

# Effective Behavior Support 2014 Webinar Series Part 2: Trauma Informed Behavior Support

Training & Technical Assistance Unit  
Division of Specialized Education



# Review of Previous Webinar

- Webinar 1:
  - Section 504
  - IDEA
  - Discipline Procedures
    - Removal
    - Change of Placement
    - Manifestation Determination



# Agenda

- Understanding the Impact of Trauma on Behavior – for Ourselves and Others
- Creating a School Climate that Mitigates Traumatic Impact
- Using a Trauma-Informed Approach in Our Work



# Questions to Consider

- How does trauma affect behavior?
- What is the adaptive response pattern for the hyperarousal continuum?
- What is an academic effect of trauma?

# Defining Stress and Trauma

- Stress: mental, physical, or emotional strain
- Trauma: an extremely distressing experience that causes severe emotional shock and may have long-lasting psychological and physiological effects



# Scope of Traumatic Impact

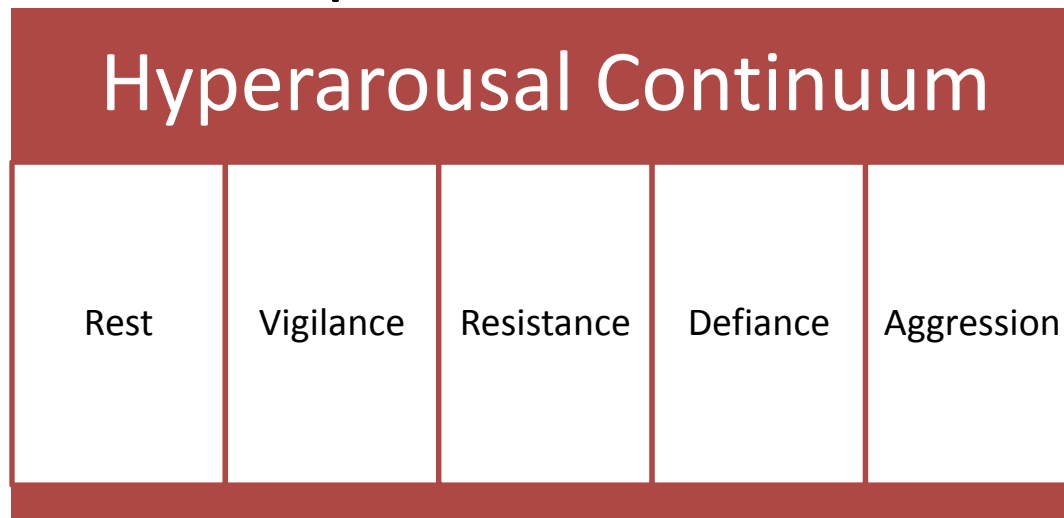
- Traumatic events:
  - Physical and sexual abuse, domestic violence, community and school violence, medical trauma, motor vehicle accidents, war experiences, natural and human-made disasters, suicides, and other traumatic losses
- More than two thirds of children report experiencing a traumatic event by age 16



American Psychological Association, 2008

# Hyperarousal Continuum

- The human body and human mind have sets of very primitive, deeply ingrained physical and mental responses to threat



# Traumatic Response

- Fight or flight response becomes permanent
- Physiological arousal is chronic
- Individuals may be:
  - Easily startled
  - Easily irritated
  - Anxious, sad, angry
  - Disconnected from surroundings
  - Verbally compromised
- Chronic stress negatively impacts memory

# Emotional Effects of Trauma

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Panic
- Irritability
- Anger
- Withdrawal
- Numbness
- Depression
- Confusion
- Hopelessness
- Helplessness



# Physical/Behavioral Manifestations of Trauma

- Nervousness, Restlessness, Hyperactivity
- Stomach aches
- Nausea
- Palpitations
- Hypertension
- Difficulty sleeping
- Nightmares
- Tiredness
- Headaches
- Pain
- Worsening of existing medical problems

# Relational Effects of Trauma

- Emotional barriers between caregivers and children
- Distrust and feelings of betrayal
- Attachment problems
- Hypersensitivity



# Academic Effects of Trauma

- Inability to concentrate or remember
- Poor academic performance due to:
  - Lack of engagement
  - Absences
  - Low tolerance for frustration
  - Engagement in disruptive behavior  
(i.e. “quick trigger”)

# Mitigating the Impact of Traumatic Stress and Building Resilience

- Structure
  - Safety
  - Predictability
  - Role clarity
- Connectedness
  - Relationships
  - Group learning/development
  - Positive caring and support



# Mitigating the Impact of Traumatic Stress and Building Resilience

## Evidence-Based Frameworks:

- Resiliency Theory
- Developmental Assets
- Restorative Practices
- Sanctuary Model



# Resiliency Theory

Research Question: What makes someone resilient?

