

# Trauma-Informed Classrooms

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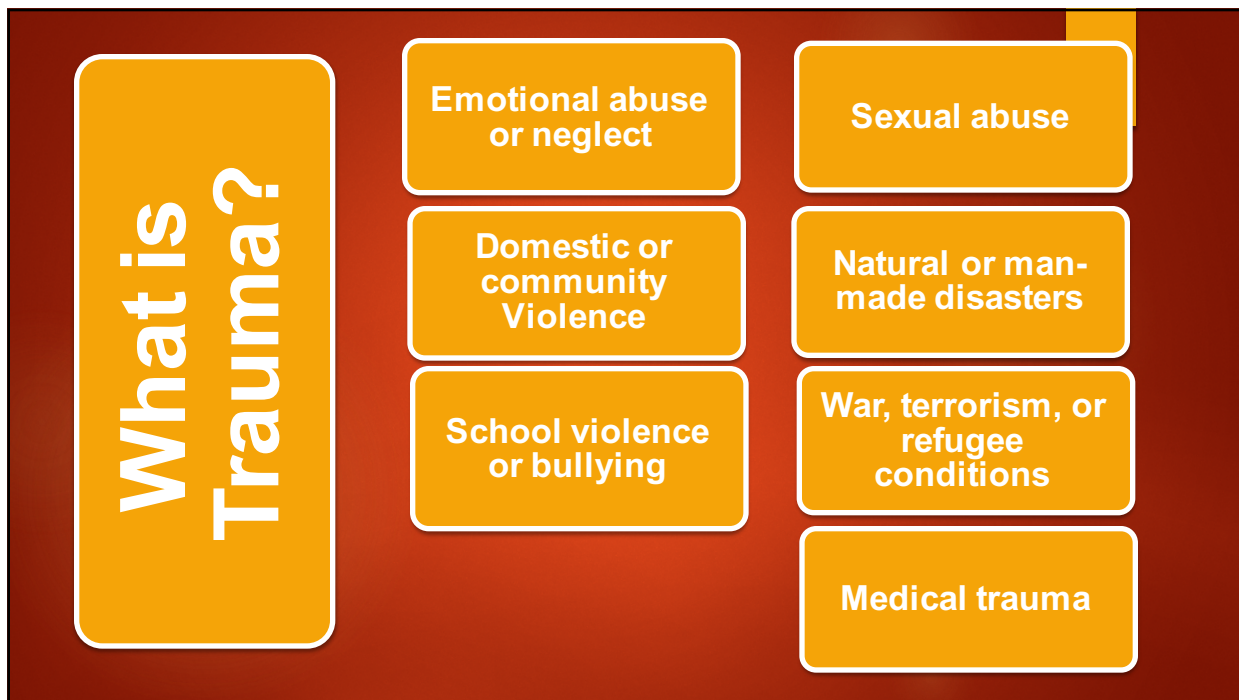
## Agenda

What is “trauma”?

What do we know about trauma?

How do we identify kids who are experiencing trauma?

What can educators do to build resilience in students?





