



Resilience- and Trauma-Informed Interactions with Youth

Nice to meet you!



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We acknowledge and honor the indigenous stewards of the land we are on. Maine is home to the sovereign peoples of the Wabanaki Tribal Nation. We exist on their unceded homelands.



Warm Up Brainstorm

Please respond to one or more of the following questions:

- What is the difference between trauma and stress?
- What is an example of an individual trauma?
- What is an example of a trauma that a group of people may experience together?
- What are the physical symptoms of trauma exposure?
- What are the emotional symptoms of trauma exposure?



Professional Sustainability

Caring for ourselves, and each other, while caring for others.

Resilience

All people are resilient and have the ability to heal following trauma.

Coping & Strength

Problematic reactions to trauma can be coping resources that helped individuals survive.

Support

Support and supervision are critical for those who help others.











Many Terms: Overlapping Concepts



ACE are experiences that may be traumatic to children and youth during the first 18 years of life and include ten categories under abuse, neglect and household challenges.

Trauma is more broadly defined by subjective experiences.

**A
C
E**

| Abuse | Neglect | Household Challenges | |
|---|---|--|--|
|  Physical |  Physical |  Mental Illness |  Incarcerated Relative |
|  Emotional |  Emotional |  Mother treated violently |  Substance Abuse |
|  Sexual | |  Divorce | |

**T
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A**

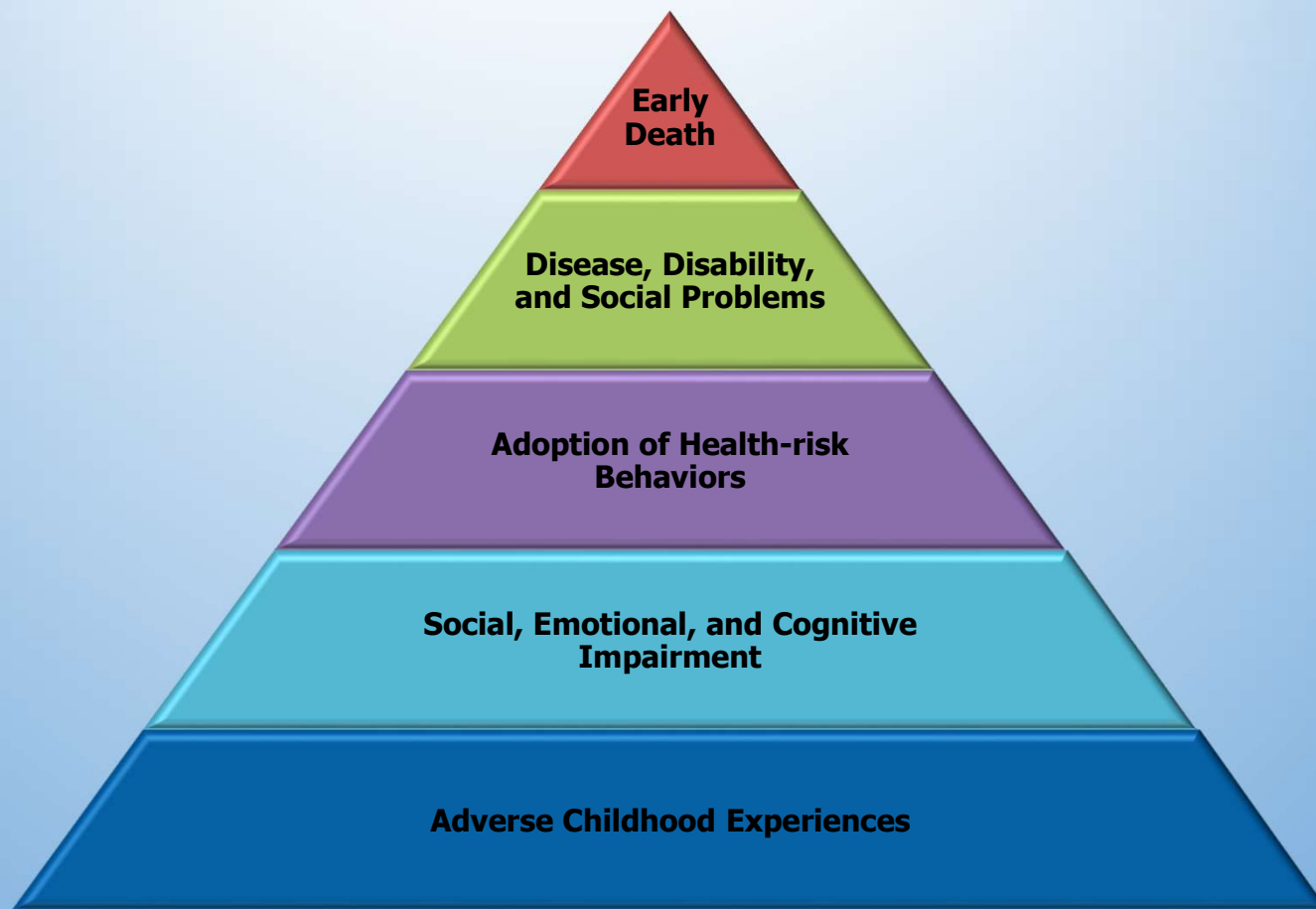
ACEs not included in the traditional measure:

| | |
|---|--|
|  Bullying |  Teen Dating Violence |
|  Peer to Peer Violence |  Homelessness |
|  Death of a parent |  Witness violence in community or school |

Death



Conception

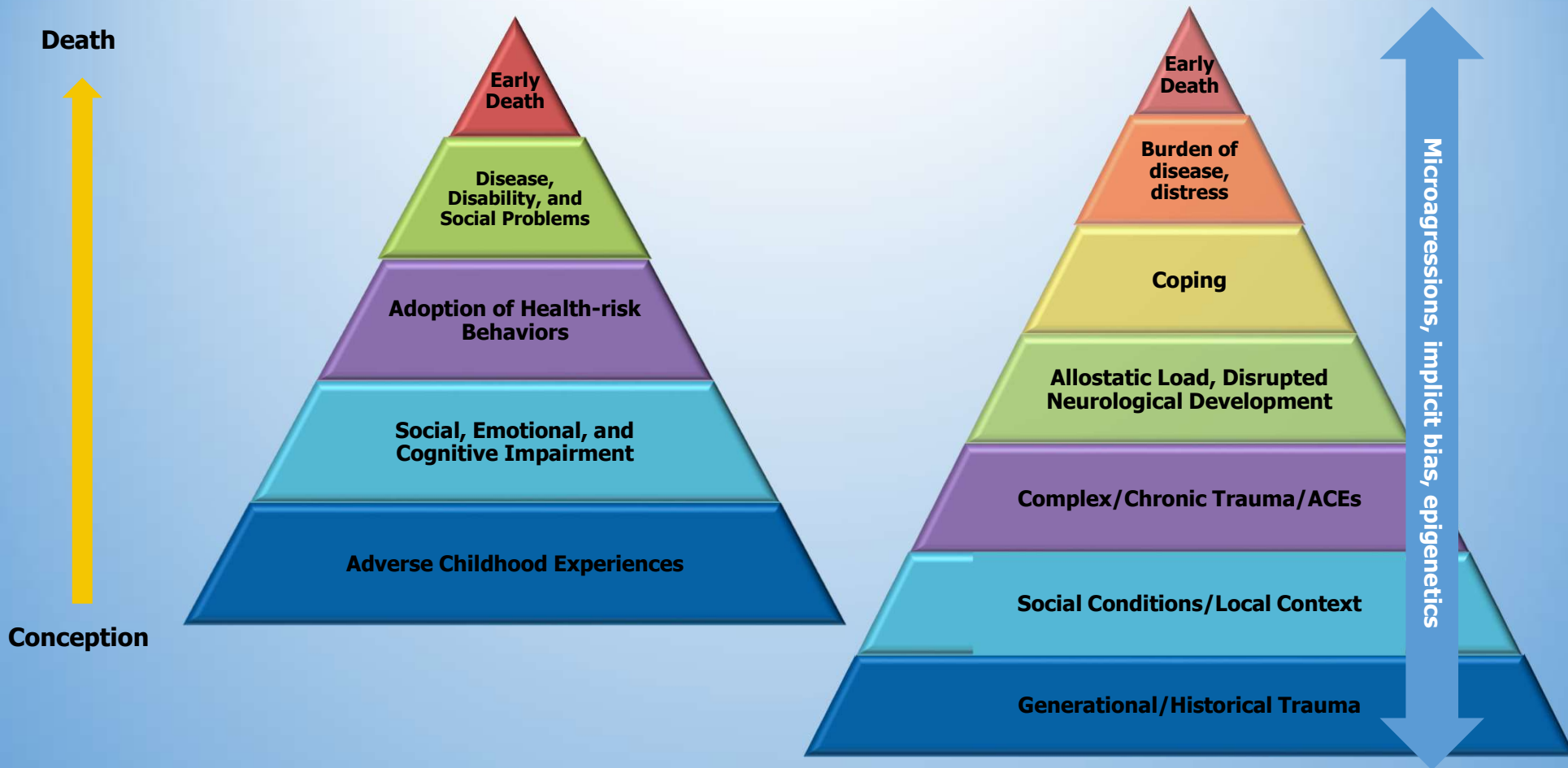


3 Realms of ACEs

Adverse childhood and community experiences (ACEs) can occur in the household, the community, or in the environment and cause toxic stress. Left unaddressed, toxic stress from ACEs harms children and families, organizations, systems and communities, and reduces the ability of individuals and entities to respond to stressful events with resiliency. Research has shown that there are many ways to reduce and heal from toxic stress and build healthy, caring communities.

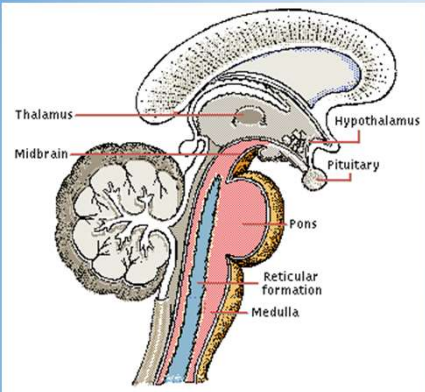