- Relationships
- Service
- Humor
- Inner Direction
- Perceptiveness
- Independence
- Positive View of Personal Future
- Flexibility
- Love of Learning
- Self-motivation
- Competence
- Self-Worth
- Spirituality
- Perseverance
- Creativity

# Resiliency in Schools

## *The Resiliency Wheel*



# Developmental Assets

- 40 common sense, positive experiences and characteristics for young people
- Help influence choices young people make and help them become caring, responsible, successful adults
- The more assets young people have, the less likely they are to engage in high-risk behaviors and the more likely they are to thrive

# Developmental Asset Examples

## External

### Constructive use of time

Creative Activities

Youth Programs

Religious Community

Time at Home

### Empowerment

Community Values Youth

Youth as Resources

Service to Others

Safety

### Support

Family Support

Positive Family Communication

Other Adult Relationships

Caring Neighborhood

Caring School Climate

Parent Involvement

### Boundaries and Expectations

Family Boundaries

School Boundaries

Neighborhood Boundaries

Adult Role Models

Positive Peer Influence

High Expectations

# Developmental Asset Examples

## Internal

### Positive Identity

Personal Power

Self-Esteem

Sense of Purpose

Positive View of Personal Future

### Commitment to Learning

Achievement Motivation

School Engagement

Homework

Bonding to School

Reading for Pleasure

### Positive Values

Caring

Equality and Social Justice

Integrity

Honesty

Responsibility

Restraint

### Social Competencies

Planning and Decision Making

Interpersonal Competence

Cultural Competence

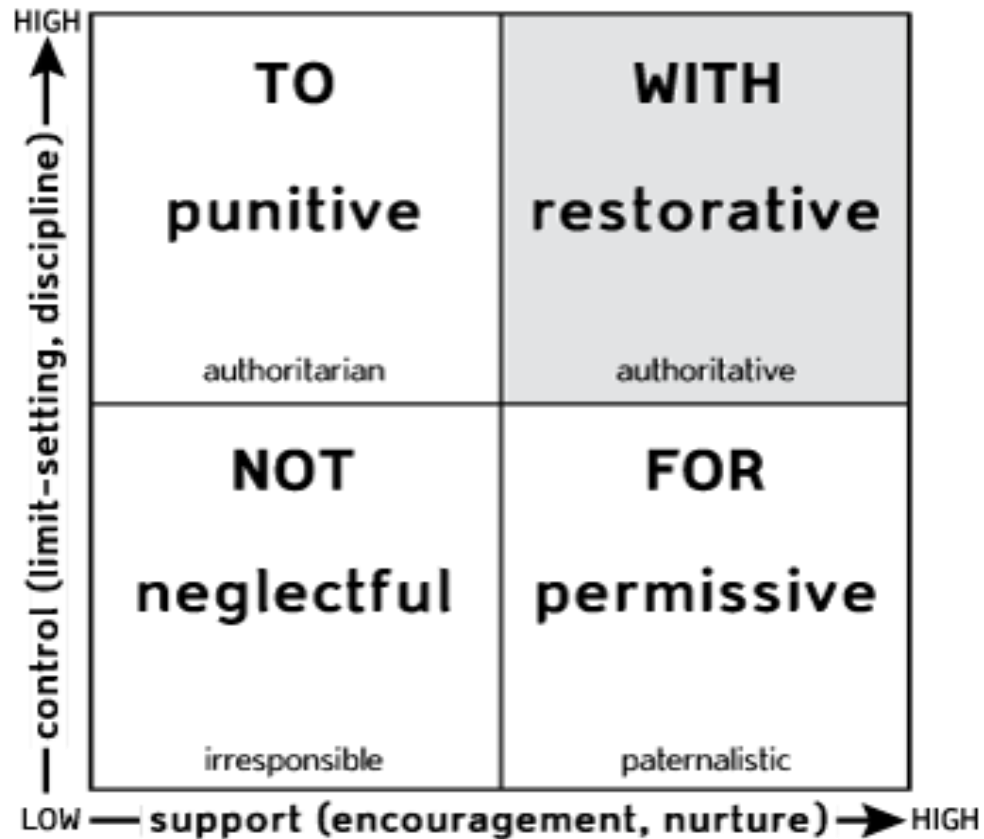
Resistance Skills

Peaceful Conflict Resolution

# Restorative Justice

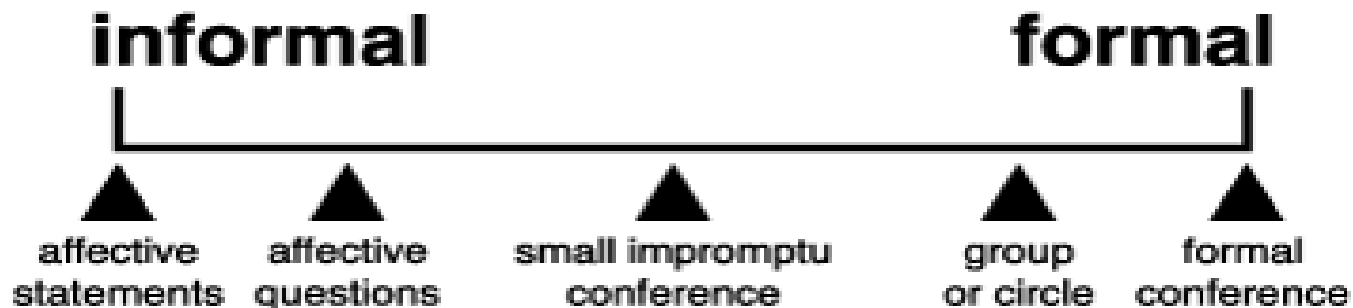
- Concept of justice is at the core of relationships
- Focus: repairing the harm done to people and relationships
- Human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them