## Normal Stress vs. Trauma or Toxic Stress



## Normal Stress vs. Trauma or Toxic Stress



# Examples

## Group Trauma



## Cumulative Trauma

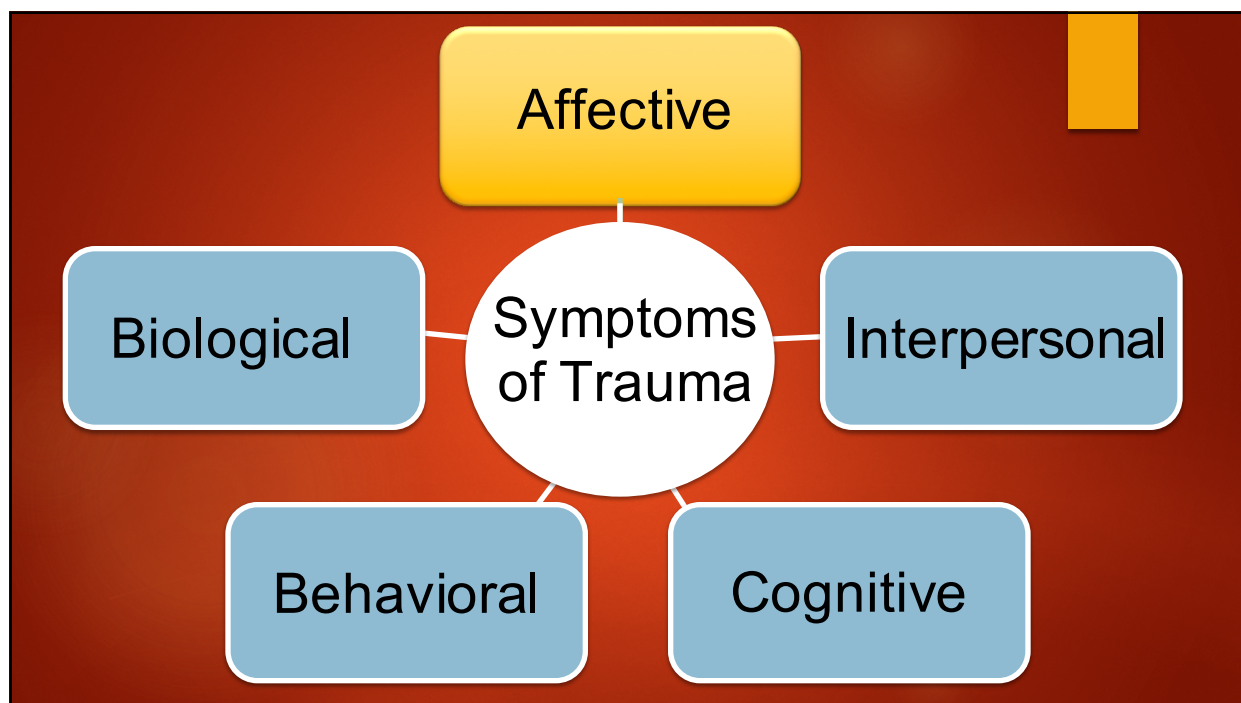


## Acute Trauma

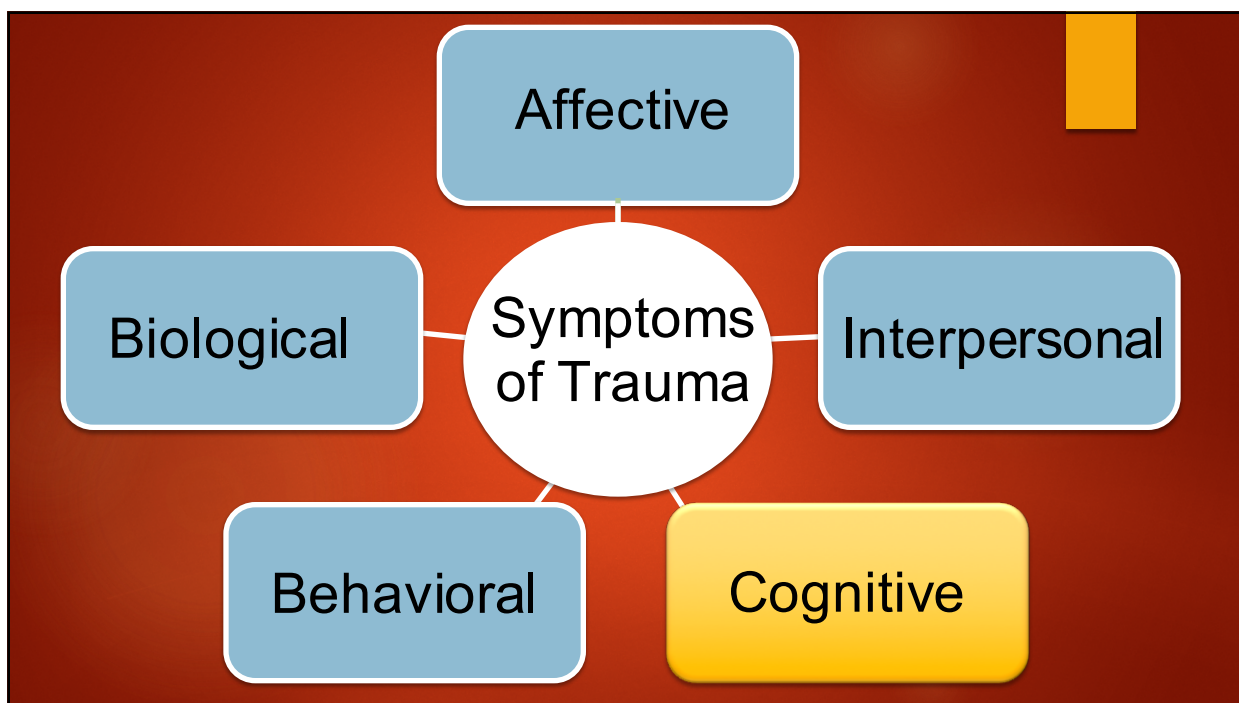
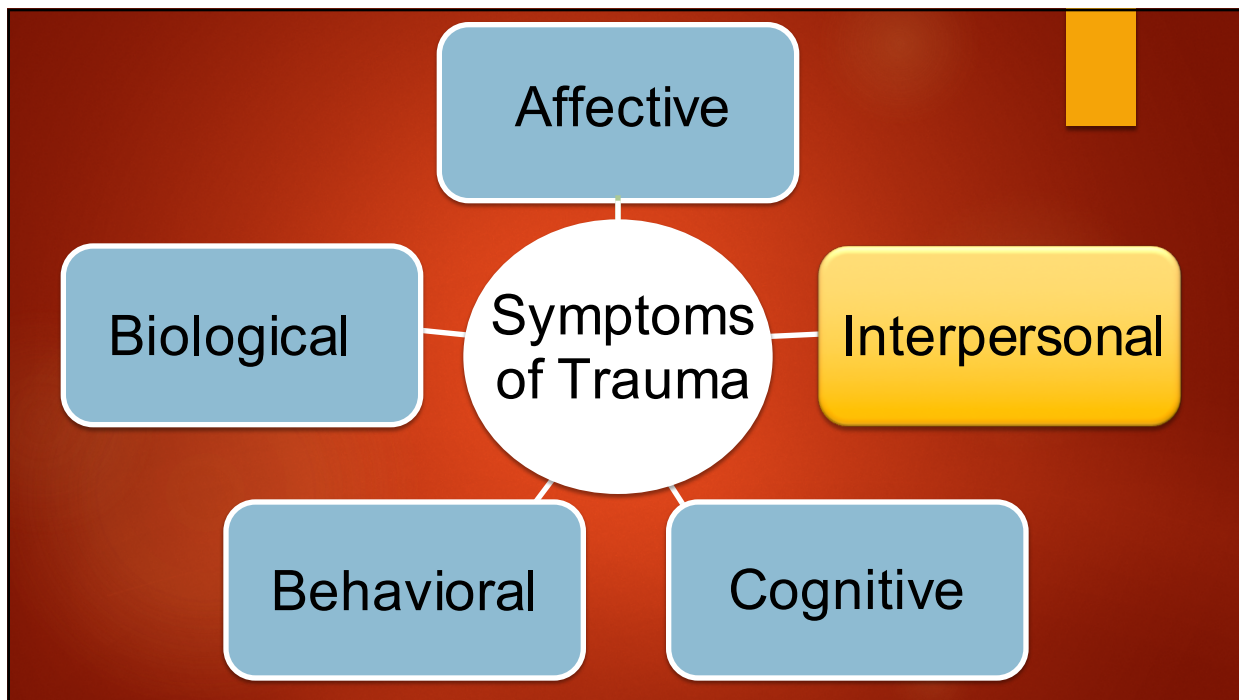


