

Helping Children Birth through Age 5 Rebound from Traumatic Experiences: Creating Classrooms That Support Recovery



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What brings us here



July 5, 2016 – Baton Rouge



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July 17, 2016 – Baton Rouge



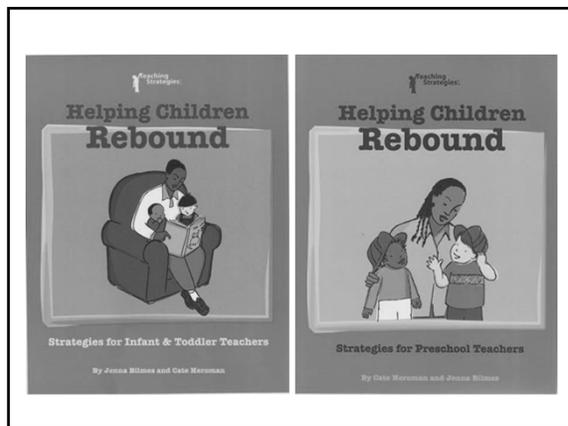
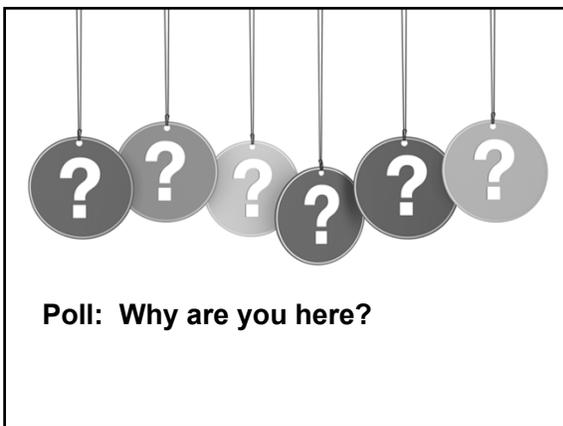
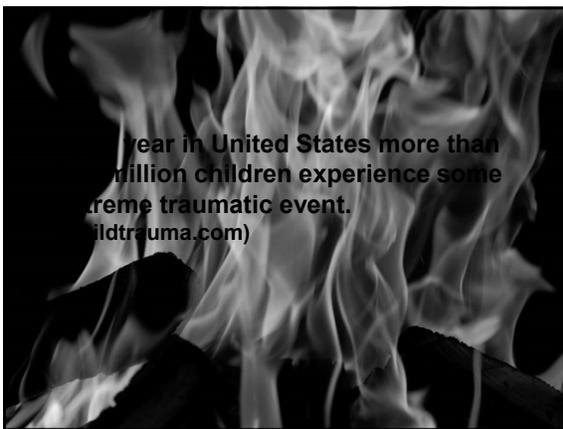
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August, 2016 - Louisiana



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In this session, we will consider...

- How young children might behave after experiencing trauma.
- How to create an emotional environment, a physical environment and classroom structure that supports children who have experienced trauma.



What helps us feel safe and secure?

- People
- Places
- Routines
- Rituals



Source: Greenman, Jim. (2005) *What Happened to MY World? Helping Children Cope with Natural Disaster and Catastrophe.*



What keeps us feeling secure?

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- Places
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A traumatic event is...

...an event that causes physical, emotional, or psychological distress or harm. It is an event that is perceived as a threat to one's safety or to the stability of one's world.

A traumatic event is an event that causes physical, emotional, or psychological



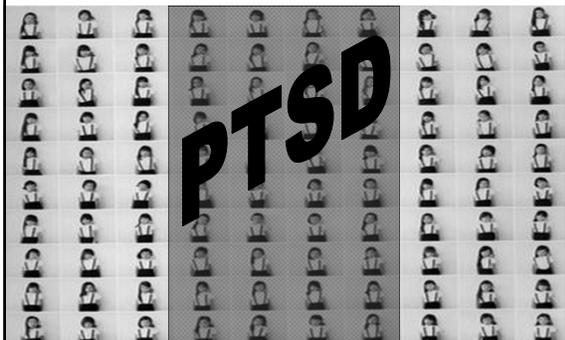
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Some causes of PTSD
under 6

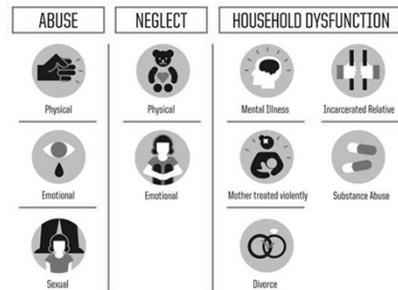


Poll: In your own experience working with children, what types of trauma have you witnessed?

