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Improvements for Trauma Informed Professional Development

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Capstone Project: A School Improvement Plan

Northwestern College, Orange City, Iowa

Abstract

The growing knowledge base of trauma contributes to the field of education, specifically early childhood. This knowledge points to the direction of trauma informed care in the early years. With the need to support both students and teachers, the content and method of professional development needs special consideration. Past research indicates the Breakthrough Series Collaborative is a successful way to implement meaningful and lasting professional development. Research also shows MindUP curriculum as successful for giving both staff and students tools to self-regulate and discuss big emotions. This school improvement plan combines the methodology and curriculum proving successful the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) and Primary Care- PTSD Screener (PC-PTSD) into a two-year plan.

Keywords: Trauma informed care. Early Childhood. Trauma informed professional development. Breakthrough Series Collaborative. MindUP.

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Improvements for Trauma Informed Professional Development

Trauma in early childhood is a section of education has received substantial attention in recent years. There are numerous studies detail the impact of trauma on learning, the resulting behaviors, the professional development opportunities, and trauma informed care programs. The problem is, there is scarce literature connecting all into an impactful program addresses trauma in childhood and supports teachers continued implementation. Liming & Grube found in their review between zero to six in a high-risk sample, 70% of children were exposed to three or more ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) (2018). “This finding is alarming given the correlation between early childhood stress and its implications for physiological and neurological development” (Liming and Grube, 2018). Head Start is a program that caters to high-risk young people to give them and their families a bright future through the risks they face. These impacts on development turn into behaviors which have an impact on teacher well-being (Aldrin et al 2018). When teachers experience lower well-being and high burnout, the children respond with higher production of cortisol, a stress hormone in their bodies (Oberle & Schonert-Reichl, 2016). The students go through trauma which impacts their development. This can result in behaviors that add to the burnout of teachers which can then impact students’ levels of cortisol production. A system needs to be established to addresses teacher stress among student stress while implementing a professional development strategy to lasts beyond the “one and done” of many others.

The purpose of this school improvement plan is to implement professional development utilizing a research proven methodology, Breakthrough Series Collaborative to deliver MindUP curriculum. This professional development will have data collection pieces to show the impact on students and staff. Trauma informed care can support both teacher and student outcomes with meaningful and continued professional development. The hope is the knowledge gained will contribute to the content and implementation style of professional development so it positively impacts teachers and students by better supporting continued practices.

Research for this improvement plan was conducted through peer-reviewed studies discovered through DeWitt library and ProQuest Central databases. The inclusion criteria contained trauma informed practices, early childhood trauma impacts, impacts on teacher wellness, trauma informed professional development, and methodologies of professional development around trauma informed practices. Research accepted was conducted in the last 10 years.

There have been many surveys conducted before and after professional development surrounding trauma informed practices, but far less beyond. It is difficult to judge the effectiveness of a program without follow up is considered complete. What makes this especially important is the result of not continuing trauma-informed practices. Trauma behaviors in students contribute to teacher burnout and impacts (or re-impacts) the stress hormone in students moving forward. Implementing MindUP and other trauma informed practices utilizing the Breakthrough Series Collaborative along with

In the literature review, there will be exploration of the research and literature surrounding trauma informed practices and their impacts on teachers and students. The structure will start with the impacts of trauma in early childhood as well as relational and behavioral aspects which impact teacher well-being. This will move into the available professional development support as most valuable to educators learning about trauma informed care. The review will support the implementation of meaningful and continued trauma informed practices.

Review of the Literature

Student Trauma and Impact of Learned Resiliency

In the classroom, teachers are a vital piece of the puzzle in relation to community. Especially the programs serving vulnerable populations due to the heightened risk of the students having been through a traumatic event. Community members who create supportive environments for children having been through traumatic events were part of a 2017 research questionnaire and interview process discussing how trauma has impacted their work. 79% mention external influences of trauma in the children they work with and 93% mention an impact which results in biological, emotional, or behavioral changes (Cummings et al, 2017, p.2731). They noted “A realization of the existence an impact of trauma might be particularly valuable for early childhood education teachers who work with vulnerable populations because they are disproportionately affected by trauma” (Cummings et al, 2017, p. 2739).

