

## Introduction

Trauma is the reaction to a “sudden and unexpected occurrence that causes intense fear and may involve a threat of physical harm or actual physical harm.”<sup>1</sup> As trauma can have significant negative impacts on students’ academic, behavioral, and social outcomes, students coping with trauma require additional support and a trauma-informed learning environment.<sup>2</sup>

To support teachers and school staff in best supporting coping with trauma, the following research brief examines best practices for trauma-informed instruction, including classroom-based strategies for identifying, supporting, and instructing students coping with trauma.

## Recommendations

*Based on our analysis of the literature, Hanover recommends that teachers:*

- Use the list of common red flags of trauma on **page 2** of this brief to identify students in your class experiencing trauma, support them, and if needed refer them for additional support and services.
- Create a trauma-sensitive classroom using the strategies on **page 3** of this brief to provide a safe space for students experiencing trauma.
- Develop a trauma-sensitive de-escalation protocol for addressing students’ behavioral and emotional overreactions using tools such as the Acting Out Cycle (**page 8**) and De-Escalation Script (**page 9**).

## Key Findings

- **Teachers can identify students coping with trauma by looking for the behavioral and emotional, social, and academic symptoms that indicate a student may be experiencing trauma.** While all students react to trauma differently and “red flags” depend on the student’s age and the broader context, students dealing with trauma often display recognizable symptoms in the classroom, such as fighting, fleeing, or freezing; difficulty paying attention; and emotional or behavioral overreactions.
  - ➔ **Because red flags for trauma may appear similar to symptoms of a learning disability, emotional disability, or ADHD, teachers should refer students**

**for further evaluation when they notice that these red flags are severe or occur over an extended time.** A mental health professional can determine whether the student should be evaluated for special education services.

- **Supporting students experiencing trauma includes requires creating a safe, supportive, and trauma-sensitive classroom environment.** The physical classroom environment should create a welcoming and organized space that reduces environmental triggers and avoids overstimulation through warm colors and natural and dimmable lights. The classroom environment should also include a supportive psychological environment with clearly communicated expectations and consistency and predictability in classroom procedures, daily structures, and transitions.
- **Teachers can support students coping with trauma by establishing meaningful, positive teacher-student relationships, which helps students feel safe and supported to learn.** Developing positive connections with students experiencing trauma requires teachers to model and teach strong social-emotional skills (e.g., self-monitoring and self-regulation skills).
  - ➔ **As a part of creating strong relationships with students, teachers should develop strategies and skills to notice and de-escalate a student’s behavioral or emotional overreaction.** Sample strategies include calmly redirecting the student’s behavior, offering support and choice, and avoiding escalation responses (e.g., raising one’s voice, getting physically closer).
- **Instruction that supports the learning and academic development of students coping with trauma is predictable and sequential; offers repetition and encouragement; and includes concrete examples, physical manipulatives, and visual organizers.** Students experiencing trauma also benefit from differentiated instruction that meets their learning needs and from additional support to ensure grade-level academic development.

## Classroom-Based Strategies for Identifying Students Experiencing Trauma



**Because students coping with trauma often demonstrate symptoms in the classroom, teachers can help identify students experiencing trauma by looking out for red flags that**

**indicate a trauma reaction.**<sup>3</sup> These behaviors can negatively impact the learning experiences of both the student experiencing trauma and other students in the class, as well as “present significant challenges for the teachers tasked with supporting them.”<sup>4</sup> As a first response to a trigger or overstimulation, a student dealing with trauma often self-protects through fighting, fleeing, or freezing. Specifically, these tendencies include:<sup>5</sup>

Fighting Back	Fleeing	Freezing
Either physical violence or refusing assistance, dismissing feedback, or breaking classroom rules.	Students may be distracted by traumatic flashbacks or fear, and consequently may be off task or exhibit haphazard thinking.	Students appear zoned out or fall asleep in class.

