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# CREATING A TRAUMA INFORMED CLASSROOM

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## Your Participation

Open and close your control panel

Join audio:

- Choose "Mic & Speakers" to use VoIP
- Choose "Telephone" and dial using the information provided

Submit questions and comments via the Questions panel

**Note:** Today's presentation is being recorded and will be provided within 48 hours.

## Molly Kiebel, Presenter

- Former Language Arts teacher
- Married with two active daughters
- Loves travel and exploring the outdoors with family and friends
- Taught for 15 years in both Minnesota and California
- **Current Role:** Curriculum & Instruction Specialist



## Susanne Leslie, Moderator

- Proud mother of a recent UW Badger graduate and a U of M Golden Gopher senior
- Loves anything and everything outdoors – during all four Minnesota seasons
- Former parent educator
- Has been with Learners Edge for ten years
- **Current Role:** Lead Curriculum & Instruction Specialist at Learners Edge



**“Everybody thinks you should be happy just because you're young. They don't see the wars that we fight every single day. And one day, my war will end. And I won't die. And I will not tolerate abuse from anyone. I am strong.”**

**-Freedom Writers, 2007**

# Goals Today

- What is trauma?
- How does trauma impact students?
- How can we create a trauma-sensitive classroom?
- How can we support ourselves as we care for students impacted by trauma?

# What is Trauma?

An exceptional experience in which powerful and dangerous events overwhelm a person's capacity to cope

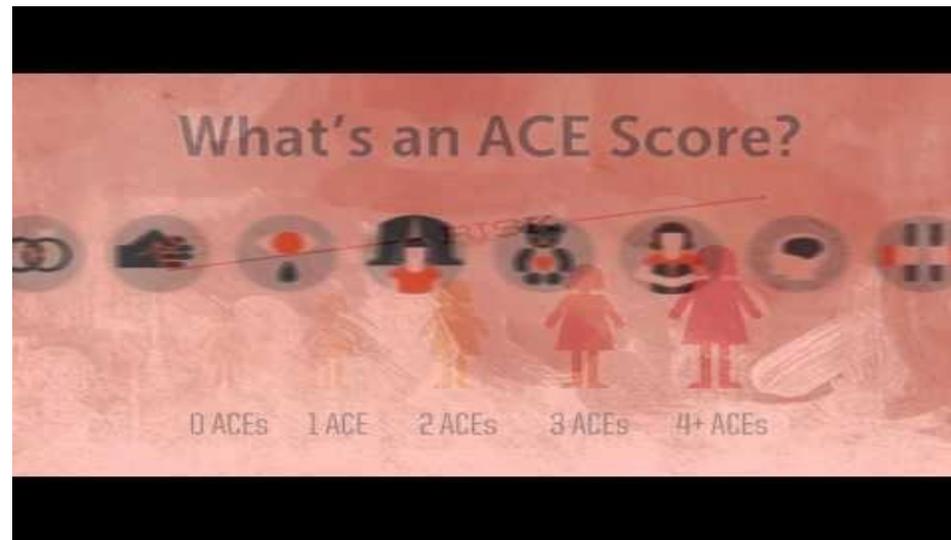
(Rice and Groves, 2005)

A sudden or unexpected experience that creates a lasting substantial, psychological impact

(Malchiodi, 2008)



# ACEs Study: Adverse Childhood Experiences!



<https://vimeo.com/139998006>

# ACEs in School

ACEs have short and long-term impact on physical and mental health

- Substance abuse in the home
- Parental separation or divorce
- Mental illness in the home
- Witnessing domestic violence
- Suicidal family member
- Death of a loved one
- Parental incarceration
- Experience of abuse
- Natural disasters, criminal behavior in the home, homelessness, and bullying





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# Incidence of Childhood Trauma?



