


More Than Their Trauma:

Moving Beyond the ACEs Study to Support Student Healing & Learning in School Settings



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Chief Executive Officer
Positive Education Program

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A Baseline for Today's Talk






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Why Trauma & Adversity Matter

Our brains are **pattern seeking, meaning making** machines.
The brain makes associations in order to **SURVIVE.**



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Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs)

ABUSE	NEGLECT	HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION
Physical	Physical	Mental Illness
Emotional	Emotional	Substance Abuse
Sexual		Divorce

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs)

BEHAVIOR				
Lack of physical activity	Smoking	Alcoholism	Drug use	Violent work

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH				
Severe obesity	Diabetes	Depression	Suicide attempts	STIs
Heart disease	Cancer	Stroke	COPD	Broken bones

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

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Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs)

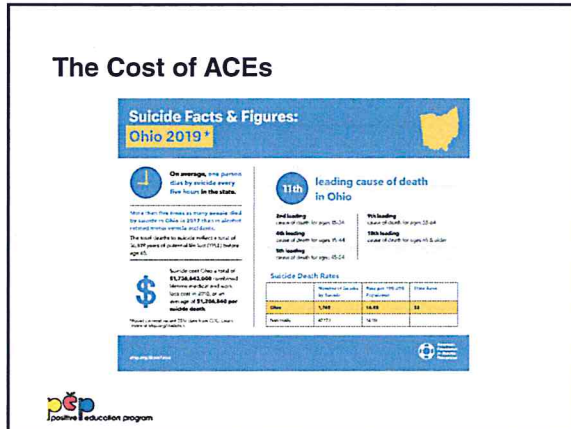
ACEs & Chronic Depression

ACEs & Suicide Attempts

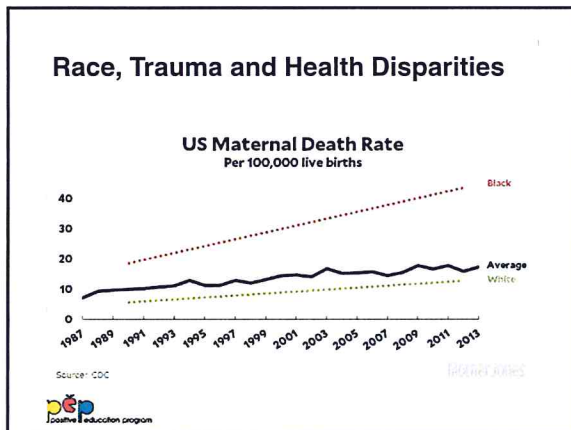
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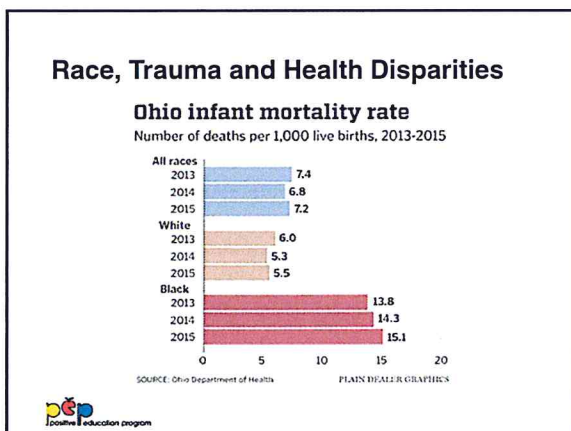
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Transgenerational Trauma



Jessica Gourneau, Ph.D.
Interim Clinical Director, American Indian Family Center




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Racism as ACE

Racial trauma, a form of race-based stress, refers to People of Color and Indigenous individuals' (POCI) reactions to dangerous events and real or perceived experiences of racial discrimination. Such experiences may include threats of harm and injury, humiliating and shaming events, and witnessing racial discrimination toward other POCI.

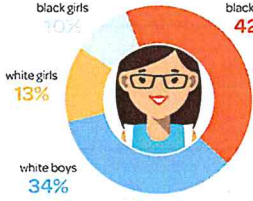
Comas-Díaz, L., Hall, G. N., & Neville, H. A. (2019)



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Racism as ACE

Track the eyes: Which students are teachers watching?



