

Advancing Trauma-Informed Schools

Promoting Resilience and School Success by Creating
Trauma-Sensitive, Safe and Supportive Schools

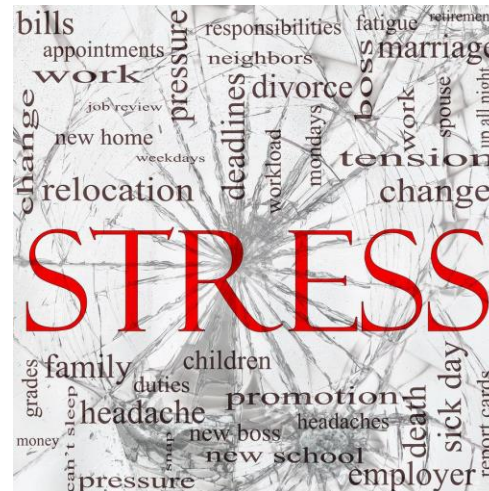
Presented by Laura McArthur, PhD & Megan
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Thanks and Credit to:

Joyce Dorado, PhD Director, UCSF Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools
(HEARTS)



Stress and Trauma Affect Us All



through Adversity and Changed the World



Vignette



What is wrong with Carlos?



**What is wrong with his
teacher?**



Shift Your Perspective

Change the paradigm from one that asks,

"What is wrong with you?"

to one that asks,

"What has happened to you?"

(from Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/tic)

*Provides **context**, fosters **compassion**,
helps us to see **strengths** in face of adversity*

What's happened to Carlos?

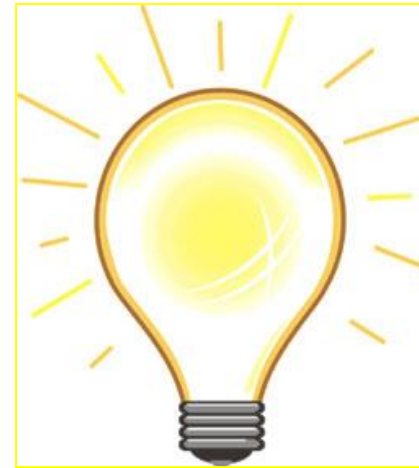


What has happened to his teacher?



Understanding Chronic Stress and Trauma

“Learning about the psychobiology of stress, toxic stress, and trauma is liberating for people. It gives us explanatory reasons for some of the puzzling behaviors we engage in and the feelings that can come to dominate us.” (Bloom, 2013, p. 48)



Adverse Childhood Experiences & Education

| | Academic Failure | Severe Attendance Problems | Severe School Behavior Concerns | Frequent Reported Poor Health |
|---------------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 3+ ACES | 3 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| 2 ACES | 2.5 | 2.5 | 4 | 2.5 |
| 1 ACE | 1.5 | 2 | 2.5 | 2 |
| No Known ACES | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

Stress and Trauma Are Public Health Issues

- Stress linked to 6 leading causes of death
 - Heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidents, cirrhosis of the liver, and suicide
- Trauma impacts more than just the individual
 - Ripple effect to others
- Some communities disproportionately affected:
 - Bigotry + Urban Poverty + Trauma = Toxic
- Sometimes multigenerational history of trauma
- Systemic, preventative approach needed

Unaddressed Trauma Can Hurt School Performance

- More days of school absence (Hurt et al., 2001)
- Problems with attention skills, abstract reasoning, long-term memory for verbal information, and reading ability (Beers and DeBellis, 2002)
- Difficulties in self-regulation (Kim & Cicchetti, 2009)
- Lower grade-point average (Hurt et al., 2001)

Intersection of Race, Trauma, & Poverty: Cradle to Prison Pipeline

(Children's Defense Fund, 2007)

Poverty and Racial Inequity

Babies born into **poverty**:

1 in 3 **Latino**

1 in 2 **African-American**

(Children's Defense Fund, 2007)

Suspensions:

African-American 2.3x

Latino 2.24 x

Expulsions:

African-American 2.5x

Latino 2.29 x

(CDE 2011-2012)

Unaddressed trauma

More days of school **absence**

(Hurt et al., 2001)

Lower grade-point average

(Hurt et al., 2001)

Higher risk of school **dropout**

(Porche et al, 2011)



Dropping out of school increases risk of imprisonment

(Center for Labor Market Studies, 2009)

Chance of being **imprisoned** in lifetime (if born in 2001):

A **Latino** boy: **1 in 6**

An **African-American** boy: **1 in 3**

(Children's Defense Fund, 2007)

