

Examining Responses to Trauma to Build More Positive Connections

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Social Emotional Learning

Introduction: This workshop will connect you to emotions, automatic responses and triggers that are unconscious reactions to rage, anger and fear. We will examine how culture and biases influence how we as adults respond in times of crisis. This workshop is not designed to answer all your questions, it is an opportunity to examine the complexity of emotions.

Transforming means growth and growth is painful.

We are going to develop our transformational muscle by having courageous conversations. There will be thoughtful reflections about the ways in which individual experiences and background affect relationships, perceptions and beliefs. This workshop will connect you to emotions, automatic responses, and triggers that are unconscious reactions to rage, anger, and fear. We will examine how culture and biases influence how we as adults respond in times of crisis and begin to understand the impact of unresolved trauma on today's children. By creating a trauma-sensitive response that addresses the core issues driving behavior and academic performance, we will create an environment of support and guidance with adults who are able to rethink assumptions about the motivations underlying children's behavior. As we develop a new framework of assessment, the impact will reduce the number of children being misdiagnosed and segregated in educational settings which serves to re-traumatize already emotionally vulnerable children.

QUESTIONS COMMENTS CONCERNS???

Objectives/Goals

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- Create a collaborative environment to examine complex emotions
- Develop an awareness of the lens through which you experience the world
- Move beyond “right” and “wrong” judgements
- Examine existing barriers to transformative leadership
- Develop an honest critical analysis of inter/intra personal conversations
- Strengthen ability to problem-solve and think outside the box
- Develop the skills necessary to graciously listen and communicate effectively

Expectation/Group Agreements

Expectations/Group Agreement:

- Participation from everyone is encouraged
- Speak from your experiences and use “I” statements
- The intention is to listen graciously to understand, rather than to judge
- Take care of yourself
- Step up, Step back
- Agree to Disagree
- It is important to be open and willing to grow
- Expect non-closure (this workshop will not answer all your questions)
- This workshop will include encountering deep emotions-such as grief, sadness, woundedness , anger and fear
- Engage fully, be present
- Expect to feel uncomfortable
- Be willing to make mistakes

Vocabulary List

- Implicit Bias-the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. (Invisible) Causes us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age and appearance. Good news: malleable.
- Explicit Bias- attitudes and beliefs we have about people on a conscious level. (Visible) Expression arise as a direct result of a perceived threat. The individual draws group boundaries to distinguish themselves from others.
- Non-Judgemental Listening- not judging on the bases of personal standards: beliefs, values and morals.
- Paraphrase- act or process of restating for clarity. Important that you use the same language.
- Cognitive Dissonance- feelings of discomfort that result from holding two conflicting beliefs. There is inconsistency between beliefs and behaviors.
- Confirmation Bias- (myside bias) searching for information that confirms preexisting beliefs. Selective information gathering of evidence that supports what you already believe while ignoring or rejecting evidence that supports a different conclusion.
- Power- power is the ability to define reality and to convince other people that it is their definition. Power is the capacity to act, the ability to enforce decisions, set standards.
- Learned Helplessness-when people come to believe that the events and outcomes in their lives are mostly uncontrollable.
- Agreement Reality-(consensus reality) if a group believes/agrees that this is the reality, it does not have to be true
- Trauma-past experience that negatively impacts your present life that is threatening to your survival

Symptoms of Trauma

- Have difficulty concentrating
- Experience sleep problems (difficulty falling or staying asleep)
- Find yourself hyper vigilant (feeling constantly on-guard)
- Over-react to noises
- Find yourself irritable, angry and experiencing outbursts
- Feel detached or estranged from others and your daily life
- You feel numb or spaced out, unable to care or to love
- Feel less interest and pleasure in activities
- You do not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a long life

Personal Awareness

Reflective/contemplative process

Influences- internalized expectations, biases, judgements and prejudices

FOO,COO, ROO, Media: TV, News, magazines-**Socialization**

(We gather information from individual experiences and link it to our perceptions, expectations, pain, anxiety.

