

The 6th
Pathways from Poverty
Colloquium

*—Unpacking Poverty—
Students' Mental and Emotional Health*

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— Unpacking Poverty— Students' Mental and Emotional Health

Discussion

- Responses and suggested solutions
- Mental Health professionals recommendations
- Specific programs
 - CBITS (Cognitive Behavior Intervention for Trauma in Schools)
 - Trauma-Sensitive Schools (TSS) [district/school responses]
 - Steps for Developing Trauma-Informed Educational Leadership
- End Notes

Urban poverty greatly increases children's chances of experiencing trauma...and (most likely) their exposure to such events as:

- Family chaos
- Conflicts, violence
- Victimization
- Incarceration or death of a family member
- Abuse and neglect

Protecting Children from the Dangers of Urban Poverty
Clinical Psychological Review
Laurel J. Kiser, 2007

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/6815502_Protecting_children_from_the_dangers_of_urban_poverty

How Mental Health Professionals can help

- **Obtain training** in developmentally and culturally appropriate evidence-based therapies for child trauma
- **Support the child, family and community** by helping parents and children identify and use existing resources for problem-solving, to reduce stress, to include:
 - ✓ responding to addressing police investigations
 - ✓ court proceedings
 - ✓ funerals
 - ✓ disruptions, displacements from school and other routines
 - ✓ housing and custody issues
 - ✓ loss of possessions, friends, pets
 - ✓ financial stress

Help families navigate real-life challenges and serve as **advocates** for social justice.

Presidential Task Force on
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Trauma
in Children and Adolescents

Children and Trauma: Update for Mental Health Professionals, 2008

Mental Health Professionals can also...

- Provide education about trauma reactions to the child and to people around him or her, including parents, teachers, coaches, clergy, community leaders, other individuals within the child's support system
- Help children, families, communities return to or create normal roles and routines
- Understand the child's and family's cultural perspectives relating to the trauma, reactions to the trauma and the need for (and type of) intervention
- Understand that culture plays an important role in the meaning given to trauma and the expectations for recovery

Mental Health Professionals also note...

Children and families from ethnic and racial minority groups may encounter additional barriers, including limited access to mental health services and insensitivity from the majority culture regarding the impact of racism and poverty on their experience of traumatic events.

It is critical that awareness of the potential impact of cultural, historic and racial trauma be acknowledged and shared among teachers, administrators, support service providers (counselors, psychologists, social workers, others) include training and diverse related experiences.

What Mental Health Professionals should do:

Responses...

Assess the need and provide care consistent with the child's level of need and time elapsed since exposure to the trauma.

Respect child and family readiness and willingness for treatment.
Keep doors to treatment open.

Advocate for trauma-focused treatment for those who do not recover fully.

Consider confidentiality and privacy issues.

Take care of one's self and watch for symptoms of burnout.

American Psychological Association
Children and Trauma, 2008

School Programs can be a Source of Response and Support

Schools offer a promising site for helping children exposed to trauma, because school-based treatment can reduce barriers to seeking mental health care.

Lisa H. Jaycox
Helping Children Cope with Trauma:
A School-based Intervention
RAND Corporation

Example of a School Program offering Responses to Trauma

The Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)

RAND health researchers, in collaboration with the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and UCLA, developed—

...an intervention program designed for
mental health professionals to deliver in a school setting.

- <https://cbitsprogram.org/>



CBITS

Consists of group and individual sessions that:

- Educate students about the effects of trauma
- Support students in developing a narrative about the trauma
- Help students through cognitive therapy and social problem-solving techniques



CBITS

Key findings included:

- CBITS significantly reduced symptoms of post-traumatic stress and depression among students exposed to trauma
- Students who received CBITS early performed better in reading and mathematics
- The program produced consistent results and was well accepted by students, parents and teachers

RAND

researchers and colleagues from LAUSD and UCLA conducted randomized controlled evaluation of CBITS in school settings.



