



School Based Mental Health Interventions in a High Trauma Setting

Part 1: Background


Special Focus on Newcomer Students



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Presentation Overview

- Trauma 101
- Immigrants and Refugees: Forced Migrants
 - Immigration 101
 - Changes in policy
 - Reminders
- Trauma Sensitive Work




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Trauma

What does trauma mean to you?

What does trauma do?

What does trauma look like?



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Trauma

- Two components:

(Traumatic) **event**

AND

the (Trauma) **response** to the event (aka its impact)

- An event is traumatic if it is extremely upsetting, at least temporarily overwhelms the individual's internal resources, and produces lasting psychological symptoms. (Briere & Scott, 2013)

**this is not the same as the DSM V definition for PTSD criteria*



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Trauma 101: Traumatic events

Different things are traumatic to different people.

However, there are some things that we can agree in general can be traumatic

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| • Sexual abuse | • Loss of a child or sibling |
| • Physical abuse | • Chronic illness, repeated hospitalizations, terminal illness, significant procedures |
| • Rape | • Natural disasters |
| • Neglect | • Terrorism |
| • Torture, imprisonment | • Forced displacement, multiple moves |
| • Poverty, hunger | • Kidnapping, extortion, death threats |
| • War/Combat trauma | • Witness to violence, abuse, death |
| • Early loss of a parent or caregiver | • Bullying |
| • Community Violence | • Separation from parent or caregiver |
| • Serious accidents | |

(Berger Cardoso, J 2016), (NCTSN, 2019)



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Trauma 101: What makes an event traumatic

- Controllability (lack of)

Loss of control is more stressful than lack of control

- Predictability (lack of)

Inability to predict danger leads to generalization of fear

- Subjective experience

The meaning the event has to the individual

- Proximity to the event, gruesomeness, "dose"

- Personal "nature" of the event; varying degrees of interpersonal involvement

(Allen, 2001)



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Trauma 101: What makes an event traumatic

The personal nature of traumatic event

Impersonal	Interpersonal	Attachment Trauma
<p>"Random" (not referring to vulnerable and exploited populations ex those living in poverty who lack resources)</p> <p>Ex: floods, tornado, fire, volcano, terrorism</p>	<p>Deliberate Trauma inflicted interaction with a stranger</p> <p>Ex: Criminal assault, rape, kidnapping, war</p>	<p>Occurs in an attachment relationship</p> <p>"double liability"</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> generates extreme distress undermines the development of mental and interpersonal capacities needed to regulate that distress <p>Ex: Physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, abandonment</p>

(Allen, 2001)

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Trauma 101: Types of Trauma

- Single event trauma/Acute
- Chronic trauma
- Complex trauma or Complicated trauma
- Sanctuary trauma
- Vicarious (Secondary) Trauma
- Historical trauma
- Collective trauma

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Trauma 101: Responses to trauma

Individuals have different and varied responses to trauma that can hide behind other problems. Common responses & problems include:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appetite changes • Bulimia, anorexia • Sleep changes • Nightmare • Flashbacks • Fear • Anxiety, Panic • Anger* • Sadness • Guilt • Numbness, disconnected • Loss of trust • Loss/change in self-image • Racing or pounding heart | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritability • Agitated • Hyperarousal • Headaches • Self-harm • Aches and pains • Developmental impact in children • Long term health problems* ACE's • Increase in high risk behaviors, self-medicating • Avoidance • Bed wetting/loss of bowels | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alcohol and drug use and abuse • Neurobiological changes • Shame • Isolation • Hopelessness • Mood swings • Increased need to control situations • Distracted, difficulty concentrating • Difficulty remembering |
|---|--|--|

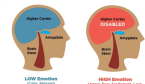
(Levin, 2003)

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Trauma 101: Trauma in the Brain

Exposure to traumatic experience can lead to structural changes in the way the brain develops.

- **Reduced brain activity and decreased brain activation** in areas related to language, memory, conscious fear awareness and emotion
- **Decreased capacity in brain** areas associated with focusing attention and categorizing information
- **Increased brain activation** in other areas associated with automatic detection of threats.
- **Amygdala Hijacking** During a traumatic event stimuli goes directly to the thalamus –then amygdala (survival mode) and bypasses Neocortex (thinking brain). However it gets “stuck” and can keep firing; chronic high levels of cortisol damage, destroys and shrinks the hippocampus, which leads to increased cortisol levels. Sustained activation of the stress response system can lead to impairments in learning, memory, and the ability to regulate certain stress responses



(Ford, 2005) (Cohen-Posey, 2015)

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Trauma 101: ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) study of 17,000 participants proved that ACEs or various traumatic experiences negatively effect an individuals physical and emotional health throughout the life span.