Figure 1. 3 Realms of ACEs. ACEs occur at the household, community, and environmental levels. Created by ACEs Connection, this graphic can be downloaded and used freely from the following URL: <https://www.acesconnection.com/g/resource-center/blog/3-realms-of-aces-handout>.





The Brain

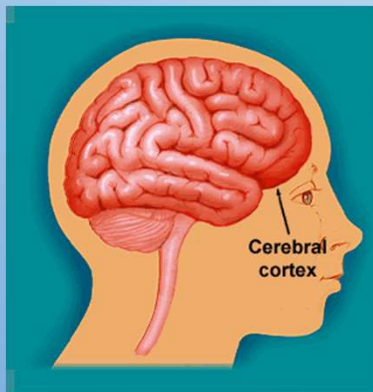
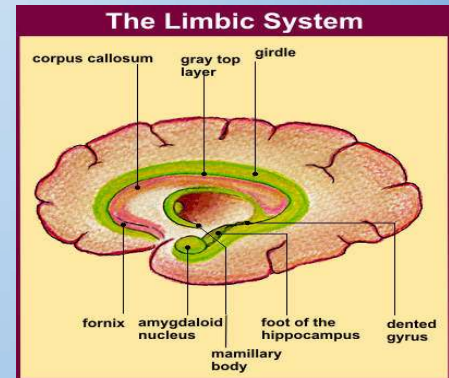


Instinctual or Doing Brain: Brain Stem

- Everything is NOW!
- Keeps us safe and alive
- Fight, Flight, Freeze

Emotional Brain: Limbic System

- Site of emotions
- Site of memory storage
- Automatic reactions:
 "first alert" alarm system in
 times of stress and crisis



Rational or Thinking Brain: Cerebral Cortex

- Has a sense of linear time
- Is conscious and alert:
 Observes, anticipates
 Plans, responds
 Makes logical decisions