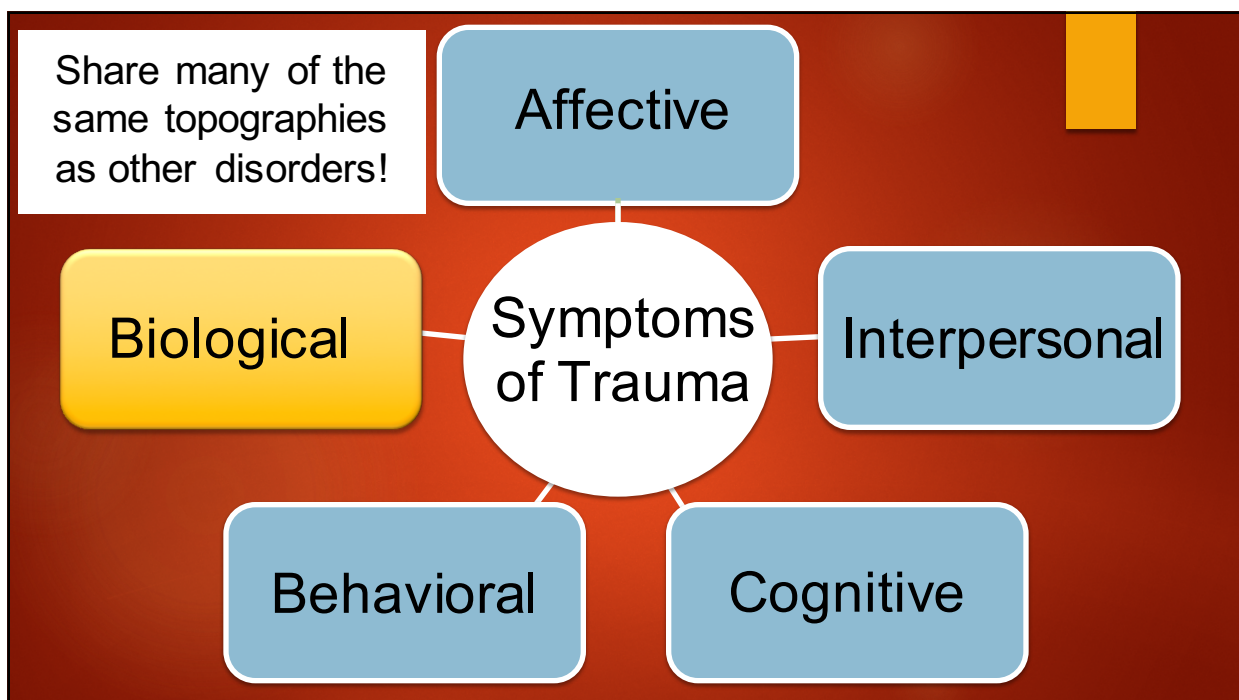
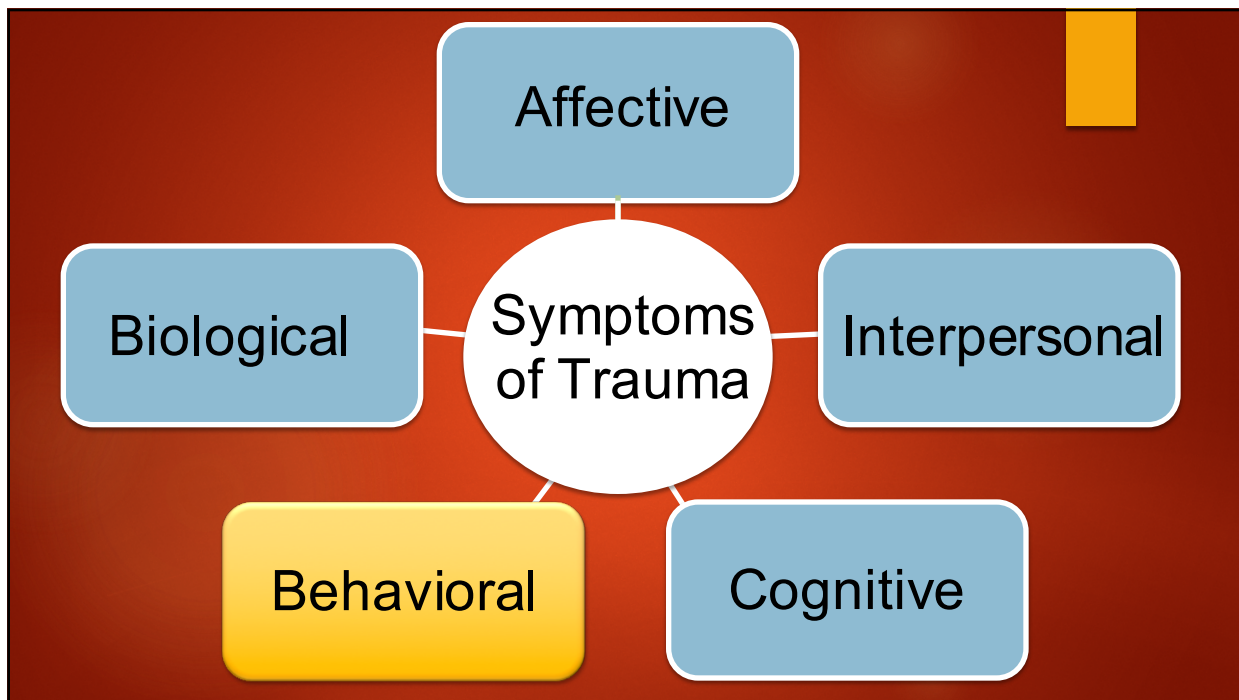


