

***Building a Trauma-Informed Nation***  
***Barb Trader***  
***Executive Director, TASH***



# Behavior is *Communication!*

THE KIDS WHO NEED  
THE MOST LOVE WILL  
ASK FOR IT IN THE MOST  
UNLOVING OF WAYS.

-unknown

Lemon Lime Adventures

# Main Points

- A high percentage of the nation's children experience trauma during their school years (25-68%)
- Aversive/ coercive school environments can traumatize and re-traumatize children
- Aversive/ coercive school environments can re-traumatize those in the education workforce who have experienced trauma, and
- **We Can Change This!**

# What Experiences Cause Trauma?

- Natural Disasters
- Forced Displacement
- War / Terrorism
- Emotional, Physical, or Sexual Abuse or Assault
- Serious Accident or Illness /Medical Procedure
- Victim or Witness of Violence (Domestic, Community, School, Interpersonal)

# What Causes Trauma at School?

- Systematic segregation of students with disabilities from an early age (Harvey, K. (2012). *Trauma-Informed Behavioral Interventions*. Washington, DC. AAIDD)
- Bullying, ridicule
- “Tracking” – low expectations
- Culturally insensitive/ unresponsive
- Use of harsh disciplinary practices
- Restraint and seclusion – witnessing or experiencing

# Call to End Aversive Responses to Behavior – 1990

*Clearly, the time has come for limiting the use of stimuli and procedures that are painful, damaging, and dehumanizing.*

Horner, R.H., Dunlap, G., Koegel, R.L., Carr, E.G., Sailor, W., Anderson, J. A., Albin, r. W. & O'Neill, R. E. (1990) "Towards a technology of 'nonaversive behavioural support'", *Research and Practice for Persons with Severe Disabilities* . 15 , 125- 132, Washington, D.C.

# Family Activism



# Joint Guidance – ED and DOJ

- The Departments strongly support schools in their efforts to **create and maintain safe and orderly educational environments that allow our nation's students to learn and thrive**. Many schools have adopted comprehensive, appropriate, and effective programs demonstrated to: (1) reduce disruption and misconduct; (2) support and reinforce positive behavior and character development; and (3) help students succeed.

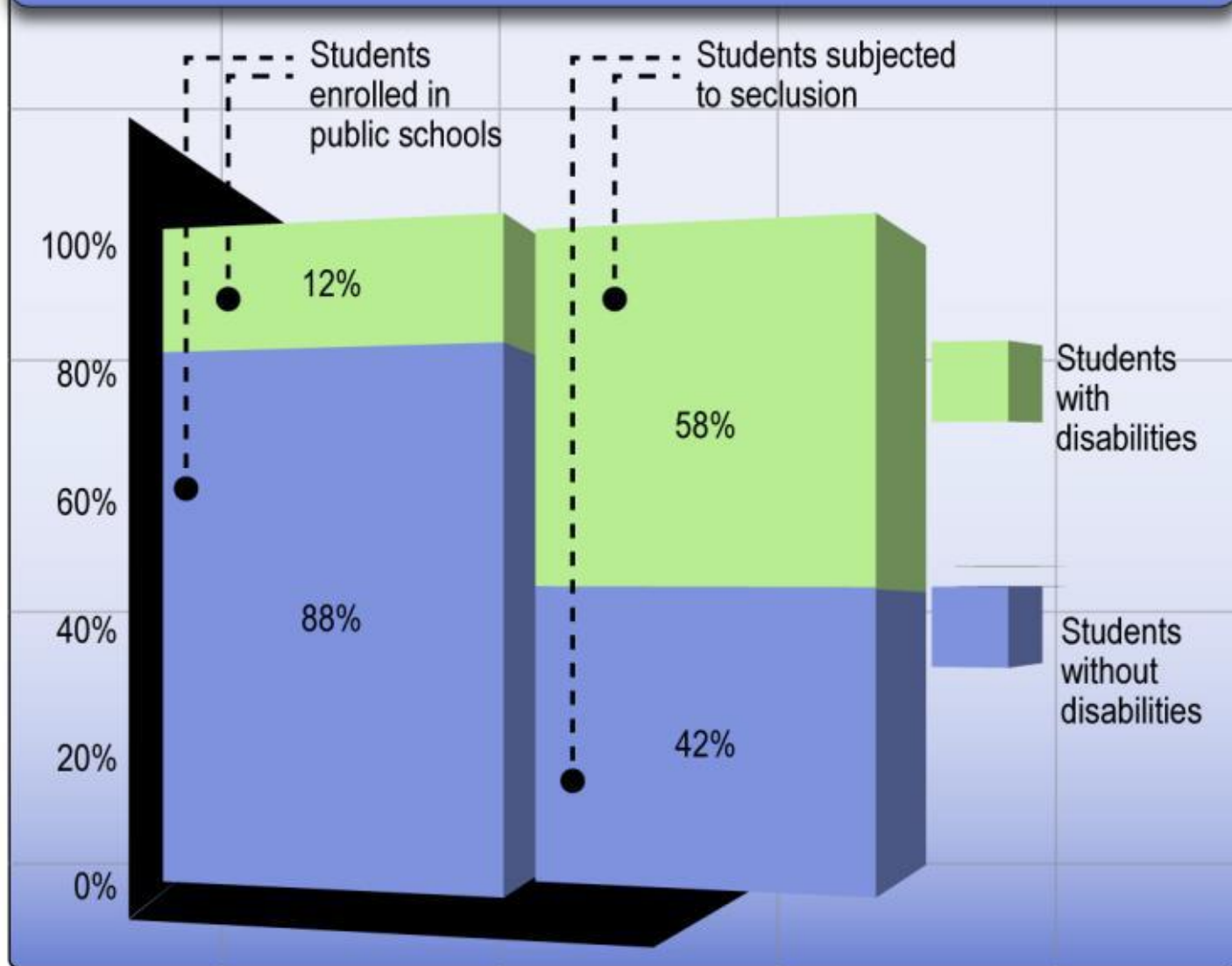
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.html>



