

- ▶ Dr. David Opalewski
- ▶ griefrecoveryinc@gmail.com
- ▶ www.griefrecovery.ws



FOSTERING EMOTIONAL WELLNESS
IN ALL STUDENTS

- ▶ **52% rise in reported symptoms of major depression among 12 to 17 year-olds**
- ▶ **63% rise in reported symptoms of major depression among 18 to 25 year-olds**

- ▶ **American Psychological Association, Journal of Psychology, March 14, 2018**



“WHAT’S TROUBLING OUR YOUTH”

▶ Half of these youth with a mental health condition in the U.S. go without treatment.

▶ The Journal of JAMA Pediatrics, March 18, 2019



TREATMENT

- ▶ Families concerned about stigma
- ▶ Concerns about insurance coverage
- ▶ Shortage of mental health providers – 17 providers per 100,000 children/adolescents
- ▶ American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry



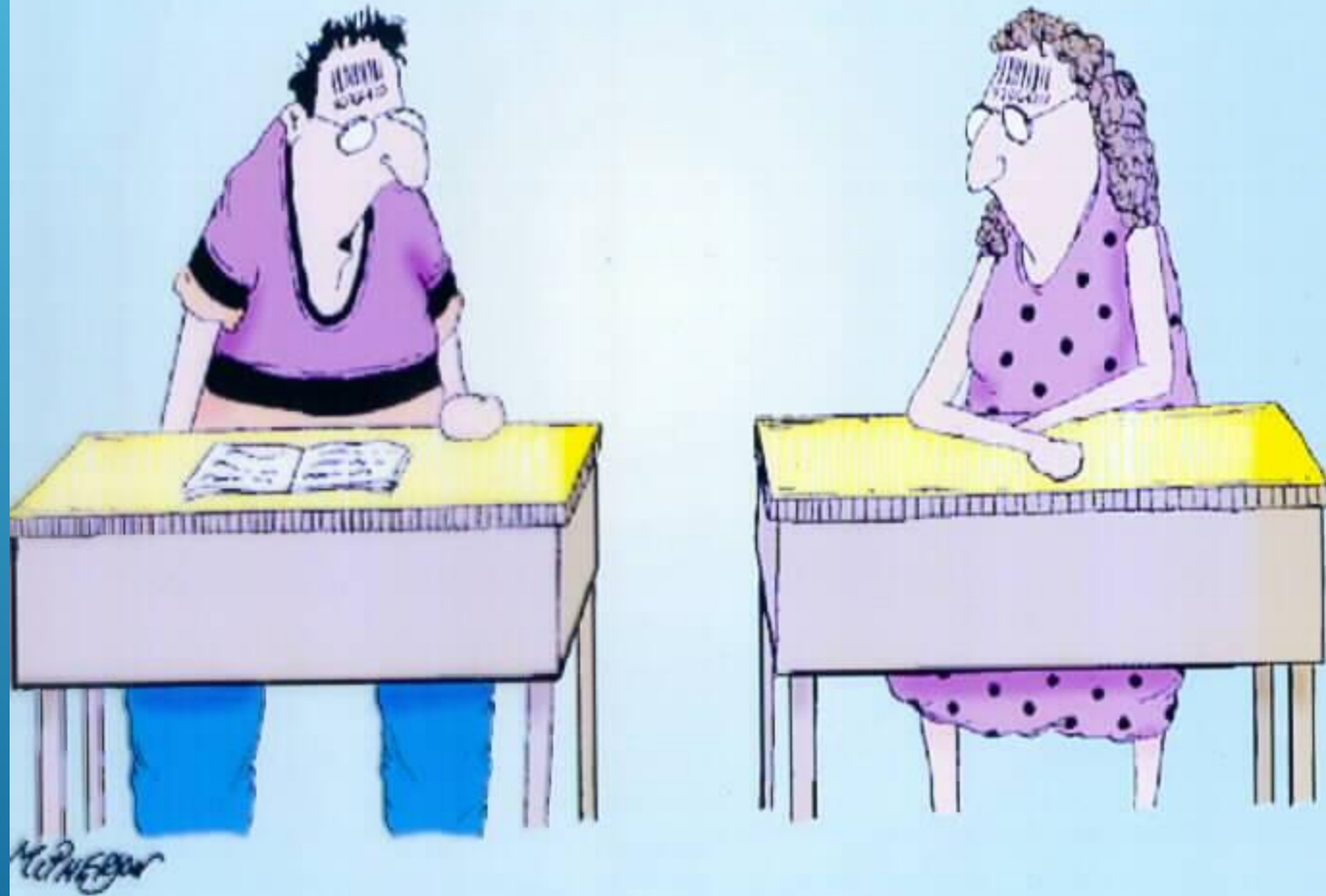
WHY ??

