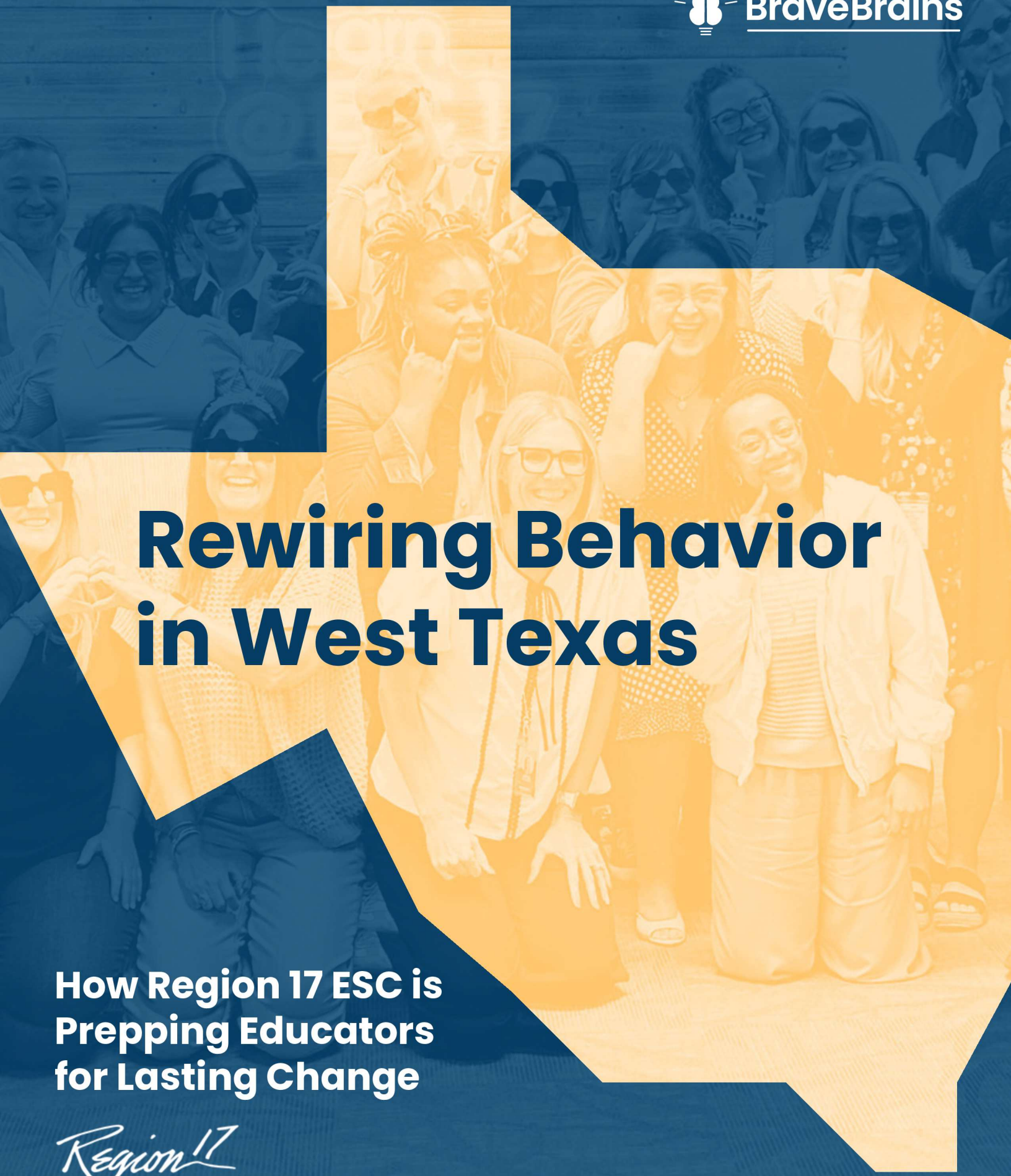
BraveBrains



Rewiring Behavior in West Texas

How Region 17 ESC is Prepping Educators for Lasting Change

Region 17

Region 17 Education Service Center (ESC) supports 64 public school districts and charter schools across 20 counties in the South Plains of West Texas (Llano Estacado).

