Trauma-Informed Approaches and the Pyramid Model

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Early Childhood Institute, April 19th and 20th, 2023
Session norms

• Participate Respectfully
• Ask and Welcome Questions for Clarification
• Honor our Time Together
Session goals

Participants will:
1. Learn how the Pyramid Model Framework can promote social and emotional competence in young children, specifically those who have experienced trauma.
2. Define what trauma looks like in the early childhood classroom.
3. Understand the impact of the trauma on young children.
Key social emotional skills

• Confidence
• Capacity to develop good relationships with peers and adults
• Concentration and persistence on challenging tasks
• Ability to effectively communicate emotions
• Ability to listen to instructions and be attentive
• Ability to solve social problems

What do children do when they don’t have each of these skills?
Let's Define Trauma and Pyramid Model
What is trauma?

Trauma occurs when frightening or harmful events overwhelm a child’s ability to cope or deal with the event or events.

Pyramid Model Trauma Informed Care Guide
The three E’s of trauma

Event
Experiences
Effect
How trauma impacts young children

Trauma-induced changes to the brain can result in varying degrees of cognitive impairment and emotional dysregulation that can lead to a host of problems, including difficulty with attention and focus, learning disabilities, low self-esteem, impaired social skills, and sleep disturbances (Nemeroff, 2016).

For more information, please visit 4 Ways Childhood Trauma Changes a Child's Brain and Body - Salud America (salud-america.org)
Data says...

33.3% of children were exposed to at least one adverse childhood experience. (ACE)

The National Survey of Children’s Health ([NSCH]; 2017-2018)
Adverse Childhood Experience

ACEs include abuse, household challenges, neglect, substance use disorders or mental illness in the house, parental separation or divorce, incarcerated household members, and witnessing domestic violence (Felitti et al., 1998).
Possible Signs and Symptoms of Trauma in Young Children

**Infants & Toddlers:**
- Difficulty eating and sleeping
- Separation anxiety
- Difficult to soothe
- Developmental regression
  - Fearfulness
  - Easily startled
- Difficulty engaging in social interactions
- Language delays
- Aggression
Possible Signs and Symptoms of Trauma in Young Children

**Preschoolers:**
- Avoidant, anxious and clingy
- Fearfulness
- Restless
- Impulsive
- Inattention and irritability
- Aggression and sexualized behavior
- Sadness
- Loss of developmental milestones
- Poor peer relationships
What is the Pyramid Model

The Pyramid Model is a multi-tiered framework with a continuum of evidence-based practices to support the social and emotional development of young children. (Fox et al., 2003)

Pyramid Model Trauma Informed Care Guide
The Pyramid Model

• Develop meaningful relationships
• Establish schedules and routines
• Provide clear directions and expectations
• Promote emotional regulation
• Teach problem-solving skills
• Provide intensive individualized support when children have persistent challenging behaviors
Trauma and behavior

Trauma can impact young children’s social-emotional development and behavior.

Children’s behavior relies heavily on their ability to cope with stress and challenging situations. Children who have experienced trauma often have difficulty regulating their responses to stressful situations.
How does the Pyramid Model support children who are impacted by trauma?

Children who have experienced trauma might need help with regulating their emotions and learning skills to cope with their feelings.

Children who have experienced trauma need close secure relationships and safe predictable environments.

Individualized interventions are developed by a collaborative team that considers the function of the child’s behavior, the context of the family and family’s culture, and a child’s experiences including a history of trauma.

Staff are provided training to understand the impact of trauma on young children, families, and themselves. The program supports a trauma-informed approach.

Kentucky Department of Education
QR code checklist of practices

Checklist of Early Childhood Practices that Support Social Emotional Development and Trauma-Informed Care

Layout 1 (challengingbehavior.org)
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