

The background of the entire slide is a photograph of a large group of diverse school children sitting on the floor. They are looking in various directions, some towards the camera, and appear to be in a classroom or assembly setting. The children are of various ethnicities and are dressed in casual school attire.

Mental Health Matters

ACET Conference

April 23, 2019 1:45 – 2:45 PM



Julie Wayman, MSSW
Mental Health and Behavioral Health Manager,
Interagency Liaison

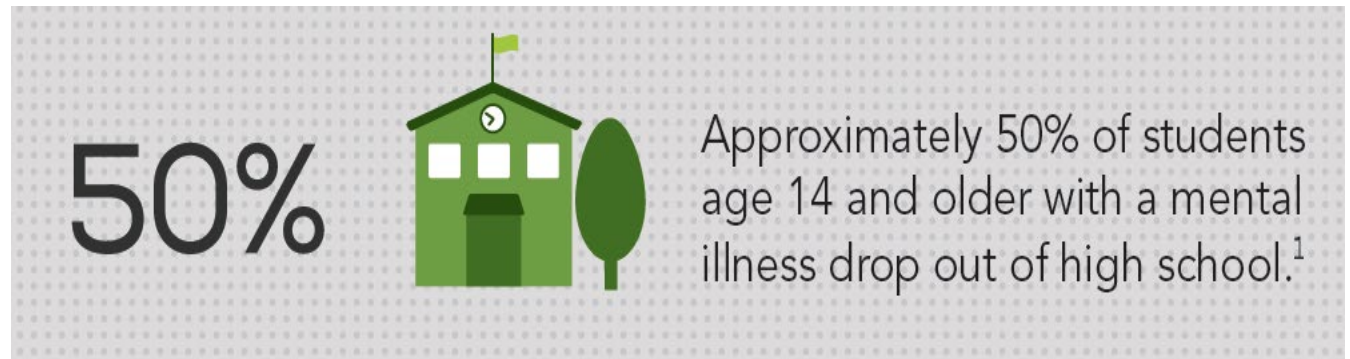
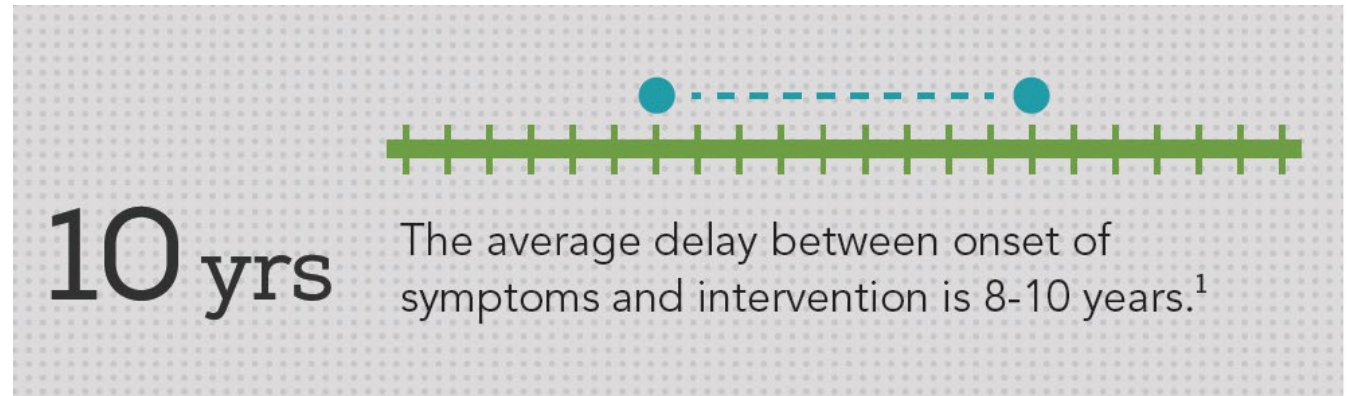
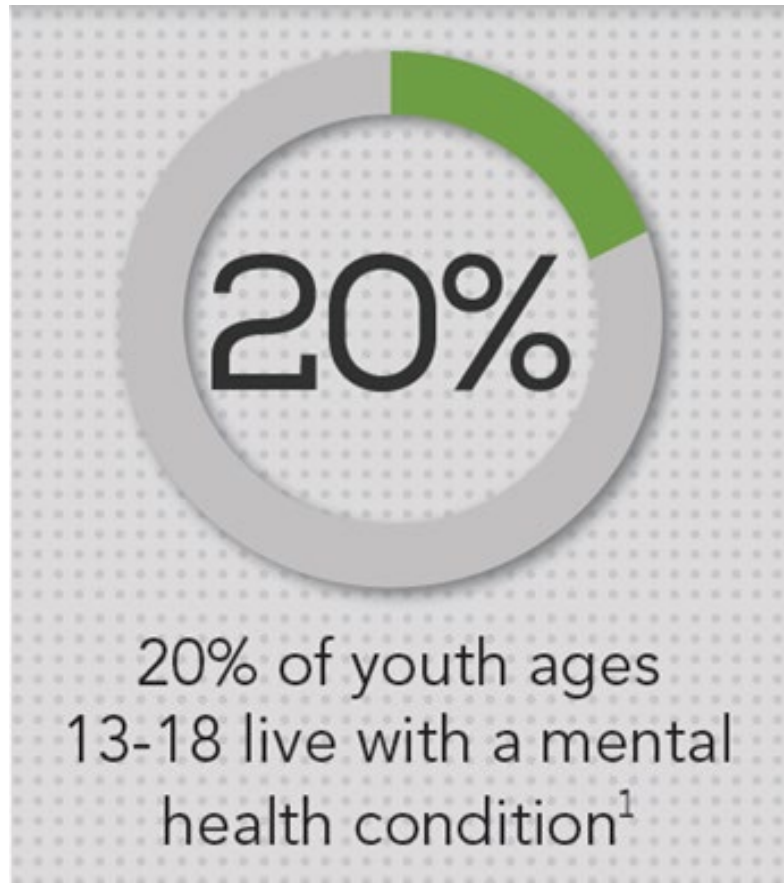
Objectives



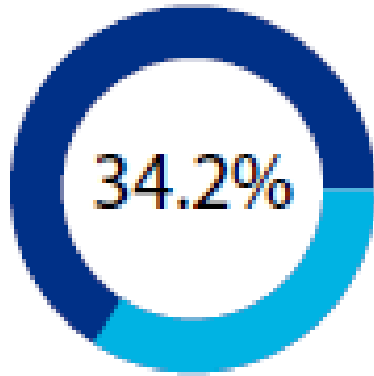
Participants will increase knowledge of:

1. Mental health, trauma and the impact on learning
2. Trauma-informed best practice strategies
3. Resources available for deeper learning

Mental Health Statistics



Sources: Texas Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan, National Institutes for Health (NIH), National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI)

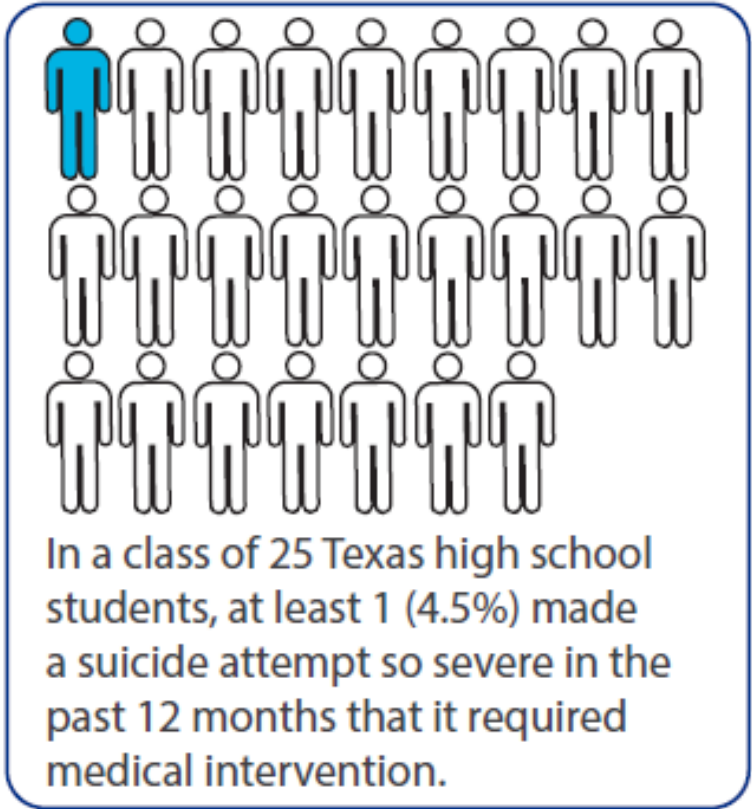
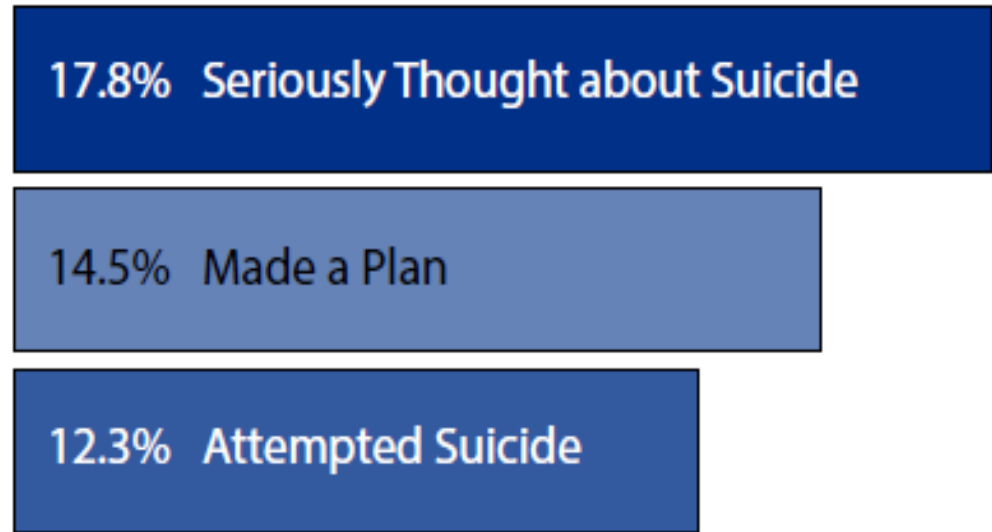


More than 1 in 3 Texas high school students felt so sad or hopeless almost every day for 2 or more weeks in a row in the past 12 months that they stopped doing some usual activities

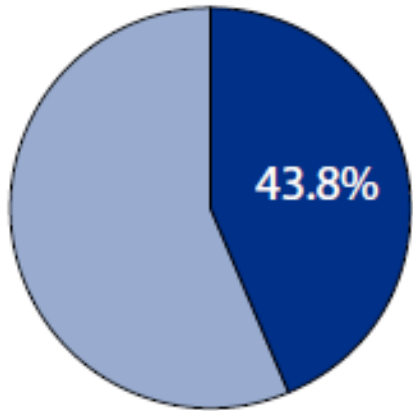
The Texas YRBS is a biennial survey of students in randomly selected public and charter high schools across Texas. For more information about the Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey please visit: www.dshs.texas.gov/chs/yrbs.



