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TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM: TRAINING
MODULES FOR PRE SERVICE TEACHERS

By
Savannah Armistead

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College and Mississippi Excellence in Teaching Program.

Oxford, MS
May 2023

Approved By

Advisor: Dr. Sara Platt

Reader: Dr. Ann Monroe

Reader: Dr. Saijun Zhang

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Savannah Armistead

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my siblings.

You've taught me the power of courage, hope, and healing.

I love you forever.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would first like to thank my incredible parents, Joe and Teri Armistead, for all their unconditional patience, love and support throughout my life.

I would like to thank my amazing advisor, Dr. Sara Platt. My completion of this project could not have been possible without her grace, guidance, and encouragement throughout the way.

Thank you to my second and third readers Dr. Ann Monroe and Dr. Saijun Zhang.

I would like to thank the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College and the Mississippi Excellence in Teaching Program for supporting me in my academic endeavors. I am so thankful for the many hours learning and growing to become the best version of myself.

Lastly, I extend my gratitude to The University of Mississippi for allowing me the opportunity to meet the most supportive and encouraging community of friends and instructors that have become my family. It will always be a spot that ever calls.

ABSTRACT

Savannah Armistead: Trauma Informed Practices in the Elementary Classroom: Training Modules for Pre Service Teachers

(Under the direction of Dr. Sara Platt)

The purpose of this capstone is to explore trauma-informed practices in the elementary classroom, and to develop foundational training modules for pre-service teachers. The need for trauma-informed practices in schools is important as research indicates that children who experience traumatic events are impacted in their academic performance, behavior, and emotional well-being. This capstone reviews the literature on the impact of trauma on children, with an emphasis on how it manifests in the classroom. It highlights the importance of recognizing the symptoms of trauma and how teachers can effectively create a safe and supportive learning environment for all students. The training modules and informational materials were designed to provide pre-service teachers with a foundational knowledge of trauma-informed education, including how to recognize and respond to trauma as well as how to implement social emotional learning and self-regulation practices in the classroom. By equipping pre-service educators with the tools and resources needed to recognize and respond to trauma, we can create a more equitable and supportive learning environment for all students, specifically those who have experienced trauma.

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Chapter 1: Purpose Statement

My passion for education began from a young age. I always loved school and I knew I wanted to be a teacher when I grew up. My favorite memory of school was coming home and telling my parents everything about all the new concepts we explored during the day. I loved learning and had supportive friends, parents, and teachers that pushed me to excel in my academics. While I was fortunate to have such a positive experience with school and learning, I quickly discovered that not everyone had the same experience.

When I was in high school, I was introduced to four individuals that were exposed to trauma for an extended period at a very young age. They experienced extreme abuse and neglect from their biological parents, which eventually led to their removal and placement into foster care. The trauma they experienced manifested in various ways such as aggressive behavior, withdrawal, and the development of mental health disorders like ADHD, PTSD, and depression. The trauma they experienced continues to impact every aspect of their life even years later. They frequently experience difficulties building relationships and coping with adversity.

While working at an after school program during my junior year of college, I was able to recognize the symptoms of trauma in some of my students. One student in particular displayed extreme aggression, difficulty making friends, withdrawal from social situations and relationships with teachers, and embodied the idea that he was a bad kid. I was able to take an empathetic approach in my interactions with him and develop a meaningful relationship. I was someone that responded patiently to his behaviors and he quickly saw me as a safe person.

I became extremely interested in learning more about trauma and its long term impacts on children. I began to read the book “The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog” by Bruce Perry. Each

case study in the book presented the story of a child who had experienced trauma and the psychology behind their behavior. The stories of these children were extremely powerful and moving. I began to think of the teacher's perspective on how to support these students in the classroom setting. I realized that teachers could become trauma informed and implement empathetic practices specifically designed to support behaviors exhibited by children who have experienced trauma.

My involvement with these individuals, along with my own investigation into trauma, gave me a platform to talk about my experiences in my pre-service teaching classes. I was able to share that when students who have experienced trauma participate in acting out behaviors, they are expressing a need that needs to be met. For example, one of the individuals I interacted with used to steal food from the cafeteria. She frequently got in trouble for this behavior, but the reality was that she stole the food to feed her siblings because they had no food to eat at home. She was unable to do her homework and would get in trouble for this behavior, but the reality was she couldn't focus on doing homework as drugs were being exposed to her and her siblings after school. These perspectives helped my classmates to understand that not all their future students will be able to cope and respond in ways that children who have not experienced trauma do.

School became another place where these individuals did not feel loved, welcomed, or valued. They could not focus on instruction as they were reliving the days prior or dreading going home. They quickly fell behind in school and constantly got in trouble which led them to feel inadequate in the school setting. All it took was one teacher to realize that something wasn't right and get them the help and support they needed. That one teacher was able to provide them with a safe, controlled, and loving environment that responded empathetically to their needs.

Seeing how this one teacher responded to their adverse needs led me on a path to becoming an advocate for children who have experienced trauma in the classroom.

After reading “The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog”, while also sharing my own knowledge and experiences with pre-service teachers, I realized trauma-informed teaching practices are absolutely essential and need to be taught in pre-service teacher programs. Teaching pre-service teachers about trauma-informed practices can help change the trajectory of a child’s life by providing them with stability, empathy, social emotional learning skills, and more. It can also help teachers see the signs of trauma, respond in ways that support the student, and help them to develop skills to cope with their experiences.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this section, I will highlight relevant research on the definition of trauma informed education, the need for trauma informed practices, how trauma manifests in children, and how to integrate social emotional learning practices. By using this research, I will be able to focus on my central topic of implementing trauma informed practices in the elementary classroom.

Defining Trauma and Trauma Informed Education

Trauma in children refers to the physical or emotional reactions following the experiences of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, violence, natural disasters, and accidents that overwhelmingly inhibit an individual's capacity to cope which therein impacts their short and long term well-being (Craig, 2008). Development of children in those who have experienced trauma can be profound, resulting in a variety of emotional, behavioral, and cognitive difficulties. Children who experience trauma may have difficulty forming positive relationships with peers and adults, regulating emotions, and may struggle with their academic performance (Craig, 2008). Consistent repeated instances of violence or neglect may alter children's brain chemistry and impact the child long term depending on a child's age, developmental stage, support systems, and prior experiences (Craig, 2008). They are also at risk for developing mental and physical health issues (Craig, 2008).

“Trauma informed education starts with an understanding of how trauma can impact learning and behavior. With this approach, educators think about what student behavior may be telling them and they reflect on their teaching practices to find ways to better support students who may be experiencing trauma” (Kaufman, 2023, para. 2). Implementation of

trauma-informed practices including the building of positive relationships, providing social emotional learning (SEL) experiences, and providing appropriate support and resources to children who have experienced trauma in the elementary classroom can help to cultivate a safe and supportive environment that adapts to mental, physical, and behavioral challenges (Craig, 2008). Trauma informed curriculum realizes the widespread impact of trauma, recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma, is knowledgeable about procedures and practices regarding trauma, and actively seeks to prevent retraumatization (Cavanaugh, 2016). Trauma informed practices are essential for the elementary classroom as it can have a profound impact on the personal and academic development of children. School wide implementations of trauma informed practices include “multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) such as positive behavioral interventions and supports that include emphasis on student safety, positive interactions, culturally responsive practice, peer supports, targeted interventions, and strategies that support the individualized needs of students” (Cavanaugh, 2016, p. 42). Implementing a trauma informed approach in the classroom can improve relationship and communication skills, help participation in school community, decrease disruptive behavior, reduce emotional distress, increase the ability to self regulate, boost academic success, and promote overall healing (Craig, 2008). The benefits impact everyone in the classroom and help foster a sense of security, trust, and confidence in students.

By incorporating trauma-informed practices in pre-service teacher training, future teachers can be equipped to prevent, assist, and support the academic and behavioral needs of children who have experienced trauma in the classroom while creating a loving and safe environment for all students. This means that educators are aware of the potential impacts of trauma, are able to effectively build meaningful relationships with students, and create a structured environment that can not only de-escalate behavioral outbursts but also prevent them.

The Need for Trauma Informed Practices in the Elementary Classroom

In order for students to thrive in the school environment, basic needs must first be met. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a child's physiological needs including shelter, food, water, clothing, and sleep must first be met (Maslow, 1943). This is followed by the need for safety and security. For children who have experienced trauma, these basic needs must be met for students to achieve in the classroom. Students who have not been fed or slept or experience violence and neglect in the home are unable to reach their full potential. Within the classroom setting, teachers play an important role in students' lives as a consistent, caring, and informed adult figure that can advocate for the needs of children. A teacher may be the only adult in a child's life that can provide stability in a child's otherwise chaotic and traumatic home environment. They are not only able to extend academic knowledge but also interpersonal and intrapersonal skills (Parker & Folkman, 2015). Implementing trauma-informed practices and being aware of the signs of trauma in children can allow teachers to be in a unique position to change the trajectory of a child's life. According to (Sitler, 2009) a teacher's small, caring actions can establish the classroom as a safe learning environment while still conveying the academic expectations.

Research shows that youth who have experienced trauma have a disproportionately higher rate of disciplinary referrals and absences, lower performance on state assessments, and are more likely to drop out of school (Somers et al., 2020). In regards to disciplinary referrals, children in foster care are "twice as likely to have out-of-school suspensions and three times more likely to have been expelled compared to non-foster care youth" (Somers et al., 2020 p.

1846). These outcomes result from behaviors being perceived as defiant and aggressive due to the trauma they have experienced. Since these students experience a high rate of disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions, academic achievement takes a major toll. The disparities in academic achievement begin as early as kindergarten. A study found that in a sample of youth in foster care, 54% fell in the at-risk range in the area of phonological awareness upon entering kindergarten which is significant as phonological awareness is an early indicator of later reading skills (Somers et al., 2020). This research indicates that the average 17 to 18 year old in foster care is reading on a seventh grade level, while only 44% of these students are reading at a high school level (Somers et al., 2020). They are also more likely to perform lower on state assessments, miss twice the amount of school, and fail a grade or be retained in school. Due to the emotional and behavioral difficulties that manifest because of trauma, almost half of students are eligible for special education services (Somers et al., 2020). To help keep students connected to school, it is important to understand how trauma manifests in children and respond empathetically when behaviors occur.

How Trauma Manifests in Children

The human body is designed to deal with a certain amount of stress in which hormones, such as adrenaline and cortisol, allow us to face situations in a healthy way (Walton-Fisette, 2020). Small amounts of manageable stress can be referred to as positive stress (Walton-Fisette, 2020). Overwhelming amounts of stress, in which a person has no control over the situation or when they cannot cope with what they are experiencing, can be referred to as toxic stress (Walton-Fisette, 2020). Toxic stress increases hormone levels to a state where they cannot return to a normal state of functioning (Walton-Fisette, 2020). Sustained activation of the body's stress

response (toxic stress) impacts the brain's vital systems such as the stress pathway which can lead to anxiety, depression, and impaired learning and memory; emotional processing and regulation which leads to hypervigilance and reduced attentional control; evaluation of reward which results in difficulty in experiencing joy; and brain connectivity which leads to difficulty in understanding the relevance of situations and how to respond (*What are ACEs?*, 2018).

The amygdala controls our reaction to stress, and when exposed to violence is hardwired to habitually be on the lookout for danger (Craig, 2008). According to *Teaching with Awareness: The Hidden Effects of Trauma on Learning* (2009), trauma is defined as an “affliction of the powerless in which the victim is rendered helpless by overwhelming force[s]” (p. 119). When trauma repeatedly occurs and the individual has no control of the situation, toxic stress hinders the brain's chemistry permanently (Walton-Fisette, 2020). Children may become emotionally and physically unable to cope with the trauma that has occurred leading to mental and physical difficulties. This can include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and behavioral disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). They may also experience physical difficulties such as chronic health issues including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, a weakened immune system, and an increased risk of infections and illness due to the toxic stress in the brain and body (Nelson et al., 2020).

Along with physical implications, behavioral outbursts may also occur that can lead to hindrance of social relationships and academic performance in the classroom. These children experience persistent hyperarousal of the brain making them overly sensitive to their surroundings and constantly on the lookout for danger or threats (Craig, 2008). Children who have experienced violence are unable to self regulate, live in a constant state of fear, and participate in self destructing behaviors (Craig, 2008). Without the presence and care of a stable and supportive adult, children are unable to learn self-regulating techniques and in turn come to

school unfocused, frightened, and out of control, disconnected or overwhelmed by interactions with teachers or peers, or engage in aggressive or rigid behavior (Craig, 2008).

