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Attitudes Related To Trauma-Informed Care In The Educational Setting: An Exploratory Case Study

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ATTITUDES RELATED TO TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE IN THE EDUCATIONAL
SETTING: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

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A DISSERTATION

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SETTING: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY

ABSTRACT

This qualitative, exploratory case study was used to explore the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment. Faculty and staff attitudes toward adverse childhood experiences and their attitudes toward implementation of trauma-informed care (TIC) in the educational setting are not well known. This study applies constructivism as a theoretical framework because the research depends on the participants' views of the topics under study. Ten faculty and staff from a suburban high school in the northeastern part of the United States participated in this exploratory case study, completed the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care Scale, and participated in a semistructured interview. The data analysis revealed four themes that included relationships, safety, training, and behavior.

The most significant finding was building relationships. From the results of this study, this researcher found that, when educators take the time to build relationships with students, the impact of traumatic events might be mitigated. Additional findings of this study were focused on participant attitudes toward TIC, the TIC practices they implemented, and factors that affected TIC implementation, including professional development. The findings of this study could be useful to educators, administrators, and educational support personnel interested in TIC.

Keywords: trauma-informed care (TIC), adverse childhood experiences, trauma-sensitive, relationships, professional development

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose of the Study	4
Research Questions	4
Conceptual Framework	5
Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope	8
Rationale and Significance.....	10
Definition of Terms	11
Conclusion.....	12
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	14
Conceptual Framework	16
Childhood Trauma.....	18
Adverse Childhood Experiences	19
Trauma-Informed Approaches	20
Trauma-Informed Care.....	22
Trauma-Sensitive Schools.....	25
Conclusion.....	26
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	28
Purpose of the Study	28
Research Questions	29
Research Design.....	29

Site Information and Population.....	30
Sampling Method	30
Instrumentation and Data Collection.....	31
Survey	31
Semistructured Interviews.....	33
Data Analysis	34
Survey Analysis	34
Interview Transcript Analysis	36
Data Synthesis	36
Limitations of the Research Design	36
Trustworthiness	37
Credibility	37
Member Checking Procedures	38
Transferability	38
Dependability	39
Confirmability	39
Ethical Issues in the Study.....	39
Researcher Affiliation	40
Chapter Summary.....	41
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS	42
Analysis Methods	43
Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale Analysis	43
Semistructured Interview Analysis	46

Presentation of Results	47
Case 1: Zuri	47
Case 2: N’Jobu	49
Case 3: M’Baku.....	50
Case 4: Ramonda.....	52
Case 5: W’Kabi.....	54
Case 6: Nakia	55
Case 7: Okoye	56
Case 8: Shuri	58
Case 9: Ayo	60
Case 10: T’Challa.....	61
Emergent Themes.....	62
Relationships.....	62
Safety	65
Behavior.....	67
Training.....	69
Summary	70
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION	72
Interpretation of Findings.....	73
Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 1	73
Teachers Feel Unprepared to Implement Trauma-Informed Care.....	74
Time as a Factor for Implementing Trauma-Informed Care	75
Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 2	77

Relationships.....	77
Kindness.....	78
Flexibility.....	79
Safety.....	80
Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 3.....	82
Implications.....	85
Recommendations for Action.....	86
Recommendation for Action 1.....	86
Recommendation for Action 2.....	87
Recommendations for Further Study.....	88
Conclusion.....	89
REFERENCES.....	91
APPENDICES.....	100
Appendix A: Recruitment Flyer.....	101
Appendix B: Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale.....	102
Appendix C: Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Subscales.....	105
Appendix D: The Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale – Student License Application.....	108
Appendix E: Semistructured Interview.....	109

LIST OF TABLES

1. Learn–Grow–Thrive	45
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In the United States, the incidents of students with adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have increased (Romero et al., 2018). An ACE is an interpersonal or early childhood trauma (e.g., physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, arrest of a caregiver, leaving care, and other traumatic childhood experiences) that can have a lifelong negative impact on an individual's health and well-being (Mendes et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2014; Sciaraffa et al., 2018; Strait & Bolman, 2017). According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC; 2016), childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, lifelong health, and opportunity. Individuals who have had numerous ACEs are at risk of developing other issues (Romero et al., 2018). As Baker et al. (2016) stated, "Due to its high prevalence and associated risk of poor academic and health outcomes, adverse childhood experiences and trauma are considered a public health epidemic" (p. 61). Thus, it is not surprising ACEs influence student academic achievement (Souers & Hall, 2016).

Some children come to school feeling anxious, depressed, hungry, exhausted, completely overwhelmed, and might have witnessed or been victims of violence (Baker et al., 2016). Traumatic experiences can affect learning, behavior, and relationships at school, which increases the likelihood that they might drop out of high school and have chronic health problems (Baker et al., 2016; Jennings, 2019; Romero et al., 2018). Children respond differently to adversity; however, children who are exposed to adverse experiences and complex trauma are liable to have difficulty with learning and behavior (Parris et al., 2015; Sciaraffa et al., 2018). The number

of ACEs to which a person is exposed when young most likely affects the individual's educational performance and health (Baker et al., 2016).

In educational settings, faculty and staff interact with students during the school day. Some of these students have experienced ACEs, and they are having difficulty navigating their academic setting because of mental health issues (Souers & Hall, 2019a). Trauma is real, prevalent, toxic to the brain, and can affect development and learning (Souers & Hall, 2016). To help the students be successful, the faculty and staff must be informed about the effect that ACEs have on students, and the way that the implementation of TIC strategies can affect student learning. According to Souers and Hall (2018), "It is the responsibility of professionals and caregivers to provide a trauma-sensitive environment (a classroom, school, or any other teaching location) where each and every student is healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged" (p. 1).

Working effectively with students who have experienced trauma is a major concern in the field of education (Jennings, 2019). Education is an important factor in facilitating young people's well-being (Mendes et al., 2014). Regardless of the cause, interventions need to alleviate the effects of trauma and bring lasting positive behavioral change (Parris et al., 2015). Using trauma-informed care (TIC) therapeutic strategies can help mitigate incidents of aggression and reduce the use of restrictive interventions (i.e., seclusion, physical, and mechanical restraint) in a variety of settings (McEvedy et al., 2017; Levenson, 2017). Hopper et al. (2010) defined TIC as

a strengths based framework that is grounded in an understanding of and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety

for both providers and survivors, and creates opportunities for survivors to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. (p. 82).

Statement of the Problem

Faculty and staff attitudes toward ACEs and their attitudes toward implementation of TIC in the educational setting are not well known (Harris, 2018). Faculty and staff should have a working knowledge of TIC practices so that they can assist effectively students who exhibit a myriad of mental health issues (Harris, 2018). According to Harris (2018), training staff in the school environment—“from leadership to guidance staff to every single teacher” (pp. 185–186)—will profoundly affect school culture. After the 1999 school shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado, school systems created zero-tolerance discipline policies intended to keep schools safe (Craig, 2017). However, the policies imposed severe penalties on students without considering individual circumstances (Craig, 2017). Instead of improving school safety, these policies intensified students’ rebelliousness toward school rules, and put these students at increased risk of arrest for tardiness to school, or disturbing the peace (Craig, 2017). With the high prevalence of trauma affecting students, school leaders can no longer ignore the effects of trauma (Craig, 2017). Additionally, many faculty and staff have not examined their own attitudes regarding traumatic experiences and they have not been given adequate tools to address these issues (LoGiudice & Douglas, 2016; Pence, 2011; Strait & Bolman, 2017). According to Harris (2018), it is essential to “understanding that no matter the geographies, ethnicities, and socioeconomic backgrounds, we are all affected by ACEs in similar ways” (p. 98). Researchers have indicated that traumatic experiences can affect learning, behavior, and relationships at school (Baker et al., 2016; Craig, 2017; Souers & Hall, 2016). The

aim of TIC is to help students to self-regulate attention, emotions, and behavior (Souers & Hall, 2016; Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, 2019). Faculty and staff must have the knowledge and skills to provide TIC for children to be helped effectively (Craig, 2017).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to investigate (a) the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment; (b) how public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment; and (c) how public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students. Measuring staff attitudes regarding TIC is paramount to understanding student behavior (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). “The Traumatic Stress Institute (TSI) fosters the transformation of organizations and service systems to trauma-informed care (TIC) through the delivery of whole-system consultation, professional training, coaching, and research” (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). Many high school faculty and staff working with these students are not trained in TIC strategies (Harris, 2018). To help these students acquire a more effective learning experience and to bring about healing, it is imperative that all faculty and staff become educated about the effects of trauma and the best way to address them (Jones & Mudd, 2006; Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016).

Research Questions

According to Mills (2018), qualitative research uses narrative, and descriptive approaches to data collection to understand the way things are and what it means from the perspective of the research participants. In this study, the researcher addressed the following research questions (RQs):

- Research Question 1: What are the current attitudes of public high school faculty and staff regarding TIC?
- Research Question 2: How do public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment?
- Research Question 3: How do public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students?

Using surveys and semistructured interviews, this researcher analyzed in-depth the attitudes and practices of public high school faculty and staff regarding TIC in an educational setting.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a conglomeration of what the researcher wants to study, why they want to study it, and how it should be studied (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Theoretical frameworks are defined as a structure of theories framed together especially to support the relationships embedded in the conceptual framework (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). In this study, the researcher used constructivism as a theoretical framework.

According to Creswell (2014), constructivism is a theoretical approach to qualitative research, for “social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The individual develops subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things” (p. 8). A constructivist researcher focuses on the distinct perspectives in which people live and work and does so with the purpose of understanding the historical and cultural background of the participants (Creswell, 2014). In constructivism, the “researcher recognizes that their own background shapes their interpretation

and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). The theory of constructivism has informed this study because “the goal of the research is to rely on the participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Vygotsky (1978) asserted that the social realm consisted of influences from the community and that culture affect human behavior. Similar to Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1960) emphasized the social nature of learning and that learning is an active process. Bruner theorized that any subject matter could be instructed successfully in some academically authentic method to any person during any period of growth.

A conceptual framework helps researchers make the connections between what they want to study, why they want to study it, and how it should be studied (Ravitch & Riggan, 2017). In this study, the researcher was interested in faculty and staff attitudes regarding TIC in the public school setting because of the high prevalence of trauma among students. According to Souers and Hall (2016), “The more ACEs a student experienced, the more likely he or she was to experience serious school and health issues” (p. 21). This is because trauma is toxic to the brain and the body (Souers & Hall, 2016). In schoolchildren, unaddressed mental health issues can manifest as disruptive behavior, or they can be misinterpreted as defiance and deliberate disruption. In addition, children with mental health issues are legally required to attend school, but not obligated to receive professional mental health services (Souers & Hall, 2016); therefore, the researcher gleaned information from faculty and staff about their perceptions regarding TIC. The researcher conducted a survey, using semistructured interviews to gather data for an exploratory case study.

Ravitch and Riggan (2017) stated, “Topical research refers to work (most often empirical) that has focused subject matter in which the researcher is interested” (p. 11). When caregivers fail to protect and respond to the needs of those in their care, children create a means to survive when they feel disconnected, dysregulated, disorganized, and isolated (Craig, 2016). Students who are not getting these same needs met at home attempt to get them met in the school setting (Souers & Hall, 2016). Faculty and staff are responsible for the students during the school day; therefore, it is important to have “an understanding of how trauma affects student learning and behavior in the school environment” (Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016).

In this study of the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment, the contemporary trauma theory (CTT) provided a framework with which to understand the impact that trauma has on a person’s functioning (Goodman, 2017). The framework has five central properties: dissociation, attachment, reenactment, long-term effect on later adulthood, and impairment in emotional capacities (Goodman, 2017). CTT presents a foundation for discerning the bio-psychosocial impact of trauma on children and adults. Given the damaging and destructive impact that childhood trauma has on brain functioning and on the development of social and emotional skills, it has a profound effect on education too (Goodman, 2017). Another concept important to the conceptual framework of this study is TIC. Hopper et al. (2010) described TIC as a “strengths based framework that is grounded in an understanding and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and creates opportunities to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment” (p. 82). TIC in schools is important because the “school responds to the needs of trauma-exposed students by integrating

effective practices, programs, and procedures into all aspects of the organization and culture” (Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016, p. 2).

Employing constructivism as a theoretical framework, while using CTT and TIC for guidance, the researcher sought to understand the perceptions of the faculty and staff regarding TIC in education. Furthermore, the researcher addressed the research questions, and the findings were grounded by applying the framework.

Assumptions, Limitations, and Scope

Assumptions in studies are the beliefs, worldviews, or paradigms that the researcher uses when conducting a qualitative study (Creswell, 2007). In this study, the researcher used a survey and semistructured interviews to collect the data. The researcher assumed that the participants would be honest in their responses when they completed the ARTIC scale, and that they would be transparent in their interview responses.

Limitations of the study were “those characteristics of design or methodology that impacted or influenced the interpretation of the findings from [the] research” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 207). In this study, the researcher used purposeful sampling, and the potential pool of participants for this study included all of the faculty and staff at a public high school. “Purposeful sampling is based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 96). The limitations to purposeful sampling are that variability and bias cannot be measured or controlled, and the results from the data cannot be generalized beyond the sample (Acharya et al., 2013). The limitations to conducting surveys are that participants (a) might not feel encouraged to provide accurate, honest answers; (b) might not

feel comfortable providing answers that present themselves in a negative light; (c) might not be knowledgeable on the subject; or (d) might skip answers (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

According to the Traumatic Stress Institute (2019), the limitations inherent in the ARTIC Scale are (a) moving beyond preliminary validation; (b) replication needed to confirm the seven-subscale structure; (c) not enough data regarding how an organization's scores compare to other organization's scores; and (d) linking ARTIC scores with other favorable staff and system-level outcomes. The ARTIC uses a Likert scale. The limitations to using Likert scales are that participants might be more likely to report what they think the researcher wants to hear (Turner, 1993). The limitations to conducting interviews are that they (a) can be time consuming, (b) require a level of trust between the interviewer and interviewee, (c) the interviewer must be skilled in active listening and probing, and (d) the interviewer must be knowledgeable about and sensitive to the interviewee's frame of reference and/or culture (Creswell, 2015).

The researcher conducted this study at a single site, which was a public high school in the northeast region of the United States. Although the Northeast Region has nine states—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont—school districts in the Northeast vary from state to state (Hussar & Bailey, 2013). The scope was further confined to include faculty and staff in the high school. This sample was focused on a single location, which made it difficult to generalize the results to other locations. According to the NICHE (2021) clearinghouse, the school has more than 2,000 students in Grades 9–12, which is a student–teacher ratio of 15 to 1, and the state test scores have shown high percentages of students who are proficient or above in math and reading. Another limitation could have been a participant's lack of knowledge of regarding TIC.

Rationale and Significance

Examining the attitudes of faculty and staff regarding TIC was imperative to determining what information was necessary to assist faculty and staff to grow in their understanding of TIC strategies and intervention practices. Souers and Hall (2019b) indicated that, when educators arrange an educational setting without considering childhood trauma in their policies and practices, the setting tends to reflect that their academics are separate from social–emotional practices, which then classifies the setting as trauma-indifferent. Souers and Hall (2019b) further indicated that a trauma-informed setting incorporates social–emotional practices with academics and includes staff that have acquired some knowledge about childhood trauma and are versed in related strategies. Additionally, trauma-invested environments are settings in which “stakeholders have consented to act on their knowledge, truly working together to enhance safety across the board. This setting incorporates whole child learning and supports practices aimed at success for all students” (Souers & Hall, 2019b, p. 24).

