Integrating Trauma Sensitive Best Practices into Your Classroom

Interview with Susan Craig, Ph.D., Author & Consultant

Interviewer: Julie Beem, ATN Executive Director

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Transcript: Craig

Julie: Hello, Everyone, this is Julie Beem, the Executive Director of The Attachment and Trauma Network, back again today for another interview from the Educating Traumatized Children Summit: An Online Gathering of Expert Voices on How to Provide Trauma Sensitive School Experiences for Our Children.

This summit has been created by the Attachment and Trauma Network, also known as ATN. And today I am pleased to have with us Dr. Susan Craig. She is going to be speaking about how to integrate some best practices to be trauma-sensitive in your classroom.

Before we get started, let me tell you a little bit about Dr. Craig.

She is the founder and president of SEC Enterprises Inc., and she is a career educator, author, public speaker, and nationally recognized expert in addressing educational needs of at-risk children and youth. Teachers and administrators rely on her professional development training and materials to create trauma-sensitive schools and childcare environments. Her ability to create schools-friendly interventions for traumatized children is definitely an asset to any program or organization struggling to include this difficult to serve population.

So I am very excited to hear what Dr. Craig, what Susan, has to say to us today. Welcome, Susan!

Susan: Thank you, Julie! I am very happy to be here!

Julie: So tell us just for starters, how you got into this work, training teachers to reach and teach children who are hurt.

Susan: Well, I was a reading specialist when I first began my career as a teacher, and the more evaluations I did, the more I recognized the pattern that children who were struggling academically seemed to have histories that either involved early childhood adversity or some kind of unhappy experiences that seem to still stay with them, and was somehow, I didn’t know how then, interfering with their ability to learn basic skills. And many of them have a lot of behavioral problems.
I went from there to running a program for children with emotional problems for about 10 years in the Portsmouth public schools, and from there pursued my doctorate in sociology studying the effects of violence on children’s cognition and social development.

Susan: And along the way I have trained many teachers many places and given a lot of workshops because teachers seem to be desperate to try to unlink what it is about children who seem to be trying their best who just continually fall apart and just can’t make it to the next step.

Julie: And I think every teacher listening to this today probably has at least one student in mind for which that’s true, that they have not been able to reach even though they can see their level of effort.

Susan: That’s right and you know, when you hear the statistics nationally in terms of one in four children it’s estimated has been abused or in some way traumatized before the age of five in the United States. Those children are in school.

Julie: Right.

Susan: So in a classroom of 25 children, teacher probably has three or four of those kids sitting in front of him or her and doesn’t have a clue about it because many of the children who have early adversity never really come to the attention of helping professions. It’s the very tip of the iceberg where children will wind up being referred for children and youth services.

Julie: Right. So they may be the students that look how? Can you describe quickly what they might look like?

Susan: They are classically two different types of children. The most difficult to manage and the most frustrating for teachers, I would say, are those that appear to be quite oppositional and defiant. And its funny that the child is only five years old they usually wind up with that label, which is a little bit scary; the children who just won’t cooperate.

Julie: Right.

Susan: And it’s hard for teachers to recognize the fact that it’s not a matter of not wanting to cooperate, but it’s a matter of really not knowing how or being able to.

The second group of children that appear in classrooms who probably have a trauma history are children who are quite withdrawn and are referred to often as “parentified” children, who are the children who want to help all the time, they want to do things, but they are always, in their own quiet way, seeking the attention, reassurance of the adults.
And so what we now know about children and how they develop is that in those early years, usually from 0 to 3 particularly, the whole self-regulatory processes in the brain are being formed and in the best of all circumstances and they are being formed with the support of a caring caregiver who is co-regulating the child’s moods and the child’s emotional and physical state.

Those children come to school ready to learn because they have the confidence that they can control their internal processes as well as the things around them.

In the absence of that caring attachment relationship in early childhood, these kids are terrified. They can’t control themselves, they can’t control the world around them and they actually lack the brain, neural pathways that are necessary for managing their arousal systems, so they are always on edge.

