Safe Classrooms, Resilient Kids: Tier 1 Trauma-Responsive Practices

The 22nd Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health

James Padden, Director of Related Services
Chris Gaither, Team Lead for the FBA/BIP Team
Nicole Tschopp, Promoting Student Resilience Clinical Grant Manager

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Learning Objectives

• Understand how trauma impacts the whole child
• Understand the impact of trauma on school climate
• Learn Tier 1 trauma-responsive classroom and school-wide strategies supporting:
  - Connection
  - Protection
  - Respect
  - Re-direction
What is Trauma?

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well being.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

- Maternal Depression
- Physical & Emotional Neglect
- Emotional & Sexual Abuse
- Divorce
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Illness
- Domestic Violence
- Incarceration
- Homelessness

Adverse Community Environments

- Poverty
- Violence
- Discrimination
- Community Disruption
- Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital
- Poor Housing Quality & Affordability

Ellis W., Dietz W. BCR Framework Academic Peds (2017)
Positive stress

is a normal part of healthy development.

Tolerable stress

is more severe but the effects can be managed.

Toxic stress

is strong, prolonged stress and can disrupt brain development, and increase risk of disease and cognitive impairment.
**Spectrum of Trauma**

**Acute Trauma** - Single incident (crime victim, serious accident, natural disaster)

**Chronic Trauma** – Repeated, prolonged trauma (domestic violence, abuse, war)

**Complex Trauma** – Chronic, interpersonal trauma; varied and multiple traumas; often perpetrated by trusted caregivers

**Historical/Intergenerational Trauma** - cumulative emotional and psychological wounding of an individual or generation caused by a traumatic experience or event.

**Secondary Traumatic Stress** - the emotional duress that results when an individual learns about the firsthand trauma experiences of another.
## Protective Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supportive family environment</th>
<th>Nurturing parenting skills</th>
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<tr>
<td>Stable family relationships</td>
<td>Parental employment</td>
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<td>Household rules and monitoring of the child</td>
<td>Adequate housing</td>
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<td>Access to health care and social services</td>
<td>Caring adults outside the family who serve as role mentors</td>
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<td>Communities that support parents and preventing abuse</td>
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Examples of Traumatic Events in Baltimore City

- Serious illness
- House fires
- Poverty
- Community or school violence
- Violence within the family
- Sudden loss of a loved one
- Abuse and Neglect
- Homelessness
- Riots and vandalism
- Police brutality
- Incarceration
- Experiences of our refugee students
Resilience in Baltimore Related to Trauma

- Multiple City Schools partnerships with community agencies
- Roughly 600 school social workers, school psychologists, school counselors and ESMH clinicians assigned to City Schools
- Multiple city agencies and City Schools departments trained in SAMHSA Trauma-Informed Practices
- District-wide emphasis on instituting the Whole Child framework and including Restorative Practices
- Promoting Student Resilience (PSR) Grant
- Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST) Grant
- School Emergency Response to Violence (SERV) Grant
- Resilience in Baltimore Related to Trauma
Toxic Stress can impact learning.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoqaUANGvpA
Toxic Stress can Impact Learning

Fear and Anxiety Affect the Brain Architecture of Learning and Memory

**PREFRONTAL CORTEX**
Center of executive functions; regulates thought, emotions, and actions. Especially vulnerable to elevation of brain chemicals caused by stress. Matures later in childhood.

**AMYGDALA**
Triggers emotional responses; detects whether a stimulus is threatening. Elevated cortisol levels caused by stress can affect activity. Matures in early years of life.

**HIPPOCAMPUS**
Center of short-term memory; connects emotion of fear to the context in which the threatening event occurs. Elevated cortisol levels caused by stress can affect growth and performance. Matures in early years of life.

HTTPS://DEVELOPINGCHILD.HARVARD.EDU/SCIENCE/DEEP-DIVES/NEGLECT/
Narrative memory is lost
Children lose an ability to make sense of their experiences.

Episodic memory is fractured
Children cannot remember events that occurred in that day or over the week. They do not remember who they were with. They do not remember what they learnt.

Working memory is paralysed
Children stop being able to hold information long enough for it to be judged to be valuable by the brain. It is promptly forgotten.

