



Welcome! Thanks for joining us. We'd love to know who's in the "room."

Please introduce yourself in the chat by sharing your first name and where you're joining from this afternoon!

**SPENCER
FOUNDATION**

MEETING STUDENTS WHERE THEY ARE THROUGH TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE

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About today's presentation

- Please use the chat function to submit questions and share thoughts with others
- Feel free to use the reaction buttons at the bottom of the screen to respond to what you're learning
- Please remember to keep mute your mics to minimize distractions for others

Goal for today's presentation



Our goal today is to provide you with a few actionable trauma-informed strategies that you feel comfortable implementing or exploring as start the beginning of the school year.

The strategies we review today are adaptable to any environment whether you are in a face-to-face classroom or a virtual space.

Objectives for today



Image Source: Alliance for Education

- Deepen your knowledge about approaches to building a trauma-informed learning environment.
- Expand upon leveraging the strengths and culture that ELs/immigrant children bring to the learning environment.
- Learn how to build strong relationships and strong self-regulation and self-care strategies for you and your students.
- Prepare for self-assessment and implementation.



Image Source: Alliance for Education

Adversity, trauma, and stress among youth

Key terms

- **Adverse Childhood Experiences (or ACEs)** - potentially traumatic **events** that children (ages 0-17) experience or witness.
- **Trauma** - An **experience** of an actual, perceived, or threatened negative event, or series of events, that causes emotional pain and a sense of feeling overwhelmed.
- **Toxic stress** - **Repeated and chronic exposure** to ACEs over time - often without the support of other protective factors - which maintains the body's stress response into overdrive.

The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Maternal
Depression

Physical &
Emotional Neglect

Emotional &
Sexual Abuse

Divorce

Substance
Abuse

Mental Illness

Domestic Violence

Homelessness

Incarceration

Adverse Community Environments

Poverty

Violence

Discrimination

Poor Housing
Quality &
Affordability

Community
Disruption

Lack of Opportunity, Economic
Mobility & Social Capital

Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017) A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model. *Academic Pediatrics*. 17 (2017) pp. S86-S93. DOI information: 10.1016/j.acap.2016.12.011



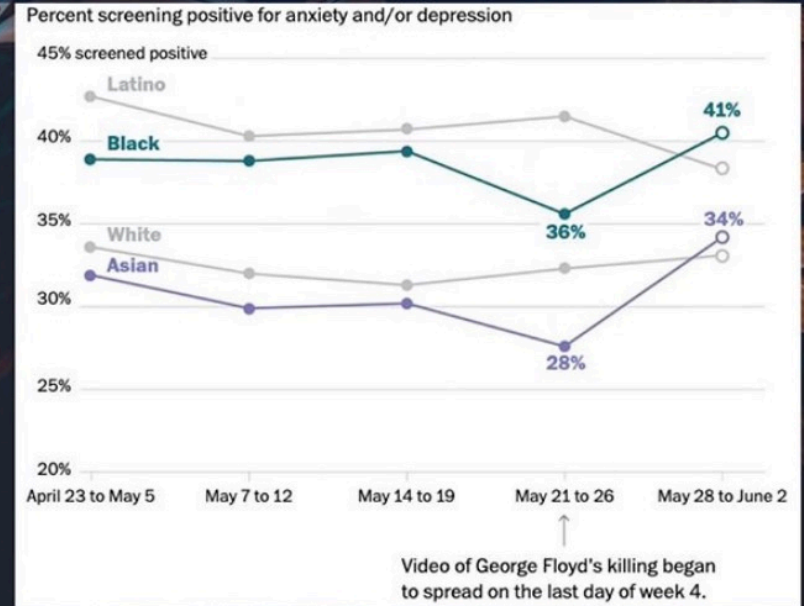
Image source: the74million.org



Image source: UNICEF

It is vital for clinicians and policy-makers to focus on BIPOC mental health

National data shows that clinical anxiety and depression symptoms in Black Americans went up from 36% to 41% after the video of George Floyd's death became public.



