

# Link Between Historical Trauma & Health Outcomes for Native Americans

Presented by:

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# Adverse Childhood Events

- ACES is the largest and first research study that established a direct association between childhood trauma and adult ill health. The study found that the greater the number of adverse childhood experiences, the greater the possibility of disabilities and dysfunction in adult life.
- ACEs Questionnaire (Felitti et al., 1998) is a **10-item measure used to measure childhood trauma**. The questionnaire assesses 10 types of childhood trauma measured in the ACE Study. Five are personal: physical abuse, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect.
- Note that there are many other sources of childhood trauma that are not included in the above-mentioned ACEs scoring tool. For example, exposure to community violence or food insecurity is not included in the ACE score.

**Finding Your ACE Score**

**While you were growing up, during your first 18 years of life:**

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often...**  
Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you?  
**or**  
Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household **often or very often...**  
Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you?  
**or**  
**Ever** hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you **ever...**  
Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way?  
**or**  
Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
4. Did you **often or very often** feel that ...  
No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special?  
**or**  
Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Did you **often or very often** feel that ...  
You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you?  
**or**  
Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
6. Were your parents **ever** separated or divorced?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
7. Was your mother or stepmother:  
**Often or very often** pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her?  
**or**  
**Sometimes, often, or very often** kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard?  
**or**  
**Ever** repeatedly hit at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic or who used street drugs?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt suicide?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_
10. Did a household member go to prison?  
Yes No If yes enter 1 \_\_\_\_\_

**Now add up your "Yes" answers: \_\_\_\_\_ This is your ACE Score.**

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# What Impact Do ACEs Have?

As the number of ACEs increases, so does the risk of negative health outcomes



Possible Risk Outcomes:

