kids may feel after distress.
 - Change and time – The time travel device opens conversations about growing up, perspective-taking, and transitions.
 - Empathy across time – Sam and Ash form a quick bond despite being from different eras, modeling open-mindedness and connection.

POKÉMON MOVIE SUMMARIES- MORE RECENT

Pokémon the Movie: The Power of Us

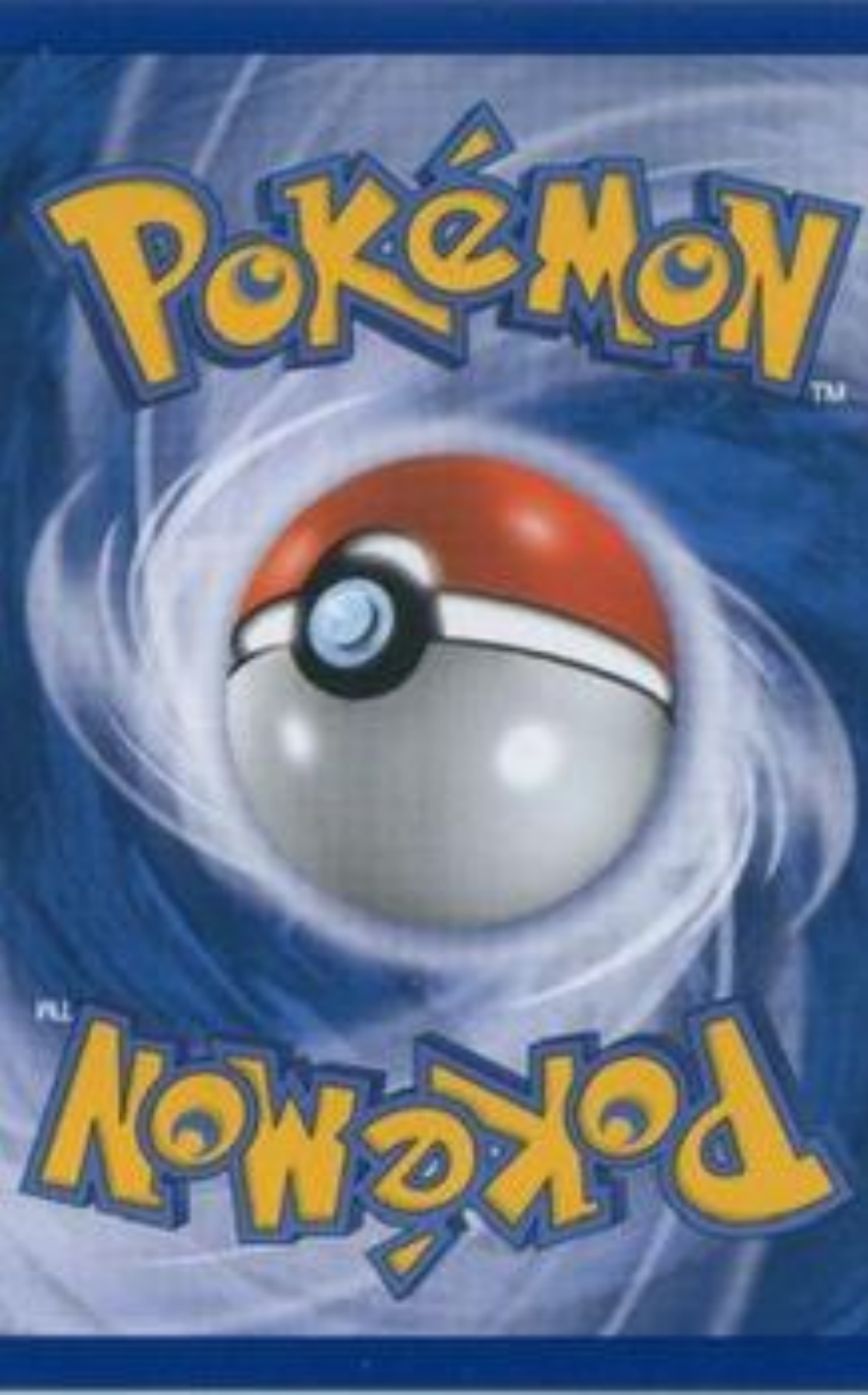
- Plot Summary:
 - In Fula City, the annual Wind Festival is in motion—celebrated by locals ready to greet the legendary Pokémon Lugia. A high-school student, a shy researcher, an old woman who dislikes Pokémon, a boastful man and a quiet girl living alone in the forest all converge when disaster strikes: a massive wind-borne threat looms, and a mythic figure appears in the mix. Alongside Ash Ketchum and his companion Pikachu, these unlikely characters must learn to work together, set aside their differences, and rally to protect both people and Pokémon.
- Therapeutic Themes:
 - Collaboration and interdependence: many characters with different strengths come together.
 - Self-identity and value: each person's story matters—even if they feel “just a side character.”
 - Overcoming fear and doubt: the shy researcher and other characters face internal blocks.

