

Trauma Informed Teaching

While we can't end the reasons trauma occurs, we can be a place of growth and support for our youth surviving the most challenging of circumstances. Our programs can be structured in intentional ways such as: making decision with care and intention by designing our spaces, how we serve meals, common language we use with youth and one another, and most importantly, be grounded in unconditional care for our youth.



Defining Trauma

Trauma is a response to life-threatening events, dangerous, or harmful conditions, or a prolonged stressful environment. While this includes acts of violence or natural disasters, it can also include experiences like living in a community where you're constantly not accepted and experiencing micro-aggressions. Trauma is a response to something and people may experience trauma differently or in different circumstances.

Trauma Matters

About half of all children in the US will experience at least one potentially traumatic event before the age of 18. This number is higher for children of color. Youth with disabilities are 4x more likely to be maltreated.

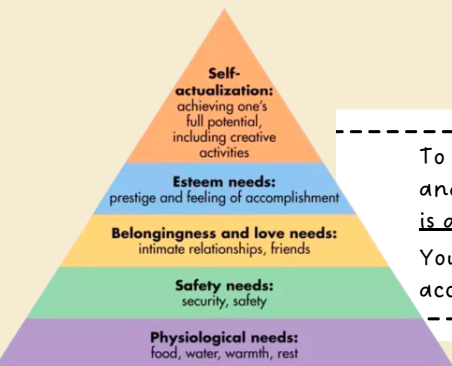
Some children with access to a supportive community are more likely to recover from stress and not experience lasting challenges from trauma. But no amount of "resilience" helps people heal from trauma.



Trauma-Informed Education

To recover from trauma, we first need to reestablish a feeling of safety, emotionally and psychologically. This is the foundation or Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Trauma is a response to something and disrupts our core sense of safety.

Youth need trusted adults with whom to build relationships and unconditional acceptance. Healing requires a community that cares and that includes teachers!



Trauma Informed Strategies

- Increase your empathy, taking a youth's feelings & challenges into account & setting aside your frustrations.
- Establish clear boundaries & stick to them; don't try to be their best friend or parent.
- Consistent expectations & rules that aren't excessive. Try: Be safe, Be respectful, & Be responsible.
- Be predictable, daily/weekly/monthly with your routines & schedule.
- Be a mirror to the youth, reflecting back what is good in that child.
- Teach SEL explicitly through literacy, poems, gratitude journaling, and calming strategies like deep breathing.