## BEHAVIOR



Lack of Physical Activity



Smoking



Alcoholism



Substance Abuse



Missed Work

## PHYSICAL & MENTAL HEALTH



Severe Obesity



Diabetes



Depression



Suicide Threats



STIs



Heart Disease



Cancer



Stroke



COPD

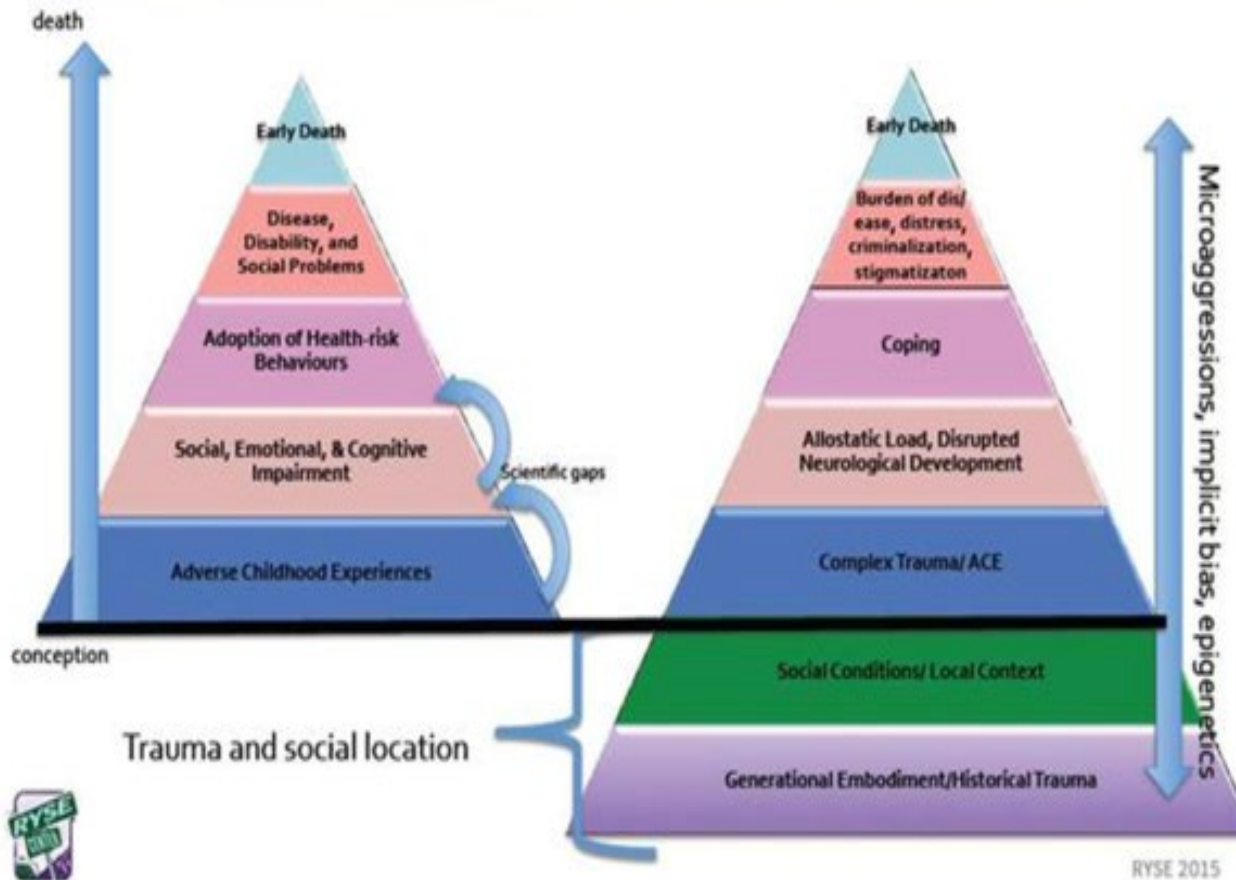


Broken Bones

# Trauma and Social Location

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Historical Trauma/Embodiment



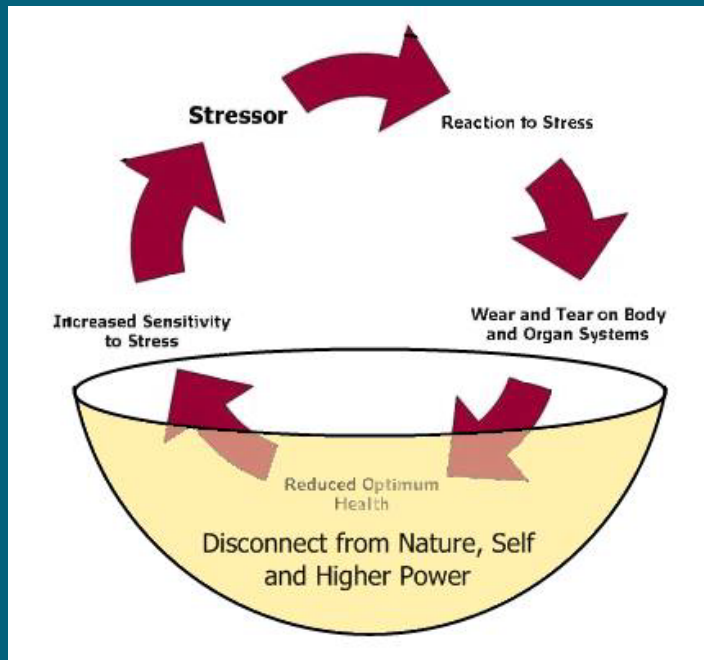
# Adverse Childhood Events

- 64% of adults report at least 1 ACE
- 1 in 5 adults report 3 or more ACEs
- 1 in 6 adults experienced 4 or more ACEs
- In one study on Native Americans 78% reported at least 1 ACE; 40% reported at least 2 ACEs
- Those who experienced 4 or more ACEs are 12 times more likely to have negative health outcomes
- Females, younger adults, sexual minorities and multiracial individuals are at greater risk for ACEs
- At least 5 of the top 10 leading causes of death are associated with trauma
- Preventing ACEs could reduce the number of adults with depression by as much as 44%

# Adverse Childhood Events

- Statistics on people who have experienced 4 or more ACEs without intervention:
  - 5.13 x more likely to be depressed
  - 2.93 x more likely to smoke
  - 2.42 x more likely to develop chronic pulmonary lung disease
  - 3.23 x more likely to binge drink, etc.

