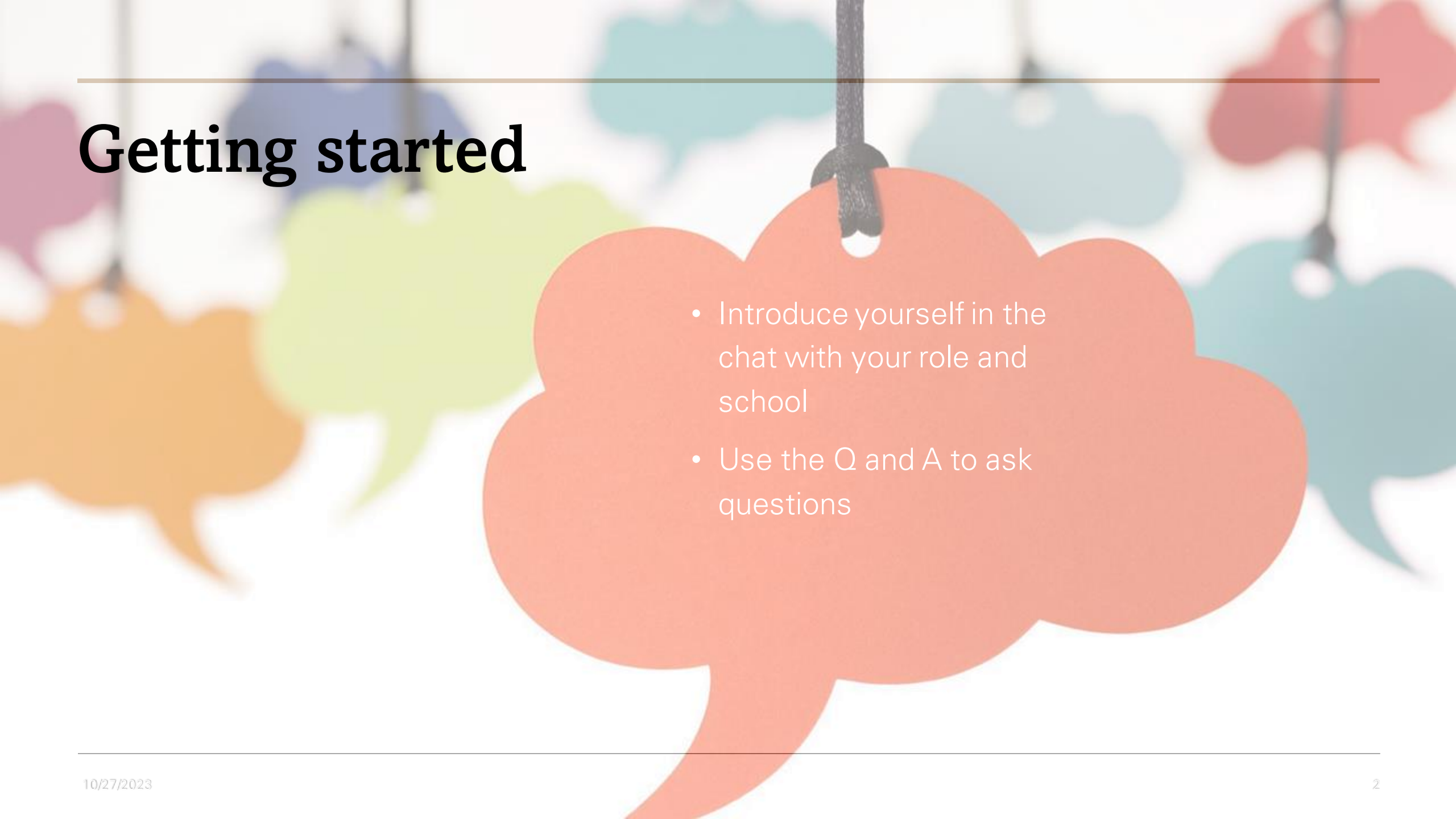

Trauma- Informed Practices in your Classroom

Getting started

- 
- Introduce yourself in the chat with your role and school
 - Use the Q and A to ask questions

About me!

