**Working Together to Build Self-Healing Communities to Combat Adverse Childhood Experiences**

(Introduction to Trauma Sensitive Schools)

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**LEARNING TARGETS**

1. Discuss the key findings of the ACE Study.
2. Learn the effects of toxic stress and adverse experiences on the brain and nervous system development.
3. Learn how to interact and support individuals that have experienced adverse childhood experiences to build and strengthen their resiliency.

**ELBOW BUDDY - DISCUSSION**

Think about an adult who influenced you as a child/youth?
TYPES OF ACES

- **ABUSE**
  - Physical
  - Sexual
  - Emotional

- **NEGLECT**
  - Physical
  - Emotional

- **HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
  - Mental Illness
  - Incarcerated Relative
  - Mother treated violently
  - Substance Abuse
  - Divorce

ACES ARE COMMON

- **ABUSE**
  - Physical Abuse: 29.9%
  - Sexual Abuse: 26.7%
  - Emotional Abuse: 18.8%

- **NEGLECT**
  - Emotional Neglect: 10.6%
  - Physical Neglect: 3.5%

- **HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION**
  - Household Substance Abuse: 26.9%
  - Parental Bereavement: 29.3%
  - Household Mental Illness: 18.9%
  - Mother treats children: 31.7%
  - Incarcerated Household Member: 4.1%

ACES ARE COMMON

- 36% have experienced 0 ACES
- 26% have experienced 1 ACE
- 16% have experienced 2 ACES
- 9.5% have experienced 3 ACES
- 12.4% have experienced 4+ ACES
- 64% have at least 1 ACE

ACE SCORE AND HEALTH PROBLEMS

As the number of ACES increases, so does the risk for negative health outcomes.

- 0 ACES
- 1 ACE
- 2 ACES
- 3 ACES
- 4+ ACES
POSSIBLE RISK OUTCOMES

BEHAVIOR
- Lack of physical activity
- Smoking
- Alcoholism
- Drug use
- Misused work

PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH
- Severe asthma
- Diabetes
- Depression
- Suicide attempts
- STDs
- Heart disease
- Cancer
- Stroke
- COPD
- Broken bones

Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

ACE Score + Past 30 Day Use

Minnesota 8th, 9th, and 11th Graders Reporting Any Past 30 Day Alcohol Use, by ACE Score, 2013
ACE Score + Suicide

Minnesota 8th, 9th, and 11th Graders Reporting Past Year Suicidal Ideation and Attempts, by ACE Score, 2013

ACE Score 0 ACE Score 1 ACE Score 2 ACE Score 3 ACE Score 4 ACE Score 4+ 5 ACE Score 6 ACE Score 7

- Serious suicide attempt in the last year
- Attempted suicide in the last year

ACE Score + Mental Health

Minnesota 8th, 9th, and 11th Graders Reporting Having Significant Problems in the Last 12 Months with Feeling Very Trapped, Lonely, Sad, Blue, Depressed, or Hopeless About the Future, by ACE Score, 2013

ACE Score 0 ACE Score 1 ACE Score 2 ACE Score 3 ACE Score 4+

- Feeling very trapped, lonely, sad, blue, depressed, or hopeless about the future

KEY POINTS: ACE STUDY

- ACEs are common.
- ACEs are highly interrelated.
- There is an intergenerational transmission of ACEs.
- ACEs are the leading cause of health and social problems in the United States.
- ACEs are strong predictors for later social functioning, well being, health risks, disease and death.
BRAIN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Complex, on-going interaction between genes and experiences.

EPIGENETICS
How the experiences of previous generations can affect who we are.

Adverse Childhood Experience Study

Three Levels of Stress Response

Positive
Brief increases in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels.

Tolerable
Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.

Toxic
Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.
**BRAIN AND STRESS**

- Amygdala
- Prefrontal Cortex

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**Exhibit 1**

- Abstract thought
- Concrete Thought
- Affiliation
  - "Attachment"
- Sexual Behavior
- Emotional Reactivity
- Motor Regulation
  - "Arousal"
- Appetite/Satiation
- Sleep
- Blood Pressure
- Heart Rate
- Body Temperature

Source: Bruce Perry www.childtrauma.org

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**Conception**

- Brain Hormones, chemicals and cellular system prepare for life in a safe world.

**Individual Adaptation**

- Edgy
- Hot-Tempered
- Vigilant
- Impulsive

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**Traumatic Stress**

- Problems when adaptations collide with expectations.

