



**HANDLE WITH CARE MISSOURI
MJJA SPRING CONFERENCE
MAY 2022**



Agenda for Today

- Handle with Care Overview
- Handle with Care for Law Enforcement
 - Handle with Care for Schools
- Handle with Care for Mental Health
 - How we start

HWC Overview





Handle With Care

- A program aimed at ensuring that children who are exposed to crime, violence or abuse receive appropriate interventions so they can succeed in school to the best of their ability.
- Research shows that trauma can undermine children's ability to learn, form relationships and function appropriately in the classroom.

FOCUS

BEHAVE APPROPRIATELY

LEARN

Who Created HWC?

In 2012, HANDLE WITH CARE was created in a subcommittee of the West Virginia Children's Justice Task Force in Partnership with the U.S. Attorneys Office for the Southern District of West Virginia as part of a Defending Childhood Initiative.

Today, HANDLE WITH CARE has been implemented in 40 states.

HOW DID HWC GET TO MISSOURI?

The Missouri Juvenile Justice Association submitted a grant proposal to the Missouri Department of Public Safety, asking for federal Title II funds to hire a School Response Coordinator to work on interrupting the School to Prison Pipeline in Missouri.

The School Response Coordinator is responsible for implementing a three-pronged approach to help law enforcement, schools, and juvenile officers throughout the state.

The over-arching goal of the grant project is to reduce the number of youth unnecessarily inserted into the juvenile justice system in Missouri.

HOW DID HWC GET TO MISSOURI?

The three phases of the project are:

1. Work with law enforcement and schools to introduce trauma informed responses to behavioral incidents. We'll do this by developing a HANDLE WITH CARE response system
2. Assist law enforcement, juvenile officers, and schools in developing Memorandums of Understanding outlining agreed upon responses to youth misbehavior and low level delinquency offenses
3. Provide technical assistance and training to law enforcement, schools and juvenile officers on recognizing and responding to trauma, understanding roles and responsibilities, and developing best practices for diverting youth who are potentially eligible for referral to the juvenile officer.

HOW DID HWC GET TO MISSOURI?

MJJA was awarded the Title II funding in April, 2021

The School Response Coordinator was hired in late July, 2021

We are currently working on introducing HANDLE WITH CARE to any interested school district in Missouri

We are also working with districts on Truancy Reduction responses and the development of MOUs

We are working with MSBA's Center for Education Safety on developing training to assist law enforcement and schools in understanding the roles and responsibilities of the juvenile justice and child welfare systems.

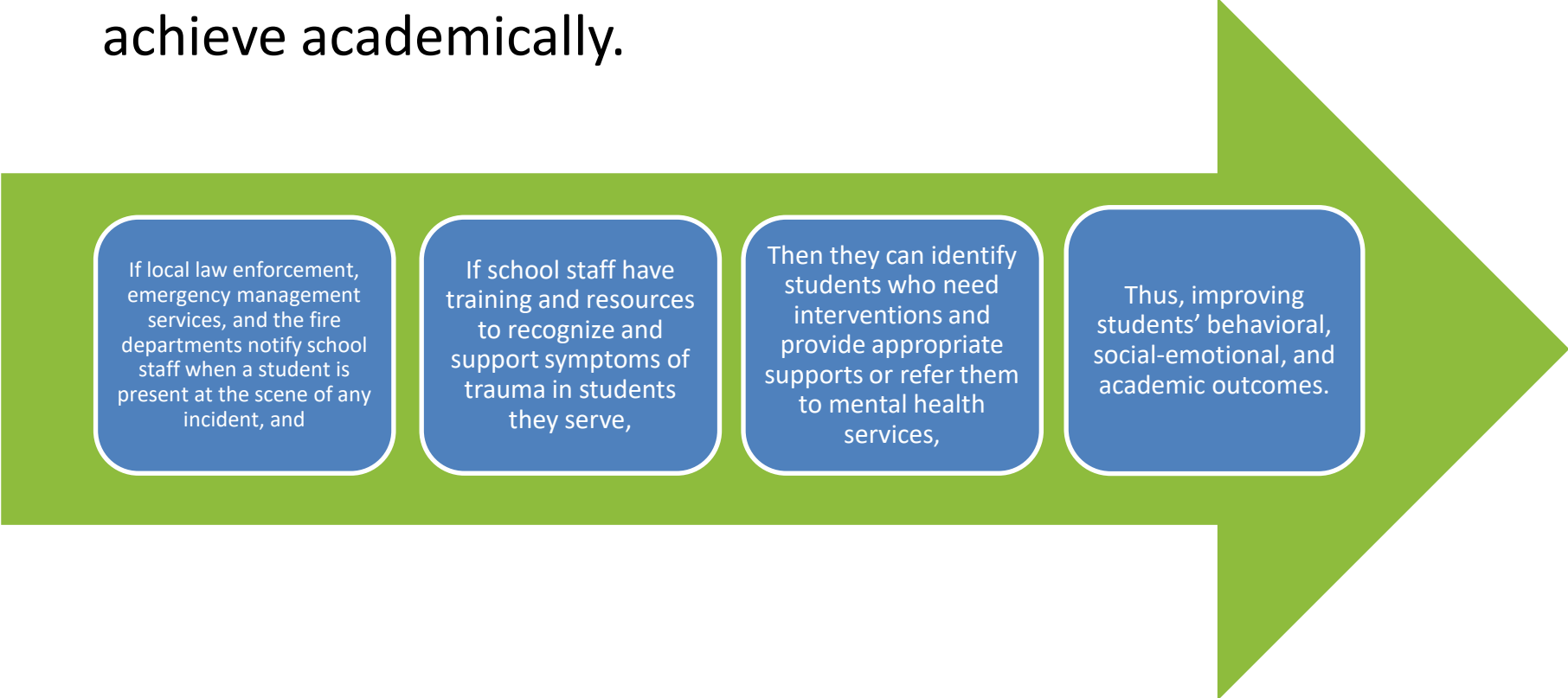
HOW DID HWC GET TO MISSOURI?

