



Building Trauma-Informed Schools

*An Educational Training Program
To Support Students & Schools
Through Difficult Challenges*

Educators see the effects of trauma and toxic stress in school daily. A child acts out with little provocation. A previously outgoing student sits sullenly, refusing to engage with the teacher or classmates. The new transfer student has obsessive behaviors that make teaching more difficult.

OVERVIEW

Using Brain Science to Unlock a Student's Ability to Learn

Trauma and toxic stress affects how our brains develop, impairing a child's ability to regulate emotions, work with others or develop basic learning skills. The child could have chronic behavior problems in school or seriously lag behind classmates.

This training is based on the Neurosequential Model of Therapeutics (NMT), developed by the Child Trauma Academy. Designed for educators, the Neurosequential Model in Education (NME) approach draws on NMT to apply basic brain science concepts to the teaching and learning process.

Changing from "What's Wrong with You?" to "What Happened to You?"

Healthy development depends on our brain acquiring skills and knowledge in a very sequential way. Trauma or stress can interrupt that sequencing. Over time, those development gaps can result in a child who is unable to learn. By understanding how trauma and stress impact the way a child's brain responds to the world educators can better understand how to help each student be more successful.

Decreasing Challenges for Educators & Students

By helping educators understand the impact of trauma and stress on both students and teachers, this training can:

- Reduce stress in the classroom
- Increase a student's time in class
- Decrease suspensions and behavioral referrals
- Increase empathy for students and families



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Training Options & Additional Services

Level 1: Introduction to Trauma-Informed Care & Neurosequential Model in Education (NME)

“Trauma informed” is more than just a buzz word. Schools across the nation are seeking to be trauma informed and often required to do so. This training increases participants’ awareness of trauma and basic knowledge to create a trauma-sensitive environment. Participants are introduced to the impact trauma or stress has on the brain and how this affects a student’s ability to function in the school environment. Learn easy-to-use activities to help students self-regulate in the classroom.

Objectives:

- Learn to recognize and respond to trauma symptoms in a sensitive, empathetic manner.
- Understand how trauma impacts development across the lifespan, specifically cognitive functioning, and classroom learning.
- Learn skills to implement in the classroom to facilitate student regulation and learning.

4-hour training

Level 2: Understanding and Strengthening the Brain Through Environment, Routine, Structure and Relationships

Relationships are the vehicle for change, yet when we struggle to develop relationships it’s difficult to provide healing environments. Often we don’t recognize how the current environment or our approaches can hinder growth of a positive environment. Participants receive guidance on how to facilitate a healing environment for students who are hard to reach or emotionally closed off.

Objectives:

- Learn how the brain’s development is impacted during early childhood and the effect that has on relational capacity as the child matures.
- Discover how healthy and unhealthy relationships contribute to a person’s ability to regulate and achieve long-term success.
- Understand how to create a relational environment that’s conducive to healthy development and learning.

4-hour training

(Pre-requisite: Level 2 training)

Level 3: Advanced Concepts

Brain science is a fast-growing area of focus for those working with individuals who have been exposed to childhood adversity. Understanding the stress response system and circumstances that impact functioning is critical when trying to teach students in a school setting. Participants delve deeper into both brain science and the impact of stress and trauma, and learn additional skills to help students reach their greatest potential for learning.

Objectives:

- Increase understanding of events that lead to a sensitized stress response system
- Learn observable behaviors that suggest increased states of arousal
- Increase knowledge of the 8 specific skills connected to executive functioning

4-hour training *(Pre-requisite: Level 3 training)*

Level 4: 6 Core Strengths of Healthy Development

Are your teachers struggling to understand the lack of “respect” some students display in the classroom? This training provides a foundation for understanding how to promote healthy childhood development and reduce the risk for social, emotional and behavioral problems. Health promotion is violence prevention!

Objectives:

- Identify the six core strengths and understand how they build on each other sequentially.
- Increase understanding of the relational circumstances that promote healthy development and violence prevention.
- Leave with ideas to nurture tolerance and respect for staff, and students and their families.

4-hour training *(Pre-requisite: Level 1 training)*

SCHEDULE TRAINING OR LEARN MORE:

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Additional Services

Consultation

Work with an NME/NMT-trained consultant to develop a specific implementation strategy that's best for your school or district. Through periodic meetings with the consultant during the school year, your staff learns strategies to better meet the needs of the most challenging students and circumstances. The consultation period is for a maximum of one year, but may be condensed based on school/district needs.

The 11-hour consultation contract includes:

- Two-hour initial orientation meeting with school administrator to help identify:
 - Site-specific opportunities to take training to the next level, and
 - Best staff mix (principals/counselors/teachers/para-professionals/support staff) to create a team to implement the training concepts that lead to creating a trauma-informed school.
- Nine one-hour meetings with your team focus on:
 - Developing specific strategies and interventions for your most challenging students or classrooms.
 - Student-specific consultation to identify ways to support the family, build teacher empathy with the student and foster a healing environment in the classroom.

Brain Development Assessments

Trauma or stress can significantly impact key areas of a child's brain development, impairing his/her executive functioning level and affecting both behavior and ability to learn. Using the "mini-metric" brain assessment tool, developed by Child Trauma Academy, Great Circle's NME-trained staff assesses which areas of a child's brain development are impacted and creates child-specific recommendations that facilitate learning, improve behaviors and reduce classroom stress.

The mini-metric assessment includes: 1) review of school files, with a focus on behavioral concerns or management plans, as well as IEPs and other appropriate assessments; 2) interviews with key staff and parents/guardians, and 3) classroom observation. Educators receive specific activities or interventions to help the child create the necessary neural pathways to improve his/her functioning, in areas such as attention or distractibility, fine and large motor skills, emotional regulation and impulsivity, relational skills, math and logic, and reading or communication/verbal skills. *NOTE: This is not a stand-alone assessment that will result in a specific diagnosis.*

Comfort Kits

Specific sensory-based activities or interventions help stimulate specific areas of a child's brain, allowing him/her to improve both behavior and ability to learn. Comfort Kits contain a variety of somatosensory items for use in the classroom or other settings, or in conjunction with a brain development assessment.

Each Comfort Kit contains more than 30 somatosensory items to help educators "quiet" a student's lower brain so the brain's thinking part can learn! Kit items may change periodically, but always include a variety of weighted/textured balls and brushes, fidget toys, music/noise makers, stretching bands, and "therapeutic" putty of varying firmness. There are multiples of many items, so the kit can help several students, or be shared among a team.