



## Trauma Informed Solutions and Strategies



# Objectives

---



- Gain a deeper understanding of the landscape of trauma and its effects as it relates the brain.
- Learn more trauma skill-acquisition and trauma resiliency
- Discuss NIEA's trauma-skilled strategies for Native students
- How is your school doing?



# Ice-Breaker

---



- Discuss at your table the top 3 stressors in your life.
  
- When I am stressed, I....

# Trauma Defined



- 
- A decorative graphic consisting of three overlapping triangles in shades of blue and teal, located in the top-left corner of the content box.
1. Trauma exposure vs. trauma reaction
    - child traumatic stress reaction
  2. Acute trauma
  3. Complex trauma
  4. Developmental trauma

# The Legacy of Historical Trauma



## EPIGENETICS

Study finds trauma effects may linger in body chemistry of next generation:

“children of Holocaust survivors...could be more likely to develop stress or anxiety disorders.”

- [Study by RACHEL YEHUDA, ICAHN SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AT MT. SINAI](#)

# Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study



- On going research study through the collaboration of Kaiser Permanente and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- 10 types of trauma: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, mother treated violently, household substance abuse, household mental illness, parental separation or divorce, incarcerated household member

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html>

# Prevalence

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Study  
Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

---



## Household dysfunction

- Substance abuse 27%
- Parental separation/divorce 23%
- Mental illness 19%
- Battered mother 13%
- Incarcerated household member 5%

## Abuse

- Psychological 11%
- Physical 28%
- Sexual 21%

## Neglect

- Emotional 15%
- Physical 10%

<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/consequences.html>

# Health risks associated with ACEs



## Behaviors

- School Absenteeism  
—tardies & truancy
- Dysregulated eating  
(under & overeating)
- Smoking
- Suicide attempts
- Illicit drug use &  
substance abuse
- Multiple sexual  
partners
- Self-injurious  
behaviors (e.g.,  
cutting)

## Outcomes

- Autoimmune disorders
- Obesity & eating disorders
- Substance use disorders
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease  
(COPD)
- Depression
- Fetal death
- Health-related quality of life
- Ischemic heart disease (IHD)
- Liver disease
- Risk for intimate partner violence
- Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- Unintended pregnancies

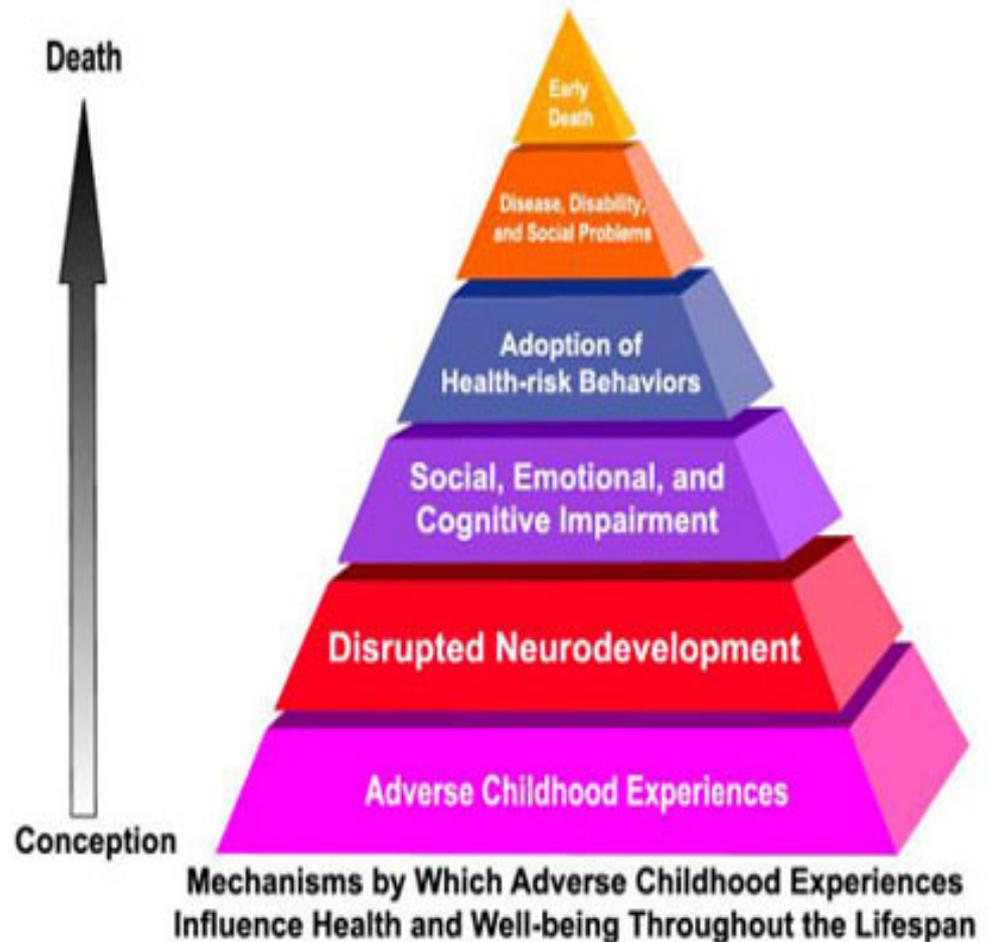
<https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/childmaltreatment/consequences.html>

