

Trauma  
Informed Care  
(TIC) & Trauma  
Sensitive  
Schools (TSS)

*How to Build  
Resilience in  
Response to  
Trauma*

# Objectives

- Briefly review what is trauma
- Learn how trauma affects the brain
- Gain an understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) scores
- Identify ways to build resilience in ourselves and others

# What is Trauma?

When an individual's external and internal resources are inadequate to cope with any perceived external threat

An exceptional experience which powerful and dangerous events overwhelm a person's capacity to cope.

An intense and overwhelming experience that involves serious loss, threat, or harm to a person's physical and/or emotional well-being.

# The Impacts of Trauma

Focusing on academics while struggling  
with trauma is like “trying to play chess in a  
hurricane,”

Wolpow, Ray, [The Heart of Learning](#), (2009)

“A child whose behavior is creating issues is not trying to cause a problem. They’re trying to solve a problem.”

American Journal of Pediatrics, November 1956

“Kids do well if they can.”

Ross Greene, *Lost at School* (2008)

# REFRAME THE BEHAVIOUR

"KIDS DO WELL IF THEY CAN"

~ ROSS GREENE



"SEE A CHILD DIFFERENTLY, YOU SEE A DIFFERENT CHILD"  
~ Dr. Stuart Shanker

When kids exhibit challenging behaviour we can be "STRESS DETECTIVES"... finding and removing barriers.

- FIND STRESSORS → REDUCE THEM
- FIND UNMET NEEDS → MEET THEM
- FIND SKILLS DEFICITS → TEACH THEM

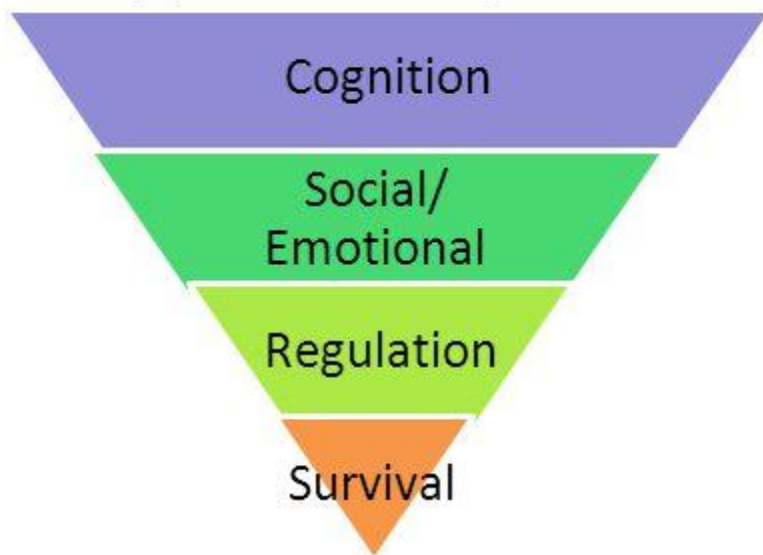
@kwfens62

# Trauma & Brain Development



Reptilian Brain ●  
Limbic System ●  
Neocortex ●

## Typical Development



## Developmental Trauma



# Impact on Student's View of the World

## Typical Development

- I live in a predictable and benevolent world
- I am worthwhile
- I am hopeful & optimistic about my future
- I have the ability to impact and change my life

## Developmental Trauma

- The world is not safe
- People want to hurt me
- I am afraid
- No one will help me
- I am not good/smart/worthy enough for people to care about me
- It will never get better
- I need to establish personal power and control



# Trauma's Effect on...

## Learning

- Organizing narrative material
- Cause and effect
- Taking another's perspective
- Attentiveness
- Executive Functioning
  - Planning, Organizing
- Engaging in curriculum

## Behavior

- Aggression
- Defiance
- Withdrawal
- Reactivity & Impulsivity
- Regulating Emotions



# Sources of Traumatic Stress

- Loss of a loved one
- Accidents
- Homelessness
- Community/School violence
- Domestic violence
- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Man-made or natural disasters

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# Triggers

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- Triggers include seeing, feeling, or hearing something that remind us of past trauma.
  - Triggers activate the alarm system.
  - When the alarm system is activated, but there is no danger, it is a false alarm.
  - The response is as if there is current danger.
  - In order to protect itself, the body uses increased energy to respond to danger in 1 of 3 ways:
    - Fight
    - Flight
    - Freeze

