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## *Using the ARC Model with Students with Histories of Trauma: A Skills Based Discussion*

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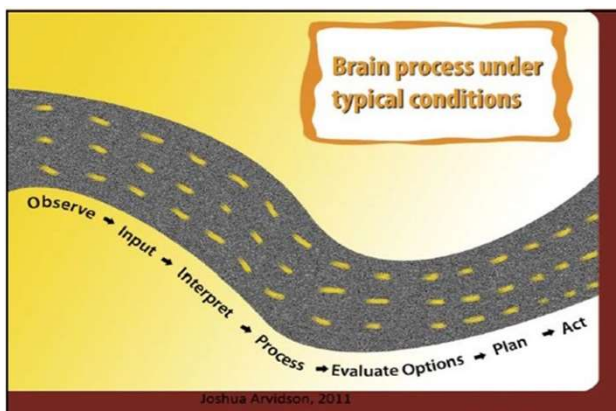
### What is trauma?



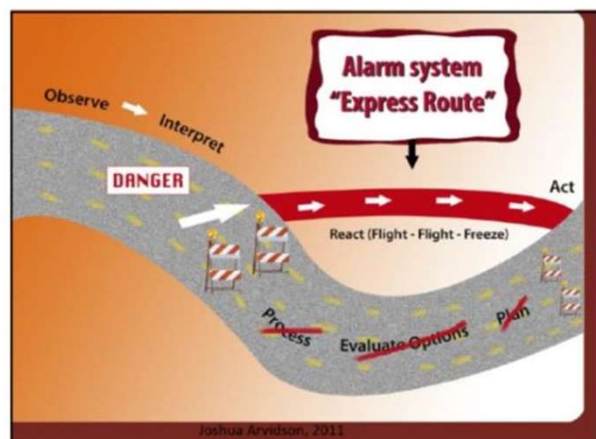
How would you define trauma? What are some traumas you have seen in your schools, whether teachers or students? What have you seen in terms of impacts of trauma?

## Trauma effects

- Brain develops from back to front, bottom to top, and inside to outside.
- Rather than labeling as pathology, consider sequelae as deficits or maladaptive skills in major competencies:
  - Interpersonal
  - Intrapersonal
  - Regulatory
  - Neurocognitive



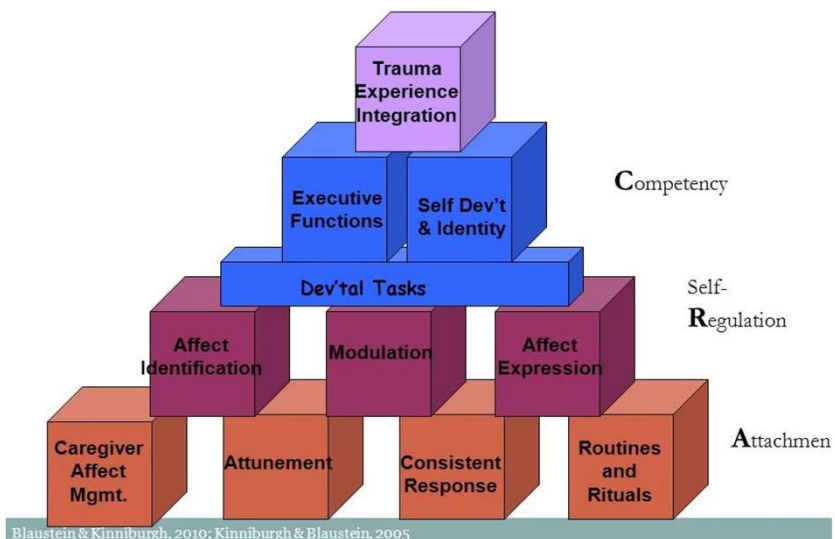
Joshua Arvidson, 2011



Joshua Arvidson, 2011

## ARC Model- the basics

Addresses deficits in each competency area through interventions that can be utilized at each Tier- universal to intensive individual.



## Attachment

## The Attachment System

- The foundational relationship between a child and their caregiver(s)
- A model for all other relationships
- A way to practice emotional expression, and advance both coping and social skills in a safe environment

## The Caregiving System

- Many children who have experienced trauma live in alternative systems of care
- This is where teachers, administrators, and afterschool caregivers play an important role

## Attachment Sections

Affect  
Attunement  
Consistency  
Rituals

### Management of Affect

*“Support the child’s caregiving system - whether parents or professionals - in understanding, managing, and coping with their own emotional responses, so that they are better able to support the children in their care.”*

- Why is affect management important?
- Challenges
- Common responses

## Tuning In to Yourself

| DOMAIN   | PROMPT   |
|----------|--|
| Body     | <i>"What are you experiencing in your body?"</i> |
| Thoughts | <i>"What do you think in this situation?"</i>    |
| Emotions | <i>"What do you feel in this situation?"</i>     |
| Behavior | <i>"What do you do in this situation?"</i>       |
| Other    | <i>"What else do you notice about yourself?"</i> |

## Attunement

*"Support the child's caregiving system - whether parents or professionals - in learning to accurately and empathically understand and respond to children's actions, communications, needs, and feelings."*