Why is this important for us?



Adverse Childhood Experiences (the ACE Study)



For more information: https://www.aap.org/en-us/Documents/ttb_aces_consequences.pdf

Toxic Stress Changes Brain Architecture

Normal

Toxic stress

Prefrontal Cortex and Hippocampus

Typical neuron—many connections

Damaged neuron—fewer connections

Sources: Radley et al. (2004); Bock et al. (2009)

Factors affecting children's reactions

- Whether the event is ongoing
- How close they were to the event
- Whether or not their basic needs are being met
- Their family situation before the event and how family members react to the event
- Their disposition and resiliency

One of the most important factors affecting the extent to which children display symptoms is related to their parents' and caregiver's response to the traumatic event.

Taking Care of Caregivers

Burnout Reactions:

- Emotional
- Physical
- Cognitive
- Behavioral or social

Think about...

What are some behaviors you have noticed in children who have experienced trauma?

Cognitive

<p>Birth to Age 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor verbal skills • Memory problems 	<p>Ages 3 to 6</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulties focusing or learning in school • Develop learning disabilities • Poor skill development
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Behavioral

Birth to Age 2

- Excessive temper
- Seek attention
- Extreme aggression
- Scream/cry
- Startle easily
- Fear of separation
- Irritable, sad, anxious
- Withdraw from activities
- Fear adults who remind them of the trauma



Ages 3 to 6

Additional behaviors

- Regressive behaviors
- Verbally abusive
- Act out in social situations
- Re-enact the traumatic event
- Trouble connecting with others
- Believe they are to blame for the event

Physiological

Birth to Age 2

- Eating problems
- Sleep problems
- Nightmares



Ages 3 to 6

- Stomach aches/headaches
- Sleep problems
- Nightmares
- Wet the bed or self after being toilet trained and other regressive behaviors

Children's Thinking



- generalize
- literal
- egocentric
- concrete
- focus on one attribute at a time
- reality vs. fantasy



Regardless of the source of the trauma, the way we address child trauma in early childhood programs is very similar.



How do we support children in our care?

- People
- Places
- Routines
- Rituals



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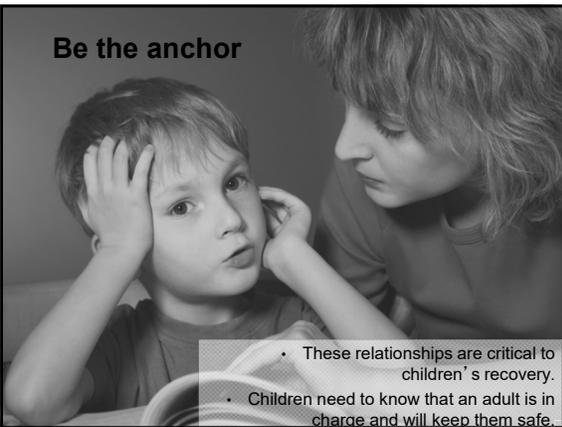
Create a classroom community



One-on-one relationships are the basis for feelings of security



Be the anchor



- These relationships are critical to children's recovery.
- Children need to know that an adult is in charge and will keep them safe.

Hold and comfort distressed children



Responding to children in crisis

- Don't be afraid to talk about what happened, but let children take the lead.
- Answer questions in language that is easy to understand.
- Correct misunderstandings.
- Remind children that you will do everything possible to keep them safe.

The boat man saved the animals-- Joseph

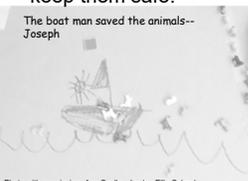


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Help children feel connected

Make sure each child's name is included on cubbies, attendance charts, job charts, and sign-in sheets.