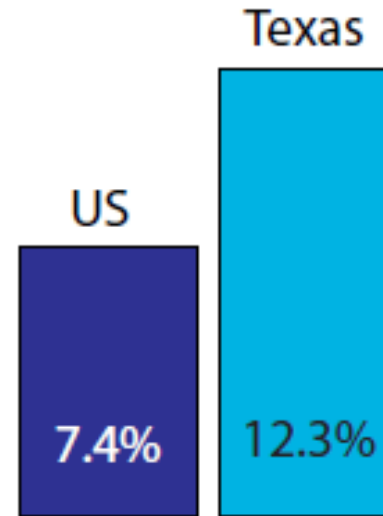
Suicidal Behavior Among Texas High School Student in Thoughts, Plans, and Attempts, in the Past 12 Months, YRBS 2017



The Texas YRBS is a biennial survey of students in randomly selected public and charter high schools across Texas. For more information about the Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey please visit: www.dshs.texas.gov/chs/yrbs.



Close to half of Texas high school students who identify as gay or lesbian have attempted suicide in the past 12 months, compared to 9.6% of their peers who identify as straight and 23.2% of their peers who identify as bisexual.



Texas high school students consistently had a higher rate of attempted suicide in the past 12 months than those in the US. In 2017, the Texas rate was 66% higher than the US rate (12.3% vs. 7.4%).

The Texas YRBS is a biennial survey of students in randomly selected public and charter high schools across Texas. For more information about the Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey please visit: www.dshs.texas.gov/chs/yrbs.



If you or a loved one are struggling with suicidal thoughts, contact the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or the Crisis Textline by texting HOME to 741741.

The Texas YRBS is a biennial survey of students in randomly selected public and charter high schools across Texas. For more information about the Texas Youth Risk Behavior Survey please visit: www.dshs.texas.gov/chs/yrbs.

Warning Signs for Mental Health Challenges



Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks (e.g., crying regularly, feeling fatigued, feeling unmotivated).



Trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so.



Out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors that can cause harm to self or others.



Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or fast breathing.



Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or gain.

Sources:
National Institutes for Health (NIH), National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI)

Warning Signs for Mental Health Challenges



Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships.



Repeated use of drugs or alcohol.



Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits (e.g., waking up early and acting agitated).



Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still that can lead to failure in school.



Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities like hanging out with friends or going to classes.

Sources:

National Institutes for Health (NIH), National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI)

What can parents do?

4 Things Parents Can Do



Talk with your
pediatrician



Get a referral to a
mental health specialist



Work with
the school



Connect with
other families

¹ This document cites statistics provided by the National Institute of Mental Health. www.nimh.nih.gov

Follow Us!



facebook.com/officialNAMI



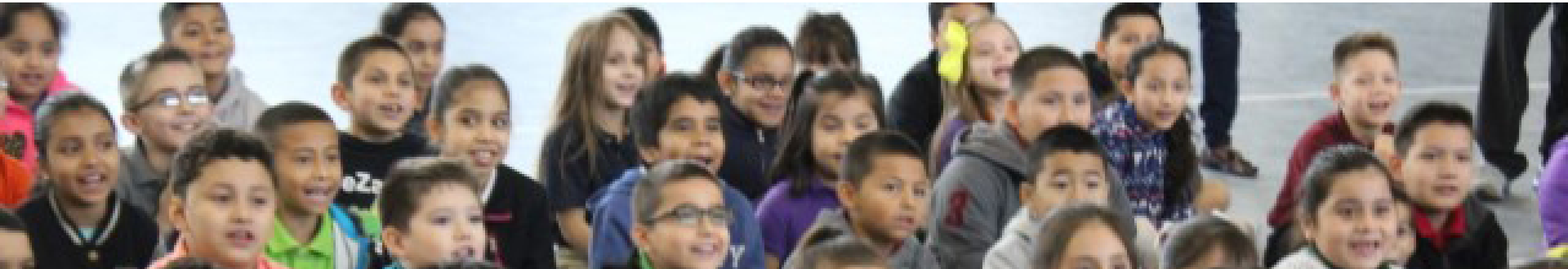
twitter.com/NAMIcommunicate

Sources:

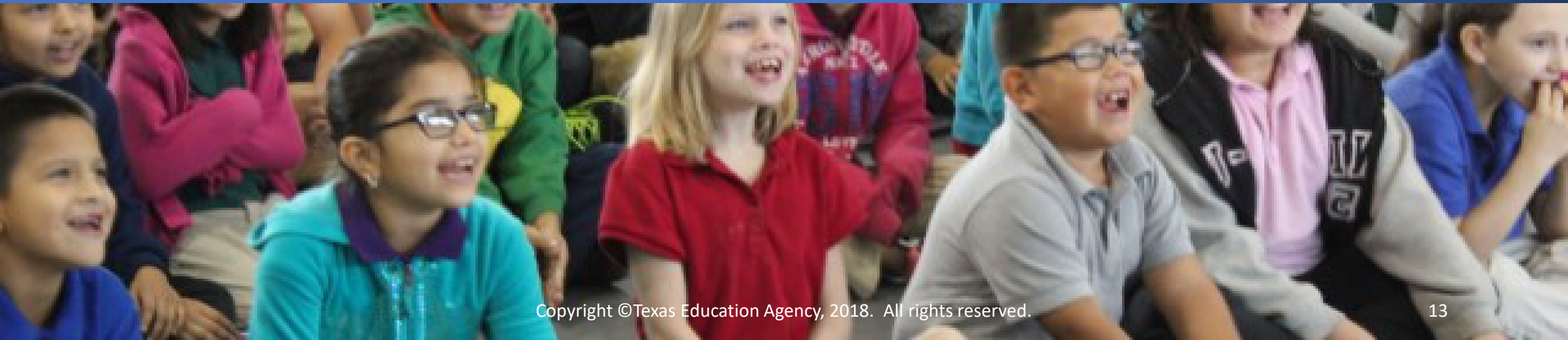
National Institutes for Health (NIH), National Association for Mental Illness (NAMI)



- ✓ **What warning signs have you seen in your classroom, school district or community?**
- ✓ **What procedures are in place when possible warning signs are observed?**
- ✓ **Does your organization have any written agreements with local mental health providers?**
- ✓ **What training is provided in your district, or by your ESC?**



Adverse Childhood Experiences and Trauma



Grief and Trauma



Trauma - Informed
Inquiry:

Wonders “what happened to you?” rather than, “what’s wrong with you?”

What is Trauma?

Three main types of trauma:



Acute trauma - results from a single event



Chronic trauma - repeated and prolonged such as witnessing domestic violence, community violence, toxic stress in person's environment, abuse



Complex trauma - exposure to varied and multiple traumatic events, often of an invasive, interpersonal nature



Trauma can have lasting, adverse effects on the individual's functioning, physical, social, emotional wellbeing

Examples of Adversity and Traumatic Experiences



- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Domestic violence
- Neglect
- Deprivation
- Traumatic grief and loss
- Community violence
- Witnessing violence
- Abandonment
- Divorce or separation
- Toxic stress
- Kidnapping
- Displacement
- War



No two people have the same emotional or physical response to an adverse or traumatic experience. Understanding adversity is not to pathologize or stigmatize persons.

Examples of Adversity and Traumatic Experiences

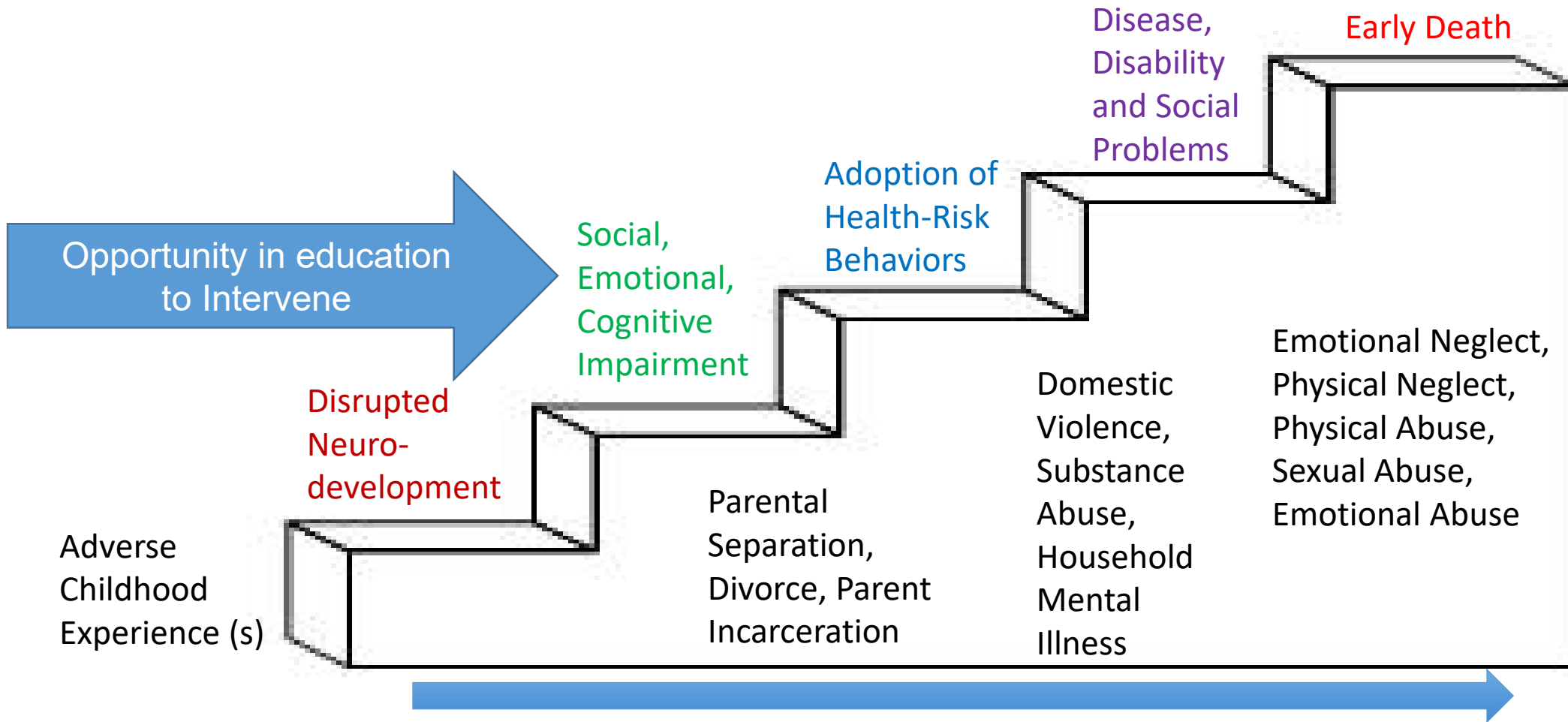


- Natural disasters
- Medical Injury, illness, or procedures
- Substance abuse in household
- Mental illness in Household
- Accidents
- Incarceration
- Parent incarceration
- Victim of crime
- Persistent failure
- School violence
- Dating violence
- Bullying and cyber-bullying



No two people have the same emotional or physical response to an adverse or traumatic experience. Understanding adversity is not to pathologize or stigmatize persons.

