

CURRENT OBSERVATIONS AND INNOVATIVE TRENDS ON TRAUMA AWARENESS/SUPPORTS IN SCHOOLS

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SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma

- 3 “E”s of trauma: Event(s), Experience of Event(s), and Effect
- “Individual trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being”
- “Psychological trauma”

DSM-5 Trauma

- “Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways:
 - **Directly experiencing** the traumatic event(s);
 - **Witnessing**, in person, the traumatic event(s) as it occurred to others;
 - **Learning** that the traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend (in case of actual or threatened death of a family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental);
 - or Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) .”

DSM-5 Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders & State/Federal Education Codes

- DSM-5 Trauma and Stressor-Related Disorders
 - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
 - Acute Stress Disorder
 - Adjustment Disorders
 - Reactive Attachment Disorder
 - Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder
 - Unclassified and Unspecified Trauma Disorders
- State/Federal Education
 - General Education
 - ADA Section 504
 - Special Education (Emotional Disturbance)

Effects of trauma on children

- Symptoms of trauma may include:
 - Isolation
 - Hyperactivity
 - Aggression
 - Anger
 - Sadness
 - Distraction
 - Fearfulness
 - Moodiness
- Children exposed to violence are more likely to have:
 - Behavior problems
 - Poor school performance
 - Problems with authority
 - Difficulty following directions
 - More school absences
 - Somatic complaints
 - Poor sleep and nightmares
 - Symptoms of depression
 - Fewer friends



Developmental reactions: Adolescents

- Adolescents may:
 - Feel self-conscious about their emotional responses
 - Engage in self destructive behavior
 - Experience feelings of shame/guilt
 - Express fantasies about revenge and retribution
 - Experience feelings of fear, vulnerability, and concern over being labeled “abnormal” or different from peers, causing withdrawal from friends/family.
- A traumatic event in adolescence may foster a radical shift in the way these children think about the world.

Exposure to trauma over time

- **Single** exposure to an event may cause
 - Jumpiness
 - Intrusive thoughts
 - Interrupted sleep
 - Nightmares
 - Anger
 - Moodiness
 - Social Withdrawal
 - Disorganized or agitated behavior

Any of which can interfere with concentration and memory
- **Chronic** exposure can:
 - Adversely affect attention, memory, and cognition
 - Reduce ability to focus organize and process information
 - Interfere with effective problem solving and/or planning
 - Result in overwhelming feelings of frustration and anxiety

Trauma effects in the classroom

How might a traumatized student act in class?

- Fails to understand directions
- Over-reacts to:
 - Comments or criticism from teachers and peers
 - Noises (startles at bells, slamming doors)
 - Physical contact
 - Environmental cues (low lighting, sudden movements)
- Has difficulty with authority and redirection
- Misreads context; fails to connect cause with effect
- Clingy and worried about safety
- Distracted and unable to complete work/homework
- Irritable or angry
- Uncomfortable, in pain, or sick



