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EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND AUTONOMY: COMBATING THE LOSS OF
SELF-EFFICACY INFLUENCING EDUCATORS' BURNOUT

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CHELSEA LYNN AMELL

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EDUCATOR SUPPORT AND AUTONOMY: COMBATING THE LOSS OF SELF-
EFFICACY INFLUENCING EDUCATORS BURNOUT

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December 2022

APPROVED

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Abstract

Educator trauma-informed teaching practices in education systems are paving the way for schools to meet the needs of students who have experienced trauma and support students from experiencing secondary trauma. Furthermore, exploring the effects and impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic also conveys the influences of indicators in educators' burnout. Research suggests that understanding the influences of educator burnout indicators allows policy leaders, districts, and schools to address the increasing levels of educator burnout. Unfortunately, our society does not know the lasting impact COVID-19 had on our educational system for both students and teachers. Findings in the research revealed impacts on educator self-efficacy and influences on burnout from increased work demands but a lack-there-of support for educators. Policy leaders, districts, and schools can implement strategies such as collaborative planning time, allowing time for teachers to implement trauma-informed pedagogy into their classrooms, and accessing support for self-care to address the need to decrease the likelihood of burnout to support our education system. Research does suggest that COVID-19's impacts on the educational system are bringing to light future issues in education; however, as a society, we can only assume the lasting impacts, and this is where further research is needed.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Teacher burnout has become a concern among education systems across the world. Many teachers had to adapt and find new ways to administer lessons to students through virtual platforms, increasing the demands of educators for several reasons, from learning new technology programs and how these programs meet pedagogy and academic standards. Not only did the COVID-19 pandemic contribute to the increasing stressors for teachers (Pate, 2020), but COVID-19 also influenced secondary trauma educators' experience from students directly impacted by trauma. Students who experience trauma often show behavioral and academic challenges in school (Crosby et al., 2019). Part of teachers' day-to-day job requires educators to manage and deal with the trauma affects students display; therefore, taking on the responsibility that increases educator stress (Phillips, 2021). Trauma-informed teaching practices are fairly new to educational institutions, although understanding trauma has been a conversation for several years. Trauma-informed practices can be defined as “creating safe and supportive learning environments and helping students develop consistent, positive relationships with peers and adults” (Pate, 2021, p.1). Teachers often experience secondary trauma from supporting students who have experienced trauma firsthand. Being trained in trauma-informed teaching practices was not a sole influence on secondary trauma but rather a side effect of adverse childhood experiences from their students. Trauma-informed teaching practice became a larger conversation in education systems as a means to better equip and diversify teachers' experience to work with all students, no matter their

ethnicity, socioeconomic status, or ability. Professional development training often addresses informing educators to understand further what trauma students may have experienced, what behaviors may be shown in their classrooms, what academic challenges students may present, and what strategies to implement in the classroom. Minahan (2019) and Crosby et al., (2019) are a few who have researched strategies to mitigate secondary trauma and the decrease in teacher self-efficacy. Although these strategies are often beneficial to the district, school, educators, students, and community as a whole, stressors often come from taking care of students who experience trauma. These increased stressors over long periods of time contribute to the impacts leading to educator burnout (Miller & Stipp, 2019). Understanding the influences and symptomatology of teacher burnout is essential to how policy leaders, districts, and schools can implement professional development and support educators so they can continue to educate tomorrow's future (Hurley, 2021).

Importance of the literature review (Researcher's story)

This researcher started as a special education teacher in an east suburban school district outside of St. Paul, Minnesota, in the 2018-2019 school year. This researcher had no experience teaching, just an undergraduate degree in Psychology and Corrections and a passion for working with students. Being well-diverse in working with children who have experienced trauma and special needs, this writer took on a new role as a special education teacher under a Tier 1 license in Minnesota. The tier teaching license system was implemented in July 2018 by the Minnesota Professional Educators Licensing and Standards Boards as a way to address the shortage of educators in the state of Minnesota,

and push for more diversified, trained, and high-quality teachers in the education system. As of 2021, 5.6% of educators in Minnesota are people of color or indigenous descent. The tier system seeks to attract high-quality and diverse educators (EdAllies, 2018). Each tier identifies credentials required to teach in the state of Minnesota, but all the pathways an educator takes are means to better diversify our education systems to address the shortages in education, especially in our STEM, special education, and other licensed fields. Having a bachelor's degree in a related field, five years of experience or more, participating in a mentoring program within the hiring district, and the district providing proof they could not hire a higher-tiered teacher was all that was needed for this researcher to teach.

Has the tier licensing system helped bridge the educator shortage gap and brought more diversified educators into the field of education? The simple answer is “yes”. This researcher experienced working with at-risk youth (children under the age of 18 who have experienced trauma and are considered at risk of successfully being integrated into society) as well as this researcher's academic credentials in understanding mental health, which qualified this researcher as an educator. Although this candidate had academic credentials and years of experience, the question still presented if this educator was a highly qualified and diverse enough teacher. Within the first year of teaching, this thesis researcher could perform the tasks and basic functions of the job but lacked the knowledge of pedagogy, Minnesota academic state standards, and how to teach a modified curriculum to special education students. Stress levels increased, which impacted this writer's ability to perform their job functions into the second year. Due to

this educator being undertrained, this teacher struggled with feeling successful as a teacher in performing their job function: teaching students. The demand of having to teach students while also supporting behavior responses from students who experience trauma, while also having to learn how to plan and write lessons to teach to the various levels of needs of students only increased. Slowly, over time, this impacted this researcher's self-efficacy, mental health, and physical health. This researcher started therapy bi-weekly because their mental health was dwindling. They gained over 120 pounds over the course of a year, which diminished their mental health and impacted the ability of this researcher to have children. Their higher education licensure program was affected, and time for this researcher to focus on self-care diminished as lesson planning and preparing for the next learning day took over this researcher's ability to spend focused time on other things.

COVID-19 Impact

In March 2020, the world was struck by the COVID-19 pandemic that impacted education. Many educators, including this writer, had to learn quickly how to adapt and meet the needs of the students through a virtual learning platform. Student engagement, support for student mental health needs, academic support, access to healthcare and basic needs such as food that students would have gotten being in person were impacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Expectations of educators drastically changed with the need to adapt learning to a virtual environment. Many felt mentally exhausted as there was a lack of planning time, stress with students not engaging in learning, and frustration with parents about how they would support their students' learning while also having to

support their families. With these increased expectations of educators with little time to adapt, districts struggled to support teachers, this researcher concluded. Since March 2020, many things have changed in the field of education with the way educators teach. Trauma-informed teaching practices were fast-tracked and were pushed more quickly into the educational system, but potential gaps in academia with students were also recognized. In many ways, students had to re-learn how to be in school again and address the achievement gaps that have started to be present in today's schools.

Educator shortages continued, including within this researcher's network. Six out of seven people in this researcher's network worked in the field of education. All of those educators have experienced burnout, with half of them leaving education. This left this researcher wondering how so many young educators feel burnt out early in their careers. How could working in schools for only four years or less lead to teachers wanting to switch careers this early into their adult working life? If the education system is training teachers to address the concerns many educators are bringing forward, such as how to respond to students who have experienced trauma, why are people leaving the education profession? This writer herself had felt the effects and the aftermath and is still experiencing the symptomatology of burnout, but she is not alone.

Background

“Up to two-thirds of U.S. children have experienced at least one type of serious childhood trauma, such as abuse, neglect, natural disaster, or experienced or witnessing violence” (Minahan, 2019, p. 30). Trauma is often explained as experiences in which students experience maltreatment or impacts on youths' functioning and/or development.

