Making the Case for Trauma Informed Practices in Schools

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Great Lakes MHTTC
January 25th, 2022
10 am, CT

Trauma-Informed Practices in Schools

Training Objectives and Agenda

- Strengthen understanding of trauma and how it impacts the classroom.

- Gain strategies for managing the impact of trauma in the classroom.

- Discuss needs assessments to effectively design trauma responsive practices training for your school.

Why Trauma Training in Schools?

Toxic stress in the absence of protective relationships can have a negative effect on development.

More than **two-thirds of children** reported at least one traumatic event by age 16.

Early childhood brain development is formed by genetics and experiences.

There are different developmental responses to trauma.

The presence of a caring adult can mitigate the effects of stress and promote lifelong healthy development.

Changing our mindset to "what has happened?"

Current Context

More than **two thirds of children** reported at least 1 traumatic event by age 16. (SAMHSA)

The prevalence of depression and anxiety symptoms during COVID-19 have doubled. (JAMA)

Increased suicide rates for adolescent girls (CDC)

U.S. Surgeon General Issues Advisory on Youth Mental Health Crisis Further Exposed by COVID-19 Pandemic (HHS)

Signs of Trauma in Children

Experience grief 3 to 6 months after the event happened

Become fascinated by death

Become obsessed with their safety

Suddenly have problems with sleeping, eating, anger or attention

Triggered by things like the birthday of someone who died

Continue to refuse to go to school because that is where the upsetting event happened

Talking to Students About Trauma and Violence

- Reassure students they are safe

- Make time to talk

- Keep explanations developmentally appropriate

- Review safety procedures

- Observe students emotional state

- Limit tv/social media viewing of traumatic events

- Maintain a normal routine

6 Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach

1. SAFETY
2. TRUSTWORTHINESS & TRANSPARENCY
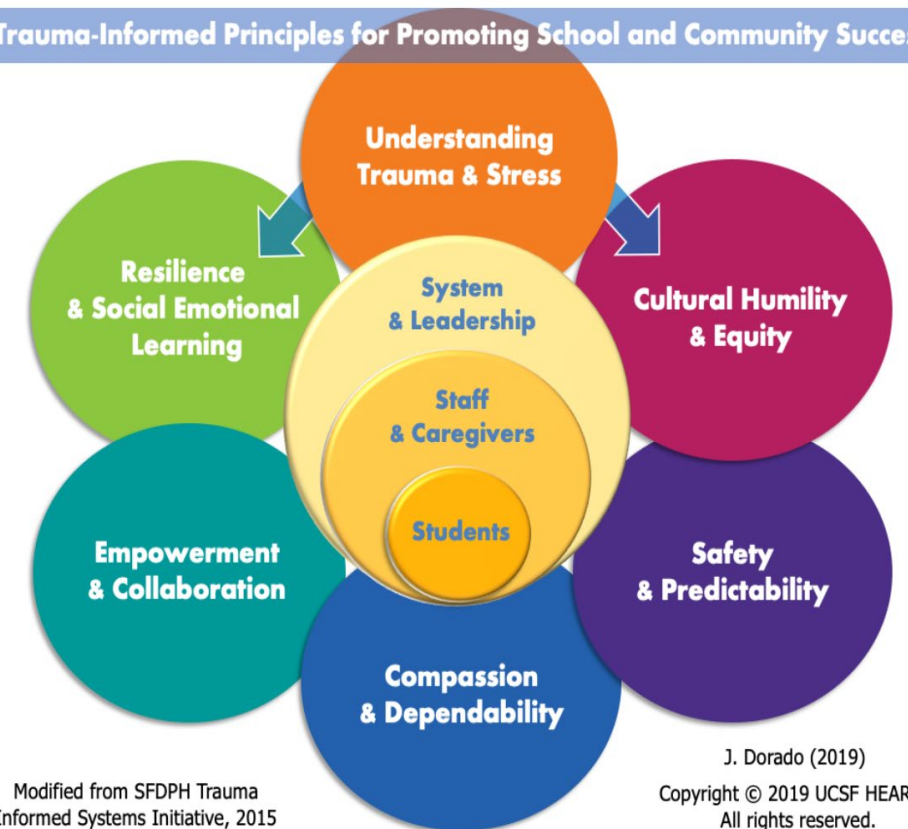3. PEER SUPPORT
4. COLLABORATION & MUTUALITY
5. EMPOWERMENT VOICE & CHOICE
6. CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, & GENDER ISSUES