It is important to keep in mind that all students react to trauma differently, so some students may demonstrate these behaviors, while others “may experience severe distress yet demonstrate no overt changes in behavior or disruption to the classroom.”<sup>6</sup> Similarly, some students may have the resiliency and support structures to adapt to adverse experiences without indication.<sup>7</sup>

**Students dealing with trauma may display certain behavioral and emotional, social, and academic characteristics in the classroom.**<sup>8</sup> In the classroom, teachers can look for the following common learning and cognition, behavioral, and social reactions that indicate a student may be experiencing trauma:

<b>Learning and Cognition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Difficulty processing instructions</li> <li>▪ Decreased attention, memory, and focus</li> <li>▪ Reduced executive functioning</li> <li>▪ Difficulty solving problems</li> <li>▪ Difficulty understanding consequences of actions</li> <li>▪ De-emphasis on skills/tasks that are not directly relevant to survival</li> </ul>
<b>Behavior</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Heightened vigilance; inaccurate perception of danger</li> <li>▪ Rapid response to perceived threats (e.g., may jump or raise fists from pat on the back)</li> <li>▪ Self-protective behaviors (i.e., aggression or withdrawal)</li> </ul>
<b>Socialization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social withdrawal, difficulty making friends, untrusting, involvement in bullying</li> <li>▪ Easily frustrated, quick to give up, unwilling to try new things, difficulty setting and working toward goals</li> <li>▪ Inconsistent moods, easily overwhelmed or upset, hopelessness, confusion, rigidity, perfectionism</li> </ul>

Source: National Education Association<sup>9</sup>

However, red flags that a student is experiencing trauma can differ depending on a student’s age. Teachers can consider the following warning signs depending on a students’ age:

**For young students, teachers should pay attention if a student:**

- Has difficulty paying attention
- Becomes upset and withdrawn
- Is tearful, sad, or talks about scary feelings and ideas
- Fights with peers or adults
- Shows changes in school performance, wants to be left alone, eats more or less than usual, or gets in trouble

**For teenagers, teachers should pay attention if a student:**

- Constantly talks about a traumatic event or denies that it happened
- Talks back, engages in risky behavior, or refuses to follow rules
- Has different sleep patterns or frequent nightmares
- Becomes increasingly aggressive, isolates themselves, or gets into trouble with the law

Source: Education Update<sup>10</sup>

**These red flags for trauma may appear similar to a learning disability, emotional disability, or ADHD.**<sup>11</sup> Teachers should refer students to further evaluation by a school mental health professional when they notice that these red flags are severe (e.g., intense fear or hopelessness) or occur over an extended time (e.g., over one month).<sup>12</sup> A mental health professional can determine whether the student should be evaluated for special education services. Additionally, teachers’ efforts to identify students in the classroom should be part of a larger, tiered school-wide identification strategy.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, teachers and school-based mental health professionals can use or adapt the Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire (Figure A.1 in the Appendix) to help identify students who have experienced trauma.<sup>14</sup>

## Classroom-Based Strategies for Supporting Students Experiencing Trauma



Supporting students who are experiencing trauma requires taking a trauma-informed approach to teaching, classroom management, and student relationships. According to guidance from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a trauma-informed approach may be integrated into any framework and should:<sup>15</sup>

- Realize the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths for recovery;
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and
- Respond by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seek to actively resist re-traumatization.

A trauma-informed approach to teaching includes care, compassion, and acceptance for students regardless of their successes, failures, or situation.<sup>16</sup> Teachers can use the following strategies to increase sensitivity and support students experiencing trauma in individual classrooms.