(Crosby et al., 2019) In an article by Crosby et al., (2018), they defined psychological trauma as “a response to emotionally or physically harmful events that damage our ability to function across social, emotional, behavioral, or physical domains” (p.16) The COVID-19 pandemic has also created barriers for students accessing safe, educational supports such as their environment, relationships with adults and other students, and learning support needs. An increased likelihood that students experience trauma occurred because education needed to take place on virtual platforms (Pate, 2020). Schools in California sought to provide students with food sources, technology support, and access to education. Various learning platforms, such as virtual learning, hybrid learning, or in-person learning, ranged from district to district across California. Many districts tried to address the needs of special education students, English language learners or other disengaged learners by having small group in-person learning. Many tried to host appointment times when in-person learning was not an option. Barriers to students having access were sometimes limited due to poor internet connections or lack of support in properly using technology. Funding for educational materials such as technology, appropriate masking when in-person learning or ventilation remained a barrier to keeping students safe. Districts in rural counties even struggled to help support virtual learning and provide students with educational materials, meals, and other support that they would have gotten if they were in-person learning (Carver-Thomas, et al., 2021). Society does not know the full effects of COVID-19 on students' education and how this will impact students and educators in schools. “Many district leaders are worried about future shortages given the considerable uncertainty about the long-term impacts of the

pandemic” (Carver-Thomas, et al., 2019, p.7). Therefore, further research needs to be conducted to truly understand the impacts of COVID-19. What we know from the COVID-19 pandemic is that there is a flaw in the system with the demands on educators. Phillips (2021) stated, “COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the failure of school leaders to adapt their expectations of teachers” (p. 39). Hurley (2021) addressed how teacher burnout has produced pressure, demands, and stress on educators and a lack of how to cope with these issues. Recent research suggested that “teaching is among one of the most stressful professions today; 90% of educators have reported experiencing job-related stress, while an estimated 46% report “high daily stress” (Hurley, 2021, p. 22). This is a continuing concern as this has psychological, emotional, and physical health effects on educators, which impacts education for students.

Trauma-informed teaching practices have been fairly new to education in the past several years, and more schools and districts are adapting to include professional development and training as frameworks to support students day in and day out. Throughout the research, many themes were the same (Crosby, et al., 2018). Howell and Thomas (2018) explained that racial and ethnic minorities often experience trauma at disproportionate rates and this contributes to how adolescent trauma impacts their success. Pate (2019) suggested childhood trauma negatively impacts students' ability to learn through lack of engagement, inability to regulate emotions, development of unhealthy relationships, and struggle to develop healthy ones, pay attention, and engage in their learning.

Miller and Flint-Stipp (2019) addressed secondary trauma that teachers experience while educating students and the secondary trauma's risks, including teacher burnout. They further explained that teachers' experience of secondary trauma impacts educators' personal and mental health both at the preservice level teachers (PSTs) and career teachers. Understanding what trauma is and providing professional development for strategies to use for educators can strengthen not only educator resiliency but also help support educators in how to manage secondary trauma experiences in their careers. Minahan (2019) stated that with student trauma, there are things outside of educators' control, but educators can provide “a great deal of a supportive and sensitive environment where students can be safe, comfortable, take risks, learn, and heal” (p. 35).

Definition of Terms

The following terms were determined to be important in understanding the research from this literature review.

Trauma is often explained as experiences in which students experience maltreatment or impacts on youths functioning and/or development (Crosby et al., 2019). In an article by Crosby et al., (2018), they defined psychological trauma as “a response to emotionally or physically harmful events that damage our ability to function across social, emotional, behavioral, or physical domains.”

Secondary Trauma refers to trauma being transferred from one individual to another in which the educator takes on the stress of another's trauma. Secondary trauma can also be explained as having physical, mental, and emotional damage from the trauma being transferred (Miller & Fint-Stipp, 2019).

Trauma-informed teaching refers to teaching practices in which an educator is diversified in understanding trauma and its impact, building emotionally healthy school cultures, and building in self-care for educators. Concepts are used to guide trauma-informed teaching practices, as there is no standard approach to trauma-informed teaching.

Self-efficacy refers to the influence of educators' motivation and behavior as well as their perception of their ability to produce student engagement and instructional strategies and obtain positive classroom management (Sheehan & Moore, 2019).

COVID-19 pandemic refers to the coronavirus disease as an infectious disease that was discovered in 2019 that created an epidemic that affected countries across the world (Center of Disease Control, 2022). When referencing the COVID-19 pandemic in this literature review, the COVID-19 pandemic was the only reason schools were shut down in March 2020 in the United States. Many states adopted different COVID-19 protocols that impacted education across the nation and even the world (Carver-Thomas, 2021).

Burnout is the impact of a person's occupational stressors, chronic response to emotional stress and day-to-day job-related stress, with the inability to recover (Brunzell, et al., 2021). Burnout often happens as a negative consequence of emotional labor due to mental pressures and stress (Kant & Shanker, 2021).

Teacher burnout refers to burnout specific to educational professionals as they are considered to be emotional laborers (Kant & Shanker, 2021). Teacher burnout stems from the stress, demands and pressure put on educators (Hurley, 2021).

Thesis Questions

How do we address educator burnout and utilize strategies to better understand the influence of teacher burnout and solutions to sustain educators?

There are three guidelines that follow the guiding research question to establish an understanding and the importance of not only being trained in trauma-informed practices but also implementing the strategies inside the classroom and ensuring all staff utilizes the strategies and then effective measures are being taken to ensure the effectiveness of the implementation of trauma-informed approaches.

The guiding research questions for this thesis are:

What influences teachers to feel burnout in the field of education?

Why are trauma-informed practices serving an important role in the field of education?

How can we reduce teacher burnout through proven ways or solutions?

Upon researching these questions, it is important to look at three things. First, it is central to explore the trauma-informed strategies that educators can use to incorporate their classroom academics and pedagogy to better understand the importance of being a trauma-informed educator. Second, it is important to consider teacher motivation and self-efficacy and how they can play a role in educator engagement, mental, psychological and physical health, and longevity of the educator profession. Third, it is essential to address methods of support for educators and find realistic expectations for educators by finding and utilizing solutions to decrease the likelihood of burnout.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Search Procedures

To locate literature for this thesis, searches were conducted through EBSCO Database utilizing resources from PsycINFO, ERIC, JSTOR, and Educational Journals for publications from 2016-2021. The research was narrowed by reviewing published articles that were peer-reviewed that focused on trauma-informed teaching, childhood trauma and education, trauma-informed professional development, and teacher burnout that addressed the guiding question. The keywords used in this search included “trauma-informed teaching,” “teacher burnout in education,” “trauma-informed professional development,” and “childhood trauma and education.”

What influences teachers to feel burnout in the field of education?

