



NYSTEACHS

NEW YORK STATE TECHNICAL AND EDUCATION
ASSISTANCE CENTER FOR HOMELESS STUDENTS

Trauma-Sensitivity and School Success



Presented by the New York State Technical and Education Assistance Center for Homeless Students (NYS-TEACHS)

September 29, 2020

Housekeeping: Using the Control Panel

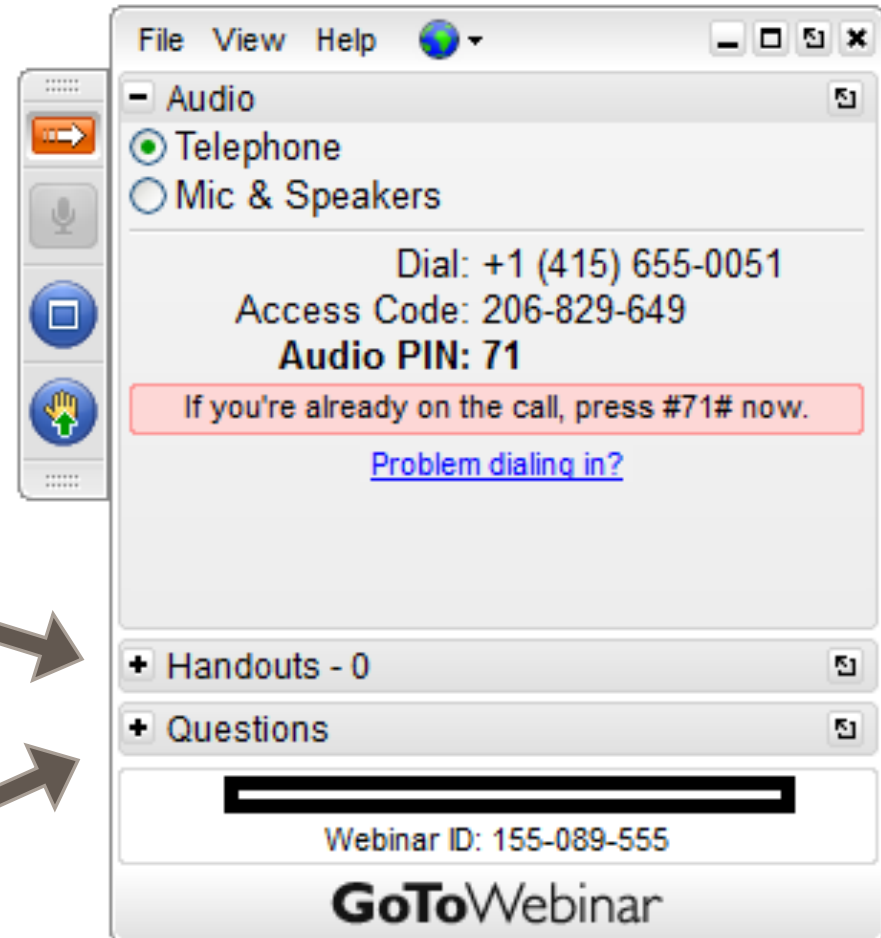
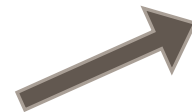
SHOW/HIDE your control panel using the orange arrow



HANDOUTS are available for download from the control panel



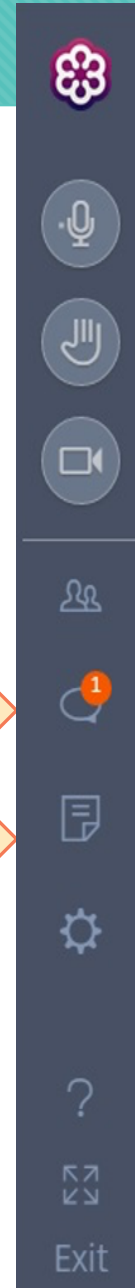
Ask QUESTIONS by typing them into the "Questions" box. Be sure to click "send."