- What is attunement?
- Challenges



# Feelings Detective



## Consistent Caregiver Responses

*"Support the caregiving system, whether familial or programmatic, in building predictable, safe, and appropriate responses to children's behaviors in a manner that acknowledges and is sensitive to the role of past experiences in current behaviors."*

- Why is consistency important?
- Challenges

## Setting Limits

*A 10-year-old boy has been told by his caregiver that he can't have a snack before dinner. He begins to yell and demand a snack.*

1. Acknowledge the feeling behind the behavior
2. Name the unacceptable behavior
3. Name the limit or consequence
4. Suggest an alternative for current or future use

## Building Routines and Rituals

*"Work to build routine and rhythm into the daily lives of children and families."*

- Why?
- What are routines?
- What are rituals, traditions, and celebrations?





## **Building Routines into the Therapy Session**

Opening check-in  
Modulation activity  
Structured activity  
Free time  
Closing check-out  
Modulation activity  
Clean up



**Regulation**

## Self-Regulation

The capacity to effectively manage experience on many levels: cognitive, emotional, physiological, and behavioral



## The 3 Components of Self-Regulation in the ARC Model

### Affect Identification

Labeling emotions

### Modulation

Modifying physiological and emotional experience

### Affect Expression

Sharing one's emotional experience with others

## Affect Identification

Why is this important to address in children who have experienced trauma?

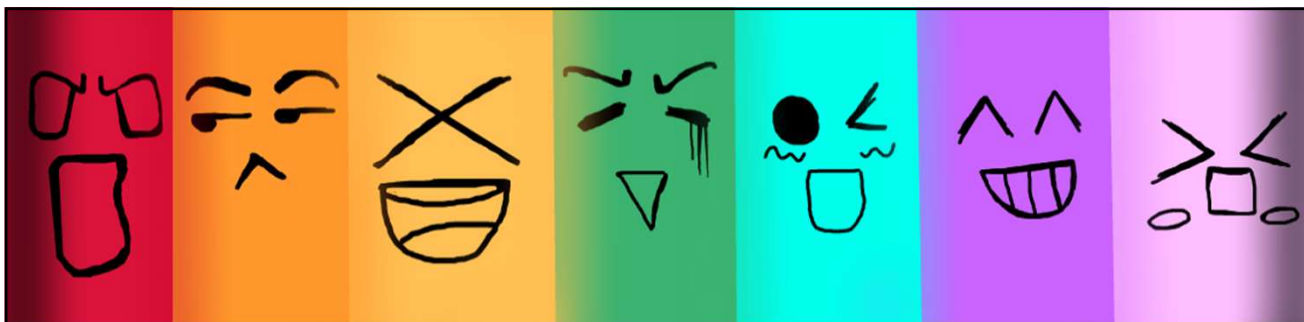
### Goals of identification:

- Build a vocabulary for emotional experience
- Build connections between identified emotion states and internal experiences



## Exercises for Building Affect Identification Skills

- Feelings flashcards
- Feelings charades
- Word play
- Feelings detective
- Body awareness
- What is in your head?
- Feelings book



## Feelings Flashcards

This exercise specifically targets:

- Identification of **emotions in self**
- Identification of **emotions in others**
- **Factors in the environment** that precede the emotions

## Feelings Flashcards Materials

- Drawings, magazine/book pictures, etc. that depict a range of emotions
- Child or clinician can make the cards



# Techniques

## Have the child identify and label the picture

- Go from basic to subtle
- Start with pictures that contain obvious affect
- Start with a small number of basic emotions
- Start with more subtle emotions or variations on a single emotion
  - Ex: Irritation, frustration, rage

## Have the child identify possible reasons for each emotion

## Have child identify things that might elicit those emotions

## Modulation

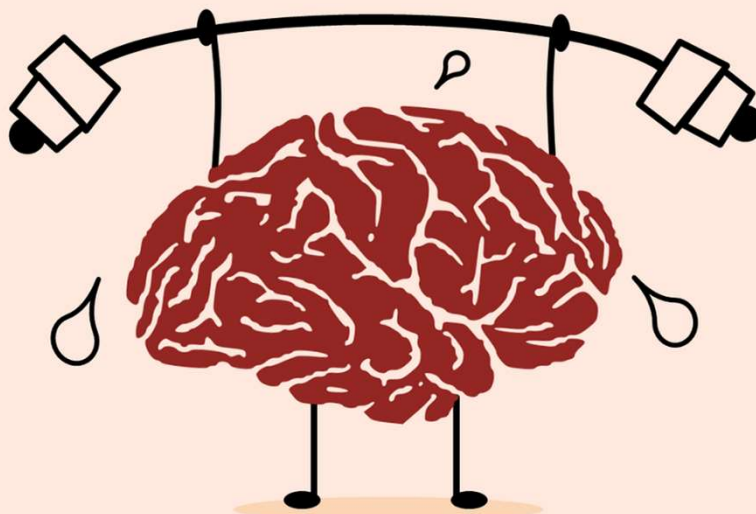
Why is this important to address in children with trauma?

