TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS
POLICY & PRACTICE WORKSHOP

Mark Sander, Psy.D., L.P.
Hennepin County &
Minneapolis Public Schools

Linsey McMurrin
Sharleen Zeman-Sperle
Stacy Bender-Fayette

Wi-fi: Trek_North_Guest
Password: treknorthguest2014

WHAT DO WE DO?

- Provide Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction in area schools
- Students Teaching Attitudes of Respect (STAR) Program
- Speak Your Peace Curriculum
- Professional Development
- Cultural Responsiveness

MARK SANDER, Psy.D., L.P.

- Hennepin County and Minneapolis Public Schools
- Senior Clinical Psychologist
- Director of School Mental Health Coordinator
- ACEs Master Trainer
- Visiting Scholar, Wilder Research
612-668-5489
mark.sander@hennepin.us

Tier 1: Universal Prevention

- SEL Lessons
- PLC/Professional Development
- Positive Culture/Climate
- Restorative Practices
- Cultural Responsiveness
- Family Engagement

Tier 2: Strategic

Tier 3: Intensive

Tier 1: School-Wide Foundation
Universal Prevention
All students and staff
LEARNING TARGETS

1) Review ACEs, neuroscience and resilience.
2) Learn about the essential elements of trauma sensitive schools and classrooms at both the systems and direct service levels.
3) Learn about the importance of thinking of social emotional learning (SEL) and mental health from an Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) lens.
4) Understand the importance of trauma awareness when planning for and working with youth.
5) Practice strategies and skills that promote trauma-sensitive classrooms and schools including: Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), restorative practice, self-care, non-violent communication strategies and cultural responsiveness.
6) Learn what other MN schools are doing to become more trauma sensitive.

ELBOW BUDDY - DISCUSSION

Think about an adult who positively influenced you as a child/youth?

WHAT IS A TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOL?

A trauma-sensitive school is a safe and respectful environment that enables students to build caring relationships with adults and peers, self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and succeed academically, while supporting their physical health and well-being.
HOW DOES MY SCHOOL BECOME TRAUMA SENSITIVE?

Trauma Sensitive School Framework:
- Supporting Staff Development
- Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment
- Assessing Needs and Providing Services
- Building Social and Emotional Learning Skills
- Collaborating with Students and Families
- Adapting Policies and Procedures

Adapted from Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI)

IMPACT OF TRAUMA INFORMED CARE

Impact of Trauma-Informed Care
Acknowledging the causes of behavioral issues led to a drastic drop in the need for disciplinary action at this Washington high school.

TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS PILOT

- ACEs for Educators
- Integrating Social & Emotional Learning at Paul Bunyan Kindergarten Center
- Collaborating with Project Partners - Trauma Coaches
Shifting mindset from...
What is wrong with you?
TO
What happened to you?

Pause, listen, breathe.

Human Central Nervous System
Nervous systems orchestrates body functions and perceptions
Neuroscience help us understand why ACES are so powerful!

SYNAPTIC DENSITY

At Birth  |  6 Years Old  |  14 Years Old
Introduction to ACEs

- emotion processing regions smaller, less efficient
- efficient production of stress-related chemicals
- dysregulated hormones
- less calming receptors
- less white matter
- competitive
- hot tempered
- impulsive
- hyper vigilant
- or
- withdrawn
- dissociated
- numb

emotion processing regions robust and efficient
- abundant happy hormones
- high density white matter, especially in mid-brain
- competitive
- laid back
- relationship oriented
- reflective
- "process over power"

©2013

Predictable, moderate stress world

We adapt to our environment

Experience gets wired into our biology
ADAPTATIONS VS EXPECTATIONS

When biology collides with social expectations we run into trouble

What kinds of jobs might be a good match for someone who tends to be: edgy, hypervigilant, emotionally detached or quick to act?

TOXIC STRESS AND ADVERSITY: AFFECTS PHYSIOLOGY AND PERCEPTION

- Research has found a change in RESTING heart rates
- Some of these students are “wired” to be on HIGH ALERT!!
- Constantly on “threat assessment”- impact on social awareness
- Their bodies “learn to” go into “fight/flight/freeze” very quickly
- Perception Example - Faces study
- Understanding what they might be perceiving is real even if different than your “reality”

Mindfully Aware
Body is relaxed, breathing is steady, heart rate is normal. Higher level brain functioning is optimal.

Cautious
High Alert
Fight, Flight or Freeze
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.

KEY MESSAGES: TOXIC STRESS AND ADAPTATION

- Anxiety and stress is a normal part of life
- Stress can become toxic and damaging when:
  - Severe, prolonged and/or occurs repeatedly and is not buffered by caring adults
  - These adverse experiences can have significant effects on brain development and the development of the nervous system
- Children “adapt” to these adverse experience to “survive” – this is normal biological response to traumatic events
- Repeated experience gets wired into our biology/brain

THE ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCE (ACE) STUDY
ACES ARE COMMON

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

ACEs in Minnesota:
Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

### 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.
FOR MORE ON ACEs AND MN ACEs

- CDC ACEs webpage
  - http://www.cdc.gov/ace/

- MN Department of Health ACE webpage
  - http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/chs/

WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF YOUR ROOTS?