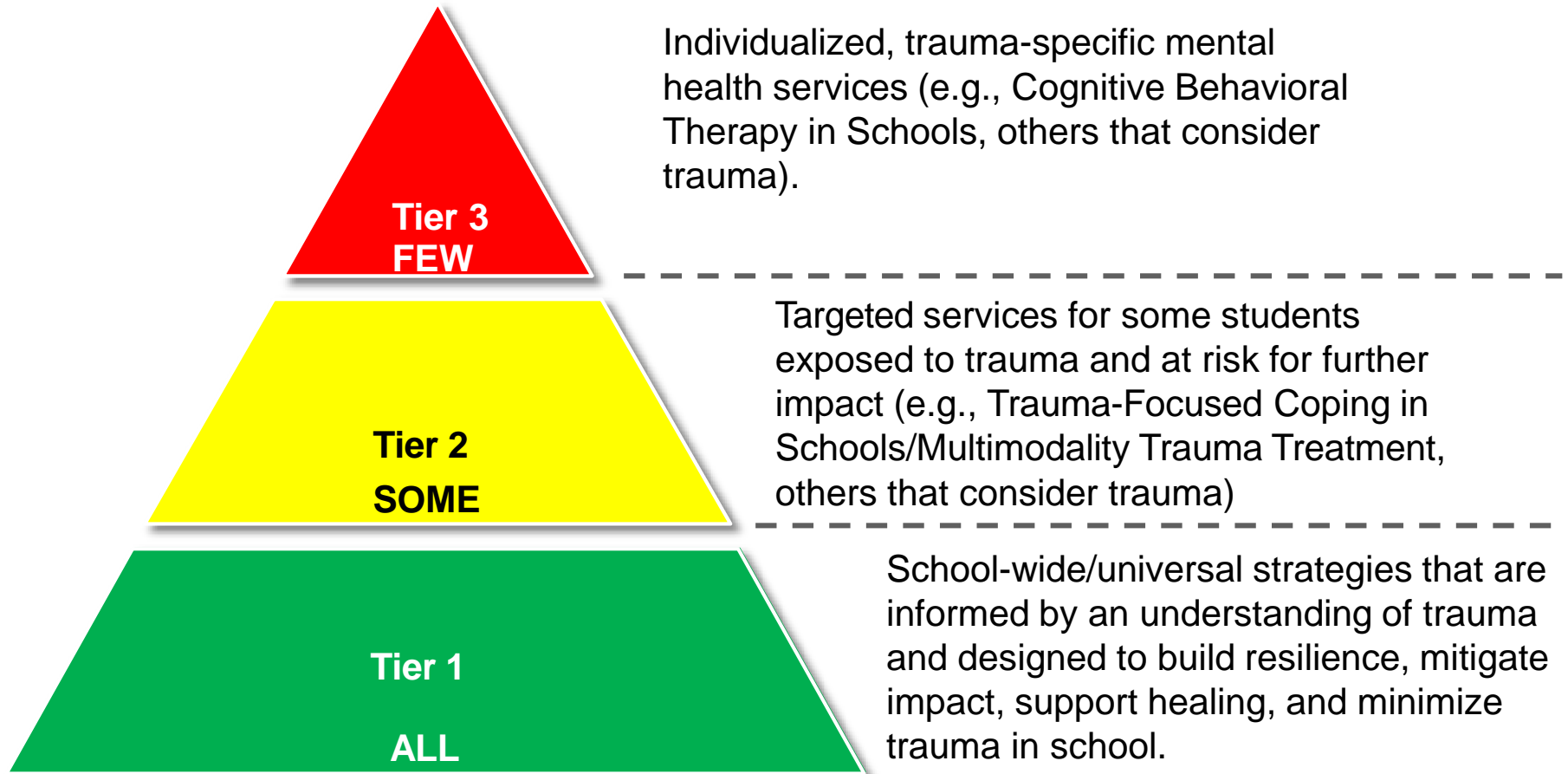
Positive Behavioral Interventions & Support (PBIS)

- A systems approach for establishing the **social culture** and individualized behavioral supports needed for schools to be effective learning environments for **all** students.
- Evidence-based features of SWPBS
 - Prevention
 - Define and teach positive social expectations
 - Acknowledge positive behavior
 - Arrange consistent consequences for problem behavior
 - On-going collection and use of data for decision-making
 - Continuum of intensive, individual interventions.
 - Administrative leadership – Team-based implementation (Systems that support effective practices)

PBIS and Trauma informed schools

- Trauma informed schools:
 - Acknowledge the prevalence of traumatic occurrence in students' lives.
 - Create a flexible framework that provides universal supports.
 - Are sensitive to unique needs of students.
 - Are mindful of avoiding re-traumatization.
- Schools that implement trauma informed practices increase trauma awareness by ensuring school staff, educators, and administrators:
 - Recognize the potential effects of trauma on education (e.g., attendance, grades, test scores, classroom behavior, etc.).
 - Identify students who are in need of help due to exposure to trauma.
 - Consider students' trauma histories and needs in every aspect of service delivery.
- A trauma informed school is most effectively created and maintained when positive universal supports and strategies are part of daily school programming.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)