# Stress Response Cycle



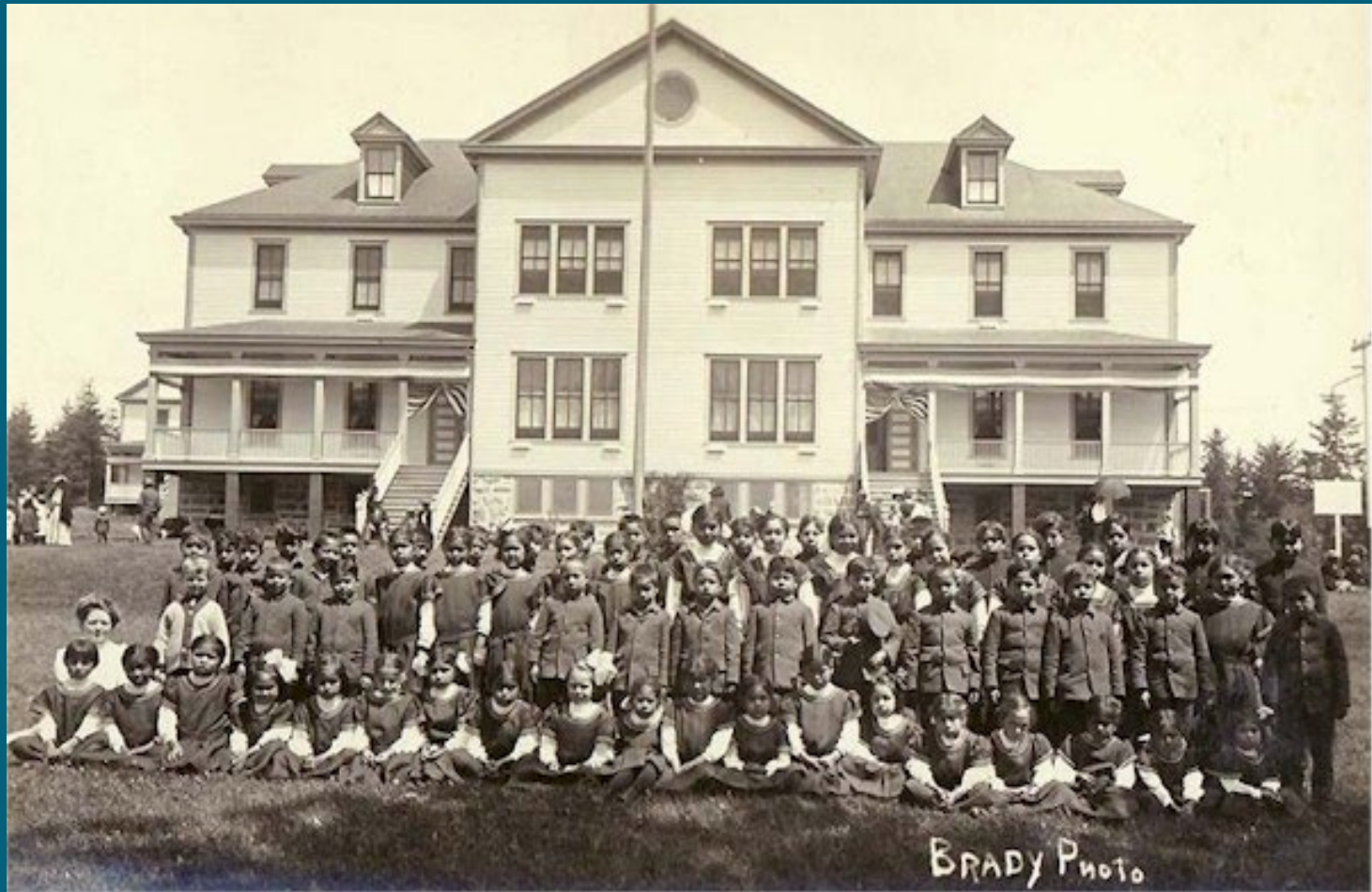
- ❖ Stress is a normal response to challenging life events
- ❖ Stress response is meant to be there during threat and then diminish/recover after threat
- ❖ Chronic stress breaks down bodily functions and leads to illness, disease and problems with mood, etc.
- ❖ The only way to prevent these is through routine self-care

# Types of Stress Responses

- **Positive Stress Response** is a normal response to challenges such as attending a new school or taking a test. It involves brief increases in heart rate and mild elevations in stress hormones, which quickly return to normal.
- **Tolerable Stress Response** results from more serious events such as a car accident and results in greater activation of the body's alarm system. When a person has sufficient support, the body can recover from these effects.
- **Toxic Stress** can occur when a person is exposure to severe, frequent, or prolonged trauma without adequate support from trusted helpers. It can affect learning, behavior and result in long term health problems. In children, toxic stress can result in changes in the brain's architecture and function.



