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Navigating the Impact of Trauma in the Classroom: An Analysis of the Trauma-Informed Care
in Three Alternative Public Schools

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ABSTRACT

Trauma-informed care is a growing strengths-based model in the world of social and human services that focuses on understanding past trauma to create sustainability and build a strong relationship between the client and service provider. Though it is used in various types of agencies, this thesis focuses on the implementation of the trauma-informed care model within three alternative public schools in three cities. The trauma-informed care model is used specifically in public school systems' alternative schools to influence success for children who have experienced behavioral issues within traditional school settings in light of the consideration that these issues may have been impacted by trauma.

In this study, school curriculum and training are examined to determine whether the use of trauma-informed care is utilized successfully within these schools. Interviews with principals are used in this report to get a first-hand look at the negatives and positives of this model. In previous studies, researchers have investigated the impact of trauma-informed care on children and how trauma can negatively affect people. The goal of analyzing these training and curricula is to discover if there are effective programs to help support the students by recognizing potential trauma and finding ways to work with them while avoiding labeling them as 'difficult children.' This is important because teachers need to be trained in areas of evidence-based practice in order to better relate with and reach their students toward the ultimate goal of motivating them to succeed in school.

INTRODUCTION

The term trauma-informed care (TIC) comes from the profession of social work, and is a concept used to describe the provision of services in a way that recognizes the complex, lasting effect that trauma has on the individual and the critical need for the service provider, counselors social works, etc., to focus on strengths of the individual as a way to promote perseverance, resilience, and safety. This model emphasizes relationship-building and trust between client and provider of services. This type of service continues to increase in the field as more agencies offer and require training for TIC approaches. One of the agencies applying this model outside of the social work profession is the education system as they work with children who may have faced trauma. Sometimes children are not able to remain in the traditional education system for a variety of reasons; a segment of this population struggles to succeed in a typical classroom setting due to behavioral concerns that disrupt the individual student and their peers from learning. Students in this situation require more individualized and intensive attention from educators, and for many of these students, the alternative public school is an appropriate fit.

Alternative public schools are located in school districts throughout the country and exist to provide educational and support services for students who are not successful in a traditional public school setting. In most cases, children are recommended to an alternative school by a principal or teacher. This recommendation can be a result of behavioral issues that go beyond what the professionals in traditional public schools are capable of handling; an alternative public school is thus considered an environment in which the child will have more support and resources. When children attend an alternative school, they are taught differently than in a traditional school. Delivery of class content is more individualized, as there are fewer children in the classroom. Given the individualized method for delivery of educational materials, the TIC

model is an excellent fit and companion approach for providing students in an alternative public school with an experience that addresses their psychosocial need and allows them to succeed academically.

While TIC has been researched in a variety of social work and human service settings such as foster care and victim advocacy, not enough research is present on how to successfully incorporate TIC into programs and services serving the populations that would benefit from the approach within an alternative school setting. The use of TIC in alternative school settings will help children be better served because it compliments and does not detract from the educational mission of the school; this approach will benefit the professionals working within the schools because it trains them to be better equipped to work with children whose lives have been influenced by trauma and whose trauma might impact the behaviors that distract them from being successful students. The overarching purpose of this study is to evaluate three alternative middle school programs' infusion of TIC model(s), and in doing so analyze the data collected to inform the development of recommendations for enhancing curriculum and training in this unique educational setting that serves a high need population.

INFLUENCES OF SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

One theory that is relevant to this issue of trauma is labeling theory. The prevalence of labels within the walls of the education system leads to the salience of labeling theory also known as the societal reaction perspective. The conceptual framework of this theory dates to Cooley in 1902. The basic premise is that individuals see themselves as others see them (Thompson 2014). Other people form opinions on an individual and this reflects in the individual's perception of themselves. The application of this in the public education system is

that from a young age, children enter the classroom to find themselves labeled by peers, teachers, and counselors. This early interaction creates an image of themselves that is reflected through the eyes of others.

Not only does this theory state that these opinions change the way in which an individual sees themselves, but it also states that these opinions will change how the individual acts and behaves in the future (Thompson 2014). The individuals will start to mold themselves into the person that they believe others think that they are. The children who may be acting out are labeled as bad students from a young age and this can reflect on how they will act in the future.

Furthermore, labeling theory includes primary and secondary deviance; these two types describe the ways in which a child in the public school system can become deviant. Thompson (2014) states,

While primary deviance referred to the individual who engages in a deviant act for the sake of the act itself, secondary deviance is the result of the individual having been identified as a member of some group of deviants and thus that individual begins to identify as a member of that group of deviants, adjusting their behavior to fit this identity (1).

This secondary deviance is the deviance that is attributed to the label and highlights the possible outcome of labeling children with trauma as bad children. Secondary deviance can create a sense of isolation and desperation in the child that comes out through anger and bad behavior. By adjusting the behavior to fit the stereotype of a bad child, the student will carry this label through the rest of their educational career and maybe even further.

The label placed on students creates an expectancy cue for the behavior that is manifested within the label. The label itself leads to a stereotype that is now attached to that person and so, the labeled person may experience social distance due to the deviant label (Thompson 2014). From here, the label becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as the labeled person uses the label to

behave in the way in which they are expected to (Thompson 2014). This is damaging for students who are labeled as troubled/bad students because that behavior will become an expectation and they will react the way that others anticipate them to. They are now stereotyped as the bad child and will continue to behave as such.

In an article about stigmatizing students with learning disabilities through labeling theory, Shifrer (2013), emphasizes that special education programs do not expand the opportunities for these students, instead, they limit them. It was found that parental and educational figures tend to, “hold lower educational expectations for labeled adolescents than for similarly achieving and behaving adolescents not labeled with disabilities” (Shifrer 2013:462). This experience could be a parallel to alternative public schools. This special education label creates an individualized education plan for the student, and this is like an alternative public school where the class sizes are smaller, and the education is focused on the success of each individual. While this may help their education, the label can harm the student as they begin to behave in the ways in which those around them think that they will. If they are seen as a trouble maker, this label will attach itself and create a tendency to fulfill this label even if it is initially placed there in order to get the student the educational plan that they need to succeed in school.

This theory is important but is also a paradox to the study because while going to an alternative school can invite labeling, the goal of the alternative school is to remove this label. Thompson states in his research that a label is not permanent but instead is a relational term between a person and an expected set of behaviors (2014). In this way, the labels can change. The alternative staff are not the ones who recommend the student to their program and therefore, they do not attribute to the negative label. This is significant because although the attending of the alternative school may further attach that label to the child, the work done within the

alternative school will hopefully eventually remove this label in order for the child to successfully continue on to further education without issue.

Another sociological theory that is relevant to this thesis is the Developmental Family Life Cycle Model. The basic premise of this theory is that it is important to pay attention to families; this theory attempts to explain families as a process of events over time (Schwartz and Scott 2018). The first sociologists to observe this theory were Glick and Parke (1965) where they observed several stages including marriage, first child, leaving of children, and death of a spouse. These stages have been altered over time by many sociologists as they attempt to discover more about the family cycle and how it affects family lifestyle. Duvall (1988) states that “that stages of the family life cycle follow no rigid pattern and are neither descriptive nor prescriptive of family life cycles” (130). These stages can alter and therefore, are able to show the changes within family life over time.

