Trauma Informed Practices: Using the ARC Model

by

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Trauma Informed Practices: Using the ARC Model

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Abstract

Many children and youth experience trauma in their childhoods. Often the students' trauma symptoms present in their classrooms as unacceptable or defiant behaviours. Educators are inundated with information and advice on how to work with difficult students but most of the time practical strategies are lacking. This may overwhelm teachers, while students to not receive the support they need. The goal of this capstone is to provide educators with the skills, strategies, and activities to support students with trauma. To accomplish this, I have thoroughly researched the ARC model of Attachment, Regulation, and Competency. Firstly, I provided an in-depth look into how educators can form secure attachments with students. Secondly, I examined how to build regulatory skills through helping students identify, manage, and communicate their feelings and emotions, Thirdly, educators learnt how to build competency skills in students so students can learn how to problem solve and recognize their strengths and successes to start understanding and coping with their trauma. Finally, I included a workshop for middle school educators to support students through building attachment, regulatory, and competency skills.

Keywords: *ARC model, Attachment, Competency, Developmental Trauma, Self-Regulation, Resilience, and Trauma.*

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

In classrooms, school counsellor and administrator's offices, students are seeking ways to get their needs met. This occurs in the most problematic ways through defiance, yelling, slamming doors, and bullying. Students often encounter stressed and burned-out educators that react by labelling them as, "problem kids" and judge them as, "kids today have no respect". However, what these students are seeking is connection and attention. Children who need love the most will often ask for it in the most unloving ways (Barkely, 1987). Within the school system there are many students who do not know how to ask for help because they have not experienced secure attachments with adults and feel like they have no control over their lives, consequently they act out.

Therefore, the purpose of this capstone is to identify ways in which to support students with trauma, so they can find connections and success within their educational journey. Thus, I will be reviewing the most effective practices that allow students to form relationships, regulate themselves, and build resiliency skills.

Background Information

In my eleven years as an educator, I have worked with many students with unhealthy coping strategies that have also shown tremendous resiliency over their complicated and challenging lives. I first taught in the Heiltsuk Nation at Bella Bella Community School. It was an honour to have this incredible experience and to be welcomed into the community. I also witnessed the trauma and resiliency of a nation that continues to experience systematic racism and the impacts of colonization. Through witnessing how intergenerational trauma affected my

students in many ways, I began to question how trauma impacts learning and personal well-being.

My curiosity and experience working with students with trauma continued when I was hired in the Campbell River school district as a middle school teacher where many of my students have adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and trauma. These students have experienced trauma in many forms, such as, abandonment, death of a parent or primary caregiver, foster care system, addictions, emotional, sexual, and physical abuse. As an educator I still feel I am only touching the surface of understanding how trauma not only affects my students' learning but also their lives. Within the education system, students are diagnosed with many labels, such as, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), anxiety, and depression but what I often wonder whether these diagnoses are related to their trauma response? My intention is to find out how students' behaviours are connected to their trauma and as an educator and future school counsellor what practices I can use to support students having psychological and behaviour challenges.

Negative Effects of Early trauma on Students

Trauma has a significant negative impact on students' learning and futures, and it can cause psychological, somatic, and behavioural problems. Childhood trauma can negatively affect learning causing students to have extreme difficulties with self-regulation, organization, comprehension, and memorization (Wolpow et al., 2009 as cited in Thomas et al., 2019). The resulting physical symptoms worsen over time. According to van der Kolk (2003) has studied without early interventions there are little changes that students with trauma can do to outgrow this problem. It has been found that adults with childhood trauma have between a ten percent and fifteen percent increased chance of suffering from cancer, heart disease and diabetes and a three-

hundred percent greater chance than their non traumatized peers to have addictions, self-harm, and perform violent and aggressive behaviour against others (Felitti, 1998 as cited in van der Kolk, 2003). When students' trauma needs go unmet it leads to negative long-term outcomes not only for students but societal impacts, such as, increased healthcare use, unemployment and being more likely to be involved crime, violence, and substance misuse (Boyer et al., 2016; Joint Commissioning Panel for Mental Health 2013 as cited in Spence et al., 2016). Therefore, it is imperative that educators and school counsellors identify students with trauma and support them within the school system.

Trauma Informed Schools

Given that schools are places of inclusivity and provide universal services they can provide a vital role in supporting students with trauma and provide interventions or referrals (Spence et al., 2021). Although trauma informed approaches seem to be the big buzzword in the education field right now, I have noticed within district administrators, counsellors, teachers, and support staff do not fully understand what effective trauma informed approaches are, and how these might be implemented. The study of trauma is relevantly new in the research field. Freud at the beginning of the 19th century looked at inner worlds of adults and attributed their behaviours to the history of their trauma, rather than underlying biological and medical causes (Freud, 1896 as cited in Havens, 2015). This was the first-time trauma had been considered and studied. However, very little research was done before the 1950's on the psychological effects of traumatic events in children's lives (Batista-Pinto Wiese, 2010). It was believed as recently as the 1980's that children's responses to traumatic events were temporary and had little, long- term effect (Yuke, 2001 as cited in Spates et al., 2003). Only until recently have schools started to use trauma informed approaches.

To move towards a trauma informed school, it requires a shift in school culture. This means shifting educators' thinking, from what is wrong with you? To what is happening with you? (Thomas et al., 2019, p. 428). This shift moves away from blaming the students for their backgrounds and behaviours and begins to understand where the students are coming from and then working with them in stages so that the student experiences healing and growth (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). Within trauma informed schools there must be an agreement within the school community that mainstream teaching approaches are no longer meeting the needs of most of the student population (Stokes & Turnbull, 2016 as cited in Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). This will allow educators to thoughtfully take into consideration the students' backgrounds and experiences. However, it takes a team of educators to see their roles and responsibilities in implementing trauma informed practices and that can purposely look after themselves when supporting students with trauma (Souers, 2018 as cited in Thomas et al., 2019).

Statement of the Problem

It is no wonder that the mainstream school systems are not able to meet the student's needs because currently the school system model does not foster a trauma informed approach. World-wide there is an increase of at least twenty-five percent for mental health support related to trauma and currently the need is not being met (Spence et al., 2021). Teacher training programs and even educators with experience have limited education on trauma. Therefore, this amplifies students with trauma behaviours because educators have not had the proper training or experiences with supporting students with trauma. Furthermore, the impact trauma has on students has tremendously negative effects and presents in a variety of ways emotionally, behaviourally, physically, and in relationships with others and self.

Teachers' Background and Training

Many educators are not well prepared to teach students with trauma, because they have come from backgrounds where they have not been exposed to trauma, or they themselves do not have the socioemotional skills to effectively work with students with trauma. Many teacher education programs fail to teach practical skills needed to work with students with trauma (Koenen et al., 2021 as cited in Brown el al., 2022). This leaves teachers in the field unaware of student trauma triggers, as well as a lack of understanding of how trauma affects students' brain and development. Another difficulty is many educators have studied in urban universities and are from predominantly white, middle-class backgrounds, and have had little interactions with students from other ethnicities and social classes (Brasche and Harrington, 2012 as cited in Brown et al., 2022). With this lack of awareness, it is difficult for educators to respond to behaviour of students living with the effects of complex childhood trauma or intergenerational trauma (White & Rid, 2008; Richards, 2012; Hall 2013; Heffernan et al., 2016 as cited in Brown et al., 2022). Even when educators begin training and gain awareness it is a steep learning curve because it is difficult for them to understand what it is like to live with trauma. Therefore, it is crucial that school systems and educators create an environment that accommodates unique individuals and gain an understanding of how trauma, the brain and learning works (Kostouros et al., 2022).

Symptoms of Trauma Exposed Students

Trauma can cause many different symptoms and it is important to understand that trauma greatly affects children and youth developmentally. Prolonged traumatization during children's developmental stages can lead to the faulty classification of information where most experiences and stimuli are understood as possibly traumatic and children react with protective behaviours (van der Kolk & Courtois, 2005 as cited in Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013). There are three

components of Developmental Trauma Disorder (DTD). Firstly, students' response to traumatic

reminders through many forms of continuous dysregulation throughout the response to traumatic

reminders in their environments (van der Kolk, 2005). Secondly, these triggers of dysregulation

are simplified to non-traumatic stimuli, leading to regular and persistent trauma responses for

students (van der Kolk, 2005). Thirdly, students adapt and change their behaviours to anticipate

recurrent traumatic experiences (van der Kolk, 2005.) Unfortunately, students get trapped in

self-protection mode to prevent future traumas from happening again, which causes them to

become more dysregulated. Traumatized students' thoughts about themselves, others, and their

environment are changed to reflect the negative thoughts about themselves and their future as

well as anticipation of future re-traumatization in the absence of safe adults (Gregorowski &

Seedat, 2013). Therefore, when traumatized students are always in a state of hyperarousal, they

develop emotional, behavioural, physical problems, and have great difficulty in relationships

with others and self.