Furthermore, not only do students go through trauma and need support in the classroom, but students also respond to the stress of their teacher in the increasingly overworked profession. In 2016, 406 students took part in an 8-week study exploring the link between teacher burnout and student cortisol levels. The students’ saliva was tested while teachers assessed their burnout by rating items on a scale of 1-5 on the emotional exhaustion scale. Overly et al found there was a positive correlation between teacher stress and cortisol levels. “In fact, before considering the predictive role of teacher burnout in the present sample, we found an initial 10% variability in morning cortisol levels between classrooms” (Overly et al, 2016, p.35).

To support the realities of trauma and student responses to adult stress, research has made strides to measure student responses to mindfulness and resilience programs. Kielty and colleagues conducted a three-year study assessing a MindUP program in third grade classrooms with the Positive Experiences at School Scale and the Mindfulness Student Questionnaire. Their results showed 92% of

participants (now in 5th grade) said they would use mindful breathing in the future and 62% shared they use it during strong emotions (Kielty et al 2017, p.320). In addition, 80% of educators reported believing they can explain what mindfulness means and 80% reported their students were displaying good coping skills after the MindUP programming (Kielty et al 2017, p.320). Student mindfulness can be taught in early years to address and deescalate strong emotions. Also looking into MindUP programming was Crooks and colleagues. They explored MindUP as an effective intervention specifically for improving behaviors in young children. This study looked at 23 classrooms who implemented MindUP and 19 who did not. Both sets of rooms took data on the children's behaviors pre and post intervention. The study determined mindfulness and social emotional learning can improve psychosocial and behavioral outcomes in young children (Crooks et al, 2020).

The most ground-breaking was Vidal-Meliá and colleagues exploring the correlation between mindfulness skills and academic performance of secondary and higher education students. The participants measured mindfulness items on a ten-point scale and resilience items on a five-point scale. The academic performance was measured by the student grades. They found "...students' mindfulness has a positive impact on resilience. At the same time, resilience has a positive relationship with academic performance" (2022, p.8). Though the students are significantly older than early childhood, this study illustrates the benefits of resiliency and mindfulness skills on academic achievement. Such skills can begin in early childhood classrooms to benefit the child as they grow. Another study depicts the student's perspective of 1,270 high school students. The researchers studied whether an adapted resilience curriculum would be effective in giving students tools for higher resiliency. The students took pre and post tests on the curriculum and were screened for PTSD symptoms. The PTSD screener found lower odds of PTSD post- intervention along with significant improvements in empathy and problem solving (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al, 2017, p.321). The ripple of impact resiliency and mindfulness skills have on the future of students is vast and overwhelmingly positive.

Adult Relationship and Attitude Impacts within a School Community

Adult reactions to professional development in conjunction with their relationships within the school truly dictate the success of the program within their practices. If adults respond well to professional development, the practices are implemented, and the students benefit. However, adult relationships within the school community add a complex layer needing to be addressed.

In a study involving 72 Early Head Start teachers and 29 family care providers, emotional competencies, behavioral responsiveness, and relationships were extensively studied to decipher if a relationship exists between the three. Emotional regulation was a positive predictor of comfort with social emotional teaching practices (Garner et al, 2019). Emotional regulation was significantly positively related to relational closeness (Garner et al, 2019). The skillsets found in professionals positively impacted the children they worked with. The adults actively create the change in children's social emotional regulation. This secure relationship benefits students and their education and social emotional outcomes.

Not only does this relationship benefit students, but it can have an impact on teachers as well. Aldrin and colleagues studied the correlation between the perception of misbehavior and the well-being of teachers. The study included 222 teachers and 4,111 students. Both students and teachers were asked to evaluate the amount of student misbehavior in class. Teachers were then asked to rate the quality of their relationships with students as well as their occupational well-being. Teachers who perceived more student behaviors were more likely to report increased emotional exhaustion and reduced work enthusiasm (Aldrin et al, 2018). Relationships that were considered positive between students and teachers contributed positively to teacher well-being (Aldrin et al, 2018). Relationships with students in the classroom positively impact not only students, but the teachers as well. Relationships play a key role in the success of a school and the success of professional development.

Turning the attention to the adult relationships within the school, Van der Vyver and colleagues investigate the correlation between principal leadership behavior and teacher professional well-being by surveying 400 teachers across 20 schools. Positive correlations were exposed between leaders described as “transformational” higher levels of teacher comfort in addition to lower levels of anxiety and depression (Van der Vyver et al, 2020). Relationships all the way up the leadership scale will have an impact on students. If the leadership of the building is negatively impacting teachers, student cortisol levels will also rise (Overly et al, 2016).