As a result of these overwhelming and uncontrollable feelings, children can participate in self destructive behaviors. Some children might perceive themselves as inherently bad as a way to explain the trauma that has happened to them. This “explanatory narrative” shapes the perception of themselves and they resort to patterns of behavior that reinforces the notion of intrinsic badness by creating problems both in the classroom and community (Craig, 2008). This can be seen in violent or aggressive behaviors, non-compliant behaviors, off-task behaviors, clouded judgment, inability to problem solve, and irrational perceptions of the world around them. They are limited in ability to regulate as they only feel safe when they are in control of their surroundings thus fulfilling their “inherent badness” with extreme behaviors. Occasionally, some children attempt to overcorrect their badness by adopting patterns of rigid perfectionist behavior (Craig, 2008). These children attempt to overly please teachers and peers and are easily frustrated when unable to do so.

Frequently, these children may be unaware of the reasoning behind their behavior as it comes from the subconscious. They are unable to make sense of what has happened to them which leads to deeply rooted feelings of shame, fear, and anger which drives a child’s behavior making them feel more out of control (Craig, 2008). These children could be adapting to the chaos and unpredictability and reacting in ways that seek to explain and control what has happened to them. Due to their hyperarousal and persistent state of fear, they are unable to activate higher order thinking and problem solving as all their energy is directed toward their environment regardless if it is safe or not which compromises the ability to “attend to academic instruction, acquire new information, engage in new ideas, or expand their understanding of the world” (Craig, 2008, p. 34).

As children subconsciously participate in self destructive behaviors, relive the trauma in an attempt to explain it, and try to control the environment surrounding them their academic performance and achievement takes a massive toll (Craig, 2008). They may be unable to engage in social and academic activities as their mind is reeling with their experiences. Chronic toxic stress brought on by the trauma interferes with working memory and the ability to process information accurately (Craig, 2008). Not only are they unable to distinguish between important and unimportant stimuli during academic instruction, but they are also unable to organize and process content for later retrieval leading to extreme frustration and the inability to complete tasks (Craig, 2008). Additionally, if children are not in control of their surroundings, they become so preoccupied with safety and survival that they are unable to focus on classroom instruction or acquire new skills (Craig, 2008). They may direct all their energy to meeting their survival needs and making it through the day. Due to their inability to cope, it is possible that their energy is diverted away from other cognitive tasks needed to complete work throughout the school day and focused on simply surviving. It is important to implement trauma-informed practices in the school day to help students feel safe, de-escalate, and be taught self regulation techniques to curb the effects of trauma and help them redirect their energy to daily and future tasks (Sitler, 2009).

How to Effectively Implement Trauma Informed Practices

In an effort to curb the occurrence of unpredictable, aggressive, or off task behavior, trauma informed practices can be implemented in the classroom environment. Since most children are unaware of the reasoning behind their behavior, it is up to teachers and other supportive professionals to help students identify triggering situations, prevent outbursts in

behaviors, regulate their emotions, and de-escalate behaviors when they occur. This can be done through the use of positive classroom management practices, supportive and predictable environments, individualized support systems, social emotional learning experiences, and taking preventative measures such as recognizing signs of trauma.

Cultivating a classroom environment that emphasizes empathic responses to behavior, positive relationships, consistent structure and routine, and safety is essential for creating a trauma sensitive environment (Craig, 2008). Responding empathetically to behavior allows students to feel safe in their environment. In order to do so, teachers must “rethink common assumptions about the motivations underlying children's behavior as their apparent opposition, defiance, aggression, emotional disengagement, and avoidance of responsibility are often produced by traumatic stress reactions over which they have little control” (Craig, 200, p. 11-12). Creating strong and positive relationships with students can help teachers empathize with students in an easier way. Teachers can learn more about students’ life circumstances and experiences using different engaging methods such as interest surveys or one on one interactions. Creating a positive rapport with students increases the likelihood of building trust with students who have experienced trauma (Parker & Folkman, 2015).

Establishing a consistent structure and routine is also essential in creating a trauma sensitive environment (Craig, 2008). Students who experience trauma need consistency in order to help the out of control and chaotic feelings. Having predictable and consistent schedules throughout the school days can help children “acquire a conceptual understanding of the world, organize their experiences in meaningful ways, and bring order to the chaos of their daily lives” (Craig, 2008, p. 9). In order to encourage appropriate school behavior, students who have experienced trauma benefit from explicitly taught school and classroom expectations with limits and consequences being consistently reinforced (Palmieri & La Salle, 2016). In a structured and

predictable classroom environment, individualized and consistent behavior management systems for students who have experienced trauma are also favorable in comparison to traditional reward systems (Craig, 2008).

Understanding that traditional classroom management strategies such as token economies may not be as effective for students who have experienced trauma is also important for creating an empathetic classroom environment. Most behavior management systems are based on the assumption that students are able to “adapt and regulate their emotions enough to change their behavior in compliance with classroom expectations” (Craig, 200, p. 11-12). However, when children who have experienced trauma act out in apparent opposition/defiance, aggression, emotional disengagement, or avoidance of responsibility they are in reality responding to a traumatic stress response in which they have little to no control, making traditional reward systems ineffective which can sometimes lead to escalation of behavior (Craig, 2008). Children who have experienced inconsistency from adults may also perceive the receiving of rewards as a result of the teacher’s mood rather than making the connection that it serves as a reward for hard work (Craig, 2008).

Creating management systems that are specifically designed to help children who have experienced trauma can be extremely beneficial. Targeted supports such as tier interventions can help to address the social and behavioral challenges children may experience. Screening processes can also be helpful for identifying the students in need of behavioral support internally and externally and can help to determine specific interventions that scaffold positive and productive behavior management (Cavanaugh, 2016). Screenings can also help to identify triggers that may set off a student’s aggressive behavior in the classroom (Cavanaugh, 2016). Once these triggers are identified, additional preventative supports can be put in place to help

control outbursts of behavior. It can also help the teacher understand and use trauma sensitive language to avoid outbursts of behavior as a result of triggering language.

Within the daily routine of classroom instruction, practices such as social emotional learning activities, choice and autonomy, art and music, and sensory areas can significantly benefit children who have experienced trauma (Craig, 2008). Social emotional learning (SEL) is defined as the process in which individuals acquire the skills and knowledge to manage emotions, establish and maintain supportive relationships, make responsible and caring decisions, and communicate effectively with others (*Fundamentals of SEL*, 2022). One element of SEL is self regulation techniques which can include mindfulness, practice of self awareness, use of expressive language, and regulated self control which can all help to reduce the symptoms of hyperarousal or triggered responses. Mindfulness is taught to students as a way for them to become aware of what is happening around and within them while being fully present and compassionate with themselves and others (Palmieri & La Salle, 2016).

An example of mindfulness can include using expressive language which encourages the child to think out loud about their emotions and opinions while also allowing them to link new information to what they already know in a positive and optimistic way. Expressive language helps children “regulate their emotions and behavior while allowing them to consider the consequences of their behavior” (Craig, 2008, p. 54). Many times, intrusive thoughts and memories of traumatic events occur resulting in unbearable feelings of fear and anger leading to rapid changes in mood and activity (Craig, 2008). These mindfulness practices work with the brain’s neuroplasticity by creating neural pathways in which the symptoms of trauma are reduced (Craig, 2008). With enough repetition, the new pathways can help the student to assess perceived threats around them as real or not, putting a cognitive brake on the ‘fight, flight, or freeze’ response (Craig, 2008). The practice of self awareness can help children regulate their body’s

stress response and give them security and clarity when coping with adversity. Giving students choice and autonomy throughout the day can help them feel in control of their environment, which in turn, helps them to consciously self-reflect and assess their emotions as they make decisions.

The incorporation of art and music during mindfulness or self reflection activities can also be a beneficial method to help students regulate their emotions and behaviors. Using "patterned, repetitive sensory input such as music, dance, deep breathing, or drumming can be integrated into classroom activities as a way of inducing relaxation and increasing children's capacity to learn" (Craig, 2008, p. 13). This pairing of music, art, and dance can help students improve their motor skills while helping them to become consciously aware of what they are doing. This conscious thinking helps students build confidence in self regulation practices while also creating a classroom climate that is emotionally safe where they are able to strengthen their explicit memory and free up any space previously held by anxiety about their safety (Craig, 2008).

Equally as important as implementing trauma informed practices in the classroom, is learning and understanding the symptoms held by children who have experienced trauma to take preventative measures. Recognizing the signs such as behavioral or academic changes, difficulty regulating emotions, inability to cope with adversity, physical illness, avoidance or withdrawal, regression, or the idea of inherent badness is a crucial part of empathetically connecting to students who have experienced trauma. As stated previously, it is incredibly important to "rethink common assumptions about the motivations underlying children's behavior as their apparent opposition, defiance, aggression, emotional disengagement, and avoidance of responsibility are often produced by traumatic stress reactions over which they have little control" (Craig, 200, p. 11-12). Understanding the manifestations of trauma in children can help

cater the classroom experience in a meaningful way to meeting the needs of the individual child while helping to change a child's perception of school and connection with others.

Chapter 3: Training Modules


The following training modules and informational slides are included on trauma informed education, the need for trauma informed practices, how trauma manifests in children, and how to effectively integrate trauma informed practices in the classroom. Each module includes a module lesson plan guide as well as individual powerpoint slides.

Module 1: Defining Trauma and Trauma Informed Education

Module 2: The Need for Trauma Informed Practices in the Elementary Classroom



Module 3: How Trauma Manifests in Children

Module 4: How to Effectively Implement Trauma Informed Practices



TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

MODULE 1 GUIDE



KEY POINTS

1. Trauma comes in a variety of forms. These can include the experiences of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, violence, natural disasters, or accidents.
2. Experiences of trauma inhibit an individual's capacity to cope which impacts their short and long term well-being.
3. Behavioral, emotional, physical, and mental difficulties can occur after experiencing trauma.
4. Long term impacts include difficulties in forming positive peer and adult relationships, regulating emotions and behavior, academic performance, and alteration in brain chemistry
5. Trauma informed education is the practice of teaching and learning that recognizes and responds appropriately to children who have experienced trauma
6. Creating trauma sensitive environments can support and effectively assist children who have experienced trauma in their learning by reducing emotional, social, and behavioral distress to promote overall healing
7. Teachers need to be aware of the impacts of trauma, know how to build meaningful relationships, and create effective trauma informed environments

DEFINING TRAUMA AND TRAUMA INFORMED EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS



02	What is TRAUMA?
03	Adverse Childhood Experiences
04	What can happen to children when they experienced trauma?
05	What are long term impacts?
06	What are trauma informed practices?
07	How to create a trauma sensitive environment
08	How do trauma sensitive classrooms benefit students?
09	What are the goals of getting teachers trauma informed?

LECTURE MATERIALS

MODULE 1: Defining Trauma and Trauma Informed Education

Overview: Using presentation format, present slides 2-9 and deliver content in lecture style. The content covered in the slides includes information about trauma and a brief overview on the some of the impacts of trauma physically, mentally, behaviorally, and academically. It also includes information about trauma informed education and how it can benefit students in the classroom.

Slide 2: What is TRAUMA?

- "Trauma refers to the physical or emotional reactions following the experiences of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, violence, natural disasters, and accidents that overwhelmingly inhibit an individual's capacity to cope which therein impacts their short and long term well-being."
- This definition comes from Teaching with Awareness by Helen Collins Sittler

What is TRAUMA?