Impacts of CBITS

- Its delivery in group settings has expanded children's access to mental health care
 - A single social worker can screen up to 1,500 students per year and deliver care to more than 200 students per year
 - It is widely implemented in more than a dozen states
 - It has been adapted for Spanish-speaking populations; low-literacy groups; children in foster care
- It is currently recognized as a recommended practice by national agencies assessing the quality of mental health interventions, including
 - * U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration
 - * Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - * U.S. Dept. of Justice

Trauma-Sensitive Schools

Examples of District and School Responses
to Students'
Mental and Emotional Needs

Common Elements of Trauma-Sensitive Schools may include:

- Comprehensive professional development for teachers and other staff
- A team of school/district personnel to assess individual student cases
- Expanded counseling services
- Referrals to outside support services
- Parent and community workshops on the effects of trauma
- Conflict resolution training for both teachers and students
- Consultation with local hospitals, mental health facilities, women's shelters, and other community-based organizations

- School/district administrative support for establishing a trauma-sensitive environment
- Academic instruction techniques for teaching traumatized students
- Development or revision of school policies to be more trauma-sensitive

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
December 2007

What Do Trauma-Sensitive Schools Have in Common?

The Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative of Massachusetts identifies these characteristics as essential components of “Trauma-sensitive Schools” ...

- **All school staff understand** how trauma impacts learning and “buy into” the need for a school-wide approach.
 - **All school staff embrace** a shared sense of responsibility for helping every child succeed.
 - **School staff create** an environment where all children feel safe – physically, emotionally, socially and academically.
 - Student trauma is **addressed in holistic ways** – not in a singular program.
 - **School staff explicitly** make children feel like a part of the school community and provide children multiple opportunities to practice newly developing social and behavioral skills.
 - **School leaders have their pulse** on what’s happening within their halls and outside of their walls and can respond quickly to needs of students and the surrounding community.
- Schools should view suspension and expulsion as a disciplinary option of last resort.

Example of Trauma-Sensitive Schools (The District of Columbia)

- The Children's Law Center (Washington, DC) supports Trauma-sensitive schools—noting they “...can improve academics by helping children become emotionally available to learn and improving their behavior.”
- Creating trauma-sensitive schools in DC should build on efforts already in place. DC's Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) has been implementing a trauma systems therapy model in their practice.



The District of Columbia's evidence-based programs focused specifically on children experiencing trauma. They utilize the CBITS Model

- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention
for Trauma in Schools

<https://cbitsprogram.org/>

and offer...

- ...SPARCS—Structured Psychotherapy for
Adolescents Responding to Chronic Stress

<http://www.sparcstraining.com/>

A Washington, DC Response...



DC's
*Child and Family
Services Agency*

CFSA has worked with the Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) to train over 440 DC educators in trauma systems therapy.

OSSE presentation to the Mayor's
Advisory Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect
February 24, 2015

The DC Public Schools' (DCPS) Mental Health and Behavioral Support Services Team has re-evaluated the mental health services provided by its social workers and significantly increased the number of clinical services they provide.

DC Public Schools: Building an
Infrastructure for School Mental Health
2015

The Children's Law Center urges the DC District to make all schools trauma-sensitive by:

1. Creating a position to coordinate schools' efforts.
2. Adopting a model trauma-sensitive schools policy that can be tailored by DCPS and the Public Charter Schools to fit their student populations.
3. Creating a grant program to support trauma-sensitive schools.
4. Requiring all Local Education Agencies to train and provide professional development on trauma for all staff that students come into contact with during the school day.
5. Requiring all Local Education Agencies to screen potential teachers, administrators and staff when hiring new positions to strengthen the trauma-sensitive school model in DC.
6. Increasing access to information about trauma-sensitive plans in schools.



