Trauma-Informed Practice in Education
Introduction
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• “Any pattern of activating your stress response that leads to an alteration in how that system is functioning that leads to an overactivity and an over-reactivity.”

- Neurobiologist Dr. Bruce Perry
3 Es:

1) Event,
2) Experience,
3) Effect(s)

“Perspective is a function of experience.”
- Brené Brown
Trauma: small-t

- *Not necessarily life threatening, but definitely life-altering*
- Examples include grief/loss, divorce, verbal abuse/bullying, and just about everything else...
- The trauma itself is not “the problem,” it’s whether or not the trauma has been able to heal/process adaptively that leads to problems
- *If it was traumatic to the person, then it’s traumatic.*
- According to the adaptive information processing model, “little t” trauma can be just as valid and as clinically significant as “Big T” trauma.
Symptoms & Behaviors

- Underachievement / performance
- Overachievement / performance
- Withdrawn and/or isolation
- Irritability / Reactivity or hypervigilance
- Confusion, distraction, learning or memory issues
- Sleep disturbances
- Increase in drug and alcohol use
- Changes in eating behaviors
- ...
The Pair of ACEs

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Maternal Depression
Emotional & Sexual Abuse
Substance Abuse
Domestic Violence

Physical & Emotional Neglect
Divorce
Mental Illness
Incarceration

Adverse Community Environments

Poverty
Discrimination
Community Disruption
Lack of Opportunity, Economic Mobility & Social Capital

Poor Housing Quality & Affordability
Violence

HOW STRESS AFFECTS THE BODY

BRAIN
Difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

CARDIOVASCULAR
higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack and stroke

SKIN
hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

JOINTS AND MUSCLES
increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness

GUT
nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM
decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms

IMMUNE SYSTEM
decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time
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Brené with Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Bruce D. Perry on Trauma, Resilience, and Healing
Question to consider

“What’s wrong with you?”

→ “What happened to you?”
References


https://www.edutopia.org/article/understanding-trauma-informed-education