Several stages of the eight-stage life cycle model discussed by Schwartz and Scott (2018) can be linked to trauma that could potentially keep the child in an alternative program. One of the stages of this cycle is Stage 2: Childbearing Families and this is when the first child is born, and the family is still forming (Schwartz and Scott 2018). This stage has the potential for trauma through parents fighting, divorcing, or even domestic violence as the family is still trying to adjust to marriage and the first child. Another stage that could connect to this trauma is Stage 5: Families with Teenagers which is the stage where the family is adjusting to new found independence and adolescence (Schwartz and Scott 2018). This could affect traumatic events if a sibling or friend in this stage dies or the child is in an abusive household. All of the stages could be traumatic because the stages are not concrete and can alter; these are a few examples of stages that have potential trauma for the child.

This theory influences this thesis as it does not recognize the dissimilarity over different styles of family, even if it recognizes that the stages can alter. Developmental Family Life Cycle Model has become more diverse as more scholars have pointed out varieties of the cycle. In fact, there is discussion that a family crisis can pull a family out of normal routine and cause harm to the cycle (Duvall 1988). It was suggested by Duvall (1988) that “well-organized families weathered even severe losses, while disorganized families suffered severe disruption” (131). This seems to suggest that the disorganized families are the ones that suffer through trauma and this may cause the children to go through this as well. It might even be possible that those who are unable to go through the stages outlined by this theory are more likely to experience trauma due to disorganization and a lack of resources to recover from a crisis. This inability to react well to a crisis may account for some trauma harming children and show the increasing attendance in public alternative schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This thesis focuses on the implementation of TIC within the classroom at alternative public schools. When reviewing the literature, it becomes clear that there are many new and progressive sources on trauma and TIC within articles from the last ten years that will be helpful tools to those who are researching and implementing policy in the future. Although the focus of this thesis is not directly centered on policy making, there is an emphasis on the need for nationwide change when it comes to successfully applying these types of methods. This necessary change is discussed within the literature as a common theme across many of the references.

When analyzing the literature, there are similarities and differences that can be broken up into categories as the relevant scholarly sources focus on the effects of trauma and the implementation of some sort of solution. The review summarizes the literature in the key categories of (a) defining trauma, (b) trauma-informed care (TIC): an evidence-based practice, and (c) a focus on alternative public education: a gap in the literature. The review of the existing literature clarifies the key concepts related to the thesis study and guides the development of the methods of the study itself.

Defining Trauma

Trauma is a constantly evolving term within society as it has developed various meanings throughout different sectors of the professional world such as, the education system, the child welfare system, and the juvenile justice system. In a study done by Mullaney, it was found that in past years, “society treated children with traumatic experiences as outliers, believing that seemingly rare traumatic occurrences were effectively addressed through the criminal justice system, foster care, Child Protective Services, and alternative schools, (2018:454). This is no longer the case as trauma has shown to be prevalent and have the potential to cause short- and long-term problems (Brown, King, Wissow 2017). Brown et al. define trauma as, “events (including physical injury but also threats to social and emotional well-being) that create difficult-to-manage levels of psychological and physiologic stress,” (2017:94). This simple definition highlights important results of trauma but does not quite capture the multidimensional definition that is required to fully understand childhood trauma.

Taylor Mullaney developed an in-depth and comprehensive definition of trauma that allows for an easier understanding of the concept and gives a better look at the wide variety of events that can be traumatic. The research looks at the, “three E’s of trauma: event, experience,

and effect,” (Mullaney 2018:455). The first E looks at the event and there are several examples of what events could count as traumatizing which include, verbal, sexual, physical abuse, have a parent suffering from a mental illness, losing a parent through abandonment or divorce, and experiencing domestic violence (Mullaney 2018). Experience, which acts as the second part of trauma, “is inherently subjective; not all events are automatically traumatizing, and individual children will experience difficult events in different ways,” (Mullaney 2018:455). This shows that the definitions and effects of trauma will be different for each child and therefore, it is not plausible to have a rigid definition of trauma and what events fall under that definition. The last “E” of trauma recognizes that even if a child has endured an adverse event, they must first show symptoms of trauma before he or she is diagnosed as having experienced trauma (Mullaney 2018). This structure of diagnosing trauma allows for research and care to reach those who have experienced trauma to the point of which it has affected them and their daily lives. Recent studies have shown that between 25% to 60% of youth are exposed to traumatic events (Donisch, Bray, Gewirtz 2016). From this trauma experienced, “16% to 33% of children exposed to traumatic events will develop posttraumatic stress disorder,” (Salloum et al. 2016:614). These statistics present trauma as an important issue that needs to be addressed by society.

According to Mullaney (2018) symptoms of trauma include nightmares, regressive behaviors, difficulty learning and focusing, and withdrawal. In a study of children in the foster care system, Perry and Price (2018) also identified these symptoms which they categorized as external and internal. The authors defined external symptoms as including behaviors that are aggressive and hostile, and internal symptoms including behaviors that exhibit a lack of control of emotions and social withdrawal (2018). Though this study solely focuses on the foster care system, it intertwines well with the other literature on the effects of trauma as it discusses

symptoms that are found in other studies in education and the juvenile justice system. Symptoms that define trauma can be utilized within specific public sectors of care, including the education system, to distinguish victims of trauma from children who are simply acting out.

Within the education system, many symptoms of trauma are exposed through the behavior of the students. Some of these symptoms can be, “more difficult to observe (such as revenge fantasies, withdrawal, or isolation),” and others, “are easier to observe (such as acting out and aggression)” (Martin et al. 2017:960). Smithgall et al. (2013) also observed similar symptoms in students such as, acting out and breaking rules, and then they connected the symptoms of trauma to students’ potential to have future interaction with the juvenile justice system. Mullaney (2018) expands on the symptoms that Martin et al. and Smithgall et al. investigated by connecting the difficult-to-observe and easy-to-spot symptoms. For example, the difficult-to-observe symptom of intrusive thoughts, such as feelings about the traumatic experience, make it difficult to concentrate which is indicated by the easy-to-spot symptom of aggression and poor grades (2018). Smithgall et al. (2013) focuses on the classroom impacts as well as the social impacts of trauma by listing areas these students struggle with, including, “language, concentration, understanding, and responding to classroom instruction, problem-solving, abstractions, participation in group work, classroom transitions, forming relationships, regulating emotions and organizing material sequentially” (402). The severe effects of trauma highlight the need for further development and understanding of trauma’s impact on youth and their educational future.

Trauma-Informed Care: An Evidence-Based Practice

As an evidence-based practice, TIC is mentioned in literature on the various public institutions of care. The goal of these institutions is to improve the lives and futures of youth

impacted by trauma, but each system approaches trauma differently because service providers vary in skills and the capacity to treat traumatic stress (Donisch et al. 2016). Despite these differences, Donisch et al. give this definition of TIC as an evidence-based practice:

A program, organization, or system that is trauma-informed realizes the widespread impact of trauma and understands potential paths for recovery; recognizes the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, staff, and others involved with the system; and responds by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices, and seeks to actively resist re-traumatization (126).

This definition highlights that an essential part of this practice is the service provider's response to the trauma and their understanding that their response has a monumental impact on the victim's view of their trauma (Sullivan, Murray, and Ake 2016). The importance of awareness for service providers within the TIC model helps to prevent re-traumatization, which is "re-experiencing the intense, distressing feelings that occurred during the original traumatic event" (Martin et al. 2017:960). Donisch et al. (2016) advocate that the appropriate use of TIC is not a treatment model but instead, promotes evidence-based treatment. In contrast, Cavanaugh (2016) states that TIC does not address practices but focuses on an entire organization's structure and mission statement. This difference in application between the two researchers demonstrates that TIC can be a broad concept that differs across public sectors with Donisch et al. (2016) looking at juvenile justice and Cavanaugh (2016) discussing education. Despite the contrast, researchers tend to agree that TIC focuses on action and reaction of the client and service provider.