The Brain and Stress

Stressful
Event:
Release
Cortisol



Fight



Flight



Freeze



Submit

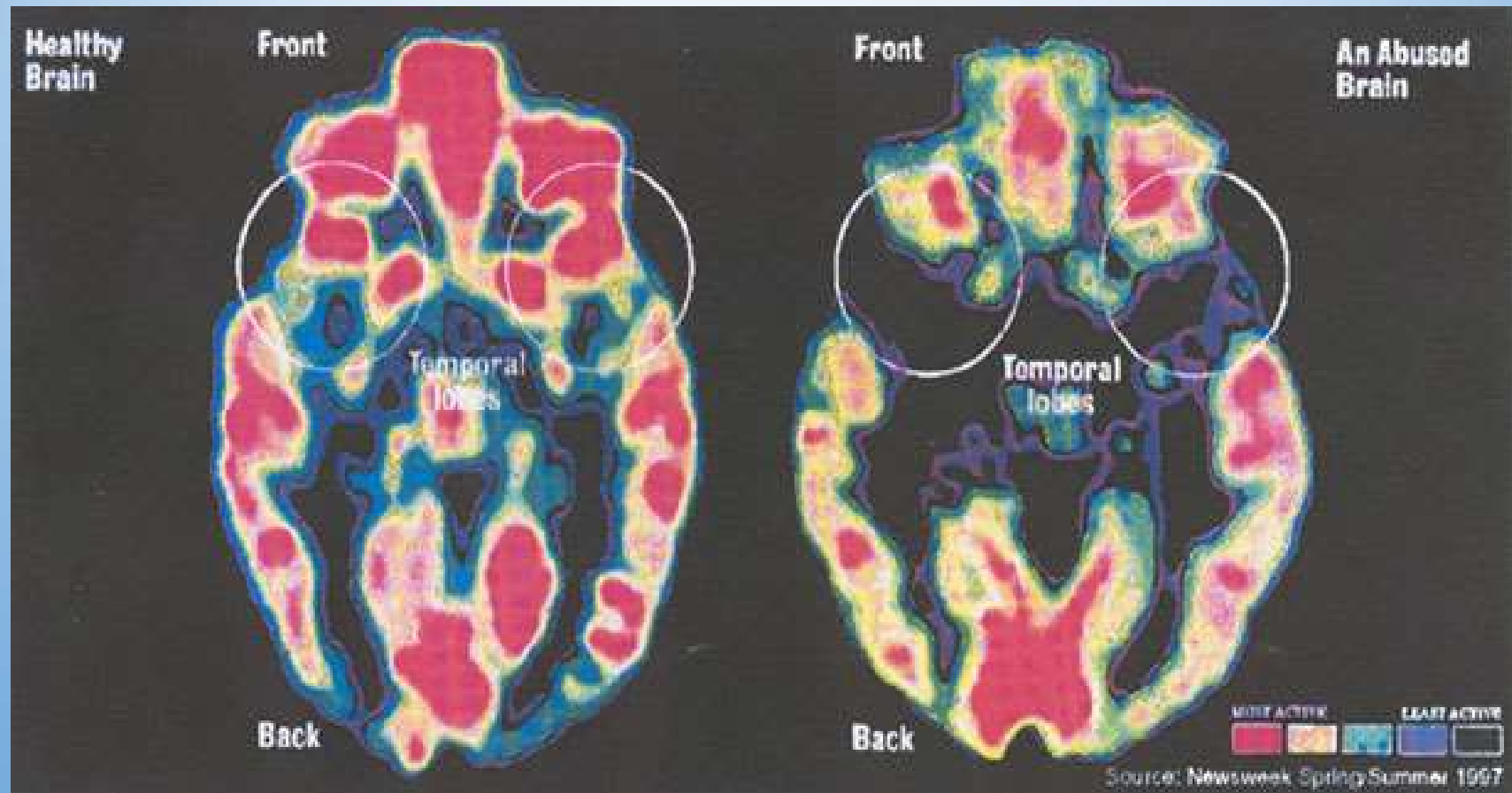
Trauma

Return to Normal:
Cortisol Regulates

OR

**Stay in Fight, Flight,
Freeze, or Submit:
Cortisol Levels
Remain High**

Child Maltreatment and the Brain





Non-Trauma View

Trauma View



Think about an invisible backpack...

