

Trauma Informed Practices for Schools - TIPS

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES FOR SCHOOLS - TIPS

Foster Youth Services Coordinating Program & Homeless Education Services



OBJECTIVES:

Trauma Informed Practices In Schools

- **Prevalence & Response** -Why does this matter?
- **Triggers** – Why is this happening?!
- **Tools** – What can I do?!
- **Self Care** – This is exhausting....



WHY THIS MATTERS

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)-study
<http://www.cdc.gov/ace/index.htm>
- Kaiser Permanente, San Diego, CA
 - Original 286 patients
 - 17,000 participant sample
- Participants completed a 10-question ACE Survey
- ❖ Something happens between infancy and adulthood to create a lifetime of addictions, abuse and mental health issues. (Dubee et al., 2003)



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OF THE 17,000 RESPONDENTS...

Two-Thirds reported at least one ACE:

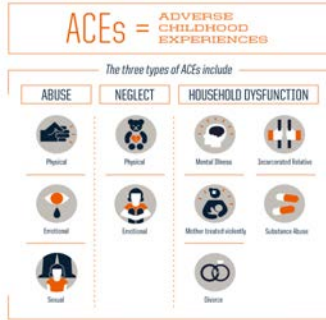


Image: http://www.wjg.org/le/nlib/ra/y/l/info/grap/hics/th-e-t-ut-h-ab-ou-t-aces_jht.ml



ADDITIONAL ADVERSE EXPERIENCES

- Accidents
- Community/School violence
- Homelessness
- Loss of a loved one
- Man-made or natural disasters
- Terrorism
- War
- Witnessing of domestic violence



UNTREATED ADVERSE EARLY CHILDHOOD Events Only Exacerbate Over Time



Source: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study
Information available at <http://www.cdc.gov/ace/index.htm>

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OUR BRAIN'S TRIO

Amygdala – Brain Stem

- The NOW
- Am I safe?

Limbic system – Mid Brain

- The PAST.
- Memories, emotions, past hurts & experiences.
- Can I trust you?

Pre-frontal cortex

- The FUTURE.
- Higher level functioning
- can plan & consider consequences
- Rational Thinking/Logic



REMOVED VIDEO



HOPE IS A ONE WAY STREET...

Resiliency is:

“The Deep Belief that at one time you really mattered to another human being”

-Vincent Feletti, M.D.



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WHAT IS TRAUMATIC STRESS?

- Overwhelming experience
- Involves a threat
- Results in vulnerability and loss of control
- Leaves people feeling helpless and fearful
- Interferes with relationships and beliefs

"Trauma can be a single event, connected series of traumatic events or chronic lasting stress."

Diagnostic Classification 03R

Complex Trauma:

- Multiple traumatic events, often that occur within a care-giving system that is supposed to be the source of safety and stability in a child's life.



THE STRESS RESPONSE AND TRAUMA

The stress response is a **chemical response**

- Prepares the body for action
 - Fight
 - Flight
 - Freeze
- Most recover
- Some develop more severe difficulties



SIGNS OF TRAUMA

- What behaviors might we see in:
 - Young Children (0-5 years)?
 - Elementary School Children (6-12 years)?
 - Adolescents (13-18 years)?



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TRIGGERS AND BEHAVIOR

Some Common Triggers:

- Sirens
- Loud noises – school bell
- Police Officers / Fire Persons
- Schedule Changes
 - Minimum Days, testing days, fire/earthquake drills, picture day...
- Sights and Smells
- Resemblances – physical and verbal
- Terms of Endearment
- Unexpected Touch
- ...You tell us?



IT'S A PARADIGM SHIFT. CHANGING THE QUESTION:

From... "What is **wrong** with you?"
To... "What **happened** to you?"

Behavior...

- Oppositional
- Outbursts
- Anger
- Depression
- Withdrawal/Absences
- Argumentative
- Escalation
- Defiance of Authority

Feeling it is Masking...

- Fear of Rejection/Abandonment
- Overwhelmed
- Hurt
- Lack of Self Worth
- Avoidance of Emotions
- Testing relationship
- Triggered Trauma Memories
- Need for Control



UNDERSTANDING THAT

TRAUMA **EXPLAINS** BEHAVIOR IT DOES
NOT **EXCUSE** BEHAVIOR

*Problem Behaviors are often due to
a desire to Self Protect or Mechanisms for
Coping*



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WHAT MITIGATES IMPACT OF TRAUMA?