Web View: Control Panel

Questions

Handouts



SESSION SURVEY

- A short survey will pop up on your screen after you exit the session
- The same survey will also be included in the follow-up email one hour later

*** You only need to complete the survey one time. ***

Recording



Google Custom Search

INFO BY TOPIC LIAISONS NEWS POSTERS & BROCHURES **TRAININGS** GRANTEES PARENTS & FAMILIES FAQ 800-388-2014

Trainings

NYS-TEACHS provides free trainings and webinars for school districts, social service providers, and other professionals about the educational rights of children and youth experiencing homelessness.

You can:

- ◆ Register for an upcoming event in [New York City](#) or [New York State](#) (outside NYC)
- ◆ View [training materials from past events](#) and watch recorded webinars
- ◆ Download materials to present a [turn-key training](#)

THINGS TO DO

[New York State Event Registration](#)

[New York City Event Registration](#)

[Annual Workshop Archive](#)

[Webinar Archive](#)

[Turn-Key Presentations](#)

 REMINDERS



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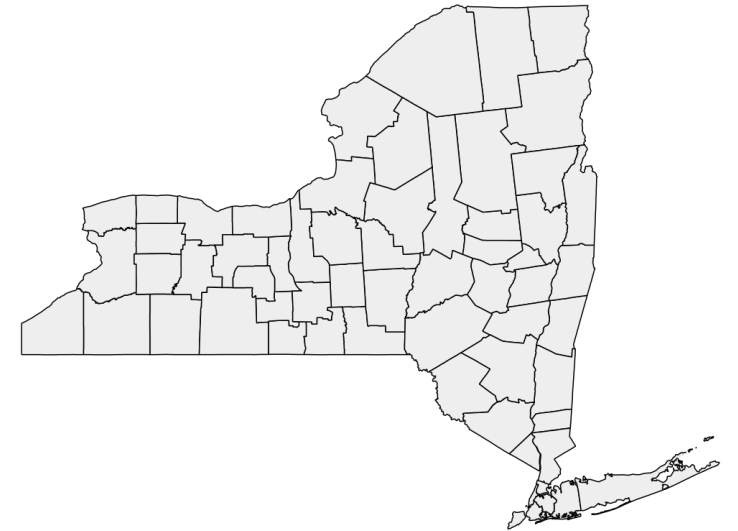
About Us

○ NYS-TEACHS

- **N**ew **Y**ork **S**tate **T**echnical and **E**ducation **A**ssistance **C**enter for **H**omeless **S**tudents
- Funded by the New York State Education Department.
- Provide technical assistance on homeless education issues.

○ Our (*current*) Core Services Include:

- Infoline (800-388-2014) – *We're open! Please leave a VM.*
- Webinars, Interactive Zoom Trainings, Annual Workshops, and On-Site Trainings (*in-person events currently on hold*)
- Outreach Materials
- Website of Resources (**www.nysteachs.org**)



Poll

What is your
role?

- A. McKinney-Vento Liaison
- B. School Social Worker or Counselor (*not the MV Liaison*)
- C. Teacher or School Administrator
- D. Social Service Provider
- E. Other

Goals

Participants will:

- Recognize the **prevalence of trauma** and its connections to homelessness and school performance.
- Understand the **impact of trauma** on a person's brain, body, and behavior.
- Learn **specific strategies** for taking a **trauma-sensitive approach** with students and families.

Poll

Fewer than 10% of children and youth have experienced chronic stress or trauma.

