

# Addressing Mental Health Issues in K-12 Through SEL

*Cynthia Mose-Trevino (Lake Ridge Schools) & Debbie Matthys (Hobart Schools)*



# Agenda

- Approaches to social-emotional learning (SEL)
- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)
- Use of Trauma Indicators to identify and address needs





# Mindful Moment

Be present in the moment.

# COVID Impact on Children and Youth Mental Health

## COVID Mental Health Impact

- Emergency room visits for mental health issues youth 12-17 increased 31% from 2019 to 2020
- Mental health claims for 13- to 18-year-olds in March and April 2020 roughly doubled compared with the same months the year before, FAIR Health Study
- Intentional self-harm claims in the same age group increased by 90% from March 2019 to March 2020, FAIR Health Study
- Substantial mental health impact on youth, especially seen with the following:
  - Depression
  - Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
  - Aggressive Behaviors
  - Attention-related issues

# COVID Impact on Children and Youth Mental Health and Schools

## What others are doing and saying?

- [AAP, AACAP, CHA declare national emergency in children's mental health, 10-19-2021](#)
- Feb 2021 - Washington Governor declared State of Emergency due to youth mental health crisis - [Washington Department of Health Classroom Think Box](#)
- After-school mental health clinic, Kansas City
- Chicago Public Schools “Care Teams” in all 500 campuses through “[Healing Plan](#)” ([Chicago Beyond, Liz Dozier](#))
- [Dallas ISD](#) - Discipline policies reflecting mental health informed responses rather than exclusionary responses
- [USDOE Supporting Child and Youth Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs](#)
- [Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students](#)

# COVID Impact on Children and Youth Mental Health and Schools

- [OCR Reminder](#) 10-2021
  - **A student with a condition such as anxiety, depression, or a substance use disorder can have a mental health disability. Students with mental health disabilities are protected by Federal civil rights laws, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). These laws require K-12 schools and postsecondary institutions to provide students with an equal opportunity to learn, free from discrimination, including during public health crises.**
  - **Students with ACEs, Poverty, Special Populations are at an even greater risk of developing mental health symptoms**
- **What would the OCR do?**
  - **A public school student has developed severe depression for the first time during the pandemic. Their parent tells the school principal. Despite the school's Section 504 FAPE obligation to evaluate any student who needs or is believed to need special education or related services because of a disability, the principal does not refer the student for evaluation. Instead, the principal says that all students are struggling because of the pandemic and suggests that the parent should hire a private tutor and find a psychologist for the student.**

# Use of Trauma Indicators to Identify and Address Needs

Develop a full understanding of the whole child.

\*Taking the time to review what has been collected.

## Student Management System (ABC's)

- Attendance
- Behavior
- Grades
- Special population indicators
- Who does the student have a relationship in the building?
- Family and sibling information
- Activities the student is involved in

## Using Your Local Data Collection (SABRS, Panorama, Gallup, Connors)

Behavior Assessments

Social Emotional Learning Assessments or Surveys

Goal: Building awareness of the student to lead to the root cause.

# Begin with the Brain

Understanding the upstairs and downstairs brain.  
How can this help with our current position.

- Students K-12
- Adults
- Family
- Our own children
- Ourselves

**UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN**  
WILL HELP UNDERSTAND THE BEHAVIOR

**REASONING** **PROBLEM-SOLVING**  
**THINKING** **PLANNING**

**UPSTAIRS BRAIN**  
**DOWNSTAIRS BRAIN**

**SAFETY** **REACTIVE** **SENSORY PROCESSING**

When a child has **BIG EMOTIONS** or **FEELS THREATENED**, they are **DYSREGULATED** and in their **DOWNSTAIRS** brain. They can't access their **UPSTAIRS** brain, where thinking and reasoning occurs.

**CHALLENGING BEHAVIOR ?**  
Use the **Power of YOU!**  
They need **YOU** to Co-regulate, not escalate further. You can't reason with someone who can't access their upstairs brain.  
Listen. Validate. Help them feel safe.  
Meet them where they are:  
**THEY'RE DOWNSTAIRS.**

**GREG SANTUCCI, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST**

Concept from *The Whole-Brain Child* by Dr. Dan Siegal and Dr. Tina Payne Bryson



# Dysregulated Behavior

When we notice dysregulated behavior from any person.

Before we can move forward the brain needs to become regulated.

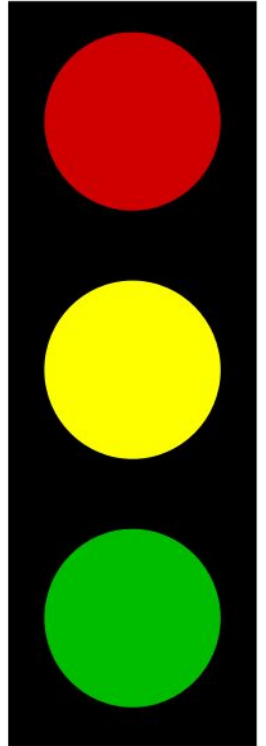
“As the adult, you need to be the calmest nervous system”. Dr. Lori



# How to Regulate Our Nervous System

Have a plan for yourself so you can co-regulate with your students.

1. What are your triggers?  
(Take 1- 2 minutes to identify)
2. How do these triggers make you feel?
3. When anticipating those triggers, what could you do?



# Respond Rather Than React

Ideas to use when anticipating a trigger. Catch ourselves before we go into the downstairs brain.

- Deep Breathing
- Name it to tame it
- Walking around the building
- Shake out the emotions
- Write down - Rip it
- Draw / Doodle / Zentangle

As we learn this for ourselves begin to teach others.

-Model for students

-Teach students and other adults.

*\*Know that mistakes are natural, we are human. We will slip into our old habits of reacting to our triggers.*

*\*Notice it, apologize if you need to.*

*\*Start again.*

# Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

\*Behavior - Direct instruction, Model it, Practice it, Model it, Reminders and Support Learners

Use this model at each tier. - Explicit instruction in social, emotional, and behavioral skills

- Tier 1: Whole school

- Relationships - Know yourself and know others/Way we are vs. Thing we do
- Universal Screeners - SAEBRS, "SOS List", Mental Health Disabilities and COVID
- PBIS, Class expectations, Expectations in common areas, Emotional regulation strategies
- Develop inclusive and supportive classroom culture with student voice and choice.
- Proactive and responsive strategies - Predictable Routines, Routines for Self-Care and Wellness, Relationship Building, Conscious Discipline/Brain-based Practices, Restorative Practices, Trauma Responsive Practices, Brain States, Mental Health First Aid, Positive School Discipline, Responsive and Inclusive Policies, Informal FBAs, EWIS (Early Warning Indicators) for Adults and Students
- Staff SEL/Self-care

- Tier 2: Targeted small group skill support for those with identified social, emotional, or behavioral risk

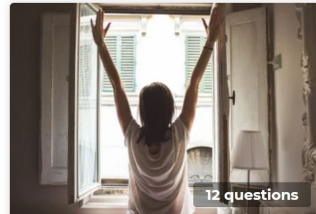
- Stop light - working through triggers and discussion of how individual reacts.
- Images / Sentence starters - Learn how to express self
- Social skill groups
- Skill-based CICO (Check-in/Check-out)
- Access to Mental Health Supports in School - 6x more likely to complete in schools (Jaycox, 2010)
- Formal FBA and behavioral supports

- Tier 3: One on One

- Intensive and targeted to student

# No Cost High Impact Tier 1 Strategies

- Adult and student emotional regulation plans
- Greet students by name at the door
- Trusted adult relationship with every student - index card assignment
- [“Windows of Tolerance” Checks](#)
- [Google Form Daily Check-ins](#)
- [Kahoot Daily Check-ins](#)
- Tap-out Teams
- Normalize and Reframe
- Check-ins
  - 2x10 (check-in 2 minutes 10 days in a row)
  - HUG (hello, update, goodbye)



**Morning check-in**  
SEL\_by\_Kahoot • 213.6k players



**Midday check-in**  
SEL\_by\_Kahoot • 40.6k players



**End of day check-in**  
SEL\_by\_Kahoot • 26.1k players

# ESSER Strategies

- Academic Interventionists
- Behavior Interventionists
- Reset Room Counselor
- Home-School Liaisons



# Thank you!

Questions/Thought Partner/Resources - Feel free to reach out at:

[ctrevino@lakeridgeschools.net](mailto:ctrevino@lakeridgeschools.net) or 219.689.9289(c)/219.989.7813(w)

[debbiem@hobart.k12.in.us](mailto:debbiem@hobart.k12.in.us)