(Felitti et al., 1998)

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Impact of Trauma on Education

Effects of Trauma	
Effects on the Child or Adolescent	Effects on the Adult
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of mental health problems • Increased risk of substance use • Increased risk of physical health problems • Increased risk of academic problems • Increased risk of social problems • Increased risk of legal problems • Increased risk of financial problems • Increased risk of housing problems • Increased risk of transportation problems • Increased risk of food problems • Increased risk of clothing problems • Increased risk of hygiene problems • Increased risk of safety problems • Increased risk of security problems • Increased risk of health care problems • Increased risk of social support problems • Increased risk of community problems • Increased risk of environmental problems • Increased risk of natural disaster problems • Increased risk of climate change problems • Increased risk of technological problems • Increased risk of information problems • Increased risk of communication problems • Increased risk of transportation problems • Increased risk of food problems • Increased risk of clothing problems • Increased risk of hygiene problems • Increased risk of safety problems • Increased risk of security problems • Increased risk of health care problems • Increased risk of social support problems • Increased risk of community problems • Increased risk of environmental problems • Increased risk of natural disaster problems • Increased risk of climate change problems • Increased risk of technological problems • Increased risk of information problems • Increased risk of communication problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased risk of mental health problems • Increased risk of substance use • Increased risk of physical health problems • Increased risk of academic problems • Increased risk of social problems • Increased risk of legal problems • Increased risk of financial problems • Increased risk of housing problems • Increased risk of transportation problems • Increased risk of food problems • Increased risk of clothing problems • Increased risk of hygiene problems • Increased risk of safety problems • Increased risk of security problems • Increased risk of health care problems • Increased risk of social support problems • Increased risk of community problems • Increased risk of environmental problems • Increased risk of natural disaster problems • Increased risk of climate change problems • Increased risk of technological problems • Increased risk of information problems • Increased risk of communication problems

Reduced Cognitive Capacity
Incapable of perspective taking

Appears insensitive, cannot understand how ones actions effect others, student just doesn't "get it". Misinterprets stimuli and sees anger or threatening behavior when there is none.

Reduced Cognitive Capacity
Diminished memory: storing, retention and recall.
Does not remember instructions, retain concepts, does not complete assignments, forgets homework, misplaces supplies, ID, etc

(Howell, 2020)

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Trauma 101: Mental Health outcomes

PTSD (post traumatic stress disorder)

Depression

Anxiety

Acute Stress disorder

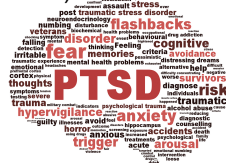
Reactive attachment disorder

Dissociative Identity Disorder

ADD/ADHD

Borderline Personality Disorder

Adjustment disorder



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Refugees and Immigrants

Refugee	SIV	Parolee	Asylum Seeker	Immigrant
Iraq Afghanistan Syria Bhutan Burma (Myanmar) DR Congo Somalia Eritrea Sudan	Iraq Afghanistan	Cuba Haiti CAM	Central American Minors (CAM)	Mexico Canada Nigeria Vietnam (currently)

- This is NOT meant to be a complete or comprehensive list of nationalities
- Nationalities can fall under multiple categories, they are not limited to one type of immigration status, these are most frequently observed as newcomers.
- Refugees, especially children often identify with the country they have lived in most recently, not the "refugee producing country"

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Forced Migrants Resettled Refugees & Asylum Seekers

Refugees are individuals that have been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war, or violence.

Refugees include individuals recognized under the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees; its 1967 Protocol; the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa; those recognized in accordance with the UNHCR Statute; individuals granted complementary forms of protection; or those enjoying temporary protection.

Asylum-seekers are individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined, irrespective of when they may have been lodged.

Resettled Refugees are those that have been resettled or "transferred" from an asylum country to another state that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent settlement.



(UNHCR, 2018)

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Central American Minors

Contrary to the way it is characterized in the media it is NOT illegal to seek asylum.

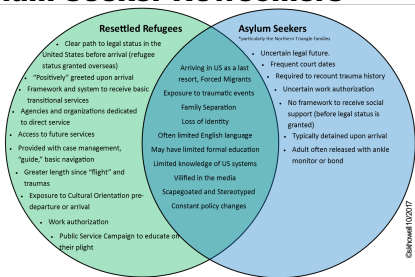
There is often no legal way to immigrate, there is no "line to wait in"

Asylum claims that are denied does not necessarily indicate that they are false claims, simply they do not meet the threshold or definition at the asylum officer or immigration judges discretion. Or fit the ever changing criteria the current administration is implementing.