Rigid patterns ingrained: reactivity)

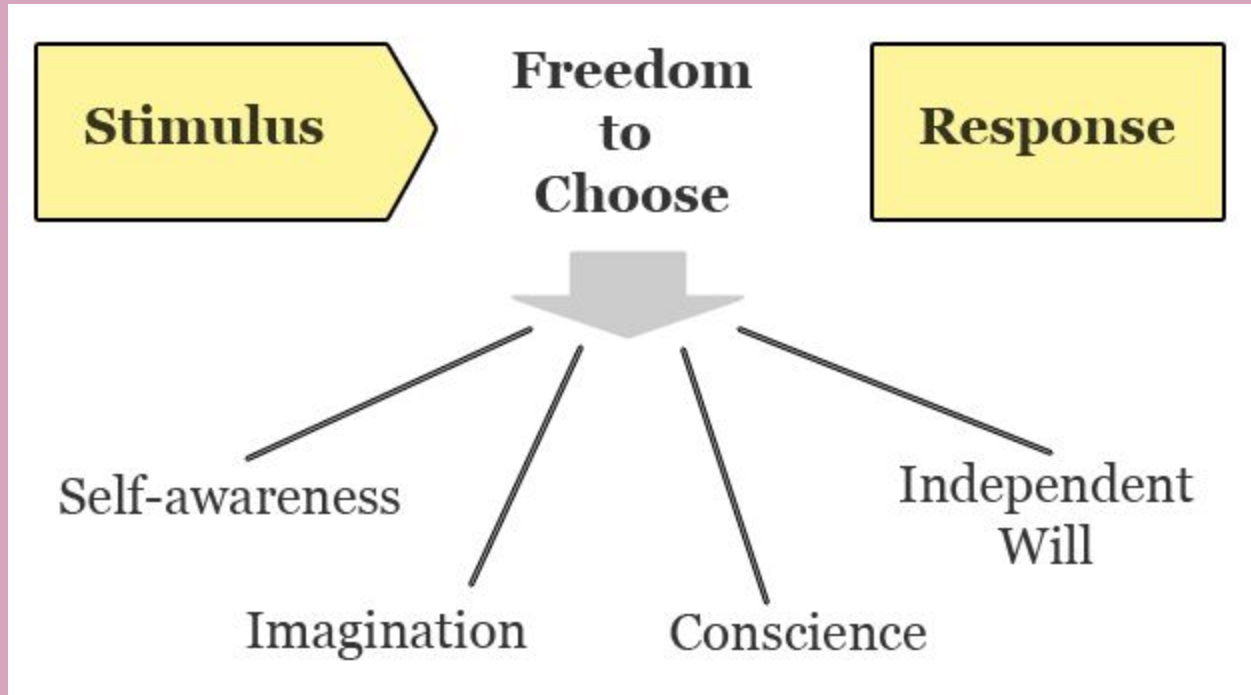
Mental Habits- lens through which we see and interpret our world

- Habitual state of mind
- Defines our basic view of the world and of others
- We are often unaware of our mental habits
- They are unconscious and go unexamined
- We are driven by them and most times limited by them
- Impacts our ability to understand and respond positively

Impact of Mental Habits- status quo (agreement reality-the way we perceive a culture or group of people)

- Selective perception: seeing things only one way, while discounting all evidence of the contrary
- Overgeneralizing-taking a single event and using it to describe/predict patterns (always/never)
- Mind reading- attributing the worse motives/intentions to another to explain why they have done something
- Jumping to conclusions-concluding the worst beliefs are valid
- Exaggerations- trivial fact is mistaken for a catastrophe
- Idealization-believing things “should” be a certain way, everything short of that is wrong/bad
- Personalization- taking things personally

Freedom to Choose



Systemic Awareness

Ownership and willingness to transform

(systems are setup to fix individuals not institutions)

Are your biases getting in the way of shifting the paradigm, changing the system. How do your biases show up in the stories you tell?

Everyone in the system has to consciously/unconsciously agree to support the system for it to continue.

You will not be able to transform the current system with the same tools used to create it: apathy, silence, judgements, biases, etc.

How are your actions, language, biases, inaction supporting the current system?

How much are you willing to invest in transformation. In other words, you will have to put some skin in the game.

Examples: Assessment Process, Individual Education Program/Plan, Special Education, Disproportionate Disciplinary actions, Language choices, etc.

