Schools & Covid-19
Planning for Social and Emotional Supports for School Re-Opening and Beyond

New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative
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Moderated by Laura Danna, Project Director
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Learning Objectives

- Create a common understanding of the definition and prevalence of trauma, including Covid-19 and racial trauma.
- Recognize how trauma can impact the brain, behavior, learning, and teaching.
- Create a common understanding of resilience.
- Identify specific approaches to foster student and teacher resilience in schools (virtually or in-person).
Realizes

Prevalence & Impact of Trauma

Recognizes

Signs of Trauma
Need for Learning Supports

Responds to promote healing and avoid Re-traumatization

By integrating principles of trauma-informed care into classroom practices and responding to staff needs for self-care

Trauma

The harmful interruption of safety, agency, dignity or belonging

Can be acute, chronic, cumulative, complex

Overwhelms our ability to cope or integrate our emotional experience of an event
Some Working Definitions

**Safety** – the sense of being physically, psychologically and emotionally secure.

**Agency** – the ability to make a decision, experience reasonable consequences of that decision and make a subsequent decision.

**Dignity** – the sense of one’s place and power in the world. Self-worth.

**Belonging** – the expression of being connected, a full member of a group.
Trauma can be...

- **Systemic**
  - Policies
  - Institutions

- **Collective**
  - Kin
  - Community

- **Individual**
  - Personal
  - Interpersonal

Historical vs. Intergenerational
Resilience must be...

Systemic
- Policies
- Institutions

Collective
- Kin
- Community

Individual
- Personal
- Interpersonal

Historical

Intergenerational
Realizing
Prevalence & Impact of Trauma

Teacher & Student Experiences
Covid-19 Stressors Among NOLA Teachers

- Had serious illness from COVID-19
- School staff death from COVID-19
- Unable to pay bills
- Had symptoms of COVID-19, never tested
- Adult education suspended
- School staff seriously ill with COVID-19
- Family/friend death due to COVID-19
- Family/friend seriously ill with COVID-19
- Had to take care of others in the home
- Had to teach own kids
- Felt unsafe
- Deaths in students' families due to COVID-19
- Increased workload
- Difficult transition to working from home
- Experienced emotional distress
- Unable to do enjoyable activities/hobbies
- Acute awareness of student stressors
- Separated from family/friends

White Teachers, Black Teachers, Total Sample
Racial Disparities in Teacher Stressors

Increased Odds of Exposure for Black Teachers

- 1.7: Take care of others
- 2.4: Teach own children
- 2.7: Have family/friend become ill with Covid-19
- 4.3: Become ill with Covid-19
- 4.6: Death of family/friend due to Covid-19
Pre-Covid Trauma Exposure Among NOLA Youth

> 90% experience community violence.

> 55% have experienced 3 or more traumas.

The most common traumatic experiences are exposure to community violence and loss of a loved one.
Covid-19 Trauma Exposure Among NOLA Youth

- 25% unemployment rate since Covid-19
- Food insecurity
- Homelessness
- Domestic violence
- Child maltreatment
- 75% of Covid-19-related deaths in NOLA occurred in the Black community
Trauma can be...
Collective and Systemic Trauma: Police Killings

Black and Brown people are... 3x more likely to be killed by police than white people.

99% of killings by police from 2013-2019 have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime.
49% of Black Americans were exposed to a police killing of an unarmed Black American in a 3-month period between 2013 and 2015.
Collective and Systemic Trauma: Criminalization of Black Students

Bar chart showing the out-of-school suspension rates for boys and girls by race:

- Boys:
  - Black: 18.0
  - White: 5.2

- Girls:
  - Black: 2.0
  - White: 10.0

The chart indicates higher suspension rates for Black boys compared to White boys, and higher rates for Black girls compared to White girls.
Collective and Systemic Trauma: Criminalization of Black Students

Referral to law enforcement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage Point Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School-related arrest

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage Point Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two or more races</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Percentage of all students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>50.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>15.5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
What thoughts or feelings came up during this section?