Understanding Trauma

- Shared language

- School culture

- Staff and student wellness

HEARTS Trauma-Informed Principles

Trauma-Informed Principles for Promoting School and Community Success

Understanding Trauma & Stress

Resilience & Social Emotional Learning

Cultural Humility & Equity

System & Leadership

Staff & Caregivers

Students

Empowerment & Collaboration

Safety & Predictability

Compassion & Dependability

Modified from SFDPH Trauma Informed Systems Initiative, 2015

J. Dorado (2019)

Definition of Trauma

"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 threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being."

SAMHSA (2014)

"Every child needs one person who is crazy about them."

- Urie Bronfenbrenner, 1977

60 Minutes (2018)

Shifting Our Perspective

Instead of what's wrong with you.

Ask

What happened to you?

Expect all students to be dealing with trauma on some level.

Core Guiding Principle: Understanding Trauma & Stress

Without understanding trauma, we are more likely to misinterpret trauma-related behaviors.

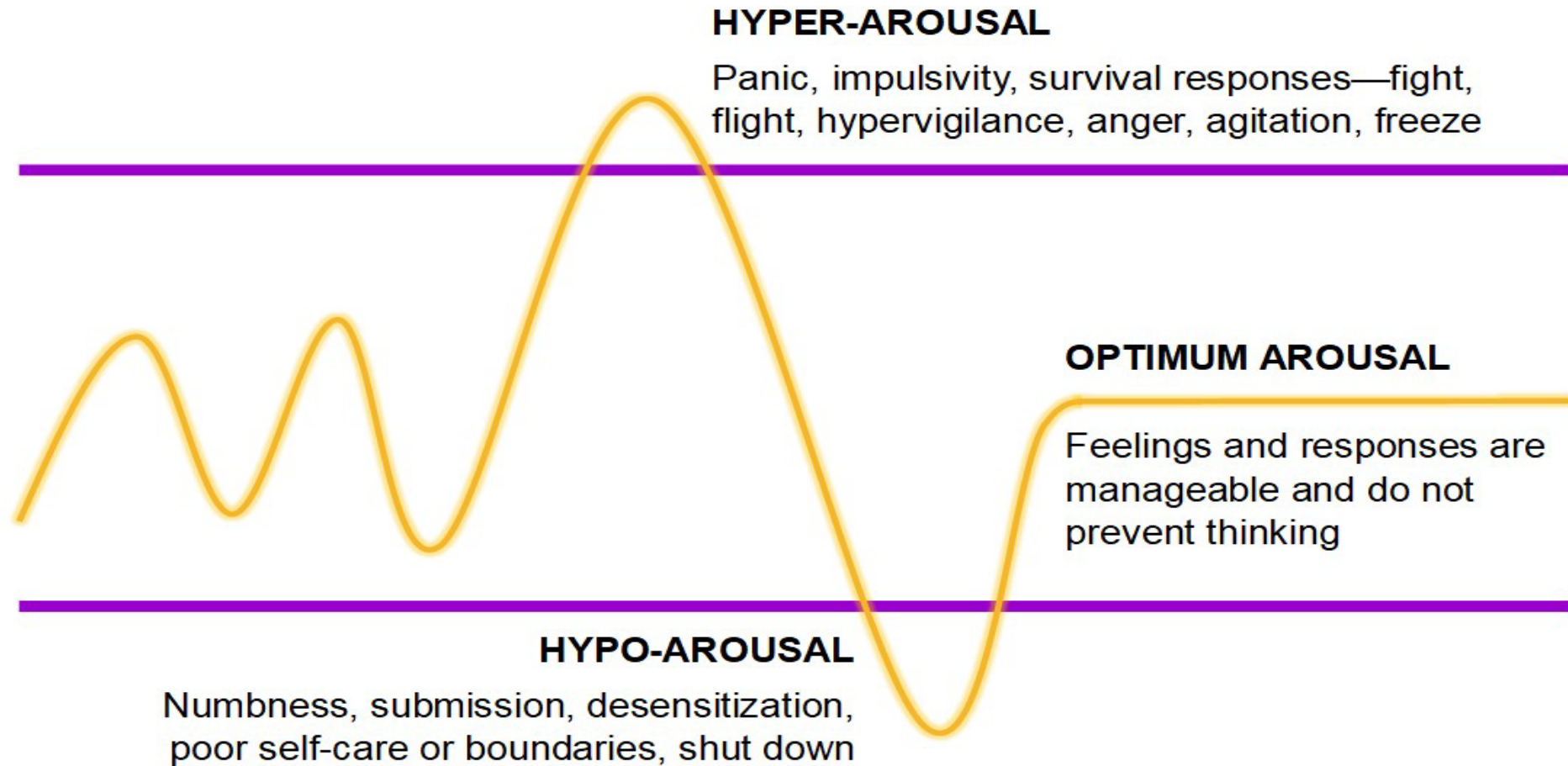When we understand trauma and stress, we increase our ability to act compassionately.

Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers

Stress and Toxic Stress

Positive stress — Meeting new people

Tolerable stress — Death in the family

Toxic stress — Parental addiction, Abuse, Neglect

Image Source: Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Service (2020)
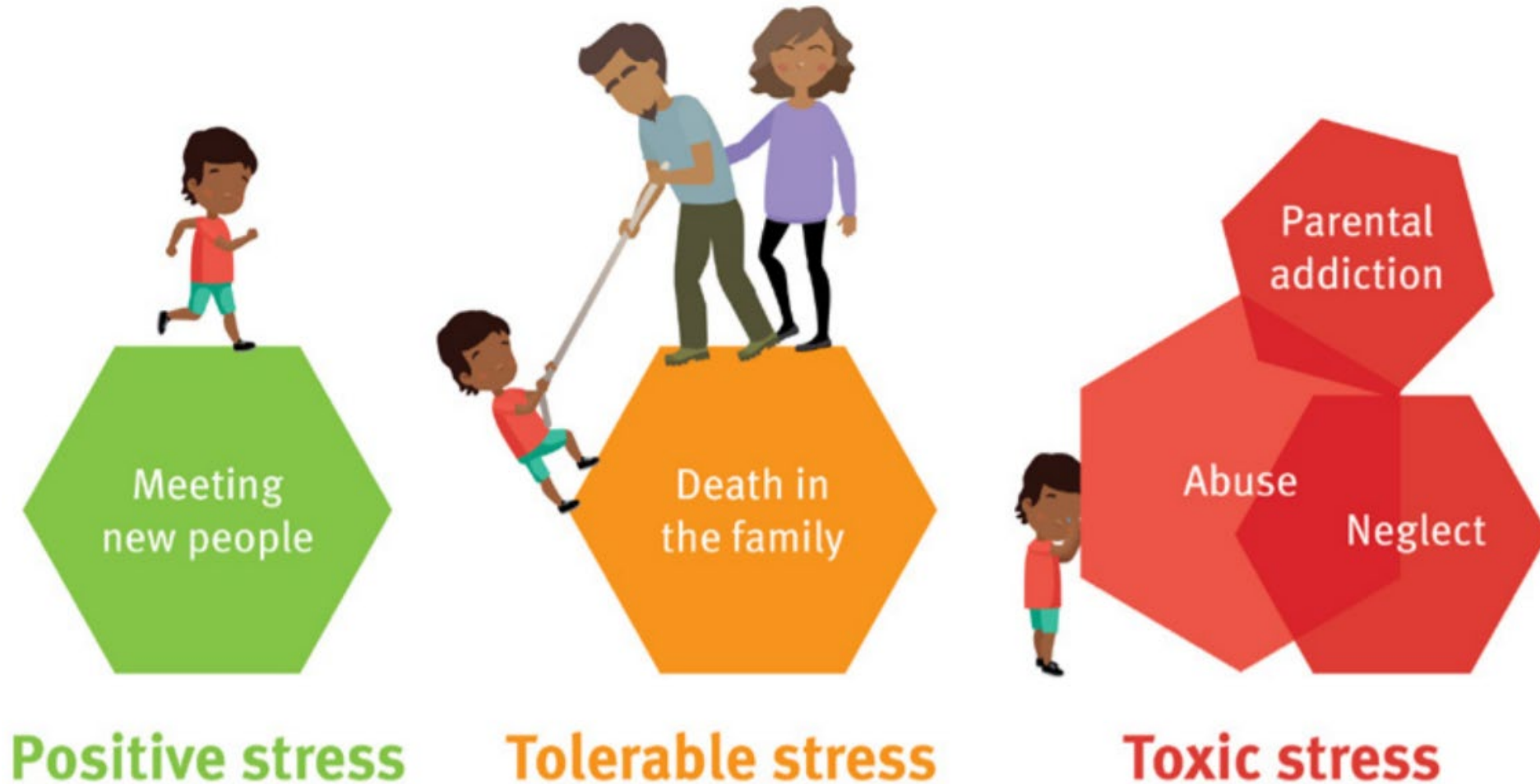
The Window of Affective Tolerance