Revisiting the study of Kielty and colleagues, the results from students and educators showed a decrease in mindfulness as their MindUP program progressed. This mirrors the need for continued programming surrounding trauma informed skillsets. If teaching a student population to be mindful, the scores should decrease because the students and staff are learning what mindfulness entails. This could very well be a sign of “you don’t know what you don’t know” (2017, P.321). The more you learn, the more you realize you must learn. This is supported in this study by the increase in ability and confidence to teach and explain mindfulness by both the teachers and students. This is exactly what skilled professional development should encourage- the acknowledgement that there is more information and a plethora of ways to grow as humans.

In a longitudinal study, Champine and colleagues studies a multilevel trauma informed initiative conducted between 2016 and 2019 in a Pennsylvania community. Participants who fell into the professional categories of interest filled out a semi-annual Qualtrics survey describing their beliefs and knowledge about trauma in addition to focus groups discussing the same. The focus groups identified the shift in their perspective including greater awareness of signs of traumatic stress (Champine et al, 2022). Many shared their deeper understanding of their own adverse experiences as children which prompted reflection (Champine et al, 2022). The final overarching theme that resulted from the focus groups was the acquisition of skills to respond to trauma, although many participants desired continued

training and reflection overall (Champine et al, 2022). Even over a span of 3 years, professionals involved with children and social services desired more ongoing training to better understand trauma and the skillset to respond. When relationships exist that support learning environment of continued growth, reflection of practice takes place and systems change.

McIntyre and colleagues tested a two-day training on trauma informed practices and utilized pre and post knowledge tests to compare the scores with 210 participants' substance abuse and mental health services (SAMHSA) items quiz. There was a positive correlation found with the pre and posttest knowledge and the teacher rating of acceptability (McIntyre et al 2019). This supports the idea that acceptability is a factor when learning.

Palfrey and colleagues investigated how confidence and awareness were impacted in trauma informed care professional development. There was a significant increase in the mean levels of confidence in assessment of trauma and adversity in addition to a knowledge and skills in working with individuals affected by trauma and adversity (Palfrey et al, 2018, p.471). 57% listed content regarding assessment of trauma to be the most important aspect of the training. (Palfrey et al, 2018). At the 12 month follow up, 81% reported usually or always screening for traumatic events to better support young ones and 80% reported going on to receive training in trauma focused cognitive behavioral therapy (Palfrey et al 2018). Interestingly, this study also investigated the barriers of working with trauma and found there was a significant decrease in participants who "don't have enough experience to work with clients affected by trauma and adversity" or were "not equipped to deal with trauma and adversity" and those who were "concerned about further distressing a client" (Palfrey et al, 2018, p.471). The correct delivery of professional development can yield incredible results if attuned to the correct audience.

Implementation of Trauma Informed Professional Development

The way professional development is delivered can be just as important as the content itself. If the professional development is a one and done model with little follow through, the content will not matter because the implementation will be extremely low. One way to assess the impact of professional development is to research the knowledge of participants before and after. Anderson and colleagues studied the impact of trauma informed care for classroom staff (aids and teaching assistants). The study conducted relied on group conversations to develop themes and overall feelings towards professional development and trauma informed practices in general. The classroom staff noted the value in undergoing professional development related to student behavior as often only the lead teacher does. 94% of participants agreed student behavior is often linked to psychological changes due to stress (Anderson et al, 2015). 71% planned to share their learning with others even though it was noted that many were nervous about sharing knowledge with the teachers in case it was seen as overstepping. One way to alleviate this is to have professional development with every member of the classroom so they can collaborate on knowledge gained together. Unfortunately, 62.2% of the classroom staff attending the trainings still felt an aggressive tone of strong words was often the only way to get students to stop a negative behavior, but this shows a need for continued professional development for all staff working with children to change that belief (Andersen et al, 2015). Even with a successful professional development, continuation may be needed depending on the starting point of knowledge and the perspective change which needs to happen. Especially when considering difficult concepts, or concepts which challenge the norm of society, having the correct delivery for the audience is extremely important.

