Delving Into the Elementary School Teachers' Experiences and Support Needs when Working with Traumatized Learners

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Abstract

This study examined the lived experiences of elementary school teachers managing learners' traumatic experiences in the schools of Banaybanay, Davao Oriental, Region XI. Ten (10) teachers participated in the study. This study used a phenomenological approach to extract the ideas from the participants who were purposely selected as representatives from the group of public elementary school teachers in different schools in the same District. In-depth interviews were employed to gather some information regarding their respective lived experiences. Using thematic analysis, the following themes emerged about the lived experiences of the participants: Trauma as total personality distress, Trauma as an extreme emotional reaction, Handling trauma as a negative experience, and Hurling trauma-related challenges. Further, there were three (3) subthemes identified on the hurdling with trauma-related challenges; these are Lack of knowledge on trauma management, Students' aggressiveness, and teachers' stress. The coping mechanisms of teacher participants on the challenges they experienced were mindfulness practices and seeking professional guidance. The educational management insights from the participants were about creating safe spaces for learners and providing trauma-informed services. With this, the administrators and supervisors of the Department of Education (DepEd) may create capacity development training for teachers on handling and managing students' trauma and behavior. These programs would specifically target managing students' experience reactions, adopting trauma-informed instructional methodologies within school settings, and fostering effective collaboration with parents and other stakeholders.

Keywords: Trauma, Behavior, Lived Experiences, Elementary School Teachers

1. Introduction

Teachers play a vital role in creating safe and nurturing learning environments for students, yet one of the most significant challenges today is ensuring schools are secure from harm. School children are particularly vulnerable to trauma, which can arise from various sources, including poverty and exposure to violence. Research shows that children living in poverty are at a higher risk of trauma and its associated adverse effects on physical health (Osofsky et al., 2017). Despite this, educators often overlook the impact of trauma on children's academic and emotional development (Goodman et al., 2012). Trauma significantly affects cognitive development, especially in young children from kindergarten through fourth grade. It impacts brain regions related to memory, emotional regulation, and language skills, thereby hindering their academic performance (Flannery, 2017). Studies have

demonstrated that trauma can lead to decreased IQ, lower literacy ability, increased school absences, and lower grade point averages (Jaycox, 2017). This underscores the necessity of recognizing and addressing trauma in young students to support their educational success (Price et al., 2013).

In the United States, nearly half of all students have experienced childhood trauma, which can adversely affect their academic and social well-being throughout their lives (Neitzel, 2020). Traditional disciplinary approaches often fail to consider the underlying trauma, leading to misinterpretations of children's behaviors and severe punishments (Delale-O'Connor et al., 2017). Many educators are not equipped to meet their diverse student populations' social-emotional and mental health needs, which exacerbates the problem (Murano et al., 2019).

In the Philippines, a significant number of children experience violence, often beginning at home, which contributes to lifelong developmental challenges (Crisostomo, 2018). Studies reveal that such violence leads to mental and physical health issues, anxiety, depression, and risky behaviors (Council for the Welfare of Children & UNICEF, 2018). This situation is mirrored in places like Banaybanay and Davao Oriental, where children display trauma-induced behaviors that teachers frequently misunderstand. Educators need proper training and support to address these challenges effectively. Without trauma-focused strategies in schools, the well-being of both students and teachers is at risk, potentially leading to increased teacher burnout and lower retention of quality educators (Lever et al., 2017; Izard, 2016).

2. Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Piaget's theory of cognitive development, which posits that children learn about and adapt to their surroundings, shaping their rationale for engaging with the world through equilibration (Muller et al., 2017). This process involves linking new knowledge with past experiences, leading to a balanced worldview. However, when children encounter traumatic events such as abuse, they remain in a state of disequilibrium that they cannot resolve, leading to potential mental health issues and inappropriate social behaviors (Piaget, 1977; Dalvie et al., 2020). The inability to integrate trauma into their worldview may result in long-term developmental challenges (Goltermann et al., 2021).

This study also draws on DuPont's theory of emotional development, which extends Piaget's ideas by incorporating emotions into the disequilibrium-to-equilibrium process (DuPont, 1994). DuPont suggests that conflicting world knowledge generates emotions that help children resolve these conflicts, thus integrating emotion into cognitive balance. Children's emotional responses are shaped by social interactions and cultural norms, which influence their development of emotional maturity. In abusive environments, children may develop maladaptive emotional responses, such as aggression and lack of empathy, reflecting their family's cultural norms (Kihlstrom, 2021).