Pokémon the Movie: Secrets of the Jungle

- Plot Summary:
 - Deep in the Forest of Okoya, a mythical Pokémon named Zarude finds an infant boy floating in a cradle and raises him as one of their own—calling him Koko. Years later, the boy lives among Pokémon, believing he is a Pokémon—until he meets Ash and Pikachu, which triggers questions of identity, belonging and the human world.
- Therapeutic Themes:
 - Identity and belonging: Koko's journey of discovering “Who am I?” is central—especially relevant for kids who feel between worlds.
 - Adoption, guardianship, and care: Zarude's role in raising Koko opens conversation about nontraditional family, caregiving and attachment.
 - Ethical responsibility and advocacy: human encroachment and the protection of the forest link to themes of stewardship, community responsibility and speaking up for others.



POKÉMON CARDS



POKÉMON CARD RARITIES

Card Type / Rarity	Explanation
Common	The most basic cards—found frequently in packs, marked with a circle symbol.
Uncommon	A step above common; marked with a diamond symbol. Slightly harder to pull.
Rare	Identified with a star symbol. Includes stronger or more desirable cards than common/uncommon.
Holo Rare (Rare Holo)	A Rare card where the illustration area has a holographic (foil) finish.
Reverse Holo	Any rarity card where the “rest of” the card (border, background) is holographic, but not necessarily the main art area.
Ultra Rare	Cards rarer than standard Rare—often include special art or foils, and may carry higher collector value.
Secret Rare	Cards whose card number in the set exceeds the listed “total” (for example 195/192) and often include alternate art, gold foil, or other premium finishes.
Full Art	Cards where the artwork extends across most or the entire front of the card rather than just the illustration window—often collectible variants.
Alternate Art (Alt Art)	Variant artworks (sometimes entirely different scenes) of a Pokémon or card that also often carry premium finishes—these are collectible, even when functionally identical to a standard version.
Illustration Rare / Special Illustration Rare	Designations (especially in recent sets) for ultra-premium versions with unique art, foil treatments, and very low pull rates.
Shiny / Shining Pokémon Cards	Cards featuring a Pokémon in its alternate (shiny) coloring, often with special foil and designated as a premium variant.
Promo Cards	Cards not pulled from the standard booster packs but given out via events, special products, or promotional campaigns. These often carry unique numbering or markings.



POKÉMON CARD EXAMPLES



I have real life examples with me, since the pictures don't do it justice.

ANATOMY OF A POKÉMON CARD

Pokemon Name

This is the name of the Pokemon. This Pokemon is called "Larvesta".

Stage

Some Pokemon can evolve into stronger versions of themselves. In gameplay, you must start with the "basic" version of a Pokemon, but then you can evolve it into its "Stage 1" and "Stage 2" versions, if you have them.

Expansion Symbol

This is a unique symbol that tells you exactly which expansion a card is from. This card is from the Darkness Ablaze expansion.

Card Number

Each card in every set is given a specific number. This card is number 29 of a total 189 cards in this set. This does not mean there are only 189 cards like this in the world. There are many many 029/189 cards in existence, and all of them are Larvesta with 70 HP, etc.



Pokemon Type

Each Pokemon has a type. This Pokemon is a fire type. Pokemon types become relevant in gameplay sometimes... for example: a Pokemon can be weak to a certain type of Pokemon, and then they take more damage when attacked by Pokemon of that type.

Hit Points

Hit points tell you how much damage a Pokemon can take before they are knocked out (killed). This Pokemon can take 70 damage.