Student Group	Percentage
black girls	30%
black boys	42%
white girls	13%
white boys	34%

Preschool teachers tend to more closely observe blacks than whites, especially black boys, when challenging behaviors are expected.



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Trauma Defined

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.



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Traumatization Defined

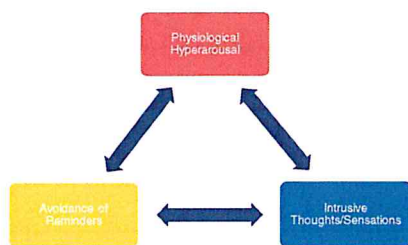
Traumatization occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat.

Van der Kolk, 1989




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What does it mean to be "traumatized?"




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The Impact of Trauma




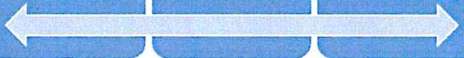
Brain Physiology and Development



Learning and Memory



Interpersonal Relationships



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Relational Health





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What Every Child Needs

"Every child needs at least one adult who is irrationally crazy about him or her."

Urie Bronfenbrenner



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Break



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Bizarro vs. Superman



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Barriers to Helping Students Heal

What is your biggest challenge in supporting students' social and emotional development?

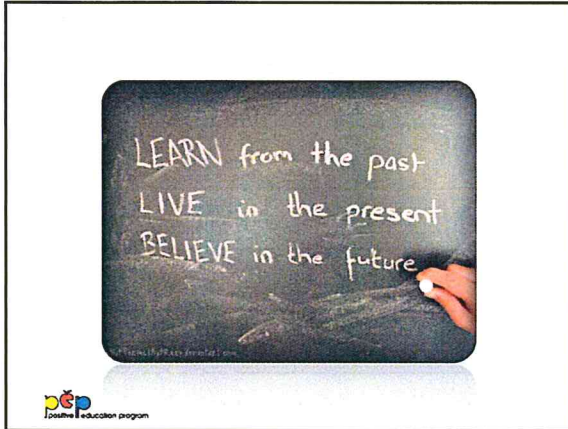
Time, closely followed by lack of parental buy-in, are the down impediments teachers say they face in helping their students develop social-emotional skills.

Focus on academic content leaves me too little time for this	29%
Lack of support from parents and families of students	27
Inadequate professional development or training	13
Inadequate social-emotional learning curriculum or programs	9
Inadequate support from counselors, psychologists, or other mental health professionals	7
Inadequate support from administrators	6
Other	9

Sarah Schwartz, "Teachers Support Social-Emotional Learning, But Say 'Students in Distress Strain Their Skills,'" Education Week, July 18, 2019

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From Trauma-Informed Care to Healing-Centered Engagement



A healing centered approach is **holistic** involving culture, spirituality, civic action and collective healing.

A healing centered approach views trauma not simply as an individual isolated experience, but rather highlights the ways in which **trauma and healing are experienced collectively.**

Shawn Ginwright, "The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement," Medium, May 31, 2018.

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Healing-Centered Engagement

- ✓ Is asset driven and focused on well-being
- ✓ Supports all individuals in their healing
- ✓ Is culturally responsive
- ✓ Is explicitly political rather than clinical



Shawn Ginwright, "The Future of Healing: Shifting From Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement," Medium, May 31, 2018.

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Creating the Change We Wish to See

“Relationships matter: the currency for systemic change was trust, and trust comes through forming healthy working relationships. People, not programs, change people.”