A. True

B. False

The Prevalence of Trauma

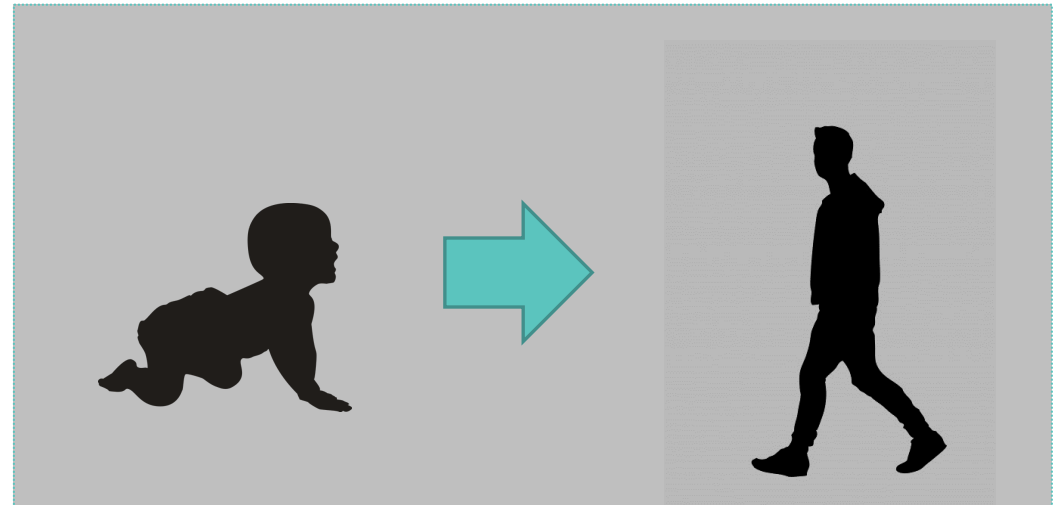
ACE = Adverse Childhood Experience (A study of 10 adverse experiences in three categories):