Clients from many different human service institutions are treated with TIC as an evidence-based approach in order to meet the needs of the many types of populations, including clients in child welfare. The child welfare system utilizes TIC in order to, "accurately determine the circumstances and needs of the children in its care in order to provide the most appropriate services," (Smithgall et al. 2013:403). TIC focuses on individualizing needs to better serve the

clients. This type of care closely relates to the Developmental Systems Theory which discusses the implications of stages of development of children and how the environment affects behavior (Vimont 2012). There are various components with this theory, but the one that relates the theory back to TIC is, “positive human development can be realized through the application of developmental science that seeks to understand and promote the strengths found within individuals and contexts” (Vimont 2012). The theory emphasizes the importance of individual services that TIC provides. Kramer et al. (2013) similarly refer to trauma-informed practice as a way to promote awareness of the effects of trauma on the development of children to all child welfare workers. Both Kramer et al. and Smithgall et al. reflect on the need for an awareness of needs and circumstances in which trauma is present and the potential effects on children. Sullivan et al. (2016) studied the parents who are foster, kinship, and adoptive caretakers through the evaluation of a trauma-informed parent workshop by the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN). TIC education geared toward this population is essential because the parents are an underrepresented group in the TIC movement, and this leaves the children in their care at risk of instability and worsening effects (Sullivan et al. 2016). The multiple populations within the child welfare system - including, parents, welfare workers, and the children - are reasons that TIC is important to implement into this system.

Along with the child welfare system, the education system highlights TIC as a solution to support high-risk youth. Specifically focusing on students, Martin et al. (2017) states that “other principles of TIC include supporting student control and choice, enhancing collaboration between staff and student, empowering students, and ensuring cultural sensitivity” (961). Cavanaugh’s (2016) expectations of TIC in classrooms are parallel to Martin and colleagues as they both emphasize interactions with the families to enforce culturally responsive practice,

safety for all students through behavioral expectations, and peer support through peer tutoring. These similar views of how to best carry out TIC strengthen the argument that these practices benefit students within the system through small adjustments to current trauma treatment such as positive support and cultural sensitivity enhancement which calls for an understanding of those that are different and allows for better service to them. Teachers benefit from this practice because when they are confronted with students who have experienced trauma, they know how to best help the students both emotionally and academically (Mullaney 2018). Cummings and colleagues (2017) agree with Mullaney and further explain that teachers receive limited training on promoting competence and combating trauma symptoms in the classroom and as a result, could potentially trigger stress reactions in children. This system supports those who have experienced trauma, and it can also offer support to service providers in terms of knowledgeability, self-care, and practices of TIC.

TIC's approaches and goals are utilized by other public institutions such as therapists who specialize in mental health and physicians within the primary care systems; however, they refer to TIC by different names. The first approach to TIC in the mental health system is called trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy. This approach focuses on youth ages 3 to 18 and is an evidence-based treatment (Salloum et al. 2016). This is a three to six-month process, and it incorporates similar aspects of TIC, such as a focus on the building of client and service provider relationships and sensitivity to trauma (Salloum et al. 2016). The other public service area that was found to uphold this type of practice is primary care for children. The primary care providers use integrated care which minimizes harms to the client while maximizing benefits, customizes the patient's care plan to their individual needs, and prioritizes confidentiality (Brown et al.

2017). Integrated care and TIC are similar as their goals and values align regarding individualization of needs and minimizing harm.

Focus on Alternative Public Education: A Gap in the Literature

Solutions to the trauma crisis across public sectors have been suggested and implemented to carry out TIC effectively. Brown et al. (2017) completed an analysis of primary health care and stated that its goal in trauma prevention should be to create a safe and comfortable environment where issues about health are discussed and advice is given. A suggestion in creating this ideal environment is for facilities to “incorporate questions about trauma into screening or history-taking but only after exploring acceptable ways of doing this in the population served” (Brown et al. 2017:98). This recommendation allows for service providers to be sensitive immediately after meeting the client and calls for the creation of a better definition of trauma in order for all public institutions to better serve clients. Kramer et al. (2013) expanded on this solution by conducting a study to evaluate the plausibility of implementing statewide training on TIC among child welfare workers. They found that after training, knowledge about trauma and TIC went up significantly, there was an increase in the way that supervisors used their roles to promote TIC, and it was determined that developing statewide TIC is essential to preparing the child welfare workers to handle victims of trauma (Kramer et al. 2013). Foster care is also a highly-researched topic and fits well with an institution-wide solution. A study on external and internal symptoms of trauma found that the foster care system would be improved if those involved in the system targeted problematic behavior reduction when there are multiple children in a home and promoted stress-coping techniques for the parents (Perry and Price 2018). The study suggested these solutions be implemented across the foster care system in the United States. Another study done on the correlation of the education system and the justice system

advocated for, “promoting a shared view of child development and an understanding of the impact of trauma on children’s development trajectory [as] an important step toward implementing a...system of care for high-risk youth” (Smithgall et al. 2013:406). This promotes uniformity of services to help traumatized clients. Finally, a study from Donisch et al. (2016) also promotes a unified system as they interviewed those who worked with mental health, education, and the juvenile justice systems and found that there was a difference in definition of terminology and lack of commonality across the systems. They then went on to recommend a “unified conceptualization and operationalization of [trauma-informed practice] TIP; one that is as applicable to educators as it is to juvenile justice, child welfare, and other child-service professionals,” (Donisch et al 2016:131). This solution seemed to be one that many researchers favored as it lessens confusion and creates more effective services among all of those who work with at-risk children and youth.

TIC in the classroom is also a prevalent solution within the literature and several approaches present themselves as viable options for implementation. Mullaney (2018) advocates for the litigation of trauma by classifying it as a disability so that children with trauma are eligible for individual services such as an aid in the classroom. Furthermore, Corr and Barton (2018) recognize the validity of Mullaney’s argument through finding that children who experience traumatic events are more likely to develop a disability than their peers so they may need those specific services. Along with this aid for children in the regular classroom, Martin et al. (2017) research the benefits of a sex education course that is trauma-informed to prevent and protect at-risk youth from teen pregnancy in order to not harm or exclude those who have survived trauma. Martin et al. (2017) creates an action plan for this course that focuses on elements that would create a TIC classroom, including the staff having a basic awareness of

trauma, looking into the program's mission statement to ensure TIC is reflected, identifying trauma histories within the students, and modifying policy to reflect a trauma-informed environment for all. This view into TIC in the classroom views different programs as ways to reach at-risk students but does not present alternative public education as a way to combat the struggles of those who have experience with trauma.

Alternative public schools as the solution to the effects and risks of trauma in classrooms is presented as a positive experience for the students, parents and teachers involved. Lagana-Riordan et al. (2011) did a study specifically about alternative public schools and interviewed students on how they differed from the public ones that they previously attended. The purpose of alternative public schools is to “decrease the number of at-risk students leaving school prematurely and serve those students by using different methods than found in traditional educational settings” (Lagana-Riordan et al. 2011:106). The in-depth interviews from this study found that students were more successful in alternative schools because there was a focus on positive, nonjudgmental student-teacher relationships, there was an offer of choices if consequences were given, the school focused on their strengths, and teachers were educated on support services for students (Lagana-Riordan et al. 2011). This shows that the alternative education plan seems to work for those at-risk students and can be seen as a plausible solution in order to combat the trauma crisis within the education system.

