

DEEPER WOUNDS

Punitive school practices’ impact on trauma-impacted youth.

Trauma in Youth

1 in 4 children will experience maltreatment in their lifetime

Not every child is afforded security and safety during their most formative years. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 1 in 4 children will experience maltreatment in their lifetime. Between the years 2011 - 2015, there was an 3.8% increase in reported childhood abuse cases. While since many cases of child mistreatment went unreported, the percentage of children who experience trauma is even higher.

3.5 million children have seen or heard **parents or adults hurt one another** in the home

16.3 million children’s parent or guardian **got divorced or separated**

7% of children have ever lived with anyone who was **mentally ill, suicidal or severely depressed**

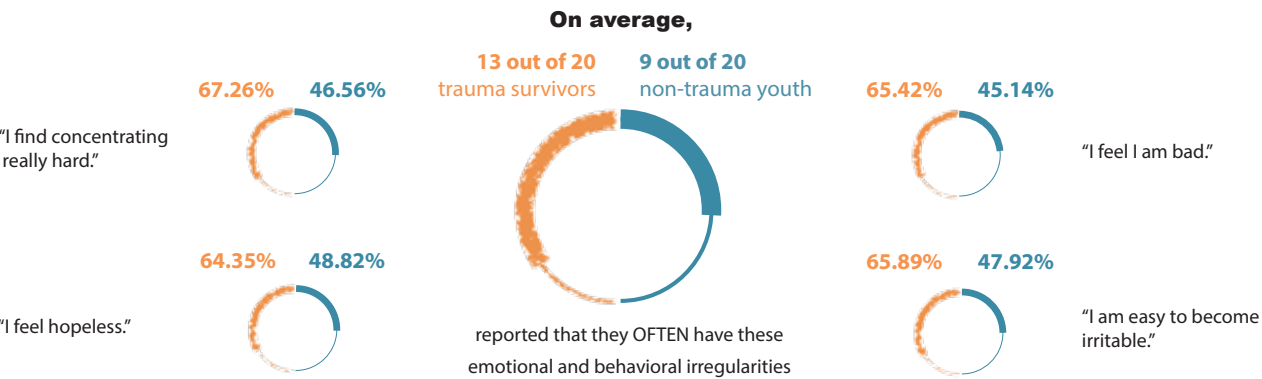
0.77 million children live in a household which could **not often afford enough to eat**

5.6 million children have lived with anyone who had a problem with **alcohol or drugs**

Challenges in School

The cognitive, emotional, and behavioral effects of trauma are often heightened as a child enters the school system due to the change in their environment and routine. It can cause emotional, psychological or physical distress. Based on the result of an online Pediatric Symptoms Checklist (PSC) for young screeners launched to evaluate children for psychosocial problems, children with a trauma youth are more prone to attention, mood and conduct problems in school.

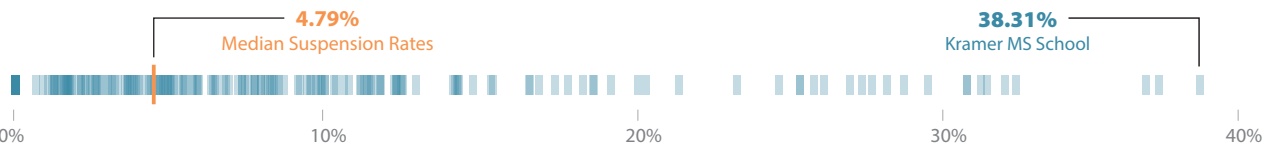
Results of PSC on Emotional and Behavioral Irregularities



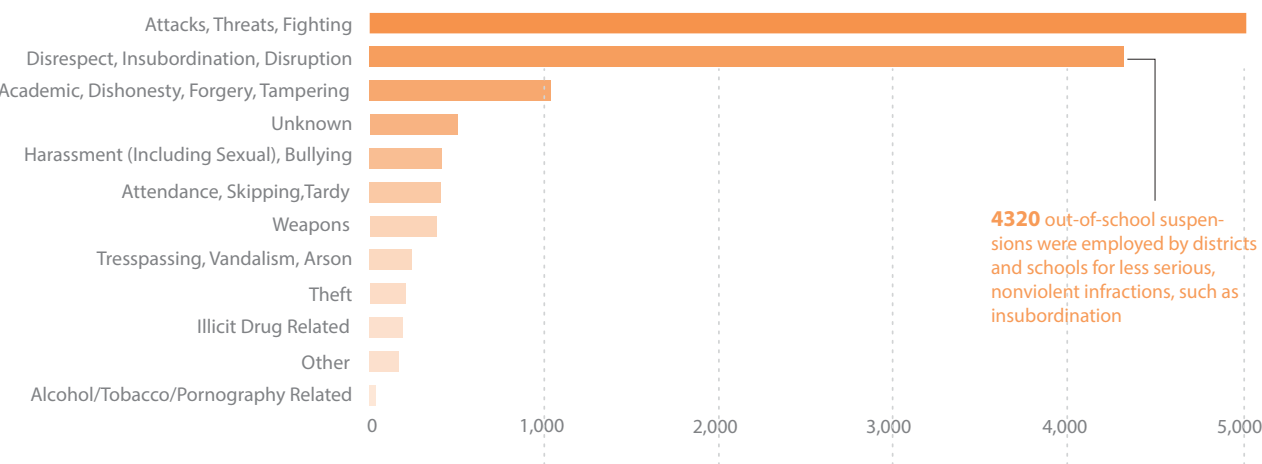
Punitive School Practice

Agression, anxiety, irritability, depression and social withdrawal are common ways in which trauma-impacted youth **communicate a need for adult support**. Unfortunately, their expressions of emotional distress are often addressed as misbehaviors with punitive practice such as out-of-school suspensions. In the 2016-2017 school year, 7.4 % of students received at least one out-of-school suspension.

2016-2017 School Year Out-of-School Suspension Rates across Schools in the U.S.



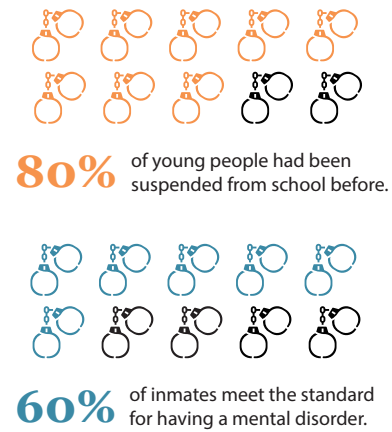
Total Number of Out-of-School Suspensions by Reason



Deeper Wounds, Worse Consequences

Youth that were expelled or suspended are more likely to drop out of high school, fall behind in school, and end up in the juvenile system. This is commonly known as the **School-to-Prison Pipeline**, which disproportionately affects individuals who are more likely to be victims of chronic trauma.

In the Juvenile Justice System



How do we heal their wounds?

Addressing the needs of children with trauma in schools requires active participation by school staff in adopting trauma-informed practices that promote resilience and enhance academic performance. The Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative’s Flexible Framework developed a guide for trauma-informed school based on 6 operational functions of schools.

Develop practices and policies that foster a trauma-sensitive school culture.

Implement a referral system ensures that students and their families are connected to the resources they need.

Offer and encourage participation in extracurricular activities and peer relationships.

Equip staff with capacity of helping students develop emotional and behavioral regulation skills.

Incorporat teaching practices that address learning needs of students affected by trauma.

Review and amend practices to promote accountability but do not reinforce traumatic behavior.