# Joint Guidance, cont.

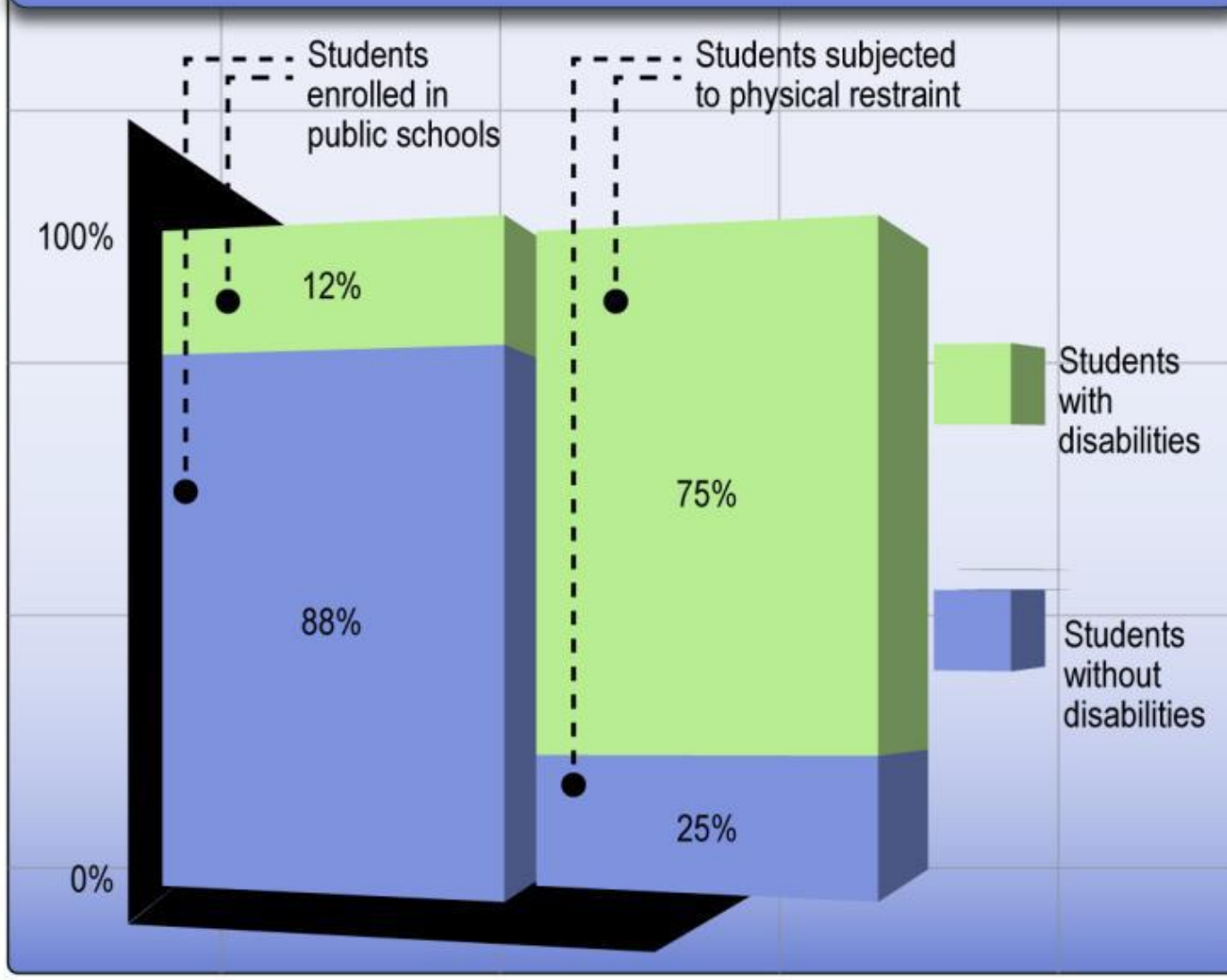
- **Studies have suggested a correlation between exclusionary discipline policies and practices and an array of serious educational, economic, and social problems**, including school avoidance and diminished educational engagement;<sup>9</sup> decreased academic achievement;<sup>10</sup> increased behavior problems;<sup>11</sup> increased likelihood of dropping out;<sup>12</sup> substance abuse;<sup>13</sup> and involvement with juvenile justice systems.<sup>14</sup>