BELIEFS ABOUT SELF AS AN INDIVIDUAL

BELIEFS ABOUT ADULTS WHO CARE(D) FOR THEM

BELIEFS ABOUT THE WORLD



Common Reactions in Youth

| FIGHT | FLIGHT | FREEZE | SUBMIT |
|--|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-blame• Poor peer relationships• Verbal/physical aggression• Disobedience | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distracted, inattentive• "Runner"• Isolation• Disconnected | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persistent concern over safety• Fear/Anxiety• Depression• Shame/low self-esteem | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Display exaggerated flattery or affection• Protective behaviors• Appeasing |

Impact of Childhood Trauma

Cognition

- Impaired readiness to learn
- Difficulty problem-solving
- Language delays
- Problems with concentration
- Poor academic achievement

Brain development

- Smaller brain size
- Less efficient processing
- Impaired stress response
- Changes in gene expression

Physical health

- Sleep disorders
- Eating disorders
- Poor immune system functioning
- Cardiovascular disease
- Shorter life span

Emotions

- Difficulty controlling emotions
- Trouble recognizing emotions
- Limited coping skills
- Increased sensitivity to stress
- Shame and guilt
- Excessive worry, hopelessness
- Feelings of helplessness/lack of self-efficacy

Relationships

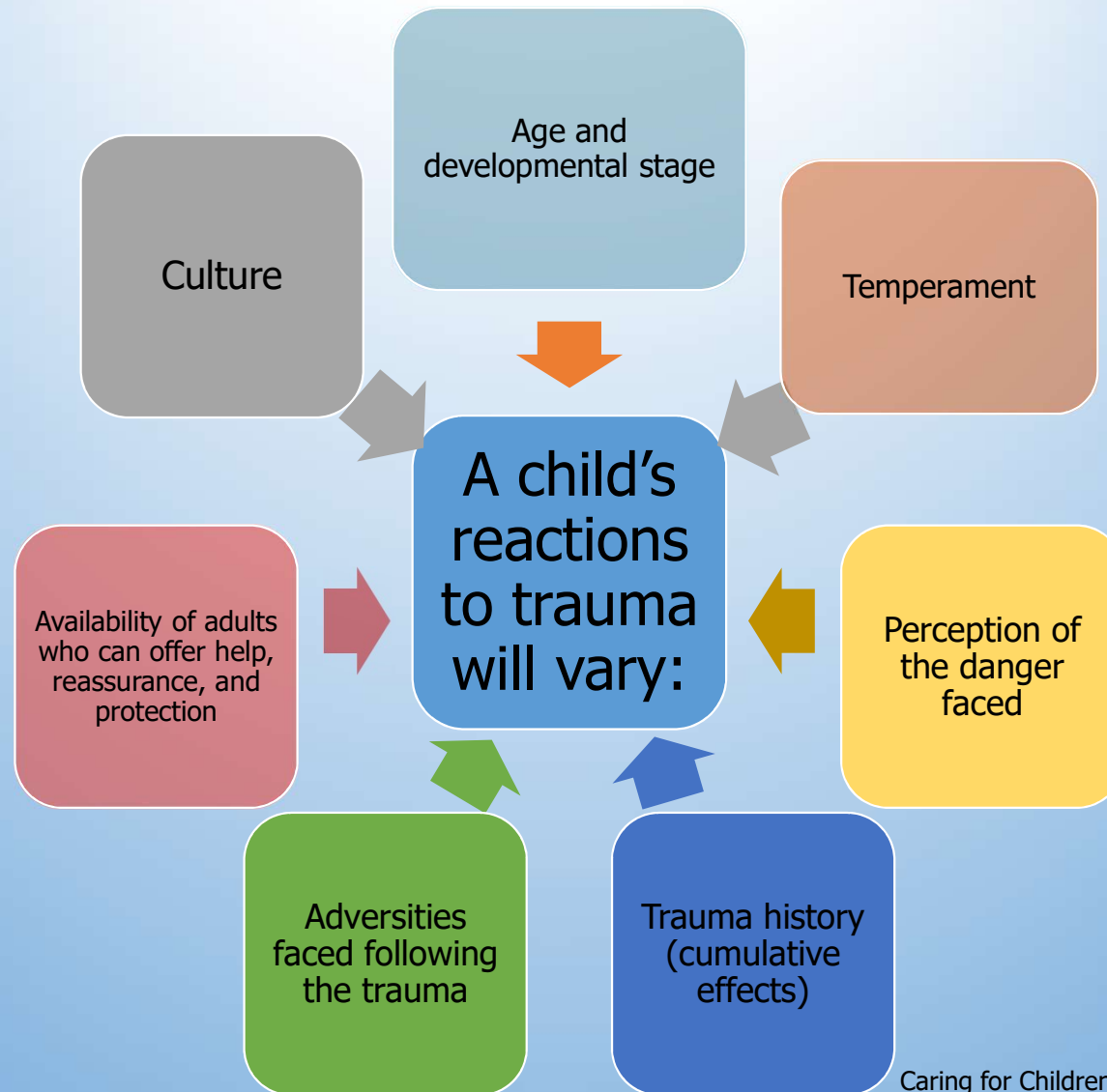
- Attachment problems/disorders
- Poor understanding of social interactions
- Difficulty forming relationships with peers
- Problems in romantic relationships
- Intergenerational cycles of abuse and neglect