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems model further supports this study by emphasizing the influence of a child's environment on their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1974). This model highlights the importance of microsystems, such as family and school, and their interactions in shaping a child's behavior and responses. Positive relationships and consistent care within these environments are crucial for healthy emotional and social development (Choi et al., 2019). Early educators play a vital role in modeling social-emotional skills and creating supportive classroom environments, essential for helping maltreated children develop functional social behaviors (McNally & Slutsky, 2018). However, there is a significant research gap in trauma-informed classroom practices, underscoring the need for targeted training to equip educators to support trauma-affected students effectively (McIntyre et al., 2019).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The study used a qualitative research design, specifically phenomenology, with open-ended questions to explore elementary school teachers' experiences and support needs when working with traumatized learners. This approach delves into understanding the essence of participants' experiences by setting aside the researcher's biases (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The methodology effectively captures individual perceptions, challenging normative assumptions and informing practical theory (Lester et al., 2009). Additionally, in-depth interviews and participant observations comprehensively understood the participants' routines, problems, and meanings in their natural settings (Denzel & Lincoln, 2000; Lee, 2007). This method is suitable for analyzing the lived experiences of elementary school teachers' experiences and support needs when working with traumatized learners.

3.2 Research Participants

This investigation was carried out within the educational framework of DepEd Region XI, with a specific focus on Banaybanay in the Division of Davao Oriental. Ten participants, selected as key informants, were drawn from various elementary schools in the area. These informants were purposefully chosen based on their roles as seasoned elementary school educators within the Department of Education, each possessing five or more years of experience in the field. Employing a purposive sampling approach, also called judgment sampling, participants were selected deliberately for their capacity to provide in-depth insights pertinent to the study's objectives. As Bernard (2006) outlined, this non-random method entails the systematic selection of informants according to predetermined criteria relevant to the research focus. Key informants, characterized by their profound understanding and willingness to share expertise, were tasked with offering invaluable perspectives on the phenomena under scrutiny. To ensure a diverse range of viewpoints, male and female participants with varying educational attainment and professional experience were included. Inclusion criteria encompassed kindergarten to grade six teachers with at least three years of teaching experience, confronting challenges associated with student behavioral issues stemming from trauma, and possessing familiarity with traditional and new standard educational settings.trauma, and possessing familiarity with teaching in both traditional and new normal educational settings.

3.3 Data Analysis

In this study, all the data collected were carefully examined and thoughtfully analyzed. The researcher first described personal experiences with the phenomenon under study. The researcher began with a complete description of his experience of the phenomenon. This is an attempt to set aside the researcher's personal experiences so that the focus can be directed to the participants. He developed a list of significant statements. He then finds statements about how individuals were experiencing the topic, lists these significant statements as having equal worth, and works to come up a list of non-repetitive, non-overlapping statements. The researcher grouped the significant statements into larger information units called "meaning units" or themes. He wrote a description of "what" the participants in the study experienced with the phenomenon. Next, he wrote a description of "how" the experience happened. This is called "structural description," the inquirer reflects on the setting and context in which the phenomenon was experienced. Finally, he wrote a composite description of the phenomenon incorporating textural and structural descriptions. This passage is the "essence" of the experience and represents the culminating aspect of a phenomenological study.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Lived Experiences of Elementary School Teachers in Engaging Students Who Exhibit Trauma Related-Behavior in The Classroom

4.1.1 Trauma as a total personality distress

Trauma encompasses the profound psychological impact that traumatic events or sequences of events exert on an individual's identity, emotions, and social relationships. It may result from various sources, including physical, mental, or psychological abuse, neglect, natural disasters, accidents, or the witnessing of violence. When trauma culminates in a comprehensive personality disturbance, it significantly alters an individual's cognitive processes, emotional responses, belief systems, and behaviors. In the context of elementary school learners, participants articulated trauma using the following terms:

> *Trauma among learners is a severe emotional and psychological response to distressing experiences, disrupting their ability to cope and impacting their overall well-being and learning. (P1)*

> *It is extreme shyness and difficulty engaging with others. Disproportionate reactions to setbacks and unexpected changes. Trouble managing solid emotions (extreme anger, excessive crying, etc.) (P2)*

> *It is psychological and emotional distress or experiences that are disturbing and harmful. (P3)*

P1 stated that trauma causes profound emotional and psychological reactions in learners, impairing their well-being and learning. P2 noted that trauma manifests as extreme shyness, difficulty interacting, exaggerated responses to setbacks, and difficulty regulating intense emotions. P3 described trauma-related behavior as stemming from unsettling and detrimental experiences causing psychological and emotional distress.