This study was significant to both students and faculty in educational settings. Exploring the perceptions of faculty and staff provided a potential opportunity for faculty and staff to reflect on their own attitudes regarding the impact that trauma has on students. Reflection of personal attitudes can inspire greater understanding and preparation for beneficial interactions that are more efficient. To help students have a more effective learning experience, it is imperative that faculty and staff be prepared to support students who have experienced trauma (Jones & Mudd, 2006; Souers & Hall, 2018). According to Souers and Hall (2016), “the environment we establish, the relationships we build, the focus we encourage, and the kindness we share can influence the beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and outcomes in our classrooms” (p. 3).

Additionally, Souers and Hall (2019b) indicated that, in milieus that are trauma-invested, teachers vigorously labor to ensure that the needs of their students are met so that learning can happen.

Definition of Terms

Adverse childhood experiences: “ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0–17 years). ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness, and substance misuse in adulthood. ACEs can also negatively impact education and job opportunities. However, ACEs can be prevented” (CDC, 2016).

Attitudes related to trauma-informed care: ARTIC is one of the first psychometrically valid measures of TIC published in the peer-reviewed literature (Baker et al., 2016).

Retraumatization: This experience “is a conscious or unconscious reminder of past trauma that results in a reexperiencing of the initial trauma event. It can be triggered by a situation, an attitude or expression, or by certain environments that replicate the dynamics of the original trauma” (Zgoda et al., 2016, p. 2).

Trauma: This experience is a widespread, harmful, and costly public health problem. It occurs because of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war, and other emotionally harmful experiences (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]; 2014).

Trauma-informed care: TIC is “a strengths based framework that is grounded in an understanding and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and creates opportunities to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment” (Hopper et al, 2010, p. 82).

Trauma-invested environment: This location is “a setting where stakeholders have consented to act on their knowledge, truly working together to enhance safety across the board. This setting incorporates whole child learning and supports practices aimed at success for all students” (Souers & Hall, 2019a, p. 24).

Trauma-sensitive: This descriptor “refers to practices and approaches intended to cultivate a safe learning environment and mitigate the impact of trauma symptoms on student learning” (Jennings, 2019, p. 3).

Conclusion

Faculty and staff have an obligation to provide all students with the opportunity to learn, grow, and become the best person they can be (Hopper et al, 2010). Exploring the perceptions of faculty and staff as they relate to TIC could provide insight into the educational environment. According to Harris (2018), many high school faculty and staff lack knowledge in TIC strategies. Conversely, a trauma-informed setting can allow educators to incorporate social–emotional practices with academics, with staff that have acquired some knowledge about childhood trauma and are versed in related strategies (Souers & Hall, 2019b). Using a constructivism framework, the researcher explored the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff regarding TIC in the educational environment. Faculty and staff should have the knowledge and skills to provide TIC so that children can be helped effectively (Craig, 2017).

In Chapter 1, the researcher discussed the importance of exploring faculty and staff attitudes towards ACEs and TIC. The researcher also introduced the research questions that were answered through the study. In addition, the researcher defined the terms that were used throughout the study. In Chapter 2, the researcher provides a comprehensive literature review

with which the need for TIC in a myriad of settings was explored, along with the impact that it has had in educational environments.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This literature review is focused on the current literature regarding trauma-informed practices in the educational setting. Baker et al. (2016) indicated that traumatic experiences could affect learning, behavior, and relationships at school. The goal of TIC is to help children who have been exposed to trauma, self-regulate attention, emotions, and behavior (Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, 2019). It is important to explore the attitudes of faculty and staff regarding TIC (Baker et al., 2016) because it is paramount to understanding student behavior (Minahan, 2019). Faculty and staff who display attitudes of compassion and empathy regarding TIC might be empathetic and compassionate toward students and might have significant influence in the implementation of TIC interventions that affect staff convictions, which might lead to profound TIC practices (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). To bring about healing and to help students have a more effective learning experience, the faculty and staff should become educated regarding the effects of trauma and the way that it hinders learning (Souers & Hall, 2016). Using trauma-informed strategies in the classroom can make a big difference for traumatized students by making changes that foster a sense of safety (Minahan, 2019). The topic is important because most classroom faculty and staff are not aware of the impact of childhood trauma (RB-Banks & Meyer, 2017). According to Souers and Hall (2016), “Too often, educators reduce students to experiences and make decisions about their capabilities based on those decisions. Changing the focus enables the educator to concentrate on nurturing the whole child and create trauma-sensitive learning environments for all students” (p. 16).

Throughout the United States, organizations such as the SAMHSA, the Traumatic Stress Institute, and the CDC coordinate efforts by implementing TIC to prevent, treat, and heal people who have experienced trauma (Strait & Bolman, 2017). A trauma-informed staff member must be willing to reflect on any instances of their own trauma and the way that it affects their life and performance in their profession (Strait & Bolman, 2017). People experience trauma and that experience can have lasting effects (Beyerlein & Bloch, 2014; Henry et al., 2011; Yang et al., 2019). The literature also recognizes that training needs to occur so that educators can understand and provide a trauma-informed approach (Craig, 2016; Harris, 2018; Jennings, 2019; Romero et al., 2018; Souers & Hall, 2019a). “Trauma training can help teachers to support their students and increase the chances that they will experience academic and behavioral success despite the negative effects of adverse childhood events” (Jones, 2013, p. 112). Furthermore, Yang et al. (2019) indicated that, to integrate trauma into the schools’ curricula, more groundwork is needed. According to Romero et al. (2018), “If each PreK–12th-grade school staff member added trauma-informed strategies to his daily routines and practices, every child in the classroom would benefit” (p. 133). Furthermore, Craig (2017) stated, “Given the prevalence of trauma among the school population, there is a critical need for secondary schools to adopt a more trauma sensitive approach to discipline and student engagement” (p. 55).

The search terms included trauma, trauma-informed approach, TIC, attachment, education, mental health, intervention, ACEs, transformational leadership, attachment theory, trauma theory, trauma survivors, reactive attachment, and posttraumatic stress disorder. The reviewed literature consists of a variety of articles, papers, dissertations, books, TED Talks, journals, conferences, and other sources addressing TIC. Many studies were of a qualitative

nature, while others consisted of mixed-methods or quantitative research methods. In the search for literature, the researcher used scholarly databases and search engines including DUNE, Academic Search Complete, ProQuest Dissertations and Thesis Global, ProQuest Journals, ResearchGate, ERIC, and Google Scholar.

Conceptual Framework

This study applies constructivism as a theoretical framework. Creswell (2014) said that the theory of constructivism is an approach used in qualitative research. The theory of constructivism informed this study because “the goal of the research is to rely on the participants’ views of the situation being studied” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). Creswell (2014) further postulated, “Social constructivists believe that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The individual develops subjective meanings of their experiences—meanings directed toward certain objects or things” (p. 8). Additionally, a constructivist researcher focuses on the distinctive perspectives in which people live and work with the purpose of understanding the historical and cultural background of the participants (Creswell, 2014). In constructivism, the “researcher recognizes that their own background shapes their interpretation and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8). In 1934, Vygotsky (1978) developed social constructivism and posited that learning is a collaborative process, and that knowledge results from individuals’ interactions with their culture and society. Vygotsky realized that learning and social settings were interrelated. Vygotsky claimed that the social realm also consisted of influences from the community and that culture affects human behavior. Similar to Vygotsky (1978), Bruner (1960) emphasized the social nature of learning and that

learning is an active process. Bruner theorized that any subject matter could be inculcated successfully in some academically authentic method to any person during any period of growth. Furthermore, Bruner believed that people are active learners who facilitate their own knowledge. By focusing on the social aspects of the learning process, the theories of Bruner (1960) and Vygotsky (1978) dovetail with the framework of this study. According to Souers and Hall (2016), people in the “caregiving field seldom look deeply into their own belief systems to understand the hidden motives behind what they think and do” (p. 134). As faculty and staff, it is important to understand one’s own experiences because the way one interprets them has the most powerful influence on the decisions made, the way one lives, the relationships developed, and one’s thoughts, and actions (Souers & Hall, 2016).

The CTT framework provided the researcher with an understanding of the impact that trauma has on a person’s functioning, and it is based on five central properties: dissociation, attachment, reenactment, long-term effect on later adulthood, and impairment in emotional capacities (Goodman, 2017). CTT presents a foundation for discerning the bio-psychosocial impact of trauma on children and adults. Suleiman (2008) posited that trauma is not only the experience of a past event, but also a condition of survival (Suleiman, 2008). Given that childhood trauma has a damaging and destructive impact on brain functioning and on the development of social and emotional skills, it understandable that it also has a profound effect on education (Goodman, 2017). To help students succeed in school, educators must understand the effects of trauma on students and its impact in the classroom (Souers & Hall, 2016). CTT is a research framework for studying trauma and TIC is an action framework for responding to

traumatized individuals. Using TIC as part of the conceptual framework for this study is prudent.

Hopper et al. (2010) described TIC as

a strengths based framework that is grounded in an understanding and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and creates opportunities to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment. (p. 82)

Understanding that students' learning and behavior problems are rooted in their history of difficult life events is an example of a favorable TIC attitude (Baker et al. 2016).

Childhood Trauma

According to the SAMHSA (2014), trauma is categorized as a widespread, harmful, and costly public health problem. It occurs because of violence, abuse, neglect, loss, disaster, war, and other emotionally harmful experiences. Trauma can have lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being (SAMHSA, 2014). Understanding the effects of trauma is the key to implementing the interventions necessary to help others (Jennings, 2019).

The SAMHSA (2014) definition centers around the E's of trauma: event(s), experience of event(s), and effects. When relating these E's to children, an event is the "actual or extreme threat of physical or psychological harm or severe, life-threatening neglect for a child that imperils healthy development" (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 8). Experience is the individual's experience of the event "to determine whether it is a traumatic event" (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 8). Effects is the individual's "inability to cope with normal stresses and strains of daily living; trust and benefit

from relationships; manage cognitive processes; to regulate behaviors or to control the expression of emotions” (SAMHSA, 2014, p. 8).

Traumatic experiences for children can affect learning, behavior, and relationships at school (Baker et al., 2016; Jones & Mudd, 2006; Souers & Hall, 2016; Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). Mitigating the effects of ACEs helps children self-regulate attention, emotions, and behavior (Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, 2019). Researchers have indicated that many faculty and staff have not examined their own attitudes regarding traumatic experiences and that they do not have adequate tools to address these issues (LoGiudice & Douglas, 2016; Pence, 2011; Strait & Bolman, 2017). Faculty and staff must have the knowledge and skills to recognize and respond to childhood trauma (Craig, 2017).

Adverse Childhood Experiences

ACEs are interpersonal or early childhood trauma (e.g., emotional, physical, or sexual abuse; neglect; arrest of a caregiver; leaving care; and other traumatic childhood experiences) that can have a negative impact on an individual’s health and well-being that can last a lifetime (Mendes et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2014; Sciaraffa et al., 2018; Strait & Bolman, 2017). Souers and Hall (2019a) indicated that people who have numerous ACEs might be negatively affected by trauma. According to the CDC (2016), childhood experiences, both positive and negative, have a tremendous impact on future violence victimization and perpetration, and on lifelong health and opportunity. Individuals who have had numerous ACEs are at risk of developing other issues. The occurrence of ACEs is prevalent. Between 2011–2014, 23 states incorporated an ACE module on their states’ Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Survey (BRFSS; Merrick et al., 2018). Of the participants in the BRFSS Survey, 39% reported zero ACEs, 24%

reported one ACE, 13% reported two ACEs, 9% reported three ACEs, and 16% reported four or more ACEs (Merrick et al., 2018). According to Merrick et al. (2018), the prevalence of ACEs from the BRFSS data appears similar to the original ACE study. The findings indicated that prevalence of ACEs is high for participants in the study (Merrick et al., 2018).

Children respond differently to adversity; however, children who have been exposed to adverse experiences and complex trauma are liable to have difficulty with learning and behavior (Parris et al., 2015; Sciaraffa et al., 2018). This might manifest in difficulty with self-regulation, focusing, paying attention, and interpersonal interactions (Sciaraffa et al., 2018). Even very young children are affected by traumatic events (Cummings et al., 2017). These events can include community disasters such as a tornado; earthquake; the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack; or school shootings (Yeary, 2018). “When a young child’s caregiver is impacted by a stressful occurrence, that child is also impacted, even without having directly experienced the trauma” (Yeary, 2018, p. 84). Regardless of the event, Souers and Hall (2016) stated, “It is much more helpful for educators to monitor the effect of the event on an individual, not to be preoccupied with the detail of the event itself” (p. 16).

Trauma-Informed Approaches

According to Jennings (2019), traumatized children and teens are constantly in crisis mode. They might be anxious, fearful, hypervigilant, and may imagine danger where there is none. “Some students may externalize their feelings of threat by acting disruptive or aggressive, or both. Some internalize their fear by shutting down to become passive or invisible” (Jennings, 2019, p. 30). To help students, educators do not need to have a counseling degree; they need to

be trauma-informed and invested to guide students toward their best selves (Souers & Hall, 2019a).

Education is an important factor in facilitating young people's well-being (Mendes et al., 2014). Students who are suffering from the effects of trauma are not emotionally and psychologically ready to learn (Souers & Hall, 2016). "To ensure high levels of learning for every student, educators must first ensure that students are in a safe place" (Souers & Hall, 2016, p. 27). Trauma interventions need to alleviate the effects of trauma and bring lasting positive behavioral change (Parris et al., 2015). Hopper et al. (2010) defined TIC as "a strengths based framework that is grounded in an understanding and responsiveness to the impact of trauma, that emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety for both providers and survivors, and creates opportunities to rebuild a sense of control and empowerment" (p. 82). According to the CDC (2016), TIC has six guiding principles: safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment voice and choice, and cultural, historical, and gender issues. Using TIC strategies can help mitigate incidents of aggression and reduce the use of restrictive interventions (i.e., seclusion, physical, and mechanical restraint) in mental health and academic settings (Levenson, 2017; McEvedy et al., 2017; Souers & Hall, 2019a). Souers and Hall (2019b) saw all behavior as "an expression of need. Simply making a behavior go away does not solve the problem at the origin. The key to true change is understanding the need and teaching students helpful and healthy ways to get that need met" (p. 2).

