RESPONDING TO ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES
Attachment, Self-Regulation & Competency

Reading
The Heart of Learning & Teaching
- More difficult to learn
- Difficulty processing what they hear
- Trouble identifying/regulating emotions
- Difficulty remembering, organizing & storing information
- Difficulty understanding cause & effect
- Difficulty creating and executing a plan
- Difficulty with transitions
- Perfectionism, impulsiveness, withdrawal

“K”
- Substance abuse in the home
- Absence of Parent through death or divorce
- Emotional Abuse
- Mental Illness in the home
- Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Domestic Violence
- Incarceration of Family Member
- Physical Abuse

Thoughts from the ARC training
- Quote from an educator:
  - “In college I was taught how to teach. I wasn’t taught how kids learn.”
  - “Relationship” is the evidence-based practice.
    - Positive regard
    - Genuineness
    - Warmth
    - Positive Reinforcement
    - How kids feel, defines how they learn.
    - Feel first, think second

Complex trauma leads to complex outcomes
Students who have experienced trauma tend to...
- ...expect harm from the world & others
- ...have difficulty forming relationships
- ...have difficulty managing, understanding & regulating feelings & behaviors
- ...have a damaged or fragmented sense of self
- ...have developmental challenges in the areas of problem solving & academic performance
Difficulties of Teaching Students of Trauma

- Trauma continues even during the timeframe they are with us (home, foster care)
- Living/schooling in a system that is difficult to change—schools don’t have a bunch of time to “counsel”
- All kids develop differently
- All kids have different assets and deficits

Parallel Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Teacher/Parent</th>
<th>Counselor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Tan, hurt, lonely, The student is depressed, needs to work, not to blame</td>
<td>Tan, hurt, lonely, The student is depressed, needs to work, not to blame</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Fear, anger, loss, hopelessness, Fearfulness, anxiety, worry, helplessness,</td>
<td>Fearfulness, anxiety, worry, helplessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioral</td>
<td>Irritability, aggression, agitation, Disrupting, distracting, poor relationship</td>
<td>Disrupting, distracting, poor relationship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Cycle</td>
<td>Don’t cooperate, feels bad, the student isn’t interested in cooperating</td>
<td>Grumpy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Components of ARC

- 3 Domains
  - Attachment
  - Self-Regulation
  - Competency
- Flexible implementation
  - Depends upon staff
  - Depends upon student needs/goals
- Can involve all people working with kids

Attachment

- Goal—Helping school staff create an environment that is safe and supportive
  - Manage staff affect
  - Teaching staff to attune to student’s emotions
  - Helping staff to respond predictably to student behaviors & emotions
  - Recognizing the Importance of rituals and routines

Block 1A—Caregiver Affect

- Goal—Help staff to monitor & regulate their own emotions so that they can support their students.
- Things that make it tough
  - Students can be unpredictable (have triggers)
  - Teachers bring in their own experiences to the relationship—have their own triggers
  - History of interactions with students
  - Students don’t always know how to read emotions accurately—may read us inaccurately
WHAT KIDS SEE & WHY

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXGebZhi0

Facial Expressions

How do we show:
- Anger
- Frustrated
- Stressed out
- Confused

They all look similar to kids.

Let's talk

- Discuss with someone at your table
  - What are your triggers? What are the triggers of the people you work with?
  - How do you manage your affect with students/staff with whom you work?
  - What is one thing you can do in your building to help people manage their affect?
  - How can you help the parents you work with manage their affect?

Block A2—Attunement

- Goal—Learn to read cues and respond to underlying student emotions
  - Students have difficulty understanding their own emotions and communicating them appropriately
  - Students use behaviors to communicate their emotions
- Become an emotion/feeling detective
- Learn student “triggers”
- Depersonalize the behaviors
- Listening skills (reflective)

Let's talk

- Discuss with your neighbors possible emotions/feelings behind these actions:
  - Sleeping in class
  - Angry outburst about an assignment
  - Refusal to move to new seat/anger over new seating arrangement
  - Make up your scenario

Block A3—Consistent Response

- Goal—Respond in consistent way to both positive and negative student behaviors.
  - Predictability is key so student doesn’t feel like he/she needs to adapt his/her behavior to elicit desired response from staff
  - History of powerlessness/vulnerability may trigger negative response even when praise is given.
  - Pay attention to praise/correction to see how student responds
  - Focus on building success
  - Reduce limit setting (“always empower never disempower” from Compassionate Schools)
Block A4—Routines and Rituals

- Goal—Help establish routines and rituals at school for the student, especially focusing on trouble spots
  - Target transitions—lunch routines, recess routines, changing classes, arriving, leaving...
  - Encourage parents to build routines at home
    - Bedtime
    - Homework

Let’s Talk

- Consistent Response
  - What positive and negative responses do kids expect from us?
  - What student behaviors trigger positive and negative responses from you?
- Routines and Rituals
  - What routines/rituals does your school/classroom/office have?
  - What routines can you add that would help students?

