



# KOI

EDUCATION

Knowledge. Outcomes. Impact.  
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Using SWPBIS to Help Schools Become More Trauma Sensitive  
Debi Neat, KOI Education

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**INTRODUCE SELF, BRIEFLY SHARE YOUR INTEREST IN THE TOPIC**

Elbow Partner Sharing

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## Learning Objectives

1. Define Trauma
2. Describe types of experiences likely to be traumatic for youth
3. Explain how trauma may impact behavior and learning
4. Identify tiered interventions to increase student strengths



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## MY HOPE – DR. NADINE BURKE-HARRIS

Breakthrough



## WHAT IS TRAUMA?

Define it...  
What could cause it?  
How common is it?

## TRAUMA IS COMMON

Each year more than 10 million children in the United States endure the trauma of abuse, violence, natural disasters, and other adverse events.

Research suggests that **at least** 25% of U.S. children will experience at least one traumatic event by age 16.

These children are in your schools.

National Center for Children  
Exposed to Violence

National Child Traumatic  
Stress Network

## TRAUMA IS COMMON

In a nationally representative U.S. survey, 39% of 12 -17 year-olds reported witnessing violence, 17% reported physical assault and 8% reported sexual assault.

75 - 93% of youth in the juvenile justice system have experienced some



Healing Invisible Wounds: Why Investing in Trauma-  
Informed Care for Children Makes Sense 2010

Traumatic events **overwhelm** the ordinary human adaptations to life.

Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery*, 1997

An exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous stimuli overwhelm the child's **capacity to regulate emotions.**

Early Trauma Treatment Network



Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as **physically and emotionally harmful or threatening** and that has **lasting adverse effects on the individual's physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.**

SAMHSA, 2012



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Child Traumatic Stress is when children are exposed to traumatic events/experiences and the exposure **overwhelms their ability to cope.**

*Not all experiences of trauma lead to a trauma response. Many variables impact the process.*



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What Type of Experiences?



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What types of experiences would be likely to be traumatic for youth?

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## VIGNETTES

Peter grew up with physical and sexual abuse, lived in foster homes, and has witnessed more than 20 people get shot. In March and April, he slept on the roof of the high school because he was homeless. When he was discovered, he was suspended.

"I want to figure out a way for the teachers to understand the students," said Peter, 17.

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### Victim / Witnessing:

- Domestic Violence
- Community Violence
- School Violence
- Interpersonal Violence



Physical, emotional, sexual abuse / assault  
Physical or emotional neglect  
Natural disasters  
Forced displacement  
Serious accident or illness / medical procedure

Adapted from National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2008 [www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/trauma](http://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/trauma)

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## VARIABLES

Obviously, the event(s)

What else do you think determines whether a traumatic experience leads to traumatic stress response?

### Internal Factors

- Coping
- Mental health
- Trauma history
- Emotional regulation

### External Factors

- Family support
- Social support
- Family trauma
- Poverty

What are ACEs?

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KIDNEY ORGAN  
INTEGRATION

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## WHAT ARE ACEs?

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Growing up experiencing any of the following conditions in the home or prior to age 18:

- Recurrent physical abuse
- Recurrent emotional abuse
- Contact sexual abuse
- An alcohol and/or drug abuser in the household
- An incarcerated household member
- Someone who is chronically depressed, mentally ill, institutionalized, or suicidal
- Mother is treated violently
- One or no parents
- Emotional or physical neglect

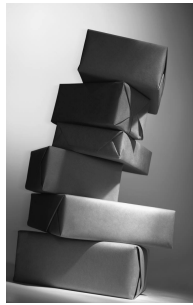


ACEs are experiences in childhood that are unhappy, unpleasant, hurtful.

Sometimes referred to as toxic stress or childhood trauma.

Trauma is cumulative.

Implications?



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It is important to remember that a traumatic reaction is **not** an attitude or a "choice" but rather a physiological and psychological reaction to stress.