MJJA will work with law enforcement, schools, and juvenile officers on any of these phases or ALL of these phases

Law enforcement and schools do NOT have to agree to participate in ALL of the interventions in order to implement
HANDLE WITH CARE

Handle With Care (HWC)

HWC is a school-community partnership to help ensure that children exposed to trauma in their home, school, or community receive appropriate support to help them achieve academically.



If local law enforcement, emergency management services, and the fire departments notify school staff when a student is present at the scene of any incident, and

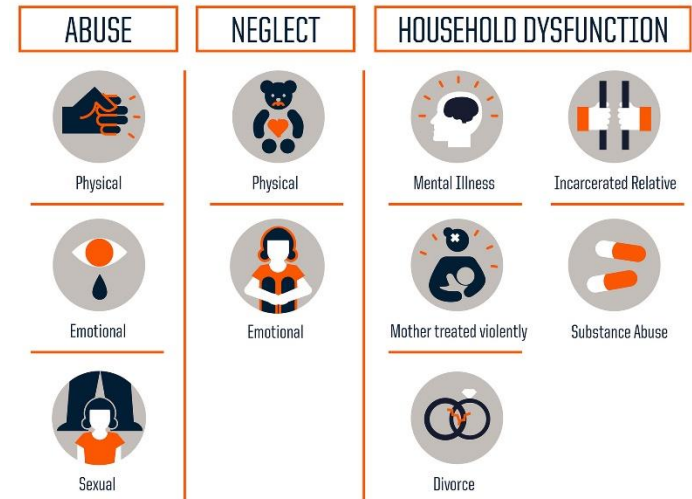
If school staff have training and resources to recognize and support symptoms of trauma in students they serve,

Then they can identify students who need interventions and provide appropriate supports or refer them to mental health services,

Thus, improving students' behavioral, social-emotional, and academic outcomes.

The Problem

Students experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may suffer trauma as a result of that exposure at home or in the community.



These students have increased risk for negative outcomes such as poor academic performance, dropping out of school, and delinquency.



3 Realms of ACEs

Adverse childhood and community experiences (ACEs) can occur in the household, the community, or in the environment and cause toxic stress. Left unaddressed, toxic stress from ACEs harms children and families, organizations, systems and communities, and reduces the ability of individuals and entities to respond to stressful events with resiliency. Research has shown that there are many ways to reduce and heal from toxic stress and build healthy, caring communities.



Thanks to **Building Community Resilience Collaborative and Networks** and the **International Transformational Resilience Coalition** for inspiration and guidance. Please visit ACEsConnection.com to learn more about the science of ACEs and join the movement to prevent ACEs, heal trauma and build resilience.

