
CASB 2022 Fall Conference

Student Voice in Trauma- Responsive Education Practices



Colorado Association
of School Boards

October 21, 2022

PANELISTS

- ❖ Toni-Rae Charles – Colorado’s Finest High School of Choice (Englewood Schools)
- ❖ Tatyana Garcia - North High School
- ❖ Fern Nutter - Northfield High School



LEARNING OUTCOMES

- ❖ A deeper awareness of key trauma-related concepts
- ❖ A greater understanding of trauma's effects on behavior
- ❖ 6 guiding principles to a trauma-informed approach
- ❖ Understanding trauma from a student perspective
- ❖ Listening to students in order to move forward



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

What is your definition of trauma?



WHAT IS TRAUMA?

- ❖ An emotional response to a terrible event
- ❖ Can be an accident, rape, natural disaster, or pandemic situation
- ❖ Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical
- ❖ Longer term reactions include unpredictable emotions, flashbacks, strained relationships, and even physical symptoms like headaches or nausea



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

What does trauma look like?



THE LENS OF TRAUMA

Trauma can serve as a filter, or lens, through which a person views the world. Think of sunglasses: You put them on and everything is shaded differently. Trauma can have that type of effect on how a person perceives their world.



TYPES OF TRAUMA

❖ **Acute**

- results from exposure to a single overwhelming event (rape, death of a loved one, natural disaster)
- detailed memories, hyper-vigilance, exaggerated startle response, misperceptions or overreactions



TYPES OF TRAUMA

❖ **Chronic**

- results from extended exposure to traumatizing situations
- prolonged exposure to violence or bullying, profound neglect, series of home removals
- denial and psychological numbing, dissociation, rage, social withdrawal, sense of foreshortened future



TYPES OF TRAUMA

❖ **Complex Trauma**

- results from a single traumatic event that is devastating enough to have long-lasting effects
- mass casualty school shooting, car accident with fatalities, refugee dislocation
- perpetual mourning or depression, chronic pain, concentration problems, sleep disturbances, irritability



WHAT ARE TRIGGERS?

- ❖ Signals that act as signs of possible danger, based on historical traumatic experiences, which lead to a set of emotional, physiological, and behavioral responses that arise in the service of survival and safety
- ❖ They are all about a person's perceptions experienced as reality
- ❖ People that are triggered may experience fear, panic, upset, and agitation



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

What triggers affect students?



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

How has the pandemic impacted the trauma students have experienced?



RISK FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS DURING THE PANDEMIC

- ❖ Mental health challenges prior to the pandemic
- ❖ Living in an urban area or an area with more COVID outbreaks
- ❖ Parents or caregivers that were frontline workers
- ❖ Parents or caregivers that had a higher risk of burnout
- ❖ Worrying about COVID
- ❖ Disruptions in routine, not seeing friends or going to school



RISK FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS DURING THE PANDEMIC

- ❖ Having more adverse childhood experiences (ACE's) such as abuse, neglect, community violence, and discrimination
- ❖ Financial instability, food shortages, housing instability
- ❖ Trauma such as losing a family member or caregiver due to COVID-19



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

What do you know about trauma-responsive or informed education?



WHAT IS TRAUMA-RESILIENT CARE?

- ❖ A framework of thinking and interventions that are directed by a thorough understanding of the profound neurological, biological, physiological, and social effects trauma has on an individual
- ❖ Recognizing a person's constant interdependent needs for safety, connections, and ways to manage emotions and impulses



GROUPS AT HIGHER RISK OF MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

- ❖ Youth with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs)
- ❖ Racial and ethnic minority youth
- ❖ LGBTQ+ youth
- ❖ Low income youth
- ❖ Youth in rural areas
- ❖ Youth in immigrant households
- ❖ Special youth populations (juvenile justice or child welfare systems)



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

What are you seeing in your schools in regard to trauma-responsive education?



TRAUMA-RESILIENT EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES

- ❖ Create a positive, safe, and affirming school environment
- ❖ Expand social and emotional learning programs and other evidence-based approaches that promote healthy development
- ❖ Provide a continuum of supports to meet student mental health needs, including evidence-based prevention practices and trauma-informed mental health care (MTSS)
- ❖ Expand school-based mental health workforce



TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES

- ❖ Maintain student dignity
- ❖ Having disciplinary interactions that strengthen the student's self-regulation capacity
- ❖ Non-confrontational body language
- ❖ Keeping voice to normal volume, slow, and warm
- ❖ Listening
- ❖ Relationship building



6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

- ❖ Safety
- ❖ Trustworthiness and Transparency
- ❖ Peer Support
- ❖ Collaboration and Mutuality
- ❖ Empowerment and Choice
- ❖ Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

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OUTCOME IF ISSUES NOT ADDRESSED

- ❖ Negative behaviors
- ❖ Behaviors perceived as disobedience, disrespect, or disruption
- ❖ Self-harm
- ❖ Harm toward others



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

How does your school culture and climate contribute to helping students either feel safe and secure or unstable?



THE CRY OF NEGATIVE BEHAVIOR

- ❖ Behavior is how students show what they cannot say
- ❖ Negative behavior is a cry for help
- ❖ Distress is seen in behavior



WHAT IS A TRAUMA-INFORMED DISTRICT?

- ❖ Prioritizes relationships between adults, adults and students, students and schools, and schools and communities;
- ❖ Ensures that all educators (both in schools and central administration) realize the impact of trauma, recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma, and respond through trauma-informed practice;
- ❖ Engages all in continuous improvement of trauma-informed practices through a systematic multi-tiered approach;
- ❖ Provides multi-tiered access to supports for students, educators, and families/community members who experience trauma;
- ❖ Promotes a culture of respect and care for students, educators, and families who experience trauma and other mental health challenges; and
- ❖ Commits to all leaders engaging in this work through their words, thoughts, and actions.



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

What do you believe should be offered or changed in your school in order to help students through trauma?



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

Questions?



STUDENT VOICE IN TRAUMA-RESILIENT PRACTICES

Thank you for attending this session

