

Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavioral Disorders
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Using a Trauma Informed Lens:
Data
Brain Development
Impact of Trauma
Strategies

Intended Outcomes

- * 1. Participants will acquire a deeper understanding of the impact of trauma on brain development.
- * 2. Participants will enhance their attitudes, skills and knowledge to more effectively work with students through a trauma-informed lens.

ACEs Study

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

- Largest study to examine the health and social effects of adversity experienced during childhood
 - >17,000 adults in San Diego, CA
 - Middle upper class (employed, members of Kaiser Health Plan)
- Adversity measured in 3 areas:
 - Abuse (physical, emotional, sexual)
 - Neglect (physical, emotional)
 - Household Dysfunction (substance abuse, domestic violence, relative incarcerated, relative mentally ill, parents divorce)
- ACE score = Number of categories to which a person was exposed

Vincent Felitti (Kaiser) & Robert Anda (CDC)

Probability of Outcomes

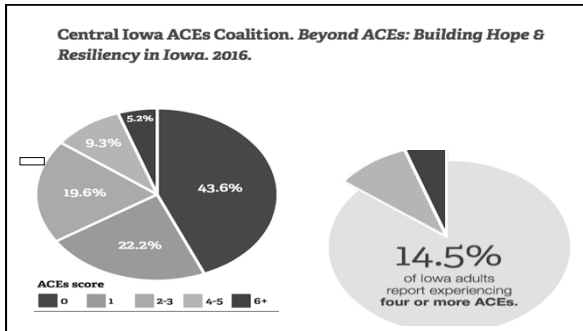
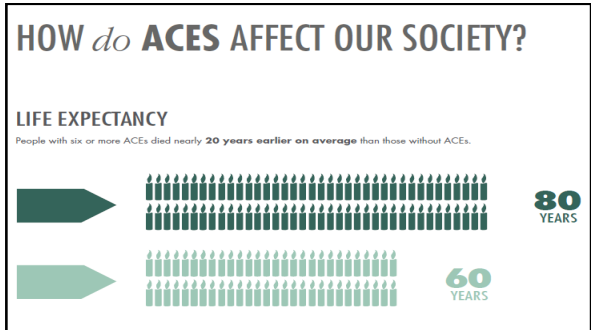
Given 100 American Adults

33 No ACEs	51 1-3 ACEs	16 4-8 ACEs
WITH 0 ACEs 1 in 16 smokes	WITH 3 ACEs 1 in 9 smokes	WITH 7+ ACEs 1 in 6 smokes
1 in 69 are alcoholic	1 in 9 are alcoholic	1 in 6 are alcoholic
1 in 480 uses IV drugs	1 in 43 uses IV drugs	1 in 30 use IV drugs
1 in 14 has heart disease	1 in 7 has heart disease	1 in 6 has heart disease
1 in 96 attempts suicide	1 in 10 attempts suicide	1 in 5 attempts suicide

ACE-related odds of having a physical health condition

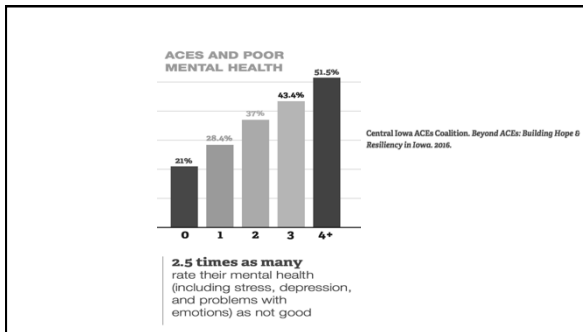
Health Condition	0 ACEs	1 ACEs	2 ACEs	3 ACEs	4+ ACEs
Arthritis	100%	130%	145%	155%	236%
COPD	100%	120%	161%	220%	399%
Heart Disease	100%	123%	149%	250%	285%
Stroke	100%	114%	117%	180%	281%
Vision	100%	167%	181%	199%	354%