# The Indian Boarding School



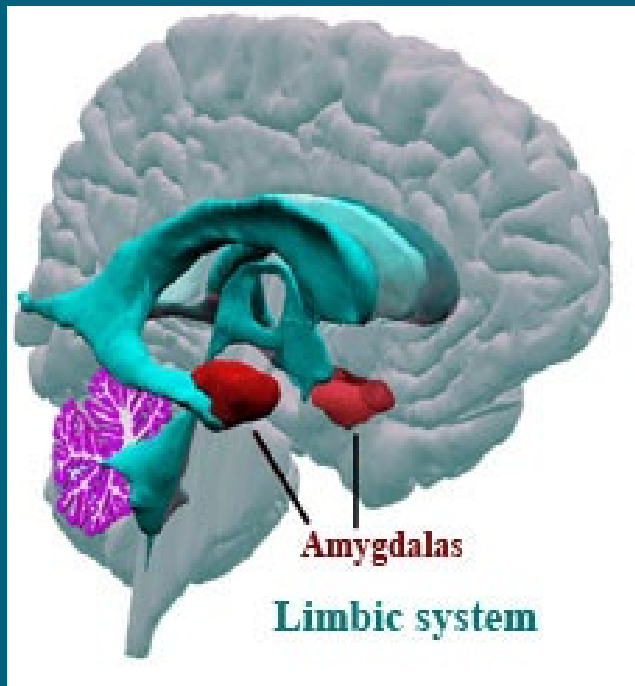
# Understanding Trauma: Impact on Development

- “What fires together wires together”
- Sensitive periods (when there is the most neuroplasticity) of brain development occur during childhood. Therefore, trauma experienced during childhood is particularly harmful to brain development.
- Childhood trauma can change the structure *and* functioning of a child’s brain.

## Activity Across Brain Regions

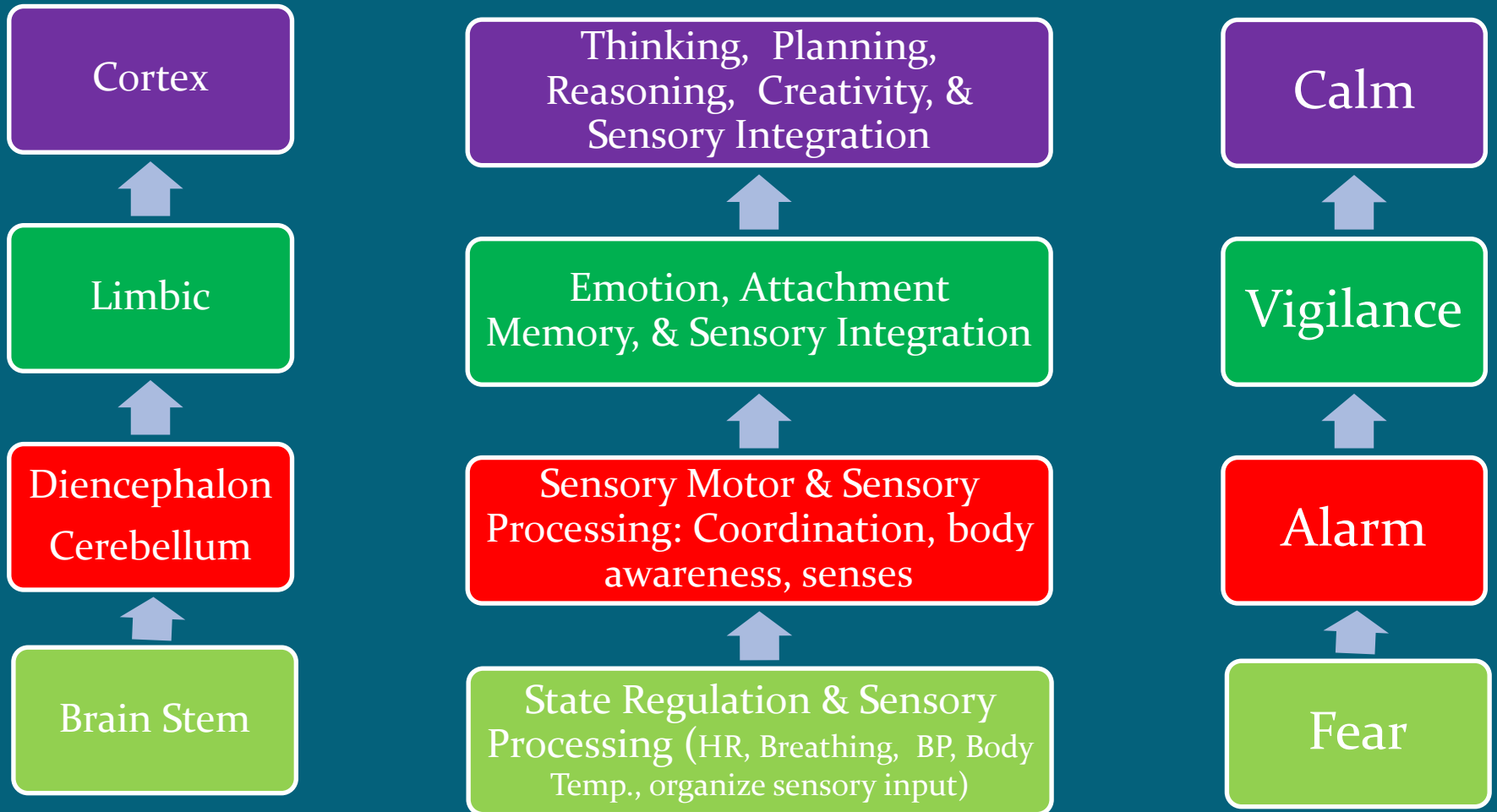
Brain Region	Functions	Critical Period	Experiences needed	Functional Maturity
Cortex	Thinking, Planning, Reasoning, Creativity, & Sensory Integration	3 - 6 years	Complex conversations, social interactions, exploration, safe, fed, secure	Adult
Limbic	Emotion, Attachment Memory, & Sensory Integration	1 - 4 years	Complex movement, social experience, narrative	Puberty
Diencephalon	Sensory Motor & Sensory Processing :	6 months - 2 years	Complex rhythmic movement, simple narrative, affection	Childhood
Brain Stem	State Regulation & Sensory Processing	In utero - 9 months	Rhythmic, patterned input, engaged caregiving	Infancy

