

**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
WELLNESS CENTERS:  
A TIER I TRAUMA INFORMED  
INTERVENTION**

**Jennifer Caldwell, LCSW, PPSC**  
**Trauma Focused School Social Worker**

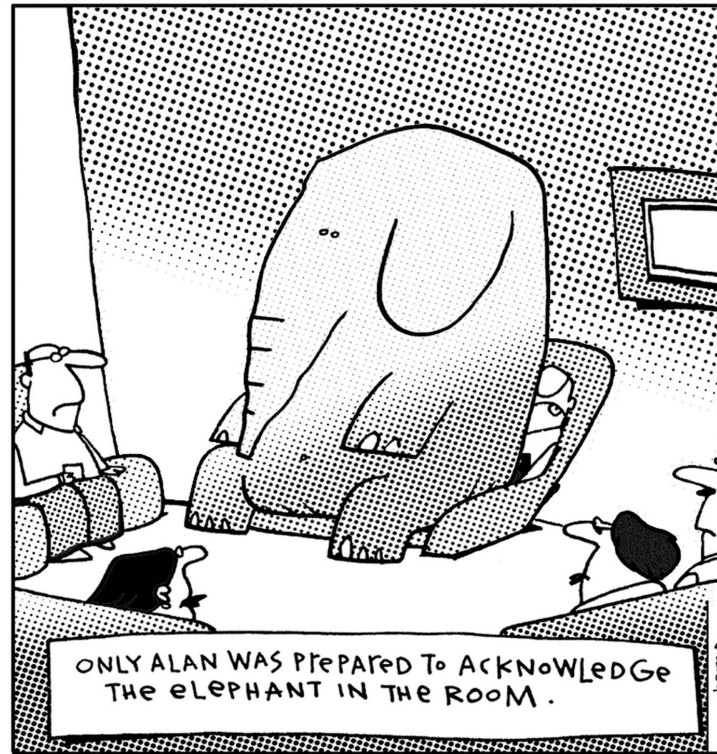
**Gabrielle Theobald-Anderson, MSW, PPSC**  
**School Social Worker / Community School  
Coordinator**



**SAN FRANCISCO  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS**



# WHO IS IN THE ROOM?




# OBJECTIVES



- Participants will be able to describe the purpose and key components of an Elementary Wellness Center and its alignment with Trauma Informed Practices
- Participants will be able to assess a school's readiness for implementation
- Participants will be able to discuss best practices for implementation of an Elementary Wellness Center

# **AGENDA**

- ❖ School Social Work in SFUSD
  - ❖ Trauma Informed Practices in SFUSD
  - ❖ The Journey to Elementary Wellness Centers
  - ❖ Assessing School Readiness
  - ❖ Avoiding Pitfalls
- 

# SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK IN SFUSD



# FRAMING A UNIQUE MODEL!

## VISION

All SFUSD students are safe, healthy, and ready to learn.

## MISSION

School Social Workers address barriers to student success, enhancing the social and emotional growth and academic outcomes for all students.

CORE SUPPORTS

### TIER III

- School-focused **case management** for individual students and families
- Individual and school-wide **crisis response**

### TIER II

- Small **group counseling** utilizing evidence based practices
- **Individual** short-term goal-oriented **supports**

### TIER I

- Coordination and facilitation of **Student Assistance Program**
- Trauma informed **teacher consultation** for positive classroom climate and student support

# FRAMING A UNIQUE MODEL!

## GOALS

**ACCESS AND EQUITY:** INCREASE ACCESS TO SCHOOL BASED AND COMMUNITY BASED MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS AND SERVICES

As measured by, number of students receiving individual and/or group mental health supports at school

As measured by, number of students referred to community based mental health supports

**ACHIEVEMENT:** IMPROVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE

As measured by, improved attendance for students receiving social work support compared to similarly matched students

As measured by, percent of students with chronic absenteeism receiving social work support

**ACCOUNTABILITY:** INCREASE STUDENTS' FEELING OF SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS AND SAFETY

As measured by, number of students who agree or strongly agree to feelings of school connectedness

As measured by, number of students who agree or strongly agree to feeling safe at school

