



Alum Rock Counseling Center

AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO TRAUMA-INFORMED TEACHING



How Trauma Impacts Learning: Addressing the Social
Emotional Needs of Students at School and in the Classroom



Alum Rock Counseling Center

About ARCC

ARCC is a community-based behavioral health agency that serves low-income, high-risk youth and families in Santa Clara County. Our extensive Continuum of Care includes prevention education, early intervention, crisis management, outpatient services, and aftercare support. Services are provided in homes, on school campuses, in the community, and in our clinic located in East San Jose.

Our Mission

To heal families and inspire youth to reach their full potential.

Areas of Impact

- Our youth and families have resources for overcoming behavioral concerns, including substance use and mental health challenges.
- All of our kids are kindergarten ready.
- Our youth graduate from middle school, high school, and beyond.
- Our youth and families are free from involvement with the justice system and/or social services systems.
- Our homes, schools, and neighborhoods are safe - free from violence and dangerous behaviors.

Our Story

ARCC was founded in 1974 by a group of community members who wanted to address the academic, social, and mental health needs of the at-risk youth and families living in the extremely high-need area of East San Jose. Due to the lack of linguistically sensitive and culturally appropriate practitioners and services, many of the predominantly Spanish-speaking individuals in this region were "falling through the cracks" of the legal, educational, and health systems into lives of poverty, academic failure, illness, addiction, incarceration, and victimization. The founders' intent was to offer practical, proven solutions to families when and where they needed them most, and in a manner that was inclusive, respectful, and delivered in a language most familiar to clients. Their goal was to provide this community with culturally sensitive, strengths-based counseling and professional support to help youth and their families to lead healthier, safer, more productive lives.

Today, ARCC's mission remains very much the same - namely, to heal families and inspire youth to reach their full potential. Through its strategic partnerships and extensive continuum of care, ARCC provides low-income, minority youth with tools to break multigenerational cycles of poverty and school failure, so that they can stay safe, in school, and drug and violence free.

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What is Trauma?

Trauma is "an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being."

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration -



An unsafe event or series of events that impacts an individual's ability to cope

Traumatic Events and the Brain



Upstairs Brain

Allows us to think before we act
Decision-making
Control over emotions & body
Focus/concentration
Empathy
Self awareness



Downstairs Brain

Allows us to act before we think
Fight/Flight response
Emotional reactions
Bodily functions

Source: Siegel & Bryson
"The Whole Brain Child"

Traumatic events and chronic stress can sometimes lead us to get "stuck" in our survival (downstairs) brain and cause other parts of our brains to not function as well as they should (upstairs brain). We can't think clearly, we might overreact, or we might zone out and shut down. Being stuck in our downstairs brains can make it difficult for us to think, learn, make good decisions, concentrate, and control our impulses.

Traumatic Events and our Students

More than 2/3 of students will experience a traumatic event by the age of 16. -SAMHSA

It is important to note that not all children who experience a traumatic event will experience traumatic stress. Children that have strong support systems, healthy coping skills, and are able to share their feelings openly with supportive adults are less likely to develop a negative stress response to trauma.

**2 out of 3
students**



Examples of Traumatic Events

- Natural Disasters
 - Sexual Assault/Abuse
 - Physical Assault/Abuse
 - Car Accidents
 - Act of Terror
 - Violent Death of a Loved One
 - Robbery
 - School Shooting
 - Global/National Crises
- Homelessness
 - Poverty
 - Food Insecurity
 - Neglect
 - Family Separations
 - Bullying
 - Ridicule
 - Racism
 - Systematic Injustice

The Impact of Trauma on Children

Academic:

- Difficulty focusing and processing information
- Difficulty verbally expressing oneself
- Difficulty with problem solving and analysis
- Inhibited ability to organize material sequentially
- Trouble understanding cause and effect relationships
- Inattentiveness to classroom tasks
- Decrease in executive functioning
- Difficulty with classroom transitions and change
- Lack of engagement
- Increased truancy
- Getting in trouble frequently at school