## Students subjected to seclusion, by disability status (IDEA)



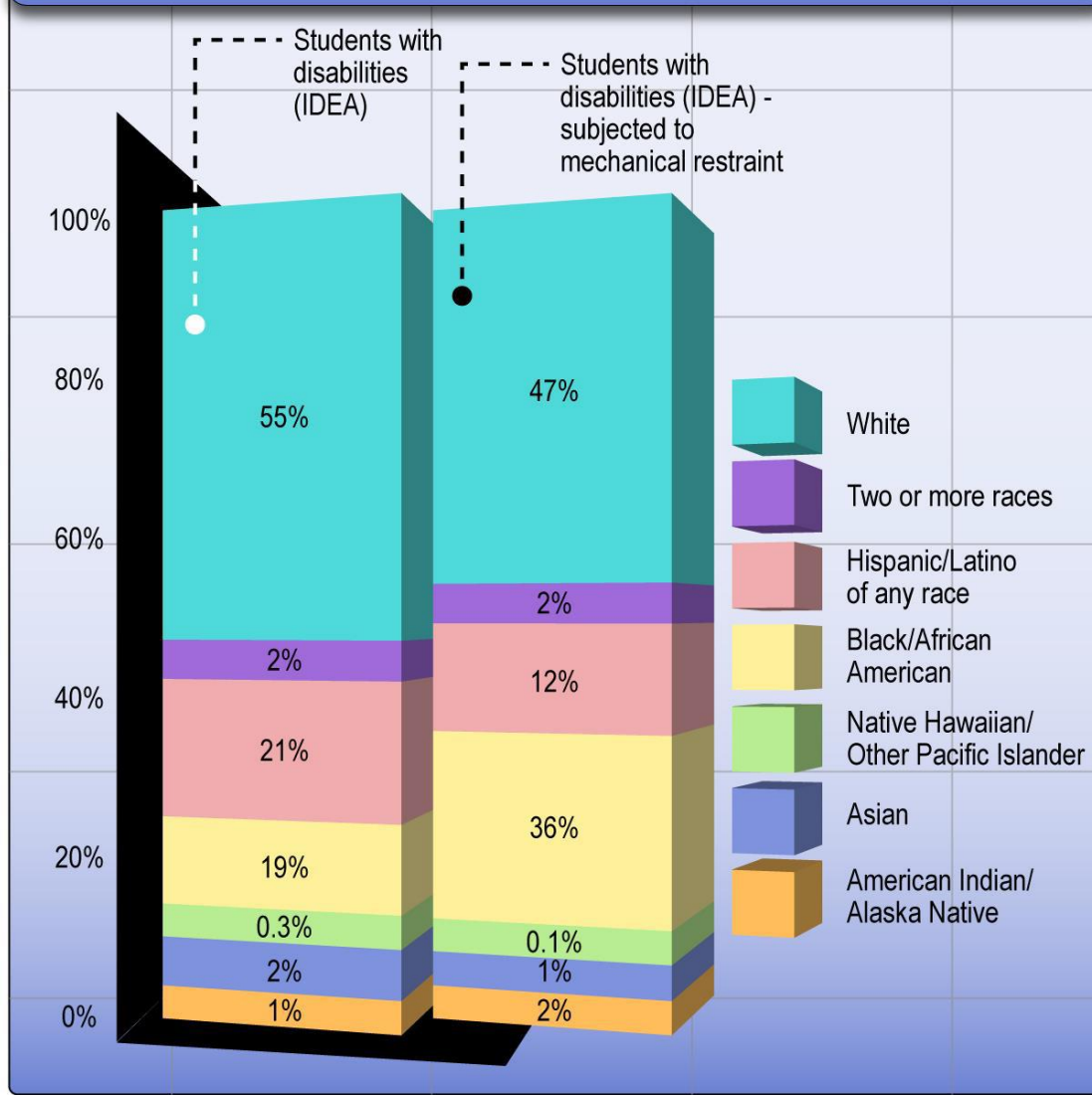
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12.

