Trauma Informed Care for Parents

Lake Travis ISD Counseling Services
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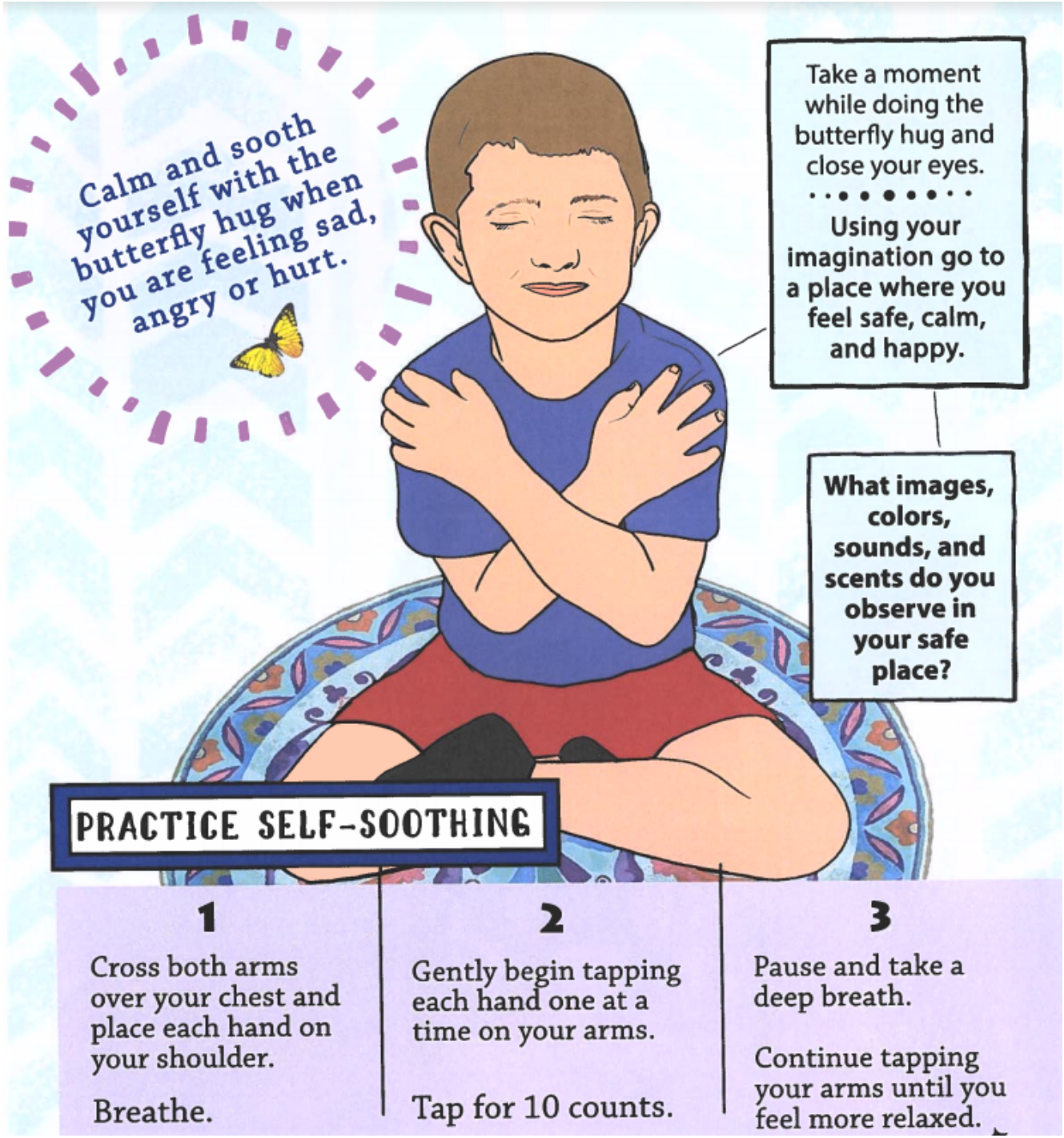
Jennifer Lyon, Director of HSEL (content creator)
Leslie Doctor, LCSW – LTISD District Social Worker (presenter)