As recurrence and intensity of trauma increases

HTTPS://WWW.THEACTGROUP.COM.AU/DOCUMENTS/MAKINGSPACEFORLEARNING-TAUMAINSCOLLS.PDF
HOW TOXIC STRESS IN CHILDHOOD ALTERS THE BRAIN

Exposure to major adversity in early childhood can weaken brain development. This can permanently set the body’s stress response system on high alert. A stable, nurturing environment can prevent these responses and outcomes for learning, behavior and health.

A typical neuron with many connections looks like this.

A neuron damaged by toxic stress has fewer connections.

SOURCES: J.J. Radley Neuroscience 2004

MARTHA THIERRY/DETROIT FREE PRESS
Impact on Affect and Behavioral Modulation

https://vimeo.com/109042767
Impact on Relationships

Students don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.

– Anonymous
Case Scenario

LEARNING

IMPACT OF TRAUMA

MEMORY

RELATIONSHIPS

EMOTIONS
The Invisible Backpack

Trauma affects how children feel, behave and think.

What do you think traumatized students may fill their backpack with:

- Beliefs about self
- Beliefs about the future
- Beliefs about adults who care for them
- Beliefs about the world
Repacking the Invisible Backpack

We can repack this backpack with positive experiences and beliefs by implementing strategies that promote the following:

- Connection
- Protection
- Respect
- Redirection
Essentials of Trauma-Responsive Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONNECTION</th>
<th>PROTECTION</th>
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<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Connection Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Protection Image" /></td>
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<tr>
<th>RESPECT</th>
<th>RE-DIRECTION</th>
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<td><img src="image3" alt="Respect Image" /></td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Redirection Image" /></td>
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(Hummer, Crosland & Dollard, 2009)
Connection: Classroom Universal Supports

Strategy: Relationship-Building Rituals

Purpose: Building and maintaining healthy and supportive relationships
Relationship Building

TUMS

- Touch
- Use name
- Make Eye-Contact
- Stay present
Relationship Building Rituals

“Shout-Out” Notes

- Teacher to student or student to student

- Teacher-made template "Today, I loved the way you..."

- Helps the note writer focus more on positives, which:
  - improves writer's mood/cooperation/behavior
  - reinforces receiver's behavior and sense of belonging
Connection: School-Wide Supports

**Strategy:** Activities that promote recognizing student and staff success

**Purpose:** Building and maintaining healthy and supportive relationships
Students of the Month

Perfect Attendance!
Resources

Relationship Building Activities:

Teacher PBIS Incentives: https://www.pbisrewards.com/teacher-incentives/

Simply the Best: 29 Things Students Say the Best Teachers Do Around Relationships
Kelly E. Middleton and Elizabeth Petitt
Protection: Classroom Universal Supports

Strategy: Calm down corners in the classroom

Purpose: Promoting emotionally and physically safe environments
I Can Calm Down When I Am Upset

Deep breaths
- sit
- squeeze something
- look at the sensory bottle

I Will
- breathe
- count
- hum a tune

I will take a deep breath

How do you feel today?
- happy
- nervous
- frustrated

When I'm Angry
- I will
- Sit in my chair
- Read my hands

I Can Calm Down When I Am Upset

Deep breaths
- draw
- do yoga

Calm Down Corner Rules
1. Set Timer for 3 minutes.
2. Choose:
   - Calm Down Kit
   - Calm Down Picture
   - Calm Down Kit
3. Talk to Ms. or go back to work.

Calm Down Down Kit
Here is an example of a calm down corner in a City Schools high school media center.

Calm down corners work for high school students too!
Protection: School-Wide Universal Support

Strategy: PBIS Gotcha Tickets!

Purpose: Promoting emotionally and physically safe environments
the reason we come to work everyday
Resources

**Websites:** PBIS Tier 1 Resource:
https://www.pbis.org/school/tier1supports

**Gotcha Resources:**
https://www.pbis.org/training/staff/student

**Calm Down Corner:**
http://www.thewatsoninstitute.org/watson-life-resources/situation/classroom-calming-corner/
LESSONS
LEARNED
Respect: Classroom Universal Supports

Strategy: Brain or Movement Breaks

Purpose: Engaging students and caregivers in choice and collaboration
Brain Breaks
Quick activities to get the blood pumping and wake up your brain!