GOAL	STRATEGIES
<b>Establish social and emotional safety in your classroom</b>	
Social and emotional safety is the cornerstone of positive classroom outcomes. Students experiencing trauma, including bias, bullying, and social isolation, are more likely to feel unsafe.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enforce classroom contracts</li> <li>▪ Participate in anti-bullying or community-building curricula</li> <li>▪ Conduct timely interventions in conflicts and hurtful exchanges</li> <li>▪ Teach and model empathy and active listening skills</li> </ul>
<b>Create a behavior management plan that focuses on positive reinforcement</b>	
Discipline and behavior management are central to classroom culture and often present challenges for students dealing with traumatic events or experiences. Foster compassion and praise students for appropriate classroom behavior, focusing less on punishment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement student-generated agreements and contracts</li> <li>▪ Adopt “zero indifference” (not zero-tolerance) policies</li> <li>▪ Seek out training in restorative justice techniques</li> <li>▪ Explore stress-management strategies to diffuse tense situations and help students process feelings in the moment</li> <li>▪ Give students opportunities to demonstrate their strengths</li> </ul>
<b>Increase your self-awareness and trauma competency</b>	
Students respond to trauma in different ways, and their responses may be influenced by cultural traditions, religious beliefs, or familial relationships. Educators may connect with students and their families to identify resources and services that can inform how to best support them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek professional development on working with specific identity groups</li> <li>▪ Share support resources with other educators</li> <li>▪ Connect with community organizations</li> <li>▪ Engage in ongoing self-assessment and reflection on your trauma responsiveness</li> </ul>

Source: Teaching Tolerance<sup>17</sup>

## Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom Environment



Teachers can support students experiencing trauma by creating a safe, supportive, and trauma-sensitive classroom environment.<sup>18</sup> A trauma-sensitive classroom environment is predictable and minimizes reminders and triggers of student trauma.<sup>19</sup> Indeed,

*While safety encompasses ensuring the physical wellbeing of students, it also extends to ensuring that psychological safety is bolstered through creating a predictable classroom environment where every member feels respected, validated, and heard.<sup>20</sup>*

The physical classroom environment should be organized, not overstimulating, and create a welcoming space that reduces environmental triggers.<sup>21</sup> Teachers should consider the physical features of the classroom when creating a trauma-sensitive classroom environment, such as the lighting, furniture, and materials:<sup>22</sup>



In addition to the physical classroom environment, a trauma-sensitive classroom includes a supportive psychological classroom environment and culture.<sup>23</sup> Characteristics and actions that promote psychological safety within a trauma-sensitive classroom environment include:<sup>24</sup>

- Clear expectations for behavior;
- A defined process for addressing behavioral concerns that students understand; and
- Mechanisms for helping students communicate about experiences that undermine feelings of safety.

Specifically, at the beginning of the school year, teachers should discuss with students how they can express feelings of anger, frustration, or sadness in a safe and respectful manner and communicate expectations that students will not bully one another.<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore, teachers can establish a safe space for students experiencing trauma to calm themselves both within the classroom and elsewhere in the school building.<sup>26</sup> Safe spaces “provide opportunities for students to self-regulate when experiencing behavioral and emotional challenges.”<sup>27</sup> These spaces should have a relaxing, sensory-friendly environment and include comfortable furniture (e.g., beanbags, rocking chairs), music, sensory toolkits, and books.<sup>28</sup>

## Promoting Consistency and Predictability

Students who have experienced trauma benefit from consistency in the classroom environment, classroom procedures, and instruction, as they can be triggered by sudden changes in routine, a lack of structure, or unclear boundaries.<sup>29</sup>

Teachers should work to implement consistency in their classrooms by implementing similar daily structures, reliable warmth, clear and consistent expectations, and predictability.<sup>30</sup> Providing students with some choices can help students develop a sense of self-control over their environment, which may be impacted by trauma.<sup>31</sup> Additionally, teachers can implement the following strategies for integrating predictability and consistency into the classroom:<sup>32</sup>

- Discuss, rehearse, and frequently revisit rules, expectations, and rewards;
- Discuss the rationale for rules, expectations, and rewards;
- Avoid threats, intimidation, and battles for control;
- Reinforce that schools are a nonviolent and safe place for children, both physically and emotionally; and
- Integrate safety and conflict resolution skills throughout the curriculum.