There is a clear gap in the literature regarding the views of leaders in the education setting, such as principals, about the utility of TIC approaches and the way in which these approaches enable staff to support students effectively. The majority of the literature is focused on student interviews and the impacts on their lives in both the traditional and alternative school setting. While this thesis aims to emphasize the importance of students in the development of

TIC, it will also explore the impact of the alternative public school setting on educators. While there are impacts in traditional schools as well, their focus on only alternative schools develops from a lack of resources on how alternative schools use TIC in a more purposeful way. There is also a gap when it comes to evaluating the curricula and training for the teachers in these schools. Addressing these gaps in the existing literature will provide a more in-depth look on how the pedagogical approaches that might incorporate TIC in these schools might differ from traditional education schools' approaches and evaluate how universal a TIC approach really is within a school district.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The target population for this study were service providers within the alternative public school setting. Choosing the three schools was based on their title as alternative public middle schools and their potential to have a large population of children who have faced trauma. For those who were interviewed, the selection was made because these were the professionals who had the most knowledge about the training on TIC and how the training had been implemented and received by the students. This thesis used purposive sampling which is choosing subjects based on specific criteria and the criteria was the school had to be an alternative public middle school (Lune and Berg 2017). Purposive sampling was used as it was convenient, less expensive, and less time consuming (Lune and Berg 2017). This was the best sampling strategy due to the time and money constraints that this project had. Lune and Berg (2017) warned that one of the limitations of purposive sampling was that research would lack wide generalizability. Although the study could not make generalized claims about TIC, the study could focus on detailed accounts of TIC in these three schools. An advantage of this strategy was the variety of in-depth answers because at each alternative school, the interviewer conducted interviews to approximate

maximum variation which samples were chosen to maximize the diversity of the answers in the context of the research question (Lune and Berg 2017). The interviewees were chosen based on their occupation to maximize the diversity of their answers because each had a different way of interacting with the students and so, each utilized TIC in a diverse way. Thus, the total of these interviews was three. The people were interviewed based on their position in the school and their willingness to be interviewed.

The thesis used a case study approach to evaluate each of the three schools separately to then make connections between each case. A case study approach is used when the researcher has clearly defined cases with boundaries and wants to understand the comparison between several studies (Creswell 2007). This helped when the researcher examined three different schools with clear boundaries due to location, population, and resources. Creswell also states that case studies are drawn from several different resources such as content analysis and interviews (2007). This was used in the interviews to tie in information from the analysis of training. The curriculum analysis piece fit in with the case study as the researcher read through texts while establishing themes within and among each case, and then analyze all cases in order to understand complex trends among cases. (Creswell 2007). This established the necessity to use an organizational unit of analysis to look at each school as an individual case study. The research took each evaluation and looked at the within-case analysis, the themes within each case, and followed with a cross-case analysis which is a thematic investigation across all of the cases (Creswell 2007). This presented a full investigation of each school and how they compared to others. Each case study with both interview and training evaluation was presented with equal weight as the others (Bronstein and Kovacs 2013). There was not one that was emphasized more than the other as they all had unique and defined features that were characterized and compared.

The research began with the analyzing of curricula and training from these individual schools. This was the first step of the analysis in this thesis. When these materials were analyzed, it set up the next part of the research. The materials were read to get background on the TIC in each school and they allowed the researcher to understand the answers in the interview better based on the training of the schools. The training and curricula not only were an integral part of the project themselves, but they also served as background knowledge before the interviews about the TIC in each school.

This case study research project is a qualitative research investigation that incorporates the quantification of text data analyzed during the curriculum and training analysis phase of the study with in-depth semi-structured interviews (Creswell 2007). Out of the several types of case studies, this thesis has used the intrinsic case study as it focused on the case itself by evaluating the TIC programs within the schools. Although the case study is a type of qualitative approach, it differs from standard qualitative studies. Instead of the examination of trends throughout individuals, the case study approach identifies specific examples of the phenomena and uses multiple sources that created an extensive, in-depth view on each case and how they connect (Creswell 2007). This method also pulled in the use of mixed methods by utilizing both interviews and training analysis. Bronstein and Kovacs explain that mixed methods are useful when the study calls for exploration and explanation and the complexity of the question was not answered with just one method (2013). This thesis called for mixed methods within the case study in order to address the complexity of trauma and TIC.

The researcher contacted the alternative public schools to inquire about an interview and request any training and curricula about TIC. The researcher interviewed participants individually over email. The interviewer told the interviewee that they would be asked a series of

questions about the training and curricula examined, and their opinions about the role and impact of TIC in their school. The questions asked are listed below.

1. How would you define trauma-informed care?
2. What is the mission statement/motto of this school?
3. What training is required of the staff in this school and how often is this training updated?
4. How do you think the care is implemented in the classroom?
5. How do you think trauma-informed care is implemented in the discipline?
6. What is the ratio of social workers to children? Teachers to children?
7. What is the graduation rate at this school?
8. What are a few reasons that children are referred to this school?
9. Do you see improvements in behavior in students?

The variables that were applied to these questions were as follows,

- Operational Definition of TIC – Question #1
- Organizational Structure and Functionality – Question #2, 3, 6, 8
- Implementation of Care – Question #4, 5
- Effectiveness of Care – Question #7, 9

These variables helped the researcher to categorize the various questions and organize them between cases. They created clear coding methods between interviews.

After each interview concluded, the researcher completed her field notes. Upon completion of all interviews and field notes for a specific site, the researcher analyzed all three interviews using the analysis of Creswell to examine the cases. Creswell argued that the researcher should make a detailed description of each case, look at patterns between cases, create

naturalistic generalizations which allow for people to learn from the cases to apply to themselves or a population, and create themes for each case (2007). The researcher coded the data which are labels for assigning measurement to descriptive data (Miles and Huberman 1994). In this study, coding was used as a data-labeling and data-retrieval tool in order to create an effective and in-depth analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994). This gave the researcher the ability to categorize themes.

Along with coding, the researcher used a separate form to summarize the interviews. For the interviews, the researcher completed a contact summary form; this form contained relevant comments and analysis questions that the researcher came back to in order to summarize each interaction (Miles and Huberman 1994). This analysis form was completed along with a methodological journal. This methodological journal was kept throughout the research in order to maintain objectivity, record coding mechanisms, track modifications to the research protocol, and develop relationships between categories (Rodwell 1998). These forms and the journal organized the research data to give clear results of the analysis of TIC in the alternative public schools. In addition to these elements of the research methodology, the thesis includes a researcher reflection, located in the appendix; this is typically found within the traditions of interpretivism approaches to qualitative research in which the researcher has a motivation to study and connection with the topic of the research that is rooted in her previous educational, personal, and/or professional experiences with the phenomenon (Rodwell, 1998). These elements gave the researcher the ability to reflect and immerse herself fully into the research.