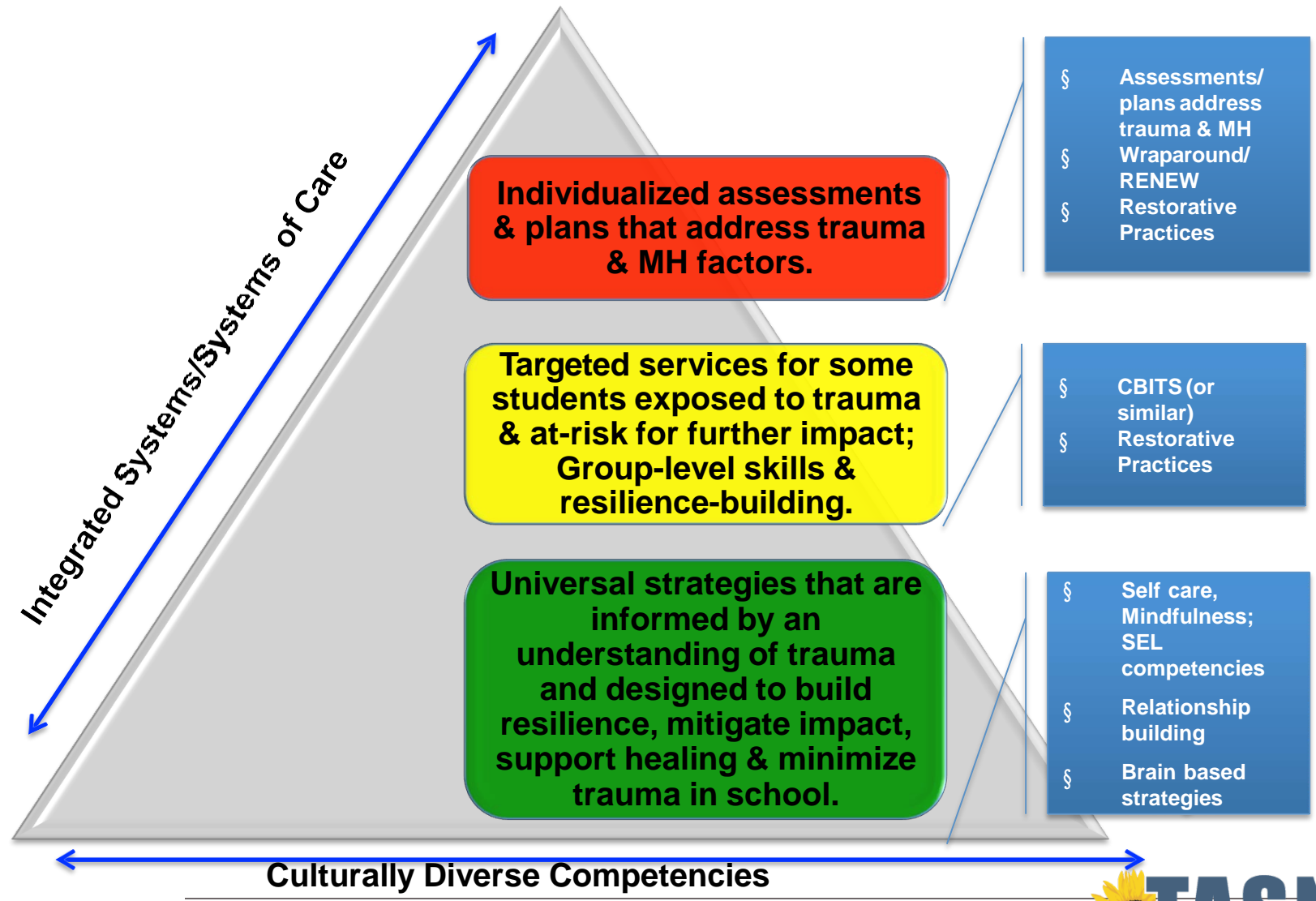
Trauma Sensitive Practices - Core Domains