Predominantly rural, these schools rely on Region 17 ESC to help them navigate everything from administrative challenges to classroom success. Together, Region 17 ESC and their dedicated district staff work hard to serve a wide range of students and families across West Texas.

> Adults are more stressed and feel inadequate and/or unprepared to handle some of the challenges they are facing. Resources and methods they relied on before are not perceived to be working. With increased academic stressors and compliance added on top of behavioral challenges, administrators and staff behavioral challenges are increasingly addressed through alternative disciplinary placements which translates to loss of learning for the students out of the classroom.
>
> **— Anna Phillips, Coordinator**
> Student Support Services
> Region 17 Education Service Center (ESC)



A Search for Something with Lasting Behavior Impact

Schools across West Texas have faced a long list of hurdles in recent years. Between **shifting staff demographics**, an **increase in behavior challenges**, and **rising classroom stress** in general, district leaders in Region 17 ESC were searching for real, sustainable answers.

The needs in Region 17 ESC were crystal clear:

Support for a Changing Workforce

With an increase in retirements, roughly 50% of new staff in the region are certified through alternative training programs. This means that many teachers enter West Texas classrooms without any formal education and training, especially in behavior management.

Tools for High-Intensity Behaviors

Post-COVID classrooms have seen an increase in both the frequency and intensity of challenging student behaviors.

Keeping Kids in the Classroom

Academic stressors and compliance demands, coupled with behavioral challenges, were increasingly leading to alternative disciplinary placements, disrupting educational consistency and academic progress.

In-House Staff Capacity & Stress Relief

Educators were feeling burnt out and unprepared, trying to rely on old methods that no longer worked. Leaders needed a way to support the adults so they, in turn, could better support their students.

BraveBrains + Region 17 ESC Partnership



After hearing BraveBrains founder Jessica Sinarski speak at the Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools Conference, Region 17 ESC leadership knew they wanted to bring her brain-based approach directly to West Texas.

They started with a one-day workshop open to educators across the region: **Problematic Student Behavior: Let's Fix the Foundation.**