Students also benefit from knowing ahead of time what is going on and what is expected of them.<sup>33</sup> Accordingly, “implementing even small classroom systems can greatly alleviate emotional stressors and prevent behavioral incidents.”<sup>34</sup> One strategy includes clearly posting or presenting students with visual icons to represent the major events and activities of the day, so that students can anticipate their routine and know what to expect.<sup>35</sup> For older students, sharing a clear agenda for the day increases predictability and decreases student stress.<sup>36</sup>

Often, transitions between activities and beginning new assignments can create stress and uncertainty for students who have experienced trauma. By implementing consistent practices for these occasions, students experience less stress and fewer negative reactions.<sup>37</sup>

For example, leading up to transitions, provide students with a warning, such as:<sup>38</sup>

- “Five minutes until we go to lunch,”
- “Three minutes until we go to lunch,”
- “One minute until we go to lunch.”



## Building Relationships and

## De-Escalating Overreactions



Students who have experienced trauma benefit from positive, connected relationships with teachers that make them

feel safe and supported to learn.<sup>39</sup> Nurturing positive connections with students who have experienced trauma requires deliberate action from teachers, using strategies such as:<sup>40</sup>

- Making eye contact using soft eyes when speaking with students or making a request;
- Encouraging healthy positive touch into the classroom routine, such as handshakes, high fives, and fist bumps; and
- Taking an interest in students’ lives:
  - Ask questions.
  - Listen.
  - Incorporate a journaling activity in class. Read and respond to entries.
  - Recognize emotional states; e.g., when a student looks like they are upset or angry.
  - Have a check-in question at the beginning of each class; e.g., “On a scale of 1 to 10, my stress level is a \_\_\_.”

Intentionally forming positive relationships with students who have experienced trauma requires teachers to model and teach strong social-emotional skills, especially self-monitoring and self-regulation skills.<sup>41</sup>

Students who have experienced trauma also benefit from positive relationships with other students, and may struggle with social situations. Teachers can facilitate students’ relationships with their peers through the following strategies, which “can help to honor children who may be afraid to trust or who are overwhelmed by feelings of closeness, while allowing them opportunities to practice connecting with others and space for respect and interdependence to emerge.”<sup>42</sup>

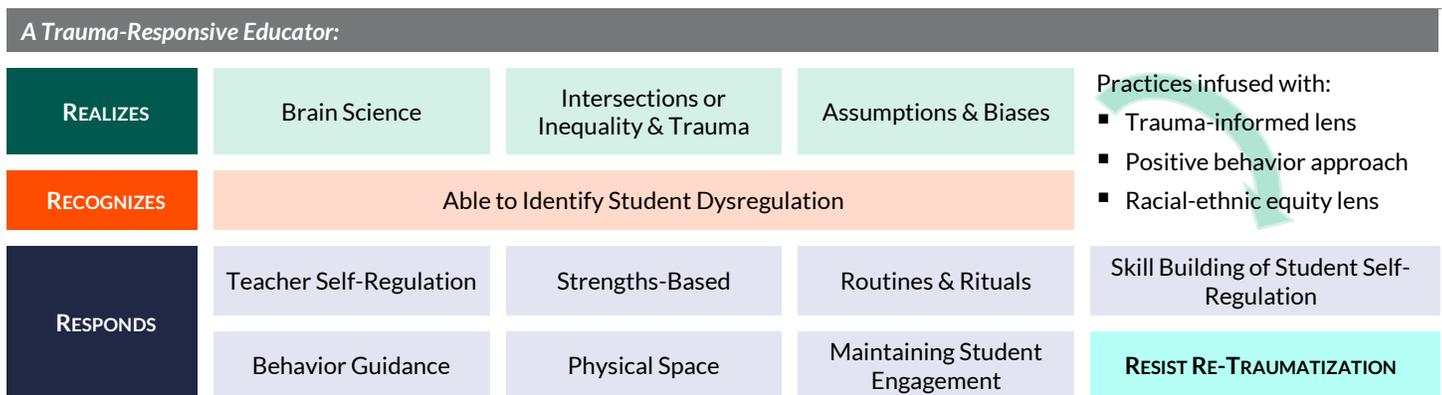
- ➔ Offering structured opportunities for both group and individual play;
- ➔ Creating quiet spaces for children to “take a break” throughout the day;
- ➔ Modeling and role-playing strategies for joining in play and resolving conflicts; and
- ➔ Recognizing and naming moments of positive social interaction.