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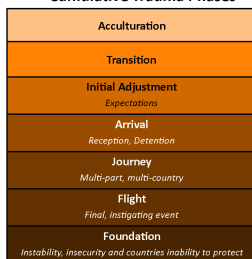
Resettled Refugee Newcomers VS Asylum Seeker Newcomers



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Forced Migrant Trauma

Forced Migrant Journey:
Cumulative Trauma Phases



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School Community: Stress and Needs

- High poverty, lack of resources
- Often neighborhoods with high rates of violence and insecurity
- Experienced a pattern of broken, failed relationships that were unable to protect them from harm
- Unfamiliar family dynamics
- Uncertain legal future- their future is outside of their control
 - Currently involved in immigration legal system
 - Many may be facing deportation
- Safety is #1 priority
- Holding space and conveying patience



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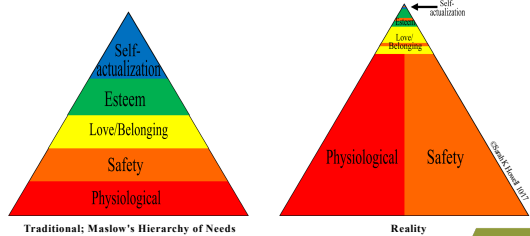
2017-2019 policy changes and stressors

- + Executive Orders, Travel Bans
- + Attempts to discourage immigration north, Wall
- + Decrease in refugee numbers
- + SB4, ID yourself
- + End of DACA
- + End of TPS
- + "DACA trade"/"tougher asylum"
- + Child Refugee Program Terminated, UAC re-defined, targeting sponsors
- + End of asylum for victims of domestic violence and gang violence
- + "zero tolerance" and family separations at border
- + attacking protections provided by Flores Settlement Agreement
- + limiting ability to apply for asylum at the border
- + Safe third country agreement with Guatemala
- + Migrant Protection Protocol (remain in Mexico), Metering
- + Public Charge
- + Media and Political Conversations that vilify foreigners
- + Panicked immigrant community living in a trans crisis state
- + Natural disasters locally and around the world
- + Increase in conflict in Central and South America
- + Venezuela Crisis (hyperinflation, political turmoil)
- + Nicaragua (protests, riots, violent govt crackdown)
- + Guatemala (expulsion of CICIG, "slow-motion coup")



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School Community: Stress and Needs



(Howell, 2020)

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Strategies: Foundational skills

- Trauma Informed

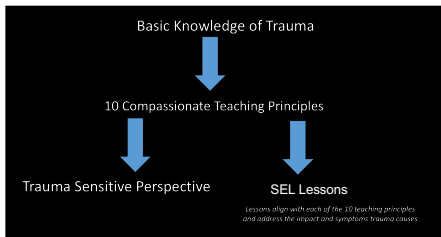
- SEL (social emotional learning)
- Integrating non-traditional interventions

*Mental Health integrated into campus/services/interactions, high priority placed on mental health needs
Individual, groups, resources, focus on problem solving and reducing barriers



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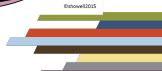
Trauma Sensitive Perspective



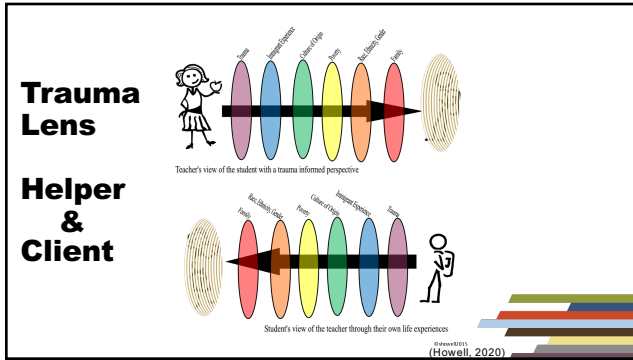
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Strategies: School Foundation

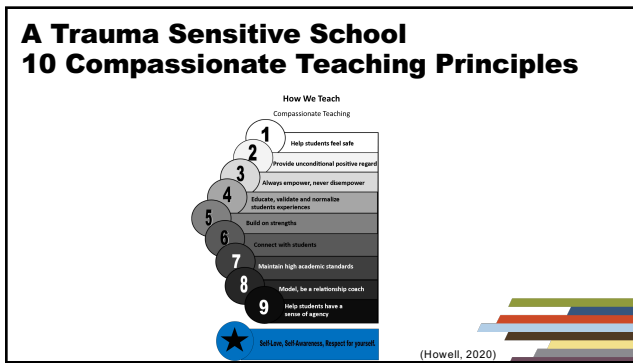
Trauma Informed School



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Questions

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