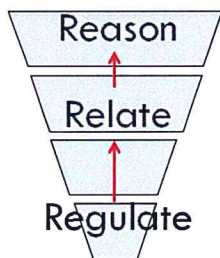
Bruce Perry



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The Sequence of Engagement

NME

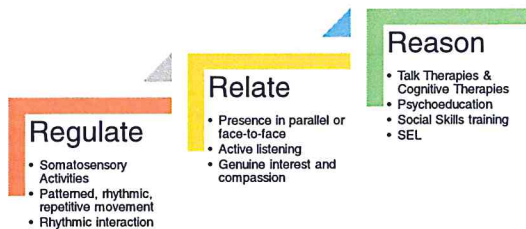


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NME & The Sequence of Engagement



Adapted from the work of Dr. Bruce Perry

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Healing the Helper: Self-Regulation & Professional Resilience



A BLACK LADY SKETCH SHOW
FULL SKETCH


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The Regulated Adult

"A teacher-counselor is a decent adult; educated, well trained; able to give and receive affection, to live relaxed, and to be firm; a person with private resources for the nourishment and refreshment of [their] own life..."

Nicholas Hobbs

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Regulate

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Self-Regulation & Professional Resilience



Peer Support
Self-Care
Employee Assistance

Personal & Professional Resilience

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Aspects of Self-Care

- Personal Physical
- Personal Psychological
- Personal Social
- Personal Moral
- Professional
- Organizational/Work Setting
- Societal



Regulate

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Safety Plans

Self-Regulation

- You do it yourself
- Can be done anytime/anywhere
- A relational tool



Sample Safety Plan

1. Take 10 Deep Breaths
2. Say a silent prayer or affirmation
3. Massage hands with lotion
4. Take time alone
5. Call a trusted friend

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Break for Lunch



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Classroom Management Strategies

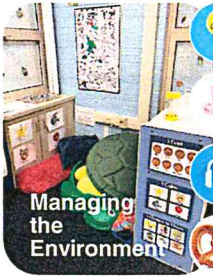
- Structure the day
- Establish routines
- Create schedules
- Create and model use of safety plans
- Create and teach use of a "safe place"
- Use visual supports
- Honor loss
- Celebrate success



Regulate

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Supporting Regulation in the Classroom: Somatosensory Supports



- Manage lighting and temp
- Bring calming sounds into the space
- Allow students to self-modulate stimuli
- Anticipate and provide for basic needs that may present in a day or period

Managing the Environment

Regulate

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Supporting Regulation in the Classroom: Somatosensory Supports

Calming Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Low lighting• White noise• Scent diffusers: calming scents• Yoga balls• Swing chair or rocking chair• Heavy work activities	Activating Supports <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Full lighting• Movement breaks• Scent diffusers: activating scents• Yoga balls• Crunchy snacks, mints, chewy items
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Regulate

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Supporting Regulation in the Classroom: Mindfulness

"Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally."



Photo Credit: Holistic Life Foundation

Jon Kabat-Zinn



Relate
Regulate

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Supporting Regulation in the Classroom: Mindfulness

Considerations in Using Mindfulness:

- Historical and cultural context for the origins of mindfulness should be honored
- To teach mindfulness, you must be a practitioner of mindfulness
- Leading mindfulness exercises requires an awareness of possible traumatic triggering



Relate
Regulate

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Instructional Strategies: Arts & Movement

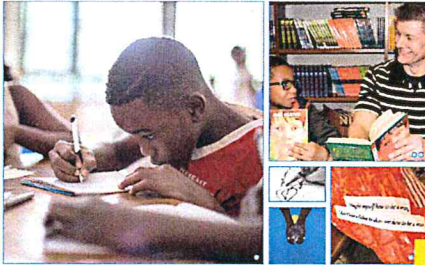
- ✓ Creates space for cultural and identity expression
- ✓ Taps into the brain's regulatory system through rhythmic, patterned, repetitive activity
- ✓ Provides space for relationship-building that feels safe to the young person
- ✓ Is regulating for both the young person and adult educator/helper




Relate
Regulate

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Instructional Strategies: Narrative Development & Storytelling

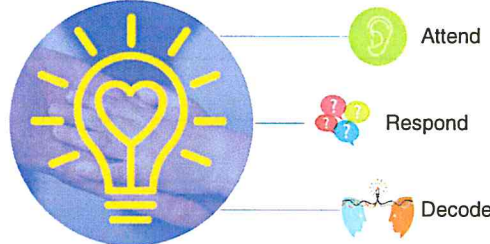


Relate
Regulate


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Responding to Crisis



Attend
Respond
Decode

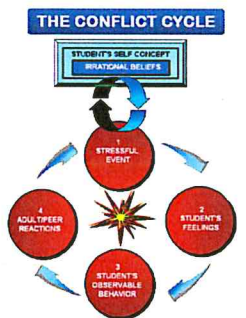
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Adapted from Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI)