Commitment to Transform Systems

Sample Letter

Hi,

Today, Ronnie (not real name) was at lunch and although he did not have cheese in his lunch he was witnessed by our adult lunch room supervisor playing with some cheese from another student's lunch. Then right after lunch a fifth grade boy--a very honest and credible student--reported that Ronnie and another boy were throwing the exact same color and kind of cheese that he was seen playing with in the lunchroom, into the toilet and plugging the toilet.

When I asked Ronnie about it he completely denied doing anything wrong in the bathroom.

I am so disappointed that Ronnie did not tell me the truth and I am worried that this is his attitude when caught committing an infraction. I need to have consequences for this and with field day coming up I am considering him missing part of the field trip.

Can you please talk to Ronnie tonight and let him know that lying about something is a far greater infraction than the original poor choice with the bathroom. He can come tomorrow and talk to me. Please let me know if you have questions.

Interim Principal

Elementary School

Social Awareness

Interpersonal Skills (relationships with people)

Emotions-ability to recognize own/others

Self-Regulation-consistent with deepest values

Motivation-reasons you act in a particular way (what is the payoff for you)

Empathy- the feeling that you understand and share others experience/emotions
(don't have to understand exact situation to be empathetic- sorrow, grief is universal)

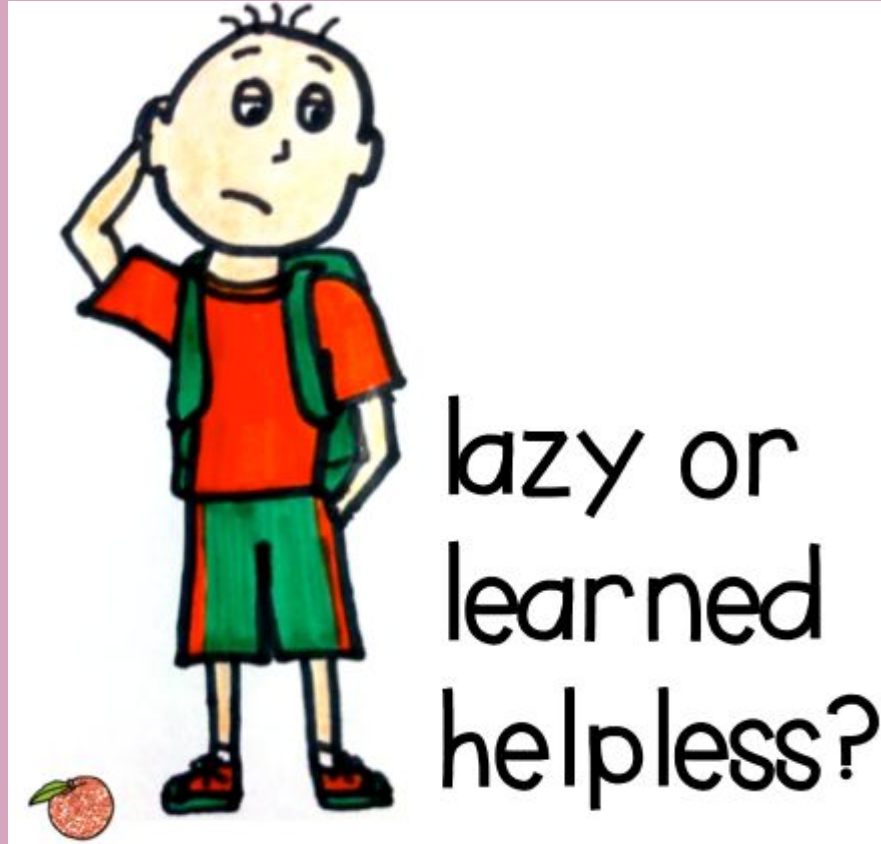
Social Skills-skills you use to communicate: verbal/non-verbal

How do you respond to crisis: fear, anger, frustration, rage, silence, aggression?

How much of the meaning you make of what happened is rooted in past assumptions and thoughts?

What does what happened say about you?

What Meaning Do You Make of What You See?



