

FROM CHAOS TO CALM

Healing-Centered School

Participant Manual

ASSESS

Observe & Identify Patterns.
Inventory Strengths & Challenges.

MODEL

Be the thermostat, not the
thermometer. Model social &
emotional skills.

RELATE

Cultivate Joy. Celebrate Strengths.
Reinforce Positive Behavior. Invite
Curiosity.

STRUCTURE

Design, Plan, & Implement with
emotion regulation at the
foundation.

INDIVIDUALIZE

Develop targeted plan for
students who require
additional support.

RESPOND

Avoid Power Struggles. Co-Regulate.
Teach Emotion Awareness. Repair Harm,

WHAT IS EMOTION REGULATION?

The ability to recognize & respond to a full range emotions effectively. Emotion regulation allows for balance and is able to avoid remaining in extremes. Emotion regulation is also sufficiently flexible--it allows for both spontaneous reactions as well as the ability to delay the spontaneous reaction as needed. Emotion regulation may be conscious or unconscious.

Emotional DYSregulation is an inability to respond to a stimulus within the normal emotive range of a neurotypical individual. It creates a disconnect between a person's goals, response/emotional expression, and demands of the social environment.

WHAT ARE MIRROR NEURONS?

The physiological foundation for empathy. Mirror neurons do just that, they mirror the perceived emotions and actions of another person. This research also shows us that people are more interested in what you have to say if they first understand how you feel--their neurons are trying to match up with yours.

WHY COREGULATION?

Coregulation involves warm & responsive interactions that provide the support, modeling, and coaching children need to understand, express, and modulate their thoughts, feelings, & behaviors. (Murray et al. 2015) Coregulation is an implicit, non-verbal communication style that relies on affect recognition, facial matching, body gestures, and attunement. Coregulation supports a person to de-escalate in the moment and also supports a person's ability to learn to self-regulate overtime.

ASSESS

- **Map It!**

Review the list of potential trauma triggers for students and families provided in workshop 1. Determine where in your school building and/or classroom these triggers are likely to occur. Code these triggers and place them on a map of the school/classroom. Some of the most common include:

Student Triggers	Family Triggers
<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Loud, chaotic environmentsB. Physical touchC. Unfamiliar experienceD. Changes in routineE. Witnessing violence (bullying, fights)F. Emergency vehicles & personnelG. Being called out on behaviors in front of othersH. Being harassed or intimidatedI. Being asked to discuss difficult topicsJ. Feeling embarrassed, ashamed, incompetent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Being called to discuss a problem2. Feeling disrespected when entering school3. Participating in meetings with lots of school staff4. Left out of decision-making for your child5. Lack of privacy (school staff talking to you about a private matter in a public space)6. History of negative experience with education system7. Confusion & lack of clarity about child's education

- **Time It!**

Similar to physical mapping, create a timeline of the school day. Identify times during the day when triggers are more likely to occur.

- **Request Feedback**

Create pathways for collecting feedback about student & staff relationship to the school. When do they feel safe & supported? When do they need the most support? Are there times they experience heightened anxiety or distress?

MODEL

- **Model Social & Emotional Skills**

- Be consistent in following community expectations

- Teach emotion awareness & management through modeling your own emotion regulation

- Be explicit about what you are feeling & how it connects to your actions.

- Demonstrate self-regulation when you are experiencing an unpleasant emotion

- **Be the thermostat, not the thermometer**

- Set the tone, don't absorb it

- **Be mindful of voice tone, facial expressions, posture, and body language**

- Soft tones are calming, firm tones are directive, loud tones may be read as angry

- Making your body bigger or using fast movements may be experienced as directive, authoritative, activating or aggressive

- Making your body smaller or using slow movements may be experienced as calming or collaborative

- **Engage in restorative practices**

- Be the type of person you hope your students will be

- Respond to conflict & repair relationships

- Be the first to acknowledge when you've made a mistake and apologize for it

- Be collaborative in your problem solving

RELATE

- **Create a Welcoming Environment**

Ask students what name & pronoun they want to use in your class. Greet students by name. Notice how students are feeling & find time to check-in with them if needed. Ensure that illustrative content is culturally relevant

- **Get to Know Your Students**

Find out what their interests are. Ask them what they are good at or what they are doing when they feel their best. Ask non-academic questions about their lives and really listen to their answers. Reach out to the person that takes care of them. Set aside time to get to know students you struggle to connect with.

