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• If you need assistance, please type your comments and questions in the Q&A box
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Racial Trauma and Trauma Informed Schools

Dr. Jamie Freeny
Director, Center for School Behavioral Health
Mental Health America of Greater Houston
By acknowledging the priorities of mental health and wellness and incorporating trauma informed practices, schools can **build a firm developmental foundation** and help all students perform at their highest potential.

It is important to **recognize the impacts historical and racial trauma** have on education systems and students from historically marginalized groups and address these impacts to support student’s mental health and well-being.

It is critical to understand that there is a **direct relationship between adverse childhood experiences and academic performance**. Exposure to trauma can have a negative impact on all areas of child development: physically, cognitively, behaviorally, socially, and emotionally.

Additionally, trauma informed practices and a culture of mental health **redirects students from the school to prison pipeline**, reduces stigma related to mental illness, increases positive racial identity and contributes to students’ feelings of belonging and community.
Trauma-Informed Schools

Benefits

• Student physical, social, and emotional safety
• Understanding of the impact of trauma and adversity on students
• Positive and culturally responsive discipline policies and practices
• Access to comprehensive school mental and behavioral health services
• Effective community collaboration

Outcomes

• Significant improvements in behavior
  - Fewer suspensions
  - Fewer expulsions
  - Significant improvements in academic achievement
  - Decreased race/ethnic disparity gaps
  - Improved response to crisis

National Association of School Psychologists [Trauma-Sensitive Schools (nasponline.org)]

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
The Center’s Mission
To improve the prevention, early identification, intervention, and treatment of behavioral health issues among youths.

Emotional Backpack Training Suite:
- Children’s Mental Health
- Trauma 101: Trauma-Informed Classrooms
- Youth Suicide Prevention
- Trauma 102: Advanced Trauma-Informed Strategies
- Self-Care for Educators
Emotional Backpack Program: Core Components

✓ Practice empathy – active, neutral, and nonjudgmental listening

✓ Practice cultural responsiveness – understand historical trauma and include students’ cultural references in learning and service provision

✓ Recognize implicit bias - attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner

✓ Understand and promote equity - every child gets what they need

✓ Realize both the widespread effects of trauma, and the many pathways to recovery.
  • Interpreting behavior as communication, rather than judging a person based upon their behavior.

✓ Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma.
  • Understanding precipitating factors and address them as supportively and safely as possible.

✓ Respond with a trauma-informed approach.
  • Integrate into every aspect of the system in which you’re working.

✓ Resist re-traumatization by reducing the likelihood of triggers.
  • Understand how your response and the environment can either help or hurt the situation at hand.
Steps to Becoming Equitably Trauma-Informed

- Establish wide-spread understanding of the benefits of becoming trauma-informed and culturally responsive
- Prioritize educator mental and emotional wellness
- Understand existing student needs and disparity gaps in discipline and achievement
- Strategic planning by district and campus-level administrators
- Staff professional development training in mental and behavioral health
- Multi-tier system of support that includes access to services
- Prioritize the child over their behavior
Require all school district employees receive culturally responsive training in how to recognize and provide an appropriate, equitable response to signs of behavioral health issues in students – *redirect from school to prison pipeline*

Implement strategies to improve school disciplinary policies e.g. a) review school discipline policies and exclusionary practices, b) review and revise student codes of conduct to be equity-driven and c) conduct Equity Audits to review data on exclusionary practices and racial inequality among campuses - *redirect from school to prison pipeline*

Offer opportunities for families, students, and the community to receive culturally responsive education about signs of behavioral health concerns in students, as well as access to support groups – *reduce stigma related to mental illness*

Recruit and retain educators in K-12 schools who are Black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) by prioritizing teacher preparation, teacher autonomy, and equal pay – *contributes to feelings of belonging and community*
Cultivating Healing & Wellness in Schools

An environment that prioritizes healing and wellness promotes student learning and engagement in school and teacher enthusiasm and efficacy.

- Evidence-based social and emotional learning program
- Incorporate strategies to increase all student’s feelings of belongingness
- Provide ongoing validation and recognition for educators
- Practice self-care strategies for students and teachers
- Build positive interconnected relationships among teachers and staff
- Promote nurturing relationships between students and teachers

https://traumaawareschools.org/traumaInSchools
Warrior Well: Trauma Informed Practices in Schools to Cultivate Wellness

Art McCoy, Ph.D.
Saint Louis University Distinguished Fellow, Superintendent Emeritus, HHS IRP Geography and Poverty Fellow
Mental Health America Board Member
Grandmomma just died

There is no other family nearby

Feeling like Godzilla’s bride

Because every two hours, one of us expires from acts of violence and at a point during COVID-19, every hour one expired.

