

Trauma Sensitive Strategies for Schools

Resources for Professional Development

Introduction

School personnel often have an intuitive understanding about the impact of trauma and toxic stress in the lives of their students. They frequently see students who exhibit the behaviors associated with trauma – hyperarousal, difficulty focusing, inability to regulate emotions, etc. Training teachers about trauma and its impact are met with nodding heads and stories that illustrate the concepts.

But many school personnel are not sure what to do with this information. Teachers are not therapists. They do not have magic wands to change their students' history, experience, families or neighborhoods. They frequently ask, "What can I do?" with a feeling of frustration, hopelessness and sadness.

The resources in this package are designed to answer that question. Information is provided in a variety of formats; with differing levels of detail; and for various experience levels. The package can be used by individual teachers or entire school staff to gradually learn and implement trauma sensitive, evidenced-based and evidenced-informed strategies specifically for educational settings. The strategies can be used to address the needs of students identified through the Handle With Care initiative. They are also tools that can be used to gradually move from a trauma reactive to a trauma sensitive/responsive and finally to a healing school environment.

A word of caution. There is a LOT of material in this package. Some of the content overlaps. Some of the materials may not fit a particular school environment or teaching style. The package is meant to provide opportunities for exploration and learning. Resources should be selected and used in a way that meets your specific school or teaching needs. For each resource, an effort has been made to give a brief description of the content and the level of experience that would benefit from the materials. The materials are organized according to their format.

Important Things to Remember

- There are no magic bullets or quick fixes; learning to use and respond to trauma sensitive and healing practices is a journey for you and your students.
- The ideal time to implement trauma sensitive practices is BEFORE there is a big problem or meltdown.
- The key to trauma sensitive and healing schools is SAFETY. Anything you can do to enhance physical and emotional safety for everyone is valuable.
- Schools are not the only places for trauma sensitive practices. All adults who have contact with children can use many (or most) of the strategies in this package. Share your knowledge; consider inviting partners to your training sessions. This information is for everyone.

Online Training Packages:

- **Trauma Informed Schools Training Package**, National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments, A comprehensive package for developing trauma sensitive schools, includes materials for administrators, introductory information about trauma and its impact, handouts, videos, exercises, etc. Individual modules can be used alone. **Level: beginner to intermediate.** <https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/trauma-sensitive-schools-training-package>
- **Trauma Informed Schools Training**, Midwest PBIS, A comprehensive package for developing trauma informed schools, includes power point presentations, trainer notes, handouts, exercises, etc. Includes a module on classroom strategies. Individual modules can be used along. **Level: beginner to advanced.** <http://www.midwestpbis.org/materials/special-topics/trauma>

In Person Training:

- **ACE Master Trainers or Community Champions**, Michigan ACE Initiative, Trainers available across the state to provide foundational information about ACEs, trauma and its impact. **Level: beginner.** A list of the master trainers is available at www.miace.org

Power Point Presentations:

- **Being Trauma Informed & Responsive in Education Settings**, MDHHS, Division of Child & Adolescent Health, An overview of trauma, its impact and strategies for addressing it in schools., includes a toolkit and handouts. **Level: Beginner to intermediate.** https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/0,5885,7-339-73971_4911_69588_80204_80359---,00.html
- **Washtenaw ISD Trauma Education**, Washtenaw ISD, Two videos/power point presentations for preschool/elementary school and middle/high schools. **Level: Beginner to intermediate.** <https://washtenawisd.org/HandleWithCare>
- **Child Trauma Toolkit-A Free Guide of Practical Strategies, Tools and Resources for Educators**, Trauma Informed Positive Behavior Supports Program, Australia, A presentation available for free download at www.tipbs.com. **Level: Beginner to intermediate.**

Books:

- **Helping Traumatized Children Learn, Volumes 1 & 2**, Trauma Learning and Policy Initiative, An overview of trauma sensitive schools practices and ways to implement them. **Level: beginner to intermediate.** Available for free download at <https://massadvocates.org/tlpi/>. The site contains other materials as well.
- **Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom**, Souers, K. and Hall, P., A guide for cultivating a trauma-sensitive learning environment. Available through Amazon or www.ASCD.org. **Level: Intermediate to advanced.**
- **The Heart of Learning and Teaching: Compassion, Resilience and academic Success**; Wolpow, R., Johnson, M., Hertel, R., Kincaid, S.; Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. Comprehensive description of the impact of trauma and strategies for promoting resilience in schools. Available for download at <https://www.k12.wa.us/student-success/health-safety/mental-social-behavioral-health/compassionate-schools-learning-and-1> **Level: Beginner to Advanced.**

- **Hand in Hand: A Manual for Creating Trauma-Informed Leadership Committees**, G. Cox, K. Arnold, T. Kummer, D. McCullough, A. Settle, A step by step guide for implementing trauma leadership teams in schools. **Level: intermediate to advanced.** Available from Beyond Consequences, LLC, www.BeyondConsequences.com
- **Resilience-Building Schools for At-Risk Youth**, M. Mulloy, Specific strategies for building resilience in schools, not necessarily specific to trauma but relevant strategies. **Level: intermediate to advanced.** Available from Civic Research Institute, www.civicrosearchinstitute.com

Websites

- **Trauma Sensitive Schools, WI Department of Public Instruction**, Offer power point presentations, guidelines, strategies and resources. <https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/trauma>. **Level: Beginner to advanced.**
- **Trauma-Informed Systems-Schools, National Child Traumatic Stress Network**, Offers a variety of resources, including the Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators. <https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/creating-trauma-informed-systems/schools>. **Level: Beginner to intermediate.**
- **Changing Minds Now**, The website offers basic information about trauma and its impact as well as information and videos that describe everyday gestures that can build resilience in children. www.changingmindsnow.org. **Level: Beginner to intermediate.**

Pamphlets, Articles, etc.

- **Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom (Quick Reference Guide)**, Souers, K. and Hall, P., A pamphlet that presents 12 practical, easy-to-implement strategies for help students living with trauma. Available on Amazon or www.ASCD.org. **Level: Intermediate to advanced.**
- **Strategies and Resources to Create A Trauma Sensitive School**, Peace4Gainesville, A listing of strategies and resources in key areas from academics to social emotional learning. Available for download at <https://www.peace4gainesville.org/uploads/5/1/1/0/51106965/traumastrategies.pdf>. **Level: Beginner to advanced**
- **Fostering Trauma Informed Classrooms-Handouts**, From a presentation for the WI Council of Religious & Independent Schools, Specific strategies for morning meetings, mindfulness, assessment, etc. <https://www.wcris.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Fostering-the-Trauma-Informed-Classroom-Handouts.pdf>, **Level: Intermediate to advanced.**
- **Trauma Sensitive Schools Checklist**, Lesley University and Trauma Learning and Policy Initiative, An assessment for determining how a school is implementing five components of trauma-sensitive schools. Available for download <https://www.wcris.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Fostering-the-Trauma-Informed-Classroom-Handouts.pdf>, **Level: Intermediate to advanced**
- **Room 241-A Blog by Concordia University-Portland**, Includes several articles related to trauma-sensitive schools. Available at <https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/>. **Level: Beginner to intermediate.**