

School Based Mental Health Interventions in a High Trauma Setting
Part 2: Interventions & Strategies
Special Focus on Newcomer Students




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Presentation Overview

- Trauma
- Immigrants and Refugees: Forced Migrants
- Trauma Sensitive Interventions
 - Trauma Sensitive garden
 - Therapy rabbits
 - Restorative work



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Forced Migrants

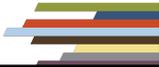
- Refugees
 - Individuals that have been forced to flee their country because of persecution, war or violence
- Resettled Refugees
 - Examples include: Congolese, Burmese, Syrians, Iraqis, Sudanese, Eritreans
- Asylum Seekers
 - Individuals who have sought international protection and whose claims for refugee status have not yet been determined
 - Examples include: Hondurans, Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Venezuelans




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School Community: Stress and Needs

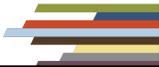
- High poverty, lack of resources
- Often neighborhoods with high rates of violence and insecurity
- Experienced a pattern of broken, failed relationships that were unable to protect them from harm
- Unfamiliar family dynamics
- Uncertain legal future- their future is outside of their control
 - Currently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



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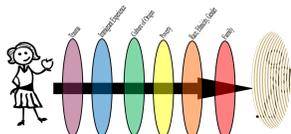
2017-2019 policy changes and stressors

- 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, IAC 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 (evulsion of CICIG, "slow-motion coup")

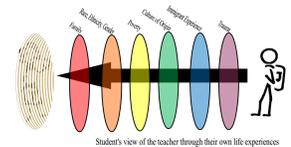


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Trauma Lens



Helper & Client

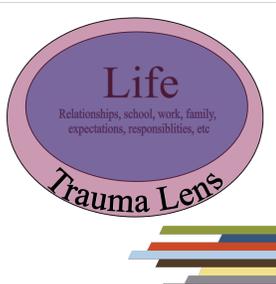


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Strategies: Foundational skills

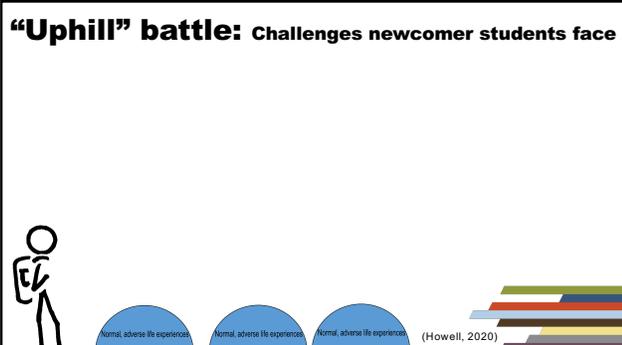
- Trauma Informed
 - SEL (social emotional learning)
 - Integrating non-traditional interventions

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



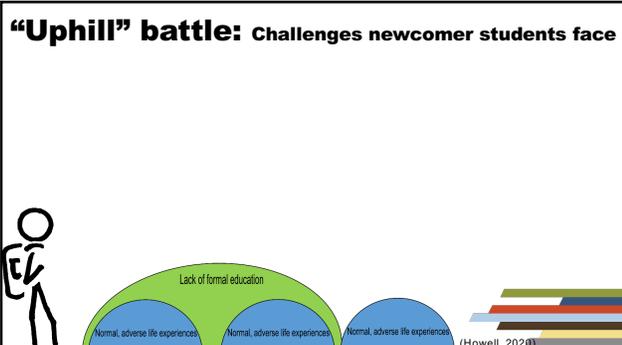
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“Uphill” battle: Challenges newcomer students face