Educators take on many roles that aim to improve society by educating today’s youth for tomorrow’s future; however, the role educators take on requires them to have certain professional qualities. The effects of teaching are both positive and negative that can impact teachers’ educational practices (Kasalak and Dagyar, 2022). Many reports that ineffective student discipline management and inadequate school leadership influence teachers to want to leave the profession. When a teacher starts feeling the effects of burnout, we often see educators detach from their jobs, alienate themselves, increase in absences, appear more cynical, and be less empathetic toward others, ultimately leading them to leave education (Brunzell et al., 2021). “Burnout is defined as negative impacts of occupational workplaces stressors, prolonged chronic response to emotional job stress, and insufficient recovery” (Brunzell et al., 2021, para. 4). From the early studies of

burnout by Maslach (1996), the author defined burnout as a psychological syndrome that addresses one's response to chronic stress in the workplace. Maslach Burnout Inventory was developed in 1996, and this manual has been used over the decades to better understand burnout across several professions. Many researchers, including Brunzell et al., (2021), utilized this inventory when conducting research to better understand what burnout symptoms emerge from the educator profession and what is ultimately producing burnout in education. When we address burnout and how it relates to education, teachers define their burnout as having high demands in planning, administering, and supporting students. There are three factors to Maslach's (1996) burnout model; 1) mental fatigue, 2) depersonalization, and 3) a decrease in personal accomplishment (Kant and Shanker, 2021) & (Zincirli, 2021). Mental fatigue plays a role in teachers' psychological health and emotional exhaustion. With the consistent stress of having to plan out curriculum in new ways, support students experiencing trauma, and pressure from parents and administration, teachers often lead to negative thinking, feelings, and behavior. When teachers' emotional resilience decreases, the classroom environment and students are negatively impacted (Zincirli, 2021). Depersonalization is "the formation of pessimistic emotions and behaviors towards one profession" (Kant & Shanker, 2021, p. 967). Research suggests that teachers leave for the wrong reasons due to the high demands. With teachers being asked to meet curricular needs and spend more time planning and less time building relationships, teachers question their "why" or "purpose" of educating students.

A large majority of educators experience daily stress in their day-to-day jobs. This stress can often impact educators physically, mentally, and emotionally. With educators being ranked one of the most stressful jobs, burnout is likely when we understand how long-term stress can influence burnout. “Over 90% of educators have reported experiencing job-related stress, while an estimated 46% report “high daily stress“ (Hurley, 2021, p.22).” With long-term stress, some effects may cause rising rates of absenteeism, anxiety, frustration, coping with feeling a lack of classroom management and confidence, as well as depersonalization. Kasalak and Dagyar (2022) completed a study that sought to investigate and understand variables in teacher burnout, more specifically, teacher enthusiasm. Kasalak and Dagyar (2022) defined teacher-positive enthusiasm as an essential part that keeps teachers from feeling the effects of burnout and how their enthusiasm also benefits their students in being successful in school. Similarly to other research that utilizes Maslach’s (1996) model to define burnout, Kasalak and Dagyar (2022) addressed the emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decreased feeling of personal accomplishment impacting educators’ performance. Moreover, their findings from their research supported that teachers who are emotionally exhausted often have not only psychological effects but physical effects too. Many educators, especially teachers newer to education, tend to show higher exhaustion, which is a symptom of burnout trends in education because they often feel their performance is measured by their success in the learning environment. Furthermore, research conveys that educator seniority does decrease emotional exhaustion in teachers; however, enthusiasm decreases over time. In addition, learning environments that have larger class sizes often contribute

to professional exhaustion and fatigue (Kasalak and Dagyar, 2022). The need for special education teachers who provide educational needs to students has increased over the past several years, according to Nuri et al., (2017). This Turkish study addressed special education teachers' self-efficacy and burnout in the field of education as special education teachers frequently interact with students with disabilities, educational barriers or other issues within education. Their findings revealed that significant burnout levels are different among men and women in the field of education. They also found that burnout levels decreased as educational levels increased, and burnout increased more among those in young adulthood. Furthermore, the location of the schools also plays a more vital role in the increase or decrease seen within education systems. Educators that work in the city tend to have a higher level of educator burnout than those that live in the country (Nuri et al., 2017). In a study by Crosby and colleagues (2019) involving trauma-informed teaching practice for court-involved girls, research participants lived in urban areas where these girls often experienced higher rates of psychological trauma (Crosby et al., 2019). Teachers that work with students who have higher needs tend to experience trauma earlier in their careers than those who work with students that tend to be more neurotypical in development (Nuri et al., 2017).

When teachers understand psychological trauma, they can understand how various students' brains may function and learn. From there, teachers can utilize trauma-informed strategies to implement within their teaching practices and work with various students. If teachers understand that a student is struggling with processing, they can provide interventions, modifications to the curriculum, or accommodations. Several

schools use a multi-tier support system to utilize interventions based on the student's needs. For example, students who are in Tier 1 can access the general education curriculum with little to no interventions, and Tier 2 is where students do receive interventions from either a positive support team or other programming support, such as reading interventions. Tier 3 is when students need more intensive interventions, such as special education, where students may often require modifications to the curriculum to meet their educational needs based on their disability.

Secondary trauma

Conversations addressing secondary trauma have also surfaced with the increased demands of educators, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Secondary trauma refers to the trauma that a person experiences from another person who has directly experienced the trauma. The secondary trauma that educators experience is heavily impacting one of many reasons there is a high rate of teacher burnout, leading to a shortage in education (Brunzell et al., 2021). In order to address burnout, we must first understand what secondary trauma teachers are facing to support their needs so that their secondary trauma can be managed and therefore decrease burnout that contributes to teachers leaving education. Secondary trauma, as defined in Blitz et al., (2016) research, supports the idea that caretakers without sufficient support that are in relationships with others that have experienced trauma carry the trauma or stress of others. We can interpret that when educators do not have adequate support, they take the emotional burdens of their students, and in return, the emotional demands lead to exhaustion which influences educator burnout. In Miller and Stipp's (2019) research on pre-service teachers, their interviews with

their subjects discussed experiences while teaching with cooperating teachers. Miller and Stipp's (2019) participants shared many stories about their students' traumatic experiences. Many of these participants addressed how they felt when building their relationships with students. They felt they wanted to do more. The research findings showed that many participants took on additional stress as these relationships with their students involved sharing more information. These impacts made it difficult for education, with many of the participants stating that the additional stress they took led to many of them contemplating continuing on with being educators (Miller and Stipp, 2019). With taking on secondary trauma, teachers are also struggling to learn ways to manage stress and practice self-care strategies. Conversations addressing secondary trauma have also surfaced with the increased demands of educators, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The secondary trauma that educators experience is heavily impacting one of many reasons there is a high teacher burnout rate leading to a shortage in education (Copkova, 2021).

With more school districts implementing trauma-informed curricula and teaching practices, educators have shared that having this knowledge is beneficial; however, implementing these practices is difficult. Stipp and Kilpatrick's (2019) research explored secondary trauma from students' experiences. 98% of Stipp and Kilpatrick's (2019) participants stated that they noticed an increase in students' mental health that was either significantly higher or slightly higher. 82% of participants identified an increase in secondary trauma, with 51% having significantly higher secondary trauma and 31% with slightly more secondary trauma. The research by Stipp and Kilpatrick (2019) supported that when educators take on the stress from students directly affected by trauma, it increases

their odds of secondary trauma. Teachers are struggling to separate themselves from the needs of their students and take care of themselves. Taking on this additional responsibility leads to higher stress in the working environment and to increased feelings of burnout.

COVID-19's impact on educators The COVID-19 pandemic increased the relationship students and teachers have with technology, leading to students spending less time learning from others. The demands of online learning cause stress not only on the teachers, the students, and parents as well. Many teachers are being asked to teach social-emotional learning so students may learn to use strategies when dysregulated. These skills are essential to students who have experienced trauma, but how do we ensure teachers can still find a balance (Phillips, 2021)? In addressing ways to decrease burnout in teachers, Hurley (2021) indicated that research has shown that teaching is ranked as one of the most stressful professions, where over 90% of educators are reporting job-related stress, with daily high stress rated at nearly 50%. Stressed teachers feel an impact on their personal accomplishments and show a decline in self-efficacy. When teachers are asked to plan lessons using unfamiliar programs or with time constraints, educators struggle with deciding what to prioritize; academic and curricula learning or social-emotional learning (Phillips, 2021).