In another study, Blitz and colleagues investigated culturally responsive care through questionnaires given to 36 certified teachers and 25 classroom aids in addition to unstructured interviews. Their results are based on a one-to-six-point scale where one strongly agrees and six strongly

disagree. Teachers answered an average of 4.73 to the statement “I am aware of the learning preferences of the various students in my class” and 4.85 was the average for “I adjust my teaching style to match the learning preference of my students” (Blitz et al, 2016, p. 527). 4.84 was the average to the statement “I believe that diverse students will rise to the level of success that I expect, despite other negative influences” (Blitz et al, 2015, P.527). The study stated “Understanding the school personnel’s perceptions regarding race and culture is complex, and colorblind ideals previously held by staff add to the complexity. School personnel were adamant racial bias was not an issue in the school. Teachers felt criticized by the cultural responsiveness training offered by the school district, however, did not feel the workshop offered content designed to be helpful to them in the classroom” (Blitz et al, 2016, p.534). Teacher buy-in to professional development is paramount for its success. Having the proper professional development that causes reflection to beliefs without causing defensiveness is key.

In contrast, Elbert and colleagues took a deep dive into the Breakthrough Series Collaborative (BSC) in conjunction with cognitive behavioral therapy in 11 sites who served multiple programs. The teams included agency administration, clinical supervisors, and clinicians. This 18-month study resulted in 52% of participants identified being able to collaborate with individuals at other agencies as the most valuable aspect of BSC while 86% said working on a team of individuals with varying roles was beneficial (Elbert et al, 2012). During the follow up 1 year later, 82% of participants indicated their participation on the BSC had been extremely important to the agency capacity to sustain and extend practices while all 11 agencies continued to provide the Trauma Informed Cognitive Behavioral Therapy services after the BSC professional development (Elbert et al, 2012). The BSC encourages teams of people in differing positions to work together and create agency wide change. This methodology of professional development is extremely impactful for supporting sustained implementations.

In continuation, Douglas and colleagues delved deep into the BSC approach for delivering trauma informed care. With 5 early childhood programs each serving between 60-144 children in their

program. They collected data between 2013-2015 through qualitative interviews, meeting interventions, and document review. The findings determined all five sites understand what it is to be trauma informed while four of the five were found to have staff confidence, empowerment, and teacher leadership (Douglas et al, 2021). Four of the Five centers were found to have changed systems to utilize collaborative learning using data because of BSC and four of five were considered to have changed systems to support a positive workplace with relationships and shared leadership (Douglas et al, 2021). The center found to not have achieved these features was the same center both times. All five centers were found to have changed interagency collaborative systems due to BSC (Douglas et al, 2021). This is a compelling case for the methodology Breakthrough Series Collaborative which focuses on the adoptions of new practices by creating supportive structures within organizations. "It is rooted in a system theory that emphasizes that improvement is about shifting conditions that are holding the problems in place, involving changes not only at the individual level but also across the organization" (Douglas et al, 2021, p.183).

Impacts of Professional Development

The content of professional development has an impact on the results as much as the delivery of such. Professional development can give tools to teachers, parents, and students to assess their spaces and utilize the new knowledge gained. Kim and colleagues took an interesting approach when collecting data on the benefits of MindUP delivery on educator attitudes and burnout. The researchers had three categories of schools, twice timers (went through the program twice), once timers (went through the program once), and the comparison group who did not go through the trainings during the study. The study was conducted from September 2016 until June of 2019. The Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) is a form from which teachers rated themselves and their workplace. Emotional exhaustion was reduced in the once involved group. In addition, in all involved groups there were significant changes in social emotional and calm down skills in their students (Kim et al, 2021). The study

concluded by stating Mind UP implementation may promote trauma-sensitive attitudes and reduce teacher burnout.

Parents are a massive part of healing trauma, and this next study supports their involvement in supporting the child's process and growth. Salloum and colleagues investigated Stepped Care Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy as an alternative to traditional therapy. 83.3% of the children responded to treatment with Step One programming (Salloum et al, 2014). At the Baseline, all children met criteria for the PTSD algorithm. At mid assessment only one child still met the criteria. This one child was the only not to respond to treatment out of the nine who were chosen (Salloum et al, 2014). After the three treatment steps, 74% of the children no longer met the criteria for anxiety disorder. Since both parent and child were involved in the treatment process, this study supports this model as being cost effective and partnering with parents effectively.