This aligns with the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2020), which defines trauma and maltreatment as encompassing all forms of emotional and physical abuse, regardless of gender, socioeconomic status, or nationality. Consequences include unmet physical, medical, and psychological needs, with more prolonged and more severe trauma leading to more complex issues.

4.1.2 Trauma as Extreme Emotional Reaction

Trauma, characterized by intense emotional reactions, refers to individuals' acute response following profoundly distressing or life-threatening events. This response is a natural and adaptive reaction as the human brain and body have evolved to protect themselves from danger. When faced with stress, the body initiates the fight, flight, or freeze response, which helps release adrenaline and cortisol to rapidly and efficiently respond to perceived threats. However, in some cases, this reaction may become persistent or dysfunctional, leading to prolonged emotional distress.

The participants' responses indicated a clear and further description of trauma. Among the comprehensive explanations is that trauma is a harmful emotional reaction and distress. Several responses from the participants were recorded.

> *Trauma-based behaviors can be identified as patterns or repetitive routines that play out in the relationships and environments in which children and young people are engaged. Deregulation is one of the*

primary underlying causes of challenging (disruptive) behaviors in children with complex trauma. Due to their early experience of traumatic relationships, the child is likely to perceive relationships as frightening and unpredictable and view themselves as unlovable and a bad person. (P2)

Trauma-related behaviors can be recognized when people or persons engage in behaviors to manage the after-effects or the distressing aspects of the traumatic experience, while general disciplinary behavior can be defined as a formal way of disciplinary misconduct/behavior. (P6)

Trauma-related behavior shows sadness and flashbacks of bad memories. As teachers, we have to help and understand the situation of the learners in order for them to recover. General disciplinary behavior shows how to correct the bad attitude of the learner positively. (P7)

Trauma-based behaviors, as elucidated by P2, are recognizable recurring patterns or routines evident in children and young people's relationships and situations, often stemming from deregulation due to early exposure to traumatic interactions. This can lead to perceiving relationships as intimidating and developing a negative self-perception, as discussed by P6. P7 added that trauma-related behaviors involve coping with distressing aspects of traumatic experiences, often manifesting as expressions of sadness and re-experiencing distressing memories. Educators play a crucial role in understanding learners' circumstances and facilitating their recovery while addressing general disciplinary behavior positively. This aligns with Horwitz's (2018) conceptualization of trauma as a mental health concept rooted in the Greek word for wound, with PTSD diagnoses evolving in response to veterans' experiences. DeYoung and Landolt (2018) further note developmental influences on trauma manifestation in children, with up to 20% experiencing prolonged PTSD symptoms despite potential recovery over time.

4.1.3 Handling Trauma as A Negative Experience

Understanding the impact of trauma on teachers is crucial for fostering a supportive educational environment. Teachers shape students' lives and create secure learning atmospheres, but unresolved trauma can impede their effectiveness and connection with students. Recognizing trauma as a challenge and implementing supportive strategies can enhance mental health for teachers and improve student learning experiences.

The participants of the study during the interview mentioned all their negative experiences in handling trauma among learners in the classrooms. The following were noted:
The usual student behaviors that indicate that they experienced trauma were showing sadness and becoming anti-social. I had a hard time helping my students with this. (P7)

> *Sometimes, they stare into nothing; sometimes, I cannot understand their mood. They are lonely and want to be alone. This is difficult for me. (P8)*
>
> *Extreme shyness, difficulty engaging with others, misappropriate reactions to setbacks and unexpected changes, and trouble managing strong emotions. (P10)*

P7 highlighted that common indicators of student trauma include melancholy and withdrawal from social interactions, presenting challenges in assisting affected students, as they often engage in contemplative moments. P8 struggled to comprehend students' emotional states, particularly their loneliness and need for solitude. Additionally, P10 noted social anxiety and impaired social interaction as consequences of mishandling setbacks, leading to difficulties in regulating intense emotions among students. Flannery (2017) emphasizes the novelty of addressing trauma's impact on pupils within educational settings, with many districts lacking initiatives to support teachers effectively. It is essential to equip teachers with trauma-informed techniques to assist students effectively, fostering a secure and empathetic environment, as proposed by McInerney and McKlindon (2014).