ANALYSIS OF TRAINING

Case A

In this case, the training provided was through the National Dropout Prevention Center. The mission of this organization was to “increase graduation rates through research and evidence-based solutions” (National Dropout Prevention Center 2019). They also focused on the development of students in social, academic, health, and work areas of life by offering schools opportunities and resources such as certifications, program assessments, conferences, and alternative school support (National Dropout Prevention Center 2019). Although Case A did not mention attending, the Prevention Center was also advertising for the First Annual National Trauma-Skilled Schools Conference and this demonstrated that the term trauma is being used in a new and experimental way as it is starting to be recognized as a hindrance to a child’s education and development. When assessing the goals for this conference, there were clear references to TIC within the agenda. The advertisement for the conference displayed a quote that stated “Trauma and stress impact the way individuals learn and behave, presenting a significant issue for educators and learners. Awareness of the issue is not sufficient; educators must become skilled to help students excel in the classroom and life” (National Dropout Prevention Center 2019). This statement was followed by learning goals that included building resilience, cultural transformation, and academic plans in the classroom that recognize trauma (National Dropout Prevention Center 2019). These clearly reflected the tenets of TIC and demonstrated the growing awareness for the need for TIC within public education.

One of the conferences that Case A had attended was the National Dropout Prevention Conference. The various themes of this conference included diverse learners, engagement, and alternative educational contexts (National Dropout Prevention Center 2019). These themes lend

themselves to helping the students that Case A serves by not only focusing solely on alternative public education but incorporating aspects of TIC such as using various engagement techniques for different students and therefore, creating a safe and diverse learning environment.

The other conference that was utilized by Case A was the At-Risk Youth National Forum. This was through the National Dropout Prevention Center; the conference had a learning objective of fostering healthy relationships between client and service provider. This is important as they were referring to TIC but did not use the official term. There was a recognition of all the important aspects of TIC such as relationships and empathy; this was important for these types of schools as it assisted them in successfully helping students influenced by trauma.

Case B

There was a distinct awareness of TIC from the first communication with this alternative program as Interviewee One stated that the TIC implementation is growing rapidly (Case B). They had secured grant funds and have brought in several prominent speakers on TIC in order to educate their staff. These speakers have both held influences in TIC by spreading awareness through programming in several schools.

One of these influencers was hosting a Professional Development workshop of the faculty of this program. Within the itinerary given to the researcher, there were several factors that directly linked to TIC. On the summary, the agenda stated “Trauma-informed and restorative justice principles are the tool belt. Changed mindsets become the toolbox and relationships are the playground for taking this age-old dilemma and turning it into a winnable game” (Case B). Relationships and open-mindedness were concepts that were emphasized in the purpose of the agenda and highlighted the usefulness of TIC in the classroom. There were several activities on this schedule that included a look at moving away from a punishment system to a supportive

discipline system (Case B). This is a part of the empathy section of TIC. By understanding the trauma, the empathy skill of the TIC will reshape punishment into consequences that teach students lessons but also support them.

The school also pointed to the National Alternative Education Association (NAEA) which was an organization with goals to create a unified voice of advocacy for students in alternative programs and provide opportunities for alternative education professionals (National Alternative Education Association 2018). The association included education options for teachers, alternative research, conferences, and even a Twitter feed. Within this organization, Case B recommended their conference, the NAEA Conference on Alternative Education. This conference had several strands that promote various factors of the alternative education plan and one of these was “Trauma Sensitive Strategies for Alternative Schools” (National Alternative Education Association 2018). This direct reference to TIC and the connection to alternative education showed the influence that TIC has had on the world of education. Case B had the materials and training required in order to educate themselves on TIC and how to best assist their students.

Case C

There was no clear training from Case C. There was evidence of a relationship with the school district in order to have professional development training; topics relevant to students were discussed among the staff which included community violence and the impact on the learning environment (Case C). While this was an important topic, it did not discuss TIC. Along with this, there was the implication that there is no individual training specifically for this alternative school as it was stated that the staff collaborates with the whole school district. While

this can be helpful in some respects, the alternative education program should have different approaches and therefore, have different solutions than traditional public schools.

There was also no mention of TIC topics in the training. The training discussed included “Guided Intervention Sessions” where students talked through various topics (Case C). There was no mention of any aspect of TIC within these training or recognition of characteristics of TIC within the mentions of the curriculum.

ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEWS

Case Study A

Case A is an alternative program that seems to be up to date on modern TIC training and conferences through their works with the National Dropout Prevention Center. The researcher was unable to get an interview due to time constraints.

Case A contacted the researcher in order to understand her study and asked questions about TIC. Case A gave the researcher the conferences that they attended through the National Dropout Prevention Center. After several attempts for an interview, Case A contacted the researcher to state that they did not have time to do that long of an interview over the phone. The researcher was granted permission to send Case A the questions over email, but there was still no response. Due to this time constraint, the researcher could infer that this school is understaffed and therefore, may not be able to provide the relationship-building aspect of TIC with the students because of circumstances outside of their control.

The importance of the conferences for Case A also helps the researcher to conclude that this school has potential resources that are beginning to recognize TIC as a term, and this could influence the effectiveness of TIC in Case A through graduation rates and strategies used by the professionals.

Case Study B: Interviewee One

Case B is an alternative program with many outside resources and funding to be able to help the students. Interviewee One was extremely knowledgeable about TIC and the ways in which it was implemented in the alternative school setting.

Patterns

When it came to patterns in TIC standards, there were a lot of implementation of TIC in Case B and this implementation influenced the effectiveness of TIC in a positive way. When asked how they felt that the care is implemented in the school, Interview One states that teachers “build supportive relationships with students, provide safe-places within the classroom and also work to identify student triggers prior to them being triggered” (Case B). These three TIC standards, relationships, safe-spaces/resources, and striving against re-traumatization are important to this best-practice model.

Interviewee One was confident that Case B prioritized relationship-building in order to assist the students. In part of their definition of TIC, Interviewee One informs the researcher of the importance of relationships with all students regardless of their backgrounds and potential behavior issues (Case B). When looking at the relationship between student and staff, Interviewee One states that these are “healthy beneficial relationships with also clear boundaries” (Case B). This means that these relationships positively influence the student and teacher without making either uncomfortable or frightened. These relationships seem to be a strong, healthy aspect that make this school trauma-responsive.

Safe-spaces are also mentioned and this extends to additional resources that students are equipped with to better handle trauma. Safe-spaces are essential in the classroom and allow students a place to feel secure and trust those around them; along with this, the teachers have

calming-kits in their classroom to ensure a safe classroom environment and preventative measures to stop the behavior (Interviewee One, Case B). Along with this, Interviewee One points out that water is always available to the students because “water has been shown to help students regulate and additionally it has been shown to increase academic success” (Case B). This freedom to get water gives the students the ability to decide when they need a break. These classroom resources are another aspect of TIC that Case B implements to ensure student success.

Another element of TIC that is utilized by Case B is striving to recognize individual triggers and to not retraumatize “intentionally or unintentionally” (Interviewee One, Case B). Interviewee One discussed that teachers work to help students recognize their own triggers within the classroom and social setting in order to avoid re-traumatization (Case B). This was important as re-traumatization can be as harmful as the trauma itself as the student would essentially relive that trauma.

Naturalization Generalizations

A generalization that has the potential to be gleaned from this case is that TIC is “best practices for all students” (Interviewee One, Case B). These methods do not need to only be applied to those in alternative programs. Placing these steps into traditional schools might eradicate the need for alternative education altogether and therefore, this would assist in the labeling that accompanies a student attending an alternative program.