Lowers tolerance for stress, which can result in behaviors such as fighting, checking out or defiance

Increases difficulty in making friends and maintaining relationships

Increases stress hormones which affects the body's ability to fight infection

May cause lasting health problems

Increases problems with learning and memory, which can be permanent

"I can't hear you, I can't respond to you, I am just trying to be safe!"



Reduces ability to respond, learn, figure things out, which can result in problems in school

Kids at Risk Tend To:

- Get behind in school
- Start skipping school
- Drop out of school
- Become involved in things they should not be involved in
- Often end up inserted in the Juvenile Justice or Criminal Justice system



Which Can Lead to Serious social problems

Homelessness,

Inability to sustain employment,

Delinquency, violence, and criminal behavior,

Long term use of health, behavioral health, correctional and social services,

Compromised ability to parent

The Solution

Improved cross-agency communication among first responder organizations and schools can help the increase support for students experiencing trauma.



Increased use of trauma-sensitive strategies by educators and school leaders will lead to improved educational and life outcomes for students experiencing trauma as a result of the adverse childhood experiences.



“Before and After” Handle With Care

Before HWC

- LE at the scene would make a HOTLINE to CD for children who met the criteria
- Children who did not meet the criteria were never identified or provided services

HWC intervention

- LE identifies children at the scene
- The school is notified before school starts the next day.
- HOTLINE IS STILL MADE, if appropriate
- We all handle the child with care and respond in a trauma informed way

Handle With Care




- 1. Police encounter kids at the scene and send a HWC notice to the school.**
- 2. Schools prep trauma-sensitive support for these kids.**
- 3. Mental health providers partner for on-site therapy.**

The HWC Notice



HWC PILOT



 *Handle With Care Notice*
From Law Enforcement to the School

To: _____ From: _____
(School) (Law Enforcement Agency)

Date: _____ Time: _____ Incident Date: _____


The child referenced below was on the scene of a police action in the last 24 hours and could exhibit academic, emotional and/or behavioral problems as a result of exposure to a traumatic event. Please handle him/her with care. For more information go to www.handlewithcarewv.org

Childs Name: _____ Age: _____
Childs Name: _____ Age: _____
Childs Name: _____ Age: _____

✂ _____

To: _____ From: _____
(Teacher) (Principle/Counselor)

Handle With Care
Student _____
Incident Date _____





Confidentiality

- It does not violate confidentiality because the notice contains only the student's name, the school name and these three words:

HANDLE WITH CARE

- No details of the incident are given to the school.

Law Enforcement sending the HWC Notice to the School

It needs to be at the school
at the start of the next school day!



HWC ROLL CALL VIDEO



HWC Notice

- **It's only three words: Handle with Care**
- No details are ever given
- It should arrive at the school before the start of the next school day.
- Need to know basis only at the school.
- Does not stay in the child's permanent record
- Include childcare serving agencies

It does not mean you approach the child

Who receives the HWC notice at the School District?

In WV there is a HWC Coordinator in every county
In MO, we'll need a HWC Coordinator in each school district
Law Enforcement notifies the HWC coordinator
The HWC Coordinator notifies the Principal who notifies:

Essential Notifications

- Only teachers who work with the child
- Counselor
- School Nurse

Optional notification

- Superintendent
- Childcare serving agencies

Section 2: Trauma



Let's talk about Trauma

There is no greater insight into the future than
recognizing...when we save our children, we
save ourselves

