

Childhood Trauma: What's its Impact within the School Context?

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Definitions

- Trauma – An intense event that threatens or causes harm [to a child's] emotional and physical well-being
- Child Traumatic Stress – Stress of a child who has experienced trauma and having difficulty moving forward
- Trauma Reminders – Images, sounds, smells, people, situations that remind youth of the traumatic event or the way their loved one died
- Loss Reminders – Images, sounds, smells, people, situations that remind youth that their loved one is gone (i.e., death)

Types of Trauma (nctsn.org)

- Bereavement (traumatic grief)
- Community/School Violence
- Intimate Partner Violence
- Physical/Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Terrorism
- Natural Disasters
- Medical illnesses/Procedures
- Refugee

Impact of Trauma Exposure

- Attachment
- Brain Development
- Self-regulation

Impact of Trauma on Learning

- Impaired academic functioning
- Decreased reading ability
- Lower grade point average
- Absenteeism
- Decreased graduation rates

Warning Signs of Trauma Reactions

- Anxiety, Fear, Worry
 - Safety of self/others
 - Distrust

- Clingy to school personnel
- Emotional Distress
 - Mood, irritable
 - Difficulty w/ authority, redirection, criticism
- Behavioral Changes
 - Activity level
 - Attention/Concentration
 - Withdrawal
 - Anger/Aggression
 - Absenteeism
- Misinterpret Social Cues
- Academic Problems
- Sleep Problems
 - Nightmares
- Somatic Complaints

Intervention Approaches for Schools

- Assumptions of Trauma-Informed Schools
 - Realization of the widespread prevalence and impact of trauma
 - Recognition of the signs of traumatic exposure
 - Response grounded in evidence-based practices
 - Resists re-traumatization of individuals
- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools
 - Psychoeducation – trauma reactions
 - Relaxation training
 - Cognitive coping
 - Stress or trauma exposure
 - Social problem solving
- Evidence-Based Practices
 - Exercise
 - Reading
 - Music
 - Mindfulness
- Innovative School Based Program
 - Rhymes with Reason

Resources

- National Child Traumatic Stress Network <http://www.nctsn.org>
- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools <https://cbitsprogram.org/>
- Rhymes with Reason <http://rhymes-with-reason.com/>
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273- TALK (8255)