### Students subjected to physical restraint, by disability status (IDEA)



SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12.

### Students with disabilities subjected to mechanical restraint, by race/ethnicity



**SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, Civil Rights Data Collection, 2011-12.**

# Restraint and Seclusion Frequently Used for Reasons Other Than Emergencies

<i>Staff Reasons Stated for Using Restraint</i>	<i>Staff Reports</i>
1. Noncompliance	48.4%
2. Leaving Assigned Area	19.4%
3. Disrespect	7.3%
4. Property Misuse	7.3%
5. Disrupting Class	6.5%
<b>6. Physical Aggression</b>	<b>3.2%</b>
7. Threats	3.2%
8. Horseplay	3.2%
9. Harassment	0.8%

<i>Staff Reasons Stated for Using Seclusion</i>	<i>Staff Reports</i>
1. Leaving Assigned Area	32.6%
2. Noncompliance	31.9%
3. Disrupting Class	11.2%
4. Property Misuse	10.1%
5. Disrespect	4.5%
<b>6. Physical Aggression</b>	<b>2.8%</b>
7. Harassment	2.4%
8. Threats	2.0%

Ryan, J.B., Peterson, R.L., Tetreault, G. & Van der Hagen, E. (2007). Reducing seclusion timeout and restraint procedures with at-risk youth. *Journal of At-Risk Issues*. 13(1), 7-12.

# Which Students are Restrained and Secluded?

- **75%:** students with disabilities (12% of overall student population – mostly with labels ID/D; ADHD; ASD; EBD)
- TASH survey:
  - **69%:** 6-10 years old
  - **65%:** Segregated classroom setting
  - **50%:** Non-verbal or difficult to understand
  - **93%:** Emotionally traumatized
  - **66%:** Parents rarely (27.4) or never (39) contacted



# Brianna, Grade 2



One morning, I got mad and said I wasn't going to school. When you have problems with talking, you just say "no" in the loudest and easiest way possible. I have friends and I know children who have just fought back. **Violence by children with severe disabilities is almost always in response to abuse.**





I wish my teacher  
knew how much I miss  
my dad because he got  
deported to Mexico when  
I was 3 years old and  
I haven't seen  
him in 6 years. I wish  
my teacher knew how much

© Twitter



# *Restraint and Seclusion: Hear Our Stories*

<http://stophurtingkids.com/the-film/>

TASH's educational work on prevention of restraint and seclusion is supported by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, [www.samhsa.gov](http://www.samhsa.gov)

# The Goal of School

College and Career Ready!!

Academic and behavioral success!

