

# From Adversity to Action- How the Science of Trauma Can Guide Better Practice

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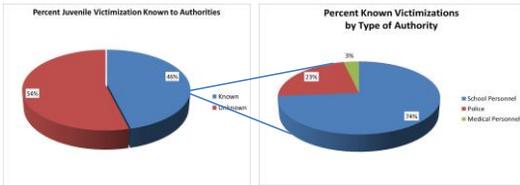
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We don't know much about trauma



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Understanding the Need through the  
Eyes of the Child

Emotional Care Homelessness Violence

Incarceration in the Family

Racism and Historical Trauma

Homelessness

Household Violence

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## The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

- ACE exposure
- With four or more categories of childhood exposure, compared to adults with no ACEs
  - 4 to 12 times increase in alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and suicide attempt
  - 2 to 4 times increase in poor self-rated health
  - 3 to 4 times increase in chronic illness (heart disease, liver disease)

	ACE Study	BRFSS WA State
No Reported ACEs	38%	36%
One ACE	21%	26%
Two ACEs	14%	16%
Three ACEs	10%	10%
4-5 ACEs	17%	13%

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## Montana ACEs

Reported ACEs	Percent
No ACEs	40%
1-3 ACEs	43%
4 or more ACEs	17%

### With Four Plus ACEs in Montanans are:

- 4 times more likely to be heavy drinker
- 6 times more likely to abuse prescription pain meds.
- 6 times more likely to have a mental health concern
- 1.5 times more likely to have diabetes, heart disease
- 3 times more likely to report poor health or physical limits

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## Anda & Felitti- ACE Risk Pyramid and Change



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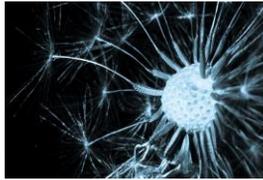
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### How Risk is Guided by Brain Development

- Principle 1: Our brains are designed to benefit from rich and supportive intimate social relationships.
- Principle 2: Brain function is hierarchical. We feel and then we think.
- Principle 3: Brain development is use dependent.
- Principle 4: Brain systems change with use throughout life.



### Core brain development principles for Change

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### Moving from ACEs to complex trauma as the framework for action

- The process of exposure to ACEs and the process of adjustment.
- Toxic stress- persistent, unpredictable, inescapable.
- The 'complex' in complex trauma risk:
  - Early exposure at times of critical development
  - Multiple risks
  - Unpredictable and persistent.
  - Who you love is who you may not be able to count on.
- Natural responses to extraordinary circumstances.
- Complex trauma involves common challenges and responses that can be understood and guide our actions.

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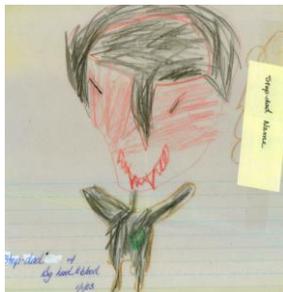
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### Mapping trauma's risk

#### Risk dimensions

- Impaired relationships
- Threat-arousal regulation
- Social emotional development
- Emotional regulation
- Cognitive development
- Health risk



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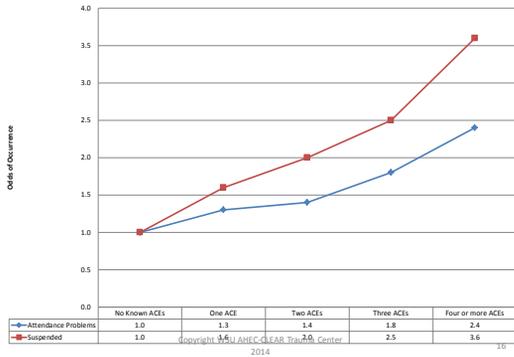
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**The Association of ACEs and Odds of Attendance and Suspension Problems in an Academically At-Risk Population (RTL N=3,393)**




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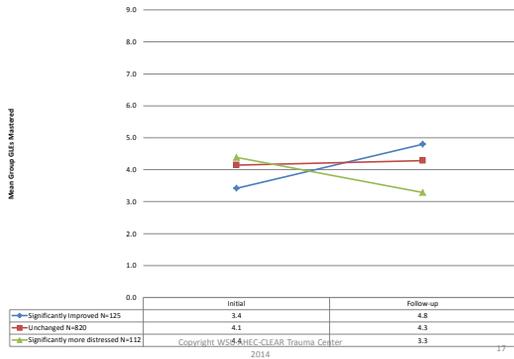
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**Change in Teacher-Rated Social Emotional Adjustment and Grade Level Expectations Mastery**




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**Why There is Reason for Hope-  
Trauma Informed Education and Family Support**

- Social support and resources build resiliency at any age. Resiliency buffers the effects of trauma.
- Creating safety and predictability creates opportunity for new learning.
- Understanding trauma creates opportunities for new behaviors for caregivers.
- Professionals can create powerful relationships.
- Managing trauma's effects may result in increasing success for systems.
- We need phased, needs-based integrated action




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## Response implications of threat response and self-regulation challenges

- We need to calibrate our relationship and goals to the arousal level of the child
  - New learning can not occur effectively in high states of painful arousal.
  - Response options available to children reflect their level of present arousal and their range of skills and learning.
- Arousal level can be re-regulated to permit access to higher levels of thought and new learning.



