



Trauma Informed Classroom Strategies for All Students



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Overview of Trauma and ACES

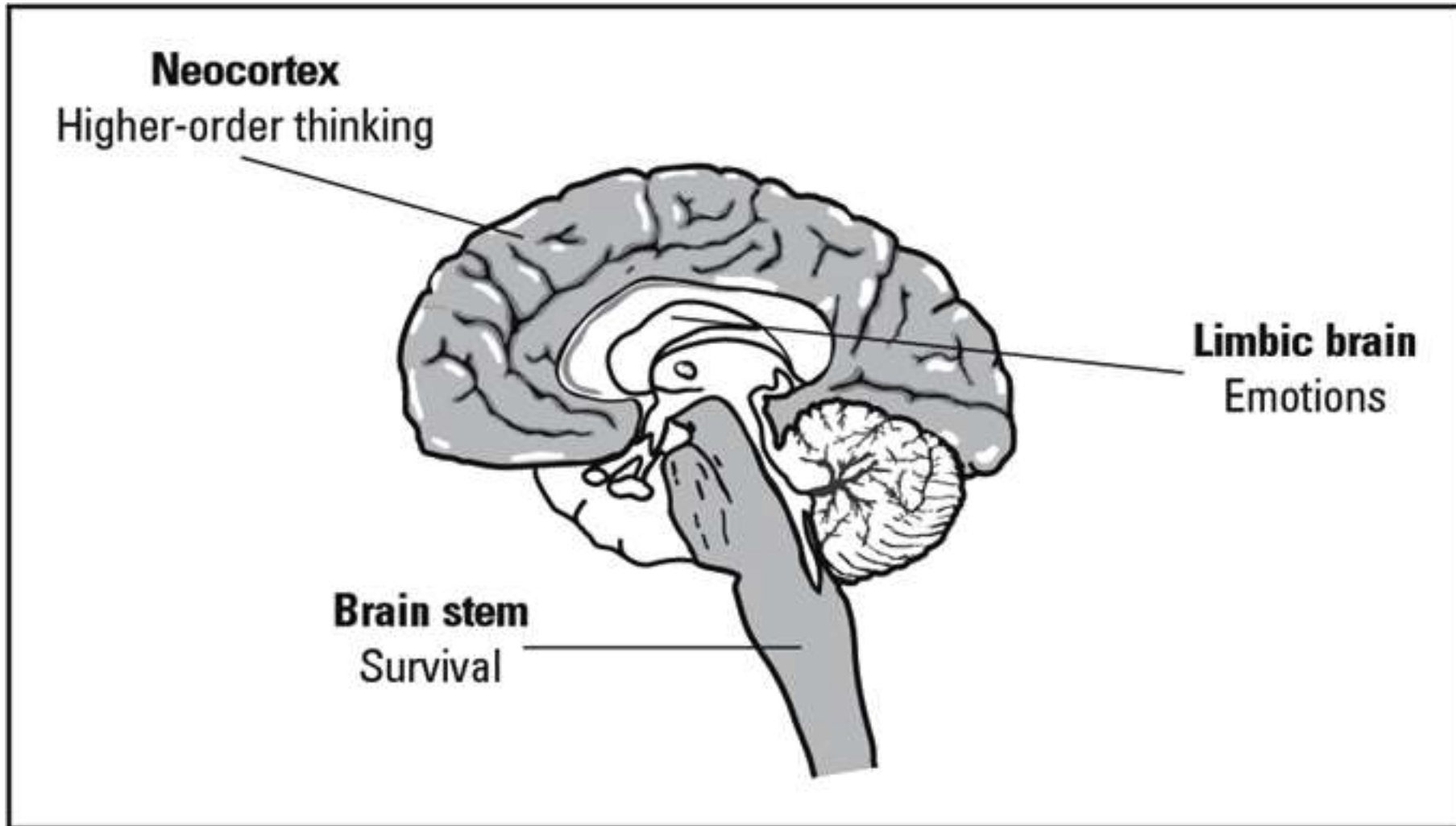


What is Trauma?

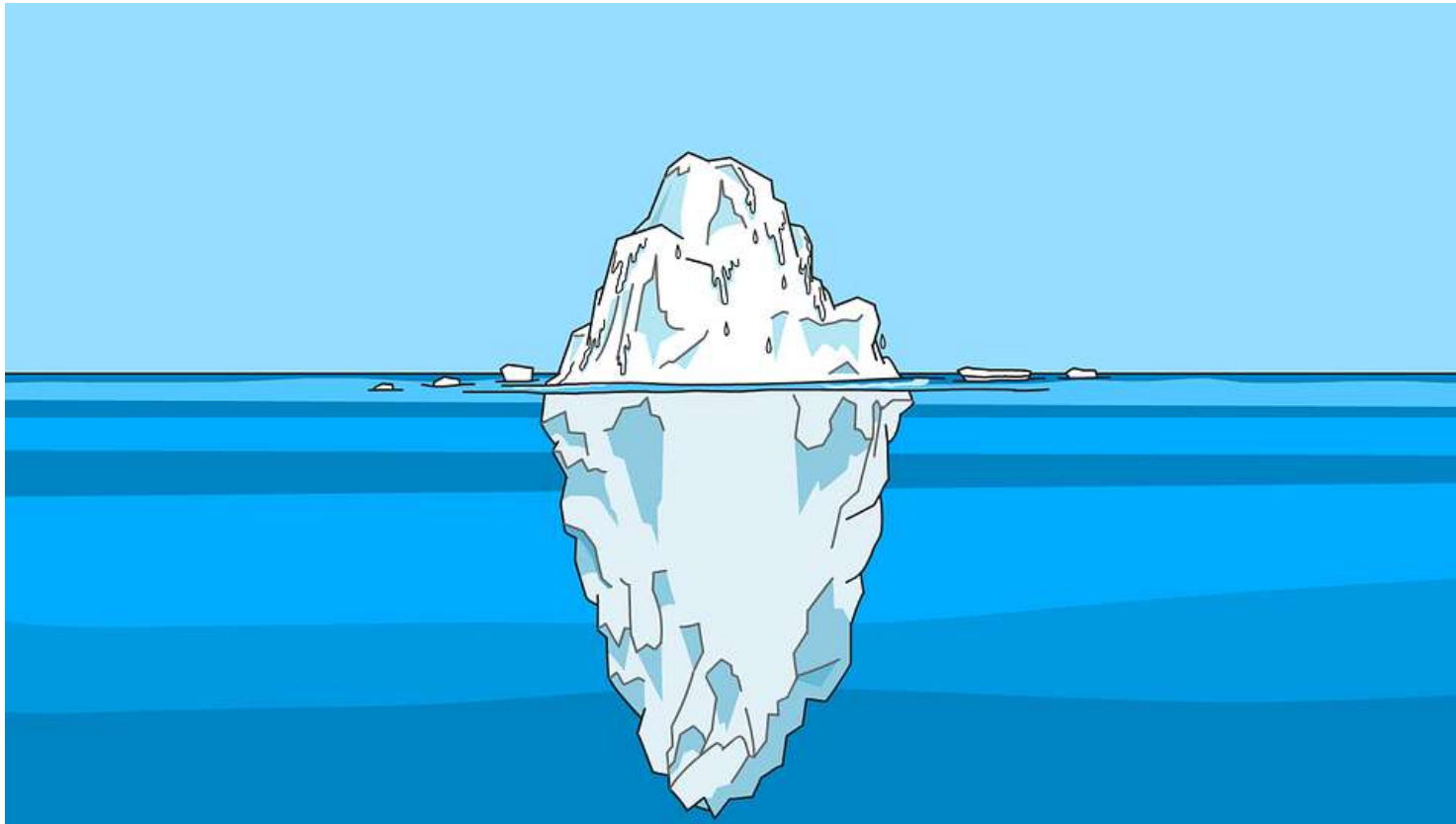
- Trauma is anything that changes the brain's development.
- Examples include:
 - Abuse, assault, natural disaster, death of loved one.
- Really, anything can lead to trauma depending upon the person and the circumstance.



The Brain Basics



Trauma in the Classroom



Adverse Childhood Experiences

Abuse

Physical

Emotional

Sexual

Neglect

Physical

Emotional

Household Dysfunction

Mental Illness

Domestic Violence

Divorce

Incarcerated Relative

Substance Abuse

There is no greater intervention
than a student having a safe
relationship.



Classroom and School Application



Multi-Tiered System of Support

Tier 3:
1:1 or 1:2 ratio.
The highest level
of support
offered outside of the classroom

Tier 2: Support provided in small groups.
Where we identify “lagging skills” and develop
plan to improve.

Tier 1: Typically, 85% of children will fall into Tier 1. This is
where you will use educational best practices using
children’s readiness level and positive behavioral supports.

Steps to Trauma-Informed Schools

- Four critical steps to implementing trauma-informed instruction:
 - Allow the student to de-escalate and regulate before solving the issue at hand.
 - Problem solving cannot happen in the moment. Designate a quiet space a student can feel safe de-escalating.
- It's never about the current issue. It goes much deeper.
 - Think about what is really driving the student's behavior. Listen and value the student's voice, ask how you can help, and respond with empathy.



