



AASA Social And Emotional Learning Cohort Webinar Series: Implementing Social and Emotional Learning: A Systems Perspective # 1

Trauma – Skilled Schools Model

**Call-in toll number
(US/Canada)**

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Event password: 0716

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AASA Social And Emotional Learning Cohort



RIGHT AT
SCHOOL

The Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Cohort is a groundbreaking initiative designed to meet the needs of the "total child."

The SEL Cohort involves more than 50 districts from across the country.

The cohort gathers twice a year, develops case studies, action plans, resources and other publications that are shared with AASA members and other administrators.

We're looking for like-minded leaders who are innovators and risk takers in the field of SEL. No one can argue this is one of the most critical issues in public education. If you think you can make a positive contribution to this cohort, please join today.



Trauma-Skilled
SCHOOLS MODEL

Sandy Addis, Director

National Dropout Prevention Center

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The National Dropout Prevention Center

- Mission is to provide services and resources to support those who work to improve graduation outcomes.
- Founded in 1986. Nations oldest and most utilized dropout prevention resource.
- 10 staff members – 30 consultants – 13 researchers
- Supports schools, districts, and states across nation.
- Research – strategies - publications – guides – films – reports – tools – conferences – institutes – professional development – program analysis and review

Conclusions & Understandings

- “Trauma”, broadly defined, is a major problem in the school setting.
- Trauma is a primary root cause of school behavior and learning problems.
- Our dropouts are primarily the trauma-impacted students who have not been helped to go beyond and past the influences of trauma.
- Mental health professionals in schools are valuable but will not solve the problem.
- Trauma training for educators is essential but will not solve the problem.

Maybe we've been barking up the wrong tree.



Our Agenda

Trauma-Skilled Model:

1. Why the Trauma Skilled Model
2. The Model: “What it is” and “What it’s NOT”....
3. Overview of Strategies and Ideas

Why the Trauma-Skilled Model?

1. Prevalence of the issue
2. Trauma-impacted students are our dropouts
3. After 4 years of intensive research we are convinced educators are looking for more help.
4. Trauma is becoming a legal and political issue for schools.

How Many Students Are Trauma-Impacted?

- 67% witness at least one act of violence or crime each year.
- 50% witness more than one act of violence or crime each year.
- 15% witness six or more acts of violence or crime each year.
- 2.5 million children in America are homeless each year.
- 57% of homeless children are without food for one or more days per month.

Childhood Trauma May Be.....

A single first hand incident

A chronic adverse condition over time

An observed incident or situation

Virtual or Reported

A predicted or anticipated danger

The perception and the psychological impact is more important than the incident or source of the trauma.

**More than half of our children
are negatively impacted by
childhood stress and trauma,
and many, if not most will never
be identified.**



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Impact of trauma on individuals

- Shape mindsets and assumptions about adults and authority
- Programs the brain to trigger fight/flight/freeze response patterns
- Programs the brain to trigger physical responses to certain stimuli
- Programs the brain to associate certain stimuli with expected harm
- Programs the body to delay emotional and physical recovery after danger
- Teach individual to expect negative, even in positive situations
- Alter normal concentration, focus, and problem-solving mechanisms
- Create chronic and ongoing stress levels
- Contribute to development of negative self-concept

Common School Manifestations of Trauma

- **Inappropriate reactions to authority**
- **Inappropriate reactions to adults and other students**
- **Hypersensitivity to certain situations or stimuli**
- **Overly defensive behaviors**
- **Withdrawal from certain situations**
- **Distracted from activities or instruction**
- **Memory issues**
- **Inability to concentrate on or focus on instruction**
- **Inability to problem solve**
- **Inability to demonstrate learning**

School Outcomes for Many Trauma-Impacted Students

- **Unacceptable behavior**
- **Poor attendance**
- **Academic failure**
- **Grade retention**
- **Failure to graduate**

If
Trauma = Challenging Behavior
and if
Trauma = Low Achievement
and if
Challenging Behavior + Low
Achievement = Dropouts
then
Trauma = Dropouts



Litigation and Legislation

2015 Compton Unified School District, California

2017 Bureau of Indian Education, Colorado

2018 “Trauma-Informed System of Education” proposal, Pennsylvania

2018 Anderson, SC parents suing district for inadequate preparation to address needs of trauma-impacted students

What are we currently doing to improve school outcomes for trauma-impacted students?

Hire Mental Health Professionals

Train Teachers



Will it solve the problem?