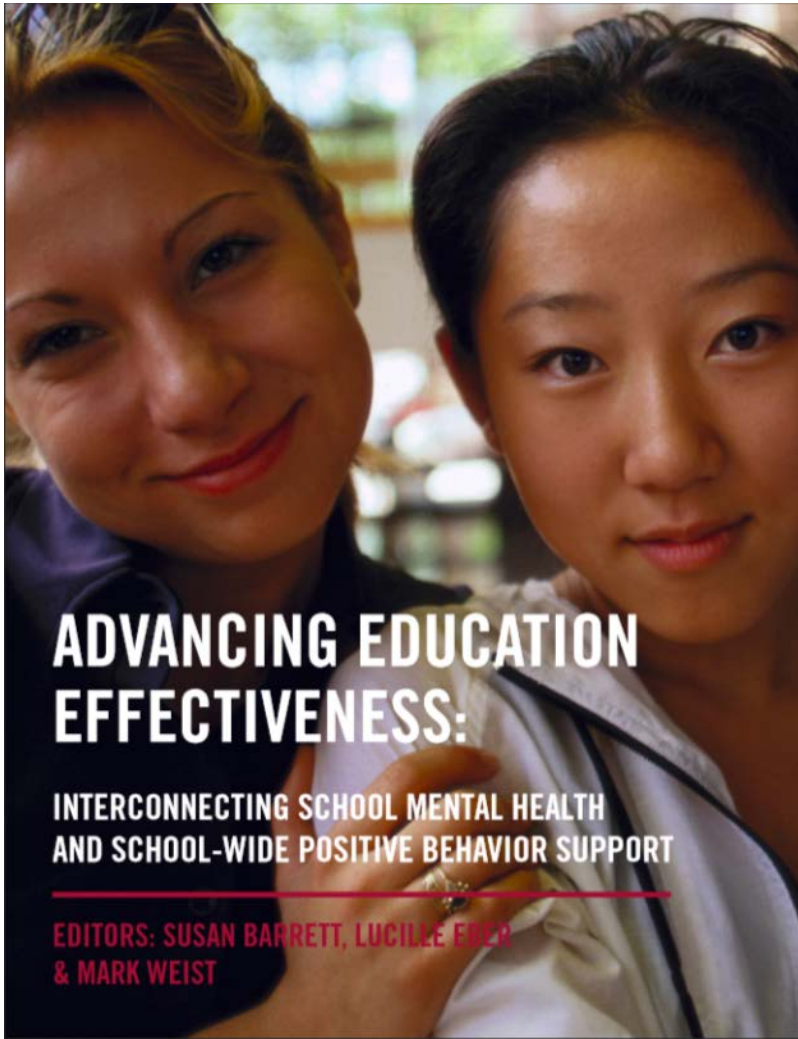
- 1 Supporting Staff Development
- 2 Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment
- 3 Assessing Needs and Providing Services
- 4 Building Skills
- 5 Collaborating with Students and Families
- 6 Adapting Policies and Procedures

MTSS and Trauma Sensitivity

Multi-tiered System of Support	Trauma-Sensitivity
Tier 3: Functional Behavioral Assessments and Individualized plans and supports.	Tier 3: Trauma-related factors are considered in individual assessments and plans. School provides or connects to trauma-specific mental health services.
Tier 2: Behavioral and academic skill development groups.	Tier 2: Group-level skill-building considers trauma and key factors for resilience-building.
Tier 1: Creating a positive school culture, teaching social skills, positively reinforcing prosocial behaviors, structuring the environment to prevent undesirable behaviors.	Tier 1: Training all staff on trauma and its impact. Identifying and minimizing trauma-related triggers. Upholding core principles of that support positive school culture. Teaching self-regulation.