Mental health

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Negative self-image/low self-esteem
- Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
- Suicidality

Behavior

- Poor self-regulation
- Social withdrawal
- Aggression
- Poor impulse control
- Risk-taking/illegal activity
- Sexual acting out
- Adolescent pregnancy
- Drug and alcohol misuse



Children's emotional and behavioral reactions to trauma can be challenging.

Behaviors are not always calculated or conscious and youth may act out for a variety of unconscious reasons:



- To reenact patterns or relationships from the past.
- To increase interaction with a caregiver—even if the attention is negative.
- To keep people at a distance.
- To vent frustration, anger, sadness, or anxiety.
- To protect themselves.

The Push-Pull of Trauma Informed Care



Resilience



...is not only the capacity to thrive under stress, it is also the strength and ability of communities to provide those living within, with the things they need to adapt and thrive.

Protective Factors

Individual

- Cognitive ability
- Self-Efficacy
- Internal locus of control
- Temperament
- Social Skills
- Epigenetics

Family

- Family cohesion
- Secure attachment
- Interaction
- Social support

Community

- Positive school experiences
- Community resources
- Supportive Peers/Mentors
- Formal support
- Advocacy and policy development

Culture

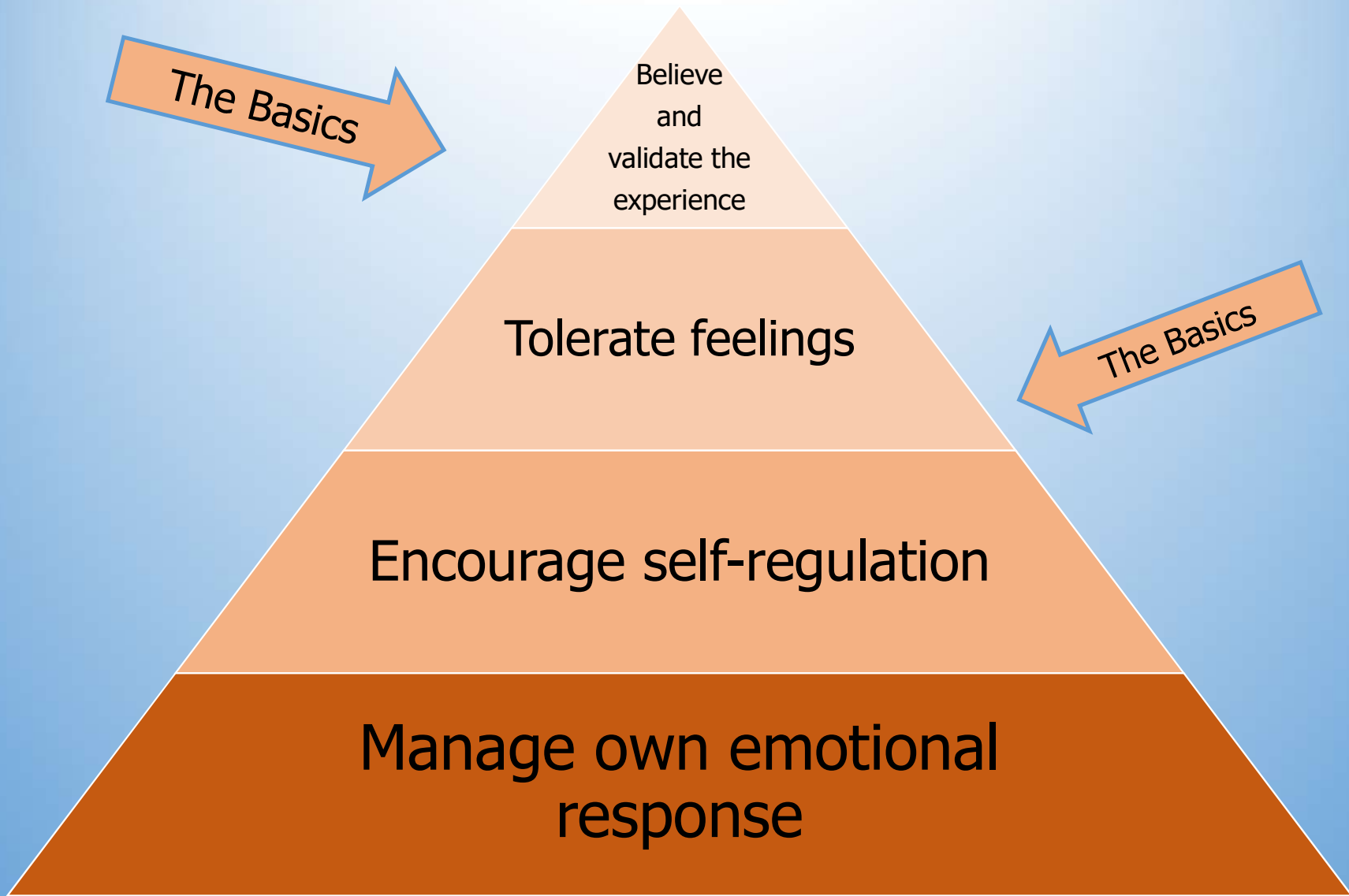
- Strong sense of cultural identity
- Spirituality
- Connection to cultural community
- Cultural talents and skills

Protective Factors

Factors that
can increase
resilience
include:

- Strong relationships
- Feeling connected
- Feeling nurtured and appreciated
- Feeling some control over one's own life
- Having a sense of belonging





LOW and SLOW

LOW

- Lower the volume and pitch of your voice.
- Keep a matter of fact tone regardless of the situation.
- Speak in short sentences with few questions.
- Talking WITH the person, not at the person.

SLOW

- Slow yourself down by taking slow, deep breaths.
