

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TRAUMA AND YOUNG LEARNERS:

How to Support Students in the Classroom



LEARNER OBJECTIVES

- I know what an ACE is and how they could impact my students
- I can name at least two effective practices to support students and where to find an example of implementation

TIMELINE FOR LEARNING AND PRACTICE

- **Before school:** The first session will be a 60 minute professional development.
- **During the year:** Attendees should meet once every 6-8 weeks to review learning and share data around attempted interventions. Later sessions should focus on reflection on student behavior and how to best add additional support

SEEING TRAUMA: WHAT IS TRAUMA?

- Events that cause stress to a child with effects that may persist after the event (NCTSN 2019)
- Often defined by: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Other forms can include:
 - Bullying
 - Community Violence
 - Physical Abuse
 - Sexual Abuse
 - Traumatic Grief
 - Medical Trauma
- Protective Factors may mitigate negative responses to Traumas.

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES



Seeing Trauma: Possible Symptoms

- Impulsivity, inattentiveness, and hypervigilance
- Difficulty regulating affect
- Difficulty with relationships
- Somatization of symptoms (i.e. headache, stomach ache)
- Yelling, running away
- Physical/Verbal Aggression
- Overeating
- Stealing
- Delayed language development
- Sensitivity to loud noises

Seeing Trauma: Case Example

Names are fictional to protect student identity.

Rory

- Rory has witnessed domestic abuse
- Rory has a parent with a diagnosed mental illness
- Rory's parents are divorced
- Rory had talked about wanting to kill themselves
- Based on Rory's language we think they may have experienced or witnessed verbal abuse.
- We estimate that Rory's ACE score is 5

Seeing Trauma: Case Example Jordan

- Jordan lives in poverty
- Jordan experiences verbal profanities that the parent see's as 'teasing'
- Jordan has proclaimed at school that their parent does not love them anymore because they are bad
- Jordan often wore the same clothing and appeared unclean
- Jordan's parents are divorced
- Jordan's parent would forget to meet them at the bus top and when called down stumbled as though they had been drinking
- According to these observations and what we know about the student they have an ACE score of 6

Seeing Trauma in the Classroom

- Rory is highly intelligent and will stare at Jordan to trigger them.
- Once this happens Rory chases Jordan around the classroom in an attempt to hit Jordan.
- Jordan continues to run and yell profanities at Rory.
- Rory eventually catches Jordan and pushes/hits them.
- Jordan later in the day waits for a moment to throw, scratch, or punch Rory to retaliate over the earlier transgression.

EFFECTS OF TRAUMA: NEUROBIOLOGY

- Trauma can interrupt brain development
- Trauma can dismiss positive protective factors
- Can prevent higher order thinking

STRATEGIES to Support Students with Trauma

- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - www.Pbisworld.com
- Trauma Informed Practices
 - Article: Classroom Strategies for Traumatized, Oppositional Students
- Restorative Practices
 - <https://www.facebook.com/ccranston/>

PBIS

- Focuses on positive behavior modification
- Language and interaction focused
- 5:1 or 8:1 ratio of positive praise : verbal correction depending on the student needs
- Tiered system
 - Tier 1 - Schoolwide/Classroom
 - Tier 2 - Small group intervention
 - Tier 3 - Individualized Plan

TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

- Use Social Emotional Learning (SEL) to address emotional literacy and problem solving skills - two key factors for building resiliency through supportive relationships (Bush, Kersevich, & Plum, 2016, p. 45)
- Built in structure such as a visual schedule posted in the classroom
- Create a predictable environment through the use of routines
- Use frequent positive praise to give students feedback in order to build confidence
- Implement a 'Trauma Tool Kit'
 - Stress ball - visual timer - puzzle - play-doh

Restorative Practices

- Classroom circles rooted in agreed upon values
- Provides opportunities for all students to have a voice
- Restorative Chats
 - Gives validation to the victim
 - Provides coachable moments for problem solving
 - Focuses on repairing harm
 - Mostly student led with adults facilitating