(Iowa ACEs 360)



Central Iowa ACEs Coalition. *Beyond ACEs: Building Hope & Resiliency in Iowa. 2016.*

ADULTS REPORTING EACH CATEGORY OF ACEs	%
CHILD ABUSE	
Emotional abuse	26.8
Physical abuse	15.9
Sexual abuse	9.7
HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION	
Substance abuse in home	26.1
Separation/divorce	23.2
Family member with mental illness	18
Domestic violence	15.3
Incarcerated family member	6.8
Any ACE	56



ACES and Depressio

Central Iowa ACEs Coalition. *Beyond ACEs: Building Hope & Resiliency in Iowa. 2016.*

Iowa adults with **four or more ACEs** were **6 times** more likely to have been diagnosed with **depression.**

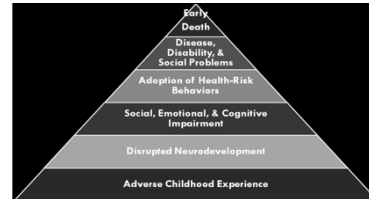
Attempted Suicide



Compared with 0 ACEs

- * 1 ACEs 80% increase
- * 4 or more 1,120% increase

ACEs Explained



Immune System



Analogy from Nakazawa, 2015

“The child may not remember, but the body remembers.”

– Dr. Jack Shonkoff
Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University

ACES Questionnaire


Scoring the ACEs Questionnaire

- * Each “yes” answer is scored as one point
- * Even if a person experienced an ACEs category multiple times
- * Score from 0 to 10




Trauma

Trauma



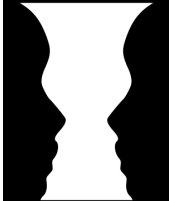
- * Is viewed as a threat to life or safety
- * Feels terror, helplessness, horror
- * Intense physical effects
- * Overwhelms the person's ability to cope

Types of Trauma

<p>Public</p> 	<p>Private</p> <p>More traumatic than natural disasters</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">* More disruptive to our fundamental sense of trust and attachment* Typically experienced as intentional rather than as "an accident of nature." <small>(International Society for the Study of Trauma and Dissociation, 2009)</small>
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Trauma

Considered traumatic based on the response of the person to the event



Complex Trauma
From Multiple Adversities

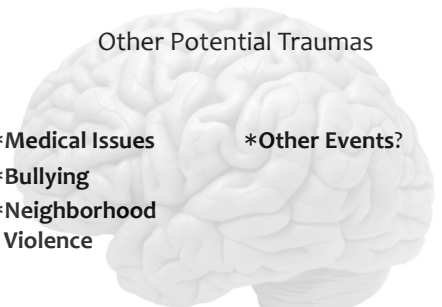
50 Shades of STRESS

Healthy Stress: Motivates individual to perform at optimal level

Traumatic Stress: Triggers fight/flight response for survival


Toxic Stress: Keeps individual on hyper-alert

Other Potential Traumas



- *Medical Issues
- *Bullying
- *Neighborhood Violence
- *Other Events?

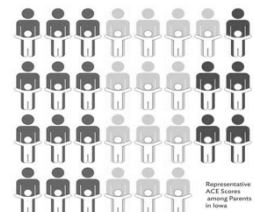
Impact on Learning



Students with a higher number of ACEs are more likely to:

- ▼ Score lower on a standardized test
- ▼ Have language difficulties
- ▼ Be suspended or expelled
- ▼ Have poorer health
- ▼ Fail a grade

Iowa's Classroom



On average:


- 5 out of every 30 students live with a parent who has a very HIGH ACE SCORE – a score of 4 or more
- 13 out of 30 have a MEDIUM HIGH SCORE

Representative ACE Scores among Parents in Iowa



What is the impact on learning?

Likelihood of a learning delay?

