

Student  
Behaviors  
Misunderstood:  
Trauma-Inform  
ed Care

# TIC Overview

- Stress Test (Adult/Child)
- Basic Understanding of Trauma
- Trauma Informed Care/ACEs
- Trauma and the Brain
- Impact on Learning/Education
- Classroom Management Strategies
- Questions/Answers

# Trauma Definition

- Actual or perceived threat of death or serious injury by:
  - Direct personal experience
  - Witness of another person's experience
  - Learning of a loved one's experience

# Trauma Response

- The person's response to the event involves at least one of the following:
  - Intense fear
  - Helplessness
  - Horror

## Bottom Line...

**An event is traumatic if it is extremely upsetting and at least temporarily overwhelms the individual's internal resources**

# TIC - ACEs

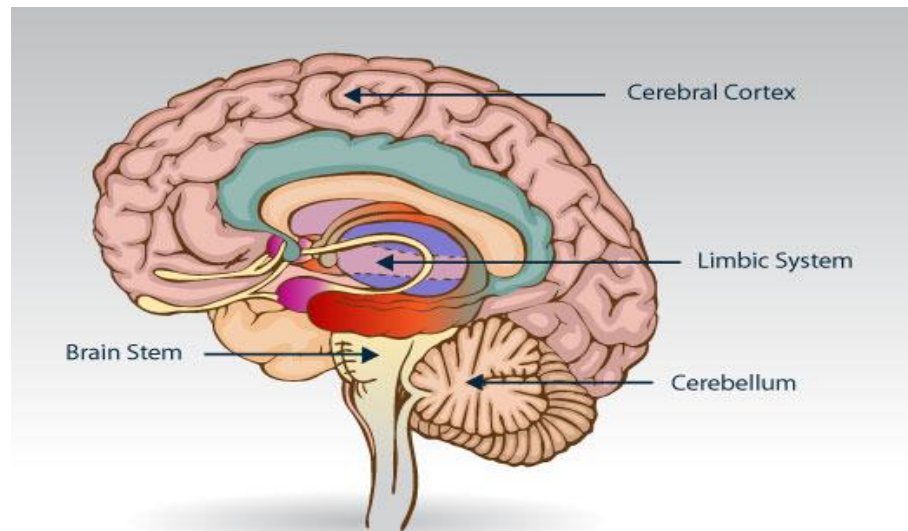
- Trauma-Informed Care
  - Approaches that enhance the effectiveness of services for all
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
  - [whatsmyacescore.com](http://whatsmyacescore.com)

# Trauma and the Brain

- The brain develops from the bottom up, and from the inside out
- Our brain is undeveloped when we are born, waiting for our experiences to shape how it develops
- Healthy development of the outer brain depends on the development of the lower parts of the brain

## 1. Brain Stem

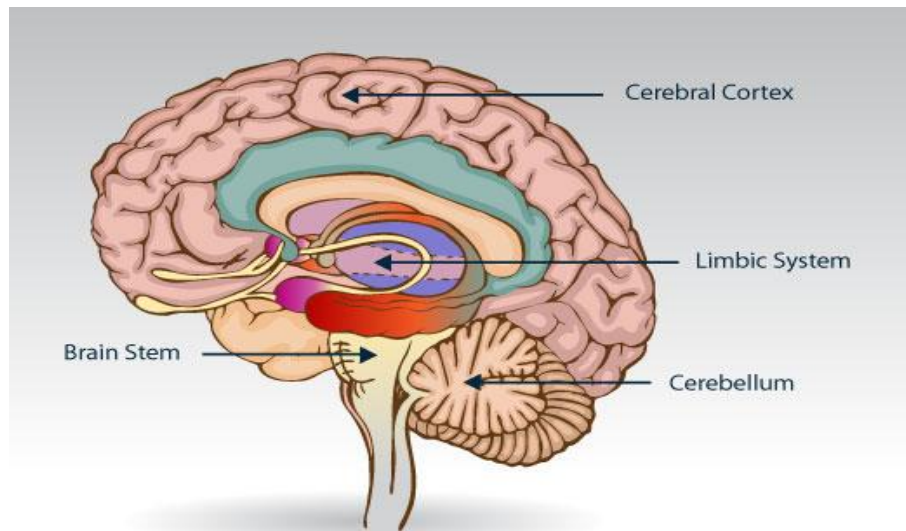
- Fully developed by 9 months
- Responsible for the sensory system