# Impact of Trauma over the Life Span



## Effects of childhood adverse experiences

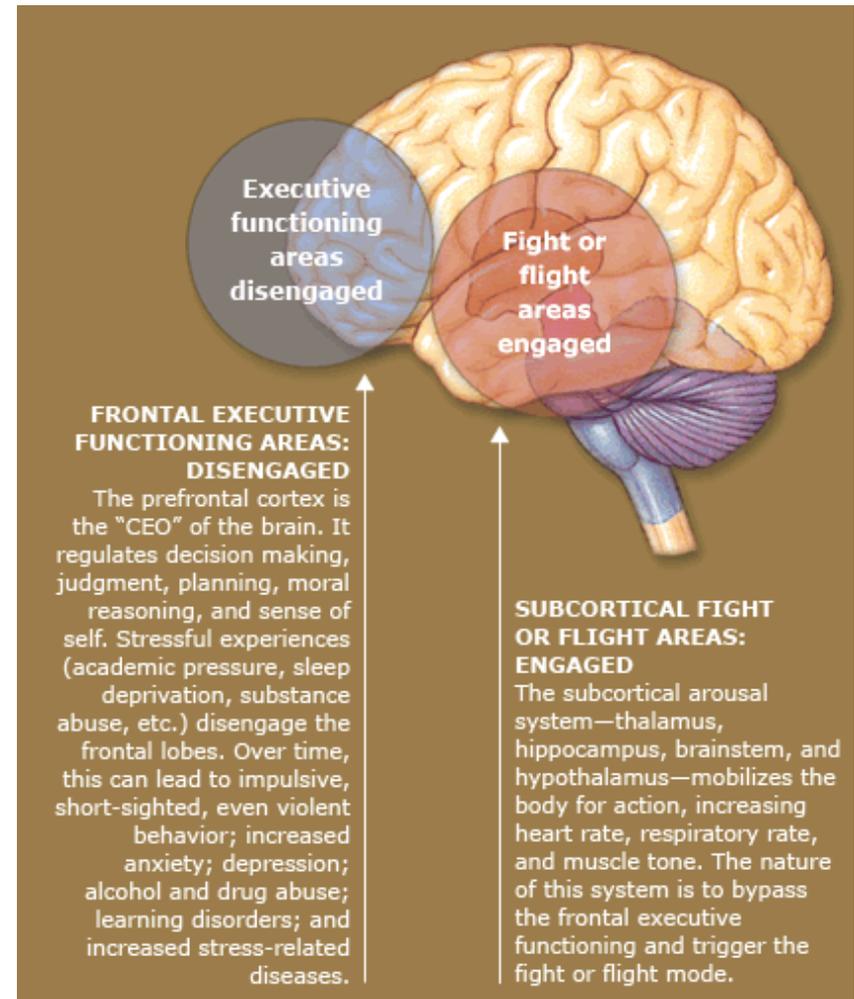
- neurological
- biological
- psychological
- social