Julie: Right.

Susan: That’s what you see in their, what we refer to often as “defiant behavior.” They are afraid, they are threatened by very neutral signals in the environment, and so they are always kind of ready to fall into a rage to defend themselves.

Julie: Right. So they are always on edge, they’re always a little bit hyper-vigilant, even though they seem to look aggressive and defiant in their actions.

Susan: They are. Most of what you would define or call aggression in young children really is a reaction of fear. It’s a very rare child who is going to be really aggressive. They may act aggressively, but they are motivated by self protection. And they see, they have cognitive distortions where they perceive things as more threatening than they actually are.

In fact, when you do MRI imaging of children at rest, children that have early trauma histories, there are parts of their arousal system that remain activated even when their typical peers are we’d say “green” because they are not activated. The child who has had a really trauma history will maintain an activity in their arousal system even at rest.

Julie: So it’s almost like the thermostat is set high or something to that effect?

Susan: That’s exactly right. And you know they are often children who parents will report who don’t sleep well or are picky eaters, can’t settle down, and it all goes to that same arousal system.

You want children to maintain a state of arousal that allows them to explore their environment and learn new things. And what chronic stress in early childhood does is, it ups the arousal so that it almost makes learning impossible. They are not going to explore new things when they are afraid to move out of their own shadow, and so you
see that kind of, that appears to teachers as lack of effort or giving up quickly. And again it’s kind of a muted response to the environment -- because they are afraid, they can’t control either themselves or the environment around them.

Julie: That’s incredibly important information and sort of goes to our next question where we were talking about what makes them challenging.

You’ve talked a lot about the emotional-behavioral. Can we talk specifically about what they look like academically, these children?

Susan: Sure. I think before I go on to the academics I just want to say that one of the things that I think is very stressful for teachers, and it is hard to believe even myself I sometimes find myself saying this when a kid is really difficult.

The way the memories of an adverse early childhood are coded in the brain is in the right hemisphere and it’s nonverbal. So children can’t really tell you why they are behaving the way they are because they don’t know, they don’t have a script that explains the feeling they are having and it does not go away.

So you’ve got a well-motivated teacher who is doing everything he or she learned to do to build up trust in children and it never seems to work, they always go back... The child always goes back to the same conflict. And that’s because that conflict is being motivated or fueled by unconscious memories that neither he nor the teacher can understand. And so you have to always keep going back to the start with these kids.

You never reach a steady ground where, ok they know I like them, they know I can be trusted. It’s always beginning over again, which makes it very hard to be with them.

Now cognitively, there are all sorts of issues that come up for these children. They are often labeled learning disabled, and it’s because they are, again their arousal system fuels an attention system that is very deficient. They are always attending to the external environment for whether or not what’s threatening in it or what’s going to hurt them.

So attending to a task that appears to be unrelated or appears to be pretty devoid of meaning in their own personal lives is going to be very hard. So they sometimes look like they have ADHD because they flip from one thing to another.

Their memory can be impaired because of the high anxiety that they have. And another thing that often is a problem for these children is they are pretty deficient in language. Very often they will be coded for special education services for language. They don’t have a real good vocabulary development, they don’t have a lot of auditicity [sic] to the
vocabulary that they use. And they don’t necessarily think in words; they think sensorially.

In other words, they think with their body and what’s going on around them rather than being able to kind of sit and plan ahead so they tend to be very impulsive.

Julie: That sort of leads back to what you were saying earlier, it’s hard for the teacher to understand that the child does not understand why they are... The child can never answer the question about why they are doing the things that they’re doing, and it’s all language-based.

Susan: That’s exactly right, That’s exactly right and I think that’s frustrating to the child as well as the teacher because you think, “Well, there must be some motivation for this behavior” and there is in fact the motivation but it’s hidden in that right hemisphere and it is essentially nonverbal.