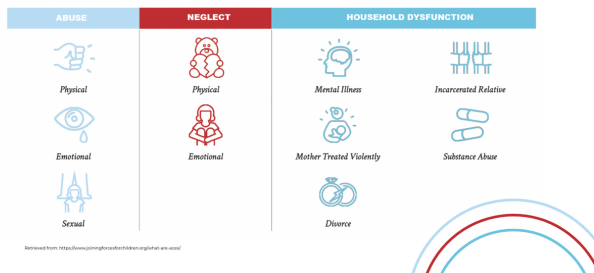
"Trauma refers to the physical or emotional reactions following the experiences of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, violence, natural disasters, and accidents that overwhelmingly inhibit an individual's capacity to cope which therein impacts their short and long term well-being"

This definition comes from Teaching with Awareness by Helen Collins Sittler (2009)

Slide 3: ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE)

- Adverse Childhood Experiences or ACEs, include 10 different experiences grouped into abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction. Abuse can come in the form of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse. Neglect can include both physical or emotional. Examples of household dysfunction are mental illness, incarcerated relatives, substance abuse, violence, or divorce. Results from the ACEs study indicate that roughly 64% of people experience at least one ACE with 22% of the population experiencing three or more ACEs.
- (Cavanaugh, 2016)

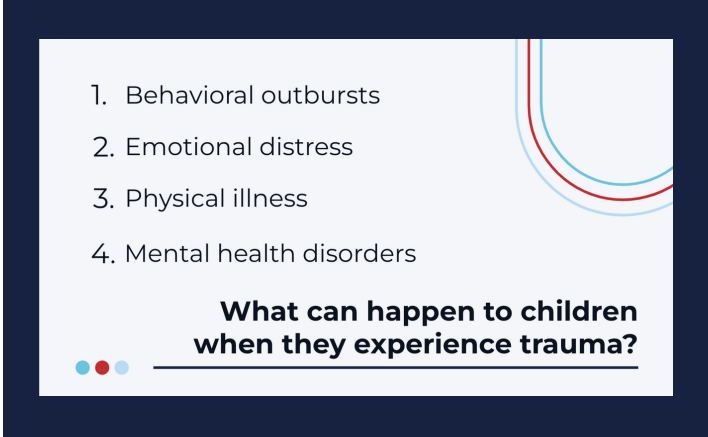
ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE)



LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 4: What can happen to children when they experience trauma?

- The American Psychological Association indicates that trauma can lead to challenges with emotional regulation, which may result in behavioral outbursts and challenges with social relationships. Trauma experience can also lead to physical illness and mental health disorders in children.



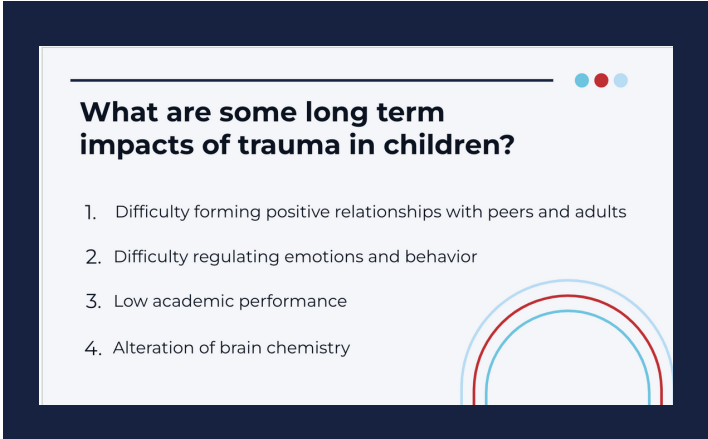
1. Behavioral outbursts
2. Emotional distress
3. Physical illness
4. Mental health disorders

What can happen to children when they experience trauma?

Decorative elements: Three colored dots (red, blue, light blue) on the left; a stylized rainbow graphic on the right.

Slide 5: What are some long term impacts of trauma on children?

- The impacts long-term of trauma in children may include difficulty forming positive relationships with peers and adults. As mentioned previously, the ability to regulate emotions and behavior may be impacted as well. Children who experience trauma, also have lower academic performance than those who do not. Trauma alters brain connections, making it more difficult to learn and take in information, as opposed to children who have not experienced trauma.
- (Craig, 2008)



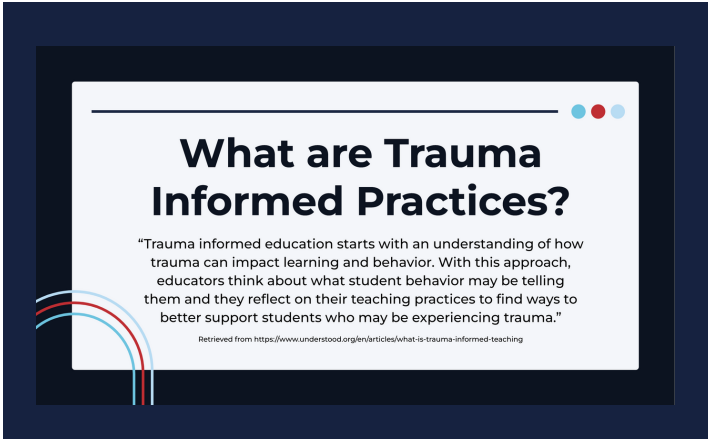
What are some long term impacts of trauma in children?

1. Difficulty forming positive relationships with peers and adults
2. Difficulty regulating emotions and behavior
3. Low academic performance
4. Alteration of brain chemistry

Decorative elements: Three colored dots (red, blue, light blue) on the right; a stylized rainbow graphic on the bottom right.

Slide 6: What are trauma informed practices?

- Trauma informed education starts with an understanding of how trauma can impact learning and behavior. With this approach, educators think about what student behavior may be telling them and they reflect on their teaching practices to find ways to better support students who may be experiencing trauma.



What are Trauma Informed Practices?

"Trauma informed education starts with an understanding of how trauma can impact learning and behavior. With this approach, educators think about what student behavior may be telling them and they reflect on their teaching practices to find ways to better support students who may be experiencing trauma."

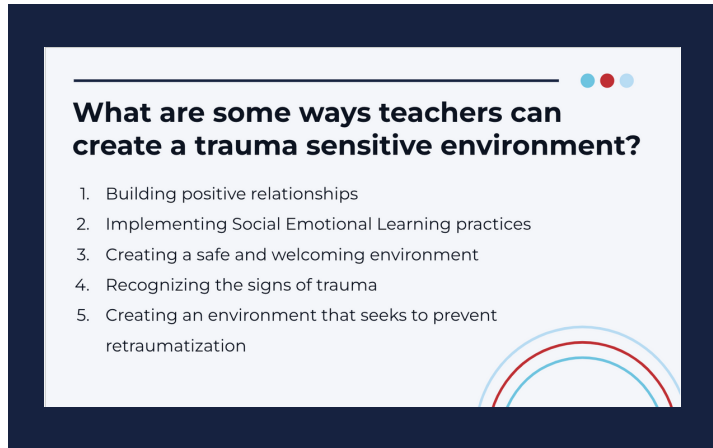
Retrieved from <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-trauma-informed-teaching>

Decorative elements: Three colored dots (red, blue, light blue) on the right; a stylized rainbow graphic on the left.

LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 7: What are some ways teachers can create a trauma sensitive environment?

- Teachers can create a trauma sensitive learning environment by:
 - Building positive relationships
 - Implementing social emotional learning practices (SEL)
 - Creating a safe and welcoming environment for students
 - Recognizing the signs of trauma
 - Creating an environment that seeks to prevent retraumatization



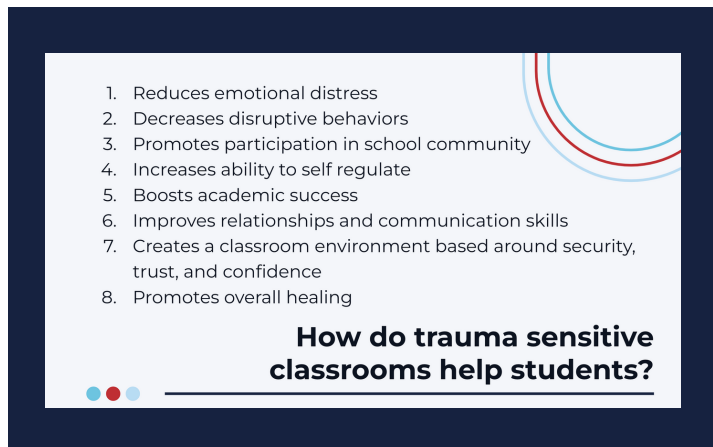
What are some ways teachers can create a trauma sensitive environment?

1. Building positive relationships
2. Implementing Social Emotional Learning practices
3. Creating a safe and welcoming environment
4. Recognizing the signs of trauma
5. Creating an environment that seeks to prevent retraumatization

Decorative elements: Three colored dots (blue, red, blue) at the top right and a rainbow graphic at the bottom right.

Slide 8: How do trauma sensitive classrooms help students?

- Trauma sensitive classrooms help students by:
 - Reducing emotional distress
 - Decreasing disruptive behaviors
 - Promoting participation in school community
 - Increasing ability to self regulate
 - Boosting academic success
 - Improving relationships and communication skills
 - Creating a classroom environment based around security, trust, and confidence
 - Promoting overall healing
 - (Craig, 2008)



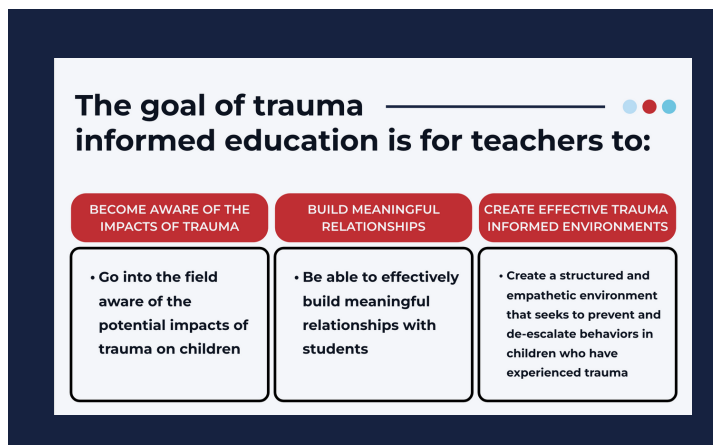
How do trauma sensitive classrooms help students?

1. Reduces emotional distress
2. Decreases disruptive behaviors
3. Promotes participation in school community
4. Increases ability to self regulate
5. Boosts academic success
6. Improves relationships and communication skills
7. Creates a classroom environment based around security, trust, and confidence
8. Promotes overall healing

Decorative elements: Three colored dots (blue, red, blue) at the bottom left and a rainbow graphic at the top right.

Slide 9: What are the goals of getting teachers trauma informed?

- The goal of trauma informed education is for teachers to:
 - Go into the field aware of the potential impacts of trauma on children
 - Be able to effectively build meaningful relationships with students
 - Create a structured and empathetic environment that seeks to prevent and de-escalate behaviors in children who have experienced trauma



The goal of trauma informed education is for teachers to:

BECOME AWARE OF THE IMPACTS OF TRAUMA	BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS	CREATE EFFECTIVE TRAUMA INFORMED ENVIRONMENTS
• Go into the field aware of the potential impacts of trauma on children	• Be able to effectively build meaningful relationships with students	• Create a structured and empathetic environment that seeks to prevent and de-escalate behaviors in children who have experienced trauma

Decorative elements: Three colored dots (blue, red, blue) at the top right.



MODULE 1: Defining Trauma and Trauma Informed Education




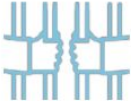








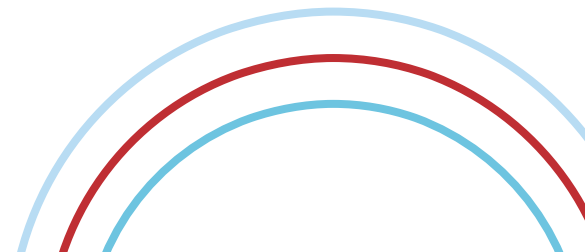
What is TRAUMA?

