Trauma-Informed Practices and Social-Emotional Learning

Necessary in the Face of the COVID-19 Pandemic

An emotionally regulated young person is a young person who’s ready to learn.

Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Is an Integral Part of Creating a Trauma-Informed Learning Environment

As a part of a trauma-informed learning environment, SEL can:

- Support self-regulation, coping skills, and other protective factors critical to mitigating the negative impacts of trauma
- Promote resiliency
- Improve positive social behaviors and academic performance
- Reduce emotional distress and risky behaviors
- Produce a lasting and positive effect

Trauma Is Common, but We Must Be Proactive in Addressing It, Especially Now

Most people have experienced at least one type of traumatic event as a young person. In times of disaster, sources of trauma—such as abuse, violence, and other adversity—may increase. There is reason to believe abuse is on the rise since the pandemic began. And while schools and school systems expand their use of online technologies, there also may be greater exposure to internet safety risks, such as cyberbullying and online sexual exploitation.

Failure to Proactively Address Trauma Will Hinder Young People’s Ability to Learn

- The effects of trauma and adverse experiences can lead to challenges in self-regulation, problem-solving, and communicating socially and emotionally, as well as other risky or challenging behaviors
- Trauma can hinder young people’s academic success
Policy Recommendations During the COVID-19 Pandemic

- Increase access to trauma-informed supports that promote resilience and help mitigate the negative impacts of trauma.
- Make SEL universally accessible to young people in their learning environments.
- Prioritize and coordinate universal SEL as part of a comprehensive approach to supporting students’ learning in the wake of the pandemic.
- Increase funding available for universal SEL across all learning settings, whether in school, after school, or during remote learning.

References


