

# **School Counselors as Leaders in Trauma-informed Movement**

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# Purpose of proposal presentation

- Introduce Jan and Jen and our shared story
- Understand implications of Adverse Childhood Experiences study
- Build hope through neuroscience of resilience
- Propose school counselors as most salient leader in bringing a trauma-informed approach to the school
- Review of research
- Practical Tips
- Case conceptualization

## Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

- Traumatic experiences that occur between three ages of 0-18
- Explored: Abuse, neglect, and family dysfunction
- Findings:
  - High correlation between cumulative childhood stress and poor health outcomes across the lifespan, including highest causes of early death.
  - Graded-dose relationship: the greater the exposure the greater the risk of health issues (social emotional, behavioral challenges)

# Trauma-informed Practices

Increases adults skills and capacity for handling student behavior

1. Realizes impact of trauma and hope of resilience
  2. Recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma
  3. Responds using trauma-informed policies, procedures, and practices
  4. Resists re-traumatization
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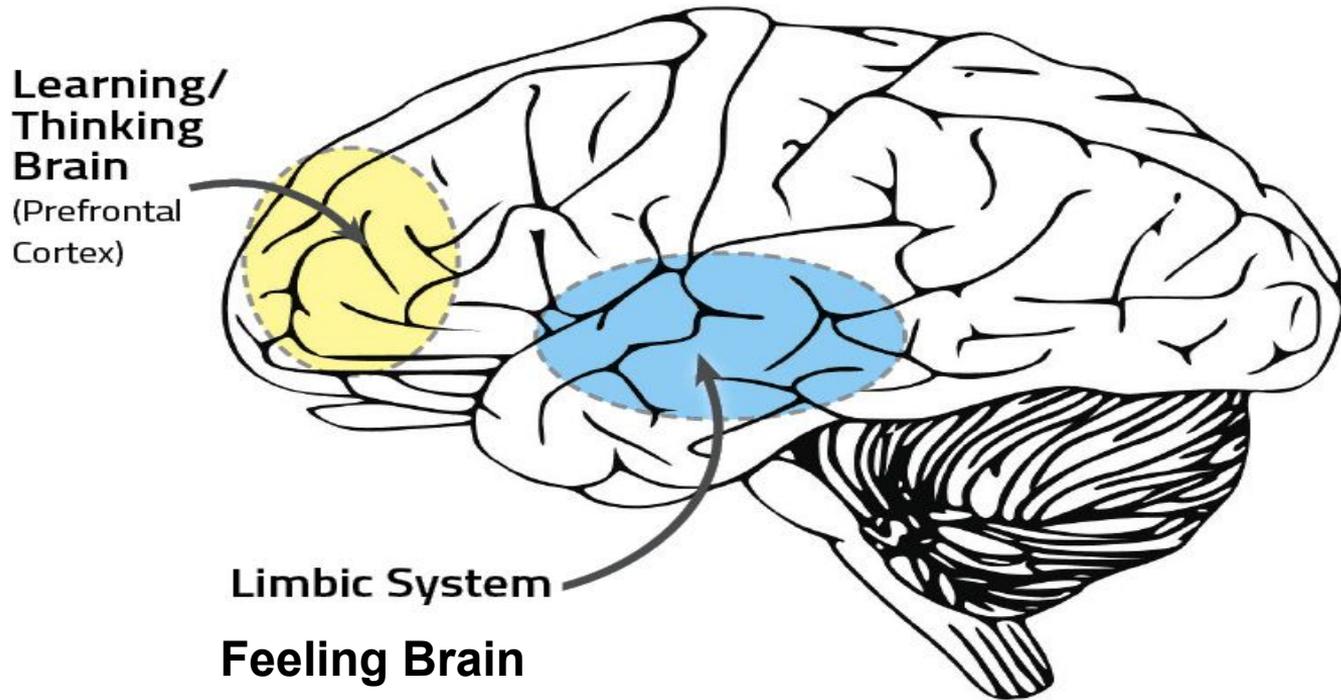
# Trauma and Learning

- Problems with executive function
- Problems with processing speed and working memory
- Learning problems and developmental delays