- School counselor in rural Maine for 9 years (middle and high school)
- Faculty in Counselor Education program at PSU and coordinator of School Counseling program



Agenda



- How we see trauma in our students
- Trauma informed strategies that can easily be integrated into everyday practices in your classroom
 - Students impacted throughout the day, so we need to support them throughout the day
- Overview of how to support student who is escalating in our classroom

Trauma

- E's of trauma-
 - Event (traumatic),
 - Experience (goes beyond person's ability to effectively cope)
 - Effect (altered baseline activity)
- Some trauma is good! Examples- test, starting new activity, etc. With the support of caring adult
- Complex/toxic trauma is when the trauma happens over frequent, prolonged exposure without adequate adult support (no support is a key factor)
 - Repeated activation of body stress response (Downey & Greco, 2023)
 - Children particularly vulnerable to impacts



Complex trauma in kids

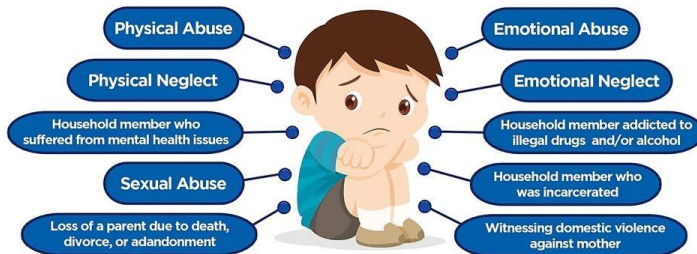
- Cause harmful, intense distress that affects overall wellbeing and function (Thomas et al., 2019)
- Brain threat response system is altered which leads to overdevelopment of the lower (emotional) brain and underdevelopment thinking brain (brain architecture change!)
 - Leads to unexpected behavior in our classrooms
 - Fight, flight, freeze behavior
 - Seem to often be on “high alert status” or be highly reactive
 - Be hesitant to trust adults



Complex Trauma

- Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs; Kataoka et al., 2018) can cause complex trauma
 - Nearly two thirds of U.S. adults (63.9%) experienced one or more ACE: 23.1% reported one; 23.5% reported two to three; and 17.3% reported four or more ACEs (CDC, 2023)
- What are some of the ACEs?
 - Child physical abuse • Child sexual abuse • Child emotional abuse • Emotional neglect • Physical neglect • Person with mental health, including depression or suicidality in the home • Family member with drug or alcohol addiction • Witnessing domestic violence against the mother • Loss of a parent to death or abandonment by parental divorce • Incarceration of any family member for a crime
- The more ACEs a student has, the stronger the impact (Downey & Greco, 2023)

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES INCLUDE:

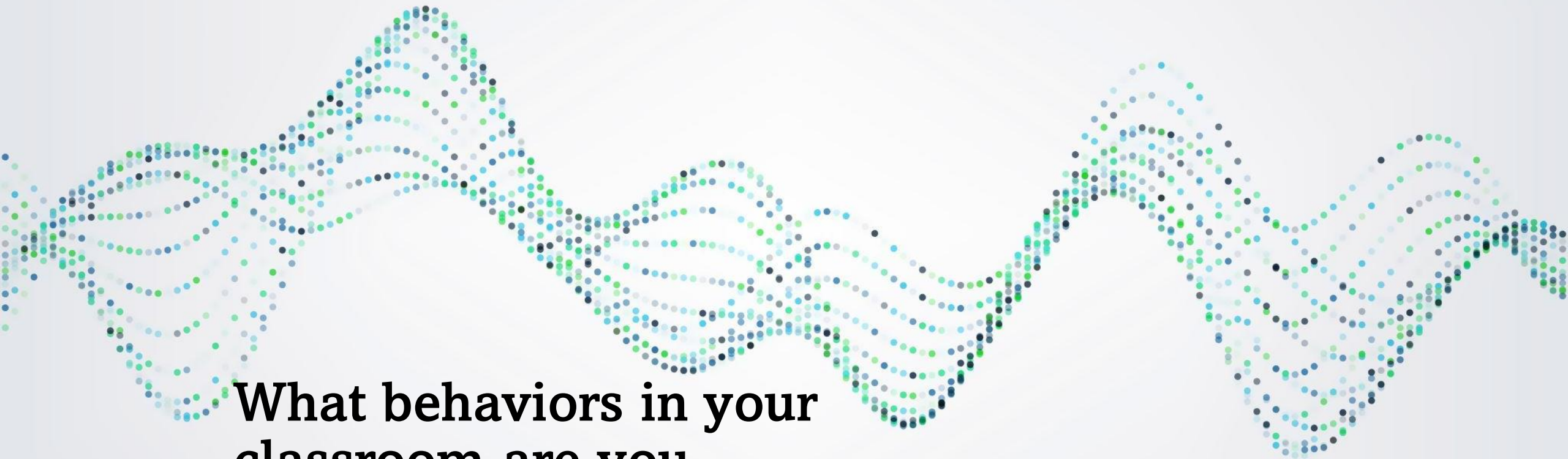


ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES HAVE BEEN LINKED TO:



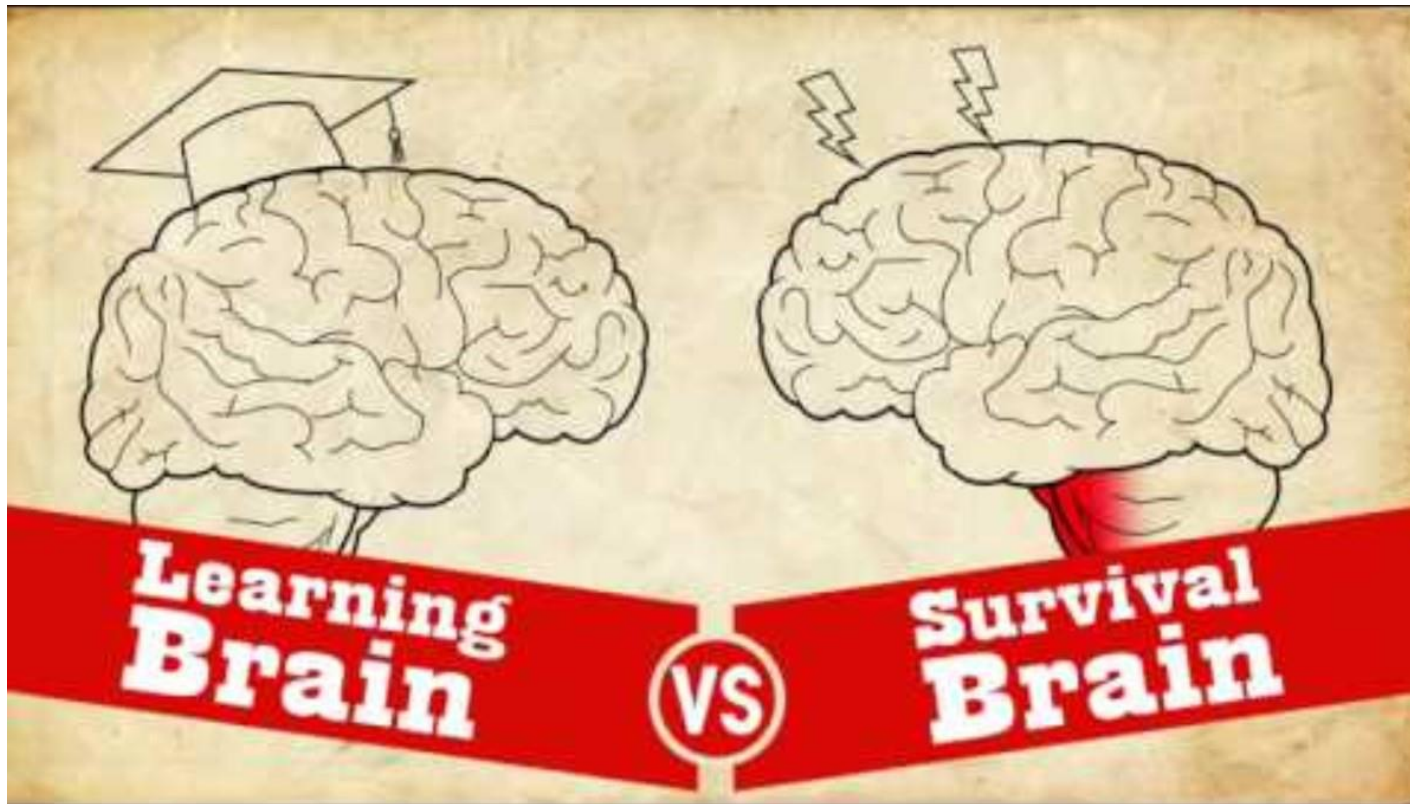
-
- 10-12x greater risk for IV drug use and attempted suicide
 - 2-3x greater risk for developing heart disease and cancer
 - 32x More likely to have learning and behavioral problems (Department of Health and Human Services, 2021)