Culturally-Responsive, Trauma-Informed School Communities within MTSS





**ADVANCING EDUCATION
EFFECTIVENESS:**

**INTERCONNECTING SCHOOL MENTAL HEALTH
AND SCHOOL-WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORT**

**EDITORS: SUSAN BARRETT, LUCILLE EBER
& MARK WEIST**

**Advancing
Education
Effectiveness:
Interconnecting
School Mental
Health &
School-Wide
Positive Behavior
Support**

*Editors: Susan Barrett,
Lucille Eber & Mark Weist*

*National PBIS TA Center
Center for School Metal Health
IDEA Partnership NASDSE*

<https://www.pbis.org/school/school-mental-health/interconnected-systems>

Using the PBIS Framework to Support Students' Mental Health

Tier 3

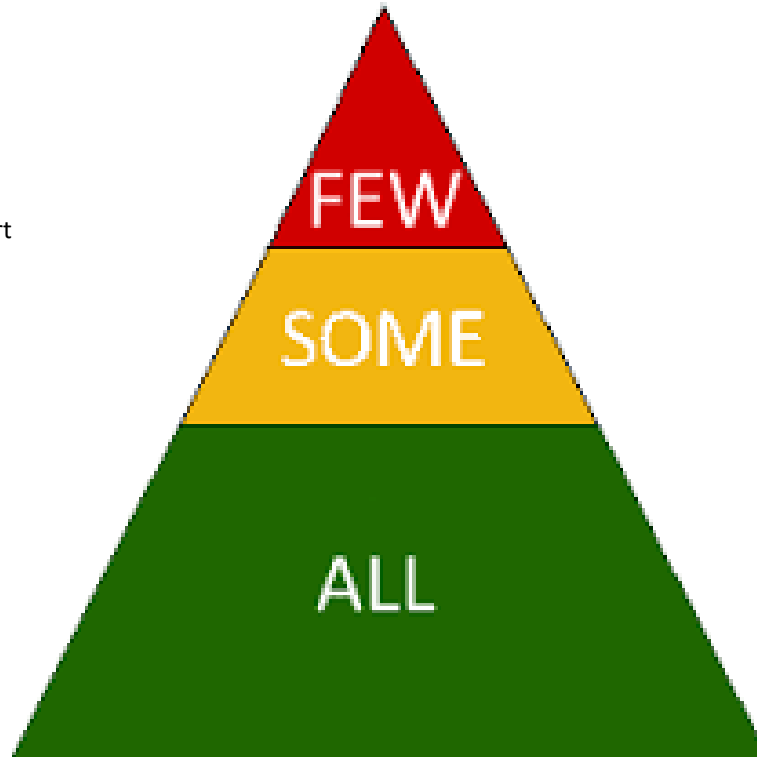
- Individualized services
- Case management
- Coordination with community-based treatment
- Parent & caregiver training & support

Tier 2

- Adult mentors
- Small groups for SEL & CBT
- Community referrals
- Parent & caregiver education
- Monitoring

Tier 1

- Instruction on SEL, mental health & suicide prevention
- Sensory opportunities to manage anxiety
- Predictable routines
- Choices in learning
- Physical activity breaks
- Adults model emotional regulation
- "Calm zones"



Tier 3

- Comprehensive FBA & BIP
- 504 plans & IEPs
- Wrap-around programs
- Staff avoid "trauma triggers"
- Lethal means restriction

Tier 2

- Brief FBA & BIP
- Building Consultation Team
- Classroom supports
- Screening/SBIRT
- Pupil services accessible & approachable
- Staff awareness of higher-risk groups

Tier 1

- School policies promote safe climate
- Proactive behavior management
- Discipline system minimizes exclusion
- Comprehensive School Counseling Model
- School builds environmental assets
- Professional development
- Classroom consultation

How do we see these students?