- Approximately 50% of U.S. children, nearly 35 million, have experienced at least one type of childhood trauma
- 1/3 of youths ages 13-17 have experienced more than one type of trauma

National Survey of Children's Health, 2013

# Impact of Trauma on Teaching and Learning

Trauma impacts reasoning, planning, and emotional control

*Survival Mode: What Trauma Can Look Like in the Classroom\**

FIGHT	FLIGHT	FREEZE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acting silly</li> <li>▪ Hyperactivity</li> <li>▪ Defiance</li> <li>▪ Aggression</li> <li>▪ Yelling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Withdrawing</li> <li>▪ Fleeing</li> <li>▪ Seeming to sleep</li> <li>▪ Wandering or hiding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Refusing to answer</li> <li>▪ Blank looks</li> <li>▪ Appearing numb</li> <li>▪ Feeling unable to move or act</li> </ul>

*\*from Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom, 2016*

# How to Support Students

*Implement classroom-wide strategies to assist the needs of all learners*

## **Strategies:**

- Empower students to self-regulate
- Create a safe learning environment
- Provide flexibility and choice
- Foster stable relationships
- Practice self-care



# Encourage Self-Regulation in the Classroom!

*Help students understand the impact of stress  
and promote self-management*

## **Strategies:**

- Teach common language
- Fidgets
- Movement and breathing exercises
- Quiet spaces
- Creativity breaks



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmgCIJ74Oxw>

# Create Safe Learning Environments

*Move students from survival mode to learning mode through the creation of safe and predictable classrooms*

## Strategies:

- Establish clear expectations
- Create a sense of belonging
- Build predictable routines



# Provide Choice and Flexibility

*Help students overcome lagging skills by providing choice and flexibility*

## Strategies:

- Seating: where and *how*
- Work and Assessments: choice boards, question completion, format, partners
- Rules: focus on the objectives



# Foster Stable Relationships

*Encourage emotional bonds and social skills through positive interactions and community-building*

## Strategies:

- Share personal interests
- Celebrate success
- Model and role-play social skills
- Focus on strengths



# Teacher Self-Care

*Take care of yourself so you can take care of others*

*Secondary Trauma/Compassion Fatigue: A normal reaction to abnormal circumstances*

## **Self-care:**

- Health
- Self-compassion
- Gratitude
- Mindset



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## Strength and Health

- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Calming  
Techniques

## Self-Compassion and Gratitude

- Quiet the inner critic
- Focus on your mission
- Practice compassionate acts
- Express gratitude

## Mindset

- Do not take student misbehavior personally
- Convey calm through words and action
- Recognize and heal personal triggers



# QUESTIONS?

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# Sources & Resources

Souers, K., & Hall, P. (2016). *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom*. ASCD.

*Text also serves as the foundational text for our new course launching **March 16, 2017:***  
**Trauma-Sensitive Teaching: Helping Students Overcome Adverse Experiences**

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Dan Siegel. [www.drdansiegel.com](http://www.drdansiegel.com), 2017.

James Redford (Director). 2016. *Paper Tigers* [Motion picture]. United States: KPJR Films.

Mark Sander. EdTalks: Mark Sander: [Trauma-Informed Classrooms](https://www.achievetemps.org/edtalks), 2017. <https://www.achievetemps.org/edtalks>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network. [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)

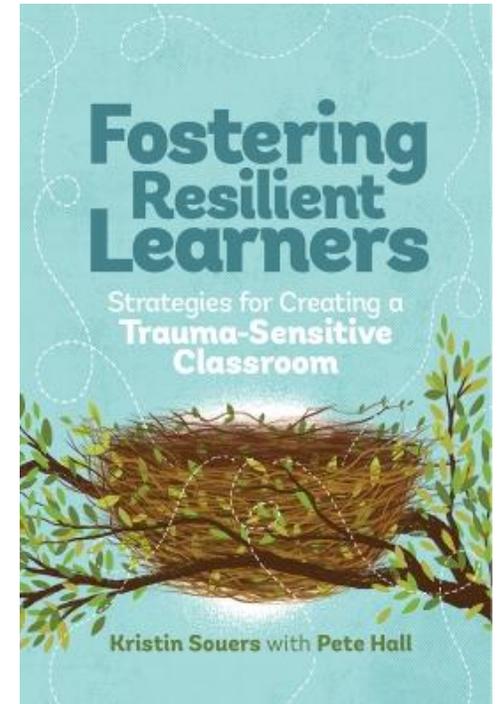
Richard LaGravenese (Director). 2007. *Freedom Writers* [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount.

Ross Green. [www.livesinthebalance.org](http://www.livesinthebalance.org), 2017.

## Teacher Resources

[www.Mindfulteachers.org](http://www.Mindfulteachers.org)

<https://www.livingwell.org.au/mindfulness-exercises-3/>



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**THANK  
YOU FOR  
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