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Trauma-Informed Schools and Educators

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Trauma-Informed Schools and Educators

Goal for Presentation

Educators, staff, and administrators in the school community will be prepared to recognize and respond to those who have been impacted by traumatic stress.

What need does your practice address?

“The PRACTICE has seen a marked increase in the need for mental health services since the 1 October shooting,” said Michelle Paul, PhD, Executive Director of The PRACTICE. The 1 October shooting made it known to the state of Nevada the need for mental health and preventative services. A New York Life grant will support us in providing training/outreach to elementary and middle school teachers and staff on trauma-informed schools and classrooms to decrease referrals to school counselor.

Briefly identify/describe the practice:

In part, our project disseminates information on trauma-informed systems to the community, including schools, to decrease teacher burnout, increase student engagement, and decrease referrals to mental health.

Previous Research: What is Trauma?

Traumatic events impair and complicate cognitive, social and emotional developmental tasks, which can lead to disruptive behaviors in the school setting (Perry, 2000; Walkley & Cox, 2013; Crosby, 2015; Scott & Mayor, 2017).

Crosby, Day, Somers, and Baroni (2018) found that court-involved female students who have experienced trauma preferred to utilize a trauma-informed disciplinary alternative called Monarch Room and presented with positive perceptions of the intervention.

McIntyre, Baker, Overstreet, and The New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools learning Collaborative (2018) found that teachers who perceived better system fit for trauma showed growth in their knowledge of trauma-informed approaches. Teachers that did not believe that adaptation would benefit the system did not grow their knowledge of trauma-informed approaches.

“When students can trust you, their academics begin to blossom” – Teacher at Fall-Hamilton Elementary School.

Trauma-Informed Training

Training includes:
• The effect of trauma on development
• How trauma manifests in the classroom
• Tips for teachers on creating a trauma-informed classroom

Tips for teachers:
• Calm- a calm environment supports learning
• Attuned- be attuned to a student's nonverbal signs: tone of voice, body language, and emotional state
• Connect at an emotional level before cognitive (i.e. learning) level
• Remain in the present moment to instill secure relationships with students
• Have a predictable routine; students feel safe with predictability

*Tips were adapted from Walkley & Cox, 2013

You may find more resources from:
• Carolina Meza Perez, PsyD at The PRACTICE in College of Education Building (CEB)
• Michelle Paul, PhD at The PRACTICE in College of Education Building (CEB)
• The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (nctsn.org)

Trauma-Informed Educators and Student Welfare

Self-care is also important in working with students who have experienced trauma.

UNLV educators are encouraged to adopt the following self-care tips:
• Take a quick, mindful break
• When wanting to vent about challenging student, give a warning to co-worker
• Take the ProQOL Measure (proqol.org) to assess if you have burnout
• Seek professional help (at The PRACTICE or other mental health office) if you experience burnout

*Adapted from The Compassion Fatigue Workbook- Mathieu (2015).