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Conceptual Framework of Trauma



Adapted From:

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childabuseandneglect/aces>

The Biology of Trauma

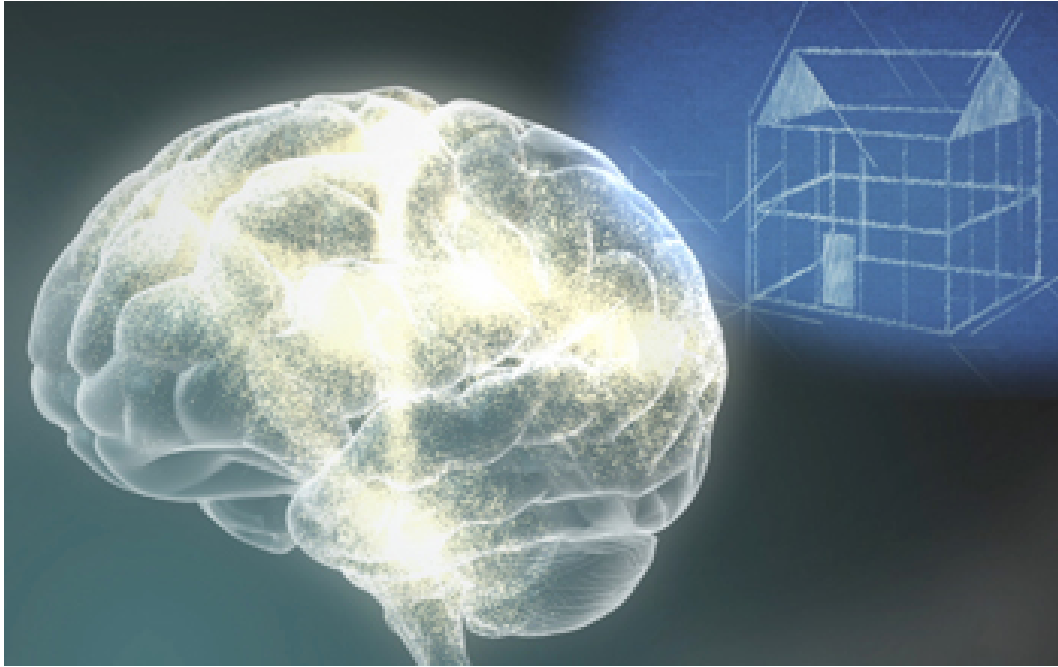


Several systems of the person – cognitive, social, emotional, behavioral, neuroendocrine and genetic -- all influenced by the environment plus early experiences and interact with each other as the child grows and develops.

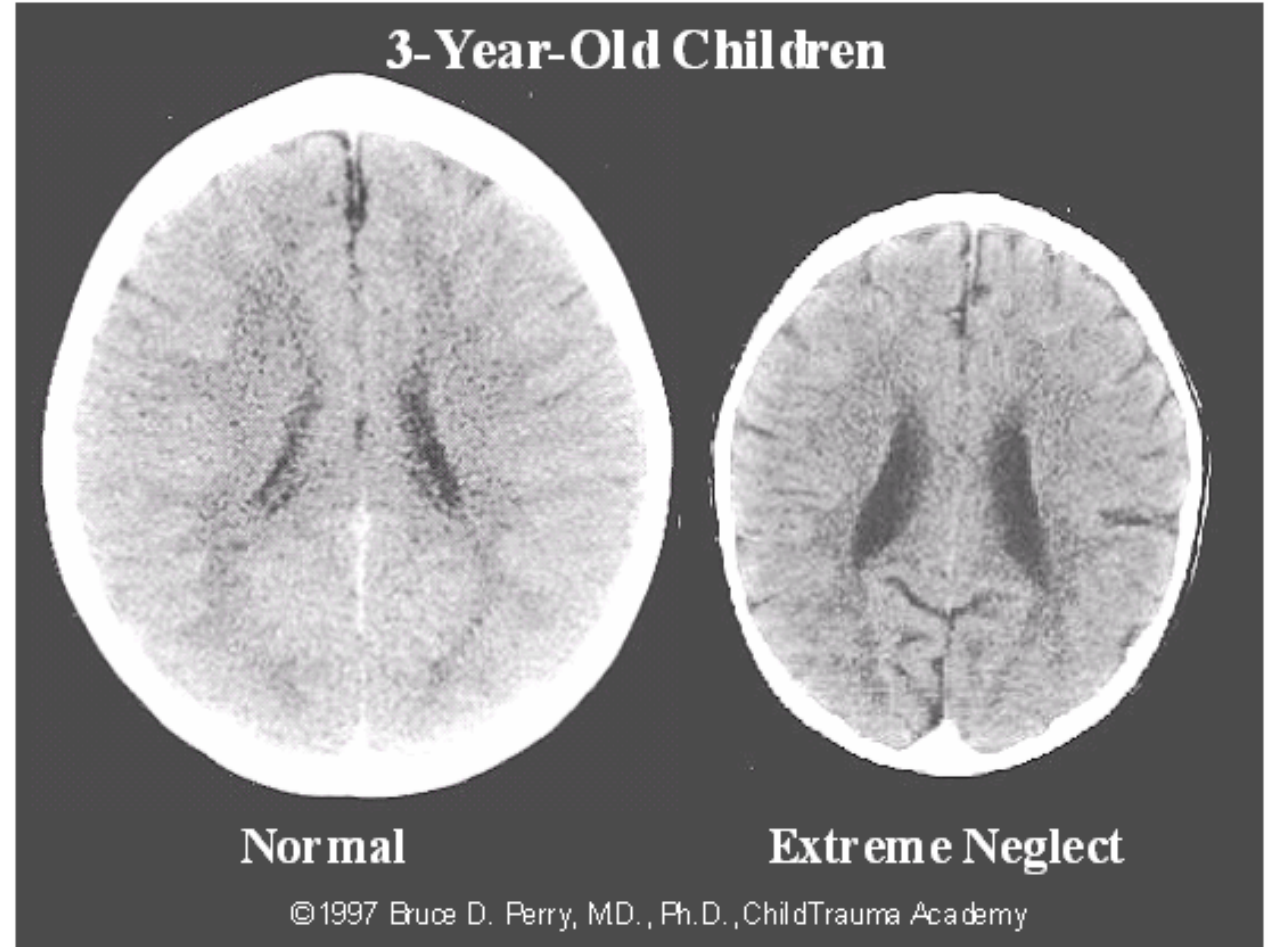


The body's systems are mutually interactive – the system is learning. Structural changes take place in the developing brain when it is under conditions of extreme stress – which impacts behavior responses.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN), American Academy of Pediatrics



Building Brains
Cognitive, emotional and social learning capacities are inextricably intertwined throughout the life course



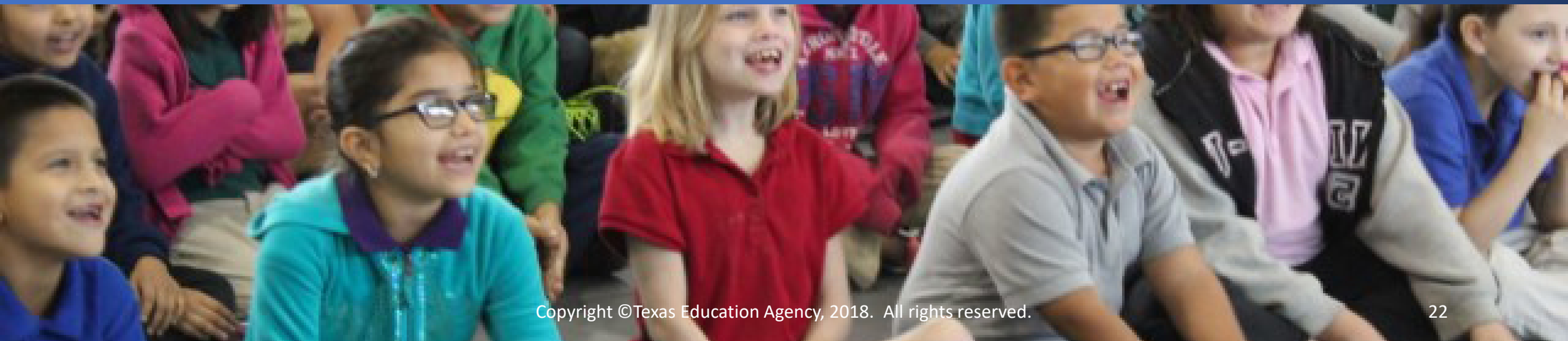
Dr. Bruce Perry, Child Trauma Academy



- Students struggling with trauma are concerned for their safety
- Often operate at a high level of arousal and fear
- If they discern correctly or incorrectly that they are to be exposed to increased danger, their fright, fight and flight symptoms will likely increase and surface
- Anxiety, hostility, aggressiveness, withdrawal



The impact of trauma on learning





- ✓ Using a trauma-informed lens, how might trauma impact a student according to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs?
- ✓ How might schools intervene?

<https://www.bing.com/search?q=maslows+hierarchy+of+need&src=IE-SearchBox&FORM=IESR4A>



Cognitive Skills:

- **Attention**
- **Concentration**
- **Memory**
- **Recall**
- **Processing**
- **Reasoning**



Academic Performance:

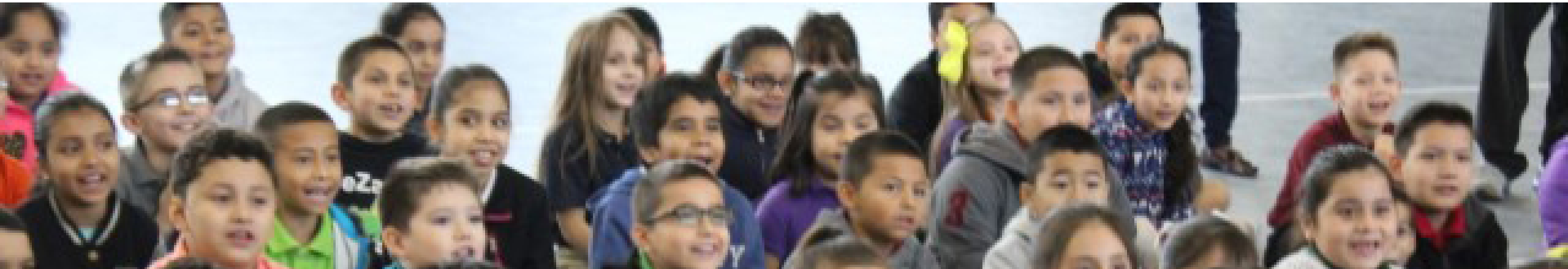


- **Poor attendance**
- **Particularly frequent absences for vague, non-specific physical health problems**
- **Difficulties with academic work, reading, mathematics, completing assignments and homework**
- **Falling grades**

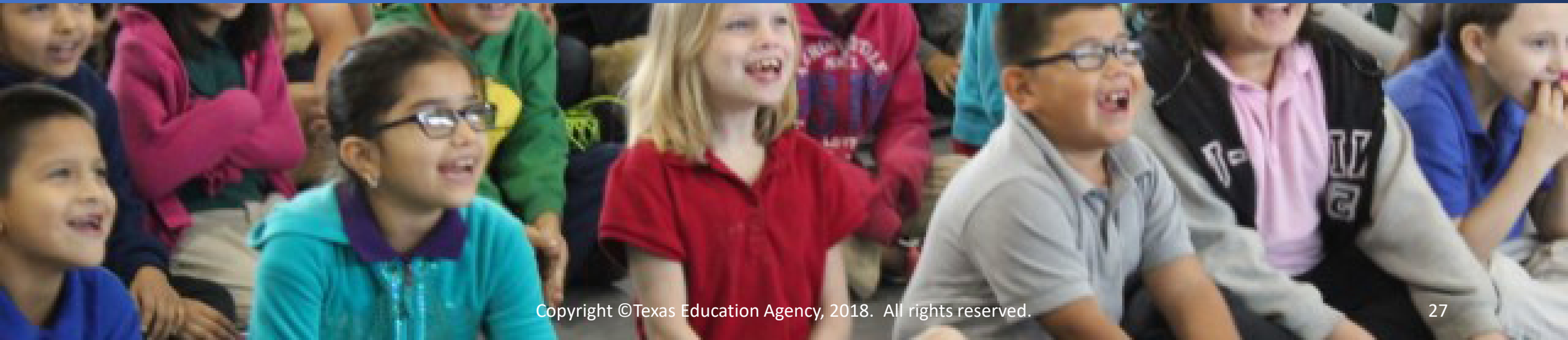


Competencies with:

- **Self-Efficacy and confidence**
- **Attachment and relationships**
- **Social integration and social skills**
- **Adjustment to school**
- **Managing emotions**
- **Behavior self-regulation**
- **Responsible decision-making**



Mental Health Awareness and Promotion





MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID



ORDER MATERIALS

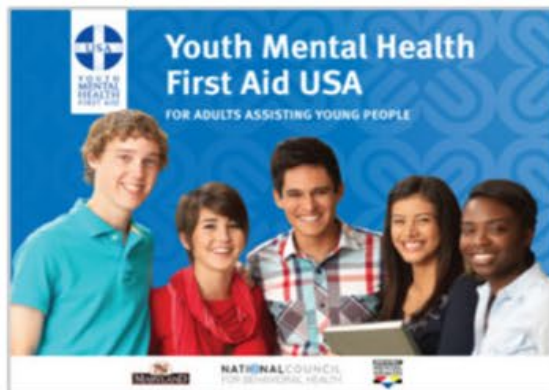
INSTRUCTOR LOGIN

TAKE A COURSE BE AN INSTRUCTOR BE THE DIFFERENCE ABOUT NEWS PARTNERS

Youth

Youth Mental Health First Aid

En Español



Youth Mental Health First Aid is designed to teach parents, family members, caregivers, teachers, school staff, peers, neighbors, health and human services workers, and other caring citizens how to help an adolescent (age 12-18) who is experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge or is in crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid is primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with young people. The course introduces common mental health

challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan for how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders (including AD/HD), and eating disorders.

FIND A COURSE



FIND INSTRUCTOR
TRAINING



DONATE NOW



MENTAL HEALTH
FIRST AID AT WORK



“We don’t provide our services in a vacuum. We don’t provide our services to buildings. We don’t provide our services to corporations. We provide our services to people. We are people

**Free Training
for Texas
Educators!**

May is Mental Health Awareness Month!



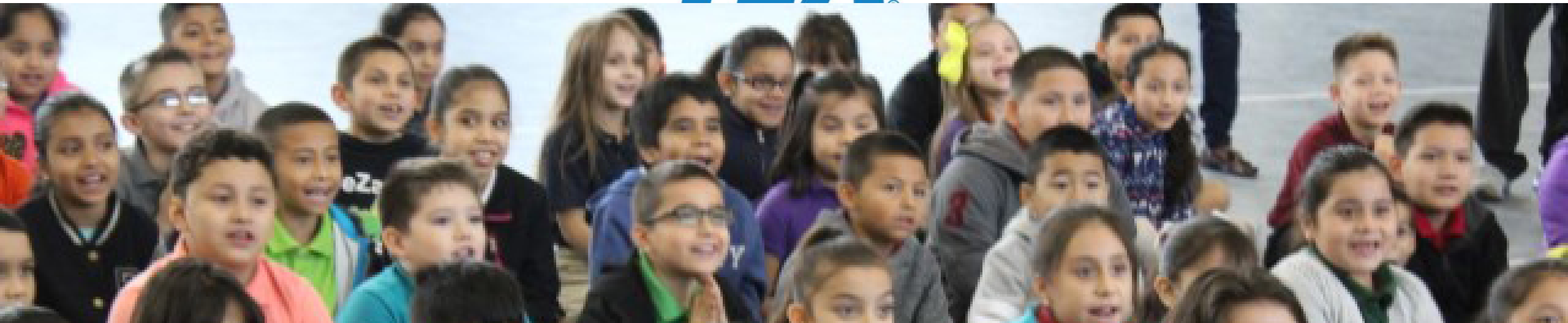
**Capitol Event –
Children’s Mental Health
Awareness Day,
Saturday, April 27, 2019**

**Children’s Mental Health
Art Contest Display**

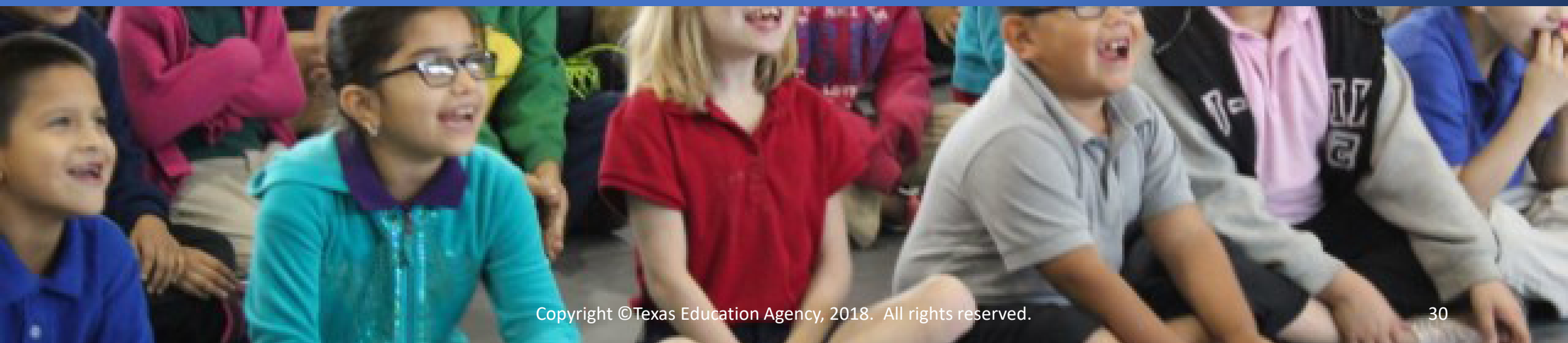
<https://cmhaustin.weebly.com/>

Statewide Activities

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



After Mental Health Awareness, What Can Schools Do?





“We learn the emotional habits that can undermine our best intentions, as well as what we can do to subdue our more destructive or self-defeating emotional impulses.

Most important, the neurological data suggest a window of opportunity for shaping our children’s emotional habits.”

– Daniel Goleman, [Emotional Intelligence](#)



Social and emotional learning is the process to acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to:

- ✓ understand and manage emotions,
- ✓ set and achieve positive goals,
- ✓ feel and show empathy for others,
- ✓ establish and maintain positive relationships and
- ✓ make responsible decisions.

Definition: Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning 2018.

<http://www.casel.org>

/

Youth Development Programs



Common asset-building and wellbeing goals for young people including:

- ✓ Physically and emotionally safe and healthy
- ✓ Resilient with a growth mindset and grit
- ✓ Hopeful, optimistic, compassionate, joyful, curious
- ✓ Ability to form and sustain caring, committed relationships
- ✓ Success in school and employment
- ✓ Gratitude and able to give back- service to community

Resilience



Resilience – the process of managing stress and functioning well even when faced with adversity and trauma



Protective Factors - the effects of toxic stress and trauma, can be mitigated by designing experiences that help to build youths' resilience.

Promoting Resilience and Wellbeing

Examples of Protective Factors at School



Relationships: Foster a consistent relationship with at least one caring adult who promotes high expectations, responsibility and encourages self improvement



Decision Making: Provide all students with opportunities for meaningful and responsible decision-making including constructive engagement in their family, community, school



Genuine Support: Provide both concrete and emotional support in times of need



Social, Emotional, Behavioral Learning: Build the knowledge, attitudes and skills to: manage emotions, feel and show empathy for others, set and achieve positive goals, establish and maintain healthy relationships, and make responsible decisions.



Create a Calm and Caring Learning Environment: Facilitate features such as: safe, positive, connected, predictable rules and routines, respectful, joyful and peaceful



Evidence-Based Practices: Implement through a multi-tiered system of support, i.e. PBIS, installed with leadership commitment, teaming, fidelity and data to monitor progress

A Trauma Informed Approach for Building Resilience and Wellbeing

Reduce or Mitigate
Against Risk
Factors

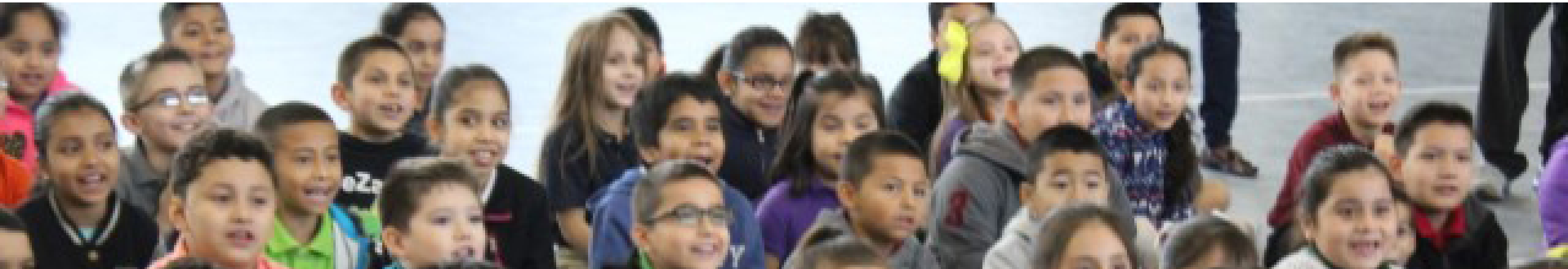
Increase Promotive
and Protective
Factors