# Anticipating Trauma...What can we do?

## With Academics

- Anticipate mistakes
- Provide opportunities for practice and repetition
- Reteach when students miss the mark
- Reassess to determine what we need to revisit

## With Behavior

- Anticipate mistakes
- Provide opportunities for practice and repetition
- Reteach when students miss the mark
- Reassess to determine what we need to revisit

# Strategies for Creating a Safe and Supportive Environment

## Emotional / Psychological

- Greet everyone at the door with a smile
- Validate feelings
- Speak in a calm tone
- Provide immediate feedback “you’re on the right track”; normalize mistakes
- Show compassion & gratitude

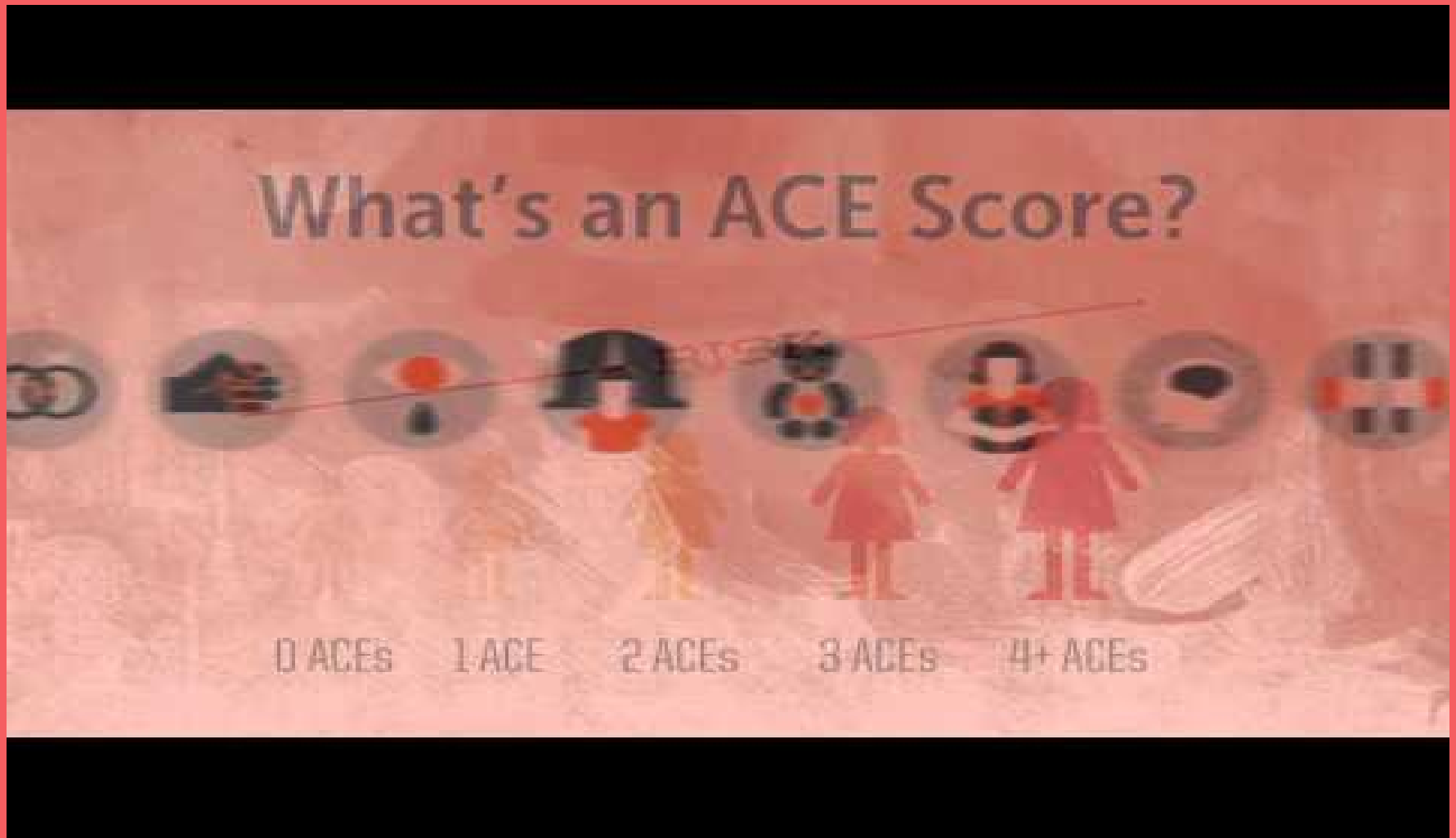
## Social

- Establish classroom norms
- Create opportunities for connections
- Interact with your students
- Model kindness, patience, and vulnerability