▶ “Untreated mental illness in children and adolescents pose grave consequences to our communities, including high rates of suicide, academic decline and unemployment.”

▶ *Dr. Barbara Robles-Ramamurthy, child psychologist, Long School of Medicine at UT Health San Antonio*

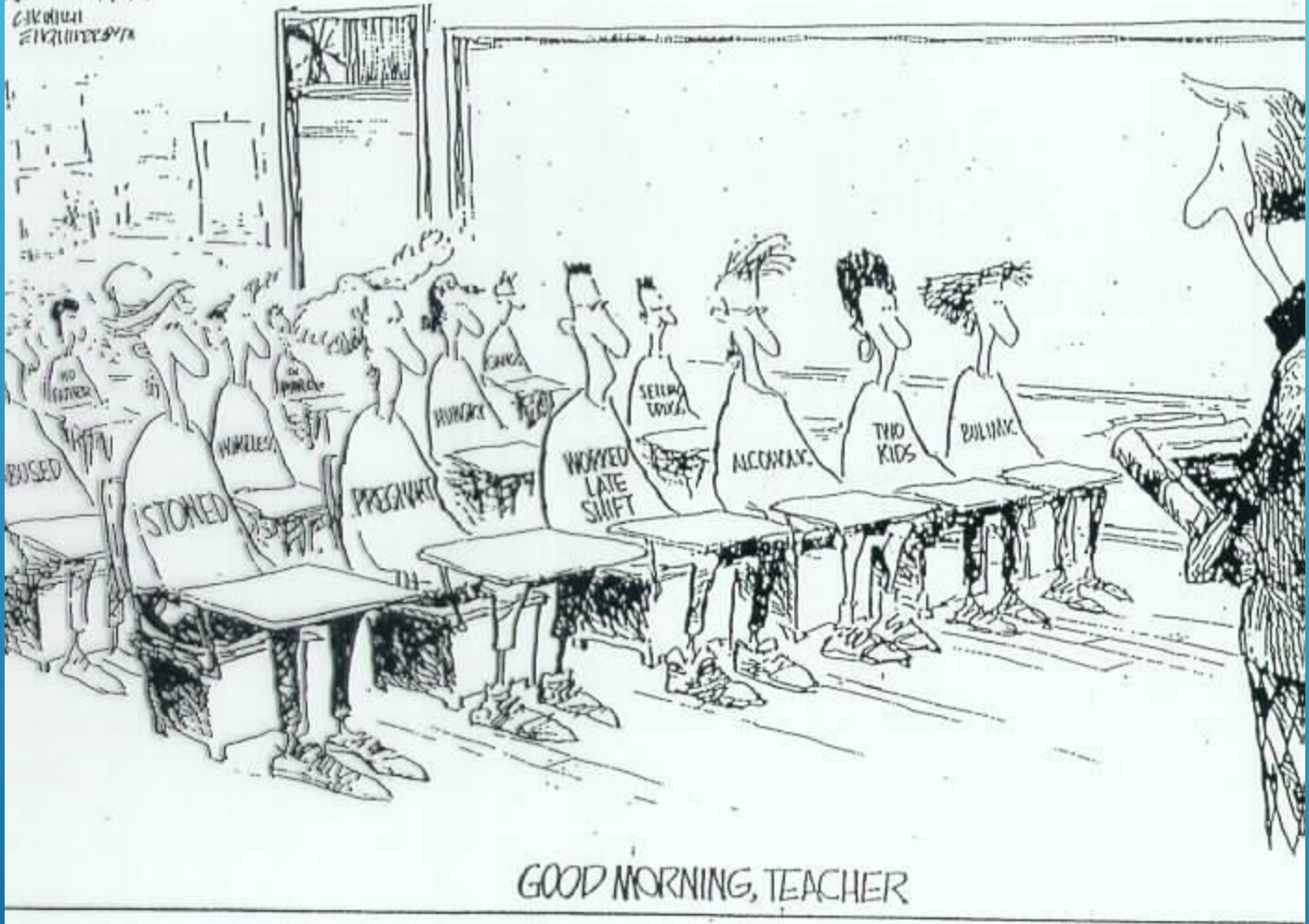


CONSEQUENCES



"Personally, I think this new attendance system stinks."

PERGAMAN
© 1994
EIKZLINDER/97A



GOOD MORNING, TEACHER

- ▶ “If you don’t think what I think
- ▶ Feel what I feel, experience what
- ▶ I experience, and see what I see
 - ▶ When I look at myself, others
- ▶ And the world around me, how can you possibly know
 - ▶ What is best for me?”