- * 0 ACEs 10%
- * 4 ACEs 40%
- * 6 - 7 ACEs 100%



Brain Development



How Brains are Built: Discussion

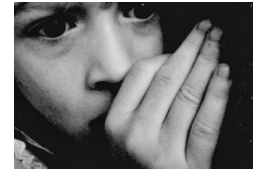
What stands out to you in this clip?
How might serve and return apply to older youth?
How is the concept of air traffic control applicable to schools?



Big Idea!

The most developed areas of a child's brain are the ones used most frequently.

Bruce Perry, Child Trauma Academy



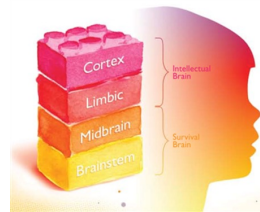
Developing Brain

Genes are the bricks

Experience is the mortar



Developing Brain

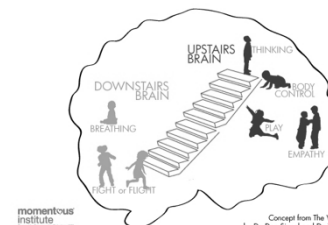


Our brains grow from the bottom up.

(The Amazing Brain, Linda Chamberlain PhD)

When the brain “downshifts”...

- *Fight
- *Flight
- *Freeze



Concept from The Whole-Brain Child by Dr. Dan Siegel and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson

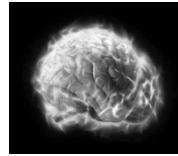
50 Shades of STRESS

Healthy Stress: Motivates individual to perform at optimal level

Traumatic Stress: Triggers fight/flight response for survival

Toxic Stress: Keeps individual on hyper-alert

Another way to think about this is...



*The brain is “marinating” in cortisol.

(Caring for Children Workshop)

Activity

- * Take a minute to think of a situation that was quite stressful for you.
- * Think about how you felt at that time—was it hard to “get your bearings” or “think straight” at first?
- * How did you feel?
- * What helped you?



50 Shades of STRESS

Healthy Stress: Motivates individual to perform at optimal level

Traumatic Stress: Triggers fight/flight response for survival

Toxic Stress: Keeps individual on hyper-alert

A Word About the Teenage Brain

Differ from adults

- * Actions
- * Problem solving
- * Decision making

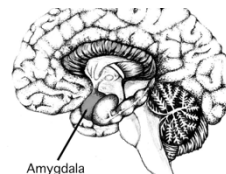
- * Act on impulse
- * Engage in risky behavior
- * Misread social cues, emotions

Why? Physiological Explanation

- * Neocortex (reasoning, impulse control)
- * Neocortex develops later, changing and maturing well into adulthood

(American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry)

Amygdala



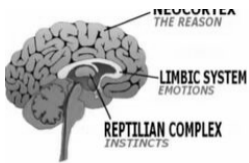
Amygdala

- * Instinctual reactions such as fear and aggression

- * Develops early

- * Emotional Responses


Neocortex



- * Reasoning, impulse control
- * Develops later, changing and maturing well into adulthood

(American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry)

Trauma Lens




Above: Child's behaviors

Below: Child's feelings, thoughts, triggers (invisible backpack)

Why does the brain go into "survival mode" even when there is no threat?

- * Child is "safe" at school
- * The toxic stressor isn't present





Why?

Tool: Invisible Backpack Trauma Reminders

- * Sight, sound, smell
- * Reaction is as if it is actually happening
- * Releases chemicals (e.g., cortisol) during terror

(Concept from Caring for Children Workshop)



Sometimes it can be really hard to figure out that these feelings and behaviors are about the past and not what is going on now. This makes it even harder to explain to adults what is going on. Adults sometimes have a hard time understanding that the child's feelings are real and can be scary.

Gladys Noll Alvarez, 2015

Survival Trumps Learning

A student's brain that has been wired to survive ACEs may resort to behaviors that are not acceptable in the classroom or on school grounds.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Can last a lifetime,
But they don't have to...

