TRAILS

Traumasensitive Assessment and Support for Refugee Students in Inclusive Classrooms in Germany

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University of Wuppertal, Germany
Learning Objectives

• To know about a large German research project focusing on traumasensitive PBIS methods for students with refugee background in inclusive classroom
• To learn about empirical results of a qualitative interview study with teachers, students, and parents on needs and challenges in trauma-sensitive work in German schools
• To learn about innovative methods to develop a participative empirical study to implement and evaluate teacher training plus a TIER 1/2 intervention for students on a bottom-up basis.
• To be informed about specific techniques for trauma sensitive assessment and support of refugee students in inclusive classrooms based on PBIS principles
Agenda

• Project Background and Goals
• Part 1: Analysis of Students‘, Parents‘, and Teachers‘ Needs
• Part 2: Development and Evaluation of Assessment and Support Tools (Tier 1 & Tier 2)
• Discussion

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Project Background & Goals
Socio-cultural background: Asylum seekers in Germany

Graph showing the number of refugees granted asylum and the annual percentage change from 1960 to 2020.
Introduction

- About 43% of the asylum seekers in Germany are minors and have an increased risk of traumatization due to the confrontation with war and crisis (BAMF, 2022; Pine et al., 2005)

- Teachers are exposed to trauma related stressors emanating from students in the school context, which may pose a risk for secondary traumatization in teachers (Fleckmann et al., 2022)

  ➢ Schools must be prepared for the inclusion of students with refugee experience
  ➢ So far, however, there is a lack of evidence-based concepts for assessment and intervention in this context in Germany
Students

**Tier 3**
- Trauma-focused CBT, crisis intervention, out-of-school therapy services
- Diagnosis via DBR & trauma-focused functional behavior analysis

**Tier 2**
- (Trauma-focused) behavioral support via cognitive-behavioral methods (e.g. TAFF)
- Behavioral assessment via Direct Behavior Ratings

**Tier 1**
- Classroom management, social-emotional learning, teacher behavior & relationship building.
- Screening to detect trauma-related behaviors in the classroom.

Parents

- Therapies & Parents Trainings

Parents'

- Counseling services provided by out-of-school trauma experts

Teachers

In-process training & outer school engagement

- Networking with & counseling by trauma experts (school psychology, school social work, clinic)

Parents'

- Parents' meetings, parents' self help

**Social Engagement to change social conditions that create and exacerbate psychological trauma (e.g. social programs to alleviate poverty)**
Development, implementation and evaluation of an integrated, multi-tiered system for the assessment and intervention of trauma-affected students with refugee backgrounds in inclusive school at lower secondary level (class 5-8) in Germany
Needs Analysis
Phase 1: Needs analysis – Research question

What are the experiences and needs of teachers, students and parents with regard to trauma-sensitive assessment and intervention in inclusive schools (classes 5-8) in Germany?

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Phase 1: Needs analysis – Research question

What are the experiences and needs of teachers, students and parents with regard to trauma-sensitive assessment and intervention in inclusive schools (classes 5-8) in Germany?

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Phase 1: Needs analysis – Methods and Participants

Methods:

- Semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussions
- Structured content analysis according to Kuckartz (1986)

Students with refugee background (N=4)
- Single Interviews

Teachers (N=6)
- Focus Group Discussions

Parents (N=6)
- Focus Group Discussions

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### Needs analysis – Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior of teachers</th>
<th>Behavior of other students</th>
<th>Infrastructural issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In case of emotional problems:</strong></td>
<td><strong>In case of emotional problems:</strong></td>
<td>• Places to be alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Responsibility</td>
<td>• Presence</td>
<td>• Silent places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to trusted teachers</td>
<td>• Ability to talk</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support for problems solving</td>
<td>• Ability to deal with aggressive or refusing behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Taking time</td>
<td>• Contacting students that have problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accurate assessment of problematic situations</td>
<td>• Finding solutions together constructively</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Consistent help offers</td>
<td>• Leave space if needed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher behavior in general:</strong></td>
<td>• An open ear</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Trust in students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Taking students seriously</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Kindness and patience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Reasonable reactions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Willingness to help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sensitivity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Needs analysis – Parents</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Behavior of teachers
- Be more considerate about traumatic experiences in refugee students
- Overcoming language related barriers
- Making the integration process easier for refugee students
- Preventing secondary traumatization in other students
- Addressing difficulties

### Professional collaborations
- Improvement of parents-teachers cooperation
- Improvement of teachers-refugee students collaboration

### Infrastructural issues
- Improvement of personnel and professional resources in schools

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trauma related knowledge and competencies</th>
<th>Interpersonal und professional collaborations</th>
<th>Infrastructural issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Trauma-related knowledge and skills to identify and support traumatization in students with refugee background</td>
<td>• Improvement of the teacher-parent cooperation</td>
<td>• Improving resources (time, space &amp; staff)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to recognize unhelpful teacher behaviors</td>
<td>• Improvement of the collegial and multi-professional cooperation</td>
<td>• More frequent opportunities for student-teacher conversations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability to teach students with German as second language</td>
<td></td>
<td>• A more flexible school system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Knowledge about self-care strategies for teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy access to school psychologists and trauma therapists</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Summary

- Common categories between the interview groups (e.g. more time, space, and flexibility in school)

- Across all groups, there is indication that teachers need greater trauma-related knowledge and skills for dealing with traumatized students with refugee background

Impact on TRAILS-Methods:

a) Assessment Tools

b) Intervention

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Questions & Discussion
Development and Evaluation of Assessment and Intervention on Tiers 1 & 2
(Trauma-focused) behavioral support via cognitive-behavioral methods (e.g. TAFF)

Classroom management, social-emotional learning, teacher behavior & relationship building.