Interventions for trauma informed care had excellent results with a large grouping of children and massive testing into the effects. In a study conducted by Hoover and colleagues, clinicians were asked to utilize five different tools to determine the outcome of the statewide initiative called Evidence Based Trauma Intervention. Findings included that PTSD symptoms were reduced, and functions increased with involvement in the program (Hoover et al, 2018). 316 of the 350 children involved finished the program (Hoover et al, 2018). On a one-to-five-point scale with five being satisfactory, satisfaction of the intervention was a 4.3 while cultural sensitivity was a 4.4, cultural sensitivity was a 4.1, and social connectedness was a 4.1 (Hoover et al, 2018).

Lee and colleagues investigated 84 randomly selected Head Start centers across 23 states with a total of 4,442 children. The research studied children who have experienced violence and those who had not. Parents rated their children's "problem behaviors" and the relationships with their child utilizing

the Robert Pianta closeness scale (Lee et al, 2016). Enrolling in Head Start correlated positively with socio-emotional outcomes and more positive outcomes to learning.

School Profile

This Head Start/Early Head Start and Early Head Start Child Care Partnership Programs in the Midwest provide early childhood educator for children ages birth to five. The mission statement for the overall programming is to “Better prepare young children and their families for life experiences now and in the future.” Most families served face significant challenges such as poverty, homelessness, disability, or trauma. The program operates in eight counties and provides home visiting services within one of those counties. The Head Start/Early Head Start programming provides either standalone classrooms or multiple classrooms in each county. Some locations are in malls while others are in locations partnering with public schools. The Early Head Start Child Care Partnership grant operates within 7 existing centers in classrooms serving birth-three. Both grants operate primarily within a metropolitan area known as the insurance capital of the world with a population of approximately 200,000. A few counties are served in more rural areas with a population as low as 7,000.

The program goals for the 2020-2021 school year in the Head Start/Early Head Start grant included “Children will be better prepared for school success”, “Enhance the monitoring system to fully utilize data to make informed program decisions”, “Foster a positive culture and climate built upon collaboration and strengthens”, and “Empower families to be their child’s first, most important, and forever teacher” (DUHS, 2021, p.5). The goals for the Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships (EHS-CCP) included “Improve outcomes for children by providing comprehensive, full-day, full year experiences in a high quality learning environment facilitated by highly qualified staff, provide support and education to parents to improve self-sufficiency and competency in their roles as parents, and increase staff qualifications and skills through

instructional coaching and quality, comprehensive professional development” (DUHS, 2021, p.16).

The funding for the Head Start and Early Head Start programming comes from federal funds. In the 2020-2021 program year the total funding award for the grants combined exceeded 10 million dollars which includes \$783,896 in COVID-19 funding through the CARES Act. The Early Head Start Child Care Partnerships received \$1,249,949 in funding with \$79,093 in COVID-19 funding through the CARES Act.

According to the United States Census Bureau’s American Community Survey, the area in which this program operates has 4-17% of persons below the poverty line. 4-10% of the families served in the program area equals about 16,250 families with children under 5 years of age. 61% of families in the 2020-2021 program year for Head Start/Early Head Start were accepted into the program for being below the poverty line and 45% for the EHS-CCP grant. There were 39 children in foster care that were served by our program in the 2020-2021 year. The program served 871 children and their families during the 2020-2021 school year in the Head Start and Early Head Start grant.

The program year starts in July for Early Head start and August for Head Start. Each program year starts with FES and Enrollment Staff working with families to learn more about their needs and the needs of their enrolled child(ren). The Family Engagement Specialists check in with families throughout the year to create and execute family goals based on the needs of each individual family. They also connect families with helpful resources depending on need and availability. In addition, the FES gives parent education professional development to enhance at home care. The program offers opportunities for events such as a day at a local farm, science

center, and zoo. The science center event did not take place in the 2020-2021 year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the program, teachers use Teaching Strategies curriculum and Teaching Strategies Gold assessment (LAPBK assessment in the EHS-CCP programming). Assessments for instruction are conducted using CLASS (Infant, toddler, and preschool versions), ITERS, ECERS, TPOT, and Fidelity Checklist. Data is then given to teachers to create coaching goals to take steps toward quality improvement. Professional Development is provided monthly and covers health and safety, nutrition, PBIS Pyramid Model, Conscious Discipline, and SEL (Social Emotional Learning) program, PITC, and cultural competency. Speakers in recent years include Jen Alexander, Jason Kotecki, and Jennifer Harvey. Professional development is packed with many required elements each year as far as renewed health and safety training. Other topics are typically given in one month and a new topic is given the next month without continuation or structured follow up of topics. From March 2020-April 2021 all professional development was delivered through virtual services.