What can educators do?

Therapy vs. Trauma Lens

(from Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools, Wisconsin DPI)

Therapy

- * Licensed clinical mental health professionals
- * Intervention in therapists office in 1:1 or small group sessions
- * Focus is on addressing trauma reactions & reducing symptoms

School

- * Licensed educators & student services professionals with varied mental health training
- * Sensitivity & accommodations occur throughout the school
- * Focus is on students' education success through emotional & physical safety, empowerment, trust, choice, and collaboration

Core Philosophical Shift
Changes the Question

What's wrong with
you?

What happened to
you?

So What do we do?


- *Connect (Relationships)
- *Protect (Physical and Emotional Safety)
- *Respect (Choice and Collaboration)
- *Redirect (Teach)



Connect (Relationships)

**Protective Factor:
Positive Adult Relationships**

- Moderate, short-lived stress can build a healthy stress response system
- Toxic stress can weaken brain architecture



BUT caring adults can provide a buffer for children to reduce the effects that toxic stress can have on learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health

Source: Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, American Academy of Pediatrics



WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT BRAIN BUILDER?

RELATIONSHIPS! That's why Connections Matter, whether we are thinking about our children or grandchildren, friends and family, our community or our own well-being.

***“ Relationship is the evidence-based practice.”**

Christopher Blodgett, 2012


Relationship Technology
(Bredtro, Brockering, & Van Bockern, 2002)

- * An action... not a feeling
- * Crisis is an opportunity
- * Loving the unlovable
- * An endurance event
- * Respect begets respect
- * Disengaging from the conflict cycle

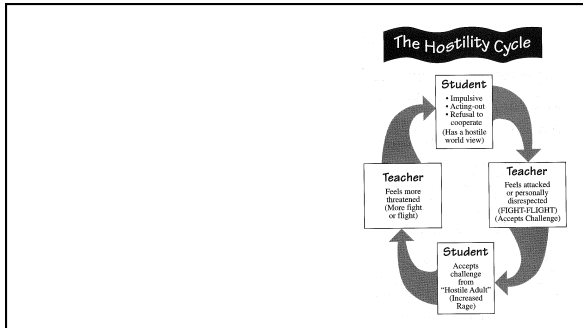
**Tool: Relationships
(Connecting with Students, Mendler)**

Strategies

- * 2 X 10
- * 4 Hs (High-five, handshake, How are you? Hello)
- * Greet using a rating scale (1-5)
- * Apologize if you “blow it and know it)”



Protect



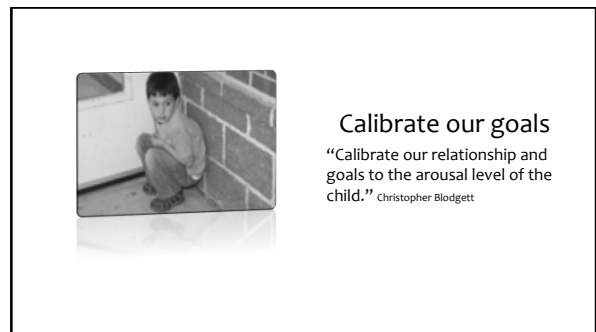
Re-frame the goal
Example

One Way


- * Adult gives direction
- * Child acts out
- * Adult punishes
- * Child escalates
- * Adult escalates

Tool: Re-frame the goal
Example

One Way	Another Way
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Adult gives direction * Child acts out * Adult punishes * Child escalates * Adult escalates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Adult gives direction * Child acts out * Adult changes goal: de-escalation * Child de-escalates * Adult changes activity/direction




Your Intended Message



- Your nonverbal behavior will reveal your true philosophy. (you cannot FAKE this)
- Know your triggers. (we ALL have them)
- Be mindful of conversations students "don't" hear. (because they DO).

