Trauma Responsive Schools: Race, Equity and Marginalized Students

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Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital
Pritzker Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Health

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The Center for Childhood Resilience (CCR) is focused on building the resiliency of all children and youth by leading innovative, sustainable and evidence-based strategies that engage youth-serving organizations in a public health approach to addressing the impact of trauma and promoting mental health and wellness.
Collaborators

We believe that the diversity of our relationships enhances our mission to promote thriving children, families and communities

Our Collaborators Include:
Acknowledgements

These slides were developed in collaboration with:

- The Center for Childhood Resilience at Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital of Chicago
- Lansing School District 158
- Champaign Unit 4 School District, Special Education Department
- Chicago Public Schools’ Office of Social & Emotional Learning
- Bruce Perry, MD, The Child Trauma Academy
- Gene Griffin, PhD, Northwestern University
- Audrey Stillerman, MD, University of Illinois at Chicago
- Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition
- Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools TA Center
- (U.S. Department of Education)
Objectives

1. Understand contextual and historical factors related to trauma

2. Increase awareness of how youth who are marginalized experience trauma

3. Increase awareness of self-reflection among adults working with children and youth impacted by marginalization

4. Discuss strategies to address race and equity in the classroom
Shared Agreements

- Participate Fully
- Vegas Rule
- Beginner’s Mind
- Assume Positive Intent
- E-etiquette
Self-Care Alert!

• Step out and take a break

• Reach out to someone you trust

• Use relaxation skills like deep breathing
Who is in the room?

1. Find a friend, that you do not know, if possible

2. Choose who is going first

3. Get to know your friend by asking them the questions in the bubble

4. Take 2 mins each (listen for the bell)

5. Share out 1 thing you have in common

- Your name and 1 thing about you
- What do you intend to get out of today’s session?
- How will you contribute to today’s session
Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations

1. Stay Engaged
2. Speak Your Truth
3. Experience Discomfort
4. Expect and Accept Non-Closure
Courageous Conversations Compass

- Soul
- Believing
- Moral
- Emotional
- Heart
- Intellectual
- Thinking
- Relational
- Hands & Feet
- Acting
Contextual and Historical Trauma
What is Child Trauma?

The 3 Es

An emotionally painful or distressing event

The experience of the event induces an abnormally intense and prolonged stress response

The event and experience of the event result in lasting physical & mental effects

Types of Trauma

• Extreme Acute Event
  Examples: car accident, assault, natural disaster

• Chronic Stressful Events
  Examples: abuse, violence, poverty, historical, systemic

Childhood Traumatic Grief

• Typical grieving process is complicated if the death was traumatic

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Child Trauma: National Incidence

• **50%** of the nation’s children have experienced **at least one or more** types of serious childhood traumas.

  *National Survey of Children’s Health, 2013*

• **Over 40%** of the children and adolescents receiving services through NCTSN funded partners experienced **4 or more** different types of trauma and adversity.

- **Decreased IQ and reading ability**
  
  *Jimenez et al., 2016; Kira et al., 2012; Sharkey, 2010*

- **Lower grade-point average**
  
  *Borofsky, et al. 2013; Mathews et al, 2009*

- **More days of school absence**
  
  *Mathews et al, 2009*

- **Increased behavior problems, expulsions, & suspensions**
  
  *Jimenez et al., 2016*

- **Decreased rates of high school graduation**
  
  *Porche et al., 2011*
### Study Design

**Standard ACE Indicators:** Growing up (prior to age 18) in a household with...

- Emotional Abuse
- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse
- Physical Neglect
- Emotional Neglect
- Substance using Household Member
- Mentally Ill Household Member
- Witnessed Domestic Violence
- Incarcerated Family Member

1. **ACEs are common**
   - 50% experienced 1 ACE
   - 25% experienced 2 ACEs
   - 6% experienced 4 ACEs

2. **ACEs occur together**

3. **ACEs are powerfully predictive of adult outcomes**
**BEHAVIOR**

- Lack of physical activity: 2X
- Smoking: 10X
- Alcoholism: 10X
- Drug use: 10X
- Missed work: 2X

**PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH**

- Severe obesity: 2X
- Diabetes: 2X
- Depression: 12X
- Suicide attempts: 12X
- STDs: 2X
- COPD: 2X
- Broken bones: 2X
- Heart disease: 2X
- Cancer: 2X
- Stroke: 2X

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, NPR  Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
ACEs Study
Influence on Health and Well-being over the Lifespan

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Disrupted Neurodevelopment
- Social, Emotional and Cognitive Impairment
- Adoption of Health Risk Behaviors
- Disease, Disability, Social Problems
- Early Death

- Meltdowns, poor peer relationships, school drop out
- Drug use, poor eating habits
- Obesity, heart disease, problems with the law
- Easily startled, irritable, difficulty concentrating
- Chronic community violence and threat of deportation
### Historical Trauma as the original “ACES”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slavery</td>
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<tr>
<td>Genocide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Colonization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of Basic Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forced Family Separations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of Basic Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Removal of Property</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is Racism?

• a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race

• Unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities

• Unfairly advantages other individuals and communities
Racism and Discrimination

Levels of Racism

- Institutional/Structural
- Personally Mediated
- Internalized

(Jones, 2000; Trent, Dooley, & Douge, 2019)
“Cumulative and psychological wounding over the life span & across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experience”

-Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, PhD

Response to historical trauma:
• Unresolved grief & anger in turn contribute to physical & behavioral health disorders
• Shapes the way people respond to current traumatic stressors

SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM RYSE Center  https://rysecenter.org/
Community Trauma

Symptoms of Community Trauma

- Intergenerational poverty
- Long-term unemployment
- Relocation of businesses & jobs
- Limited employment
- Disinvestment

- Deteriorated environments and unhealthy, often dangerous public spaces with a crumbling built environment
- Unhealthy products

- Disconnected/damaged social relations and social networks
- The elevation of destructive, dislocating social norms
- A low sense of collective political and social efficacy

Figure 1 The Community Environment

The Experience of Trauma in Marginalized Young People
Equity vs. Equality

[Diagram showing the concept of equity vs. equality through visual comparisons]

Equity does not mean equality.
Discussion/Reflection

• How do you feel after watching this video?
• What stood out to you?
• How might you respond to students who share the perceptions/realities expressed in this video with you?
• What now?
DISCUSSION: “Marginalized”

• Merriam-Webster dictionary of *marginalize*: (v) to relegate to an unimportant or powerless position within a society or group

How are students marginalized in school?

How are students marginalized by society?

[Diagram showing suspension rates for girls and boys, with a comparison of suspension rates for different genders and races.]
Yale Study (Gilliam, 2016)

• Teachers: Detect challenging behavior in the classroom “before it becomes problematic.”
  • Press a key when they saw a behavior that could become a potential challenge

• Videos did NOT contain any challenging behaviors, but 42% of teachers identified the black boy as requiring the most attention

• Eye-tracking: Preschool teachers more closely observed black students, especially boys
Public Health Implications of the Current Sociopolitical Climate

• Marginalized individuals are experiencing significant distress
  – Dramatic increase in the number of hotline calls
  – Schools reporting instances of:
    • Hate speech
    • Racist vandalism
    • Students fearful to attend school
  – Decline in attendance at medical appointments and application for public benefits

“Disrespect invites disrespect. Violence incites violence. When the powerful use their position to bully others, we all lose.” - Meryl Streep, 2017 Golden Globes
Mental Health Repercussions for Youth who are Marginalized

- Anxiety
- Self-Esteem
- Depression
- Absenteeism
- Physical illness
- Suicidal thoughts/behaviors
- Problem behaviors
- Lowered school achievement
- Accumulating trauma

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Collective Resilience & Strength

- **Resilience** = Positive capacity of people to cope with stress and life problems.