Trauma-Informed Practices

Why are trauma-informed practices serving an important role in the field of education? And how can we reduce teacher burnout through proven ways or solutions?

The question still is: *How do we find solutions to the stress teachers face, decrease the stress teachers experience and increase job satisfaction overall to sustain trauma-informed educators?* COVID-19 increased the demands on educators as well as the burnout rate of educators. A huge reason for this is teachers in pre-service and into their careers that take on students' trauma as secondary trauma. Stipp and Miller's (2019) study aimed to gain insight into preservice teachers' (PST) experiences with student trauma, secondary trauma, and self-care. They further addressed how secondary trauma and self-care are understudied and further research is needed. When an educator can practice self-care, this increases an educator's resilience when they experience trauma in their day-to-day jobs.

Miller and Stipp's (2019) study examined preservice teacher coursework and data from interviews for teachers who have experienced student trauma and secondary trauma and how one practiced self-care during the study. Many themes were identified throughout the study that helped conclude the findings that there are important things to include and should be provided during professional development training and that trauma-informed teaching practices should and need to be provided (Miller & Stipp, 2019). A thematic analysis of Miller and Stipp's (2019) data additionally found that some of the effects of secondary trauma were shown to mitigate when teachers practiced self-care. Miller and Stipp addressed the positive benefits of caring for students who have experienced trauma but addressed the consequences of caring that can lead to secondary trauma.

Miller and Stipp (2019) conducted a research study in a large teacher education program based in the Midwest. The study participants started their first clinical experience and were also enrolled in a 16-introductory elementary education course that addressed

several educational practices and policies. Participants of the study were primarily female of a variety of races and were asked questions relating to their practices of self-care, including the type of self-care and how often teachers participated in their self-care practices. Findings came from two phases. Phase one was “data collection from written reflections, self-care plans, and research log kept by the research instructor” (Miller & Stipp, 2019, p.32). The second phase involved interviews collected over a year. Miller and Stipp (2019) conducted interviews that were 45 minutes in length, which they audio-recorded to analyze at a later date. The authors stated, “Our thematic analysis led to the identification of four major themes related to how student stories can activate stress and concern in preservice teachers, as well as how preservice teachers manage, or neglect to manage, negative emotional reactions” (p. 32). Many of the research participants shared the stories they heard from their students and how it made them feel in response to their students' experiences with trauma. Miller and Stipp (2019) found that many participants found “a general awareness of their students' difficult circumstances resulted in PST concerns for their students' well-being” (p. 34). The goal of Miller and Stipp's (2019) study was to address the secondary trauma that teachers face when working with students who have experienced trauma firsthand and share their experiences directly or indirectly with their teachers.

All three studies addressed trauma-informed teaching practices and defined how students may experience trauma in ways that address the need for trauma-informed teaching practices. Miller and Stipp (2019) took a perspective of understanding the secondary trauma teachers experience and shared the trauma they become aware of when

working with students who have experienced it first-hand. From there, Miller and Stipp (2019) addressed the importance of self-care and how practicing self-care helps their teaching practices versus getting “burned out.” Stipp and Kilpatrick (2021) looked similarly at trauma-informed practices over five years and their importance in professional development in recent years. Over the six-session training throughout the school year, Stipp and Kilpatrick (2021) addressed the promise of trauma-informed training to support teachers working with students who have experienced trauma. Through the TBRI model for trauma-informed training, the authors found similarities in their research and saw “increased levels of emotional distress in students and in themselves” (Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021, p. 67). Crosby (2015) addressed several different frameworks that districts, schools, and administrators utilize to train staff in trauma-informed teaching practices. Crosby (2015), Stipp and Kilpatrick (2021), and Miller and Stipp (2019) all addressed the trauma students face, the impact on educators, and how their training can support them in self-care and providing support to their students. When educators are well-trained, informed, and supported in various ways, they can better meet the needs of the students they serve and the community in which they work, reducing burnout and utilizing trauma-informed practices in day-to-day teaching practices.

Secondary traumatic stress (STS) and burnout also contribute to higher rates than other related professions, even though there are similar levels of job satisfaction. Kant and Shanker's (2021) empirical investigation of educators addressed the relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout. Their findings suggested that emotional intelligence does have a role to play in the burnout of teachers. Emotional intelligence is

explained as the ability of a person to deal with daily stressors and challenges and also monitor other people's emotions to help guide that person with how they may act in response to those daily stressors and challenges. If an educator were to have a higher level of emotional intelligence, Kant and Shanker's (2021) research suggested that an educator would be able to better handle emotional stress. Adjusting access to workplace support, including class sizes and teacher-to-student ratios, increasing opportunities to learn and implement self-care strategies, having trauma-informed professional development and practices across districts, and increasing teacher voice are all interventions to decrease burnout. Many of these interventions often require policy change from school leaders within the educational structures to which teachers must adhere (Brunzell et al., 2021).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, academic demands increased as school districts had to be creative in teaching students. Teachers have been asked to teach from a virtual platform with multiple different variations of schedules, direct instruction, and supporting students through their independent work time. With the quick shift in teaching to a virtual platform for K-12 students, teachers are being introduced to new platforms with no time to learn the technology platforms themselves and how to integrate them into their lessons. (Phillips, 2021).

“The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light the failure of school leaders to adapt their expectations of teachers” (Phillips, 2021, p. 39). From there, teachers had to also make plans for in-person teaching that addressed some new challenges. Some of these challenges address the trauma students have experienced at home through the

pandemic. With the demands of educators, the teachers address the stress of the demands as unreasonable to maintain. The United States is not the only country showing a decrease in teachers in the education profession. “In Australia, approximately 50% of teachers will leave the profession in the next five years, and 45% of teachers will not be teaching in ten years' time. Up to 25% of teachers attribute their reason for leaving to problems with disruptive student behavior” (Brunzell et al., 2021, para.1).

When teachers are trauma-informed and utilize the skills they learn in the classroom, these evidence-based practices are essential to the increased success of a student's education. When the COVID-19 pandemic swept the world, bringing forth barriers to managing and supporting those with trauma, many educators had to learn how to implement the learned trauma-informed practices through distance learning as well as in person when learning resumed in the schools. The changes that COVID-19 presented for schools only increased the amount of stress and demand for educators to meet. The new demands of teaching for veteran and new educators heavily influenced the amount of stress that, in return, contributed to teacher burnout. Shortages of educators in the schools impact not only the students but teachers as well.

Phillips (2021) addressed some contributions to teacher burnout, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Many things she addressed were related to things that leadership teams can provide more to educators during the school year. Some of this included professional development based on relationships with other coworkers. COVID-19 hit and introduced new protocols and new ways teachers had to teach to students. With these changes to protocols, many educators were asked to plan with little time for the

turnaround to teach students. With learning to teach students a new platform such as technology, many educators struggled to learn new programs while also planning for students' needs. Teachers also lost time collaborating with team members in person, in order to better understand and share thoughts surrounding pedagogy. Phillips (2019) addressed that leaders in schools need to find ways to address the short instructional planning times educators have and the stressors teachers are facing that are affecting teachers' ability to complete their jobs.

When teachers struggle to feel like they cannot manage these stressors over a prolonged period of time, then we see burnout and, ultimately, teachers leaving the profession (Hurley, 2021). With emotional exhaustion, the prolonged stress behaviors educators may show by not giving enough time to themselves (oneself being the educator); they may not give enough time to planning. Teachers may also display behaviors such as quick-tempered or negative responses that may appear unintentionally as a lack of care. Not only does prolonged stress impact educators emotionally, but prolonged chronic stress can also impact educators physically. Many effects often seen are fatigue, back pain, joint pain, headaches, stomach ulcers, insomnia, as well as trigger hypertension, diabetes and cardiovascular disease due to educators being exposed to long periods of stress. "High amounts of stress which, unfortunately, triggers their bodies to produce higher levels of cortisol. Cortisol is the body's stress hormone" (Hurley, 2021, p. 23). Hurley (2021) addressed that when educators have these physical issues, many teachers are unable to perform their duties and will often have to take time off work.