This topic can be triggering, if you need to step out…


Calm and sooth yourself with the butterfly hug when you are feeling sad, angry or hurt.
Take a moment while doing the butterfly hug and close your eyes.
Using your imagination go to a place where you feel safe, calm, and happy.
What images, colors, sounds, and scents do you observe in your safe place?
PRACTICE SELF-SOOTHING
1
Cross both arms over your chest and place each hand on your shoulder.
Breathe.
2
Gently begin tapping each hand one at a time on your arms.
Tap for 10 counts.
3
Pause and take a deep breath.
Continue tapping your arms until you feel more relaxed.

5-4-3-2-1-Relax

Engage your 5 senses to help you reconnect and feel calmer in the present moment.

SIGHT

Look around you and **find 5** of each:

- Five circular shapes
- Five tiny items
- Five blue objects

TOUCH

Feel with your hands

Find & feel 4 items for 20 seconds each

1. a hard and sturdy item
2. a soft or fluffy item
3. a flexible and bendy item
4. a rough or bumpy item

HEARING

Listen to your surroundings

Identify 3 different sounds

1. listen to the sounds close to you
2. listen for background sounds
3. listen to the sound of your breath

SMELL

Engage your nose

Sniff out 2 scents from your surrounding

1. a scent that you enjoy (flowers, soap, bread, etc.)
2. a strong scent that stimulates your nose (coffee, lotion, etc.)

TASTE

On the tip of your tongue

Engage your taste buds by trying 1 of each:

Something **Sweet,** *something* **Sour** *and something* **Salty.**

What is Trauma?

Emotional and psychological trauma is the result of extraordinarily stressful events that shatter your sense of security, making you feel helpless in a dangerous world.

What is Trauma?

Any event can lead to trauma if:

- It happened unexpectedly
- You were unprepared for it
- You felt powerless to prevent it
- It happened repeatedly
- Someone was intentionally cruel
- It happened in childhood

What Does Trauma Look Like?

Trauma (PTSD) can mirror the symptoms of ADHD including:

- Hypervigilance
- Inattention
- Detachment
- Irritability
- Anger Outbursts
- Distractibility
- Restlessness
- Impatience
- Impulsivity
- Limited sense of future
- Difficulty concentrating

CHRONIC TRAUMA

WHAT IS TRAUMA?
A distressing, disturbing, or life-threatening experience or event.

Trauma can also be...

EMOTIONAL

Terror/fear
Sadness
Shock
Loss of pleasure from activities
Despair
Emotional numbering
Hypersensitivity
Helplessness
Depression
Irritability
Guilt
Grief
Phobias
Anger

PHYSICAL

Sleep disturbance
Startle response
Somatic complaints
Insomnia
Impaired immune response
Gastrointestinal problems
Decreased appetite
Hyperarousal
Decreased libido
Headaches
Fatigue

INTERPERSONAL & BEHAVIORAL

Aggression
Regression in behavior
Crying easily
Risk taking
Social withdrawl
Change in eating patterns
Alienation
Avoiding trauma reminders
Tantrums
School impairment
Refusal to go back to school
Increased relationship conflict
Vocational impairment
Isolation

CONGNITIVE

Worry
Nightmares
Disbelief
Confusion
Memory impairment
Impaired concentration
Impaired decision making ability
Decreased self-efficancy
Self blame
Distortion
Decreased self-esteem
Intrusive thoughts/ memories

AFFECTS THE WHOLE YOUTH

Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccKFkcfXx-c

What are ACEs?

ACEs are serious childhood traumas -- a list is shown below -- that result in toxic stress that can harm a child's brain. This toxic stress may prevent a child from learning, from playing in a healthy way with other children, and can result in long-term health problems.