Emotional Health:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Reactivity and impulsivity
- Aggression and anger-management concerns
- Defiance
- Withdrawal
- Perfectionism
- Lack of self-soothing and reflective strategies
- Sleep problems
- Low self-confidence and self-worth
- Self-harming behaviors and/or suicidal ideation
- Substance Use

Physical Health:

- Body aches and pains
- Stomach/digestive problems
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Increased risk of Cancer
- Increased risk of stroke
- Weak immune system
- Frequent fatigue
- Sleep problems
- Skin problems
- Shorter life span

Relational:

- Difficulty trusting others
- Difficulty standing up for oneself
- Difficulty communicating clearly
- Difficulty setting boundaries with others
- Frequent arguments
- Controlling behaviors
- Jealousy
- Increased incidents of domestic violence/intimate partner violence



Adapted from:

What does it mean to be Trauma-Informed?

Being trauma-informed is a lifelong journey and universal framework that builds upon the following principles:



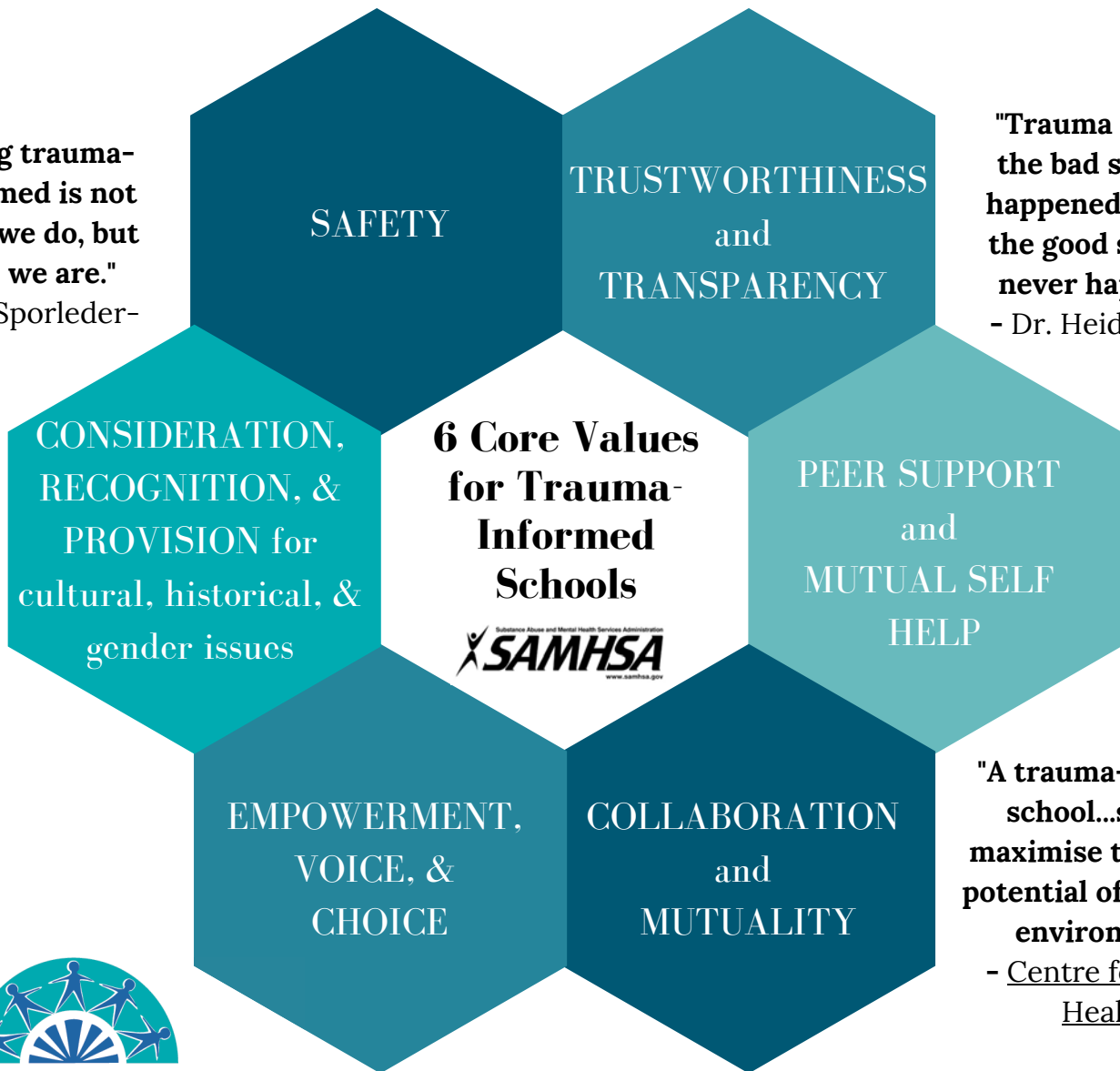
- We are informed about trauma and its impact on the brain
- We view behaviors through the lens of trauma
- We focus, first and foremost, on the importance of **safety**
- We build on student strengths and resiliency
- We are empathetic, compassionate, and understanding, while still holding students and one another accountable
- We create and implement policies and practices where all students, parents, and staff feel valued, supported, and safe
- We focus on the importance of self-care and community-care: student, staff, administration, and our school and neighborhood communities

