



Touchstone Health Services

ERICA CHAVEZ, MA, LAC

DIRECTOR OF PREVENTION AND SCHOOL BASED SERVICES

LYDIA COSSIO, BA, BHT

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF PREVENTION

Learning Objectives



- ▶ Increase awareness of trauma and its impact
- ▶ Discuss strategic areas to examine to shift school culture to trauma informed environment including:
 - professional development
 - discipline approaches
 - safety/creating trauma informed classrooms and interventions
 - connections to mental health resources
 - looking at secondary trauma/self-care for educators
- ▶ Identify resources to help a campus solidify their approach to implementing a trauma informed school

Understanding Trauma

- ▶ Definition: Trauma results from the **actual or perceived** harm to one's physical, psychological, or emotional well-being
- ▶ It can be a singular event, or a set of on-going circumstances, that overwhelms a person's ability to cope (or "a failure to recover" Miller, 2013)
- ▶ Trauma is **subjective** and considered an **adverse physiological response** (nctsn.org)
 - ▶ *It is not the actual event that defines trauma-* two people can experience the same adverse experience and have differing responses



Impact of Trauma on Children

Brain Development

- ▶ Early childhood trauma, or chronic stress, can alter brain development
- ▶ The brain is most vulnerable and “plastic” during the first months of infancy and also in adolescence
- ▶ Pathways and connections made in neural development contribute to behaviors (developingchild.Harvard.edu)



Behavior

- ▶ Toxic stress in early life and childhood can establish the “fight, flight, freeze” response as the default state of mind and body
- ▶ This can translate to: reactivity, aggression, fear, impulsive behavior and more
- ▶ Further, it also has serious physical health implications in adulthood (i.e. HBP)
- ▶ Video Toxic Stress by Harvard University: [Developing Brain-Toxic Stress](#)

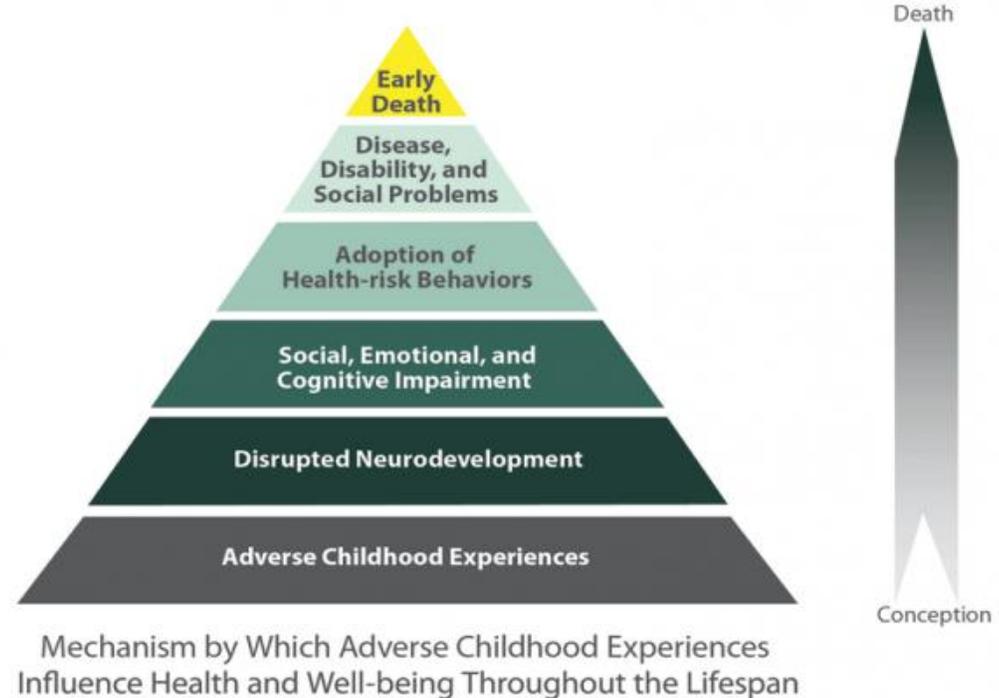
Adverse Childhood Experiences- ACEs



- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are stressful or traumatic events, including abuse and neglect.
- ACEs impact social, emotional, and brain development in early childhood (they have shown to physically alter genes and neural connections)
- Adverse Childhood Experiences have been linked to risky health behaviors, chronic health conditions, low life potential, and early death (SAMHSA, 2014)

Adverse Childhood Experiences Statistics

- ▶ Arizona Children 12-17:
 - ▶ 44.4% Two or more ACEs
 - ▶ 30.5% National average two or more ACEs
- ▶ 70,000 children in Arizona have five or more ACEs
- ▶ 4.21% of youth in Maricopa County have 5 or more ACEs



<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html>

<http://azsba.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/830am-Resource-ACEs-in-Arizona.pdf>

Results of Trauma on Learning



- ▶ Difficulty focusing
- ▶ Harder time understanding and processing academic content and classroom instruction and recalling information
- ▶ Lack of accountability for mistakes while struggling to seek help to solve a problem
- ▶ Difficulty maintaining healthy relationships
- ▶ Students with 6 or more ACEs have a near 100% chance of being diagnosed with a learning disability
- ▶ Traumatic stress impacts the brain's ability to respond to stressors and maintain emotions effectively.

