

# High School Counselors' Perceptions and Knowledge on Trauma Informed Practices

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## The Problem

Students experiencing trauma due to the loss of primary attachment figures exhibit cognitive, social, physical, and emotional vulnerabilities. Students in our schools are experiencing adverse childhood experiences also known as ACE, throughout their life and it's impacting their everyday function. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention states that 1 in 6 adults have experienced more than one ACE in their whole life (2020). Students experiencing trauma are often struggling to meet academic skills and cognitive development given that their primary goal is survival not academics. Gaps exist between teacher preparation, trauma informed practices in the classroom, collaboration between systems, and resources for counselors. School counselors are not being trained or educated on this topics in their counseling education program; they have to seek out additional trainings and resources in order to support the topic to school community.

## Results

Based upon the review of my current literature, school counselors will address the following:

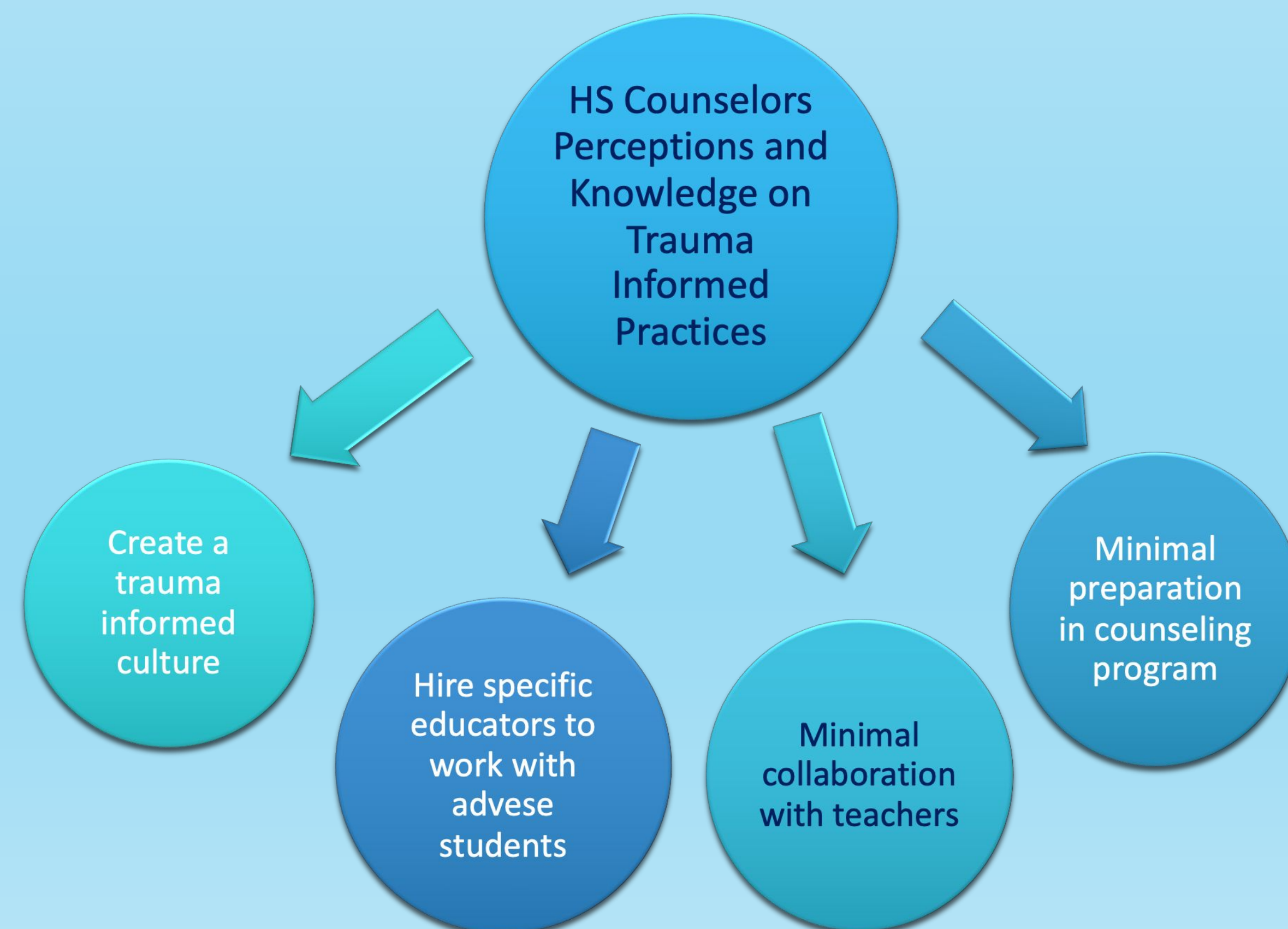
- Little to no preparation in school counseling education program on resiliency or trauma informed practices
- Little to no collaboration with teachers or other stakeholders on students' wellbeing
- Have to attend multiple seminars/trainings/conferences to continue expanding their knowledge
- Hire specific roles/educators to support students on trauma
- Create awareness and trauma informed school

## Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the school counselors' perceptions and knowledge about trauma informed practices as they work with students overcoming adversity. The purpose of this study is to uncover the correlations between the themes below:

- Education Prep
  - School Counseling education and teacher programs
- Communication between systems
  - Perceptions of teachers
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's)
  - Trauma Informed Practices (TIPs)
  - Attachment, Regulation and Competency (ARC) Framework
  - Minority students with ACE's

The research question is: When working with students overcoming adversity, what are high school counselors perceptions and knowledge about trauma informed practices?



## Methodology

- Qualitative case study conducted with 10 high school counselors to provide a perspective of their educational journey and professional training towards trauma informed practices
  - 10 high school counselors identified at a local school district in Southern California
- Data collected through 1-hour individual interviews via Zoom
  - Pseudonyms were used to protect participants confidentiality
  - Audio was downloaded and transferred into a written transcription through a third-party transcription company
- Participants were asked a set of 10 open-ended questions focusing on 3 themes: Education prep, Collaboration between systems, and Knowledge on trauma informed practices
- Analysis plan consisted of coding all interview transcriptions into 3 common themes using different highlighters

## Implications

From the current literature review, implications from this study will:

- provide insight of school counselors knowledge and perceptions on ACE's
- Ensure a communicative and collaborative school community
- Educate the school community on Trauma Informed Practices
- Cultivate a trauma informed culture