# Trauma, Self-Regulation and Coping Skills

- Biology of trauma impacts ability to regulate
- Trauma impacts the caregiver-child relationship
- To heal, children must feel safe in their bodies and they must have supportive relationships with loving caregivers who they can trust
- If coping skills are more developed, a child is much better equipped to handle stress

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE)



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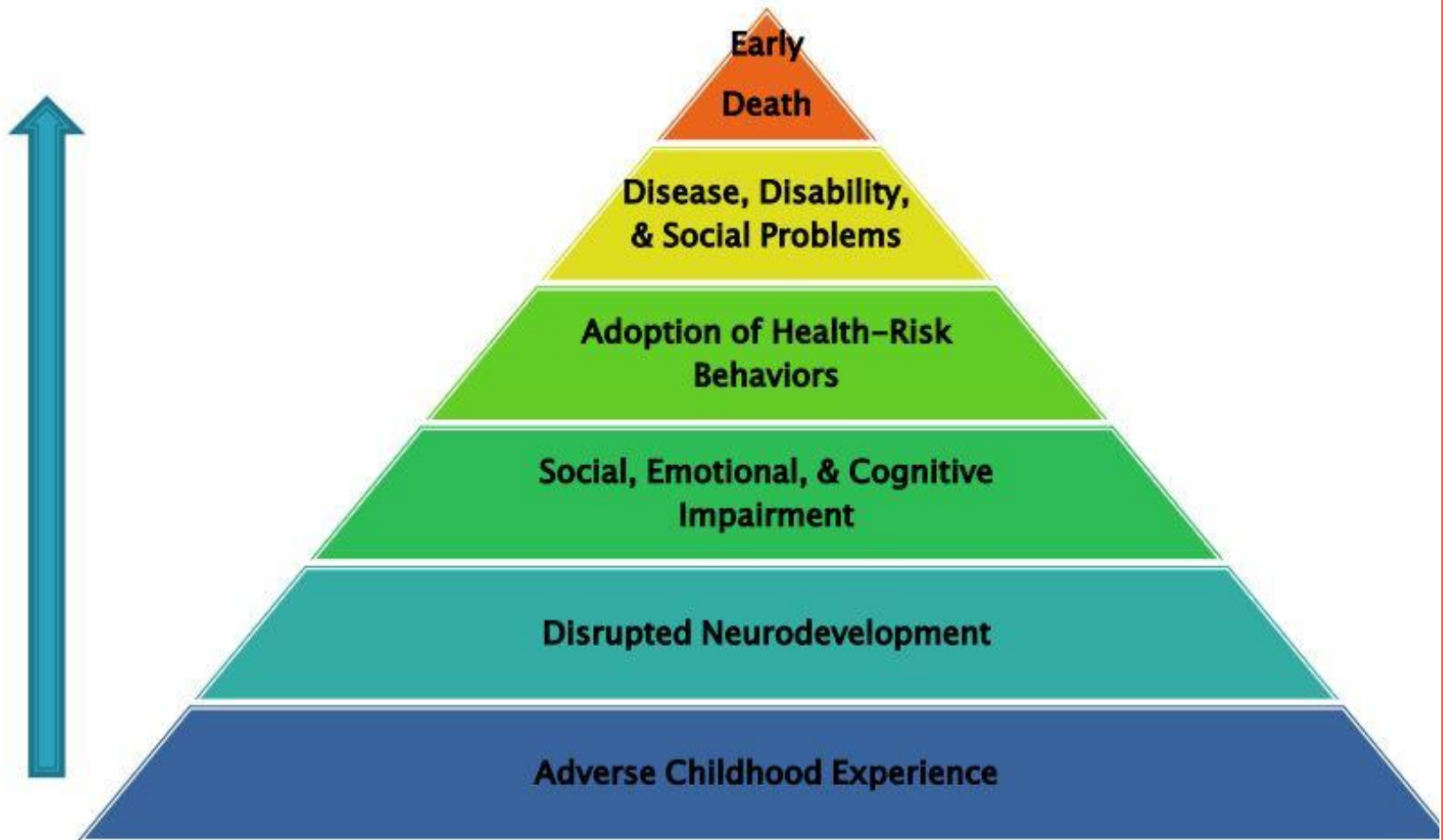
# Relationship Between Stressors and Adverse Health Outcomes