4.2 Hurdling Trauma-Related Challenges
4.2.1 Lack of Knowledge on Trauma Management

Insufficient teacher knowledge in trauma management can lead to adverse outcomes impacting both learners and the educational setting. Teachers may struggle to recognize and address the specific needs of students who have experienced trauma, resulting in inadequate support and resources, hindering their emotional well-being and academic progress. This can widen the achievement gap between trauma-affected students and their peers, leading to increased disruptive behavior, absenteeism, and social isolation among affected adolescents. Additionally, a lack of expertise in trauma management may impede teachers' ability to maintain a conducive classroom atmosphere, negatively affecting the educational experience of all students. Addressing this issue requires implementing professional development, fostering teamwork, and allocating resources effectively to establish a supportive and inclusive learning environment.

On this note, some narratives of the participants were elaborated:

> *I have not encountered extreme challenges in handling students who experienced trauma, as I have not had such experiences in my teaching career. However, on the basic level, based on experience, teachers who cannot handle mild traumas will be unable to handle extreme ones. Teachers hurdle because of their lack of training on managing students' trauma. (P1)*
>
> *Having a traumatic experience is not easy. One of the challenges is that an educator needs ample time to be comfortable with the teacher and learn how to manage their disruptions in the classroom sometimes. (P3)*

P1 mentioned she has not encountered significant challenges managing students who have experienced trauma, attributing it to not having faced such situations during her teaching career. However, lacking skills to handle minor traumas may extend to managing severe ones, indicating a need for comprehensive training in trauma management for teachers. P3 also noted the difficulty of enduring painful experi-

ences and emphasized the importance of building rapport with students and implementing effective classroom strategies to manage disruptive behavior. McLeod et al. (2017) highlight the recognition within school systems of the necessity to educate and train teachers to meet students' social-emotional needs, with obstacles including the need for increased trauma education, regular communication with intervention services, and understanding the importance of school-based trauma programs (Sonsteng-Person & Loomis, 2021). Teachers must create supportive classroom environments that foster cognitive development and mitigate trauma triggers, as enhancing instructors' trauma knowledge and training has been shown to alleviate challenges in interacting with traumatized students.

4.2.2 Students' Aggressiveness

Teachers encounter significant challenges when managing aggressive behavior in students, which can disrupt the classroom environment and divert attention from academic tasks. Aggressive behavior may stem from underlying emotional distress, leading to social exclusion and potential academic difficulties for the student. Managing hostility resulting from trauma poses a formidable challenge for educators, necessitating resource allocation toward professional development and support. Addressing student aggression requires understanding its potential roots in unresolved trauma, enabling educators to respond with empathy and assistance, thus fostering a more supportive educational atmosphere.

The participants' points about the theme are evident in the following:

> The learner did not cooperate in answering questions related to his experience that caused the trauma and was sometimes very aggressive in the classroom. (P9)
>
> They exhibit aggressive or challenging behaviors yet hide their emotional pain. They sometimes bully others as their way of coping with their traumas. (P10)

P9 and P10 reported similar experiences regarding students' aggressive behavior stemming from trauma. They noted that traumatized students often exhibit noncompliance when questioned about their traumatic experiences and may display violent behavior in the classroom, concealing their inner distress. Additionally, they may engage in bullying behavior as a coping mechanism for their psychological traumas. This finding aligns with Carlson and Dalenberg's (2000) research, which emphasizes the three essential components of trauma: abruptness, lack of control, and intense negative emotional experience. However, there is a notable gap in understanding the impact of trauma experienced in early childhood, as highlighted by De Young, Kenardy, and Cobham (2011), with limited research on trauma symptoms among children under the age of 6, possibly due to challenges in conceptualization.

4.2.3 Teachers' Stress

Teachers often experience stress when managing students' trauma in the classroom due to various factors. Predicting students' reactions and behaviors can be challenging due to the diverse manifestations of trauma, leading to feelings of anxiety and tension. Emotional availability and empathy are essential for addressing students' trauma, but managing multiple students with different experiences and needs can be overwhelming. Additionally, teachers have numerous responsibilities, such as designing instructional plans and maintaining discipline, which may be further complicated by addressing students' trauma and increasing their workload and stress levels. Despite these challenges, teachers are committed to creating a secure and supportive educational environment for every student, which can create a sense of urgency in addressing students' trauma. These challenges were highlighted by teachers in the study and verbalized by the participants as follows:

> *I make big adjustments in my teaching approaches, facing or handling the learners every day, always considering them with traumatized experiences so that they may always feel supported and safe. I always reflect on my teaching practices to find ways to support better learners experiencing trauma. Stress is part of the teachers' jobs. (P6)*
>
> *It challenges me to have strong determination, understanding, and patience in dealing with this kind of learner. Naturally, I also feel stressed at times. (P8)*