Resilience, Mental
Health, Healthy
Development and
Wellbeing

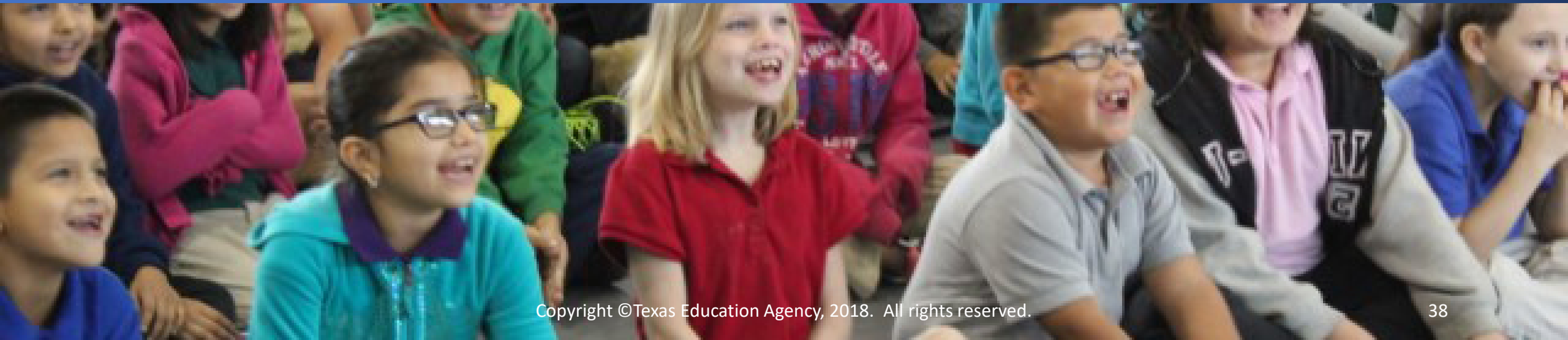


“Resilience cannot exist without hope. It is the capacity to be hopeful that carries us through challenges, disappointments, loss, and traumatic stress.”

Dr. Bruce Perry, Child Trauma Academy



Promoting Solutions Implementing a Multi-Tiered Systems of Support





School Mental Health

school

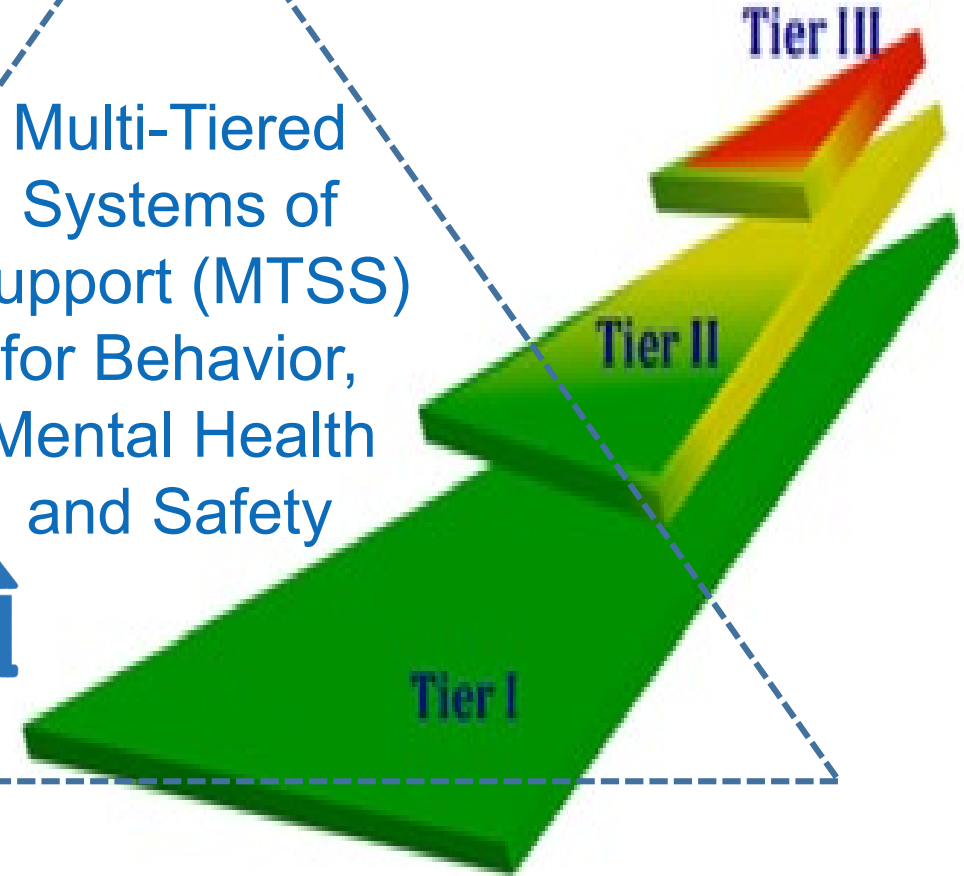
- Bully Prevention
 - SWPBIS for Beginners
 - PBIS FAQs
- PBIS in the Classroom
 - Classroom PBIS Practices
 - Systems to Support
 - Classroom PBIS Data
- Tier 1 Supports
 - Tier 1 FAQs
 - Tier 1 Case Examples
- Tier 2 Supports
 - Tier 2 FAQs
- Tier 3 Supports
 - What is Tier 3 PBIS
 - Organizational Systems
 - Student-Level Systems
 - School-Level Systems
 - District/Region/State Systems
 - Professional Development
 - Current Tier3 FAQs

Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-wide Positive Behavior Support



Supporting Children and Youth with Mental Health Challenges

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) for Behavior, Mental Health and Safety



<https://www.pbis.org/school/school-mental-health/interconnected-systems>



[NCSMH Home](#) | [About NCSMH](#) | [Our Work](#) | [Resources](#) | **Conferences** | [The SHAPE System](#) | [Connect With Us](#)

The 2019 Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health



November 7-9, 2019
Austin, TX:
Hilton Austin

Safe and Supportive
Schools for All Students!



National Center for School Mental Health (NCSMH)

[National Center for School Mental Health \(NCSMH\)](#) > [Conferences](#)

<http://csmh.umaryland.edu/The-SHAPE-System/Playbook-Guides/>



CASEL Educating Hearts.
Inspiring Minds.

JOIN THE MOVEMENT WATCH OUR VIDEO DONATE

ABOUT WHAT IS SEL? SEL IN ACTION PARTNER DISTRICTS RESEARCH POLICY RESOURCES NEWS CONTACT

Collaborating...

With leading educators, scholars, and policymakers to expand the field of SEL.
The missing piece in American education.

What is SEL? SEL in Action Research Policy Resources

Welcome to CASEL, the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. Our mission is to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of education from preschool through high school. CASEL and our broad network of collaborators are working together to turn momentum for SEL into a national movement.

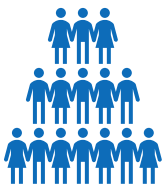
Integrated social,
emotional,
behavioral and
academic skills
evidence based
practices

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

Research Examples



Rigorous instruction and effective leadership contribute to student achievement; however, students who receive social-emotional support and prevention services achieve better academic outcomes (Greenberg et al., 2003).



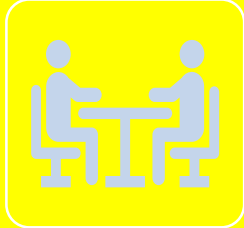
Whole-school interventions, delivered within an MTSS, have been shown to improve school climate. Improving school climate and student engagement and connectedness is associated with increased achievement in reading, writing, and math (Spier, Cai, & Osher, 2007).

AWARE Texas Grant A Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) for School Mental Health


Example Activities



**Intensive Services and Wraparound
Safety & Treatment Transition Plans**



**Early Identification of Student Needs
Targeted Skill-Building Interventions**



**Mental Health and Trauma Awareness
Evidence-Based Universal Prevention**

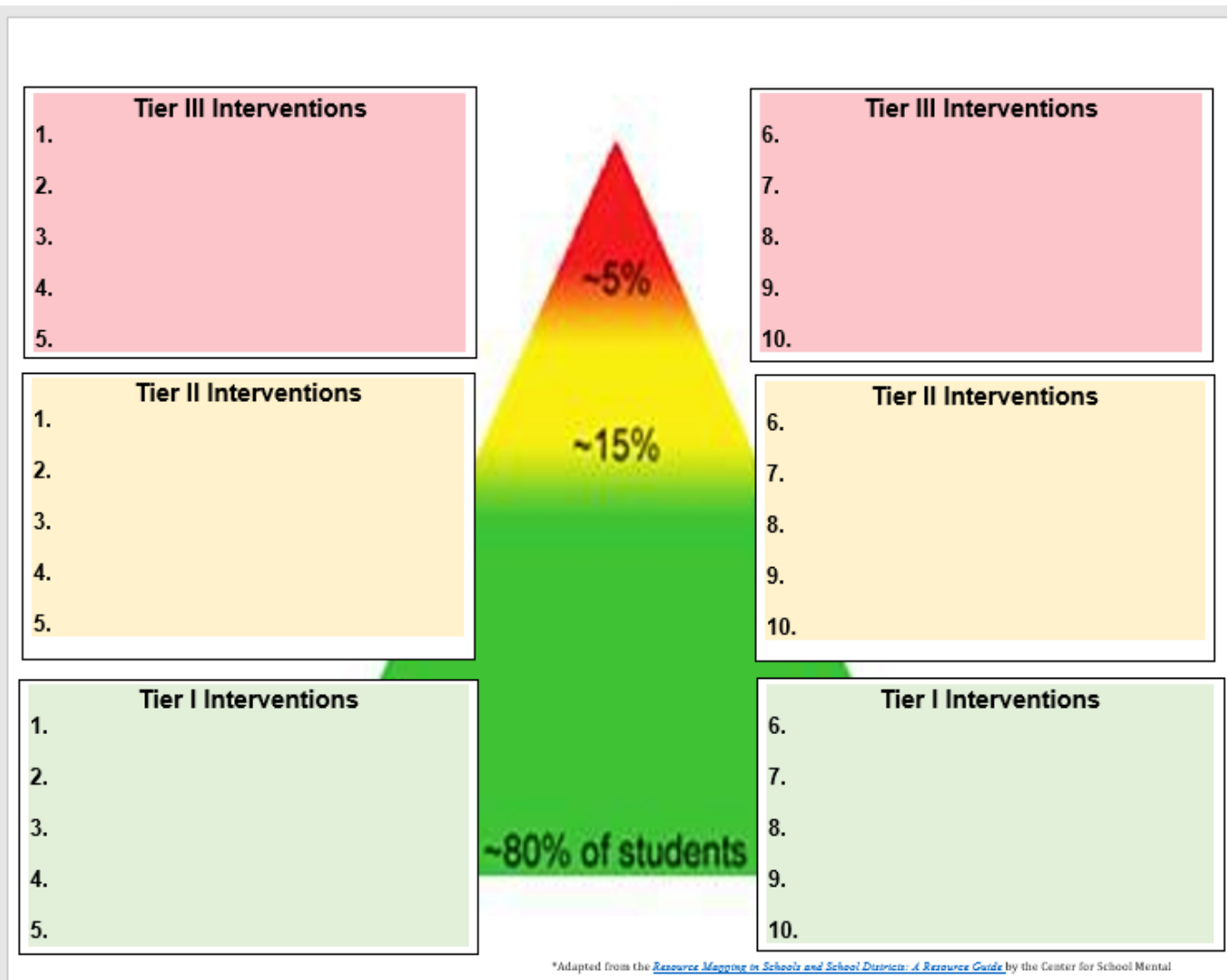
FEW

SOME

ALL

Collaboration

- TEA
- Four (4) ESCs
- Five (5) School Districts
- Fifteen (15) Schools
- District and Campus Leadership Teams
- Mental Health (MH) Specialists
- Community MH Providers
- Parents and Youth
- Health and Human Services Commission
- University of Texas at Austin Institute for Excellence in MH