# Impact of Trauma

from <http://www.azed.gov/prevention-programs/files/2013/12/trauma-informed-schools-barb-iversen.pdf>

## On Behavior

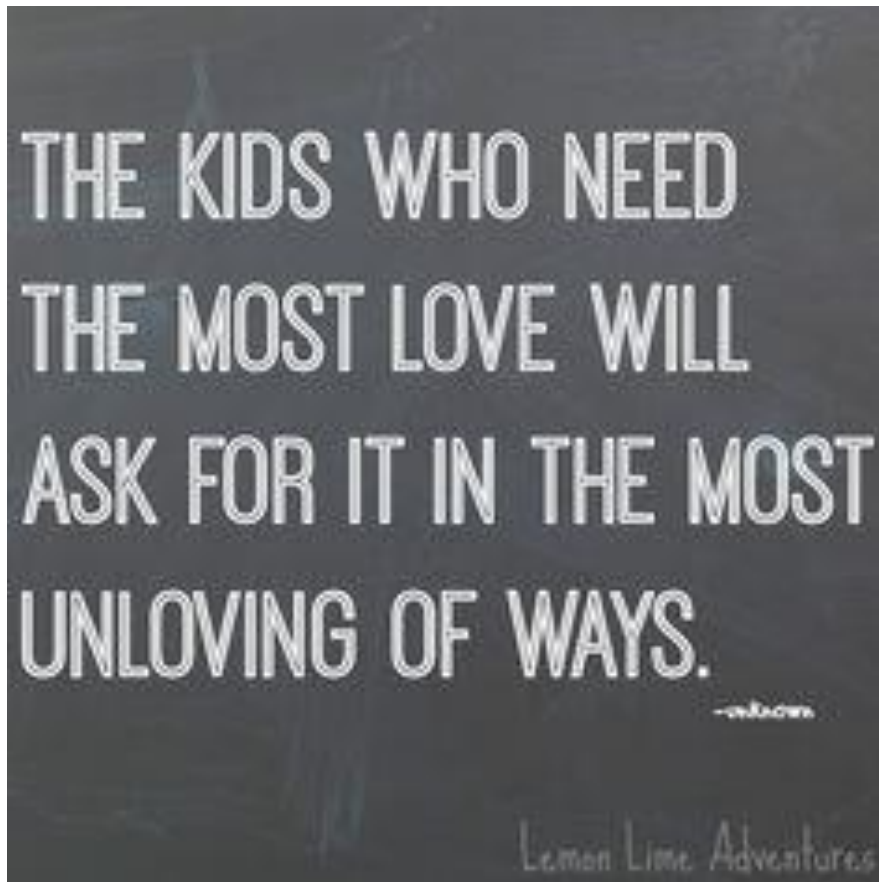
- Anxious, withdrawn
- Difficulty with impulse control
- Impaired short term memory
- Confusion, disorientation
- Acting out
- On edge
- Day dreaming

## On Learning

- Impaired concentration, memory
- Intrusive thoughts
- Interrupted sleep
- Executive functioning deficits (goal setting, organizing, planning, etc.)
- Poor relationships with school staff
- Abnormally high levels of stress hormones.