Prescription: Select an activity when kids start to lose their focus...

- Hop on 1 foot for 1 minute
- Jump the River (jump back and forth across a rope)
- Do 10 Jumping Jacks
- Spin around 5 times
- Sing Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
- Have a quick race around ___
- Do a headstand; Hold position for 1 minute
- Do 10 Cartwheels
- Do 10 Summersonsuits
- See how long you can balance on 1 foot.
- Have a Skip, Hop, Gallop Race
- Do a wheel-barrow race. (1 kid walking on hands, while someone holds their legs)
- Dance and sing to a favorite song
- Shake the 'sillies' out! (Start by shaking each part of your body until everything is shaken off!)
- Do 10 Cartwheels

Movement is key to turning our kids 'ON' to learning.

heatherhaupt.com
Respect: School-Wide Universal Support

Strategy: Restorative Practices Circles

Purpose: Engaging students and caregivers in choice and collaboration
Resources

**Websites:** Go Noodle: [https://www.gonoodle.com/](https://www.gonoodle.com/)

**Brain Breaks:** Roll Some Brain Breaks free printable: [https://d3eizkexujvlb4.cloudfront.net/2016/04/08194320/Roll-Some-Fun-Freebie.pdf](https://d3eizkexujvlb4.cloudfront.net/2016/04/08194320/Roll-Some-Fun-Freebie.pdf)

**International Institute for Restorative Practices:** [https://www.iirp.edu/](https://www.iirp.edu/)

**Community Conferencing Center:** [http://www.communityconferencing.org/](http://www.communityconferencing.org/)

LESSONS LEARNED
Redirection: Classroom Universal Supports

**Strategy:** Mindful Moments

**Purpose:** Teaching and reinforcing by encouraging skill-building and competence
“If a child doesn’t know how to read, **we teach**.
If a child doesn’t know to swim, **we teach**.
If a child doesn’t know how to multiply, **we teach**.
If a child doesn’t know how to drive, **we teach**.
If a child doesn’t know to behave, **we teach?**
**Or punish**?”

Herner 1998
Redirection: School-Wide Universal Supports

Strategy: Social/Emotional Curriculum

Purpose: Teaching and reinforcing by encouraging skill-building and competence
SEL Core Competencies

Self-Management
- Regulating one's emotions
- Managing stress
- Self-control
- Self-motivation
- Stress management
- Setting and achieving goals

Self-Awareness
- Labeling one's feelings
- Relating feelings and thoughts to behavior
- Accurate self-assessment of strengths and challenges
- Self-efficacy
- Optimism

Social Awareness
- Perspective taking
- Empathy
- Respecting diversity
- Understanding social and ethical norms of behavior
- Recognizing family, school, and community supports

Relationship Skills
- Building relationships with diverse individuals and groups
- Communicating clearly
- Working cooperatively
- Resolving conflicts
- Seeking help

Social & Emotional Learning

Responsible Decision-Making
- Considering the well-being of self and others
- Recognizing one's responsibility to behave ethically
- Basing decisions on safety, social and ethical considerations
- Evaluating realistic consequences of various actions
- Making constructive, safe choices for self, relationships and school

Sources: CASEL, Acknowledge Alliance

SEL Social & Emotional Learning

11/07/2014
Austin Independent School District

Baltimore City Public Schools
The Zones of Regulation

**Blue Zone**
- sad
- sick
- tired
- moving slowly

**Green Zone**
- happy
- calm
- feeling ok
- focused
- ready to learn

**Yellow Zone**
- frustrated
- worried
- silly/wiggly
- excited
- loss of some control

**Red Zone**
- mad/angry
- terrified
- yelling/hitting
- elated
- out of control
Resources

Websites: Zones of Regulation:
http://www.zonesofregulation.com/index.html

Collaborative for Academic and Social Emotional Learning (CASEL): http://www.casel.org/

Holistic Life Foundation: http://hlfinc.org/
LESSONS
LEARNED
Contacts

James Padden, jpadden@bcps.k12.md.us

Chris Gaither, jcgaithe@bcps.k12.md.us

Nicole Tschopp, nrtschopp@bcps.k12.md.us
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