Trauma-Informed Social-Emotional Learning in the Classroom

A WEBINAR FOR EDUCATORS
March 19, 2020
Welcome
Transforming Education

Mission
Transforming Education partners with school systems to support educators in fostering the development of the whole child so that all students, particularly those from underserved populations, can thrive.

Vision
At Transforming Education (TransformEd), we envision a future in which all students become thriving adults, able and empowered to lead personally meaningful lives and to contribute to their communities.
Our Partners

We’ve partnered with schools and districts serving over 1 million students across 20 states. We also partner with other research and practice organizations to expand our impact.
Akira Gutierrez, M.A.
Child & Youth Development Fellow
TransformEd

Nikki Murphy, Ed.S, LICSW, MSW
Director of Social-Emotional Learning
North Andover Public Schools
Check out Monique’s blog post on our site

It Takes a Village: Building a Trauma-Informed & Responsive School

Every day, students across the country attend school, where they are expected to perform to their best abilities. There are clear standards for what constitutes the “best,” and that often leaves children who are struggling with emotional regulation or the impacts of trauma behind. How to help these students who are clearly struggling with emotional regulation and executive functioning skills remains a challenge even for the best teachers. Often, these students are labeled as “disruptive,” “bullies,” or “behavioral problems”. In reality, these students are searching for stronger connections and meaning without knowing the best strategies to find them. Even if only a small portion of the student body has experienced trauma, the entire school will be impacted by the effects. For this reason, it is important that a trauma-informed school takes a school-wide, collaborative approach.

www.transformingeducation.org/resources/our-blog
What is trauma-informed social-emotional learning (SEL)?

Trauma-informed SEL is an approach to fostering youths’ social-emotional development that seeks to create a safe and reliable environment where students who have experienced adversities and trauma:

• Feel supported
• Are welcome to explore their strengths and identities; exercise their agency
• Can develop meaningful, positive relationships with adults and peers in their learning community
• Have access to the mental health supports they need
A trauma-informed, SEL, cultural awareness model of supports allows (educators) to create a safe environment to address trauma and SEL skill build, while also tapping into the strengths and opportunities of students’ culture.

Dr. Gregory Leskin, Ph.D
Program Director at UCLA/Duke University
National Center for Child Traumatic Stress
KEY TERMS

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Events experienced or witnessed in childhood that are potentially traumatic; extreme adversities experienced in childhood.

Includes experiences of abuse, neglect, or violence, and includes aspects of a child’s environment that can undermine their sense of safety, stability, and bonding.

Source: CDC, 2019.
What is trauma?

An experience of one or more overwhelmingly stressful adverse events (or ACEs) where one’s ability to cope is dramatically undermined.

The event can be witnessed or experienced directly and causes the person to have an extreme psychological and/or physiological response due to feeling terror and/or perceived helplessness.

Sources: NCTSN, 2008; SAMHSA-NRSA, n.d.
CDC’s 6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach

“Adopting a trauma-informed approach is not accomplished through any single particular technique or checklist. It requires constant attention, caring awareness, sensitivity...” - CDC

Source: CDC, 2018
The power of positive experiences for children

Source: Turnaround for Children
Key Trauma-informed SEL Practices

- Create predictable routines
- Build strong & supportive relationships
- Empower students' agency
- Support the development of self-regulation skills
- Provide opportunities to explore individual and community identities
Certain strategies and supports can help children who have experienced traumatic events adapt to transitions in the classroom a little easier so that they feel safe and ready to learn.

**Sample Strategy**

- Be transparent with students about any changes to an established schedule.
- Model your own self-regulation skills as you flexibly adapt to any changes in the day.

Create predictable routines

Find additional strategies for building safe and inclusive spaces in our SEL Integration Approach resource.
Strong relationships can provide the responsiveness, scaffolding, and protection that can support children who are feeling the effects of traumatic events.

Sample strategy

- Spend two minutes a day getting to know a student for ten consecutive days. Invite other colleagues in the school to get to know and connect with students in your classroom.