# Trauma Informed Practices in a School Setting

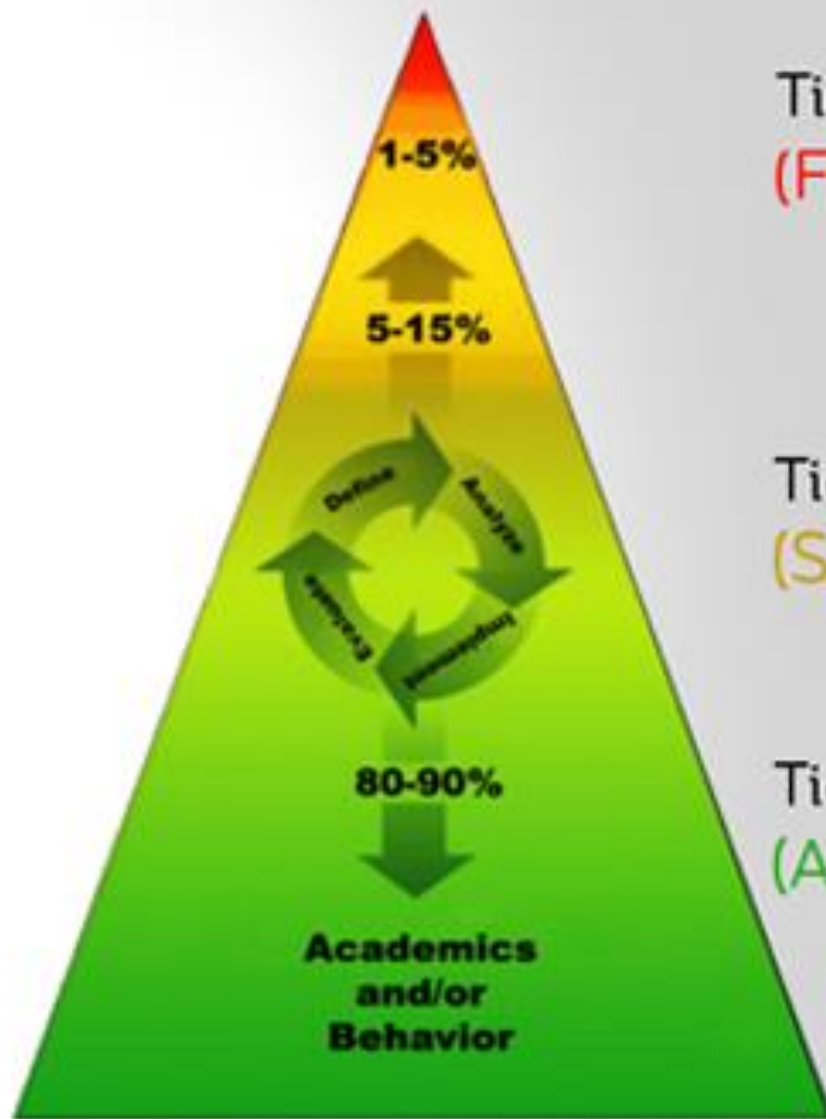


- Shift in thinking and practice.
- Understanding of how trauma impacts the individual
- Understanding symptoms as attempts to cope
- Avoidance of retraumatization

# Multi-tiered Systems of Support

A Multi-Tiered System of Supports (**MTSS**) is a

- systemic,
- continuous- improvement framework in which
- data-based problem-solving and decision making is practiced across
- all levels of the educational system for
- supporting students



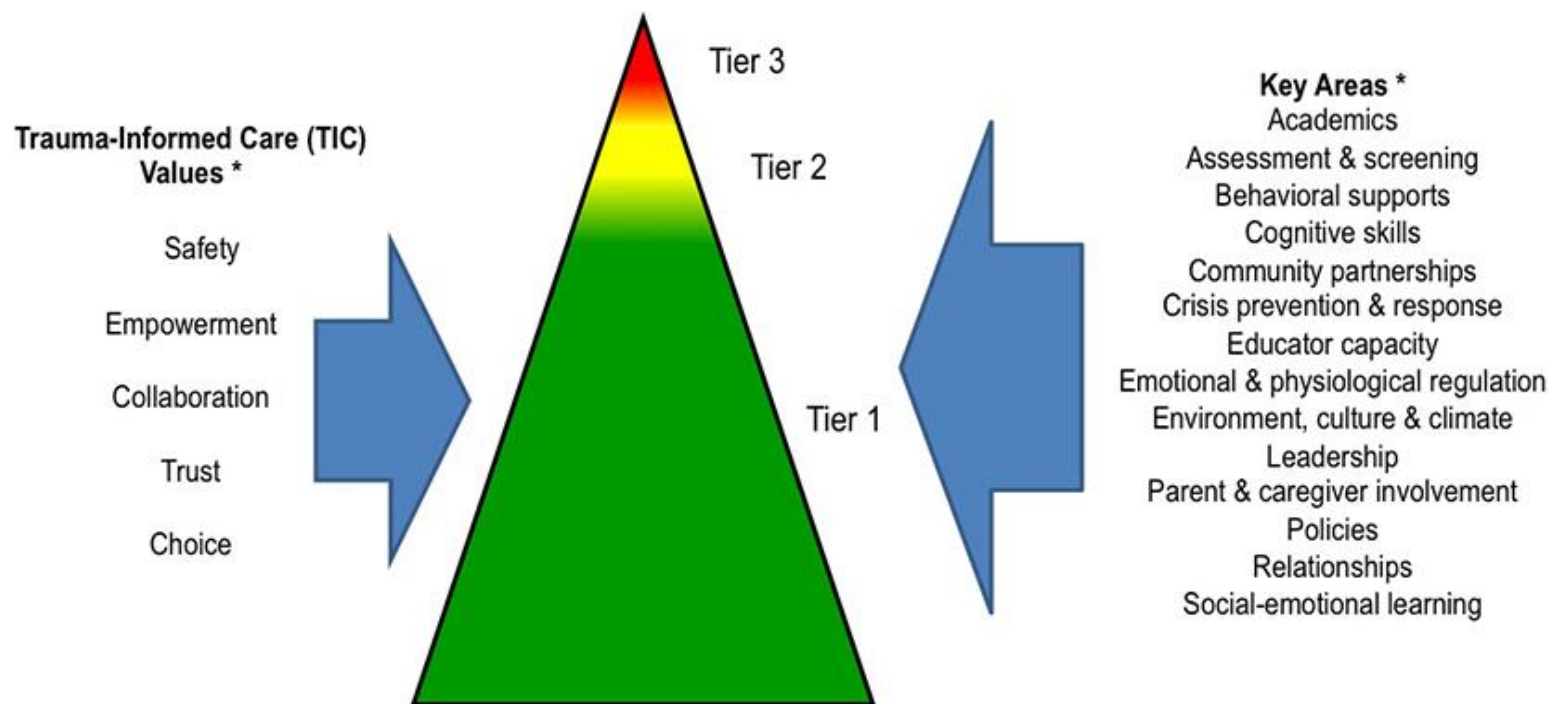
Tier III: Intensive Interventions  
(Few Students)