Attacks

The attacks this Pokemon can use are shown in this area of the card. This Pokemon only has 1 attack called "singe". The Pokemon must have at least 1 fire energy card attached to it to use the attack. The attack deals no damage and causes the opponent's active Pokemon to become Burned (being Burned is a special condition in the game).

POKÉMON CARD GAME RULES



Goal:

Collect all of your prize cards OR defeat all of your opponents Pokémon to win!

Setup:

60 card deck

1 active Pokémon, and additional on “bench”

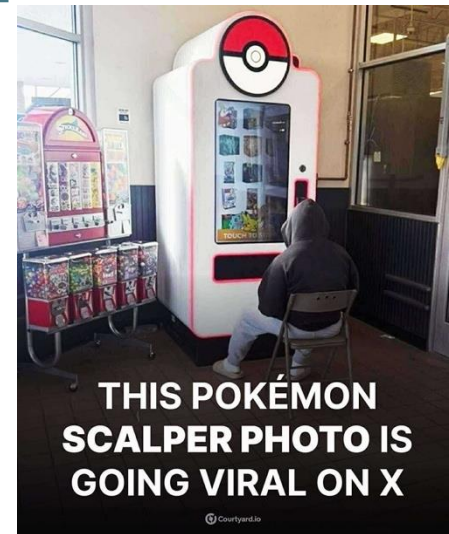
Turn structure:

Draw Phase, Action Phase*, Attack phase

*Action phase includes playing new Pokémon, evolving Pokémon, attaching energy, playing trainer cards, activating abilities, or retreating.

POKÉMON TCG FEATURES

- Playing the game is a big business right now.
 - World Championships are a big deal
 - <https://worlds.pokemon.com/en-us>
 - If you think you want to learn how to play, download Pokémon TCGP.
 - <https://tcgpocket.pokemon.com/en-us/>
 - If you're already familiar with the card game, you can download the full game for your phone or computer.
 - <http://tcg.pokemon.com/en-us/tcgl/>
- Pokémon Professor Program
 - <https://professorprogram.pokemon.com/page/about-ranks>
 - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/play-pokemon/organize/become-a-pokemon-professor>
- Card scarcity
 - Over the last several years, problems with print runs combined with scalpers has made getting cards more difficult and costly.
 - [IGN Article on Scarcity](#)
 - [Community Article on Scalping](#)
 - [Pokémon Card Stabbing](#)