**Household
Dysfunction**

Abuse

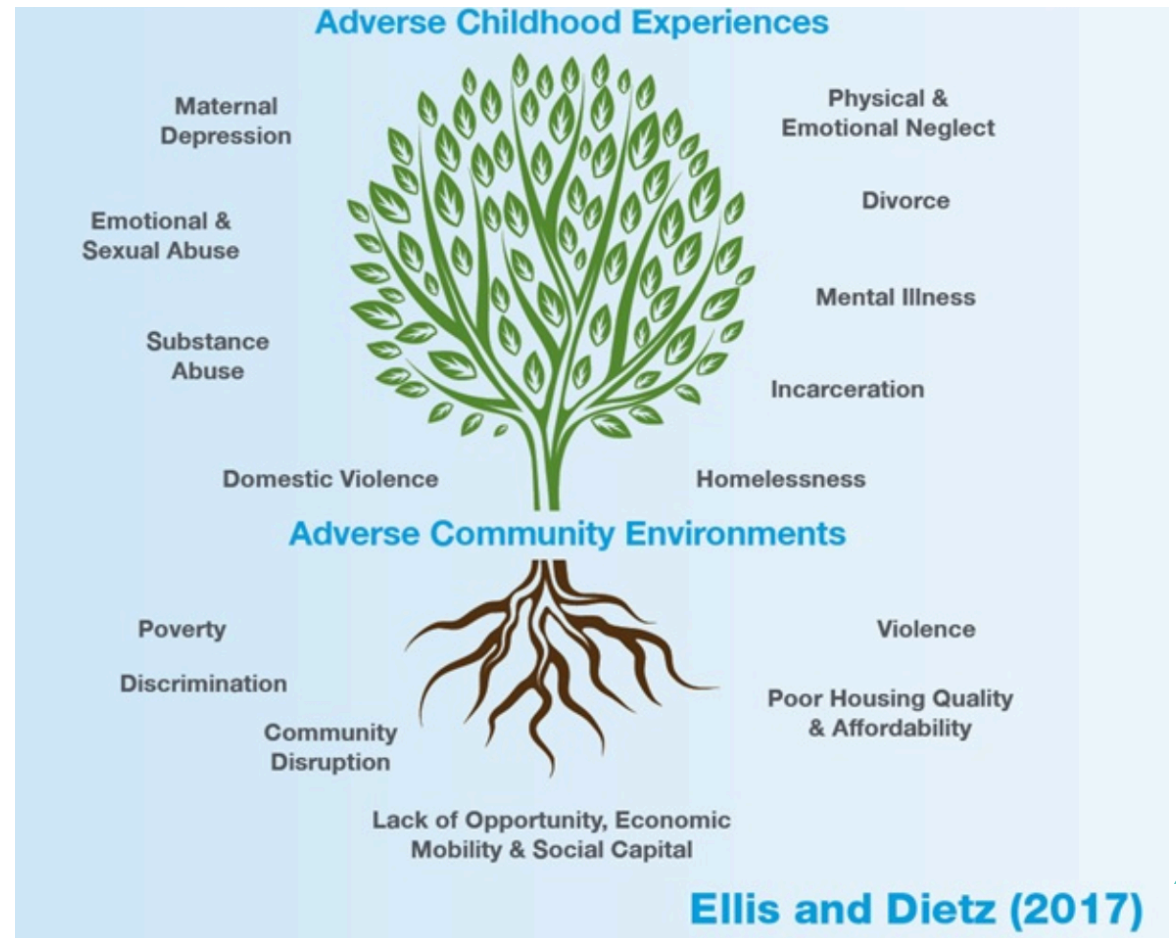
Neglect

25 %



Traumatic and Oppressive Systems

- Racism
- Xenophobia
- Homophobia
- Unequal access to quality healthcare, housing, and education
- Employment discrimination and wage gaps
- Involvement with systems such as the justice and welfare systems



Causes of Homelessness and Disproportionality



The Impact of Trauma on Learning



**Competition
for energy
and
attention.**



**Students are less
available to learn.**

- Decreased engagement (*high absenteeism*)
- Lower academic performance (*grades and test scores*)
- Increase in negative behaviors and disciplinary actions



What is trauma sensitivity?

- A. A clinical therapy to support people with PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).
- B. A method for diagnosing trauma in a school setting.
- C. An approach intended to help others feel safe, welcome, and supported.

Addressing the Impact of Trauma through Sensitivity

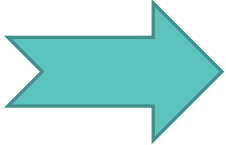


★ Trauma-Sensitivity involves...

- ◆ **Thinking and responding differently** to a student's reactions and behaviors.
- ◆ Asking or considering ***“what happened to them?”*** rather than *“what is wrong with them?”*
- ◆ Practices that can be used by anyone in any setting. You do not need to be a mental-health professional.

Goals

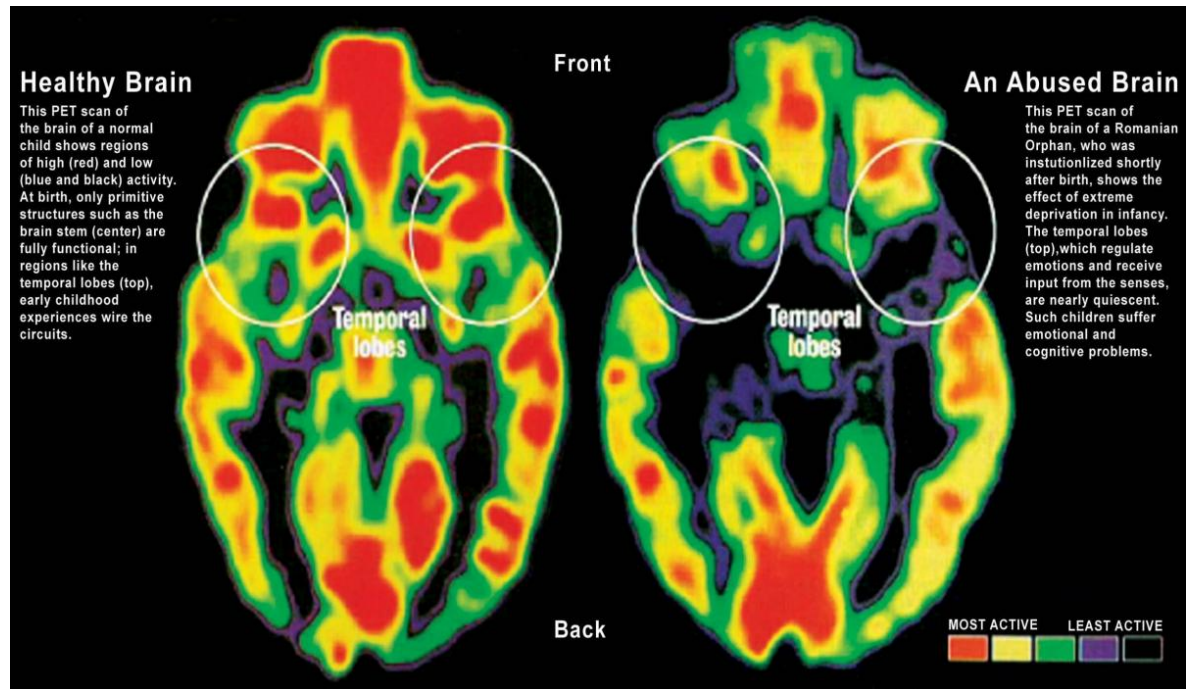
Participants will:

- Recognize the **prevalence of trauma** and its connections to homelessness and school performance.
-  ○ Understand the **impact of trauma** on a person's brain, body, and behavior.
- Learn **specific strategies** for taking a **trauma-sensitive approach** with students and families.