Tier II: Targeted Interventions  
(Some Students)

Tier I: Universal Instruction  
(All Students)



## Using the PBIS Framework to Support the Learning of Students Affected by Trauma



Tier 1 – Universal strategies & instruction for all students

Tier 2 – Additional supports for students with milder symptoms of trauma or in high-risk groups

Tier 3 – Intensive & ongoing interventions for students deeply impacted by trauma

\* TIC Values & Key Areas apply across all 3 tiers of the PBIS Framework.

TIC Values are from Fallot & Harris, Community Connections, [www.ccdc1.org](http://www.ccdc1.org)

[http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw\\_mhtrauma](http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_mhtrauma)

# Avoiding Re-Traumatization

- Help teachers understand that children may not be able to express their suffering in ways that adults can understand.
- Emphasize the importance of helping children feel safe.
- Create support systems for teachers to develop classroom strategies for addressing the needs of traumatized children.
- Adapt school curricula and procedures to respond to the needs of traumatized children.
- Develop protocols for early identification and services before children are at risk for discipline or school failure

# What works – Systems Approach

- Administrators must embrace their roles as leaders of the culture of a school
- Teachers need training and support
- Systems must be culturally responsive and engage families
- Teachers need TIME for planning and collaboration
- Each child needs to be known and understood – this takes time but prevents many problems

# What Works – Systems Approach

- A quality MTSS system includes a combination of PBIS, Behavioral Instruction, and Trauma-Informed Practices, integrated together, to develop the culture necessary for children and adults to thrive
- Students with behavioral manifestation of disability learn best in inclusive classrooms where other children can model expectations

# What Works – Systems Approach

- Use of Data – helps identify children who are struggling
- Early identification – children either withdraw or act out when experiencing trauma
- A pro-active vs. reactive approach; TEACH children how to behave and how to cope
  - Children can exhibit behaviors that are a manifestation of the disability
  - Many children need behavioral *instruction* in order to live up to behavioral expectations

# What Works? Time to Implement!



<https://www.deming.org/theman/theories/pdsacycle>

# What Works? Understanding the Nature of Behavior (VS. Control)

Ask – What happened to you? Or, why did you do that?

NOT – what is wrong with you?

To HEAL – children need:

- Safety
- Empowerment
- Connection

# Challenging Behavior Communicates....

- *Pain or discomfort*
- *Frustration*
- *Anxiety*
- *Fear*
- *Threatened*
- *Doesn't understand*
- *Distrust*
- *Desire for something*
- *Need for stimulation*

*Help develop communication skills!*

*Find out "why?"*



# All Behavior Has a Purpose

- Behavior doesn't *just happen for no reason at all*
- There are always reasons for challenging behaviors, even if we do not know what they are right now.
- **Q:** What purpose does the behavior serve for the individual?