“Promoting trauma-sensitive school approaches has the greatest potential to positively impact all students, regardless of trauma history.”

- NASP -

"Being trauma-informed is not what we do, but who we are."

- Jim Sporleder-



"Trauma isn't just the bad stuff that happened. It's also the good stuff that never happened."

- Dr. Heidi Green -

"A trauma-informed school...seeks to maximise the healing potential of the school environment."

- Centre for Mental Health -



Trauma-Informed Strategies in the Classroom

FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIP

- One positive and nurturing personal connection can help reverse the negative effects of trauma on a child.
- Create regular opportunities for connection (daily check-ins, team building, etc)

CREATE SAFETY

- Create emotional and physical safety for students within the classroom by providing predictability, structure, routine, respect, and consistency

EMOTIONAL REGULATION

- Create and provide opportunities to teach and model emotional regulation strategies throughout the day
- The 4 R's: Regulate, Relate, Reason, Repair

FOCUS ON STRENGTHS

- Focus on the inherent strengths and resilience of the students

LOOK BEHIND THE BEHAVIOR

- What is the why behind the child's behavior?
- What emotional need is not being met?

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

- Move from punishment to accountability and repair
- Set clear limits, boundaries, and opportunities for reflection and repair in order to restore relationships

OFFER CHOICE, CONTROL & EMPOWERMENT

COLLABORATIVE APPROACH

- Provide opportunities for shared decision-making between students, families, and staff
- Students and families as partners in education