# Impact on the Brain

- If there is danger, the “thinking” brain shuts down, allowing the “doing” brain to act
- Traumatized children experience changes in brain structures, neuro-chemistry & genetic expression





# Trauma and the Brain



- **Flight/Fight**
  - Hypervigilance
  - Escape
  - Irritability
  - Outbursts



# Trauma and the Brain



- Freeze

- Exhaustion
- Apathy
- Tension
- Folding, Defeat
- Compliance

# Impact of Trauma on a Child



“Does not impact how you think, but impacts your ability to think.”

-Dr. Bessel Van der Kolk

# Impact of Trauma on a Child



- Cognitive/academic
- Physical
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Developmental

# Impact of Trauma on a Child



- Physical

- Recurrent maladies
- Over or under response to certain stimuli
- Analgesia
- Digestive issues
- Chronic pain
- Bedwetting
- Acne
- Sleep disruption



# Impact of Trauma on a Child



- Emotional
  - Low Self-Esteem
  - Anxious
  - Sadness, depression, isolation
  - Sense of shame
  - Anger
  - Attachment issues
  - Distrustful
  - Suspicious
  - Affectionless



## How to Help?



- In small groups, make a list of activities that you think would help students affected by trauma and stress?
- Examples: physical activities; grounding activities

# Impact on Worldview

## Typical Development vs. Developmental Trauma



- Nurturing & stable attachments with adults
- Belief in a predictable & benevolent world/ generally good things will happen to me
- Feeling of positive self-worth/others will see my strengths
- Optimism about the future
- Feeling that I can have a positive impact on the world
- Basic mistrust of adults/inability to depend on others
- Belief that the world is an unsafe place/bad things will happen & they are usually my fault
- Assumption that others will not like me
- Fear & pessimism about future
- Feelings of hopelessness & lack of control



# Perpetuation of Trauma



- More than one in three American Indian and Alaska Native children live in poverty
- The American Indian/Alaskan Native public high school graduation rate is 67 percent, the lowest of any racial/ethnic demographic group across all schools.
- Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) schools fare even worse, with a graduation rate of 53 percent, compared to a national average of 80 percent.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death—2.5 times the national rate—for Native youth in the 15 to 24 year old age group.
- PTSD rates three times the general public—the same rate as Iraqi war veterans.

2014 Native Youth Report, The White House

# Perpetuation of Trauma Continued



- In 2014 the rate of past-year substance use disorders was higher among the AI/AN population (16%) than among other racial and ethnic groups: non-Hispanic white (8%), non-Hispanic black (8.6%), Hispanic (8.5%), Asian (4.5%), and Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islanders (10%).
- AI/AN communities experience alcohol related deaths at a rate that is six times higher than the rate for all other races
- Native Americans are incarcerated at a rate 38% higher than the national average, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics
- Native Americans are more likely to be killed by police than any other racial group

# ACE & School Performance

A decorative graphic consisting of three overlapping triangles in shades of teal and light blue, arranged in a corner pattern.

- Traumatized children are:

- 2.5x more likely to fail a grade in school
- score lower on standardized achievement tests
- more likely to have struggles in receptive & expressive language
- suspended & expelled more often
- more frequently placed in special education

<http://k12.wa.us/CompassionateSchools/HeartofLearning.aspx>

# Impact on Classroom Behavior



- Reactivity & impulsivity
- Aggression
- Defiance
- Withdrawal
- Perfectionism

<https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/trauma/presentations>

# Responding vs. Reacting and Telling



## David's Story

David is an 8th grade boy. This morning, when he arrived at school, his teacher asked him for his homework and David did not have it. She expressed frustration, especially because this wasn't the first time, and gave him detention as a consequence. A short time later, a classmate accidentally bumped David. David punched him in the stomach. His teacher, upset by this outburst, began to yell at David to stop. David began to scream, kick chairs and hide under his desk. After 10 minutes of trying to get David out from under the desk, he was brought to the principal's office and given a five day suspension for fighting and disruptive behavior.

