

Fixing the Hole in the Soul: Trauma Informed Teaching Practices



By
Simple Solutions Educational Services
 Created by: **Angela Searcy, Ed.D.**
 Presented by **Becky Honig**
866-660-3855
asearcy@aol.com

Dr. Angela Searcy asearcy@aol.com 708-845-2343

- **Dr. Angela Searcy** holds a B.A. degree in English and secondary education with teacher certification through the state of Illinois and a M.S. degree in early childhood development from **Erikson Institute**, with a specialization in Infant Studies and a **Doctorate in Education**. Her research centers around brain-based learning and it's correlation to aggressive behaviors in preschool children.
- Angela is the owner and founder of **Simple Solutions Educational Services**, and has over 28 years of experience at all levels of education. Angela currently leads the online cohorts and acts as an continuing education instructor at **Erikson Institute**, is a professional development provider for **Teaching Strategies, LLC**, an affiliate trainer for **Teachstone**, a member of the **Classroom Assessment Scoring System CLASS** Community Advisory Board and a author for **Gryphon House Publishing**
- A former neuro-developmental specialist, Angela has specialized training in neuroscience and is a nationally recognized speaker. She has been featured on Chicago's **WGN Channel 9 News**, Chicago Public Radio's **Chicago Matters**, **Chicago Parent** and **Chicago Baby Magazines**



Becky Honig



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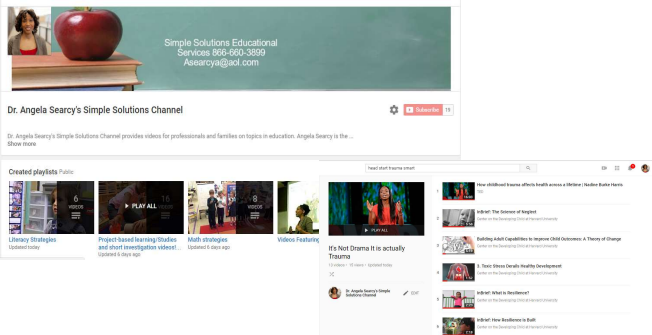


@Angela_Searcy

Angela Nelson-Searcy
 OR
 Simple Solutions
 Educational Services Page
 @angelassimplesolutions



Subscribe! There is a Trauma PLAYLIST full of videos



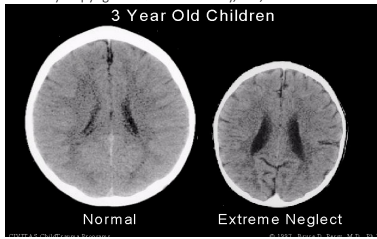
Trauma & School Performance

- Traumatized children are:
 - 2.5x more likely to fail a grade in school
 - score lower on standardized achievement tests
 - more likely to have struggles in receptive & expressive language
 - suspended & expelled more often
 - more frequently placed in special education



CT Scans of Children: What do you See?

The Child Trauma Academy Copyright 1997 Bruce D. Perry, MD, Ph.D.



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Impact of Trauma on the Child

- Cognitive/academic
- Physical
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Developmental



Impact on Worldview

Typical Development vs. Developmental Trauma

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurturing & stable attachments with adults • Belief in a predictable & benevolent world/ generally good things will happen to me • Feeling of positive self-worth/others will see my strengths • Optimism about the future • Feeling that I can have a positive impact on the world | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic mistrust of adults/inability to depend on others • Belief that the world is an unsafe place/bad things will happen & they are usually my fault • Assumption that others will not like me • Fear & pessimism about future • Feelings of hopelessness & lack of control |
|---|---|

Impact on Learning



- Organizing narrative material
- Cause & effect
- Taking another's perspective
- Attentiveness
- Regulating emotions
- Executive functioning
- Engaging in curriculum

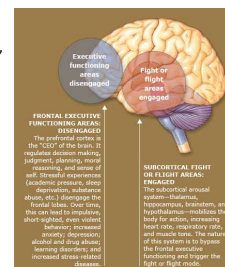
Impact on Classroom Behavior

- Reactivity & impulsivity
- Aggression
- Defiance
- Withdrawal
- Perfectionism



Impact on the Brain

- If there is danger, the "thinking" brain shuts down, allowing the "doing" brain to act
- Traumatized children experience changes in brain structures, neuro-chemistry & genetic expression



Some Key Points

- Traumatized children spend most of their lives in a state of low-level fear – even though outwardly they may look calm and relaxed.
- While in this state, it takes very little to move them up the arousal continuum.
- They will respond by using either a dissociative or hyperarousal adaptation. Their functioning on every level (emotional, behavioral, cognitive) will reflect this state.

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You Tube Video



Trauma-Sensitive Schools

Trauma-sensitive schools acknowledge the prevalence of traumatic occurrence in students' lives & create a flexible framework that provides universal supports, is sensitive to unique needs of students, & is mindful of avoiding re-traumatization.

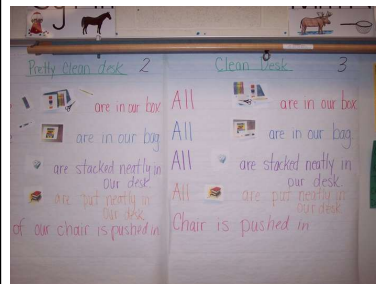
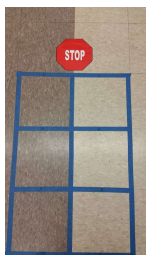


Classroom Strategies to establish SAFETY

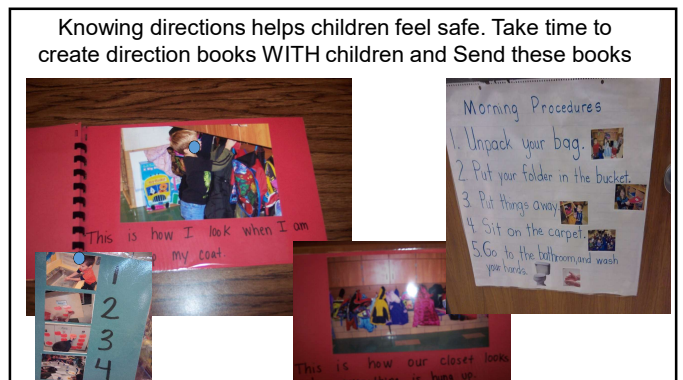
- Clear & consistent rules for managing behavior & setting limits
- Accommodations to meet individual strengths & needs
- Predictable structure, relationships, & environment
- Reduce bullying & harassment
- Use seclusion/restraint only as a last resort

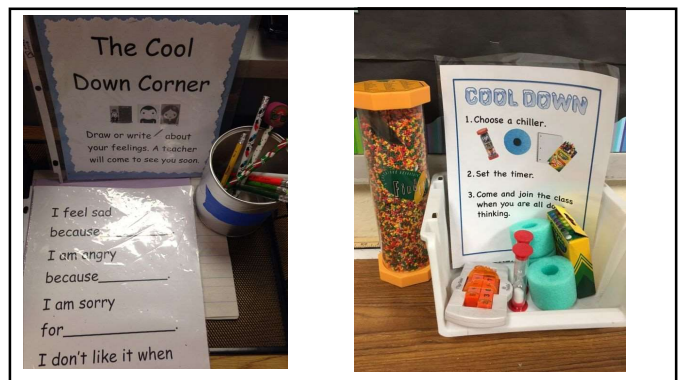


How do I know how to line up? What in the environment helps me?



This rubric for a clean desk helped students understand clear expectations in k-3





What in environment lets me know rules

Outside Rules

- Up the ladder
Down the slide
- Sit on the swing
- Keep sand in sandbox
- Take turns
- Safe feet

Circle Time Rules

- Quiet voices
- Make your hand
- Looking eyes
- Listening feet

Outside Rules

- We let ALL bugs and animals live.
- We use gentle words and hands.

We use our looking eyes.


We share and take turns with our friends.

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Know when I go next helps me feel safe






Sensory pillows can calm me and give me a "hug"



Break assignments down into small bits to help children feel safe!

Give CLEAR boundaries and supports

Lunch time steps






How could you adapt this?

BATHROOM MINI SCHEDULES

First Line-up, wash hands	Then Eat
First Go Potty, get book	Then Circle
First Line-up, wash hands	Then Rest

Kids often have trouble with bathroom transitions. Consider posting a bathroom mini-schedule for each transition, to and from the bathroom, on your bathroom door. While waiting for a turn, review the visual schedule so kids know where to go next.

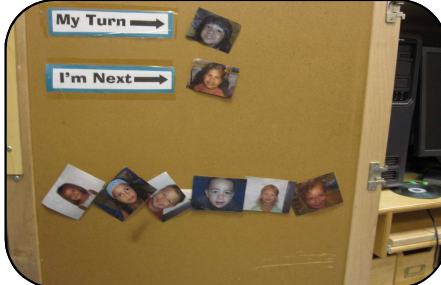
Program-Wide Positive Behavior Support




Visual supports for Children with challenges with comprehension skills—they need a visual to show who to chase and how to be gentle

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Environmental Cues




Do you have ways for children to calm down around the room?



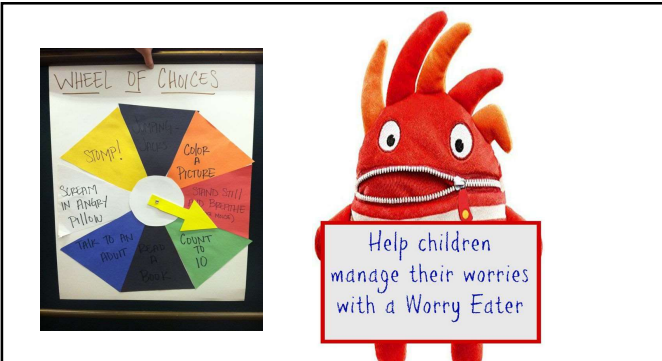
Put pinwheels around the room to help children with deep breathing when they become upset! Send pinwheels home



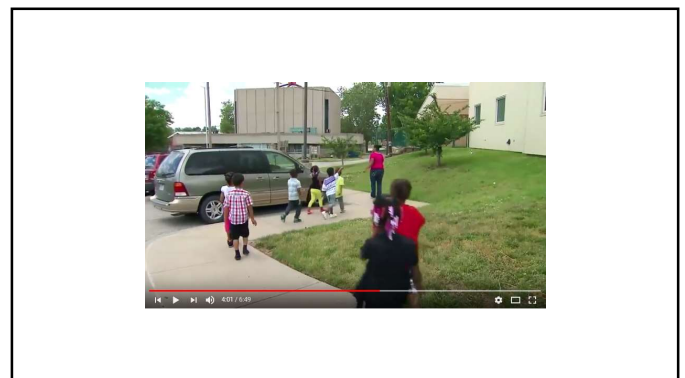
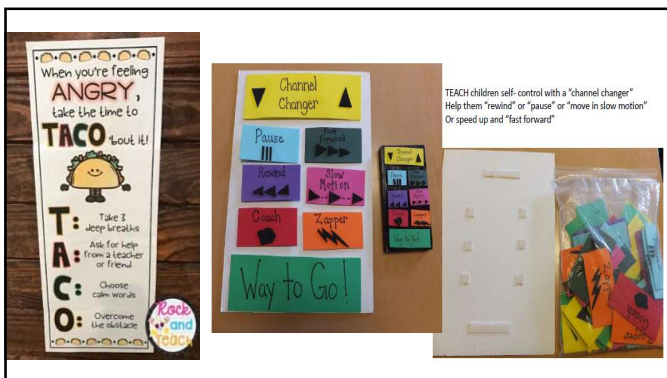
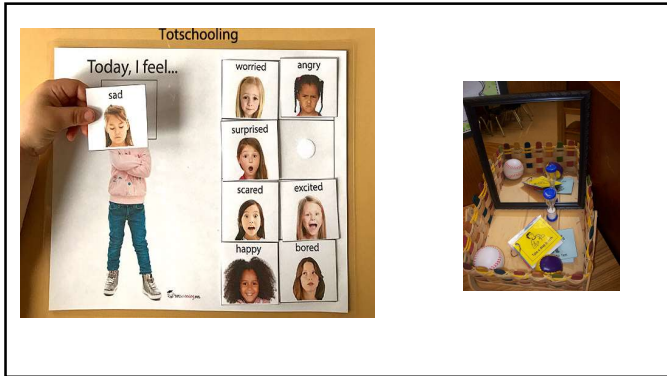
Teach deep breathing with Dragon Breathing and other tools



WHEEL OF CHOICES

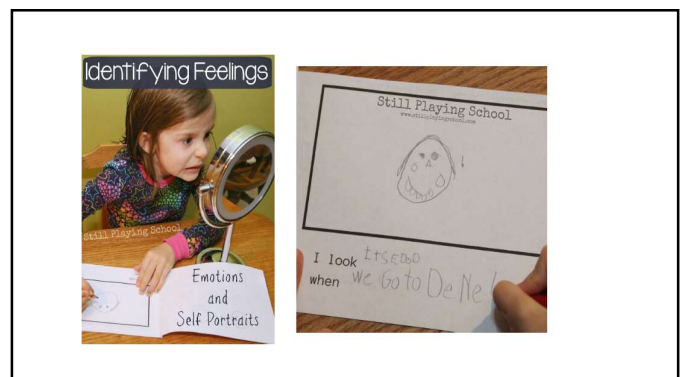


Help children manage their worries with a Worry Eater



Creating a Safe Environment at School through Relationships

- Rebecca S. Brown, LCSW suggests these strategies in working with students impacted by trauma:
 - Clarify your role with the student.
 - Establish yourself as a safe individual.
 - Create an environment of respect.
 - Give the student opportunities to make choices.
 - Talk about safety and what steps you will take to help the student be and feel safe.
- Connect the student to the appropriate resources and people.
- Message to students: "You are not alone."





Creating a Safe Environment at School

Some safety approaches for the classroom:

- Have a predictable environment with clear expectations for behavior
- Have structure during the class day, try not to deviate from it often
- Establish a quiet, safe place in the classroom for students to go when they are feeling overwhelmed. It should be a comfortable space away from others, with comfortable furniture, blankets and pillows.
- Have some sensory materials for students, such as a small rubber ball they can squeeze, stuffed animals, pillows with different types of fabric, pipe cleaners, rocks, crystals, play doh or clay, paper for scribbling, color markers/pencils, puzzles, etc.
- Have pleasant colors, pictures of nature, cute animals, etc. in the classroom that students can focus on when dysregulated
- Incorporate music into the classroom that is playing in the background, rhythmic sounds





The best ships are friendships!

Trauma Informed Interventions with Trauma Impacted Students

- Teach Stress Management/Relaxation Skills:
 - BREATHE! Teach breathing for relaxation
 - Provide students with a calm or quiet place to sit or talk.
- Remain calm, quiet, and present. Use LOW and SLOW when needed.
 - Watch the tone and speed of your voice/words—these children are hypersensitive to facial expressions, volume of voice, tone, etc. they pick up on stress-related behaviors of adults
 - Don't lecture or ask too many questions because the student can't process too much
 - Make sure to take deep breathes yourself to calm yourself and the student will imitate you
 - Slow yourself down, talk slower, use a lower pitch for your voice, don't use complex sentences, don't use lots of body movements
- Offer suggestions on self-calming techniques, such as mindfulness, grounding, tracking, positive memories.
- Teach positive self-talk to students and practice it before you need it. "I am safe" "I can calm myself down" "I am a good loving person"
- Use music, exercise, movement, stretching
- Incorporate more opportunities for humor and laughter into the curriculum. (Laughter reduces the traumatic response in the brain)



I try to improve a child's mood with the mood duster!

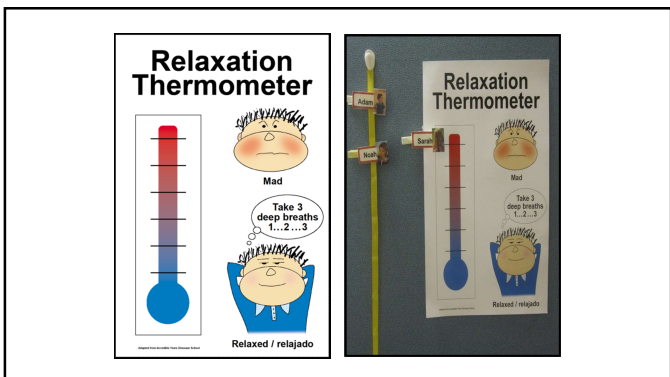
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Talk about emotions and set up the environment

Trauma Informed Interventions for Trauma Impacted Students

- Teach Feelings Expression and Coping--
 - Identify and label emotions and feelings.
 - Use of scales and "thermometer" to rate emotion intensity.
- Identify coping skills to help decrease emotional intensity. Help youth find positive ways to cope.
- Connect students to friends, peers, or supportive adults.
- Give ideas about participating in creative and positive social activities.
- Think of ways to reach out to parents/caregivers that involves them in the educational process.
- Deepen your understanding about the community the student lives in and available resources for the student and family




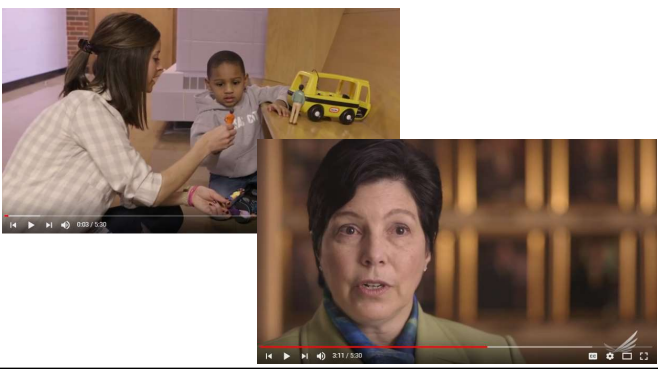


I try to improve Tim's mood as soon as he walks through the door, I can always get a smile out of Tim using the mood duster!

Angela Seary's Simple Solutions © 2015

Trauma Informed Interventions with Trauma Impacted Students

- Help students identify internal and external people and places that are safe.
- Teach students how to ask for help until someone responds.
 - Role play accessing additional supports.
 - Best friend role plays: "What would you tell your best friend to do?"
- Recognize that change happens very slowly.
- Know that you may never see the outcomes of your efforts.
- Trust that our simple compassionate gestures are important elements of healing and surviving.

Secondary Trauma

Knowing Your Stressors and the Signs of Stress

When you are stressed, it is easy to react before even realizing you have reached a point of stress. In order to respond to secondary trauma that results from stress and the impact it has on themselves and the children they care for, they must first recognize their stressors or "primary pressure points".

Common Signs and Symptoms of Stress:

- Physical Signs**
 - Nervous or jittery
 - Irritability or overreacting
 - Constantly worrying
 - Feeling drained
- Feeling alone**
 - Feeling overwhelmed
 - High level of anxiety
 - Being angry
 - Difficulty to relax
- Behavioral changes**
 - Being more withdrawn
 - Being more socially isolated
 - Increased calls or letters
 - Absence, lateness or tardiness
- Emotional Signs**
 - Nervous or decrease in appetite
 - Depression (sad and angry)
 - Difficulty sleeping or irregular sleep patterns
 - Being absent, apathetic or change to relax

In the spaces provided, answer the following questions:

What is stress?

What causes me stress?


How do I know when I've reached a point of stress?

Free Pep Talks Help yourself...

your good before are returned only by your self on the above lines

you write to them sometimes

your good before are returned only by your self on the above lines



HoJo's Teaching Adventures

Notes of Positivity

Hang it on top of the bottom of this board and pass it along to a friend. Complete each day. Daily makes it easier, but you see the rewards a mile or two away.

Aurora Early Learning Center

STAFF SHOUTOUT!!

Take one of these colorful stars and write something about another staff member that really made a difference and post it on the SHOUT OUT portion of the board.

CONTROLLED BLADDER FOR 5 HOURS!