Adverse Childhood Experiences can include:

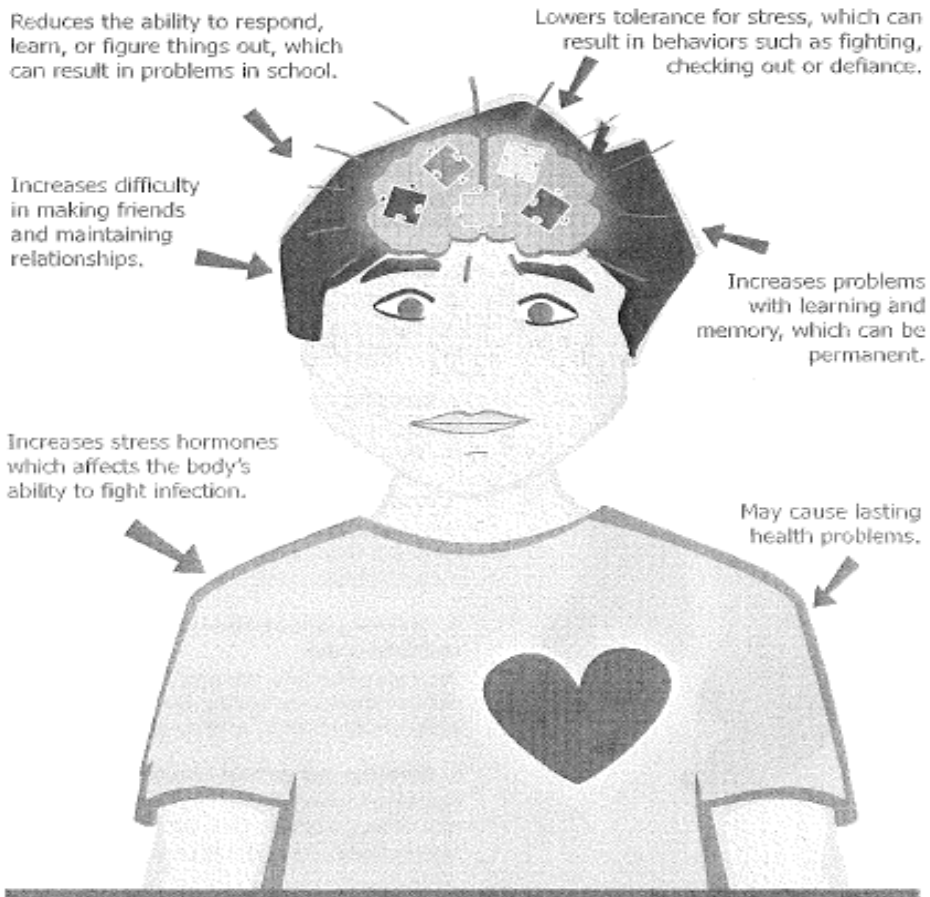
1. Emotional abuse
2. Physical abuse
3. Sexual abuse
4. Emotional neglect
5. Physical neglect
6. Mother treated violently
7. Household substance abuse
8. Household mental illness
9. Parental separation or divorce
10. Incarcerated household member
11. Bullying (by another child or adult)
12. Witnessing violence outside the home
13. Witness a brother or sister being abused
14. Racism, sexism, or any other form of discrimination
15. Being homeless
16. Natural disasters and war

Exposure to childhood ACEs can increase the risk of:

- Adolescent pregnancy
- Alcoholism and alcohol abuse
- Depression
- Illicit drug use
- Heart disease
- Liver disease
- Multiple sexual partners
- Intimate partner violence
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Unintended pregnancies

How do ACEs affect health?

Through stress. Frequent or prolonged exposure to ACEs can create toxic stress which can damage the developing brain of a child and affect overall health.



A Survival Mode Response to toxic stress increases a child's heart rate, blood pressure, breathing and muscle tension. Their thinking brain is knocked off-line. Self-protection is their priority. In other words:
"I can't hear you! I can't respond to you! I am just trying to be safe!"