The other thing about these children which is really interesting when you watch them over time, they lack a lot of core concepts that children need to build academic skills on. Like they lack a clear sense of cause and effect because they are children who don’t think they can do anything right. Their early experiences have taught them that they are bad and that they can’t really do much.

So that’s actually how most children learn cause and effect; they learn that they are the cause of something happening in their environment and they build on that, these kids don’t have that. They typically come from environments that are very unpredictable so prediction and estimation is very hard for them.

Julie: Right, right. Or neglectful environment where no matter what they did, it didn’t make an impact and so why bother?

Susan: Right. They are very prone to shame so they are not going to put themselves out on a limb to take a risk and be wrong. So that’s what you see in the child that appears to be really unmotivated or refuses to try when the teacher kind of urges them on to something; they just give up or tear the paper up or knock the chair over because they are very ashamed of who they are and they don’t want to be seen as stupid.

They also have a very difficult time with sequence which is just when you think about it, school is very sequential. Everything in the day builds on the sequence and these kids have no sequence. They just don’t have the ability to say, “Oh, this is step A, B and C, and I continually use those steps to solve problems.”

Julie: Mhm.
They start in the middle of things. So taken together, you can appreciate that that they are lacking a lot of the core skills needed for academic success.

Exactly, exactly. But sometimes and it just depends on the students. Sometimes their emotional behavioral state seems to overshadow all of that and they get hard to see those academic struggles as well, true?

That’s true because you are so distracted by the behavior.

I mean I think it’s probably the experience that most teachers that teach elementary school, that they had at least one child a year who thinks nothing of having a temper tantrum where they wind up on the floor crying and screaming, I mean in grade second, third, and sometimes even fourth-grade; behavior that you normally would have expected to see maybe if you taught preschool in a two-year-old. But I have been in a lot of elementary schools, and it is not at all unusual to have a few kids continuing to have temper tantrums like that well into ages 8, 9, and 10. When they get to adolescence of course, they then wind up in the purview of the courts because of aggression.

Right!

It becomes more peer directed.

And from a teacher standpoint, being that the teachers are human beings, then a lot of times those behaviors cause feelings and emotions within the teacher as well. So what advice can you give the teachers about what happens when their buttons get pushed by children like this?

I think that one of the things that teachers need to be really aware of is that children who have been abused or have bad early histories of adversity almost unconsciously set up on interaction with teachers because they are parental figures in many ways. That I’m going to show you my worse shot, and I’m going to make you reject me really right on before I start to like you. So they come in loaded for bear, you know what I mean? And anytime the teacher gets too close, that reenactment kicks in again because the child fears the relationship so much.

So when I talk to teachers, I always say to them, “The first thing you need to do is be pretty much in touch with your own trauma history.” Many people have a trauma history, many people in schools grew up in families that weren’t necessarily always easy to be with. And to take really good care of yourself. You can’t teach traumatized kids if you are exhausted because they are just too physically and emotionally draining.

Right.
Susan: So you need to be able to really kind of care for yourself; physically, emotionally, spiritually, rely on friends. And I have often thought it would be really helpful for public school teachers to have some clinical supervision where they could talk through some of the things that happened in classroom with children that are so difficult.

And then it’s really important for teachers to know how to manage what I call the “double struggle.” It’s a phrase that comes from Nicholas Long who is an old-time teacher who taught children with behavior problems for years and years and years.

And what he meant by that was that you can’t de-escalate the behavior of a child who is out of control if you are out of control yourself.

Julie: Correct. That’s so true!

Susan: We all know that. We’ve all been there, I think.

So you have to really get a grip on how you are feeling yourself, you know, where your head is at. And if the child really pushes you to the point that you cannot truthfully say to yourself, “I can be in charge of my own emotions dealing with this child right now,” then turn the child over to a peer, an aide in the classroom. Ask them to take the child for 10 minutes. Because once the kid gets you at a place where you can’t pull yourself back, there’s no hope. You’re not going to do very well at it, and that kid is just going to escalate because they are going to get frightened.