Needs Assessment

Professional development is the area of improvement chosen because of the lack of follow through or continuation of current professional development. This plus the knowledge most families served face significant challenges such as poverty, homelessness, and disability. Both acknowledgements offer the opportunity for quality and consistent professional development on trauma informed practices to bring about change in instruction to best benefit the children served especially after the added societal trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Currently, the Head Start and Early Head Start classrooms receive professional development for approximately one business day each month. In our professional development committee, we first assign the health, safety, and nutrition trainings we must renew in our programs. In addition, we assign specific topics for each month's professional development time. For example, December is when we have a presentation on Diversity and Inclusivity and April is our wrap up for the year with shout outs for all staff members. Next, we look at teacher data such as the CLASS, TPOT, and Fidelity checklist from the most recent academic year. Based on these data tools, we choose other topics to provide professional development in. Typically, this professional development is based on who we can bring in on the topic and are covered where there is room in the professional development schedule.

Our agency does not utilize any tools to measure trauma understanding or practices in the classroom. Though social emotional instruction is covered in the TPOT for the Head Start classrooms, it is not currently measured in the Early Head Start Classrooms. CLASS offers some social emotional measurements, but they are general classroom social emotional practices. This being the case, trauma informed practices are covered through Conscious Discipline trainings occurring once or twice a year based on availability in the professional development schedule.

Data Analysis

According to Teaching Strategies Gold Data, 21% of students were below expectations on social-emotional skills in Fall 2021. This is an increase from Fall 2020 where students performing below expectations on social-emotional skills was only 14%. It is possible that the largest factor in this change is the COVID 19 pandemic taking place. In 2020 through the present year of 2022, the COVID 19 pandemic has continued adding stressors like food insecurity, classroom instability with more frequent closures due to exposures and staff shortages. Virtual services were also offered at times during this year of instruction. Shortages in almost every workplace adding stress to the family could be another factor troubling this score.

One of the biggest factors is teacher burnout. Being understaffed with consistent exposure to COVID 19 and having classroom closures create an exceedingly difficult environment for teachers to excel in self-regulation. With, preparation for instruction through trauma and with students experiencing ACEs only when time allowed in the professional development schedule did not prepare instructors for the behaviors that would take place and the mental fortitude it would take to appropriately address the behaviors brought on by a global pandemic.

In exploring CLASS data, a strength found in the program is posited climate. Classrooms overall scored an average of 6.67 out of 7 for Positive Climate, a 6.59 out of 7 for Teacher Sensitivity, 6.56 in Regard for Student Perspective, and 6.72 for Behavior Management. Areas for improvement include Concept Development with an average score of 3.38 out of 7, Language modeling at 3.38, Instructional Support at 3.86, and Quality of Feedback at 4.33.

Utilizing other forms of assessment on teacher instructional strategies surrounding trauma would be helpful in determining effectiveness of programming and professional development.

Using an assessment or tracker of traumatic events or ACES would also benefit understanding how the agency impacts the lives of children who have gone through trauma. Assessing student behavior before and after implementation of trauma informed professional development would also imply effectiveness.

Action Plan

The first step of this proposed plan is training. The agency will need to select at least four individuals to go through MindUP curriculum training and learn more about the structure of the Breakthrough series Collaborative. These individuals will either need to be contracted with the agency or chosen from within based on their experience with professional development and availability to partake in the training. This may take responsible restructuring on part of the agency to make this important endeavor doable for a current employee.

Once selected, these trainers will meet with the professional development committee to share their highlights of the MindUP programming and structure of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative and how the two will work together for the agency all staff training. A calendar of events will start to unfold and solidify as conversations continue and develop.

At least 3 professional development sessions need to take place for the all-staff experience, however more are preferable. In between sessions will follow the Plan, Do, Study, Act cycle (PDSA) outlined in the Breakthrough Series Collaboration. It is noted “Over half of the participants indicated that the PDSA method was very or extremely useful to their implementation” (Ebert et al, 2011, p.193). Planning the BSC and MindUP professional development will take precedent to all else after mandatory health and safety professional development.

Cohorts of various positions need to be created within the agency as a “vast majority of participants (86%) indicated that working with a team that included individuals who held a variety of roles at the agency was extremely useful to their implementation efforts”, the workgroups will be intentionally made up of differing roles within the agency (Ebert et al, 2011, p.194). Each group will be tasked with creating accountability pieces in written form fitting their individual group need for the PDSA cycle.