Psychological Effects of Trauma

- Overwhelming sense of terror
- Helpless and isolated
- Erosion of community, peace and safety
- Preoccupied with survival
- Family- how do they define family



Physiological Effects of Trauma

- Anxiety and hypervigilance make it difficult for children to concentrate
- They become unresponsive and disconnected from themselves and others
- They live in a state of constant fear, ready to defend or protect themselves



Cognitive Effect of Trauma

- May have difficulty understanding and following rules
- Children of trauma often fail to develop a framework for learning
- Unable to explain the reasons behind emotional outbursts
- May have difficulty understanding and following rules



Social-Cultural Effects of Trauma

- Unnamed unrecognizable pain/invisible wounds
- Who I am in response to how I'm defined
- Difficult to define a clear sense of self
- Devalued
- Culture of Shame Silence Secrecy
- Learned voicelessness
- No language for the pain
- High premium on respect, willing to die for it



Tangible Loss from Trauma

- Pain devalued
- Loss devalued
- Dignity
- Innocence
- Respect
- Unacknowledged, unmourned, ungrieved losses (CPS involvement, absent parental influence, Foster Care involvement)

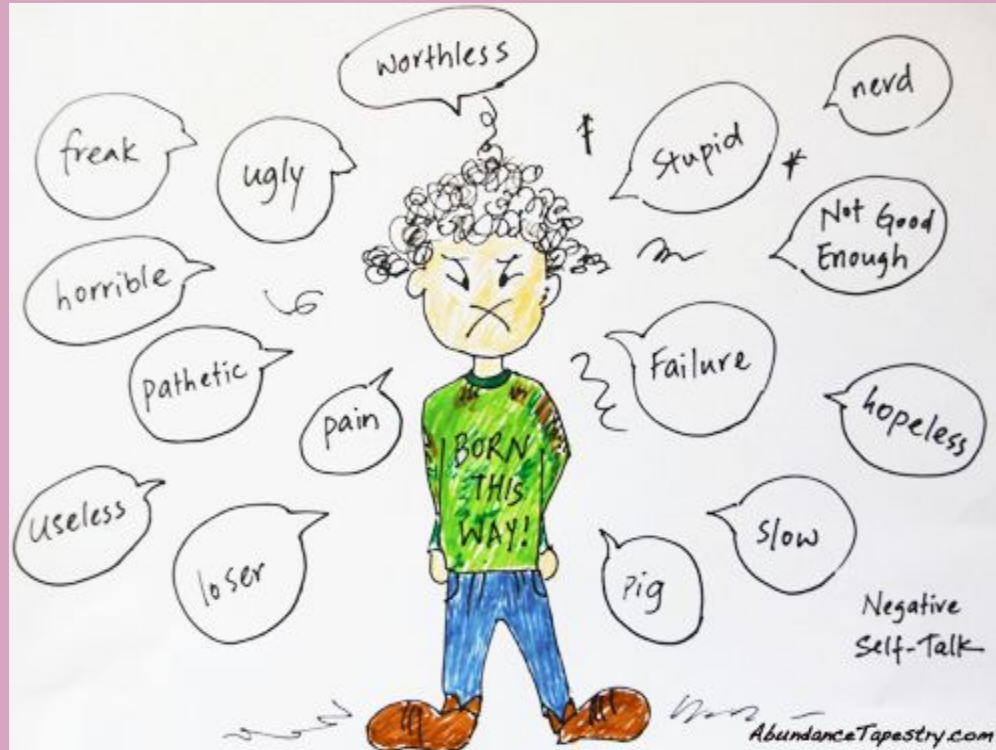
My loss does not matter to anyone.

I have had so many losses, that have not been acknowledged

Consequences of Unresolved Trauma

- Being misdiagnosed: ADHD, ADD, DD, CD
- Demonized for aggressive behavior without the full picture
- IEP- follows you throughout your school life
- Special Education-segregated educational setting (lower standards)
- Lifelong negative effects of misdiagnoses: negative self image, despair
- Repressed rage with no appropriate outlet
- Loss of hope
- Negative self image

Negative Self Image



Creating Trauma-Sensitive Responses

- Understand the reality of their lives
- Acknowledge that such violence exists
- Children need to know that teachers, administrators, caregivers can keep them safe
- Surround children with teams of caring non-judgemental competent adults
- Create a non-punitive learning environment
- Be consistent
- Keep your word
- If you make a mistake, admit it
- Be a positive role model for the students
- Be aware of your inner self, the one you think no one sees.

Build Positive Connections

