



Santa Maria-Bonita
School District

Trauma Informed Practices

Deanna Castellanos - Mental Health Specialist
Shilpa Kachgal - Mental Health Specialist



Deanna



4th year in education, 11th in the
mental health field, LCSW for two
years

Disney adult

BSB, Taylor Swift, iPod shuffle

Audiobooks; Fantasy, mystery, books
that narrate from different character
perspectives

Shilpa



This will be my 9th year with SMBSD.

California born and raised.

I love being a mom.

I enjoy listening to podcasts and audiobooks.

My favorite drink is matcha.

Learning Intention: Explore core trauma-informed care principles, including safety, trust, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural responsiveness, while gaining practical strategies to create supportive, compassionate, and trauma-sensitive environments across school settings.

Success Criteria: Attendees will be able to identify 1-2 strategies to help engage with students while also better understanding how experiences of trauma affects the school environment, both socially and their capacity to engage in academics.

Take a moment...

- Take 1 -2 minutes and think of a student that challenges you.
- To the best of your ability describe what makes them a challenging student. Use quotes and/or describe their behavior/actions
 - “I don’t need to do anything you say”
 - “School sucks and so do you”
 - Ripping paper, throwing items, etc.

Coming From a Place of Empathy



What is Trauma Informed Care and why does it matter?

Definition: TIC is an approach and set of practices that seeks to acknowledge the whole picture of a child's life in order to better educate and care for our students. Whole child approach.

TIC seeks to:

- Acknowledge the widespread impact of trauma and understand paths for recovery
- Recognize the sign and symptoms of trauma in students
- Integrate knowledge about trauma in to policies and practices
- Actively avoid re-traumatization



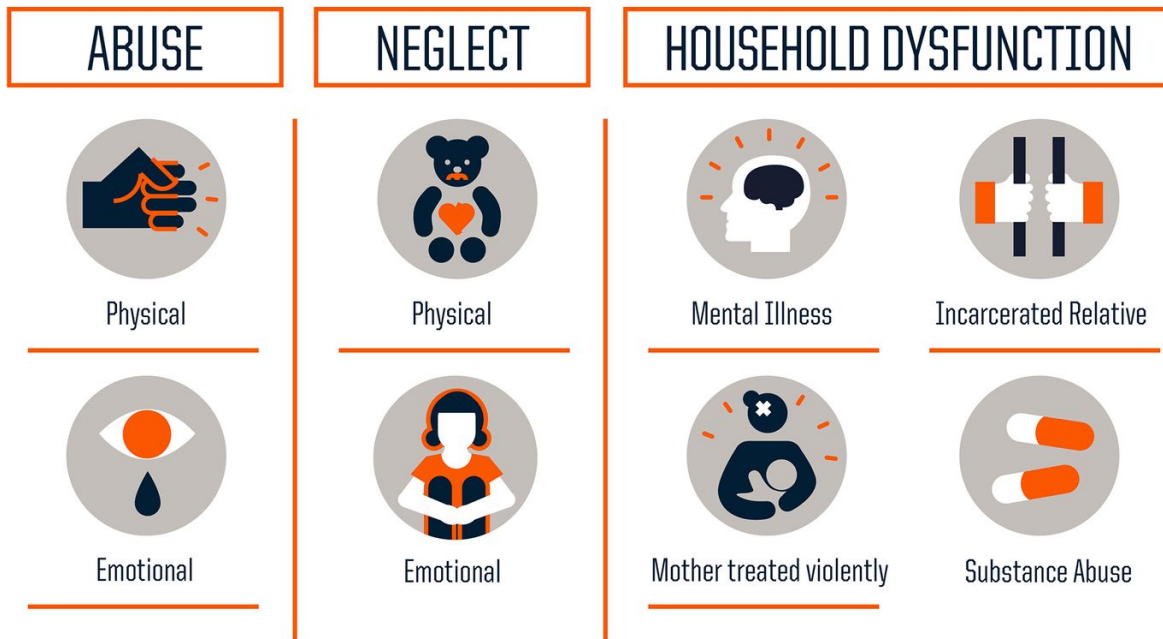
What is Trauma?