- **Things that promote resilience and strength**
  - Strong bonds and connectedness with parents and caring adults
  - Positive experiences in the community (school, church, neighborhood)
  - Positive cultural identity
  - Personal qualities, coping resources, courage, leadership

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**Still I Rise**

By Maya Angelou

“You may write me down in history
With your bitter, twisted lies,
You may trod me in the very dirt
But still, like dust, I’ll rise.

Does my sassiness upset you?
Why are you beset with gloom?
’Cause I walk like I’ve got oil wells
Pumping in my living room.

Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I’ll rise.
Self Awareness/
Self Reflection
Beads Activity
REFLECTION: Allegory about Race

• When have you been aware of the open/closed sign in your life?

• How does that open/closed sign impact the students in your school?
Intersection of Diverse Identities

- Race
- Immigrant / Refugee / US Citizen
- Gender Identity
- Religion
- Sexual Orientation
# ACTIVITY: ADDRESSING Reflection Tool

## Cultural Self-Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age &amp; Generational Influences</td>
<td>When I was born, what were the social expectations for a person of my identity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental / Acquired Disabilities</td>
<td>How was my world view shaped by the social movements of my teenage years?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion &amp; Spiritual Orientation</td>
<td>When I was a teenager, what were the norms, values and gender roles supported within my family, by my peers, in my culture and in the dominant culture?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>Put a * next to categories in which you hold a dominant cultural identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indigenous heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

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**SAMPLE: ADDRESSING Reflection Tool**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Self-Assessment</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age &amp; Generational Influences</strong></td>
<td>52 yrs old; 3rd generation U.S. American; member of politically active generation of Chicanos/as in California; first generation affected by post-Civil Rights academic and employment opportunities in the 1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developmental/Acquired Disabilities</strong></td>
<td>Chronic knee problems since early adulthood; use crutches sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion &amp; Spiritual Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Mother is practicing Catholic, father non-practicing Presbyterian; my current beliefs are a mixture of catholic and secular; don’t attend mass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td>Mother and father of mixed Mexican (Spanish, Native American) heritage; both U.S. born; my own identity is Chicana; Speak Spanish but primary language is English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Socio-economic status</strong></td>
<td>Parents: urban, working/lower-middle class I identify as university-educated Chicana who identifies with working class people though my occupation and income are middle class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation</strong></td>
<td>Heterosexual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indigenous heritage</strong></td>
<td>Maternal grandmother was native American and immigrated to US from Mexico; what I know about this part of my heritage I know from her but she died when I was age 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>National origin</strong></td>
<td>U.S. but deep understanding of immigration experience from grandparents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender identity</strong></td>
<td>Woman, Chicana, mother of two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Hays, 2007
Discussion/Reflection

- What was it like to complete this assessment?
- Did anything surprise you or give you a “aha” moment?
- How might you use this assessment (or something similar) with your leadership team, teacher teams, etc.?
Addressing Race and Trauma in the Classroom
Key Components of Trauma-Informed Care

Creating a Safe Environment

Building Relationships and Connectedness

Supporting and Teaching Emotional Regulation

Cultural Responsiveness

Provider Self Care
Silent Reflection

Am I aware of any racial inequities that exist in my school?

Does my school have the capacity to address these issues?

Does my school have the readiness to address these issues?

Is my school culture one where staff are willing to speak up and confront the inequities that may be negatively impacting students of color?
The Trauma-Informed Perspective: What do you have to give up? What do you gain?

**Traditional**

1. Student’s challenging behaviors are the result of individual deficits (e.g. what’s wrong with you?)
2. Understands difficult student behaviors as purposeful and personal
3. Focuses on changing the individual to “fix” the problem
4. Adults need to uphold authority and control with students and families
5. Punitive discipline works
6. Support for students exposed to trauma is provided by counseling professionals

**Trauma-Informed**

1. Student’s challenging behaviors may be ways of coping with traumatic experiences (e.g. what’s happened to you?)
2. Understands difficult student behaviors may be automatic responses to stress
3. Focuses on changing the environment
4. Adults need to offer flexibility and choice to students and families
5. Positive reinforcement works
6. Support for students exposed to trauma is the shared responsibility of all staff

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Implicit Bias is...

