

Supporting Students in Temporary Housing:



Becoming Trauma Informed: Understanding Trauma



Presented By: NYS TEACHS
February 17, 2022, 9:30am -11:00am



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Who's in the Room?

Are you a...

- New McKinney Vento Liaison (1st Year)
- McKinney Vento Liaison (2-4 years)
- McKinney Vento Liaison (5 – 9 years)
- McKinney Vento Liaison (10 + years)
- Other School/District Staff



Which region are you from?

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| * Western Region | * Capital Region |
| * Finger Lakes | * Hudson Valley |
| * Central Region | * New York city |
| * Southern Tier | * Long Island |
| * Mohawk Valley | * North Country |

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Introductions

Halley Eacker, Ph.D.

Project Director, Upstate Center for Emergency Assistance to Nonpublic Schools; NYS Center for School Safety; Research and evaluation

Kat Owens, MSW

Behavior Specialist, Capital Region RPC



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Norms for Today's Session

- “Lessons leave but stories stay” – respect the confidentiality of each participant
- Think critically about the content and how it can be applied to your work
- Participate to the best of your ability
- Keep your mic muted when not speaking
- Camera may be on or off
- Use the chat box for questions and comments throughout the training
 - Note that, unlike previous webinars, *all* participants will be able to see comments put into the chat box



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Housekeeping



- Today's session will be recorded.
- We will ask you poll questions periodically throughout the session.
- We won't be able to answer questions about specific situations in the chat but we welcome your help line calls to discuss these issues at 800-388-2014.
- The help line is open 24 hours a day. If you leave a message you will be called back by the next business day.

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Learning Objectives



- In this session, I will...
 - Be able to define “trauma” and name different types of potentially traumatic events
 - Identify the impact that trauma can have on the brain and behavior
 - Begin to think about my role when supporting children and families in a trauma-informed capacity

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Opening Activity

Before we jump into the content, take a moment to reflect:

- Why do you think it's important to be trauma-informed in your role and your work with students?

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Defining Trauma

		
Experience of real or perceived threat to one's safety or survival	Or witnessing a real or perceived threat to the safety or survival of another	That causes feelings of fear and helplessness which overwhelm normal coping.

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Discussion

What stands out to you about this definition of trauma?



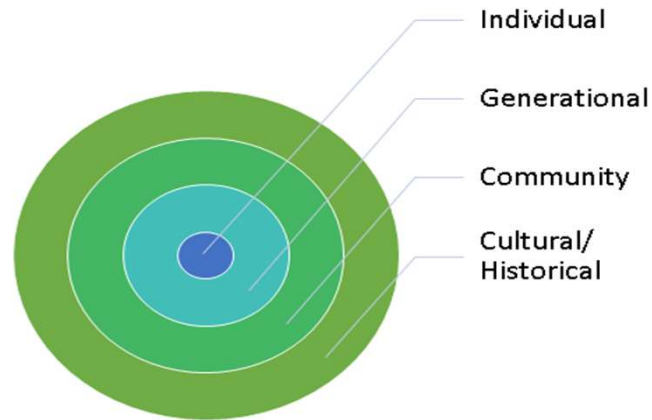
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Who experiences trauma?

- Anybody!
- Difficult to estimate numbers
 - Varying definitions and methodologies
 - Can change with time, geographic location, political climate, etc.
 - May be as high as 71% who have experienced a potentially traumatic event
- Housing insecurity is almost always stressful, if not traumatic!

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Layers of Trauma



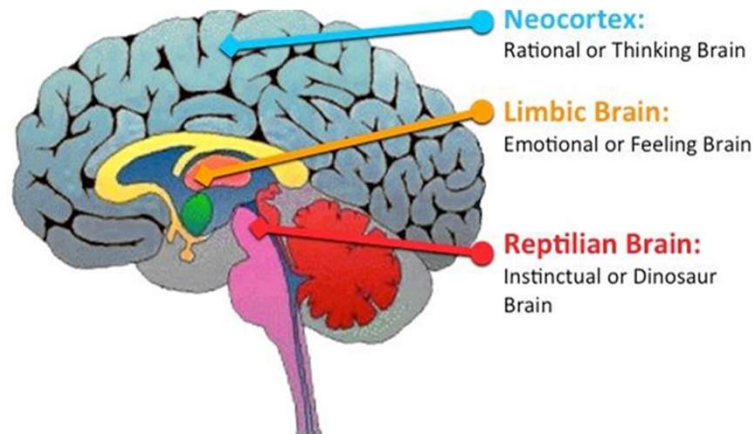
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Types of Trauma

- Acute: one single incident or event
- Chronic: recurring or ongoing event(s)
- Complex: multiple types experienced at once
- Examples of potentially traumatic experiences:
 - Homelessness/housing insecurity
 - Abuse, neglect, or inconsistent caregivers
 - Poverty
 - Oppression and discrimination
 - Community violence
 - Natural disasters

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Trauma's Impact on the Brain



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Trauma's Impact on the Brain

“Lizard brain”

- Focus on survival and self-preservation; constantly on the lookout for threats
- Fight, flight, or freeze
- Driven by emotions
- Resistant to change

Potential impairments in:

- Memory
- Sensory processing
- Executive functioning
- Social skills



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Trauma's Impact on Behavior

Hyperarousal
 Hypoarousal
 Inattentive or preoccupied
 Somatic complaints
 Regressive behavior
 Re-enacting or re-experiencing
 Perfectionism, anxiety, other internalizing behavior
 High-risk behavior or maladaptive coping



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Discussion: Breakout Rooms

Think about the last time you encountered one of these behaviors in a student you were working with.

