Trauma’s Impact on Behaviors:
Overview and Strategies To Help Repack A Child’s Invisible Backpack
Your Presenter

Gina Hernandez, MA, LAC
Senior Vice President
ghernandez@preventchildabusenj.org

Prevent Child Abuse
New Jersey™

CHiLD WELLNESS INSTITUTE
OF NEW JERSEY
Goals of Today:

- Principles of becoming trauma-informed
- Sample classroom strategies that promote the principles
- Assessing your environment
- Creating the plan

Presentation available at:
www.tinyurl.com/OUR-COMMUNITY-CARES
The Journey Includes Resilience...
Adverse Childhood Experiences

ACEs = Adverse Childhood Experiences

The three types of ACEs include:

- **ABUSE**
  - Physical
  - Emotional
  - Sexual

- **NEGLECT**
  - Physical
  - Emotional
  - Mother treated violently

- **HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
  - Mental Illness
  - Incarcerated Relative
  - Substance Abuse
  - Divorce
Children with **3 or more ACEs** are nearly **4** times as likely to have a developmental delay

(Marie- Mitchell and Connor, 2013)

Children with **4 or more ACEs** are **32** times more likely to have behavioral problems in school

(Burke et al, 2011)
Brain in Survival

Survival Mode: Flight/Fight/Freeze

Frontal lobe (Prefrontal cortex) goes offline
Limbic system / mind and lower brain functions take over

Learning/Thinking Brain
(Prefrontal Cortex)

Limbic System
Intrusive thoughts: difficulty focusing on tasks and desire to distract oneself from thoughts

Re-experiencing: treating other similar to the perpetrator of traumatic experience

Avoidance: tardiness and truancy may reflect trauma reminders present in classroom/group setting.

Negative thoughts & feelings: lack of desire to complete assignments or engage because of low self worth or high level of pessimism.

Dissociation: appear distracted or “zoned out” during group/class time.

Hyper/hypo arousal: heightened state of arousal can lead to disproportionate responses to adults
Principles of Trauma Informed Care

• Safety
• Trustworthiness & Transparency
• Peer Support
• Collaboration & Mutuality
• Empowerment, Voice, and Change
• Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues
Consider This…

BITE-SIZED PD

“Every student asks three questions about their teacher every day.
1. Can I trust you?
2. Do you believe I can succeed?
3. Do you care about me?”

—Teacher Tom Loud

#T2T
Repacking the Student Backpack
FIRST THINGS FIRST:

RED BRAIN
GREEN BRAIN
FIRST THINGS FIRST:

RED BRAIN GREEN BRAIN

It takes a Calm Brain to Calm a Brain
Repacking the Student Backpack

4 essentials:

1. Connection
2. Protection
3. Respect
4. Redirection

From OJJDP webinar: Trauma-Informed Classrooms: Moving Theory to Practice, November 2017
Repacking the Student Backpack

CONNECT
BEFORE YOU
CORRECT

–Dr. Jane Nelson

www.laurafroyen.com
Connections
Connections
Connections

ACTIVITY
Protection

- Teach children about the brain & triggers
- Brain breaks
- Movement breaks
- Start day/class with breathing
Protection

➢ Calm Down Area/Zen Den
➢ Sensory stations
Calm Down Corner Examples

BEFORE

AFTER

Source: Harvard Center for the Developing Child Teach
Protection

I CAN KEEP MY COOL

When I feel

I can

calm embarrassed
out of control
upset sad excited
scared lonely
furious confident
worried frustrated
proud disappointed
annoyed mad
happy hurt silly
nervous

take deep breaths
play drink water
sing ask for help
go to a quiet place
laugh run outside
smile blow bubbles
play do yoga dance
Respect

“RESPOND; DON’T REACT. LISTEN; DON’T TALK. THINK; DON’T ASSUME.”

– RAJI LUKKOOR
Respect

Choices Build a Cooperative Environment

- You are welcome to.... Or ...
- Feel free to.... Or.....
- What would be best for you? ..... OR.......?
"When confronted with a defiant, angry, or rebellious child, don't react. Slow down, put on your adult hat, and stay calm. Focus on the child, not the action, and listen for the need behind the behavior. Correction, in the form of guidance and communication, will be far more effective later, when tempers have cooled and hearts have been opened through connection and understanding. Remember, behavior is communication, and a need met is a problem solved!"

L.R. Knost, author of *Two Thousand Kisses a Day: Gentle Parenting Through the Ages and Stages* (2013)
Redirection

All Behavior Has Meaning!

• 3 questions:
  • How can I help?
  • What do you need?
  • What can we do together to make this better?
Time to Repack
What do we do?

- Trauma-sensitive practices work!
- Build relationships and connections
Create a school culture/climate that supports trauma-sensitive practices:

- Build trauma lens: awareness among staff
- Connect with students and build their resilience: skills
- Engage parents and community
- Change policies and practices
- Keep it going! Sustain it with Champions!

WHAT WE CAN DO
WHAT WE CAN DO

Sample awareness activities:

- Film screening for staff
- Introductory clips on connections
- ACES/Trauma Training for staff
- Skill Building for Staff
  - Connect Before Correct
  - Calm Down Kits
  - Zen Den/Cozy Corner
  - Ending the power struggle because it is a lose-lose
- Skill Building for Kids
Reflection Activity
Taking a measure of your school/district.....

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Taking a measure of your school/district.....

• Is your school/district brain friendly?
HEALING HEART TRAINING SERIES

- Trauma 101 An Overview: Understanding Challenging Behaviors Using a Trauma Informed Lens
- Trauma Informed Care In Your School
- Trauma & Resilience
- Trauma and The Importance of Self-Care
- Advanced Strategies
- School/Classroom Design
- Calm Down Kits/Posters Available
- Consultation for Champion Teams
Be the change...

STAY CALM
NO MATTER WHAT

SEE THE NEED
BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR

MEET THE NEED
FIND A WAY

DON'T QUIT
IF NOT YOU, THEN WHO?
If your district is interested in any further trauma trainings or consultation: Email us!

Gina Hernandez, MA, LAC
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