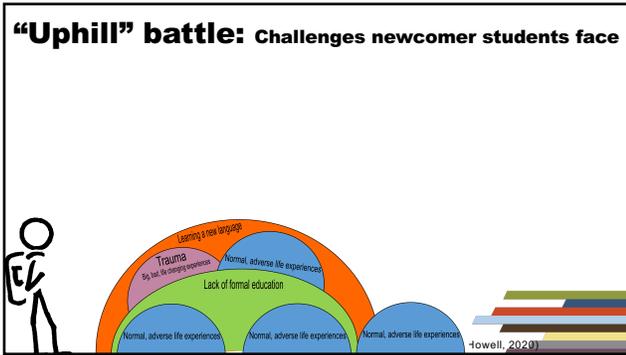


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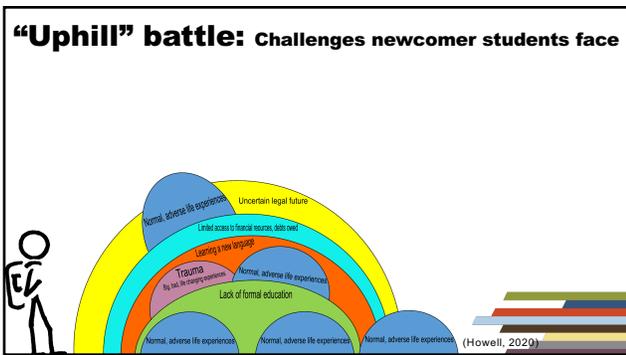
“Uphill” battle: Challenges newcomer students face



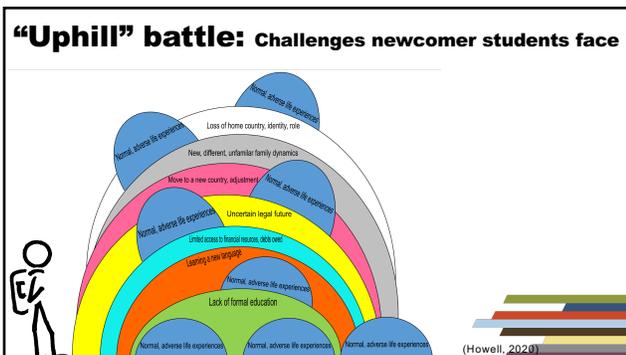
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Mental Health in Schools; Therapy with a focus on trauma

- Individuals, groups, crisis work
- Spectrum of therapy modalities available
 - TF-CBT
 - CBT
 - DBT
 - EMDR
 - Narrative exposure
 - TGCT
 - Psycho education
 - Topic/theme specific (grief, anxiety/stress, etc)
 - Mindfulness, ACT



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Starting place

What do you do when nothing you have learned is working?

What happens when traditional interventions aren't cutting it?

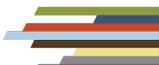


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Strategies: Interventions

- Trauma Sensitive Butterfly, Sensory Garden
- Nieve and Noche, Therapy Rabbits
- Restorative Practices for newcomers
- Relationship building & Reminders

- Strategy
 - Trauma /Mental Health Intervention
 - Social Emotional Learning
 - Academic Support
 - Logistics & Administrative Perspective



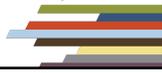
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**Strategy:
Trauma Sensitive Sensory Butterfly Garden**



Create a culturally familiar, calming space that students can do meaningful 'work' in.

Therapy: Horticultural Therapy

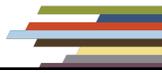


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**Strategy:
Trauma Sensitive Sensory Butterfly Garden**

Horticultural Therapy

Professionally conducted client-centered treatment modality that utilizes horticulture activities to meet specific therapeutic or rehabilitative goals of its participants. The focus is to maximize social, cognitive, physical and/or psychological functioning, and/or to enhance general health and wellness. (Haller and Capra, 2017).

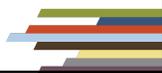


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**Strategy:
Trauma Sensitive Sensory Butterfly Garden**

Trauma sensitive: flowers, scents, plants that are familiar and comforting. Teaching, empowering, providing skills to cope with trauma.

- Guatemala: Birds of Paradise, Crown of thorns,
- Syria, Afghanistan & Iraq: Jasmine
- Central America: Maize, tomatoes, peppers



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**Strategy:
Trauma Sensitive Sensory Butterfly Garden**

- Can you tell me...
- 5 things you can see 
 - 4 things you can touch 
 - 3 things you can hear 
 - 2 things you can smell 
 - 1 things you can taste 



Sensory: engaging the senses to help students ground themselves

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**Strategy:
Trauma Sensitive Sensory Butterfly Garden**



Butterfly garden: Observe transformation, growth

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**Trauma Sensitive, Sensory Butterfly Garden
Social Emotional Learning**

- Socialization
- Collaboration
- Cooperation
- Hands on, experiential
- Providing students a sense of agency
- Problem solving
- Responsibility, follow thru
- Building on strengths



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**Trauma Sensitive, Sensory Butterfly Garden
Logistics & Administrative Support**

- There is something for everyone.
- Behavior support, intervention
- Managers; adult supervision
- Balance between routines and improvising
- Master plan: room for growth and expansion, can be costly.
- Gender roles, student support balance



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**Strategy:
Nieve and Noche, Therapy Rabbits**



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**Strategy:
Nieve and Noche, Therapy Rabbits**



Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)
Uses the human-animal bond in goal-directed interventions as an integral part of the treatment process (Chandler, 2017).