Neurobiological Impacts of Trauma

Trauma can create a “trapped mind” caught in a neurally and interpersonally reinforcing loop of potentially maladaptive, destructive and addictive behaviors.

- **Attachment**
- **Physical Health**
- **Emotional Regulation**
- **Dissociation**
- **Cognitive Ability**
- **Self-Concept**
- **Behavioral Control**

Source: Cook, et al, 2005

Body Stress Response

- Increased fear response
- Increased stress and anxiety
- Increased negativity or depressi
- Increased learning and memory problems
- Increased blood pressure
- Increased weight gain

What is the antidote?

The antidote to ACEs and trauma is a safe relationship in which the child feels seen, heard, and understood by a trusted adult.

Resources and Tools

What is Resilience?

Resilience is the ability to return to being healthy and hopeful after bad things happen. Research shows that if parents provide a safe environment for their children and teach them how to be resilient, that helps reduce the effects of ACEs.

Resilience trumps ACEs!

Parents, teachers and caregivers can help children by:

- Gaining an understanding of ACEs
- Helping children identify feelings and manage emotions
- Creating safe physical and emotional environments at home, in school, and in neighborhoods

What does resilience look like?

1. **Having resilient parents**
Parents who know how to solve problems, who have healthy relationships with other adults, and who build healthy relationships with their children.

2. **Building attachment and nurturing relationships**
Adults who listen and respond patiently to a child in a supportive way, and pay attention to a child's physical and emotional needs.

3. **Building social connections**
Having family, friends and/or neighbors who support, help and listen to children.

4. **Meeting basic needs**
Providing children with safe housing, nutritious food, appropriate clothing, and access to health care and good education.

5. **Learning about parenting and how children grow**
Understanding how parents can help their children grow in a healthy way, and what to expect from children as they grow.

6. **Building social and emotional skills**
Helping children interact in a healthy way with others, manage their emotions and communicate their feelings and needs.

Resources:

ACES 101
http://acestoohigh.com/aces-101/

Triple-P Parenting
www.triplep-parenting.net/glo-en/home/

Resilience Trumps ACEs
www.resiliencetrumpsACEs.org

CDC-Kaiser Adverse Childhood Experiences Study
www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/

Zero to Three Guides for Parents
http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/areas-of-expertise/free-parent-brochures-and-guides/

Thanks to the people in the Community & Family Services Division at the Spokane (WA) Regional Health District for developing this handout for parents in Washington State, and sharing it with others around the world.

How Schools Support Students

- District SEL Curriculum- Second Step
- Offering mindfulness opportunities for escalated students (examples: apps on an iPad or phone- Mind Yeti & CALM, calm down corner, keeping kids and teachers hydrated and feed, reminder to not flip lights off unexpectedly, using a calm not “yelling” voice, calming room or sensory room, opportunities to walk and talk, etc.
- Trauma Informed Care in the Classroom Training for all school staff
- School Counselors and District LCSW’s

4 S's of Secure Attachment

Repairing neural pathways is essential!

Children need to be:

- Seen
- Safe
- Soothed
- Secure

A relationship with one validating adult can make all the difference

Connecting, Empowering, & Correcting

Connecting:
Calm Presence, Attunement & Awareness, Flexible Responding, Creative Problem Solving, Valuing Eye Contact, Authoritative Voice, Behavioral Matching, Playful Interaction, Healthy Touch

Empowering:
Transitions, Rituals, Artifacts, Hydration, Blood Sugar, Healthy Touch, Physical Activity, Rhythmic, Activities, Sensory Milieu

Correcting:
Life Value Terms (e.g. Using Words, With Respect), Behavioral Scripts (e.g. Choices, Compromises, Redos)

Connecting Principles

We heal in safe and loving relationships

- Mindfulness: calm presence, attunement, awareness, creative problem-solving, flexible responding
- Engagement: Eye Contact, Healthy Touch, Behavioral Matching, Playful, Authoritative Voice (w/o yelling or hollering or sounding “put out.”)