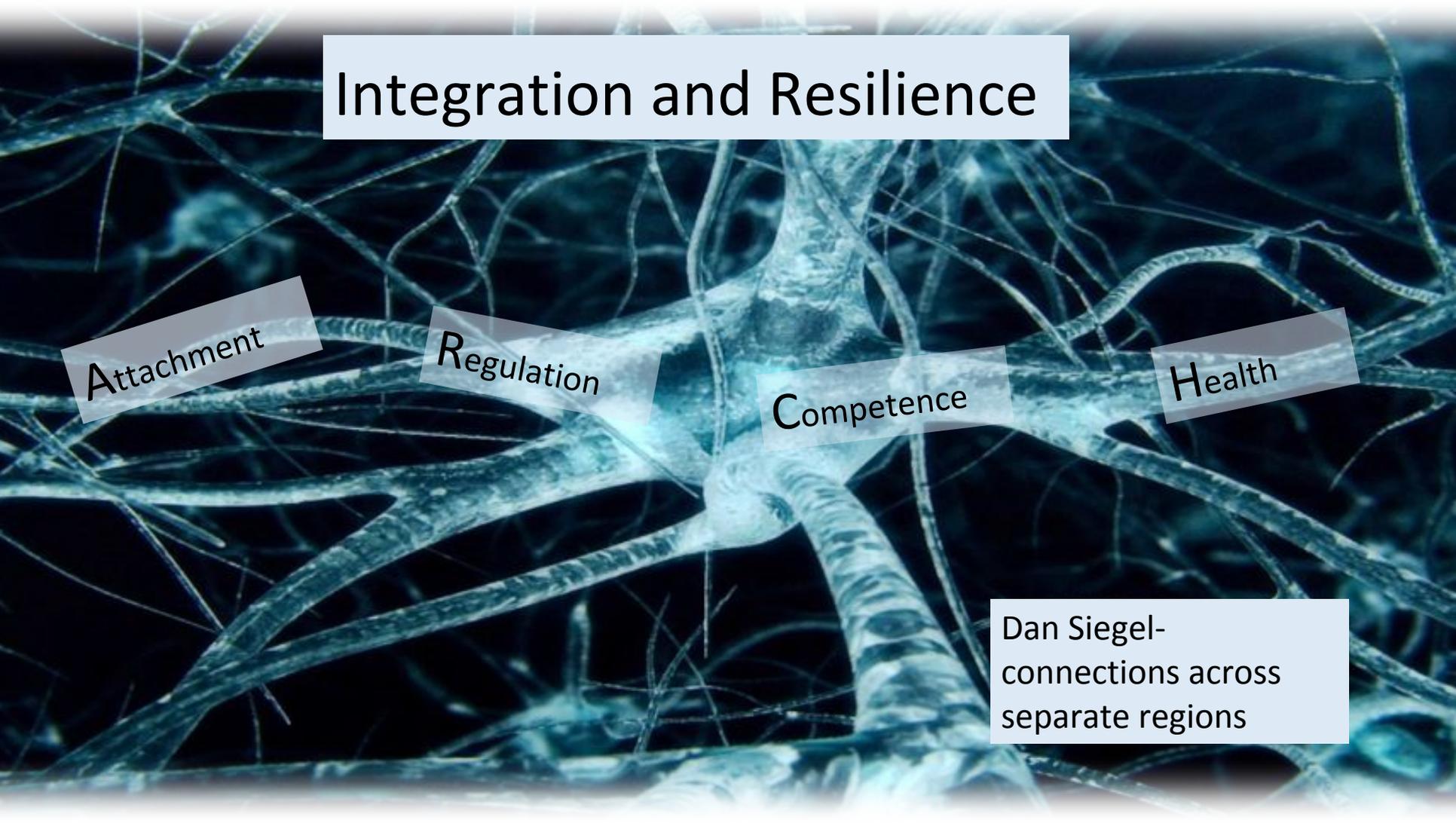
- Emotion Regulation
- Impulse Control
- Hypervigilance
- Problematic relationships with peers and adults

# Survival Mode: Flight/Fight/Freeze

Frontal lobe (Prefrontal cortex) goes offline  
Limbic system / mind and lower brain functions take over



# Integration and Resilience

The background of the slide is a complex, glowing blue network of neural connections, resembling a brain scan or a neural network diagram. The connections are thin and intricate, with some thicker, more prominent pathways. The overall color scheme is a vibrant blue with white highlights, set against a dark background.

Attachment

Regulation

Competence

Health

Dan Siegel-  
connections across  
separate regions

# Research questions:

- To what extent do school counselors have the training and self-efficacy to be leaders in bringing trauma-informed practices to their school?
- To what extent are schools already using trauma-informed practices?