Principal's Research Review Nov 2013



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Impact



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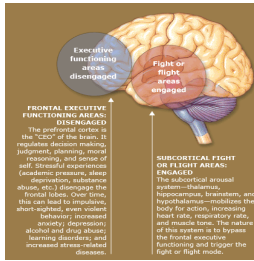
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## IMPACT ON THE BRAIN

- If there is danger, the “thinking” brain shuts down, allowing the “feeling” brain to act
- Traumatized children experience changes in brain structures, neuro-chemistry & genetic expression

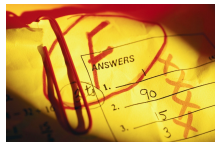


## HOW DOES TRAUMA IMPACT CHILD BRAIN DEVELOPMENT?

Toxic stress

## ACE AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE

- Traumatized children are:
  - 2.5x more likely to fail a grade in school
  - score lower on standardized achievement tests
  - more likely to have struggles in receptive & expressive language
  - suspended & expelled more often
  - more frequently placed in special education



## IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Trauma causes brain to adapt in ways that contributed to their survival (i.e. constant fight/flight/freeze)

These adaptations can look like behavior problems in "normal" context, such as school.

When triggered, "feeling" brain dominates the "thinking" brain.

The normal developmental process is interrupted, and students may exhibit internalizing or externalizing behaviors.

*"Traumatized children do not fit neatly into any single 'box'... the symptoms of their trauma can be quite varied."*



Helping Traumatized Children Learn, Massachusetts Advocates for Children 2005

## IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Trauma can impair the acquisition of developmental competencies in

- cognitive functioning
- emotional regulation
- interpersonal relationships

When the brain is activated (in alarm state); children feel vulnerable and unsafe.

**Cannot shift to calm state necessary for learning.**



## SPECIFIC CLASSROOM CHALLENGES

Children who have experienced trauma may:

Misread context

Fail to understand directions

Be easily overstimulated



Helping Traumatized Children Learn, Massachusetts Advocates for Children 2005

Have difficulty connecting cause & effect

Overreact to comments made by teachers and peers (hurt feelings / withdrawal, anger / conflict, etc.)

## IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON BEHAVIOR

Children develop coping strategies that are not understood by the adults in their lives, or by themselves, which often contribute to secondary problems, like disciplinary actions.



## IMPACT OF TRAUMA ON BEHAVIOR

Anxious  
Withdrawn  
Confusion  
Disorientation  
Avoidance  
Acting out  
On edge  
Day dreaming  
Difficulty with impulse control

Be aware of both the children who act out AND the quiet children who don't appear to have behavioral problems.



## Trauma Informed Schools



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### PBIS AND TRAUMA INFORMED SCHOOLS

#### Trauma informed schools:

- Acknowledge the prevalence of traumatic occurrence in students' lives.
- Create flexible framework that provides universal supports.
- Are sensitive to unique needs of youth.
- Are mindful of avoiding re-traumatization.

***A trauma informed school is most effectively created and maintained when positive universal supports and strategies are part of daily school programming.***

SRI International, April 2015

### PBIS AND TRAUMA INFORMED PRACTICE

▪ Strategies for creating trauma-informed schools fit well into existing initiatives such as PBIS.

▪ A trauma informed school is most effectively created and maintained when positive universal supports and strategies are part of daily school programming.



Rob Horner, 2013



## WHAT IS SCHOOL-WIDE PBIS?

Define or Describe it

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## CREATING THE CULTURE OF POSITIVE BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS

[The Culture of PBS](#)

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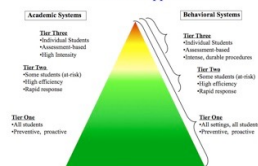
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## SCHOOL-WIDE PBIS IS:

- A multi-tiered framework for establishing the social culture and behavioral supports needed for a school to achieve behavioral and academic outcomes for all students.