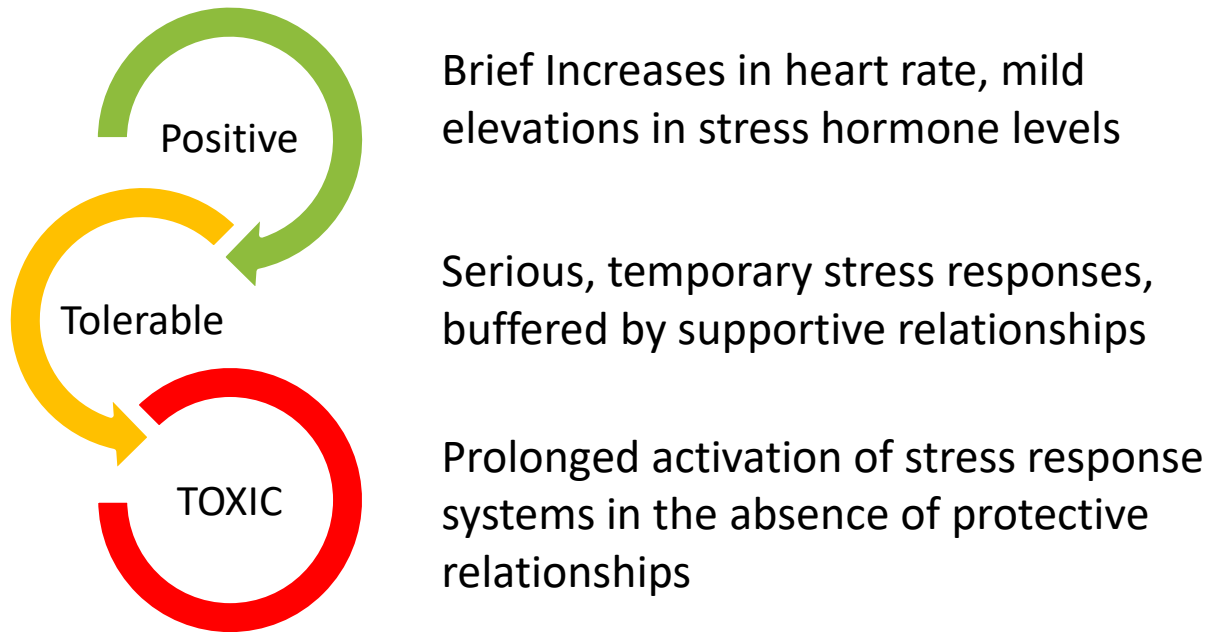
Margaret Mead



Compass Health
Network

Inspire Hope. Promote Wellness.
compasshealthnetwork.org

Different Kinds of Stress



Center on the Developing Child – Harvard University



Compass Health
Network

Trauma

Trauma describes a lasting response to experiences or circumstances that exceed an individual's ability to cope and produces lasting adverse effects.

(SAMHSA, 2014)



Potential Traumatic Events

Abuse

- Emotional
- Sexual
- Physical
- Domestic violence
- Witnessing violence
- Bullying
- Cyberbullying
- Institutional

Loss

- Death
- Abandonment
- Neglect
- Separation
- Natural Disaster
- Accidents
- Terrorism
- War

Chronic Stressors

- Poverty
- Racism
- Invasive medical procedure
- Community trauma
- Family member with substance use disorder



Compass Health
Network

Childhood trauma

Children are very sensitive. They struggle to make sense of trauma. They also respond differently to traumas. They often have emotional reactions. They may hurt deeply. They may find it hard to recover from frightening experiences. They may act out and threaten others. They may hurt themselves.

As a result they need extra support. They need adults who know how to respond in order to reduce further trauma and to lessen the long term emotional effects of trauma.



Compass Health
Network

Child Trauma

Educators, counselors, principals, and staff are often the first adults to learn of a child's trauma.

Trauma experiences are complex and difficult to sort out, one trauma may compound and result in new trauma or issues.



Child Trauma Indicators

- Children Cutting on Themselves
- Lack of Food
- Parental Drug Use
- Domestic Violence in the Home
- Educational Neglect
- Medical Neglect
- Sexual Abuse
- Non-Caretaker Reports
- Child makes threat of harm to self
- Child threatens others
- Sad about friend who died
- Acting out in class
- Stories about lack of supervision
- Talking about suicide/homicide
- Acting weird
- Missing lots of school
- Physical abuse
- Child drew a threatening picture
- Child brought weapon to school
- Child assaulted another
- Observed suspicious bruising
- Child has stated he will kill himself if has to go home
- Says his parent won't give him his meds



Child Trauma Indicators

Mental Health

- Children cutting on themselves
- Child made threat to harm self
- Child threatens others
- Sad about friend who died
- Acting out in class
- Child draws a threatening picture
- Child takes a weapon to school
- Child assaulted another
- Child says he will kill himself if he has to go home
- Suicidal ideations
- Child acting 'weird', or 'not themselves'

Safety and Neglect

- Lack of food
- Parental drug use
- Domestic violence in the home
- Educational neglect
- Sexual abuse
- Non-caretaker reports
- Lack of supervision
- Missing lots of school
- Physical abuse
- Observed suspicious bruising
- Child says parent won't give him meds



Trauma Is

- A response to an overwhelmingly stressful event
- It affects all people differently
- A threat to life and well being
- It can be acute or chronic
- It is a harmful interruption:

Trauma and Social well-being are married

- Safety has to be established to heal from trauma
- Trauma can create triggers



ACE -Adverse Childhood Experiences Study Findings (1998 and 2010)

- Adverse childhood experiences are common
☹️ (verified by both CDC studies)
- Childhood experiences powerfully influence
who we become as adults
(verified by CDC/Kaiser study)

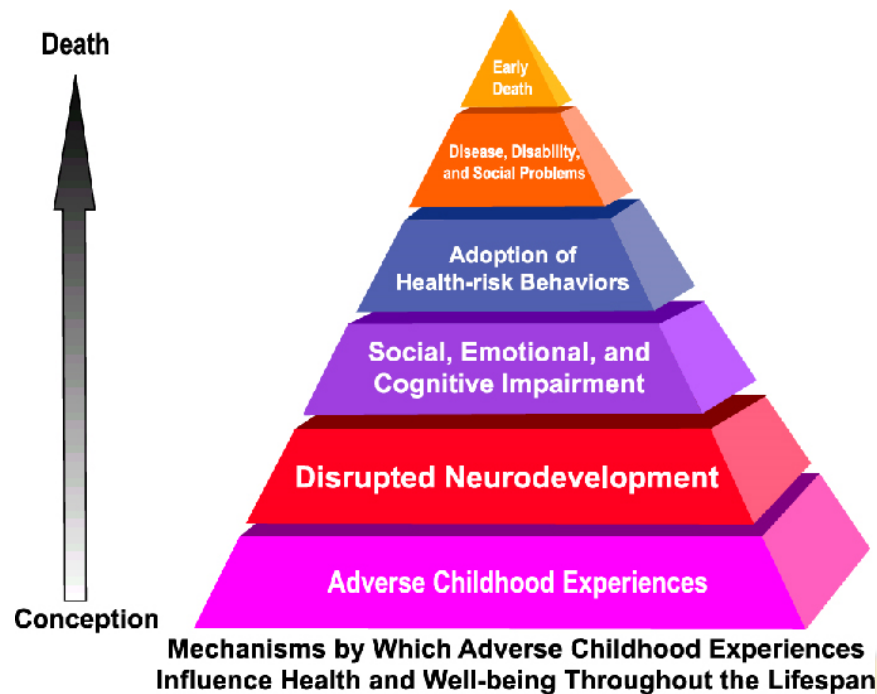


Impacts of Childhood Trauma

- Neurobiological Impacts
 - Disrupted development
 - Anger–rage
 - Hallucinations
 - Depression/other mental health challenges
 - Panic reactions
 - Anxiety
 - Somatic problems
 - Impaired memory
 - Flashbacks
 - Dissociation
- Health Risks
 - Smoking
 - Severe obesity
 - Physical inactivity
 - Suicide attempts
 - Alcohol and/or drug abuse
 - 50+ sex partners
 - Repetition of trauma
 - Self injury
 - Eating disorders
 - Violent, aggressive behavior



ACEs Influence Health and Well-Being throughout the Lifespan



HWC in Schools



HWC In Schools

Handle With Care sets schools up to be proactive, rather than reactive. With informed, caring personnel ready to share their calm, rather than contribute to the student's chaos, the outcomes of a traumatic situation would likely be minimized.

This can reduce disciplinary action and absenteeism while building resilience, self-respect, and confidence.

The Solution

A Trauma Sensitive School



A respectful and safe environment where children can build positive relationships with adults and peers, learn to manage their emotions and behavioral responses, and find academic success.

Why create a trauma sensitive school system?



Schools provide possibilities for traumatized children to forge relationships with caring adults and learn in a *supportive*, *predictable*, and *safe* environment.

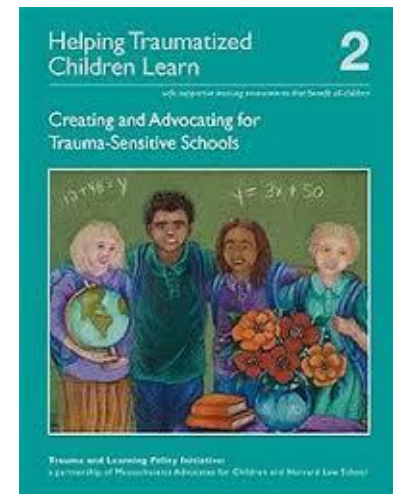
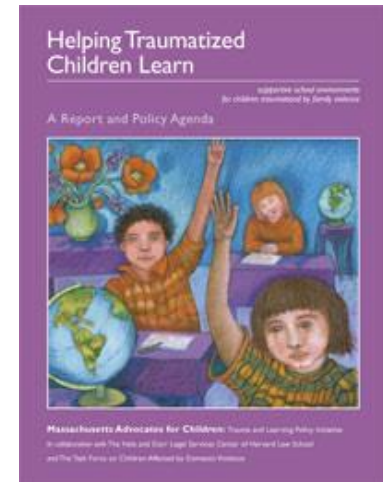
Understanding Trauma Informed Education