Student Feelings

- Ask your partner how he/she is.
- When you ask kids how they are, what do they say?
- What are some emotions kids say they have?
- Limited vocabulary to describe how we are feeling.
- Stressed: tense, frazzled, strained, stressed out, vexed
- Fine: Well, exceptional, superior, okay, all right

Second Tier—Self-Regulation

- Overarching Goal—Help students learn to identify, control, and communicate their emotions.
  - Identify Emotions
  - Modulate emotions
  - Effectively communicate and express their emotions to staff and others

Block R1—Affect Identification

- Goal—awareness of emotions; why they are feeling that way; plus learning how to read others’ emotions
  - Students may be unaware of their emotions (their own and others)
  - Unaware of the connection between what is happening and how they are feeling, both emotionally and physically.
  - Use literature, music, film to help kids learn to identify emotions.

Block R2—Affect Modulation

- Goal—Help student learn to regulate their emotions and energy level
  - Without substances
  - Identify initial state (full of energy or lethargic)
  - See if they can notice changes
- Students need to be able to get to the center so they can learn
  - What is your energy level today?
  - Use a measuring tool
  - Physical movement to help regulate
Thermometer

- Learning occurs in the middle
- Students who have low energy, need to learn to bring it up.
- Students with high energy, need to bring it down.

Feeling Toolbox

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Put it in writing</th>
<th>Personalize it</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Re-write</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearless</td>
<td>Art</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>Re-listen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Sleep</td>
<td>Rest</td>
<td>Re-rest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excited</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Movement</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Re-dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confident</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Writing</td>
<td>Re-write</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Block R3—Affect Expression

- Goal—Help kids learn to express their emotions in a way that helps them meet their needs
  - Have experienced inconsistencies with sharing their emotions
  - Fail to communicate, over-communicate, communicate effectively
  - The inability to express emotions makes it difficult to form healthy relationships

Affect Expression Skill Targets

- Help students understand why it is important to communicate emotions and how to do so
  - Who is safe to share information with?
  - Picking the time to share
  - Initiating conversation
  - Using non-verbal communication

Let's Talk

- There are 3 blocks
  - Affect Identification
  - Affect Modulation
  - Affect Expression
- Which do kids struggle with the most?
- What are some of the challenges/obstacles to these blocks?
- Do you have a “toolbox” already? What is in it?

Competency

- Over arching goal—Help students become more resilient and continue to learn
  - Helping to build executive functioning skills
  - Target self-development
  - Identify key developmental tasks
Block C1—Executive Functions

- Goal—Help students develop the ability to evaluate the situation, control impulses, and make appropriate choices.
  - Help students achieve goals, anticipate consequences, evaluate outcomes, come up with solutions.
  - Occurs in the prefrontal cortex which is often underdeveloped due to ACEs
- Teach Problem solving steps

Problem Solving

- Notice there is a problem
- Determine safety and help them understand instinctive response.
- Identify/Understand the problem
- Brainstorm solutions
- Evaluate consequences of each solution and make a choice
- Implement solution and/or revise

Block C2—Self-Development and Identity

- Goal—Help kids understand their own positive identity
  - Internalize negative experiences
  - May have missed out in early childhood on experiences that help them relate to others
  - May have missed out on development of values
  - May not understand the link between their actions and their future
  - May be afraid to try new things—fear of failure

Helpful Tip

- Unique Self—Help student identify personal attributes: values, talents, opinions
- Positive Self—build internal resources and identify positive attributes.
- Cohesive Self—How past experiences make you what you are
- Future Self—Imagine yourself in the future, connect current activities with future outcomes

Trauma Experience Integration

- Work with student to explore & process past experiences to help them live effectively in the present.
  - Negative past experiences can interfere with the students ability to navigate in their current life.
  - Current experiences may elicit responses that were helpful in their past.
  - Already have developed a pattern of responding.
Let's Talk

- Of the 10 building blocks, which ones do you feel you already implement?
- Which one will you target?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

http://mediasite.netsn.org/NCTSN/Viewer/?peid=14c17788-d0f4-4ad9-9cf0-e392073c4647

QUESTIONS

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