ACES IN MINNESOTA BY RACE/ETHNICITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>5.8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WHAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAYING
EPIGENETICS

How the experience of previous generations can affect who we are

EXPERIENCE INFLUENCES GENE EXPRESSION

Mice and Cherry Blossom Study

DNA remains unchanged - epigenetic markers influence how the genome is read

Traumatic Experiences are Transmitted Across Generations

HISTORICAL TRAUMA IN TRIBAL NATIONS

Warfare/Genocide

Removal/Relocation
HISTORICAL TRAUMA IN TRIBAL NATIONS

WHAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SAYING

ACEs & HISTORICAL TRAUMA: HOW HAVE OUR COMMUNITIES BEEN AFFECTED?
WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN SCHOOLS?

CULTURAL COMPETENCE VS. CULTURAL HUMILITY

- End Product
- Objective set of best practices
- Detached mastery of finite body of knowledge
- “I’m the expert”
- Focus on learning about “the other”

- Lifelong Process
- Subjective set of best practices
- Self-Exploration
- “You’re the expert”
- Willingness to learn from others
- Mutually beneficial

ELBOW BUDDY - DISCUSSION

Share with your elbow buddy your reaction to learning about epigenetics and historical trauma.

Does this information change the way you think about your personal or professional relationships?
**In other words, resilience emerges from ordinary magic.**

- Ann Masten, 2009

**SCHOOLS ARE A PLACE OF RESILIENCE**

- Schools and school staff can be intentional about how they interact with students
- **POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS** are a powerful intervention
- The students that need those relationships the most can be the hardest ones to have them with…

**SCHOOLS: PROVIDING SUPPORTS**

Schools can and often do provide programs and supports focused on:

- School Climate
- Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS); Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Response to Intervention (RtI)
- Student Support Staff (school psychologist, school nurses, school counselors, school social workers)

**ADDITIONAL SCHOOL SUPPORTS**

- MindUP, Yoga Calm and Zones of Regulation
- Prevention and early intervention groups
- Social Emotional Learning and skill building groups (e.g., Second Step)
- Responsive Classroom and Restorative Practices
- Alternatives to Suspensions
- Positive Relationships are the evidence based practice
FRAMEWORK FOR DEVELOPING TRAUMA-SENSITIVE SCHOOLS

1. ACES/Trauma Sensitive Schools 101
2. Overarching Guiding Values for Trauma Sensitive Schools
3. Brief introduction of SEL in MTSS/PBIS framework & Self-Assessment of SEL practices at each tier
4. Importance of Alignment & Implementation
5. Reflective Consultation and Conversation
6. Importance of Self Care

OVERARCHING GUIDING VALUES FOR TRAUMA-SENSITIVE SCHOOLS

- Repeated messages and experiences are vital to creating a cultural and climate that promotes and nurtures resilience
- Collaboratively schools need to develop values and guiding principles
- WI Dept. of Public Instruction created these values:
  - Safety
  - Empowerment
  - Collaboration
  - Trust
  - Choice

KIDS DO THE BEST THEY CAN…
DR. ROSS GREEN

- Dr. Ross Green has a fundamental belief:
  - Kids are doing the best that they can
  - Where they have problems there are lagging skills
- As staff in child serving agencies – if a child has a lagging skill, I believe we have a duty to help teach that student the skill(s) to be successful – not just consequence them
LAGGING SKILLS...

• Rather than intentional misbehavior
• How do we think about lagging skills? How do we assess?
• What intervention do we have related to lagging skills?
• Who is really good at doing some of these interventions?

DIFFERENTIATED RELATIONSHIPS

CLASSROOM STRATEGIES TO ESTABLISH: SAFETY

• Clear and consistent rules for managing behavior and setting limits
• Accommodations to meet individual strengths and needs
• Predictable structure, relationships, and environment
• Reduce bullying and harassment
• Use seclusion/restraint only as a last resort
CLASSROOM STRATEGIES TO ESTABLISH: EMPOWERMENT

- Embed mental health and social emotional instruction into curriculum by teaching:
  - coping skills
  - self-regulation skills
- Provide guided opportunities for meaningful participation
- Maintaining high behavioral & academic expectations
- Build on strengths and build competency

IMPORANCE OF SELF-CARE AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ADULTS TO EXPERIMENT

- Taking care of ourselves is critical for us being our best and modeling our best for students and families and colleagues
- Self care must not be seen as a luxury but rather an ethical duty and essential part of our job
- Building leaders should promote and actively model self-care and create an environment where self-care is valued
- School leaders must create an environment where it is safe for adults to share & reflect on beliefs and practices

RELATIONSHIPS TRUMP ACES

*Schools, classrooms, and educators can help promote and strengthen resiliency by ensuring that school is: nurturing, stable and engaging.

*Positive, healthy relationships with students and other school staff are the key to creating and sustaining resilient and healing environment.
Understanding is only as powerful as the action that follows.

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?

“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.”