Year to year, what trauma patterns have you noticed in your school and how did they affect your school community?
Realizing
Prevalence & Impact of Trauma

Neurobiological Impact
Biological Adaptations to Chronic Trauma

Thinking Brain

Hippocampus
Regulates memory and emotions.

Prefrontal Cortex
Thinking/logic/what to do/evaluation.

Amygdala
Turns on fight or flight, and stores memories of the event.

Survival Brain

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Biological Adaptations to Chronic Trauma: Trauma Triggers

Possible Triggers

- Yelling or Fighting
- Isolation
- Physical Touch
- Loud Noises
- Unexpected Changes
- Shame and Failure
- Time of Year (anniversaries)
Recognizing
Signs of Trauma & Need for Learning Supports
**Biological Adaptations and Behavior**

How do we **recognize** the signs of trauma and the need for **behavioral or emotional** supports?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fight</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Flight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeze</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Biological Adaptations and Learning

Hippocampus
Makes it hard to store, consolidate, and retrieve new information

Prefrontal Cortex
Makes it hard to pay attention, problem solve, set goals, take perspective, retrieve prior learning

Amygdala
Makes it hard to think clearly

Survival Brain

Thinking Brain
Long-term Outcomes of Chronic Trauma

Percent of Students with One or More Academic Concerns by ACE Exposure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Students with Academic Problems</th>
<th>No Known Adverse Events</th>
<th>One Reported Adverse Event</th>
<th>Two Reported Adverse Events</th>
<th>Three or more Adverse Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One or More Academic Concerns</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Stevens (2012)
Protection Against the Effects of Chronic Trauma

This is not inevitable.
Protection Against the Effects of Chronic Trauma

We can go from this...

Responding to promote healing and avoid Re-traumatization

By integrating principles of trauma-informed care into classroom practices and responding to staff needs for self-care
19% of teachers indicated the need for time and space to collectively process experiences.

44% of Black students do not feel emotionally safe at school.
Acknowledge Stress & Trauma

**Student Supports**
- Create safe and respectful spaces for discussion and reflection.
- Talk to students about Covid-19.
- Integrate current events into lesson planning.

**Teacher Supports**
- Communicate clear plan for health safety that is responsive to the disproportionate impacts of COVID19 on staff and families.
- Provide foundational training in trauma for all staff.
- Provide ongoing opportunities to practice using a trauma-lens.
Provide Supports for Regulation

71% of teachers reported experiencing emotional distress as a result of the pandemic.

65% of Black students feel teachers are unsuccessful at managing their classes.

49% of Black students feel they are not able to regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors well.
Provide Supports for Regulation

**Student Supports**
- Promote healthy habits, establish consistent routines, and maintain clear communication.
- Enhance student learning by revisiting familiar content and delivering instruction in “bite-sized” segments.
- Offer opportunities for movement and mindfulness breaks throughout the day (not tied to reward system).

**Teacher Supports**
- Provide professional development in mindfulness, self-care, and trauma stewardship.
- Promote staff self-care practices inside and outside the work environment, with a focus on equity.
- Train all staff on culturally responsive de-escalation and communication strategies.
Provide Supports for Relationships

71% of teachers noted importance of support from administrators and colleagues in dealing with stress.

51% of Black students feel their teachers are not concerned for their well-being.

42% of Black students feel teachers do not value their ideas.
Provide Supports for Relationships

**Student Supports**
- Provide opportunities to connect with adult mentors.
- Facilitate community building activities.
- Provide opportunities for structured and unstructured play time.

**Teacher Supports**
- Create peer-to-peer community building opportunities/rituals.
- Encourage ongoing teacher reflection and goal setting around relationships.
- Promote the use of technology to support parent-teacher communication practices while setting realistic expectations and boundaries.
Planning Guide

- Alignment with LDOE Strong Start guidance.
- Planning considerations.
- Material and community resources.
- Action planning tool.
- Example schedule to illustrate integration of supports.

Thanks to Karaline Zeigler and Avery Brewton for their support in developing the planning guide.
Questions?

Thanks to United Way of Southeast Louisiana for their support of the Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative