

Objective: Teachers will be able to practice and role play positive framing as a trauma-informed classroom strategy.

Notes: This Professional Development is suitable for groups who already have a baseline understanding of the effects of trauma in the classroom.

Total time: 35 minutes minimum

Materials needed:

1. Workshop Packet
 - a. Worksheet: Matrix of School Success Framework Strategies
 - b. Trauma in the Classroom Factsheet
 - c. Strategy Toolkit
2. Role Play Scripts
3. Role Play Feedback Forms

Timing	Actions	Materials Needed
3 min	Do Now Activity: Matrix of School Success Framework Strategies. Have teachers circle what strategies they have used and have them underline what strategies they would like to do.	Worksheet: Matrix of School Success Framework Strategies
10 min	Brief overview of trauma, including discussion about definitions, triggers, trigger warnings, and effects on different age ranges in Elementary Schools	Trauma in the Classroom Factsheet
2 min	Split group in half and transition to facilitated small groups	
5 min	Facilitators model positive framing scenario one as trauma-informed strategy and discuss instructions for scripted role-play in teacher dyads.	
10 min	Have one teacher read the role of “teacher” while the other reads the role of “student”. Then have the dyad switch roles. At the end of the role play, dyads should discuss how they should include this strategy in their own classroom.	Role Play Script – Scenario Two and Three
5 min	Ask participants to complete the survey that is the last page of their packet. Collect the surveys from all participants.	Post Surveys

What is Trauma?

Trauma is a single or series of events or a set of circumstances that overwhelms an individual's ability to cope appropriately. Events that are considered traumatic will involve feelings of fear or danger and threatened or actual physical, mental or emotional abuse.

The effects of these **Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs**, are often long-lasting and may lead to negative and unhealthy behaviors in adulthood. As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk of negative outcomes later in life.

Children who experience trauma may also experience negative impacts relating to their education. Trauma may lead to increased school absences and decreased reading levels and school performance.

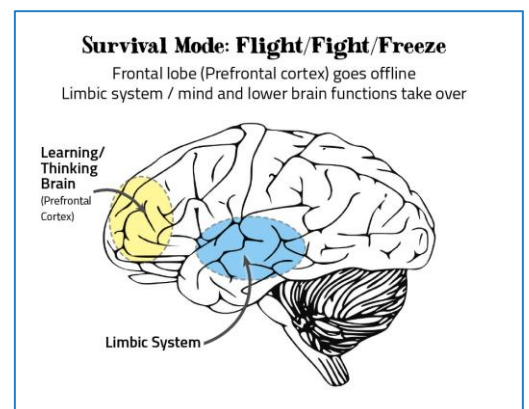
Traumatic Events

A traumatic event may be a single episode or could happen repeatedly over a period of time. Trauma is considered cumulative, as the effects of trauma on a child usually worsen if they are continually exposed to traumatic events. Some examples include:

- Sexual or physical abuse
- Neglect or abandonment
- Life-threatening illness or death of a family member or caregiver
- Incarcerated family member
- Accident
- Natural Disasters, like hurricanes and floods
- Medical problem and staying in the hospital
- Victim or Witness of Domestic violence
- Homelessness or temporary housing
- Victim or Witness of violence in the community or at school

Signs of Trauma

A body's natural response to any stress is **fight, flight, or freeze** which causes the nervous system to go into an elevated state and then returning back to its natural state. When a child has experienced **toxic stress** (trauma) however, the body perceives the elevated state as normal.



Triggers, or “threat-cues”, are situations that may set off a reaction by a child who has experienced trauma. Triggers may include loud noises, criticism, demeaning tone of voice, or activities that involve particular memories.

As a teacher, you may be able to notice **trigger warnings**, or situations that signal possible triggers. If a child is restless, short of breath, shaking, crying, using aggressive language, or clenching their teeth or fists, they may be particularly prone to reacting to triggers.

Effects of Trauma

Students who experience trauma may exhibit specific behaviors in the classroom. These effects may compromise developmental milestones of a child and often differ between students in lower and upper elementary grades.