Emotional Symptoms

Emotional symptoms of traumatized students are avoiding thoughts, feelings, and

memories, which cause anxiety, depression, and sometimes dissociation. Since children and

youth who experience trauma try to avoid reexperiencing trauma they avoid thoughts, feelings,

and memories that are associated with the event causing increased physiological arousal and

these symptoms may overlap with depression and anxiety (Spates et al., 2003). Dissociation can

also develop as a defence mechanism against the anxiety with students recognizing their own

helplessness and lack of control in their life. This can be very detrimental to traumatized students

because the consequences involve disconnection between their thoughts and feelings, lack of

conscious awareness of their body, and lack of control or awareness of behavioural reactions

(Cook et al., 2005; Ford & Cloitre, 2009 as cited in Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013). Also, research within recent years, has been discovered if trauma is left untreated, the reactions in children enter their personality development and can cause later disorders as adults (Pines & Cohen, 2002 as cited in Spates et al., 2003)

Behavioural Symptoms

Students with trauma suppress their emotions and feelings making them aggressive, passive, or impulsive causing them to push away supportive relationships and use unhealthy coping strategies. Students with trauma can have difficulty with their aggression, shyness, and inability to read social cues, and withdrawal which causes many adults to deal with their frustration in unsupportive ways that are linked to the student's earlier traumas and clinical experience shows that they are unlikely to give up their primitive self-protective behaviours until they learn how to feel physically safe and secure (van der Kolk, 2003). These symptoms can come out as attention deficit disorder (ADHD) as well as aggression and acting-out behaviours can look like oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) (Spates et al., 2003). Since development trauma for children and youth can have long lasting impacts, students build up defenses and use unhealthy and dysfunctional coping behaviours such as substance abuse, eating disorders, and self-harm (Havens, 2015).

Somatic Symptoms

Students with trauma develop somatic symptoms causing many physical ailments and disruptions which can lead to diseases later in life if their trauma is not worked through. Somatic symptoms in children exposed to trauma have increased rates of stomach aches, headaches, and muscle tension (Kugler et al., 2012). In addition, students with trauma can experience all the somatic symptoms connected to anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress, such as,

hypervigilance, irritability, and sleep problems (Kugler et al, 2012). Also, trauma can exacerbate forms of dissociation causing pseudo-seizures as well (Cook et al., 2005, Ford & Cloitre 2009 as cited in Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013). Within the child or youth's psychophysiological reactions they can develop cardiac disease, high blood pressure, pain, and gastric ulcers (Spates et al., 2003). Therefore, trauma can lead to physical discomfort and stress. Later in life medical conditions can worsen, specifically orthopaedic, neurological, and cardiovascular illness if the trauma exposed children or youth do not receive support to manage and work their trauma (Cook et al., 2005, Ford & Cloitre 2009 as cited in Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013).

Relationships with Self and Others

Traumatized students need to be shown how to tolerate their uncomfortable physical sensations and feelings to build resiliency within themselves and develop positive attachments to secure adults. Since students with trauma have experienced the world as a dangerous place, they have a poor concept of self, and a negative outlook of life in the present and future (van der Kolk, 2005). This leads to poor developmental competences of learning how to identify feelings and express emotions causing difficulties in social relationships, and educational and employment achievement and even legal difficulties (van der Kolk, 2005). Within research it has been shown that early detection and intervention in children's trauma can help prevent psychological disorders later in life (Batista-Pinto Wiese, 2010). Therefore, when secure and safe adults can help students exposed to trauma through modelling skills in how to identify and manage emotions and feelings instead of solely using medications for students to deal with their uncomfortable physical sensations, they are not only working through their trauma but developing positive relationships and in turn increasing their resilience to manage difficult emotions and experiences (van der Kolk, 2003).

Purpose of the Paper

My purpose of my capstone is to search the literature to discover effective strategies to support students to build safe and supportive connections with educators, identify their feelings and emotions, and be able to explore their story to help them develop a healthy sense of self despite their history of trauma. Within my capstone I will include the following objectives:

- Understand how educators develop secure attachments with students.

- Uncover ways educators teach self-regulation strategies.

- Determine how to build resiliency through modeling effective problem-solving skills.

- Support students discover themselves through exploring their identity and successes.

My intent is to accomplish a clear, concise plan to help educators and school counsellors to support students with trauma through sharing my findings of what research-based evidence has shown the most effective theories, strategies, and activities are.

Research Question

My capstone aims to answer the following question: What trauma informed practices build resiliency in students? To answer my capstone question, I will explore how attachment, self-regulation, and building competency and resiliency skills support students who live with their trauma in healthy ways. My intention is to help educators and school counsellors identify and understand the impact trauma has on students' lives and support them in building strategies to manage and lead successful lives.

Theoretical Frameworks

The three theories of attachment theory, person-centered theory (PCT), and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory will be instrumental in helping me answer my capstone research question. Firstly, attachment theory states that humans are programmed to

form attachments with others for survival and security (Bowlby, 1969). Continuing the theory of attachment, Neufeld and Matè (2013) research concluded that children and youth will only connect with adults they feel attached to. However, trauma behaviours such as impulsivity, withdrawal, aggression, and defiance put a strain on students with trauma relationships, causing it to be difficult for them to attach to safe adults (Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013). This makes it imperative within my research to use attachment theory to understand the best strategies that educators and school counsellors can use to form healthy secure attachments with students.

The second theory is PCT. It will help guide one of my core beliefs that school counsellors and educators cannot be helpers if they do not have a safe and caring relationships with their students. Therefore, PCT creates a safe, secure space that focuses on the student, and enables the student to find their knowledge from within (Rogers, 1951). For many students with trauma, they have trouble trusting their bodies and emotions and when school counsellors use the PCT approach it allows students to build confidence and look inward. This allows students with trauma to begin to feel safe within themselves to try strategies. It is crucial for counsellors using PCT, to accept and express that the student is a person who is capable to direct themself (Rogers, 1951). Using PCT allows school counsellors and educators to build therapeutic relationships.

The final theory, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, views that child development is a complex system of relationships affected by various systems. Therefore, the complex system of a child's relationships is created by their manifold and complex environments, the ecological perspective also encompasses all areas that affect a student's life (Hass, 2018). Using this theory is very important in trauma informed approaches because many different systems are at work, and it is important that school counsellors and educators know what are triggers for students who experience trauma.

Significance of the Study

The significance of my research would allow students to be better supported within the education system and assist them to learn strategies to cope with life stressors and traumas. Within my own practice I have noticed caring adults in students' lives wish to help but do not have the right knowledge, practices, or strategies. This research will be beneficial for me as a new counsellor in building relationships with students and understanding their needs better. Researching trauma-informed practices and understanding the importance of attachment, self-regulation, and resiliency will allow school counsellors and educators to learn how to create safe, secure spaces for students with trauma in the school system and take a proactive approach versus reacting to their behaviours.

Definition of Terms

Attachment: Attachment is a deep and enduring affectionate bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Ainsworth 1973; Bowlby 1969).

Attachment, Regulation, and Competency model (ARC): focuses on the development of relationship, regulatory, and competency skills to overcome trauma related barriers to healthy development (Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013).

Complex trauma: the result of consistent or repeated traumatic exposure over a period of time, generally resulting in significant dysfunction or reduced well-being (Wolpow, Johnson, Hertel & Kincaid, 2009 as cited in Thomas et al., 2019).

Developmental trauma: exposure to multiple, cumulative traumatic events usually of interpersonal nature, during childhood which results in developmental adverse consequences (van der Kolk, Busuttil, 2009 as cited in Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013, pg. 105).

Intergenerational trauma: has been defined as trauma that "occurs when parent figures who experienced trauma transmit the effects of their trauma to their children via interactional patterns, genetic pathways and/or family dynamics (Isobel et al., 2021, p.632 as cited in Brown et al., 2021).

Trauma: inability of an individual or community to respond in a healthy way (physically, emotionally, and/or mentally) to acute or chronic stress (Wolpow et al., 2011 p. xvi).