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**Outcome**

- Individual survives worst conditions.
- Individual lives peacefully during best conditions; vulnerable in worst conditions.

Dr. Martin Teicher, Harvard University
ALL BEHAVIORS ARE ADAPTIVE

Behavior, affect, attitude, and capacities may not be “choices” - They may be normal biological adaptations to toxic stress and adversity during development.

IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING

Children who have experienced trauma have:
- More school nurse visits/school absences
- More referrals to special education services
- More disciplinary actions/suspension from school
- More aggressive or non-attentive in school
- Difficulties with peers, teachers, and staff
- Lower performance and grade point averages
- Higher dropout rates

THE RIPPLE EFFECT

KEY POINTS: EFFECTS OF STRESS

- Repeated experience gets wired into our biology
- Anxiety and stress is a normal part of life
- Toxic stress can cause damage when:
  - Prolonged, severe and/or happens repeatedly
  - The adversity is not buffered by a caring adult
- Toxic stress can have significant effect on brain development
- Children adapt to adverse experiences in order to survive
**ELBOW BUDDY - DISCUSSION**

- Share at least one thing you have learned thus far and why it’s stuck with you.
- Is there an individual that you started thinking about differently after hearing this information?

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**WHAT IS RESILIENCE?**

Resilience is the ability to “bounce back from adversity.”

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“Emerging neuroscience has yielded some good news: ACEs are not destiny. If the human brain can be hurt, it can also be healed. And it is up to all of us to aid in that healing, creating communities in which everyone can thrive.”


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**What do we know about individuals who do well despite adversity?**

**Protective Factors**

- Individual Capabilities
- Positive Relationships
- Community
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Problem</th>
<th>The Solution</th>
<th>How do we get there?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Many students have had adverse childhood experiences.</td>
<td>2 ACEs can impact learning, behavior, and relationships at school.</td>
<td>4 Trauma sensitivity requires a whole school effort.</td>
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<td>3 Trauma-sensitive schools help children feel safe to learn.</td>
<td>5 Helping traumatized children learn should be a major focus of educational reform.</td>
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Adapted from Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI)

**TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS - PILOT**

- ACEs for Educators
- Integrating Social & Emotional Learning at Paul Bunyan Kindergarten Center
- Collaborating with Project Partners - Trauma Coaches
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL)

Self-Management

The ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.

http://www.casel.org/

WHY TEACH SELF-REGULATION?

Self-Regulation is now recognized as foundational for lifelong physical and mental health.

With data establishing self-regulation as a predictor of:
- violence
- substance use
- mental health disorders
- physical health problems
- socio-economic status

DEVELOPMENT OF SELF-REGULATION: IT DOESN’T JUST HAPPEN

“There are two clear developmental periods where self-regulation skill increase dramatically due to underlying changes in brain architecture--early childhood and adolescence--suggesting particular opportunities for intervention.”

HELPING STUDENTS LEARN HOW TO SELF REGULATION

Getting to Know and Love Your Brain

These important parts of your brain help you think and react in unexpected and important ways. Learn how to help these parts work together to ensure a happy, healthy, and successful you.
Adapted from Dr. Dan Siegel’s Work

BRAIN HAND MODEL

- Amygdala “Guard Dog”
- Prefrontal Cortex “Wise Owl”
- Flip your lid!

Calming the Amygdala

HELPING TO CO-REGULATE

- Where are you at on a scale of 0-10? Avoid argument and power struggle.
- Calm down (walk) – pacing; you can assess the child’s body/emotional.
- Awareness of triggers.

PAUL BUNYAN ELEM. - RESULTS

- Actions taken at Paul Bunyan Elementary – Morning Announcements
- The Ripple Effect - Home
- Decrease in Behavior Referrals to the office – Cut in half
POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

The single most common factor for children who develop resilience is at least one stable and committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver, or other adult.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Compassionate Accountability

“ACEs are not an excuse. We need to hold kids accountable, but with guidance.”

Dr. Mark Sander, Psy.D., LP

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Students thrive on consistency and predictability.

Trauma Sensitive Schools

- School Climate and Culture (Responsive Classroom)
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
- School-wide Expectation (PBIS)
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- School Mental Health Services
- Classroom rituals

POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP

- Schools & school staff can be intentional about how they interact with students.
- Resist blaming and judging! Use your compassionate lens.
What have you learned? What does it mean in your personal, professional, or community life?