Julie: Right, right.

Susan: So the very best thing you can do is to just remain objective, and know that anything the child is doing really has nothing to do with you and everything to do with what’s happened to him or her before. And that neutrality works best.

I think a lot of teachers really their hearts go out to these kids and they try to bond with them in a way that the children are not capable of responding to. So a neutral, fair teacher is the best kind of person to work with these kids.

Julie: Right, right. Yes.

Susan: “This is what is expected, these are the things that I can do to help you get there”, and then just leave a fairly broad distance emotionally between the expectations you have of the child. You’re not going to get [the] emotional response you might get from another child from a child who has been traumatized.

Julie: And I think that’s highly important advice because a lot of times, exactly, if you know the child’s background, or you know that they are going back into a big at risk situation,
then you feel sorry for them and your empathy causes you to act in such a way that you end up getting more frustrated because of the behaviors.

Susan: And then it just kind of spirals down.

So it’s a good thing, I think, for teachers to seek out, if their administrators don’t provide it for them, they really need to have some training in how to de-escalate conflict in children. There is a lot of good things on the market in terms of -- Responsive Classrooms does a nice job with that. And to know how to join with the child in a way that does not escalate further the emotions they are already feeling, and to kind of work through the steps that it takes to move the child from being really out of control to a place where they are able to talk.

I know that sometimes people try to have children talk too soon. What we know is that anxiety and anger, stress actually shuts down the language center of the brain. So that when anyone is under stress you really can’t talk about it; you have to kind of give yourself time to calm down first. And so one of the best de-escalation strategies I can give a teacher is when somebody is really acting out of control, if they are safe, just say, “I’m going to give you a few minutes. When you are ready, I would love to talk to you about what is going on to see if we can make a plan.”

Julie: Right.

Susan: But not to try to process it right at the moment, in the heat of the moment.

Some teachers find that giving kids options for just doodling or listening to music and so they calm down, is a good way to de-escalate. Journaling is something that a lot of teachers use with kids on a regular basis so that they are kind of training them to reflect on what they have done, so that when something does erupt that’s a problem, they have already built up some cognitive skills they can use to facilitate the process of de-escalation.

Julie: That’s great. I know my daughter has a tendency to draw pictures. She’ll take a piece of paper and draw pictures and then just tear the picture up as though... If she’s upset about what she drew, which might have been troubling, but it gives her a chance to get herself regulated and to sort of put out there what it was she was upset about.

Susan: Right. Sometimes children... There is a lot of work that is actually being done now by people like Bessel van der Kolk, who does a lot with developmental trauma. And his recommendation is to not go to the verbal, to not go to cognitive processing with kids when they are upset, but to give them something that is more sensory to do to regulate sensory first.
Susan: So he’ll recommend like rocking, drumming or beating on a bongo drum, or just rubbing something really hard that maybe gives sensation, just to kind of get the sensory body calm down first, and then have place where they can use language to talk about what’s going on.

Julie: Well, it makes total sense. I mean I know I as an adult, if I get upset and dis-regulated sometimes one of the best things I can do is just to take a walk. I’m not talking to anybody, I am just... The movement of the walking allows me to dispel some of that emotion and that I can come back regulated and ready to communicate.

Susan: There are quite a few places right now that like -- Dan Siegel is one of the people that is pushing this mindfulness in the schools, where they train teachers how to teach children how to do like the deep breathing and visualization and a lot of the yoga techniques that help children regulate, and they have been very successful. So you might take a few minutes at the beginning of a class and “Let’s just breathe through our nose and out through our mouth 10 times”. And you don’t have to proselytize about the fact it’s yoga.

Julie: Right! Well, and that is a good tool for all of the children to have.

Susan: It is. It is. There is nothing that a teacher is going to do for child that has had a trauma history that will not benefit typical kids as well. And I think that that’s one of the things that we -- the word trauma is kind of scary, it sounds huge. It sounds like it belongs in a hospital as opposed to a school. But in fact, what you are trying to do is give children access to what typical kids get from birth, which is good parenting, which is an objective “other” who is available to help them learn how to take care of themselves.