Another generalization that has been made from this case is that even if a school is equipped with the resources and knowledge to implement TIC, results do not come easily. Interviewee One states that results take patience and instead of looking at students like a problem that need to be solved, this alternative program tries to “equip them with strategies and resilience to regulate themselves better when back in a comprehensive school environment” (Interviewee

One, Case B). This is an essential generalization that should be applied to all TIC schools as TIC is a process and not a quick fix. The students need time to adjust their thinking and behavior to be able to function outside of an alternative program.

Themes

Acknowledgment of TIC

Case B has a clear definition of TIC and the importance of it within the classroom for students. According to Interviewee One, TIC is a “mindset that often comes from a mind shift that those involved must make” (Case B). This not only addresses the students but the administration and teachers as well. It is not an automatic fix but a process that everyone must follow in order to successfully use TIC. One of the beginning stages of starting to train to become trauma-informed is to, “utilize solid, research backed training” (Interviewee One, Case B). This acknowledgment on the depth of TIC and its importance shows the skills that Case B has in order to implement the TIC on students and faculty.

Implementation of TIC

Implementation of TIC in Case B is emphasized through the discipline and rewiring of thoughts and reactions of the students. Case B emphasizes punishment versus discipline as punishment is not a part of TIC and when aligned with trauma-informed leaders, discipline can be a part of the TIC implementation. Discipline, as described by Interviewee One, is about “processing the behaviors and looking at the cause rather than trying to consequence the behavior out of the student” (Case B). This shows that Case B views discipline as a method in which to learn more about the student’s trauma and triggers in order to get them to recognize this pattern of bad behavior.

This discipline has the goal of reworking the way that the students think about their actions and how they impact others. The students often think in terms of flight, fight, or freeze which is also known as “survival brain” (Interviewee One, Case B). When elements of TIC are implemented, including the discipline, the objective is that “the student begins to think from top-down and then will own their behavior and will look to correct the behavior” (Interviewee One, Case B). The top-down brain allows them to self-regulate their own behavior and analyze options for their behavior. Top-down behavior is also successful through the relationships built with teachers and peers and recognition of their own triggers. This implementation in Case B incorporates valuable traits of TIC that make it a best-practice model.

Alternative Placement and Background

Interviewee One discussed the frustration of alternative schools as they had to recently cut one of their two social workers within the program due to “the mindset of those who control the funding” (Case B). There is a lack of recognition of the work of alternative schools and TIC in those who are outside of the programs. Despite this, Case B added a “Crisis Intervention Counselor and a Student Intervention Specialist” (Interviewee One, Case B). These two positions help to influence the TIC within the school and assist with student support.

This alternative program has several reasons in which students have been placed there. Out of the six general reasons given for students coming to this program, three are due to a variety of behavior issues which could have been influenced by trauma. These three reasons are being recommended by their home school due to behavior issues, suspension or expulsion from another school, or Department of Juvenile Justice Transition (Interviewee One). This theme creates an understanding as to why students are placed in these programs and why there is a need for these programs if they are TIC trained.

Effectiveness of TIC

The effectiveness of TIC is slow within Case B, but therefore, it is a long-term solution for students. By changing the brain reactions slowly over time, the hope is that this change will last within the students well into their adult years for them to be successful outside of school. In graduation rate, Case B has been at 95% over the years and hit 96% this past year while the county average is about 90% (Interviewee One). This success rate exposes the effectiveness of TIC on these students as they are successfully graduating from the program. Interviewee One hopes that the program teaches the students the TIC skills that they need in order to be resilient and successful outside of the classroom.

Case Study C: Interviewee One

Case C is an alternative program with small classroom sizes and little TIC training. Interviewee One did not acknowledge TIC though they did discuss the effect of trauma and ways to have relative conversations with students about issues that might cause trauma.

Patterns

When it comes to patterns in TIC standards, there is a recognition of the impact of trauma. When asked to define TIC, Interviewee One states that trauma “affects the lives and situations of people around us” (Case C). The recognition of trauma is the first step of developing TIC. It is clear from their answer that Case C has some aspects of TIC but does not have a clear definition of TIC.

Another TIC standard that Case C has is the support for students not only in academics but in other areas of life such as emotional well-being. Their mission statement states that they support their student academically while meeting their social and emotional needs (Interviewee One, Case C). This multidimensional goal of service relates back to TIC and its goals.

Naturalization Generalizations

A naturalistic generalization that can be made about Case C is that alternative schools should have separate training from traditional programs. Though they are both serving educational purposes, the alternative program is there for students who need a different approach. Therefore, it makes sense to hold the two types of schools to different training standards. In this way, the students of Case C will be catered to differently and this will encourage them to finish the program.

Themes

Acknowledgment of TIC

Though a clear definition of TIC is not given, Interviewee One still recognizes a concept that is important to TIC. This concept is the recognition of the impact of trauma to not only the person traumatized but everyone else around them (Case C). Interviewee One's acknowledgment of the potential impact for trauma is the first part of becoming trauma-informed and eventually, implementing TIC.

Implementation of TIC

There are a couple of ways that some elements of TIC are implemented into Case C. Interviewee One talks about small class sizes with the teacher to student ratio being 1:5 (Case C). This smaller class size allows for a more individualized educational experience. This can lead to relationship building between teacher and student which is an element of TIC. Within the classroom, there are also Guided Interview Sessions "daily where students have the opportunity to discuss various topics" (Interviewee One, Case C). These sessions could be a part of empathizing with the students and allowing them to speak on whatever they are feeling at the time.

Case C has not yet implemented TIC in the discipline (Interviewee One). This is an important aspect of TIC and the absence of it in the discipline may be an influence in the behavior of the students and the success rate of the program.

Alternative Placement and Background

Case C did not give reasons that students are in the alternative program, but there is a lot of collaboration between traditional schools in the district and this alternative one. It can be inferred from this that there are references made from traditional schools to Case C due to behavior.

For training, Case C works with the whole school district in “professional development sessions to address matters relating to our students” (Interviewee One). This is the only training commented on and there seems to be no distinction between traditional school training and alternative training. Though discussing matters with students is important, a separate alternative training may be beneficial due to the purpose of alternative education being to help at-risk students who need extra assistance using methods that a traditional curriculum will not usually cover.

Effectiveness of TIC

With the consideration of lack of training and confusion on TIC, Case C does not seem to have implemented TIC and therefore, it cannot be determined whether TIC is an effective method for students in this school. Interviewee One disclosed that the graduation rate is only at 42% (Case C). From this rate, it can be inferred that the methods that Case C is using such as district-wide training are not as effective as it could be. The possibility of implementing TIC in this program could improve the graduation rate and create better outcomes for students.

TABLE 1: AGGREGATE COMPARISON OF THEMES FOR CASES A, B, AND C

The chart below helps to break up the coding methods used by the researcher for each interview. The codes “Acknowledgment of TIC”, “Implementation of TIC”, “Alternative Placement and Background”, and “Effectiveness of TIC” are used in order to sort the interview data and glean comparisons throughout the schools. There are vast differences in the training in Case B as there is a comment about grants that provide this school with training led by influential people in TIC and this may lead to the fact that their graduation rate is significantly higher. Both Case A and Case B go to well-known conferences for training as well and have a greater understanding of TIC than Case C. The other major difference in Case C is that there is no clear training for only the alternative staff; there is training for the whole public school district and therefore, Case C is not getting any specific training on TIC. All of these schools recognize the potential impact of trauma on students and their ability to learn and grow.