## LENS

**EQUITY CENTERED • TRAUMA INFORMED • RESTORATIVE APPROACH • WHOLE CHILD FOCUSED**

# WHY TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES?





# Trauma = Event, Experience, & Effect

Event

Actual or extreme **threat** of **harm**



Experience

**“Fight, flight or freeze”**

+

**Helpless to escape**



**Overwhelms** brain and body



Effect

**Dis-integration**



**Dysregulation**



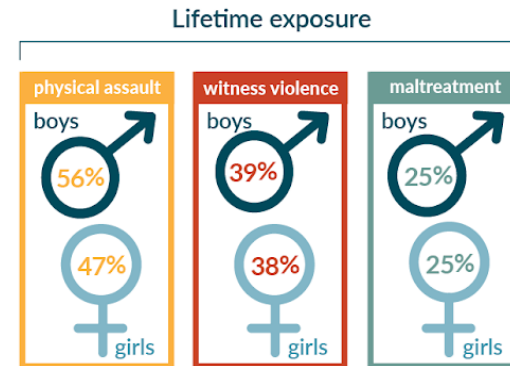
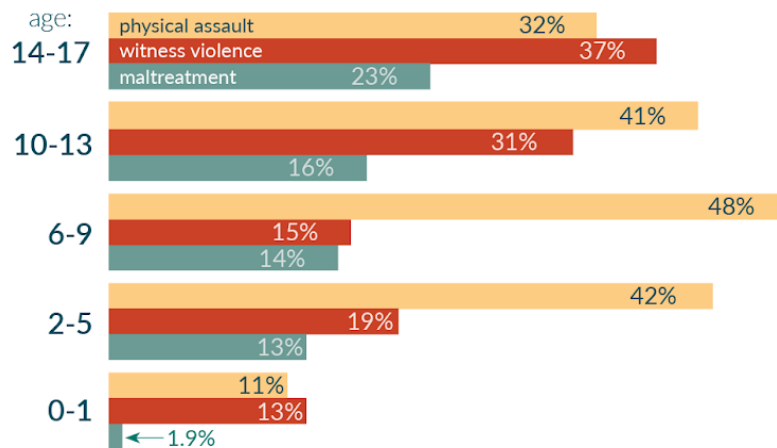
**Lasting adverse effects**

(Herman, 1997; Van der Kolk, 2005; DSM-IV-TR; SAMHSA; Siegel, 2012; Bloom, 2013)

# PREVALENCE OF CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

**2 of 3 children & youth** were exposed to violence in the past year

Of these, **50%** report *more than 1 form of victimization* | **1 in 6** report *6 or more exposures to violence*  
**physical assault, witnessing violence, and maltreatment** are common



## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

**1 in 5 adults** report **3 or more** adverse experiences as children



Adverse experiences include:

- Physical abuse, emotional abuse, and sexual abuse
- Emotional and physical neglect
- Household substance abuse
- Household mental illness
- A mother treated violently
- Parent separation or divorce
- Incarcerated household member

As rates of adverse childhood experiences go up, so does **high risk behavior, illness, and early death**

Sources: Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, & Hamby, 2015; Child Trends, 2016; Felitti, Anda, Nordenberg, Williamson, Spitz, Edwards . . . & Marks, 1998

