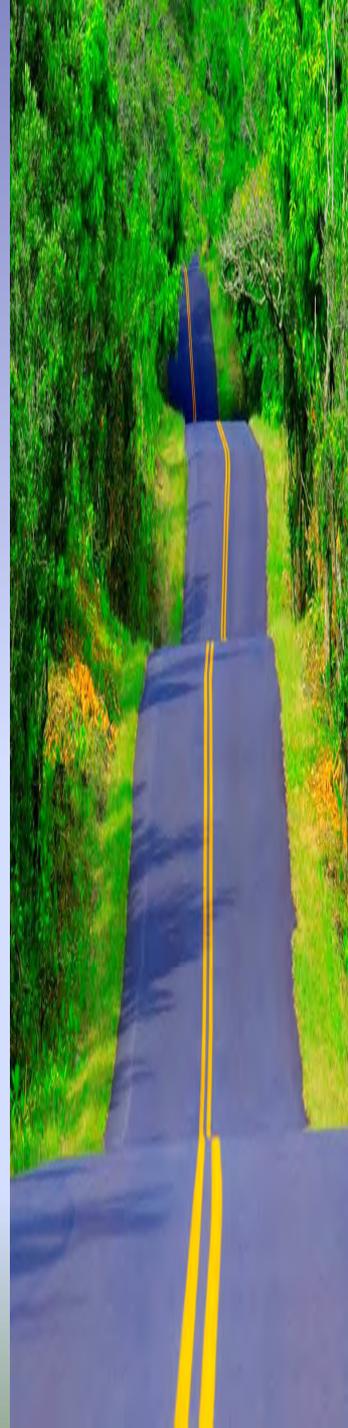


# Starting the Journey to Become a Trauma Informed School

MO Coordinated School Health  
Conference

December 2016



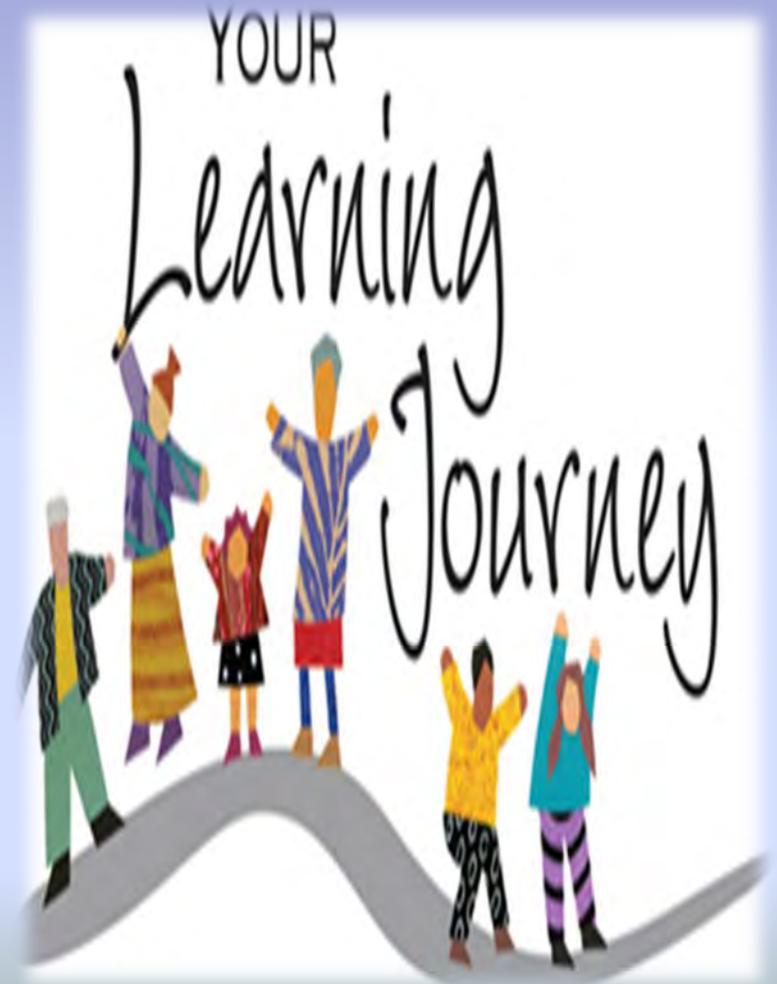
# What Is a Trauma Informed School?

- **Realizes** the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery;
- **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system;
- **Responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- Seeks to actively resist **re-traumatization**



# Core Principles

- Safety
- Trustworthiness
- Choice
- Collaboration
- Empowerment



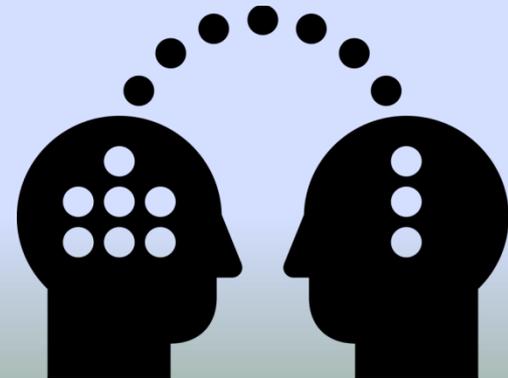
# Attributes



- Leadership and staff share an understanding of trauma's impact on learning and the need for a schoolwide approach
- Supports all students to feel safe physically, emotionally and academically
- Addresses students' needs in a holistic way
- Explicitly connects students to the school community and provides multiple and varied opportunities to practice new skills
- Embraces teamwork and share responsibility for all students
- Anticipates and adapts to ever changing needs of students