All I do is hide Empty inside. There’s no understanding these hard times

It doesn’t even help to get high

Go to school? Can’t. Go to church? Why. Don’t deny that even if I could, it wouldn’t help. There’s too much pain and too much pride.

Call it fate, but hate helped me just get by

But to my surprise

A new feeling has visited my mind

When alone late at night it seems justified

It is a suffocating feeling inside

It says, “I am your savior.”

God? No!

Suicide? Yes! Suicide.

V.U.C.A.

Volatility
Uncertainty
Complexity
Ambiguity
I am this person lost in the world,
And don’t know where to turn.
I am a girl wanting to achieve in anything I do.
I want to be treated like I exist. I want to be seen for more than the outer me. I want to be seen for the person placed inside of me. I feel like I’m alone in the World. I feel like there is no one out there in the world to run to when I feel like it’s the end of me.
Sometimes I want to run away to a place where no one can hurt me. Sometimes I feel like Life for me will never go right. As much as I try it will never go right.
What should I do if the problems I face won’t come up from the deep, dark place inside me? Who should I turn to if I can’t turn to the person that gave life to me?
Then who can I turn to?
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Need is so important -

- JSD 2 Homeless Shelters
- JSD 2 Food Grocery Hubs
- JSD 2 School Health Clinics
- JSD 5 Cs for ALL
  1. Computers
  2. Connectivity
  3. Caring Adults & Life Coaches and Educators
  4. College Credits up to AA Degree for students,
  5. Credentials – IRC and Jobs for HS students and for parents

JENNINGS’ WARRIORS WELL

It is our aim for all Jennings Students to be


SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
The top 20 elementary schools in St. Louis for math

The new Post-Dispatch public school guide makes it easier to compare schools on a variety of issues, including test scores. These are the 20 local elementary schools with the highest rate of proficiency on statewide tests on math. Statewide, the rate for proficiency in math is 48.6 percent. See our school guide to see how all the schools rate and compare teacher pay in our salary database.
JENNINGS, MO – The Jennings School District is celebrating a unique achievement: a 100 percent graduation rate.

"When you have such an awesome culture and climate you’re able to produce amazing things and that’s how we’re able to be here to celebrate a 100 percent graduation rate and 100 percent career-placement rate" said Jennings Superintendent Dr. Art McCoy.

Jennings High Principal, Dr. Rhonda Key says all 160 Jennings High School students have graduated and are headed to college, the military, a technical/trade program or already employed.

"The people, the process, and the procedure has produced a product we can be proud of and that’s when each student that enters this building as a ninth grade, we already looking at them as future employees outside of these walls” said Dr. Key.

Kevon Larkin is one of those students. He also received a $50,000 scholarship to attend college and will major in engineering and architecture at UMSL.

“I couldn’t do math” said Larkin. “I could do it but it was hard for me. So, I’m like I’m not going to college, I know they’re going to throw a math class my way I wasn’t going to take, but it was like if they could do it I could do it" he said.

Dr. Key says that can-do attitude is fostered at Jennings High when students walk in as freshmen. During their high school years, students become required to fill out at least two college application, apply for federal student aid and take the ACT.

“We are making a difference in that every child no matter what your zip code, should achieve” said Dr. Key.
Needs Assessments & School Based Health Clinics

**Students**
1. Alcohol and drug abuse
2. Teen pregnancy
3. Stressful or poor family relationships
4. Fighting or physical aggression

**Parents**
1. Stress and or frequent worrying
2. Stressful or poor family relationships
3. Alcohol and drug abuse
4. Teen pregnancy

**Teachers/Staff**
1. Attention deficit & hyperactivity
2. Stressful or poor family relationships
3. Alcohol and drug abuse
4. Family substance abuse
Our Space: Today

Spot the J
Youth Center
Jennings Senior High School

Supporting positive opportunities with teens

Spot the J

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
Hope Houses to Address Homelessness

HOME FOR STUDENTS IN TRANSITION
Two Comfort Spaces in All Schools

The country may be divided on many things, but we can all agree on this: An idea that doesn't cost much and helps a lot of people is a great one.

As an antidote to the acrimony in our politics and social culture, I want to call out a few people who figured out creative ways to make a positive difference with relatively little money. When considering the return on investment on a societal level, it’s hard to beat programs that help children from low-income homes perform better in school.