Impact of Trauma on the BRAIN

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON:

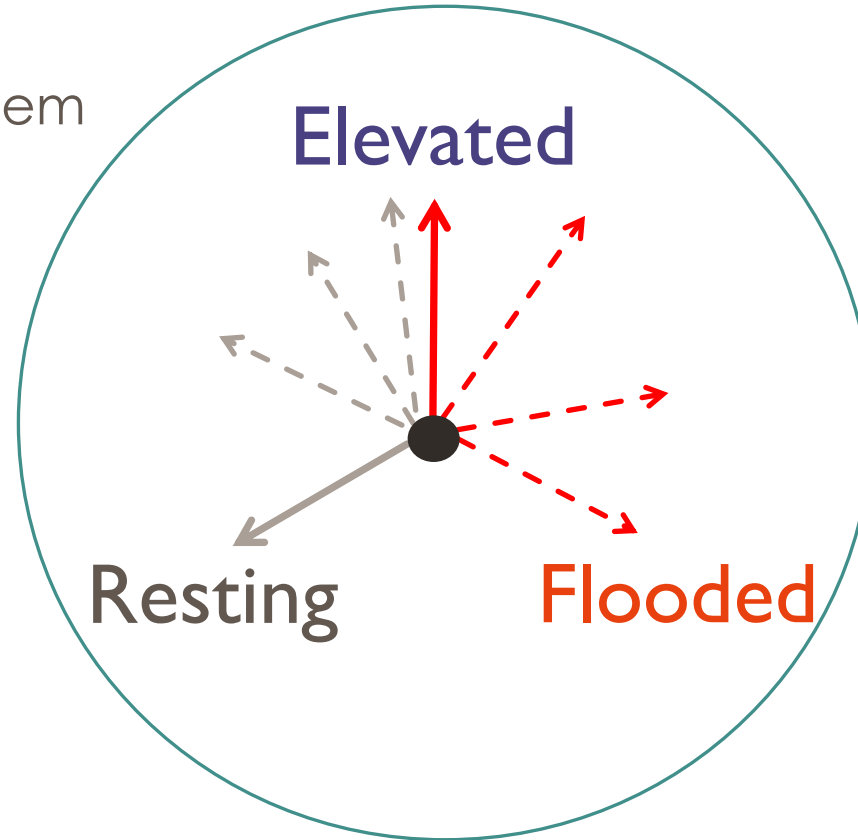
- Brain development in early childhood
- Cognitive development and learning
- Social and emotional development
- Attachment and trust with others
- Physical health and development



Impact of Trauma on the BODY

- Increased adrenaline (hormones)
- Faster heart beat
- Higher blood pressure
- Sleep disturbances
- Weakened immune system

**Healthy
Nervous
System**



**Traumatized
Nervous
System**

Poll

Students who have experienced chronic stress and/or trauma often “act out” for no reason.

A. True

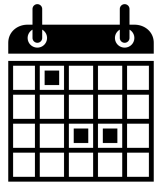
B. False

Impact of Trauma on BEHAVIOR: Understanding “Triggers”

Examples of Triggers include:



Being asked questions

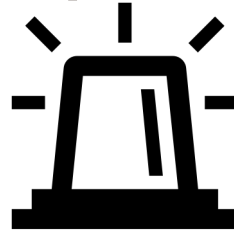


Change in schedule/plans

Loss of supportive relationships



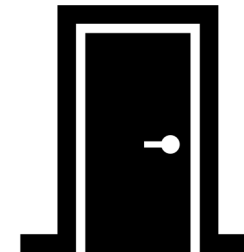
Sensory overload



Touch




Punitive consequences



Isolation

Goals

Participants will:

- Recognize the **prevalence of trauma** and its connections to homelessness and school performance.
- Understand the **impact of trauma** on a person's brain, body, and behavior.
-  ○ Learn **specific strategies** for taking a **trauma-sensitive approach** with students and families.

