Adverse Childhood Experiences & Complex Trauma
League of Education Voters
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OBJECTIVES

• Trauma Informed Multi-Tiered System of Support

• Science of Learning / Brain info retention

• ACE’s, Complex Trauma + Relationships and Resiliency

• Wraparound to mitigate risk factors
Current Work

• 61 schools implementing practices related to Trauma/ACE’s and school climate Research

• Largest district in Washington State - 103 Schools 2017-2018

• Wraparound as a Tier II or Tier III Support/Intervention for students
Climate & Culture – Theory of Action

Improve school culture & climate
Build positive relationships with every student

Increase in attendance
Decrease in challenging behaviors
Decrease anxiety
Increase Learning time
Increase in academic gains
Trauma Informed MTSS

Positive Beliefs
Positive Relationships
Positive Learning
Positive Partnerships

Fluidity and flexibility in grouping, and individualizing instruction and behavioral supports

Tier 1
SEL Curricula

Tier 2

Tier 3

ACADEMIC
BEHAVIORAL

Culturally Responsive Pedagogy
Trauma Informed Practices

PBIS Framework

David Lewis 2016
Is someone there for me when I need them? Does someone love me?
Neural Embedding

- Seen
- Felt (physically and emotionally)
- Heard
Neural Embedding
Lifespan Perspective Scale

Experiences

18 yrs.

18 yrs.
Frame of Reference

Are people trustworthy?

Is the world a safe place?

Stereotypes

Implicit Bias

Transference & Counter Transference

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# What is Trauma(s)?

### Simple Trauma
- One time victim of a crime
- Car Accident
- House fire
- Earthquake
- Physical Injury

### Complex Trauma
- Ongoing physical abuse
- Emotional Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Domestic Violence
- Familial substance abuse
- Placement Disruptions

[David Lewis 2016]

**Biological Response**
A trauma-informed approach asks:

“What happened to you?” instead of “What’s wrong with you?”

“Help me Better understand your experience.”
Adverse Childhood Experiences

- **ABUSE**
  - Physical
  - Emotional
  - Sexual

- **NEGLECT**
  - Physical
  - Emotional

- **HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
  - Mental Illness
  - Incarcerated Relative
  - Violence
  - Substance Abuse
  - Loss of a parent or caregiver
Adverse Childhood Experiences

Growing up (prior to age 18) in household with:

**Abuse**
- Recurrent physical abuse
- Recurrent emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse

**Neglect**
- Emotional or Physical neglect
Toxic Stress

Too much stress = toxic stress = occurs when a child is overloaded. (20 minutes beneficial)

- Anxiety Based / Fear Based

Cortisol

Adrenaline
Good Stress vs. Toxic Stress

Self Regulated

Dysregulated

Normal Range

Toxic Range

Cortisol

Cortisol

D. Lewis; Toxic Stress Level Scales 2016
Causes of Toxic Stress / Complex Trauma

- Student Mobility (SPS 2987 MKV & 208 Foster)
- Emotional Abuse
- Generations of Inadequate parenting
- Loss or absence of parents
- Homelessness
- Unemployment
- Poor Nutrition/Hunger
- Lack of healthcare
- Chronic medical conditions
- Witness to a death
- Anti Social Peer Groups
- Learning Disabilities

- Experience of Racism
- Poverty
- History of suicide in family
- Mental Health of family member
- Ongoing Anxiety
- Teen Pregnancy
- Multiple changes in caregivers
- Loss of parent due to death, divorce, abandonment
- Birth defects (FAS)
- Physical &/or Emotional Neglect
Imbalance in Brain Regions

- Hippocampus
- Prefrontal Cortex
- Amygdala
Physiological Response
Diagnostic Criteria

**ADHD / ADD**
- Impulsive
- Trouble staying focused
- Easily distracted
- Difficulty with memory
- Difficulty following instructions
- Trouble planning ahead and finishing projects

**Complex Trauma/ Anxiety**
- Impulsive
- Difficulty focusing
- Anxious and fearful
  - Memory problems
  - Poor Skill Development
  - Act out in school situations
  - Act withdrawn
  - Develop learning Disabilities


Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2014
Student Cognitive Load

“Could someone help me with these? I’m late for math class.”
Cognitive Load Reduction

Consistency – Predictability - Structure

Learning & Regulating
Consistency, Predictability, Structure

Choices in Between

Structure  Structure  Structure
Consistency Over Time
Tier 1

Universal Tier

Students =

Consistency, Predictability & Structure
Tier 2
Risk Factors

Academic

Social

Family

Legal

Substance Use

Medical

Behavior
Anxiety Risk Factors and Symptoms

- Attention Seeking
- Low Self Esteem
- Low attendance at school
- Negative Social Skills
- Low frustration tolerance
- Doesn’t have friends
- Gives up easily
- Withdrawn & disconnected
Protective Factors / Wraparound Supports

- Social Emotional Supports
- Concrete Needs Support
- Individual Counseling
- Structured Scaffolding & CBT approaches
- + Relationship
- * Social emotional groups
- Family & Community Supports
Authoritative Teaching Practices

- Able to be trusted; reliable.
  - *Synonyms*: reliable, dependable, trustworthy, sound, authentic, valid

- Clear and precise expectations and directives

- Giving directives with an awareness of my self expression

- Don’t over direct/ direct and step away / hold the line.

- Strength based approaches – Directives that set up successes

David Lewis 2017
3rd Point (Authoritative Approach)

Common Expectations
Scaffolds to Student Resilience
CBT Approaches / Neural Embedding (Journals)

Goal achieved – Embed the skills

Academic or SEL goal

*Skill Acquisition
*Grit
*Actualization of the task
*Resilience
Positive Trusting Relationships

Students = Consistency, Predictability & Structure
Questions

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