Trauma Informed Care for Educators

A look at the impact of trauma on students and strategies to address the behaviors and students impacted by trauma.
Why Childhood Trauma Matters?

https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_across_a_lifetime
Self-Care Alert

Step out and take a break.

Talk to someone you trust.

Do something relaxing and/or reinvigorating

These feelings and thoughts may persist even after the training has ended
Types of Trauma

- **Acute**: single event, time limited
- **Chronic**: multiple events (may be multiple types or same type over time); cumulative effect
- **Complex**: ongoing interpersonal trauma from a very young age; the people who should protect the child do not for some reason impairing the development of appropriate attachment; this causes impaired ability to self-regulate which results in persistent negative effect on the child’s development and functioning
Perceived THREAT

Alarm Center (Amygdala) activated

HPA Axis sends body automatically into self-protection mode

Filing Center (Hippocampus) becomes disorganized

Thinking Center (Cortex) goes offline

No Feedback to turn off alarm

Adapted from TARGET, Ford, Cruz-St.Juste & DeVoe
Fight, Flee, or Freeze (to protect)

**Fight or Flight Response**

- Hypothalamus
  - saliva flow decreases
  - skin blood vessels constrict; chills & sweating
  - heart beats faster & harder
  - stomach output of digestive enzymes decreases
  - muscles become more tense; trembling can occur
- Hippocampus
  - lungs quick, deep breathing occurs
  - bowel food movement slows down
  - blood vessels dilate, blood pressure increases
- Release of adrenaline & cortisol
How Youth Respond to Trauma

- Trauma can elicit such intense fear, anger, shame, and helplessness that the child feels overwhelmed.
- Overwhelming emotion may interfere with the development of age-appropriate self-regulation.
- Emotions experienced prior to language development may be very real for the child but difficult to express or communicate verbally.
- Trauma may be “stored” in the body in the form of physical tension or health complaints.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Traumatic Stress Symptom</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intrusion</td>
<td>Nightmares, distracted, responses don’t fit situation, repetitive traumatic play or continually talking about the trauma, acting it out</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>Withdrawal OR acting “out”, repetitive misbehavior with predictable outcome, tantrum in certain circumstances, class clown, “don’t care”, self-injurious</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hyperarousal/ Reactivity</td>
<td>Easily startled, over-react to stimuli, overactive, anxiously aware, aggressive posture</td>
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<td>Dissociation</td>
<td>Daydreaming, disconnected, don’t seem to feel pain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Alteration of Cognition &amp; Mood</td>
<td>Rigid expression of emotion, fearful, clingy, unable to retain information, not reaching developmental milestones, poor attention, poor perceptive and expressive communication</td>
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Good News

Brain is malleable and can build new pathways.

• HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=ELPFYCA87G
Strategies to Support Students with Traumatic Stress

• Use a Trauma Lens
• Understand the child- Build Relationships
• Connect then Redirect
• Use Corrective Relationships
• Create Psychological Safety
• Use Safety Messages
• Be a Trigger Detective
• Teach Self-Regulation Strategies
More Strategies

- Manage your own reactions and responses
- Build Competence
- Use PBIS - Have clear routines and procedures and teach expectations
- Be consistent
- Engage students in learning
- Repack the Invisible Suitcase
- Student voice and choice
- Time in, not time out
And More Strategies

- Use prevention, interventions and consequences, not punishment
- Create a safety plan
- Use Mindfulness
- De-escalate and Re-engage
- Listen and understand
- Incorporate Social and Emotional Learning
- Teach students to understand their body and brain and how to self-regulate

HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/109042767
What Supports Resilience?

- Family Support
- Peer Support
- Competence
- Self-efficacy
- Self-esteem
- School Connectedness
- Spiritual Belief

Teach Students to be Resilient

Easiest Change to Make-

• Instead of asking “What is wrong with you?”
• Ask “What happened?”
Self-Care

Secondary Traumatic Stress is Real

• Take care of yourself first
• Know the signs
• Seek help as needed
• Have a plan

Resource: The A-to-Z Self-Care Handbook for Social Workers and Other Helping Professionals by Erlene Grise-Owens (Author, Editor), Justin "Jay" Miller (Editor), Mindy Eaves (Editor)
Gang Leader to Graduate

• https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RXJGcqcJckA
Reflection

- What strategies do I already use to help students who have experienced trauma and how can I improve?
- What specific strategies can I start using in my classroom or school-wide?
- How can we shift the mindset from focusing on behaviors to understanding trauma and responding differently?
- How can we keep students engaged?
- How can we support students to build resiliency?