Poll

A stable relationship with an adult at school can help a student cope with the negative effects of trauma.

- A. True
- B. False

3 Essential Elements of Trauma-Sensitivity

- *Addresses the feelings of helplessness and hopelessness often associated with trauma.*

1. Safe and Supportive Environment

2. Secure Attachment to a Nurturing Adult

- *Addresses the feelings of isolation, blame, distrust, shame, etc. often associated with trauma*

- *Addresses the “flooded” nervous system and lack of coping and self-soothing skills associated with trauma.*

3. Opportunities to Strengthen Non-Cognitive Skills

Trauma-Sensitive Framework for School Success

1.

Toxic stress and trauma can make a student feel overwhelmed, unsafe, and unavailable to learn.



2.

But, if the student has access to 3 key supports...

1. A safe and supportive environment

2. Secure attachment to a nurturing adult

3. An opportunity to strengthen non-cognitive skills

3.

... they will feel safer, more resilient, and more available to learn.



Create a Safe and Supportive Environment

IN-PERSON

- Create a “calm-down” corner that is bright, colorful, and includes sensory items.
- Consider lighting options (e.g. holiday lights, floor lamps).
- Give verbal reassurance of safety.
- Use a strengths-based approach.



Create a Safe and Supportive Environment

VIRTUALLY

- Be flexible with work/project deadlines and expectations.
- Encourage students to take screen breaks and engage in other self-care activities.
- Remind them that they are not alone.
- Regularly check-in with unaccompanied homeless youth about where they are staying and how long they are able to stay there.



Foster a Secure Attachment to a Nurturing Adult

IN-PERSON

- Be patient and consistent with students.
- Have a staff member at the front door to welcome students to school in the morning.
- Make it clear who students can go to for help and how to contact those people.
- Connect every student with at least one group or activity.



Foster a Secure Attachment to a Nurturing Adult

VIRTUALLY

- Regularly check-in with the student about their experiences and feelings.
- Actively listen and avoid giving immediate advice.
- Stress inclusiveness and shared purpose.
- Try to speak with the student “face-to-face” (via the computer) whenever possible.



Strengthening Non-Cognitive Skills

IN-PERSON

- Help students practice various strategies for calming down.
- Focus on “should” rather than “should not.”
- Provide opportunities for young students to learn about feelings and how to name them.
- Provide various outlets/opportunities for older students to express themselves.

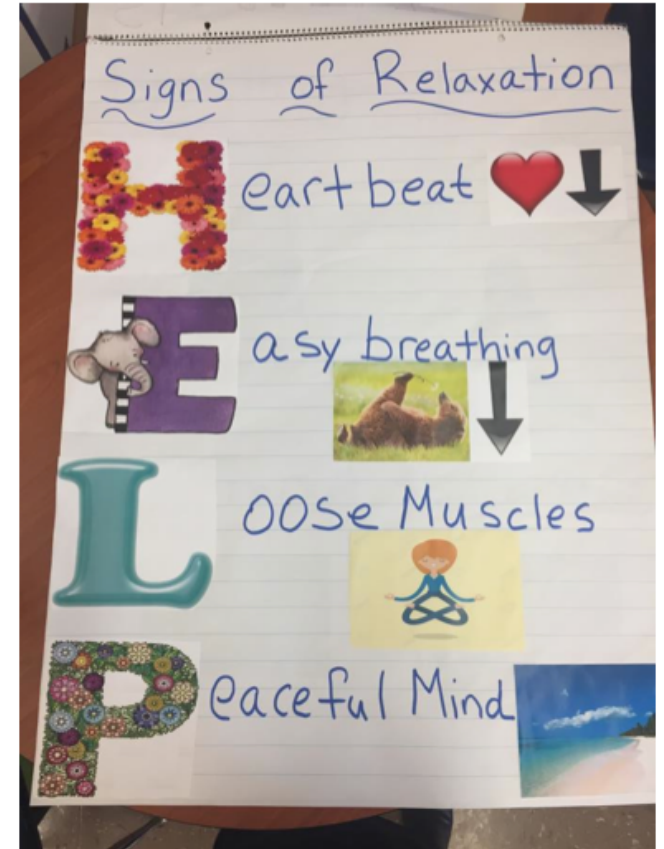


Photo credit: Healthy and Ready to Learn initiative at Children's Health Fund

Strengthen Non-Cognitive Skills

VIRTUALLY

- Show students where/how they have control.
- Help the student identify alarms/triggers and strategies.
- Praise effort, not just outcomes.



