



Becoming Trauma-Informed in the Classroom

The Heart of Learning

What is Trauma?

Any event or series of events that is upsetting or that is real or perceived as being physically or emotionally unsafe or threatening. These events disrupt feelings of safety and cause lasting adverse effects.

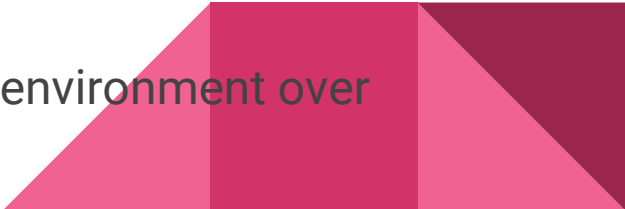
Physical trauma-serious threat of injury or danger to the body

Mental trauma-upsetting and frightening thoughts and feelings

Acute Trauma- one time experience of a traumatic event

Chronic Trauma-multiple experiences that are traumatic

Complex Trauma-exposure to consistently dysfunctional environment over periods of time and the impact it carries.



Truth about trauma

“Child traumatic stress occurs when children and adolescents are exposed to traumatic events and traumatic situations, and when this exposure overwhelms their ability to cope with what they have experienced.” (NCSN, 2008)



Types of Traumatic Experiences

Natural Disasters: Tornados, Hurricanes, Earthquakes

Life Events: Foster Care, Illness, Divorce, Violence, Accidents, Pandemics

Grief: Loss of a friend or family member, loss of a pet

Human Trauma: Physical, Sexual Abuse, Neglect, Family Violence, School Violence

Demographic/Situational: Financial, Racial



Adverse Childhood Experiences

Using the ACES assessment

<https://www.madinamerica.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ACES-questionnaire.jpg>

Dr. Nadine Burkett Harris Surgeon General of California

<https://www.nbcnews.com/news/nbcblk/california-s-first-surgeon-general-screen-every-student-childhood-trauma-n1064286>



Adverse Childhood Experiences



Are Our Kids Really Traumatized?

According to the National Institute of Health, one in five youths ages 13-18 experiences a serious mental health condition, and of chronic cases of mental illness, 50 percent begin by age 14. Yet, on average, it takes 8-10 years from the onset of symptoms until intervention. How can schools play a stronger role in identifying potential issues and helping affected students thrive both academically and socially?




Brain's Response to Trauma

When stress hormones flood the brain, they negatively affect a child's ability to concentrate, process language, recall memories, sequence information, and make decisions.

Traumatic events and related emotions are stored in the right side of the brain. Where there is no language, logic, or order.

When children feel fear, the right side of the brain responds and the left side of the brain is inaccessible. The thinking side of the brain, the left side is shut down. This is why we have an emotional reaction. A traumatized brain is in a continual state of chaos and disorganization.



Relationship Matters

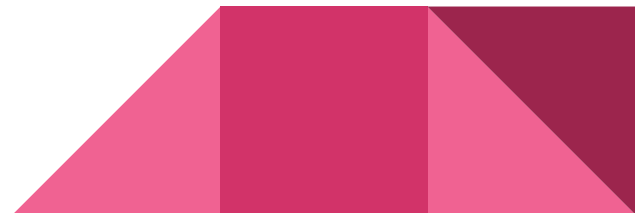
“Children don’t care about how much you know, until they know how much you care.”

How to create relationships with your students:

Get to know them.

Set compassionate boundaries.

Assume people are doing the best they can.



Am I safe or do I feel threatened?

Our brain scans for safety 4 times per second. Is it safe, am I safe?

When the Amygdala, the emotional brain, is elevated, the pre-frontal cortex, the thinking brain, is inaccessible.

When our children are traumatized, they cannot think clearly, so they move into fight, flight, or freeze.

This explains why they act out, leave, or do nothing.



Brain image



Response to Trauma

What is Fight, Flight , Freeze and Collapse?

Hyperarousal occurs when stress has produced neurobiological changes in the brain causing physical, social, academic, and emotional development to be impeded.