Steps to Trauma Informed Schools

- It's a brain issue, not a behavioral issue.
 - My job is to help this student regulate, not simply behave. Incorporate regulatory activities into the culture of the classroom and support students in their ability to learn how to self-regulate.
- Discipline is to teach, not to punish.
 - Discipline should happen through the context of relationship. Use consequences that keep students in school and foster the building of trust and safety.



Relationship Building- Empathy



Safe Relationships

Perspective Shift

Old

- He's so defiant
- She is choosing this behavior
- What's wrong with him?
- I don't need to call home, they won't help
- I won't tolerate disrespect



New

- He is lacking social skills
- She is reacting with adrenaline/survival skills
- What happened to him
- Calling home may help give more insight
- How can I help them learn respect

Safe Relationships

- Clarify your role with the student.
- Establish yourself as a safe individual.
- Create an environment of respect.
- Talk about safety and what steps you will take to help the student be and feel safe.



Empowering Students

Power and Control

- Using threats
- Using intimidation
- Isolation
- Minimizing and denying
- Using position of power



Sharing Power

- We are in this together
- Second chances
- Choices
- Seeking a compromise

Types of Teaching Styles

Authoritarian

Reactive Non-Assertive

Pro-Active Assertive

Preventing Reenactments

- Students who have experienced trauma and attachment failures in life are primed to mistrust adults.
- Extreme reactions to reasonable requests.
- A mild criticism or perceived lack of attention may cause a triggered response.
- Students may not even know why they responded in the way that they did.
- Zero Tolerance policies have proven not to work.



Response to Students

Your Response is Critical

- Do not acknowledge the negative behavior
- Allow de escalation
- Let student know that you care and ask how you can move through together

Preventing Arguments

- “I understand”
- “I see”
- “Uh-huh”
- Silence
- “Bummer”

“You have a Choice”

- Repeat your need three times with clear directions.
- Determine in your classroom “major” and “minor” events.
 - How many minor events equal a major
- “You have a Choice”
 - “If you continue to argue, the following will occur: you will be placed on a behavior card for 2 days and your parents will be contacted”
- If needed, turn and walk away to prevent escalation.



Classroom Plan

- Assess school/classroom climate
 - Student surveys
 - Focus group
- Have a clear classroom plan for expectations of behaviors that is shared with students many times throughout the school year.
 - Classroom behaviors must include traits that students **should** be exhibiting.
- When a student does not meet expected classroom behaviors create a “Lagging Skills Plan”.
- Create with student the “Development of Skills Plan”.

Relationship Building

Relationship Building

- Greet students in the morning.
- Have a presence during passing periods.
- Connect with students in the cafeteria.
- Be the last contact after dismissal bell.

Examples of Connecting

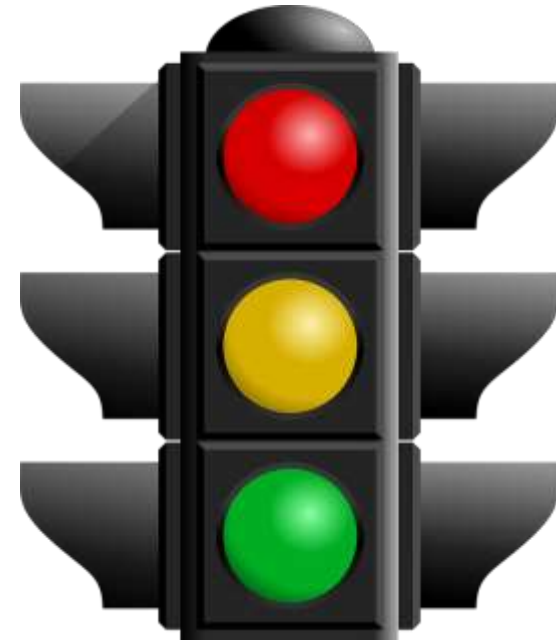
- “Good morning, Sammy! It is great to see you today.”
- “Sammy, you made my day coming to my class.”
- “Sammy, how was your weekend?”
- “Sammy, I am so appreciative of your positive attitude today.”