More than 30 states among the United States have worked with the Center for Study and Social Policy to create communities of support and to enhance teacher training and integration of a trauma-informed perspective of care (Sciaraffa et al., 2018). At the federal level, SAMHSA

(2014) provided support for grant programs to agencies that specifically address trauma and focuses on prevention, treatment, and recovery from trauma. At the state level, various departments are tasked with meeting the needs of people with trauma histories. For example, in Connecticut, the Child Health and Development Institute with the state Department of Children and Families is building a trauma-informed system of care throughout the state through policy and workforce development (SAMHSA, 2014). In Wisconsin, the six guiding principles are applied along with the four “R’s” (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2020). The four “R’s” represent four step-by-step assumptions for implementing a trauma-informed approach. They include (a) realizing the prevalence of trauma; (b) recognizing how trauma affects individuals by overwhelming a person’s ability to cope and leading to negative consequences; (c) responding by putting this knowledge into practice creating safe environments for patients that promote healing and recovery by prioritizing people’s dignity, voice, and self-empowerment; and (d) resisting retraumatization by recognizing and taking steps to minimize situations that could cause distress or mirror the person’s traumatic experiences (Wisconsin Department of Health Services, 2020). TIC has several different approaches.

Trauma-Informed Care

The term TIC was coined in the early 1990s to describe the methods of delivering services that incorporate an understanding of the extensive biological, psychological, and social sequelae of ACEs and other trauma with the ultimate goal of mitigating their effects (Baker et al., 2016; SAMHSA, 2014). Souers and Hall (2019a) suggested that people who have the responsibility for caring for those who have experienced trauma and/or ACEs might not have adequate training to assist others successfully through TIC. According to Craig (2017),

The continued high prevalence of trauma in children’s lives suggest[s] that trauma is a common pathway to academic and social problems. Teachers need to recognize the symptoms of early trauma and know how to intervene in ways that mitigate its devastating consequences. (p. 2)

TIC is “an approach to engaging people with trauma histories in education, human services, and related fields that recognizes and acknowledges the impact of trauma on their lives” (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019, p. 1).

TIC is a framework that “ensures that children are screened for trauma exposure, service providers use evidence-informed trauma practices, and resources on trauma are taught and available throughout the school” (Pataky et al., 2019, p. 642). Developing a safe environment is critical to providing TIC (Cavanaugh, 2016). In a School-Wide Positive Behavioral Intervention System, a school-wide expectation might include “be safe” and would be enforced throughout the school (Cavanaugh, 2016, p. 42). Another example of TIC is being culturally sensitive and responsive (Cavanaugh, 2016; Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016).

Williams and Smith (2017) conducted a study in Western Australia focused on clinicians and managers in public health who had received TIC training the previous year. These participants reported that training increased their knowledge and awareness and positively affected their attitudes regarding TIC (Williams & Smith, 2017). However, the clinicians also reported that they had limited success in making changes in the workplace (Williams & Smith, 2017). Strait and Bolman (2017) focused on students and future healthcare practitioners’ understanding of ACEs and TIC, their awareness of their own ACEs, and their willingness to incorporate TIC into their professional practice. Strait and Bolman (2017) found that students

and future health care practitioners who voluntarily assessed their ACE score tended to understand better compared to others the scientific and clinical findings of the ACE study and TIC. Hanson (2011) suggested that more effective “practitioners are attuned to the impact of trauma on a person’s psychological health and well-being as well as their own” (p. 413).

McEvedy et al. (2017) suggested that ensuring staff who work with mental health clients are aware of the impact that past trauma can have on psychopathology and behavior is essential to support trauma-informed practices. Costa (2017) examined the impact of developmental trauma on children’s school-based programming and the need for additional support. Costa underscored the fact that the impact of childhood maltreatment and traumatic experiences on children’s cognitive, emotional, and social development and functioning potentially exacerbates the difficulties that children face during their formative years. Costa also highlighted the overwhelming and devastating effects on students, educators, and schools, emphasizing the need to respond with trauma-informed and sensitive methodologies.

The prevalence of trauma and its impact on educational outcomes among children is garnering attention (Cummings et al., 2017). Cummings et al. (2017) conducted a study across a state in the Midwest to gather perspectives from community-based service providers who worked with families and children regarding trauma-related issues, the results of qualitative interviews revealed teachers might not readily connect children’s behaviors and emotions to traumatic events that the children experienced. Trauma was prevalent; therefore, the findings indicated that using TIC strategies might be helpful in the early childhood classroom setting (Cummings et al., 2017).

Trauma-Sensitive Schools

A trauma-sensitive school provides a safe environment that shields students from outside influences that jeopardize their ability to manage changing behavioral expectations and achieve goals, while fostering skills that adolescents require to regulate internal emotions (Craig, 2017). According to Simonich et al. (2015),

Given the high frequency of children exposed to trauma and the detrimental impact of such exposure on school performance, it is critical that educators become more familiar with symptoms of traumatic stress and begin to create school environments that optimally support trauma-exposed children (p. 272).

School personnel are in a unique position to support children who are exposed to trauma. According to Craig (2017), since the risks are too high, schools can no longer deny the high prevalence of trauma in the student population. States are developing ways to mitigate the devastating effects of trauma. Moreover, “in 2005 Massachusetts was first to coin the phrase ‘trauma-sensitive schools’ to describe the school climate, instructional designs, positive behavioral supports, and policies needed to help students achieve academic and social competence” (Craig, 2017, p. 10). Since then, California, Pennsylvania, Washington, and Wisconsin have established trauma-sensitive schools and these states continue to be the forerunners in drawing attention to the prevalence of trauma among children and adolescents (Craig, 2017). In December 2015, President Barack Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015, which acknowledges the importance of schools using “trauma-informed practices that are evidenced-based” (30 U.S.C. 7118 § 4108 [B] [ii] [II] [aa]. According to Jennings (2019), the term “trauma-informed” language in ESSA is mostly used in the behavioral

health field and it generally “refers to the delivery of therapeutic practices and an understanding of trauma and its impact on individuals and settings” (p. 3). The term trauma-sensitive is also used in the educational arena and it “refers to practices and approaches intended to cultivate a safe learning environment and mitigate the impact of trauma symptoms on student learning” (Jennings, 2019, p. 3). Nevertheless, the term trauma-sensitive is synonymous with TIC. Additionally, Souers and Hall (2018) believed that creating a trauma-sensitive learning environment includes four main ideas:

1. Self-awareness – a person must care for and know themselves.
2. Relationship – knowing that human connection is the foundation of the work, [educators] must foster strong interpersonal relationships.
3. Belief – to positively influence students, [educators] must be clear what they believe about children who have experienced or are experiencing trauma as well as one’s role in supporting their healthy development.
4. Live, laugh, love – [educators] must find the silver lining in every cloud to be the champions our students so richly deserve (p. 1).

Overall, educators do amazing work every day (Souers & Hall, 2019a). [Educators] cannot stop the trauma from happening, but they can create environments that are nurturing, “incorporates whole child learning and supports practices aimed at success for all students” (Souers & Hall, 2019a, p. 24).

Conclusion

Current literature effectively examines trauma-informed practices with health care professionals, people in the criminal justice system, clinical psychologists, and social workers

regarding TIC; however, it rarely includes classroom teachers, education support personnel, custodians, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, secretaries, or administrators. Some of the literature suggests that training people in TIC strategies has benefitted not only the worker, but also the client (Conradi et al., 2011). However, since the inclusion of “trauma-informed evidenced-based practices” in ESSA (30 U.S.C. 7118 § 4108 [B] [ii] [II] [aa]), several states have led efforts to draw national attention to the high prevalence of trauma among children and adolescents and have opened trauma-sensitive schools (Craig, 2017).

Dealing effectively with students who have experienced trauma is major concern in the field of education as these students “are more likely to struggle with academic success” (Souers & Hall, 2018, p. 1). Understanding how early adversity shapes a student’s foundation and beliefs about the world, staff will be able to help students develop new coping skills, deal with feelings, manage their behaviors, and strengthen their relationships (Levenson, 2017).

Therefore, for children to be helped effectively, faculty and staff must have the knowledge and skills to provide TIC (Craig, 2017). It is important to study the perceptions of staff in a high school setting related to TIC because of the prevalence of trauma among children and adolescents (Craig, 2017). In Chapter 3, the researcher discusses the methodology that was used while conducting the study.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

In this study, the researcher used a qualitative research method with an exploratory case study design. The researcher sought to explore faculty and staff attitudes regarding TIC at a public high school. A case study was chosen because it “generate[d] understanding and deep insights to inform professional practice” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 49). Furthermore, this exploratory case study was used to investigate attitudes of faculty and staff and had no clear single set of outcomes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). In this chapter, the researcher reiterates the research questions stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of the study, research questions and design, site information and population, sampling method, instrumentation, data analysis, limitations, credibility, and ethical concerns, and then provides a summary of Chapter 3.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to investigate (a) the perceptions that public high school faculty and staff have towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment, (b) how public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment; and (c) how public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students. Measuring staff attitudes regarding TIC is paramount to understanding student behavior (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). “The Traumatic Stress Institute (TSI) fosters the transformation of organizations and service systems to TIC through the delivery of whole-system consultation, professional training, coaching, and research” (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). Many high school faculty and staff who work with these students are not trained in TIC strategies (Harris, 2018); therefore,

exploring the attitudes that faculty and staff have regarding TIC will be important to understanding the learning environment.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed through a review of the literature:

- Research Question 1: What are the current attitudes of public high school faculty and staff regarding TIC?
- Research Question 2: How do public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment?
- Research Question 3: How do public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students?

Research Design

This study was a qualitative study in which the researcher used an exploratory case study as the methodology. In a qualitative study, the researcher explores the views of participants (Creswell, 2014). According to Mills (2018), qualitative research uses narrative, descriptive approaches to data collection with the goal of understanding the way things are and what that means from the perspective of the research participants. By conducting semistructured interviews, the researcher documented participants' perspective regarding TIC. Semistructured interviews were conducted and allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions so that participants could expand on their responses to provide rich, descriptive data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). These interviews were conducted by phone or Zoom at a time that was mutually agreed on by the participant and the researcher.

The Attitudes Related to Trauma Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale was used to determine the participant's attitudes towards TIC as learning, growing or thriving, in relation to the seven subscales. An exploratory case study is an "in-depth exploration employed across disciplines, including education" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 49). The method of case study fit this research because it "generates understanding and deep insights to inform professional practice" (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 49). Furthermore, this exploratory case study was used to investigate attitudes of faculty and staff and had no clear, single set of outcomes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Site Information and Population

The research study took place in a suburban high school in the northeastern part of the United States. The site had approximately 2,300 students and approximately 250 faculty and staff. The potential participants for this study include everyone who was employed within the school. To access the participants, the researcher secured permission in writing from the superintendent and the building administrator to conduct the study. The district email system was used to invite participants. The building administrator had already shown support for this study, which aligned with the school district's initiatives and strategic plan. This information was conveyed to the superintendent when the researcher secured approval to conduct the study.

Sampling Method

In this study, the researcher used purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is a process by which "researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon" (Creswell, 2015, p. 206). In this case, the researcher could say with confidence that the individuals were representative of the population. The researcher sent out a recruitment

flyer (Appendix A, Recruitment Flyer) through the district email to all faculty and staff at the site and included a link to REDCap (Research Electronic Data Capture). Prior to participating in the ARTIC survey, the potential participants completed an electronic consent form and acknowledged they would take part in a semistructured interview. After they consented, they were taken to the survey portion of the data collection, which was the ARTIC scale. Although the goal was to have representation from all departments in the school to get the greatest amount of diversity and equity, the researcher used the first 10 returned surveys and conducted the interviews of those participant volunteers.

Instrumentation and Data Collection

The data collection instruments included a survey containing the ARTIC Scale and semistructured interviews. By using multiple sources to gather data the researcher achieved triangulation; the goal was not to rely on a single source of data for results (Creswell, 2015). “Multiple sources of evidence permit going beyond appreciating the breadth of a case study’s scope” (Yin, 2018, p. 127). Using different sources of information supports the validity and accuracy of the case study findings (Yin, 2018).

Survey

The survey for this study included the ARTIC Scale that measures attitudes about TIC. The ARTIC was developed because no objective way was available to determine the extent to which an individual or system was trauma-informed (Baker et al, 2016). Developed by the Traumatic Stress Institute of Klingberg Family Centers and Dr. Courtney Baker of Tulane University, the ARTIC (Appendix B, Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care Scale [ARTIC]) is a practical, psychometrically valid, and immediate way to measure TIC within

organizations and schools (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). The ARTIC Scale has five core subscales and two supplementary subscales (Appendix C).

The ARTIC Scale was used to measure faculty and staff attitudes relating to TIC (Baker et al., 2016). Levenson (2017) discussed the use of the ARTIC Scale as a means of measuring TIC attitudes, readiness for change, operational obstacles, and assessing employees' perceptions while an organization adopts new TIC principles (Levenson, 2017).

The ARTIC measurement of attitudes, rather than behaviors, makes it a useful instrument for this study. Some agencies with implemented TIC use the ARTIC as a screening tool to identify prospective employees, and to determine whether they possess attitudes aligned with a trauma-informed culture (Baker et al., 2016). Agencies that have not implemented TIC might use the instrument to assess the likelihood of individuals adopting a trauma-informed approach to service delivery (Baker et al., 2016).

The survey was distributed to approximately 250 potential participants in a recruitment email that had a direct link to the survey in REDCap. Study data were collected and managed using REDCap electronic data capture tools hosted at the University of New England REDCap, which is a secure, Web-based application designed to support data capture for research studies. REDCap provides (a) an intuitive interface for validated data entry, (b) audit trails for tracking data manipulation and export procedures, (c) automated export procedures for seamless data downloads to common statistical packages, and (d) procedures for importing data from external sources (Harris et al., 2009).

The researcher was given permission from the developers of the ARTIC to use the ARTIC Scale in REDCap (Appendix D, The ARTIC Scale – Student License Application). The

researcher sent out a digital recruitment flyer to all faculty and staff at the identified site, inviting them to participate in this study. This link contained the electronic informed consent, acknowledgment that they would participate in an interview, and the ARTIC survey (whose link would be available for 10 days). The researcher sought 10 participants to both complete the survey and be interviewed. For case studies, four or five participants are recommended because that “number should provide ample opportunity to identify themes” (Creswell, 2007, p. 128). For this case study, the researcher used 10 participants because this number was sufficient to generate satisfactory results. If the researcher did not yield enough responses initially, the recruitment process would be reopened for 5 five days. When potential participants clicked on the link, they were taken to an electronic informed consent form. They clicked on the link to agree to consent, and then they were taken to a screen to acknowledge their willingness to participate also in an interview. If they choose yes, they were prompted to provide their contact information, and then move on to complete the ARTIC Scale. If the participant responds no, the survey was completed.

Semistructured Interviews

Semistructured interviews were also conducted. The interviews allowed more information to be gathered with meaningful narratives (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Semistructured interviews were conducted by using the same questions for each interviewee (Appendix E, Semistructured Interview). These questions were developed from the subscales of the ARTIC, which are “underlying causes of problem behavior and symptoms, responses to problem behavior and symptoms, on-the-job behavior, self-efficacy at work, reactions to the work, personal support of trauma-informed care, and system-wide support of trauma-informed

care” (Baker et al, 2016, p. 67). Semistructured interviews also allowed the researcher to ask follow-up questions so that participants could expand on their responses to provide rich, descriptive data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). These interviews were conducted by phone or Zoom at a time that was mutually agreed on by the participant and the researcher. They lasted approximately 30–45 minutes. Using a password-protected iPhone and an iPad, the researcher recorded the interview to provide a detailed record-of the interview, make handwritten notes as a backup to the recording, and use Rev.com (2010) to transcribe the audio recording of the interviews. Rev.com is a speech-to-text service that converts audio and video to text.

