Family Leadership Institute

Trauma Informed Practices
What is the purpose of the Family Leadership Institute?

- Vision
- Communication
- Values
- Organizing
Trauma-Informed Practices for Caregivers
Goals For Today:

- Develop an awareness of trauma
- Recognize the effects of trauma
- Better understand how trauma-informed practices in schools and at home can support resilience
- How you can use the six pillars of trauma-informed practices in your home
“The District shall be a Trauma-Informed District and shall work in a strategic, culturally-responsive, strength-based preventative way to best meet the needs of our diverse students, families, and educators that mitigates the impact of trauma on the social emotional and academic growth of our students” by providing training, coaching and support in trauma-informed approaches.
Six Pillars of Trauma-Informed Practices

- Safe and secure environments
- System-wide trauma-informed competence
- Healing, hopeful, honest and trusting relationships
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Client voice, choice and self-advocacy
- Support for staff self care
Caregivers and Educators as Protective Factors

- Caregivers and Educators as protective factors
- Universal paradigm shift

**Mindset shift:**

What is wrong with you → *What happened to you?*

- Not a “one-size-fits-all” model;
  No quick fixes
1-in-4 Colorado children have experienced two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences

Activity: Communities and Schools as Protective Factors

Blocks Activity:

In what ways can schools and communities build student resilience?

Center on the Developing Child [http://developingchild.harvard.edu](http://developingchild.harvard.edu)  
Frameworks Institute [www.frameworksinstitute.org](http://www.frameworksinstitute.org)
What is Trauma?
What is Trauma?

Experience of real or perceived threat to life or bodily integrity

OR the life or bodily integrity of a loved one

AND causes overwhelming feelings of terror, fear and helplessness

DSM, NCTSN
What is Trauma?

“Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being” (SAMHSA, 2014).
Event(s)
What Are The Types of Trauma?

**Historical**: Collective and cumulative trauma experienced by a group across generations and individuals are still suffering effects: Systemic oppression, discrimination, harassment, race based trauma

**Chronic**: Repeated and prolonged traumatic experiences: ongoing exposure to family or community violence, chronic bullying, or long-term medical issue, chronic stressors

**Complex**: Multiple traumatic events from early age often within caregivers system, without adequate adult support: ongoing physical, emotional, sexual abuse, neglect, and witnessing domestic violence

**Acute**: A one time single/isolated incident: fire, car accident, one time incident of abuse

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
Potentially Traumatic Events

- Accidents
- Physical, sexual abuse
- Childhood neglect
- Abandonment
- Natural disasters
- Domestic violence (witnessing)
- Community violence
- Medical injury or illness
- Immigration concerns
- Traumatic grief
- Refugee trauma (War or persecution)
Potentially Traumatic School Events

- Bullying
- Cyber-bullying
- Weapons
- School Violence
- Lockdowns
- Discrimination
- Harassment
- Gangs
- Fighting
- Witnessing fighting
Experience
What’s safe for one may not be safe for another.

Whether an event is traumatic depends on the person’s perspective and experience of the event.
Effects
Neuroplasticity:
The ability of the brain to form and reorganize synaptic connections, especially in response to learning or experience or following injury.

Trauma’s Impact on Brain and Body:
- Traumatic Event
- Emotional Response
- Short Term Memory
- Long Term Memory
- New Traumatic Event
- Emotional Response (Fight, Flight, Freeze)
Normal Reactions to Potentially Traumatic Events: Preschool Children

- Helplessness
- Uncertainty if there is continued danger
- General fear
- Sleep difficulties
- Separation anxiety
- Traumatic play
- Possible loss in speech and toileting skills
- Changes in appetite
Normal Reactions to Potentially Traumatic Events: School Age Children

- Helplessness
- Concern for safety of self & family
- New fear of people, situations, events
- Teachers might notice change in concentration
- Guilt or shame
- Sleep difficulties
- Reckless or aggressive behavior
- Constant re-telling of the traumatic event
- Difficulty with boundaries

