

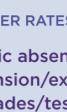


School Nurses Can Help Students Heal from Trauma

Promote resilience and avoid re-traumatization by understanding how violence impacts child development.

Almost half of U.S. children have been exposed to traumatic events, like domestic violence, abuse, or even fighting. Trauma can impact the physical development of a child's brain, and can have profound effects on a child's long term health. Children who have experienced trauma demonstrate:

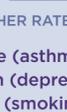
SCHOOL



HIGHER RATES OF...

Chronic absenteeism
Suspension/expulsion
Low grades/test scores

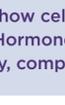
HEALTH



HIGHER RATES OF...

Chronic disease (asthma, heart disease)
Mental health (depression, anxiety)
Health risk behaviors (smoking, drug use, self harm)

DEVELOPMENTAL CHANGES



TRAUMATIC STRESS CAN CHANGE...

Genes and how cells read them
Hormones

Brain structures responsible for memory, complex cognition, and emotional processing.

Though not all children respond to trauma in the same way, children who have been exposed to traumatic events may present symptoms such as ...

FEAR AND ANXIETY

FREQUENT VISITS TO THE HEALTH CLINIC

HEADACHES

STOMACH ACHES

CLASS AVOIDANCE

WITHDRAWAL



What can school nurses do?

School nurses are uniquely positioned to help youth, promote healing, and avoid re-traumatization. Consider...

WHAT MAY HAVE HAPPENED IN THE LIFE OF THIS CHILD?

HOW CAN I CONTRIBUTE TO A CULTURE AND COMMUNITY OF HEALING?

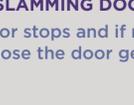
1

Be aware of trauma triggers in the environment and minimize where possible



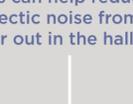
HARSH LIGHTING

Try using lamps or covered overhead fluorescents.



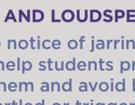
SLAMMING DOORS

Use door stops and if necessary, close the door gently



SHOUTING

Rugs and other noise-absorbing fabrics can help reduce and muffle hectic noise from outside or out in the halls.



BELLS AND LOUDSPEAKERS

Advance notice of jarring sounds may help students prepare for them and avoid being startled or triggered.



UNWELCOME OR UNEXPECTED TOUCH

Ask permission or give warning before physically touching a student.

2

Promote healing by using Everyday Gestures



CELEBRATE

"I am proud of your hard work studying for the exam, Celinda."
...

"James, these thoughtful adjectives you used help me understand your favorite food."



LISTEN

"Tell me more about how you're feeling."
...

"Did you mean (this)? I want to make sure I understand you."



COLLABORATE

"I see you're stuck. Tell me what you have tried and I will listen for ways I can help."
...

"Great thinking! What would you do next?"



COMFORT

"You seem different today. Remember that I care about you and I am here for you."
...

"Are you feeling nervous or anxious about something?"



INSPIRE

"I've heard so many great ideas today!"
...

"Who would you be if you could be anyone in the world?"

3

Adopt trauma-informed assessment and intervention practices

Reframe assessment language: When a student visits your office, ask what has happened, rather than what's wrong with them.



Use school-based and community resources for support.



Engage youth and parents as partners.



Identify the strengths and challenges of each child.



Incorporate calming strategies into nursing practice.

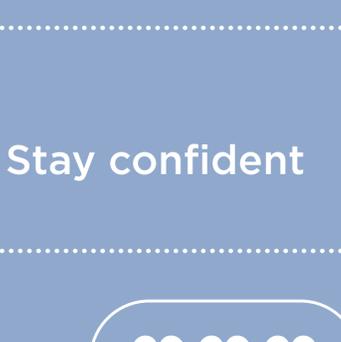


Consider developing IHP goals that promote resilience.

Taking Care Of Yourself

Working with trauma-impacted youth can also have an impact on the mental and emotional health of school staff. It's important to take care of yourself to ensure that you are prepared to best support students.

Remain calm



Stay confident

Ask for the support you need



Discover more about the Changing Minds everyday gestures, science of childhood trauma, and the power of a caring, consistent adult at: ChangingMindsNow.org



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