Data Analysis

Data from the surveys and interviews were analyzed by using Creswell’s (2014), suggested step-by-step process for analyzing data for qualitative research. Step 1 was to organize and prepare all the data. Step 2 was to read through all the data. Step 3 was the beginning of coding the data. In the coding process, when reviewing each transcript, the researcher highlighted words that were similar in meaning and context and assigned a word or phrase that signified a category and labeled it (Creswell, 2014). Step 3 was done for each piece of data. The researcher used the coding process to generate themes for analysis in Step 4 (Creswell, 2007). In Step 5, the researcher organized the way that the themes were represented in the qualitative narrative. Step 6 was to make an interpretation in qualitative research (Creswell, 2014).

Survey Analysis

The ARTIC Scale was scored and analyzed according to the ARTIC scoring instructions and syntax. The ARTIC has seven subscales. Subscale 1 (the Underlying Causes of Problem Behavior and Symptoms) measures behavior and symptoms as adjustments and pliable versus

behavior and symptoms as deliberate and fixed (Baker et al., 2016). Subscale 2 (Responses to Problem Behavior and Symptoms) emphasizes relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety as the agent of change contrasted with rules, consequences, and accountability as the agent of behavior and symptom changes (Baker et al., 2016). Subscale 3 (On-the-Job Behavior) advocates empathy-focused staff behavior as opposed to control-focused staff behavior (Baker et al., 2016). Subscale 4 (Self-Efficacy at Work), endorses feeling able to endure the difficulties of working with a traumatized population versus feeling unable to endure the stresses (Baker et al., 2016). Subscale 5 (Reactions to the Work) favors understanding the effects of secondary trauma/vicarious traumatization and coping by pursuing support opposed to minimizing the effects of secondary trauma/vicarious traumatization and coping by ignoring or hiding the effect (Baker et al., 2016). Subscale 6 is personal support of TIC. It emphasizes being supportive of, and confident about, implementation of TIC contrasted with concerns about implementing TIC (Baker et al., 2016). Lastly, a system-wide support of TIC endorses feeling system-wide support for TIC as opposed to not feeling supported by colleagues, supervisors, and the administration to implement TIC (Baker et al., 2016). After scoring, each subscale for each participant will be described as learn, grow, or thrive. These three benchmarks are based on percentile rank. To be in the thrive range, the scores must be in the 75th –100th percentile. The grow range consists of scores in the 25th–75th percentile and the learn range includes scores in the 0–25th percentile. According to Hardin (Personal communication, 2021) of the Traumatic Stress Institute, “The terms learn, grow, and thrive are simply strength-based descriptors that we assigned to our benchmark data. The terms have supported organizations around goal setting especially when looking at only one timepoint of data.”

Interview Transcript Analysis

After the interviews, the recordings were uploaded to Rev.com (2010) for transcription. The transcripts were then shared with the participants by email for member checking for accuracy. The researcher provided the participants 5 days to review the transcript. If the researcher did not hear from them within 5 days, the transcript was accepted as accurate. When reviewing each transcript, the researcher highlighted words that were similar in meaning and context. The researcher also highlighted words that were repeated. The researcher then identified emerging themes that were present in each participant's interview (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019; Saldana, 2016).

Data Synthesis

After presenting the findings from each participant's interview and ARTIC survey, the researcher searched for themes that were common across participants. The researcher looked for patterns in the data that had been collected. This was done by identifying commonalities that emerged among the participants, and through an examination of the data that supported the themes (Creswell, 2007).

Limitations of the Research Design

Limitations of the study are features in design or methodology that can have an impact or influence on the interpretation of the findings from the research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). A limitation of this study was the limited number of participants; only 10 participants were recruited for data collection. Limitations to conducting surveys are that participants (a) might not feel encouraged to provide accurate, honest answers; (b) might not feel comfortable providing answers that present themselves in a negative light, (c) might not be knowledgeable on the

subject, or (d) might skip answers (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). According to the Traumatic Stress Institute (2019), limitations inherent to the ARTIC Scale are (a) moving beyond preliminary validation; (b) replication needed to confirm the seven-subscale structure; (c) not yet having norms about how an organization's scores compare to other organization's scores; and (d) linking ARTIC scores with other favorable staff and system-level outcomes.

When conducting interviews, another limitation is researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher might perceive a level of understanding that is different from the participant's understanding. Participants might feel like they cannot express themselves honestly in an individual interview (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Furthermore, the researcher used purposeful sampling, and the potential pool of participants used for this proposed study was all faculty and staff at a public high school. Limitations to purposeful sampling include that variability and bias cannot be measured or controlled, and results from the data cannot be generalized beyond the sample (Acharya et al., 2013).

Trustworthiness

The issue of trustworthiness of results is the cornerstone of high-quality, qualitative research (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). By reviewing the areas of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability the researcher can ensure the overall trustworthiness of the qualitative research study.

Credibility

Credibility refers to the researcher's ability to represent accurately what the participants think, feel, and do (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher must clarify up front, any biases that they bring to the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Furthermore, the researcher explained

all the intricacies that are portrayed in the study and addressed the themes, patterns, and problems that might not be clearly understood (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher presupposed that the participants might not be well informed about ACE or TIC. Additionally, the researcher understood that some participants might have had ACEs, and that the participants' responses might indicate a higher level of comprehension of TIC. The researcher is also engaged in TIC work that is under study. By being a part of this endeavor, the researcher monitored subjective perspectives and biases, and kept a journal throughout the research process to help mitigate personal bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019).

Member Checking Procedures

One way to enhance credibility is to use member checking (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). For this study, the researcher used the member checking activity of returning the interview transcript to the participant to check for accuracy (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher was responsible for causing no harm, and for reassuring the participants that their participation was voluntary such that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

Transferability

Transferability is the ability to apply findings in similar contexts or settings (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Different parts of this study can be used in other settings (e.g., the ARTIC Scale and conducting semistructured interviews). The findings from the ARTIC Scale and the semistructured interviews might not be replicable in other high schools because they might yield different results.

Dependability

Dependability refers to the stability and consistency of data over time, and to whether one can effectively trace all the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher ensured that the research process was authenticated, coherent, and observable. By using multiple sources to gather data, the researcher achieved triangulation. According to Creswell (2007), triangulation is a process involving corroborating evidence from multiple or different sources that shed light on a theme or perspective. Triangulation confirmed that the researcher created an appropriate and practical research design and data collection plan (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). Triangulation also “encourages the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible” (Creswell, 2015, p. 259).

Confirmability

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2019), “Confirmability is concerned with establishing that the researcher’s findings and interpretations are clearly derived from the data, requiring the researcher to demonstrate how conclusions have been reached” (p. 204). Using triangulation strategies and critical reflection through journaling offers the reader the opportunity to assess trustworthiness of the study’s findings, while demonstrating confirmability (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). The researcher used “ongoing critical reflection and reflexivity by way of journaling” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019, p. 205).

Ethical Issues in the Study

Ethical issues included the confidentiality of the participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2019). This study underwent the IRB process (Appendix F, IRB Approval). The researcher provided informed consent information to each participant and used digital informed consent

before the participants proceed with the study. All personally identifiable information was kept confidential. Furthermore, the participants and the research sites remained confidential and pseudonyms were assigned accordingly. Surveys were given, and responses were kept confidential. Bloomberg and Volpe (2019) explained that confidentiality is “an agreement with the researcher about what can be done with the information obtained about a research participant” (p. 201). The privacy of all of the participants was ensured. The researcher ensured that the participants knew they could leave the study at any time with no repercussions. The participants’ rights were considered of primary importance regarding the reporting and dissemination of the data. All of the research-related records and data will be secured in a locked file cabinet and on an encrypted flash drive for 1 year. At that time, all of the research-related records and data will be destroyed. No one, other than the researcher, will have access to the materials. Once again, the participants were reminded that they could leave the study at any time with no repercussions.

Researcher Affiliation

The researcher has been an employee of the site school for more than 20 years as a special education teacher and has had direct contact with some faculty and staff during monthly department meetings, professional development, and all staff meetings. This connection should not pose an ethical concern because the researcher does not work closely with many of the participants in the study, which results in little personal interaction beyond greetings. This researcher is also part of a teaching team with five other teachers in a behavioral program for students who are transitioning to the high school from an outplacement program or to a more

restrictive environment. This researcher believes that the previous direct contact with the potential participants was not an ethical issue, nor did it affect the data collected.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the researcher provided a detailed description of the methodology that was used to conduct the research study. The topics covered the purpose of the study, research questions and design, site information and population, sampling method, instrumentation, data analysis, limitations, credibility, and ethical concerns. A qualitative exploratory case study research method was used to understand attitudes of high school faculty and staff regarding TIC and implementation practices in a suburban setting. The participant sample was drawn from the pool of faculty and staff in a suburban high school. Two data collection methods were used: surveys and semistructured interviews. The data were coded and reviewed for emerging themes. Credibility and dependability were accounted for through triangulation strategies.

The researcher used an exploratory case study to examine the attitudes and implementation practices of high school faculty and staff regarding TIC practices; therefore, the results could inform any professional development, interventions, and strategies that need to be implemented regarding TIC. Acknowledging the current attitudes of the faculty and staff was necessary to assist them as they grow in their own understanding of TIC strategies. Additionally, in environments that are trauma-invested, faculty and staff can then work to ensure that the needs of their students are met so that learning can happen.

Chapter 4 addresses the data collection, analysis, and findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to investigate (a) the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment; (b) how public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment; and (c) how public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students. Measuring staff attitudes regarding TIC is paramount to understanding student behavior (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). To understand student behavior, Souers and Hall (2016) indicated, “In our schools, we need to be prepared to support students who have experienced trauma, even if we don’t know who they are. Children are resilient, and within positive learning environments they can grow, learn, and succeed” (p. 11). A case study “generates understanding and deep insights to inform professional practice” (Bloomberg & Volpe, p. 49). This exploratory case study was used to investigate attitudes of faculty and staff and had no clear single set of outcomes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). In this exploratory case study, the researcher sought to answer the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: What are the current attitudes of public high school faculty and staff regarding TIC?
- Research Question 2: How do public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment?

- Research Question 3: How do public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students?

Data were collected from 10 high school faculty and staff participants through the ARTIC Scale and semistructured interviews. The ARTIC Scale was scored and analyzed according to the ARTIC Scale scoring instructions and syntax (Baker et al., 2016). Interview transcripts were coded and themes were identified. The themes identified are behavior, safety, relationships, and training. The chapter concludes with a summary of results analyzed from the data.

Analysis Methods

This research study took place in a suburban high school in the northeastern part of the United States. This high school has approximately 2,300 students and approximately 250 faculty and staff. The potential participants for the study included everyone who was employed within the school. The researcher sent out a recruitment flyer through district email to all faculty and staff at the site and included a link to a REDCap survey that included an electronic consent form, the ARTIC Scale, and an acknowledgement to participate in a semistructured interview. Eleven potential participants responded and completed the ARTIC Scale, while 10 participants actually participated in the interview process. The 11th participant chose not to continue participating in the study after participating in the survey. The 10 participants were assigned pseudonyms to keep their identity and information confidential.

Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale Analysis

The ARTIC Scale was administered, scored, and analyzed according to the ARTIC scoring instructions and syntax to determine the participants' attitudes towards TIC and the learn, grow, or thrive spectrum in relation to the seven subscales (Baker et al., 2016). The first subscale

scored addressed the underlying causes of problem behavior and symptoms in students. This subscale emphasized that the behavior of some students is external and malleable, while the behavior of other students is internal and fixed (Baker et al., 2016). The second subscale scored responses to problem behavior and the symptoms of students, and emphasized relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety as agents of change, which contrasted with rules, consequences, and accountability as the agent of student behavior and symptoms of trauma changed (Baker et al., 2016). On-the-job behavior was the topic of the third subscale. It explored empathy-focused staff behavior as opposed to control-focused staff behavior (Baker et al., 2016). The fourth subscale, self-efficacy at work, measured feeling able to endure the difficulties of working with a traumatized population versus feeling unable to endure the stresses (Baker et al., 2016). The fifth subscale scored the participants' reactions to the work of TIC. This subscale is used to investigate the effects of secondary trauma and vicarious traumatization on teachers and their coping by pursuing support as opposed to minimizing the effects of secondary trauma and vicarious traumatization that might affect teachers and their coping by ignoring or hiding the effect (Baker et al., 2016). The sixth subscale scored personal support of TIC in the workplace. It emphasized being supportive of and confident about the implementation of TIC as contrasted with concerns about implementing TIC (Baker et al., 2016). Lastly, system-wide support of TIC endorsed feeling system-wide support for TIC as opposed to not feeling supported by colleagues, supervisors, and the administration to implement TIC (Baker et al., 2016). Using the scores on the ARTIC scale, each participant's subscale was categorized as *Learn*, *Grow*, or *Thrive* (Table 1). According to Hardin (2021, Personal Communication) of the Traumatic Stress Institute, "The terms learn, grow, and thrive are simply strength-based descriptors that we

assigned to our benchmark data. The terms have supported organizations around goal setting especially when looking at only one time point of data.”

Table 1

Learn–Grow–Thrive

Respondent	Underlying causes of problem behavior and symptoms	Responses to problem behavior and symptoms	On-the-job behavior	Self-efficacy at work	Reaction to the work	Personal support of TIC	System-wide support for TIC
Zuri	Grow	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Grow	Thrive	Thrive
N'Jobu	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Grow	Grow	Learn
M'Baku	Grow	Learn	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Learn	Learn
Ramonda	Grow	Grow	Grow	Learn	Grow	Learn	Grow
W'Kabi	Learn	Learn	Learn	Learn	Learn	Missing*	Grow
Nakia	Learn	Grow	Learn	Grow	Learn	Learn	Learn
Okoye	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Grow	Thrive	Learn	Learn
Shuri	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive
Ayo	Learn	Learn	Grow	Grow	Grow	Grow	Learn
T'Challa	Grow	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive	Thrive

Note. Participant pseudonyms were chosen from the movie “Black Panther” (2018).

*W’Kabi’s subscale 6, personal support of TIC, was classified as missing data because the threshold for completed items within that subscale was not met (Baker et al., 2016).

The goal of this study is to measure the attitudes of TIC and the impact of TIC on others. The researcher used the ARTIC Scale, which is formatted as a Likert scale. A Likert scale is an instrument that asks people to respond to a series of statements that indicate the degree to which

they agree or disagree with a statement (Mills, 2018). In addition to using the categories of *Learn*, *Grow*, and *Thrive* in the analysis, the researcher also used the participants' responses to the questions in the ARTIC as part of the findings to look for patterns by using the coding process to identify themes (Creswell, 2007).

Semistructured Interview Analysis

After reviewing the consent form and the ARTIC Scale for completion, the researcher contacted each participant via email and scheduled an interview. Interviews were conducted via Zoom and were recorded on a password-protected iPad and iPhone. The researcher also made handwritten notes as a backup to the recording. It was anticipated that the interviews would last approximately 30–45 minutes; however, the length of the actual interviews ranged from 8–18 minutes. The researcher believes that the lack of participants' knowledge on the topic of TIC accounts for the brevity of the interviews. The recordings were uploaded to REV.com for transcription. The transcripts were shared with the participants via email for member checking for accuracy. They were provided 5 days to review the transcripts and make corrections. All of the participants replied, stating that the transcripts were accurate and that no corrections were necessary. Pseudonyms were assigned to each participant to ensure confidentiality.

