

Project Experience Hope!

Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline Using Restorative Practices
and Evidence-Based Group Therapy to Address Academic and
Behavioral Impacts of Complex Trauma and PTSD

Presenters

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Learning Objectives

We will cover:

- ✦ Exploration of the school-to-prison pipeline and its impacts
- ✦ Tiered restorative interventions in schools
- ✦ Integration of trauma-informed restorative practices into whole-school climate change
- ✦ Complex trauma/PTSD
- ✦ Using restorative practices in evidence-based group therapy to create safety and build relationships
- ✦ Believing in students “at-promise”



Trauma-Informed
Restorative Practices in a
Zero-Tolerance Culture

Zero-Tolerance Policies

- ❖ Zero-tolerance policies in schools were introduced in the 1990s to address high-profile school shootings by young white men.
- ❖ Schools began using resources to encourage police interventions in school discipline issues
- ❖ These policies disproportionately impact already-traumatized or marginalized student populations, especially youth of color.
- ❖ Zero-tolerance policies push students out of schools and, often, into the criminal justice system. Educational activists began to refer to this as **“The School-to-Prison Pipeline”**

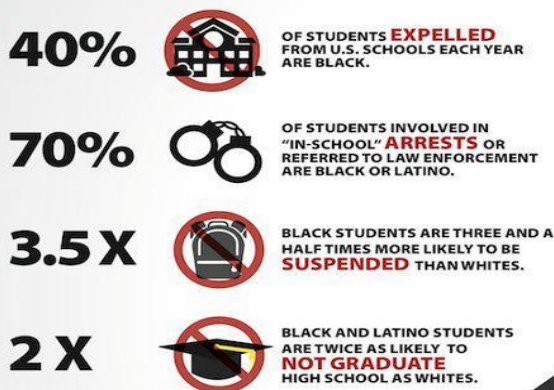
The School to Prison Pipeline

ARE OUR CHILDREN BEING PUSHED INTO PRISON?

THE PIPELINE TO PRISON: THE U.S. HAS THE HIGHEST INCARCERATION RATE IN THE WORLD, AND ITS PRISONS AND JAILS ARE OVERWHELMINGLY FILLED WITH AFRICAN AMERICANS AND LATINOS. THE PATHS TO PRISON FOR YOUNG AFRICAN-AMERICAN AND LATINO MEN ARE MANY, BUT THE STARTING POINTS ARE OFTEN THE SCHOOL AND FOSTER CARE SYSTEMS.

FROM SCHOOL TO PRISON

STUDENTS OF COLOR FACE HARSHER DISCIPLINE AND ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE PUSHED OUT OF SCHOOL THAN WHITES.



FROM FOSTER CARE TO PRISON

YOUTH OF COLOR ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WHITES TO BE PLACED IN THE FOSTER CARE SYSTEM, A BREEDING GROUND FOR THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM.



68% OF ALL MALES IN STATE AND FEDERAL **PRISON** DO NOT HAVE A HIGH SCHOOL **DIPLOMA.**



70% OF INMATES IN CALIFORNIA **STATE PRISON** ARE FORMER **FOSTER CARE** YOUTH.

THE COLOR OF MASS INCARCERATION



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Catholic Charities of the East Bay

Stories from Schools

- ✦ <https://youtu.be/04pcSyzwoTg>
- ✦ Turn to your neighbor and take 2 minutes each (Cat is timing you!) to answer these two questions:
 - ✦ How do I feel after seeing the video?
 - ✦ What is one thing our school could do to address this issue?

Zero-Tolerance and Restorative Frameworks

Traditional discipline

ask:

- ✦ What rule was broken?
- ✦ Who did it?
- ✦ What is the assigned punishment?

Restorative justice asks:

- ✦ Who was harmed?
- ✦ What do they need?
- ✦ Whose responsibility is it to meet those needs?

Zero-Tolerance and Restorative Frameworks

Zero-tolerance policies:

- ✘ Are meant to hurt and punish, not teach
- ✘ Exclude the wrongdoer from discussion of the harm or actions to resolve it
- ✘ Often leave those impacted by harm feeling *less* safe

Restorative schools:

- ✘ Address the physical, emotional and academic safety for *all* students
- ✘ Focus on logical consequences to address harm and prevent reoccurrence
- ✘ Processes are driven by those impacted but include the wrongdoer

The Shift from Zero-Tolerance to Trauma-Informed Restorative Schools

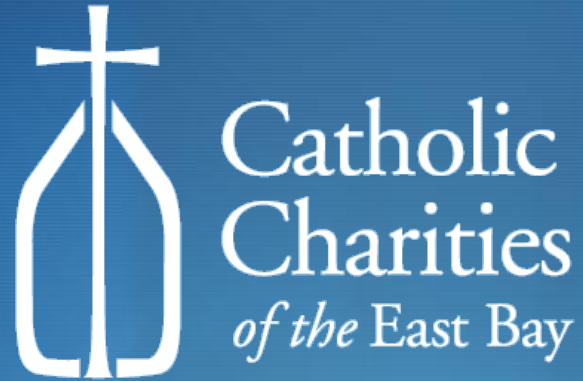
"I did then what
I knew how to
do. Now that I
know better, I
do better."