Outline of the Remainder of the Paper

Chapter 2 will include a thorough comprehensive research and review of the literature on attachment, self-regulation, competency to identify specific and tangible supports educators and school counsellors can use to support students exposed to trauma to build resiliency through creating secure attachments, learn new self-regulation and competency skills so they can process their emotions and being to thrive in their personal and academic life. I will firstly examine research on the impact that attachments have on students exposed to trauma and the importance of educators building secure trusting relationships. Specifically, I reviewed how to build secure attachments with students through building routines and rituals, having attunement and unconditional positive regard to students so they feel bonded not only to the adults but their school. Next, I will evaluate how teaching self-regulation skills to trauma-exposed students allows them to identify their emotions and feelings, learn how to tolerate them, and then practice effectively communicating them through non-verbal and verbal communication. Particularly, I will focus on the importance of educators' role modeling how to identify emotions and giving students many opportunities to practice their communication skills, so they develop new pathways of communication. Finally, I will assess the teaching of competency curriculum through SEL for trauma exposed students. I will review the elements of teaching problem

solving skills, celebrating strengths and successes to explore identity, and the importance of telling one's story. Through comprehensive research and review of the literature on attachment, self-regulation, and competency I was able to identify specific and tangible supports educators and school counsellors can help students exposed to trauma build resiliency through creating secure attachment, learn new self-regulation and competency skills so they can process their emotions and begin to thrive in their personal and academic life. In chapter 3, I will propose a recommendation for workshop for middle school teachers that aims to help students with trauma develop strategies to identify their emotions and feelings so they can self-regulate and begin to explore their identity.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

In chapter 1, I discussed how it is crucial that school staff and counsellors understand how trauma affects students and how it impacts their learning and daily lives. I also examined how students who experience trauma expressed themselves in many ways through difficulties with self-regulation, aggression, psychosomatic problems, and difficulties in their self-concept and ability to have supportive interpersonal relationships (van der Kolk, 2003). In chapter one, I posed the question, "what trauma informed practices build resiliency in students?" Therefore, in chapter 2, I will review the literature around the best practices to support students in a trauma informed way.

Through all the research I read, reviewed, and analyzed three core themes developed, attachment, self-regulation, and competency. My research will provide school staff and counsellors an understanding of the importance of a three-tiered approach to learning that is supported in a strength-based perspective (Brunzell et al., 2019). The attachment, self-regulation, and competency (ARC) treatment framework will guide the process (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). It begins with tier 1 of repairing students' disrupted attachments, students will then be able to move on to learning their ability to regulate. With those two key pieces addressed then school staff can support students in healing and provide opportunities for post-traumatic growth and work towards competency (Brunzell et al., 2019).

Therefore, my review will examine how attachment, self-regulation, and competency strategies are the best trauma informed practices when supporting trauma exposed students in schools. Firstly, I will examine attachment theory and then highlight how attachment strategies enable school staff to build secure relationships with students. Without this important piece of building trusting relationships with students no learning can happen. Secondly, I will assess how

trauma impacts student self-regulation and what school strategies enable students to learn how to regulate their emotions and feelings. Lastly, I will examine psychological resources that foster competency in self-development and resiliency in students.

Attachment Theory

Through my research I have concluded attachment theory is complex. Therefore, within my study I am going to focus on how attachment theory supports students in school, specifically what strategies school staff can use to build secure attachments with students. I will do this through looking at types of attachments, the impact trauma has on students, and how to create a relationship-based learning environment that best supports students with trauma. The research is very clear that the most important element that makes students resilient, especially students with trauma is, close connected relationship with a stable adult (Abblett, 2011). Therefore, I will review how attachment connects students exposed to trauma with educators.

Types of Attachment

A common theme school staff struggle with, is students with trauma have greater difficulty forming attachments. This creates a challenging job for teachers and school counsellors of pulling students in, because of the different attachment styles students with trauma have. This makes understanding the different attachment styles crucial for school staff so they can develop a better understanding and react empathically towards students.

Bowlby's theory of attachment argued that when a child's primary caregivers do not meet their child's needs, and do not offer support, a child can either become insecure, anxious, or distant (Bosmans, 2020). Mary Ainsworth took Bowlby's research further and classified attachment styles (Jennings, 2019). Ainsworth et al. (1978) conducted the "Strange Situation" experiments, which defined three attachment styles within her infant experiments and established

their behaviour regarding their caregiver as secure, anxious/avoidant, and ambivalent (van der Kolk, 2003). Researchers, Main and Hesse identified a fourth type of attachment style, called disorganized attachment (Main & Hesse, 1990). The three attachment types anxious/avoidant, ambivalent and disorganized are often jointly stated as an insecure attachment. Educators need to recognize that insecure attachments are quite common in children who are vulnerable to trauma and adversity (Jennings, 2019).

It is also important to mention attachment disorders. Although not common, in cases of severe neglect and abuse as an infant some children have shown symptoms of reactive attachment disorder (RAD), and they often appear vulnerable or distant (Jonkman et al., 2014 as cited in Jennings, 2019.) Children with RAD have difficulty attaching because of their trauma or extreme neglect. Conversely, children with disinhibited RAD will look for contact with anyone that could be their potential caregiver and have trouble attaching to their primary caregiver (Jennings, 2019). Although these types of attachment disorder are rare, it is important that educators understand them.

Importance of Attachment

Through all the literature and resources, I have read the most important theme is attachment because without a trusting relationship, educators are unable to connect and cultivate learning. This is because students who have experienced trauma need to know they are safe and welcomed. Also, without a secure relationship, students working with a teacher or counsellor cannot move to working on regulating and identifying their feelings to then build resiliency. This is because a secure attachment acts as a cushion to alleviate the effect of overwhelming stressors and experiences and can support the healing of students who have experienced trauma (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). Attachment researchers, Bowlby and Stern proposed that attachment

relationships provide a central map of the world for children (van der Kolk, 2003). Therefore, without attachment to a stable adult, children are lost to figure out their worlds, leading to unhealthy coping strategies and behaviours.

Attachment therapist and consultant Gordon Neufeld, said it best, "the way to children's minds has always been through their hearts" (Neufeld & Maté, 2013, p. 173). When students feel liked and known by a teacher or school counsellor, they are much more likely to attach. This is because that adult has the natural influence to guide the student's behaviour, invite positive intentions, and instil collective values (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). However, traumatized children who have not been able to rely on caregivers form disorganized attachment patterns, causing many reactions, such as, anger, anxiety, and the desire to be taken care of, which makes it difficult for educators to break down the barriers to form attachments with these students (van der Kolk, 2003). Therefore, school staff are unable "to ride on the coattails of the strong adult orientations engendered in culture and society" because of the societal changes and trauma backgrounds many students face (Neufeld & Maté, 2013, p. 166). Neufeld & Maté (2013) argue that money, changes in curriculum, and technology cannot fix the problem only building strong bonds with students can, which makes it imperative that educators understand how trauma works and how to implement trauma informed practices. School staff can truly begin to support students when they understand trauma and how it impacts student attachments.

Trauma and its Impact on Attachment

As attachment theorists have argued, students without consistent and sensitive care learn that the world is not a safe place and that they cannot count on adults to be sensitive to their needs or provide security (Jennings, 2019). Therefore, many students with trauma have backgrounds of damaged attachments and have trouble creating, sustaining, and developing

secure lasting relationships (Brunzell et al., 2016). Not only is it important for educators to understand how trauma makes students feel but what causes trauma and the importance of not retraumatizing. I will demonstrate how educators must be aware of student's behaviours, reasons for trauma, and why they pull towards their peers.

An important piece of building trusting relationships with students is educators learning how trauma impacts students' brains and causes them to react in certain ways. When teachers understand how trauma affects the brain and learning, they can create an atmosphere that adapts to students' unique needs and include strategies that are supportive and predictable (Kostouros et al., 2022). Therefore, it is important for educators to understand that a trauma informed approach to teaching provides an awareness of a problem and aids in identifying and responding to the triggers for the student (Kostouros et al., 2022). For example, when traumatized students' emotions are too hardened to allow themselves to feel sadness or disappointment, they are unable to handle failure due to the need to protect themselves (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). Unfortunately, students trapped in this cycle do not develop resilience and become stuck on what does not work and continue negative behaviours (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). Furthermore, it makes it essential that educators are aware of how trauma triggers impact students and do not make assumptions about the student's work ethic or personality but rather why they are responding the way they are.

Understanding the societal and historical pieces of intergenerational trauma is crucial in supporting students. When educators take the time to learn and become aware of historical and current intergenerational and transgenerational trauma this provides educators with an awareness of how they can build relationships with the students, their families, and communities, (Brown et al., 2021). Within schools' systems especially in Indigenous and minority communities the long-term effects of colonization and government policies on assimilation continue to cause distrust

and impede relationship building (Brown et al., 2021). Therefore, educators being informed and responsive to their student's cultures and learning is a vital factor in fostering and sustaining relationships (Brown et al., 2021).

Also, it is important that educators understand why traumatized students with insecure attachments turn to peer relationships so quickly. Orientation voids are when children cannot find a strong adult to attach to (O'Neil et al., 2010). Furthermore, students then attach more to their peers versus a supportive adult, which causes it to be more challenging to connect with students (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). When working with peer-oriented students they are more likely to be challenged learners and dysregulated in their thoughts, feelings, and actions (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). This leads into my next section of research to understand how educators can begin to build secure attachments with students with insecure attachments.