Data from the surveys and interviews were analyzed using Creswell's (2014) suggested step-by-step process for analyzing data for qualitative research. In Step 1, the researcher prepared and organized all the data by collecting the interviews and submitting them to REV.com for transcription, as well as scoring and analyzing the ARTIC Scale according to the ARTIC scoring instructions and syntax. In Step 2, the researcher read through all of the data. Beginning coding of data happened in Step 3. In the coding process, when reviewing each

transcript, the researcher highlighted words that were similar in meaning and context, and assigned a word or phrase signifying a category and labeled it (Creswell, 2014). This was done for each piece of data.

Using the coding process to generate themes for analysis was Step 4 (Creswell, 2007). After examining the findings from each participant's interview and ARTIC survey, the researcher searched for themes that were common across participants and looked for patterns in the data collected. Commonalities that emerged amongst participants were identified, and an examination of the data supporting the themes was conducted (Creswell, 2007). In Step 5, the researcher presented the themes in a qualitative narrative format. Making an interpretation in qualitative research was Step 6 in the process (Creswell, 2014). This interpretation is provided in Chapter 5.

Presentation of Results

The participants presented the findings of this study in narrative form in no particular order. They are followed by a detailed discussion of the themes that emerged from both the interview responses and the ARTIC analysis.

Case 1: Zuri

During the interview, Zuri felt strongly that TIC strategies lessen stress and anxiety in students so that they could be successful in school. Zuri purports using TIC, to include de-escalation strategies in the school environment to assist students who exhibit work avoidant behaviors, which included taking sensory breaks, going for walks, and modifying the student's course material as a few examples. When asked, "Can you describe how the implementation of trauma-informed care strategies have affected the environment you are in?" Zuri stated,

They lessen the stress and anxiety of the students and us as facilitators because we talk about mental health and work on strategies to help mental health situations before implementing education so that the students feel safe, secure, and comfortable working at school before entering into material at school.

Zuri also stressed the importance of building relationships when working directly with students. Zuri stated, “You try to build a rapport with the student first so that the student knows that they can trust you and that they feel safe sharing things with you so that they can self-advocate for themselves, which is huge.” The ARTIC Scale also suggests that Zuri’s attitude focused on the importance of relationships, flexibility, and kindness, as agents of change (Baker et al., 2016). Zuri further stated, “Relationships are key. If you don’t have a relationship with a student to some degree, it not only hurts you as the educator, but it hurts the student that they don’t feel enjoyment out of coming to class.” According to the ARTIC, Zuri believes that building healthy relationships with students is the way to produce good student outcomes versus believing that people had poor boundaries if they built relationships with students (Baker et al., 2016). During the interview, Zuri also stressed the importance of treating students as individuals, for each one is different. Specifically, Zuri said, “All expectations of every student are different. I don’t think there’s one uniform expectation that you could set across the board that would cover everyone, because everybody is different. So it’s a case-by-case assessment.”

When reviewing the results of the ARTIC, Zuri’s attitude towards underlying causes of problem behavior and symptoms for students suggests that she believes that student behavior is adaptive and malleable. However, she did share the belief that students tend to manipulate situations, suggesting that what they say cannot always be trusted (Baker et al., 2016). Yet,

according to the responses provided on the ARTIC, Zuri also believes that when things are not going well with students, she needs to shift her thinking (Baker et al., 2016). From the ARTIC responses, it appears that Zuri also believes that focusing on improving healthy, restorative relationships is the best method when working with people with trauma histories. Furthermore, she mostly understands the effects that secondary trauma and vicarious trauma have on faculty and staff, and Zuri copes by seeking support from other professionals (Baker et al., 2016).

Case 2: N'Jobu

When asked about TIC strategies, N'Jobu consistently mentioned that one should never assume that student behavior was necessarily about school. N'Jobu stated, "I always assume that [behavior] stems from outside of school and plan accordingly." By assuming that a student's behavior is based on outside forces, N'Jobu explained that the "kids trust you more and will do work for me where they might not for someone else. They trust me to help them." This is because of N'Jobu's willingness to engage in conversation about what students are experiencing outside of school. When asked, "What specific TIC strategies have you implemented in the school environment?" N'Jobu stated, "I try to get [students] to talk about what's going on or why they are having a hard time." N'Jobu's responses on the ARTIC, in relation to problem behaviors and symptoms of students, suggest that her attitude was focused on the importance of relationships, flexibility, and kindness, as agents of change (Baker et al., 2016). In her interview, N'Jobu stated that building relationships with students is important. Making connections builds trust "because I show an interest in what they're interested in." Furthermore, N'Jobu shared that relationship building is a part of creating a safe school environment. Without it, schools are just a

place where “we need to get [students] to learn this curriculum, instead of learning who they are and how they can contribute to the world.”

Her response in reaction to the work regarding TIC, suggests that even though N’Jobu’s attitude, as a professional, is that she understands the effects that secondary trauma and vicarious trauma have on faculty and staff, her ability to cope by seeking support of other professionals needs improvement (Baker et al., 2016). According to Souers and Hall (2018), “Our students are stronger when we are stronger and healthier” (p. 6). As a professional, N’Jobu is supportive of and confident about implementing TIC, but she believes that there is more to be done to improve her level of confidence (Baker et al., 2016). During the interview, N’Jobu frequently stated, “I’m probably not even right,” suggesting that she lacks self-confidence regarding implementing TIC. N’Jobu’s response to the element of system-wide support of TIC suggests that she does not believe that there is system-wide support for TIC at the high school (Baker et al., 2016). In fact, on the ARTIC, N’Jobu indicated that she believes that “working in a trauma-informed way is just a passing phase,” suggesting that the implementation of TIC will not be sustained over time.

Case 3: M’Baku

M’Baku stressed the importance of supporting individuals and building relationships throughout the interview. When asked, “How have you demonstrated kindness in your office?” M’Baku stated,

It really depends on the student’s needs at the time. However, the number one thing I have learned is developing [a] positive rapport with my students, demonstrating how much I really care about them, and wanting to get to know them as an individual is the most important. This also helps foster their growth in the educational environment.

M'Baku's attitudes are also reflected in the ARTIC. M'Baku believes that building healthy relationships with students is the way to generating good student outcomes as opposed to judging that people had poor boundaries if they built relationships with students (Baker et al., 2016). M'Baku also asserted,

I am under the belief that every child can succeed and that, to meet them where they're at to encourage them and to help influence them to figure out what they're passionate about and, if they have any struggles, to give them the support or encouragement to pull from their resources to reach their best potential.

M'Baku's response to, "How do you demonstrate flexibility?" was as follows,

Flexibility is hugely important! I think it's one of those times to catch a student when they fall and certain things that we expect of children, depending on their maturity, their academic abilities, their environmental support, all those things are factors that not everybody's the same. Not everybody has the same resources to pull from. In terms of classes that students take or certain circumstances that happen, especially in this day and age, sometimes they have to focus on their social-emotional health first, and academics might have to take a back seat. It really depends on the individual and circumstance, but I think you have to be flexible.

Regarding TIC strategies, M'Baku's ARTIC results indicate the need to develop a more supportive attitude and more confidence about implementing TIC (Baker et al., 2016). Her responses to questions on the ARTIC that are related to system-wide support of TIC suggest that M'Baku does not feel supported by her colleagues, supervisors, and administrators to implement

TIC (Baker et al., 2016). This is also evident in M'Baku's interview. When asked to describe how the implementation of TIC strategies affected the environment, M'Baku responded,

It would be nice to have a little bit more professional development. And sometimes I think that some of these children that might need a little bit more TLC, that it might fall under that umbrella. I feel like we might not necessarily know. I guess having more awareness of what those are would be helpful because we definitely have a lot of support within our school system in terms of helping any child. But when it comes to exactly when it's designated trauma-informed care, these are the specific protocols I don't know if that differs through the scope of what we typically do when we have a student in crisis or something that surfaces, that's not particularly that type of student with that identification specifically.

M'Baku's attitude of not feeling supported by administration affected her ability to implement TIC strategies. If she receives professional development in TIC interventions, M'Baku might improve her level of confidence in implementing TIC.

Case 4: Ramonda

Ramonda stated at the beginning of the interview that she has not been formally trained in TIC but applies "whatever background and sort of like sense or intuition I can apply to the situation without having the specific skill set or training." Furthermore, Ramonda stated, "I kind of have the lens but don't have the training when working with students."

Ramonda looks at students' "behaviors as not necessarily reacting to what's happening in the moment with us, but potentially as a response to life experiences and things that have kind of brought them where they are." In one of her responses on the ARTIC, Ramonda indicated that

she strongly believes that students perform and respond as best that they can with the skills they possess (Baker et al., 2016). Furthermore, Ramonda believes that, although students might do the right thing one day, but not the next, the student is doing the best that they can at that particular time (Baker et al., 2016).

When asked to “Describe how the implementation of trauma-informed care strategies impacted the environment you’re in?” Ramonda stated, “I feel like maybe the lack of trauma-informed strategies, if anything has impacted the environment.” According to Ramonda, “When working individually with students, having a sensitivity to the individual’s background helps one be more effective and connected to that student.” Ramonda also stated,

Having a support staff that’s maybe not specifically trained in [TIC], or education staff is probably not a good thing, especially when we have students that are going into the main office and dealing with discipline issues, which is where a lot of my students tend to escalate significantly. If [faculty, staff, and administrators] were trauma aware, they would be sensitive to potential triggers, like not backing a kid into a corner on things, not engaging in a power struggle, actually giving the student the physical space and emotional space that they might need.

As evidenced by her responses to the ARTIC, Ramonda believes that students want to learn and change (Baker et al., 2016). Ramonda indicated that she strongly believes that all children want to change or learn versus believing that many students do not want to change or learn (Baker et al., 2016). Additionally, while Ramonda believes that students need to experience real life consequences, at the same time she also believes that students need to experience healing relationships to function in the real world (Baker et al., 2016). Regarding relationships,

Ramonda believes that it is best to treat students with respect and kindness at the outset to ensure that they know that they are cared for and to build a healthy relationship (Baker et al., 2016).

During the interview Ramonda stated, “From the beginning, I try to establish rapport and understanding with students, and not be a threatening or disciplinary figure to them and try and really be an ally and a support to them.” This confirms Ramonda’s belief that building relationships is an important part of student learning.

Case 5: W’Kabi

During the interview, W’Kabi focused on safety, support, and making connections with students. Specifically, W’Kabi mentioned that the school has a committee that focuses on having a safe school climate. The committee, which includes both staff and students, works toward helping students build relationships with staff and other students. When discussing TIC strategies, W’Kabi stated, “To my knowledge, we do not have a care plan, but what a lot of us (faculty) do is always try to see what a student is about and what their experiences are.” W’Kabi also noted that during the COVID-19 pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020) the virtual environment makes it difficult “to make a connection with a student or to have a conversation because you don’t have the opportunity to pull them aside, or even greet them walking in through the door.” According to W’Kabi, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020), teachers would stand outside of their door to greet students, be able to be in close proximity, and make connections with the students. Additionally, W’Kabi discussed the need for the students to feel safe so that they can have open discussions, while keeping in mind “that [faculty] can get more from a student by working with them versus not working with them. I think we have to work together. It’s like a partnership.” Regarding building relationships between faculty, staff,

and students, W’Kabi determined, “There’s nothing specific, but I think we’re always trying to listen to our fellow teachers and giving them support and advice. If they’re struggling working with a student, give them advice to reach out to the guidance counselor.” W’Kabi’s responses on the ARTIC suggest that she believes that there is room to improve concerning system-wide support for TIC, but currently there is not enough support to implement a TIC approach at her school (Baker et al., 2016).

Case 6: Nakia

Nakia focused on several topics during the interview including training, safety, and relationships. She discussed the lack of training in TIC, for she has not received any. In addition, Nakia’s responses on the ARTIC to belief statements in the category of underlying causes of problem behavior and symptoms students, suggest that more training is needed in TIC (Baker et al., 2016). Although untrained in this topic, when asked to describe what is meant by TIC, Nakia stated,

I would be informed if a student had a traumatic incident maybe in their life, something that may have shaped them in some way or may have had a great impact on them, and then using that information, I could keep an eye on them or pay attention to certain things in class that may be affecting him or her.

However, Nakia also indicated that,

Any information received or gathered from students made me be more sensitive to them in certain areas, meaning, I would give students an alternate assignment where they would still be getting the material but not something that may trigger him or her.

Furthermore, Nakia stressed that the school needs to address implementing TIC strategies more, because “we’re finding that more and more students have [trauma] in their background and as staff members, we are not aware of it.” Nakia expressed excitement for the prospect of learning more about TIC “because it’s somewhere that we can improve upon as a school, definitely, and that would help me as a teacher in a classroom going forward to help students learn better.”

Another area that Nakia discussed was safety. According to Nakia, providing a safe environment for students to express themselves was a way to assist students. She stated, “Keeping students safe in the environment included daily check-ins.” Nakia stressed another way of providing a safe environment involved building relationships. This goes beyond learning student names. According to Nakia, students completed class assignments such as the Zulu shield where students tell about themselves. When in person in school during COVID-19 (WHO, 2020), Nakia shared, “The mask breaks that we take are a time to be out of the classroom and just walking around and having conversations, is a way to build those relationships.” Safety is important component of building relationships.

Case 7: Okoye

During the interview, Okoye focused on the lack of training provided regarding TIC. Okoye indicated several times, “If I were to learn more about trauma-informed care strategies and how to implement them, it would make me a better teacher.” Okoye reiterated that there had been no formal training, but that the implementation of TIC strategies affected the environment and made students feel more comfortable in the classroom and made them feel more successful. This included adjusting the academic requirements so that students could manage them a bit

more easily. Regarding building relationships, Okoye focused on how her department helped students to examine relationships and then built on them. Okoye stated,

We talk about them in our curriculum. As far as relationships with community, family, friends . . . it's a driving theme we're always talking about. Whatever we're talking about in class we always relate it to how they can be a better citizen and how they can be there for people in their family or in their community or in their friend circle. We also talk about the resources in our school and all the people that they can get in touch with.

Okoye also highlighted kindness and flexibility. Okoye defined kindness as being a decent human being, kind, respectful, staying open and speaking nicely to one another. Okoye demonstrated kindness “just by being a good human being in my classroom. The way I speak to kids and modeling how they should work with each other, speaking nicely. Kindness creates a positive learning environment.” When completing the ARTIC, Okoye also gave treating students with respect and kindness a positive rating suggesting that kindness and respect are important (Baker et al., 2016). Furthermore, Okoye stated, “If you're in a room where kindness isn't being demonstrated, you're not going to be successful, you're not going to want to be there. If I wouldn't want to be there, why would the kids?”

Regarding flexibility, Okoye stated,

It's important because kids aren't numbers and they have different needs. When students need a little wiggle room, pay attention to who they are, what they need, give some flexibility with a due date or the way they're expressing themselves.