Some Models of Trauma-Sensitive Schools

Massachusetts

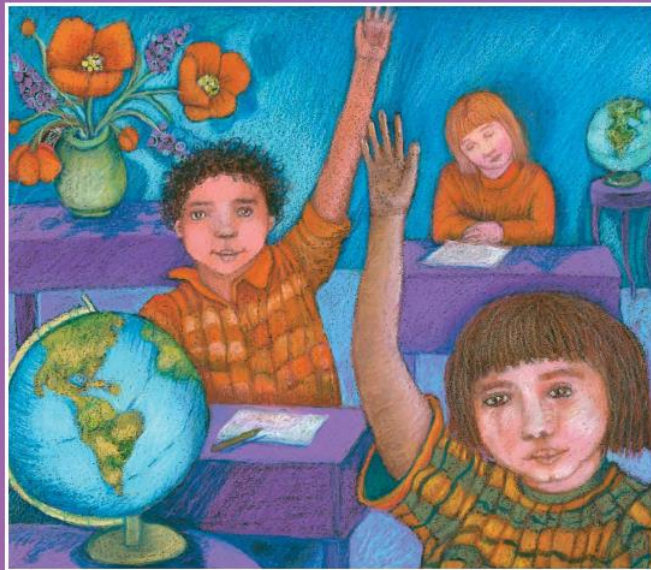
Massachusetts has emerged as a national leader in creating trauma-sensitive schools.

Teachers and administrators in schools that received grants and developed action plans describe many changes, big and small, that quickly led to measurable success, including a dramatically reduced number of suspensions and increased test scores.

Helping Traumatized Children Learn

supportive school environments
for children traumatized by family violence

A Report and Policy Agenda



Massachusetts Advocates for Children: Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative

In collaboration with Harvard Law School

and The Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence

The Massachusetts Advocates for Children, Harvard Law School, and the Task Force on Children Affected by Domestic Violence launched ***Helping Traumatized Children Learn***, a policy agenda for the state, in 2005. Schools are encouraged to adopt a “Flexible Framework” for trauma-sensitive practices and supports at the school-wide level. More specifically, schools are asked to incorporate an understanding of trauma.

Massachusetts' "Flexible Framework" for Trauma-Sensitive Practices in Schools

Domains

- **School Culture and Infrastructure**
- **Staff Training**
- **Links to Mental Health Professionals**
- **Academic Instruction for Students who have Experienced Trauma**
- **Nonacademic Strategies**
- **School Policies, Procedures, and Protocols**

Source: *Helping Traumatized Children Learn*

Washington State

The Attachment, Regulation and Competency (**ARC**) program, schools integrate socio-emotional learning and trauma knowledge into classroom practices, integrate community behavioral health service providers into schools, and develop policies and practices to help teachers learn trauma-informed practices.

Washington State

School staff are regularly trained on the impact of trauma on learning and taught tools to address student behavior and learning.

New teachers are screened during the application process to determine whether their teaching style would foster the trauma-informed practices of the school.

San Francisco

San Francisco has implemented a trauma-sensitive schools' program since 2008. The program relies on:

- prevention and
- intervention

Operates on three levels:

- student,
- caregiver and
- school system

Children attend classroom presentations on how to calm down under stress, and individual and group psychotherapy is available in schools.

San Francisco

Caregivers can attend workshops and support groups. School staff can receive trauma-focused professional development. Policies and procedures in the school district are examined through a “trauma lens,” which can mean finding alternatives to suspension.

Five Steps for developing Trauma-Informed Educational Leadership

a Message to School Districts from:



Tiffany Anderson, former Superintendent of Jennings, Missouri School District, the first trauma-informed school district in St. Louis.

EDUCATION WEEK



1

**Get to know
the community
and schools you
serve.**

Before setting a clear vision for working with trauma, leaders must understand the needs and feelings of the community.



2

**Build teacher
and parent
capacity for
understanding
the effects of
trauma.**

Ensure that teachers
and leaders make
positive parent
contact.



3

**Use data
to drive
interventions.**

Schools should review students' academic history and develop intervention plans that treat trauma and academic health in the most effective manner.