Robert Wood Johnson Report - The National Collaborative On Adversity and Resilience
WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

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

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

Protective Factors

- Individual Capabilities
- Positive Relationships
- Community

HOW DO SCHOOLS PROMOTE THESE PROTECTIVE FACTORS?

Protective Factors

- Individual Capabilities
- Positive Relationships
- Community
**WHY TEACH SEL?**

Top 10 Skills Desired by Fortune 500 Companies

- Teamwork
- Problem-Solving Skills
- Interpersonal Skills
- Oral Communication
- Listening
- Personal & Career Dev.
- Creative Thinking
- Leadership
- Goal Setting & Motivation
- Writing

**WHY TEACH SEL? SHOW ME THE RESEARCH**

3.5 years after the last intervention the academic performance of students exposed to SEL programs was an average 13 percentile points higher than their non-SEL peers.

Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning - CASEL.org

**WHY TEACH SEL? SHOW ME THE RESEARCH**

At other follow-up periods, conduct problems, emotional distress, and drug use were all significantly lower for students exposed to SEL programs, and development of social and emotional skills and positive attitudes toward self, others, and school was higher.

Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning - CASEL.org

**SEL in Elementary Schools**

- Ten 30-minute SEL lessons at elementary level
- Job-embedded professional development
SEL Lesson Topics

Grades K-1:
- Circle Training
- Positive decision-making ("Circle of Peace/Circle of Hurt")
- Respectful Listening
- Energy Regulation
- Self-control
- Identifying feelings
- Empathy
- Our Amazing Brain
- Managing Anger
- Effective communication ("I" statements)

Grades 2-3:
- Circle Training
- Positive decision-making ("Circle of Peace/Circle of Hurt")
- Active Listening
- Identifying feelings
- Our Amazing Brain
- Managing Anger
- Empathy
- Effective communication ("I" statements)
- Perspective
- Helpful Self Talk

Grades 4-6:
- Circle Training
- Positive decision-making ("Circle of Peace/Hurt")
- Intro. To Needs
- Feelings and Our Amazing Brain
- Dealing with Stress and Worry
- Empathy
- Conflict Styles
- Effective communication ("I" statements)
- Perspective
- Helpful Self Talk

SEL Elementary Sample Lesson

Lesson Topic: Circle of Hurt & Circle of Peace
- Breathing Activity
- Sharing Circle
- Lesson: Stop & Think Zone
- Activity: Helpful & Hurtful Behaviors
- Wrap up

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.

HELPING STUDENTS LEARN HOW TO SELF REGULATE

http://www.casel.org/
**WHY TEACH 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 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.
- Chime to help class calm.

*Mindfully Aware
  Body is relaxed, breathing is steady, heart rate is normal. Higher level brain functioning is optimal.*

*High Alert
  Fight, Flight, or Freeze*
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

SEL RESULTS

Survey of SEL Practices in the Classroom
(41) K-1 Teachers in schools served by BRIC were surveyed.

- Agree: 100%
- Neutral: 86%
- Disagree: 78%
- Agree: 80%

HOW DO SCHOOLS PROMOTE THESE PROTECTIVE FACTORS?

- Individual Capabilities
- Positive Relationships
- Community
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.

- Schools & school staff can be intentional about how they interact with students.
- Resist blaming and judging! Use your compassionate lens.

**Positive Relationships**
- Circle
  - Both staff and student.
- Restorative Circles
  - To repair harm with parents and students.

**Protective Factors**
- Individual Capabilities
- Positive Relationships
- Community

**How Do Schools Promote These Protective Factors?**
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
- Restorative Practices
- School-wide Expectation (PBIS)
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- School Mental Health Services
- Classroom rituals
- Cultural connections

SELF-CARE

The best way to take care of others is to take care of yourself first.
Our NEEDS are connected to FEELINGS

When our needs are not met, we experience uncomfortable feelings such as:

- Frustration
- Sadness
- Embarrassment

Our NEEDS are connected to FEELINGS

When our needs are met, we experience comfortable feelings such as:

- Happiness
- Calm
- Excitement

NEEDS and BEHAVIORS

ALL of our behavior, and ALL of our actions, are attempts to get to get our needs met.

NEEDS ACTIVITY

- Put yourselves into groups.
- Place the “Needs” cards in the center of the table.
- In the present moment, reflect on what you need right now.
- Take turns sharing with the small group.
Looking at the future, what do you want most for your own child (or family member). 

HAPPINESS EQUATION

50% Genetics
40% Intentional Activities
10% Life Circumstance

Research from Sonja Lyubomirsky and the Greater Good Institute

SHAWN ACHOR

GRATITUDE
Documenting three good things.
GRATEGORIES

- Divide into six groups.
- Find space to make a circle.
- Each member selects one card from the Grategories card deck.
- Take turns reading the card and answering the question.

Ending Reflection

1) What is something you learned today that you want to bring back to your workplace?
2) What is something you learned today that you want to bring back to your family?

How to Follow Through With Your Goals

Deciding in advance when and where you will take specific actions to reach your goal can double or triple your chances for success.

—Heidi Grant Halvorson, Columbia University professor