Uninformed view

- Anger management problems
- May have ADHD
- *Choosing* to act out & disrupt classroom (e.g., disrespectful or manipulative)
- Uncontrollable, destructive
- Non-responsive

Uninformed response

- Student needs consequences to correct behavior or maybe an ADHD evaluation

Trauma-informed view

- Maladaptive responses (in school setting)
- Seeking to get needs met
- Difficulty regulating emotions
- Lacking necessary skills
- Negative view of world (e.g., adults cannot be trusted)
- Trauma response was triggered

Trauma-informed response

- Student needs to learn skills to regulate emotions & we need to provide support

Foster Youth, Trauma & Education

- Over 70% of foster youth aged 7 and above present with trauma and/or mental health symptoms.
- 20-25% of adolescent foster youth present with significant externalizing behaviors.
- 10-15% of adolescent foster youth present with significant internalizing behaviors.
- Children who were exposed to four or more adverse experiences were 32 times more likely to have learning and behavioral problems than non-traumatized children.
- Maltreated children are more likely than their peers to be retained a grade, have irregular attendance, and be placed in special education classes.
- Children with higher exposure to violence have lower grade point averages and more absences than children with less exposure to violence.

Jim Casey Youth Opportunities Initiative: Issue Brief #5, *Trauma-Informed Practice with Young People in Foster Care*, available at: <http://www.aecf.org/resources/trauma-informed-practice-with-young-people-in-foster-care/>

Maura McInerney, Esq and Amy McKlindon, M.S.W., *Unlocking the Door to Learning: Trauma-Informed Classrooms & Transformational Schools*, Education Law Center, available at <http://www.elc-pa.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Trauma-Informed-in-Schools-Classrooms-FINAL-December2014-2.pdf>

What Does A Trauma Sensitive School Look Like?



- All staff:
 - Understand what trauma is
 - Understand how trauma manifests itself
 - Adjust their teaching and discipline styles to meet the needs of traumatized students
 - Know where to turn and what resources are available for students they suspect have experienced trauma

Changing the Question:

From “What is wrong with you?” to “What is going on? How are you feeling?”

Behavior	Feeling it is Masking
Oppositional Behavior	Fear of Rejection/Abandonment
Outbursts	Overwhelmed
Anger	Hurt
Depression	Lack of Self Worth
Withdrawal/Absences	Avoidance of Emotions
Argumentativeness	Testing Relationship
Escalation	Triggered Trauma Memories
Defiance of Authority	Need for Control

- **Create A Sense of Safety**
 - Provide a safe environment: predictable structure with consistent routines
 - Provide clear pathways to emotional support for students who elect to utilize it
- **Self-Regulation Techniques**
 - Teach/Model/Practice
 - Breathing, taking breaks, writing down feelings
- **Provide a Sense of Control**
 - Give students choices and not ultimatums
 - Engage them in a semi-private conversation, instead of in front of classmates
 - Keep verbal interactions calm and use simple, direct language

• Foster Connections

- Create opportunities to develop meaningful relationships between peers including through classroom group work activities or encouraging club/sport participation
- If a student is struggling, empathize with their situation
- Allow student to share their experiences on their own timeline
- Offer support (academic or emotional)
- If a student needs to be removed from a situation, don't isolate them. Make sure an adult is always nearby to provide support when the student is ready to talk or to help them regulate themselves

ASSESSMENTS

Universal vs Specific or Both?

- Universal Mental Health Screeners (MTSS Tier 1)
 - Examples
 - CoVitality APP
 - Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire
- Specific (MTSS Tiers 2 & 3)
 - Examples
 - PTSD Reaction Index
 - Coping Responses Inventory
 - Child Dissociative Checklist

INNOVATIVE APPROACHES/PROGRAMS

Trauma-Informed School Frameworks/Models

Trauma Sensitive Schools

The Heart of Learning and Teaching

Neurosequential Model in Education (NME)

Risking Connection

Sanctuary Model

UCSF HEARTS Program

KVC Trauma-Informed School Curriculum

Smart Start

Helping Traumatized Children Learn

A Parent and Policy Agenda



Published by the National Center for Education Policy, U.S. Department of Education

