Trauma Sensitive Schools: Fostering a Culture of Hope & Resilience Begins with Adults

MSCA Fall Conference 2017

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Raymore-Peculiar School District
“Be kinder than necessary because everyone you meet is fighting some kind of battle.” -TH Thompson & John Watson
Why and How We Started

Compliance oriented discipline used to work or at least we thought it did!

Conversations…

Fostering the Resilient Learner  Kristin Souers with Pete Hall

Creating a Leadership Team

Establishing a Multi-Year Plan

Putting Year One Into Place--Setting the Pace
Purpose/Vision of the Work

4 R’s of Trauma Informed Care

- **Realizes** widespread impact of trauma (it is in every zip code)
- **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system
- **Responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
- **Resists** re-traumatization (BUILD RESILIENCE)

Continuum

- **Trauma Aware**: understand the prevalence and impact
- **Trauma Sensitive**: embed practices in daily practices
- **Trauma Responsive**: adapt work environment and practices
- **Trauma Informed**: create organizational culture
This is why we should STOP talking to a child when they’re here. And why visuals are so helpful!

Brain State Model-- Self-Awareness is key
Connections on the outside build connections on the inside

Prefrontal Lobes:
- Create options
- Choice
- CEO of Brain

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Connection

Problem Solving

Limbic System:
- Seek pleasure
- Emotions
- Memory

Brain Stem:
- Defend / Attack
- Survival
- Arousal

www.consciousdiscipline.com
Stories we tell ourselves & Do we know our own story?

When you squeeze an orange, you get orange juice because that's what's inside.

Facebook.com/DrWayneDyer

Dr. Wayne Dyer
1. **Self-awareness**  The ability to accurately recognize one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.  *CD-Rom Activity*

2. **Self-management**  The ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.  *Gratitude Practices*

3. **Social awareness**  The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.  *Iceberg, Misunderstood Monsters, 3 Things Activity*

4. **Relationship skills**  The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.  *Stop It!, It’s Not About the Nail, TSS*

5. **Responsible decision-making**  The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

*Source: SEL PK-Adult Standards, August 2013*
Year 1 Purpose: Intro to Trauma

1. I know what the term trauma means

2. I am aware that knowledge about the impact of trauma can change the way I see myself and others

3. I am aware that knowledge about the impact of trauma can change the way I interact with others

4. The impact of trauma is referenced in informal conversations among staff
A Few Questions...

Defining Trauma

How would you define trauma?

What are some examples you have seen in our students?

How has it impacted their decision-making?
Definition of Trauma: when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with an external threat (Van Der Kolk, 1989)

- Trauma shapes a person’s basic belief about identity, the world, spirituality
- Trauma creates symptoms that are adaptations
- Trauma impacts physiological development
Post-It Activity

Grab a post-it
List the top 3 support systems you draw upon when times get tough
  Internal
  External
Exchange with a partner
The ACEs Study

- Conducted by Kaiser Permanente and the CDC
- Recruited in 1995-1997
- Long-term follow-up
- Ten Types of Trauma
  - Physical Abuse
  - Emotional Abuse
  - Emotional Neglect
  - Household Substance Abuse
  - Parental separation/divorce
  - Sexual Abuse
  - Physical Neglect
  - Mother Treated Violently
  - Household Mental Illness
  - Incarcerated Household Member
ACEs Study Findings

- Adverse Childhood Experiences are common (2 out of 3)
- ACEs often occur together
- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) → Health/social problems
The ACE Pyramid

Death

Whole Life Perspective

Conception

Early Death

Disease, Disability, and Social Problems

Adoption of Health-risk Behaviors

Social, Emotional, & Cognitive Impairment

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Scientific Gaps
When we are self-aware, we can change the script

Your life experiences are permanently imprinted on your personal CD-Rom.

- **Bad news:** Can’t erase…but
- **Good news:** Can over-write!
Children don't have a narrative for trauma. They are more likely to show you than tell you. Our job is to notice.

