



CLASSROOM MENTAL HEALTH

Presented by:

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BioPsychosocial Framework:

Biological: genetic predisposition, neurochemistry, immune response, fight-flight response, physiological responses

Psychological: learning, emotions, thinking, attitudes, memory, perceptions, beliefs, stress management strategies

Social: social supports, family background, interpersonal relationships, cultural traditions, socioeconomic status, poverty, physical exercise, biofeedback

Mental Wellness Continuum Framework:

Mental wellness is a balance of the mental, physical, spiritual, and emotional. This balance is enriched as individuals have: purpose in their daily lives whether it is through education, employment, care giving activities, or cultural ways of being and doing; hope for their future and those of their families that is grounded in a sense of identity, unique indigenous values, and having a belief in spirit; a sense of belonging and connectedness within their families, to community, and to culture; and finally a sense of meaning and an understanding of how their lives and those of their families and communities are part of creation and a rich history.

Neurobiology:

Brain Development

Our brains are significantly underdeveloped at birth. In our early years, it undergoes a rapid period of development. During this period of development, neurons are establishing pathways in the brain. There are two principles crucial to this development: sequential and use dependency

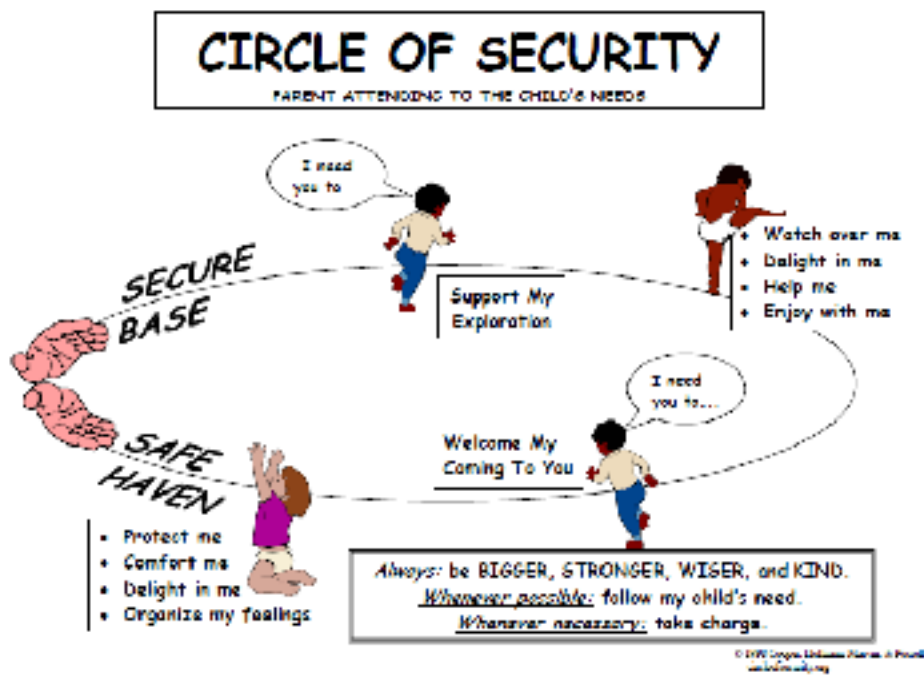
Right vs Left

Right: synthesis, imaginative, general, intuitive, conceptual, big picture, empathetic

Left: Analysis, logical, precise, repetitive, organized, details, scientific, detached, literal, sequential

Practice makes permanent

Attachment Styles:



Secure	Avoidant	Ambivalent	Disorganized
Works alone and with others	Works alone	Constant need for teacher	Push-pull
Confident to try new things	Will work alone, even when unsure	Overly dependant on teacher	Selfsoothing behaviours (banging head)
Socially competent	No engagement	Quick to blame/ turn against teacher	Controlling of relationships
Cope with roadblocks	Destroy/ not hand-in work	Unable to focus on task at hand	Difficulty regulating
Task and teacher	Learner-Task	Learner-teacher	Difficulty engaging
Content	Withdrawn	Anxious	Angry

Toolkit:

Greetings, ritual, soft starts, surveys, get to know your student, connecting before school starts, 2by 10, feasts, school events, whole body connections, classroom culture

Filling cups:

Environment:

Seating: Fatigue and pain impact performance and cognition

Unattached seats, different seats, move, postures, groupings

Temperature:

Brain is sensitive/heat lowers scores on physical and intellectual tasks/cool brains: more relaxed, receptive and on task/high temps: serotonin and norepinephrine (aggression).