- Is not solely about a student's ACE score
- You don't have to know the student's ACE score to successfully intervene
- Is not about fixing kids
- Educators give students consequences (not punishments) for inappropriate behavior
- Co-regulation is the idea of keeping calm in order to help calm a student
- Teachers do not need to do the work of professional therapists.

Become a Trauma-Sensitive School

- Blueprint for educators and communities to ensure that children traumatized by exposure to violence succeed in school
- Understand the impact of trauma on learning & educate staff
- Develop a plan to integrate trauma-sensitive routines & individual student supports

<http://www.massadvocates.org/download-book.php>



Trauma-Informed Schools Focus On



- Feeling **Safe**
 - Physically, emotionally, behaviorally, academically
- Staying **Regulated**
 - Embedded opportunities to reduce stress and manage emotions
- Being **Connected**
 - Relationship-rich environments that foster belonging
- **Learning**
 - Integrated, equitable ambitious, and fun

Strategies for Teachers and Staff



Strategies for Teachers

- Recognize that a child is going into survival mode and respond in a kind, compassionate way.
- Create calm, predictable transitions.
- Praise publicly and criticize privately.
- Adapt your classroom's mindfulness practice.
- Take care of yourself!

Recognize That a Child has Gone into Survival Mode



Create Calm, Predictable Transitions

Transitioning between activities can easily trigger a student into survival mode.

What is going to happen next?



Praise Publicly & Criticize Privately



HOW TO GIVE HEALTHY CRITICISM TO CHILDREN

- **Avoid** criticizing in front of **others**
- **Avoid** giving criticism while **angry**
- Criticize **thoughtfully**
- Criticize **gently**