Art McCoy, superintendent of the Jennings School District, has started many services to help students who face challenges living in high-poverty areas. It’s usually the human services schools need — hiring more teachers, specialists and therapists — that cost the most money. But the small stuff matters, too. Two years ago, the Jennings district created comfort spaces for students in each school, from elementary to high school. Each one required a cheap couch, a couple of bean-bag chairs and some squeeze toys that help relieve stress. The spaces gave students a place where they could take a minute to relax, calm down or talk to someone about whatever might be bothering them.

This year, the schools created a similar space just for teachers and staff. McCoy says the spaces are frequently used and appreciated. It helps improve the culture in the school and gives people a place to feel supported, he said.

Students who deal with difficult circumstances at home face additional stressors at school. And it can be tough on the teachers and staff who want to help them. Having spaces that feel less institutional in schools is a way to acknowledge that life can feel overwhelming at times, and it’s OK to take a break.
Lezley McSpadden plants new seeds in Jennings

By Sophie Hurwitz For The St. Louis American  Jul 19, 2017  0

Lezley McSpadden and her son Andre, 12, work in a garden in the Jennings School District that was planted and is being tended by Brown We Love Our Sons and Daughters Foundation and the St. Louis County Police.
Two Food Hubs for Free Groceries
ART Therapy K-12

EXPRESS SCRIPTS AND JENNINGS PARTNERSHIP
Learning and Earning Programs
Jennings students and police officers shoot hoops together to build trust, understanding

By Kristen Taketa • St. Louis Post-Dispatch  Aug 7, 2016  (1)

Officer Brandon McRary, with the St. Louis County Jennings Department, watches Trevion Donelson, 11, (legs), and Kyri Franklin, 8, in a two-on-two basketball game on Monday, August 1, 2016. The Jennings School District is supporting activities like summer basketball and boxing to improve relationships between its students and police. Photo by Christian Gooden, cgooden@post-dispatch.com
Memorandum of Understanding
Between School District and Police Department 2016-2021

ROLE OF THE SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER IN THE SCHOOL
1. The mission of the School Resource Officer program is to improve school safety and the educational climate at the school, not to enforce school discipline or punish students.
2. Building-level school administrators shall be consulted as to whether a SRO will be deployed to the school and shall participate in periodic performance reviews of the SRO.
3. The SRO shall meet with building-level school administrators, teachers, parents, and student representatives at least annually to discuss school safety.
4. The SRO shall be integrated into the school community through participation in faculty and student meetings and assemblies as appropriate.
5. The SRO shall conduct daily reports and submit monthly summaries of these reports to building-level school administrators, district-level school administrators, and the relevant law enforcement agency. Summaries shall include, for each SRO, the numbers and descriptions of all incidents or calls for service; names of school officials involved; student searches; student questioning; tickets, citations, or summonses; filing of delinquency petitions; referrals to a probation officer; actual arrests; and other referrals to the juvenile justice system.
6. Absent real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or school safety, and absent the situations described herein where formal law enforcement intervention is deemed appropriate, building-level school administrators shall have final authority in the building.

DISTINGUISHING MISCONDUCT HANDLED BY SCHOOL OFFICIALS FROM CRIMINAL OFFENSES HANDLED BY POLICE
School Resource Officers are responsible for criminal law issues, not school discipline issues.
8. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety, incidents involving public order offenses including disorderly conduct; disturbance of assembly; trespass; loitering; and fighting that does not involve physical injury or a weapon, shall be considered school discipline issues to be handled by school officials, rather than criminal law issues warranting formal law enforcement intervention (e.g., issuance of citation, ticket, or summons; filing of delinquency petition; referral to a probation officer, arrest).
9. Students shall not be arrested at school, except where a child poses a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety; or a warrant specifically directs the arrest of the student in a school; in all other instances the execution of an arrest warrant shall be undertaken at a location other than a school.
   a. School principals shall be consulted prior to an arrest of a student where practicable.
   b. The student’s parent or guardian shall be notified of a child’s arrest as soon as practicable.

RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF STUDENTS
10. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety, a School Resource Officer may conduct or participate in a search of a student’s person, possessions, or locker only where there is probable cause to believe that the search will turn up evidence that the child has committed or is committing a criminal offense.
   a. The SRO shall inform school administrators prior to conducting a probable cause search where practicable.
   b. The SRO shall not ask school officials to search a student’s person, possessions, or locker in an effort to circumvent these protections.
11. A school official may conduct a search of a student’s person, possessions, or locker only where there is reasonable suspicion to believe that the search will turn up evidence that the student has violated or is violating either the law or the rules of the school, and the search is justified.
   a. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety, a school official shall not ask a SRO to be present in such a search.
12. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety, a SRO may question or participate in the questioning of a student about conduct that could expose the child to potential involvement or arrest only after informing the child of his or her Miranda rights and only in the presence of the child’s parent or guardian.
   a. The SRO shall inform school administrators prior to questioning the student where practicable.
   b. The SRO shall not ask a school official to question a student in an effort to circumvent these protections.
13. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety, a school official shall not ask a SRO to be present or participate in the questioning of a student that could expose the student to potential involvement or arrest.
14. Strip searches of children by either school officials or SROs shall be prohibited.
15. Absent a real and immediate threat to public safety, other physically invasive searches by a school official or SRO shall not be conducted on a child.
16. Absent a real and immediate threat to student, teacher, or public safety, a SRO shall not use physical force or restraints — including handcuffs, Tasers, Mace, or other physical or chemical restraints — on a child.

MINIMUM SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER TRAINING REQUIREMENTS
19. Every School Resource Officer shall receive at least 40 hours of pre-service training and 20 hours of annual in-service training on the following topics:
   a. Child and adolescent development and psychology;
   b. De-escalation and alternative approaches to student behavior; Positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), conflict resolution, peer mediation, or other restorative justice techniques;
   c. Appropriate responses to children with disabilities and special education issues, LGBTQ children, and those with limited English proficiency;
   d. Cultural competency and implicit bias.

PROMOTING NON-PUNITIVE APPROACHED TO STUDENT BEHAVIOR
20. The School Resource Officer shall be familiar with and trained in all programs adopting non-punitive approaches to discipline available in the school district. If a school has implemented a specific program designed to improve overall school climate or respond to student behaviors in specific ways, the school resource officers shall participate in all trainings associated with that program.
   a. Security officers should be notified when a student may require special treatment or accommodations because of disabilities.
From “I”llness to “WE”llness

Empowerment comes from moving from me, myself and “I” to “WE”.

Community Approach to Heal = Centers for Healing Engagement
**Trauma Defined and PCIT**

**Parent-Child Interaction Therapy (PCIT Innovation) & Tele-Therapy**

Trauma can cause permanent changes in the structure and chemical activity in a child's developing brain.

- **Trauma is the response** we have to experiencing or witnessing an event (or series of events) that threatens our life, our safety or our personal integrity.

- **Trauma is a serious issue** which happens as a result of physical, sexual or emotional abuse, neglect, violence, war, loss, disaster, and other emotionally harmful experiences.

"I was having major control, behavior issues with my 4-year-old son. I had no idea what to do or who to turn to. I was literally pulling my hair out and yelling constantly at my son. He was my biting, kicking, and screaming at me. Once connected with the Washington University study I met Ms. Gabby. She was wonderful. She is wonderful! I learned so much through her. I learned how to talk to my son differently praise him more, make demands and have them done without feedback. There is no more back talk, biting, fighting, kicking, or scratching. I am totally 100% grateful for Urban League for introducing me to Washington University."

TONYA M.

SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
**Physical Impact of Trauma**

**Brain Architecture**
Shrinkage in prefrontal cortex, corpus callosum, and hippocampus. Enlarged and more reactive amygdala. Resolution: safe and stable nurturing relationships, walk in nature, touch, exercise.

**Brain Waves**
Predominance of wrong brain waves in wrong part of the brain leads to anxiety, unable to concentrate, and seizures. Resolution: neurofeedback.

**Neural Pathways**
Need to ‘rewire’ our brain from old thought patterns and habits of mind, conscious, and unconscious. Resolution: neurofeedback, meditation/mindful action, positive self-talk.

**Neurotransmitters**
Vulnerable to addiction because dopamine transmitters/receptors not developed or damaged. Reduces motivation & focus, creates fatigue. Low serotonin causes depression.

**Hormones**
Prolonged high cortisol and ghrelin creates greater reactivity to stress. Long term damage to cells, structures of the body, and other hormone glands (thyroid). Resolution: oxytocin (“the love hormone”).

**Toxin Elimination**
Intestines and kidneys less able to eliminate toxins (slow gut or unbalanced flora). Resolution: salt baths, sauna.