## Preventing and De-Escalating Overreactions

Students who are coping with trauma may be overwhelmed or triggered, resulting in an emotional or behavioral overreaction.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, “Because students coping with traumatic stressors have a narrow window of frustration tolerance, a mildly frustrating classroom experience or interaction that could be managed by the average student is overwhelming to the traumatized student, and results in a disproportionate emotional overreaction.”<sup>44</sup> However, teachers can establish strategies for objectively preventing and de-escalating student overreactions that do not disrupt the learning environment.<sup>45</sup>

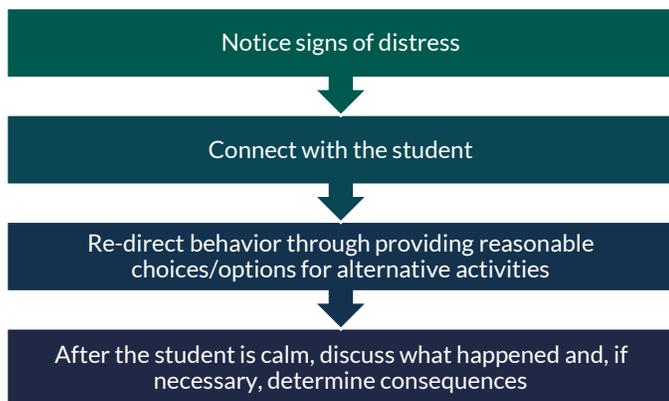
De-escalation benefits students experiencing trauma by refocusing students on learning, building relationships between teachers and students, and potentially developing students' social-emotional behaviors for self-monitoring future incidents.<sup>46</sup> The figure below illustrates the path of a

trauma-responsive educator as they address student behavior and work to avoid re-traumatization. Notably, this process aligns with the guidance from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration at the beginning of this section.



Source: Trauma-Responsive Educational Practices Project<sup>47</sup>

To assist students in a triggered state who need to calm down, teachers can follow the process below, which starts when the teacher notices the student is indicating distress.



Source: School Health Centers and El Cerrito High School<sup>48</sup>

Teachers should avoid escalation responses (e.g., raising one's voice, getting physically close to the student) and instead "redirect children's behavior in calm, respectful, and sometimes playful ways."<sup>49</sup> When faced with an overreaction situation, teachers should calmly communicate with the student in a way that reinforces their relationship and reduces the behavior.<sup>50</sup> Often, a student overreaction follows a cycle, which teachers can anticipate and react to appropriately. Figure A.2 in the Appendix presents the phases of the "Acting Out Cycle," including common student behaviors and appropriate teacher responses. Teachers can also use the de-escalation script (Figure A.3) in the Appendix.

Teachers must also carefully consider their language choices, including both what they say and how they say it, before, during, and following the overreaction.<sup>51</sup> The following strategies include "do's and don'ts" for de-escalating student overreactions.

- ✓ **Do use short and simple language.** Traumatized students have difficulty processing complex instructions when in an aroused state; therefore, keep your instructions clear and concise. Repetition can also be useful. Remaining calm will also help ensure instructions are given clearly without sounding threatening.
- ✓ **Do ask questions.** It is important to attempt to identify why a student is acting out and what can be done to calm them; ask questions to try and identify what needs the student is trying to meet as well as what they are feeling. Traumatized students may have trouble identifying or expressing their feelings and emotions, so using prompts is helpful.
- ✓ **Do set limits and reiterate rules.** While directives or ultimatums, like "you better sit down or else you're going to the office," are to be avoided, set some limits in order to move the conversation forward and inform students what is required of them. For example, "We can talk, but only if you stop swearing."
- ✓ **Do offer choices.** Directives and ultimatums do not make students feel heard and may be belittling. Instead, affirm students' autonomy by allowing them to choose from multiple acceptable options. Feeling respected will often improve a student's mood and feelings of belonging.
- ✓ **Do get on the same page.** Recapping throughout the conversation shows the student that you are listening carefully and want to make sure you are both hearing each other. You can follow up a recap by asking the student if they agree with your interpretation.
- ✓ **Do be fair.** An intervention should be balanced to the student's outbursts, and consequences should be matched with the student's behavior.
- ✗ **Don't be provocative.** Keep a calm and level voice even when being disrespected, and never humiliate or challenge a student that appears agitated. Raising your voice or becoming aggressive teaches students that this type of behavior is acceptable, and screaming matches teach that they have control because they can affect your behavior.
- ✗ **Don't argue.** Rather than being combative or defensive, you should either agree or agree to disagree. This tactic

not only shows students that they are being listened to but is empowering as the student feels they are being understood and that they are being engaged with as an equal.