Julie: Right.

Susan: And so nothing that you do for those children is going to in any way harm typical kids.

Julie: Right. Exactly. I think that’s really important. And giving them a consistent, safe environment to explore, and to be able to do some of the things that they didn’t get to do younger, and to develop that whole, more positive self image or self interaction kind of conducting.

Susan: Right. One of the things that early childhood people always stress in terms of child development and cognition is the role of play has in developing the brain. And I think it’s a good thing to think of cognitive development in schools in a playful manner as well.

Play teaches a lot of self-regulation skills, teaches me how to kind of practice in my mind what I’m going to say. It teaches me how to take the role of somebody else and see how
that feels; a lot of areas of cognition that are deficient in children that have been in environments that have been neglectful or abusive in some ways.

Julie: Right. So if I am a teacher listening to this -- and I hope there are lots of teachers listening to this because there is such valuable information here -- I’m probably thinking to myself that with the common core curriculum and all of things that I am required to do, to teach and cover in the classroom, and all the demands on my time and resources, that even implementing some of the things that you’ve suggested might seem overwhelming and it might... It just seems that this is something more I have got to learn. How would you address that with teachers?

Susan: Well, that actually comes up with teachers all the time because of course they feel overwhelmed with all the things that kind of get through their way in terms of practices. And what I say to teachers is, “It’s not really about what you have to teach in terms of trauma sensitive techniques, it’s how you teach it.”

And so think a lot about take your common core, take the standards that people say need to be taught and then think about how you are going to present that information in a way that is conveying to children a sense of safety, a sense of purpose, a predictability. Structure lessons so that there is a lot of opportunity for peer collaboration. Think about the conversational tone in the classroom, the use of children’s names, things that all of us have learned as teachers to be best practices. Like anything that Carol Ann Tomlinson has written I would say you could use as a trauma sensitive approach. She is the woman that has done so much with differentiating instruction.

Giving children choices, teaching children to reflect on what they have done and decide what parts they like about what they have done and what they would change if they had an opportunity to do it again because really, what teaching does that I don’t think any other helping profession can do, is it works with the prefrontal cortex which is the last part of the brain to develop. Teach children how to regulate and how to set goals and how to overcome the dysregulation that they’ve experienced in early childhood. It’s like nature’s second chance. That if you had a hard start and you’ve had parents that did not really perhaps know how to provide best environment for you when you were young, the fact that the prefrontal cortex does not develop until the 20s, is not fully mature until the 20s, and that it is so responsive to good instruction, it’s responsive to good questions, it is responsive to knowing how to teach, so that you get children to make inferences. That’s how you grow a prefrontal cortex.

And I just think that teachers have an incredible opportunity to help correct so many of the things that have gone wrong for children by following the best practices of their own
profession. They don’t need to be social workers, they don’t need to be psychologists, they just need to know what is the best practices currently being recommended for teachers, for my profession and how am I going to ensure that I provide that in my classroom as consistently as possible.

Julie: I think that is incredible information! That was a gold nugget that I am just hoping that people out there like rewinding the tape and listening to it two or three times right there about being nature’s second chance. And I don’t know how much teachers know about prefrontal cortex --I do want to plug that we do have, we are going to have a session specifically on brain development and it’s impacted by...how trauma impacts the ability of the brain to learn. But I think that’s so critical.

I know from watching my own daughter’s brain maturing that, you are right, that the input that happens in terms of what happens academically in the classroom, and socially, emotionally in the classroom, has been huge for giving her a second chance to learn all of that.

Susan: Right.

Julie: And there is hope, when you’re looking at a child that is struggling emotionally and you are thinking, oh yeah, this child is headed for some bad places, to know that there is a chance to rewire prior to age 20.