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative all-staff experience will take place over a span of 1 year because “over 90% of participants in a trauma informed training utilizing the breakthrough series collaborative indicated that having three two-day learning sessions over a period of nine months was more useful for their implementation than a single training of comparable length might have been” (Ebert et al, 2011, p.192).

MindUP is specifically chosen for programming due to the mindfulness it embeds in the practices for both teachers and students. It is noted MindUP training may help produce trauma-sensitive attitudes and reduce teacher burnout (Kim et al, 2021). This is extremely important when considering the positive correlation between teacher stress and cortisol levels children produce in the mornings and the at-risk population this agency serves (Overly et al, 2016).

For aiding in structural change, the Breakthrough Series Collaborative could create positive changes in leadership and teacher relationships which will positively impact student outcomes. Teachers who view leadership as transformational report experiencing much lower levels of anxiety and depression in addition to higher levels of comfort (Van der Vyver et al, 2020). For these reasons, the initial introduction to the process will come from leadership within the agency in addition to the research supporting both the breakthrough series collaborative and MindUP programming. For example, “82% [of participants] indicated that participation in the BSC has been very or extremely important to their agency’s capacity to sustain and spread the practice” (Ebert et al, 2011, p.195). In addition, mindfulness SEL intervention can improve psychosocial and behavioral outcomes in young children (Crooks et al, 2020).

Leadership will be transparent with staff in what is being implemented for the year of professional development and how it will differ from previous years especially regarding sessions that build on one another, workgroups consisting of various positions within the agency, implementation between sessions, and accountability pieces needed. All sessions will be considered mandatory and end with surveys to gauge the effectiveness of the session for future reference and training. Teachers will

undergo the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) assessment before starting the sessions, halfway through the year, and at the end of the program year to reflect effectiveness from the teacher's perspective. If not all, a large, randomized sample of students will go through the Primary Care- PTSD Screener (PC-PTSD) by the mental health specialists at the start and end of the year to determine effectiveness. This data will be taken into consideration along with the social emotional portions of Teaching Strategies Gold assessment teachers report three times in the program year.

Implementation of School Improvement Plan

Month	Step	Who is Responsible?
August 2022	Identify Individual(s) to go through MindUP curriculum	Leadership Team

	<p>training and Breakthrough Series Collaborative training and research. This will require at least four individuals for a well-rounded understanding of the program and methodology.</p> <p>Pay companies the training will go through for selected trainers within original agency.</p>	
September 2022	Staff begin train the trainer routes.	Staff identified in August 2022
November 2022	Staff start monthly check-in meetings with the professional development committee to share knowledge and highlights.	Identified Staff and Professional Development Committee
December 2022	Check in Meeting- MindUP Curriculum highlights.	Identified Staff and Professional Development Committee
January 2023	Check in Meeting- Breakthrough Series Collaborative structure outline.	Identified Staff and Professional Development Committee.
February 2022	Check in Meeting- Breakthrough Series Collaborative structure outline.	Identified Staff and Professional Development Committee.
March 2022	Check in Meeting- Breakthrough Series Collaborative structure outline.	Identified Staff and Professional Development Committee.
April 2023	<p>Check in Meeting- Breakthrough Series Collaborative structure outline.</p> <p>Finalize any budget needed for this all-staff program for finalized proposal in the new fiscal year (which starts July 1)</p>	<p>Identified Staff and Professional Development Committee.</p> <p>Leadership and Fiscal</p>
May 2023	<p>Breakthrough Series Collaborative and MindUP team to discuss organization and begin to map out the year of Professional Development.</p> <p>Decide exact working of agency wide goal(s) in implementing this professional development.</p> <p>Broad example:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Measure trauma impact on children and families served by the agency. 2.) Provide consistent and continuous professional 	Identified Staff, Professional Development Committee, and Leadership Team