Behaviors Indicative of Exposure to Trauma in Children, by Elementary Age Group	
<i>Preschool Students (Ages 3-5)</i>	<i>Elementary Students (Ages 6-12)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Separation anxiety or fear caregiver will not return ● Regression of mastered skills (e.g. language, problem solving) ● Tiredness from difficulty sleeping ● Absenteeism ● Overreactions to loud noises, physical contact, sudden movements ● New fears ● Questions about death or dying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Anxiety or worry for safety of self and others ● Decreased focus and concentration ● Withdrawal from activities ● Angry outbursts and aggression ● Absenteeism or declining school performance ● Inappropriate response to social cues ● Difficulty with authority

Worksheet: Matrix of School Success Framework Strategies

Adapted from NYS TEACHS: http://nysteachs.org/media/Matrix.of.School.Success.Strategies_8.24.16.pdf

Please take a moment to look through the strategies and related actions to help foster a trauma-informed classroom. **Circle** what you have done and **underline** what you would like to start implementing.

LOW and SLOW
 When implementing strategies in the classroom, be mindful of:
tone **body language** **volume** **space**

Essential Element	Strategy	Related Action
CREATING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT	Empathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively listen Normalize the experience Minimize self-blame Avoid giving advice
	Strengths-based approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliberately point out actions and characteristics that are positive, unique, or valuable Guide a student towards recognizing and using his or her strengths Redirect a challenging behavior by focusing on what you know the students can do well
	Predictability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be clear about expectations Follow through Keep a consistent routine Talk through changes
	Prevention rather than punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help the student identify triggers and create appropriate coping plans Teach or demonstrate what “should” be done Avoid punishment and isolation Reward positive behavior to encourage and build confidence Teach mindfulness Positive framing
	Welcoming building environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure that classrooms and hallways are bright and clean Don’t corner someone Consider having a “safe corner” or a “peace room” Greet students at the door Make sure transition times are supervised
	Connection to school community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Institute a peer buddy program Institute a student/adult mentorship program Deliberately connect students to extracurricular activities Use a team approach
	Partnership, not power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid power/control struggles Do not “corner” someone emotionally Help individual students find coping strategies for stressors

LOW and SLOW

When implementing strategies in the classroom, be mindful of:
tone **body language** **volume** **space**

FOSTERING SECURE ATTACHMENTS	Mentoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Be available ● Be consistent ● Make sure the student knows that he can go to you in a crisis ● Encourage self-motivation ● Help students set goals and create strategies for reaching those goals
	Help children identify safe people to talk to in the school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Post the names and roles of key school staff ● Let students know <i>how</i> to contact a safe adult ● Set clear expectations and boundaries
	Be patient and consistent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Give unconditional support ● Set high expectations ● Lead by example
	Family programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Host family nights or other events ● Make an effort to meet the caregivers where they are ● Don't engage in negative conversation about a family
	Helping a child to cope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Breathing for relaxation ● Positive distractions ● Promote leadership ● Encourage peer support ● Ensure children have a healthy diet ● Ensure children have plenty of exercise
	Use a team approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stress inclusiveness and shared purpose ● Share updates and successful strategies with other staff as appropriate
STRENGTHENING NON-COGNITIVE SKILLS (I.E SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL LEARNING)	Focus on "what happened to you" rather than "what is wrong with you"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ask more questions and listen to the answers ● Watch for patterns and triggers ● Keep in mind the student's history
	Encourage resiliency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Focus on strengths, not deficit ● Praise effort, not just outcomes ● Focus on "should" rather than "should not"
	Teach coping techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Talk about self-soothing ● Talk about self-regulation ● Help the student identify triggers and strategies ● Show students where/how they have control
	Empower students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Encourage intrinsic motivation ● Build self-confidence ● Promote leadership

ROLE PLAY ACTIVITY: PRE-K TO FIRST GRADE

Scenario One

Teacher: (at the board delivering a lesson)

Student: (humming, trying to talk to students on the rug)

Teacher: Let's see, I want to celebrate table 2 for sitting quietly and listening. Who else can we celebrate?

Student: (student continues humming)

Teacher: (moving toward the student) hmmm, table 3 knows that it's important to listen quietly so that we can hear and learn. (now looking at the student) Let's see if we can get table 1 to listen without any extra sounds too?