- **Celebrate them**

Identify their individualized strengths. Find ways to acknowledge and praise their strengths & skill sets. Celebrate small accomplishments and “baby steps.”

- **Cultivate Joy**

Have fun! Encourage their curiosities. Integrate art & play into curriculum. Laugh together.

- **Focus on the positive**

Choose your battles wisely. Spend more energy reinforcing positive behaviors than punishing unwanted ones. Be specific, name, & praise their behaviors. Have 5 positive interactions for every negative.

STRUCTURE*

- **Establish Universal Interventions for Trauma Response**

Consider how your school currently supports the interventions listed below. Identify practices you'd like to incorporate more fully into regular practice.

For each practice, rate your effort as to whether you:

1–Do this well 2–Could do better 3–Want to do it

	Educate school staff about trauma and its impact on students, staff, and schools (trainings, informal consultation, team meetings, student review and pre-referral meetings).
	Educate school staff about mental health and trauma-related mental health challenges.
	Educate school staff about cultural variations in responses to trauma.
	Support whole-school strategies for integrating trauma knowledge and trauma-informed principles in classrooms and throughout the school.
	Provide strategies for trauma sensitivity tailored to staff according to role (e.g., teacher, administrator, support staff).
	Support whole-school approaches to crisis, discipline, and behavior management that are aligned with trauma-sensitive principles.
	Support school staff in identifying and reducing potential triggers or re-traumatizing practices.
	Support universal programs for social and emotional learning in key areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and decision making.
	Support universal practices related to cultural awareness and responsiveness.
	Work with school teams to integrate a trauma-informed approach with other initiatives or frameworks, such as PBIS (positive behavioral interventions and supports).
	Support school staff and administrators in identifying and implementing individual and schoolwide strategies to support staff self-care.
	Establish and communicate clear crisis protocol that lay out clear protocol for responsiveness during as well as a supportive environment for debriefing after

*Adapted from: National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. Building Trauma Sensitive Schools Handout Packet. Retrieved 2018 from https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Building%20TSS%20Handout%20Packet_ALL.pdf

- **Establish a Baseline Structure**

- How do you foster a general sense of safety and calm in the community?
- Check the following boxes of what you are already doing to establish a safe structure for learning--what is working well? What could use your attention?

	Establish clear routines (routines are predictable & communicated in multiple ways)
	Ensure adequate staffing during times when students are likely to have difficulty
	Arrange the space to minimize potential trauma triggers (where students sit, amount of physical space, areas to take space when needed, avoidance of information overload on walls/in the area)
	Anticipate triggers & plan ahead
	Provide trigger warnings for potentially upsetting content
	Plan for times of uncertainty & transition, create systems for decreasing distress
	Ensure your responses to students, families & staff are calm and respectful (modeling!)
	Use positive behavior interventions (PBIS)
	Incorporate self-regulation practices into daily routine
	Plan times to check-in with yourself & take breaks to regulate your own affect throughout the day. If you are in leadership, plan times for the staff you lead to do this

From the top two checklists, which 2-3 strategies would you like to focus on improving? How might you go about shifting culture and structure?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

- **Provide Alternative, Planned Responses for Triggering Situations**

Part of trauma-informed care is anticipating and responding to triggers. Identify alternatives to reduce or eliminate survival brain responses in the tables below

Student Trigger	Alternatives
Loud, Chaotic Environment	
Physical Touch	
Unfamiliar Experience	
Changes in Routine	
Witnessing Violence	
Emergency vehicles/personnel	
Calling out student behavior in front of others	
Being harassed/intimidated	
Being asked to discuss difficult topics	
Feeling incompetent/embarrassed/ashamed	
Tests, Formal Assessments	

Parent/Family Trigger	Alternatives
Being called to discuss a problem	
Feeling disrespected	
Participating in meetings with lots of school staff	
Left out of decision-making	
Lack of privacy	
History of negative experiences with school systems	
Confusion or lack of clarity about child's education	

INDIVIDUALIZE

Create targeted plan for students who need additional support. In targeted interventions-- academic, SEL, etc. utilize a trauma-informed framework

For each practice below, rate your effort as to whether you:

1–Do this well 2–Could do better 3–Want to do it

	Consider trauma in all school-based evaluations or assessments and related impact on learning, behavior, testing results, diagnoses.
	Consider historical and racial trauma in assessments.
	Assess (or refer for assessment) for trauma in country of origin and resettlement and acculturation stress for students who are refugees.
	Offer evidence-based group and individualized interventions for addressing the effects of trauma.
	Provide and/or refer students to therapeutic services that are culturally specific.
	Be aware of cultural variations in trauma-related responses and experiences with the mental health and educational systems.
	Include a place for trauma-related considerations in all individualized plans (IEPs, 504s, formal & informal behavior plans) e.g., triggers, trauma responses, trauma-related supports.
	Adapt interventions to meet the needs of student groups as needed (e.g., students of color, refugees, LGBTQ youth).
	Incorporate opportunities for skill building to support resilience (self-regulation, coping, attachment) into your work with students.
	Educate children and families about trauma and its impact.
	Be aware of your own cultural attitudes, values, and beliefs and how they influence your work.
	Support a safe physical environment in your space.
	Ensure all interactions with students and families are conducted in a trauma-informed manner.
	Maintain a family-driven focus that encourages parent involvement.
	Minimize re-traumatizing practices (e.g., consider how you uphold confidentiality and how you address issues of safety or reporting in a trauma-informed manner).
	Be aware of and tending to vicarious trauma & how it is triggered by certain experiences in the school environment

RESPOND

Practice responding rather than reaction to students who are triggered and/or escalated.

- **D.N.A.**
Describe. Name & Notice. Acknowledge.
- **Avoid Power Struggles**
Choose your battles wisely. Utilize non-confrontational strategies for behaviors that are not unsafe. Address students privately.
- **Co-Regulate**
Manage your own emotional response so that you can facilitate the student's de-escalation. Use quiet tones and step outside with the student. Allow the student space and time to adequately calm from the escalation.
- **Be Firm in Response to Unsafe Behaviors**
In the case of physical or emotional non-safety, intervene immediately. Maintain a firm voice (not a loud one). State the reason for intervening in this way ie "it is my job to keep you safe," and be directive in how to proceed (for example "Put down the scissors. Take a step back. Refrain from using that derogatory word.").
- **Be Consistent**
Respond consistently and predictably to behaviors. When possible, remind students of possible outcomes or consequences before giving them. Provide consequences that are clear, consistent, and connected to the behavior. Avoid giving consequences when you are triggered or angry.
- **Build Repair into Structure & Culture**
Give clear opportunities for relational repair. Hold yourself to the same standard of repair that you hold students. Develop a consistent response to conflict that provides space for reflection, repair, and making a plan for the future. Refrain from labeling students and allow meaningful opportunities to build trust and understanding.

PRACTICE EMPATHETIC RESPONSE:

Elevator Empathy

(adapted from www.consciousdiscipline.com)

Adapt the response to one that is grounded in empathy utilizing components of DNA

SITUATION	UNHELPFUL FIRST RESPONSE	DESCRIBE, ACKNOWLEDGE, OR NOTICE
Student says "I hate this f***ing class"	"You're so disrespectful. Go outside"	You seem _____. You were hoping _____. (notice & acknowledge)
Student enters your room crying, shares something that happened at home	"Awww don't cry."	You're feeling _____. You weren't expecting _____. (notice & acknowledge)
Student says "why do we have to do this do now again?"	"We do this every day, you should know that."	"You were hoping _____." Right now we are doing _____. You have a choice, you can _____ or _____. (acknowledge)
Student throws her backpack	Stand over student, grab backpack	"Your body just did this..." (describe)
Student begins crying after seeing grade in class	"It's just one grade. You'll be fine."	"You seem _____. You were hoping _____." (notice & acknowledge)
Parent tells you it's your fault their child is failing	"Your child never finishes any work no matter what I do."	
Student bumps into another in the hallway. The other student postures to push them.	"He didn't do anything to you. Knock it off."	
Student leaves class three times during the block	"I'm writing you a referral."	
Student keeps getting up out of seat and walking around classroom.	"Sit down and stop moving."	

D.N.A. PROCESS

(adapted from www.consciousdiscipline.com)

Describe, Notice (survival state behaviors)

“Your (face, hand, arm, leg) is going like this [mirror their gesture]”

“You just walked out of the class”

“You’re walking with your head down like this...”

“You’re not able to speak right now.”

Pause: Support through co-regulation

Name the emotion (emotion brain)

“You seem _____.”

Acknowledge what the child wanted or the unmet need (executive functioning)

“You wanted _____.”

“You were hoping _____.”

“because of your need for _____.”

Assist student to move into problem solving

“You have a choice. You may _____ or _____ . What’s best for you?”