- Attitudes & stereotypes that unconsciously affect people’s perceptions, actions, & decisions

- May be in opposition to someone’s stated beliefs

- Associations develop beginning at an early age through exposure to direct & indirect messages

- We act on implicit biases without awareness; thus the can undermine our true intentions

- Implicit biases are malleable, can be unlearned

\[ 2 + 2 = 4 \]

\[ 2x (x^3 + 4x) = 96 \]

SOURCE: http://kirwaninstitute.osu.edu/research/understanding-implicit-bias/
Yale Study (Gilliam, 2016)

- Teachers: Detect challenging behavior in the classroom “before it becomes problematic.”
  - Press a key when they saw a behavior that could become a potential challenge.
- Videos did NOT contain any challenging behaviors, but 42% of teachers identified the black boy as requiring the most attention.
- Eye-tracking: Preschool teachers more closely observed black students, especially boys.
Effects of Race-related Trauma in the Classroom (NCTSN)

Exhibit a variety of reactions to trauma and to racial trauma in particular.

Tend to view media coverage in personal terms, worrying a personal event can happen to them.

School Age Children (Ages 6-11):

Reactions will depend on whether they have direct experience or personal connections to someone experiencing racial trauma.

Can lead to concerns for own safety or that of others, which can lead to distractibility & behavior problems in school.

They may benefit from identifying safe spaces in their environment and adults that can keep them safe. Supporting predictable routines.
Effects of Race-related Trauma in the Classroom (NCTSN)

- May become fixated on events as a way of trying to cope or deal with the anxiety that they are feeling as a result.
- Understand events and the implications of issues such as racial trauma.

Older Students (Ages 12-17):

- May be exposed to a wide range of images & information via social media as well
- Still forming their identities and views of the world and their place in it

They may benefit from discussing ways that they can promote positive changes in their communities.
What can educators do?

1. Learn about Impacts of History & Systemic Racism
2. Honor the Impacts of History & Systemic Racism
3. Model and Support Honesty & Authenticity
4. Create, Support Safe & Brave Environments
5. Encourage & Empower Students as Leaders
6. Care for Yourself
1. Learn about Impacts of History & Systemic Racism

Benefits of a Diverse Educator Work Force

• For Students of Color
  – Met with higher academic expectations
  – Display higher student confidence
  – Promote school completion

• For White Students
  – Benefit from exposure to a diverse teaching staff
1. Learn about Impacts of History & Systemic Racism

Stereotype Threat:

Threat of being viewed through the lens of a negative stereotype, or fear of doing something that would inadvertently confirm that stereotype

Task performance suffers when a stereotype about an individual’s social group is made salient

- “Math test produces gender differences” Women’s < Men’s performance
- “No gender differences in this test” Women’s = Men’s performance

Prompted by situational cues, but can persist over time

- Being asked to record ethnicity decreased performance for Black students on cognitive tests they were told assessed intelligence

(Steele, Aronson, & Spencer)
1. Learn about Impacts of History & Systemic Racism

Effects of Sterotype Threat

- Reminder of stereotypes increased:
  - Physiological arousal
  - Negative thoughts about one’s performance

Black students matched with White students based on SAT scores performed more poorly than their White counterparts when told a difficult task (GRE test items) measured their intelligence

(Spencer, Steele, & Quinn, 1999), (Cadinu, Maas, Rosabianca, & Kiesner, 2005)
Reducing Stereotype Threat in the Classroom

- Address negative stereotypes in the moment (Speak Up)
- Educate students about stereotype threat
- Communicate “growth” mindset messages
- Pay attention to freshman!
- High standards and believe students can meet the standard
- Break down social segregation among peers in the classroom
  • Reflection Question: How do you do this?
- Integrated workgroups with students of varying levels of proficiency working together
  • Reflection Question: Also, how do you do this?
2. Honor Impacts of Systemic Racism

• Understand the culture in which you are working & find cultural references that will resonate with your students.