Student: (notices the teachers attention and stops humming)

Teacher: Excellent! Now we can continue!

Scenario Two

Student: (bouncing in their seat) Pick me! I know the answer!

Teacher: (too the class, not the student) Let me see a silent hand if you want to tell us the answer.

Student: But I know the answer!

Teacher: I see, one, two, three, four, five, six, silent hands, let see how many we can get.

Student: (loud huff, but stops calling out, raises hand quietly)

Teacher: (calls another student) can you tell us the answer?

Student: That's not fair!

Teacher: We want to hear from everyone, but if you can raise your hand quietly, maybe I'll call on you next time.

Scenario Three

Teacher: OK Kindergarten friends, all eyes on me.

Student: (continues coloring)

Teacher: I want to praise table 1 for putting the crayons down and giving me their eyes. Well done!

Student: (continues coloring)

Teacher: Table 2 is all ready to listen to for directions. I'm waiting for one more student at table 3 to put the crayon down and give me their eyes.

Student: (student drops the crayon but puts their head down)

Teacher: I see that most of us are ready to move on, so let's talk about what's next. (teacher gives instructions for next activity to the group and then goes over to talk to the student with their head down)

ROLE PLAY ACTIVITY: SECOND GRADE – FIFTH GRADE

Scenario One

Student: (as teacher is giving directions, student begins writing)

Teacher: I know that we're excited to write their stories, but I need to finish these directions before we begin.

Student: I know what I want to write! I need to write before I forget it!

Teacher: (walking over to the student) I like that I have everyone's attention, I'm waiting on one more person so that we can continue.

Student: (student drops the pencil)

Teacher: Thank you. (continues delivering instructions, speaks to the student individually)

Scenario Two

Student: (during line up a student is lingering near the cubbies avoiding the line)

Teacher: Thank you line leader for starting a strong line. I'm waiting on 5 more students to find their place so that we can go.

Student: (student doesn't move but looks at the teacher)

Teacher: (gestures for the student to come over) I see that we are mostly ready, just waiting for 2 more. I want to see who can wait quietly in line so that we can leave.

Student: (student comes over to the teacher but doesn't say anything)

Teacher: You seem to be upset, but can you join the line and let's talk about this when we get downstairs?

Student: (student nods and joins the line)

Scenario Three

Student: (student comes in at the start of the day and puts their head down after putting their things away)

Teacher: So we are off to great start today, I see that we are putting our things away and one table is already seated and reading their books well done.

Student: (student keeps their head down)

Teacher: Let's see if we can all get settled in our seats in another 60 seconds so that we can start the day. (walks over and taps the student)

Student: (students raises their head)

Teacher: Are you ready to get started? What's going on?

Student: (student puts their head down)

Teacher: Step to my desk so that we can talk about what's going on. (To the class) I see that we're almost there, once you're at your seat, I want to see you reading quietly like table 1.

SKIT REFLECTION

Please respond to the following questions after each scenario:

Scenario One

- 1) How did the teacher's response help to diffuse this situation in a trauma sensitive way?

- 2) What is another way that the teacher could have responded?

Scenario Two

- 1) How did the teacher's response help to diffuse this situation in a trauma sensitive way?

- 2) What is another way that the teacher could have responded?

WORKSHOP SURVEY

Thank you for taking part in our workshop! We would like your help in understanding how to improve the workshop, how much you learned, and if you think that you will apply what you learned in your work and life. Please take a few minutes to fill the following survey. Honest feedback is welcome!

1) What was the best part of the workshop?

2) What did you LIKE LEAST about the workshop?

3) How would you improve the workshop?

4) Please circle the number that best represents your knowledge and skills before and after this training:

Understanding the effects of trauma in the classroom:

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP					AFTER THE WORKSHOP				
Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Using trauma-sensitive strategy of Positive-Framing in the classroom:

BEFORE THE WORKSHOP					AFTER THE WORKSHOP				
Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high	Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very high
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

5) How likely are you to use the knowledge and skills that you learned in the workshop? (Please circle)

Not likely at all	Not likely	Neutral	Likely	Very likely
1	2	3	4	5

6) What challenges do you think you will have in using what you learned?

7) Any other feedback?