Susan: Right. And there’s a lot of hope. The plasticity of the brain offers incredible hope for children that have had hard starts and we just need to work with it as opposed to pretending it’s not there. I always tell teachers that they are in the business of growing children’s brains, that’s really what they do because the brain is socially constructed, and anybody that you ask as an adult if they had a difficult childhood, if you ask them, “What saved you, what helped?” They will always say, “A teacher.”

Julie: A teacher.

Susan: Always a teacher.

Julie: That is so wonderful.

Susan: So we can’t devalue what teachers do.

Julie: Right. And it wasn’t that that teacher taught them math or taught them home economics or whatever it was that they were teaching. It was the way in which they taught them.

Susan: It was the “how,” the way that they taught it.
And I might just add there that one of the things that I have been reading recently is that in terms of language in classrooms, I remember in the old days, teachers used to be evaluated on the language they use in classrooms. I don’t think that they are anymore, but we now know that in infancy, in early childhood, that the parents’ language pragmatics, not just the words they use but their tone of voice, their eye gaze, their smile, their facial expression, the tone of their voice, all of that is encoded in the right hemisphere.

So children who have had hard starts are going to be hypersensitive to a teacher whose face shows no emotion or to a tone of voice that sounds harsh or critical but they are also going to be very sensitive to indications on the face. And I would say teachers say this to kids, “Look at my face, look at my face is telling you I love you, look at my face!” And eye gaze, that kind of thing that is just so important to have a child feel like they are seen and that they have a place that’s safe.

Right, right. And that is so important because our children, and you talk about them having cognition problems and misreading cues and things, and they will always, at least in my experience, they will always misread that to be negative, so a neutral face is often seen as negative to our kids.

Yes. And the research shows that children who had early trauma histories will see negativity in a neutral face both of a peer and an adult.

And then they will apply that misread into what their actions are and just sort of feed that negative spiral in themselves.

That’s right.

If I could have a few more minutes about the core curriculum.

Sure.

One of the things that I think is best practice that helps children with trauma histories with their peers because they tend to be children that have fairly poor peer relations, peers see them as either odd and a little scary or they just don’t have the social... They don’t have a lot of representational thought but they can’t really see what something looks like from somebody else’s point of view.

Right.

So I know that one of the things that many of the standards especially in social studies and reading talk a lot about now is perspective taking; like there will be standards that recommend that you write a speech from the perspective of all these different people in history or you tell it... Anything like that that is definitely hard-core academics but that
fosters that sense of representational thought and empathy will go a huge way in helping these children develop the social competencies that they need as well as the academic ones.

So I would just recommend that teachers be very aware of that and the standards that... I have to teach perspective taking, but when I am teaching it am going to be really keen on the idea that it’s training, not just about something in history, but it’s also training empathy.

Julie: Right, so that... Yes, exactly! And that whole empathy and socialization and they probably will find that children with trauma are really struggling with that.

Susan: Right. And children who have been traumatized don’t like open ended play acting but they love play acting that has like two sides, they already know what both people are going to say because they know the containment of the conversation, they know where it's going to go, so that’s another good way of training them to get the most out of academic instruction is role-playing and drama.

Julie: I was just thinking that myself that a drama, a scripted something, would be useful for that situation.

Susan: Right.

Julie: So we are coming up on our time, but we do have a few more minutes if there are any other specific tips or ideas that you want to give the teachers.

Susan: Yeah. There are actually. I could give some bottom line rules of the road for a classroom. Children that have been traumatized respond far better to visuals than they do words, so if there are procedures that you want children to follow in the classroom, you should always have like a written protocol for it. So if it is how to set up a paper, how to do your homework, how to line up for lunch, have some kind of a written protocol. Or even use what those of us in special ed know kind of as a Bible, the Mayer-Johnson picture symbols.

Julie: Right, right, pictures.

Susan: Which are really helpful and sometimes people say well, “Well, after second or third grade people aren’t going to be interested in that.” I have seen high school teachers use those very effectively to just organize the room and to have all of the day-to-day things that people need to know in order to get business done theirs done.

