The Impact of COVID-19 on Trauma-Informed School Intervention Research
Poster Presentation by: Liam Davis-Bosch (Pitzer College), Dawn Graham (Ohio University), Sierra Hightower (Ohio University)

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 Not peer-reviewed academic journal article (n = 83)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
The Impact of COVID-19 on Trauma-Informed School Intervention Research

Liam Davis-Bosch¹, Dawn Graham⁴, & Sierra Hightower⁴
Pitzer College, Ohio University⁴

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 ¾ of children have experienced at least one significant trauma by age 16 and more than ¼ 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

Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr. Dawn Graham who provided mentorship, patience and encouragement through this project. Additional gratitude and thanks to Dr. Fran Wymbs, the Ohio University Center for Intervention Research in Schools, and the National Science Foundation REU Grant that made this opportunity possible.