Source: *Trauma-Responsive Educational Practices Project*<sup>52</sup>

While teachers need the knowledge, skills, and tools to de-escalate emotional and behavioral overreactions, they should also be prepared to anticipate student overreactions and implement preventative interventions. Strategies include teacher empathy and proximity, paying close attention to the classroom environment, knowing students' triggers and working to reduce them, and teaching relaxation techniques.<sup>53</sup>

For example, teachers can hang a poster of five to seven activities that students can choose from to cool down. Suggested activities include:<sup>54</sup>



- Counting backwards;
- Deep breathing;
- Getting water;
- Removing yourself from situation; and
- Journaling or drawing.

Furthermore, teachers can consider the questions below for both students and themselves to better empathize and reflect on their relationships with students and de-escalation practices. For the student questions, teachers can ask students these questions either individually or collectively to demonstrate empathy and improve connections with students.<sup>55</sup>

#### Questions for Students

- What are some emotions you feel today?
- What is something you can do to calm your emotions?
- Are you hurting today? If so, what is hurting?
- Is there something you would like your teacher or someone else to know today?
- Is there something you need from your teacher today?

#### Questions for Teachers

- How am I feeling today? What can I do to regulate myself, so I can be prepared to teach my students?
- Have I set clear expectations for my classroom?
- What is the emotional tone of my classroom?
- Have I greeted all my students by name today?
- Have I had at least one positive interaction with each student today?
- Is there a student who needs extra attention or support today?

Source: *Oklahoma State Department of Education*<sup>56</sup>

## Instructional Strategies



Teachers can implement instructional practices that support the learning and academic development of students experiencing trauma, as traumatic experiences can make the skills necessary for learning (e.g., engagement, attention, memory, organization) difficult.<sup>57</sup> Thus, in addition to creating a trauma-sensitive environment, building relationships, and anticipating and de-escalating behavioral incidents, teachers can implement instructional practices to support the learning and academic development of students experiencing trauma. Teachers should provide students who have experienced trauma additional support when needed and differentiated instruction to ensure that they maintain academic development with their grade level.<sup>58</sup>

As with the classroom environment, students who have experienced trauma benefit from instruction and lessons that are predictable.<sup>59</sup> Teachers can break lessons up into multiple parts so they are less overwhelming and warn students of any changes or transitions.<sup>60</sup> The following classroom strategies can support the academic development of students who have experienced trauma:<sup>61</sup>

- ➔ Emphasize causal and sequential relationships in classroom activities;
- ➔ Divide tasks and instruction into parts to help students feel less overwhelmed;
- ➔ Present information in multiple ways to reduce the likelihood of students missing important pieces of information;
- ➔ Provide concrete examples and use visual cues, physical movement, and recall activities during instruction to help students stay focused and engaged;
- ➔ Utilize graphic organizers and physical manipulatives in academic lessons to help students organize new information;
- ➔ Create opportunities for students to repeat and rehearse instructions; and
- ➔ Offer ongoing support and encouragement to support students in staying on task.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

- Teachers can implement the "Classroom Strategies and Techniques" section of the [Trauma Sensitive Schools Checklist](#) to facilitate a safe and supportive classroom environment for students coping with trauma.
- [Learn strategies for teacher self-care when supporting students coping with trauma](#)
- The [Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools Handout Packet](#) includes a variety of resources on implementing trauma-informed care, including handouts on staff self-care, mapping triggers, and social-emotional competencies.