PRACTICE SELF-CARE AND COMMUNITY CARE



The Importance of Self-Care

KATHRYN (KITZI) HENDRICKS, AMFT



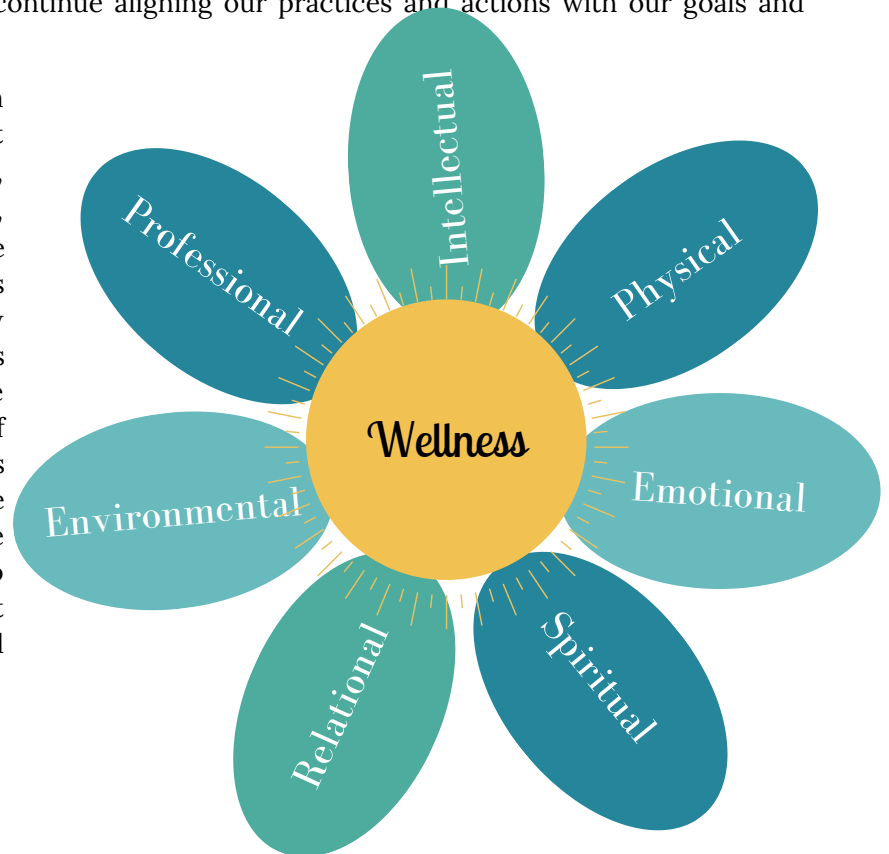
Over the past decade, there has been a growing emphasis on the importance of self-care, especially in the professional world. Many of us have started to hear the phrases "you can't pour from an empty cup" or "put your oxygen mask on first", but what do these phrases actually mean? Do the people who use these phrases truly have time for it?

There is a common misconception that self-care means getting massages frequently, going to a spa, or taking extended vacations at the beach. While this may be true for some people, for many others, these practices may not be affordable, accessible or sustainable in the long run.

What is self-care, then, and how can we practice it sustainably? Self-care is the ethical obligation that we have to bring our best selves to our work and relationships. Self-care, therefore, is a vital part of our work as helping professionals. It is not an option. Self-care is what sustains us each day amidst our personal and professional stresses and prevents burnout and compassion fatigue, so that we can bring our best selves as helping professionals. It is what helps you to be a better educator and trusted adult for your students. It is what helps you to be a supportive colleague and ask for support in return. It is also what helps us to bring our best selves into our personal lives and our relationships. Self-care is the glue that holds every part of who we are together in a way that aligns with our goals and values.

Self-care can include intentional actions that can be woven in throughout the day and actions that are scheduled outside of your work. Self-care also reflects who we are from a holistic lens and helps us to make sure that we are paying attention to all aspects of our lives and who we are, in order to help us feel more connected to our true selves and continue aligning our practices and actions with our goals and values.

When thinking about self-care, we can break it down into seven different categories: *professional, intellectual, physical, emotional, spiritual, environmental, and relational*. Taking care of each dimension of wellness can help us to become more aware of how interconnected each of these dimensions are and how all aspects of these dimensions contribute to our sense of individual well-being, as well as communal interconnectedness. When we start to notice the value of each of these dimensions in our own lives, we begin to seek out self-care practices that support and honor who we are as whole and complex individuals.



7 Dimensions of Self-Care

Here are some examples of self-care practices in each of these categories. As you take a look at and read through these categories, what do you notice? Are there practices that you are already engaging in? Are there practices that were once important to you that are now missing? Are there any new practices that grab your attention?