# Trauma Symptoms and Trajectories

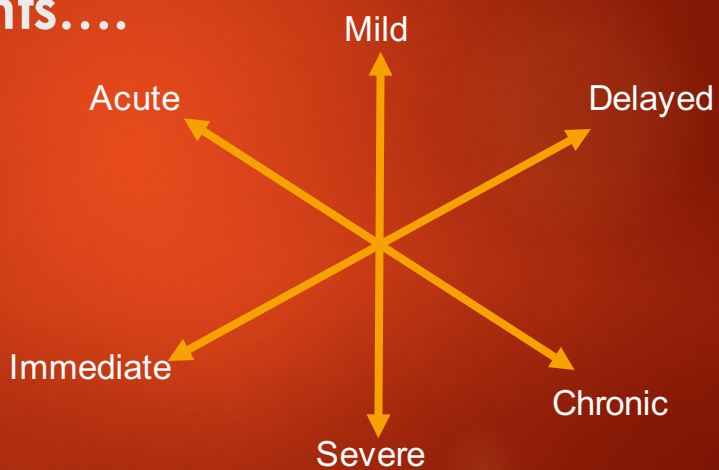








However, some children do not have symptoms even after experiencing traumatic events....





# Protective and Resilience Factors

**Resiliency**

**Hard Things & Stressors:**

- Not able to pay bills
- Not enough food to eat
- Violence
- Health problems
- Housing that does not feel safe

**Good Things & Resources:**

- People that you can count on
- Dependable transportation
- Safe housing
- A doctor you trust
- Having enough money

**Things about You:**

- Genetics and DNA
- Resiliency/ACE score
- Life story
- Personality

**Resiliency is when the scale tips toward the good...**

**...even when there are stressors and hard things**

Photo Credit: <http://buncombceaces.org/>

**Brianna**

- Older sibling assaulted
- Perceived low parental support
- Poor attendance (school/treatment)
- Mental Health

- Sexual Assault
- Family Conflict
- Risky behavior (substance use)
- Social support\* (family/friends)