*Adapted from the [Resource Mapping in Schools and School Districts: A Resource Guide](#) by the Center for School Mental Health

Group Discussion:

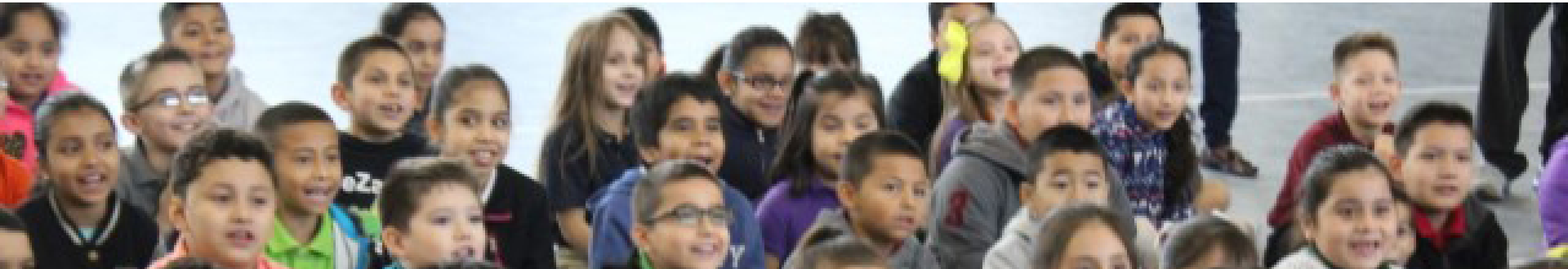
Leadership Teaming

Needs Assessment

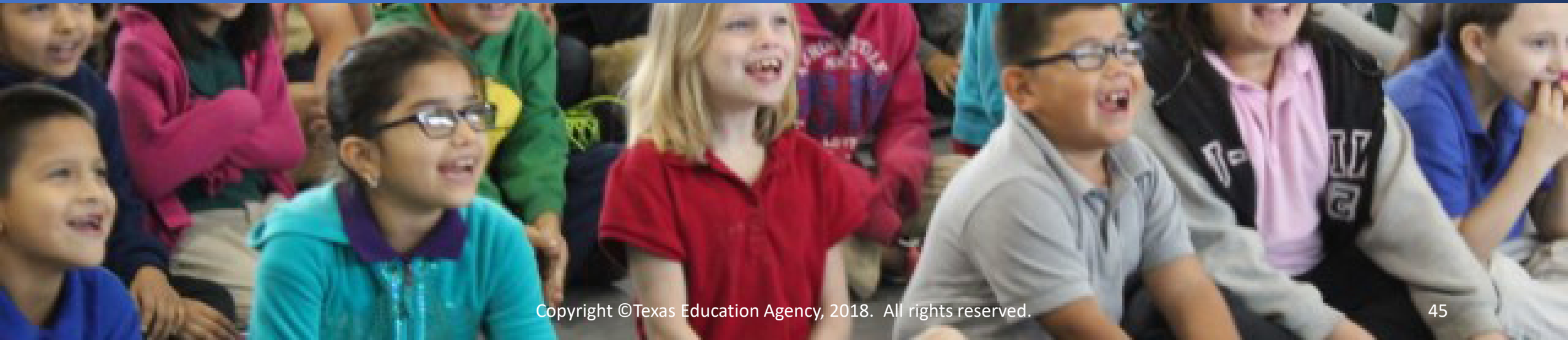
Resource and Asset Mapping

Campus Plan for:

- A tiered system (MTSS)
- Trauma-informed practices
- Social-emotional competencies
- Behavior supports
- Mental health supports



Best Practice Resources



Mental Health Best Practice Resources



[Home](#) / [About TEA](#) / [Other Services](#) / [Mental Health](#)

Mental Health and Behavioral Health

Welcome to the Texas School Mental Health and Behavioral Health Website. TEA developed these Webpages to provide information to help schools to support student mental and behavioral health.

Approximately one in six school-aged youth experiences impairments in life functioning, including impacts on academic achievement, due to a mental illness. The number of students experiencing mental illness increases as young people grow older.

Outside of the student's home, schools are the most likely place where mental health concerns will be detected. Fortunately, the earlier mental health concerns are detected and addressed, the more likely a student is to avoid the onset and/or progression of a mental illness. Many times signs of deteriorating mental health are noticeable well before a mental illness emerges.

This Website seeks to assist school personnel with resources for supporting student mental health. In Texas, there are numerous collaborative efforts, statutes, services, programs and strategies available to support the identification of mental health challenges and to address them. Please bookmark the page, share the link and visit often to learn of new resources and opportunities for promoting school mental health in Texas.

Hotlines and Links to Mental/Behavioral Health Supports in Texas

[https://tea.texas.gov/About TEA/Other Services/Mental Health/Mental Health and Behavioral Health/](https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Other_Services/Mental_Health/Mental_Health_and_Behavioral_Health/)

Mental Health Best Practice Resources



Best Practices Webpages with Curated Mental Health Resources:

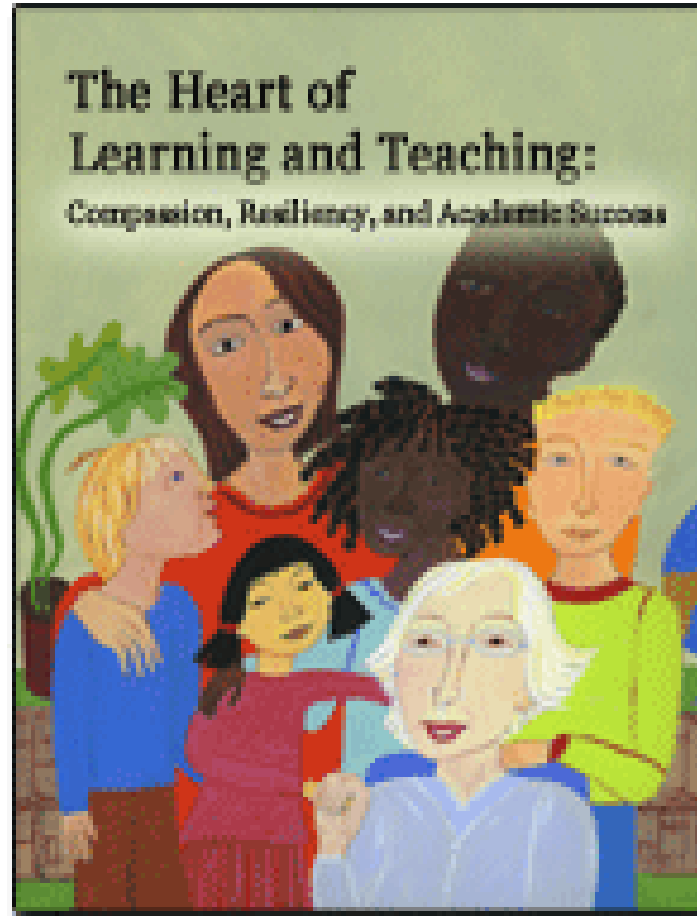
- Mental Health Promotion
- Early Mental Health Intervention
- Suicide Prevention
- Substance Abuse Prevention and Intervention
- Grief Informed and Trauma Informed Practices – ACES Information
- Safe and Supportive School Climate
- Building skills related to managing emotions, establishing, and maintaining positive relationships, and responsible decision making
- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports and Positive Youth Development
- Educator Preparation Resources

[https://tea.texas.gov/About TEA/Other Services/Mental Health/Mental Health and Behavioral Health/](https://tea.texas.gov/About%20TEA/Other%20Services/Mental%20Health/Mental%20Health%20and%20Behavioral%20Health/)

Trauma Informed Strategies For Schools



*We can not
teach the
mind until we
reach the
heart.*



**Free
Download**

**Training
Available**

<http://k12.wa.us/CompassionateSchools/HeartofLearning.aspx>

Trauma Informed Strategies For Schools



Integrates a curriculum that teaches competencies in four (4) domains:

1. Safety and security
2. Emotional and behavioral self-regulation
3. Personal agency, social skills and
4. Academics

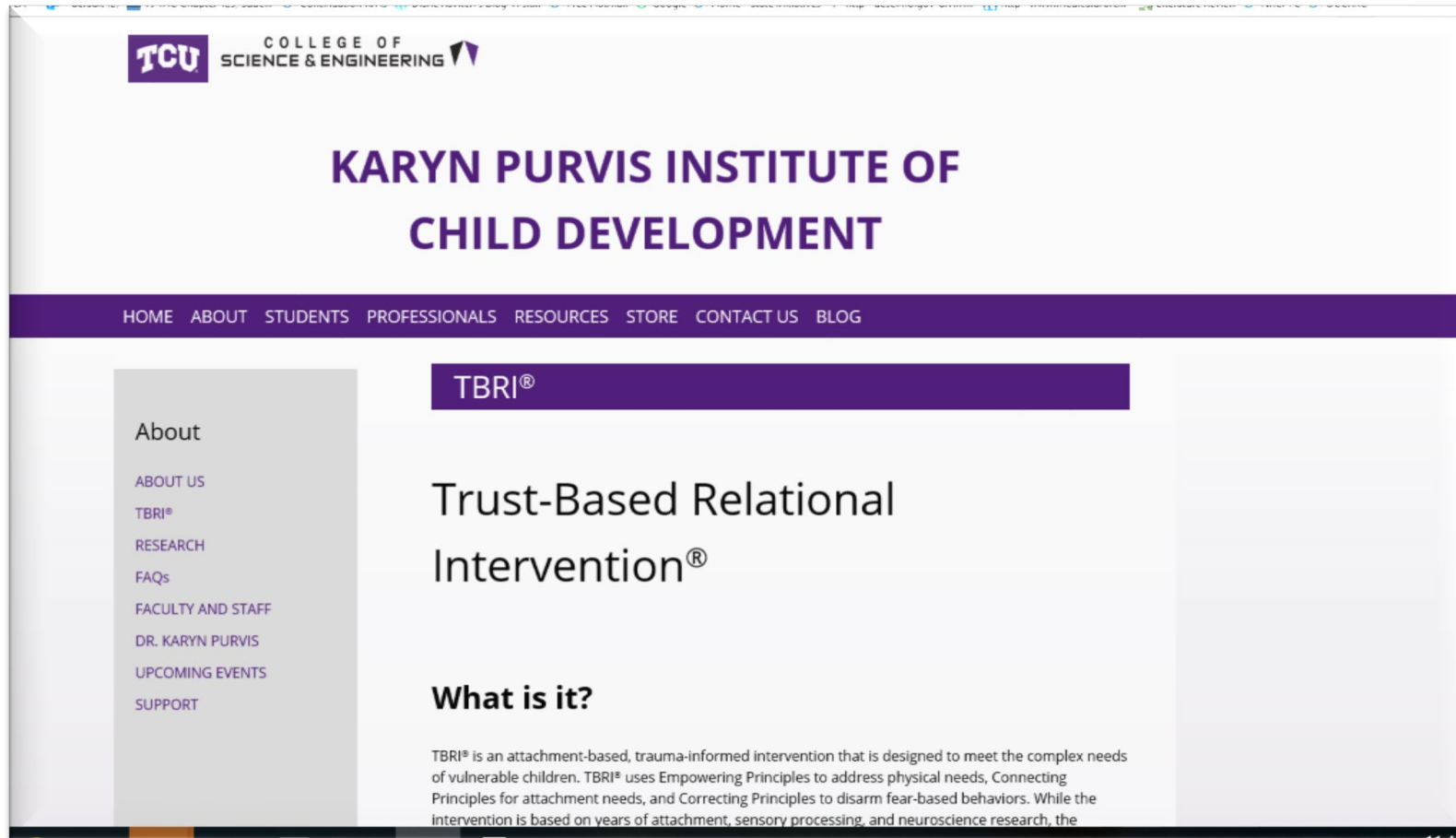
Includes goals for instruction, information on recognizing need, strategies to apply the 6 discipline principles

Trauma Informed Strategies For Schools



Provides six principles of trauma-informed discipline:

- Always empower, never disempower (psychological and physical safety)
- Teach, expect and provide unconditional positive regard (respect)
- Maintain high expectations with rules and routines (responsibility)
- Check assumptions, observe and question
- Be a relationship coach
- Provide guided opportunities for helpful participation

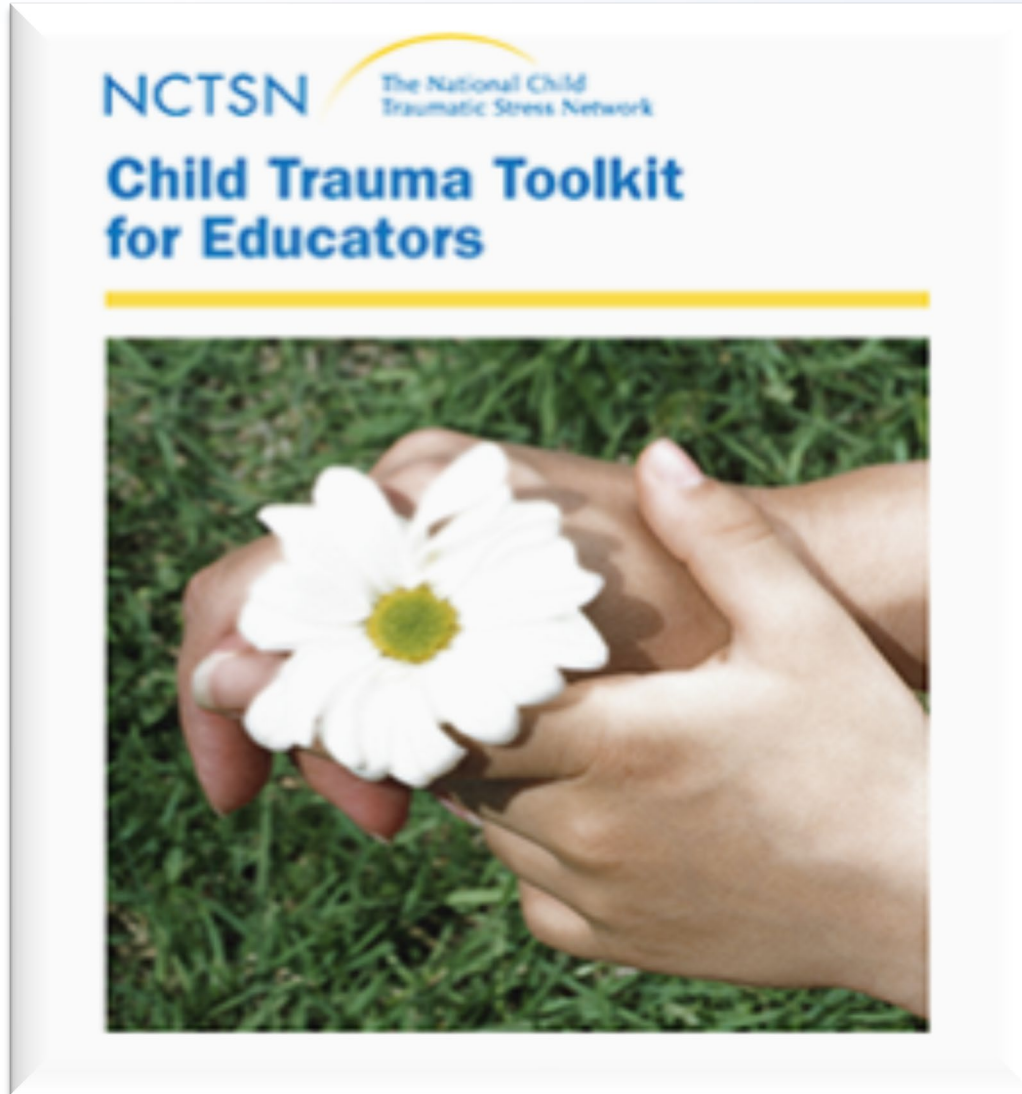


**Course for
Trauma
Informed
Classroom
Strategies**

3 Days

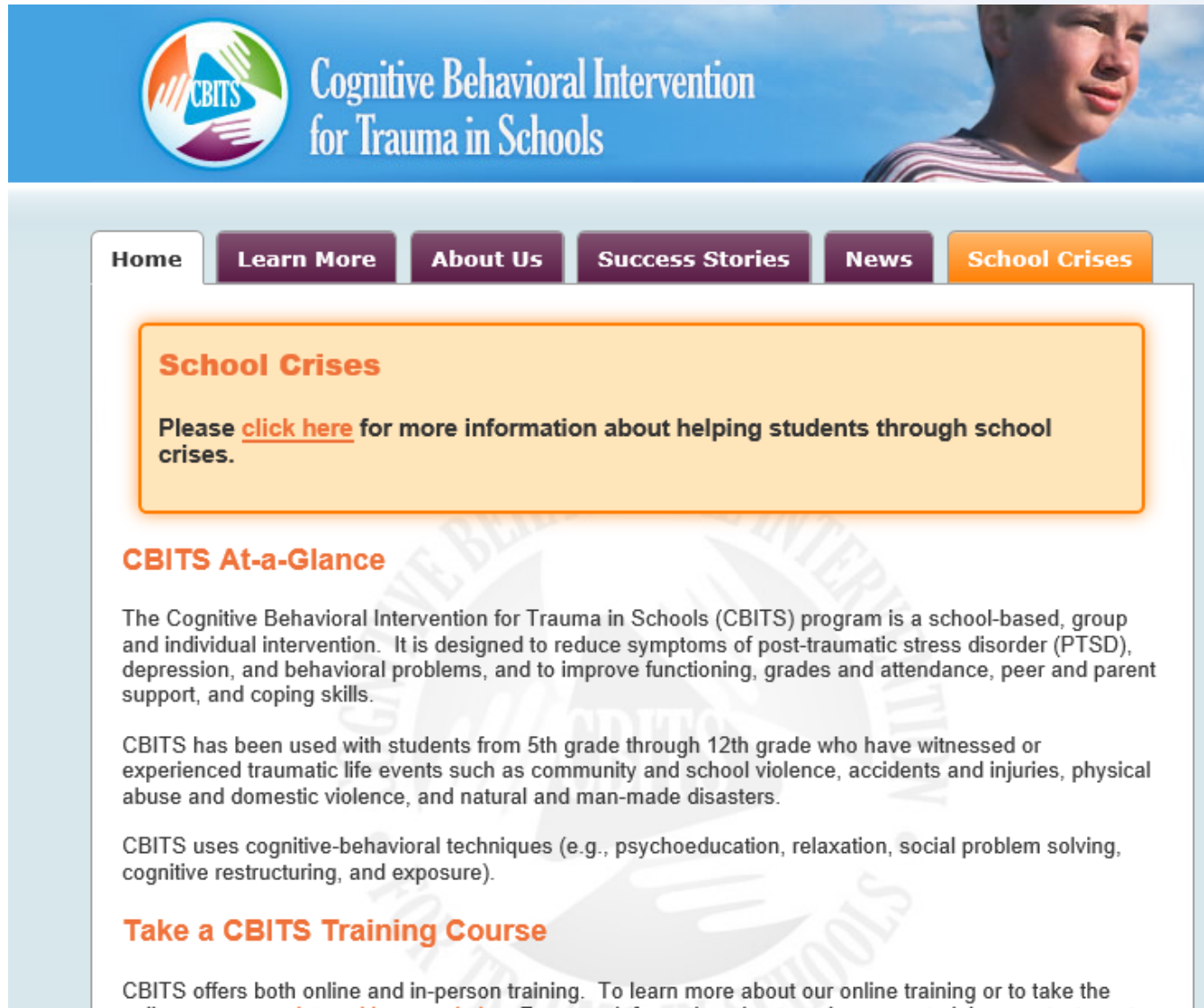
<https://child.tcu.edu/about-us/tbri/>

Trauma Informed Strategies For Schools



**Free
toolkit
download:**

[https://www.nctsn.org/resources/
child-trauma-toolkit-educators](https://www.nctsn.org/resources/child-trauma-toolkit-educators)



The screenshot shows the website for Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS). The header features the CBITS logo, which consists of three hands in blue, green, and purple holding a white triangle with the letters 'CBITS'. To the right of the logo is the text 'Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools'. Below the header is a navigation menu with buttons for 'Home', 'Learn More', 'About Us', 'Success Stories', 'News', and 'School Crises'. The 'School Crises' button is highlighted in orange. Below the navigation menu is a large orange box with the text 'School Crises' and 'Please [click here](#) for more information about helping students through school crises.' Below this box is the section 'CBITS At-a-Glance' with a paragraph describing the program: 'The Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS) program is a school-based, group and individual intervention. It is designed to reduce symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and behavioral problems, and to improve functioning, grades and attendance, peer and parent support, and coping skills.' Below this paragraph is another paragraph: 'CBITS has been used with students from 5th grade through 12th grade who have witnessed or experienced traumatic life events such as community and school violence, accidents and injuries, physical abuse and domestic violence, and natural and man-made disasters.' Below that is a third paragraph: 'CBITS uses cognitive-behavioral techniques (e.g., psychoeducation, relaxation, social problem solving, cognitive restructuring, and exposure).' Below the paragraphs is the section 'Take a CBITS Training Course' with a paragraph: 'CBITS offers both online and in-person training. To learn more about our online training or to take the

Purpose:

Training for understanding trauma and providing cognitive-behavioral group interventions in school.