**THIS POKÉMON
SCALPER PHOTO IS
GOING VIRAL ON X**

© courtyard.io

THOUGHTS ON POKÉMON CARDS AND THERAPY

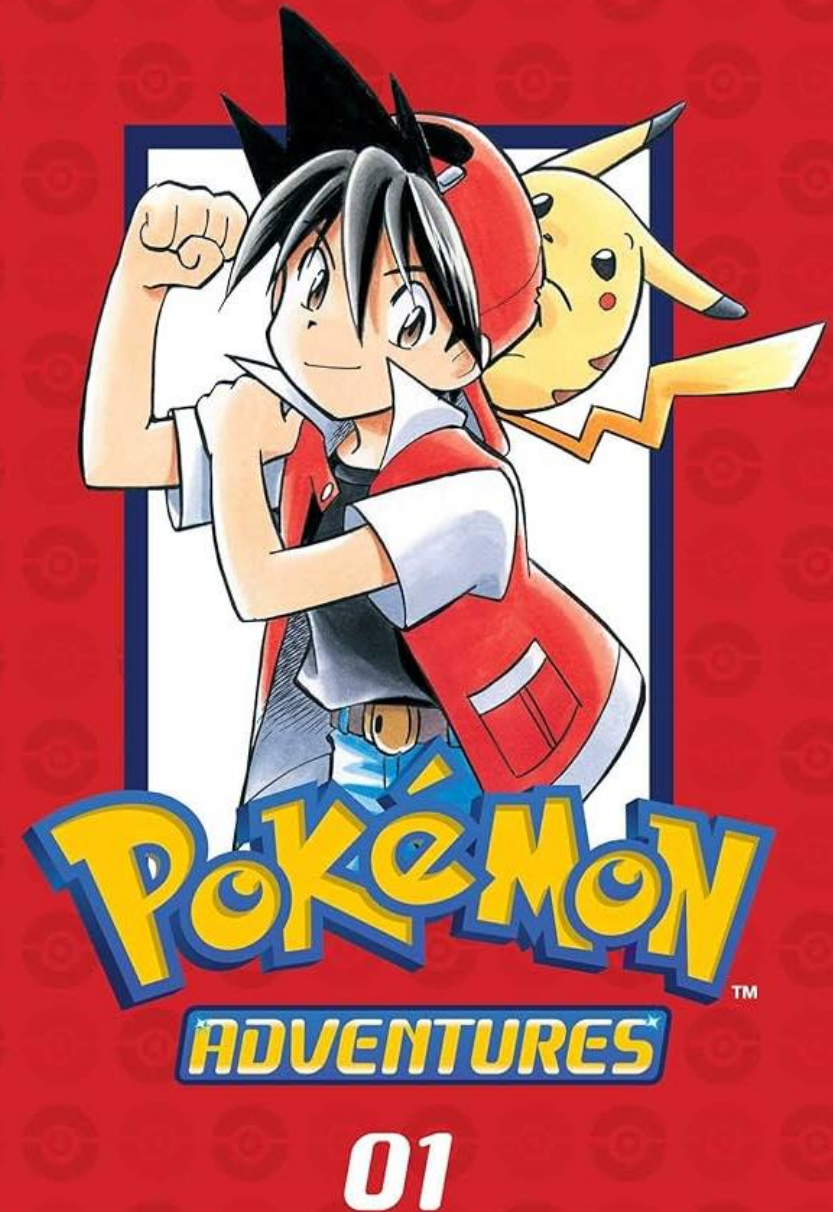
- Some people like sorting the cards as a soothing technique
- Pokémon cards have little pokedex entries on them that can be explored with students.
- If a student already knows or plays the game, let them show you what they know as a rapport building technique.
- Energy cards are a good replacement for the idea of “spoons” in the spoon analogy.
 - Resource management can be a good executive functioning exercise.



POKÉMON MANGA

POKÉMON MANGA

- Less popular than the other major ways to engage with Pokémon.
- Some of the older versions are true manga, whereas some of the newer versions are stories made from screen caps of the current movies or shows.
- Older versions are a bit darker than current versions. But they also give some more context on what the world may look like in a “real world” sense.



Story by HIDENORI KUSAKA Art by MATO



POKÉMON EVENTS

WORLDWIDE POKÉMON EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

- Pokémon Café
 - <https://www.pokemon-cafe.jp/en/cafe/>
- SS Anne boat trip
 - <https://www.ign.com/articles/i-had-an-unforgettable-pokmon-battle-aboard-the-ss-anne>
- Pokémon Fossil Museum
 - <https://www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibition/pokemon>
- Pokémon Go Events
 - <https://pokemongo.com/events>
- Pokémon Day
 - February 27th
 - <https://www.pokemon.com/us/pokemon-news/news-and-updates-from-the-february-2025-pokemon-day-pokemon-presents>



FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE FRANCHISE

“VILLAIN” TEAMS

- Team Rocket
 - Team Rocket often worked to gain money through methods such as burglary and selling Fossils
- Team Magma
 - Their main goal is to increase the landmass of the Hoenn region.
- Team Aqua
 - Their main goal is to reduce the landmass of the Hoenn region.
- Team Galactic
 - Their leader wishes to recreate the universe in his image or spiritless with the powers of Dialga and Palkia.
- Team Plasma
 - Their objective is to separate humanity from Pokémon.
- Team Flare
 - Team Flare's goal is claimed to be making the world "beautiful" with style and lots of money. It is later confirmed that they seek a world benefiting only those within Team Flare, disregarding anybody else
- Team Skull
 - Team Skull's intentions are to simply make enough money to survive
- Team Rainbow Rocket
 - Team Rainbow Rocket's intention is to create an army of Ultra Beasts in order to conquer all worlds in the multiverse.
- Team Yell
 - Unlike most evil teams, Team Yell's intentions, while similar to those of Team Skull (who also have a history of disrupting events), are not entirely evil; they are simply devoted fans of Piers' younger sister Marnie.
- Team Star
 - They are delinquent students of Naranja Academy/Uva Academy and causing trouble for others and pressuring other students into joining.

https://bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net/wiki/Villainous_team

SOME FINAL THOUGHTS



- If you're interested in seeing actual gameplay of card games or the mainline games, you can usually find someone playing on Twitch or YouTube.
- There are multiple ways to play the video games.
 - Nuzlocke
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=plSyrHqUh78>
 - Speed Run
 - ROMs/ROM Hacks

WANNA DIG IN A LITTLE DEEPER?