	development to support trauma informed practices. 3.)Hold agency staff accountable for systemic change in being trauma sensitive and holding trauma sensitive attitudes.	
June 2023	Finalize professional development map for the 2023-2024 year. Create substitute schedule for teachers to be able to do PC-PTSD screeners Strategize cohorts involving multiple roles within the agency in each for maximum impact and collaborative work.	Identified Training Staff and Professional Development Committee Leadership and Staffing Personnel Professional Development Committee
August 2023	(Early August) Welcome Back professional development for all staff- Introduction to BSC MindUP and transparent goals of the professional development plan. Cohorts Communicated. (Late August) Training for teachers on Primary Care PTSD Screeners.	Professional development Committee and Identified Training Staff Mental Health Consultants
September 2023	Round 1 Assessments: Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Primary Care- PTSD Screener (PC-PTSD)- teachers to students.	Mental Health Consultants Teaching staff
October 2023	First Professional Development Topic Session Plan, Do, Study, Act- Create Plan in Cohorts	Identified Training Staff Cohorts
November 2023	Cohort Meetings to check in with Plan, Do, Study, Act TS Gold Data Checkpoint #1	Cohorts Teaching staff
December 2023	Second Professional Development Topic Session	Identified Training Staff

	Plan, Do, Study, Act- Create Plan in Cohorts	Cohorts
January 2023	Cohort Meeting to check in with Plan, Do, Study, Act plan for session two	Cohorts
February 2023	Third Professional Development Topic Session Plan, Do, Study, Act- Create Plan in Cohorts	Identified Training Staff Cohorts
	TS Gold Data Checkpoint #two	Teaching staff
March 2023	Round 2 Assessments: Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Primary Care- PTSD Screener (PC-PTSD) Cohort Meeting to check in with Plan, Do, Study, Act plan for session three	Mental Health Consultants Teaching Staff Cohorts
April 2023	Fourth Professional Development Topic Session Plan, Do Study, Act- create Plan in Cohorts	Identified Training Staff Cohorts
May 2023	Cohort Meeting to check in with Plan, Do, Study, Act plan for session four	Cohorts
June 2024	Final Round of Assessments: Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Primary Care- PTSD Screener (PC-PTSD)	Mental Health Consultant Teaching staff
July 2024	Compare student assessment data (TS GOLD), teacher assessment data (CLASS), ARTIC, and PC-PTSD	Data and Technology Specialists
August 2024	Presentation of Data	Data and Technology Specialists and Identified Trainers

Resources

MindUP Training- https://cdn.mindup.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Train-the-Trainer-Package-Overview_Page-1.png

Breakthrough Series Collaborative in Iowa example:

<https://humanrights.iowa.gov/sites/default/files/media/Change%20Package-Educational%20Continuity%20and%20School%20Stabilty.pdf>

Challenges

Challenges in this process begin with selecting trainers. If selected within the agency, workloads will need to be examined to ensure enough room for learning and leading the Breakthrough Series Collaborative on MindUP. Leadership will need to work closely with the selected individuals because the time needed for learning and implementation will be unknown at the start of the process and depend on any changes the professional development committee makes. Clear expectations and open communication are the only combatants of this challenge. The agency also could hire out for this position or positions, but this will require access to grant funding.

Another challenge will be ensuring the priority of this professional development system over other needs dictated by the professional development committee and the change in the current system of monthly themes for the year. Health and safety requirements will need to be prioritized first to respect the integrity of the grant, but this professional development should come in a close second while also ensuring any other programming in line with Head Start Performance Standards.

In conclusion, the challenge will vary from program to program, but the beauty of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative is to meet the individual needs as indicated by the goals set by the agency. This program will look and feel different across different programs because of this, but the structure of the Breakthrough Series Collaborative and MindUP curriculum stay the same in ways the research has indicated are important and impactful to participants.

Conclusion

Professional development gives teachers the tools to improve their practices for the students they serve. Teachers who serve at-risk children especially need training in how to be trauma sensitive and give students the tools to handle big emotions. The issue is the tug and pull for many professional developments which results in many “one and done” models that are not impactful and do not create changes in implementation.

The Breakthrough Series Collaborative is a meaningful way to provide professional development on a continuous level and has accountable steps between sessions and groups including many differing jobs in the agency. The MindUP program has proven many times in research to be effective in giving students tools to manage emotions appropriately. These student tools positively impact student outcomes such as improving psychosocial and behavioral outcomes (Crooks et al, 2020).

Consistent professional development on trauma informed practices is found to change attitudes about trauma in students and in general. The Breakthrough series collaborative shows great promise in supporting workplaces with shared leadership skills and a consistent plan to implement and adjust the curriculum being utilized with the methodology. Linking both the Breakthrough Series Collaborative and MindUP curriculum will have positive impacts for the agency and student outcomes based on research.

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