Adapted from Joyce Dorado, Ph.D (2013) Child and Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH

# Responding vs. Reacting and Telling



## David's Story Through a Trauma Lens

David is an 8th grade boy. He has been witnessing severe domestic violence between his parents since he was a baby. One night, in front of David, his father beat up and injured his mother so badly that a neighbor called the police; his father was handcuffed and taken away by the police, and his mother was taken in an ambulance to the hospital.

David slept little that night, terrified and anxious what would happen to his mother and father. In the morning, David's neighbor took him to school. This morning, when he arrived at school, his teacher (who did not know about David's traumatic experience) asked him for his homework. When he did not have it, she expressed frustration and gave him detention as a consequence. David was upset and triggered by being in trouble with his teacher.

Adapted from Joyce Dorado, Ph.D (2013) Child and Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH

# Responding vs. Reacting and Telling



## **David's Story Through a Trauma Lens cont.**

A short time later, a classmate accidentally bumped David. Already triggered to some degree into a heightened state of vigilance (i.e. “survival” brain), this physical contact fully triggered David into a fight/flight reaction. David punched his classmate in the stomach. His teacher, upset by this outburst, began to yell at David to stop, which further escalated David. He began to scream, kick chairs and hide under his desk.

After 10 minutes of trying to get David out from under the desk (during which time his teacher felt helpless and defeated, and the other children looked on in fear and frustration) David was brought to the principal's office and given a five day suspension for fighting and disruptive behavior, inadvertently exposing David not only to a major loss of instructional time, but also to a period of time during which he would have no refuge from the trauma and suffering in his home life.

Adapted from Joyce Dorado, Ph.D (2013) Child and Adolescent Services, UCSF/SFGH



## Trauma Skills & Resiliency

# The Power of Culture



- A strong school culture builds resiliency amongst its students, teachers, and school leadership to the adverse effects of trauma.
- Resiliency is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, threats, trauma, tragedy or significant sources of stress.

# Resilience Factors



- Connection – caring, adult relationships
- Security – sense of belonging
- Achievement – strengths-based approach that fosters success
- Autonomy – options in academics, discipline, and self-management
- Fulfillment – happiness, satisfaction

# Resilience Factors



VALUE	What will your school look like if that's a value?	How can you make that happen?
Connection		
Security		
Achievement		
Autonomy		
Fulfillment		