Definition:

An event, a 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.



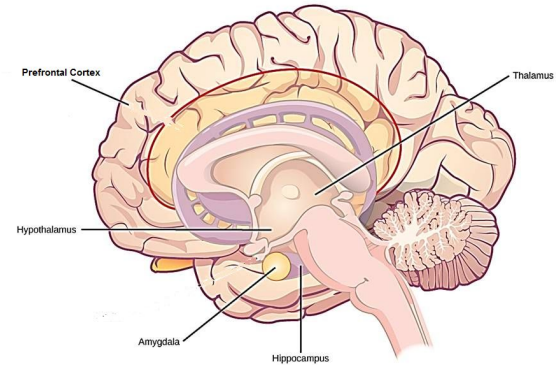
Trauma: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)



Effects of Trauma on the Brain

- Reduced activity in parts of the cortex frontal lobes.
 - Survival response can be triggered in absence of real danger (fight, flight, or freeze).
- Changes to amygdala function.
 - More likely to react to triggers especially emotional ones and can experience emotional extremes. Struggle to regulate their emotions.
- Hippocampus becomes small and its structure interrupted.
 - This can affect the child's ability to pay attention, learning, and memory.

PTSD and the Brain



What can it look like in schools?

- Acting out, non-compliance
- Shut down or explosive behaviors
- Irritability, verbal / physical aggression
- Refusals
- Disruptive behaviors
- Self-harm, poor self-regulation
- Difficulty forming relationships
- Avoidance and elopement



Remember: Behavior isn't personal

- It's easy to fall into the mindset that "If student is not compliant, they are being disrespectful". It's important to note that behavior is seldom personal.
- **Behavior is communication** - what is the student trying to communicate?

Shift perspective from:

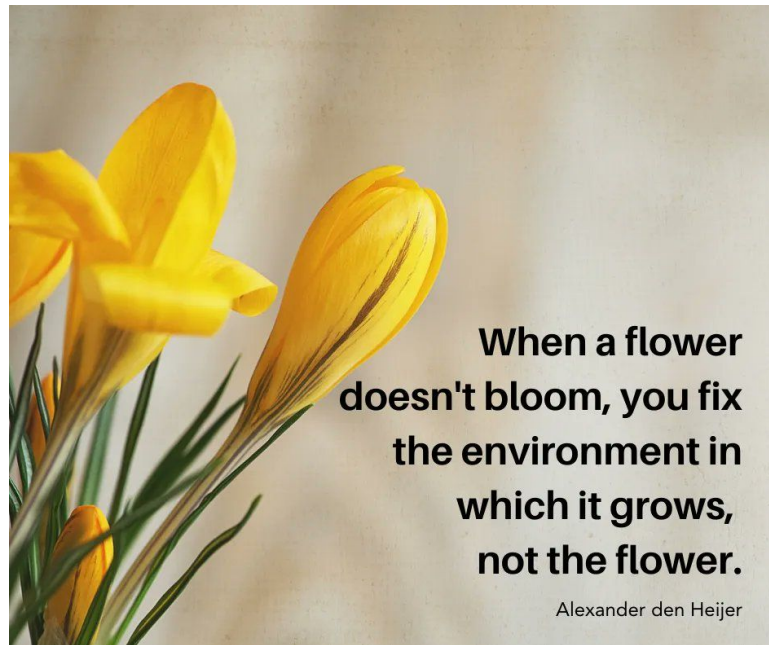
What's *wrong* with
you?



What *happened* to
you?

Guiding Rule in TI Practices

- How can we increase positive interactions with this student? How can I build our relationship?
- In working with students of trauma:
 - Positive experiences in the relationship help grow and heal
 - Negative experiences make emotional and psychological problems worse





Share Out

- How do you build relationships with students?
- What are some of the best strategies you learned that work?

