Building healthy futures in Baltimore: A trauma-informed approach in schools

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Financial Disclosures

• I have no relevant financial disclosures.
Trauma exposure is prevalent among Baltimore youth

Source: Baltimore Sun, 2/6/2016
Manifestations of trauma at school

- Headaches, stomachaches, pain, asthma symptoms
- Anxiety, depression
- Irritability, aggression, anger
- Self-destructive, risky behavior
- Attention, concentration, memory
- School absenteeism & performance

Source: nctsn.org/resources/audiences/school-personnel/effects-of-trauma
Icon from www.flaticon.com
Supporting trauma-exposed students at school

• Promote safe, nurturing relationships and environments
• Promote school engagement and attendance
• Address threats to learning and positive behavior
• Promote social and emotional skills development
• Provide physical and mental health care
Traditional school based health centers

Source: School Based Health Alliance
The Rales Center is developing, evaluating, and disseminating new school-based models that aim to address the full range of threats to students’ potential, with a focus on underserved and low-income students.
Grade K-8, >1500 students
Source: https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/wcsc/
The Rales Health Center
School Nurses + School Based Health Center
Innovative treatment of chronic conditions

Medications prescribed and managed by the school health center

Medications delivered right to school

Students take their daily medications in the RHC
Restorative approaches to discipline

- Build healthy relationships between adults and children
- Reduce, prevent, and improve harmful behavior
- Repair harm and restore positive relationships
- Resolve conflict. Hold individuals and groups accountable.

Photo: pressdemocrat.com/news/6955719-181/
So, how are we doing?
In the first two years of the program, there were:

33,169 visits to our school nurses

2,220 visits to our pediatrician and nurse practitioner
Clinician/educator partnerships identify students at risk

Students struggling academically

- Screened positive 90%
- Screened negative 10%
- Referred to Rales Health Center 33%
- Handled by School 67%
Clinician/educator partnerships identify students at risk

- Screened positive 90%
- Screened negative 10%

Referred to in-school or out of school mental health care, or managed by RHC

Parent engagement and case management
Comprehensive school health improves attendance

Chronic absenteeism dropped by 23% among students with asthma

Chronic absenteeism dropped by 30% among students with ADHD
Rales Center Team

The Rales Center is made possible by a generous gift from the Norman & Ruth Rales Foundation