Addressing trauma is about equity



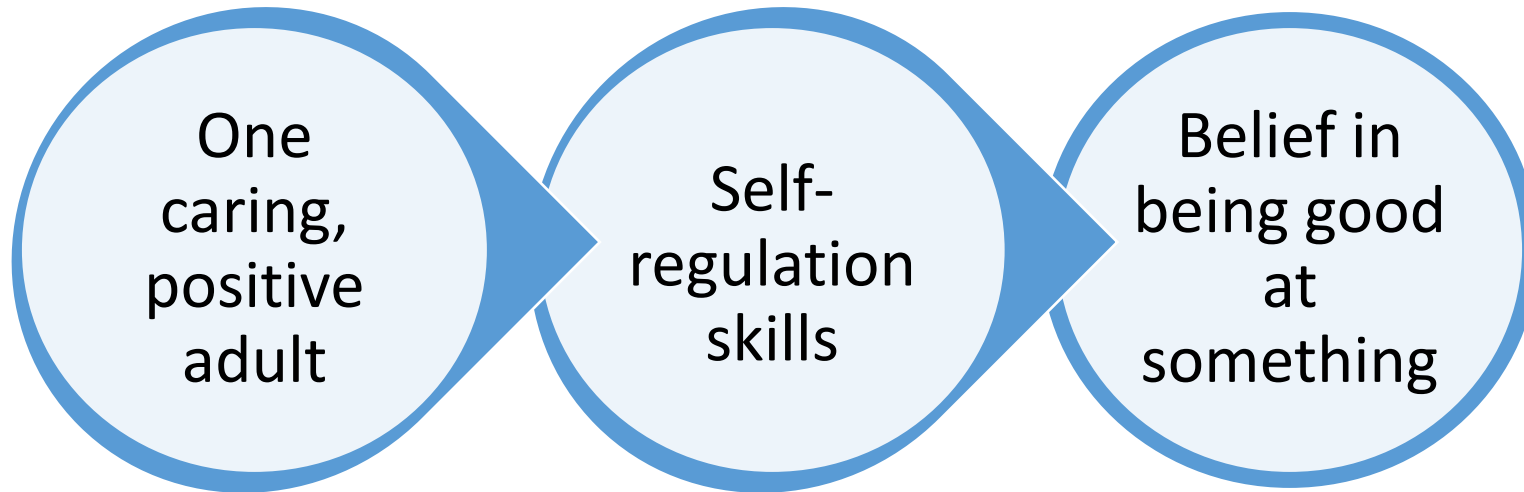
What is Resilience?

The ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress.

Resilience research makes clear that protective factors in one setting have the power to compensate for risks that may be present in other settings.

- Bonnie Benard, 2003

What builds resilience in our kids?



ARC Model, Blaustein &
Kinniburgh, 2010

“...the aim is to increase teaching and learning time and reduce time spent on discipline. The ultimate goal is to help all traumatized students become successful members in their school communities.”

(Cole et al., 2005, p. 6)

What makes a school trauma-informed?

- **Recognition of the prevalence** of trauma
- **Recognition of the connection** between trauma history and the child's behaviors: aggression, defiance, absenteeism, learning differences, withdrawal
- **Attention to triggers** that may be present in the school environment that can be activated in the course of the day
- **Building safety** in all situations (physical, emotional, and psychological)
- Use of **restorative practices** in discipline responses, to teach accountability, empathy, and repair
- Awareness of and normalization of **burnout** and **vicarious trauma** in our own experience



Seneca Center, California Foster Ed Summit (2015) and J.Lanin, Aurora Mental Health Center (2016)

Strategies for Transforming Trauma

- Establish safety:
 - Eliminate threats and reduce triggers that unnecessarily escalate
- Focus on fostering strong, supportive relationships
- Build skills in managing emotions and thinking clearly (Ford et al., 2006)
- Facilitate voice and choice
- Promote resilience and build on strengths

What's next?

- Trauma-informed school policies
 - School-wide change - “Time in” vs. “Time out” and the ME Wing
- State and federal bills regarding discipline
 - HEARTS discipline data shows significant reductions in discipline referrals, suspensions, and violent incidents.
- Trauma-informed care is bigger than schools
 - Trauma-informed practices can influence wellbeing of whole communities in many different settings
- Trauma-informed practices and rural communities
 - The training needed to be trauma-informed is much easier to access than having school-based mental health treatment or other more intensive interventions

Resources

UCSF HEARTS Program

http://coe.ucsf.edu/coe/spotlight/ucsf_hearts.html

National Child Traumatic Stress Network:

www.nctsn.org

Helping Traumatized Children Learn:

traumasensitiveschools.org

ACES Too High:

acestoohigh.com

Lives in the Balance:

livesinthebalance.org

Mindful Schools:

www.mindfulschools.org

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