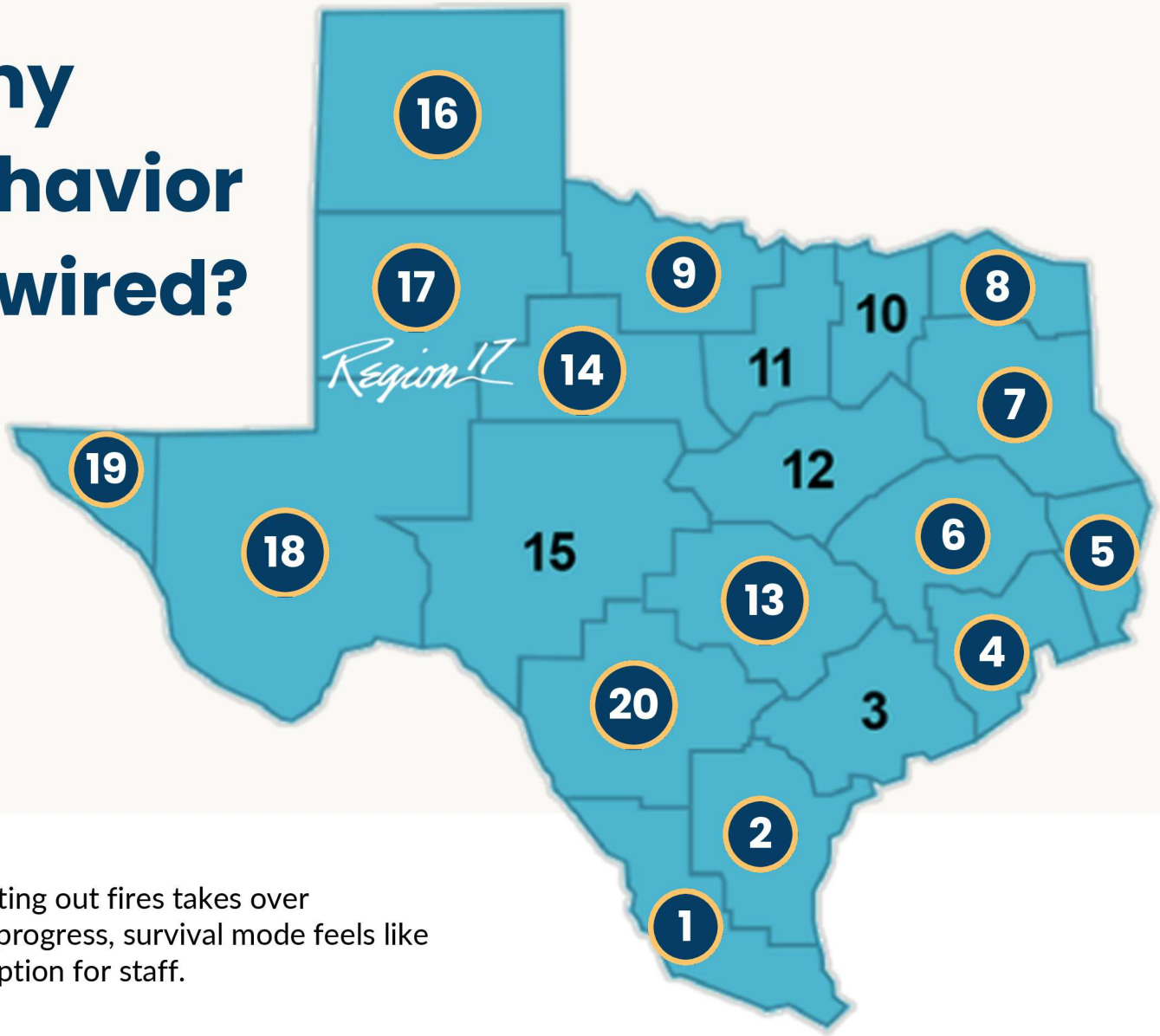
> **Jessica's initial presentation at Region 17 was so well received that we wanted to offer expanded opportunities for learning from her.**
>
> **— Amy Hagerman**
> Education Specialist
> Behavior/MTSS/504

The team at Region 17 ESC decided the learning was too important to keep to themselves.

> **That led to the partnership to bring BraveBrains' Behavior Rewired Train-the-Trainer to our area and to offer the opportunity to our service center colleagues statewide.**
>
> **— Anna Phillips**
> Coordinator of Student Support Services

BraveBrains

Why Behavior Rewired?



When putting out fires takes over academic progress, survival mode feels like the only option for staff.

Region 17 ESC wasn't looking for another rigid program or temporary fix. They needed a **practical** way to reframe behavior and build sustainable, long-term support for both staff and students.

Behavior Rewired is an immersive Train-the-Trainer experience that helps leaders rethink behavior, build staff capacity, and bring practical, brain-based approaches into their schools.

In April 2026, education specialists and consultants from **15** of Texas's 20 Education Service Centers gathered in Lubbock, TX for the **first** Behavior Rewired Train-the-Trainer in the state.

Building Confidence. Expanding Capacity.



> **Now I get it. I've been to brain-based trainings before but have never been able to explain it to someone else. You gave me these tools!**
>
> **— Kami Winter**
> ESC Consultant, Region 14 ESC

97.1%
felt confident describing the B.R.A.V.E. Framework and how it relates to student and staff behavior after training (baseline was 6.7%)