- As a cultural marker, things go beyond just the games and existing materials
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lfODTrrLzw4>
- There are a lot of poignant moments in the shows that hold meaning to many people.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sR1hzqn8k5w>
- The core of the franchise has also transcended into other mediums
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2B1v94Dp1Jw&t=1687s&pp=0gcJCQYKAYcqIYzv>



GENERAL TECHNIQUES

THINKING TRAPS / DISTORTED COGNITIONS

- Rebuild the sheet with Pokémon or Pokémon characters that represent the Distorted cognition for that student.
 - [Template Here.](#)
 - [Fillable Template Here](#)
- Consider if that thought process has happened in a Pokémon character or Pokémon. Use that as a bridge into discussing the distortion and how to handle it.

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

All or nothing thinking



Sometimes called 'black and white thinking'

"If I'm not perfect I have failed"

"Either I do it right or not at all"

Over-generalizing

"everything is always rubbish"

"nothing good ever happens"

Seeing a pattern based upon a single event, or being overly broad in the conclusions we draw

Mental filter



Only paying attention to certain types of evidence

"Noticing our failures but not seeing our successes"

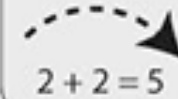
Disqualifying the positive



Discounting the good things that have happened or that you have done for some reason or another

"That doesn't count"

Jumping to conclusions



There are two key types of jumping to conclusions:

- **Mind reading** (imagining we know what others are thinking)
- **Fortune telling** (predicting the future)

Magnification (catastrophising) & minimization



Blowing things out of proportion (catastrophizing), or inappropriately shrinking something to make it seem less important

Emotional reasoning



Assuming that because we feel a certain way what we think must be true

"I feel embarrassed so I must be an idiot"

should
must

Using critical words like 'should', 'must', or 'ought' can make us feel guilty, or like we have already failed

If we apply 'shoulds' to other people the result is often frustration

Labelling



Assigning labels to ourselves or other people

"I'm a loser"

"I'm completely useless"

"They're such an idiot"

Personalization

"this is my fault"

Blaming yourself or taking responsibility for something that wasn't completely your fault

Conversely, blaming other people for something that was your fault

WATCH & PROCESS



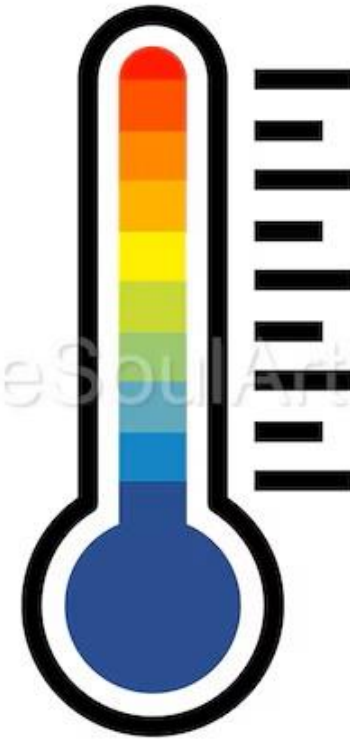
- YouTube has a LOT of free content
 - <https://www.youtube.com/@OfficialPoke%CC%81monTV>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/@pokemon>
 - SPANISH!
 - <https://www.youtube.com/@PokemonOficialES>
- Don't forget your Socratic Questioning skills!
 - "Why do you think..."
 - "What do you think..."
 - "Who else could have..."
 - "When do you think he realized..."
 - "How else could he have..."
- Let's try it out!
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RYCOc3SiU7A>
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UTidwW3iLHk>

EMOTIONAL THERMOMETER

Create an emotion thermometer using pictures instead of words. The student can draw pictures, or you can use google to find pictures of a character or Pokémon that reflects that level for the student.

Need a thermometer template? [Click Here.](#)

SVG PNG DXF JPG



EMOTIONAL FLASH CARDS



POKÉMON CARD VISUALS

There are now websites that will let you create Pokémon cards of your own! You can use them to represent skills, problems, or anything else that your heart desires!