Poll

A trauma-sensitive approach should only be taken with those students who we KNOW have experienced trauma.

- A. True
- B. False

Matrix of Trauma-Sensitive Strategies for School Success

Strategies and Actions in the 3 Key Areas:

1. Safe and Supportive Environment
2. Secure Attachment to a Nurturing Adult
3. Strengthen Non-Cognitive Skills



Matrix of Trauma-Sensitive Strategies of School Success





Essential Element	Strategy	Related Action
Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment	Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively Listen • Normalize the reaction to the experience • Minimize self-blame • Avoid giving direct advice
	Strengths-based approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberately point out actions and characteristics that are positive, unique, or valuable • Guide a student towards recognizing and using his or her strengths • Redirect a challenging behavior by focusing on what you know the student can do well
	Predictability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about expectations • Follow through • Keep a consistent routine • Talk through changes
	Prevention rather than punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help the student identify triggers and create appropriate coping plans • Teach or demonstrate what “should” be done • Avoid punishment and isolation • Reward positive behavior to encourage and build confidence • Teach mindfulness
	Welcoming building environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure that classrooms and hallways are bright and clean • Don’t corner someone • Consider having a “safe corner” or a “peace room” • Greet students at the door

Additional Resources on Trauma-Sensitivity and School Success

- **NYS-TEACHS: [Trauma-Sensitive Strategies for School Success](#)** (*Info By Topic page*)
- **Healthy and Ready to Learn: [Trauma-Sensitive Practices in School](#)** (*video*)
- **EdWeek: [How We Go Back to School - Identifying Stress and Trauma](#)** (*checklist for parent conversations*)

The screenshot shows the NYS-TEACHS website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the NYS-TEACHS logo, a phone number (800-388-2014), and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there is a blue banner with the text "TRAUMA-SENSITIVE STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL SUCCESS" and a "BACK TO ALL TOPICS" link. The main content area features a paragraph about students experiencing homelessness and their needs, followed by a list of three main areas: "Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment", "Fostering Secure Attachments", and "Developing Non-Cognitive Skills". To the right of this text is a blue diamond icon with a question mark and a button labeled "FAQ FOR THIS TOPIC". Below the main content, there is a section titled "Topic Resources" which lists several resources under the heading "HIGHLIGHTED RESOURCES": "Helping Traumatized Children Learn", "Matrix of Trauma-Sensitive Strategies for School Success", "Meeting the Unique Learning Needs of Students Exposed to Trauma", "NYS-TEACHS Info-Brief: Trauma-Sensitivity and School Success", "TED Talk: How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime (Dr. Nadine Burke Harris)", "Trauma-Sensitive School Checklist", and "Video: What is 'Trauma-Informed Practice?'". At the bottom of the page, there are two more sections: "WEBSITES" and "GUIDES & FACT SHEETS".

Next Steps

-  **Familiarize yourself** with the **School Success Framework matrix** and other available resources.
-  **Be intentional about practicing** trauma-sensitivity by focusing on one or two strategies at a time.
-  **Facilitate knowledge building** among others.
-  **Incorporate trauma-sensitivity into an already existing initiative/program** in your school/district.

Review/Summary

- Exposure to toxic-stress and trauma can **negatively impact** a child's **ability to learn** and **affect them into adulthood**.
- Using a trauma-sensitive approach considers **“what happened to you?”** rather than “what is wrong with you?”
- **Trauma-sensitivity is an approach** that can and should be used by anyone, in all settings, and with all students.
- The **three elements of trauma-sensitivity are 1)** creating a safe and supportive environment, **2)** fostering secure attachments to a nurturing adult and **3)** strengthening non-cognitive skills

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