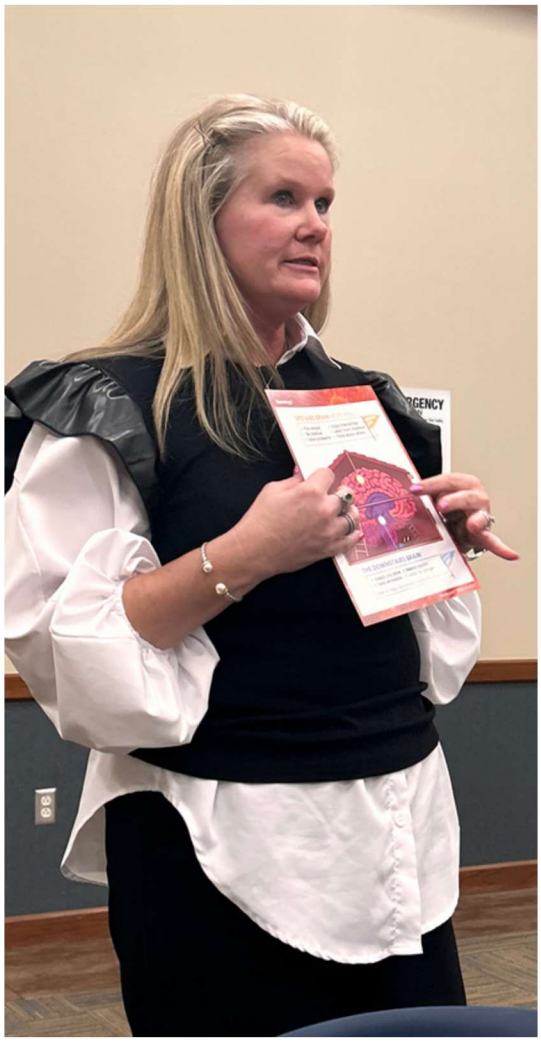
91.2%
felt comfortable using brain-state and protector language in conversations about behavior (baseline was 25.0%)

88.2%
felt confident supporting others through behavior-related change with self-regulation and reflection (baseline was 33.3%)

85.3%
were ready to create a realistic plan to shift from behavior management to brain-based support (baseline was 25.0%)

81% of participants had never attended a training by BraveBrains.





Participants left with:

A Shared Understanding of Behavior

A practical, strengths-based framework that helps educators make sense of challenging behavior in both students and adults.

A Robust Trainer Toolkit

Ready-to-use slides, visuals, activities, and facilitator guides that make it easier to bring the learning back to the districts they serve.

Strategies for Navigating Resistance

Opportunities to practice difficult conversations, support overwhelmed staff, and build buy-in without adding blame.

A Plan for Moving Forward

Time to explore how brain-based approaches could fit into existing professional learning, coaching, and schoolwide systems.

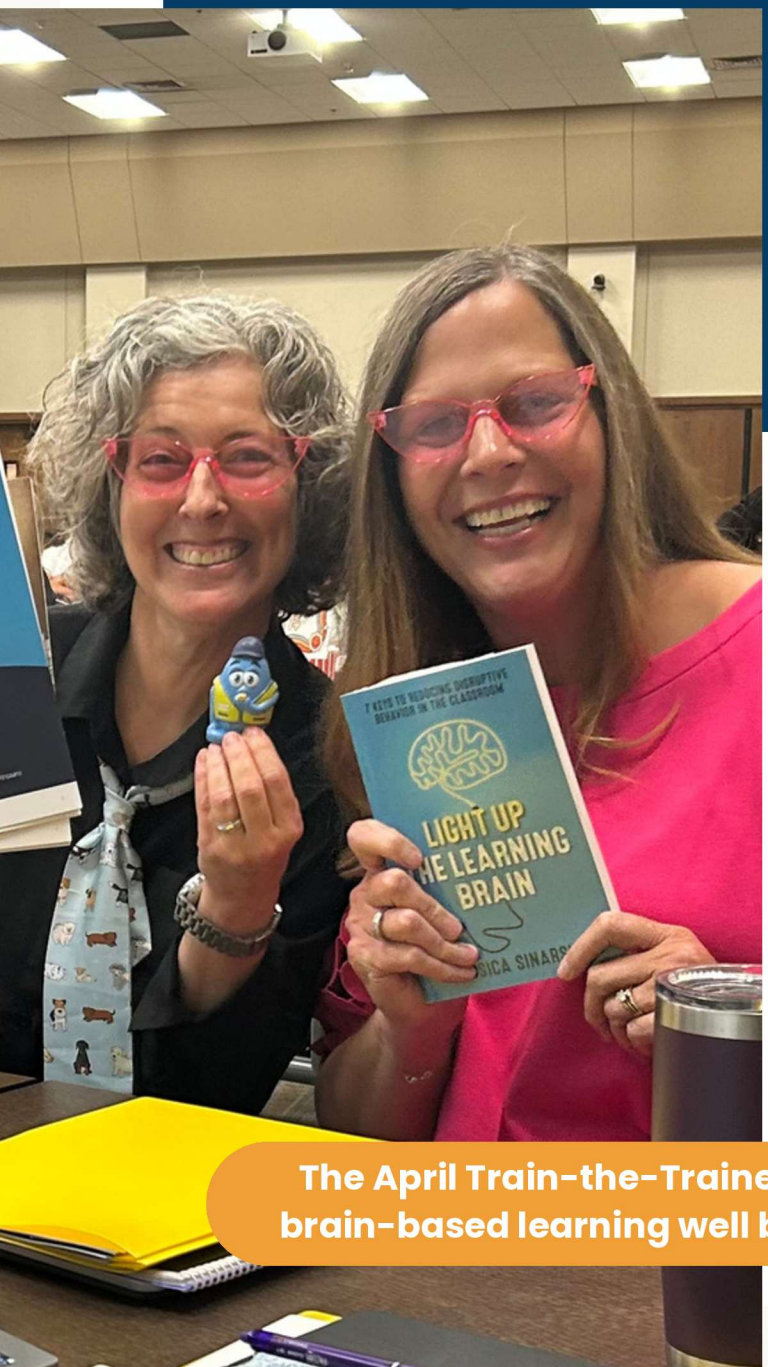
> **I have been at ESC Region 13 for 21 years. This training was one of the best TOT sessions I have attended. It has renewed and energized me!**