-Janet Williams Smith
Zoe’s Story
CHILDHOOD ADVERSITY AND TRAUMA ARE TO THE HUMAN BRAIN

WHAT VIRUSES ARE TO A COMPUTER OPERATING SYSTEM
What are we Up against?
Our Own Biology: Human Stress Response:

- State of high alert
- Action, not thought
- Inability to think clearly
- Extreme thoughts
- Hypervigilance
- Attention to threat
- Intense and prolonged anxiety
- Drive to take action

A DISASTER WHEN THIS BECOMES CHRONIC
Trauma and the Brain

Impact of Trauma on the Brain

Healthy Brain

Brain of Abused Child

De Bellis et al., 1992
How Might This Look (in general)?

○ Angry
○ Distrustful
○ Overactive/small attention span/no impulse control
○ Interaction is physical
○ Elopes/runs away
○ Fight, flight, freeze, appease, lie response
○ Yells to get attention/loud
○ Utter a few consistent rebuttals/phrases as a verbal defense “You’re stupid! I don’t like this class anyway. The others made me mad.”
○ Not following directions
○ Seeking connections but doesn’t know how to appropriately form them
How Might This Look (in the classroom)?

**Difficulty with:**
- Organizing material
- Determining cause & effect
- Taking another's perspective
- Showing empathy
- Attentiveness
- Regulating emotions
- Processing/Executive functioning
- Engaging in curriculum
Responding to Reenactment

Common responses to trauma of others often fall into one of three categories:

- **Victim**: helpless, overwhelmed, inadequate, entitled
- **Rescuer**: martyr, harried, guilt-trips, only I can help
- **Persecutor**: denies vulnerability, critical, blaming, rigid, bully
How Should We Respond?

Persecutor (Bully) to Mentor---
Listen- be willing to listen to the problem without issuing blame or judgment.

Rescuer (Martyr) to Challenger----
State Boundaries- be willing to listen to the problem without making it yours to solve. Acknowledge you don’t have to solve their problem. Encourage them to recognize their strengths.

Victim (Helpless) to Survivor/Thriver----
Problem Solver- Focus on what you can do. State what you want and take action. Do your part by following through on what you say you are going to do to support the person.
Vision for a Trauma-Sensitive School

“A trauma-sensitive school is a safe and respectful environment we create that enables our students to build caring relationships with adults and peers, learn how to self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and succeed academically, while supporting their physical health and well-being.”
Steady, Small Steps
Power of Mindset & Culture

“I’ve come to a frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It’s my personal approach that creates the climate. It’s my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child’s life miserable or joyous. I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration. I can humiliate or heal. In all situations, it is my response that decides whether a crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child humanized or dehumanized.” - Haim G. Ginott
Every Child Needs a Champion
Check Where you Are

- What does this look like?
  - Q-TSS Checklist
- How to Develop Mindsets for Compassion and Caring in Students
Checking for Understanding

“I understand what the term trauma refers to.”

“I am aware that understanding the impact of trauma can change the way I see myself and others.”

“I am aware that understanding the impact of trauma can change the way I interact with others.”

“The impact of trauma is referenced in informal conversations among staff.”
Lessons Learned

- A slow pace is a good pace
- Establish the end goal early
- Be prepared for staff trauma
- Cerebral understanding does not equal change in behavior
- The journey is a marathon, not a sprint
- No easy button, but also not rocket science
Other Resources

Draft TSS PD 2016-17 Calendar

Fostering Resilient Learners

Fostering Resilient Learners Webinar

TED Talk Playlist--Importance of Self-Care

http://joshshipp.com/one-caring-adult/

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1. What from this presentation resonates most with you?
2. Which aspect from this morning’s learning might you bring back to staff to “get started” or as a “next step?”
   a. How can those be used to increase awareness or shift thinking? What thinking?
3. Climate vs. Culture  Awareness “cerebrally” is a great first step, and activities and presentations provide momentary ah-hahs, but what next steps ahead could help your staff make the journey to apply that self-awareness when they’re in the moment?