Case	Acknowledgment of TIC	Implementation of TIC	Alternative Placement and Background	Effectiveness of TIC
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No definition is given 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training highlight elements of TIC Relationship building and cultural diversity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No information is given Can assume that there are behavioral administrative referrals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No graduation is rate given Based off up to date and intensive training, graduation rates could be high
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear definition Elements such as relationship building, and resilience are highlighted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working toward recognizing triggers Discipline - looking at the cause and not just punishing. This leads to self-awareness. Relationships and calming kits in the classrooms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grants to bring in influential people in the TIC movement to train Half of the reasons given for attendance of alternative program could be due to trauma (ex: suspension) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had a graduation rate of 96% last year Slow changes to the brain in the way it processes events. This will hopefully be long term
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal definition Recognition of trauma but not TIC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on academic, emotional, and peer support. Smaller class sizes for building relationships with students. Guided Interview Sessions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimal separate training from traditional schools Professional development sessions with the whole school district 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Had a graduation rate of 42%

CONCLUSION

The findings from each school vary and this is due to each school having a diverse level of knowledge about TIC and access to different training. For example, Case B has the grants to bring talented and educated leaders in the TIC movement to inform their staff about this best practice whereas Case C does not fully understand TIC and only has training with other traditional schools in their own district. This leads to the fact that there should be a standardized way of implementing TIC in alternative schools in order to help all students. All alternative schools have the same goal of helping at-risk students, but they do not have access to the same resources and training. Therefore, standardizing this training may lead to a well-rounded alternative school curriculum that will help students from all over. TIC would help to build relationships, acknowledge individual triggers, and ultimately help students who need a program like this to succeed.

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Appendix A: Methodological Journal

The initial plan of the methods for this thesis was to conduct interviews over the phone with each school after obtaining their training. Case A, B, and C were chosen and contacted over email on 02/26/19. There was no response and so, they were each called on 03/01/19 in which each phone call led to a voicemail.

On 03/04/19, the researcher was contacted by Case A and given references to several conferences that they attend. A phone call was made to Case A on 03/11/19 to set up an interview time and an interview was scheduled for later that day. Interviewee One, Case A emailed back that they did not have that much time today to talk on the phone.

Case C called on 03/18/19 to give a background on training. Interviewee One, Case A notified that they did not have 45 minutes to sit down to talk over the phone. To combat this, the researcher completed an IRB modification form in order to get permission to email the questions to the respondents. This modification was approved by IRB on 03/20/19. Case A was then emailed the questions on 03/21/19. Case C was also sent these questions on 03/25/19.

Case B was contacted many times until they stated on 03/29/19 that they would be unable to participate due to lack of availability. The researcher sent in another IRB modification form requesting to be able to contact any public alternative middle school in two specific states instead of the original three named schools. This was approved on 04/01/19 and this brought in Case D and E.

On 04/02/19, Case D contacted the researcher with information on their training and the interview questions were emailed. Due to Case B being unable to participate, Case D became Case B in the thesis on 04/02/19.

On 04/09/19, Case C responded with answers to the interview questions that were then put into a Contact Summary form, coded, and analyzed as a case study. On 04/15/19, Case B responded with answers to the interview questions that were then put into a Contact Summary form, coded, and analyzed as a case study. Case A did not respond the interview questions.

When looking at coding the research based it off of elements from her research question. She ended up using four codes which were, “Acknowledgment of TIC”, “Implementation of TIC”, “Alternative Placement and Background”, and “Effectiveness of TIC” and these codes became the themes in which the researcher used to organize the data in the case studies.

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Agreement

Please read this consent agreement (or listen carefully if it is being read to you) before you decide to participate in the research study. Please keep a copy for your records.

Project Title: “Navigating the Impact Trauma in the Classroom: An Analysis of the Trauma-Informed Care in Three Alternative Public Schools”

Purpose: The purpose of this research study is to evaluate the use of trauma-informed care in alternative public middle schools. The term trauma-informed care is a way to provide services by recognizing the complex, lasting effect that trauma has on the individual and then focuses on strengths to promote perseverance and safety. This model emphasizes relationship building and trust between client and provider of services. The evaluation of this care in schools is important because children impacted by trauma need an alternative structure of care in order to thrive and succeed.

Participation: As a participant in this study, you will be asked to answer questions about your understanding of trauma and trauma-informed care and how the school you work in implements these practices through training, curriculum, or other methods. .

Time Required: Your participation is expected to take 45 minutes.

Voluntary Participation: Please understand that participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate and/or answer any question(s) for any reason, without penalty. You also have the right to withdraw from the research study at any time without penalty. If you want to withdraw from the study please tell the researcher or a member of the research team who is present during your participation.

Potential Risks: The potential risks associated with this study are the potential of not showing a school in a good light if their program is not effective in this area. To combat this, no one will be able to view which school said what as they will be labeled School A, B, and C. The only people that will have access to the raw data are Hanna McWilliams, Dr. Sharon Foreman, and Dr. Beth Savage.

Potential Benefits: The potential benefits associated with this study are by evaluating a program through an interview, there will be active reflection on the program and possibly ideas on how to make it better. This will have a direct benefit on the school and community in general because is

the more effective these programs are, the more the students will be assisted in a way that fits their needs.

Compensation: You will not receive compensation for participation in this study.

Confidentiality: Your individual privacy will be maintained throughout this study. In order to preserve the confidentiality of your responses, the researcher will be leaving out the school names within the thesis. Instead, each school will be assigned a letter so that they are School A, B, and C. There will also be no mention of names of the principals or other officials that are interviewed.

Whom to Contact with Questions: If you have any questions or would like additional information about this research, please contact Hanna McWilliams at mcwilliams_h@lynchburg.edu/(240) 397-0916. You can also contact my faculty research sponsor, Dr. Sharon Foreman, at foreman.s@lynchburg.edu, who is the Principal Investigator (PI) for this project and is supervising my work on the study. The University of Lynchburg Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Human Subjects Research has approved this project. This IRB currently does not stamp approval on the informed consent/assent documents; however, an approval number is assigned to approved studies – the approval number for this study is **LHS1819093**. You may contact the IRB Director, Dr. Alisha Walker Marciano, through the Office of the Associate Provost at the University of Lynchburg at 434.544.8367 or irb-hs@lynchburg.edu with any questions or concerns related to this research study.

Agreement: I understand the above information and have had all of my questions about participation in this research study answered. By verbally agreeing/emailing agreement to participate in this interview I voluntarily agree to participate in the research study described above and verify that I am 18 years of age or older. This verbal consent is in the place of a signed consent so that there is no formal documentation of my participation in this research study.