Give reflective feedback



Giving Reflective Feedback When Children Are Reenacting Events

Reenacting Destruction*	Showing Hope and Moving On
<p>Step 1: Give reflective feedback on the action. <i>Everybody's trying to sleep in the same bed.</i></p>	<p>Step 1: Give reflective feedback on the action. <i>Oh, you're making beds on the floor.</i></p>
<p>Step 2: Describe the underlying feeling. <i>There's not enough room, and kids are getting hurt.</i></p>	<p>Step 2: Describe the underlying feeling. <i>Now there will be beds for everyone. When so many people stay together in one house, people may have to sleep on the floor.</i></p>
<p>Step 3: Redirect the behavior. <i>Let's make some room on the floor so everyone will have room to sleep.</i></p>	<p>Step 3: Say what you're going to do or offer ways to extend play. <i>Let's make everyone comfy. Would you like me to find a blanket and pillow for you?</i></p>
<p>Step 4: Suggest a positive resolution. <i>Now we're all comfy.</i></p>	

How to respond when children re-enact traumatic events

Is the play destructive?

- Give reflective feedback on the action.
- Describe the underlying feeling.
- Redirect the behavior.
- Suggest a positive resolution..



Is the play showing hope and moving on?

- Give reflective feedback on the action.
- Describe the underlying feeling.
- Say what you're going to do or offer ways to extend the play.



Drawing and Painting

- Describe what you see.
- Give positive feedback by doing at least one of the following:
 - Talk about the action.
 - Ask about the process.
 - Ask open-ended questions that encourage children to think and respond.
- Use language that encourages and supports the children's efforts.



The fireman needs to save all the people.

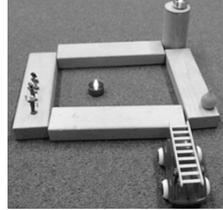


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We had to sleep in the car because the water came all the way up to here! I was crying.

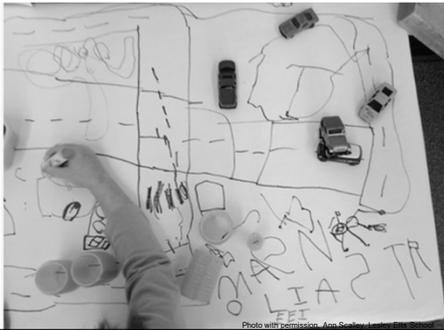


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All the dogs and cats had to stay together in the shelter.



Photo with permission, Ann Scalley, Lesley Ellis School

We need more food for the kids.



Photo with permission, Ann Scalley, Lesley Ellis School

The bad guy shot him.



Photo with permission, Ann Scalley, Lesley Ellis School

I'm making a big bed for me and my baby.



Photo with permission, Ann Scally, Lesley Ellis School

Hurry up! We got to go fast. I got my baby and my suitcase.



Photo with permission, LSU Preschool

The Learning Environment



Try to get back to normal activities. Reestablishing regular routines may be more important than any other intervention.

Materials to help children calm themselves...



Photo with permission, LSU Preschool



Photo with permission, Ann Scally, Lesley Ellis School

Materials to help children express feelings and emotions...



Photo with permission, LSU Preschool

Materials to help children cope with frustration...



Photos with permission, LSU Preschool

Create cozy areas where children can go....



...when they feel stress, anger, fear, or sorrow or when they just need some time alone..

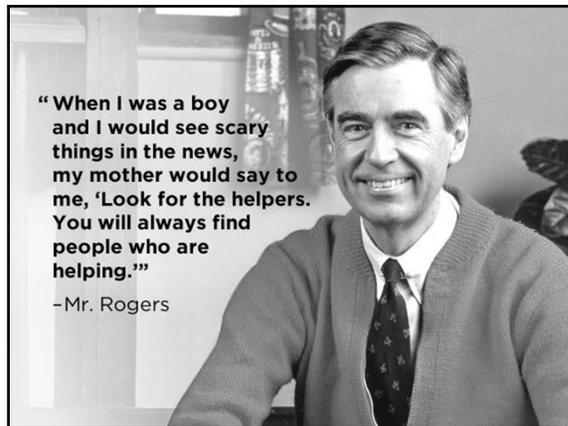
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Challenges During Daily Activities



- Arrival
- Group Times
- Choice Time
- Transitions
- Rest Time
- Outdoors

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When to suggest a referral or seek expert advice

If the distress stays the same or gets more intense over time.

If the child is a threat to self or others in a way that you cannot manage.



Questions?

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