PBIS

- What
- Where
- How

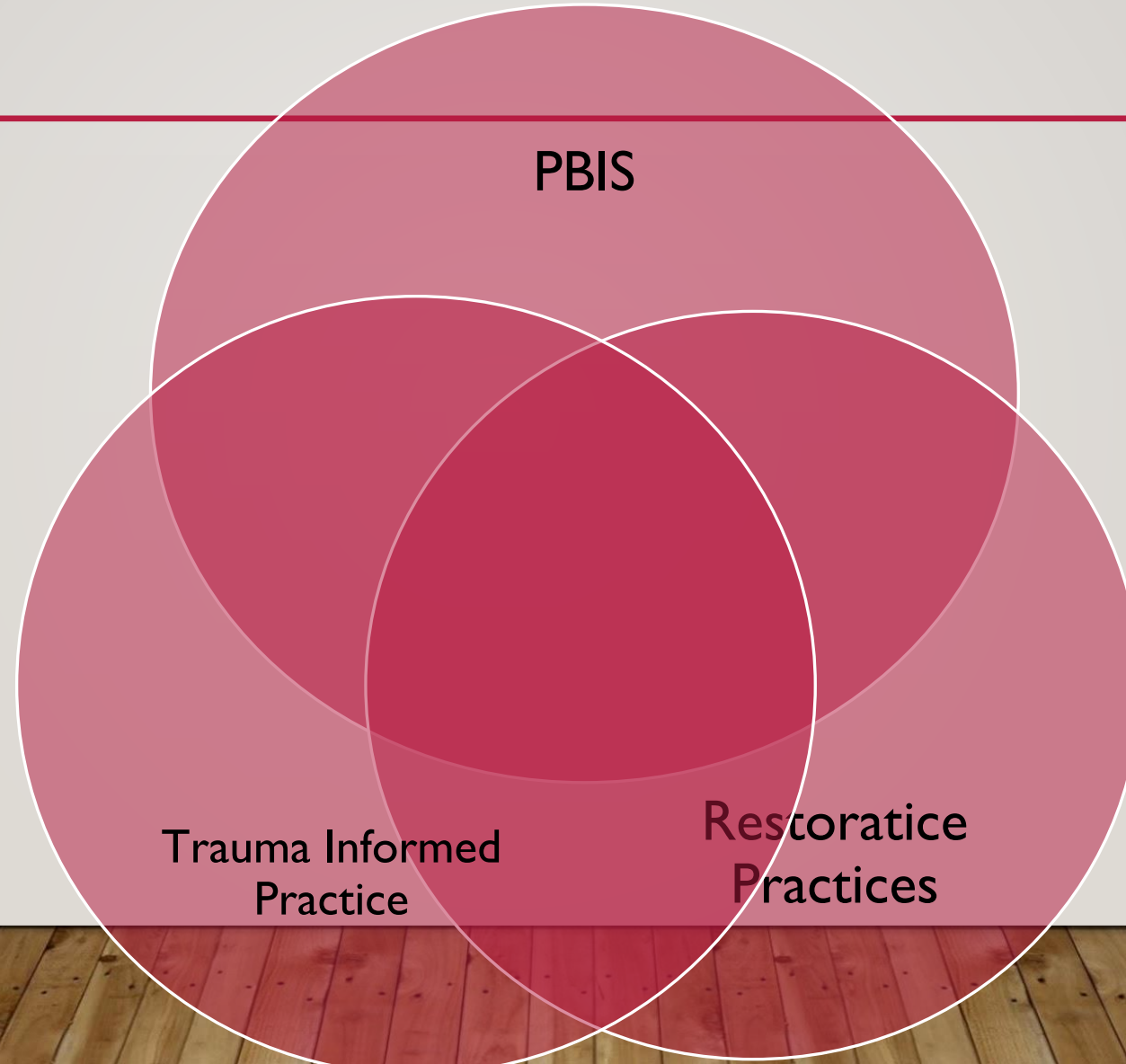
TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICES

- What
- Where
- How

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

- What
- Where
- How

COMMONALITIES IN STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT STUDENTS



Additional Resources for Trauma Informed Competency-

- Developmental Repair Model by Washburn Center for Children- <https://washburn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/WCCDevRepair-revised.pdf>
- The Body Keeps the Score- by Bessel Van Der Kolk, M.D.
- The Trauma Center at RJI- www.traumacenter.org
- David Baldwin's Trauma Info Pages- www.trauma-pages.com
- National Child Trauma Stress Network (NCTSN)- www.nctsn.org
- Adverse Childhood Experiences- <http://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score>
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acesstudy; <http://acesstudy.org>
- Trauma Informed Mindfulness Practices: <http://givebackyoga.org/> ; [http://www.kipalu.org'](http://www.kipalu.org/);
www.mindandlife.org
- Restorative Practices & Talking Circles Facebook Group
- PBIS World- <https://www.pbisworld.com/>

Appendix A: Jig Saw Handout

Strategy:

What:

How:

Where:



Appendix B: Speaker Notes for Slides

Slide 2: Discuss the learning outcomes for this professional development and how this learning will be used throughout the year. Staff will leave this session with the knowledge and resources to better incorporate Trauma Sensitive Practice in their classroom community. ~3 minutes

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Slide 4: Some educators may be familiar with different forms of trauma but this overview will be helpful for review as well as new teachers in the building.