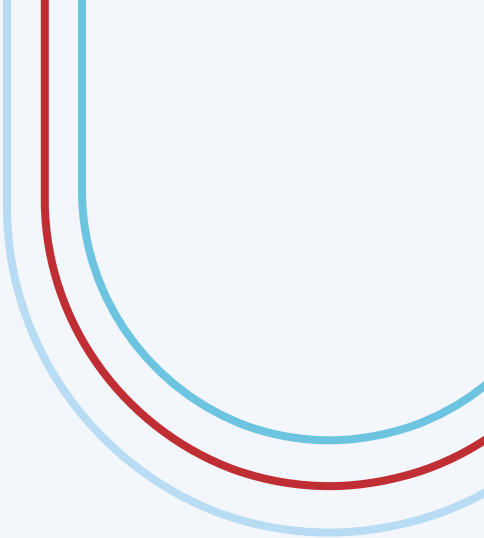
“Trauma refers to the physical or emotional reactions following the experiences of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse, neglect, violence, natural disasters, and accidents that overwhelmingly inhibit an individual’s capacity to cope which therein impacts their short and long term well-being”

This definition comes from Teaching with Awareness by Helen Collins Sitler (2009)

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE)

ABUSE	NEGLECT	HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION	
 <i>Physical</i>	 <i>Physical</i>	 <i>Mental Illness</i>	 <i>Incarcerated Relative</i>
 <i>Emotional</i>	 <i>Emotional</i>	 <i>Mother Treated Violently</i>	 <i>Substance Abuse</i>
 <i>Sexual</i>		 <i>Divorce</i>	



- 
1. Behavioral outbursts
 2. Emotional distress
 3. Physical illness
 4. Mental health disorders

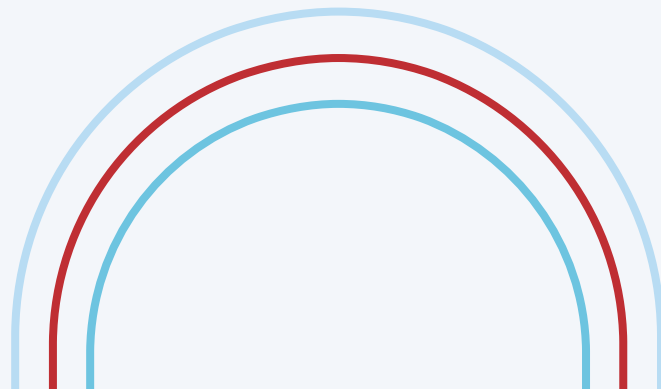
**What can happen to children
when they experience trauma?**





What are some long term impacts of trauma in children?

1. Difficulty forming positive relationships with peers and adults
2. Difficulty regulating emotions and behavior
3. Low academic performance
4. Alteration of brain chemistry





What are Trauma Informed Practices?

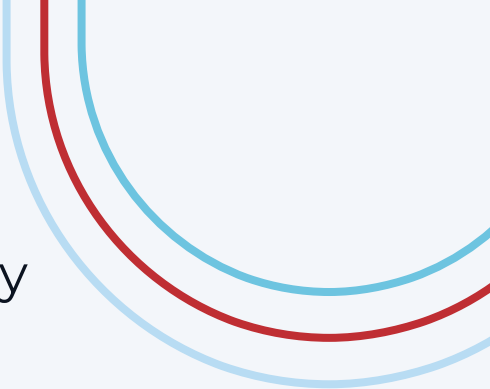
“Trauma informed education starts with an understanding of how trauma can impact learning and behavior. With this approach, educators think about what student behavior may be telling them and they reflect on their teaching practices to find ways to better support students who may be experiencing trauma.”

Retrieved from <https://www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-trauma-informed-teaching>



What are some ways teachers can create a trauma sensitive environment?

1. Building positive relationships
2. Implementing Social Emotional Learning practices
3. Creating a safe and welcoming environment
4. Recognizing the signs of trauma
5. Creating an environment that seeks to prevent retraumatization

- 
1. Reduces emotional distress
 2. Decreases disruptive behaviors
 3. Promotes participation in school community
 4. Increases ability to self regulate
 5. Boosts academic success
 6. Improves relationships and communication skills
 7. Creates a classroom environment based around security, trust, and confidence
 8. Promotes overall healing

How do trauma sensitive classrooms help students?



The goal of trauma informed education is for teachers to:

BECOME AWARE OF THE IMPACTS OF TRAUMA


- Go into the field aware of the potential impacts of trauma on children

BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

- Be able to effectively build meaningful relationships with students



CREATE EFFECTIVE TRAUMA INFORMED ENVIRONMENTS

- Create a structured and empathetic environment that seeks to prevent and de-escalate behaviors in children who have experienced trauma



TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

MODULE 2 GUIDE



KEY POINTS

1. In order for students to thrive in the school environment, basic needs must first be met. Based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a child's physiological needs including shelter, food, water, clothing, and sleep must first be met. This is followed by the need for safety and security. Students who have not been fed or slept or experience violence and neglect in the home are unable to reach their full potential.
2. Teachers play an impactful role in a child's life. They may be the only consistent and stable adult in a child's otherwise chaotic environment. Teachers not only extend academic knowledge, but also interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Implementing trauma-informed practices and being aware of the signs of trauma in children can allow teachers to be in a unique position to change the trajectory of a child's life.
3. There is a high disparity in success in the school setting for children who have experienced trauma. Being aware of these statistics can help a teacher change perceptions and make a greater impact when considering the needs of students with traumatic experiences.

THE NEED FOR TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

TABLE OF CONTENTS



02	Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
03	The role of teachers in the classroom
04	How trauma impacts school performance
05	Statistics on children in foster care
06	Statistics on academic achievement

LECTURE MATERIALS

MODULE 2: The Need for Trauma Informed Practices in the Elementary Classroom

Overview: Using presentation format, present slides 2-9 and deliver content in lecture style. The content covered in the slides includes information about the prevalence of trauma in the classroom. It begins with an overview of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and the basic foundation needed for students with trauma. The teacher plays a major role in helping to meet the needs of students in the classroom. It also discusses the statistics of academic performance in the classroom.

Slide 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

- In order for students to thrive in the school environment, basic needs must first be met. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, a child's physiological needs including shelter, food, water, clothing, and sleep must first be met. This is followed by the need for safety and security. For children who have experienced trauma, these basic needs must be met for students to achieve in the classroom. Students who have not been fed or slept or experience violence and neglect in the home are unable to reach their full potential.
- (Maslow, 1943)



Slide 3: The role of teachers in the classroom

- Within the classroom setting, teachers play an important role in students' lives as a consistent, caring, and informed adult figure that can advocate for the needs of children. A teacher may be the only adult in a child's life that can provide stability in a child's otherwise chaotic and traumatic home environment. They are not only able to extend academic knowledge but also interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Implementing trauma-informed practices and being aware of the signs of trauma in children can allow teachers to be in a unique position to change the trajectory of a child's life. A teacher's small, caring actions can establish the classroom as a safe learning environment while still conveying the academic expectations.
- (Parker & Folkman, 2015)

Teachers:

- Are advocates for children and provide much needed stability
- Are in a unique position to change the trajectory of a child's life

A photograph showing a female teacher sitting at a table with four young children, engaged in a learning activity with colorful blocks. The teacher is smiling and looking at the children. The children are focused on the activity.

LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 4: How trauma impacts school performance

- Research shows that youth who have experienced trauma have a disproportionately higher rate of disciplinary referrals and absences, lower performance on state assessments, and are more likely to drop out of school
- (Somers, et al., 2020)

How trauma impacts school performance:

- Higher rate of:
 - Disciplinary referrals
 - Absences
 - Dropping out of school
- Lower performance on state assessments

Slide 5: Children in foster care

- Children in foster care are twice as likely to have out-of-school suspensions and three times more likely to have been expelled compared to non-foster care youth
- (Somers et al., 2020)

Children in foster care are:

“Twice as likely to have out-of-school suspensions and three times more likely to have been expelled compared to non-foster care youth”


(Somers et al., 2020)


Slide 6: Academic achievement

- Since these students experience a high rate of disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions, academic achievement takes a major toll. The disparities in academic achievement begin as early as kindergarten. A study found that in a sample of youth in foster care, 54% fell in the at-risk range in the area of phonological awareness upon entering kindergarten which is significant as phonological awareness is an early indicator of later reading skills. It is shown that the average 17 to 18 year old in foster care is reading on a seventh grade level, while only 44% of these students are reading at a high school level. They are more likely to perform lower on state assessments, miss twice the amount of school, and fail a grade or be retained in school.
- (Somers et al., 2020)

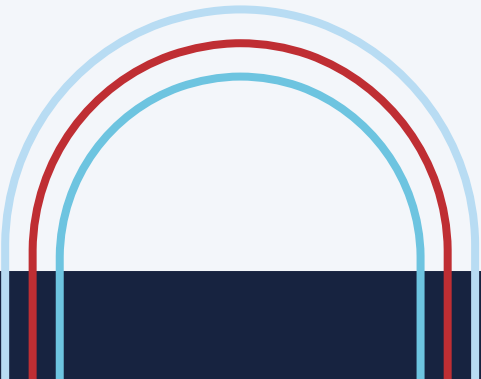
Academic achievement

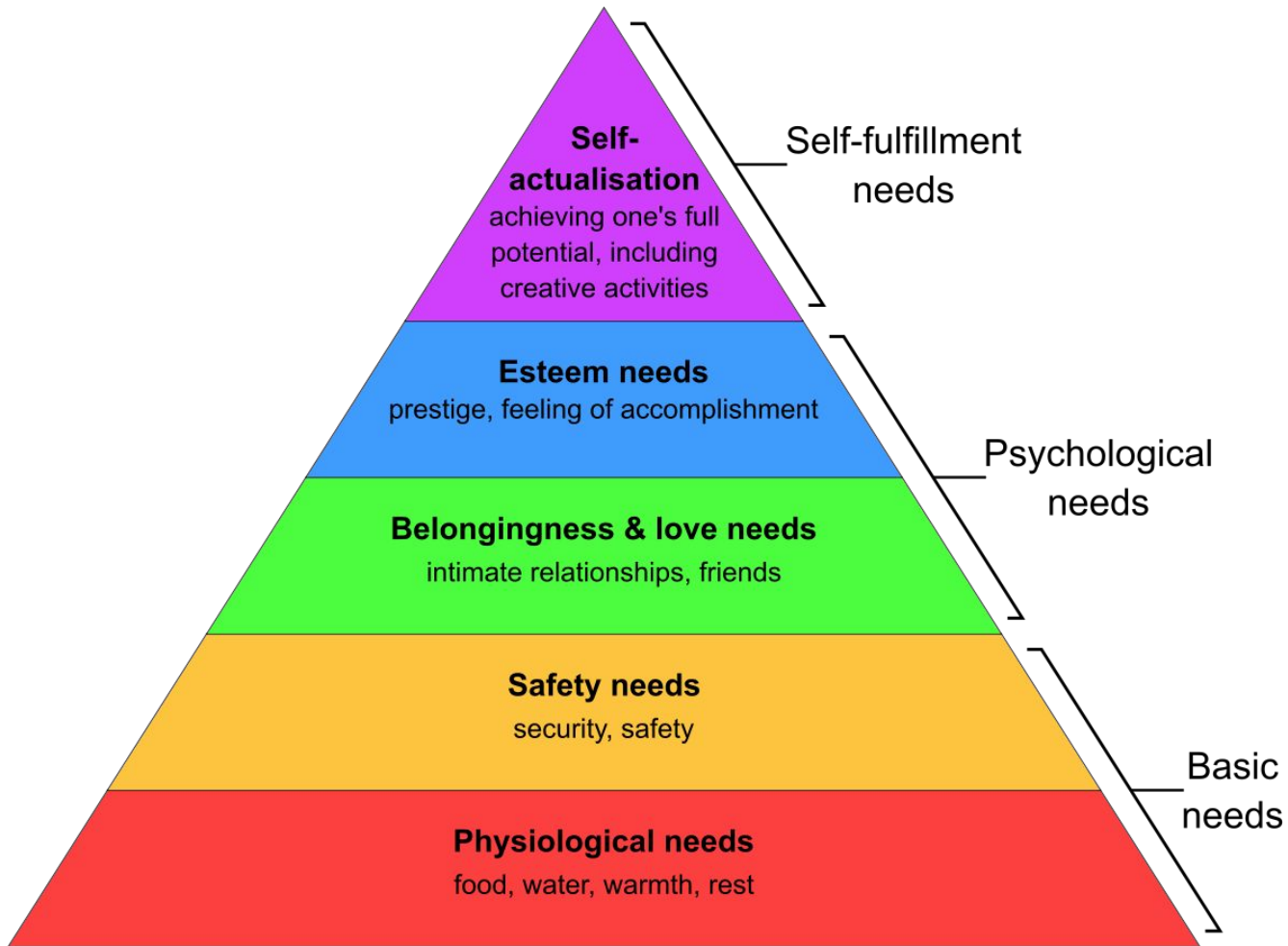
- Disparities start as soon as kindergarten
 - 54% of youth in foster care fell in the at-risk category in phonological awareness upon entry into kindergarten
- The average 17 to 18 year old in foster care is reading on a 7th grade level, only 44% read at a high school level
- More likely fail a grade or be retained in school