[Click here to try a website for making cards.](#)

TRAINER

Supporter

Deep Breath

Take 10



In, 2, 3, 4
Hold, 2, 3, 4,
Out, 2, 3, 4
Hold, 2, 3, 4

You may play only 1 Supporter card during your turn.

SVP EN 1



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT) TECHNIQUES

COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is a widely used, evidence-based approach that focuses on the connection between our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The basic idea is that how we think about a situation influences how we feel and act, and by changing our thoughts, we can change our emotions and actions. CBT is structured, goal-oriented, and often short-term, making it a good fit for school-aged populations.

In a school setting, CBT helps students recognize unhelpful thought patterns (like “I always mess up” or “No one likes me”) and teaches them how to challenge those thoughts with more balanced ones. This can help reduce symptoms of anxiety, depression, and anger, while also building emotional regulation and problem-solving skills.

- Common Techniques:

- Cognitive Restructuring: Students learn to identify negative or irrational thoughts and replace them with more realistic or helpful ones.
- Thought Logs: A structured worksheet where students track triggering events, thoughts, emotions, and alternative responses.
- Behavioral Activation: Encourages students to engage in activities they find rewarding, especially when they’re feeling low or unmotivated.
- Exposure Practice: Gradual exposure to feared or avoided situations to reduce anxiety and build coping confidence.
- Socratic Questioning: A technique where the adult guides the student through questions that help them evaluate the evidence for their thoughts and consider other perspectives.

POTENTIAL POKÉMON/CBT INTERVENTIONS

- Thought Typing
 - What's "Super effective" against a particular thought? What's "not so effective"?
- Thought Pokedex
 - Retheme of a thought log.
- Thought Evolution chart
 - Link emotions to different Pokémon types (e.g., sadness = water, anger = fire) and color in a tracker showing which "types" they've felt today.
- Misty's Psyduck as a metaphor for automatic thoughts
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fkjZNKVm1vE>

The background of the image is a dark gray, almost black, field. Overlaid on this is a complex, abstract network of white dots and thin white lines. The dots are of varying sizes and are connected by lines of varying lengths, creating a web-like structure that resembles a molecular model or a data network. The network is more dense in the upper right and lower right areas, with some smaller, isolated clusters and lines extending towards the left and bottom. The overall effect is one of a vast, interconnected system.

BIBLIOTHERAPY

BIBLIOTHERAPY

Bibliotherapy uses books, stories, or written materials to support mental health and social-emotional growth. It can be a formal intervention or an informal strategy where students connect with characters, themes, or experiences that mirror their own. Bibliotherapy is especially powerful for helping children explore difficult topics in a safe, indirect way.

This approach supports empathy, insight, and emotional expression. Whether it's reading a story about grief, a character with ADHD, or a superhero with anxiety, students are given models for how to manage their own feelings and situations.

- Common Techniques:

- Guided Reading and Discussion: Selecting a story that aligns with a student's concern and using structured questions to explore emotions and coping strategies.
- Reflective Journaling: After reading, students write or draw their thoughts, connecting the story to their own lives.
- Character Mapping: Analyzing a character's traits, decisions, and emotional journey to increase insight and empathy.
- Problem-Solving Extension: Identifying how a character solved a problem and brainstorming how the student might apply similar strategies.

POTENTIAL POKÉMON/BIBLIOTHERAPY INTERVENTIONS

- Character Compass
 - Students build a list of characters (trainers or Pokémon) they admire and write what values or traits they share — resilience, kindness, curiosity — and how those traits could guide them through a challenge.
- Watch & Reflect
 - Watch an episode or clip of Pokémon where a Pokémon or trainer faces a big decision. After watching, discuss how the student relates to the challenge and what decision they'd make in that situation.
- Evolution Stories
 - Compare the different ways a Pokémon (Eevee is a great example) can evolve depending on its environment and experiences. Let students write a story of their own "evolution" based on a strength or change they've gone through.



DIALECTICAL BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (DBT) TECHNIQUES

DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY (DBT)

Dialectical Behavior Therapy is an approach that blends cognitive-behavioral strategies with mindfulness. The word “dialectical” refers to holding two ideas at the same time that seem opposite, such as “I am doing my best” and “I want to keep improving.” DBT focuses on helping students manage intense emotions, handle distress without harmful behaviors, and build healthier relationships.