Trauma-Informed Teaching Practices Implementing trauma-informed

approaches is important to the success of all students when utilizing teaching practices to best meet all the academic, social, and emotional needs of students with disabilities. Crosby (2015) shared that several frameworks now exist to help guide administrators, teachers, and other school-based professionals when they are attempting to implement trauma-informed educational practices. Crosby (2015) previously conducted a pilot study from an ecological perspective addressing the influences of ecological factors that influence youth's risk of trauma and how it may impact their academics. Microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, and macrosystem practices are all perspectives that address emerging and existing practices for trauma-informed teaching. These systems examined the different varieties of impacts on trauma a child may experience Crosby (2015) addressed throughout this article.

“Helping traumatized students to be successful requires a departure from the status quo, where all staff is knowledgeable about trauma and effective ways to address it” (Crosby, 2015, p. 229). By understanding trauma-informed teaching practices and the implementation of these practices in the classroom, we are able to see the factors that contribute to secondary trauma that educators are facing and address the increasing demand for educators. Many schools adopted new professional development training and student support service programs while also implementing and amending policies in school districts to support the driving needs of students that have experienced trauma. Research conducted in rural schools by Minian et al. (2021) discussed ten trauma-informed approaches that utilize a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework that

is adapted to school needs. Crosby (2015) also addressed several different ways staff in education can support one another to help serve not only a purpose in the school but also support other staff in the building. Minahan (2019) explained eight strategies of Trauma-Informed Teaching strategies to support teachers who have students that have experienced trauma. 1) Expected Unexpected Responses, 2) Employ Thoughtful Interactions, 3) Be Specific About Relationship Building, 4) Promote Predictability and Consistency, 5) Teach Strategies to “Channel the Channel”, 6) Give Supportive Feedback to Reduce Negative Thinking, 7) Create Islands of Competence, and 8) Limit Exclusionary Practices. Several other trauma-informed teaching practices have been explored through research, such as the Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) program over a series of professional training sessions (Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2019). The Department of Education (DOE) has partnered with universities, non-profit organizations, and federal grant initiatives to address Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) models (Thomas et al., 2019). Although understanding trauma-informed teaching practices and models are important, educators must first understand what trauma is and how it can impact youth.

Reviewing practices by Crosby (2015) concluded with a discussion on the findings from the implications of social work practices and how education practices are implemented and practiced with students. With new practices, the increasing demand for creative planning, and the implementation of new technological programs, the increased workload for in-person and electronic learning (e-learning) for teachers became higher. Many teachers were struggling to manage the balance of not only the work demands but

also how to support students during the COVID-19 pandemic (Pate, 2020). With education taking a virtual platform, learning creative ways to support learning environments and supporting students experiencing trauma used three parts in their pedagogy. One, regulate students and prepare them for learning; two, emotionally connect with students; and three, reasonably engage instruction and learning (Pate, 2020). Although we are no longer virtually learning full-time, many educators have adapted and learned new ways to incorporate them into their classrooms. Pate (2020) suggested the importance of regulation in a classroom setting, such as grounding the class by helping students recognize what calms their bodies, creating structure in their learning environments, creating opportunities for movement breaks, promoting adaptable ways to communicate students' needs, and accommodating different learning styles. Relating to students is also important to a student's success in school. Pate (2020) suggested that educators should consider ways they respond to students instead of ways educators react. If educators can understand that student behavior is communication, then teachers can reframe students behavior and create more positive social interactions. Part of relating to other students and creating one-on-one time to build relationships outside of academics to build safety in the classroom environment. Finally, Pate (2020) addressed “reason” as the third factor in strategies of trauma-informed teaching. The reason for creating a safe environment can allow for students to better respond, including being patient with the students and letting things go that isn't a priority. When educators can make realistic expectations to the new normal. When students' stress levels appear to be down,

educators themselves feel less stress, reducing the academic workload for not only the students but the educator as well.

Vulnerable students were impacted by systematic concerns with an increase in psychological stress, such as anxiety and depression. These childhood trauma experiences outside of school are often seen in students in school through their behavior and academics, such that students who were previously disengaged showed further disengagement (Burnzell et al., 2021). Veteran educators that had been teaching for years were also bringing forward the increase of effects of their mental health and emotional distress. Stipp and Kilpatrick (2021) evaluated P-12 American school teachers' perceptions of staff training that used trauma-informed Trust-Based Relational Intervention (TBRI) systems teachers used during the 2018-2019 school year. Research questions explored and addressed the opinions about TBRI training and the opinions of veteran teachers about student and teacher mental health over the past five years. The research suggested that veteran teachers saw “increased levels of emotional distress in students and in themselves” (Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021, p. 67).

Stipp and Kilpatrick (2021) sought to understand trauma-informed teaching practices, and this has been a central focus in most professional development in education systems across the United States, yet questions remain about the effectiveness of the training and the implementation in education systems. Throughout this research by Stipp and Kilpatrick (2021), trauma-informed teaching and TBRI were defined, as well as how recent the research was conducted on trauma-informed practices. The research was conducted in the midwestern United States and over a series of eleven schools in the

2018-2019 school year in grades preschool through 12th grade. The study was conducted over a series of 6 training sessions, which “were provided to groups of administrators, teachers, and school support staff that ranged with the number of training participants” (Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021, p. 70). Each session was broken up and described how it related to the overall guiding research questions, which then led to additional questions for more veteran staff. The study concluded with the findings that “trauma-informed teaching shows promise as a reform” (Stipp & Kilpatrick, 2021, p. 78).

When educators can understand trauma and how it can impact a student's education, we then seek to understand trauma-informed teaching practices that we can implement in the classrooms. However, what are trauma-informed teaching practices? Although there is not a one size fits all model, what is understood is that having strategies can support how a teacher responds to a student based on the trauma that is being displayed by the student. If a student is struggling with processing and understanding concepts, teachers may use visuals to support a lesson. This may include graphic organizers, color-coded instructions, and fill-in-the-blank notes, to name a few. When teachers have students that are experiencing trauma where their basic needs are not being met, such as access to a home, food, or financial means, this may lead an educator to work with the school to support this need. Schools may then help provide resources like free and reduced lunches, backpack programs, transportation to and from school, access to community support programs, etc. If students are struggling with psychological needs such as depression, anxiety, or disability-specific needs, schools may provide in the school mental health support from local agencies or from the school social worker. All

these resources can help the student, but how do teachers know what strategy to use when a student displays traumatic behaviors?

Jessica Minahan (2019) provided eight teaching strategy examples that are trauma-informed and research-based practices that educators can use in a proactive and responsive way to meet the needs of the students. Minahan (2019) stated that these small changes might foster a sense of safety in the classroom and, therefore, can increase the student's likelihood and ability to learn. First, Minahan put into perspective that teachers should not take things personally but rather put students' behaviors or reactions into context. When a teacher is guarded by a student's unpredictability of a reaction, it may cause hyper alertness. When educators can understand that reactions may be sudden, teachers can then focus on how to respond proactively to the student. In return, the teacher can practice trauma-sensitive strategies to reduce the times a student may react.