- Slow down your rate of speech and pause between sentences.
- Slow down your body movements.
- Slow down your agenda and take your time.



Skill Development

Help identify
activators
and patterns

Help youth
understand
stress
responses –
normalize

Brainstorm
with you
what to do
“in the
moment”

Give youth a
role in
solving
problems

Instill hope
that with
practice, a
different
response is
possible

Adapted from: *What If Everything You Knew About Disciplining Kids Was Wrong?* Lewis (2015)

The Building Blocks of Resilience

Competence

Confidence

Connection

Character

Contribution

Coping

Control

School Level Prevention Strategies:

IDENTIFY

- When we know who is impacted or at-risk we can better understand triggers and patterns

BE CONSISTENT

- Students benefit from knowing what to expect
- Clear and simple rules benefit everyone

ACCOMMODATE

- Consider appropriate accommodations or modifications
 - Ex. Taking a break, trying again, calming down techniques, practice cultural humility

Building School Community Resilience

RETRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

- What law/rule has been broken?
- Who did it?
- What do they deserve?
- Focuses on the one who harmed and the punishment they deserved

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- Who has been hurt?
- What are their needs?
- Whose obligations are these?
- Who has a stake in this situation?
- What is the process to involve stake holders in an effort to make things right?

Repacking the Invisible Backpack...

Empowered

Capable

Likeable/Lovable

Safe



Adapted From: Caring for
Children Who've Experienced
Trauma: Resource Parent
Workshop. NCTSN (2010)

The Push-Pull of Trauma Informed Care



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Resources

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

www.nctsn.org

Fostering Resilience

https://fosteringresilience.com/professionals/7cs_professionals.php

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services
Administration

www.samhsa.gov