CHILDREN'S MANDATE

- ▶ Youth is the most exposed age group for trauma and abuse
- ▶ It is estimated that more youth are more exposed to trauma than ever before
- ▶ **The National Institute for Trauma and Abuse in Children 2016**



EXPOSURE TO TRAUMA

- ▶ 1 out of 4 students have experienced a traumatic event
- ▶ 11% of all girls 14 – 17 have experienced sexual assault
- ▶ 33% of students have been bullied
- ▶ 60% of students 17 years or younger have been exposed to crime, violence and abuse
- ▶ 30% of students in inner-city schools have witnessed a stabbing or a shooting
- ▶ Starr Global Learning Network, *Trauma Informed Schools*, June 2016



CHILDREN OF TRAUMA

Nearly 1 in 5 children/adolescents experience some form of mental illness in a given year

The Silent Tragedy, June 2018



- ▶ Our attitude has to be *not what is wrong with these students, but what has happened or is happening to them*”



ATTITUDE

- ▶ A professional is defined not by the business a person is in!!!!
- ▶ A professional is defined by the way that person does his or her business!!!

A PROFESSIONAL EDUCATOR



- ▶ “A child’s perception of the teacher’s perception of whether or not they can learn the material, is more powerful than the child’s own perception of whether or not he can learn the material”
- ▶ *8th grade locker mess up story*

PERCEPTION



- ▶ Physical Abuse
- ▶ Emotional Abuse
- ▶ Sexual Abuse
- ▶ Emotional or physical neglect
- ▶ Parental mental illness
- ▶ Parental substance abuse
- ▶ Incarceration of a parental figure
- ▶ Parental separation or divorce
- ▶ Exposure to domestic violence

- ▶ Two or more puts child at risk for attachment difficulties



ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACES)

▶ **Affect:**

- ▶ Brain structure and function
- ▶ The developing immune system
- ▶ The developing hormonal system
- ▶ How DNA is read and transcribed

All these negatively impact a child's ability to process life's situations in a healthy way.

HIGH DOSES OF ACES



- ▶ Repeated exposure to ACES negatively impact a child's ability to process life's situations in a healthy way.
- ▶ “Statistics indicate that people exposed to repeated or numerous ACES have a life expectancy 20 years lower than that of the general population
- ▶ **National Institute for Trauma and Loss in Children 2016**

ACES





**STRESSED BRAINS
CAN'T LEARN**



Start by understanding the nature of students' emotional and behavioral dysregulation can be a challenge, yet it is of the utmost importance. 1 in 10 youth have mental health problems enough to impair how they function at home, in school, and in the community.

WHERE DO WE START



- ▶ If you really want to help people living in mental illness, it starts with making a decision to **CARE**:
 - ▶ *Doesn't cost any money*
 - ▶ *Something we all can do*



GETTING STARTED

- ▶ Focused on adults well into their 40's and 50's
- ▶ Gender balanced
- ▶ Found that a vast majority who were flourishing stated “warm and caring parents is the major factor in their success in their marriages, parenting, and business accomplishments.
- ▶ Apple News, April 1, 2019 stated as published in Psychology Today



RECENT STUDY

▶ Tone matters!!!

- ▶ We can say the right thing, but if our tone is shrill, communication suffers.
- ▶ People pay more attention to our tone than anything else.
- ▶ When it comes to difficult conversations, we must choose both our words and tone carefully



COMMUNICATION



▶ Curiosity vs. Blame

- ▶ Blame usually gets in the way of understanding
- ▶ Curiosity is a better strategy – being curious communicates an effort to try to understand
- ▶ Blame breeds anger and defensiveness
- ▶ Curiosity breeds understanding



NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

Invitation vs. Persuasion

- . Using persuasion we tend to not be concerned with the other person's perspective
- . With persuasion our primary goal is to get our point across and try to get the person to see it our way
- . Invitation is a joint venture where we ask the person to join us in a journey toward understanding
- . Invitation sets the stage for a more productive conversation

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



- ▶ Perception vs. Reality
- ▶ Perception is not always reality when it comes to communication
- ▶ Start with the idea that maybe he hurt you unintentionally
- ▶ Maybe they lashed out at you because you were the first person in his path. This idea moves you closer to what is really going on.

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



- ▶ 1. Resist blaming. Use curiosity
- ▶ 2. Rather than persuasion, invite the person to join you in discovering what happened and why, and how to fix it.
- ▶ In place of perception, attempt to figure out reality.

NAVIGATING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



- ▶ Strive for the relationship, not to prove you are right!!!