# Background understanding for Hypothesis

- Counselors may be presently underutilized in leadership for systemic change but already trained and funded.
- Counselors are well-suited to be leaders in bringing trauma-informed practices to the schools: already trained in advocacy, mental health issues, consultation, leadership
- A benefit will be that it increases school counselor effectiveness in schools and communities to mitigate the negative effects of ACEs.
- Data from this study will also inform counselor educators in training future school counselors to be effective leaders in the trauma-informed movement.

# Action Steps:

- Used ARTIC, a validated measure of attitudes associated with trauma-informed practice. Sent to school counselors nationwide through ASCA, School Counselor state organizations, and ACE Connections (nationwide, online news)
- This quantitative study gathered data of school counselors' perception of their own preparedness and self-efficacy for providing this leadership and the degree to which their school has already worked on becoming trauma-informed.
- Used list serves from national counselor organizations such as American School Counselor Association (ASCA), American Counseling Association (ACA), and ACEs Connection (school subdivision). Also used state organizations such as Iowa School Counselor Association (ISCA).
- Snowballing: all persons were asked to forward the study to other counselors who may not be members.
- Qualification for participation in this study is being a practicing school counselor.

# Artic subscales:

**Underlying Causes of Problem Behavior and Symptoms.** Emphasizes behavior and symptoms as adaptations and malleable versus behavior and symptoms as intentional and fixed.

**Responses to Problem Behavior and Symptoms.** Emphasizes relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety as the agent of change versus rules, consequences, and accountability as the agent of behavior and symptom changes

**On-The-Job Behavior.** Endorses empathy-focused staff behavior versus control- focused staff behavior.

**Self-Efficacy at Work.** Endorses feeling able to meet the demands of working with a traumatized population versus feeling unable to meet the demands.

**Reactions to the Work.** Endorses appreciating the effects of secondary trauma/vicarious traumatization and coping by seeking support versus minimizing the effects of secondary trauma/vicarious traumatization and coping by ignoring or hiding the impact.

# Types of trainings

# Effective - Ineffective

38 such as, Kinect, ACE  
scale, Sanctuary, NOVA,  
TBRI, TSS, CPI, Ginsberg,  
Lighthouse, Refugee training,  
ASCA online, Life Space  
Crisis, ARC, Higher Ed,  
Mental health training,  
Nurture Groups, Boystown,  
Conscious Discipline, AEA

1-3 = 123

4-5=6

6-8=125

# School Counselor Perspective

- It's a Journey!
- During team meetings it is so important to remember the answer is in the room.
- The students are all OUR students. Teamwork is essential.
- Teachers need to be empowered - they have the answers too!--ask their opinions, give them a chance to be heard. Figure out what they need to feel competent in these situations.
- Trust your own expertise. Give yourself some time to work with the child and understand the complexity of the situations before making referrals if you can
- Modeling self-regulation/ co-regulation
- Coaching teachers-sharing trauma informed care knowledge, Coach teachers the importance of welcoming students back if they have to leave the classroom.  
(Guilt doesn't teach)

# Practical tips

Teaching SEL school wide- Second Step, Zones of Regulation

[School Wide Calendar](#) (Second Step, PBIS expectations and school-wide celebration, Olweus expectations and lessons, Responsive Classroom, Zones of Regulation, and Growth Mindset)

[ARCH District Newsletter](#)

Calming space- video [R & R](#).

Staff Mentoring program

Relationships - Attachment (classroom environment that makes them feel safe; competence)

[Trauma Informed Teacher: Silent front line](#)

# Ideas for Lessons and Small Groups

- [Neuroscience lesson](#)
- Zones of Regulation
- Counselor Kerri on TPT (Worry Warriors, and Body Calming Strategies)
- Interactive Social Skill Notebooks (TPT Education Everyone 4 Life)
- Yoga 4 the Classroom, Go Noodle, Mind Yeti

# Case Conceptualization

Without knowledge of trauma-informed practices

Zevin - tipped over his chair, said obscenities, visibly angry.

Teacher calls office. Demands punishment.

Office suspends child for disrespect.

With knowledge of trauma-informed practices

Teacher notices Zevin has had difficulty concentrating and seems anxious. Refers to school counselor.

Zevin makes a plan with counselor for what to do when he feels anxious.

Zevin loses his regulation and tips over his chair, said obscenities, visibly angry.

Teacher asks if he would like to use the calming corner. Doesn't need to call office.

# References

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