Source: The Washington Post and the Census Bureau

Image from The Mint Lab at FIU (Instagram: @themingprogram)

Prevalence

According to a 2016 study, **64%** of children have been exposed to one or more ACE;

More than **two-thirds of children** reported experiencing at least **1 traumatic event by age 16**

- Among **school-aged youth**:
 - **8%** experience sexual assault
 - **16%** experience cyber bullying
 - **17%** experience physical assault
 - **39%** witness violence
- **20-25%** of **youth from low-income backgrounds** experience **4 or more ACEs**, which significantly increases risk for poor life outcomes (such as adult diseases and health risk behaviors)

There's power in optimism

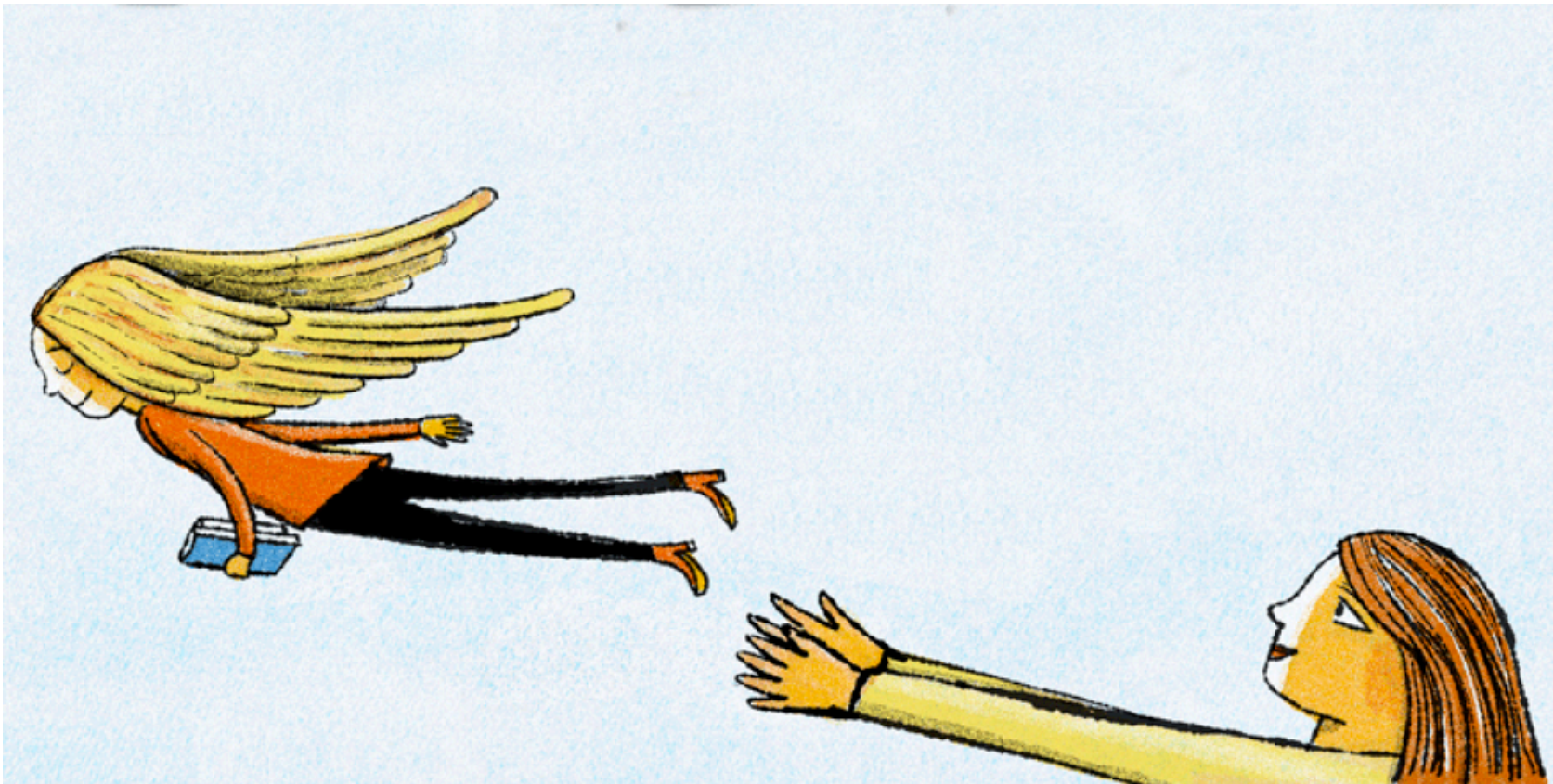


Image from Usable Knowledge – Harvard Graduate School of Education



What does it mean to be
trauma-informed?