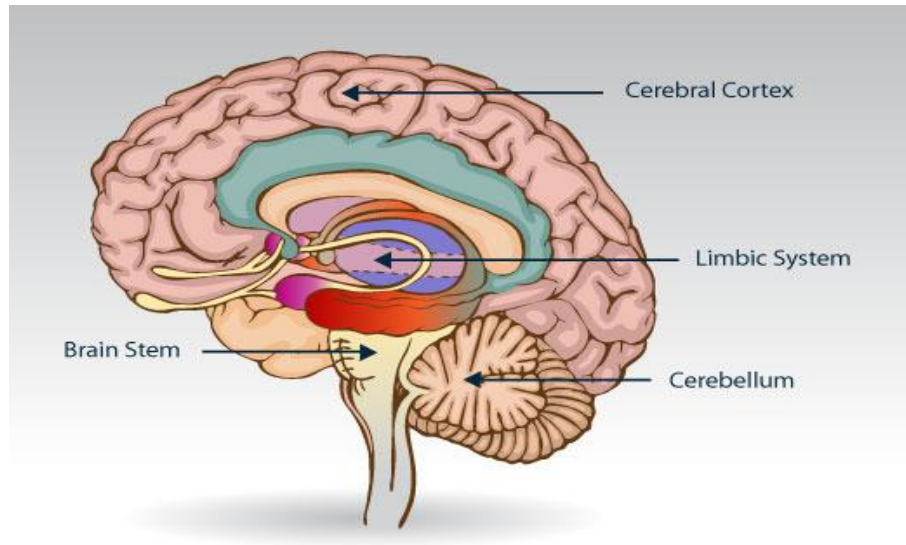
## 2. Cerebellum

- Fully developed by 4-6 years of age
- Helps with self-regulation



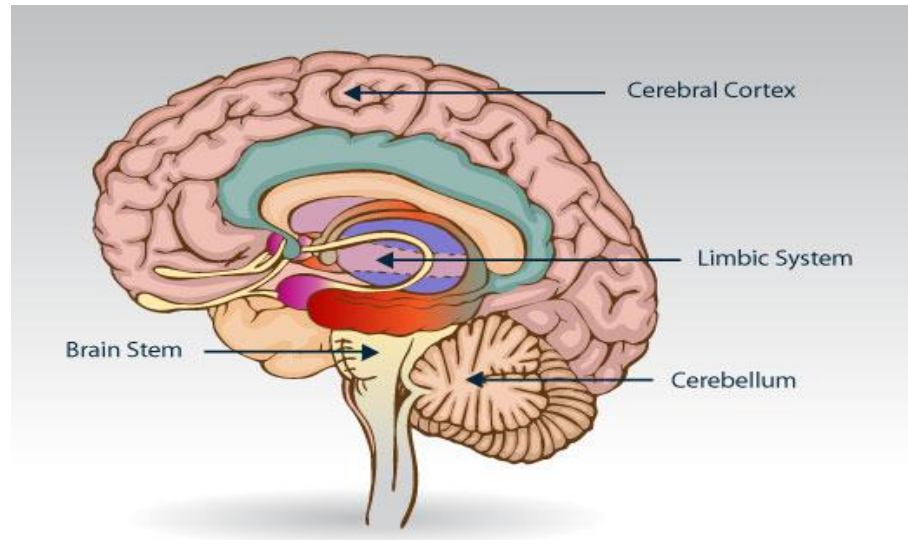
### 3. Limbic System

- Finishes development in the teenage years
- Responsible for helping us engage with the world around us and relate to others



#### 4. Cortex

- Not fully developed until 26 years of age
- Responsible for thinking, abstract thought, logic and reasoning



- As adults with fully developed cortexes, we tend to forget that reasoning is very difficult to access when there are strong emotions present
- “When we stress, we regress”

- Sometimes to meet the needs of our students, we have to meet them where they are developmentally, which may not be their chronological age

### Learning Brain vs Survival Brain

# Impact on Learning/Education

- One out of 4 youth has been exposed to a traumatic event.
- Trauma can impact school performance
- Traumatized youth may experience physical and emotional distress.

# TIC Strategies/Interventions

*“There is no more effective neurobiological intervention than a safe relationship.”*

□ *Bruce Perry, PhD, MD*

- RELATIONSHIP is **KEY**
- Helps to bring the brain back into regulation
- **Safe – Predictable – Consistent**

## Who said it...

“Our youth now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for their elders and love chatter in place of exercise; they no longer rise when elders enter the room; they contradict their parents, chatter before company, gobble up their food, and tyrannize their teachers.”

□ Socrates around 400 B.C.E.



# TIC Strategies/Interventions: Relationship

- Clarify your role
- Establish yourself as a safe person
- Build an classroom of respect
- Offer/Give opportunities to make choices
- Connect students to resources

***“Connect then correct”***

# TIC Strategies/Interventions: Relationship

- Seek first to understand before seeking to be understood
- Practice Active Listening
  - Use specifics: “You did a great job paying attention today and taking notes.” vs “Good job today.”
- 10 Positive : 1 Negative Interactions for traumatized youth
  - Active ignoring
  - Consistent expectations and plans based on rewards
  - Collaborative problem-solving with students



# ACTIVITY SETUP

# Listener: Part A Directions

Demonstrate poor listening skills as your colleague is talking to you:

- Limit your eye contact
- Multi-task (folders/cellphone/etc.)
- Interrupt
- Yawn/Act bored/disinterested

# Directions

Speaker, tell your partner/listener about an activity you recently did or something exciting that recently happened in your life.

