

# Addressing the Needs of Traumatized Students in a K-12 Setting

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- \*Defining childhood trauma
- \*Identification of students who have experienced childhood trauma
- \*School based interventions

## \* Overview of the session

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Childhood Trauma occurs when a child experiences one or more distressing situations. The distressing situation makes them feel powerless and leaves behind unwanted, unhelpful, and sometimes unhealthy effects.

\* Examples of childhood trauma include:

- \* Physical abuse
- \* Emotional abuse
- \* Sexual abuse
- \* Serious illness of self or immediate family
- \* Death of an immediate family member
- \* Involvement in a situation where life or personal wellbeing is at risk
- \* Microtraumas
- \* Bullying
- \* Belittling
- \* Witnessing or experiencing a natural disaster or accident
- \* Living with a mentally ill caregiver or substance abusing caregiver
- \* Witnessing family violence
- \* Witnessing murder

## \* Refining childhood trauma

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A multisystemic approach to working with traumatized students includes:

- \*Communication with other professionals
- \*Communication with parents/guardians
- \*Staff Education
- \*Utilize resources

**\* Multisystemic approach to working with traumatized students**

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- \*Changes in academic performance
- \*Absenteeism
- \*Behavioral problems
- \*Increase in activity level
- \*Difficulty concentrating
- \*Withdrawn or moody
- \*Headaches or stomachaches
- \*Recreating the event
- \*Heightened startle response
- \*Irritability with friends or teachers
- \*Impulsive behavior

**\* Identification of students who have experienced childhood trauma**

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- \*Feeling anxious or fearful
- \*Feeling depressed
- \*Experiencing low energy
- \*Difficulty remembering aspects of the trauma
- \*Difficulty making decisions
- \*Avoiding things that trigger memories of the trauma
- \*Difficulty with authority, redirection, or criticism
- \*Re-experiencing the trauma
- \*Emotional numbing
- \*Difficulty trusting others
- \*Repetitive thoughts and comments about death or dying

**\* Identification of students who have experienced childhood trauma**

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- \*Raise the awareness of school staff and personnel
- \* Create a supportive school environment
- \*Modify teaching strategies
- \*Balance normal school expectations with flexibility.
- \* Support families
- \*Make referrals
- \*Protect the traumatized child from peers' curiosity.
- \*Be aware of children reenacting the trauma
- \*Consider accommodations or modifications to academic work or creating a 504 plan

**\* School based interventions**

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- \*Provide structure and consistency
- \*Ease transitions
- \*Allow students a choice
- \*Focus on healthy outlets
- \*Be available
- \*Provide a safe place for students who feel overwhelmed

**\* School based interventions**

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- \*Be sensitive to the cues in the environment
- \*Anticipate difficult times
- \*Set limits for appropriate behavior
- \*Behavioral problems may be related to trauma.
- \*Make a referral to a school counselor

**\* What can teachers do?**

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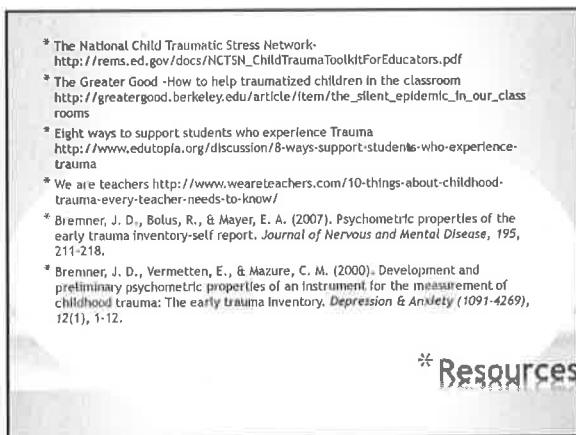
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\* Resources

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