- Create a Sense of Safety
- Provide a Sense of Control
- Foster Connections



CREATE A SENSE OF SAFETY

- Safety is a human beings number one priority
- Trauma results in a loss of sense of safety
- This includes both physical and emotional safety
- Provide opportunities for students to be successful
- Celebrate even the smallest successes



CREATE A SENSE OF SAFETY

- Provide a safe environment: predictable structure with consistent routines
 - Supervision: eyes, ears, proximity to students
 - Consider a school-wide positive behavior intervention program
 - Create clear expectations during unstructured times (e.g., passing periods, lunch)
 - Provide transition opportunities (e.g., 5 minutes to read a book or a warm up question)
 - Provide clear pathways to emotional support for students who elect to utilize it



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PROVIDE A SENSE OF CONTROL

- Give students choices and not ultimatums
- Engage them in a semi-private conversation, instead of in front of classmates
- Limit the number of adults involved; too many educators participating can cause confusion or mixed-messages
- Provide adequate personal space; if the student tells you to back off, give them more space
- Do not block escape routes; when individuals are agitated, they are more likely to experience fight or flight response
- Keep verbal interactions calm and use simple, direct language



FOSTER CONNECTIONS

- Children need to feel **belonging** & **significance** before we can really expect them to respond or care about our rules or limits
- Healthy relational interactions with safe and familiar individuals **can buffer and heal trauma related problems**
- Research shows **social connectedness** as a protective factor against maltreatment
- Social milieu (safe environments): **major mediator of trauma**





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DON'T QUIT ON ME!



[GradNation](#)

SELF-REGULATION

- Deprivation and neglect of the most basic needs in early childhood prevents the development of the ability to self-regulate
- Trauma impacts the way in which self-regulating skills are formed
- Trauma directly influences how a student develops their coping skills
- Schools that strive to build safe and nurturing schools where relationships are valued are more likely to promote and foster positive coping skills for their students



“A child whose behavior is creating issues is not trying to cause a problem. They’re trying to solve a problem.”

- American Journal of Pediatrics, November 1956



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EVERYTHING SPEAKS

Behavior is a form of communication

What is this behavior telling me about this youth? What is this youth trying to tell us through this behavior?

WHAT A STUDENT KNOWS AND HAS PRACTICED WILL ALWAYS FEEL THE MOST NORMAL

UNDERSTAND THAT:

- That the student is not out to get us
- They act in a way that makes sense according to their understanding of how the world works
- See handout *The Belief Behind The Behavior*



STEPS TO BUILD AFFECT IDENTIFICATION

- Build vocabulary
- Connect emotions with:
 - ✓ Body sensations
 - ✓ Thoughts associated with feelings
 - ✓ Behaviors—manifestations of feelings
- Context
 - ✓ External: Smells, Sounds
 - ✓ Internal: Tired, hungry
- Use literature, music, film to help kids learn to identify emotions.
- See Handout, *The Brain In The Palm of the Hand*



T.I.P.S. TECHNIQUES

- Teach/Model/Practice
- Morning check-ins
- Breathing
- Taking breaks
- Writing down feelings



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T.I.P.S. TECHNIQUES

- Grounding Exercises
 - 5-4-3-2-1
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- My Calm Colors Pallet
- Mirroring
- Simple Tasks to Engage Cortex



HANDOUTS/RESOURCES FOR TEACHING STUDENTS IMPACTED BY TRAUMA

Connections:

- *Two by Ten Strategy*

Use and Teach what you know about trauma:

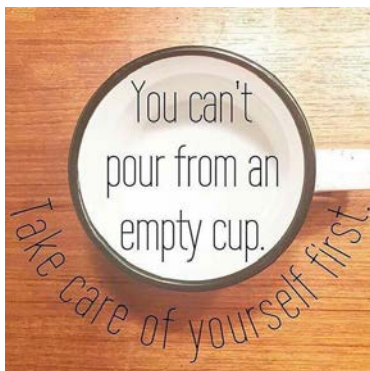
- *Working With Students Exposed To Trauma*

The power of perception – or misinterpretation!

- *The Belief Behind The Behavior – A Key For Mistaken Beliefs*



SELF CARE



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SELF AWARENESS.....

- **Educators and Empathy:** Empathy is the identification with or the experiencing of the feelings, thoughts or attitudes of others.
- **Compassion Satisfaction:** the positive feelings we get when we realize that the compassion we put in working with others is resulting in some relief growth or healing.
- **Empathy** is a double edged sword: It provides healing power, however empathy for the traumatic pain of another can result in personal upset or pain for the listener.



VICARIOUS TRAUMA

When empathy for a student's suffering leads to internalizing or frightening realities not personally experienced.

Compassion Fatigue:

- PTSD related signs that you receive vicariously as a secondary target to trauma.
- Experienced by those in a helping profession.
- Can change your wiring/who you are

Unlike Burnout:

- Physical and emotional exhaustion, apathy, or dissatisfaction with job.



THE PROFESSIONAL IMPACT OF VICARIOUS TRAUMA

(Adapted from The Heart of Learning and Teaching)

- JOB TASKS
- MORALE
- INTERPERSONAL
- BEHAVIORAL
- PHYSICAL
- EMOTIONAL
- BEHAVIORAL
- COGNITIVE
- RELATIONAL (INTERPERSONAL)
- WORLD VIEW (SPIRITUAL)



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SELF-CARE TECHNIQUES

- PHYSICAL FITNESS
- NUTRITION AND HYDRATION
- SLEEP AND REST
- ASSERTIVENESS
- CENTERING AND SOLITUDE
- CREATIVITY
- FUN AND ENJOYMENT
- CREATE A PLAN FOR SELF-CARE



QUESTIONS???