4

Engage community partnerships.

In Jennings, Missouri, the district partnered with the local community to offer support services. Business leaders mentored individual students yearlong; mental-health agencies had offices in our schools; and local universities helped implement pediatric services in schools. To provide full-time support, the district also converted several buildings into a food pantry and homeless shelter for youths and opened schools on Saturdays or during the winter when services were normally closed.

5

Make space and time for well-being.

While schools often feel they don't have time for extra responsibilities that trauma-informed settings require, leaders can set goals and expectations for their schools. Educators play a critical role in helping children cope with adverse experiences.

End Notes

Increased national interest in identifying and responding to the mental and emotional health needs of students has resulted in diverse initiatives at the federal level and state departments of education, local school districts, professional organizations of teachers, administrators, social workers, counselors, psychologists, and others involved in providing services and support to students and families, that directly focus on aspects of trauma, stress and related mental and emotional health needs.

A prime area of interest, encouraged by many professionals, is developing opportunities for shared collaboration, awareness and collective responses to identified needs of students and families.

There are additional interests in sharing common, agreed upon definitions and recommendations for effective services. The National Child Traumatic Stress Network gives some guidance and points of reference to those seeking to develop creditable, research-based, trauma-informed systems.

The Seven Key Elements they recommend are as follows:

Seven Key Elements of Trauma-Informed Systems (National Child Traumatic Stress Network)

1. Screen routinely for trauma exposure and symptoms.
2. Implement culturally appropriate, evidence-based assessments and treatments for traumatic stress and symptoms.
3. Provide resources to children, families, and providers on trauma, its impact, and treatment options.
4. Build on the strengths of children and families impacted by trauma.
5. Address parent and caregiver trauma.
6. Collaborate across child-serving systems to coordinate care.
7. Support staff by minimizing and treating secondary traumatic stress, which can lead to burnout.

<http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/bibliography%20of%20resources%20for%20schools%20to%20be%20trauma%20informed.PDF>

Resources for Schools to Help Students Affected by Trauma Learn



Resources for Schools

Calmer Classrooms: A Guide to Working with Traumatized Children

http://www.ocsc.vic.gov.au/downloads/calmer_classrooms.pdf

Calmer Classrooms particularly addresses the needs of children who have been traumatized by abuse and neglect. It explains the effect of abuse on learning and attachment, providing teachers with strategies involving relationship-based practices for challenges and conflicts in the classroom as well as self-care.

Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators

http://www.nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/Child_Trauma_Toolkit_Final.pdf

The Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators provides information for educators, parents and caretakers, including facts, suggestions, psychological and behavioral impact of trauma by grade level, and self-care.

Creating Sanctuary in Schools

<http://www.sanctuaryweb.com/Documents/Sanctuary%20in%20the%20School.pdf>

Creating Sanctuary in Schools describes the basis for the process of providing a safe and healing environment for children in schools who need to recover from the effects of trauma, as well as for less traumatized children.

<http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/bibliography%20of%20resources%20for%20schools%20to%20be%20trauma%20informed.PDF>

Resources for Schools to Help Students Affected by Trauma Learn



Websites for Educators

The Impact of Trauma on Learning

<http://www.sch-psych.net/archives/001169.php>

This website summarizes trauma's impact on children by age, the effects on school behavior and performance, and school interventions. A related PowerPoint presentation is available.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

<http://www.nctsn.org>

Established by Congress in 2000, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) is a unique collaboration of academic and community-based service centers whose mission is to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for traumatized children and their families across the United States. Combining knowledge of child development, expertise in the full range of child traumatic experiences, and attention to cultural perspectives, the NCTSN serves as a national resource for developing and disseminating evidence-based interventions, trauma-informed services, and public and professional education.