Student Behavior

Trauma-Informed

Trauma-Sensitive

Trauma-Skilled

- **Trauma-Informed** - I know that trauma can alter student perceptions and reactions, leading to school behavior challenges.
- **Trauma-Sensitive** – I know that trauma can alter student perceptions and reactions, leading to school behavior challenges. I understand why these behaviors occur, and I attempt to accommodate behaviorally challenged students.
- **Trauma-Skilled** – We understand how trauma impacts student behavior and we have adopted specific action steps to alter practices, climate, and interactions to achieve improved behavior.

School Safety

Trauma-Informed Trauma-Sensitive Trauma-Skilled

- **Trauma-Informed** - I know that trauma can cause students to be unsuccessful in school and lead to acts of displaced aggression toward the school
- **Trauma-Sensitive** - I understand that trauma can cause students to be unsuccessful in school and to become aggressive toward the school. I am empathetic with these students and attempt to redirect their potential aggression.
- **Trauma-Skilled** - We understand how trauma can lead to aggressive behaviors toward the school and we have adopted specific action steps to rebuild and develop student resiliency so as to reduce the likelihood of student aggression toward the school.

**Why do some trauma-
impacted students
make it and some not?**



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The Trauma Skilled Model is a framework to help schools shape culture, climate, practice and policies to address the effects of stress and trauma

- **Requires adjustment and hard work**
- **Involves modifying school climate/culture to build resilience**
- **Involves acquisition of staff skills to build resilience**
- **Involves acquisition of staff skills to handle trauma-based situations**
- **Implementation recommended over a minimum of two years**



Trauma-Skilled SCHOOLS MODEL



KNOWLEDGE

- Systemic
- Understanding
- Language
- Population

 **STEP 01**



BUILD RESILIENCE

- Connection
- Security
- Achievement
- Autonomy
- Fulfillment

 **STEP 02**



SKILL ACQUISITION

- Prevention
- Intervention
- Recovery
- Referral

 **STEP 03**



ASSESSMENT & IMPLEMENTATION

- Policies
- Practices
- People

 **STEP 04**



MAINTENANCE & VALIDATION

- Plan
- Implementation
- Verification

 **STEP 05**

Trauma-Skilled Schools Model©
National Dropout Prevention Center, 2018

Trauma-Impacted Students Tend to Be Deficient in 5 Essential Resilience Factors:

- Connection
- Security
- Achievement
- Autonomy
- Fulfillment

Educators Need 4 Skill Sets to Deal With Trauma In School

- **Prevention**
- **Intervention**
- **Recovery**
- **Referral**

This model is aligned to the design of a “Tier 1 RTI” strategy.

- **You do not identify the student or the trauma.**
- **This strategy works for all students.**
- **This strategy influences the overall school culture and all faculty and staff.**
- **You change culture with consistent behavior by all.**
- **The mindset of all faculty, staff and students are impacted.**
- **Impact is on all policies and practices.**

To be real clear, the Trauma Skilled School Model is not

- **A Crisis Prevention or Intervention Program**
- **A Therapist Preparation Program (not turning educators into therapists).**
- **A curriculum or program to be implemented.**
- **A cure for all disciplinary issues.**
- **A clinical look at brain science, biology or mental health issues.**
- **A replacement for Therapeutic Services.**



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How are Schools & Districts Implementing the Trauma-Skilled Schools Model?

- **Study and consider the model.**
- **Inform decision makers of the issue and the model.**
- **Pilot the model in select targeted schools.**
- **Train key staff members to redeliver training and guide the model.**
- **Schedule PD to address key concepts of the model.**
- **Establish site teams of Certified Trauma-Skilled Specialists.**
- **Host local or regional Trauma-Skilled Schools Institutes.**
- **Partner with NDPC to guide implementation of the model.**
- **Take steps to become a Certified Trauma-Skilled School or District.**

Tips for Success

- **Don't expect partial success from piecemeal implementation.**
- **Don't try it alone. Form and maintain a school-site lead team.**
- **Focus on policies, practices, and people.**
- **Support your lead team. Give them training.**
- **Establish Trauma-Skilled Specialists within your staff.**

Resources to Support Your Work

Resources on the NDPC Website (www.dropoutprevention.org)
(publications, film clips, guides, side sets, contacts, etc.)

- Keynote speeches and awareness presentations.
- Regional and local Trauma-Skilled Schools Institutes
(2-day training in model, delivered locally)
- Annual Trauma-Skilled Schools Conference (June each year)
- Trauma-Skilled Schools sessions at other NDPC Conferences
- Individual Trauma-Skilled Specialist Certification Program
- School-site Certification as Trauma-Skilled School
- NDPC service package for externally supported implementation



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