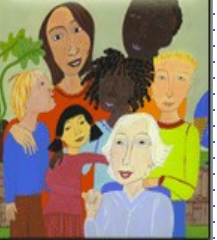
Helping Traumatized Children Learn 2

Creating and Advocating for Trauma-Sensitive Schools



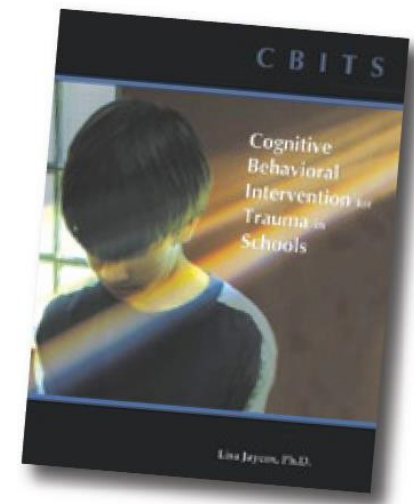
Report published by the National Center for Education Policy, U.S. Department of Education

The Heart of Learning and Teaching: Compassion, Resiliency, and Academic Success



Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)

- School-based intervention developed by UCLA, RAND, & LAUSD
 - Delivered to students experiencing significant distress due to trauma
 - Implementers = MSWs, licensed psychologists, or interns
 - Tailored for the school setting and diverse populations
 - 10 weekly student group sessions, 1 individual (1-on-1) session
 - Two parent education meetings
- Cognitive behavioral techniques
 - Education about common reactions to trauma
 - Relaxation training: imaginal exposure
 - Cognitive therapy: fear thermometer
 - Real life exposure: fear hierarchy and coping strategies
 - Stress or trauma memory: drawing/writing exercises
 - Social problem-solving: HOT seat



CBITS Study in San Francisco Unified School District

- Selected **12 middle schools** in neighborhoods with elevated violence, crime, and poverty rates
- Each school has at least 1 SSW, a certified clinician
- Each participating school receives:
 - **Resources** and **support** to implement CBITS
 - Yearly **stipends** (\$1,000 per school)
 - Ongoing **staff education** and consultation
 - Training for *all* SSWs (including non-participating)
 - Weekly clinical supervision
 - Local **Resource Guide** for trauma services
 - **Data** to support applications for potential funding



Orange County Office of Education

The CCSESA Project

- Improving Cross System Collaboration between Mental Health, Education, and Child Welfare through funding from the Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) through CalMHSA to the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) Regions.
- Increase in Mental Health practitioners who are trained in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior Therapy (TF-CBT).
- Pilot tests of utilizing a Trauma Informed Assessment Tool for children first entering the child welfare system.
- Developing a Training for School Administrators, Child Welfare, CASA, Caregivers, etc. on trauma, learning and behavior

UCSF HEARTS

- School-wide, prevention and intervention approach
 - Increasing student wellness, engagement, and success in school
 - Building staff and school system capacities to support trauma-impacted students by increasing knowledge and practice of trauma-informed classroom and school-wide strategies
 - Promoting staff wellness through addressing burnout and secondary traumatic stress
 - Interrupting the school to prison pipeline through the reduction of racial disparities in disciplinary office referrals, suspensions, and expulsions.
- Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)
- Addresses Trauma and Chronic Stress
 - Students
 - Staff
 - School Organization
- Implementing trauma-informed practices, procedures, policies
- Systems change of 2-5 years

UCSF HEARTS Multi-Tiered System of Supports

Intensive/Tertiary Intervention (5%)

Trauma-specific psychotherapy with students + consultation with teachers
IEP consultation / Trauma-informed crisis management

Early/Secondary Intervention (15%)

Participation in Care Team Meetings for at-risk students and school-wide issues
Trauma-informed school-wide positive behavioral support system
Trauma-informed, restorative discipline policies
Teacher wellness groups

Primary Prevention (80%)

Capacity building with school staff

Training on effects of complex trauma in schools and trauma-informed practices
Promote staff wellness and address stress, burnout, & vicarious trauma