Animal Assisted Intervention (part of therapy)
promote improvement in physical, social, emotional and/or cognitive functioning of those involved with trained handler

Animal Assisted Activities *involve recreation, motivation, education and other life improvement activities*



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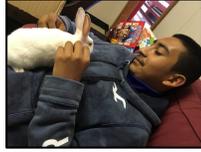
Nieve and Noche, Therapy Rabbits
Trauma/Mental Health Intervention



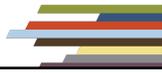
Calm, grounding



Comfort



Ability and power to give back and protect



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Nieve and Noche, Therapy Rabbits
Trauma/Mental Health Intervention



Relationships

- Accepting
- Nonjudgmental of a person.
- Fresh start
- Teach about natural consequences.
- Building trust
- Getting to know new people
- Reciprocal relationship based on animal (rabbits) response



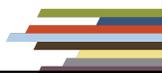
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Nieve and Noche, Therapy Rabbits
Trauma/Mental Health Intervention



Parallel mature themes and conversations that are easier and less threatening to have about a tangible animal friend.

(Examples include: welcoming, separated from family, living in a cage, tolerance, skin color, new "friends" in the community)



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Nieve and Noche, Therapy Rabbits
Social Emotional Learning



Friendship
 Opportunity to socialize and connect

Building on strengths

Empathy & safe, tough conversations

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Nieve and Noche, Therapy Rabbits
Logistics & Administrative Perspective

- Practice Bunny
- Supervision
- Managers
- Guidelines/structure
- Responsibilities
- Relatable across cultures, united the school
- Care for rabbits
- Concrete example of safety and rules
 - Don't yell or curse around bunny, bunny has to be safe
 - Asking permission



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Strategy:
Restorative Practices

Shift from Punitive to Restorative

Why → What Happened

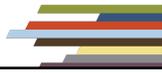
and how can we begin to repair the harm that was done

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Strategy: Restorative Practices



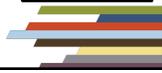
- Proactive Circles
 - Daily check-in circles, first 15 minutes
 - Twice a week (minimum) SEL circles
- Reactive Circles
 - Facilitated by social worker &/or assistant principal as needed (ideally both)



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Restorative Practices Adaptations for Newcomers

- Creating a family community
- Role playing
- Concrete questions for self esteem and success
- Campus wide language
 - "I have a problem", "We need to repair the harm"

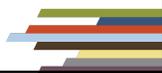


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Restorative Practices Trauma/Mental Health Perspective

- Trauma is an event that is beyond your control, restorative practices always an individual to regain control, have some power and begin to heal.
- First time many individuals have been given a voice. Feel heard.
- Modeling a new way to operate- can't undo past traumas but can introduce a new mindset.
- Teaching to repair and restore.
- Building empathy by identifying impact of actions on others.

Culture shift



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Progress through the Process

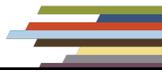
- It is the process as much as the outcome that counts
- All big interventions, are brave and vulnerable
- Something for everyone
- Creative, fluid process



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Reminders and recap

- The world gets scarier, so do the traumas people are subjected to.
- Ask appropriate questions to gather information, cultural awareness is important
- Just because it sounds bizarre doesn't make it untrue
- Think outside the box & maintain reasonable expectations.
- This work is a process and takes time. Cherish the slice of time that we get.
- Understand barriers- nothing about forced migration is "all right," make this a special time together
- Identity formation-formative time
- Relationship is the most important component



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Resources & Works Cited

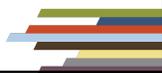
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Loar, L., & Colman, L. L. (2004). *Teaching empathy: Animal-assisted therapy programs for children and families exposed to violence*. Alameda, CA: Latham Foundation for the Promotion of Humane Education.

International Institute for Restorative Practices: www.iirp.edu

Animal Assisted Intervention International: aai-int.org



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Questions



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