Tool: Become an Emotional Container
 (Caring for Children Workshop)



- * Contain your emotions
- * Stay calm
- * Don't take it personally
- * Validate (e.g., you have a right to be angry)
- * Reframe through a trauma informed lens
- * Self-care

Protect

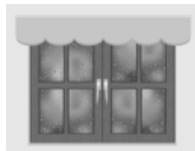
Tool: Avoid Power Struggles (Power Struggles, Mendler)



Strategies

- * Understand the Hostility Cycle
- * Develop a support network
- * Reframe (e.g., late to class)
- * Defuse with dignity (P.E.P. – Privacy, Eye contact, Proximity)

Close the door, but open a window...



Too Scared To Learn by Jenny Horsman

"I remember crying in the night. I found it difficult to hear Mrs. Patterson when she spoke in the classroom. I felt as if she were speaking from beneath tumbling water, or from the end of a long tunnel. She assumed I was daydreaming. I stopped imagining that I might one day be a teacher... Mostly I felt ashamed, different."

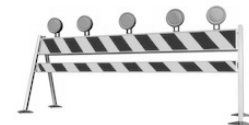
Assumptions We Make

- * Student is choosing to misbehave
- * Student isn't interested in learning (daydreaming)
- * It's a family problem
- * If parents miss a school meeting, they don't care enough
- * Student just won't learn from the punishment so we need to punish harder
- * There is nothing I can do to help this child

Avoid Re-traumatizing

Strong Barrier

The tendency to see trauma as a home problem rather than a school problem.



How might these not-unusual school reactions re-traumatize?

- * Hostility Cycle
- * Restraint
- * Seclusion
- * Suspension
- * Isolation from Peers
- * Yelling
- * Coldness
- * 3 strikes



Review Policies: Balance accountability with understanding of traumatic behavior



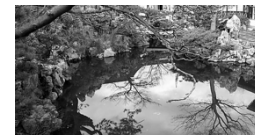
- * Discipline
- * Zero Tolerance
- * Bullying
- * Involving Police

How could our policies and practices differ?

- | | |
|---|--|
| * Think: What's wrong with you? | * Think: What happened to you? |
| * Do: When act out, punish. | * Do: When act out, provide calming response or activity. |
| * Do: When frustrated, become angry. | * Do: When frustrated, calm encouragement. |

Calming Strategies

Allow the brain to re-set



Partner Activity

- * Use a trauma informed lens to suggest an alternative to a common disciplinary action.
- * Suspension
- * Sending out of class
- * Public reprimand



Respect

- *Respect Begets Respect
- *Collaborate
- *Provide choices
- *See their strengths

Respect their ability to learn



Teach

- * Teach about the upstairs/downstairs brain (or hand brain)
- * Teach tools for getting back to their upstairs brain
- * Teach different ways to manage stress

Chemicals are released during terror

Explain to students so they don't think something bad is happening to their bodies



Self-Care

*Teacher quality is the number-one school factor for student success!

Remember...

Just as stressed brains can't learn, stressed brains can't teach!

Tool: Oxygen Mask



- * Vicarious Trauma (Compassion Fatigue)
- * Practice Self-Care (Caring for Children Workshop)

Breathe!!

“Feelings come and go like clouds in a windy sky. Conscious breathing is my anchor.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

Connections Matter!

The opposite of trauma is connectedness to one’s self and others.



Trauma-Sensitive School Checklist

Lesley University
Center for Social Education
Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative
of Massachusetts Advocates for Children
and the Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School

A checklist is organized by five components aimed at creating a trauma-sensitive school. Its component consists of several elements, and assesses your school on each element, using the following scale:

- Element is not at all in place
- Element is partially in place
- Element is mostly in place
- Element is fully in place

School _____ Date _____
 Team Members (name and position) _____

trauma-sensitive school is a safe and respectful environment that enables students to build strong relationships with adults and peers, self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and succeed academically, while supporting their physical health and well-being.

Thank you!
Ellen