# What We Know

- Chronic trauma that occurs in early childhood that is interpersonal in nature can have the most serious impact
- Trauma can change the way the brain responds
- Trauma/toxic stress can impact ANY and ALL areas of functioning
- Healing can happen through relationships and environments



# Three Areas of Focus



- Building and sustaining positive relationships/attachments between children and caregivers/adults
- Increasing competencies in cognitive abilities
- Enhance ability to self-regulate attention, emotions and behaviors

# Addressing Needs of Students with Trauma

- Understanding triggers
  - Mostly sensory in nature
  - A reminder of the past trauma
  - Student may not be aware
- Understanding Re-enactments
  - May engage in provocative behavior
  - Pulls the adult into the re-enactment
  - Adult requires self-monitoring
  - Adult needs to handle strong emotions
  - Assist in regulation rather than punishment
  - Safety Plans



# Directing Attention

- Student's brain in survival mode with attention focused on threats to safety, may have intrusive thoughts
  - Build trust
  - Predictability
  - Prompts and reminders
- Oversensitive to anything that may be threat
  - Activities/Overstimulation    -Tone of Voice
  - Name calling                      -Physical boundaries



# Regulating Emotions

- Fight, flight or freeze/hyper or hypo-aroused
- Movement
  - Rocking, swinging, rhythmic
  - Big movements
  - Deep breathing
  - Validation and self-reflection
  - Muscle relaxation
  - Comfort rooms and corners



# What Are Some Ways to Calm/Regulate

- Run cold water over hands
- Walk with large strides
- Rocking Chairs
- Fidgets
- Mantras or Affirmations
- Deep focused breaths
  - Age appropriate exercises



# Some General Considerations

- Many of the target behaviors we want to extinguish were developed as a coping mechanism
- Although it may seem intentional, it is based on:
  - Brain pathways
  - Perception of safety
  - Perception of authority



# Creating a Culture

- Universal
  - Students
  - Staff
  - Visitors
  - Families



- Everyone has stress, some is tolerable
- We all have ways of dealing with stress
- Always Empower, never disempower

# Some Tools and Ideas

- Surveys – Trauma Principles in Action
  - Students
  - Staff
- Greeters
- Community Meetings
  - All school
  - Classroom
  - Core questions
    - How are you feeling today?
    - What is your goal today?
  - Not a time for problem resolution



# Some Tools and Ideas

- Power/Safety Plans – individual or classroom
  - For all students and staff
  - Education on how the brain works
  - Understanding impact of stress on brain
  - Identification of stressors/triggers
  - Identification of ways to regulate when trigger
  - Ways to prevent stress from building
- Routine check-ins for all students
  - One on one relationships between staff and students



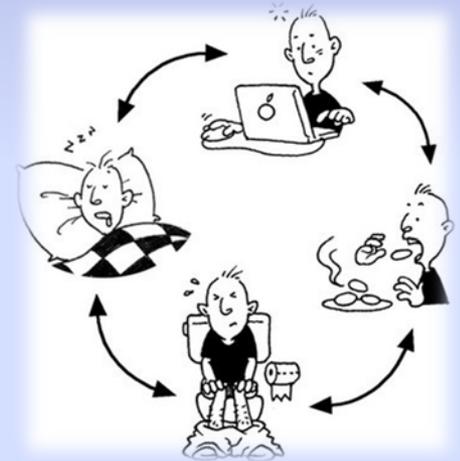
# Some Tools and Ideas

- Movement or breathing breaks for all students
- Body Awareness and Mindfulness
  - Start of school day
  - Start of a class
  - Start of an activity
  - End of class
  - End of day



# Some Tools and Ideas

- Routine check-ins for all students
  - One on one relationships between staff and students
- Clear expectations and predictability
  - Student input and choice
  - Positive prompts/reminders
- Health curriculum includes stress management
  - Inclusion of mental HEALTH/Well-being



# Resources

- Harvard Developing Child
  - <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/building-adult-capabilities-to-improve-child-outcomes-a-theory-of-change/>
  - <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/vroom/>
- Changing Minds – Teachers impact on students with trauma
  - <https://changingmindsnow.org/healing>

# Resources

- Sesame Street
  - Belly breathing
    - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZbzDOpylA>
  - Empathy
    - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_1Rt1R4xbM&list=PL8TioFHubWFtb0ta5WYjy20kwxu62n1D8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_1Rt1R4xbM&list=PL8TioFHubWFtb0ta5WYjy20kwxu62n1D8)
- Flip Your Lid video – Dan Siegal
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0T\\_2NNoC68](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G0T_2NNoC68)

# Environment

sounds

Hallways

**LIGHTING**

SECURITY

**Bathrooms**

# Long-term

- Help students practice
- Ensure and support staff's resilience
- Share across staff and with family
- Changes won't happen overnight
- Building power plan into 504 or IEP



2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019



**Thank You**