— Angela Isenberg
Senior Coordinator, Region 13 ESC

Region 17 ESC wasted no time putting the learning to work.

In June 2026, the team hosted professional learning for disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP) staff representing 22 West Texas districts. Educators received practical tools, online resources, and books to help them de-escalate challenging situations, strengthen relationships, and better support students.

> **Instead of gaining knowledge only, Behavior Rewired gives effective tools/strategies that can be used immediately! I can meet the district where they are and offer support in an easy to understand way.**
>
> **— Amy Smallwood**
> Mental Health/Crisis Intervention Lead, Region 17 ESC



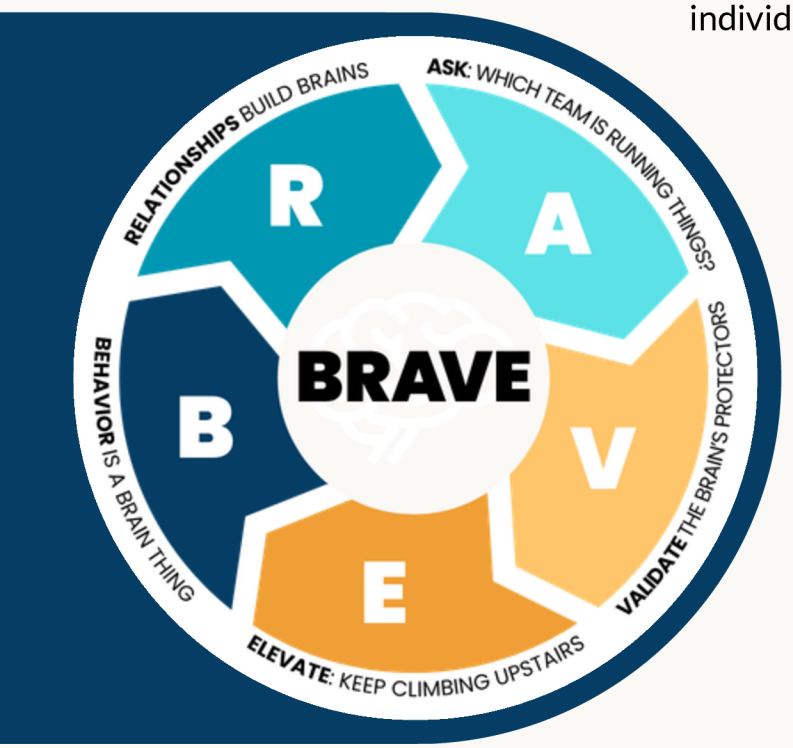
Across Texas, other ESC teams were putting their new training tools to work as well:

- Leading summer professional learning sessions
- Breathing new life into existing behavior trainings
- Using BraveBrains' resources to provide practical classroom strategies that require minimal prep
- Launching district-wide rollouts and *Light Up the Learning Brain* book studies to help local teams integrate more effective strategies into their everyday routines.

