

Vicarious Trauma: improving your self-care while working with children with affected by trauma

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Learning Objectives

- This session will highlight the impact of trauma and the impact of adverse childhood on students in correctional, detention, and treatment facilities settings.
- This session will focus on how working with children affected by trauma affect you, your work and your love ones.
- Participants will take away useful tips they can use to prevent vicarious trauma.

Defining Trauma

- What is trauma?
 - An event that happened to you
 - An event that vicariously affected you
 - An event that changed your world

- When the “event” occurs you might go through many reactions—
 - Shock
 - Terror
 - Or a sense of an unreal or surreal experiences
- A phenomenon called *dissociation*

Mary Beth Williams

Who are you?

- What about me gives me a positive sense of who I am?
- What facts describe me?
- I feel competent about (or in control of):
- I have value because:
- I am able to be emotionally (and maybe even physically) close to:
- My basic values or the truths that govern my life:
- I have sense of meaning to or in my life because:
- I see myself as a real, authentic person because:
- I make the following appropriate, reasonable demands on myself:
- I make the following inappropriate, unreasonable demands on myself:

“shoulds’ are lies; don’t should on me and I won’t should on you! List a few shoulds that governs your life and are inflexible:

- I Should:
- I Should:
- I Should:

Which of them would you like to discard or be willing to discard?

Five Drawings of myself and my life

- Do not worry if you have no artistic ability.
 - This is me; I am...
 - This is my space...
 - This is my life's road...
 - This is my family and me...
 - This is me; I am...

Mindfulness

- Vicarious Trauma can be result of:
 - Isolation in your role
 - Burnout
 - Stress disorders
 - Frequent personnel turnover
 - Additional toll on the customers of the organization

Reflection



Why does vicarious trauma occur?

- Recognize the impact of working with individuals with traumatic challenges
- Recognize it can affect your feelings, thoughts, relationships, behaviors, attitudes, dreams and hopes

Defining Trauma



Activity

- Discuss...
 - What types of personal or individual events in ones life would make working with individuals with traumatic challenges difficult?
 - Reflect with someone...come up with at least three

Impact on child's view of world

Typical Development

vs.

Developmental Trauma

- I live in a predictable & benevolent world
- I am worthwhile
- I am hopeful & optimistic about my future
- I have the ability to impact & change my life

- People want to hurt me
- I am not safe
- I am afraid
- No one will help me
- I am not good/smart/worthy enough for people to care about me
- It will never get better
- I need to establish personal power & control

- First step in dealing with trauma is to recognize its impact.
- It can affect your feelings, thoughts, relationships, behaviors, attitudes, dreams and hopes.

- Mary Beth Williams

What impacts how we react to trauma?

- Your age
- Preparation time you had prior to the event
- The amount of damage done to you (physically, emotionally, and spiritually)
- The death or devastation witness
- Your personal load or responsibility
- Your ability to seek help

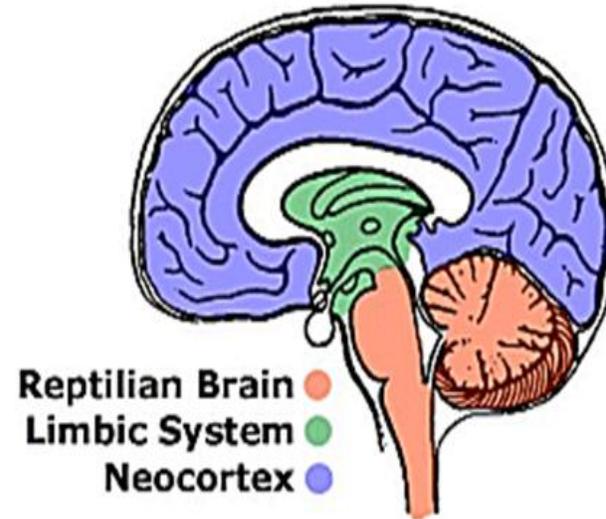
Positive Stress

- Eustress
 - Lifesaving
 - Positive reactions

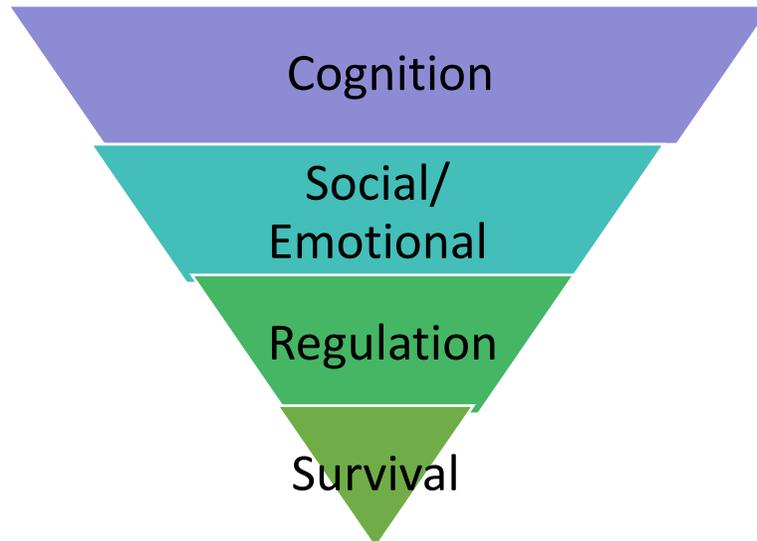
Negative Stress

- Distress
 - Debilitating
 - Causes you to function poorly in a dangerous situation or one that feels dangerous
 - Impacts your body, emotions, thoughts, and relationships

