

A Trauma-Informed Resource for Strengthening Family-School Partnerships

WHY AN ENTIRE RESOURCE FOCUSED ON THE IMPORTANCE OF STRENGTHENING FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS?

It is well established that parents and caregivers have tremendous influence on their children's success in school. When parent and educator partnerships expand beyond individual students, it can have tremendous influence on the success of the entire school community. However, a comprehensive collaboration might be new to your school and its families, and is often harder when people from the school community have experienced trauma themselves, lived with the legacy of historical trauma, and/or are impacted by racial disparities or community adversity. Due to the factors just mentioned, partnering, much like cultural humility efforts, takes intentionality, effort, structure, and resources – and is entirely worth it!

In order to support schools working toward such meaningful goals, the *NCTSN Creating, Supporting, and Sustaining Trauma-Informed Schools: A System Framework* came to be. The NCTSN Trauma-Informed Schools Framework presents a tiered approach to creating a trauma-informed school environment that addresses the needs of all students, staff, administrators, and families who might be at risk for experiencing the symptoms of traumatic stress. It includes the following domains: identifying and assessing traumatic stress, addressing and treating traumatic stress, trauma education and awareness, partnerships with students and families, creating a trauma-informed learning environment, cultural responsiveness, emergency management and crisis response, staff self-care and secondary traumatic stress, school discipline policies and practices, and cross system collaboration and community partnerships. This tool is focused on the partnership domain of that framework.

This tool is for administrators and staff to drive further conversation about family-school partnerships. This resource will help you to assess what level of partnering currently exists within your school community, areas that require enhancement, and strategies for implementing these enhancements.

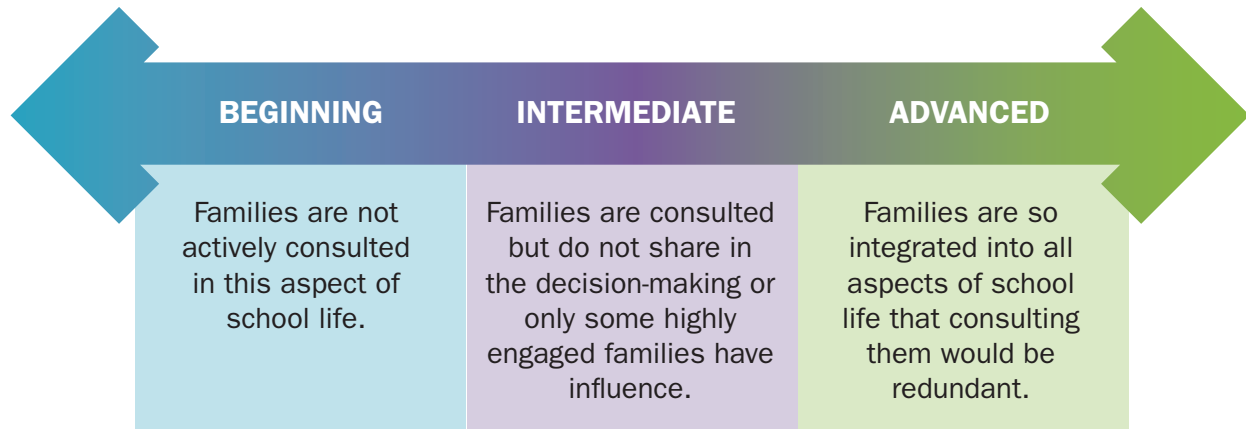
What is the purpose of this tool?

- Provide a rubric to help administrators and staff recognize areas of strength, areas deserving more effort, and opportunities to acknowledge and celebrate growth along the way.
- Help you to differentiate beginning, intermediate, and advanced partnering activities to support a growth mindset.
- Offer examples of how families and schools can partner to build a trauma-informed school community.
- Allow for local tailoring! Partnering typically looks different in every school so use this tool as a guide, not a mandate.

In addition to building on the NCTSN Trauma-Informed Schools Framework, this tool is aligned with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA's) 6 Principles of Trauma-Informed Care and includes:

- Each of the 6 Principles defined in terms of schools, along with challenges and opportunities in each area.
- Each principle with descriptions of what Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced phases of partnership might look like.

To help you differentiate between the Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced phases, use the following graphic:



Partnering isn't one more thing to do. It makes the things you are already doing more successful.

| PRINCIPLE | DEFINITION |
|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Safety | The atmosphere and physical setting created within the school community is safe and welcoming. Interpersonal interactions promote a sense of emotional, social, and psychological security and well-being. |
| Trustworthiness and Transparency | Organizational operations and person-to-person decisions are shared with the school community with the goal of building and maintaining long-term, collective understanding and accountability among everyone. |
| Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help | Mechanisms for families to assemble and support one another are co-created rather than schools making decisions about how families come together and offer support. These programs can be informal or structured; should have mechanisms for people to share their wisdom; and promote growth, resilience, collaboration, and hope. |
| Collaboration and Mutuality | There is recognition that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. Collective and individual accountability of everyone is a top priority along with leveling power differences between staff and families, and among school staff throughout all levels. |
| Empowerment, Voice, and Choice | The school aims to strengthen the experience of choice for staff and family members and to recognize that every person's experience is unique and requires an individualized approach. Throughout the school, and among the students and families, individuals' strengths are recognized, built on, and validated, and new skills are developed as necessary. |
| Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues | The school actively moves past cultural stereotypes and biases (e.g., based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography, etc.) and offers gender responsive services, leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognizes and addresses historical and racial trauma. |

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Trauma-Informed Principle: Safety

CHALLENGE

A common symptom of trauma exposure is a pervasive sense of threat. Not feeling safe makes learning, teaching, and building relationships more difficult.