I would really recommend working hard with like the teachers model where you do like 10 to 15 minutes of direct instruction and then you give kids something to do in groups and it can be small groups, it could be two but that pacing of 15 minutes direct
instructions, 15 to 20 minutes collaboration with peers is a very effective way. I mean it’s effective for all children, it’s recommended, it’s the Teachers College model, but it is really helpful for children who have been...have early trauma histories because it’s very hard for them not to have their attention wander. If they are listening to something for longer than 10 or 15 minutes, they just won’t be there anymore. They will be creating a distraction.

Julie: Right, right. And then that immediate practice, putting it into practice helps get it into their memory as well.

Susan: That’s right. And it also builds their relationship skills with kids, with the other children.

Another thing that I haven’t mentioned that does come up a lot when I am working with teachers directly is that classrooms that are really silent are terrifying for children with abuses histories. They look at me when I say that and they are like, “What?”

But when things are too quiet, they are waiting for the other shoe to fall. So they do much better in an environment where there is a lot of opportunities for peer activity, for talking and working through problems with the kid next to you. They do not do well with prolonged periods of silent work at desks.

Julie: Right, right. That’s an important thing that I would not have thought of. That’s great tip.

Susan: I can remember when I was teaching, more than once I had an opportunity to observe a child who seemed to be totally on task and doing everything right. Another child on the other side of the room got what he perceived as in trouble with me when I was teaching, and that kid would throw a desk., He would do anything to just distract me from the child who he thought was being threatened.

Julie: Wow! Wow.

Susan: Children who have grown up in families where there is a pattern of needing to protect and silence really set them off.

Julie: So he was triggered by that and he was protecting his classmate?

Susan: That’s typically right, yeah, yeah.

Anything that is new and different in the classroom, these kids respond really well to rehearsal strategies. So if you’re going to go to an assembly for the first time, talk through the assembly —what it’s going to be like, who is going to be there, who they might see. Don’t assume that any of the social routines that you expect children of a certain age to have, that they will have mastered.
Julie: Right.

Susan: New environments are very frightening to them.

Julie: Right. And I think that may help all children, even the ones that are not necessarily identified “at risk”, to just be a little bit more prepared and relaxed. It’s not like it’s going to hurt the rest of the class for you to explain all of that.

Susan: That’s right, that’s right. There is very little that you are going to do for children that have been traumatized that won’t benefit typical children as well.

Julie: Right.

Susan: Because school is stressful for everybody. It’s kind of like the least stress you can bring to the environment, the happier the place is for everyone.

Julie: It can be, yes, and just having that consistency and that safe, dependable environment where they know what to expect, it’s good for all of the children.

Susan: That’s right.

Julie: And the teacher.

Susan: And the teacher! Because keeping the teacher’s stress level down is highly important as well.

Julie: Susan, what incredibly valuable advice that you gave us today, and I want to thank you so much for joining us today. Give the audience a way to contact you in case they want to talk with you more about this or get some of your great training and consultation advice.

Susan: I would be happy to hear from anybody who would like to get in touch with me, to talk more about how they can make their schools trauma sensitive and the easiest way to reach me is through Gmail susancraig1689@Gmail.com

You can also visit my blog meltdownstomastery.WordPress.com

Julie: Awesome. Thank you very much. This is Julie Beem for the Attachment & Trauma Network for our Educating Traumatized Children Summit.

Today’s interview is one of over 20 interviews that are being aired with this summit. We hope that you have been able to catch all of them.

But if you have not, or if you want a complete set of all of the recordings of this summit along with transcripts, you can purchase those through our website. And you can access
At the Attachment and Trauma Network, we are committed to helping traumatized children and their families. If you want to learn more about the support, education, and advocacy services that we provide, you can do that at our main website which is www.attachtrauma.org.

Thank you all for tuning in today and we hope you join us for our other interviews.

***End***