What can these experiences lead our students to be at risk of?



What behaviors in your classroom are you observing that you think are due to a student having trauma?

Impact of trauma in our classrooms and in school



Children reflect their environment- this can be a good or bad thing

Impacts how they present to us at school

Trauma= more reactive brain, quicker to respond to stress, go to the bad place faster, constantly overcoming battles in brain

What unexpected behavior might be seen in the classroom from a student experiencing trauma?

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

- Poor social boundaries
 - Interpersonal difficulties
 - Social difficulties- Isolation from peers, difficulty attaching
 - Aggression
 - Difficulty differentiating threatening and nonthreatening situations
 - Withdrawal
 - Blaming
 - Criticizing
 - Enmeshment with family
 - Displacement of dysfunctional family dynamic onto peers
-

What unexpected behavior might be seen in the classroom from a student experiencing trauma?

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- Struggle with executive functioning
 - Fight-flight-freeze response
 - Lowered frustration tolerance
 - Increased behavioral problems
 - Depressive symptoms
 - Ongoing emotional regulation difficulties
 - Detriments in working memory and planning ability- executive functioning skills
 - Detriment in inhibitions
 - Limitations in complex decision-making
-

What do students with trauma look like in our classes?

Student who shows attention deficits, challenges with emotional regulation, and often has meltdowns result in whole-class disruptions. Student becomes disproportionately angry when asked to perform a task and when redirected. React negatively towards certain people.



Straight A student who takes challenging courses. Does not show any "obvious" signs of experiencing trauma. Internalizes their feelings (anxiety or depression) which are not seen by school staff



The unexpected behaviors can lead to...

Individual:

- Missed instructional time
- Absences from school
- Sense of alienation
- Lack of academic growth
- Lower academic self-concept and social confidence



Impacts on other students:

- Missed instructional time
- Lack of academic growth
- Frustration → reactions that can further trigger or disrupt
- Distrust in their school or teacher



Impacts the teacher:

- Frustration → reactions that can further trigger
- Hypervigilance
- Fatigue
- Discouragement
- Burn-out

What can we do?