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**Compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4 or more ACEs were.....**

- Twelve times more likely to have attempted suicide
- Twice as likely to smoke, have cancer or heart disease
- 7 times as likely to be alcoholics
- 6 times as likely to have had sex before age 15
- 12 times more likely to have attempted suicide





# ACEs Conceptual Framework

# ACEs and School Performance

## Youth with an ACEs score of at least 2:

- Are 95 times more likely to qualify for special education (Delaney-Black, et al. 2002).
- Are 2 ½ times more likely to fail a grade
- Score 1 ½ times lower on standardized tests
- Have more receptive and expressive language difficulties
- Are 50% more likely to be suspended/expelled

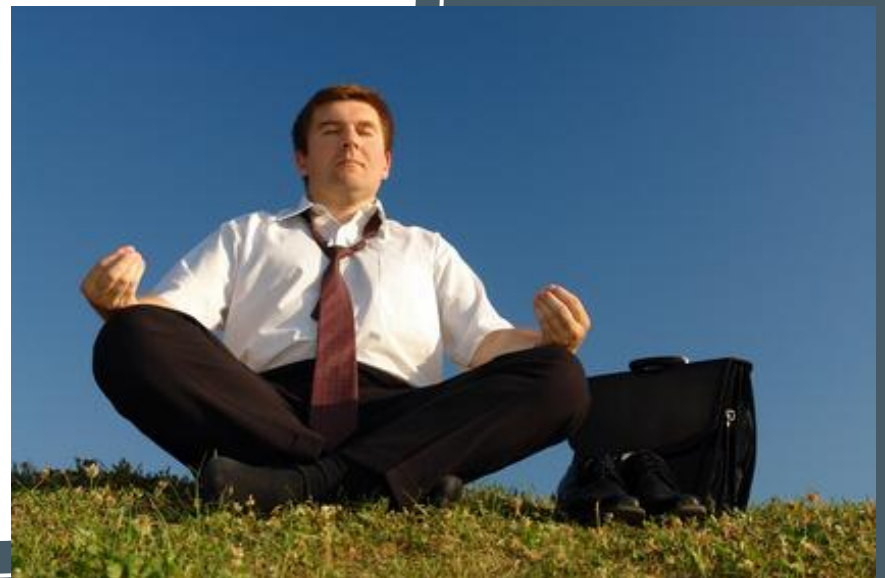
# Resilience

**Building the  
Human Superpower  
to bounce back through self-care**

# Pillars of Resilience



**MENTAL,  
PHYSICAL,  
SPIRITUAL  
AND SOCIAL  
PILLARS**



# Resilient Children

**“A resilient child is one who bounces back from adversity and continues to function reasonably well, despite continued exposure to risk” Gilligan, 1997**

## **Resilient youth share:**

- Self-esteem and self confidence
- Sense of self-efficacy
  - a belief in their ability to affect their own lives
- A range of social, problem solving approaches
- One significant adult
- External support system

**Practice good self care!**



# Taking Care of Yourself: *Self Care as a Professional and Ethical Responsibility*

- Be aware of your own needs and wellness.
- It is unethical not to attend to your needs so that you do no harm to those you serve.
- Ultimately you are responsible for promoting your own resilience.



# Things you can do for self-care...

## Physical Self-Care

- Develop a regular sleep routine
- Aim for a healthy diet
- Take your dog for a walk after work
- Get some exercise before/after work regularly
- Use a calming app to help you develop healthy habits

## Relationship Self-Care

- Attend the special events of your family and friends
- Prioritize close relationships in your life e.g. with partners, family and children

## Emotional Self-Care

- Write three good things that you did each day
- Go to the movies or do something else you enjoy
- Keep meeting with your social group
- Talk to a friend about how you are coping with work and life demands

## Spiritual Self-Care

- Meditate
- Do yoga
- Reflect with a close friend for support
- Download and learn mindfulness

# Under the Surface



**Knowing what you know  
now...**

**What will you do to  
make a difference?**

# Looking to Learn More...

## Presenter Information:

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## Obtaining Resources/Trainings for your District:

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