# Listener: Part B Directions

Demonstrate active listening skills:

- Nod your head
- Good eye contact
- Paraphrase what you are hearing
  - Use their name/names in story
  - Name a feeling of the situation you were listening to

# Directions

Speaker, continue to tell your partner/listener about the activity you recently did or something exciting that recently happened in your life.

# TIC Strategies/Interventions: Safe Environment

- Approaches to create a safe classroom:
  - Clear expectations for behaviors
  - Structure during the class – Start with mindfulness
  - Establish a quiet/safe place in the room
  - Have sensory materials available for students
  - Have pleasant colors and/or pictures in class
  - Incorporate music



# TIC Strategies/Interventions: Teach Youth

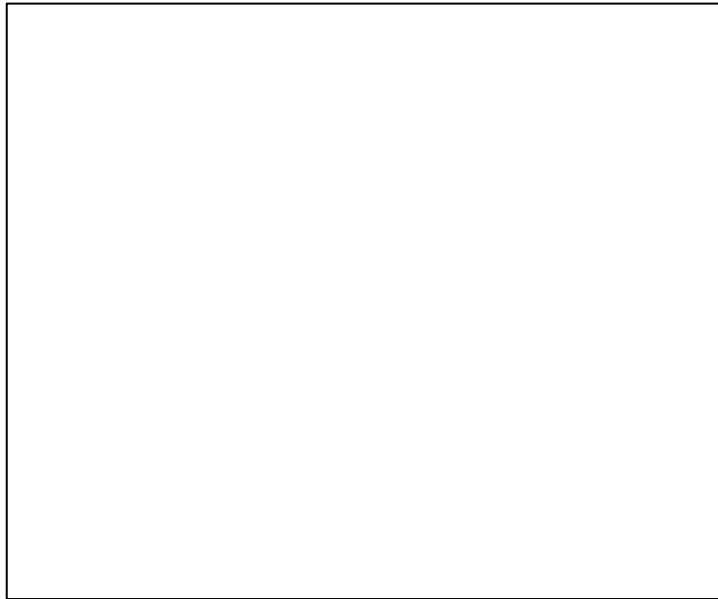
- Teach/Role Model Feeling Expression/Coping:
  - Identify/label emotions and feelings
  - Find coping strategies to decrease emotions
  - How to ask for help until someone responds
    - Role play accessing additional supports
    - “What would you tell your best friend to do?”
- [YouTube Clip - Rita Pierson: Teaching Tips \(Win-Win Conversation\)](#)

# TIC Strategies/Interventions: Self-Awareness

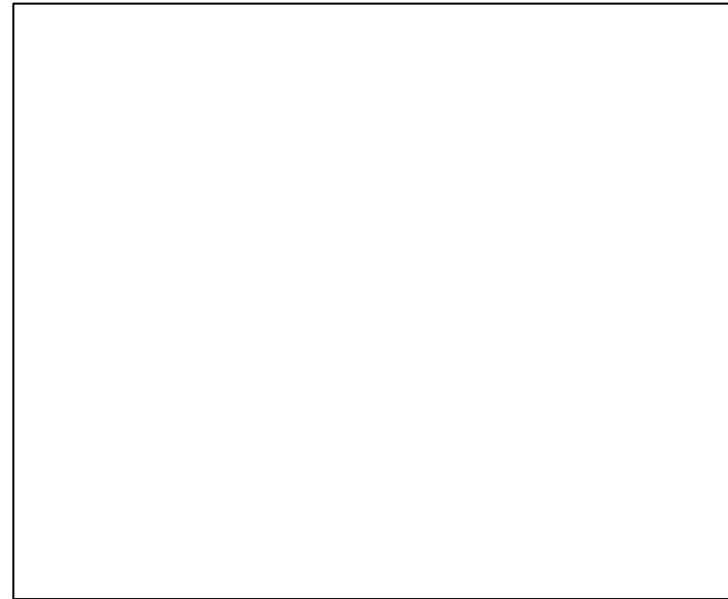
- “Cement Shoes”
  1. What do you love?
  2. Why did you choose this profession?
  3. Why do you continue to go to work every day?
  4. Whom do you seek out as a partner in your career/life?
  5. What is your inspiration behind teaching?
  6. Where do you lead others?
  7. What would you like to accomplish in your career/life?
  8. What do you believe about students?
  9. What are three core values that are important to you?
  10. What three words would you like others to use to describe you at your retirement dinner?
- Mission Statement

# TIC Strategies/Interventions: Self-Awareness Exercise

**Ideal Student  
Behaviors & Attributes**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for students to write down their observations of ideal student behaviors and attributes.

**Least Favorite Student  
Behaviors & Attributes**

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for students to write down their observations of least favorite student behaviors and attributes.

“If it’s predictable, it’s preventable”

# Resources/References

- ▣ *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* – K. Souers & Pete Hall
- ▣ *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body, in the Healing of Trauma* – Bessel Van der Kolk
- ▣ Ted Talks: How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime – Nadine Burke Harris
- ▣ Ted Talks: Every Kid Needs a Champion – Rita Pierson
- ▣ YouTube: Teaching Tips (Win:Win Conversations) – Rita Pierson

# Questions ?