HYPER-AROUSAL

Panic, impulsivity, survival responses—fight, flight, hypervigilance, anger, agitation, freeze

OPTIMUM AROUSAL

Feelings and responses are manageable and do not prevent thinking

HYPO-AROUSAL

Numbness, submission, desensitization, poor self-care or boundaries, shut down

Adapted from Joyce, P., & Sills, C. (2014), based on Siegel, D. (1999)

How Trauma Impacts Learning

How training Impacts learning

Resilience

The capacity to grow and thrive with strength and tenacity in the face of trauma and oppression for individuals and communities

Resilient Futures 2018

- Connection
- Coping
- Competence

The Power of Relationships

- Self regulation/ Co-regulation
- Proactive relational practices
- Portable practice

Behavior Regulation

What do teachers notice when students demonstrate problems with behavior regulation?

Prioritizing Trauma Responsive Practices Training in Schools

- Outcomes and data

- Benefits all students

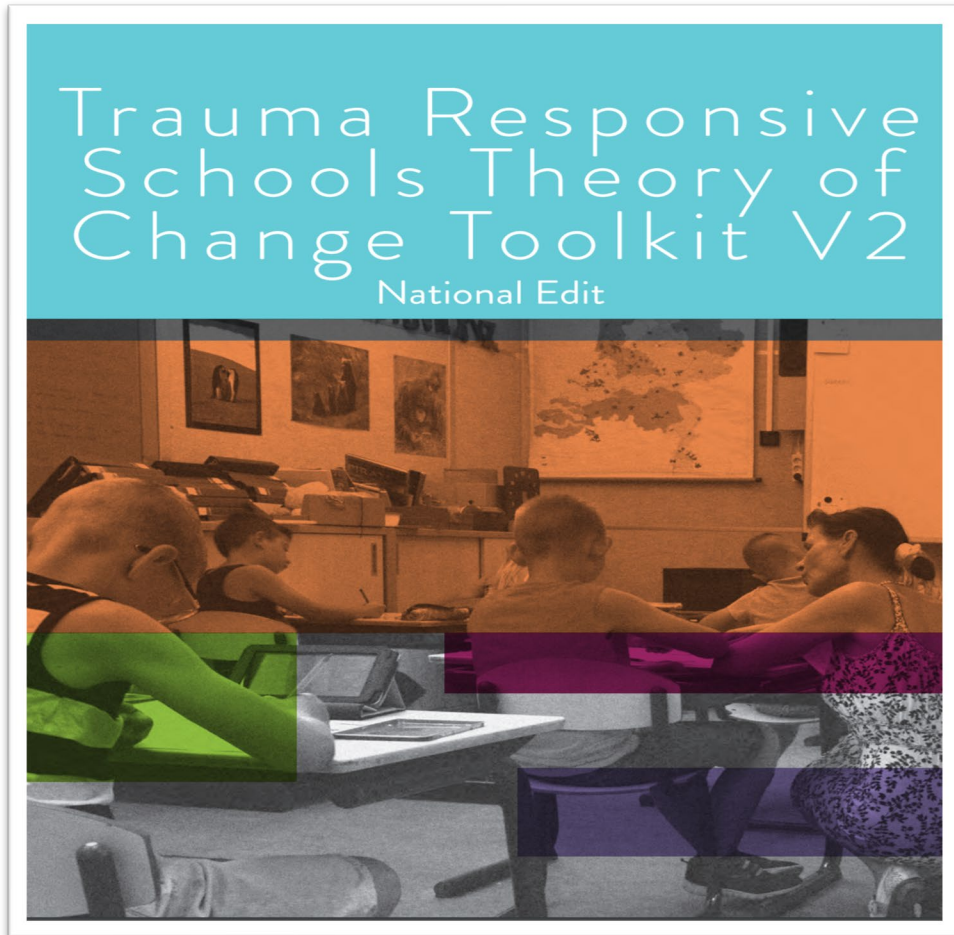- Increase and improves instructional time