Developing Secure Attachments in Schools

It is important to note that attachment is not the student being solely dependent on adults, instead, secure attachment frees students to explore their worlds (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). When building secure relationships with students it is important that educators hold students to high expectations while maintaining that they are liked. There are six forms of attachment (Neufeld & Maté, 2004, as cited in O'Neil et al., 2010), educators can put into practice every day with their students, and they are sensing the person to whom you attach (senses); being like others to whom you attach (sameness); being part of and like the person to whom you attach (belonging and loyalty); knowing that you matter to the person to whom you attach (significance); demonstrating emotional intimacy towards the person to whom you attach (feeling); and being known psychologically to the person to whom you attach.

When educators connect using these six ways of attachment students can begin to start making new neurological pathways that will help them begin to start to feel connected (O'Neil et al., 2010).

Neufeld & Maté (2013) also created four distinct steps to build attachments; proximity, offer something to hold on to, inviting dependence, and orienting the student. The first step of proximity is to draw in the student's eyes, smile, and a nod (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). Secondly to (example: a shred . To do this, educators must offer the student something to attach to (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). An example of this would be giving attention and interest and it could be as simple as noticing that both the adult and student share a similar interest (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). Third, is inviting dependence meaning that students know that they can come to their secure adult for help and trust that they count on them (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). Lastly, is to orient students so they can get their bearings. This means an intuitive teacher helps orient a child where they are, through being their compass point and letting them know what is happening. Orientation could be saying, "this is how we put the books away", or "I would like to introduce you to Ms. Brown the school counsellor" (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). Through bringing students in, they become less stressed, and the attachment dance also reactivates their instincts to keep safe adults close.

Relationship-based Classrooms

Neufeld and Maté, six forms of attachment and four steps to the attachment complement the concept of relationship-based classrooms. A relationship-based classroom means that the student-educator relationship is created first before learning happens. This is based on the evidence that students are more responsive to learning when they can attach to a trusting adult (Krstić, 2015). If a parent is unavailable for a student a surrogate caregiver like a teacher can act

as a mentor and this is linked with resilience among students (Jennings, 2019). Therefore, students benefit from connectedness and belonging through relationships with their teachers, school counsellors, and school staff because it provides security for students therefore, fostering a greater well-being (Roffey 2013; Stewart et al., 2004 as in Brunzell et al, 2019). Classroom and school structures need to be designed to make students feel welcomed, so they can attach to their schools and know they are liked by teachers and peers (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). In Bergin & Bergin (2009) article, "attachment in the classroom," they made some critical recommendations. Firstly, for individual teachers: increase sensitivity and warm, positive interactions with students; be well prepared for class and hold high expectations for students; be responsive to students' agendas by providing choice when possible; use induction rather than coercive discipline, introduction involves explaining the reason for rules and pointing out the consequences of breaking rules; help students be kind, helpful, and accepting of one another; implement interventions for specific, difficult relationships (Bergin & Bergin, 2009, pp. 158-159). Students who have experienced trauma and have insecure attachments need this modeling of stable adults. Insecurely attached students do seek out trusting relationships and have not been modelled the skills to create them so it is imperative that educators do (Bergin & Bergin, 2009). When educators can do this, they are not only meeting the socioemotional needs of students but change how they view relationships.

Relationship based classrooms focus on relationship-based learning through promoting social emotional learning (SEL). It has been proven that students with caring and sensitive educators have greater growth in academics (Krstić, 2015). This is because the secure attachment allows students to be able to access critical thinking because they feel safe (Cornelisu-White 2007, as cited in Brunzell et al, 2019). The positive teacher student relationships provide

emotional security for students and allows students to be able to fully engage in learning and scaffold social, behavioural development as well as self-regulation within school (Krstić, 2015). Also, when students can securely attach to their teachers, they are able to comprehend and able to learn by imitation, modeling, and cue taking (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). When teachers take the critical steps to build a secure relationship with students through a relationship-based classroom students can begin to safely learn, whereas before they could not.

Routines and Rituals

An important piece of building a strong attachment with students, especially those who have experienced trauma, is providing consistency through routines and rituals. Routines and rituals create a predictable and structured environment, and it also allows educators to manage their own attunement to students and reinforce supportive and safe relationships (Kinniburgh et al., 2005). When students are taught step by step what to do in the classroom, they know what to do and feel safer and more confident. This fosters a sense of self-efficacy and students exposed to trauma need these opportunities to develop (Jennings, 2019). Routines can be providing a schedule and conducting consistent direct and indirect modelling experience required to develop language skills (Dickson & Sprague, 2001 as cited in O'Neil et al., 2010). Routines offer predictability allowing students to know what to expect unlike many other aspects of their life that are out of their control.

Rituals are the attachment strategy of collecting students each day. This is firstly done with a greeting, through eye contact and a smile (Neufeld & Maté, 2013). Rituals also create calm, safe, and inclusive classrooms. Students exposed to trauma need to know that rituals will be followed like, teachers using calm voices, being consistent, and following established procedures. Procedures like how students can move around the class, identify safe areas, create

opportunities for choice, and how students can avoid triggers (O'Neill et al., 2020). Since students with complex trauma mostly live in the moment, school life needs to focus on the present. To establish safe routines and rituals, teachers need to engage students in activities that stimulate their brains, like play, drama, art, and music (O'Neil et al., 2010). These activities help them feel like they have succeeded in the task present. Rituals can also include class songs, inside jokes, weekly or daily class meetings and celebrations. Creating rituals allows students to feel like they belong and can feel competent because rituals include everyone and are practiced daily, weekly, and monthly.

Attunement and Unconditional Positive Regard

It is crucial that educators are in tune with students' feelings and emotions so they can understand their reactions and behaviours. Dan Siegel (2007) explains attunement as when we allow our own internal state to shift, so we can connect with the inner world of another. For teachers, this means showing that you care about your students and responding to them to successfully meet their needs. Attunement based on John Bowlby's (1969) work on attachment theory described how the earliest bond between child and caregiver is impactful when caregivers are responsive to their children's needs, this creates a sense of security within the child. Blaustein and Kinniburgh (2007) research on building attachment highlights the importance of attunement and identified four key building blocks. Firstly, the ability of the caregiver to recognize and regulate their own emotions when working with the child (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). Secondly, the capacity of caregivers and children to accurately read each other's cues and respond effectively (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). Thirdly, the caregiver's ability to respond consistently and appropriately to the child's behaviour (Blaustein &

Kinniburgh, 2007). Lastly, that predictability and consistency can help increase perceived safety and help with regulation-develop routine. (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007).

Attunement is more than just providing safety for students, it is enabling students to trust themselves, which is so important for students exposed to trauma. This idea stems from unconditional positive regard. Carl Rogers (1951) identified unconditional positive regard through valuing others and showing acceptance no matter what the person does or says, which places no conditions on this acceptance. This belief allows an environment where a student feels valued regardless of their past or challenging behaviours, which encourages students to learn and listen to themselves (Brunzell et al., 2016). Using unconditional positive regard as a trauma aware perspective allows teachers not to label student behaviour as problematic but to reflect on what is causing the behaviour which allows the teacher to see the student trying to meet their own needs (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). Unconditional positive regard allows teachers to accept their students, understand their triggers and then focus on their students' needs and abilities (O'Neill et al., 2010).

It is important that educators use their attachment skills like positive regard in an authentic way, because students, especially those with trauma can detect when adults are not authentic. So, when educators are giving compliments and praise to students, they need to deliver the message in a specific sincere way. This means going beyond the praise and you must "prize" students (Abblett, 2011). Prizing takes praise a step further, and it is consistent recognition towards students that they are completely unique, and teachers can name a special quality or skill about them (Abblett, 2011). Prizing is what an attuned mentors does with consistency (Abblett, 2011). Some advice Abblett (2011) recommends to educators is to think along the lines of,

"What is the one thing that comes to mind that you value about them?" This could be a direct observation or are recognition of a skill or talent (Abblett, 2011).

When prizing students, it is important to use patience and understanding. This is because students with trauma commonly have low self-esteem or mood-related issues and might rebuff what the educator is saying (Abblett, 2011). If a student rejects the prize the teacher can respond by saying, "well I'm proud of you, but it's okay for you do feel however you want (Kinniburgh & Blaustien, 2005 as cited in Wolpow et at., 2011). Using patience and sincerity helps students begin to look inward and recognize their own strengths. Therefore, when a stable adult assesses a student's strengths, they are helping to build self-awareness and confidence within that student.

School Bonding

School bonding is like relationship-based classrooms and enables students to feel like they are cared about and belong in their school community. Student's sense of belonging includes safe and secure relationships with peers and teachers, an assurance they will succeed in school, and membership in extracurricular activities (Krstić, 2015). Therefore, school bonding is like attachment because it makes students feel safe and valued, and when students feel this, they can explore new ideas and preserve through social and academic challenges (Krstić, 2015). Students who experience trauma that are not bonded to school have amplified feelings of loneliness and alienation, and this is detrimental because it continues their insecure attachments.