***For mental health professionals.**

Register for Free Manual:

- **Free online training course**
- **5 hours self-paced course**

<https://cbitsprogram.org/>



What kids (and the rest of us) need now

It's true, you reap what you sow. If we handle kids with power and control, that's what we get back. But what happens if we collaborate with them -- as partners -- instead? Lives in the Balance is devoted to moving things in that very direction. Our model is life-changing. Our programs are life-saving. Our research is compelling. Our web-based resources are free. And there's a lot more in the pipeline.



About Us

We have some ideas. Ideas about how behaviorally challenging kids should be understood. And about treating them in ways that are more compassionate and effective. Ideas about treating **all** kids in ways that are non-punitive, non-adversarial, and collaborative, and that teach them skills on the better side of human nature.

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

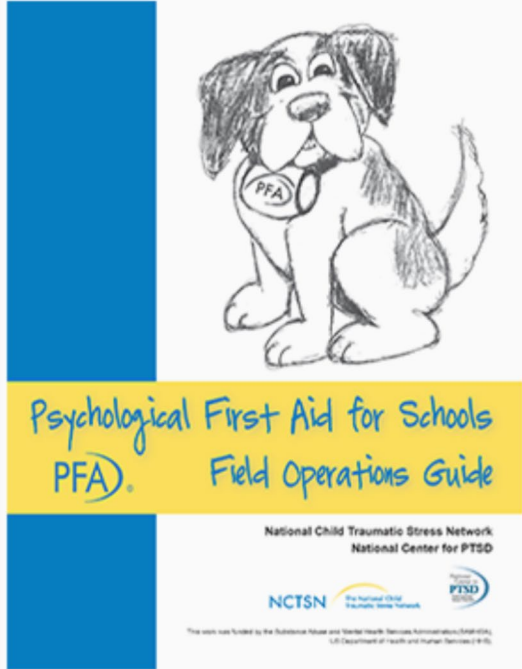
Collaborative and Proactive Solutions

FREE Web-based resources

Purpose: To teach lagging skills, engage and empower youth to develop a collaborative plan that addresses challenging behavior.

Evidence Based Practice

Home > Psychological First Aid for Schools (PFA-S) Field Operations Guide



Psychological First Aid for Schools
PFA Field Operations Guide

National Child Traumatic Stress Network
National Center for PTSD

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network PFA-S

The work was funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

NCTSN RESOURCE ⓘ

Resource Description

Provides guidance on responding to disaster, violence, or terrorism events usir

Purpose:

Preparing school teams to pre-plan for psychological safety in school plans in advance of a multi-hazard disaster or emergency

*Free online training

*Free download of Field Manual

<http://www.nctsn.org/content/psychological-first-aid-schoolspfa>



- Compassion Fatigue
- Vicarious Trauma
- Burnout
- Self-Care
- Prevention



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Home > 31 Tips to Boost Your Mental Health

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31 Tips to Boost Your Mental Health

1. Track gratitude and achievement with a journal. Include 3 things you were grateful for and 3 things you were able to accomplish each day.



Try the free apps – [Happier](#) or [Attitudes of Gratitude Journal](#) or make your own journal using one of [these tutorials](#).

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/31-tips-boost-your-mental-health>



- ✓ What is your role?
- ✓ What take-away(s) from this session will benefit you in your role?
- ✓ What else can TEA provide to assist you regarding mental health and trauma-informed practices?
- ✓ Please provide feedback that would improve learning in this one hour session?

Thank You!

Mental and Behavioral Program Contact

Julie Wayman, MSSW

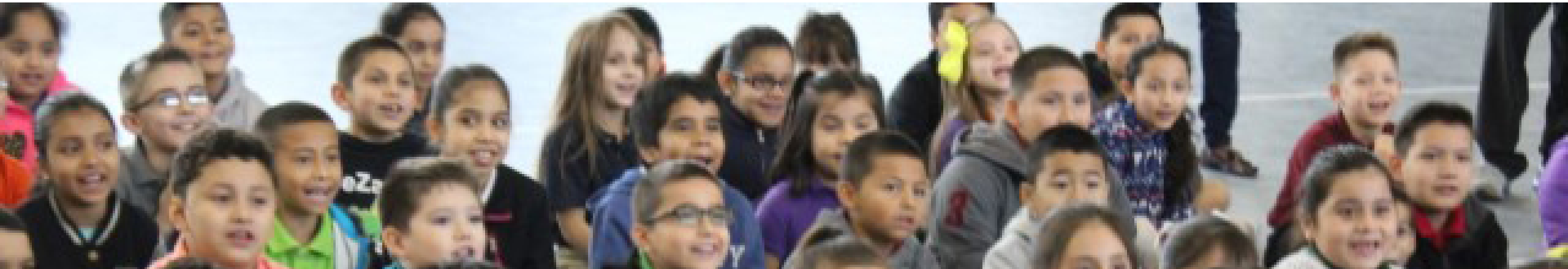
Mental Health and Behavioral Health Manager, Interagency Liaison

TEA Mental Health Webpage:

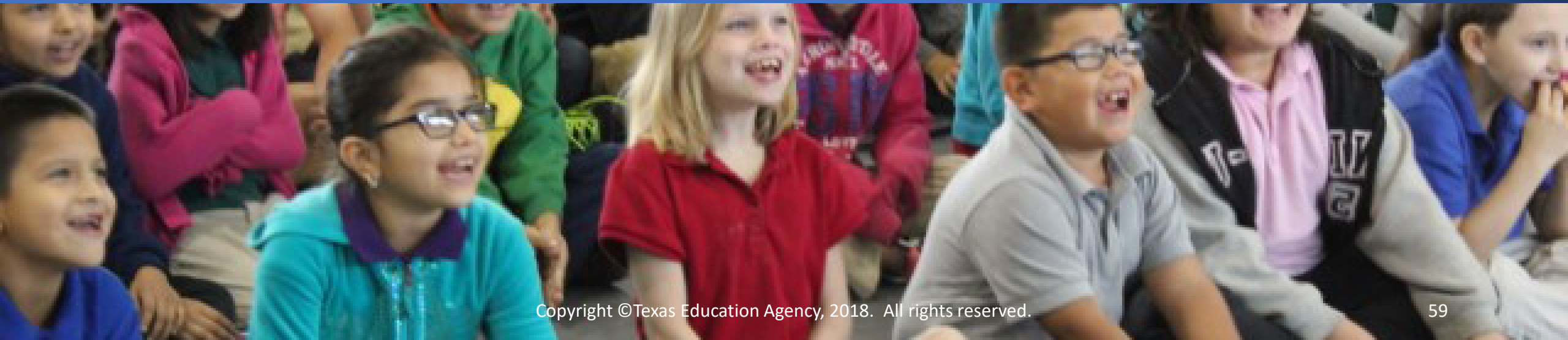
https://tea.texas.gov/About_TEA/Other_Services/Mental_Health/Mental_Health_and_Behavioral_Health/

Phone: 512-936-6403

Email: Julie.Wayman@tea.texas.gov



Bonus Section: Classroom Activity Ideas for Teachers






Trauma-Informed Practices in School: **Teaching & Self-Care Resources**

The National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH) reports that nearly 50 percent of the children in the United States have experienced "at least one or more types of serious childhood trauma." Many of the challenging behavior seen inside classrooms stem from stress or trauma in students' lives outside the classroom. Trauma, both physical and emotional, can alter a young person's brain functions, which in turn, impacts learning and behavior.

Poverty, violence, abuse, food insecurity, and home instability are just a few causes of brain-altering stress. Teachers and educators interact with students



- Featured Toolkits
- Teacher Self-Care
- Classroom Behavior
- Professional Development

Free Teacher Resources

*Excerpts on the following Slides

**Concordia University –
Portland, OR**

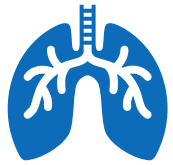
<https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/teaching-resources/trauma-informed-school-practices/>

Mood-Boosting Brain Breaks Shared by Teachers



Get Them Moving!

Sitting still is hard for all of us. These mood-boosting activities and brain breaks will give students instant energy.



Just Breathe.

Ask students to breathe in for five seconds, hold three seconds, breathe out five seconds, and repeat for one minute. Prompt them to sit up straight on the inhale and hold, then exhale and relax their shoulders.



Super Stretch.

Students stand up and stretch their arms and body to the ceiling, then to the side, then to the floor, twisting both ways.



Laugh in.

Start with “ho-ho-ho-ho” together. Then “he-he-he-he.” And then “ha-ha-ha.” Pretend to laugh. In no time the whole class will really be laughing.



Scissor hands.

Students stand and scissor their arms across their chest 4 to 5 times, then touch their nose with their right hand and touch the opposite ear with their left hand, then switch.



Dance party.

Turn on some fast music. Dance your hearts out for two minutes. Turn on some slow music and stretch a bit and calm down for 30 seconds.

*Free Resources: <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/teaching-resources/trauma-informed-school-practices/>

4 Stay-Calm Classroom Routines Shared by Teachers



Write out scheduling changes on a whiteboard.

Knowing what to expect helps students focus.



Build in rewards for getting work done.

Made it through reading groups with no interruptions? Give five minutes of free time at the end of the period.



Take class outside.

Foam mats from a home improvement store are easy to stow, soft to sit and work on, and sturdy and waterproof. No reason not to learn in the fresh air.



Bring nature in!

Project a rain forest on a large screen and play rain forest sounds. One minute is all you need for a quick field trip in their minds.

Tip: @nationalparkservice has stunning images on Instagram.



*Free Resources: <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/teaching-resources/trauma-informed-school-practices/>



Brain Breaks

Activities that bring on the calm.



Create a class relax board.

Have students look through travel magazines or on travel websites to find pictures of places that they dream of going or that make them feel peaceful. Make a class collage that can be posted prominently. Model looking at the collage yourself so students get in the same habit.



Be classical.

Students working on a quiet task? Put on some classical music while they work. Productivity will rise and stress will go down.



Color (even older students will love it!)

Mandalas, patterns, or any printed-out design has been shown to calm students.



Have a daily check-in.

Let students hold up fingers to show how their day is going. 1, not so great to 5, fabulous. (And keep an eye out for the 1s and 2s. Check with students to see if you can give them a little extra support that period or day.)

*Free Resources: <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/teaching-resources/trauma-informed-school-practices/>