



Trauma Sensitive Schools

A Review of Implementing
Trauma Informed Frameworks

Jordan Downey, LISW-CP

Contributors



Jordan Downey, LISW-CP
Outreach Clinician, National
Crime Victims Center



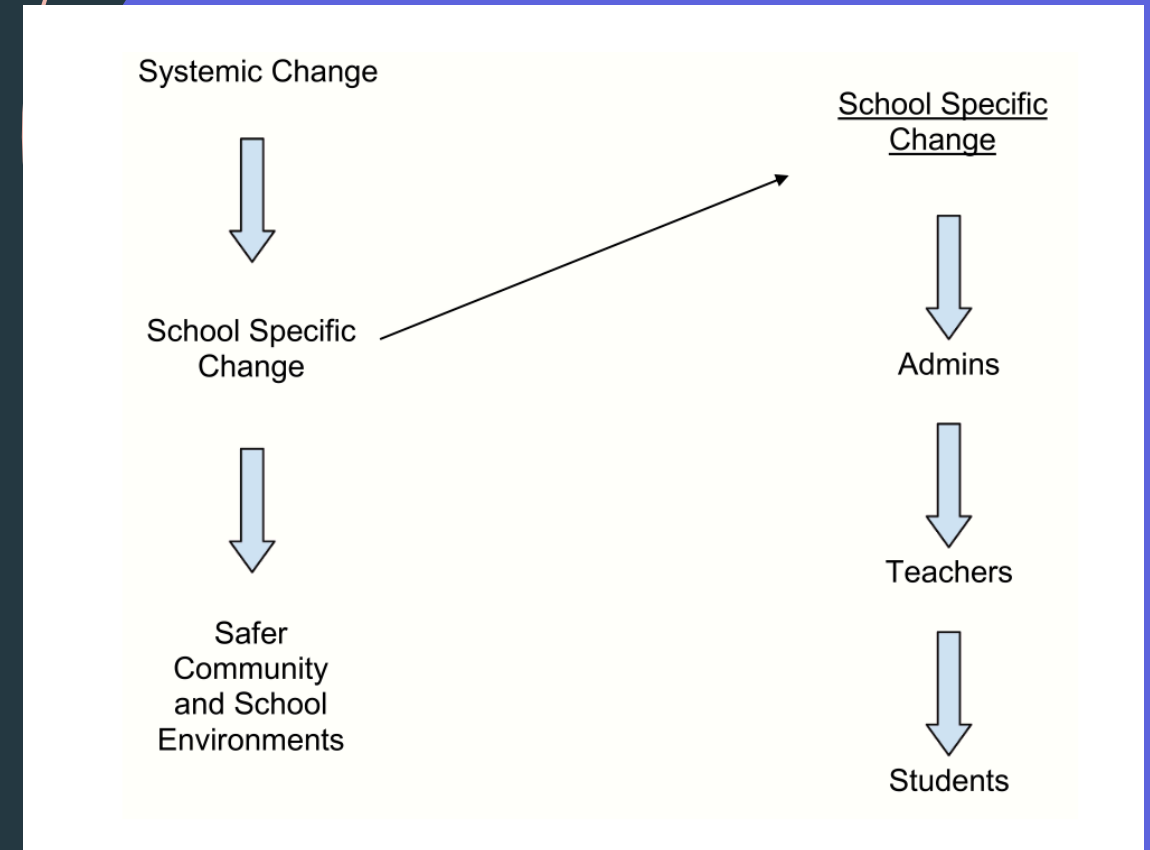
John Greco, LISW-CP
Assistant Clinical Director,
Children's Place

Why Trauma Sensitive Schools?

- Meet Timothy
 - 10-Year-Old Hispanic Student,
 - 5th Grade
 - Parents separated 4 years ago , His mother and he moved to a traditionally underserved area
 - Mom works several jobs and Timothy is aware of the financial struggles
 - Class assignments display concerning imagery and descriptions of domestic violence, sometimes plays very violently at recess
 - Experiences Attention and Focus deficits and is dysregulated during class transitions
 - Becomes disproportionately angry when asked to perform tasks or when redirected, especially by male staff
 - Administrators and teachers try to correct behavior, and nothing helps, it in fact worsens.

Trauma Informed Schools

- Current gaps and limitations
 - Classroom management based in control .
 - Tools include syllabus, cheating prevention, contracts for student responsibility, and strategies for over participation.
- Benefits
 - Higher grades and standardized test scores
 - Greater Emotional regulation
 - Higher Levels Social Competence and resilience
 - Lower levels of diagnosis like ADHD and lower levels of problematic school behaviors like truancy
- Implementation



Downey & Greco, 2023

Levels of Intervention

Macro

- District
- Administration
- Policy and Advocacy

Mezzo

- Professional Community and Culture built by teachers when NOT in front of students.