Professional

- Setting boundaries with students and coworkers
- Making time for meals
- Identifying projects/tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- Asking for help/support
- Negotiating your work needs
- Getting regular supervision
- Reflecting on work and values

Physical

- Getting enough sleep
- Eating balanced meals regularly
- Getting regular and preventative medical care
- Exercising/Body movement
- Accessing safe housing
- Taking time off when sick

Emotional

- Practicing self-love and self-compassion
- Attending therapy or a support group
- Finding a creative outlet for emotions
- Spending time with a pet
- Asking for help
- Identifying comforting objects, people, places, and activities

Relational

- Prioritizing and building meaningful connections with others
- Spending quality time with family and/or friends
- Making time to reply to personal emails/letters
- Connecting relationships with values
- Handling conflict appropriately

Spiritual

- Practicing self-reflection
- Engaging with a spiritual community
- Participating in social justice-related causes
- Spending time in nature
- Praying or meditating
- Identifying what is meaningful and noticing its place in life

Intellectual

- Engaging in creative activities
- Reading for pleasure
- Engaging in thought-provoking discussions
- Learning a new language
- Expanding knowledge and skills



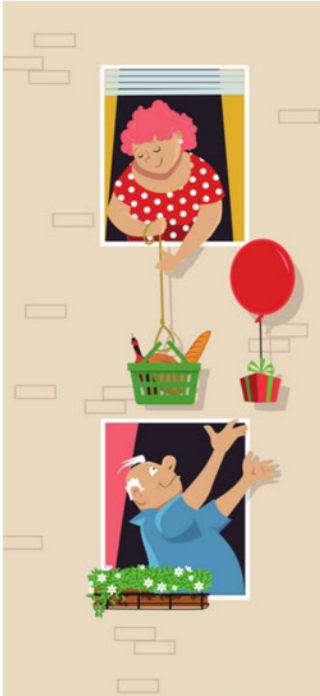
Environmental

- Taking care of your personal space
- Creating a comfortable and organized environment
- Monitoring time on technology
- Maintaining a clean and safe living environment



Beyond Self-Care: The Importance of Caring for the Community

KATHRYN (KITZI) HENDRICKS, AMFT



Self-care practices in and of themselves are not enough. When we reflect upon self-care, we think about the ways in which each different dimension works together to nurture ourselves as whole beings. However, human beings are social creatures that depend upon the interconnectedness of one another in order to survive and thrive. One person's self-care practices cannot happen in isolation, as we each depend upon our community members to support us and carry us when times are difficult.

Community care is considered any act of compassionate care performed by an individual for the benefit of another person in their life, in order to help to provide relief and solace in the face of the systemic failures. This can take the form of small acts that benefit one person or larger scale actions that benefit groups of people. Self-care and community care are deeply connected and we need both of them in order to create and support healthy and resilient communities. Community care is the necessary supplement to our self-care practices. We must support one another's wellness and find ways to advocate for and support the needs of our colleagues, students, families, and community members, in addition to the ways in which we advocate and support our own needs. We must find ways to help make self-care possible for those who may not be able to achieve it on their own.

One of the most common visions of community care includes the "meal train" - a community coming together to provide food, sustenance, and support for a family who may be grieving the recent loss of a loved one or adapting to the recent birth of a new child. We understand that the family may be struggling with completing daily tasks due to grief or an abrupt change in family dynamic and we reach out to do what we can to support the family and help them to get their emotional and physical needs met.

Community care includes acts such as this and much more. It is focused on the collective and honors the cooperative and social nature of human beings. Community care is about taking care of people together. Through community care, we acknowledge the effects of the burdens that people carry due to oppression, racism, discrimination, grief, loss, and trauma, and do what we can as a community member to help to lift the weight of that burden, when we are able.