Second, Minahan (2019) addressed the interactions with students through the way teachers give and respond to directions. A suggestion Minahan (2019) gave was to state the reason first before giving the context of the request. This accommodation method was also supported with extended time to comply with directives to avoid power struggles. Instead of expecting students to comply with the directive now, Minahan (2019) suggested that teachers should give a reasonable time frame and then follow it up with time to decompress from the directive and respond rationally. Third is building a relationship with students but being diligent in how teachers can build trust with their students. An example she gives is to give time to build a relationship without it being behaviorally or academically based but rather purposeful. A strategy she tried was over a

ten-day period, she took a two-minute walk with a student. She continued the strategy when her students exhibited frustration or anger or after long breaks. As the year went on, these students decreased the number of times they left the classroom.

The fourth strategy Minahan (2019) addressed was predictability in the classroom and the school day. “Not knowing what is coming next can put anyone on high alert, especially traumatized students” (Minahan, 2019, p. 32). A solution for this is to create predictability through the use of visual aids, such as schedules, picture stories, or verbally addressing changes in the day, like a fire drill. Since traumatized students often exhibit anxiety from not knowing what is coming next, they may seek attention in non-prosocial ways or show a state of uncertainty when needing to complete independent tasks. Using prosocial statements such as giving students a time frame of reference when you will come back to check on their work may ease the unpredictability of “when.” An example Minahan (2019) used was, “I am going to check on you in 10 minutes.” This researcher uses The Catalyst Approach to predictability, which also gives students explicit instructions where they know the time frame of work, what problems to do, where to put their sheets when they are done, and what options they have when they complete their work. All of those strategies support predictability. “Telling the students what will happen and when and always following through establishes the teacher as a consistent, reliable adult” (Minahan, 2019, p. 33).

Minahan’s (2019) fifth, sixth and seventh strategies addressed how traumatized students' brains and cognitive thinking impact their responses. Students often have higher levels of negative thinking, where they may interpret things inaccurately, and often have

cognitive distortions when teachers give feedback or proactive ways to change their thinking. Minahan used the term “Change the Channel,” where teachers change activities or other cognitive distractions instead of breaks to keep the brain engaged and not festering on negative thinking. Furthermore, teachers provide feedback, remember facial expressions and smiles, and compliment the student when they do something right. When needing to give negative feedback to a student for classwork or behavior, Minahan (2019) suggested using a “positive sandwich approach” where teachers start with a positive comment, give direct feedback, then finish with another positive comment. Finally, recognizing students’ strengths and building on them can support a student’s competence and create more positive thinking for the future. Utilizing strategies that challenge negative thinking and cognitive distortions can help improve communication with students who have experienced trauma.

Strategy eight addressed how behavior is communication not only for students but adults as well. Many practices address ignoring negative behavior that students display, but this can actually trigger students’ trauma by associating this reaction with neglect and thinking the adult may not like them. Another behavior that teachers should be wary of is using incentives that involve time with adults. This can lead students to believe that relationships are based on conditions that students need to meet and that adults may unintentionally be communicating that in order to have time with students, they must always be behaving (Minahan, 2019).

When teachers utilize trauma-informed strategies, teachers are supporting students' needs within the classroom. Although these strategies do not fix what happens

outside of the classroom, these strategies can increase the likelihood of academic success and lifelong learning. “Students cannot learn unless they feel safe... there is much beyond an educator's power, but there is also a great deal they can do to build a supportive and sensitive environment where students feel safe, comfortable, take risks, learn and even heal” (Minahan, 2019, p. 35).

Adkins et al., (2021) research examined educators' knowledge of various trauma-informed concepts in schools in Georgia. Their findings stated that educators are most familiar with Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) models. Reasoning as to why they believe this is because many school districts have been implementing PBIS models in the last five years. They also found that one-third of educators are unfamiliar with certain strategies used in schools with students who have experienced trauma. These strategies include social-emotional learning (SEL), mindfulness, regulation, self-regulation and de-escalation techniques. “A full one-half to three-quarters of teachers are unfamiliar with terms such as restorative justice, trauma-informed pedagogy, trauma symptoms and triggers, vicarious trauma, toxic stress and wrap-around services” (Atkins et al., 2021, p. 81). They concluded that educators are not set up for success to meet the adverse childhood experiences and trauma and often will “send” students to other authoritarian or other trauma-informed educators or systems of support when working with students. The results from Atkins et al. (2021) found that over 70% of participants showed a need for future professional development as they were not familiar with trauma-informed pedagogy and restorative practices.

In recent years, trauma-informed teaching practice has become a central focus in educational settings. The Department of Education (DOE) has several resources and variations which districts and schools can implement into their practices. Resources provided by the DOE include frameworks, PowerPoints, guidebooks, learning modules, and many other resources for districts to implement. Wisconsin is one of many that has promoted and implemented Positive Behavioral Intervention Systems (PBIS) in its educational framework (Crosby et al., 2019). Crosby et al. (2019) explained that in earlier times literally tracing back to the 1860s from the war explained, the early times of trauma have been around for several years, especially in the mental health world, the effects of trauma on students address the impacts surrounding physical and psychological development, social and relational skills, and in return, how it impacts students' abilities to be successful in their academics. Crosby et al. (2019) also conducted research involving court-involved girls to evaluate the welfare of these students in schools that utilize trauma-informed teaching practices. Their findings proposed that students who are court-involved in trauma-informed practices (in comparison to other students who were in schools without trauma-informed practices) saw reductions in symptoms related to trauma. In research about social justice education conducted by Crosby et al. (2018), discussions about eliminating punitive practices are not what students who have experienced trauma do. Classroom management strategies are another trauma-informed approach that has been utilized to support youth's well-being. Utilizing what Crosby et al. (2018) identify as "The Flexible Framework", discusses non-academic strategies to support students in their education setting. An example Crosby et al. (2018) gave was that

some schools adopted classrooms or spaces in the school in which students could go for non-academics for processing and social-emotional support. Their research findings suggest that when teachers have adequate training to support these needs, students that utilize these resources show a decrease in trauma symptoms. Research findings support that when students are in classrooms where traditional classroom management practices are happening, they struggle to meet expectations. Students who struggle with trauma in these classroom settings often have issues with creating emotional and social interpersonal relationships, managing impulses, and controlling behavior (Crosby et al., 2018).

Teachers are not the only employees that need to be trauma-informed. Research suggests that evidence-based practices for school social workers, school leadership and personnel, aides, and several other educational workers are important to supporting students who have experienced trauma. Schools must also build a collaborative school culture in which other school personnel are trained to teach coping skills, model skills and emotional processing, and set up predictable routines in school (Blitz et al., 2016). With many educators not feeling adequate in responding to students who experience trauma, research by Blitz et al., (2016) addressed teachers' vulnerability to secondary trauma. When leadership can lead the whole school in training that focuses on the local community, especially communities with inequities, educators can feel more adequate and confident when using trauma-informed practices (Grieg, 2021). Teachers who used evidence-based practices for students who experienced trauma helped support their own self-efficacy and self-care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has fast-tracked the importance of schools being trauma-informed to best meet the needs of students. Across the nation, the pandemic brought to light the disparities in our students from financial hardships, access to healthcare for physical to mental health, and access to equitable education, to name a few. Brunzell and Colleagues (2021) addressed the continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, where students who lack engagement were further disengaged in learning. More specifically, low-income districts are also experiencing equity gaps and increased barriers in their communities to access resources for personal and academic support.

