

Trauma Informed Culturally Responsive PBIS

Oakland Unified School District
Behavioral Health Unit
June 19, 2015

Trauma

An experience (or extreme threat) of physical or psychological harm or the severe withholding of resources for healthy development


- Trauma can be terrifying or painful. It can provoke intense fear, helplessness or horror.
- Trauma overwhelms our capacity to regulate internal states. In a traumatic experience we cannot process or integrate what is happening.

Joyce Dorado, Ph.D (2013) Child and Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH

Trauma and Resilience: An Adolescent Provider Toolkit; Adolescent Health Working Group 2013

Chronic Trauma

Exposure to violence:

- Domestic
 - Gang, community
 - Abuse, neglect
 - Drugs
 - War
- 

Trauma Impacted Youth

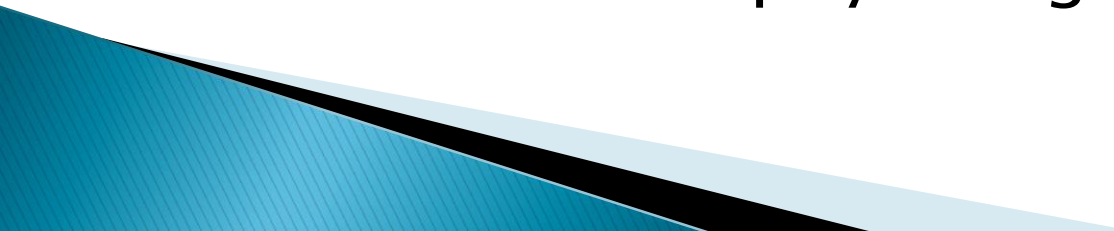
May have difficulty with:

- Managing “big” emotions
- Chronic irritability/anxiety that interferes with problem solving
- Empathy
- Expressing concerns/needs in words
- Taking into account the wider context of a situation
- Appreciating how one’s behavior impacts other people
- Working in groups/connecting with others

Survival Brain vs. Learning Brain

- We all have normal alarm systems in our brain/body that let us know when we are under threat and mobilize us to fight, flee (flight) or freeze in the face of a threat.
- When youth experience continuous threats/trauma, the brain/body is put into a chronic state of fear, activating the “survival brain” (mid/lower areas of the brain).

Key Insight:

- ▶ Because of constant exposure to violence and trauma, children and youth can become locked into a permanent state of Fight/Flight.
 - ▶ This makes these children and youth react to normal experiences as if they were life and death threats.
 - ▶ This is not a rational/cognitive process. It is wired into their physiological response.
- 

Survival Response: Fight, Flight or Freeze

Fight: Youth struggle to regain or hold onto power, especially when feeling coerced.

- ❑ Youth often mislabeled as “non-compliant” or “combative”.

Flight: Youth disengages or runs away and “checks out” emotionally.

- ❑ Youth often mislabeled as “uncooperative” or “resistant”

Freeze: Youth gives in to those in positions of power; does not, or is unable to “speak up.”

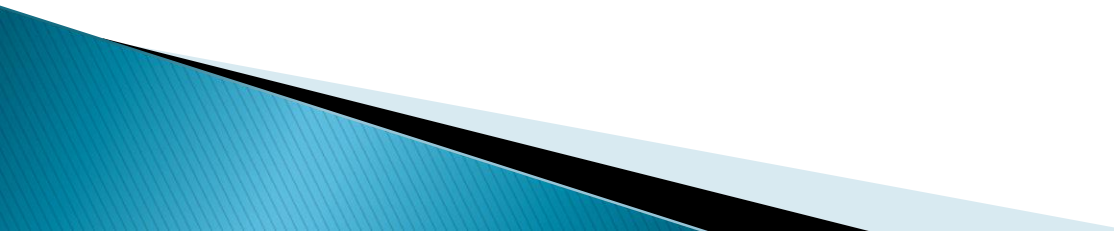
- ❑ Youth often mislabeled as “passive” or “unmotivated”

Trauma Triggers

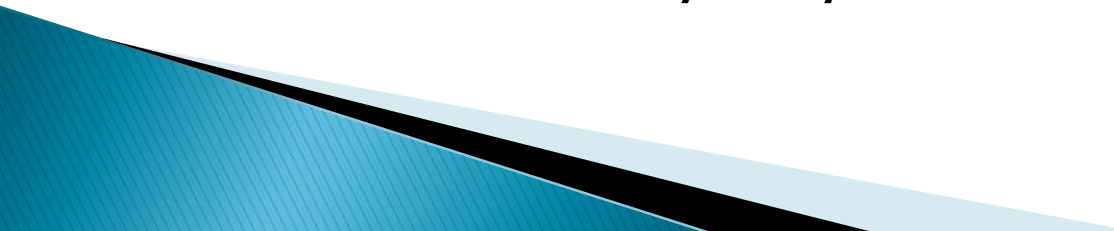
Common Triggers include:

- Unpredictability
- Sudden changes/transitions
- Loss of control
- Sensory overload
- Feeling vulnerable
- Confrontation

Trauma and Resilience: An Adolescent Provider Toolkit; Adolescent Health
Working Group 2013



The Trauma Informed Approach At School:

- Recognizes and understands that certain behaviors are related to traumatic experience and uses this recognition and understanding to drive a new set of practices at school with young people who exhibit these sets of behaviors.
 - Shifts from a model that asks, “What is wrong with you?” to one that asks, “What happened to you?” and “How can I shift the school environment and classroom practices to respond more effectively to your needs?”
- 

School-wide programs aligned with trauma

informed care in schools:

- ▶ Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
 - Restorative Justice
 - Mindfulness Practices
 - Comprehensive School Based Health Centers
- 