The Neuropsychology of Trauma and Stress: How to Develop a Trauma Informed School

Steven Feifer, Ph.D. *CPD

Ocotillo Room

Abstract: This workshop will explore the neural underpinnings of stress, trauma, and emotional dysfunction in children and its relative impact upon learning. Environmental deprivation, poverty, childhood abuse, witnessing violence, and parental neglect can impact both cognitive and social-emotional development in children. There will be a discussion on five steps that schools can take to become “trauma-informed”, in order to better meet the diverse needs of all learners. Schools can enhance emotional wellness through early prevention efforts, appropriate assessment and screening techniques, and an improved school climate to foster emotional growth for all children. Targeted assessment strategies, specific classroom accommodations, and key coping strategies will be presented for at-risk students.

Learning Objectives:

1. Discuss the prevalence of trauma and stress for school aged children, as well as the various sources from which trauma can occur.

2. Explore key brain regions that are impacted when students experience trauma, and the subsequent effect on academic and social skills’ development.

3. Review five essential steps toward the development of a “trauma informed” school.

4. Review various trauma screening tools and specific assessment techniques in order to conduct a “trauma-informed” evaluation.

5. Discuss specific classroom accommodations along with school-wide interventions, and key coping strategies to induce a more positive school climate for all students.

Biography: Steven G. Feifer, D. Ed., NCSP, ABSNP is an internationally renowned speaker and author in the field of learning disabilities, and has authored seven books on learning and emotional disorders in children. He has nearly 20 years of experience as a school psychologist, and was voted the Maryland School Psychologist of the Year in 2008, and was awarded the 2009 National School Psychologist of the Year. He was the recipient of the 2018 Outstanding Contribution to the Education and Training of Psychologists award by the Maryland Psychological Association. Dr.
Feifer serves as a consultant to a variety of school districts, and is a popular presenter at state and national conferences. He has authored two tests on diagnosing learning disabilities in children; the FAR and FAM, both published by PAR.