Alternatives, ribbons, be mindful

Light:

Californian study > more sunlight > 20% faster in math and 26% faster in reading

Melatonin and serotonin (mood, alertness and performance)

Seasonal Affective Depression

North facing classrooms, bright lighting, outdoor education, daylight

Noise:

Elevated stress levels, hearing impaired and at-risk children difficulty separating teacher and background noise

Soften noise, tapestries, allergy sensitive carpeting, sound systems, white noise, scheduling

Other suggestions:

Warm (stimulate) yellow on three walls, light blue (calms) on the back, contrasting colours as accents / decor, scents

Anxiety:

What is anxiety?

The Threat Response System

When we perceive a threat in our environment, we respond to it. We have a biological predisposition to engage in either flight, fight, freeze or collapse.

Flipping your lid:

Body Based Toolkit:

Movement, butterfly hugs, progressive muscle relaxation, mindfulness programs, “take a walk”, power poses, tapping

Sensory Toolkit:

Individualized toolkits, calming environment, essential oil bracelets, tipi, sensory corners

Classroom Toolkit:

Be the alpha, empathize, normalize, educate, recognize, anchor, routines, time, different ways to answer, belonging, meaning, hope and purpose

Seperation Anxiety:

Toolkit:

Early intervention, transitions, schedules, leadership roles, small moments, meet a teacher, family connections, transitional objects, small moments, next point of connection, prior attachments, extended village, trauma touchstones

Social Anxiety:

Developmentally normal, social experiences alter brains, area of brain responsible for processing social events processes cognitive events too. Social relations lower blood pressure, impact the immune system, lasting change in stress- response system. Social status: modifies serotonin: attention, memory, aggression and neural growth

Social stress:

flocking, girls more likely to mobilize social supports- boys status - power or status/ girls- friendship or tasks, cortisol levels increase when separated, monkeys- dopamine levels, difference and racial bias, peer pressure

Toolkit:

Create opportunities to connect, information gathering, groups and cooperative learning, social skills, drama and poems, model speech, don't label, extracurricular activities, acceptance and normalization, different ways to present work, care for an "out", PATHS/ second step/ safe environments, sharing circles

Perfectionism:

Toolkit

Model the importance of making mistakes, talk about courage, ensure classroom psychological safety, talk to the class about what's your oops, talk about self kindness, process projects, open ended tasks.

Panic Disorder:

Body Based Toolkit:

Sooth the sense, stay nearby, explore physical health, deep pressure.

Younger children: adult reassurance, time away from the group. Educate, plan ahead, avoid surprises, plan of action, group discussions

Persistent behaviours:

Obsessions: contaminations, harm to self, need to be perfect, symmetry, forbidden thoughts

Rituals: washing/cleaning, tapping, ordering, mental rituals.

Can change/ evident age 7-12, starts in childhood, more common in boys than girls (more adult females)

Toolkit

Track behaviour, connect with a child around stressors, listen, acceptance, team approach. Attachment, narrative, Exposure, CBT

PANDAS/ PANS

Rare neuropsychiatric conditions that impact children and youth: eating issues, sensory issues, intense irritability, fears, phobias, panic, attention and memory difficulties, separation anxiety, deterioration of motor skills such as handwriting, urinary frequency or bedwetting

Trauma

4% of youth aged 13-18 will be diagnosed. Girls, more likely, with a longer duration. Depression, anxiety, emotional regulation, substance issues, desensitized core securities. Intervention is critical.

Impact of trauma on the brain

The Amygdala

Hyper-arousal: Fight or flight

Optimal state: Feels calm and in control

Hypo-arousal: Freeze response

Aces

Abuse: Physical, emotional, sexual

Neglect: Physical, emotional

Household Dysfunction: Mental illness, mom treated violently, divorce, incarcerated relative, substance abuse

Behaviour: Lack of physical activity, smoking, alcoholism, drugs, missed work

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Physical and mental health: severe obesity, diabetes, depression, suicide attempts, STDs, heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, broken bones

Body Based Toolkit:

Butterfly hugs, sensory toolkits, 5 colours, change in temperature, 4B's

Build connections, create safety and routine, selfcare, foster emotional skills, learn when to refer. Whats the need? Open communication, whole school approach, triggers, transitions, healing, bullying

Emotional Regulation

Common misbehaviour issues:

Timeouts

Yelling

Behaviour Incentives

Regulate, relate, reason

Toolkit:

Upstairs- Downstairs - Right and Left brain

Be an empathetic leader, playful teaching, find a point of connection, one adult, safe spaces, leadership role, connection through conflict, model non-verbal communication, alpha, calm limits with eye contact, join then shift, next connection point, teach reparation.