## NIEA Trauma-Skilled Strategies

# Culture-Based Education



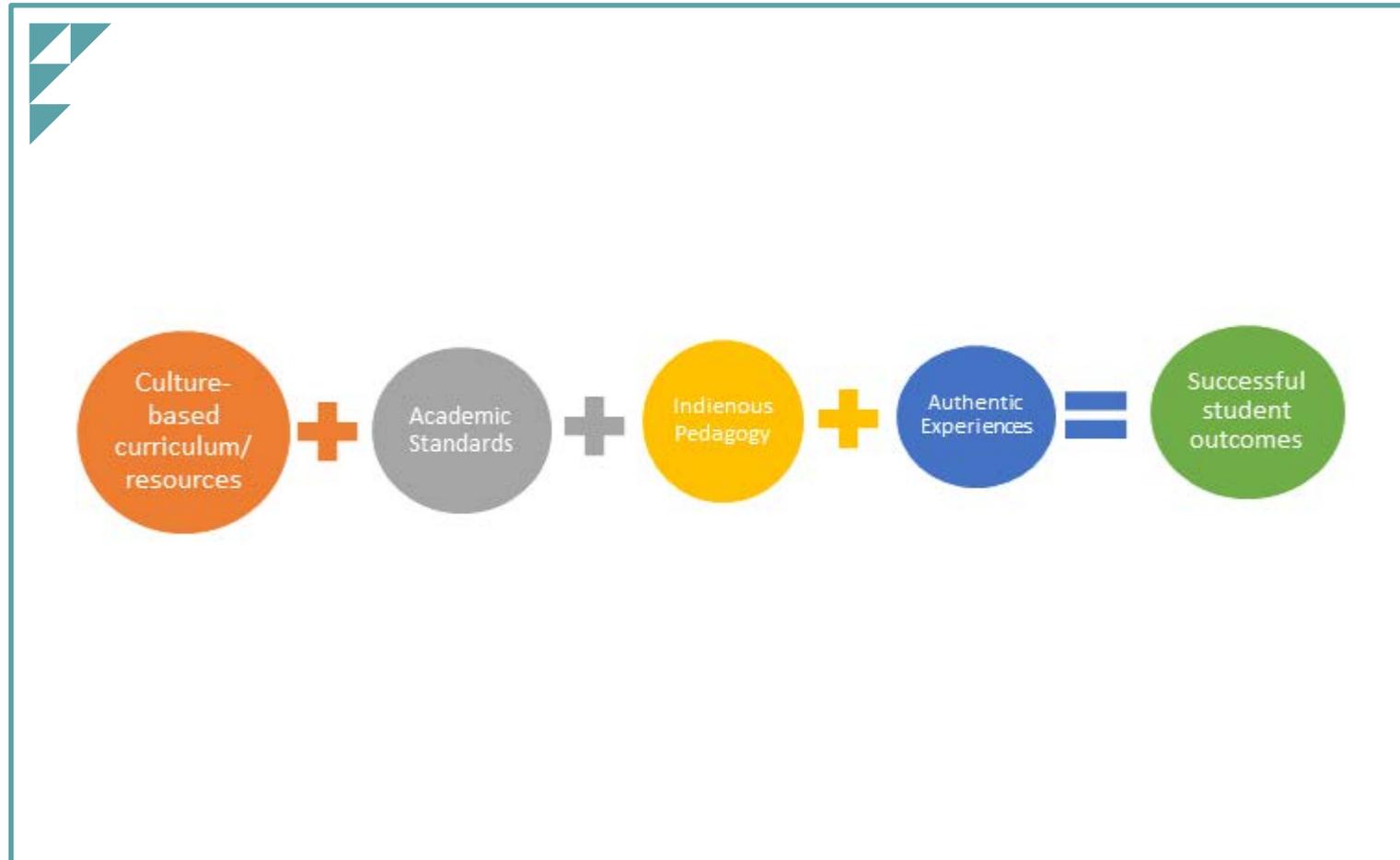
- Culture: Cognitive medium by which an individual learns.
- Critical to the learning process.
  - Indigenous children learn by listening, observing, and participating in the cultural practices and beliefs of the experienced elders.
- Direct link between cultural identity and the cognitive success of students.
  - Native students need a school environment and curriculum that reflect their identity and place as an indigenous people in American society and creates as a bridge between their home environment and their school experience.

# What is Culture-Based Education



- Holistic educational approach that grounds instructional planning and delivery in students' ways of being, knowing, and doing of a community or culture.
  - Students learn through the values, language, practices, beliefs, expectations, history, and experiences of their community while also meeting rigorous academic standards such as the College and Career Readiness Standards (CCRS).
- A high quality CBE program starts with assessing the practices and needs of the local community
  - to build a cultural curriculum of resources, artifacts, customs, and history to be taught through a blend of academic standards and Native pedagogical practices.

# Components of CBE



# Components of CBE



- High-quality teachers/leaders embedded in the community or who have a deep understanding of the community needs and practices.
- Instruction of and through indigenous language with a focus on building literacy skills if the language is written.
- Instructional materials and assessments grounded in cultural practices and knowledge
- Experiential learning.
- Student, family, and community involvement in curriculum, decision making, and the classroom.
- Emphasis on personal stories and family histories.
- Culturally reflective learning environment.
- Evaluation of and accountability for outcomes and proper use of community resources.

# Misconceptions of CBE



- Students are presented with lessons and materials about their heritage, then the school is teaching culture, and, therefore, meeting student needs for success.
- However, the essence of CBE is not that students are simply taught local culture, it is that students are taught *culturally*, and that their culture and identity as a Native student are valued inside and outside of the classroom.