Students first need to bond to their teacher and classroom, but it is also important that they bond to their whole school. School-wide policies can strain student-teacher relationships, so it is important that school administrators and board members make changes to support not only all students but especially those with trauma backgrounds. Bergin & Bergin highlighted six procedures and policies that can allow student to better attach to their school: implement school-

wide interventions; provide a variety of extracurricular activities that are accessible to students; keep schools small; provide continuity of people and place (keep students with same the teacher or team for multiple years); facilitate transition to new schools or teachers; decrease transitions in and out of the classroom (Bergin & Bergin, 2009, pp. 160-161). It is important to recognize when whole- school wide policies focus on SEL there are also changes in students' perception in learning (Katz, 2018)). Not only do these changes make it easier for students to feel safe but they become more engage in their learning because they feel like they matter and belong to their school community.

Self-Regulation

In this section, I will now examine how after the foundation of attachment is built educators can move on to teach students self-regulation strategies. This is a crucial next step because students who have insecure attachments have significant stress on their regulatory systems, causing them to have a limited understanding of how to identify, and express their experiences (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). Bandura (1991) described a person's self-regulatory system as how people form thoughts about what they can do, and this allows them to anticipate the likely consequences of their further actions. Through a social cognitive perspective, self-regulation, is an interplay between a person's personal, behavioural, and environmental influences (Bandura, 1986). When students are continuously subjected to trauma and anxiety in early life they become at risk for over-activation of their amygdala, which leads them to not learn how to organize their thoughts and causes prolonged issues with attention (Blair, 2001 as cited in Bergin & Bergin, 2009). Furthermore, as educators it is essential that they gain awareness of attention problems so they can help students learn how to manage and cope with their dysregulated minds and bodies.

Blaustein & Kinniburgh (2007) identified three key building blocks to self-regulation: how to identify emotions, learn how to tune in and tolerate and manage emotions, and learn how to communicate their emotions. In this self-regulation theme section, I will review how trauma impacts student self-regulation, how to provide education so students understand how their brains and bodies work, how to identify and tolerate their feelings, and how to use non-verbal and verbal language to communicate their emotions and needs.

Trauma and Self-regulation

Learning about trauma is important for educators to understand how that impacts students, how to identify student triggers, and understand how the child feels. An unaware educator might see a student's unregulated behaviours as being defiant making it critical that educators understand that traumatized students have great difficulty managing their levels of arousal and could demonstrate unregulated flight, fight, or freeze reactions (O'Neill et al., 2010). Students with trauma have trouble self-regulating because their brain is always on high alert causing their amygdala. to take over, which makes it difficult to access other parts of their brain that help with the ability to manage emotions and focus. Therefore, attuned educators need to navigate appropriate tasks and activities students with trauma can manage. Many students with trauma have stated that numerous factors in their classroom and school triggers their trauma-related symptoms and responses (Record-Lemon & Buchanan, 2017). Triggers include many sensory stimuli, such as, sights, sounds, words, and exchanges in the classroom (Record-Lemon & Buchanan, 2017). Attuning to students could look like a teacher using a calm controlled voice, dimming the lights, and having daily check ins. Therefore, when attuned educators support students with trauma at an emotional sensory level before moving to a cognitive level, students will connect more to the teachers, peers, and school (O'Neill et al., 2020). Using empathy,

educators can get a better understanding of how their trauma exposed students feel and how to support them.

Educators who use their own self-awareness and intuition, can teach students how to begin identifying their trauma responses. For example, if an educator sees a student become increasingly dysregulated, they could encourage an older student to go for a walk for a few minutes, or a younger student to take a body break with an adult. In doing this there is a dual benefit for the student of regulating the arousal levels of the brain through repetitive physical activity and preventing any possible outbursts (O'Neill et al., 2010). When students with trauma have safe adults modelling how to regulate consistency they begin to start becoming in tune with their bodies and calm their trigger responses.

It is critical that educators understand that students exposed to trauma need to feel safe in their bodies before they can express their emotions and feelings. Insecurely attached students report feeling more anxiety at school than their securely attached peers because they do not have the foundation of emotional regulation that leads to academic achievement (Gunnar et al., 1996; Hunsley 1987; Perry 1997 as cited in Bergin & Bergin, 2009). In van der Kolk's (2003) research he found that a prominent feature of children with trauma was a lack of ability for emotional self-regulation. This lack of a self-regulatory processes takes a toll on a student's well-being. Many students with trauma struggle with consistent sense of self and their body image; poor impulse control, including aggression against self and others and uncertainty about relying on others, which leads to distrust and problems with relationships (van der Kolk, 2003). When educators develop a greater awareness of the lives of their students, they can respond in empathetic ways, instead of focusing on the behaviours they can begin to focus on the student's well-being and strengths.

Identification of Self and Feelings

    Students exposed to trauma learn to disconnect from their emotional and physical experiences and have great difficulty identifying their emotions, causing them to use unhealthy coping skills. Therefore, it becomes imperative that students are taught to understand and identify their emotions and where they come from. The first ARC treatment step in self-regulation is working to support students in building their emotional vocabulary, and then building connections with their emotions of past, present, and future experiences (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). It is important to note that language also can be part of a student's trauma and can have an impact on their language skills. Educators must be patient and aware that students might have triggers if language or speech is difficult, if they have had to abandon a particular language, or if they use silence as a coping strategy (Busch & McNamara, 2020). Therefore, relying on a strong relationship and having patience can help bring out language.

    The first intervention in working with trauma exposed students is building the vocabulary of emotions and feelings and connecting them to their experiences and behaviours. Since, students with trauma have a lack of awareness of their feelings, they might state, "I don't know how I feel, I just feel bad" (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). So, educators need to guide students to connect to emotions first through body sensations and the ability to detect how a feeling shows up in their body (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). This can be done through activities that focus on feelings. Using visuals, students can connect with pictures and words to help share how they are feeling. Teachers or counsellors can model what students are learning through reading stories about emotions, dealing with conflict or sharing personal stories (O'Neill et al., 2010). Metaphors, similes, and analogies are strong tools to teach the language of emotions, like, "are

you as angry as an exploding volcano?" or as "happy as a kid in a candy store?" (Wolpow et at., 2011). Also, using a table display with categories of affect, helps to break down students' feelings and behaviours. In the table, each category has a list of words that can describe how we feel, what we may think when we feel that way, and how we may act when we are having those feelings (Wolpow et al., 2011). It is important that emotional strategies and skills are modelled, rehearsed, and practiced for students to be able to better self-regulate in moments of stress and uncertainty (Brunzell et al., 2016). All these exercises and information provide students to be able to identify emotions within themselves, connect to their body sensations, thoughts and behaviours and link their feelings to experiences.

Another important piece of identifying emotions and feelings for trauma exposed students is understanding how their brain works and how it reacts to triggers. Students who are trauma exposed need to be provided with psychoeducation about the human alarm response and trauma triggers (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Learning about the neurobiology of trauma helps students understand misconceptions and helps them understand that their bodies are reacting to stressors in their lives. Using mental-health literacy fosters inclusive learning and when students are taught how the brains work and how it impacts well-being, they will get a greater sense of emotional self-regulation (Katz, 2018). With psychoeducation students can move away from thinking something is wrong with them to understanding how their mind and body works and begin to explore what helps them manage their triggers and seek support.

Modulation: How to Tolerate and Manage Physiological States

Modulation enables students with trauma to learn how to tolerate uncomfortable feelings and emotions. In this second intervention, students will learn how to develop skills that will help them maintain desired arousal levels and expand their "comfort zone" to manage a range of

emotional experiences (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). The goal is to enhance self-regulatory abilities, so the student can identify their feelings and connect those feelings to experiences and use modulation skills to recognize and adapt to emotional shifts and return to a normal arousal state (Kinniburgh et al., 2005). Students who have this consistent modelling and script will be able to identify specific external triggers like environment factors and internal factors, like being tired or thirsty. When educators normalize the sensation of experiencing a variety of feelings and emotions, it helps students tolerate their alarm response and trauma triggers (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Therefore, being taught self-regulation routines, calming activities, and being given opportunities to exercise, students can learn to start self-regulating.

Using routines with body sensory experiences allows trauma-exposed students to begin to tolerate their arousal states and use strategies to decrease or increase their arousal (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). As classroom teachers follow regular routines, maintain a calm and confident demeanour, and a sense of humour this enables trauma exposed students the supportive environment to cope with their dysregulation (Fecser, 2015). Therefore, using a whole-school wide approach of positioning the body's sensory integration through regular routines throughout the school day in consistent ways. For example, daily classroom meetings, routines between transitions, frequent chances for repetitive physical movements allows students to practice tolerating and managing their self-regulation (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). Within the classroom students can learn how to identify the degree of their feelings. For example, they could choose on a scale from 1-10 how upset they are or draw a thermometer with temperatures and ask, "how hot would you be on this?" (Wolpow et al., 2011). Follow up questions be, "what helps you when you are feeling this upset or angry?" Using these procedures and questions allows students

to build and understand their feelings and then identify what strategies help them regulate their arousal levels.