Okoye posited that, since the class they teach is different from math or history, answers to questions can be approached in a variety of ways. When reviewing Okoye's responses on the

ARTIC, her responses to problem behaviors and symptoms of students suggests that emphasizing relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety can contribute to being an agent of change (Baker et al., 2016).

Case 8: Shuri

While being interviewed, Shuri concentrated on several areas. From the start, Shuri interpreted TIC as “taking the whole student’s history into perspective; not just the behaviors, the emotions that we’re seeing right now, but really looking into where that kid has been, what is their environment.” Shuri’s responses on the ARTIC also suggest that her attitude supports a view of student behavior and symptoms being amendable and pliable (Baker et al., 2016). Shuri further discussed that faculty and staff need not know any detailed trauma that a student might have experienced, but that they should understand that children are different and come from different places so that they should consider that when working with them. Shuri’s ARTIC responses suggest that her attitude regarding professional behavior was more empathy-focused (Baker et al., 2016). In addition to sharing her own experiences, Shuri gave an example of how one particular administrator uses a trauma lens when addressing student discipline. The administrator not only looked at the students’ behavior, but also considered the students’ history before meting out consequences.

When discussing how the implementation of TIC strategies affect the school environment, Shuri indicated that flexibility and professional development would be key in getting people to do things in a different way. Shuri stated, “I think there needs to be more education on what TIC looks like and how one can implement it.” Shuri made it clear that this was not just about modifying curriculum, but doing things differently, especially during the

COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020). Shuri stressed the importance of building relationships with students by “meeting them where they’re at, being empathetic, asking questions, showing that you really care, showing that you’re not judgmental in any way, and that you are a safe person that they can approach.” Shuri emphasized that being kind and making connections with people is important. According to Shuri, when people exhibited and modeled kindness it fostered communication and built those relationships. Shuri’s responses on the ARTIC echoed that her attitude is focused on the importance of relationships, flexibility, and kindness, as agents of change (Baker et al., 2016).

Shuri also focused on safety—physical, social, and emotional. Shuri shared that students and staff felt that the actual building was not physically safe because of the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020). Regarding social and emotional safety, Shuri indicated that the school did a good job with the different programs offered but could have done more to meet the needs of the students. Even though Shuri believed that the school building itself was not safe, she did recognize that the social and emotional needs of the students are being addressed.

In her responses on the ARTIC Scale regarding Self-efficacy at work, Shuri feels able to meet the demands of working with a traumatized population (Baker et al., 2016). During the interview, Shuri stated, “It is my role to really understand the student, reach out to the family, involve outside agencies if needed, and work with clinicians. The goal is to meet the needs of students.” Concerning reaction to the work of implementing TIC, as a professional, Shuri understands the effects that secondary trauma and vicarious trauma have on faculty and staff, and she copes by seeking support from other professionals (Baker et al., 2016). Shuri stated, “It is important to take care of yourself when doing this work. You cannot effectively help someone

else if you are not healthy yourself.” Shuri’s responses on the ARTIC support her belief that she feels supportive of and confident about implementing TIC (Baker et al., 2016). She indicated that she strongly believes that students react positively to the TIC approach, it saves time in the long run, and is effective. Furthermore, Shuri believes that at her school there is system-wide support for TIC.

Case 9: Ayo

During the interview, when asked to describe what is meant by TIC, Ayo mentioned the suicide prevention professional development received and social–emotional modules that were completed as examples of TIC. Ayo discussed this training as being a full day of professional development focused on how to implement [the program] in a classroom and other facilities outside of the classroom. Ayo stated that the school is not doing enough to help faculty and staff implement the strategies learned, and she stated, “We do the best that we can at our school, but we still need more outside help. Most of our professional development focused on self-care because it is super important for one to be able to care of kids.” One of the ways that Ayo took care of students was to build relationships. When reviewing the results of the ARTIC, Ayo rated building healthy relationships with students and producing good student outcomes as being positive (Baker et al., 2016). Ayo stated, “Relationships are my top priority, especially during the coronavirus.” Showing kindness is one way that Ayo built relationships with students. Ayo provided students individualized attention and showed them the mutual respect that was expected. Ayo continued to build relationships with students throughout the year. Ayo’s responses on the ARTIC also indicated that her professional behavior as faculty and staff was empathy-focused, although this is an area in which she can still improve.

Case 10: T'Challa

During the interview, T'Challa discussed what was meant by TIC. T'Challa stated, "Trauma-informed care was developing a complete picture of what happened in somebody's life or their background; their experiences that may have led to what we're currently seeing." When reviewing the results of the ARTIC, regarding underlying causes of problem behavior and symptoms students, T'Challa's attitude showed a supportive view that emphasized that student behavior could be changed (Baker et al., 2016). T'Challa proposed, "Instead of addressing just a symptom of the behavior, maybe, it's really looking to dig a little bit deeper to find out what experiences or what has happened in the past that might be driving some of the behaviors." On the ARTIC, T'Challa also indicated that he believes that students' learning and behavior issues are entrenched in their history of traumatic life experiences (Baker et al., 2016).

T'Challa also seems well versed in TIC and the implementation of TIC strategies. He noted that TIC strategies are not implemented in the school as a whole. T'Challa confessed a lack of implementing TIC practices completely or with fidelity. He usually integrates trauma-informed strategies into his approach when working with students. However, T'Challa does not implement them all the time, nor does he see them implemented consistently throughout the school. Conversely, in the interview, building trust and developing relationships were emphasized. When asked, "How have you emphasized relationships in school?" T'Challa stated, "One of the things I love about my job is that I can really take the time to forge relationships. I have the luxury of working with my kids for the entire high school career." This sentiment is evident in the ARTIC (Baker et al., 2016) when T'Challa indicated he strongly believes that

concentrating on improving healthy, healing connections is the best approach when working with individuals with a history of trauma.

Emergent Themes

According to Creswell (2014), “Themes in qualitative research are similar codes aggregated together to form a major idea in the database” (p. 247). The themes in this study were derived from words and phrases that were repeated throughout the interviews and from commonalities identified in the ARTIC. The first iteration of analysis yielded a plethora of common terms and phrases. With subsequent iterations, the researcher continued to narrow the categories to areas that seven or more participants had in common, which included relationships, safety, training, support, sensitivity, kindness, flexibility, and behavior. The final iteration results produced the themes of relationships, safety, behavior, and training. The researcher identified that these themes are interrelated. The overarching theme that emerged from the analysis was relationships. This theme is woven throughout all the other themes.

Relationships

Relationships are the backbone of TIC. However, to develop those relationships people need to feel safe. A trauma sensitive environment includes a safe and supportive atmosphere. That supportive atmosphere includes positive behavioral supports and interventions (PBIS). According to Jennings (2019), “PBIS was developed primarily to address students’ behavioral issues” (p. 65). To provide an effective trauma sensitive environment, “quality staff professional development and strong working relationships between school staff and mental health professionals are required” (Jennings, 2019, p. 67). According to Souers and Hall (2018),

“Human connection is an essential component to support learning” (p. 3). Furthermore, Souers and Hall (2018) stated,

Strong relationships are at the core of safe, predictable, trauma-sensitive learning environments. And whether you have 1, 25, 150, or 2000 students, it’s always possible to build authentic relationships to strengthen those environments by getting to know students as individuals with goals, dreams, and interests. (p. 3)

Relationships include knowing that human connection is the foundation of the work, [educators] must foster strong interpersonal relationships (Souers & Hall, 2018). Furthermore, “The relationships we forge and maintain with others are essential to our collective and individual success” (Souers & Hall, 2016, p. 90). The ARTIC Subscale 2 (Responses to Problem Behavior and Symptoms) is focused on staff attitudes related to the importance of relationships, flexibility, and kindness as agents of change (Baker et al., 2016). When reviewing the responses to the ARTIC, the researcher noticed that eight of the 10 participants believe that “focusing on developing healthy, healing relationships is the best approach when working with people with trauma histories” (Baker et al., 2016, p. 1). During the interview, when asked, “How have you emphasized relationships?” Ramonda stated,

That’s kind of all we do. Or at least for me, it’s all I do, is trying to establish rapport and understanding with students, and not be kind of a threatening or disciplinary figure to them, and try and really be an ally and support them.

Additionally, Shuri stated, “I feel like relationships are huge. I think you have to make connections with people. For everyone to work together, I have found trying to go the extra mile to build relationships goes a long way.” Another participant, Ayo, stated,

Especially this year given the COVID Pandemic (WHO, 2020), relationships are my top priority. So at the beginning of the school year, I spent several weeks really just doing relationship building. Even throughout the rest of the year, my relationship with the students and how they're feeling is really my most important factor. It's not really the curriculum.

Regarding relationships, Okoye believes that teaching students to develop positive relationships is a driving theme in the classroom. Okoye also provides resources to assist students in developing those relationships. Similar to Okoye, M'Baku also provides resources to students to encourage them to build relationships with others. M'Baku signified that there are plenty of programs for students to get involved that will help with making connections. T'Challa indicated, "One of the things I love about my job is that I can really take the time to forge relationships. It has been the thing I try to emphasize the most." Furthermore, Nakia strives to build relationships by learning the students' names, having them complete getting to know you activities, and having constant conversations with them. N'Jobu tries to find common interests with the students to boost relationship building. This could be in the form of a video game or a favorite sports team. Once that is established, N'Jobu begins the conversation and builds on it. Finally, Zuri stated, "I think relationships are key. If you don't have a relationship with a student to some degree, it not only hurts you as the educator, but hurts the student as well."

According to Craig (2017), schools that promote a community that embraces connectedness and relationships assists adolescents in acquiring the resilience they need to be productive citizens. Moreover, Souers and Hall (2018) indicated that strong relationships are at the forefront of trauma-sensitive learning environments. Cultivating relationships with students

builds authenticity and strengthens those environments by getting to know students as individuals with dreams and aspirations (Souers & Hall, 2018).

Safety

Using trauma-informed strategies in the classroom can make a big difference for traumatized students by making changes that foster a sense of safety (Minahan, 2019). A trauma-sensitive school provides a safe environment that shields students from outside influences that jeopardize their ability to manage changing behavioral expectations and achieve goals, while it fosters skills that adolescents require to regulate internal emotions (Craig, 2017). During the interview process, every participant mentioned safety as a key component in the school environment. M'Baku stated, "We work in a dynamic school system that embraces changes, collects data, and does what they need to do their best in providing a safe and supportive environment for all students, faculty, and staff." T'Challa asserted,

Safety is our number one priority. If we can't create a safe environment, if we don't have an environment that allows our kids to feel safe, then I don't know how many things we can realistically expect are going to fall in place.

Ramonda believes that safety is important from an emotional sense as well as a physical sense.

People have to feel emotionally safe and welcome and supported to kind of be their best, as well as physically safe. But that's kind of a two-way street. I am not particularly worried about students being dangerous, if you will, although I know there's instances of that happening. I feel like if students feel safe, they will behave in safer ways, and we can help them to feel safe by the way that we interact with them.

Zuri stated,

Safety is important for both staff and students. I know students that struggle with boundaries or safety sometimes with physical behavior is important to see what antecedents happen that may cause those behaviors so that we can reduce the chances of it happening, and also to know what to do like those behaviors so that we can reduce the chances of it happening, and also to know what to do, so that the staff to be properly trained to be able to handle those situations if they happen.

Regarding safety, N'Jobu believes that it is not really safe for students to talk about what is going on in their lives. She believes that the school environment is not conducive for sharing one's issues without being penalized. N'Jobu believes that the school system and the stress that parents are under make it difficult to provide the safety needed for students. W'Kabi stated, "I think that I take it for granted that we're always safe in the environment because I think safety is a part of being in the school." When Nakia thinks of safety, she is reminded of lockdown drills, but knows that there are other aspects of safety. When asked specifically, "What are your thoughts on safety in the educational environment?" Nakia stated,

I think it's important to have safety in place at the school because I think for kids to actually learn, they have to feel safe in their environment. I think, as a building there's a responsibility to keep us safe. As teachers, I think we have a responsibility to have our kids feel safe in our classroom, not only safe physically, but emotionally too.

Okoye believes that safety is essential. Okoye stated, "If you don't feel safe, you're not going to learn well. You're not going to want to be here. The basics: food, water, shelter, and safety."

Shuri believes that social-emotional safety is something that the school needs to improve upon.

She feels that too many students do not feel safe in the high school environment. Shuri works toward making sure that students feel safe by asking them if they feel safe. Shuri believes that the administration does a great job with protocols of fire drills and lockdown drills. However, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic (WHO, 2020), Shuri feels that the district could improve safety overall to include physical, social, and emotional safety.

According to Souers and Hall (2016), “To ensure high levels of learning for every student, educators must first ensure that students are in a safe place” (p. 27). The ARTIC Subscale 2 (Responses to Problem Behavior and Symptoms) addresses specifically relationships, kindness, flexibility, and safety as agents of change (Baker et al., 2016). Five out of 10 of the participants indicated that staff attitudes are focused on the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety, as agents of transformation (Baker et al., 2016). Nevertheless, the responses of two out of the 10 participants suggest that this is an area with room for improvement (Baker et al., 2016). Three out of the 10 of the participants believe that students respond better to rules, consequences, and accountability, and that student negative behavior would change if those items were provided (Baker et al., 2016).

Behavior

According to Souers and Hall (2019a), all behavior is seen as “an expression of need. Simply making a behavior go away does not solve the problem at the origin. The key to true change is understanding the need and teaching students helpful and healthy ways to get that need met” (p. 2). Students who are suffering from the effects of trauma are not emotionally and psychologically ready to learn (Souers & Hall, 2016). During the interview, Zuri stated, “In our school environment, I have used de-escalation skills when work avoidance happens, that is

generally behavior induced.” N’Jobu posited, “I never assume that a student’s behavior is about school.” Ramonda believes that, when students are misbehaving, instead of being confrontational, it is better to be understanding and to use it as a teachable moment by validating the students’ emotions, but letting them know that the behaviors they are showing can be hurtful, get them into trouble, or make their problems worse. T’Challa believes that schools need to see what is driving a student’s behavior instead of just addressing the symptoms of the behavior.

Subscales 1 and 2 from the ARTIC address understanding the underlying causes of and the responses to problem behavior (Baker et al., 2016). On the ARTIC, all of the participants believed that students’ learning and behavior issues are rooted in their behavioral or mental health circumstances and in their history of challenging life events (Baker et al., 2016). Although seven of the participants believe that helping a student feel safe and cared about is the best way to eradicate undesirable behaviors, none of the participants believe that administering punitive consequences would be effective at eliminating those same behaviors (Baker et al., 2016). Additionally, all of the participants, except W’Kabi and Zuri, believe that students are behaving the best that they can with the skills that they have (Baker et al., 2016). However, only five of the participants believe that students do the right thing one day and not the next because they [students] are doing the best that they can at any particular time (Baker et al., 2016). Furthermore, all of the participants believe that when making mistakes with students, it is best to own up to making mistakes (Baker et al., 2016). Trauma interventions need to alleviate the effects of trauma and bring lasting positive behavioral change (Parris et al., 2015). Souers and Hall (2018) believe that “we [adults] matter, and how we conduct ourselves matters” (p. 2). For

students to have better behavior, “the adult is necessarily in charge of the setting and tone of the space” (Souers & Hall, 2016, p. 41).