A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH: 6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES



“Adopting a trauma-informed approach is not accomplished through any single particular technique or checklist. It requires **constant attention, caring awareness, sensitivity**, and possibly a cultural change at an organizational level...on-going internal organizational assessment and quality improvement, as well as **engagement with community stakeholders.**”

Trauma-Informed Approach in the Classroom: Breaking it down

SAFETY

Ensuring that the classroom environment promotes physical and emotional/psychological safety

TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRANSPARENCY

Offering students clear information about routines and goals for the classroom community; decisions about changes in the classroom are made with transparency and there's an emphasis on building or maintaining trust

Breaking it down

PEER SUPPORT

Creating opportunities for building peer relationships and collaboration opportunities

COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY

Making decisions by including students, collaboration in problem solving; and recognizing that everyone has an important role in the community

Breaking it down

EMPOWERMENT VOICE & CHOICE

Prioritizing empowerment and skill building; acknowledging students' resilience, strengths and rich experiences

CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, & GENDER ISSUES

Engaging in efforts that are anti-racist and anti-biased, promoting culturally-responsive pedagogy that celebrates and welcomes all identities

Goals of trauma-informed care

- Trauma awareness
- Safety
- Choice and empowerment
- Strengths-based approach



What does it mean to have a strengths-based approach?



- Recognizing students' assets, cultures, identities, languages and resources as important contributions to the learning community and helps students recognize them in themselves
- Using students' primary language in dual language/bilingual education
- Acknowledging the rich experiences that students bring with them as natural learners
- Maintaining high expectations of **all** students to learn new skills and achieve and provides the supports to help them get there
- Believing in students' ability to grow
- Engaging students in working through challenges (leveraging their strengths and insights to come up with solutions together)

*“Every moment matters. Every interaction with a child has a reaction in that child. Even as we keep working to address the many social and cultural factors we need to address to prevent negative experiences, we should be focused on **proactive promotion of the positive**. In particular, there's a need to promote that "through any door" kind way of being. So that wherever a child goes...to school...they're met with warm adults who purposely try to see and respond to them and meet their needs for care and guidance.”*

Christina Bethell
Positive Childhood Experiences Researcher

Strategies for the Classroom



Image Source: Alliance for Education

Trauma-informed practices to integrate in your planning and your interactions

- Promote an environment that values learning and growth
- Pay attention to routines and schedules
- Build and maintain strong relationships
- Focus on co-regulation
- Include opportunities for identity exploration
- Care for yourself



Promote an environment that values learning and growth

- Promote a growth mindset in all areas of your learning space:
 - Explicitly teaching students about their ability to change
 - Normalizing failure by modeling failure
 - Create a safe space for taking risks
 - Reassuring that bouncing back from missteps or failures is part of the process
- Build your own awareness and willingness to grow
 - A commitment to always be ready to engage in self-reflection
 - Always being open to learning something new from your students

Pay attention to routines and schedules

- Establish predictability in routines and schedules
 - Refer to the schedule consistently
 - Make timely announcements of changes when necessary
- Follow through with your commitments and in situations where plans must change, be transparent with your explanations
- Practice building awareness of your own emotions and model your own self-regulation skills as you flexibly adapt to any changes in the day

Build & maintain strong relationships

- Invite a positive connection from the beginning of the day:
 - Greeting students by name (as they enter the classroom or join a virtual session)
 - Have a special routine to open the session (e.g., having a few students share highlights or express gratitude for something)
- Post a question of the day and ask students to submit an answer¹
 - What do you wish I knew about you?
 - What's one of your special talents?
 - How are you feeling today?

¹Naegeli Costa, C., & Mims, L. C. (2020)

Build & maintain strong relationships

- Facilitate opportunities for meaningful, positive peer collaboration to engage with curriculum
- Create community agreements together (e.g., co-norming):
 - Jointly set goals for creating a positive learning environment
 - Make plans for accountability and restoration

Focus on co-regulation

Co-regulation is a way to help students with their self-regulation throughout the day, it includes:

- Monitoring and labeling your emotions
- Using self-regulation strategies yourself
- Being as consistent as you can be so that students know what to expect and what your expectations are of them in your classroom and learning environment
- Thinking about preparing the environment so that students can be successful
- Helping students problem-solve
- Providing them with opportunities to make decisions and self-monitor

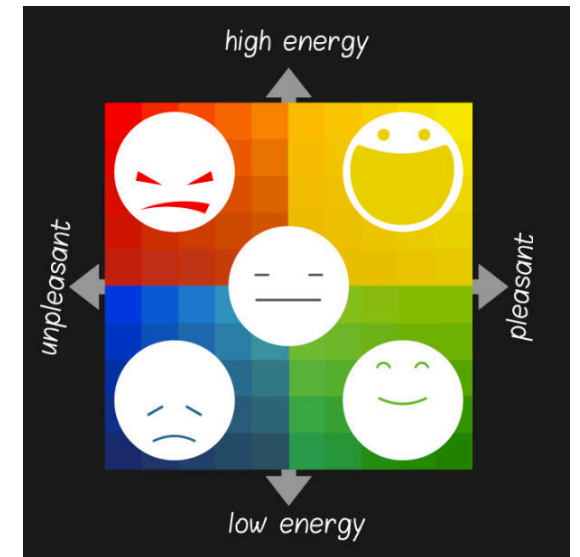


Image from Heart-Mind Online

Focus on co-regulation

Build and practice self-regulation skills *together*

- Incorporate “grounding” and deep breathing exercises as helpful tools for everyone to acknowledge and navigate their own emotions:
 - Taking a minute to name sights, sounds, or smells
 - Doing a 5-finger breathing exercise or taking 3 belly breaths together
- Model the use of these and other self-regulation strategies yourself throughout the day
- Help students develop emotional awareness and monitoring by using a Mood Meter (or feelings chart) as a tool to check in with their emotions throughout the day²

