Chapter 11

Out of Trauma Comes Strength:
The Trauma-Informed Positive Education (TIPE) Model

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ABSTRACT

Trauma occurs in a variety of forms including abuse, violence, neglect, or witness to any of these events. In the past, some have viewed trauma as a deficit that needs to be repaired. While this healing approach has value, new research has garnered a great deal of attention in shifting this paradigm to a strengths-based methodology. One such representation is the trauma-informed positive education (TIPE) model. This chapter provides an overview of the TIPE model and its three domains (i.e., repairing regulatory abilities, repairing disrupted attachment, and increasing psychological resources); discusses relevant pedagogical practices including emotional intelligence, mindfulness, grit, and growth mindset; and gives practical examples for educators to implement.

INTRODUCTION

Many students experience significant hardship in their early years of development (Slemp et al., 2017). While these hardships vary, the fact is that these adversities shape a student's academic and social development. More than two-thirds of children experience trauma by the age of 16 (Copeland et al., 2007), and those that are exposed to traumatic events display higher rates of depression, anxiety disorders, and other physical and mental impairments. This greatly impacts the educational needs of students. After a traumatic experience, children and adolescents may or may not possess the proper coping mechanisms to manage their emotions. Because of this, the students' abilities to function in school are strongly impacted by traumatic exposure (Tishelman et al., 2010). This finding is incredibly important given the COVID-19 pandemic, which is one of the most traumatic events in modern-day history. Every day, students are exposed to potentially traumatic instances in their educational experience. Many students are

still not receiving in-person instruction. Those that are have to wear masks, sit behind plexiglass shields, and maintain as much distance as possible to stop the spread of COVID-19. There have been repeated shifts from remote to hybrid, then back to full remote learning because of transmission rates of the virus. Teachers are told to stay six feet away from students as much as possible causing their ability to provide comfort and support to be diminished when teaching in person. The number of trauma-impacted students is only on the rise due in part to the increased levels of stress and uncertainty during these tumultuous times. This makes the discussion of strategies and methods for implementing trauma-informed pedagogy more important now than ever.

From academic to social issues, trauma plays a significant role for a large population of students. Although schools are a place where the consequences of traumatic incidents may unfold, they can offer invaluable structure, guidance, and services to aid in the healing and coping process and help students develop cognitive, social, and emotional skills (Tishelman et al., 2010; Waters, 2011). At times, the misconception exists that this is solely the school counselor's responsibility, but in reality, every adult, especially classroom teachers, is obligated to help students in these facets of their development. Many of these skills can be explicitly taught to improve students' well-being (Seligman, 2008). The shift toward well-being in education is going to continue to gain momentum in the coming years (Slemp et al., 2017), specifically in trauma-informed care (TIC). TIC and similar models note that treatment approaches and culture recognize the pervasive impact of trauma and seek to revolutionize, rather than intensify, the effects of trauma (Brown et al., 2016). There exists a growing body of literature that suggests positive education programs like trauma-informed positive education (TIPE) have a positive impact on the way students feel about themselves, their peers, and their families (White & Kern, 2018). Therefore, the objectives of this chapter are to review the TIPE model and pertinent theories such as emotional intelligence, mindfulness, grit, and growth mindset, to provide a framework that schools can implement to better support their students.

BACKGROUND

According to Brunzell et al. (2015), trauma can be described as "an overwhelming experience that can forever alter one's beliefs that the world is good and safe" (p. 4). Trauma and traumatic events are prevalent in all facets of life, at every stage, and every age. There are also different types of trauma. Simple trauma is a short-lived occurrence or one-time event that threatens serious harm (e.g. serious accident(s) or natural disasters like hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, etc.) (Brunzell et al., 2015). While this name may imply that this type of trauma is "clear cut," that could not be farther from the truth. Often simple trauma has some of the most powerful and immediate effects on students and their behaviors. This is in contrast to complex trauma, which is the traumatic exposure to multiple events over a longer time that may have ongoing personal threats, violence, or violation (e.g. child abuse, neglect, bullying, etc.) (Brunzell et al., 2015). Over time, complex trauma, when ignored or inadequately addressed, has the potential to be more devastating on students than simple trauma. This can have a lasting emotional and cognitive impact.

The effect of trauma on a child can drastically change how students act and handle themselves both in and out of the classroom. Trauma can directly impact a student's ability to deal with their stress response when learning new content, managing relationships with peers, or when trying to focus on a given task (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). As Brunzell et al. (2015) noted, it is important for students who

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