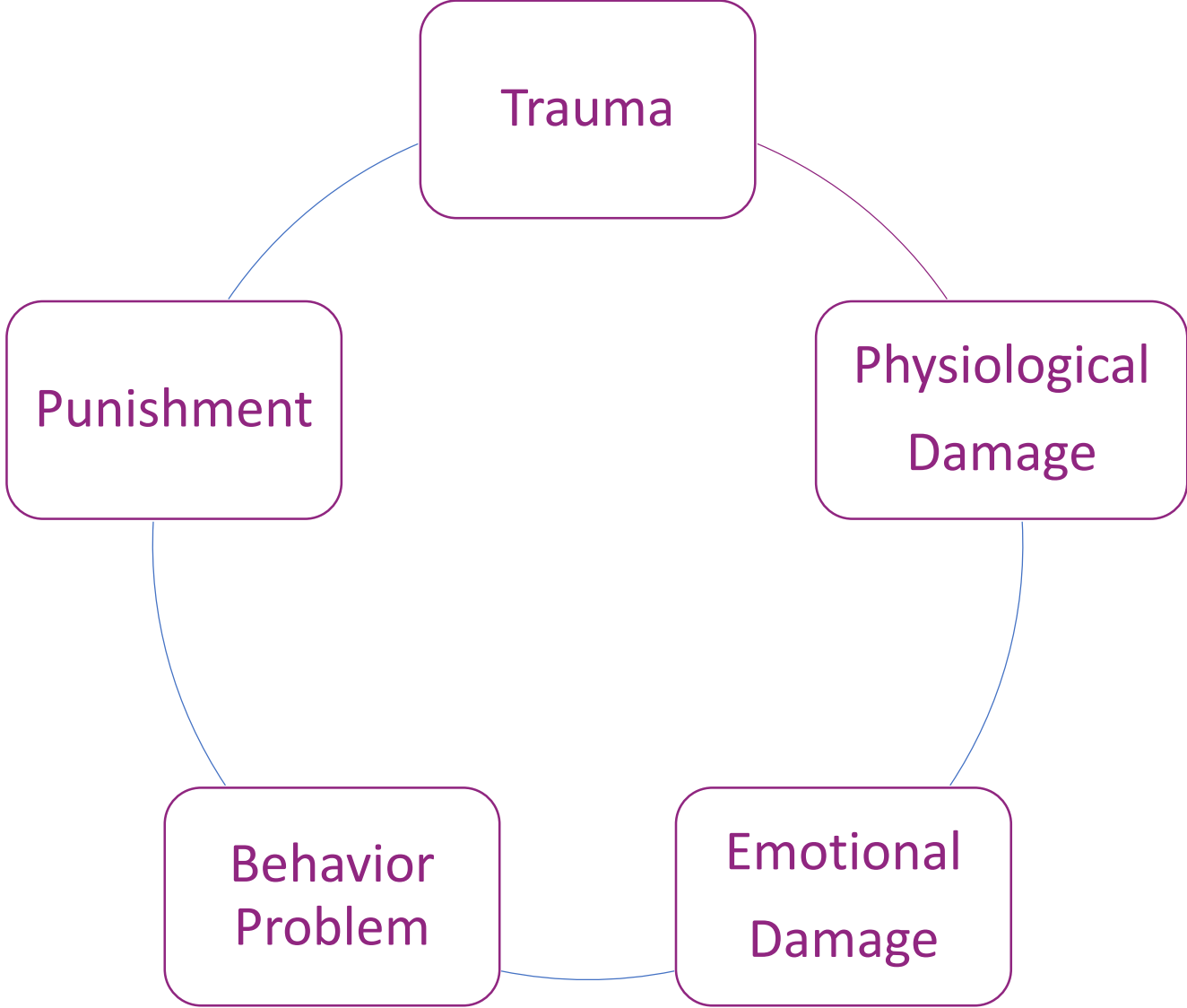
Discipline vs. Punishment

Motivation

- Positive vs. Negative Consequences.
 - Positive rewards
 - Behavior Logs
 - Flip Charts
- Create a sense of belonging
 - Everyone has a role
 - Everyone belongs



Cycle of Trauma



Teaching New Patterns of Behavior

Punitive

- Focus on action:
 - Verbal reprimand
 - Lose recess
 - No specials
 - Seclusion from other kids
 - Suspension

Trauma-Informed

- Focus on behavior:
 - Find out what is going on
 - Allow student to take responsibility for actions
 - Consequences that teach new patterns of behavior

Hope & Resilience

Fostering Hope & Resilience

**Resilience is bouncing back from negative events in life.
Hope is wanting more out of life.**

- Higher hope people do better in life than lower hope people.
- Believing in oneself and others
- Believing in future
- Hope scores more a predictor of college success than SAT
- Students who are low hope are usually the first students who are kicked out of school
 - Higher hope kids have a greater influence on lower hope kids
 - Peer mentoring groups work in increasing hope



What Can You Do?

1. Provide students with opportunities to practice positive interactions with peers.
2. Teach students how to use a “personal balance sheet”.
 - Dennis Trittin website
3. Keep a “Three Good Things” notebook.
4. Integrate discussions of students’ strengths
5. Engage in meaningful dialogues with students.
 - Have students research prompts of quotes from literature or their perceived hope.
6. End each day asking what went well.
7. Help students imagine a different future.
 - **Internal motivation most often comes from an external support**





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