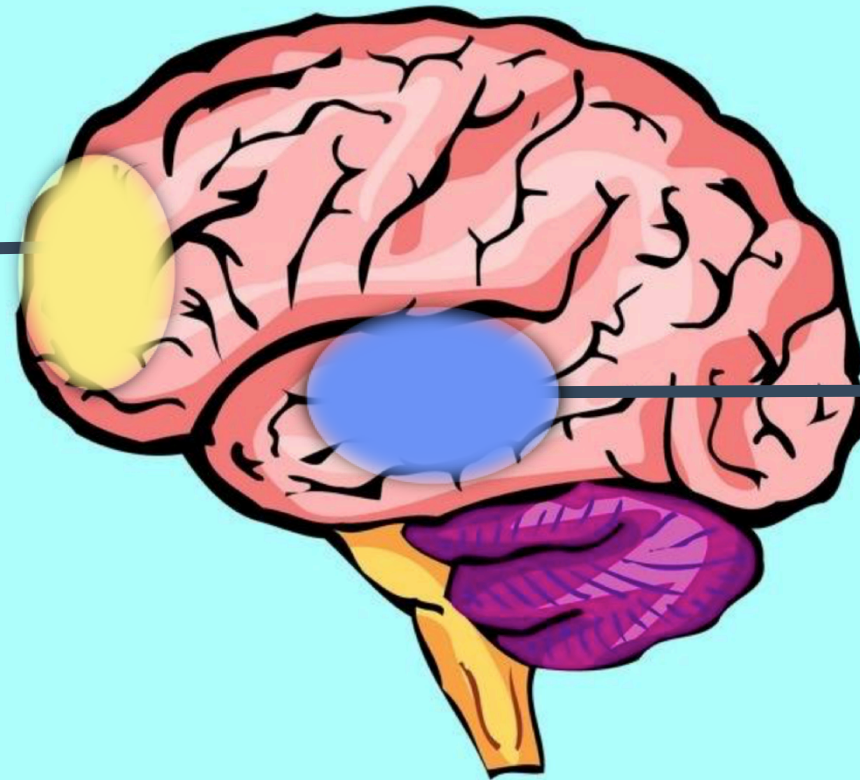
# Trauma “Wears a Groove” in the Brain



## “The Fear Song”

# Survival Mode: Fight/Flight/ Freeze

Learning/  
Thinking  
Brain



Survival/  
Emotion  
Brain

(Ford, 2009,  
Van der Kolk)

# **IT ALSO IMPACTS STAFF AND SCHOOL CLIMATE...**

**Trauma impacted students**



**Trauma impacted school staff**

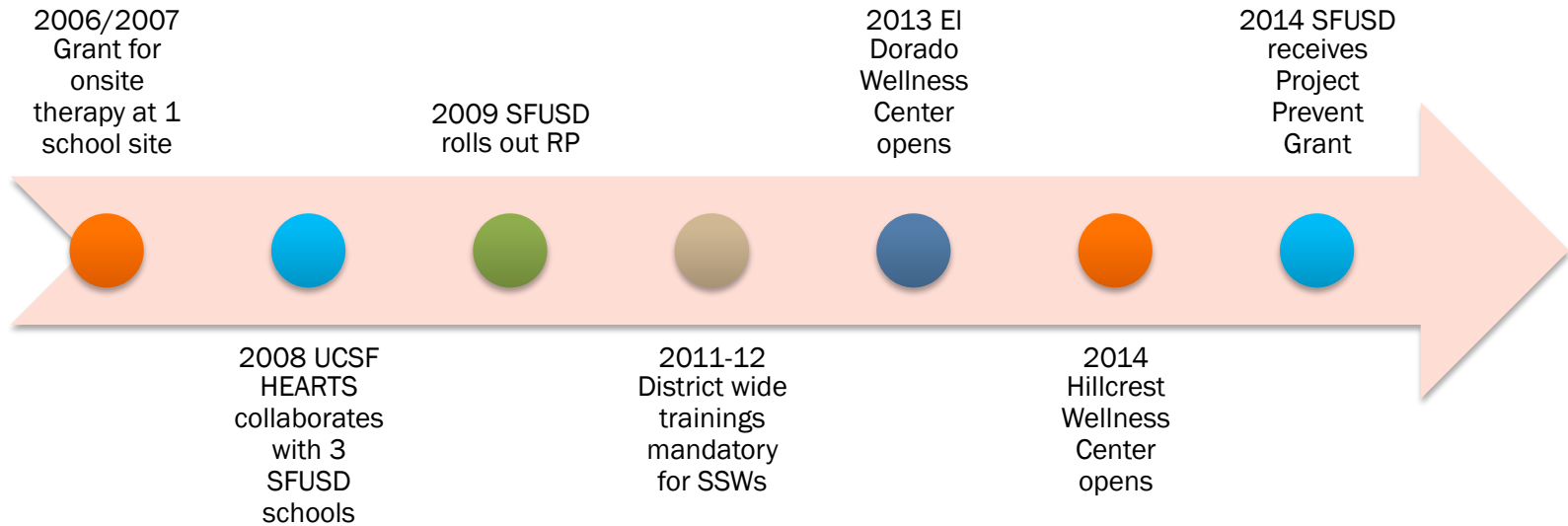


- ❖ Students escalate more quickly**
- ❖ Adults more reactive, controlling, and punitive**
- ❖ Negative impact on school safety and culture**
- ❖ Increased risk for harm**
- ❖ Decrease in academic achievement**