Maya Angelou

Trauma-Informed Restorative Practices

- ❖ *Impacts how we communicate*
- ❖ *Impacts how we relate to everyone at school (not just students)*
- ❖ *Operates on three levels:*
 - ❖ **Proactive and Universal practices (Tier 1):** improve conditions for learning (climate), improve behavior; reduce isolation, increase safety
 - ❖ **Prevention and early intervention practices (Tier 2):** catch student trauma, academic, and behavioral issues early, before zero-tolerance policies kick in
 - ❖ **Reactive practices (Tier 3):** response to wrongdoing and conflict, in lieu of traditional zero-tolerance





Complex Trauma, PTSD, and At-Promise Youth



What We Believe

School-based mental health professionals have an important role in creating, supporting, and sustaining trauma-informed schools



Tier 1 Roles and Activities

Proactive and Universal

- ✦ Educate community partners and school personnel:
 - ✦ Impact of traumatic stress on student learning and behavior
 - ✦ Alternatives to punitive disciplinary responses that do not re-traumatize
 - ✦ Signs and treatment of secondary traumatic stress and self-care
- ✦ Educate parents/caregivers:
 - ✦ Impact of traumatic stress on children
 - ✦ Positive behavior management techniques
- ✦ **Video Clip: YouTube – Respect Rap Only**

Tier 2 Roles and Activities

Early Intervention/Prevention

- ❖ Collaborate with health educators to teach students about the effects of traumatic stress on learning and behavior and teach healthy coping strategies and ways to build resilience
- ❖ Collaborate with school administrators on bullying prevention strategies
- ❖ Advocate for universal screening for trauma and appropriate ways to utilize the data
- ❖ Conduct groups that focus on behaviors that support a school climate of respect, safety, tolerance of difference and empathy

Tier 3 Roles and Activities

Intensive Interventions

- ❖ Participate with school staff during disciplinary interventions to support a restorative and trauma informed approach
- ❖ Support students during the re-entry process after a suspension
- ❖ Screen and assess for complex trauma/PTSD
- ❖ Provide evidence-based therapies for the treatment of trauma
- ❖ Collaborate with other systems of care that are involved with the student to coordinate care and resources

What is Complex Trauma/PTSD?

- ❖ DSM -5 lacks a diagnostic category for complex trauma and the criteria for PTSD fails to capture important clinical features
- ❖ Results from repeated, prolonged, and multiple forms of interpersonal trauma often under circumstances where escape is not possible due to physical, psychological, maturational, family/environmental, or social constraints

Traumatic Events Include...

- ❖ Neglect
- ❖ Childhood physical or sexual abuse
- ❖ Witnessing domestic violence or community violence
- ❖ Separation from a parent or caregiver due to death or incarceration
- ❖ Homelessness
- ❖ Food insecurity
- ❖ Multiple foster care placements



What Are the Symptoms of Complex Trauma/PTSD?

✦ Core symptoms of PTSD

plus...

- ✦ Impaired emotional control
- ✦ Self-destructive and impulsive behavior
- ✦ Impaired relationships with peers and adults
- ✦ Hostility
- ✦ Disrespect of authority
- ✦ Social withdrawal
- ✦ Feeling constantly threatened
- ✦ Somatic complaints
- ✦ Despair and hopelessness
- ✦ Loss of belief in assumptions of safety and the trustworthiness of others

What We Believe

We believe that trauma-related symptoms and behaviors are a youth's best and *most resilient* attempts to *manage, cope with*, and *rise above* their experience of trauma

RISE
ABOVE

What Are Some Restorative Practices that Can Be Integrated into Group Treatment of Complex Trauma?

- ❖ Engage with students informally – establish yourself as an adult ally on campus
- ❖ When possible, discuss therapy with the student and give a choice to participate – restorative approaches give students options

What Are Some Restorative Practices that Can Be Integrated into Group Treatment of Complex Trauma?

- ❖ Begin and end groups with circle keeper practices including:
 - ❖ Check-ins
 - ❖ Development of group values, norms and behavioral expectations
 - ❖ Allowing students to create a meaningful center piece
 - ❖ Use a talking piece
 - ❖ Check-outs
- ❖ When a student's behavior is disruptive in the group follow a predictable process for managing it – the process could be proposed by you but should be “voted” on by the students – use the thumb up, down, sideways approach

What Are Some Restorative Practices that Can Be Integrated into Group Treatment of Complex Trauma?

- ✦ Acknowledge that sometimes adults in the school have not always been kind or helpful but state that as a member of the group your role and intention is to help everyone including you feel safe and respected
- ✦ When a student is “triggered” assess if something you said or did triggered the student

What Are Some Restorative Practices that Can Be Integrated into Group Treatment of Complex Trauma?

- ✦ “Drop the role” – be genuine and humble.
 - ✦ You are facilitating the circle, not leading.
- ✦ Use art forms such as song videos as ways of processing experience and choices
 - ✦ www.genius.com
 - ✦ www.rap.genius.com
- ✦ Become a restorative practices expert and be creative!

“At-Risk” or “At-Promise/At-Potential”?

- ✦ The evolution or “etiology” of the risk rhetoric
- ✦ Blaming the victim is one way of assigning pathology to the individual
- ✦ Savage Inequalities/Distributions in U.S. Public Education
 - ✦ **Oakland:** Deep East/65th/69th Village/Sobrani Park and The Bottoms/Ghost Town/ The Acorns
 - ✦ **Richmond:** The Iron Triangle/The Manor/North
 - ✦ **New Orleans:** 9th Ward/7th Ward/Central City
- ✦ Building Alliances with Parents and Strengthening Home-School Relations

We Believe!!!



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