



District Student Services

January 2021

Creating A Trauma-Sensitive Classroom

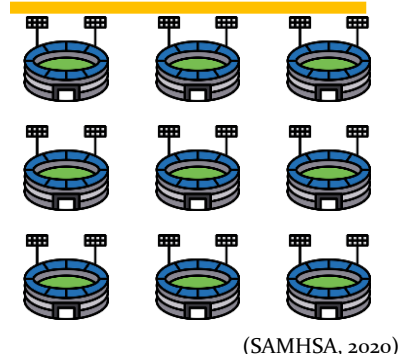
What is Trauma? "Trauma is an exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous events overwhelm a person's capacity to cope" (Rice & Groves, 2005). Keep in mind that the experience does not have to be life-threatening to trigger a trauma response. More than two thirds of children reported at least one traumatic event by age 16.

Trauma is real, toxic to the brain and affects development and learning. Trauma is prevalent, in fact it is more common than children like to admit. Children are resilient if they are in a positive and trauma-sensitive learning environment; an environment where children are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged. (SAMHSA, 2020)



- #### Potential Traumatic Events
- Psychological, physical, or sexual abuse
 - Community or school violence
 - Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence
 - Natural disasters, a pandemic, or terrorism
 - Commercial sexual exploitation
 - Sudden or violent loss of a loved one
 - Military family-related stressors
 - Physical or sexual assault
 - Neglect
 - Serious accidents or life-threatening illness

Each year, the number of youths requiring hospital treatment for physical assault-related injuries would fill every seat in 9 stadiums.



Possible Signs of Traumatic Stress

PRESCHOOL CHILDREN	ELEMENTARY CHILDREN	MIDDLE & HIGH CHILDREN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear being separated from their parent/caregiver • Cries or screams a lot • Eats poorly or loses weight • Has nightmares 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becomes anxious or fearful • Feels guilty or shameful • Has a hard time concentrating • Has difficulty sleeping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feels depressed or alone • Develops an eating disorder or self-harming behaviors • Begins abusing alcohol or drugs • Becomes involved in risky sexual behaviors

Impact of Trauma

[Click Here](#)

Click to watch a TedTalk by Dr. Nadine Harris regarding the effects of childhood trauma.

- Trauma is different for everyone
- The impact can last well beyond childhood
- Learning problems, including lower grades and more suspensions and expulsions
- Increased need of health and mental health services
- Increased involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- Long-term health problems (heart disease, diabetes)
- Trauma is a risk factor of nearly all behavioral health and substance use disorders



The Classroom Calming Corner

Calm-down corners are becoming a popular tool in classrooms across all grade levels. Teachers recognize that students, like adults, have many feelings and emotions to process throughout the day. Sometimes, these feelings can be too much and may lead to poor choices and behaviors. Calm-down corners or Peace Corners give students a place to recenter, refocus and self-sooth.

[Click on the picture to the left to learn more about Peace Corners, Social Emotional small groups, strategies to teach your students today, and more.](#)

Traumatized students are often focused on survival, which hampers their ability to learn, socialize, and develop the skills needed to thrive.

- Rossen and Cowan

Resources for Creating A Trauma-Sensitive Classroom

Resource	Description	Grade Level	Educator	Family
Making Students Feel Safe	Edutopia - A trauma informed approach ensures that students feel safe, supported, and nurtured to improve their chances of academic success	All	X	
Traumatic Stress	Florida Department of Children and Families - explanations of trauma with resources in Florida	All	X	X
Understanding Child Trauma	Recognize the signs of child traumatic stress by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	All	X	X
Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators	The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) - toolkit for educators	All	X	X
Parenting to Prevent and Heal ACEs	Strategies for parents to prevent and heal children with higher ACE scores	All	X	X
Ten Things About Childhood Trauma	Ten things about childhood trauma every educator should know	All	X	
Childhood Trauma - What Every Teacher Should Know	Video - What Educators Should Know About Children in Our Classrooms	All	X	
The How and Why of Trauma-Informed Teaching	Edutopia - working with trauma-affected students	All	X	
Getting in Tune to Sooth the Nervous System	Edutopia - singing to help the nervous system leave the flight, fight, or free response	All	X	X
Trauma-Informed Strategies to Use in Your Classroom	Tips for teachers and classroom resources	All	X	
The Student's Brain on Trauma	Explanation for trauma and stress altered brains	All	X	
Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Disasters and other Traumatic Events	What Parents, Rescue Workers, and the Community Can Do	All	X	X
TED Talk - Lisa Godwin	How teachers can help students navigate trauma	All	X	

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Providing support and creating opportunities through targeted services for students and families while maximizing student potential and creating a safe, positive learning environment.

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