P6 emphasized the importance of adapting teaching methods to support students who have experienced trauma, prioritizing the creation of a safe and supportive environment tailored to their needs. Continual reflection on teaching strategies is crucial for effectively assisting traumatized learners. However, P8 acknowledged the challenges of maintaining resilience and patience when working with these students, who were experiencing occasional stress. Educators must recognize the potential impact of supporting traumatized children on their well-being, as they are susceptible to Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS), also known as Compassion Fatigue. According to Hoffman, Palladino, and Barnett (2007), teachers can develop STS due to exposure to student trauma, a vulnerability affirmed by VanBergeijk and Sarmiento (2006).

4.3 Educational Management Insights Drawn From the Experiences and Challenges of Elementary School Teachers in Engaging Students Who Exhibit Trauma Related-Behaviors in The Classroom

4.3.1 Creating safe spaces for learners

K-12 schools serve as safe havens for children, providing academic and emotional support. Teachers and schools play a crucial role in assisting students facing various challenges, including abuse, discrimination, or trauma, by offering treatment, support, and a nurturing environment conducive to learning. Creating safe spaces within educational institutions fosters acceptance and support, empowering students to navigate life's challenges confidently. These designated areas allow students to freely express themselves without fear of criticism, engage in respectful conversations on sensitive topics, and learn from their experiences. Educators play a vital role in fostering such classroom environments, as highlighted by the participants' discussions on the importance of safe school spaces.

> *In five years of teaching, my greatest learning in handling learners' social and emotional concerns is maintaining a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, even in the absence of overtly traumatized students. Recognizing the significance of addressing students' emotional well-being contributes to a positive learning atmosphere. (P1)*
>
> *In many years of teaching, for me, is on how to model appropriate social behaviors, provide opportunities for them to develop new social-emotional skills, give explicit guidance, and Offer a curriculum that is engaging and relevant to children's lives and cultures. (P2)*
>
> *Recognizing the uniqueness of each student's experiences and following approaches to meet their specific needs. (P3)*

In her five years of teaching, P1 learned the importance of fostering a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, regardless of whether students have experienced overt trauma. This lesson emphasizes the significance of addressing students' social and emotional well-being for creating a conducive learning atmosphere. Similarly, during his extensive teaching career, P2 emphasized the importance of teaching acceptable social behaviors, providing clear direction, and offering an engaging and culturally relevant curriculum. P3 highlighted the need to recognize students' unique experiences and tailor strategies to meet their needs.

These insights align with research on the impact of trauma-informed teaching practices on students' academic and emotional development. Izard (2016) explores how schools can positively influence children's brain development, supporting their future success. Lipscomb et al. (2019) demonstrate that teachers can enhance students' resilience through supportive relationships and safe environments, which are crucial for overcoming trauma's adverse effects. Additionally, as suggested by Brunzell et al. (2015), trauma-informed teaching strategies equip students with skills to manage emotions and foster healthier interpersonal relationships, thereby improving learning outcomes.

4.3.2 Importance of providing trauma-informed services

Trauma-informed practice, widely adopted across various sectors like health and education, aims to address the needs of trauma survivors through tactics, policies, education, and intervention. Unlike therapeutic approaches, trauma-informed organizations focus on creating safe environments and fostering trusting relationships for individuals who have experienced trauma. Staff members are well-versed in trauma's impact and strive to prevent re-traumatization while promoting optimal child development. Schools employing trauma-informed practices demonstrate a deep understanding of child development, including brain development and emotional regulation, safeguarding children's mental health and promoting overall well-being. By supporting children who have experienced trauma, trauma-informed organizations inadvertently benefit the psychological, emotional, and social development of all children. The participants' narration about this theme is presented as follows:

> Creating trauma-informed programs, building trust, providing non-judgmental space, and fostering open communication are essential and fundamental to the teacher-student relationship. (P4)
>
> The learning I've gained in handling learners' social and emotional concerns, promoting mental health, and addressing learners who need counseling were all significant to me. Schools must have trauma-based offices to act on students' negative experiences and situations. (P7)