# OUR JOURNEY TO BUILDING ELEMENTARY WELLNESS CENTERS



# SFUSD AND TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES



# OUR JOURNEY

## Hillcrest ES:

- ❖ 480 students
- ❖ 2 bilingual strands
- ❖ 80-90% FRL
- ❖ 42% Latino, 20% Asian, 9% African American

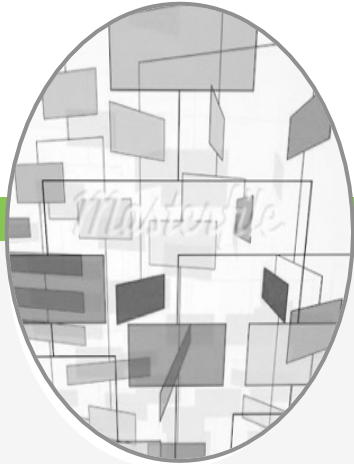
## El Dorado ES:

- ❖ 207 students
- ❖ 80-90% FRL
- ❖ 43.5% Latino, 19.3% African American, 10.1% Filipino





# Transforming Our Organizations



## TRAUMA-ORGANIZED

- No felt safety
- Fragmented
- Overwhelmed
- Fear-driven
- Rigid
- Numb



## TRAUMA-INFORMED

- Realize
- Recognize
- Respond
- Resist re-traumatization



## HEALING

- Integrated
- Reflective
- Relationship-centered
- Wellness-focused
- Learning-oriented
- Creative

**TRAUMA  
INDUCING**

TO

**TRAUMA  
REDUCING**

# WHAT IS AN ELEMENTARY WELLNESS CENTER?



- ✧ A Wellness Center is a highly structured space (usually a classroom) where students can participated in directed time limited, non-punitive self regulation, restorative practices and conflict resolution.
- ✧ Often, the Wellness Center also is the “hub” of mental health and Wellness services for the school community.
- ✧ *One part of trauma informed school’s framework*

**LET'S SEE IT IN ACTION!**



# **EL DORADO'S WELLNESS CENTER**



# **OUR JOURNEY - CURRENTLY**


## **Hillcrest ES:**

- 5<sup>th</sup> year of WC
- 1500-1700 visits per year
- 12-15 min average duration
- 2-4 WC staff

## **El Dorado ES:**

- 6<sup>th</sup> year of WC
- 541- 1836 visits per year
- 2-4 WC staff

# WELLNESS CENTERS IN SFUSD

- ✧ Wellness Centers have been rolled out in 10 elementary schools
  - ✧ Creating a manual with Wellness Center best practices under Project Prevent
  - ✧ Goal of technical support for implementation around the district
- 

# ASSESSING SCHOOL READINESS



# **ASSESSING SCHOOL READINESS**

**Clear behavior expectations/PBIS systems**

**Full staff training in TIP/RP**

**Peace Corners in all classrooms**



# IMPLEMENTATION STEPS



# IMPLEMENTATION STEPS



# DATA COLLECTION AND USE

**Restorative Practices**  
**GUIDELINES**

spaces that lifts barriers between people, which opens  
discussion, collaboration, problem solving and mutual  
understanding.

the foundation for what is required for the circle to  
be successful.

are additional behavior expectations and values that the  
group agrees to.

each talking piece: everyone listens,  
one at a time, in a turn.

in the heart: share only your truth,  
feelings, your experiences.

in the heart: let go of judgments and  
make it hard to hear one another.

you will know what to say: no need  
to be perfect.

enough: without feeling rushed, be  
considerate of the time of others.

Invite additional agreements from the group!

Restorative Practices contact the MSUSD Restorative Practices Team at  
415-695-5543. Guidelines were acquired from Restorative Resources.