After students can identify and tolerate their feelings, they can learn how to use affect modulation. Affect modulation is the skill of learning how to calm oneself down or rev back up after an intense emotion (Wolpow et al., 2011). Enabling this skill in students will allow them to express themselves appropriately and manage their triggers. Within the classroom, teachers can provide many mindfulness activities to help students learn how to calm their bodies down. Transitions back from lunch or an intense academic block, teachers can have the class do deep breathing and visualizing techniques as calming lessons (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). Yoga and progressive muscle relaxation (PMR) also help students learn how to relax their bodies and lower their cortisol levels (Wolpow et al., 2011). Exercise has been considered as one of the most effective tools for regulating and modifying mood (Thayer, 1994). Allowing students to choose a high intensity exercise of their choice, specifically with repetition, like running, dance, weight training, and gymnastics, can help students move stress out of their bodies.

Another strategy that school counsellors can use when working with students with trauma is to create a feeling toolkit. The goal is to build a toolkit that can be used to help manage feelings and emotions overtime through adding a variety of materials such as, stress balls, picture postcards, and stones, which help students cope with self-regulation (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Using mindfulness with trauma informed practice, teaches lifelong regulatory skills to students and helps calm the autonomic nervous systems which balances the parasympathetic branches which in turn improves communication (Siegal, 2009). This is because when students can regulate their bodies, they are able to calm their minds to communicate and express their needs, which leads to affect modulation.

Affect Modulation

Affect modulation means students exchange tolerance for feelings and use the skills they have learned to control their arousal states. In the third intervention students learn how to effectively communicate through modeling to learn how to use nonverbal and verbal strategies and build self-expression strategies (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). It is important that educators understand the power of role modeling and realize students do pick up on cues through observation (Berardi & Morton, 2019). Through understanding the importance of non-verbal and verbal strategies students with trauma can learn how to communicate their feelings and express their needs.

Students with trauma first need to learn through modeling from secure adults in their life what effective communication styles look like. Therefore, sharing emotional experiences is not only a vital piece of relationships but allows students to build and maintain healthy attachments (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). When teachers model effective communication, students exposed to trauma might be witnessing these communication styles for the first time. Therefore, when students are provided multiple teaching modeling opportunities during the day they can align their regulatory systems through their teacher's voice, positioning side by side with student versus facing confrontational, and assisting students to understand how to address and rebuild negative outcomes (Brunzell et al., 2016). With teacher modelling and mentoring students begin building new pathways of how to communicate with others.

Practicing non-verbal communication skills allow students to learn how to effectively create boundaries around physical space and practice effective emotional expressions. It is important for educators to keep in mind that there are many variations of appropriate nonverbal communications, such as, family norms and cultures, so it is important to understand

students' background beforehand, so students are not put in a position where they are being

culturally disrespected (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). As well, when modeling non-verbal cues

to students it is important that educators are aware of the actions and attitudes they are

displaying, such as, voice tone, pitch volume, our eyes and facial expression, and body posture

(Berardi & Morton, 2019). Educators can teach students through role playing, like, playing

around with tones of voice, and demonstrating not being too loud and not being too soft

(Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). As well as how to maintain a comfortable physical boundary

with personal space when talking and how to read other people's personal space (Blaustein &

Kinniburgh, 2010). All these demonstrations and practices support students with trauma learn

non-verbal communication.

For students practicing verbal communication styles, it is important they understand

communication and overcommunication, so they can learn how to communicate their feelings in

a safe and effective way. Students with trauma have learned when they hide their emotions, they

feel safe because it gives them a false sense of being in control making them feel less vulnerable

(Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Children with trauma may isolate themselves, minimize their

emotional experience, substitute actions for words or project their emotions onto others

(Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Therefore, it is important educators practice their reflective

listening skills because when a student feels welcomed when educators are curious to get to

know them and learn what is important to them (Berardi & Morton, 2019). It is important that

students with trauma understand when it is appropriate to share and what is oversharing and

when it is important to share if you are in danger. This not only helps students choose their

moment to initiate conversation, but how to determine if it is a safe space to share (Blaustein &

Kinniburgh, 2010). The next step is teaching self-expression to students so they can communicate their feelings and needs to others.

Having scripts, such as acronyms, "I" statements and role playing enables students with trauma to express their emotional needs. One helpful acronym is "GIVE", which stands for gentle, interested, validate, and easy manner. This is a great guide for effective communication in relationships not only for students but educators as well (Katz, 2018). This also helps students remember the importance of respectful communication. Self-expression through "I" statements are very helpful for students with trauma. "I" statements are a direct way students can express themselves in a calm but firm manner. Therefore, using appropriate, direct language is the best way for students to get their emotional needs met and an explicit way to let others know how they feel and what they need (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). All these strategies can be done using art, writing, movement, drama, and music because it not only introduces effective communication strategies but allows students therapeutic role play resolutions (Wolpow et al., 2011). Incorporating movement and art into communication strategies, engages students' minds and bodies allowing them to build lifelong effective communication.

Competency

As I have demonstrated above, positive attachments and the development of self-regulation are the key areas students with trauma need before they can move onto building competency. Students who experience ongoing trauma have difficulty with problem-solving and executive function tasks, and they struggle to understand the link between their actions and consequences in making effective choices (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). Therefore, two key themes of competency emerge in developing resilience and that is positive self-concept and behavioural control (Cook et., 2010). Many competencies' models within therapeutic work are

focused on knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Cook et al., 2019).

School counsellors need to refer out for students with complex trauma cases, as they need intensive therapy and specialized training is needed. This is because without specialized understanding and education, therapists are much more likely to become burned out and develop compassion fatigue from vicarious trauma when working with trauma survivors (Figley, 1995; McCann & Pearlman, 1990 as cited in Cook et al., 2019). Routine screening for trauma and exposure and symptoms are important so treatment options and resources can be provided to students and their families (McInerney & McKlindon, 2014). Therefore, it is important within the school system, educators and school counsellors focus on building problem solving skills, self-successes, identity, and resiliency skills within the school environment and refer out to outside agencies for concentrated therapy.

The key idea of building blocks of competency is a development of a sense of agency and resiliency, allowing students with trauma to believe they can make an impact on the world (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Students who experience early childhood trauma have not learned developmental competencies because their energy was put into survival (van der Kolk, 2004). Therefore, it is imperative that students are met where their skills are at. Agency develops when students try, do, and choose new skills (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Thus, competency goes beyond knowing and involves relating knowledge to everyday problems (Shavelson, 2010). Integrating these trauma-sensitive competency approaches into schools requires engaging adults who maintain their own well-being and can model to students how to build inner strength (Jennings, 2019). Within the theme of competency, I will be looking at the effectiveness of teaching problem solving skills, self-development, and identity in building resilience for traumatized students.

Executive Functioning

The executive functioning skills that are crucial to teach to trauma exposed students are, problem solving, making choices and thoughtful decisions. Students with trauma do not feel a sense of personal agency or believe they can have an impact on the world around them because of the trauma they have experienced. This is because students exposed to frequent trauma brains are consistently in "alarm mode," which leads to inadequate development of their prefrontal controls that are responsible for thoughts, actions, and emotions (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Therefore, within schools, students need to be taught how to problem solve and make thoughtful choices and decisions. Effective problem-solving skills can be taught through the SEL curriculum to enable students to manage their emotions to make responsible and thoughtful decisions. It is important when implementing SEL curriculum to not focus on behavioural models but restorative and relationship-based approaches and combining this with explicit teaching of brain development (Taylor & Barrett, 2018). When working with students with trauma it is important to teach, model, and reinforce listening skills.

While educators are teaching problem solving skills it is important that students are given tools for identifying solutions for personal and social problems (CASEL, 2019). Tools to support students are step by step instructions on how to problem solve. The problem-solving mat strategy helps students become more self-aware to what kinds of triggers set them off and has specific language, steps, and sentence frames to guide them through solving problems (Berardi & Morton 2019). Restorative practice think sheets also offer students a change to reflect on how they solved their problems and allows them to decide if they would solve their problem differently next time (Buffalo Public Schools, 2020). Practicing in small groups or in the class through social situations greatly helps students anticipate and evaluate the consequence of actions

(CASEL, 2019). Frequent practice using these reflective practices allows students to respond rather than react. Furthermore, when students can be in the space of power to choose their responses, they can gain self-autonomy (Frankl, 1992).