Find additional resources for building relationships in our series, “Fostering Strong Relationships in Schools.”
Help students feel seen, heard, and empowered. Find ways to support their goals and efforts to build their self-efficacy and exercise their agency.

**Sample strategy**

- Collaborate with your students to help them problem-solve through challenges in the classroom. For example, help students create **if-then plans** to prepare for upcoming projects or anticipate how to navigate challenges.

Find additional strategies for supporting students in our [Self-Efficacy Toolkit](#) and [Agency resources](#).
Support the development of self-regulation skills

Provide opportunities for students to develop and practice emotional self-regulation skills. It’s also important to practice developing and using your own self-regulation skills!

Sample strategy

• Help students develop emotional awareness and monitoring by using a Mood Meter as a tool to check in with their emotions throughout the day. Model how you use it yourself!

Find additional resources and strategies in our Self-Management and Mindfulness toolkits.
Help students strengthen and explore their own identities and the perspectives of others through various activities that promote agency and civic engagement.

Sample Strategy

• **Use current topics to foster social awareness** culminating in a special project based in the local community.

Source: Simmons (2019).

Find additional resources and strategies in our Social Awareness Toolkit.
District Level Implementation

Moving Towards Trauma-Informed Districts and Schools

Nikki Murphy, Ed.S, LICSW, MSW
Director of Social-Emotional Learning
North Andover Public Schools
District Plan:
Organize, Implement, Improve

Focus Area 1: Build Foundational Support and Plan (ORGANIZE)

Focus Area 2: Strengthen Adult SEL Competencies and Capacity (IMPLEMENT)

Focus Area 3: Promote SEL for Students (IMPLEMENT)

Focus Area 4: Practice Continuous Improvement (IMPROVE)
Focus Area 1: Build Foundational Support and Plan

- Shared vision and plan
- Communication
- Organizational Structure
- Aligned Resources
Organizational Structures: Teaming

- Teaming at district and school level
- District Strategic Plan, SEL Action Plans, SIPs
- Who will deliver PD?
- Who will champion the work?
Messaging and Buy-in....What resonates with key stakeholders?

- Trauma-informed is best practice- tier 1
- Top 3 clinical populations: trauma, anxiety, depression
- Teachers/admin least educated about MH population
- Tier 3 students- OOD cost
- Growing # of Tier 2 kids
- Data- Use Toolkit
Implement:

Strengthen Adult Competency and Capacity

- Central office expertise
- Professional learning
- Adult competence
- Staff trust, community and efficacy
Educators, Compassion Fatigue and Burnout

- The importance of self-care
- The toolkit addresses this issue
- ProQOL: Professional Quality of Life Measure (proqol.org)
- Just naming that it happens is a trauma-informed approach
Navigating Challenges During COVID-19 Pandemic
Tips for helping students navigate these challenging circumstances

• Be aware that students might process this stress in various ways

• Keep an open dialogue with your students; provide opportunities for students to share what’s on their minds

Tips for helping students navigate these challenging circumstances

- Find ways to build and maintain teacher-student and peer relationships during these periods of distance learning

- Practice naming and talking through any emotions they’re experiencing

*Emoji meter*

Source: National Educators for Restorative Practices
Tips for helping students navigate these challenging circumstances

• Plan for helping students readjust to schedules during distance learning and when you return to the classroom:
  • Revisit schedules & routines
  • Check in with students and families – be cognizant that families may be experiencing new hardships since you last saw them
  • Seek professional support if students show signs of trauma that do not resolve quickly
Tips for helping students navigate these challenging circumstances

• Look for the helpers!
  • Ask students to recall how people in their communities are helping one another

• Practice gratitude & compassion
  • Ask students to think about how they might say ”thank you” to someone who’s helped them or their family
  • Talk to students about how they can help in small ways

Find other ideas from the Greater Good’s, ”How to Keep the Greater Good in Mind During the Coronavirus Outbreak”
Q & A
THANK YOU to our colleagues, including educators, trauma specialists, and school counselors for your thoughtfulness and guidance in developing this resource.

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Contact Us

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