The April Train-the-Trainer quickly extended the reach of brain-based learning well beyond the original participants.

By September, participants were finding different ways to bring the B.R.A.V.E. Framework into their work.

Some had delivered the core lesson, while others had expanded into additional lessons or incorporated individual slides and printables into existing training.



Their reach was growing across new teacher academies, individual campuses, special education teams, counselors, and foster care liaisons.

And the framework was beginning to influence how educators understood behavior.

Participants described noticing changes in the language used by staff, growing teacher buy-in, and greater awareness of how stress affects adults as well as students.

> **The beauty of Behavior Rewired is its simplicity. The concepts are not easy, but they are presented in such simple, easy to understand ways. It is memorable, practical, and immediately useful across all ages.**
>
> — Kristen Lewis, Education Specialist, Region 17 ESC

Moving from ***"What We Learned"*** to ***"How We Do Things"***

Learning a new approach is one thing. Helping an entire school or district put it into practice brings a different set of challenges.

How do you build buy-in with skeptical staff? Support teachers who are already overwhelmed? Make room for meaningful change when everyone has too much on their plates?

In September 2026, 22 consultants, leaders, coaches, and trainers came back to Region 17 ESC for two days of B.R.A.V.E. Leadership Labs. Through collaborative problem-solving, hands-on practice, and deeper exploration of brain-based strategies, participants worked through the messy middle of implementation.



THE EXPERIENCE INCLUDED OPPORTUNITIES TO:

Support Overwhelmed Educators

Explore how stress and secondary blocked care affect adults' capacity for connection and change, with practical strategies for supporting staff who feel stuck.

Navigate Resistance and Challenging Behavior

Practice fresh, science-backed approaches to navigate difficult conversations and break out of negative cycles.

Strengthen Implementation Plans

Collaborate with colleagues from other Texas ESCs, explore additional classroom resources, and identify opportunities for coaching, professional learning communities, and district-wide support.

For many Leadership Labs participants, the work continues through a **full year of implementation coaching**, providing opportunities to share progress, troubleshoot challenges, and strengthen system change over time.

> **It’s really exciting to feel like we are seeing things take root!!!**
>
> **- Amy Hagerman**
>
> Education Specialist,
> Behavior/MTSS/504, Region 17 ESC

Fewer Discipline Referrals

Back in West Texas, Region 17 ESC is continuing to help schools put brain-based approaches into practice.

At one campus Amy Hagerman has supported for 18 months, mutual respect agreements are now in place in every classroom.

The school is reporting a decline in office discipline referrals and fewer students involved in those referrals. Another campus is preparing to introduce respect agreements schoolwide.

Meanwhile, Region 17 is beginning individualized support for two campuses in separate districts using the B.R.A.V.E. Framework. Amy Hagerman shared, “The levels of support needed vary significantly from one campus to another, and we are super excited to work with both of these schools.”

The team has also begun bringing the deeper learning about secondary blocked care directly to school staff, with one campus training completed and two more planned for early 2027.

A New Foundation

What began with a single workshop has grown into a statewide learning opportunity, practical training for local districts, and continued implementation support. Region 17's partnership with BraveBrains is helping build the capacity for lasting change, equipping local leaders with the deep knowledge and easily accessible tools to keep the work moving forward.

As Region 17 leaders Amy Hagerman and Anna Phillips shared:

> **"This is not just about 'fixing kid behavior.' It's about changing mindsets. It starts with our own perceptions of the student, the behavior, and ourselves.**

Interested in bringing **Behavior Rewired** to your region or district?

Explore training and partnership opportunities → BraveBrains.com/Rewired