What assumptions did you make about that student or their behavior?

What else might have been going on?

Would you have responded any differently?



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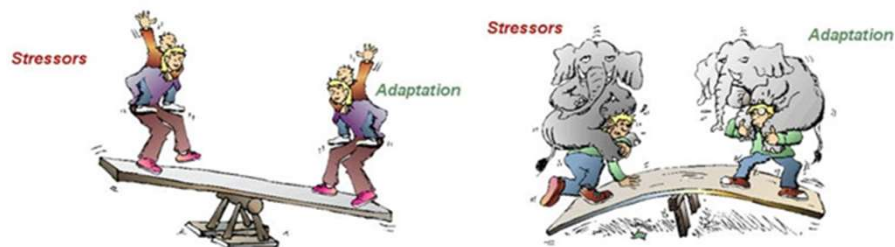
Not-Quite-Trauma?

- “Trauma” isn’t an official diagnosis
- Trauma is subjective
 - Some students may experience a potentially or traditionally traumatic event and not be “traumatized”
 - Some students may be traumatized by something unexpected
- Even if a student isn’t experiencing trauma, they may still be experiencing mental or emotional stress
 - High levels of stress impact the brain and behavior in much the same way



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Allostatic Load



Allostasis

Some stress can be energizing and toning to the system. Body systems adjust well to stressors without over taxing resources.

Allostatic Load

Body systems achieve a kind of balance, but everything is working too hard and we begin to slowly break down.

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Discussion: Breakout Rooms

Think about the last time you experienced significant stress.

How did you know the balance had tipped from manageable stress to toxic stress?

How did it affect your thinking?

Your behavior?



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Trauma is a LENS, not a LABEL

- You do not need to know whether the students or families you're working with are "traumatized"!
- Knowing or labeling trauma history isn't the most important thing
 - Trauma is subjective
 - Everyone will experience at least temporary hardship or stress
- Trauma-informed practices should be applied universally: for everyone, at all times
- Trauma-informed practices are *best practices*

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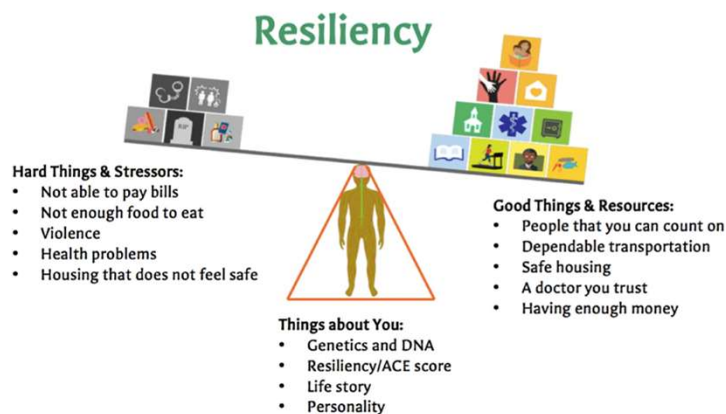
What is Your Role?

- How can you help your students?
 - You can't make the trauma go away, but...
 - You can add in more good things
- Be a **protective factor**
 - Act as a positive relationship
 - Be a source of help and support
 - Ensure you're *not* a source of stress or further trauma



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Risk Factors vs. Protective Factors



Resiliency is when the scale tips toward the good even when there are stressors and hard things.

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Discussion: Breakout Rooms

Think about a student or family experiencing homelessness you've worked with, either currently or in the past.

What were some strengths and protective factors that helped make them resilient?

What strengths or protective factors might you look for in the future?



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Trauma Informed Practices

- A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed:
 - **Realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
 - **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
 - **Responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices;
 - And seeks to actively **resist** re-traumatization.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014


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Principles of Trauma Informed Practices




SAMHSA:

- Safety
- Trustworthiness and transparency
- Peer support
- Collaboration and mutuality
- Empowerment, voice, and choice
- Cultural, historical, and gender issues




**University of Buffalo
School of Social Work:**

- Safety
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Trustworthiness
- Empowerment



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Next Time


Applying the principles of trauma-informed approaches

Practices and strategies:

- For yourself
- When working with students, families, and caregivers
- Logistical considerations



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Closing Activity

Reflect on what you've learned during this talk today.

What's one thing you're taking away from today's session?

What's one thing you still have questions about?

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Questions?



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Extension Activity

Before the next session...

Select and view a video from the list below. Then, take 5 minutes and journal your reactions to the content in the beginning of this series. Feel free to use the following questions to guide your reflection.

1. What is one idea that squared with your beliefs and/or experiences?
2. What is one idea that surprised you?
3. What is one question you still have?

[What difference can trauma-informed care make?](#)

[Getting started with trauma-informed practices](#)

[Complex trauma and its effects on child development](#)



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Resources

1. [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
2. [Harvard Center on the Developing Child](#)
3. [NYS TEACHS](#)
4. [SAMHSA Trauma-Informed Care Implementation](#)
5. [The Institute on Trauma and Trauma-Informed Care](#)



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Technical and Educational Assistance Center

- **Help Line** (800-388-2014)
- **Website** (<https://nysteachs.org>)
- **Web-Based Trainings**
- **Outreach Materials**
 - For outreach materials, email Ailin Mendoza: amendoza@measinc.com



Next Sessions:
Becoming Trauma Informed
 March 3, 2022
 March 17, 2022



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Thank You!



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