Students with trauma also need adults to model assertive communication through modeling and teaching. Adults can model positive communication through acting out how to use assertive communication in different scenarios. For example, using the acronym SOLD, which stands for; stop what you are doing, observe, look if feeling matches the event, and decide how to behave, allows students to practice problem solving for real life events (Katz, 2018). Another strategy is giraffe talk and DEAR man because these two strategies allow students to assert themselves in non-violent ways while still requiring them to use "I" statements helps and identifies the communication types of assertiveness, aggressiveness, and passivity (Wolpow et at., 2011). When students develop the capacities for executive functioning like observing before reacting and being able to make choices, they can then put their feelings into words which in turn helps them see positive alternative outcomes (van der Kolk, 2003). Through developing executive function skills, students can then begin to discover themselves, explore their identity and recognize their strengths and successes to build their resilience.

Self-Development, Identity, and Resilience

Integrating opportunities for student agency and empowerment allows students to heal and build resiliency from trauma. It is recommended providing opportunities for children to develop agency and control in the classroom to overcome feelings of powerlessness from trauma (Cole et al., 2005). Higher-order thinking and making meaning of new learning helps recovery from trauma's impact in the brain by establishing new neuro-connections (van der Kolk, 2003).

Self-Exploration

For students to learn self-development they must be given opportunities to explore their identity in a safe space and through activities that allow them to learn about their likes, dislikes, and values. Within the classroom or counselling groups it is important that educators set up an environment where students can explore. Exploration mode means that mistakes are welcomed and that students can lose their fear of being wrong, so they are comfortable to take risks and be creative (Beach & Neufeld Strijack, 2020). Therefore, if school counsellors and educators see their role as a helper and allow students to lead themselves, that is where students can grow and begin to understand their unique self (Rogers, 1951). When students are given this opportunity, they start to develop their own self-awareness. Self-awareness includes considering their strengths and limitations and gaining a sense of confidence (CASEL, 2019). Creating a learning environment to explore allows students to be open to trying new skills and activities.

The unique self involves an exploration and celebration of personal attributes through activities that examine likes, dislikes, values, family, and cultural norms (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). It is important that techniques are interactive to generate discussion and help students dig deep within themselves. "All about me" books, help students get a better understanding about themselves. They generate discussions around favourite things like animals, activities and allow students to identify their likes and dislikes (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Multiple intelligence surveys and lessons also allow students to explore their own interest, talents, abilities, feelings, and strengths allowing them to identify their unique self (Katz, 2018). When educators provide opportunities for students, especially those with trauma to understand their strengths and challenges, this gives them a more truthful insight of themselves (Levine, 2002 as cited in Katz, 2018).

Other activities like personal collages and exploring who they are as a learner allows

students to recognize their values and their family and cultural norms. Therefore, personal collages allow students to represent themselves without words and find materials that represent who they are and what represents them (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Within class or group discussions students can also begin to identify different intelligence, ability, feelings, needs, strengths, and values and recognize their own abilities (Katz, 2018). Within these different forms of exploration students can explore their true self in safe learning conditions.

Strengths and Success

Fostering the skills of students identifying their strengths and successes means that educators help students see within themselves and provide activities and opportunities to build resilience in real-life experiences. School counsellors and educators need to give students the opportunity to look inward to accept and express that they can direct themselves (Rogers, 1951). Using the strategy of looking at themselves in a positive way will allow students to notice their absolute and relative strengths. Absolute strengths are like talents, such as, math or athletic ability, whereas relative strengths are working hard at a difficult task or recognizing an area of vulnerability and choosing to address it (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Looking at strengths and successes this way allows students to rethink their concept of strengths and success.

Using strength and pride activities allows students to not only identify their strengths but celebrate their successes. When implementing activities, it is important to use methods that do not rely on high levels of literacy, so they are accessible for all students, therefore building on relationship interactions has been proven to work and be most effective (Brunzell et al., 2015). Two strength building activities are creating a power book, and pride wall. The power book allows students to highlight their strengths and power in a way and students can continue to add to it (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). The pride wall recognizes moments of success at school

where teachers or school counsellors create a space for them and students to recognize student's

strengths or successes (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Creating spaces to acknowledge not only

reinforces student strengths and successes but celebrates their unique accomplishments.

Resilience activities that allow students to recognize others' adversity helps them realize

their own strengths and accomplishments and teaches them how to persevere during difficult

times. Laursen (2015), recommends using books on growth mindset for students to learn about

people who have overcome hardships. Students then can research and report on people who have

demonstrated perseverance in the face of trauma (Laursen, 2015). Allowing students to identify

strengths in others helps them reflect on their own resilience. Another activity is where an

educator introduces a new definition of strength like courage and determination and presents an

example of a difficult social situation between two friends and then have students discuss how

using those strengths can resolve the conflict (Brunzell et al., 2015). Showing students to see that

intelligence and character strengths are flexible and grow causes students to be more likely to

stick with challenging tasks when they believe that their effort is a determining factor (Laursen,

2015). Using these thinking strategies and activating a student's growth mindset helps students

strengthen their own resilience.

Whole Self

In supporting students with trauma to develop their whole self, it is imperative that

schools create safe spaces of compassion to allow students to tell their story and identify all

aspects of themselves and experiences. When students are unable to talk about their traumatic

experiences, they have no story and until they develop an awareness of who they are and what

has happened to them they can begin to respond (van der Kolk, 2003). This makes it imperative

the schools create compassionate spaces where students can tell their stories because this is

where the healing begins. Wolpow (2011) created six principles of compassionate instruction and discipline in his book, "The heart of learning and teaching: compassion, resiliency, and academic success." The six principles include: (1) Always empower, never disempower; (2) provide unconditional positive regard; (3) maintain high expectations; (4) check assumptions, observe and question; (5) be a relationship coach; and (6) provide guided opportunities for helpful participation (Wolpow et at., 2011). Using these principles allows staff and students to recognize each student as a unique member and celebrate differences and acknowledges that each student comes from a unique background of experiences (Wolpow et at., 2011). When acknowledging students' different backgrounds, students can begin the difficult work of telling their story.

After students' experiences are normalized, that creates a safe space for students to tell their story. Normalizing being human gives students the space for incredible discovery to happen because they are free to ask questions about themselves, make mistakes, try new things and be who they are and not what others tell them they should be (Beach & Neufeld Strijack, 2020). Therefore, to be vulnerable is a very difficult step for students with trauma because they feel like the world has failed them. So, through creating an open and accepting learning environment invites courage. As Brené Brown (2010) shared courage originally meant, "to speak one's mind by telling all one's heart." Therefore, it takes a lot of courage for students to be real and authentic, let alone vulnerable, when they have had so many early traumas. However, when trauma survivors tell their stories, they can find the freedom and confidence which creates less fear and more meaningful connections (Brown, 2010). Giving students opportunities to share their story can take on many forms through, journaling, creating crests, masks, puzzles, writing and illustrating a life book. All these activities allow students to create their own narrative of

who they are, where they come from, and how significant life events have shaped their identity and made them resilient (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). When students can identify their trauma and tell their story this allows them not only to see how far they have come but helps them to imagine their future.

Future Self

Helping students make plans and goals for themselves in the future means providing them with opportunities to be reflective, practice gratitude, and hear other's stories. Students need to know that the future is about managing the freedom and the responsibilities that come with the power to make choices in their life (Bloom et al., 2021). This concept comes from safety, emotion, loss, and future (S.E.L.F), which is a psychoeducational approach that helps people understand the impact that their traumatic experiences have had on them and recognize the joys and losses that come with living (Bloom et al., 2021).

Allowing students to reflect on their lived experiences prepares them to set goals for themselves in the future. This is because it develops students' abilities to visualize themselves in the future and explore possibilities (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Explicit teaching of goal setting helps students see step by step how to plan and organize for the future. It is important to allow students to set goals on their strengths and to use their strengths to overcome their challenges while developing stress-management techniques to deal with the challenges that goals bring (Katz, 2018). Guiding students each step of the way in the beginning of goal setting will give them confidence to continue to make goals in the future.

Practicing gratitude not only helps students appreciate the present moment but allows them to build skills to help them in the future. Gratitude allows students to accept their lived experiences and connects them to others and demonstrates that even during hard times they can

benefit from practicing gratitude (Brunzell et al., 2015). For example, helping students notice the small moments, like a friend sharing their lunch or having a kettle in the classroom allows students to conceptualize their futures. Fostering gratitude, optimism, and life satisfaction within sharing circles, and journaling has shown benefits of mindfulness in students with trauma and promotes positive thoughts about their future (van der Kolk, 2003). Teaching students' mindfulness technique of gratitude provides them with the tool to feel confident that they can find joy even when they face adversity throughout their life.