Rob Horner, 2015

### A Continuum of Support for All



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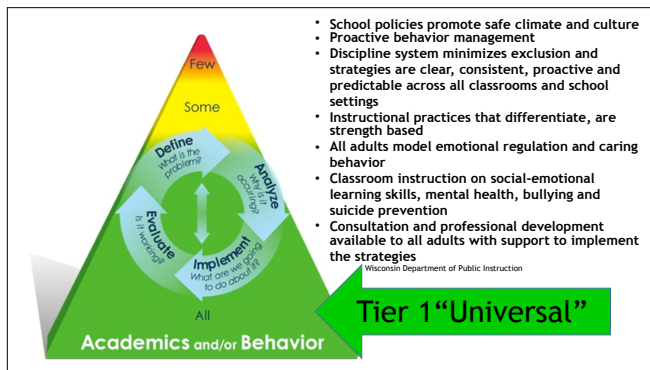
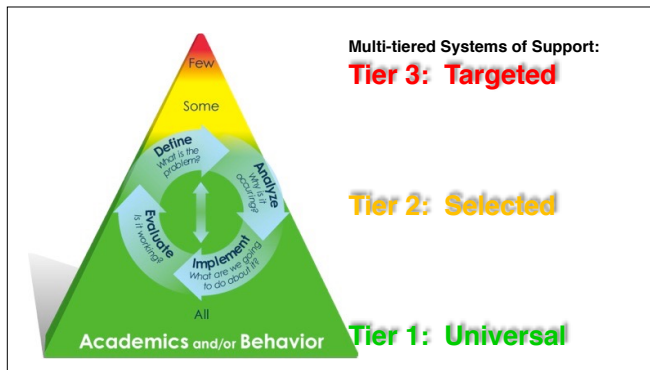
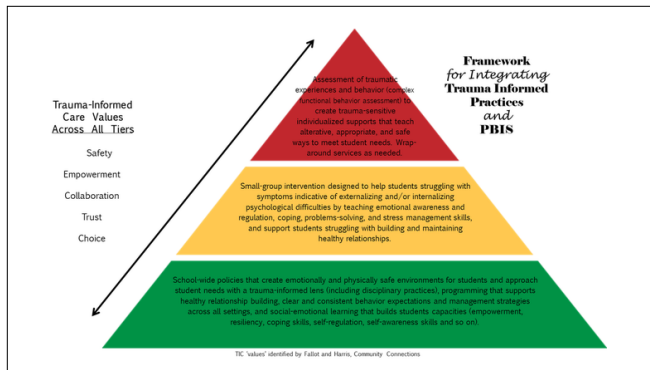
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## FOUNDATIONAL/TIER 1 PRACTICES

Create Expectations:



## FOUNDATIONAL/TIER 1 PRACTICES

Teach Expectations:

Expectations	Arrival & Dismissal	Hallway	Recess	Lunch Room	Gay/Lesbian Room	Bus	Library	Room
Be Responsible	Be on time Be prepared Wait at designated area	Stay to the right of the hallway Get materials and get to class	Keep hallways clear Be quiet Be back to the back	Follow directions Walk carefully to return your tray Be prepared	Change quickly Follow directions Wait at designated area	Remain seated on the bus The quiet voice	Listen up promptly	
	Obey the expectations Keep hands and feet to yourself Speak appropriately	Keep hands and feet to yourself Speak appropriately	Get in line to enter The soft voice Keep hands and feet to yourself Speak appropriately	Listen to the lunch supervisor Keep your area clean Keep hands and feet to yourself Give priority to others Speak appropriately	Listen to the bus driver Keep bus clean Keep hands and feet to yourself Speak appropriately	Take care of school property Include others Keep hands and feet to yourself Speak appropriately	Play fairly	
	Use the crosswalk and sidewalk Stay on the safe side	Walk	Walk hands and feet to safe	Stay in your seat Walk	Walk Use equipment appropriately Stay in your seat	Walk Stay in your seat	Stay in your designated area Use equipment appropriately	

## FOUNDATIONAL/TIER 1 PRACTICES

Reinforce Expectations:

Rosa Parks Elementary

**Way to Be!!!**

- ☐ Be Safe  
☐ Be Respectful  
☐ Be Responsible

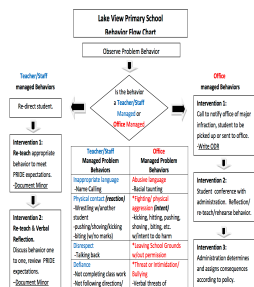


Name \_\_\_\_\_

Room \_\_\_\_\_  
Initials \_\_\_\_\_

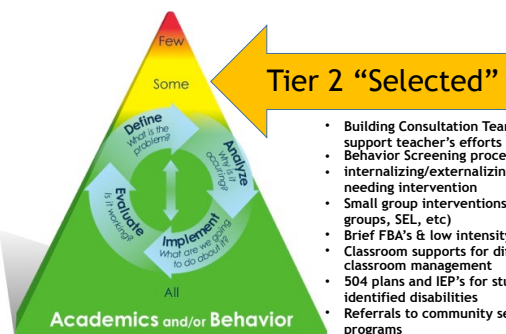
## FOUNDATIONAL/TIER 1 PRACTICES

### Accountability to Expectations:



## ADDITIONAL TIER 1 STRATEGIES

- Use of data to assess school climate and safety
- 3 positive statements to 1 negative statement
- Restorative Practices (Circles and Dialogue)
- Mindfulness Activities
- Resiliency building - strengths based approach



- Building Consultation Team (Tier 2/3) to support teacher's efforts
- Behavior Screening processes - to identify internalizing/externalizing behaviors needing intervention
- Small group interventions (support groups, SEL, etc)
- Brief FBA's & low intensity BIP's
- Classroom supports for differentiation and classroom management
- 504 plans and IEP's for student's w/ identified disabilities
- Referrals to community services and programs

## ADDITIONAL TIER 2 STRATEGIES

- Check-in-Check Out
- Bully Prevention/Intervention
- Self-Monitoring Techniques
- Peer Mentoring

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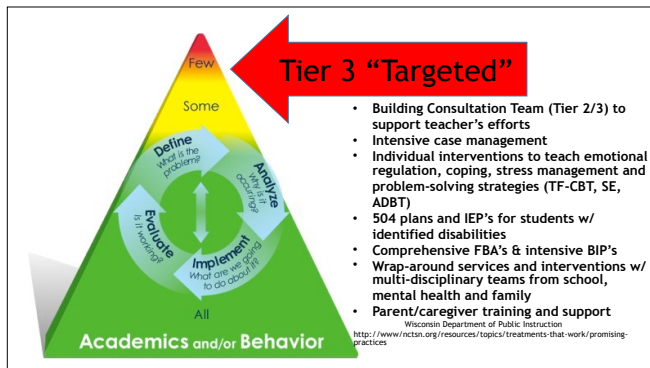
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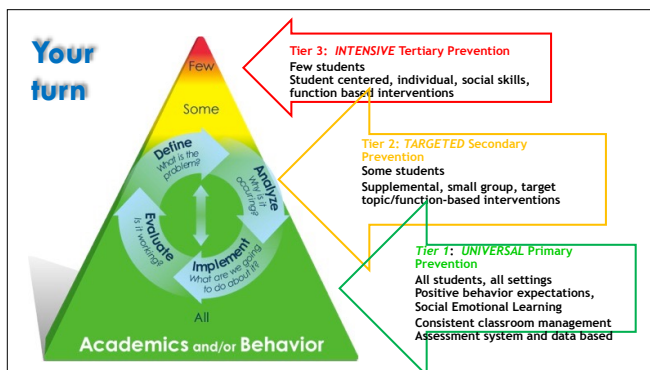
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And....



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## AVOIDING RE-TRAUMATIZATION



Help teachers understand that children *may not be able to express* their suffering in ways that adults can understand.

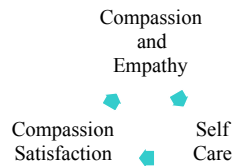
Emphasize the importance of *helping children feel safe*.

Create support systems for teachers to *develop classroom strategies* for addressing the needs of traumatized children.

*Adapt school curricula and procedures* to respond to the needs of traumatized children.

Develop protocols for *early identification and services* before children are at risk for discipline or school failure.

## CYCLE OF COMPASSION AVOIDING BURN OUT



## CONCLUSION & CLOSURE

- > Name one thing you learned about trauma, learning and behavior...
- > Name one thing you learned about SWPBIS that can help your school to provide TIC...
- > Questions?
- > What will you do with today's information?

THANK  
YOU!

Knowledge. Outcomes. Impact.

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