Slide 5: This video does a really good job of further explaining trauma and the effects it can have on the body. You will also want to pay attention to the ACE scores mentioned and potential ramifications.

Slide 6: A large reaction is a response that seems out of the ordinary, over the top, or unexpected.

A student may interpret someone bumping into them as an attempt at physical harm and begin sobbing.

A student who snatches materials from other students may have had their own personal items snatched from them from a caregiver or older sibling.

Loud noises such as a chair tipping over could trigger a student's stress response system if they have witnessed some form of violence.

Particular tone of voice or loud voice level could trigger a student who sees these as signals to potential harm.

Transitioning can trigger a student whose life lacks stability leaving them uncertain and anxious.

Re-direction may trigger a student because they lack control of their own environment or physical body outside of school.

When in school they may shut down or boldly defy adults in an attempt to gain a sense of control. ~5 minutes

Appendix C: Slide Notes Continued

Slide 7: This is an example of an actual student and the trauma they have experienced in the form of an Adverse Childhood Experience screener. The ACE score will be explained further in a couple of slides. ~3 minutes

Slide 8: This is another student that struggled in the classroom with Rory. ~3 minutes

Slide 9: This scenario shows a typical interaction in a previous class. Not only does this harm the students involved but it also interrupts other students and potentially exposes those students to secondary trauma in school. This scenario also shows how these events can carry on throughout the whole day which leads to very little if any learning for the students involved. ~3 minutes

Slide 10: Explain the theory of brain development starting from the brain stem up. When we are young the lower levels of our brains are developing. We are learning how to trust our caregivers and interact within social contexts. When trauma happens it can interrupt development by constantly firing our stress response system making this our go to response in unfamiliar situations. This is how our fight flight freeze system becomes compromised. When a conflict in the classroom arises such as someone not giving us the marker we need instead of thinking how to politely ask we may snatch the marker or throw a tantrum because we are not able to use higher order thinking.

Ask teachers if they have had any experiences similar to this scenario and offer a share out. ~8-10 minutes

Slide 11: Educators will have an opportunity to visit a resource that supports one of these strategies.

Ask teachers to choose one of these strategies to explore. Pass out the 'what, where, how' handouts for them to fill in as they are researching. ~12-15 minutes



Appendix D: Slide Notes Continued

Slide 12: PBIS focuses on building pro-social skills. A core component of this is building student confidence in order to change the function of their behavior. This is done through schoolwide and classroom systems in common language. Positive reinforcement such as token economies. A small group may look like a social worker taking students and working on pro-social skills such as taking turns by using social stories and games. An individualized plan has a specific goal separate from a classroom goal. This may look like focus on one of the core rules such as be respectful and have more regular extrinsic incentives when they demonstrate the desired behavior. ~3 minutes

Slide 13: Explain these trauma informed practices and any intersectionalities you have seen around previous training. ~3 minutes

Slide 14: These may be practice's you currently do but being consistent with these is a form of trauma informed practice because it is predictable and a regular occurrence. Now when a student interprets a situation incorrectly restorative practices comes in to help re-teach the student while problem solving with peers that are directly involved. It builds accountability knowing that when something happens there will be a chance to repair instead of carrying shame from a negative consequence. ~3 minutes

Slide 15: Tell participants to visit the PBIS world website from the previous slide. What is something they could use? Where did they find it? How will they use it in the context of their classroom? ~ 10 minutes for Jig-saw

Slide 16: Pass out the article 'A Framework for Trauma-Sensitive Schools/ Infusing Trauma-Informed Practices Into Early Childhood Education Systems' What is something they could use? Where did they find it? How will they use it in the context of their classroom?

Slide 17: Have educators visit the Facebook page linked in the previous slide. What is something they could use? Where did they find it? How will they use it in the context of their classroom?



Appendix E: Speaker Notes Continued

Slide 18: After the Jigsaw ask teachers to independently reflect on common principles they see within these strategies. ~5 minutes.

Ask teachers to share out and create a list above. As a group discuss how these practices are intertwined and explain that by doing one you are likely doing at least one more. ~10 minutes.

Slide 19: These are excellent resources for personal reading and book studies for staff.

LITERATURE / REFERENCES

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