Hearing other's stories through song, and storytelling allows students to think and write about their future selves. Having students listen to poetry or song lyrics allows students to identify resilient thinking. An example of this is Ariana Grande's song "No Tears Left to Cry" which was written after the Manchester terrorist attack at her concert (Brunzell et al., 2015). This example allows students with trauma to analyze a traumatic event, and observe how others cope with the aftermath, and move on to build a future for themselves. This can also be done through analyzing the ways in which media figures, sports heroes, and other high-profile people explain their successes and failures through observing their struggles and successes and how they moved forward (Laursen, 2015).

Also, having trauma survivors share their stories, such as, refugees or residential school survivors, is very impactful for students because connecting with survivors gives representation and hope to students that they too can go on to lead a fulfilling life. Hearing other stories of survival gives students with trauma the message that we cannot avoid suffering but we can choose how to cope with it, find meaning in it, and move forward with a renewed purpose (Frankl, 1992). Students can create future drawings of themselves in the future or add their future goals and dreams to their life book (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010). Hearing other's stories and

sharing their goals and hopes for the future allows students to identify their passions and

purpose.

Chapter 3: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusions

Summary of Findings

The importance of building secure attachments with students and building self-regulation and competency skills is the key finding. Through my review of literature on attachment it has become clear that attachment is the building block to support all students; especially students exposed to trauma. If students do not have strong attachment systems at school, they develop adaptations to keep themselves safe. However, this comes as a detriment to students because they are unable to regulate their emotional and physical bodies or learn key competencies, like not being able to form healthy interpersonal relationships (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). Insecurely attached students without secure adults will pull towards peers because they are looking for connection but unfortunately this causes the cycle of unhealthy attachments to continue. This is because it is difficult for peer attached students to attached to adults because they have a deep sense of belonging created with their peers that they have not found before with adults. As I outlined in my research, educators can create attachments with students exposed to trauma utilizing a systematic and patient attitude. Through consistent relationship-based classrooms, routines, rituals, attunement, unconditional positive regard, and changing school structures to be inclusive, students will begin to understand healthy attachment and build a healthy bond with others. Therefore, it is imperative that educators understand their students and attachment theory and how it impacts their ability to form relationships.

Through reviewing the literature on self-regulation, the main themes identified are based on utilizing trauma-informed practices. These strategies teach students to identify feelings in the body, increase the capacity to manage feelings, and then use communication skills to express feelings and needs. The explicit modeling and practice for students with trauma allows them to build new pathways of learning through using a variety of mindful and movement techniques to

engage students in learning new communication styles. Through learning to self-regulate students do not only calm their bodies but begin to feel more understood and secure within their relationships with others.

In developing competency through executive functional skills and self-development, students with trauma explore identity and build resilience, therefore learning skills to build a future with purpose. It is important when building problem-solving skills and making thoughtful choices and decisions that educators role play scenarios to give students step by step instructions and many opportunities to practice. While fostering self-development, educators must allow students a safe learning space with compassion and provide room for exploration. This means presenting many examples of what a healthy self might look like through books, songs, and guest speakers to assist students in identifying their own strengths and successes. Through this process students begin to explore their story and process some past trauma. Students who have survived trauma need to be able to express themselves either through language, art, or movement. When they are given this opportunity, they can build resilience and gratitude skills and look towards their future goals and purpose.

Recommendations

Based on the literature findings I designed a workshop (see Appendix A) for teachers that include skills, strategies, and activities outlining how to implement the ARC model might be employed in middle school settings. This will be helpful to educators and school counsellors, as there is a lack of knowledge and awareness in how to support students with trauma in an empathetic way rather than a discipline model that exacerbates the students' relationships, regulation, and resiliency.

Purpose

The purpose of my workshop will be to support educators in implementing trauma informed approaches using the ARC framework through skills, strategies, and activities. Within this framework a trauma informed school wide approach can be taken to support all students. The ARC framework gives educators the knowledge to understand how trauma manifests behaviours and how to provide skills to support students and increase their self-resilience (Spence et al., 2021). My goal with this workshop is to be able to provide clear, concise knowledge on the ARC model through tangible strategies and activities educators can implement in their classroom, as in my experience, previous trauma presentations tend to provide information of how trauma affects the brain, but does not give educators practical knowledge, skills, and strategies to take the next step in supporting students. Therefore, the purpose of my workshop is to provide valuable trauma informed approaches that can be implemented within the classroom and school setting.

Learning Objectives

The skills and activities will take place in Physical and Health Education 6,7 & 8 classes, where all students will participate. Teachers who do not feel comfortable teaching for the first year may have a school counsellor co-leading the activities. This program, presented in the workshop, is a Tier 1 intervention, and its purpose is to support the entire school-wide population. Although not all students have experienced trauma, the skills, strategies, and activities can assist all students in learning with relationships, regulation, and resiliency skills. The activities will meet the following curricular competencies for Physical and Health Education in British Columbia 6,7 & 8:

- Reflect on outcomes of personal healthy-living goals and assess strategies used.

- Explore and create strategies for promoting the health and well-being of the school and community.

- Describe and assess strategies for promoting mental well-being, for self and others.

- Describe and assess strategies for managing problems related to mental well-being and substance use, for self and others.

- Explore and describe strategies for managing physical, emotional, and social changes during puberty and adolescence.

Psychoeducation

Educators and school counsellors need to know what trauma informed strategies to use so they can support students rather than contribute to ongoing exposure to trauma. Therefore using, the (ARC) model, which is a components-based framework designed to address child and youth vulnerabilities caused by exposure to trauma allows educators and school counsellors to use the model which is built from both attachment and traumatic stress theories and recognizes the core effects of trauma exposure on relationship engagement, self-regulation, and developmental competencies (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007). Since the model is built from these theories it has evidence-based research that shows ARC training for educators with regular support from clinicians and school counsellors creates a decrease in school exclusion, educators reporting a better understanding of trauma, and how to respond to student's needs (Aspland et al., 2020 as cited in Spence et al., 2021). This model emphasizes educators focus on students' whole being with their strengths, success, and vulnerabilities rather than their behavioural deficits, which allows students to build or rebuild healthy developmental pathways. (Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2007)

Considerations

The strategies suggested in the ARC workshop are a tier 1 whole school approach. However, students with trauma will also benefit from additional specific interventions, such as, outside clinical counselling and outside agency support. The school counsellors and educators must also consider students' histories and assess if any of the activities could be triggering. Therefore, adaptations for certain students may be necessary and assessed on a case-by-case basis. Middle school classroom teachers will not require parental consent required for the activities; however, caregivers will be informed about the self-regulation and resiliency skills learned. Parental/caregiver involvement could be encouraged, depending on the comfort and safety level for students.

Another consideration is awareness of gender and cultural differences. Female, male, non-binary, and transgender children and youth experience trauma differently. Educators need to consider these differing experiences and be mindful to create safe spaces for all students. Mental health issues and trauma also have different meanings within cultures. It is important that these cultural values and attitudes are considered as they vary within communities, families, and religions. Furthermore, different types of traumas, from childhood abuse, intergenerational trauma, racism, sexism, PTSD, and RAD will require special considerations. Therefore, it is important that students get additional individual support specific to their social and cultural needs through outside agencies to support them in their journey of dealing with their traumas.

Strategies and Practical Considerations

I will present my workshop for educators in PowerPoint form (see attached Appendix) to summarize the main themes of ARC and have tangible strategies for building attachment, regulation, and competency skills in students exposed to trauma clearly and concisely. I suggest the workshop be presented to educators over a three half an hour to an hour-to-hour meetings

preferably as part of a staff meeting, each an half an hour to an hour be given to attachment, self-regulation, and competency skills. In the PowerPoint, I will discuss the purpose, learning goals, strategies, and skills for each theme.

My PowerPoint is divided into three areas: attachment, self-regulation, and competencies. I am choosing to present each theme separately to give educators the opportunity to leave-with smaller chunks-of knowledge that can be-easy to implement. My intention-is to teach educators manageable skills and activities to be built over time. I will-begin with attachment I have stated above is the key building block to create a safe learning environment for students.

Conclusions

Trauma affects many students, and it is educators' responsibility to foster an environment where students can gain awareness and tolerance of their uncomfortable emotions and reflect on them with compassion (van der Kolk, 2014). Within this capstone, I have shown three steps for educators to support students with trauma through building attachment, regulatory, and competency skills. Rather than school staff labelling students with difficult behaviours and attitudes, educators need to become curious to understand where these difficulties come from. Therefore, the ARC model focuses on students' development of skills to overcome trauma related barriers to healthy development (Gregorowski & Seedat, 2013). When educators build this self-awareness and empathic view, they can support students to build new pathways and see a future with possibilities. My hope is that my capstone provides clear, concise information to educators and school counsellors to support students with trauma through secure attachment and providing them with opportunities to learn how to self-regulate, understand themselves, and share their stories and create the conditions for a better future.

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Appendix A

ARC-Workshop for Educators

ATTACHMENT, REGULATION AN
COMPETENCY (ARC) MODEL FO
EDUCATORS

Created by Jenna Foster