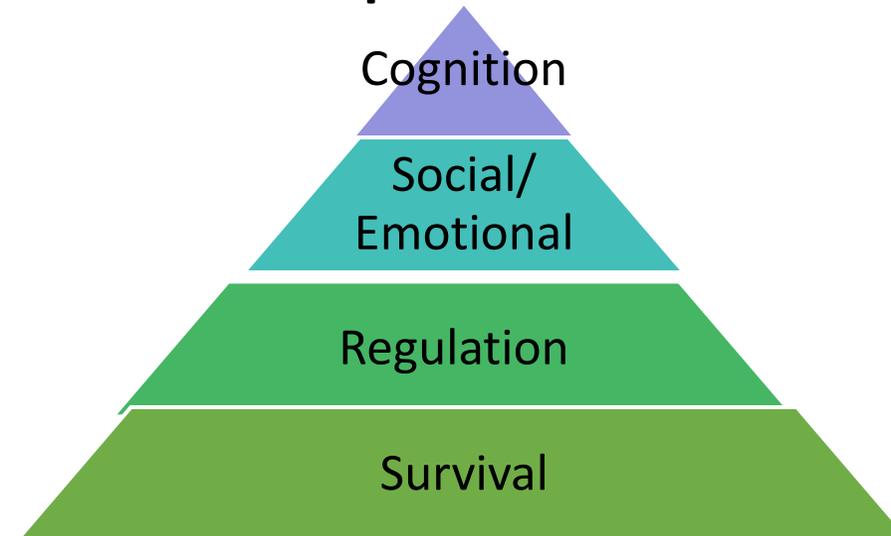
Trauma & Brain Development



Typical Development



Developmental Trauma

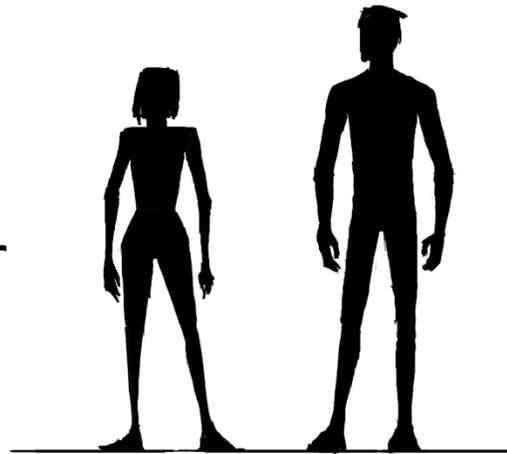


Trauma Changes Our Physiology

Fight, Flight or Freeze Response

Noticeable Effects

- Pupils dilate
- Mouth goes dry
- Muscles tense
- Heart pumps faster
- Breathing rate increases
- Chest pains
- Palpitations
- Perspiration
- Hyperventilation



Hidden Effects

- Brain prepares body for action
- Adrenaline released
- Blood pressure rises
- Liver releases glucose to provide energy for muscles
- Digestion slows or ceases
- Cortisol released (depresses immune system)

Checking In with Yourself

- Stop whatever activity you might be doing
- Sit quietly for a short period of time
- Turn your attention inward and ask your body how it feels
- Notice if you feel any tension anywhere in your body (e.g., in your shoulders, stomach, jaw, or back).
- Notice if you are holding your breath
- Notice if you are doing any behaviors that suggest tension (e.g., biting your nails, or picking at your skin).
- Now notice any emotions you feel, if you are able to recognize them (e.g., fearful, sad, angry, lonely, etc.).
- Notice if you have racing thoughts or if you are able to stay focused.
- If you've noticed any of the reactions listed above, take some time to use the deep breathing or relaxation techniques described in the next section

Trauma sensitive schools

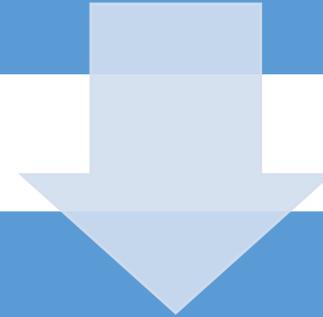
Trauma sensitive schools

- recognize the prevalence & impact of traumatic occurrence in students' lives &
- create a flexible framework that provides universal supports, is sensitive to the unique needs of students & is mindful of avoiding re-traumatization.