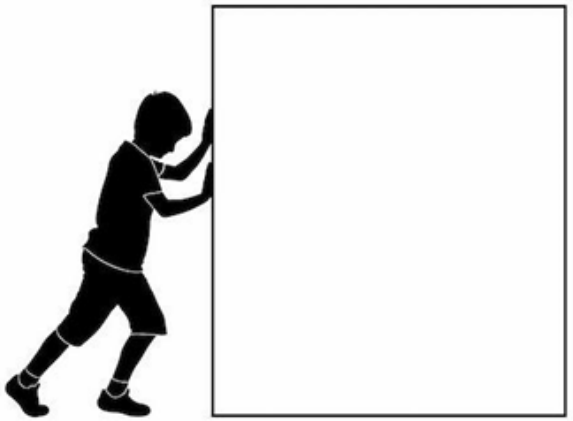
PLAY!

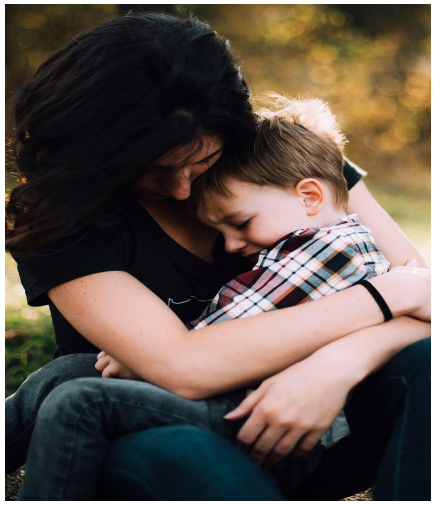
The best way to disarm fear is PLAY. –Dr. Purvis

Empowering Principles

- Physiological
- Hydration
- Blood sugar
- Healthy touch
- Transitions, rituals, routines
- Gonoodle.com for brain break ideas

Physically regulating experiences





The Art of Attunement

1. **Listen** deeply to the message. What emotion is underlying the context of this situation? Don't get caught up in the minutiae.
2. **Reassure** the person that their perspective is important.
3. **Validate** their emotional state.
4. **Respond** with an explanation of what actually occurred from your lens. This is not a defending statement.
5. **Repair** with a heartfelt apology for whatever role you played in the miscommunication or strife.
6. **Resolution** means coming to terms with what happened and collaborating to find alternative ways of acting to prevent future disruptions of the same type.

We are our best instruments

- Confident, steady quality of voice and clear language
- Take audible breaths when student is hyper-aroused
- Warm vocal tone
- Voice volume at a minimum
- Kind, soft eye contact
- Might need to be side by side
- Non-threatening, calm body stance and posture
- Crouch down if possible, don’t tower
- Some children will interpret sarcasm as shaming

Noticing statements

Connect before correct

- I’m noticing you….
- I’m wondering if you’re feeling…
- I can see on your face that…

We are in this together...

- Be a detective, ask yourself: What does my child need from me? If behavior is a symptom, what is this child trying to tell me?
- ALWAYS begin and attempt to return to playful engagement. Play *disarms* fear.
- Help your student create a felt sense of safety by using yourself (voice, eye contact, body language) as an instrument.

Respond with Empathy

"Rarely, does what we say make someone feel better. What makes someone feel better is connection."
Brene Brown

Brené Brown on Empathy

Practice Self Care

Resources and Tools

- Purvis, K. B., Cross, D. R., & Sunshine, W. L. (2007). The Connected Child: Bringing hope and healing to your adoptive family. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Siegal, Dan M.D. Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, UCLA School of Medicine, Center for Culture, Brain, and Development. Presentation: An Interpersonal Neurobiology Approach to Trauma and its Treatment
- Sampson-Jackson, Allison PhD, LCSW, CSOTP. Presentation: Trauma Informed Interventions in the Classroom.
- Brown, Brené PhD University of Houston Huffington Foundation Endowed Chair at The Graduate College of Social Work.
- TLC, The National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children https://www.starr.org/training/tlc