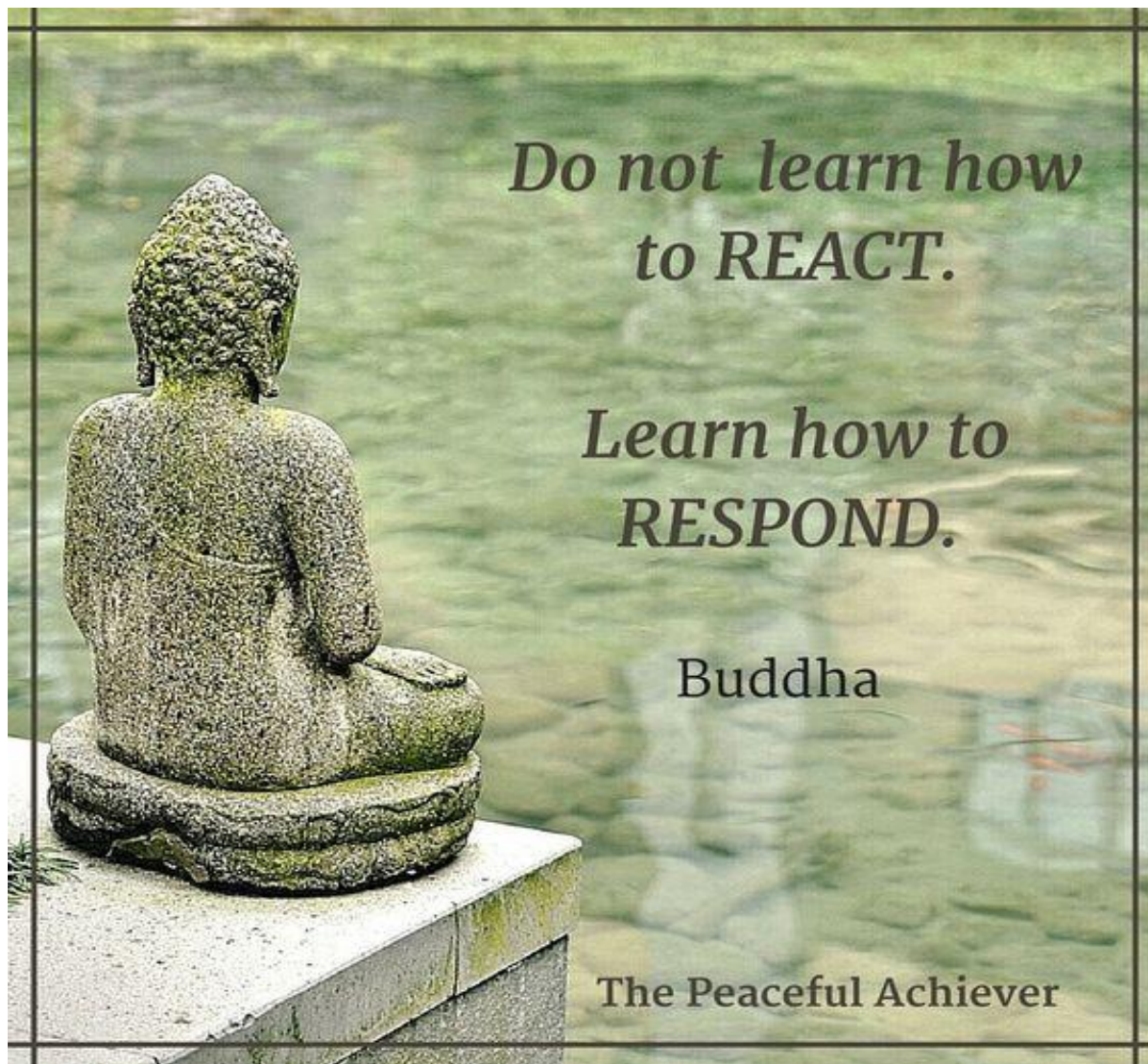
BigLifeJournal.com

Adapt a classroom mindfulness practice

Meditation, Breathing Exercises, Yoga

- Breathing calms you down
- Stress is naturally reduced
- Building concentration: Increase your focus, increase your attention
- Increase their confidence and positive self-image.
- Feel part of a healthy, non-competitive group





*Do not learn how
to REACT.*

*Learn how to
RESPOND.*

Buddha

The Peaceful Achiever

Mental Health Services



What if school interventions are not enough?



Why use outside intervention?





Mental Health Providers, teachers and school personnel work as a team to best serve the child



HWC In Summary

- Identifies the kids most at risk
- Provides teachers with a heads up
- Connects children with accessible mental health services if needed
- Strengthens and improves relationships in the community
- Improves academic, social-emotional & behavior outcomes
- Reduces a child's risk of being inserted into the juvenile justice system for behaviors at school

Section 5: Starting a HWC Program



**MJJA will be happy to help any interested law enforcement agency and/or school district implement
HANDLE WITH CARE in their jurisdiction/district**

Contact information is at the end of this presentation



Stakeholder meeting

Should Attend:

- Schools
- Law Enforcement
- Mental Health
- Dispatch
- EMS

Also Include:

- Child Protective Services
- Child Care Serving Agencies
- Family Resource Network
- Judges
- News organizations

Implementation of HWC

- Should you pilot a school or the district?
- Training for staff
- Setting up a therapy space at the school
- Quarterly meetings to check the process
- Put people in charge who care . . .
- How will we compile and track the data?

Handle with Care November 2021





HWC in Other States

HandlewithcareMI

HandlewithcareMD

HandlewithcareMA

HandlewithcareFL

HandlewithcareOH

TakecareDE

HandlewithcareOK

HandlewithcareMN

TNhandlewithcare

School Response without HWC

Comes to school without homework

Naturally he got a zero

Fell asleep in class

Lost his recess / Got sent to the Principal's Office

Got into a scuffle at lunch

Received detention / Received OSS / Called the SRO to make a report or take youth into custody

Didn't bring permission slip for field trip

Had to stay back and read in the library

School Response with HWC

Comes to school without homework

The teacher gave extra time to do homework and offered 1:1 help if needed

Fell asleep in class

Sent to the school nurse to get some rest

Got into a scuffle at lunch

There was no scuffle because he was rested and supported throughout the morning. He had a good lunch with no issues

Didn't bring a permission slip for the field trip

The homeroom teacher made a phone call to his family and got verbal permission over the phone



BECAUSE



Success in school is success in life.
Let's help children succeed in school
everyday to the best of their ability!



CONTACT INFORMATION

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