NCTSN, 2011
Normal Reactions to Potentially Traumatic Events: Adolescents

- Fear, vulnerability, concern seen as “abnormal”
- Guilt or shame
- Sleep difficulties
- Self conscious about their emotional response to event
- Withdrawal from family and/or friends
- Change in concentration and academics
- Reckless or aggressive behavior
- Fantasies about revenge/retribution
- Self destructive and accident prone behaviors

NCTSN, 2011
Not All Trauma and Traumatic Stress Leads to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

We encourage you to seek out professional support from a trained mental health provider:

- Therapist
- Counselor
- Psychologist
- School Social Worker

If there is any safety concerns or your child is talking about hurting himself/herself seek immediate care.
Helping Your Kids Overcome: Building Resilience
Myths To Avoid

● “My love should be enough to erase the effects of everything bad that happened before.”

● “My child should be grateful and love me as much as I love him/her.”

● “My child shouldn’t feel love or feel loyal to an abusive caregiver.”

● “It’s better to just move on, forget, and not talk about past painful experiences.”

NCTSN, 2010
Factors That Impact Resilience: Internal Resiliency Factors

- Age and developmental age
- Nature of traumatic event
- Child’s perception of danger
- Was child victim or witness
- Relationship with the perpetrator
- Prior trauma history
- Self esteem
- Ability to regulate emotions
External Resiliency Factors:

- Caregiver reactions
- Family as a support
- Connection to school
- Connection to community support
- Resources
- Mental health supports
- Continued stressors
Using The Six Pillars to Create a Trauma-Informed Home

- Safe and secure environments
- System-wide trauma-informed competence
- Healing, hopeful, honest and trusting relationships
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Client voice, choice and self-advocacy
- Support for staff self care
Healing Hopeful, Honest, Relationships

- You are probably the most important people in your kids' lives
- Build connection with your kids
- Verbally tell them you are there for them and believe in them
- Build empathy
- Quality time is important

Best strategy for supporting your child:
Build strong relationships with your kids
Creating Safe and Secure Homes: Physical Safety

- Predictable routines
- Structure
- Peace corners/small spaces
- Art
- Circles
- Plan for solving conflict
- Regulate your own moods
- Keep kids safe
- Have ongoing conversations about safety
Creating Safe and Secure Homes: Psychological Safety

- Believe your kids
- Remind them it was not their fault
- Tell them you love them and this doesn’t change your love
- Use a calm voice
- Help your child understand and manage overwhelming emotions
- Listen and affirm their feelings
- Ask if they want to be alone
- Watch your body language
Give Your Kids a Voice and Choice

- Allow them to talk about their thoughts and feelings (Let them know you're available)
- Help them create a strengths-based understanding of their life story (photos of happy moments, journals, videos)
- Give them options - Help them feel powerful in their choices
- Advocate for them as a caregiver leader - Obtain necessary resources for them (therapy and groups)

NCTSN, 2010
Cultural Consideration/Cultura

- Different cultures react to stress and trauma in different ways
- Talk with your kids about ways your particular family and/or culture deals with pain and struggle
- What are our cultural or family strengths that support us
- Communicate this info with schools, mental health providers, medical doctors
- Be involved in your kids treatment
- What kind of community support do we have or need?
- Continue to have high expectations for your kids
Importance of Caregiver Self-care

- Put on the mask first
- Parental guilt - seek your own therapy
- Have a support system
- Am I sleeping and eating
- Make a list of things that make you happy
- Have your own time - even 10-15 minutes
- Ask for help
- Empower yourself - Learn more about trauma, it’s effects and how to help your kids
- Be kind to yourself
Immediate Self-Care: Mantras for Caregivers

I set the tone
I choose to stay calm
It’s not personal
I am their safety
This too shall pass /Esto va pasar
My kids need me/mis hijos me necesitan
I love my kids/Amo a mis niños
Connect First
Breathe/Respira
References