# School Successes

<http://tash.org/blog/2012/07/12/recap-of-senate-help-committee-hearing-on-restraint-seclusion/>

## Montgomery County Schools (SW Virginia)

- Commitment to create a different culture, and end use of aversive strategies
- Took on a process for change
- Developed shared vision and structure
- Vision: inclusive, positive classroom environments

# Montgomery Schools – Change Structure

Staff training *emphasis* on prevention

- **Inclusive** classes, modeling from classmates
- **Effective** evidence-based practices: PBIS, including FBAs and BIPs
- PLANNING for each student; more in-depth support to those who needed it
- Coaching from in-house PBIS expert
- Data-based decision making

*“Inside these walls....*

*We discover through the power of positive reinforcement each  
child will find success.”*

<http://centennial.coe.lehigh.edu/>



# Centennial School Outcomes

- AY 1997-98: 1,064 restraints, No data on seclusion
- AY 1998-99: 327 restraints, 15,744 minutes of seclusion
- AY 1999-2000 to 2011
  - **0 restraints**
  - **0 minutes of seclusion**

# At the School Level -- Keys to Success

- Leader commitment to change – there are no bad kids! Behavior is communication!
- Staff buy-in, facilitated through education and communication; set goals together
- Support from skilled external (university) or internal staff

# Keys to Success (cont.)

- All-staff training on the nature of trauma, PBIS theory, and practical steps for implementation
- Implement new practices – communicate with students and parents, share goals of change and their role
- Early intervention! First three years of school – help develop successful strategies for later years
- Continue training – offer teachers “just-in-time” coaching and problem solving

# What is Possible?

<https://vimeo.com/55655036>

Video about Thaysa Lumingkewas, an 8-year-old girl. This film highlights the power of presuming competence, differentiated instruction and augmentative and alternative communication.

Thaysa has autism and thrives at Maple Wood Elementary School in Somersworth, NH. The school has implemented Response to Intervention (RII), Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL).



# Other Resources

- [www.pbis.org](http://www.pbis.org)
- Advancing Education Effectiveness: Interconnecting School Mental Health and School-wide Positive Behavior Support,  
<http://www.pbis.org/common/cms/files/Current%20Topics/Final-Monograph.pdf>
- <http://www.azed.gov/prevention-programs/files/2013/12/trauma-informed-schools-barb-iversen.pdf>
- [http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw\\_mhtrauma](http://sspw.dpi.wi.gov/sspw_mhtrauma)

<http://stophurtingkids.com>

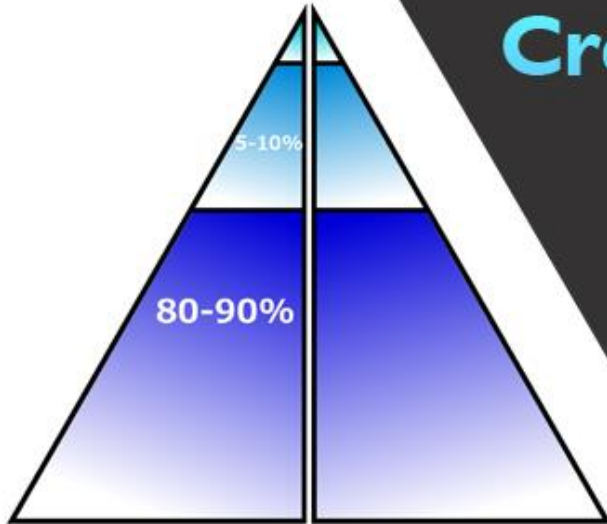
Film, resources, state-by-state analysis

Join the Campaign at  
[stophurtingkids.com](http://stophurtingkids.com)



The Campaign to End Restraint and Seclusion Abuse in Schools

# Webinar Series, Sept. 24 – Oct. 22



## Creating School Cultures Where All Students Thrive

*A Series for Education Leaders*

3:30-5 EDT, Thursdays, 9/24-10/22

Webinar Series Co-hosted By:



**TASH**



National Association of  
Elementary School  
**Principals**

# Ask Yourself:

- What is the person trying to **communicate**?
- What is another way that he or she can **communicate** this to others?
- What can s/he do to get their wants and needs met in **socially appropriate** ways?



**Nelson Mandela:**  
*There can be  
no keener  
revelation of a  
society's soul  
than the way  
in which it  
treats its  
children.*



# Thank you!

- Barb Trader
- Executive Director
- TASH
- [btrader@tash.org](mailto:btrader@tash.org)
- 202.540.9013