In schools, DBT skills can be very helpful for students who struggle with impulsivity, self-control, or big emotional swings. The skills are practical, easy to teach in groups, and promote long-term coping.

- Common Techniques:

- Mindfulness Skills: Activities that teach students to stay present and notice their thoughts and feelings without getting carried away by them.
- Distress Tolerance Skills: Tools like grounding exercises or distraction strategies to get through crises without making the situation worse.
- Emotion Regulation Skills: Teaching students how to understand emotions, reduce vulnerability to big swings, and increase positive experiences.
- Interpersonal Effectiveness Skills: Strategies for assertive communication, setting boundaries, and maintaining relationships in healthy ways.

POTENTIAL POKÉMON/DBT INTERVENTIONS

- Type Matchup
 - Emotions are like Pokémon types: sometimes you're facing a "Fire" feeling like anger, and you need a "Water" move like deep breathing. Help students build a "type chart" for what coping skills match different emotional states.
- Distress tolerance Pokebag
 - Like an item bag in the games, students list things they can "use" when they're overwhelmed — music, movement, affirmations. They can "equip" one or two each week and reflect on how it helped.
- Mindfulness watching
 - Choose a calm or humorous episode and ask the student to watch with full attention. Then reflect on what they noticed — expressions, music, colors — to practice mindfulness in a familiar context.
- Trainer's Pause Button
 - Use the concept of "pausing before using a move" to help a young student practice stopping and thinking before acting or reacting.



NARRATIVE THERAPIES

NARRATIVE THERAPY

Narrative Therapy views people as separate from their problems. It centers on the stories we tell about ourselves and encourages students to rewrite or reframe those stories in ways that emphasize strength, resilience, and possibility. The core idea is that students aren't "the problem"—the problem is the problem—and we can change how we understand and respond to it.

In practice, this means helping students explore how they've come to see themselves (for example, "I'm bad at making friends") and helping them develop alternative stories that reflect their values, hopes, and capabilities ("I've had a few tough friendships, but I'm learning what good friends look like").

- Common Techniques:

- Externalizing the Problem: Shifting the way we talk about problems (e.g., "anxiety is being really loud today" instead of "I'm anxious") to reduce shame and create space for problem-solving.
- Unique Outcomes: Helping students identify times when they resisted the problem story or acted in ways that don't fit the negative narrative.
- Story Re-authoring: Working with students to create new, strength-based versions of their personal stories.
- Naming the Problem: Giving the problem a name (e.g., "the Worry Monster") makes it easier for young children to understand and talk about.

POTENTIAL POKÉMON/NARRATIVE THERAPY INTERVENTIONS

- Alternate endings to the Story
 - Watch an episode of Pokémon where a character fails and rewrite the ending.
- Externalize the problem
 - Turn the “problem” into a Pokémon. What powers does it have? What weaknesses does it have?
- Perspective Taking
 - Watch an episode or clip of Pokémon and have the student tell the story from someone else’s perspective.
- Pokémon Storytime
 - For younger students, use a daily or weekly Pokémon (real or made-up) and tell a short story where that Pokémon faces a challenge. Ask the child what they think should happen next or how the Pokémon can overcome it.



SOLUTION FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY (SFBT) TECHNIQUES

SOLUTION-FOCUSED BRIEF THERAPY (SFBT)

Solution-Focused Brief Therapy emphasizes what is going right and what is possible rather than focusing too long on the problem. It assumes that students already have strengths and skills that can help them move forward, and the counselor's role is to highlight those resources and set small steps toward a preferred future.

Instead of digging deeply into why a problem exists, SFBT helps students clarify their goals and notice moments when the problem is less intense. Those exceptions become the foundation for meaningful change.