**Tasha**

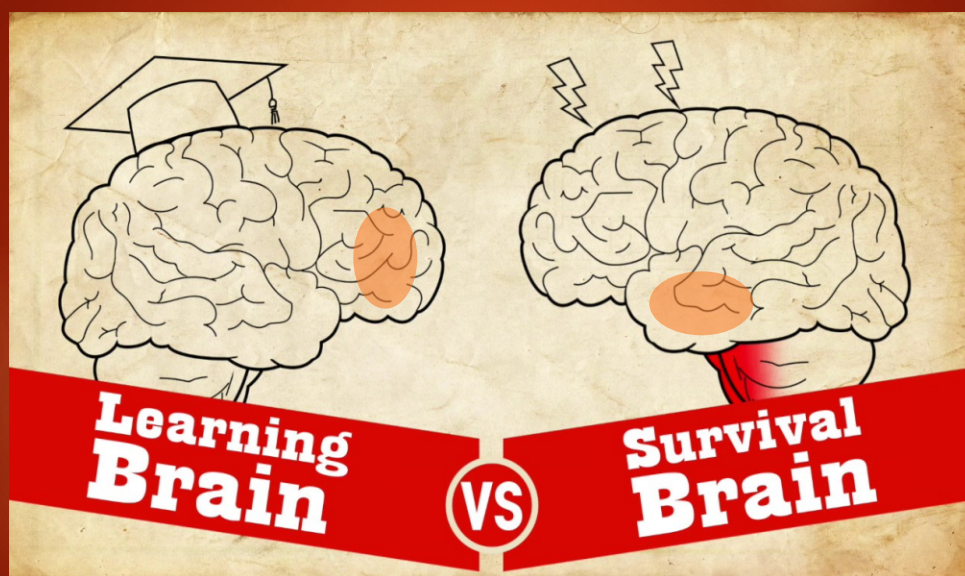
- Parents Divorced
- Risky Behavior (sexually active)
- Social support\* (school staff)
- Increased self-esteem/self-worth
- Learned to cope\* appropriately
- School supports/\* accommodations