MODULE 2: The Need for Trauma Informed Practices in the Elementary Classroom





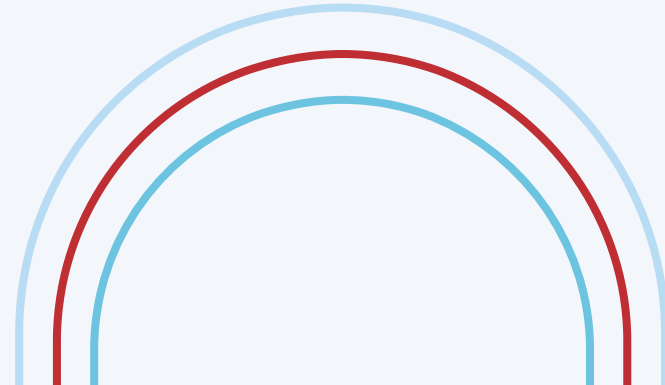


Teachers:

- Are advocates for children and provide much needed stability
- Are in a unique position to change the trajectory of a child's life




Retrieved from: <https://knowledgeworks.org/resources/role-teacher-personalized-competency-based-classroom/>





How trauma impacts school performance:

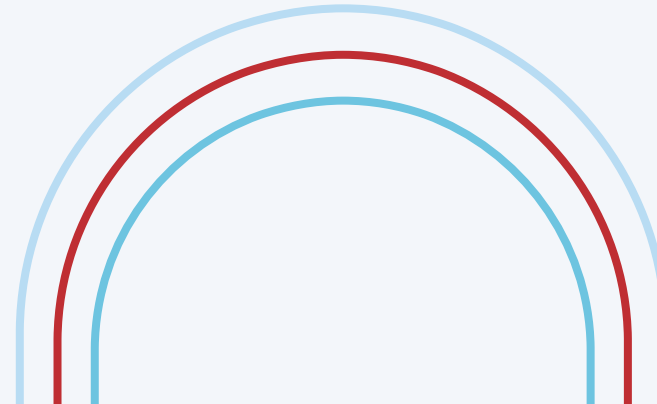
- Higher rate of:
 - Disciplinary referrals
 - Absences
 - Dropping out of school
 - Lower performance on state assessments
- 



Children in foster care are:

“Twice as likely to have out-of-school suspensions and three times more likely to have been expelled compared to non-foster care youth”


(Somers et al., 2020)







Academic achievement

- Disparities start as soon as kindergarten
 - 54% of youth in foster care fell in the at-risk category in phonological awareness upon entry into kindergarten
- The average 17 to 18 year old in foster care is reading on a 7th grade level, only 44% read at a high school level
- More likely fail a grade or be retained in school



TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

MODULE 3 GUIDE



KEY POINTS

1. Stress can be considered positive, tolerable, and toxic. Toxic stress occurs when there are overwhelming amounts of stress in which an individual has no control over the situation or when they cannot cope.
2. Toxic stress has severe impacts on brain development in children. Sustained amounts of toxic stress impacts stress pathways which can lead to anxiety, depression, and impaired learning and memory; emotional processing and regulation which leads to hypervigilance and reduced attentional control; evaluation of reward which results in difficulty in experiencing joy; and brain connectivity which leads to difficulty in understanding the relevance of situations and how to respond.
3. Mental difficulties, physical difficulties, behavioral difficulties, and academic difficulties occur as a result of toxic stress to the brain. These manifestations impact all aspects of life in and out of the classroom environment. Many seek to explain and control what has happened to them which leads to the most detrimental manifestation in the classroom environment which is behavior.

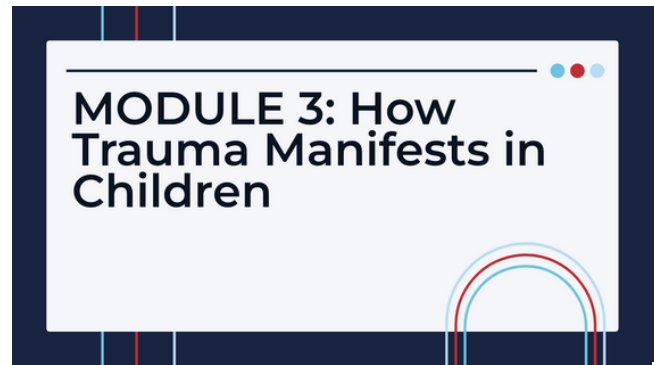
HOW TRAUMA MANIFESTS IN CHILDREN

TABLE OF CONTENTS



02	Toxic Stress Informational Video
03	Toxic Stress
04	Brain scans of normal vs abused brain
05	Difficulties of trauma: Mental
06	Difficulties of trauma: Physical
07	Difficulties of trauma: Behavioral
08	Difficulties of trauma: Behavioral cont.
09	Difficulties of trauma: Behavioral cont.
10	Difficulties of trauma: Academic

LECTURE MATERIALS



Overview: Using presentation format, present slides 2-10 and deliver content in lecture style. The content covered in the slides includes information about how trauma manifests in children through mental, physical, behavioral, and academic difficulties. It also emphasizes the importance of trauma on the brain and its development as a result of overloaded toxic stress.

Slide 2: Toxic Stress Informational Video

- *Play video about toxic stress and its impact on the brain*
- Video from BrainFacts.org



Slide 3: Toxic Stress

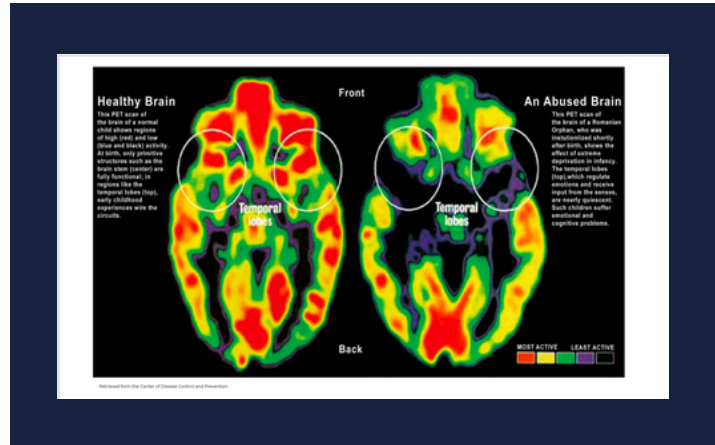
- Small amounts of manageable stress can be referred to as positive stress. Overwhelming amounts of stress, in which a person has no control over the situation or when they cannot cope with what they are experiencing, can be referred to as toxic stress. Toxic stress increases hormone levels to a state where they cannot return to a normal state of functioning. Sustained activation toxic stress impacts the brain's vital systems such as the stress pathway which can lead to anxiety, depression, and impaired learning and memory; emotional processing and regulation which leads to hypervigilance and reduced attentional control; evaluation of reward which results in difficulty in experiencing joy; and brain connectivity which leads to difficulty in understanding the relevance of situations and how to respond.
- (Walton-Fisette, 2020)



LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 4: Brain scans of normal vs abused brain

- The slide shows brain images of a healthy brain on the left, as opposed to an abused brain on the right. As you can see activity in the prefrontal cortex and temporal lobes of an abused brain have almost no activity. Since the temporal lobe regulates emotions and receives input from the senses, children who experience trauma at an early age suffer from emotional and cognitive problems.
- (Image from CDC)

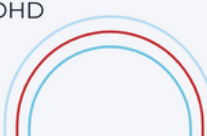


Slide 5: Difficulties of trauma: Mental

- When trauma repeatedly occurs and the individual has no control of the situation, toxic stress hinders the brain's chemistry permanently. Children may become emotionally and physically unable to cope with the trauma that has occurred leading to mental and physical difficulties. This can include anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and behavioral disorders such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).
- (Walton-Fisette, 2020)

Mental Difficulties

1. Anxiety
2. Depression
3. PTSD
4. Behavioral disorders like ADHD

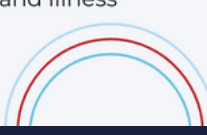


Slide 6: Difficulties of trauma: Physical

- They may also experience physical difficulties such as chronic health issues including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, a weakened immune system, and an increased risk of infections and illness due to the toxic stress in the brain and body.
- (Walton-Fisette, 2020)

Physical Difficulties

1. Cardiovascular Disease
2. Diabetes
3. Weakened immune system leading to increased risk of infections and illness



LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 7: Difficulties of trauma: Behavioral

- Along with physical implications, behavioral outbursts may also occur that can lead to hindrance of social relationships and academic performance in the classroom. These children experience persistent hyperarousal of the brain making them overly sensitive to their surroundings and constantly on the lookout for danger or threats. Children who have experienced violence are unable to self regulate, live in a constant state of fear, and participate in self destructing behaviors. Without the presence and care of a stable and supportive adult, children are unable to learn self-regulating techniques and in turn come to school unfocused, frightened, and out of control, disconnected or overwhelmed by interactions with teachers or peers, or engage in aggressive or rigid behavior.
- (Craig, 2008)



A slide titled "Behavioral Difficulties" with a dark blue border. The slide content is as follows:

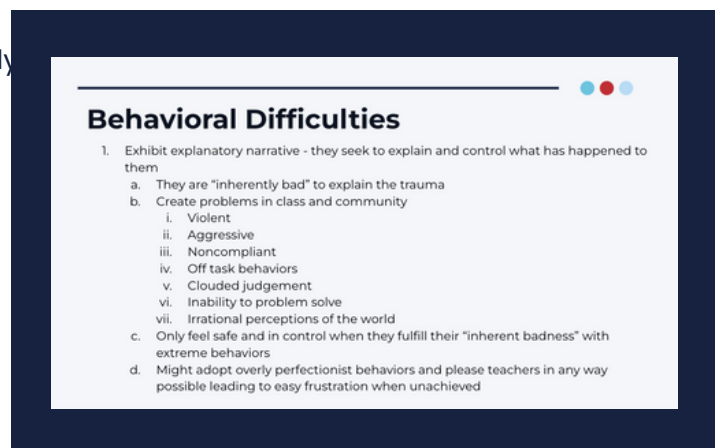
Behavioral Difficulties

1. Are unable to self regulate
2. Live in constant state of fear
3. Participate in self destructing behaviors
4. Come to school frightened and out of control
5. Overwhelmed by interactions with teachers or peers
6. Engage in aggressive or rigid behavior
7. Are constantly hyper aroused and on the lookout for danger or threats

Decorative elements include three colored dots (blue, red, blue) in the top right and a rainbow graphic in the bottom right.

Slide 8: Difficulties of trauma: Behavioral

- Some children may think they are “inherently bad” to explain the trauma
- This creates problems in class and community
 - a. Violent
 - b. Aggressive
 - c. Noncompliant
 - d. Off task behaviors
 - e. Clouded judgement
 - f. Inability to problem solve
 - g. Irrational perceptions of the world
 - h. Only feel safe and in control when they fulfill their “inherent badness” with extreme behaviors
- Might adopt overly perfectionist behaviors and please teachers in any way possible leading to easy frustration when unachieved
- (Craig, 2008)



A slide titled "Behavioral Difficulties" with a dark blue border. The slide content is as follows:

Behavioral Difficulties

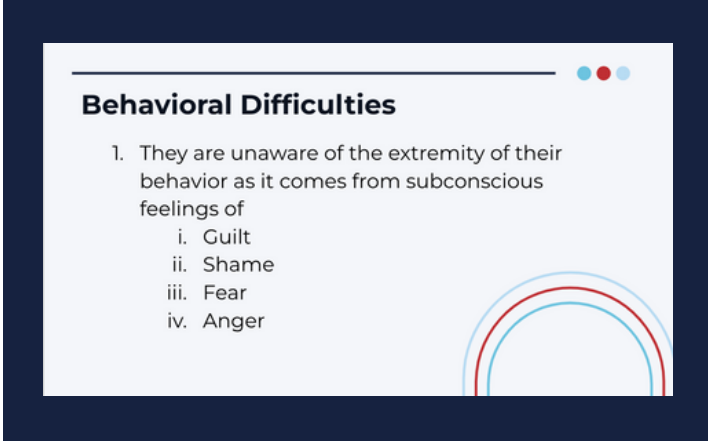
1. Exhibit explanatory narrative - they seek to explain and control what has happened to them
 - a. They are “inherently bad” to explain the trauma
 - b. Create problems in class and community
 - i. Violent
 - ii. Aggressive
 - iii. Noncompliant
 - iv. Off task behaviors
 - v. Clouded judgement
 - vi. Inability to problem solve
 - vii. Irrational perceptions of the world
 - c. Only feel safe and in control when they fulfill their “inherent badness” with extreme behaviors
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Decorative elements include three colored dots (blue, red, blue) in the top right.

LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 9: Difficulties of trauma: Behavioral

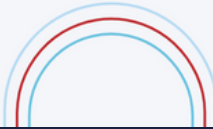
- Frequently, these children are unaware of the reasoning behind their behavior as it comes from the subconscious. They are unable to make sense of what has happened to them which leads to deeply rooted feelings of shame, fear, and anger which drives a child's behavior making them feel more out of control.
- (Craig, 2008)



A presentation slide titled "Behavioral Difficulties" with a dark blue background and a light blue content area. The slide features a list of points and a graphic of a rainbow.

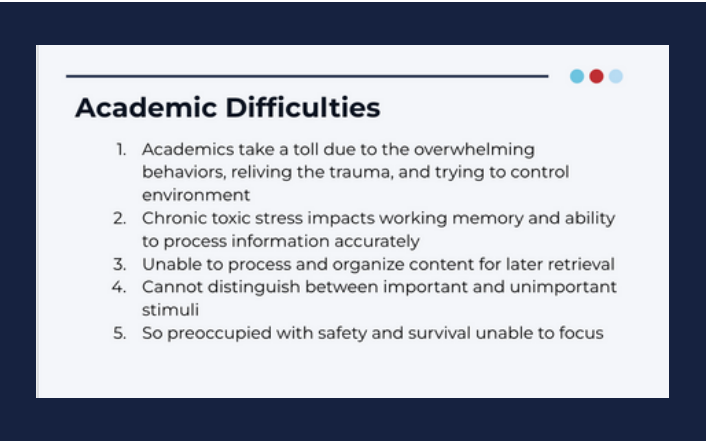
Behavioral Difficulties

1. They are unaware of the extremity of their behavior as it comes from subconscious feelings of
 - i. Guilt
 - ii. Shame
 - iii. Fear
 - iv. Anger



Slide 10: Difficulties of trauma: Academic

- Chronic stress brought on by trauma can take its toll on children. They struggle academically because it impacts their ability to process information, organize content for later retention, and they cannot distinguish between important and unimportant stimuli. Sometimes they are so preoccupied with safety and survival. They are unable to focus on classroom instruction, or acquire new skills.
- (Craig, 2008)



A presentation slide titled "Academic Difficulties" with a dark blue background and a light blue content area. The slide features a list of five points.

Academic Difficulties

1. Academics take a toll due to the overwhelming behaviors, reliving the trauma, and trying to control environment
2. Chronic toxic stress impacts working memory and ability to process information accurately
3. Unable to process and organize content for later retrieval
4. Cannot distinguish between important and unimportant stimuli
5. So preoccupied with safety and survival unable to focus



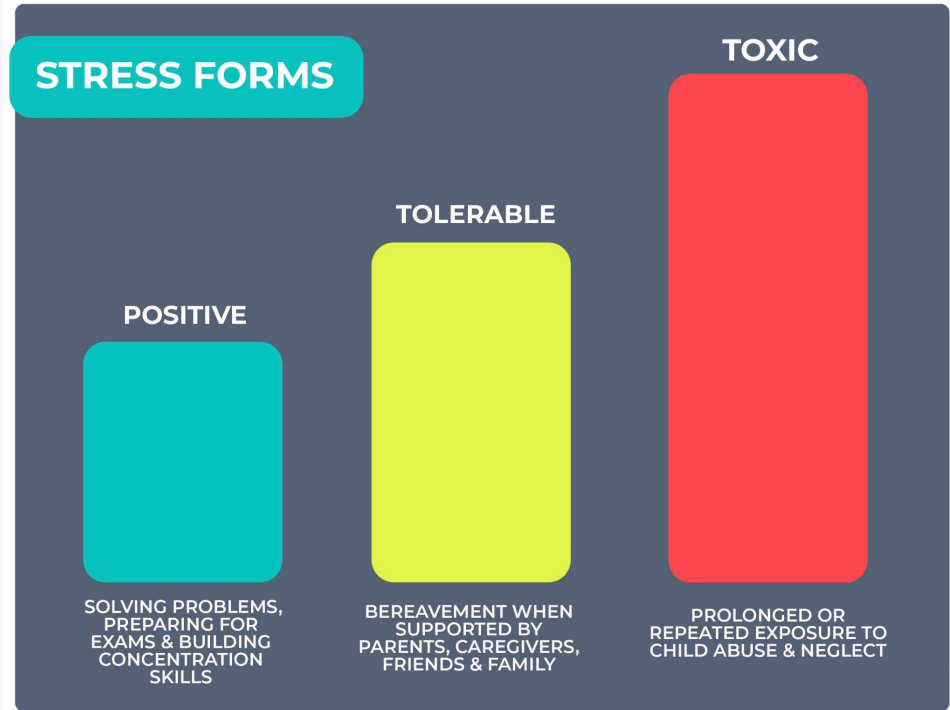


MODULE 3: How Trauma Manifests in Children



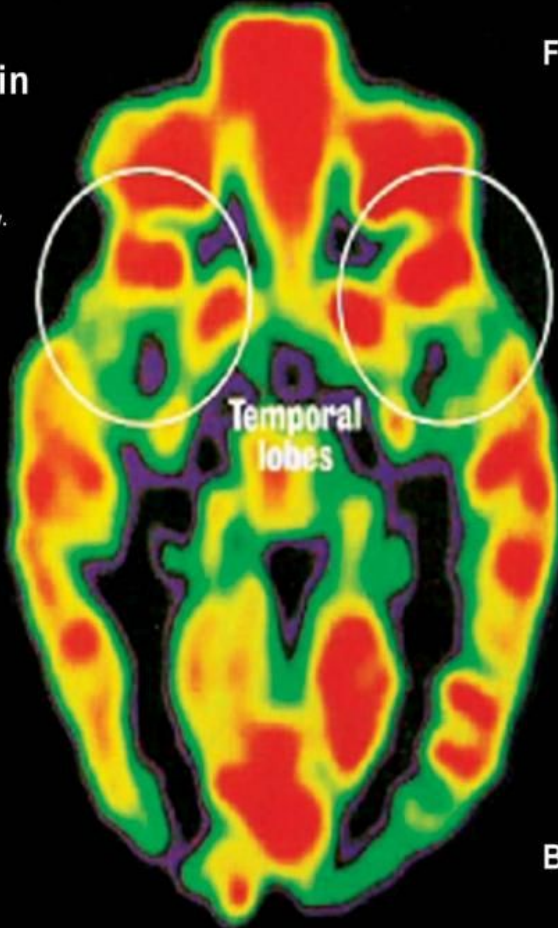
Stress on the brain

1. Positive
2. Tolerable
3. Toxic



Healthy Brain

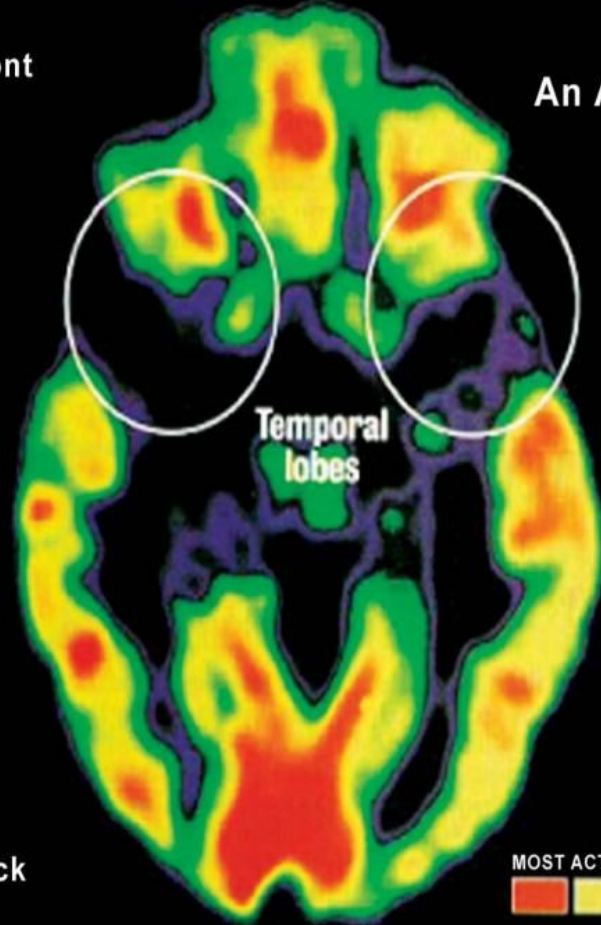
This PET scan of the brain of a normal child shows regions of high (red) and low (blue and black) activity. At birth, only primitive structures such as the brain stem (center) are fully functional; in regions like the temporal lobes (top), early childhood experiences wire the circuits.



Front

An Abused Brain

This PET scan of the brain of a Romanian Orphan, who was institutionalized shortly after birth, shows the effect of extreme deprivation in infancy. The temporal lobes (top), which regulate emotions and receive input from the senses, are nearly quiescent. Such children suffer emotional and cognitive problems.



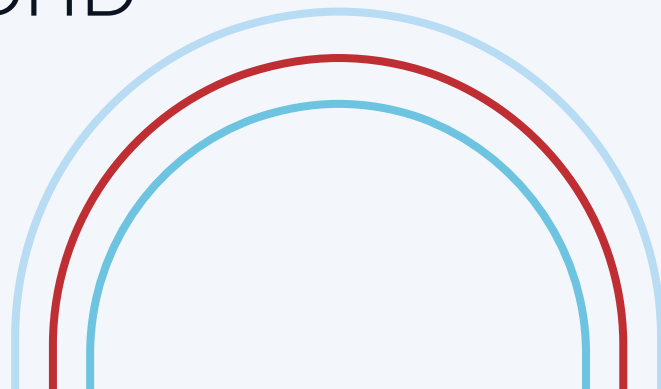
Back





Mental Difficulties

1. Anxiety
2. Depression
3. PTSD
4. Behavioral disorders like ADHD





Physical Difficulties

1. Cardiovascular Disease
2. Diabetes
3. Weakened immune system leading to increased risk of infections and illness



Behavioral Difficulties

1. Are unable to self regulate
2. Live in constant state of fear
3. Participate in self destructing behaviors
4. Come to school frightened and out of control
5. Overwhelmed by interactions with teachers or peers
6. Engage in aggressive or rigid behavior
7. Are constantly hyper aroused and on the lookout for danger or threats



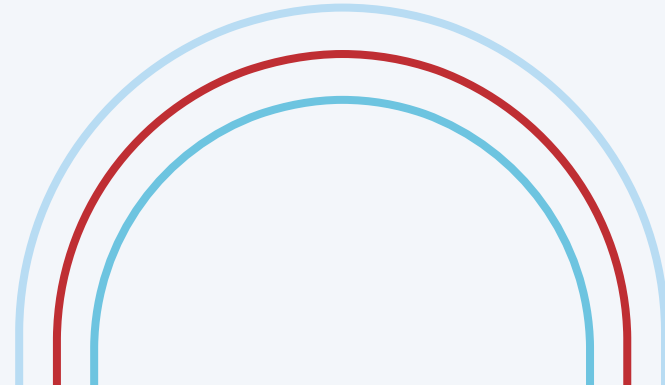
Behavioral Difficulties

1. Exhibit explanatory narrative - they seek to explain and control what has happened to them
 - a. They are “inherently bad” to explain the trauma
 - b. Create problems in class and community
 - i. Violent
 - ii. Aggressive
 - iii. Noncompliant
 - iv. Off task behaviors
 - v. Clouded judgement
 - vi. Inability to problem solve
 - vii. Irrational perceptions of the world
 - c. Only feel safe and in control when they fulfill their “inherent badness” with extreme behaviors
 - d. Might adopt overly perfectionist behaviors and please teachers in any way possible leading to easy frustration when unachieved



Behavioral Difficulties


1. They are unaware of the extremity of their behavior as it comes from subconscious feelings of
 - i. Guilt
 - ii. Shame
 - iii. Fear
 - iv. Anger







Academic Difficulties

1. Academics take a toll due to the overwhelming behaviors, reliving the trauma, and trying to control environment
2. Chronic toxic stress impacts working memory and ability to process information accurately
3. Unable to process and organize content for later retrieval
4. Cannot distinguish between important and unimportant stimuli
5. So preoccupied with safety and survival unable to focus



TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

MODULE 4 GUIDE



KEY POINTS

1. Trauma informed educational practices can help educators implement preventative, in the moment, and after the moment strategies of de-escalation and regulation of behavior.
2. Implementing measures such as positive relationships, empathetic responses, consistent structure and routine, supportive and predictable environments, individualized support systems, social emotional learning experiences, safe spaces for all students, and self-regulation techniques can help students who have experienced trauma succeed in the classroom environment.
3. Understanding that traditional classroom management systems may not be as effective. Implementing other strategies can help emphasize positive behavior.
4. Implementing arts and music in instruction can have various benefits on the development of a child.

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS



02	Trauma informed educational practices
03	Preventative, in the moment, and after the moment measures
04	Positive relationships
05	Responding empathetically
06	Supportive and predictable environments
07	Supportive and predictable environments
08	Individualized support systems
09	Social emotional learning experiences
10	Safe space for all students
11	Self regulation techniques
12	How to respond if behaviors occur
13	Preventative, In the Moment, After the Moment Informational Handout
14	Integration of arts and music in instruction

LECTURE MATERIALS

MODULE 4: How to Effectively Implement Trauma Informed Practices

Overview: Using presentation format, present slides 2-12 and deliver content in lecture style. The content covered in the slides includes information about how to effectively implement trauma informed practices including preventative, in the moment, and after the moment strategies of intervention. Trauma informed educational practices seek to help students identify triggering situations, prevent outbursts in behavior, help regulate emotions, and de-escalate behaviors when they occur.

Slide 2: Trauma informed educational practices

- Trauma informed educational practices can help
 - Students identify triggering situations
 - Prevent outbursts in behavior
 - Regulate children's emotions
 - De-escalate behaviors when they occur
- (Craig, 2008)

Trauma Informed Educational Practices

1. Help students identify triggering situations
2. Prevent outbursts in behavior
3. Help regulate their emotions
4. De-escalate behaviors when they occur

Slide 3: Preventative, in the moment, and after the moment measures

- Some ways you can implement trauma informed practices are in preventative strategies, in the moment strategies, and after the moment strategies.
- Some include:
 - Positive relationships
 - Responding empathetically
 - Consistent structure and routine
 - Supportive and predictable environments
 - Individualized support systems
 - Social emotional learning experiences
 - Safe space for all students
 - Self-regulation techniques
- (Craig, 2008)

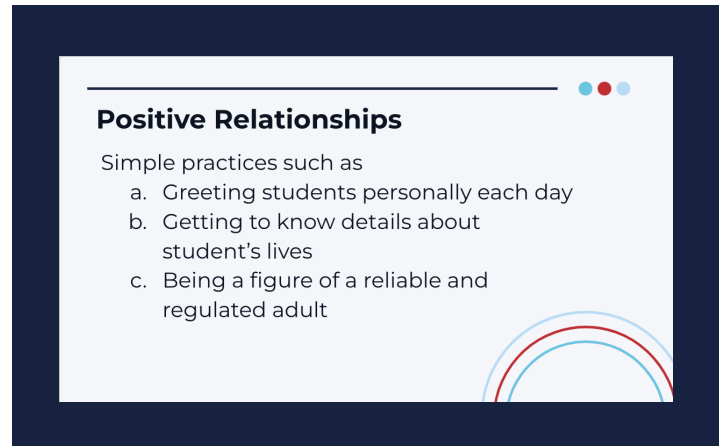
Preventative, in the moment, and after the moment measures

1. Positive relationships
2. Responding empathetically
3. Consistent structure and routine
4. Supportive and predictable environments
5. Individualized support systems
6. Social emotional learning experiences
7. Safe space for all students
8. Self-regulation techniques

LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 4: Positive Relationships

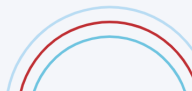
- Creating strong and positive relationships with students can help teachers empathize with students in an easier way. Teachers can learn more about students' life circumstances and experiences using different engaging methods such as interest surveys or one on one interactions. Creating a positive rapport with students increases the likelihood of building trust with students who have experienced trauma.
- (Parker & Folkman, 2015)



Positive Relationships

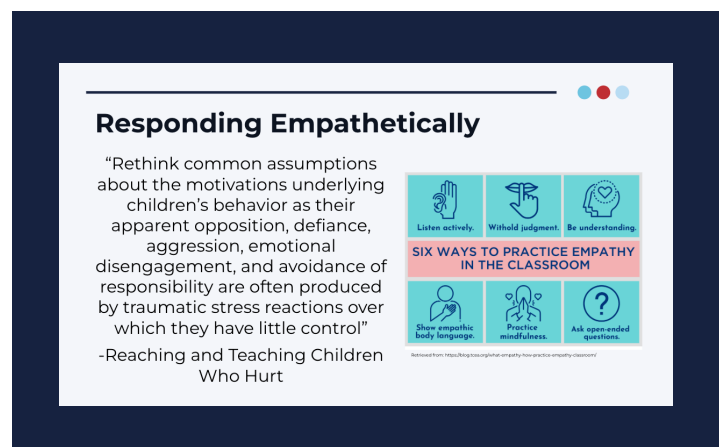
Simple practices such as

- a. Greeting students personally each day
- b. Getting to know details about student's lives
- c. Being a figure of a reliable and regulated adult



Slide 5: Responding Empathetically







- Six ways to practice empathy in the classroom include:
 - a. Listen actively
 - b. Withhold judgement
 - c. Be understanding
 - d. Show empathetic body language
 - e. Practice mindfulness
 - f. Ask open-ended questions
- It is important to rethink common assumptions about the motivation behind behavior as apparent opposition, defiance, aggression, disengagement, and avoidance are all often traumatic stress responses over which they have little control.
- (Craig, 200, p. 11-12)



Responding Empathetically

"Rethink common assumptions about the motivations underlying children's behavior as their apparent opposition, defiance, aggression, emotional disengagement, and avoidance of responsibility are often produced by traumatic stress reactions over which they have little control"

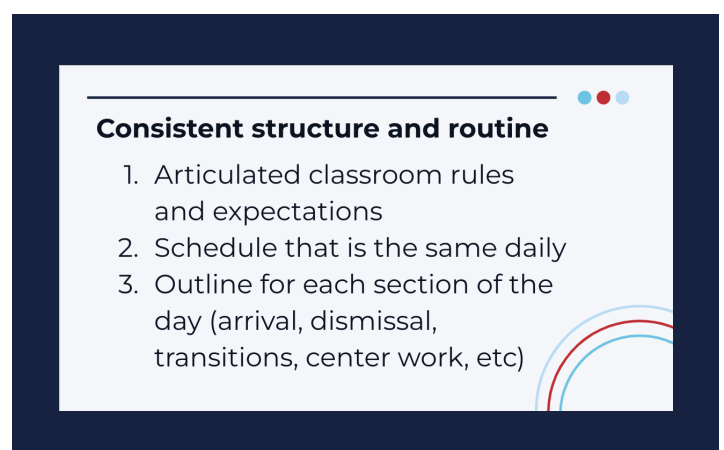
-Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt

 Listen actively.	 Withhold judgment	 Be understanding.
SIX WAYS TO PRACTICE EMPATHY IN THE CLASSROOM		
 Show empathetic body language.	 Practice mindfulness.	 Ask open-ended questions.

Revised from <https://blogs.oup.com/oupacity/2016/06/practice-empathy-in-classroom/>


Slide 6: Consistent Structure and Routine

- Students who experience trauma need consistency in order to help the out of control and chaotic feelings. Having predictable and consistent schedules throughout the school days can help children "acquire a conceptual understanding of the world, organize their experiences in meaningful ways, and bring order to the chaos of their daily lives (Craig, 2008, p. 9)."
- This can look like:
 - Articulated classroom rules and expectations
 - Schedule that is the same daily
 - Outline for each section of the day (arrival, dismissal, transitions, center work, etc)



Consistent structure and routine

1. Articulated classroom rules and expectations
2. Schedule that is the same daily
3. Outline for each section of the day (arrival, dismissal, transitions, center work, etc)



LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 7: Supportive and Predictable Environments

- In order to encourage appropriate school behavior, students who have experienced trauma benefit from explicitly taught school and classroom expectations with limits and consequences being consistently reinforced (Palmieri & La Salle, 2016).
- Make sure to:
 - a. Respond empathetically and patiently to situations
 - b. Use a calm tone of voice when talking
 - c. Have systems in place to connect with students on a regular basis
 - d. Set a schedule that is the same daily
 - e. Have regular transitions and call and response

Supportive and predictable environments

1. Respond empathetically and patiently to situations
2. Calm tone of voice when talking
3. Systems in place to connect with students on a regular basis
4. Schedule that is the same daily
5. Regular transitions and call and response

Slide 8: Individualized Support Systems

- Targeted supports such as tier interventions can help to address the social and behavioral challenges children may experience. Screening processes can also be helpful for identifying the students in need of behavioral support internally and externally and can help to determine specific interventions that scaffold positive and productive behavior management. Screenings can also help to identify triggers that may set off a student's aggressive behavior in the classroom. Once these triggers are identified, additional preventative supports can be put in place to help control outbursts of behavior.
- (Cavanaugh, 2016)

Individualized support systems

1. Multi-tiered systems of evidence based support

Slide 9: Social Emotional Learning Experiences

- Social emotional learning (SEL) is defined as the process in which individuals acquire the skills and knowledge to manage emotions, establish and maintain supportive relationships, make responsible and caring decisions, and communicate effectively with others (Fundamentals of SEL, 2022). One element of SEL is self regulation techniques which can include mindfulness, practice of self awareness, use of expressive language, and regulated self control which can all help to reduce the symptoms of hyperarousal or triggered responses. Teachers may use positive affirmations, journaling, brain breaks, AM/PM checks to name a few of the several options for SEL's. These mindfulness practices work with the brain's neuroplasticity by creating neural pathways in which the symptoms of trauma are reduced (Craig, 2008). With enough repetition, the new pathways can help the student to assess perceived threats around them as real or not, putting a cognitive brake on the 'fight, flight, or freeze' response
- (Craig, 2008).

Social Emotional Learning Experiences

1. Positive affirmations
2. Journaling
3. Brain Breaks
4. AM/PM check ins


LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 10: Safe Space for all Students

- It is important that students who have experienced trauma feel safe, especially at school. Teachers can facilitate this by:
 - Establishing a connection with all students
 - Creating a sense of classroom community
 - Showing sensitivity to students with different needs
 - Celebrating student achievements
 - Allowing students to feel heard and withhold judgement

Safe space for all students

1. Establish a connection with all students
2. Create a sense of classroom community
3. Show sensitivity to students with different needs
4. Celebrate student achievements
5. Allow students to feel heard and withhold judgement when they express their needs




Slide 11: Self-Regulation Techniques

- Many times, intrusive thoughts and memories of traumatic events occur resulting in unbearable feelings of fear and anger leading to rapid changes in mood and activity (Craig, 2008).
- Some self-regulation techniques that teachers can encourage during these times include:
 - a. Deep breathing exercises
 - b. Tense and release
 - c. Cool down walks
 - d. Reflection talks

Self-regulation techniques

1. Deep breathing exercises
2. Tense and release
3. Cool down walks
4. Reflection talks



Slide 12: If behaviors occur DO NOT...

- Some common mistakes that you want to avoid during these times are:
 - a. Arguing or getting in a power struggle
 - b. Raising your voice - keep a calm and positive tone
 - c. Handling the situation in public or in front of other classmates
 - d. Using punitive punishment

If behaviors occur DO NOT...

1. Argue or get in a power struggle
2. Raise your voice - keep a calm and positive tone
3. Handle the situation in public or in front of other classmates
4. Use punitive punishment

LECTURE MATERIALS

Slide 13:

- Understanding that traditional classroom management strategies such as token economies may not be as effective for students who have experienced trauma is also important for creating an empathetic classroom environment. Most behavior management systems are based on the assumption that students are able to “adapt and regulate their emotions enough to change their behavior in compliance with classroom expectations” (Craig, 200, p. 11-12). However, when children who have experienced trauma act out in they are in reality responding to a traumatic stress response in which they have little to no control, making traditional reward systems ineffective which can sometimes lead to escalation of behavior They may perceive the receiving of rewards as a result of the teacher’s mood rather than making the connection that it serves as a reward for hard work
- (Craig, 2008).



Slide 13: Traditional Classroom Management Strategies

1. Most traditional management strategies such as token economies are ineffective
2. Can sometimes escalate behavior
3. Perceived as teacher’s mood rather than reward for hard work

Slide 14: Integration of arts and music in instruction

- Using "patterned, repetitive sensory input such as music, dance, deep breathing, or drumming can be integrated into classroom activities as a way of inducing relaxation and increasing children’s capacity to learn” (Craig, 2008, p. 13). This pairing of music, art, and dance can help students improve their motor skills while helping them to become consciously aware of what they are doing. This conscious thinking helps students build confidence in self regulation practices while also creating a classroom climate that is emotionally safe where they are able to strengthen their explicit memory and free up any space previously held by anxiety about their safety
- (Craig, 2008).



Slide 14: Integration of arts and music in instruction

1. Can improve motor skills
2. Build confidence
3. Self-regulate
4. Improve capacity to learn





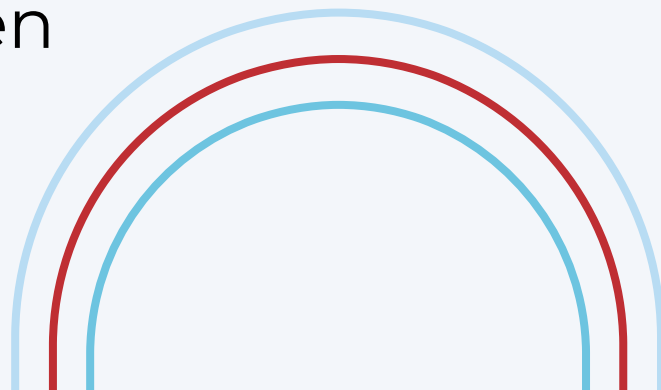
MODULE 4: How to Effectively Implement Trauma Informed Practices





Trauma Informed Educational Practices

1. Help students identify triggering situations
2. Prevent outbursts in behavior
3. Help regulate their emotions
4. De-escalate behaviors when they occur





Preventative, in the moment, and after the moment measures

1. Positive relationships
2. Responding empathetically
3. Consistent structure and routine
4. Supportive and predictable environments
5. Individualized support systems
6. Social emotional learning experiences
7. Safe space for all students
8. Self-regulation techniques



Positive Relationships

Simple practices such as

- a. Greeting students personally each day
- b. Getting to know details about student's lives
- c. Being a figure of a reliable and regulated adult



Responding Empathetically

“Rethink common assumptions about the motivations underlying children’s behavior as their apparent opposition, defiance, aggression, emotional disengagement, and avoidance of responsibility are often produced by traumatic stress reactions over which they have little control”

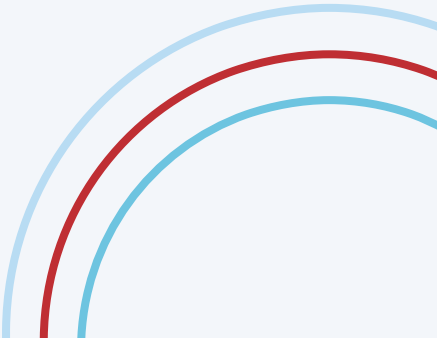
-Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt



Retrieved from: <https://blog.tcea.org/what-empathy-how-practice-empathy-classroom/>



Consistent structure and routine

1. Articulated classroom rules and expectations
 2. Schedule that is the same daily
 3. Outline for each section of the day (arrival, dismissal, transitions, center work, etc)
- 

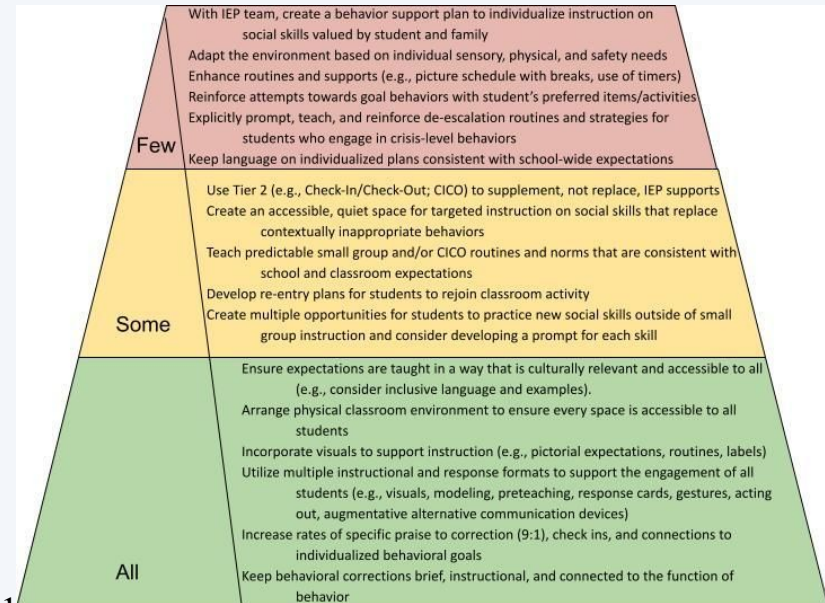


Supportive and predictable environments

1. Respond empathetically and patiently to situations
2. Calm tone of voice when talking
3. Systems in place to connect with students on a regular basis
4. Schedule that is the same daily
5. Regular transitions and call and response































Individualized support systems

1. Multi-tiered systems of evidence based support



Social Emotional Learning Experiences

1. Positive affirmations
2. Journaling
3. Brain Breaks
4. AM/PM check ins

Social-Emotional Activities For Every Classroom				
Daily Greetings 	Emotions Check-In 	Journal Writing 	Class Circle Time 	Morning Meeting 
Brain Breaks 	Gratitude List 	Mindful Morning Check-In 	Read Alouds 	Practice Coping Strategies 
SEL Chats 	End-of-the-Day Reflection 	Positive Affirmations 	SEL Art Activities 	Hold Class Meetings 
Weekly Goal Reflection 	SEL Skill of the Day or Week 	Show-and-Tell 	Shout Out Board 	SEL Quote of the Day 
SEL Crafts 	Practice Mindfulness 	Social Scenarios 	Play Games and Sports 	Daily Check-In Journal 
Daily Jobs 	AM / PM Check-In 	SEL Question of the Day 	Catch-Up and Organizing Time 	Group Challenges 



Safe space for all students

1. Establish a connection with all students
2. Create a sense of classroom community
3. Show sensitivity to students with different needs
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Self-regulation Techniques

1. Deep breathing exercises
2. Tense and release
3. Cool down walks
4. Reflection talks

12 SELF-REGULATION STRATEGIES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

 Alert and Engaged   Secure and Calm

1. Take a Time-In Spend 5 minutes in a calm, quiet space with the child. Connection is a key component of self-regulation.		7. Smell the Flowers The scent of lavender can reduce anxiety. Mindfully smell fresh or dried lavender flowers with the child, focusing on how the smell makes them feel.	
2. Listening Break Auditory stimulation such as a meditation, soothing music, or an audio book can help re-focus children's attention.		8. Move Like Animals Invite the child to move like an animal that they would like to feel like, such as a carefree bird or proud lion. Somaticly, this can help them shift their state.	
3. Rainbow Breath Inhale and raise your arms above your head, painting a rainbow with your fingers! Exhale and return arms to your sides. Deep breathing regulates the vagus nerve.		9. Smiling Contest See how long you can smile for together! Turning a frown upside down can really make you feel happier!	
4. Sing Vowel Sounds Singing long, open vowel sounds such as "ahh" and "ohh" can balance sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.		10. Tense and Release Invite the child to clench their fists as tight as they can, then exhale to release. Repeat with various body parts to lower cortisol levels and heart rate.	
5. Face Painting Pretend to "paint" the child's face in imaginary hues with the tip of your finger to provide sensory input.		11. Freeze Dance Play upbeat music and instruct the child to freeze every time the music stops. Linking movement to their senses helps children regulate their bodies and minds.	
6. Cool Down Offer the child a cool glass of water or a popsicle, or run their wrists under cold water to help their nervous system reset.		12. Reflect Together Fostering a self-reflective environment can help children learn to make better self-regulation choices in the future.	



If behaviors occur DO NOT...

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2. Raise your voice - keep a calm and positive tone
3. Handle the situation in public or in front of other classmates
4. Use punitive punishment



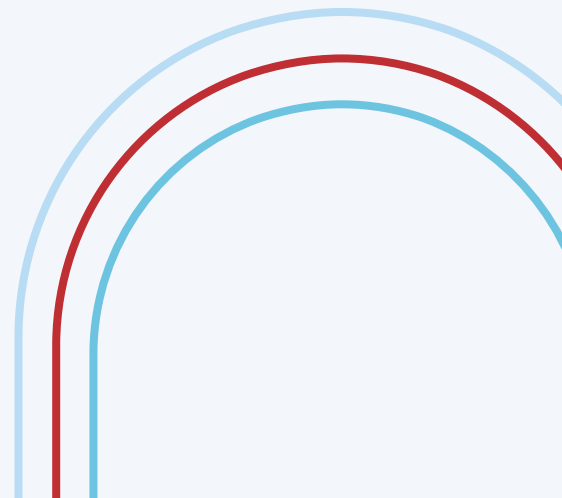
Traditional Classroom Management Strategies

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Integration of arts and music in instruction

1. Can improve motor skills
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Chapter 4: Reflection

Throughout the creation of this capstone project, I have learned a lot about trauma informed educational practices and where the future of pre-service training can grow. In my training modules, I emphasized the very basic elements of trauma informed educational practices. I focused on ensuring that teachers understood what trauma is, what trauma-informed practices are, how to recognize the signs of trauma, and some examples of how practices can be implemented in the classroom. In future training modules, community resources and school wide policies to support students who have experienced trauma can be explored. Along with community resources and school wide policies, more specific information can be presented about difficulties in concept attainment, higher order thinking, problem solving, memory, attachment styles, and informational processing.

My main source of information came from the book “Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt” by Susan E. Craig. This book was an incredible resource for providing specific examples of how teachers can implement specific strategies for children who have experienced trauma for various scenarios. In future trainings, I would like to implement more discussion based opportunities among participants to consider available resources and methods to intervene and support students in different situations in the classroom. I would also like for participants to participate in a case study activity where they evaluate a student’s background and behavior to create a support plan for them in the classroom setting. “The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog” by Bruce Perry provides a series of case studies that would be a valuable resource for teachers to evaluate how they would support the different types of manifestations of trauma discussed in the book specifically in the classroom. Using these specific examples of manifestations and then analyzing can help teachers get in the practice of constantly evaluating ways to help support

students. Creating a resource toolbox for teachers to refer to would also be a beneficial source for a plethora of supportive interventions for students who have experienced trauma.

Training modules and informational classes about trauma informed educational practices is a relatively new field. Specifically focusing on pre-service teachers can help spread awareness and valuable information into the field of education. They are able to dedicate more time to fully grasping trauma-informed practices for their future classrooms as the ideal method of delivery for these modules would be in a college style course. They would be able to further explore different types of trauma, how it manifests, and ways to support students in the classroom through various methods of learning and discussion. This preferred approach would allow pre-service teachers to have a solid foundation for trauma informed educational practices. Teachers in the field can also be exposed to trauma informed practices through these modules delivered in a daily training setting.

Overall, the need for trauma informed practices in the elementary classroom is essential. Understanding the foundations of trauma informed practices can support pre-service teachers in supporting behaviors they may have never been exposed to. Being knowledgeable about different ways to support students who have experienced trauma can help them be prepared in case behaviors do occur and prevent burnout in teachers. Being able to provide students with support and interventions when they are unable to cope can give them resources to use throughout their life. It is important to provide training to pre-service teachers and veteran teachers in trauma informed educational practices to help change the trajectory of a child's life.

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