**San Francisco Unified**  
**Restorative Practices**

When responding to conflict, a  
restorative process consists in asking the following questions:

1. What happened, and  
thinking at the time?
2. What have you thought  
and felt?
3. Who has been affected  
happened and how?
4. What about this has  
for you?
5. What do you think needs  
done to make things  
possible?

For additional information on Restorative Practices, contact  
Restorative Practices Team at (415) 695-5543.

**Talk it Out**

**I MESSAGE**

I feel \_\_\_\_\_  
when \_\_\_\_\_  
I want/need \_\_\_\_\_

**ARE YOU READY TO ...**

1. **LISTEN** respectfully?
2. **SPEAK** truthfully? **AND**
3. **ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY**  
for your role in what happened?


**SOME IDEAS FOR REPAIRING HARM:**

1. ASK WHAT THE OTHER PERSON NEEDS.
2. WRITE A LETTER/MAKE A CARD.
3. APOLOGIZE SINCERELY.
4. MAKE AN AGREEMENT.
5. GIVE A RESTORATIVE PRACTICE.

# DATA COLLECTION AND USE



ClassDojo

 HILLCREST | Wellness Center Sign In  
2015-2016

Different first page header/footer


Room Number	Name	Date	Time-In	Mood at Time-In	Time-out	Mood at Time-out
				😊 😐 😞		😊 😐 😞
				😊 😐 😞		😊 😐 😞
				😊 😐 😞		😊 😐 😞
				😊 😐 😞		😊 😐 😞
				😊 😐 😞		😊 😐 😞

\_\_\_\_\_

Wellness Center Exit Form  
Please read this and welcome your student back to class.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Time In \_\_\_\_\_



Name \_\_\_\_\_

Wellness Staff \_\_\_\_\_

How I felt when I came in \_\_\_\_\_

What I did there: \_\_\_Calm it down \_\_\_Talk it out

How am I feeling now? \_\_\_\_\_

Does Wellness Staff need to loop back with teacher? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

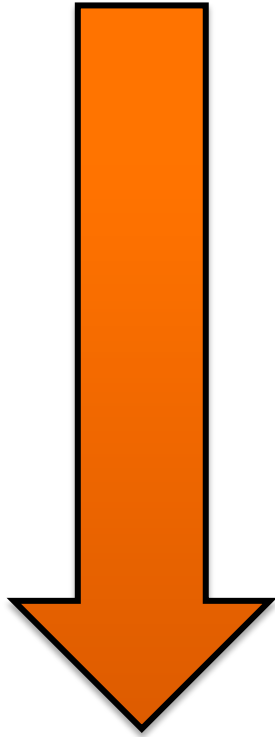
Notes:

Time Exited \_\_\_\_\_

# AVOIDING PITFALLS



# **AVOIDING PITFALLS**



**Equity Issues**

**Overutilization**

**Inconsistent structures and  
procedures**

QUESTIONS?



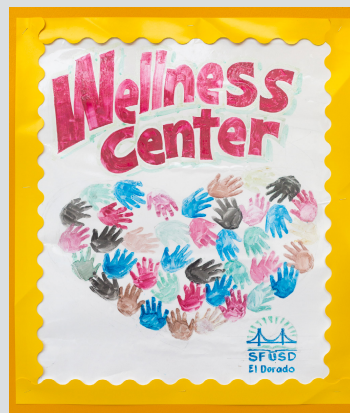
# The Finished Product!

San Francisco  
Unified School District

---

## Wellness Center Manual

Elementary Wellness Centers: A Tier 1 Trauma Informed Intervention



Jennifer Caldwell LCSW, PPSC and Gabrielle Theobald-Anderson ASW, PPSC  
with  
Andi Hilinski LSCW, PPSC and Thea Anderson MSW, MPH, PPSC





# HOW TO CONTACT US

GABRIELLE  
THEOBALD-  
ANDERSON, MSW,  
PPSC

[andersong@sfusd.edu](mailto:andersong@sfusd.edu)

JENNIFER  
CALDWELL, LCSW,  
PPSC

[caldwellj@sfusd.edu](mailto:caldwellj@sfusd.edu)