Anticipating Resistance
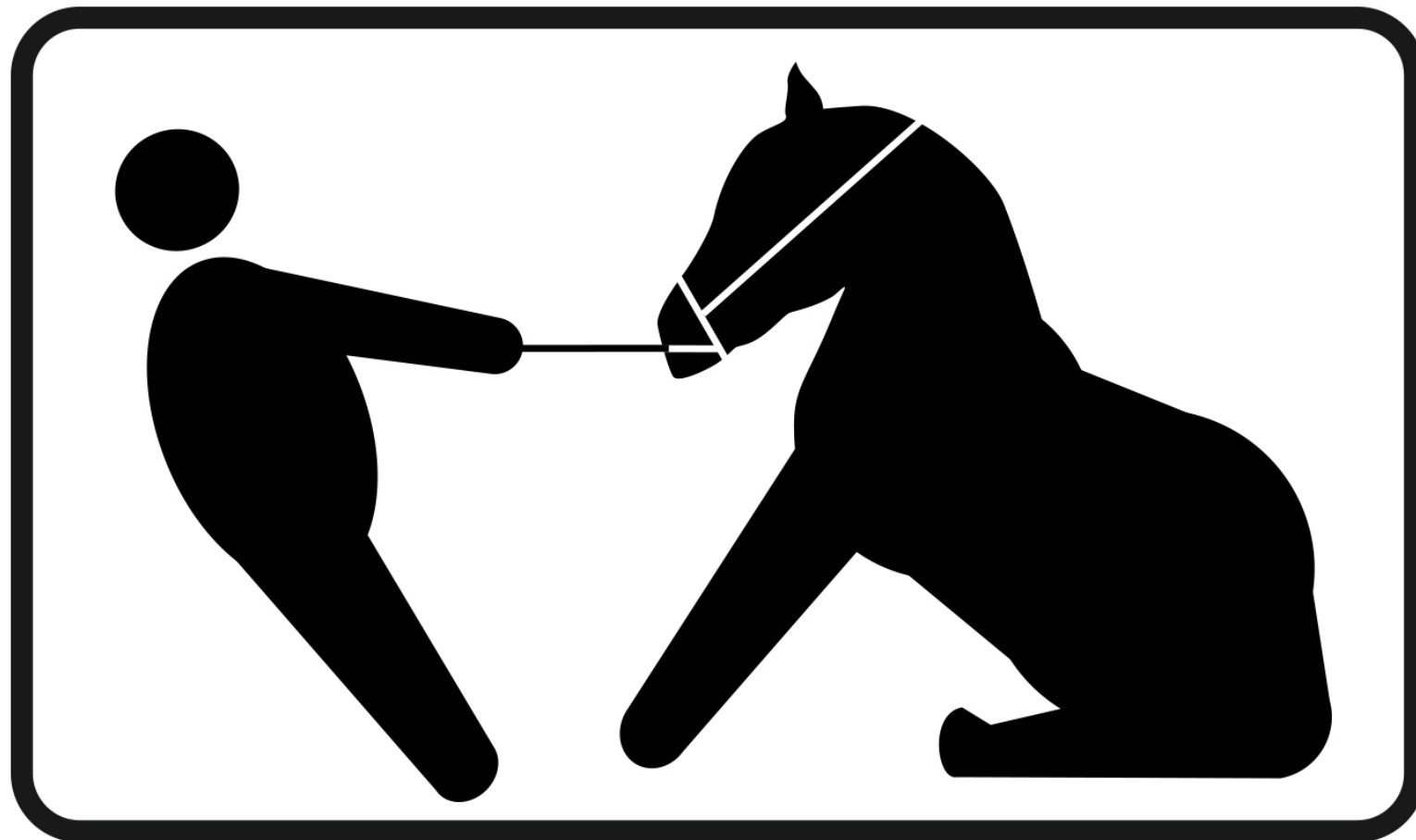
Needs Assessment
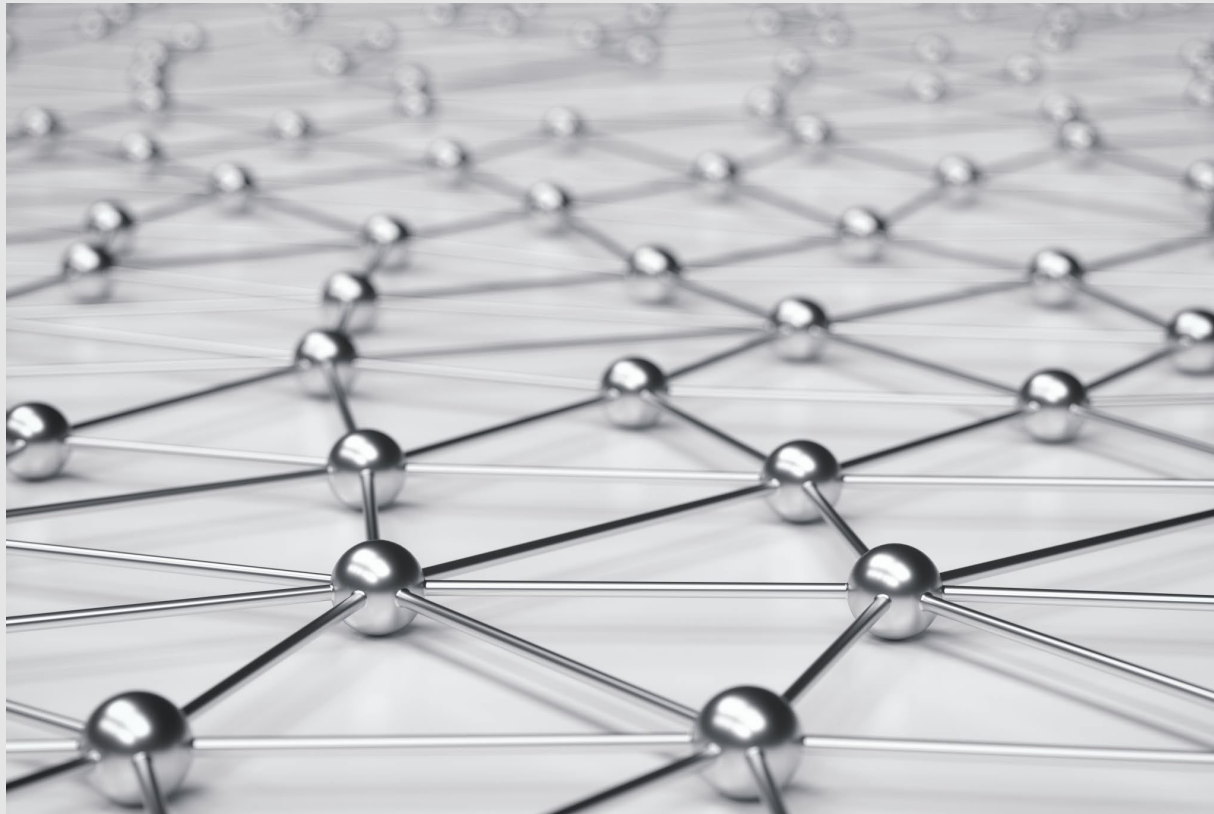
- What does your school community need?