Training

During the interviews, each participant in the study mentioned training and nine out of 10 participants stated that no formal training on TIC had occurred in the district. Ramonda stated that there has been no formal training in TIC at the school, while M’Baku shared that they would like to have a bit more professional development on the topic. Nakia mentioned not really knowing anything about TIC because she did not have any training but supports the need for the school to address training so the school can improve and assist teachers in the classroom. Additionally, Okoye stated, “I don’t know that I’ve ever had trauma-informed instruction or professional development.” Only one participant, Ayo, was able to recall being trained in suicide prevention. All of the participants remarked that a greater amount of professional development in TIC is needed. This echoed the results from the ARTIC, in Subscale 7 (System-Wide Support for TIC), five of the participants did not feel supported by colleagues, supervisors, and administrators to implement TIC, whereas, two participants felt that, although there is system-wide support for implementing TIC, there is room for improvement. Lastly, the other three participants feel that there is system-wide support for implementing TIC.

The literature also recognizes that training should occur so that educators can understand and provide a trauma-informed approach (Craig, 2016; Harris, 2018; Jennings, 2019; Romero et al., 2018; Souers & Hall, 2019). Accordingly, “Trauma training can help teachers to support their students and increase the chances that they will experience academic and behavioral success despite the negative effects of adverse childhood events” (Jones, 2013, p. 112). All children

would benefit if school staff added trauma-informed strategies to daily classroom routines and practices (Romero et al., 2018). Furthermore, “Given the prevalence of trauma among the school population, there is a critical need for secondary schools to adopt a more trauma sensitive approach to discipline and student engagement” (Craig, 2017, p. 55). Faculty and staff need to have the knowledge and skills to recognize and respond to childhood trauma (Craig, 2017).

Summary

Ten faculty and staff from a suburban high school in the northeastern part of the United States participated in this exploratory case study. The participants completed the ARTIC Scale and participated in individual semistructured interviews. In Chapter 4, the researcher described the methods used to organize and analyze the data collected from the surveys and interviews completed by the participants.

The ARTIC Scale was administered, scored, and analyzed according to the ARTIC scoring instructions and syntax, and determined the participant’s attitudes towards TIC and as Learn, Grow, or Thrive, in relation to the seven subscales (Baker et al., 2016). Interviews were also conducted, and data analysis revealed emergent themes that included relationship, safety, training, and behavior. Relationships are the cornerstone of creating a trauma-invested environment. According to Souers and Hall (2018), “Human connection is an essential component to support learning” (p. 3). To foster a sense of safety for traumatized students, teachers must incorporate trauma-informed strategies in the classroom (Minahan, 2019). As previously stated, Souers and Hall (2019a) believed that all behavior is a manifestation of need. By understanding the need, and by teaching students helpful and healthy ways to get that need met, only then can lasting change occur (Souers & Hall, 2019a). Regarding training, Romero et

al. (2018) stated, “If each PreK–12th grade school staff member added trauma-informed strategies to his daily routines and practices, every child in the classroom would benefit” (p. 133). Interpretations of these findings will be discussed in Chapter 5, including the research questions, implications, recommendations for action, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to investigate (a) the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment; (b) how public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment; and (c) how public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students. Measuring staff attitudes regarding TIC is paramount to understanding student behavior (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). According to Souers and Hall (2016), to understand student behavior in the schools, “We need to be prepared to support students who have experienced trauma, even if we don’t know who they are. Children are resilient, and within positive learning environments they can grow, learn, and succeed” (Souers & Hall, 2016, p. 11). A case study “generates understanding and deep insights to inform professional practice” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016, p. 49). This exploratory case study was used to investigate attitudes of faculty and staff and had no clear single set of outcomes (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Ten faculty and staff from a suburban high school in the northeastern part of the United States participated in the case study. The participants completed the ARTIC Scale and participated in individual semistructured interviews. After examining the findings from each participant’s interview and ARTIC survey, the researcher searched for themes that were common across participants and looked for patterns in the data collected. The commonalities that emerged amongst the participants were identified, and an examination of the data supported the themes that took place (Creswell, 2007). The final iteration produced the themes of relationships, safety,

behavior, and training. Chapter 5 includes the researcher's interpretation of the findings, implications of the findings, recommendations for action, recommendations for further study, and a comprehensive conclusion.

Interpretation of Findings

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to investigate (a) the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment; (b) how public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment; and (c) how public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students. In this exploratory case study, the researcher sought to answer the following research questions:

- Research Question 1: What are the current attitudes of public high school faculty and staff regarding TIC?
- Research Question 2: How do public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment?
- Research Question 3: How do public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students?

Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked, "What are the current attitudes of public high school faculty and staff regarding TIC?" It is important to explore the attitudes of faculty and staff regarding TIC (Baker et al., 2016) because it is paramount to understanding student behavior (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). The participants in this study presented limited attitudes regarding TIC. It

is important to note that although the participants all interact with students on a daily basis, eight out of 10 have had no formal training in TIC. According to Craig (2017), “In the absence of trauma-specific training, teachers fail to recognize trauma’s symptoms and lack the resources to reverse its course” (p. 100). The participants in this study are supportive of TIC practices, but they feel they are unprepared to implement TIC, and that time is a factor that affects implementation.

Teachers Feel Unprepared to Implement Trauma-Informed Care

Several participants in the study believe that they are not properly prepared to implement TIC and think that professional development is needed. M’Baku believes that there should be a greater amount of professional development regarding TIC and believes that the district should support such efforts. M’Baku was not familiar with the term TIC and mentioned that there are school psychologists and school counselors, but she is not aware of any designated support for TIC. Thus, administrators need to understand why TIC is important to helping educators reverse the effects of trauma on individuals (Craig, 2017). Nakia too has indicated that she has not received formal training in TIC but believes that she would benefit from professional development in this area. Many high school faculty and staff who work with these students are not trained in TIC strategies (Harris, 2018). To help students have a more effective learning experience and to bring about healing, it is imperative that all faculty and staff become educated regarding the effects of trauma and how to address those effects (Jones & Mudd, 2006; Overstreet & Chafouleas, 2016).

Ayo too believes that she is unprepared to implement TIC, for the professional development that she received related only to suicide prevention. Ayo would like to see

professional development expanded to include activities that address social–emotional learning. According to Jennings (2019), “Resilient adults can help students build inner strength and resilience of their own through both modeling and direct instruction, but to do this requires an unusually high degree of social and emotional competence” (p. 107). Ayo’s behavior matches her beliefs, for she engages her students in activities that reduce stress (e.g., meditation, yoga, and deep breathing). W’Kabi believes that, if she received professional development in TIC, she would be able to assist students in a meaningful way. W’Kabi believes that TIC is about being aware of a student’s background and plans that student’s education accordingly. Regarding implementing TIC, W’Kabi stresses that she is sometimes successful and sometimes not successful regarding implementing TIC. During the interview, she stated, “I think I always try to see their [students] perspective or get an understanding first; however, sometimes I am successful and sometimes I am not, but that is part of the learning curve.” In her responses on the ARTIC, W’Kabi also indicated that she could benefit from TIC training so that she could develop an awareness of what is involved with TIC practices, and possibly support the approach.

According to Craig (2017), “Increasing teachers’ understanding of the nature of trauma and its effects on children is an important resource in helping them manage their reactions to the experiences of the children for whom they are responsible” (p. 101). Professional development is lacking; therefore, the participants in this study had a limited understanding of what TIC is and how it can be implemented.

Time as a Factor for Implementing Trauma-Informed Care

The participants shared their opinions on TIC and their thoughts related to the time commitment involved in implementing TIC. According to their responses on the ARTIC scale,

Ramonda's and Shuri's attitudes seem to be one of support for TIC. Shuri and Ramonda indicated on the ARTIC that they strongly believe that "the trauma-informed care approach saves time in the long run" (Baker et al., 2016). On the ARTIC, Ramonda also indicated that she believes that students react positively to the TIC approach, and that TIC is effective (Baker et al., 2016). This attitude can lead to better student outcomes. According to Souers and Hall (2016), "A positive mindset would help you feel happier, more satisfied with work, and more patient as well as lead to an increased willingness to help others and try new things" (p. 141). T'Challa also believes that students respond constructively to the TIC approach, that it is effective, and that it will save time overall. During the interview T'Challa stated, "Students are able to make sustainable progress that allows them to build skills, and [to] be able to navigate some of their own issues independently."

In contrast, on the ARTIC, Okoye implied that she does not know anything about TIC because she is not sure whether she has ever had trauma-informed instruction or professional development. When asked, "Can you describe what is meant by trauma-informed care?" Okoye replied, "I don't know much about it, and I don't think that I have had any professional development on it either." Okoye's responses on the ARTIC also suggests that she believes that using a TIC approach is time consuming and that she is unprepared to handle all that the method entails (Baker et al., 2016). Similarly to Okoye, as measured by the ARTIC, M'Baku's attitude toward TIC suggests that she believes that using a TIC approach takes too much time and that she cannot manage all that the approach requires (Baker et al., 2016).

Attitudes related to TIC may be limited because of the lack of awareness and understanding of TIC. The participants believe that professional development in TIC will be

beneficial to helping faculty and staff have a better understanding of the effects of trauma on individuals, and of how it can help them. Lastly, some participants believe that having a positive attitude regarding the implementation of TIC, could lead to better, student behavioral outcomes.

Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked, “How do public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment?” These elements are components of TIC strategies and practices (Craig, 2017; Jennings, 2019; Souers & Hall, 2016; Souers & Hall, 2019a). The ARTIC Subscale 2 (Responses to Problem Behavior and Symptoms) focuses on these elements (Baker et al., 2016). Regarding relationships, kindness, flexibility, and safety, the researcher learned that building relationships with students fosters positive outcomes for student behaviors. Kindness is an essential tool for building relationships. Furthermore, students will not enter a relationship if they do not feel safe, and flexibility is important to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students.

Relationships

Craig (2017) stated, “A school that fosters a culture of connection and positive peer relationships helps adolescents acquire the resilience they need to lead productive, happy lives” (p. 88). Each participant in this study believes that making connections with students is the key to building and sustaining relationships. During the COVID-19 Pandemic (WHO, 2020), the participants in this study found that building relationships has been more challenging. N’Jobu stated, “I think it is harder right now for teachers to build relationships with students.” The participants have been working to overcome these challenges and have been finding creative ways to get to know their students. For example, Nakia had the students design a getting to know

you collage or a Zulu shield where students share about themselves. According to Nakia, taking mask breaks outside of the classroom and walking around has led to some meaningful conversations. Souers and Hall (2018) believed that, to support learning, an essential component is human connection.

To help build meaningful connections, Okoye models positive relationships for students. She spends time talking with students about relationships and how to develop them. Okoye also provides information about resources to students and shows them how they can access them. Some of the resources that Okoye discussed included community programs, school programs, after school clubs, social skills groups, peer tutoring, and a grief group for students who experienced the loss of a parent or sibling. Okoye also has the students identify at least one adult in the building with whom they can talk, and one adult outside of the building with whom they can speak. According to Jennings (2019), “Without adult support, exposure to trauma and adversity interferes with healthy development” (p. 12). Furthermore, Souers and Hall (2018) indicated, “Strong relationships are at the core of safe, predictable, trauma-sensitive learning environments” (p. 3).

Kindness

Souers and Hall (2019a) believed that a simple act of kindness “reassures a person that he or she belongs in this world, and that this world is a better place for his or her presence” (p. 84). Ayo, Ramonda, Shuri, and T’Challa believe that one cannot build an effective relationship without kindness. They believe that kindness is important. M’Baku also believes that kindness is a cornerstone to effective relationships. She stated, “I think the number one thing—more than anything I’ve learned in any class—is to develop a positive rapport with my students; and you

can't do that without kindness." Additionally, Souers and Hall (2019a) stated, "We can all use a little more kindness in our world" (p. 84).

Nakia equates kindness with respect. She believes that kindness begins with greeting students, encouraging them, acknowledging if they have done something well, and never making derogatory comments. Nakia stated, "The number one expectation in showing kindness is respect; they respect themselves, respect us, and each other." Ayo and Okoye also believe that kindness requires respect. Okoye stated, "When a person is speaking in a disrespectful manner, they are not exhibiting kindness." Furthermore, Ayo and Okoye believe that kindness creates a positive learning environment. During the interview Ayo stated, "Kindness is important because we want to build our classrooms so that students feel like they are in a safe environment and that everyone can come in and not feel intimidated or feel unwanted. They also feel respected." According to Souers and Hall (2019a), a universal trauma-invested relationship-based intervention includes kindness. Saying a kind word usually makes a person feel better. Furthermore, if one emphasizes to students that the class is a team, kindness is an intervention that can be used in the classroom (Souers & Hall, 2019a). W'Kabi stated, "There is no reason not to be kind," and Zuri stated, "If you're cold and nasty, people don't want to approach you." Kindness matters.

Flexibility

According to Craig (2017), "Teachers in trauma-sensitive schools foster teens' cognitive flexibility by integrating divergent thinking strategies into content instruction" (p. 37). Nakia believes that there are different types of flexibility exercised in school. When technology is not working, as a teacher, one must use Plan B. However, sometimes there is a great deal going on in

the home, and a student cannot complete an assignment on the due date. Giving the student extended time to complete an assignment makes sense, according to Nakia. Additionally, Okoye believes that being flexible is important because students are individuals with different needs. Okoye stated,

I think flexibility is a strategy I use with students; for example, being able to adapt or be open to them doing an assignment in an alternate way or just helping them access the curriculum is a way that they can.

When responding to statements in the ARTIC, Ayo, N'Jobu, Shuri, and T'Challa indicated that every student is different with individual needs. M'Baku stated that flexibility is hugely important to providing a safe and supportive environment for all students, faculty, and staff. Souers and Hall (2018) indicated, "If we praise growth, energy, and flexibility, our students will develop a healthy self-concept" (p. 5).

Safety

According to Jennings (2019), "A trauma-sensitive school is a safe and respectful environment that enables students to build caring relationships with adults and peers, self-regulate their emotions and behaviors, and succeed academically, while supporting their physical health and well-being" (p. 41). This study has found that educators perceive that safety is important to learning. According to Souers and Hall (2019a), "All students deserve an education, but to learn, they need to feel safe" (p. 6). T'Challa stated, "Safety is our number one priority." Nakia indicates that students learn best in an environment where they feel safe, not only physically, but also emotionally. Specifically, Nakia stated, "I think to have safety in place at school because I think for kids to actually learn, they have to feel safe in their environment.

Okoye also indicates that safety is essential for one's wellbeing, and stated, "Safety is essential; if you don't feel safe, you are not going to learn well." Additionally, N'Jobu relates safety to building relationships. She stated, "I don't think kids feel safe to talk about what is going on in their lives because there is not enough relationship building happening in the schools." Ramonda believes that interacting with students in a positive manner, helps them to feel safe. While Shuri believes that the school is doing a good job with physical safety; she contends that no one is talking about the students and families, who may be struggling because of the COVID pandemic (WHO, 2020). When the researcher pressed for more information, Shuri clarified her concern was for students that came to this school from other towns. Shuri said,

This is concerning because these kids are struggling and now they are getting further behind, because they cannot physically safely be in the building five days; because their families are high risk. They are high risk just being black and they've lost people to COVID. We can't say that for a lot of families in this town or white families that aren't high risk, and I feel like no one is really talking about it.

