TRAUMA-INFORMED RESTORATIVE PRACTICES 101

Joe Brummer
Trauma-Sensitive Schools Conference February 2018
Washington DC
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• Currently working with 21 schools in 3 districts to implement Trauma-informed RJ

• Roughly 3-years into projects in both Meriden and Hartford Public Schools in CT
WHAT IS TRAUMA?

• Word means “wound”

• Not the event ….its the response

• Child traumatic stress is when children and adolescents are exposed to traumatic events or traumatic situations, and when this exposure overwhelms their ability to cope.
SPECTRUM OF TRAUMA

- Acute (car accident, fire, rape, robbery)
- Chronic (sexual abuse or neglect)
- Complex (combined chronic exposure AKA Developmental Trauma)
- Intergenerational Trauma: Passed-on through DNA
- Toxic Stress (adverse experiences that leads to prolonged activation of the body’s stress response system)
- Secondary/Vicarious Trauma (Educators, Mental Health professionals, First-responders)
WHAT IS TRAUMA-INFORMED?

• Moving from what’s wrong with you to “what happen to you?”

• Trauma blocks memory and learning

• Moving from seeing behavior as good or bad to seeing behavior as regulated or dysregulated

• Moving from “telling” to “asking”

• Our job is to help co-regulate stress (both student and staff)
WINDOW OF STRESS TOLERANCE

Adapted from *Help for Billy* by Heather Forbes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGHT</th>
<th>FLIGHT</th>
<th>FREEZE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Walking out of class</td>
<td>Blank Stares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arguing</td>
<td>Ignoring</td>
<td>Disassociation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Threats</td>
<td>Head down, Hoody up!</td>
<td>Head on desk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silliness</td>
<td>Cutting class</td>
<td>Refusal to answer questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defiance</td>
<td>Leaving School</td>
<td>Appears forgetful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yelling</td>
<td>Hovering</td>
<td>Inability to move</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cursing/vulgar language</td>
<td>Purposely getting kicked out</td>
<td>Exhibiting numbness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sudden Outbursts</td>
<td>Withdrawing</td>
<td>Can’t recognize faces</td>
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<tr>
<td>Posturing</td>
<td>Daydreaming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacing</td>
<td>Seeming to sleep</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provoking Adults</td>
<td>Headphones or Earbuds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing objects</td>
<td>Mindless cell phone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talking Back</td>
<td>Hiding under desks, tables</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Slamming doors or lockers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands in fists</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refusal to sit in desk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Adapted by Joe Brummer from a Prezi Presentation by Arianna Caplan and Souers & Hall (2016) Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom (pg. 29)
WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

On the front-end: This is a way of building relationships and creating a culture based in community accountability. We are all responsible for the culture we have and what happens in it.

On the back-end: This is a way of bringing those impacted by harm together with those who caused harm for the purposes of healing, accountability, and repairing relationships and community.
WHAT IS RJ IN A BOX?

- Canned training focused more on practices than on foundational principles
- Part of the silo system and individually not enough
- Implemented through intellectual gymnastics rather than heartfelt change (Doing versus being)
- Complementary ideas end up having contradictions (i.e., using a meditation chime as an attention getter)
- Not cost efficient when in competition with other initiatives
- Teacher burn out
A HYBRID IDEA

• Mindfulness
• Trauma-informed Schools
• Restorative Justice/Practices
• Collaborative & Proactive Solutions
• Equity
• Nonviolent Communication
## CONVENTIONAL THINKING VS. RESTORATIVE WISDOM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rule broken</th>
<th>Harm caused</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accountability = Punishment</td>
<td>Accountability = Repairing harm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on Past</td>
<td>Focused on future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establishment of guilt</td>
<td>Needs and Responsibilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior Motivated by External Control</td>
<td>Behavior is Motivated by Human Needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenging behavior is a matter of <strong>will</strong></td>
<td>Challenging behavior is a matter of <strong>skill</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on “<strong>what</strong>” people are</td>
<td>Focused on “<strong>how</strong>” people are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on Control/Compliance</td>
<td>Focused on Connection/Influence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focused on Problem Behavior</td>
<td>Focused on Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Skills of Restorative

- Asking Questions
  - Going deeper
  - Drilling down
  - Identifying Problems

- Honest Expression
  - Speaking without judgment
  - Affective Statements
  - Trading Praise for gratitude

- The Art of Requests
  - Problem solving
  - Action plans
  - Assessing
  - Connection Requests

- Empathy
  - Listening without judgment
  - Re-assuring
  - Regulate

- Mindfulness
  - Self-care
  - Presence
  - Modeling

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RESPECT AGREEMENTS

Respect Agreements

Students to Students:
- Be kind to others.
- Respect others' belongings.
- Be respectful of others' space.

Students to Teacher:
- Be respectful to the teacher.
- Follow instructions.

Respect Agreement for Mrs. Tracey's class:
- Student to Student:
  - Hands to self
  - Use kind words
- Student to Teacher:
  - Listen the first time
  - Raise your hand and wait
- Teacher to Student:
  - Read a book
  - Stations
  - Don't yell
Our successes:
Over 83% of our teachers have agreements up in their classrooms by the second week of school.
CIRCLES

- Community Building
- Healing Circles
- Academic Circles
BRAIN BREAK
IMPLEMENTATION

Top-Down

• Board of Ed
• Leadership Support
• Policy Changes
• Paperwork
• Schedule changes

Bottom-up

• Teacher led
• Student led
• Parent led
• Training led by and for teachers
HARTFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- Cohorts of 5-6 schools
- Team Leader, Core Team, Implementation Team
- Three Year Implementation Plan
- Year 1 – 6 days of professional learning plus technical assistance days
- Year 2 – 4 days of professional learning plus technical assistance days
- Year 3 – 2 days of professional learning plus technical assistance days
- Circle Forward/Nonviolent Communication Touchstone Texts
- Student training for middle and high school in circle keeping
Training increased participant's abilities to describe how trauma influences a student's behavior and how students can trigger their own trauma responses.
Educators grew to understand that punishment is not effective at changing behavior, and that knowing what punishments exist does little to help students manage their behavior.
Educators believe that discipline is part of their job, but now also understand that part of their job is to teach students how to manage their emotions.
MERIDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

• 2-day Introduction training for Secondary School Teams

• Community of Practice 2-3 in the first year

• Community of practice 2-3 in the second year

• Ongoing Technical Assistance for each school + Climate Specialists
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