Risk Factors

Protective Factors\*



# What do we know about Trauma?













**Healthy Brain**      **Results of Chronic Stress**

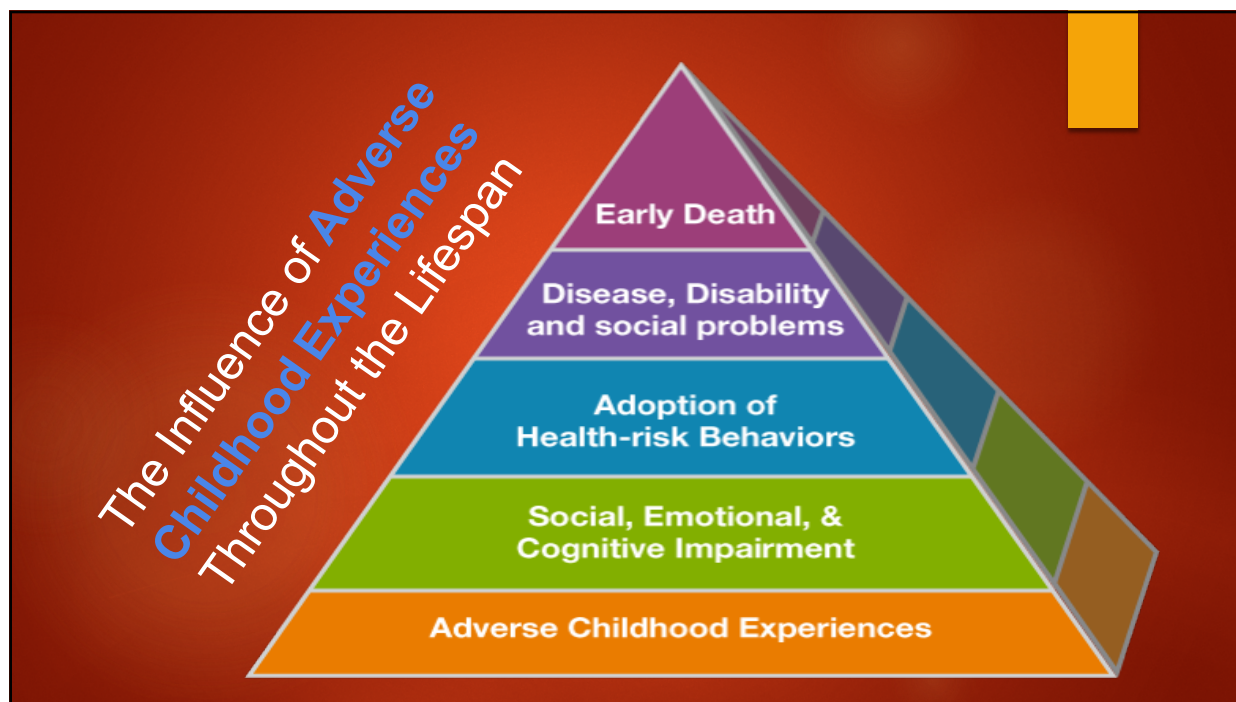
**Stress Shrinks Brain Networks**

Chronic stress can actually change your brain!

A  
C  
E  
S

ABUSE	NEGLECT	HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION	
 Physical	 Physical	 Mental Illness	 Incarcerated Relative
 Emotional	 Emotional	 Mother treated violently	 Substance Abuse
 Sexual		 Divorce	

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
 Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



## Research Implications



## How do we identify children who have experienced trauma?

### Examples of what to look for

**Abrupt changes in affective, behavioral, cognitive, or interpersonal functioning**

- ▶ Withdrawal from peers
- ▶ Decline in school performance
- ▶ Frequent physical complaints
- ▶ Threats of harm
- ▶ Repeated nightmares
- ▶ Regression in behaviors
- ▶ Sleeping and eating disturbances



# Screening

- ▶ Trauma screening may be included in school-wide behavior screening procedures
- ▶ Considerations?
- ▶ Cautions?



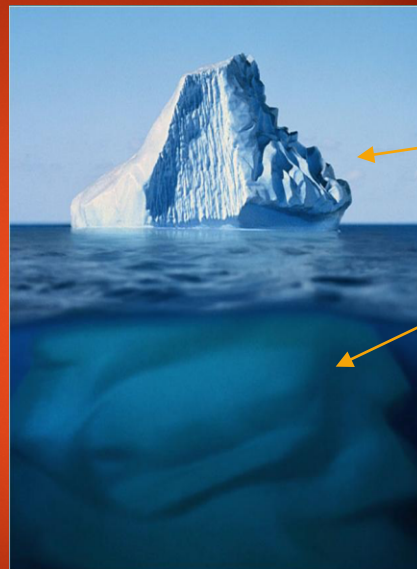
What can educators do  
to build resilience in  
students?

# Develop a Framework for understanding trauma related behavior - A Trauma Lens!



## Framework: Trauma Lens

- ▶ Consider trauma in the “why” of student behavior
- ▶ Therapeutic versus punitive approach



Behavior

Feelings, thoughts, triggers, physiological arousal

Provide support to change behavior rather than punishment



## Strategy 1: Universal Supports

- ▶ Promote Positive School Climate
- ▶ Increase Resilience
- ▶ A learning environment where kids feel safe, secure, & supported is #1 priority



## It's the little things!



## Strategy 2: Consistency

- ▶ Visual schedules and routines
- ▶ Set clear and consistent expectations

Consistency



Be flexible





## Strategy 3: Choices

- ▶ Give students choices throughout day
- ▶ Avoid power struggles



## Strategy 4: Model Appropriate Behavior

- ▶ Model problem-solving
- ▶ Model frustration management
- ▶ Model time management, etc.