- The ability to safely and effectively modulate emotion is often a key challenge for traumatized children



## Exercises for Modulating Arousal

- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Grounding
- Movement
- Muscle Relaxation
- Imagery



## Grounding Techniques for Down-Regulation

For early childhood:

- Magic wands
- Magic rocks
- Worry stones
- Piece of velvet cloth
- Glitter cream
- Pleasurable smell



## Grounding Techniques for Down-Regulation

### For middle childhood:

- Stress balls
- Wikki stix
- Lanyard string
- Grounding stone



## Grounding Techniques for Down-Regulation

### For adolescence:

- Mentally listing simple information
- Listening to music
- Writing or drawing
- Noticing what they see, hear, and feel





### Early childhood:

- Play "I spy"
- Have children describe a known, safe environment
- Have them notice a feather running up and down their arm
- Have children rub hands with glitter cream
- Have children do butterfly self-hugs
- Pretend the floor is sand and have children dig a hole with their toes



### Grounding Techniques for Up-Regulating

#### For middle childhood:

- Have children name 10 things they see in the room
- Have children describe their favorite (person, book, movie, tv show, food, etc.)
- Have children squeeze a stress ball



## Grounding Techniques for Up-Regulating

### For adolescents:

- Ask adolescents to tune in to and describe physical sensations
- Describe four, then three, then two, then one thing adolescent hears, sees, and feels
- Have adolescents describe something step by step



## Affect Expression

Why target affect expression?



## Affect Expression Tools

- Identifying Resources for Emotional Expression
- Initiating Communication
- Building Non-Verbal Communication Skills
- Building Verbal Communication Skills
- Self-Expression



## Self-Expression

Emotional Self-Expression

- Play
- Art
- Writing
- Movement
- Drama
- Music





## Competencies Derailed

- Interpersonal competencies
- Intrapersonal competencies
- Neurocognitive competencies
- Regulatory competencies

# A Developmental Framework

Early Childhood:

- Social Skills, Motor Skills, Learning Readiness

Middle Childhood:

- Social Skills, School Connection/Achievement, Personal Responsibility

Adolescence:

- Social Skills, Community Connection, Independent Functioning

## Executive Functioning

Delays and deficits in cortical development impact EF development.

These skills underlie successful completion of schoolwork, activities of daily living, even navigating social rituals.

Problem solving and analysis/planning of tasks are especially in need of support.



## Problem Solving Steps

1. Notice there is a problem
2. Establish basic safety and inhibit the danger response
3. Identify and understand the problem
4. Brainstorm possible solutions without judgement
5. Evaluate all the possible consequences (good or bad) of each solution then make a choice
6. Implement and evaluate solutions and revise as needed

## Recognizing situations to apply problem solving

1. "I can't do it! I am just going to fail anyway. Leave me alone!"
2. "I don't know why I am in trouble. I had to hit him. He wouldn't stop bothering me."
3. "I'm going to bite your face off!"
4. "No one likes me. They all just make fun of me but I don't care. I don't like them anyway!"



# Self-Development and Identity

## PROCESS not OUTCOME

- Self exists in relation to other people and to specific context and can be explored as past, present, future, positive or negative, unique or like others
  - Acknowledge and support group identities such as citizen, classmate, band member, etc as well as individual identities
  - Make space for “negative” selves and behaviors, allow natural consequences and problem solve as needed

### Trauma impacts:

- Negative experiences get taken into the self and used to define who they are and who they can be
- May need to detach from experiences or to compartmentalize some experiences so that there is not a coherent self so much as an “angry self”, “scared self”, “sad self”, “okay self”
- May not be willing to expand beyond what is known even if what is known is painful or dangerous

|             |   |   |
|-------------|---|---|
| Four Selves | 1. The Unique Self<br><br>Sense of what is special to the individual  | 2.) The Positive Self<br><br>Sense self-efficacy and self-worth   |
|             | 3.) The Coherent Self<br><br>Sense of self as continuous from past to future and across situations and states | 4.) The Future Self<br><br>Sense of self as having a future and to connect current choices to that future |

## Intervention in Self-Dev't and Identity

- “All About Me” book or wall
- “Try It Out” explorations
- Cultural and religious explorations and sharing
- Pride Wall in classroom and at home
- Power Book
- Superhero Self
- Reinforcement diets
- Aspects of Self masks or puzzles
- Mindfulness activities- yoga, 5 things, deep breathing
- Future self stories and drawings
- Growth mindset
- No Zero Sum days

## Tips for Families and School Personnel

- Actively engage with caregivers to use the same skills and skill building processes that you are teaching in class
- Teach the problem solving process
  - Consider modeling strategies with parents, administrators, and teachers
- Promote identifying and building a sense of self at home, in the classroom, and in extracurriculars
  - “Pride wall”
  - Photo albums of family, class, self
- Make sure that firsts and other life events are being documented in a way the child can keep and refer back to
- Encourage open sharing of frustrations in working with these concerns with children with trauma and appropriate ways to use that frustration to teach skills such as self-awareness and affect regulation