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## Build Resilience

- Resilience- positive adaptation despite adversity
- In early childhood, successful secure attachment
- In later childhood, mastery of school and establishing meaningful peer and adult relationships
- In adults, meaningful intimate and loving relationships
- A virtuous cycle- Reduces exposure to vulnerability and increase access to protective resources



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## Resilience

- Social emotional learning is part of a larger concept of how we support resilience
- Both a trait and a personal qualities that can be built and drawn down
- Practical goals:
  - Build resilience through mastery.
  - Increase protective factors of self, family, and community
  - End or limit the conditions that impoverish.
  - Reduce or create competing exposure to individual or social risks.
- What does resilience look like?
- Belief
  - Hope
  - Self-efficacy
- Skills
  - Emotional regulation/tolerance for change
  - Relational skills
  - Executive function
- Environment
  - Social support
  - Forgiving, repairable settings
  - Access to the social and material resources for adaptation

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## How does trauma-informed practice add value to good SEL practice

- Scope of the challenge makes addressing trauma's effects inevitable
- Lack of self-regulation skills are key barriers to individual child and educational system success
- Good SEL practice helps traumatized children
- Trauma can interfere with some children's ability to respond to SEL strategies
- Understanding trauma provides a different functional lens for understanding behavior and individualizing practices

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## What makes this work different

- Trauma informed work starts as professional change
  - Is your school safe?
- Trauma informed practice is relational at its foundation and as a result is adaptive not prescriptive
  - Applying a common vision is a practical guide to action
  - Evidence-based kernels
  - 'Creating Space'- Mindful practice
- Leadership and structure matters
  - Structures that support self-regulation
  - Reflective practice
  - Structures and policies that reinforce new practice

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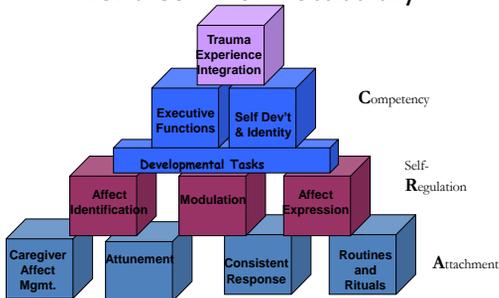
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## Adapting the ARC Framework for a Common Vocabulary



Blaustein & Kinniburgh, 2010; Kinniburgh & Blaustein, 2005

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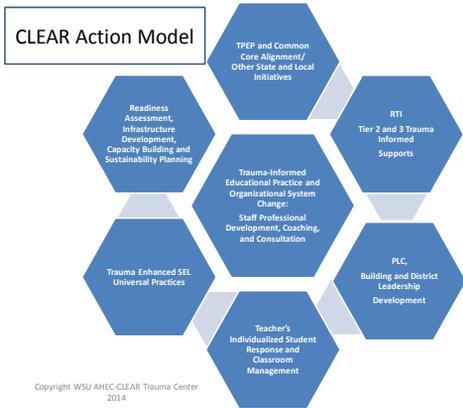
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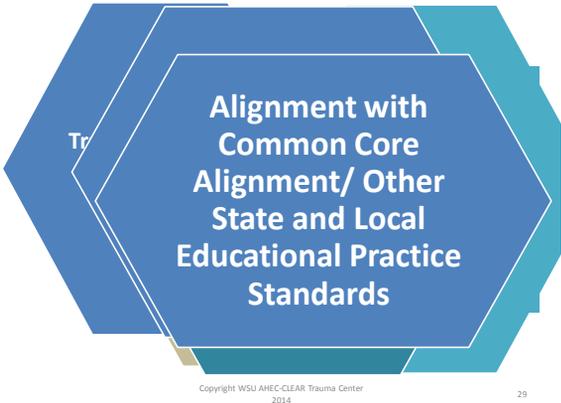
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### Proposed outcomes with CLEAR

- Enhanced parent partnership development
- Better attendance
- Better academic outcomes
- Decrease in behavior/office referrals
- Increased staff retention
- Increased effectiveness in managing most at-risk children.

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### What can you do today?

- 3-2-1 exercise
- Awareness matters

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