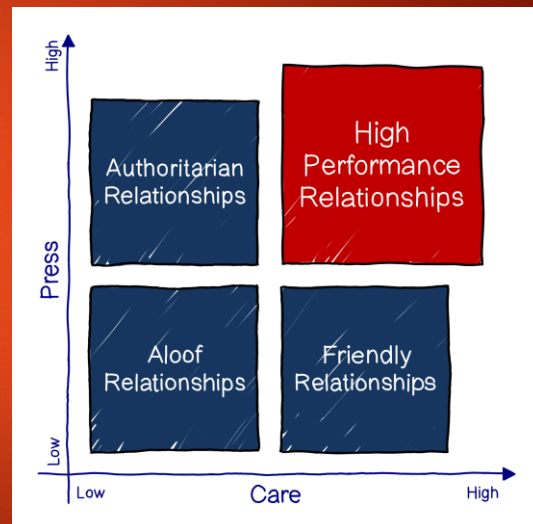
## Strategy 5: Teach Social/Emotional Skills

- ▶ Include Social Emotional Learning in the classroom
- ▶ Teach self awareness, coping, and relaxation skills



## Strategy 6: Build Relationships

- ▶ Talk with the student
- ▶ Seek out opportunities to make the student feel important








You have a powerful opportunity  
to connect with kids 😊

"Students who are  
loved at home,  
come to school to  
learn, and students  
who aren't, come to  
school to be loved.

-Nicholas A. Ferroni

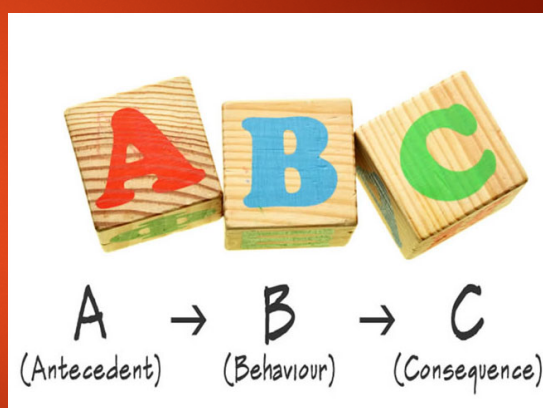
 WE are TEACHERS  
www.weareteachers.com





## Strategy 7: Identify Triggers

- ▶ Functional thinking
- ▶ Anticipate, accommodate, and adapt
- ▶ Teach replacement behavior



## Strategy 8: Utilize Community Resources



- ▶ Identify and connect with community resources
- ▶ Connect kids and families to local resources

# Examples Revisited

## Group Trauma





## Cumulative Trauma



Identify Triggers

Teach coping & Provide Choices

Utilize Community Resources

This slide features a dark red background with a yellow vertical bar on the right. The title 'Cumulative Trauma' is at the top. Below it is a photograph of a young boy in a red 'RUGBY 87R NEW ZEALAND NZ RUGBY ALL BLACKS TEAM UNIQ' jersey. Overlaid on the image are three green text elements: 'Identify Triggers' at the top, 'Teach coping & Provide Choices' in the middle, and 'Utilize Community Resources' at the bottom.

## Acute Trauma



Consistency

Build Relationships

Identify Triggers

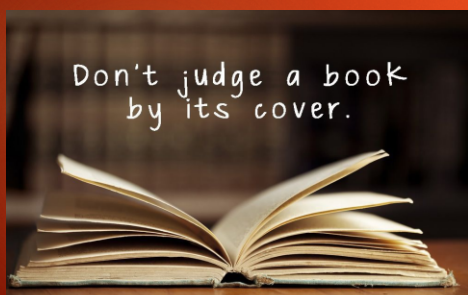
This slide features a dark red background with a yellow vertical bar on the right. The title 'Acute Trauma' is at the top. Below it is a photograph of two young women smiling and hugging. Overlaid on the image are three white text elements: 'Consistency' on the left, 'Build Relationships' in the center, and 'Identify Triggers' at the bottom.



# Summary

Develop a Framework for interpreting student behavior -

## A Trauma Lens



## Employ Strategies

- ▶ Universal Supports
- ▶ Consistency
- ▶ Provide Students Choices
- ▶ Model Appropriate Behavior
- ▶ Teach Social Emotional Skills
- ▶ Build Relationships
- ▶ Identify Triggers
- ▶ Utilize Community Resources



**Thank You!**

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[k12engagement.unl.edu](http://k12engagement.unl.edu)

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