Shuri believes that the social and the emotional safety of students need to be addressed. Zuri believes that safety is important for both staff and students. Developing a safe environment is critical to providing TIC (Cavanaugh, 2016). In a school-wide PBIS, a school-wide expectation might include "Be Safe" and would be enforced throughout the school (Cavanaugh, 2016, p. 42). W'Kabi takes safety for granted but recognizes its importance. During the interview, W'Kabi stated, "I think I take it for granted that we're always in a safe environment. I think it is just an important part of being in the school."

Overall, all the participants believe that safety is important in the school environment. Safety is the cornerstone to building relationships and providing a trauma-invested learning environment. As Souers and Hall (2019b) stated, “Remember, kids can’t learn if they don’t feel safe” (p. 2).

Interpretation of Findings for Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked, “How do public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students?” TIC strategies support the creation of safe and supportive learning environments (Jennings, 2019). According to the CDC (2016), TIC has six guiding principles: safety, trustworthiness and transparency, peer support, collaboration and mutuality, empowerment voice and choice, and cultural, historical, and gender issues. Additionally, Souers and Hall (2018) believed that creating a trauma-sensitive learning environment includes four main ideas:

1. Self-awareness – a person must care for and know themselves.
2. Relationship – knowing that human connection is the foundation of the work, [educators] must foster strong interpersonal relationships.
3. Belief – to positively influence students, [educators] must be clear what they believe about children who have experienced or are experiencing trauma, [and must know their] role in supporting their healthy development.
4. Live, laugh, love – [educators] must find the silver lining in every cloud to be the champions our students so richly deserve (p. 1).

The majority of the participants in this study shared that they did not use TIC strategies; this might have been because of the lack of formal training in TIC and TIC strategies.

According to Souers and Hall (2016), “Too often, educators reduce students to experiences and make decisions about their capabilities based on those decisions. Changing the focus enables the educator to concentrate on nurturing the whole child and to create trauma-sensitive learning environments for all students” (p. 16). Many of the participants in the study stated that they have had no formal training in TIC. W’Kabi has had no formal training on TIC and thinks that TIC strategies are not used in the school environment. During the interview W’Kabi stated, “I don’t think that we have a plan to implement TIC, nor have I received any professional development on the subject.” Okoye believes that, “if I learned more about TIC strategies and how to implement them, it would make me a better teacher. I have had no formal training.” While having no formal training in TIC, Ramonda acknowledged having an awareness of TIC and not reacting emotionally to student behaviors is a useful strategy when working with students who are dysregulated. Nakia also indicated that she has not received formal training but is excited at the prospect of learning more about TIC. According to Craig (2017), “Trauma-specific training is a key component to building capacity of teachers to work with traumatized adolescents” (p. 101). Shuri also indicated that she has not received any formal training nor has she done any research on the topic of TIC. Craig (2017) indicated, “Once [teachers] understand the biology of trauma and its effects on brain chemistry and child development, it becomes easier to master classroom strategies that are both self-protective and empathetic” (p. 101). M’Baku stated,

It would almost be nice to have a little more professional development. I mean, I guess having more awareness of what those are would be helpful because we definitely have a lot of support within our school system in terms of helping any child. But when it comes

to exactly when it's designated trauma-informed care, these are specific protocols I don't know if that differs through the scope of what we typically do when we have a student in crisis or something that surfaces, that's not particularly that type of student with that identification specifically.

When discussing TIC strategies, T'Challa noted that these are not used consistently throughout the school by faculty and staff. N'Jobu also thinks that TIC strategies are not being used in the district. Without consistency, the faculty and staff would be unable to sustain progress (Craig, 2017).

However, some participants did use strategies that could be considered trauma-informed. Ayo uses meditation in the classroom to help student to feel more regulated, gives the students mask breaks, and allows students to leave the classroom when needed. Shuri believes that flexibility is one TIC strategy for which she is familiar. Additionally, Shuri believes that flexibility is an important component of relationship building. According to the ARTIC, "Students often are not yet able or ready to take responsibility for their actions. They need to be treated flexibly and as individuals" (Baker et al., 2016). Zuri indicated that she modifies work, gives students sensory breaks, and uses de-escalation skills when students' behaviors have escalated. These are the only strategies that the participants were able to list. However, they were not sure whether the strategies were TIC strategies.

This lack of certainty could be because the participants were not aware of TIC or what TIC interventions might look like, for six out of 10 participants shared that they did not know for sure what was meant by TIC. The participants stated that they have had little to no professional development regarding TIC. To help students have a more effective learning experience, the

faculty and staff should become educated regarding what trauma is, the effects of trauma, and how it hinders learning (Souers & Hall, 2016).

Implications

Implication 1 of this research is that the findings in this study contributed to the body of literature on the topic of faculty and staff attitudes about the implementation of TIC in the educational setting, for the researcher analyzed the data collected from faculty and staff at a suburban high school all of whom work with students on a daily basis. Students, faculty, and staff of high schools that are implementing TIC could benefit from the findings of this study.

Many students have experienced trauma, even if educators do not know who they are (Souers & Hall, 2019b). Faculty and staff, through the use of TIC strategies, can help create a safe environment for students. The participants in this study had the opportunity to reflect on their beliefs regarding TIC and the TIC practices and strategies that are implemented in the school.

Implication 2 of this research is the need for professional development designed to train faculty and staff in TIC to meet the needs of students. To help students, educators do not need to have a counseling degree; they need to be trauma-informed and invested to guide students toward their best selves (Souers & Hall, 2019). The participants in this study talked about not receiving formal training in TIC, while they recognized that they needed to learn more about TIC, and to be shown the best way that the implementation could improve the school environment and lead to better outcomes for students.

Implication 3 of this study is giving voice to the faculty and staff to share their experiences to encourage system-wide support in the implementation of TIC practices. The

participants have voiced their concern that not all faculty and staff can participate in training, nor do they feel that TIC is implemented throughout the school. By using TIC strategies consistently, relationships can be built, students' behavior might improve, and referrals for discipline might decrease. This can only occur if the faculty and staff feel supported to use a trauma-informed approach.

Recommendations for Action

After analyzing the data collected from the participant surveys and interviews and presenting the findings from this study, the researcher proposes two recommendations for action:

- Recommendation for Action 1: All faculty and staff should be provided professional development that is focused on defining trauma, adverse childhood experiences, and the effects it has on student learning.
- Recommendation for Action 2: All faculty and staff should be provided professional development regarding TIC, and trauma-informed practices and strategies.

Recommendation for Action 1

Recommendation for Action 1 is that on-going training should be provided to all faculty and staff regarding trauma, its definition, and its effects. School staff members need on-going, comprehensive training and a supportive culture to integrate what they are learning into classroom practice (Craig, 2017; Jennings, 2019). Understanding the effects of trauma is the key to implementing the interventions that are necessary to help others (Jennings, 2019). Trauma often comes from ACEs (Souers & Hall, 2019b). Any training should include an understanding of ACEs, which are interpersonal or early childhood trauma (e.g., emotional, physical, or sexual abuse; neglect; arrest of a caregiver; leaving care; and other traumatic childhood experiences)

that can have a negative impact on an individual's health and well-being that can last a lifetime (Mendes et al., 2014; Roberts et al., 2014; Sciaraffa et al., 2018; Strait & Bolman, 2017). Souers and Hall (2019b) indicated that people who have numerous ACEs might be negatively affected by trauma.

Recommendation for Action 2

Recommendation for Action 2 is that faculty and staff should receive professional development that is focused on TIC practices and strategies. Several researchers have indicated that traumatic experiences can affect learning, behavior, and relationships at school (Baker et al., 2016; Craig, 2017; Souers & Hall, 2016). The aim of TIC is to help students to self-regulate their attention, emotions, and behavior (Souers & Hall, 2016; Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, 2019). Faculty and staff must have the knowledge and skills to provide TIC for children to be helped effectively (Craig, 2017). Faculty and staff need to have a working knowledge of TIC practices to assist effectively students who exhibit a myriad of mental health issues (Harris, 2018). Training staff in the school environment—"from leadership to guidance staff to every single teacher"—will profoundly affect school culture (Harris, 2018, pp. 185–186). Several authors in the literature also recognized that training must occur for educators to understand and provide a trauma-informed approach (Craig, 2016; Harris, 2018; Jennings, 2019; Romero et al., 2018; Souers & Hall, 2019). "Trauma training can help teachers to support their students and increase the chances that they will experience academic and behavioral success despite the negative effects of adverse childhood events" (Jones, 2013, p. 112). Furthermore, Craig (2017) stated, "Given the prevalence of trauma among the school population, there is a critical need for secondary schools to adopt a more trauma sensitive approach to discipline and student

engagement” (p. 55). Training staff in TIC strategies will be the key to helping create a trauma-sensitive environment.

Recommendations for Further Study

From the limitations and findings of this study, this researcher recommends that further research studies are needed to better understand how to implement successfully TIC in the school setting.

Recommendation 1 for further study is that schools that currently provide professional development related to TIC should be studied to investigate the effectiveness of the professional development strategies in use. The use of the ARTIC Scale before and after the professional development sessions would provide for the measurement of faculty and staff attitudes related to understanding and willingness to implement TIC. Faculty and staff willingness to implement TIC practices might lead to building better connections with students and might produce better learning outcomes (Jennings, 2019).

This study was focused on faculty and staff, but no administrators took part in the study. Therefore, Recommendation 2 for further study is to measure the perceptions of administrators regarding TIC practices and strategies. This might lead to understanding the barriers to TIC implementation on a system-wide level. Measuring the perceptions of administrators towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment is paramount to implementing TIC strategies and practices consistently throughout the school (Baker et al., 2016).

Lastly, Recommendation 3 for further study is to focus on the student perspective related to TIC. Future studies could include administering the ACE checklist, first to students to determine the validity of the effects of trauma on learning and then using TIC strategies to

mitigate the effects. By studying the effectiveness of TIC practices and strategies on students, researchers could determine whether trauma-informed strategies should be introduced to other schools.

Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to investigate (a) the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment; (b) how public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment; and (c) how public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students. The participant interviews and the surveys revealed a variety of perceptions regarding TIC strategies and practices.

Although all the participants were faculty and staff who were used to working with students, many had not received training in TIC. Most of the participants in this study identified the need for professional development. The ARTIC Scale and the semistructured interviews reinforced the findings that were consistent with current research regarding TIC approaches, which include building relationships with students and the need for educators to be trained in TIC (Craig, 2017; Harris, 2018; Jennings, 2019; Minahan, 2019; Romero et al., 2018; Souers & Hall, 2018). Faculty and staff who demonstrate attitudes of compassion and empathy regarding TIC might be empathetic and compassionate toward students and could have significant influence in the implementation of TIC interventions that affect staff convictions, which might lead to profound TIC practices (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). Furthermore, Souers and Hall (2016) implied that, to help students have a more effective learning experience, the faculty and

staff should become educated regarding the effects of trauma and the way it hinders learning. Additionally, the participants in this study displayed a willingness to receive professional development. According to Craig (2017), faculty and staff must have the knowledge and skills to recognize and respond to childhood trauma.

This study provided insight into the participants' view of TIC practices and strategies. The most significant finding was about building relationships. Traumatic experiences for children can affect learning, behavior, and relationships at school (Baker et. al, 2016; Jones & Mudd, 2006; Souers & Hall, 2016; Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). The researcher found that eight out of 10 participants believed that concentrating on developing positive relationships was the best approach that they could use when working with individuals with trauma backgrounds. Relationships are the backbone of TIC. According to Souers and Hall (2018), "Human connection is an essential component to support learning" (p. 3). Furthermore, Souers and Hall (2018) indicated, "Strong relationships are at the core of safe, predictable, trauma-sensitive learning environments" (p. 3). From the findings of this study, this researcher discovered that when educators take the time to build relationships with students, the impact of traumatic events could be mitigated. This study filled a gap in the research, using an exploratory case study (a) to provide an account of the perceptions of public high school faculty and staff towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment; (b) to show how public high school faculty and staff perceive the importance of relationships, flexibility, kindness, and safety within the school environment; and (c) and to show how public high school faculty and staff use TIC strategies when working with students. This study has the potential to raise awareness of the need for providing professional development in the area of TIC for all educators.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Recruitment Flyer

Purpose: The purpose of this qualitative, exploratory case study was to investigate the perceptions that public high school faculty and staff have towards trauma-informed practices in the school environment. Measuring staff attitudes regarding TIC is paramount to understanding student behavior (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019). “The Traumatic Stress Institute (TSI) fosters the transformation of organizations and service systems to trauma-informed care (TIC) through the delivery of whole-system consultation, professional training, coaching, and research” (Traumatic Stress Institute, 2019).

Who: You are eligible to participate in my study if you are a faculty or staff member of XXXXXXXXXXX High School.

How: If interested in potentially participating in my study, please click on this link: INSERT LINK TO SURVEY HERE. The period for a response is 10 days from the date of posting. For confidentiality reasons and to ensure validity of my study, please do not respond directly to this email or make public comments regarding my study. I appreciate your cooperation and support as I strive to explore further this topic.

Research indicates that traumatic experiences can impact learning, behavior, and relationships at school. The goal of Trauma-informed Care (TIC) is to help the children self-regulate attention, emotions, and behavior (Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative, 2019).

Appendix B

Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale

ARTIC

Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care Scale
VERSION FOR C-45 EDUCATION



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370 Linwood Street New Britain Connecticut 06052 (860) 832-5562 artic@klingberg.org www.traumaticstressinstitute.org

ARTIC

Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care Scale
VERSION: ARTIC-45 EDUCATION



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ARTIC

Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care Scale
VERSION: ARTIC-45 EDUCATION



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Appendix C

Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Subscales

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Contact Information:

The ARTIC Scales were developed and copyrighted by the Traumatic Stress Institute (TSI) of Klingberg Family Centers, 370 Linwood Street, New Britain, Connecticut 06052, in partnership with Dr. Courtney N. Baker at Tulane University. For information, please contact artic@klingberg.com or (860) 832-5562.

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Appendix D

The Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) Scale – Student License

Application

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Appendix E

Semistructured Interview

Informed consent will be reconfirmed with the participant.

Researcher will seek approval to audio record the interview.

Interview Questions

1. Can you describe what it meant by trauma-informed care?
2. What specific trauma-informed care strategies have you implemented in your school environment (classroom/office)?
3. Can you describe how the implementation of the trauma-informed care strategies have affected the environment you were in?
4. 4. Can you describe a how you use trauma-informed care strategies when you work directly with students?
5. What trauma-informed care strategies do you see implemented in the school environment?
6. As faculty/staff, how have you emphasized relationships in your classroom/office?
7. How do you demonstrate kindness in your classroom? What are your expectations for students? Why is kindness important?
8. How do you demonstrate flexibility in your classroom? Why is flexibility important?
9. What are your thoughts on safety in our educational environment?

Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed.