



Comprehensive System of Learning Supports



“Relationships matter: the currency for systemic change (is) trust and trust comes through forming healthy working relationships. People, not programs, change people.”

The more healthy relationships a child has, the more likely he will be to recover from trauma and thrive. Relationships are the agents of change and the most powerful therapy is human love.”
- Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.

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[Illinois Classrooms in Action](#)



Children’s Mental Health Month - Trauma

All classrooms teachers set expectations for behavior, academics and general procedures for students to follow to be successful. However, some students may struggle to navigate social interactions and comply with rules and authority due to unknown factors. Educators and school personnel can support the whole child by looking closer into what may be motivating those difficult behaviors. Students who have experienced trauma in their lives may be more anxious, worried, angry,

uncomfortable than their peers with transitions and changes in routine. They also may interpret social cues differently creating challenges in building friendships. Academically, students who have experienced trauma may experience difficulties in focusing/ concentrating, recalling/remembering, organizing/processing information and planning/ problem-solving. For more resources:



<http://bit.ly/2pYv6Ld>



<http://csmh.umaryland.edu/>

What Can Educators Do To Support A Student Impacted by Trauma?

Understand what trauma looks like in the classroom and respond through compassion, not discipline. Be trauma-informed when assessing children’s behaviors. Is the behavior that is being seen as problematic, disruptive, non-compliant actually triggered by traumatic memories. Fact sheet available at: <http://bit.ly/2qi34gs>

When appropriate, work with families and other supports to identify all options that could help a child enjoy and succeed in school. <http://bit.ly/2pdmldx>

Provide consistency and stability in the interactions with students. Children with extensive trauma histories may have difficulty interpreting safe and unsafe environments and consequently behave in ways that are not adaptive outside of the traumatic environment. Teachers, administrators and school personnel who foster a sense of safety and predictability will choose to remain consistent in how they work with these children. —<http://inspiredteaching.org/wp-content/uploads/impact-research-briefs-relationship-based-discipline.pdf>

Be concrete in offering suggestions for managing emotions. These children may lack the skills for self-regulation. They can’t just “calm down.” Assistance with how to calm down at: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/executive-function/>

Classroom Strategies

Anxious/Worried	Weak Executive Functioning skills	Sadness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Allow students a flexible deadline for worrisome assignments •Double check to see that assignments are written down correctly. •Adapt assignments to fit the students learning style with student input. •Post a daily schedule where it can be seen easily so students know what to expect. •Reduce school workload when necessary. •Ask families what works at home. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide the student with recorded books as an alternative to self-reading when the student’s concentration is low. •Break assigned reading into manageable segments and monitor the student’s progress, checking comprehension periodically. •Create a flexible academic demands to balance the energy levels of the student. •Identify a place where the student can go for privacy until he/she regains self-control. •Create an academic planner to manage assignments and due dates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reassure the student that they can catch up. Show them the steps they need to take and be flexible and realistic about your expectations. •Help students use realistic and positive statements about their performance and outlook for the future. •Help students recognize and acknowledge positive contributions and performance. •Depressed students may see things black/white– all bad or all good. It may help to keep a record of their accomplishments to show them. •Break tasks into smaller parts. •Encourage small social interaction – small group work.

*University of Maryland School of Mental Health– Children’s Mental Health Fact Sheet for the Classroom (Modified)