

The Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts

Final Reports - 2019

Trauma-Informed Interventions for Emotional Co-Regulation

Cathy Pavlik

What is this research about?

This research invites teachers to consider how to make the shift from best practices in the classroom to best self in the world. When educators can recognize particular signs, symptoms and behaviours as outward signs of emotional dysregulation, then we can shift from behaviour management towards behaviour unravelling in order to work towards creative and empowering solutions.

What you need to know:

Teachers and students co-create the classroom environment. Reactivity, withdrawal and exhaustion can be avoided when teachers develop their understanding of how to maintain emotional safety for themselves and for their students.

What did the researcher do?

Based on feedback from the 2018 presentation titled "What is trauma-informed practice?" the researcher continued to explore the effects of trauma on student behavior and well-being in order to provide a tool kit of intervention strategies to use in the music classroom. A sixty minute presentation at the RPSM teacher PD days included a Power Point, resource table, large and small group discussions, and practice time with the specific intervention strategies. A resource list, the Power Point, and an annotated list of 28 emotional regulation strategies were distributed in hard-copy and electronically through the teacher on-line portal.

What did the researcher find?

Students display particular behaviours when they are in states of hyper-arousal, hypo-arousal or constant stress. These behaviours often happen because the child's nervous system has become dysregulated, and the child is using behaviours to cope with the situation. Connecting behavioural patterns and emotional needs to current research about the vagal nerve, specifically Stephen Porges' work with *Polyvagal Theory* and Mona Delahooke's work moving interventions *Beyond Behaviours*, allowed for a comprehensive understanding how unmet emotional needs underlie what we might call 'negative' behaviours. The classroom strategies presented target emotional safety, emotional regulation and vagal nerve stimulation

The Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts

Final Reports - 2019

How can you use this research?

Educators can use this research to reflect on what kinds of self-care and wellness practices they need so that they are able to respond more and react less to students. Teachers can incorporate the specific strategies into lesson plans, modifying to accommodate for student and environmental needs. Further, the research invites educators to be curious about what aspects of emotional safety they can mitigate?

About the researcher

Cathy Pavlik is a Ph.D. candidate in Music at York University where her research is focused around Performance Anxiety in singers. Cathy taught Music and French immersion with the Durham District School Board, and she maintains a private music studio. She is a certified Emotional Success Coach and EFT Practitioner.

References

- Delahooke, Mona. (2019). *Beyond Behaviors: Using Brain Science and Compassion to Understand and Solve Children's Behavioural Challenges*. Eau Claire, WI: PESI Publishing,.
- Porges, Stephen W. (2017). *The Pocket Guide to the Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe*. New York: Norton.
- Treleaven, David. (2018). *Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: Practices for Safe and Transformative Healing*. New York: Norton.

Keywords

Polyvagal Theory, Emotional Co-Regulation, Best Practices, Self-Care for Educators

About the Helen Carswell Chair

The Helen Carswell Chair in Community Engaged Research in the Arts represents a partnership between York University and Regent Park School of Music (RPSM). Faculty and graduate students from across the university collaborate with RPSM on special projects that are aimed at researching and bolstering community music in the Jane & Finch neighborhood and beyond.

<https://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/handle/10315/36357>