

Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools In a Large Urban District

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**Orange County
Public Schools**

What Is Trauma?

- Psychological, physical, or sexual abuse
- Community or school violence
- Witnessing or experiencing domestic violence
- National disasters or terrorism
- Commercial sexual exploitation
- Sudden or violent loss of a loved one
- Refugee or war experiences
- Military family-related stressors (e.g., deployment, parental loss or injury)
- Physical or sexual assault
- Neglect
- Serious accidents or life-threatening illness

Toxic Stress

Toxic stress response can occur when a child experiences strong, frequent, and/or prolonged adversity—such as physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, caregiver substance abuse or mental illness, exposure to violence, and/or the accumulated burdens of family economic hardship—without adequate adult support.

This kind of prolonged activation of the stress response systems can disrupt the development of brain architecture and other organ systems, and increase the risk for stress-related disease and cognitive impairment, well into the adult years.

Impact of Trauma

- The impact of child traumatic stress can last well beyond childhood. In fact, research has shown that child trauma survivors may experience:
- Learning problems, including lower grades and more suspensions and expulsions
- Increased use of health and mental health services
- Increase involvement with the child welfare and juvenile justice systems
- Long-term health problems (e.g., diabetes and heart disease)

Orange Public Schools

The Orange County Public School system is the ninth largest in the nation and is the fourth largest in Florida. The district is divided into five geographic learning communities.

Number of Schools

Elementary 125

Middle 37

K-8 5

High 20

Exceptional 4

Alternative 1

Charter

Total 191

Students Enrolled

84,776

41,448

5,031

57,629

2,852

393

14,124

207,253

Student Racial/Ethnic Distribution

- HISPANIC 41%
- WHITE 27%
- BLACK 25%
- ASIAN 5%
- MULTI-CULTURAL 2%

Trauma Informed Care In OCPS

- In 2015 the district began offer a training in trauma informed care and self-regulation. This training was develop by two of the OCPS licensed mental health counselors who are trained in trauma informed practices.
- Staff were able to offer 6-7 trainings per year open to all school district staff. We were moving in the right direction but it was not a coordinated effort.

Title IV Grant

- The block grant program under Title IV, Part A, Student Support and Academic Enrichment authorizes activities in three broad areas:
- 1) Providing students with a well-rounded education (e.g. STEM, arts, civics, IB/AP, health and physical education).
- 2) Supporting safe and healthy students (e.g. school mental health, drug and violence prevention, training on trauma-informed practices, health and physical education).
- 3) Supporting the effective use of technology (e.g. professional development, blended learning, technology devices).

Title IV schools in OCPS

- OCPS Academic Center for Excellence
- Dover Shores
- Eccleston
- Englewood
- Lake Silver
- Little River
- Maxey
- Meadow Woods
- Metro West
- Riverside
- Washington Shores Early Learning Center
- Winegard

Creating Trauma Awareness

- A meeting was held with each of the 12 building administrators to create an awareness of trauma and the impact of trauma on learning.
- The Resilience Film
- The ACES TED Talk-Dr. Nadine Burke Harris
- Trauma's impact on the Brain-research by -Dr. Bruce Perry

Creating Trauma Sensitive Schools Conference

- Administrators from each of the 12 grant schools were taken to the Trauma Sensitive Schools Conference. There were some foundational workshops which were recommended but they were free to choose areas of interest
- While at the conference we had a group meeting to talk about what they were experiencing and what implementation challenges they might experience in their schools

Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports

- A PBIS consultant supported schools with reviewing their behavioral data to develop their PBIS Framework.
- The consultant met with principals to provide an overview
- Leadership teams met to determine school priorities and develop a plan
- School staff was given an overview and a review of the plan developed by school administration

Trauma Resource Library

- Each school was provided with faculty book sets to support book study and PLC's around the topic of trauma. The books purchased were:
 - Help for Billy
 - Lost in School
 - Fostering Resilient Learners
 - The Trauma Informed School Implementation Guide(Administrators)

External Supports

- In each of the targeted schools the itinerant support staff were trained in the various components. Itinerant staff included:
 - School Psychologists
 - School Social Workers
 - Licensed mental health counselors
- They assisted schools with professional development and troubleshooting any issues of concern

Restorative Practices

- School leadership teams were trained in restorative practices. We wanted to ensure that we are fostering a sense of community in school environments.
- The schools teams were able to use these principals as they reviewed discipline practices and developed the PBIS framework.

Summer Professional Development

- Each school was given two or three days of professional development. The PD topics were:
- Trauma Overview
- Restorative Practices
- James Moffett Workshop
- Positive Behavior and Supports
- Restorative practices
- Safe Spaces
- Mindfulness and Self-Care
- Social Emotional Learning and the Second Step Curriculum

25 minutes of Social Emotional Learning

- This year in all OCPS elementary schools there is 25 minutes a week devoted to teaching social emotional skills using the health curriculum standards
- This initiative helps to support students with the development of skills protective factors that support student success

Moving Forward

- We have applied for the Title IV grant for the 2018-19 school year.
- The Goal is to expand into 10 middle schools using the same implementation model
- Continue to support the elementary schools with full implementation
- Conduct surveys to determine areas of improvement and needed support
- Offer Parent Training in Stress Reduction and Mindfulness
- Continue to conduct trauma trainings open to all district staff

Questions?



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