Foster protective factors

Develop trusting relationship

Be a safe haven

Avoid retraumatizing

Hover your mouse over each of the 4R's to learn more 



Implement SAMHSA's 4 R's

- **Realization** of the widespread impact of trauma and paths to recovery
- **Recognition** of trauma signs and symptoms and how impacting the student
- **Responding** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices
- Limiting **Re-traumatization** of children by decreasing trauma triggers in classroom and whole organization
- Minimize activation of student's trauma response through increasing sense of safety at school and helping to improve emotional and behavioral regulation skills (Downey & Greco, 2023)

What the research says:

SAMHSA (2020) states:

6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

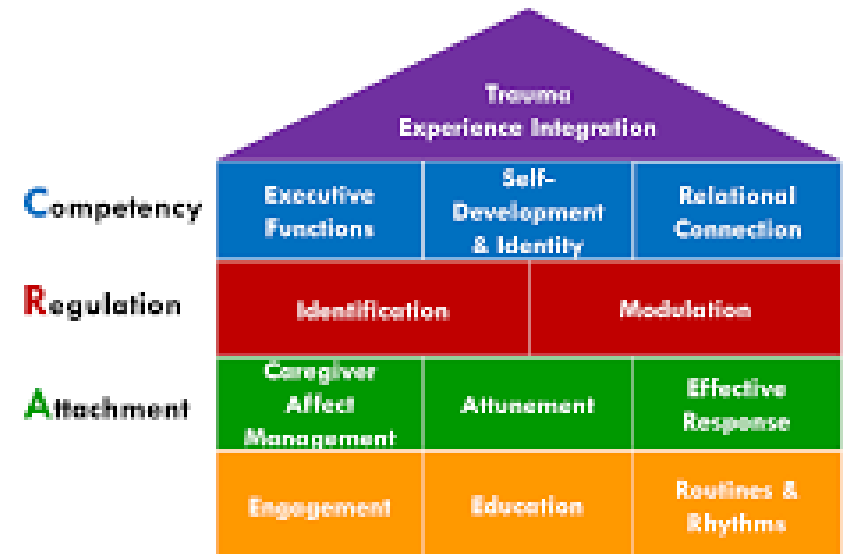
The CDC's Office of Public Health Preparedness and Response (OPHPR), in collaboration with SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC), developed and led a new training for OPHPR employees about the role of trauma-informed care during public health emergencies. The training aimed to increase responder awareness of the impact that trauma can have in the communities where they work. Participants learned SAMHSA'S six principles that guide a trauma-informed approach, including:



Adopting a trauma-informed approach is not accomplished through any single particular technique or checklist. It requires constant attention, caring awareness, sensitivity, and possibly a cultural change at an organizational level. On-going internal organizational assessment and quality improvement, as well as engagement with community stakeholders, will help to imbed this approach which can be augmented with organizational development and practice improvement. The training provided by OPHPR and NCTIC was the first step for CDC to view emergency preparedness and response through a trauma-informed lens.

ARC model (Rishel et al., 2019):
Attachment, Regulation, Competency

ARC Framework



Credit to Jeremy Sinyas, 2017, Adapted from ARC, Moskowitz & Kinniburgh, 2010, Kinniburgh & Moskowitz, 2011



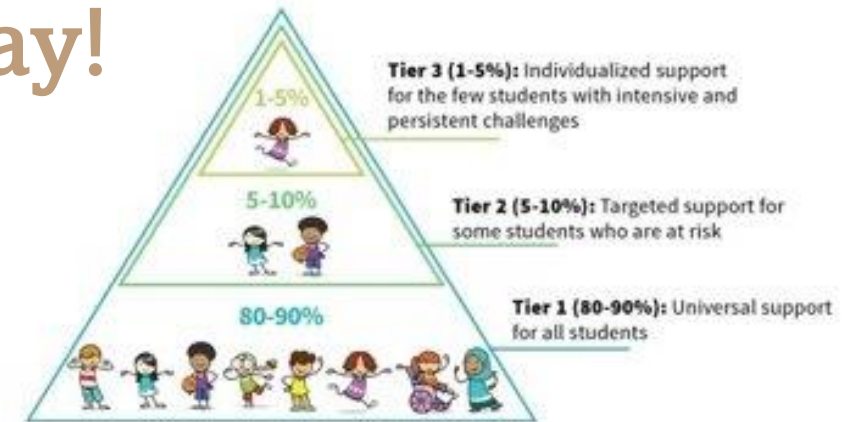
What does this
research mean?

Protective Factors throughout the day!

- Integrate social/emotional, and resilience building into all classrooms
 - Example: normalize being nervous before a test or presentation and talk about strategies
- Integrate ways to regulate emotions into their day
 - Mindfulness, breaks as needed
- Support and coaching on negotiating conflicts with peers
 - See something, say something! Help them work through their challenges.

Protective Factors throughout the day!

- Opportunities to develop positive relationships with peers
 - Check ins with students and include yourself!
- Create safe, warm, and supportive learning environment
 - Foster belonging, normalize mistakes, celebrate success, make plan to work through challenges
- Foster executive functioning skills- study and organization strategies, positive self-talk
- Support school counseling curriculum- try to be aligned in language
- Use MTSS model in your school and in your classroom



Building Relationships with students

- Be present in the hallway
- Individual greetings to students
- Check in at the beginning of class
- Foster **trust**/transparency
- Foster empowerment
- Unconditional positive regard
- Consider tone and word usage- our students pick up on this!

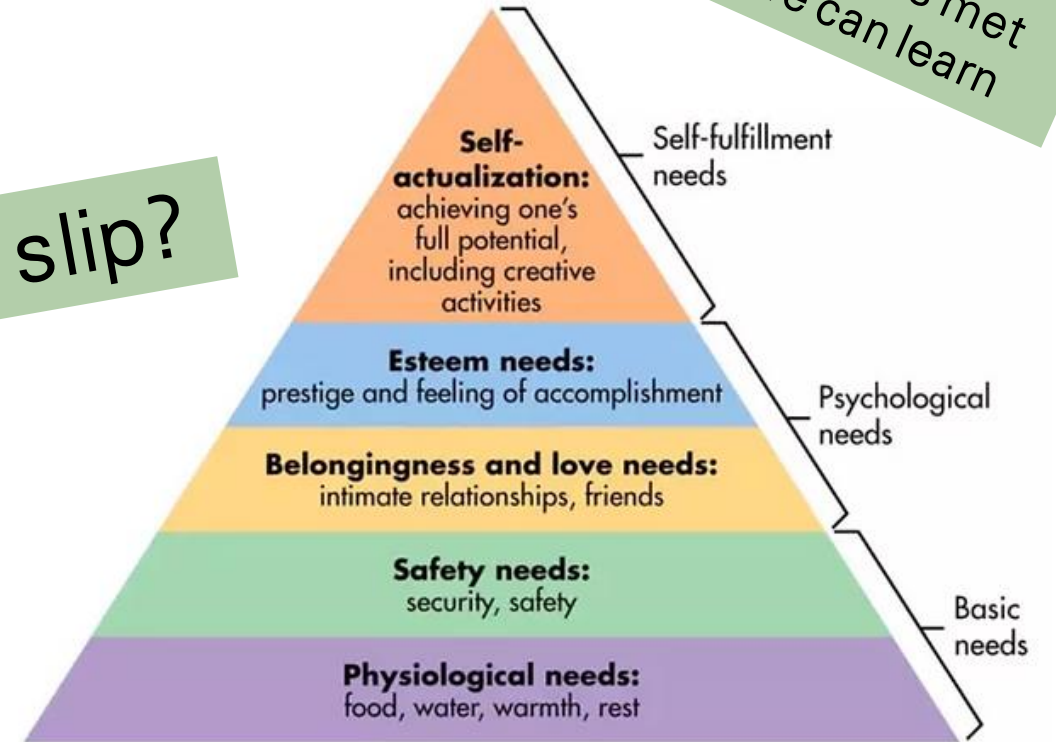


If they feel you care about them and their success, they will be able to engage more in class!

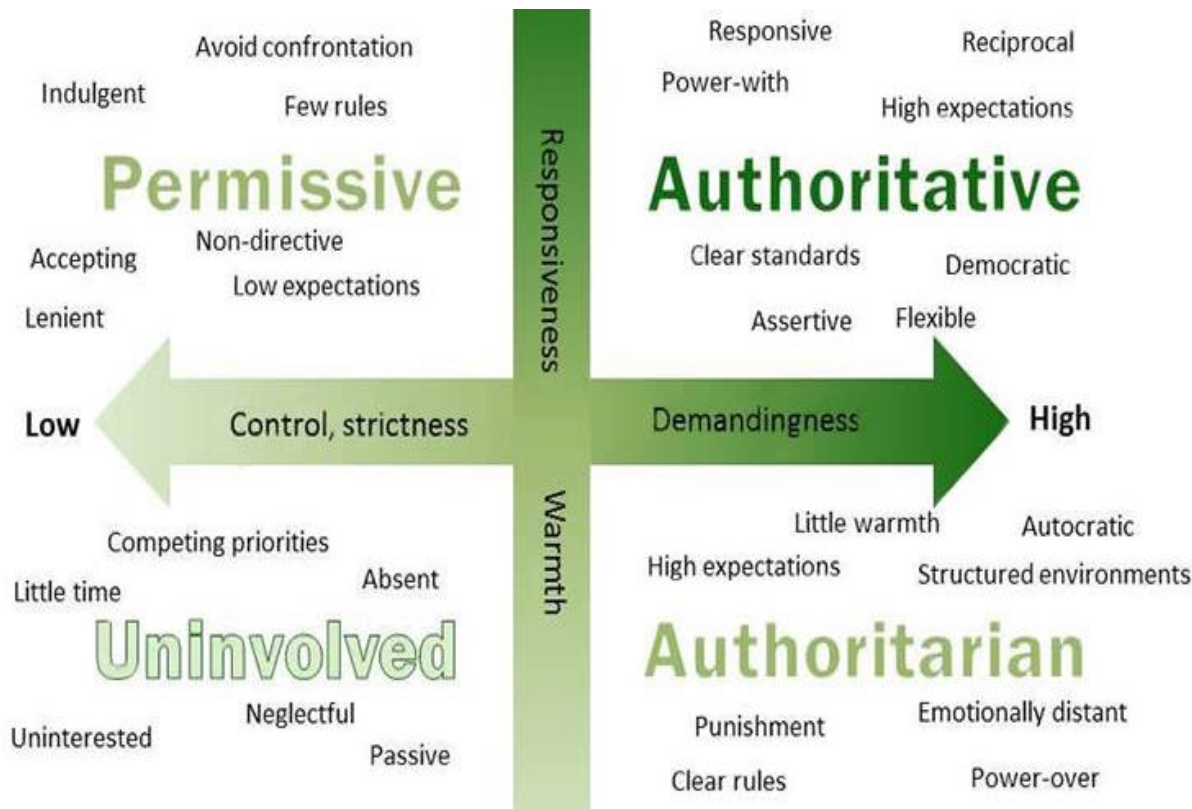
Positive start to Class

- Check in on needs being met
 - Maybe need something before can focus
- Warm-up activity
 - Mindful moment
 - Check in
 - Personal weather report
 - What color represents where you are today?
 - What animal best represents your mood today?
 - If you had to eat one food for a week, what would
 - Question related to the curriculum of the day
 - Rose, bud, thorn
 - Goal setting

Check in slip?