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Responding to Crisis

THE CONFLICT CYCLE



STUDENT'S SELF-CONCEPT
SITUATIONAL BELIEFS

1. STRESSFUL EVENT
2. STUDENT'S FEELINGS
3. STUDENT'S OBSERVABLE BEHAVIOR
4. ADULT/PEER REACTIONS

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From Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI)

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Responding to Crisis: Attending

Enter the Dialogue

- Be fully present with the student
- Attend to verbal and non-verbal communication
- Manage feelings of counter-aggression

Deepen the Dialogue

- Remain fully present
- Be aware of verbal and non-verbal messages to the student
- Establish "resonance" with the student, so that there is a sense at a subconscious level that you "feel their feelings"



Adapted from Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI)

Regulate

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Responding to Crisis: Responding

Enter the Dialogue

- Keep the dialogue going
- Reduce student's stress
- Remain non-judgmental
- Build trust
- Verbal and nonverbal messages MUST be congruent

Deepen the Dialogue

- Affirm the student and their feelings
- Check for understanding
- Create a sense of mutual experience and problem-solving.



Adapted from Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI)

Relate

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Responding to Crisis: Decoding

Enter the Dialogue

- Search for the meaning behind the message
- Listen to what is not being said
- Link emotions to words
- Help the student to calm down, feel supported, and access the frontal lobe or "high road."

Deepen the Dialogue

- Connect feeling and behavior
- Add more meaning
- Lead student to insight



Adapted from Life Space Crisis Intervention (LSCI)

Reason

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Responding to crisis



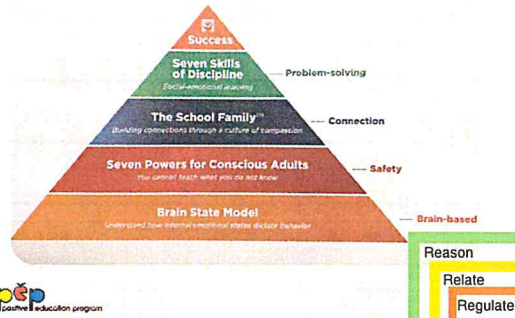

"Most troubled students want to tell their story but lack the necessary skills and trust."

LSCI Institute



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Conscious Discipline

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Racially Responsive Education

1. Build personal knowledge about race,
2. Be willing to talk about race,
3. Plan and enact curriculum and instructional practices focused on race with students of all races and backgrounds






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Empowering Youth Healing & Self-Advocacy



- Teach students about social justice
- Tap into social justice issues across the curriculum
- Engage students regarding the social justice issues that matter to them
- Use various modalities for students to express their views
- Tap partners to explore social justice content



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Empowering Youth Healing & Self-Advocacy







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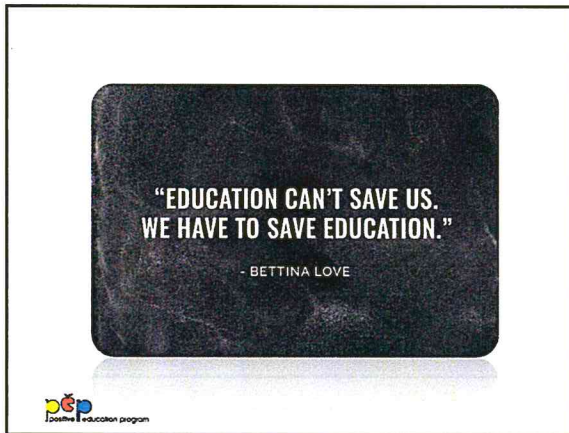
Educators as Allies, Advocates and Activists

“As I have always said, those closest to the pain should be closest to the power.”
Ayanna Pressley





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