How do we heal the traumatized brain?

Relationships- Belonging

Felt-Safety

Play

Co-regulation

See and Hear one another

Compassion-Acknowledgement



Tools for Creating Trauma Sensitive School/Classroom

As a classroom teacher, how can I help my students?

Create a morning meeting- to create structure, routine and predictability.

Maintain high expectations, reasonable limits, and consistent routines

Emotion Regulating Practices- Brain breaks, yoga movement, regulating exercises, calming music

Provide a classroom calming area

Know the campus “hot spots”



Interventions and processes

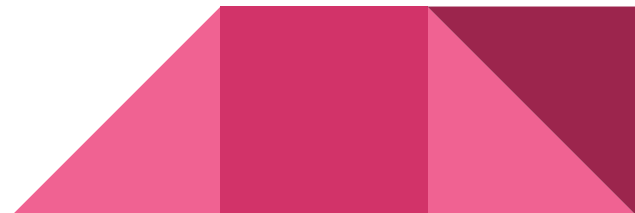
Develop a sense of belonging and community

Basic needs met: sleep, food, wellness

Self-care for staff: training, PD, wellness, support groups

Learning needs: 504, RTI, tutoring programs

Safety Planning



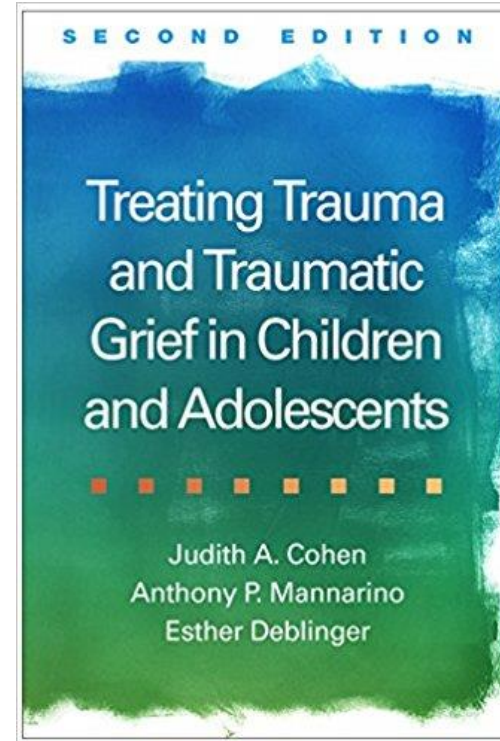
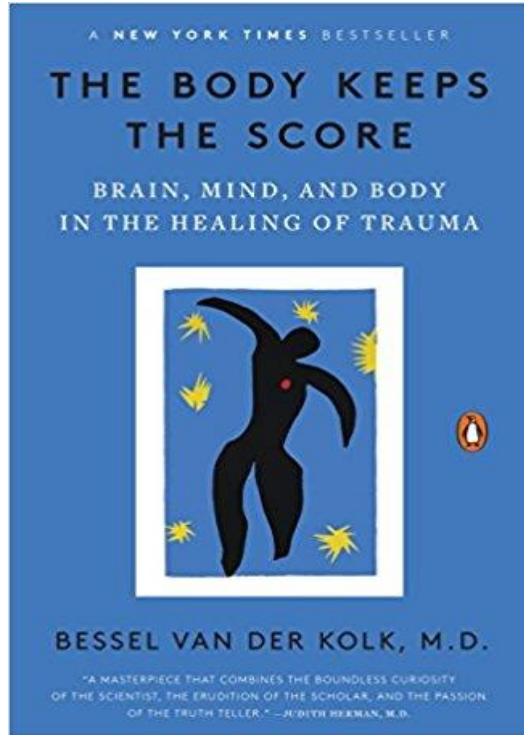
Trauma-informed school checklist

<https://lesley.edu/sites/default/files/2017-06/trauma-sensitive-school-checklist.pdf>





Suggested books for Professionals



Books to help children