**Nervous System**
Supercharged sympathetic nervous system, not engaged to bring back into balance. Resolution: yoga, breathing, or other physical/emotional regulation.

**Immune System**
Resistance to cortisol or lower cortisol creates unchecked inflammation. Cause of many diseases: asthma, arthritis, etc. Resolution: meditation/mindful action, walking in nature, diet, rest.

**Cellular Change**
Shortens telomeres which prematurely ages and reduces reproduction of cells & can cause cancer. Resolution: social support.

Epigenetics turns genes on or off in a adaptation to dangerous environments. Effect can last generations. Resolution: Safer environment (perception of).
“What do I do?”
Trauma-Informed Support for Children

1. **Create safety**
   If the child is overwhelmed, perhaps guide them to a quiet corner or allow them to decompress by visiting the restroom. If you are in a classroom, maybe you have a peace corner that you’ve outfitted with blankets or a screen so that it feels like a safe place.

2. **Regulate the nervous system**
   Stress brings a predictable pattern of physiological responses and anyone who has suffered toxic stress or trauma is going to be quickly stressed into hyperarousal (explosive, jittery, irritable) or hypoarousal (depressed, withdrawn, zombie-like). No matter how ingenious our regulation strategies, how artfully we get with tools, the child has to find what works for them.

3. **Build a connected relationship**
   This is the number one way to regulate the nervous system. When we are around people we care about, our bodies produce oxytocin, which is the hormone responsible for calming our nervous system after stress. If we stay connected, then eventually the calm discussion of each person’s feelings and needs can take place.

4. **Support development of coherent narrative**
   Creating predictability through structure, routines and the presence of reliable adults helps reduce the chaos a child may feel and allows them to start creating the kind of logical sequential connections that not only help them understand their own narrative, but are also the fundamental requirement of many types of learning.

5. **Practice ‘power-with’ strategies**
   One of the hallmarks of trauma is a loss of power and control. When someone is wielding power over you with no regard to your thoughts or feelings, the toxic shame of the original trauma may come flooding back. As adults, we should use our power well. If we model a ‘power-with’ relationship with children it’s our best chance of creating adults who will treat others with dignity and respect.

6. **Build social emotional and resiliency skills**
   Trauma robs us of time spent developing social and emotional skills. The brain is too occupied with survival to use much of its energy to learning how to build relationships and it’s a good chance we didn’t see those skills modeled for us. Learning to care for one another is the most important job we have growing up.

7. **Foster post-traumatic growth**
   We know that there are qualities and skills that allow people to overcome the most devastating trauma and not just survive but find new purpose and meaning in their lives. Problem solving, planning, maintaining focus despite discomfort, self-control and seeking support are all known to lead to post-traumatic growth and are skills we can foster in children.

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SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
These are the Key Ingredients of Learning:

1. Focus and self-control
2. Perception taking
3. Communication
4. Connection making
5. Critical thinking
6. Self-directed engaged learning
7. Take the challenge
Children and adults are asked to identify if their feelings and behaviors are related to being Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired (HALT).
Empowering Student Voice Method

The way to right wrongs is to turn the light of truth upon them. - Ida B Wells

Kids March Against Police Brutality

July 11, 2020
10:00 am - 12:00 pm
Meet at Jennings City Hall
March to Jennings High School
Speeches by Dr. McCoy and Students in the Jennings Social Justice Club

Social Distancing and Masks Required
6 Take Aways For Student Success

1. ADULTS MUST ADAPTIVELY CHANGE BEHAVIORS, ASSUMPTIONS, AND BELIEFS

2. MUCH OF WHAT WE NEED FOR TRAUMA SENSITIVE SCHOOLS ALREADY EXISTS. INTENTIONALITY IS NEEDED. IT IS A HEART ISSUE FIRST, THEN A HEAD AND HAND ISSUE.

3. ALL SCHOOL STAFF NEED TO BE INVOLVED IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REFLECTION PROCESS

4. HIGH QUALITY, RELEVANT INSTRUCTION TO ENGAGE STUDENTS IN ESSENTIAL LEARNING.

5. FOCUS ON STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH POSITIVE SCHOOL WIDE PLANS LINKED WITH POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT.

6. SCHOOL LEADERS MUST CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT WHERE IT IS SAFE FOR ALL TO SHARE AND REFLECT ON BELIEFS AND PRACTICES
SAMHSA’s mission is to reduce the impact of substance abuse and mental illness on America’s communities.

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www.samhsa.gov

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