Adapted from *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*

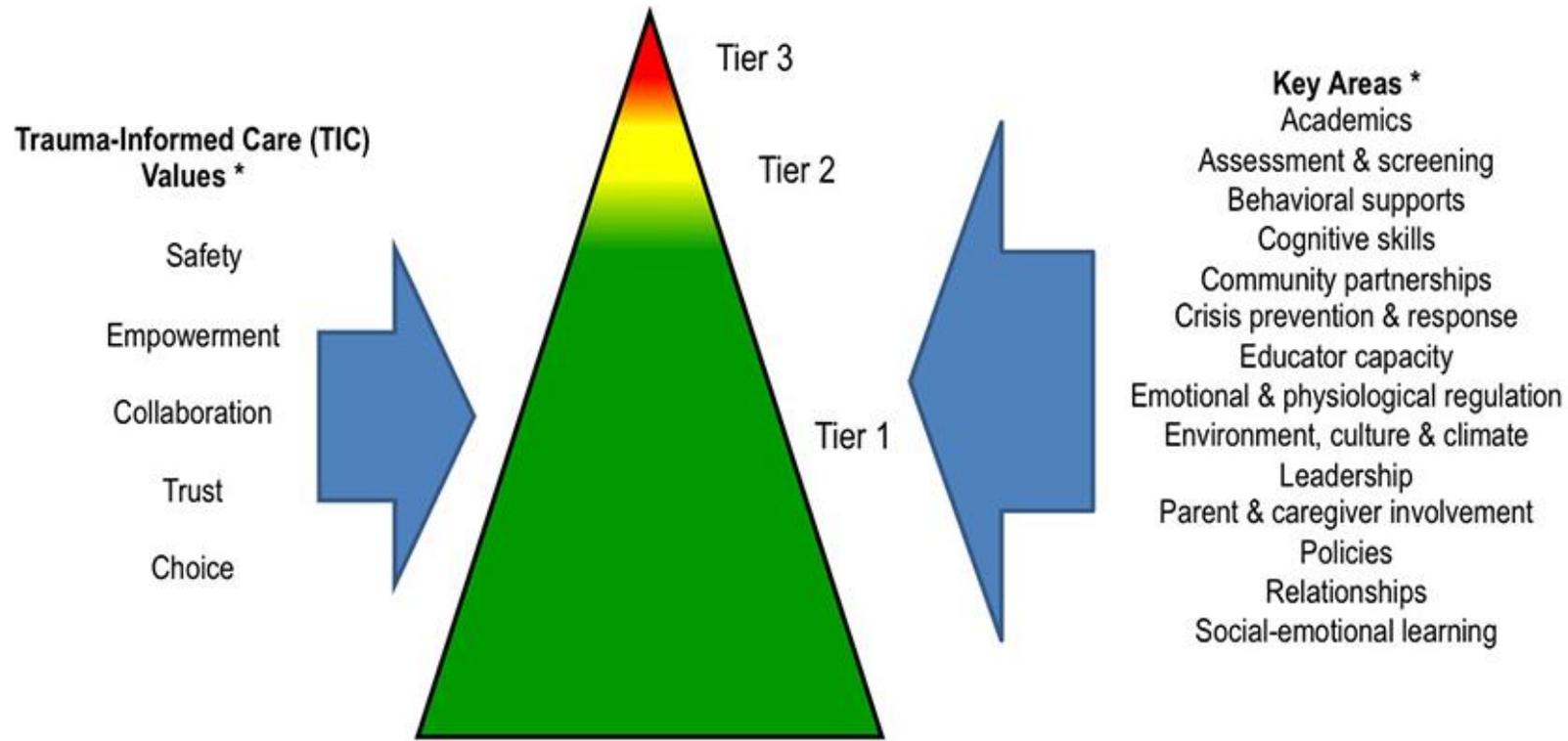
The needed perspective shift by educators

“What’s wrong with you?”



“What happened to you & how can we help?”

Using the PBIS Framework to Support the Learning of Students Affected by Trauma



Tier 1 – Universal strategies & instruction for all students

Tier 2 – Additional supports for students with milder symptoms of trauma or in high-risk groups

Tier 3 – Intensive & ongoing interventions for students deeply impacted by trauma

* TIC Values & Key Areas apply across all 3 tiers of the PBIS Framework.

TIC Values are from Fallot & Harris, Community Connections, www.ccdc1.org

Activity #1-My Ability to Cope with Trauma

- ___ I have a high degree of extraversion (I like to be with people)
- ___ I am open to new experiences
- ___ I am conscientious in the work I do (I follow through)
- ___ I am an agreeable person
- ___ I believe that my source of personal power lies within me
- ___ I try to find meaning in what happens to me
- ___ I am motivated to solve the problems that occur in my life
- ___ I am generally an optimistic person—I see things more positively than negatively
- ___ I take control in situations whenever possible, or at least try to take control
- ___ I like a good challenge and I rise to the occasion
- ___ I am committed to overcoming the bad things I have experience in life
- ___ I have a good social support network—there are people I turn to
- ___ I understand my life's circumstances and what I can and cannot do about them
- ___ I have faith
- ___ I have a sense of humor

What do you observe about yourself from reading these statements?

How many of these items did you check? Do you notice any pattern of those you did or did not check?

Are you afraid to be vulnerable?

Five Drawings of myself and my life

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Compare these drawings with your previous drawings; do you notice any differences?