Signals for time out, exercise/ chore/ nutrition breaks, obstacle course room, brainstorm with a student, connection with a sibling, drumming and rhythmic movement

Depression

What is depression?

Signs and Symptoms

Toolkit:

Classroom environment, buddy system, teacher relationship, role model, healthy lifestyles, technology, mastery, special projects, personal growth, active listening, different modes of expression

Selfharm

Harm to body without intent to complete suicide (cutting, burning, ingest- ing foreign objects, hitting, picking at wounds, hair pulling)

6-17% of girls, 2-6% of males

Relief, control, reaction



Related to depression, anxiety, self-esteem , abuse, trauma, rejection
Decreases in school holidays

Watch out for:

increased absenteeism, change in bathroom habits, secrecy, change in clothing, things that don't belong, online groups

Suicide

Risk and protective factors

Child - male, history of previous attempts, mental illness, easy history of loss

Family - parental conflict, critical parenting, authoritative parenting, history of family attempts, neglect

School - temperament, thinking style, emotional wellbeing

Events - trauma, supportive adult, access to services

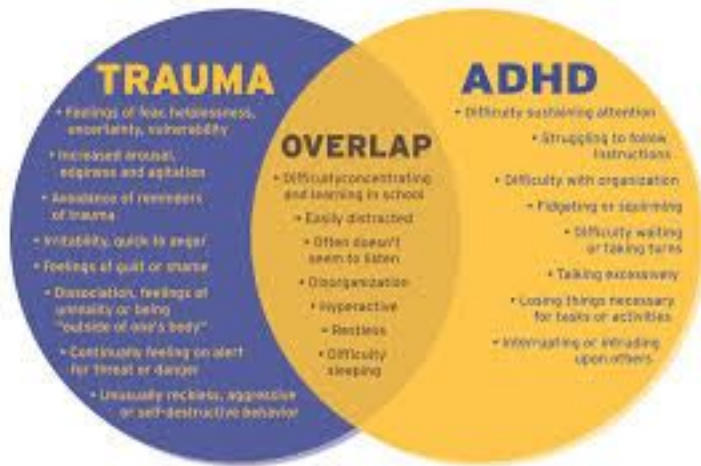
Society - economics, culture, discrimination, supports

Toolkit:

Relationship, stay calm, seriously, contact admin and follow procedures, connect with the guardians, seek medical help

Attention and Impulsivity Issues

Trauma/ ADHD overlap



Reference: The National Child Traumatic Stress Network Toolkit

Keep attachment needs in the forefront, multifunction watches, short-simple instructions, signals, give smaller segments of work, use cooler. Process praise and frequent end goals, choices and hands-on activities, accommodations, reduce distractions, movement, recess

Rewards

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Brains are designed to predict, enjoy and remember rewards. Rewards temporarily stimulate physical responses. Complex behaviours are usually impaired, not helped by rewards. Reward prediction system: Initial improvement, performance drops. Predictable (loss). Students will differ Use for special populations, short lengths of time. Low cost, concrete tokens, quick use, get mileage out of the anticipation. Use abstract rewards. Motivation

Talk to learners about tasks, process models or strong end goal, encouragement, role-model, change emotional states (music, movement, laughter), help children to experience success, flow states

Selfcare:

Choose at least one self-care strategy for each area

Brain: _____

Choose 3 self-care items that can be completed in the classroom:

Heart: _____

Social: _____

Body: _____

Spirit: _____

Brain: _____

Choose a mindful moment:

What empties your bucket?

What's going to stop you from engaging in self-care?

Who to contact:

ICP, 811, health link

Counselling agencies (play therapy)

Mobile Mental Health: 1-403-266-1605

911

Hospital emergency

Distress Line: 780-482-4357

Mental Health Support: 1-877-303-2642

Bullying helpline: 1-888-456-2323

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Resources

Websites:

<http://www.ascd.org>

<http://www.anxietybc.com/parenting/parent-child>

<http://www.childtrauma.org/>

<http://www.drdansiegel.com/>

<https://www.handinhandparenting.org/>

<https://www.heysigmund.com/>

<http://www.sickkidscmh.ca/ABC/Introduction.aspx>

<https://www.positivediscipline.com/teachers>

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