Micro

- Teacher to student interaction
- Student to student interaction
- Classroom culture built to cultivate connection and resiliency

Micro Level Intervention

Classroom
Culture

Student
Regulation

Student
Attunement

Heart of Learning and Teaching



For Themselves:

Safety Connection, and Assurance

Improving Emotional and Behavioral Self-Regulations

Skills for learning



From Their Educators

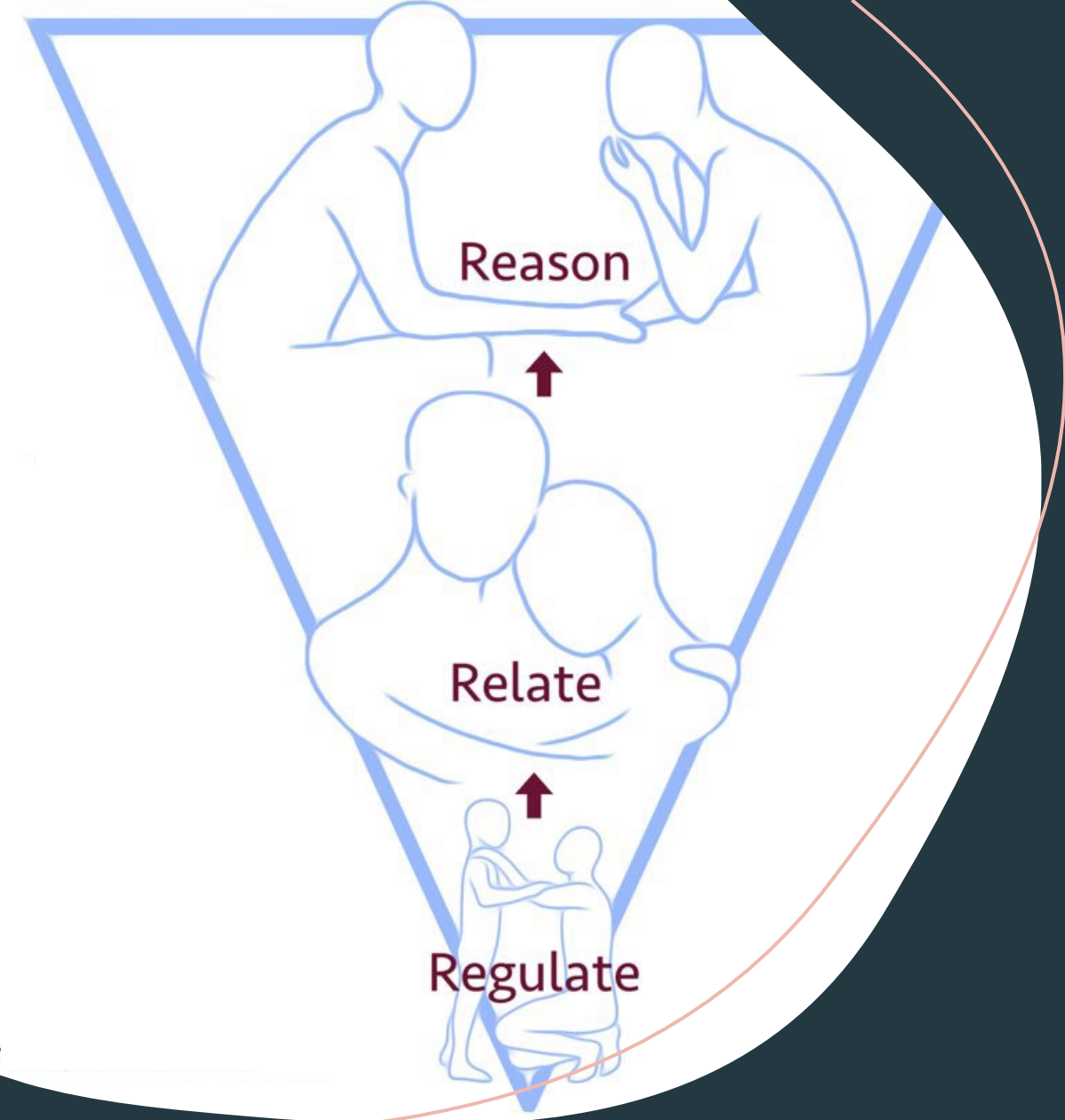
Always Empower, Never Disempower

Provide Unconditional Positive Regard

Maintain High Expectations
Check Assumptions, Observe and Question

Be a Relationship Coach

Provide Guided Opportunities for Helpful Participation



Bruce Perry's Three R's

Regulate

Work with students who have an activated trauma response (fight, flight, freeze, fawn)

Relate

Using relational language to connect with the student to build attunement.

Reason

Through supportive brief reflection help the student's learn, remember, and become self aware.

Dan Hughes' PACE



Playful

A relaxed and genuine attitude. This helps student feel connected and less alarmed.



Acceptance

Working to understand the reasons behind the behavior whether they make sense or not.



Curiosity

Asking to understand what is going on. Seeking to understand the "why" behind the behavior.



Empathy

Be with the student in their experience. Convey an understanding and address the idea of feelings felt

Summary of Support

- Timothy's teacher fosters relational connection using PACE
- A new safety plan based on patterns of behavior with the teacher and admins.
- The Heart of Learning and Teaching's specific strategies helped the teacher to create a sense of safety and control in the classroom.
- During moments of behavior or dysregulation the teacher employed the Three R's to help timothy deescalate.
- "His overall development was supported by the school system and through the relational connection he developed with teachers and other staff, Timothy was able to regulate and actively learn."





Questions?

Contact

- Jordan Downey, LISW-CP
 - downeyjo@musc.edu

Link to full Article