"Community care is a commitment to contributing in a way that leverages one's relative privilege while balancing one's needs. It's trusting that your community will have you when you need support, and knowing you can be trusted to provide the same." - Nikita Valerio

Sources: [Self-Care Isn't Enough. We Need Community Care to Thrive \(Heather Dockray\)](#), and [This Viral Facebook Post Urges People to Re-Think Self-Care \(Nikita Valerio\)](#)





Local Resources

Free Community Resource Information
Dial 2-1-1
24/7 access to information and referral services, available in all languages



Food

To find the nearest food pantry:

1 (800) 984-3663 or
Text: "GETFOOD" to (408) 455-5181
Email: getfood@shfb.org
English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog

Sacred Heart Community Service

1381 S. 1st Street,
San Jose, CA 95110
(408) 278-2160
Pantry Hours: M-Th (9am - 4pm)

Housing/Shelter

SCC Homeless Helpline:

(408) 510-7600
For all people currently homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless and need housing, services, etc.

Sacred Heart Community Service

(408) 278-2166
1 time rental & deposit assistance

Salvation Army of Silicon Valley

408-282-1165 ext. 3210
1 time rental & deposit assistance

Legal Support

Law Foundation of Silicon Valley

Housing: (408) 280-2424
Children/Youth: (408) 280-2416
Health/Mental Health: (408) 280-2420
www.lawfoundation.org

Bay Area Legal Aid

Legal Advice Line: (800) 551-5554
www.baylegal.org
(408) 850-7066

Mental Health (Youth) Mental Health (Adult)

Mental Health Call Center

1 (800) 704-0900
24/7 Days a week central entry point for those seeking services from Santa Clara County Behavioral Health.

Alum Rock Counseling Center

(408) 294-0500
Mental Health Services for low-income youth and families, including those who have Medi-cal

Mental Health Call Center

1 (800) 704-0900
24/7 Days a week central entry point for those seeking services from Santa Clara County Behavioral Health.

Domestic Violence

Next Door Solutions

24/7 Hotline: (408) 279-2962
Crisis & Legal Support, Supportive Services, Housing
www.nextdoorsolutions.org

YWCA Silicon Valley

24/7 Hotline: (800) 572-2782
Therapy: (408) 295-4011 (x3151)
Therapy services, support services, housing support
www.ywca-sv.org



Trauma-Informed Schools Resources



Books

- [The Whole Brain Child](#) by Dr. Daniel Siegel & Dr. Tina Payne Bryson
- [The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog](#) by Dr. Bruce Perry & Maia Szalavitz
- [Fostering Resilient Learners](#) by Kristin Souers & Pete Hall
- [Relationship, Responsibility, & Regulation](#) by Kristin Souers & Pete Hall
- [The Trauma-Sensitive Classroom](#) by Patricia A. Jennings



Articles

- [How Trauma-Informed Schools Help Every Student Succeed](#) (Emily Eilers)
- [How Trauma-Informed Teaching Builds A Sense of Safety And Care](#) (Katrina Schwartz)
- [When Schools Meet Trauma With Understanding, Not Discipline](#) (Mallory Falk and Eve Troeh)
- [Adverse Childhood Experiences](#) (CDC)



Podcast Series/ Episodes

- [Trauma Informed Educators Network Podcast](#)
- [MindShift Podcast](#)
- [Armchair Expert Episode 147 - Dr. Nadine Burke Harris](#)
- [Educate Podcast \(12.16.2016\) - School Confronts Trauma in Students' Lives](#)
- [Educate Podcast \(2.17.2017\) - Reforming School Discipline](#)



Documentaries

- [Paper Tigers \(2015\) - One High School's Unlikely Success Story](#)
- [Resilience \(2016\) - The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope](#)
- [In Utero \(2016\)](#)



Other

- [Trauma-Informed Educators Network Facebook Group](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Schools Book Club Facebook Group](#)
- [Trauma-Informed Schools Journal Facebook Group](#)



Acknowledgements

Kaiser Permanente's community involvement uniquely pairs grant funding with 65 years of clinical expertise, medical research, and volunteerism to support prevention-focused, evidence-based programs that are expanding access to care and creating healthy environments. Kaiser Permanente recently awarded Alum Rock Counseling Center a \$98,000.00 grant that will help more people in this community get access to the resources they need to lead a healthy life. For more information about Kaiser Permanente's work in the community, visit about.kaiserpermanente.org/community-health.



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