

Childhood Trauma

Affects



(At Least 1 in 4 Students)

In Every Single Classroom... Every Day...



What Trauma is...

A psychologically distressing event outside the range of usual human experience. It involves a sense of intense fear, terror, and helplessness, and may lead to a variety of effects, depending on the child.

- Bruce Perry

Examples include child neglect, abuse, domestic violence, parental incarceration or abandonment, a family member's serious mental illness or substance abuse problem, highly conflicted divorce situations, as well as experiencing serious accidents, disasters, war, or acts of terrorism.

What Trauma Does to...*



The Body



- Fight/flight/freeze reactions
- Sensory/motor challenges
- Unusual pain responses
- Physical symptoms

Emotions



- Hypervigilance
- High distress
- Self-regulation problems
- Difficulty communicating feelings and needs
- Possible dissociation

Actions



- Poor impulsive control
- Aggression/ dangerous actions
- Oppositional behavior
- Self harm
- Overly compliant
- Sleeping problems
- Eating problems
- Substance abuse

Thinking



- Lack of curiosity
- Learning/processing problems
- Language development problems
- Difficulty regulating attention
- Executive functioning problems
- Problems with planning and organization
- Difficulty understanding cause and effect

Self Concept



- Low self-esteem
- Toxic shame and guilt
- Grandiose ideas/bragging
- May blame others or self
- Body image problems
- Self-sabotaging behaviors

No Signs



Some traumatized youth show little to no signs at school but may have difficulty at home in relationships with primary caregivers.

Relationships



- General mistrust of others
- Clingy/overly dependent
- Withdrawn
- Problems with peers
- Overly helpful/solicitous of attention
- May lack empathy

What Trauma-Sensitive Schools Do...

Help Students

Feel safe
Be connected

Get regulated
Learn

They Benefit Everyone!

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