Strategies to address educator burnout By understanding how and what contributes to educator burnout, we can now address methods and strategies that can decrease the likelihood of educator burnout. Increasing a teacher's self-efficacy can greatly improve the teacher's feeling of success and satisfaction (Sheehan & Moore, 2019). When educators have a high self-efficacy perception, that educators are likely to counter negative student relationships, tolerance of students, and criticism of students (Nuri et al., 2017). If education is considered an emotional labor type of profession, then addressing the emotional repercussions of teaching must be addressed (Yassar & Demir, 2015). If a teacher's self-efficacy is defined as a teacher's perception of the outcomes of classroom management, student engagement, and producing instructional strategies (Sheehan & Moore, 2019). Districts must implement trauma-informed interventions to increase the knowledge and the skills needed to provide proactive strategies and coping skills to manage difficulties for educators (Brunzell et al., 2021). Some suggestions by Brunzell and colleagues (2021) addressed interventions to mitigate burnout for educators and increase

self-efficacy. Smaller class sizes to improve student-to-teacher ratios and consistent behavior management procedures and practices across districts and schools are a few ways to help mitigate educator burnout. One suggestion Phillips (2019) gave is to provide more collaborative professional development and planning times with other coworkers as it helps teachers confide in one another to support student needs both behaviorally and academically. Also providing time to connect with educational leaders can support teacher resiliency as information being shared can help educational leadership to know the areas where educators need support, such as IT support, behavior support, or even academic support. “School leaders must adjust their expectations of teachers considering COVID-19 protocols” (Phillips, 2021, p. 41).

Self-efficacy influences educators in their teaching practices as self-efficacy refers to how one may feel successful in their career. Educators that have low efficacy greatly impact their learning practices, especially in how it relates to educators’ feelings of effectiveness in their jobs (Aydogmus and Serce, 2021). Research suggests that a larger part of this is contributed to the way schools are structured. Many educators often feel as if they do not have a say in decision-making, and educators’ opinions are hardly represented in decision-making (Hogan and White, 2021). In addressing self-efficacy, changes in support can also be made. With several educators frustrated with not feeling well-equipped to support students who have experienced trauma, teachers are looking for administration and leadership to provide professional development (Hurley, 2021). Although many findings from research highlight the importance of teacher self-efficacy, little research has been done to improve preservice teachers’ confidence even though

many recommendations from researchers' findings have been made to address this issue. Having districts adopt strategies to support teachers, so they feel supported, heard, or part of the planning process can improve pre-services and veteran teachers (Sheehan and Moore, 2019).

When teachers practice self-care, they often decrease the stress they feel and create a healthy work and life balance. Phillips (2021) and Hurley (2021) both addressed educator leaders as providing support for teachers' self-care to increase job satisfaction and decrease the stress of being unable to decompress from the day. Creating that work-life balance allows educators to decrease the symptomology of educator self-efficacy. A large part of self-care is educators being self-aware of the secondary trauma they are experiencing. Promoting self-well-being also needs to be addressed at an organizational level, where self-care practices need to be reflected in policies to promote a more positive culture in the school (Crosby et al., 2019). A participant in Miller and Stipp's (2019) research brought light to preservice teacher self-care. The participant from the study shared that, although she was well-diversified in trauma practices, she did not feel that she was prepared to work with students who had experienced trauma. This participant continued to address that they always needed to do more. This participating cooperating teacher encouraged the preservice teacher to take time to take care of themselves, such as taking their lunch breaks. Miller and Stipp's (2019) participants in the research said that they have the knowledge of self-care but do not often utilize these practices day to day.

By providing professional development for educators, teachers could then learn ways to support students in situations where being trauma-informed can better support

classroom environments and support methods of support for learning. Research looking at girls who have a relationship with the criminal justice system addresses the trauma they have faced and how their trauma impacted their academic experience and success. Court-involved girls often had adverse trauma experiences whether it be drugs, witnessing abuse, economic struggle or other basic needs (Crosby et al., 2019). Trauma-informed teaching practices included curriculum training and building appropriate relationships with students, including using de-escalation strategies. Results from Crosby and colleagues (2019) study showed that court-involved girls who have trauma-informed educators showed that their teaching interventions reduced the symptomology of trauma.

Conclusion

Culturally responsive trauma-informed teaching approaches provide an opportunity to establish positive representations of culture in schools and other pedagogy learning styles to address the impact trauma has on students (Blitz et al., 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic has traumatized many as it impacted many people in several different ways. COVID-19 limited access to healthcare, mental health support, county services, shelter availability for the homeless, access to food and other sources of needs, as well as education. Studies have shown that students who go to school are more likely to be successful than those who do not attend school. Because students could not attend school due to the pandemic and had to access school online or alternative formats with no consistency, many students missed several key academic standards that they normally would have shown success in if they had been in school. With the inconsistency of being in person and virtual learning, many educators noticed that students were not performing

well and were showing trauma responses. Nearly three years after the start of the pandemic, we are still seeing the impact COVID-19 had on its students with learning how to be in school, follow routines, complete work independently, manage higher levels of academic demands, as well as meet educational standards. Teachers themselves are still expected to continue the high levels of work and adapt learning to meet the needs of students but are not taking care of themselves to manage the long-term stress. Because of this, many educators are burning out. But who is to blame? Is it educators, parents, policymakers, or school districts themselves? In truth, there is much to be explored in understanding the lasting impact COVID-19 had on today's youth from an educational perspective and, in return, the impacts it has on educators that lead to the increasing rates of teacher burnout and the educator shortage.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

Summary of Literature

Culturally responsive trauma-informed teaching approaches provide an opportunity to establish positive representations of culture in schools and other pedagogy learning styles to address the impact trauma has on students (Blitz et al., 2016). The COVID-19 pandemic has traumatized many as it impacted many people in several different ways (Pate, 2020). COVID-19 limited access to healthcare, mental health support, county services, shelter availability for the homeless, access to food and other sources of needs, as well as education. Studies have shown that students who go to school are more likely to be successful than those who do not attend school. Because students could not attend school due to the pandemic and had to access school online or alternative formats with no consistency, many students missed several key academic standards that they normally would have shown success in if they had been in school. With the inconsistency of being in person and virtual learning, many educators noticed that students were not performing well and were showing trauma responses. Nearly three years after the pandemic's start, we are still seeing the impact COVID-19 had on its students with learning how to be in school, follow routines, complete work independently, manage higher levels of academic demands, as well as meeting educational standards. Secondary trauma, as defined in Blitz et al.'s (2016) research, supports the idea that caretakers without sufficient support who are in relationships with others that have experienced trauma carry the trauma or stress of others.

Teachers themselves are still expected to continue the high levels of work and adapt learning to meet the needs of students but are not taking care of themselves to manage the long-term stress. Because of this, many educators are burning out. But who is to blame? Is it educators, parents, policymakers, or school districts themselves? In truth, there is much to be explored in understanding the lasting impact COVID-19 had on today's youth from an educational perspective and, in return, the impacts it has on educators that lead to the increasing rates of teacher burnout and the educator shortage.

Professional development training often addresses informing educators to further understand what trauma students may have experienced, what behaviors may be shown in their classrooms, what academic challenges students may present, and what strategies to implement in the classroom. In my research, Minahan (2019) provided us with eight strategies when working with students who have experienced trauma, and Thomas et al. (2019) discussed Positive Behavior Interventions and Support (PBIS) models used in schools that The Department of Education (DOE) is making available to education systems across the United States. Furthermore, Brunzell et al. (2018) looked more specifically at court-involved girls and their symptoms of trauma. In Brunzell et al.'s (2018) research, the impact of trauma-informed approaches on court-involved students was explored. They found that with trauma-informed practices, they did see a decrease in symptoms of trauma. In my research, I found that trauma-informed teaching practices are not only to support the students, they are also to address the educational shortage and mitigate educator burnout. Adkins et al. (2021) addressed the need for more trauma-

informed training for educators because they found that over 70% of educators did not feel equipped to support students who had experienced trauma.

Self-efficacy is an essential part of educators staying in their current profession, yet, many are feeling the effects of burnout. Common themes found in the research are defining self-efficacy and what contributes to educators feeling lack-there-of support to address burnout (Aydogmus and Serce, 2021; Crosby et al., 2019; Hogan and White, 2021; Yassar & Demir, 2015). The research of Phillips (2021), Hurley (2021) and Blitz et al. (2019) suggested solutions for mitigating educator burnout. Teacher burnout has been and continues to be a concern in education, especially when pre-service teachers are also struggling to care for themselves and feeling inadequate to take care to support students who have experienced trauma. Educators are being asked to adapt to new learning styles such as e-learning, learning new trauma-informed teaching methods to add to their pedagogy as well as adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic's effects. Phillips (2021) and Hurley (2021) both addressed education leaders as providing support for teachers' self-care to increase job satisfaction and decrease the stress from not being able to decompress from the day. Creating that work-life balance allows educators to decrease the symptomology of educator self-efficacy. Although these strategies are often beneficial to the district, school, educators, students, and community as a whole, there are often stressors that come from taking care of students who experience trauma, such as secondary trauma. These increased stressors over long periods of time contribute to the impacts leading to educator burnout. Crosby (2015) addressed several different frameworks that districts, schools, and administrators utilize to train staff in trauma-

informed teaching practices. Crosby (2015), Stipp and Kilpatrick (2021), and Miller and Stipp (2019) all addressed the trauma students face, the impact on educators, and how their training can support them in self-care and providing support to their students.

In conclusion, the findings from this literature review identified that teacher self-efficacy is a variable in the impact of educators feeling burnout. With changes to policies, increasing trauma-informed teaching practices, and providing professional development to support educator self-care, the increasing rate of secondary trauma among educators can be diminished (Phillip, 2021; Hurley, 2021). COVID-19 brought to light the discrepancies between educator needs and student needs (Pate, 2020). Trauma-informed teaching practices are proven to support not only students who experience trauma, but they are also a support for teachers to feel more equipped to do their jobs (Brunzell et al., 2019). If education systems do not address the educator shortage and increasing rates of burnout, students will be affected and will not obtain quality education to meet the needs of our future generation.

Limitations of the Research

Research was narrowed by reviewing published articles that were peer-reviewed for the years 2015-2021 that focused on trauma-informed teaching, professional development, and teacher burnout that addressed the guiding question. The limitations to this research were that trauma-informed teaching practices are fairly new practices recognized in education, and although it is a hot topic in education practices, research is still in the beginning stages of truly understanding the lasting impacts of trauma-informed teaching practices. The scope of the research was based on “trauma-informed teaching,”

“teacher burnout in education,” “trauma-informed professional development,” and “students and trauma.” The purpose of the review literature was to better understand trauma on students, trauma-informed teaching practices, staff development training, and teacher burnout. With COVID-19 bringing forth further trauma to society as a whole, research is still being gathered to further understand the lasting impacts on education. The reasoning for this limitation is that the world is still dealing with the effects of COVID-19 and the limitations it has on students' access to quality trained educators in trauma-informed care, trauma-informed support in school and outside of school, and the lasting financial impacts that bring forth several other impacts to students and their families. Although trauma-informed practices are greatly beneficial in schools, they still do not address the trauma students face outside of the school systems.

Implications for Future Research

Through the literature review, gaps that exist are “what trauma-informed teaching practices are most used and most effective?” Although there are several different types of trauma-informed teaching practices that share common themes, I noticed a lack of universal trauma-informed teaching models to support educators, schools, and districts. The Department of Education (DOE) provides materials (PowerPoints, lessons, resources) for school districts to adopt research-based proven trauma-informed teaching practices that can support the needs of students. Furthermore, there is also limited information in my research on how to support educators who are experiencing secondary trauma and how to effectively cope with secondary trauma. Although we can identify what is influencing educator burnout and what strategies can be used, there is still a lack

of schools implementing self-care practices and professional development to support this growing need. Further research should also attempt to seek what self-care practices are proven to increase self-efficacy so that education can implement those processes into their professional development. Teacher burnout continues to be a common topic after the impact of COVID-19 on teaching practices and supporting not only students but the increasing demands on educators. With COVID-19 still present and limited research on the lasting traumatic effects on students and education, further research should address the impacts of COVID-19 on trauma students. Social-Emotional Learning curriculums are being implemented in more schools each year as part of the curriculum. It is not a nationwide practice in all schools in the United States. There is a limited amount of research supporting the efficacy of the Social-Emotional Learning curriculum to support all students with and without trauma. Long-term research in trauma-informed teaching curricula is needed to truly understand the impacts it has on students' education.

Implications for Professional Application

“Teacher burnout is a growing concern and has become notorious for its psychological, emotional, and physical health effects on educators” (Hurley, 2021, p. 22). As an educator servicing for 5 years before, during, and after the COVID-19 pandemic, I have experienced high levels of job stress. Teacher burnout is increasing, and the demands of educators are only increasing. As Hurley (2021) explained the problems that educators face in education and the impacts it has on them psychologically, emotionally, and physically, it is essential to adopt self-care practices to decrease the likelihood of educator burnout. My special education license areas are Emotionally Behavior Disorders

(EBD) and Applied Behavior Strategist (ABS), with the purpose of serving students who have experienced trauma. Understanding what trauma is and how it applies to students emotionally, behaviorally, and educationally greatly impacts the approaches I use, the methods I adopt, and the strategies I use to support the students I serve. Having well-rounded knowledge of trauma-informed teaching models, strategies, and methods strengthens my practices as an educator. If I can understand the function, I can then create a space where students feel safe and can learn. COVID-19 brought forth new challenges and increased challenges for those who have already experienced trauma, and the demands on educators have not gotten any easier. As schools and districts adopt new practices into their curriculum and staff training procedures, this can in turn impact students' ability to be successful. Educators, from administration to principals to teachers, and educational supports can greatly impact the success of students by being well-trained and immersed in trauma-informed teaching practices.

What we know is that students who experience trauma can have psychological effects on the brain and development. Students who have experienced trauma struggle cognitively, emotionally, and socially. Cognitive functions can be memory, attention, or even learning processes, emotional impacts can be the regulation of emotions and how to cope with those emotions in a positive, proactive way. Social impacts can include relationships with peers and adults, how to function in society, college readiness, and social norms. By understanding the impacts and theorizing or knowing the trauma a student has faced, we can utilize strategies for the given situation. An example of this from Minahan (2021) is learning about the students' reactions that are unexpected, where

we as educators might not be able to predict the student's behavior. In return, the students themselves might not be able to control their reactions due to a trauma response. What we can control as an educator is how we respond to the student by not taking it personally but rather trying to understand the reaction or what the student is experiencing. As Minahan (2019) stated, "Small changes in classroom interactions can make a big difference for traumatized students" (p. 30). Our behavior is communication with students, and if we can improve our craft, we can support our students better and, in return, improve our self-care strategies to decrease the secondary trauma we as educators take on and decrease teacher burnout.

Conclusion

Overall, this literature review provides an understanding of what trauma is and how it can impact students greatly while influencing how a teacher can respond to their students and support them in the classroom. Understanding what trauma-informed teaching strategies exist and supporting practices that can be implemented in schools and district-wide can be beneficial in educators' day-to-day work. In short, understanding secondary trauma that educators experience can improve professional development and training on how to find a balance between the demands on teachers and teachers' self-care strategies to inspire empathy for their students and utilize effective practices.

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