• Give students opportunities to share cultural stories & experiences in a variety of ways (e.g., art and music)

• Acknowledge past hurt
  – Offer empathy to students who express distrust & distress
  – Avoid telling them past experiences should not effect current beliefs

• Use local and/or national issues to highlight the pervasive harms of racism on individuals and on communities.

REFLECTION ACTIVITY: How are you/could you do this in school?
What can educators do?

1. Learn about Impacts of History & Systemic Racism
2. Honor the Impacts of History & Systemic Racism
3. Model and Support Honesty & Authenticity
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5. Encourage & Empower Students as Leaders
6. Care for Yourself
3. Honesty & Authenticity

• Discussions about race can bring up emotions for everyone
  — Model, practice ways for students to deal with emotions in productive ways

• Develop common language (define racism, bias, privilege & inequalities)

• You don’t have to have all the answers—invite others to share

• Facilitate conversations with restorative dialogue

• Get comfortable modeling the ability to have & stay in difficult conversations
4. Create, Support Safe & Brave Environments

Classroom Management Strategies

• Restorative, emphasizing social justice
• Clear, consistent consequences
• Allow for dissention without consequence when a student points out implicit bias or presence of stereotypes
• Recognize that differences in social norms make it inherently more difficult for students of color to reflect compliance to rules – (e.g. be still while working with no movement, respect authority without questioning)
• Consider banning activities that can elevate racial conflict

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4. Create, Support Safe & Brave Environments – Speak Up

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8hN7vwcLm8&list=PLCKMtQa10NDTsmNe44ZL291nXst4ZIm7c
4. Create, Support Safe & Brave Environments - Speak Up

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Share Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you currently do?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepare yourself in advance</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
  - “I am a person who will speak up against bigotry.”
  - Ready phrases: “That offends me.”, “Using that word doesn’t help others feel safe or accepted here”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interrupt</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stop what you’re doing to address it</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Why do you say that?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What do you mean by that?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you mean to say something hurtful when you said that?</td>
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<table>
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<th>Educate</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Echo</th>
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<tr>
<td>Multiple people speaking up has multiplying effect</td>
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</table>
4. Create, Support Safe & Brave Environments

Responding to Hate & Bias

BEFORE A CRISIS OCCURS. Assess your school’s climate with an eye toward defusing tension, preventing escalation & avoiding problems

1. Listen, Watch & Learn
2. Stay current, Stay Connected
3. Set High Expectations
4. Make the Most of Teachable Moments
5. Speak Up
What can educators do?

1. Learn about Impacts of History & Systemic Racism
2. Honor the Impacts of History & Systemic Racism
3. Model and Support Honesty & Authenticity
4. Create, Support Safe & Brave Environments
5. Encourage & Empower Students as Leaders
6. Care for Yourself
5. Encourage Student Leaders

• Study activism, movements in racial and social justice history

• Help students think BROADLY about options for leadership

• Support student-led activism
  – Mikva

• Create and support student-led activities
6. Care for Yourself

Self-Care Strategies & Plan

• Physical Self-Care
• Psychological Self-Care
• Emotional Self-Care
• Spiritual Self-Care
• Workplace or Professional Self-Care
• Balance

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Professional Self-Care

• Help staff pursue developmental opportunities
• Encourage staff to take breaks, including planning to take vacation time throughout the year
• Maintain regular supervision meetings
• Make time to check-in on staff compassion fatigue
• Creating space for people to say no if they are feeling overwhelmed.
• Arrange group lunches or other meetings with coworkers
• Maintain healthy, appropriate boundaries with your students
• Help staff know their role limits
Organizational

• Staff education & training
• Staff supervision
• Effective communication
• Comfort room/space for staff
• Celebration of successes and life events
Reflection

- What are your reactions?
- What are the implications of this information for your scholar/mentees?
- What are the implications for you as mentors?
Now What?
Time to Plan
**Action Plan**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>WHO</th>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>WHEN</th>
<th>NOW</th>
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The Center for Childhood Resilience

For more information...

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