<http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/bibliography%20of%20resources%20for%20schools%20to%20be%20trauma%20informed.PDF>

Resources for Schools to Help Students Affected by Trauma Learn



Websites for Educators, continued **School Mental Health Project**

<http://www.smhp.psych.ucla.edu/>

The UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools provides a Quick Find On-Line Clearinghouse for a long list of topical areas involving stress, including PTSD, child abuse, immigrants and refugees, impulse control, traumatic brain injury, juvenile delinquency, eating disorders, physical and somatic complaints, homelessness, loss, grief, and bereavement. Resources include documents, websites, audio and video downloads and fact sheets.

Websites with Clinical Information **Learning Center for Child and Adolescent Trauma**

<http://learn.nctsn.org/course/category.php?id=3>

The Learning Center provides free access to NCTSN experts and up-to-date, science-based information in the areas of assessment, treatment and services, training, research and evaluation, and organizational and systems change for traumatized children, adolescents, and their families.

<http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/bibliography%20of%20resources%20for%20schools%20to%20be%20trauma%20informed.PDF>

Resources for Schools to Help Students Affected by Trauma Learn



Selected Articles

Optimum Learning Environments for Traumatized Children

http://www.jaspermountain.org/optimum_learning_environment.pdf

This article addresses how and why traumatized children perform in schools, how the traumatized brain functions, and elements to avoid in and enhance schools.

Resilience and Recovery from Trauma

http://www.tsaforschools.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=92&Itemid=81

This website includes a paper that summarizes research findings concerning the relationship between mental health and academic achievement.

Trauma in Children and Related Learning Problems

<http://www.psychiatry.emory.edu/PROGRAMS/GADrug/Feature%20Articles/Parenting/2006%20Trauma%20in%20Children%20and%20Related%20Learning%20Problems.pdf>

This article provides an explanation of the “survival mode” experienced by traumatized children and how it affects their ability to learn and conform to behavioral expectations in the classroom. Teachers are presented as supportive adults.

<http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/resources/bibliography%20of%20resources%20for%20schools%20to%20be%20trauma%20informed.PDF>

Resources for Schools to Help Students Affected by Trauma Learn

Selected Articles, continued

Understanding and Helping Children Who Have Been Traumatized

http://www.jaspermountain.org/understanding_helping_children.pdf

This article provides information about children who have been traumatized, including suggestions for how to support them.

Additional Publications

Healing the Hurt: Trauma-Informed Approaches to the Health of Boys and Young Men of Color

<http://www.calendow.org/uploadedFiles/Publications/BMOC/Drexel%20-%20Healing%20the%20Hurt%20-%20Full%20Report.pdf>

The purpose of this paper is to promote understanding of the role of trauma and adversity in the lives of Latino and African American boys and young men and to examine trauma-informed approaches to improving their health.

Healing the Invisible Wounds: Children's Exposure to Violence-A Guide for Families

<http://www.safestartcenter.org/pdf/caregiver.pdf>

This easy-to-read publication is designed to help parents and other family caregivers understand how children are affected by exposure to violence.

Resources for Schools to Help Students Affected by Trauma Learn

Books

Elementary

Craig, Susan. 2008. *Reaching and Teaching Children Who Hurt: Strategies for Your Classroom*. Baltimore, MD: Paul Brookes Publishing.

Oehlberg, Barbara. 2006. *Reaching and Teaching Stressed and Anxious Learners in Grades 4-8: Strategies for Relieving Distress and Trauma in Schools and Classrooms*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

High School

Horsemen, Jenny. 2000. *Too Scared to Learn*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Stien, Phyllis, et al. 2003. *Psychological Trauma and the Developing Brain: Neurologically Based Interventions for Troubled Children*. New York, NY: Routledge.

PreKindergarten – High School

Koplow, Lesley. 2002. *Creating Schools that Heal: Real-Life Solutions*. New York, NY: Teacher's College, Columbia University Press.

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An Available Resource RAND and the 3C Institute for Social Development

have created a website that provides training
and implementation support for mental health
professionals to deliver CBITS,
free of charge.



<https://www.3cisd.com/>