Trauma Informed Practices and Strategies

1. Power Struggles
2. Positive Reinforcement
3. Choices
4. Setting Limits
5. “I” Statements
6. Enforceable Statements
7. Supporting regulation and co-regulation



Power Struggles: Drop the rope!



Positive Reinforcement

- Noticing the good and actively ignoring the negative behavior.
- Notice everything even if small.
 - Ex: I'm so happy you're sitting in your chair and being still.
- Consistent expectations that are based on rewards and not punishment.
- 5 to 1 ratio of positive interactions to corrections.



Choices



- Give as many ‘little’ choices as possible as ongoing reinforcement, relationship-builder, and tool to build students’ sense of agency.
- Try to provide choices *before* student presents with resistance, not after.
- Phrases for providing Closed-Ended Choices:
 - ”Would you rather....” “What would be best for you....” “Feel free to....” “What would help you the most...” “Do you plan to....” “Are you going to...”
- Sample Choices:
 - Whisper or talk quietly? Read Section A or B first? Work from the desk or the beanbag? Write or type? Math or Science work first?

Setting Limits

- Shift replying with “No” to at least one “Yes” towards something else.
 - Provides limits, retains control without power struggle
- Shift “You will...”, “You should...”, “You need to....” towards I-statements and choices.



I - statements / Affective statements

Default Statement	Affective Statement
Stop taking your phone out.	It's frustrating to see your phone again. Put it away.
Great work.	I'm delighted to see what you've produced there.
Never speak like that in my classroom.	Hearing language in my classroom like that really saddens me.
That's right.	I'm very impressed with that answer.
How many times to I have to tell you?	I'm frustrated at how many times I'm repeating this instruction.
Good to see you helping out.	I'm so proud to see you putting others first.
You'll be in at recess if you don't finish your work.	I care enough about your learning to give you extra time at recess if you need it.
Now you've got it.	It's so exciting to see you take on new challenges like that.
You've been hitting people at lunchtime again?!	I'm shattered to hear that you've chosen to hurt others again.
Great to see you taking turns.	It makes me happy to see you waiting so patiently and maturely.
I'm not going to tell you again, ok.	This behaviour is making me feel like I need to take stronger action.

Enforceable Statements

Focus on what *you* will do , not what *the child* will do.

Unenforceable Statements	Enforceable Statements
Stop Yelling!	I'll be glad to listen when your voice is as calm as mine.
Open your book to page 38.	I'll be working from page 38.
Raise your hand if you want to talk!	I can really only listen to students who raise their hand
Don't be late for class!	Those who arrive on-time, are dismissed on-time.
You need to be respectful!	I'll discuss this when I feel respect is being shown.
You need to sit down!	I'll start as soon as everyone is seated.

Supporting Regulation and Co-Regulation

- Co-regulation is the interactive process of support between a caring adult and a child. Unlike self-regulation, this requires adults to actively provide the environment and the scaffolds for a child to successfully meet their needs and achieve their goals.

Co-Regulating Moves	This Might Look Like:
 Set the scene	<i>Using lighting as a cue – dimmer to bring the energy down, brighter to bring the energy up</i>
 Match volume and tone	<i>When a situation is escalating, keeping a quiet or moderate volume with a serious, calm, steady tone</i>
 Check your physical presence	<i>Getting on students' eye level to balance power</i>
 Use reflecting language	<i>Naming the emotions students express as a way to show you are listening to or seeing them</i>
 Prompt strategies and choices	<i>Remind students of available supports or strategies, when they might not be at their best</i>

Group Discussion Work - Groups of 3

Can you come up with at least two practices or strategies that you can use in your classroom that can promote trauma informed principles? What practices have you already implemented?

1. Power struggles
2. Positive reinforcement
3. Choices
4. Limit setting
5. “I” statements
6. Enforceable statements
7. Supporting regulation and co-regulation



Questions?

Please reach out if you'd like any
support throughout the year!

Deanna Castellanos and Shilpa Kachgal
Mental Health Specialists