Class Structures



- High structure, high support
- Predictability in structure; clear expectations
- Brain breaks and body calming opportunities- mindful moments, movement breaks, relaxation games, etc.
- Individualized supports. All students are different!
- Celebrate success
- Open communication- no surprise culture- be predictable
- Transparent decision-making
 - Flexibility when needed
- Normalize making mistakes
- Sandwich feedback when giving to students

Discipline in the classroom and school



- Less punitive; more support, exploration, and education
- Flexibility with behavior- seek the why instead of zero tolerance
 - Ask- "Help me understand what you are experiencing?" Or "how can I support you?"
 - Not- "what is wrong with you?"
- Consistent consequences, delivered in respectful and empathetic way
- Positive interventions for prevention- PBIS and Restorative practices- build a community that can support each other in the good and bad

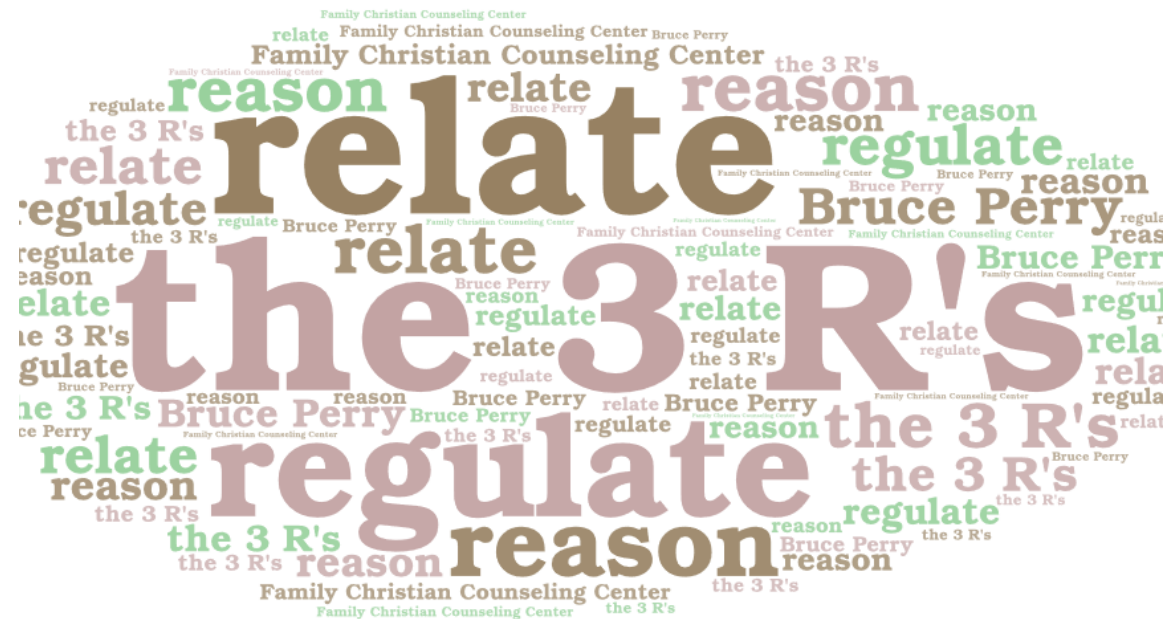
Wait, this helps me too!?



- A lot of these changes are things that help US as well as the STUDENTS
 - Mindful moments at the beginning of class, help US as well!
 - Instilling transparent flexibility helps US as well
 - Do it together so no surprise culture
 - Flexibility in how they present their knowledge is fun for US as well as meets the STUDENTS needs
 - Collective approach to teaching- foster ownership. Discussions invited into the classroom
 - Respond to current events- they may not be able to be present if these issues are not addressed

**Prevention
cannot Prevent
everything!**

When a student is triggered



1. Help the student **regulate** (stop the fight, flight, freeze response)- deep breathing, calming music, walking
Brain not receptive to new information when dysregulated- need to regulate first
2. **Relate**- be attuned to the current need and connect
Connect and empathize with the student
3. **Reason**- in supportive way help the student remember and reflect on what happened
Now we can talk! Reflect on what happened and explore together how could do differently/prevent in the future

Implicit bias exploration

Self-care- more than just a walk after work or yoga!
Need to make separation between work and home, time to recharge, etc.

Our own work



What do you want to learn more?

Consider taking:

Advanced Human
Development

Social Behavior and Diversity

Get your master's in School
Counseling!



Thank you!

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