- Common Techniques:

- The Miracle Question: Asking students to imagine what life would look like if the problem disappeared overnight, helping clarify the goal.
- Scaling Questions: Rating feelings or progress on a scale (for example 1 to 10) to track small improvements and find what helps.
- Exception Seeking: Exploring times when the issue was not happening or was less intense to discover effective strategies already in use.
- Coping Questions: Asking what has helped them keep going even when things are hard, building confidence in existing strengths

POTENTIAL POKÉMON/SFBT INTERVENTIONS

- What would Ash Do?
 - When stuck, ask students what Ash might do in their situation, or what a gym leader they admire might suggest. Then shift: “What do you think you could do that’s even better?”
- Pokémon scale
 - Use a 1–10 scale with a Pokémon theme: “On a scale from Magikarp (1) to Garchomp (10), how confident do you feel today?” Ask what would need to happen to move up one number. Building the scale is another fun activity!
- Exception Spotting in Pokemon
 - Reflect on episodes where a character (i.e. Brock) calmly handles conflict or supports others. Then ask: “When have you done something similar?” Look for past successes or coping moments.



MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING

MOTIVATIONAL INTERVIEWING (MI)

Motivational Interviewing is a collaborative, conversation-based approach designed to help people strengthen their own motivation for change. The core idea is that change is most effective and long-lasting when it comes from the individual, not from pressure or persuasion. Instead of arguing against resistance, MI works with it, helping students explore their own reasons for wanting to make a change.

This approach is especially useful when a student is unsure, unmotivated, or saying things like “I don’t care.” The counselor’s job is to guide the student in noticing the gap between where they are now and where they want to be, while showing acceptance, empathy, and respect for autonomy.

- Common Techniques:

- Open-Ended Questions: Encourage students to reflect more deeply on their thoughts and goals rather than answering yes or no.
- Affirmations: Highlight strengths and successes to build confidence and reinforce self-efficacy.
- Reflective Listening: The counselor repeats or rephrases what the student says to show understanding and help deepen insight.
- Eliciting Change Talk: Guiding students to voice their own desire, ability, reasons, and need for change.
- Decisional Balance: Exploring the pros and cons of change versus staying the same to build internal motivation.

POTENTIAL POKÉMON/MI INTERVENTIONS

- Trainer Readiness
 - Ask students where they are on a “trainer journey” — are they just getting their first Pokémon, or ready to take on a gym? Use this as a metaphor to talk about their readiness to make a specific change.
- Interviewing with a Pokémon
 - The student picks a favorite Pokémon and imagines what it would say about the student’s strengths and challenges.
- Starter Pokémon Path choices
 - Like choosing a starter Pokémon, the student explores what path they might take with a new goal — each “starter” representing a different way to start (slow and steady, fiery and bold, etc.). Then reflect on which one fits and why.
- Pikachu powers up!
 - Talk about how Pikachu gets stronger when he trusts his trainer. Ask the student what things make them feel stronger, and how they can "power up" with help from others or by doing something brave.

The background is a dark gray field filled with a complex, interconnected network of small white dots and thin white lines. The dots are scattered across the frame, with some forming dense clusters and others standing alone. The lines connect these dots, creating a web-like structure that suggests a network or a path. The overall effect is one of depth and complexity, with the network appearing to recede into the background.

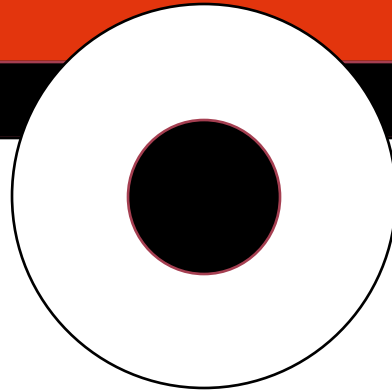
SOME SMALL,
ACHIEVABLE STEPS



YOU CAN'T DO EVERYTHING, AND THAT'S OKAY!

- PUT SOMETHING IN YOUR “SPACE” THAT SAYS POKÉMON.
 - CHOOSE A FAVORITE POKÉMON.
 - WATCH SOME CLIPS FROM YOUTUBE.
 - WATCH A COUPLE EPISODES ON A STREAMING SERVICE.
 - CHECK YOUR CAMPUS OR COMMUNITY LIBRARY FOR BOOKS.
 - START TALKING TO KIDS ABOUT POKÉMON!
 - IF YOU’RE ALREADY COMFORTABLE WITH POKÉMON BASICS, PICK ONE TECHNIQUE OR IDEA AND USE IT THIS MONTH.
- 

Question? Comments? Thoughts?



rhernandez@dentonisd.org

Rene Hernandez, MSCP, LSP, CGT