Screening to detect trauma-related behaviors in the classroom.

Tier 1

Tier 2

Tier 3

Networking with & counseling by trauma experts (school psychology, school social work, clinic)

In-process training & outer school engagement

Students

Teachers

Parents

Therapies & Parents Trainings

Parents' meetings, parents' self help

Counseling services provided by out-of-school trauma experts

Counseling services

Networking with & counseling by trauma experts (school psychology, school social work, clinic)

In-process training & outer school engagement

Social Engagement to change social conditions that create and exacerbate psychological trauma (e.g. social programs to alleviate poverty)
Overview

Tier 1:
- Universal Screening
- Cultural Responsive Classroom Management

Tier 2:
- CBT-based intervention („TAFF“)
- Direct Behavior Ratings - MIS

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### Tier 1: Universal Screening

1. **Need for teacher rating scale of classroom behaviors that might linked to traumatization**
2. **Review of literature and existing scales**
3. **Interviews with students, teachers, parents**
4. **Development of conceptual measurement model**
5. **Expert consensus meeting**
6. **Item pool generation**
7. **Qualitative item review**
8. **Cognitive interviews**
9. **Final revisions**
10. **Field testing & calibration**
11. **Psychometric analysis**
12. **Finalization of items**

**Approx. 40 items**

Refers to emotional, behavioral, cognitive, and physical dispositions

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**Please rate how often the items below occur in your student using the following Likert scale:**

- 0 = never
- 1 = rarely
- 2 = often
- 3 = almost always

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Description</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expresses concern/fear of being separated from caregivers.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is quickly emotionally overwhelmed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learns with great difficulty.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overly anxious.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports sleep disturbances or nightmares.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works on tasks independently and incompletely.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easily out of socket/ is quickly annoyed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has learning deficits.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spends a lot of time alone.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has conflicts with peers.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has conflicts with teachers.</td>
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</table>
Tier 1: Cultural Responsive Classroom Management

- Recognize own ethnocentrism and possible prejudices
- Know the cultural background of the students
- Know the social, economic and political context
- Demonstrate competencies and readiness for culturally sensitive classroom management
- Build caring communities in the classroom
Overview

Tier 1:
- Universal Screening
- Cultural Responsive Classroom Management

Tier 2:
- CBT-based intervention („TAFF“)
- Direct Behavior Ratings - MIS
Tier 2: CBT-based intervention

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS; Jaycox et al., 2012)
- Sound theoretical foundation
- Empirical evidence for effectiveness

Support for Students Exposed to Trauma (SSET; Jaycox et al., 2009)
- Usable in schools
- SAFE: Sequenced – Active – Focused – Explicit (Durlak et al., 2011)

Traumasensible Unterstützungs- und Förderkonzept für Kinder- und Jugendliche mit Fluchthintergrund (TAFF; Linderkamp & Casale, 2022)

Trauma-sensitive support and intervention for children and adolescents with a refugee background

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**Tier 2: CBT-based intervention**

**Traumasensible Unterstützungs- und Förderkonzept für Kinder- und Jugendliche mit Fluchthintergrund (TAFF; Linderkamp & Casale, 2022)**

Trauma-sensitive support and intervention for children and adolescents with a refugee background

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Module A (2 sessions)</th>
<th>Module B concomitant</th>
<th>Module C (4 Sessions)</th>
<th>Module D (2 sessions)</th>
<th>Module E (1 Session)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psycho education (cognitive modeling)</td>
<td>Mindfulness exercises</td>
<td>Helpful thinking &amp; Coping</td>
<td>Social Problem Solving</td>
<td>Development of perspectives</td>
</tr>
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</table>

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Tier 2: CBT-based intervention

Traumasensible Unterstützung- und Förderkonzept für Kinder- und Jugendliche mit Fluchthintergrund (TAFF; Linderkamp & Casale, 2022)

Trauma-sensitive support and intervention for children and adolescents with a refugee background

- 10 sessions
- 90 minutes each
- Sequential rituals:
  1. Welcoming
  2. Emotional barometer ("smileys" to recognize own emotions)
  3. Contents of today's session
  4. Short meditation/ mindfulness exercise
  5. Practice and reflection
  6. Short meditation/ mindfulness exercise & farewell
- Hybrid of systematic-direct observation and behavior rating scales
- Rating of
  - A specific behavior
  - In a specific situation
  - Immediately after the behavior occurred
Figure 1. Adaptive Model of Behavioral Assessment
ABRS = abbreviated behavior rating scales; DBR = direct behavior rating.
Volpe et al., 2010, p. 242
Tier 2: Direct Behavior Ratings - MIS

Please rate how often the items below occur in your student using the following Likert scale:

0 = never  
1 = rarely  
2 = often  
3 = almost always

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Expresses concern/fear of being separated from caregivers.</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Has learning deficits.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Spends a lot of time alone.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Has conflicts with peers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Has conflicts with teachers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How often did the student show the following behaviors in group plans?

1. Easily out of socket/ is quickly annoyed
   - never  
   - rarely  
   - sometimes  
   - often  
   - very often  
   - almost always

2. Has conflicts with peers
   - never  
   - rarely  
   - sometimes  
   - often  
   - very often  
   - almost always

3. Has conflicts with teachers
   - never  
   - rarely  
   - sometimes  
   - often  
   - very often  
   - almost always
Tier 2: Direct Behavior Ratings - MIS

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Questions & Discussion
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References


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