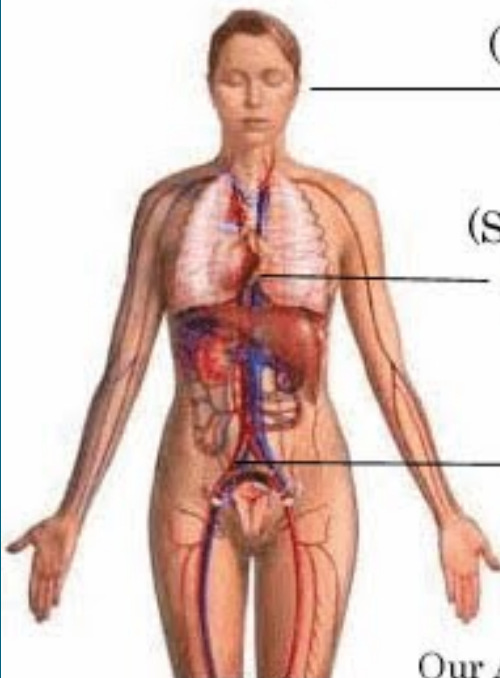
# Amygdala



- Part of the limbic system
- Important role in expression and modulation of aggression
- Survival based
- “Boss” of the limbic system
- Activates fight-flight-freeze response
- Overactive in traumatized children, creating a “constant state of emergency”

# Fight, Flight, or Freeze





(VVC) Ventral Vagal Complex: Signaling System for motion, emotion & communication. (Our Social Engagement System)

(SNS) Sympathetic Nervous System: Mobilization System for Flight or Fight Behaviors. (Our Aggressive Defense System)

(DVC) Dorsal Vagal Complex: Immobilization System for Conservation Withdrawal. (Our Passive Defense System)

Our Autonomic Nervous System fires muscular tensions triggered by feedback signals from the external & internal world at millisecond speeds below conscious awareness. These muscles tensions fire our Thoughts?

# Trauma-Informed Strategies

- Trauma-Informed Care
  - **Understanding the prevalence and impacts** on health and behavior
  - **Recognizing the effects** on health and behavior
  - **Training** on responding with best practices
  - **Integrating knowledge** into policies, procedures and practices
  - **Avoiding retraumatizing** by approaching students with non-judgmental support
- TIC Principles
  - Create a culture of physical and emotional **safety** of students and staff
  - **Build and maintain trust** among & between students and staff
  - **Recognize** the signs and symptoms of trauma-related behaviors
  - Promote **student-centered** education
  - Ensure teacher and student **collaboration**
  - **Culturally sensitive** education (race, ethnicity, cultural background, gender identity, etc).

# Trauma-Informed Care

## 3 Pillars of Trauma-Informed

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