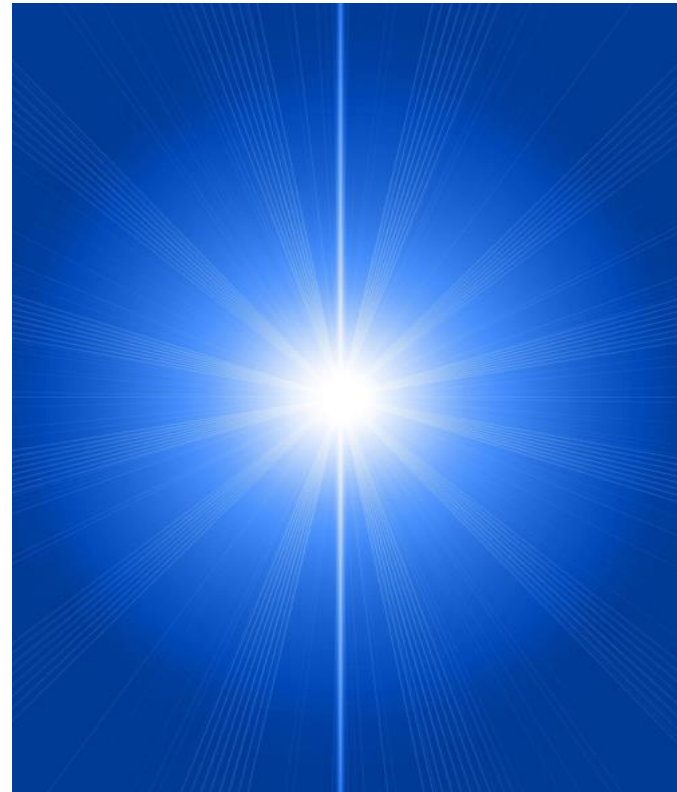
Use of trauma-informed lens to augment universal supports

Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
Health education on coping with stress
Safe and supportive school climate / Educational equity
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) curricula
Restorative Practices / Restorative Justice

J. Dorado (2016),
UCSF Healthy
Environments
and Response to
Trauma in
Schools (HEARTS)

A Trauma-Informed Intervention - SPARCS?

Structured
Psychotherapy for
Adolescents
Responding to
Chronic
Stress



DeRosa, R., Habib, M., Pelcovitz, D., Rathus, J., Sonnenklar, J., Ford, J., Kaplan, S. (2005). *SPARCS: Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress: A Trauma-Focused Guide*. Great Neck, NY: North Shore- Long Island Jewish Health system, Inc.

A Typical SPARCS Session

- Check-in
- Practice from last session
- Mindfulness exercise
- Session-specific content & activities
 - Example: Bottle about to Burst
- Check-out
- Remind to practice

DeRosa, R., Habib, M., Pelcovitz, D., Rathus, J., Sonnenklar, J., Ford, J., Kaplan, S. (2005). *SPARCS: Structured Psychotherapy for Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress: A Trauma-Focused Guide*. Great Neck, NY: North Shore-Long Island Jewish Health system, Inc.

RESOURCES

- AAP Parenting After Trauma: Understanding Your Child's Needs, A Guide to Foster and Adoptive Parents, <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/healthy-foster-care-america/documents/familyhandout.pdf>
- Alliance for Children's Rights <http://kids-alliance.org/edtoolkit/>
- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools: An Evidence-based Program for Students Exposed to Trauma www.cbitsprogram.org
- Child Welfare Information Gateway: Parenting a child who has experienced trauma, <https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/child-trauma.pdf>
- PBIS and Trauma Informed Schools <https://www.ocde.us/HealthyMinds/Documents/Resource%20Page/PBIS%20and%20Trauma%20informed%20schools.pdf>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network Educator's Toolkit (including Complex Trauma Measures) <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-trauma-toolkit-educators>
- Project CoVitality <http://www.project-covitality.info/>
- Safe Supportive Learning <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Trauma%20OLE%205%2025%2016%20Web.pdf>
- SPARCS <http://sparcstraining.com/index.php>
- TASN <http://ksdetasn.org/>
- UCSF HEARTS: Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools <http://hearts.ucsf.edu/>