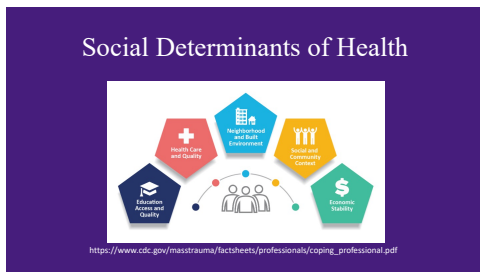


# TRAUMA INFORMED INSTRUCTION IN THE MUSIC ROOM

Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being. (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 7)

## TRAUMA IS WIDESPREAD

A majority of US youth have experienced at least one traumatic event before their 18th birthday. (McLaughlin et al., 2013)



The CDC has labelled childhood trauma a public health crisis. Lack of access to any of the social determinants of health is associated with adverse childhood experiences.

Childhood trauma is associated with negative academic, social, behavioral, and health outcomes across a lifetime. Students in Louisiana are particularly at risk of experiencing trauma given our state's high rate of poverty and frequent natural disasters. Trauma-informed instruction aims to create psychologically safe learning spaces and begins with an understanding of how adverse childhood experiences may inhibit the ability to learn.

Exposure to trauma can cause neurobiological changes. (Tellasi & Garth, 2017)

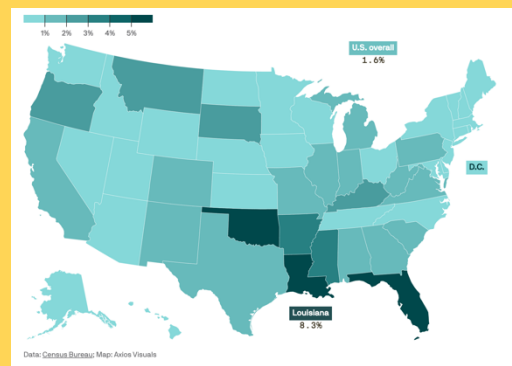
Cognitive	Emotional	Physical	Behavioral
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>poor concentration</li> <li>confusion</li> <li>disorientation</li> <li>indecisiveness</li> <li>shortened attention span</li> <li>memory loss</li> <li>unwanted memories</li> <li>difficulty making decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>shock</li> <li>numbness</li> <li>feeling overwhelmed</li> <li>depression</li> <li>feeling lost</li> <li>fear of harm to self and/or loved ones</li> <li>feeling nothing</li> <li>feeling abandoned</li> <li>uncertainty of feelings</li> <li>volatile emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>nausea</li> <li>lightheadedness</li> <li>dizziness</li> <li>gastro-intestinal problems</li> <li>rapid heart rate</li> <li>tremors</li> <li>headaches</li> <li>grinding of teeth</li> <li>fatigue</li> <li>poor sleep</li> <li>pain</li> <li>hyperarousal</li> <li>jumpiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>suspicion</li> <li>irritability</li> <li>arguments with friends and loved ones</li> <li>withdrawal</li> <li>excessive silence</li> <li>inappropriate humor</li> <li>increased/decreased eating</li> <li>change in sexual desire or functioning</li> <li>increased smoking</li> <li>increased substance use or abuse</li> </ul>

## Louisiana by the Numbers

27% of Louisiana children live below the poverty line.

RANKINGS SCORECARD	
Crime & Corrections	#50
Economy	#50
Education	#46
Fiscal Stability	#38
Health Care	#45
Infrastructure	#49
Natural Environment	#49
Opportunity	#48

Displacement and loss of property due to climate disasters.



## Why do TI practices belong in school music programs?

Children spend an inordinate amount of time in school (Costa, 2017)

Schools have substantial influence on youth development.  
(Atkins et al., 2010, Domitrovich et al., 2010, Masten, 2003)

Music students spend a substantial amount of time with their music teachers in and out of school hours and over the course of years (Hess, 2020).

### 6 GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

The CDC's Center for Preparedness and Response (CPR), in collaboration with SAMHSA's National Center for Trauma-Informed Care (NCTIC), developed and led a new training for CPR employees about the role of trauma-informed care during public health emergencies. The training aimed to increase responder awareness of the impact that trauma can have in the communities where they work.

Participants learned SAMHSA's six principles that guide a trauma-informed approach, including:



<https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health>

## Trauma Informed Framework (Harris & Fallot, 2001)

- ▶ Understanding trauma
- ▶ Understanding the survivor
- ▶ Understanding the service
- ▶ Understanding the service relationship

Music teachers are at risk of vicarious trauma, burnout, compassion fatigue. Professional boundaries and self-care are necessary for trauma informed teachers.

[Trauma informed self-care assessment](#)

**While not mental health professionals, music teachers can work to create accessible environments for children who have experienced trauma.**

### Behavior mitigating tools

- ▶ Embrace consistent routines
- ▶ Set up in open spaces with clear exits
- ▶ Allow movement
- ▶ Employ brain breaks
- ▶ Notice patterns for prevention
- ▶ Incorporate regulating strategies



### Building Community

- ▶ Be mindful of congruency between words and affect
- ▶ Be generous with noncontingent attention
- ▶ Embrace student-centered instructional practices
- ▶ Allow choice in the music performed/learned
- ▶ Program culturally responsive/student selected music
- ▶ Limit behaviorist practices
- ▶ Limit competition



### Pedagogically Sound Instruction

Sound before Symbol  
Experience before Theory  
Known to Unknown  
Child Development vs. Subject Logic



### Pedagogically Sound Instruction



# Trauma Informed Practices in the Music Room

Louisiana Music Educators Association  
Annual Conference

November 18, 2023  
Baton Rouge



Abby South, ABD  
Instructor of Music Education, LSU  
Certified in College Student Well Being: Trauma and Resilience, FSU



# THANK YOU!

To engage further on this topic or gain access  
to references used in this presentation, email  
me at:

[southmusicllc@gmail.com](mailto:southmusicllc@gmail.com)