Mood Meter Examples



Image from New Canaan Public Schools

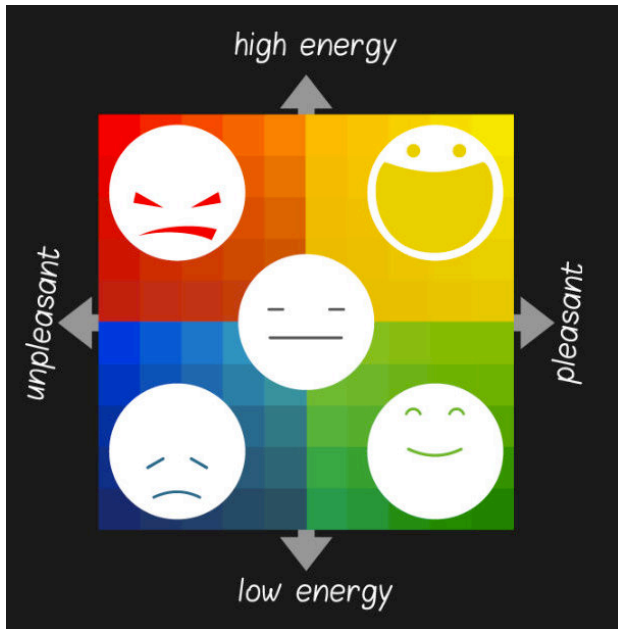


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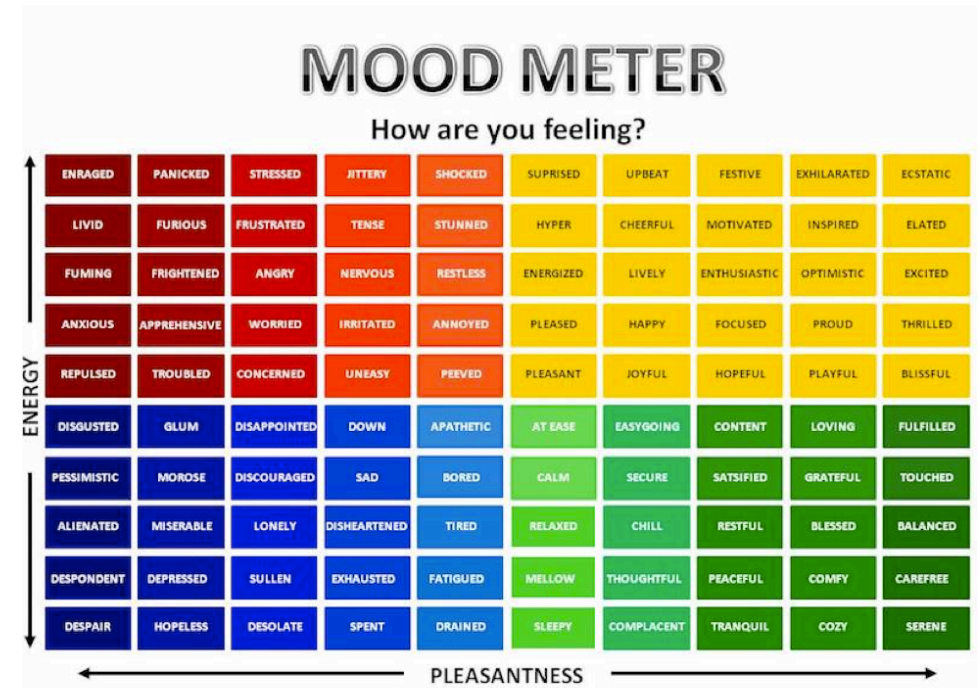


Image from New York Public Schools - PS 120Q

Include opportunities for identity exploration and agency

- Provide students with opportunities to reflect on identity and equity to build self-awareness
- Enhance students' relationship skills by supporting them in discussing issues that matter to them, building relationships and collaborating with diverse team members, and engaging in constructive conflict negotiation

Include opportunities for identity exploration and agency

- Incorporate study of different expectations for self-management for different groups of people – promote students' understanding of the role of bias and racism in expectations of different groups³
- Promote a culture of student agency:
 - Invite students in decision-making
 - Provide opportunities for students to engage with content that resonates with them or helps them explore their own identities

³ Simmons, D. (2019)

Care for yourself

Recognizing the symptoms of Secondary Traumatic Stress⁴ or Compassion Fatigue:

- withdrawing from friends and family
- feeling inexplicably irritable, angry, or numb
- inability to focus
- blaming others
- feeling hopeless, isolated, guilty about not doing enough
- struggling to concentrate
- being unable to sleep
- overeating or not eating enough
- continually and persistently worrying about students, even outside of school.

Care for yourself

- Care for yourself and ensure that you're receiving supports to properly address any difficult experiences you have had
- Be intentional about using your own self-care strategies, for example:
 - Setting boundaries with work hours
 - Taking breaks when you can, making sure your basic needs are met, checking in with your own emotions
 - Connecting with colleagues for support

Post-It Reflections/Reminders

1 question I want to follow up on is...

1 action I'll take to implement a practice is...

Tool for self-assessment & planning next steps

Question/ Area	Self-Assessment (What I am currently doing towards this? Where do I need to try something new?)	I need to learn more about this./ I will try this new practice. (Select 3 overall.)
In what ways do I promote an environment that values learning and growth		
How do I build and maintain strong relationships?		
How do our routines and schedules support students?		
What do we already do towards co-regulation?		
How does the work students do promote identity exploration?		
How do I care for myself?		

Takeaways



- Given the prevalence of youth's experiences of adversity and trauma, it's important to create spaces that are trauma-informed.
- The goal is to create positive experiences for students where they feel safe, welcome, celebrated, and encouraged to learn and grow.
- Believe in students' strengths, abilities, and richness in identity and culture, and how they enrich the classroom.
- Being trauma-informed requires being intentional about this work in planning, in the execution of your plans, during your interaction, and in authentic reflections throughout the year.

Resources for you!

<https://tinyurl.com/trauma-inf-resource>



Questions?

Please reach out with any questions using my contact information below:

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