# Benefits



- Representation
- Cultural knowledge
- Increased self-esteem, pride, and academic motivation
- Bilingual or multilingual instruction has had impact on higher achievement in math and reading
- Increased attendance rate
- Increase community involvement
- Stronger relationships with teachers, parents, community members

# Educator Initiative: Trauma Training



## NIEA Historical Healing & Education Workshop

The [National Indian Education Association](#) partnered with [KAIROS Canada](#) to become certified facilitators of the Kairos Blanket Healing Exercise (KBE). NIEA participated in the Facilitator Training so that we would be able to provide and implement the blanket healing exercise in our own local communities, both Native and non-Native.

*The KAIROS Blanket Exercise program is a unique, participatory history lesson – developed in collaboration with Indigenous Elders, knowledge keepers and educators – that fosters truth, understanding, respect and reconciliation among Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.*



# Educator Initiative: Trauma Training



## NIEA Historical Healing & Education Workshop

### Components

- Prayer
- Cleansing
- Land Acknowledgement
- Role introduction, including Elder or traditional knowledge keeper (if applicable)
- Blanket Healing Exercise
- Talking Circle
- Physical and emotional healing supports (provided by the host organization/community)



# Educator Initiative: Trauma Training



## The Experience

During this workshop, participants walk on blankets representing the land and into the role of Native peoples of Indian Country by reading scrolls and carrying cards which ultimately determine their outcome as they literally 'walk' through situations that include pre-contact, treaty-making, colonization and resistance. Participants are guided through the experience by trained facilitators (who read the script and assume the roles of European explorers and settlers) and Indigenous Elders or knowledge keepers. The Exercise concludes with a debriefing, conducted as a 'talking circle', during which participants discuss the learning experience, process their feelings, ask questions, share insights, deepen their understanding, and create actionable next steps for their work.



# Educator Initiative: Trauma Training



## Want to do a Blanket Exercise in your own community?

### What NIEA needs from you:

- One-month advance notice to book travel and accommodations
- Specific dates and times
- At least 3 hours to conduct the full exercise
- Accurate counts of all attendees
- Host organization will provide food, water, and Kleenex
- Participate in a post-exercise survey/evaluation



# Review Tool for your School's Trauma Policies



## Safety

- Reinforces listening to students' histories without judgment.
- Emphasizes value for emotional and physical safety for students, including adapting usual approaches, if needed.
- [https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/TSSTraumaSensitiveLens\\_PolicyReviewTool.pdf](https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/sspw/TSSTraumaSensitiveLens_PolicyReviewTool.pdf)

# Review Tool for your School's Trauma Policies



## Trustworthiness

- **Recognizes trust is something that is earned over time, so students may not tell the truth until a relationship is established.**
- **Recognizes students may “test” relationships, because they may have been hurt by people close to them in the past who were supposed to guide or protect them.**

# Review Tool for your School's Trauma Policies



## Collaboration

- **Recognizes relationships matter and demonstrates interest in students' histories and current life circumstances.**
- **Establishes an expectation staff will work together with students to create a plan to help them learn skills, rather than dictating to students a plan to change behavior.**

# Review Tool for your School's Trauma Policies



## Choice

- **Recognizes a “one-size-fits-all” approach can make students feel discounted.**
- **Recognizes students cannot learn to make better choices, unless given real choices to make.**
- **Demonstrates student choices are important and valued. Recognizes that in the past, some students may have been told 1) what they think does not matter and 2) to do things that make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.**
- **Helps students to believe they have meaningful choices that will be respected.**

# Review Tool for your School's Trauma Policies



## Empowerment

- **Redefines student “problems” as coping strategies or adaptations.**
- **Recognizes student strengths and anticipates areas where students need to build skills.**
- **Recognizes students 1) may often feel like they cannot be successful and 2) require their strengths to receive more emphasis and attention.**
- **Recognizes students are often told what to do and how to do it, so they may have a hard time believing their choices and opinions matter to others. ☑ Helps students to feel more confident and hopeful about their future.**

# Review Tool for your School's Trauma Policies



**How can WE do better?**





# CONTACT US



@WereNIEA



NIEAFanPage



@niea1969

[www.niea.org](http://www.niea.org) | 202-544-7290