Souers, K. & Hall, P. (2016). *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom*.

Becoming a Trauma Informed School

Whole School Approach **4R's** to Trauma

- ▶ **Realize** impact of trauma
- ▶ **Recognize** signs of trauma (triggers)
- ▶ **Respond** in trauma informed manner (safety, security)
- ▶ **Resist** retraumatizing

Training for staff

- ▶ Understanding trauma: including impact on behavior and learning
- ▶ ACEs study and outcome
- ▶ Identifying triggers
- ▶ Interventions
- ▶ De-escalation techniques

Becoming a Trauma Informed School

▶ Approach to Discipline

- ▶ Behavior as a symptom of a problem-not the problem!
- ▶ Anticipation and prevention is better than being reactive
 - ▶ PBIS
- ▶ Shift from “what is wrong with you” to understanding and asking “what happened to you?”
- ▶ Examples

▶ Restorative Justice

- ▶ *Restorative justice is an alternate method of disciplining students that seeks to balance the process between being too permissive and being too punitive.*
- ▶ *The goal of restorative justice is to work with students (the victims and the accused) to come to a solution rather than simply handing down punishment.*

http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/classroom_qa_with_larry_ferlazzo/2016/02/response_how_to_practice_restorative_justice_in_schools.html

Becoming a Trauma Informed School

- ▶ Mindfulness: awareness of present thoughts, feelings, bodily sensations, and environment
 - ▶ Age Appropriate
 - ▶ Fun activities
 - ▶ Modeling
- ▶ Reflection
 - ▶ debriefing after challenging incidents so that you are clear in your mind about what happened and the intensity of your feelings can subside.
 - ▶ Reflect on the child's behavior
- ▶ Regulation: Manage your own emotions and responses by:
 - ▶ knowing the child might make you angry or upset, in order to recreate familiar relationship patterns
 - ▶ knowing that strong emotions are contagious
 - ▶ knowing what your own trigger points are and what upsets you the most
 - ▶ taking time to calm yourself when you do get angry or hurt
 - ▶ calling for assistance, not trying to do it all alone
 - ▶ having clear plans and practices/strategies worked out in advance

Becoming a Trauma Informed School

▶ Creating a Trauma Informed Classroom

- ▶ Break Box
- ▶ Feelings Charts
- ▶ Sensory Strategies
- ▶ Breathing Exercises
- ▶ Safe Time In Space
- ▶ Maintain Routines - Schedule on the board
- ▶ Buddy System and peer support
- ▶ Upstairs brain, downstairs brain

▶ Items to consider:

- ▶ Starting the day, ending the day
- ▶ Field trips
- ▶ Fire and active shooting drills
- ▶ Room set up
- ▶ Unfamiliar volunteers
- ▶ Environmental triggers: conflict, frustration, pressure, over stimulation, physical needs

Becoming a Trauma Informed School



- ▶ Better connections with parents
- ▶ Connections to Resources
 - ▶ Community Coalitions and Networking
 - ▶ Behavioral Health Providers
 - ▶ School Based Services
 - ▶ Community Resources
 - ▶ Find Help Phoenix: <https://www.findhelpphx.org/>
 - ▶ Arizona 211 <https://211arizona.org/>

Touchstone Partnering with Schools

▶ Prevention Programming

- ▶ CARE Coalition
- ▶ School Mental Health Task Force formation
- ▶ Drug Education and Prevention
- ▶ Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program
 - ▶ Trauma informed curriculum reviews

▶ Health Promotion

- ▶ Evidence-Based programming:
 - ▶ Teen Dating Violence
 - ▶ Sexual Health
 - ▶ Substance Abuse
 - ▶ Parenting Programs
 - ▶ Eating Disorders
 - ▶ Anxiety/Depression
 - ▶ Health and Nutrition

School-Based Services



- ▶ School Based Services (SBS) provides comprehensive behavioral services for youth and their families in the youth's school (or at another convenient site for the youth and family) through a partnership with the school district. The idea is to provide youth help to address behavioral and mental health concerns and bring together the family and the school in how best to address and support the youth.
 - ▶ Addressing Tier 3 youth with therapeutic needs
 - ▶ Virtual Site of Touchstone
 - ▶ Reducing barriers to treatment

Self Care for Educators

- ▶ Realize school staff may have ACEs and trauma
- ▶ Have a resource to direct them to (EAPs, support groups, etc.)
- ▶ Be aware and look for signs of compassion fatigue/vicarious trauma
- ▶ Attend to self care
 - ▶ Work with staff on identifying effective self care strategies



Resources

- ▶ [Whatsmyacescore.com](https://whatsmyacescore.com)
- ▶ ACESTOOHigh.com
- ▶ Cdc.gov/ace
- ▶ samhsa.gov/children/awareness-day/2018/resource-list-traumatic-stress
- ▶ nctsn.org/resources/creating-supporting-and-sustaining-trauma-informed-schools-system-framework
- ▶ traumasensitiveschools.org
- ▶ developingchild.harvard.edu



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Questions

