

The Impact of COVID-19 on Trauma-Informed School Intervention Research

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Boolean search string (completed in PsycInfo and PubMed)

("traumatic stressors" OR trauma OR "complex trauma" OR PTSD OR "post-traumatic stress disorder") AND ("trauma-informed") AND (school*) AND (child*) AND (treatment* OR prevention* OR intervention*) NOT (adult*) NOT ("systematic review" OR review OR "meta-analysis") NOT (residential OR inpatient)

Yield of 231 results, 4 were included in systematic review based on **exclusion criteria below**;

1. Not peer-reviewed academic journal article ($n = 83$)
2. Publication date before 2015 ($n = 6$)
3. Duplicate between or within database/s ($n = 10$)
4. Not psychological trauma – TBI ($n = 1$)
5. Systematic review, meta-analysis or other review ($n = 2$)
6. Outside of the US ($n = 10$)
7. No intervention studied ($n = 25$)
8. Intervention not implemented in K-12 school ($n = 59$)
9. Not trauma-informed care intervention ($n = 11$)
10. No quantitative measurement of student outcomes ($n = 16$)
11. Not a MTSS trauma-informed intervention ($n = 4$)

*An additional 3 were supplemented in the review from an earlier exploratory search conducted through PsycInfo and PubMed

Interventions Included in the Review

Dorado et al. (2016): Healthy Environments and Response to Trauma in Schools

Báez et al. (2019): Wediko Community School Partnership

Hutchinson (2020): Aspire Connect Thrive

Tabone et al. (2020): Trauma-Informed Elementary Schools

Holmes et al. (2015): Head Start Trauma Start

Shamblin et al. (2016): Project LAUNCH

von der Embse et al. (2019): Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports



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Introduction

- COVID-19 has increased childhood stress through disruption in routines, increased familial tension and higher risk of child maltreatment and abuse (Cuartas, 2020) (Bryant et al., 2020)
- In the US, more than 2/3 of children have experienced at least one significant trauma by age 16 and more than 1/3 are exposed to multiple traumatic events (Tabone et al., 2022)
- Childhood trauma can lead to mental health issues, substance use, and behavioral challenges interfering with academic success (Tabone et al., 2022)
- Multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) is a framework for trauma-informed interventions in schools that provides universal design and individualized support needs to recognize and respond to the impact of trauma (Berger, 2019) (SAMHSA 2014)
- High rates of childhood trauma have become a public health issue and in the aftermath of COVID-19, it is necessary to investigate and evaluate the types of MTSS trauma-informed interventions in school settings

Methodology

- Database search in PsycInfo and PubMed to find studies that fit the criteria of trauma-informed school interventions with children (see boolean search string and exclusion criteria for more details)
- Yield of 231 results, 4 were included in systematic review based on set of 11 exclusion criteria and an additional 3 were supplemented in the review from an earlier exploratory search conducted through PsycInfo and PubMed

Results

- 42.9% of the interventions were designed as a 3-tiered MTSS, 50% implemented them only at Tier I & II, and 14% only included Tier II & III
- The intervention (Hoover et al. 2018) implemented at Tier II & Tier III showed the most significant reduction in PTSD symptoms (42% reduction) and problem severity (25% reduction)
- Interventions ($n = 3$) measuring behavioral problems found significant decrease in challenging classroom behaviors, physical altercations and/or suspensions
- There was a lack of consistency with measures used to assess student academic, social, emotional and behavioral outcomes

Discussion & Future Directions

- This review highlights the **lack of literature and efficacy studies** conducted on MTSS trauma-informed school interventions
- Services provided at each tier **lack consistency between programs**, which raises **concerns about the standardization of the MTSS model**
- There is a **lack of consistency between terminology and measures** used in the literature, especially across multiple disciplines such as psychology, education and public health, which limits **future research for meta-analyses and quantitative comparisons** on student outcomes

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Definitions:

Tier III: Intensive and individualized interventions for students with significant emotional or behavioral issues resulting from trauma who need more support than Tier I or II can provide

Tier II: Targeted interventions for students at risk for trauma and/or those who meet eligibility criteria based on select measures

Tier I: Universal support for all students regardless trauma history, emotional or behavioral concerns