RELATIONSHIP

Problematic Terminology

- ▶ “Crazy” “Nut Job” “Maniac”
- ▶ “Others are worse off,”
- ▶ “Just stop thinking about it”
- ▶ “There is no reason to feel depressed”
- ▶ “It’s just a phase

Preferred Terminology

- ▶ “Person living with mental illness
- ▶ “I may not fully understand it but I want to learn more”
- ▶ “I am here for you”
- ▶ Treat early. We treat cancer at stage 1 not stage 4

COMMUNICATION

“Mental Health is as much health as physical health

It is not a sin to be sick. Illness is illness

Your illness is not your identity

Your chemistry is not your character”

Kay Warren, CelebrateRecovery.com 2018

ELIMINATE STIGMA



- ▶ It is vital for teachers to read stories or share stories of success, especially children or adolescents who have overcome adversity to reach their goals.



TELL STORIES OF SUCCESS

- ▶ Ashley Judd
- ▶ Shia LeBeouf
- ▶ Tyler Perry
- ▶ Oprah Winfrey
- ▶ Albert Einstein
- ▶ Mark Wahlberg
- ▶ Drew Barrymore
- ▶ Eminem
- ▶ Allen Iverson



INSPIRING STORIES

Happiness is Not Something
You Postpone for the Future
It is Something You Design
For the Present



JIM ROHN MOOD QUOTES, 11/27/18

- ▶ We can help these students thrive:
 - ▶ Academically
 - ▶ Behaviorally
 - ▶ Socially
 - ▶ Emotionally



WE MUST BELIEVE



- ▶ All children can learn
 - ▶ Latest brain based research on how kids learn
 - ▶ Gardiner's 8 intelligences
 - ▶ Differentiated Instruction
 - ▶ Constructivism Principles
 - ▶ Giving students an active part instead of a passive part of their education. No more “*sit and git*”

WE MUST BELIEVE



- ▶ As time passes, students will remember less what you taught them, BUT will remember more how you treated them.
- ▶ The students in your classroom are infinitely more significant than the subject matter you teach.



CONVICTION

- ▶ The 3 R's are important!!! **However**, we can't forget the additional 5 R's:
 - ▶ Relationships
 - ▶ Respect
 - ▶ Responsibility
 - ▶ Rigor
 - ▶ Relevance



Things not on state assessment tests. We need to develop the whole child, the heart as well as the mind.

TEACHING TO CARE

- ▶ American Education must rid itself of the 8 track mentality.
 - ▶ Our students are millennial kids, not generation Xers or baby boomers.
 - ▶ Different doesn't mean deficient, it just means different

PLATEAU



- ▶ Our own high standards should be measured by how many students we help be successful, not how many students we fail.
- ▶ College president was pleased that the over all GPA fell by .2 of a point

STANDARDS



- ▶ **Always treat students with dignity**
 - ▶ don't back student into corner - put on defense
 - ▶ don't develop power struggles - winners/losers
 - ▶ eliminate sarcasm
 - ▶ "lets talk as self respecting individuals"
 - ▶ be open to student feedback
 - ▶ put students into position for success



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

- ▶ Schools don't exist for us, schools exist for kids.
- ▶ We have to realize what is good for kids is good for us.



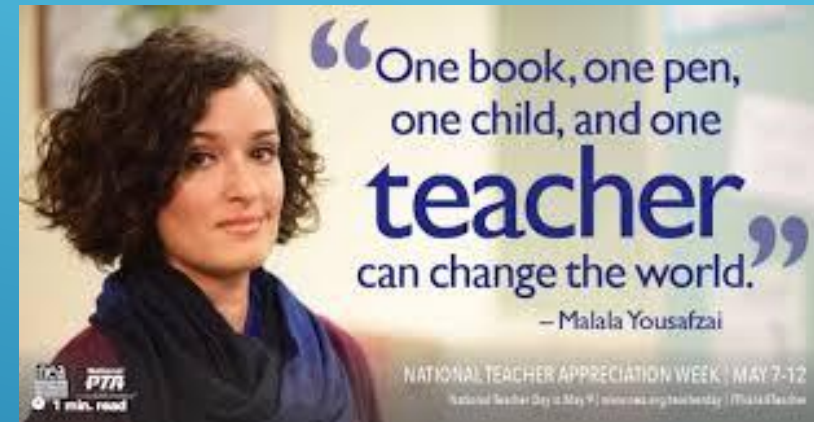
STUDENTS OR STAFF??

- ▶ “The nature of the relationship among the adults who inhabit a school has more to do with it’s quality, character, and accomplishments of it’s students than any other factor”
- ▶ Roland Barth, “Improving Schools from Within”



MOST IMPORTANT

- ▶ Build a better world said God
 - ▶ And I answered how?
- ▶ The world is such a vast place
 - ▶ So complicated now
 - ▶ And I am small and simple
 - ▶ There is little I can do
- ▶ And God in all His wisdom said
 - ▶ ***“Just build a better you!”***



BUILD A BETTER WORLD

▶ Blast From the Past