- What are you doing well?

- What areas can you use more support?

- What do the students and families say?

- How do you know?

Trauma Responsive Schools Theory of Change Toolkit
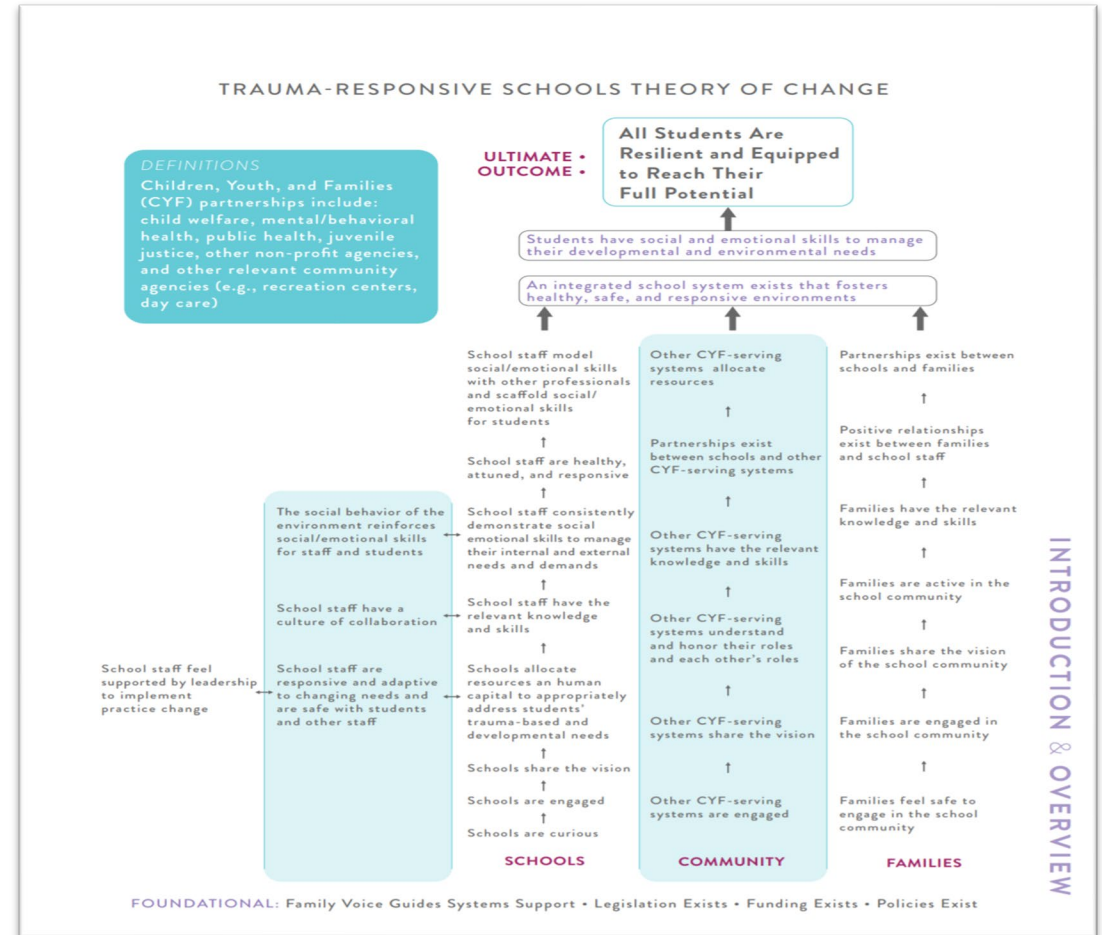
TRSTC Needs Assessment Tool

	Urgency				Achieved?			✓ if Very/High Urgency & Partially/Not Yet Achieved
Phase 2: Relevant Knowledge and Skills								
11. School staff feel supported by leadership to implement practice change	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
12. School staff are responsive and adaptive to changing needs and are safe with students and other staff	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
13. School staff have a culture of collaboration	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
14. Schools allocate resources and human capital to appropriately address students' trauma-based and developmental needs	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
15. School staff have the relevant knowledge and skills	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
16. Other CYF-serving systems have the relevant knowledge and skills	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
17. Families have the relevant knowledge and skills	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
Phase 3: Social and Emotional Skills								
18. The social behavior of the environment reinforces social/emotional skills for staff and students	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
19. School staff consistently demonstrate social and emotional skills to manage their internal and external needs and demands	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
20. School staff are healthy, attuned, and responsive	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	
21. School staff model social/emotional skills with other professionals and scaffold social/emotional skills for students	Very High	High	Moderate	Low	Fully	Partially	Not Yet	

SHAPE System

- Trauma Responsive Schools Implementation Assessment (TRS-IA)

- School Mental Health Quality and Sustainability Assessments

- Screening and assessment library

TRS-IA Sample Questions

Training Considerations

- Physical space
- Co-facilitation
- Time Frame
- Prior knowledge
- Acknowledge the content may be challenging

Thank you

Contact Info

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Questions and Next Steps???

Facebook and Twitter!
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