The participants' insights are interconnected, emphasizing the importance of trauma-informed programs, trust-building, non-judgmental environments, and open communication in fostering solid teacher-student connections. Their experiences managing students' social and emotional issues, prioritizing mental well-being, and offering counseling have proven invaluable. Schools are encouraged to establish trauma-informed offices to effectively address students' adverse experiences. These findings align with research by Carello and Butler (2015), who stress the need for understanding trauma's effects and tailor-ing services accordingly, and Berardi and Morton (2019), who highlight teachers' lack of training in trauma despite extensive pedagogical training. As emphasized by Walkley and Cox (2013), continuous professional development is essential for educators to address trauma effectively. Brunzell, Stokes, and Waters (2016) argue for integrating trauma-informed concepts into teaching practices to meet the diverse needs

of traumatized students, while Morton and Berardi (2017) underscore the importance of trauma-informed practices in promoting healing and resilience among affected children, advocating for their implementation in educational settings to address the multifaceted challenges posed by trauma.

4.4 Educational Management Insights Drawn From the Experiences and Challenges of Elementary School Teachers in Engaging Students Who Exhibit Trauma Related-Behaviors in the Classroom

4.4.1 Creating Safe Spaces for Learners

K-12 schools serve as havens for students, offering support beyond academic education to those facing various challenges such as abuse, discrimination, or trauma recovery. This supportive environment equips young individuals with a diverse society, fostering feelings of acceptance and assistance crucial for overcoming life's obstacles positively. Safe spaces within schools allow students to freely express themselves without fear of criticism, facilitating respectful and thoughtful conversations on sensitive topics. Educators are vital in creating environments where students feel comfortable discussing challenging subjects.

The significance of creating safe spaces in schools was acknowledged and discussed by the participants, who shared their narratives in the subsequent discourse.

> *In five years of teaching, my greatest learning in handling learners' social and emotional concerns is maintaining a supportive and inclusive classroom environment, even in the absence of overtly traumatized students. Recognizing the significance of addressing students' emotional well-being contributes to a positive learning atmosphere for all. (P1)*
>
> *In many years of teaching, for me, is on how to model appropriate social behaviors, provide opportunities for them to develop new social-emotional skills, give explicit guidance, and Offer a curriculum that is engaging and relevant to children's lives and cultures. (P2)*
>
> *Recognizing the uniqueness of each student's experiences and following approaches to meet their specific needs. (P3)*

Throughout their teaching experiences, participants emphasized the importance of creating a supportive and inclusive classroom climate, addressing learners' social and emotional needs, and acknowledging each student's individuality. This insight aligns with research suggesting that schools can positively influence children's brain development and resilience, thereby aiding in overcoming the adverse effects of trauma (Izard, 2016; Lipscomb et al., 2019). Teachers play a crucial role in enhancing students' resilience through supportive relationships and safe environments. By implementing trauma-informed teaching strategies, educators can equip students with the necessary skills to manage their emotions and improve interpersonal relationships, ultimately fostering a conducive learning environment for all (Brunzell et al., 2015).

4.4.2 Importance of Providing Trauma-Informed Services

Trauma-informed practice, widely adopted in health and education, aims to address the needs of trauma survivors through tactics, policies, education, and intervention. Unlike therapeutic approaches, it emphasizes creating safe environments and understanding the impact of trauma on individuals' lives. Schools employing this approach prioritize child development, assisting children in managing emotions and fos-

tering trust to prevent trauma recurrence. By supporting trauma survivors, these organizations inadvertently promote the psychological, emotional, and social development of all children.

The participants' narration about this theme is presented as follows:

> Creating trauma-informed programs, building trust, providing non-judgmental space, and fostering open communication are essential and fundamental to the teacher-student relationship. (P4)
>
> The learning I have gained in handling learners' social and emotional concerns, promoting mental health, and addressing learners who need counseling were all significant to me. Schools must have trauma-based offices to act on students' negative experiences and situations. (P7)

The participants' responses highlight the interconnectedness of their learnings, emphasizing the importance of trauma-informed programs, trust-building, non-judgmental environments, and open communication in the teacher-student relationship. Their knowledge of managing students' social and emotional issues, prioritizing mental well-being, and providing counseling has been instrumental. They advocate for the establishment of trauma-informed offices in schools to address students' adverse experiences. These findings align with previous research. Carello and Butler (2015) stress the need for understanding trauma's effects and developing tailored systems for trauma-informed services, while Berardi and Morton (2019) and Walkley and Cox (2013) highlight the lack of teacher training in trauma despite its significance. Brunzell, Stokes, and Waters (2016) propose integrating trauma-informed concepts into teaching methodologies, while Morton and Berardi (2017) argue for the implementation of trauma-informed practices in schools to support the healing and resilience of traumatized children.

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