# The Social Discipline Window



# Restorative Practices Approach

- Balance of support and limit setting
- Use of interactions that build on the development of empathy and perspective taking



# Restorative Practices: Fair Process Principles

- *Engagement*—involving individuals in decisions that affect them by listening to their views and genuinely taking their opinions into account
- *Explanation*—explaining the reasoning behind a decision to everyone who has been involved or who is affected by it
- *Expectation Clarity*—making sure that everyone clearly understands a decision and what is expected of them in the future

# The Sanctuary Model

- Originated as a trauma-specific program for adult survivors of childhood maltreatment
- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Model
- Teach the skills for creating and sustaining nonviolent lives and nonviolent systems



# Elements of the Sanctuary “Operating System”

- *A Commitment to Nonviolence* – helping to build safety skills and a commitment to higher purpose
- *A Commitment to Emotional Intelligence* – helping to teach emotional management skills
- *A Commitment to Social Learning* – helping to build cognitive skills
- *A Commitment to Open Communication* – helping to overcoming barriers to healthy communication, learn conflict management, reduce acting-out, enhance self-protective and self-correcting skills, teach healthy boundaries
- *A Commitment to Democracy* – helping to create civic skills of self-control, self-discipline, and administration of healthy authority
- *A Commitment to Social Responsibility* – helping to rebuild social connection skills, establish healthy attachment relationships, establish sense of fair play and justice
- *A Commitment to Growth and Change* – helping to work through loss and prepare for the future

# Trauma Informed Practice

Changing our stance from a blaming stance:

*“What is WRONG with You?”*

To a trauma-informed stance:

*“What HAPPENED to you?”*

# Trauma Informed Practice

- Create and maintain routines
- Give students choices
- Increase the level of support and encouragement
- Set clear, firm limits for inappropriate behavior
- Provide a safe place for the student to talk
- Maintain student dignity (and yours)
- Implement PEP (privacy, eye contact, proximity)
- Don't "take the bait!"

# Intervention for Students Who Experience Trauma

Primary intervention should include a series of structured, trauma-focused drawing activities engaging implicit processes and trauma memories



# Essential Elements of Trauma: Informed Crisis Response

- Maximize the child's sense of safety
- Assist the children in reducing overwhelming emotion
- Help children make new meaning of their trauma history and current experiences
- Address the impact of trauma and subsequent changes in the child's behavior, development, and relationships

# Essential Elements of Trauma: Informed Crisis Response

- Coordinate services with other agencies (law enforcement, child welfare, courts, etc.)
- Utilize comprehensive assessment of the child's trauma experiences and their impact on the child's development and behavior to guide services
- Support and promote positive and stable relationships in the life of the child
- Provide support and guidance to the child's family and caregivers

# A Final Note...About You

It is important to:

- Understand, and recognize, your triggers
- Assess, and build, your resiliency

<http://www.resiliency.com/free-articles-resources/the-resiliency-quiz/>

- Educate others- with patience and empathy

# Applying Trauma-Informed Behavior Support Today

- What are developmental assets?
- Think about your own resiliency builders (e.g. relationships, perceptiveness, creativity, etc.). How can you apply them to current life problems, crises, or stressors?
- What action can you take today to mitigate the impact of traumatic stress that your students may experience?

# Resources

- American Psychological Association 2008 Study: <http://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/children-trauma-update.aspx>
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network: <http://www.nctsn.org>
- Child Trauma Academy: <http://www.childtrauma.org>
- Helping Children and Adolescents Cope with Violence and Trauma, National Institute of Mental Health: <http://www.nimh.nih.gov>
- From Restorative Justice to Restorative Practices: Expanding the Paradigm, by Ted Wachtel and Paul McCold
- Resiliency: <http://www.resiliency.com/>
- Search Institute: <http://www.search-institute.org/>
- Sanctuary Model: <http://www.sanctuaryweb.com/organizations.php>
- Restorative Practices: <http://www.iirp.edu/what-is-restorative-practices.php>
- Discipline with Dignity: <http://www.tlc-sems.com/Discipline-With-Dignity.aspx/>

# Next Webinar

## Webinar 3: Functionally Based Behavior Support

*June 03, 2014*

*10:00am-11:00am*



# Next Steps

Thank you for participating!

Please email any questions to [osse.tta@dc.gov](mailto:osse.tta@dc.gov)