Appendix C: Contact Log

<u>Date</u>	<u>Email</u>	<u>Call</u>	<u>Case</u>	<u>Answer</u>
02/26/19	x		A, B, C	None
03/01/19		x	A, B, C	Left Voicemail
03/04/19		x	A	Someone called and gave training
03/07/19		x	A	Will call Interviewee One to schedule interview
03/07/19		x	B	Directed to email another person
03/07/19	x		B	Original email sent - no response
03/11/19		x	A	Left voicemail for interview times
03/11/19		x	B	Notified to call tomorrow
03/11/19		x	C	Call did not go through
03/11/19	x		C	Re-sent original email
03/11/19		x	A	Interviewee One called me. Interview set for 1 pm
03/11/19	x		A	Emailed Interviewee One consent form
03/11/19	x		A	Interviewee One emailed to cancel the interview
03/11/19	x		C	Forwarded request email to another position
03/12/19		x	B	No response
03/15/19	x		A	Emailed with interview times again
03/15/19	x		B	Forwarded original email again
03/15/19	x		C	Forwarded original email
03/18/19		x	C	Called, they will call me back
03/18/19	x		C	Emailed times they could call - no response
03/20/19	x		A	Asked about interview questions

03/20/19		x	C	Called school - they were out
03/20/19	x		C	Emailed Interviewee about calling me
03/20/19	x		B	Original email to Professional #1
03/20/19	x		A	Original email to Professional #2
03/20/19	x		C	Original email to Professional #3

IRB Modification to email interview questions, approved 03/20/19

03/21/19	x		A	Emailed interview questions
03/25/19		x	C	Administrator called me about interview
03/25/19	x		C	Emailed interview questions to Interviewee One
03/29/19	x		B	Original email to administrator
03/29/19	x		B	Notification of inability to participate
04/01/19	x		C	Checking in on interview questions

IRB Modification to any school in two specific states, approved 04/01/19

04/01/19	x		D	Adding potential Case D - original email
04/01/19	x		E	Adding potential Case E - original email
04/02/19	x		D	Confirmation with Case D about training
04/02/19	x		D	Interview Questions Emailed

Research Modification as of 04/02/19 - Case D becomes Case B

04/09/19	x		C	Interview Questions answered
04/10/19	x		A, B	Emailed reminding about interview questions
04/15/19	x		B	Interview Questions answered

Appendix D: Contact Summary Sheets

Case Study A

Contact Summary Sheet

Contact Type: Email - Training

Site: Case A

Contact Date: 03/04/19 - 04/10/19

Today's Date: 04/23/19

1. What were the main themes that stuck with you through this contact?
 - a. They were confused when contacted about TIC, needed more clarification
 - b. Elements of TIC were present in training presented
2. Summarize the training points based on your variables.
 - a. Operational Definition of TIC - Needed clarification but understood the term once it was defined. Elements were clearly there, but this did not seem to be a term that they used.
 - b. Organizational Structure and Functionality – They are very busy and therefore, unable to complete an interview. This lack of time may show an understaffed program in need of more caretakers.
 - c. Implementation of care - If Case A has used the themes within the conferences then there should be TIC influence with the relationships between students and teachers and improvement on the alternative curriculum.
 - d. Effectiveness of care - Unable to determine.
3. What remaining questions are there?
 - a. What is the graduation rate?

- b. Is TIC implemented in the discipline?
- c. Who implements the training learned at the conferences?
- d. Why are children referred to this school?

Case Study B

Contact Summary Sheet

Contact Type: Email - Interview

Site: School B

Contact Date: 04/01-15/19

Today's Date: 04/15/19

1. What were the main themes that stuck with you through this contact?
 - a. Recognition of aspects of TIC: relationships, resilience, best practice
 - b. Stated that becoming trauma-informed is not about an amount of training, but is a journey
 - c. Classroom equips teachers with several tools to help students
 - d. Top-down processing is important instead of the survival brain (fight or flight)
 - e. Even though there is recognition here, the people who are outside the program sometimes fail to recognize the importance (ex: funding)
 - f. Many reasons for referral are behavior (ex: suspension, referred by administration)

2. Summarize the interview points based on your variables.
 - a. Operational Definition of TIC - Relationships - working with students instead of working to do things for or to them, working on a top-down

brain instead of a survival brain, best practice for all students because it is about building resilience and hope

- b. Organizational Structure and Functionality - Researched training, developing healthy relationships with clear boundaries, discipline vs punishment, Crisis Intervention Counselor and a Student Intervention Specialist
 - c. Implementation of care - Teachers identify triggers and safe-spaces, water is provided freely in every classroom (cooldown), calming kits, discipline – the student will soon be able to own behavior and become more self-disciplined
 - d. Effectiveness of care - 96% grad rate last year with the county average being a little over 90%, equipping them with strategies to help themselves instead of “fixing” them.
3. What remaining questions are there?
- a. What types of calming kits are available to teachers?

Case Study C

Contact Summary Sheet

Contact Type: Email - Interview

Site: School C

Contact Date: 02/26-04/09/19

Today’s Date: 04/15/19

- 1. What were the main themes that stuck with you through this contact?
 - a. Lack of recognition of TIC

- b. Not a lot of training for just alternative studies - working with the school district and traditional public schools
 - c. Small classroom sizes fit TIC
 - d. Graduation rate is low

- 2. Summarize the interview points based on your variables.
 - a. Operational Definition of TIC - lack of recognition and a confusing answer on definition. There is talk of recognition of trauma and that it influences everyone but does not fully give definition.
 - b. Organizational Structure and Functionality - Talks about multiple types of support including academic and social. Discusses social matter affecting students - lack of emphasis on alternative education. Smaller class sizes
 - c. Implementation of care - Daily Guided Interview Sessions with kids. Not in discipline
 - d. Effectiveness of care - 42% grad. rate. Some interview questions remain unanswered.

- 3. What remaining questions are there?
 - a. Why were some of the questions not answered? Seems to be information missing.
 - b. Is this school district more regulated with what training are produced for teachers?
 - c. Does this school see other reasons besides trauma for a need for alternative public education?

Appendix E: Reflection

The concept of this senior thesis began to form in my summer internship with DV services. There were women who came in and out of the organization for services. Some of them appeared at the beginning of my internship and then disappeared until the end of those eight weeks. Those who disappeared either fled town or went back to their abusers. The hopelessness of the job soon settled in on me and I found myself frustrated and asking is there ever any progression or change in victims in order to help them break this cycle.

When faced with these questions, the social workers of this institution told me about aspects that sounded like TIC. They stressed on empathy and the power of compassion. When women came back, there was no judgment or setbacks in their services; they were communicated with and asked constructive question in order to build a stronger relationship with the social worker and to evaluate their own behavior.

TIC appeared as a concrete term when, at this same internship, I read a book off of the office bookshelf called *Healing Neen: One Woman's Path to Salvation from Trauma and Addiction* which is a story about a young woman who grew up through many traumatic events that landed her in many difficult situations. When faced with a person in a helping profession she was often looked down upon. No one asked her how she turned out this way or showed any compassion. She eventually fought her way out of the destructive cycle she found herself in and is now a successful public speaker and philanthropist. There is even a Healing Neen Trauma Informed Care Conference coming up this year and the goal of this conference is “to bring the country together to network as a community of trauma informed care” (Tonier Cain International 2019). This term TIC and the story of Neen stuck with me as I continue to serve as an intern.

This model brought hope into the lives of many victims in a society that loves to victim-blame. In my experience, some service providers will not help these victims unless they are either clean and/or have left their abuser. Victim-blaming was a clear theme within *Healing Neen: One Woman's Path to Salvation from Trauma and Addiction* as well as those who were in the position to help decided to judge instead. This creates a detrimental environment of not recognizing the effects of trauma. Many of the victims have had trauma in their pasts and this may have influenced their decisions of today.

With the TIC model, there is recognition not only of potential effects of trauma but potential triggers of traumatization that may have them going back to their abusers. This was utilized in my internship. The social workers were supportive and sensitive to their clients creating a comfortable and safe environment. This influence helped me to realize that I wanted to research trauma and the TIC model as I found that this model fit with the characteristics of the care that I want to give as I continue on to the University of Maryland to become a licensed social worker.