## Appendix

**Figure A.1: Adverse Childhood Experience (ACE) Questionnaire**

While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:		
Yes	No	1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often . . . Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? Or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
Yes	No	2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often . . . Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? Or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
Yes	No	3. Did an adult or person at least five years older than you ever . . . Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? Or Try to or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal sex with you?
Yes	No	4. Did you often feel that . . . No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? Or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
Yes	No	5. Did you often feel that . . . You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? Or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
Yes	No	6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
Yes	No	7. Was your mother or stepmother . . . Often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? Or Sometimes or often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? Or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
Yes	No	8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?
Yes	No	9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?
Yes	No	10. Did a household member go to prison?
Add your Yes answers. This is your ACE score:		

Source: Phi Delta Kappan<sup>62</sup>

Figure A.2: Phases Of The Acting Out Cycle

PHASE	STUDENT BEHAVIORS	TEACHER RESPONSES
CALM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ideal classroom behavior</li> <li>▪ Engaged in instruction</li> <li>▪ Adhering to classroom social and behavioral expectations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide positive attention</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Work on developing relationships with children</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide safe, calm environment</li> </ul>
TRIGGER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Classroom stimulus (interpersonal conflict, cognitive frustration, social pressure) provokes a trauma response</li> <li>▪ Triggers can be social, cognitive, emotional or physiological</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin to recognize what triggers are and help to prevent them,</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Change the setting, social interactions</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Offer positive attention</li> </ul>
AGITATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Off-task behaviors</li> <li>▪ Difficulty with concentration</li> <li>▪ Physical signs of agitation such as tapping, rocking, “spacing out”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Redirect child</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Change the way the child is working on the activity—offer choices</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide assistance</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Offer calming techniques</li> </ul>
ACCELERATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student seeks teacher’s attention in negative ways</li> <li>▪ Inconsistent compliance with redirection</li> <li>▪ Attempts to provoke teacher and other students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Calmly redirect to appropriate behavior</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledge feelings</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Make high-probability requests</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Give positive attention</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Do not engage in argument, use sarcasm, or offer negative remarks</li> </ul>
PEAK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student escalates to out of control behavior</li> <li>▪ Displays of physical and/ or verbal aggression toward others</li> <li>▪ Can be potentially dangerous for others in the classroom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Maintain safety</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Stay calm</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Help child to regain control in respectful, caring way</li> </ul>
DE-ESCALATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student becomes disoriented or confused</li> <li>▪ Withdraws emotionally</li> <li>▪ Becomes more receptive to teacher redirection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Move child to Quiet Corner</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide calm independent activity</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Check on rest of class to restore order</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Request support from other adults and administrators when needed</li> </ul>
RECOVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Student calms down</li> <li>▪ May avoid talking about the incident</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Debriefing of incident is critical</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Discuss what triggered incident and make plan for prevention in future</li> </ul>

Source: Trauma-Responsive Educational Practices Project<sup>63</sup>

**Figure A.3: Satori Alternative to Managing Aggression De-Escalation Script**

I see you are (describe behavior).	Identify the behavior that signals to you the student is emotionally escalated.
Are you feeling (emotion)?	Inquire if you interpret the observed behavior correctly.
I can see that you are (emotion).	Affirm what the student says.
What are you (emotion) about?	Inquire why the student is feeling that way.
So, you're (emotion) about _____. Is that right?	Restate what you heard to verify your understanding and demonstrate that you're listening.
What do you want?	Assist the student in identifying what options are reasonably available.
What have you tried? What did you do?	Guide the student through a process of self-reflection.
How well has that worked?	Help the student assess their progress in dealing with the situation.
What else are you willing to try? Would you like to hear my ideas? You could try_____ or _____.	Provide alternatives if the student is struggling with identifying other ways to deal—the student chooses the next step.
Will you let me know how it goes?	Follow up with the student within an appropriate amount of time, this will help build trust.

Source: Trauma-Responsive Educational Practices Project<sup>64</sup>

## Project Evaluation Form

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> "The Effects of Trauma on Schools and Learning." The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. <http://www.nctsn.org/resources/audiences/school-personnel/effects-of-trauma>

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