OPPORTUNITY

Schools already care a great deal about safety. Adding a trauma lens to those efforts not only improves learning, it can be healing for children, families, and staff.

Safety: The atmosphere and physical setting created within the school community is safe and welcoming. Interpersonal interactions promote a sense of emotional, social, and psychological security and well-being.

| CATEGORIES | BEGINNING | INTERMEDIATE | ADVANCED |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Building Security | Be aware of security measures at your school and how they impact families. If they make it harder for them to feel comfortable entering the building, then level out that feeling by creating a welcoming atmosphere. | Ensure physical security and accessibility are equally valued. If physical security measures increase, so do efforts to ensure accessibility. Your school is not willing to trade physical safety for a less welcoming, engaging, or inclusive atmosphere. | Have your school and its families work together to figure out how to maintain a balance of physical safety and accessibility for ALL staff, students, and families. |
| Digital Safety | Have practices and policies regarding the use of social media, the internet, and electronic devices. Communicate these practices and policies with caregivers. | Co-develop policies and practices for online and digital safety in partnership with families. | When harmful or inappropriate on-line behavior occurs, your school and its families work together to ensure safety of all. When appropriate, use restorative practices to attend to repairing harm, rebuilding trust, and maintaining a sense of community. |
| Welcoming Interactions | Have at least one staff, if not more, greet families when they enter the building. There is understanding that greeting and warmly (e.g., positive tone, body language, and interactions) welcoming families into the building is everyone's responsibility. | Actively greet families when they enter the building. Include multiple opportunities or touch points throughout the building to welcome and assist families. | Have positions in the building for parent liaisons/ambassadors. Ensure that parent and caregiver voices are heard and welcomed no matter the reason they are on campus. |
| Inclusive Environment | Display artwork by students throughout the school. | Decorate with inclusion in mind. The displays on the walls welcome ALL families and are representative of ALL members of the staff, student body, and community. | Have students and community members create artwork that appears on the walls. |

Safety in Action

I love my son's school. I walk him to his building every morning and we are both greeted by name when we approach the school. It's a little thing, but that they bothered to learn my name shows that they really care. *- Parent*

Our school now requires visitors to ring a buzzer and present identification before being let into the building. It wasn't long before we noticed quite a drop in parents attending school events, so a small committee of parents and teachers worked together to find a solution. They set up a system to give caregiver identification cards during registration, now all caregivers use the same form of ID and it seems to be working. *- High School Principal*

Our family is not the typical mom, dad, 2.5 kids with a dog! We are a same sex couple and our children have come to us through birth, international adoption, and recently through foster care. I love that rainbow flags, artwork about Kenya (our daughter's birthplace), and pictures of so many diverse families are all over the school. We really feel like our family 'belongs' and there's nothing we wouldn't do for our school, next month I'm helping host an international pot luck! *- Parent*

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Trauma-Informed Principle: Trustworthiness and Transparency

| CHALLENGE | OPPORTUNITY |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| For families and communities that have experienced trauma, their experiences may have taught them it is not safe to trust, and that authority cannot be relied upon. There could be layers of individual, familial, and societal distrust based on real and perceived experiences. | Establishing trust with students, families, and communities is usually a goal of many schools. Doing this more intentionally with an added goal of transparency also helps schools attract – and keep – passionate and experienced educators and active committed families. |

Trustworthiness and Transparency: Organizational operations and person-to-person decisions are shared with the school community with the goal of building and maintaining long-term, collective understanding and accountability among everyone.

| CATEGORIES | BEGINNING | INTERMEDIATE | ADVANCED |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Decision-Making | Invite parents to give input on major decisions such as referendums, large expenditures, and curriculum updates. | Ensure that a certain percentage of caregivers have weighed in before moving forward with decisions. | Co-develop approaches to gather family perspectives. Make sure ALL families are being represented in decisions, and that decision types are broad ranging from curriculum selection, hiring of staff, to building policies. |
| Communication | Have multiple ways or mediums (e.g., phone call, emails, notes in bags) to communicate with families to ensure ALL families are getting school information not just those with internet access. | Ensure all written material is up-to-date and available in ALL languages spoken in the community. Make sure the website is user-friendly, and positive communications outnumber negative ones. | Utilize robust, frequent, two-way communication with families. Understand and acknowledge that you hear as much from the families as you share with them. Partner to make certain ALL materials are trauma-informed and anti-racist. |
| Working through Conflict | Have a plan for addressing conflict that is shared with ALL educators, students, and caregivers. | Have a robust and empowered parent liaison program to help negotiate conflict between schools and families. | Address conflict through a restorative approach that acknowledges the inherent difference in power between families and schools. |

Trustworthiness and Transparency in Action

Teachers at our middle school are required to have at least one conversation with every family during the first month of school. So, I try and make sure our ‘first conversation’ with a caregiver is never about a discipline issue! It isn’t always easy, but our parent liaison and support staff help out a lot and we make it happen. My students learn better when I have a relationship with their families, so it is nice that our principal made it a priority. Now when I have a problem with a student, it just feels easier to reach out and ask for their help.

– Middle School Teacher

I can tell our school means it when they say they want families involved. Last year when they wanted to change the core math curriculum, I had three separate invitations to find out the changes, ask questions, and tell them what I thought. Later, I heard that the school wouldn’t move forward with a decision until they had gotten some type of input from at least 60% of students’ families! This year, a couple parents were asked if they would join an interview committee to help select three new English teachers. Before they started enhancing partnerships, the school talked about engaging parents, but now it feels like they really mean it.

– Parent

I run a non-profit agency that helps parents advocate for accommodations under special education law. We always tried to have good relationships with schools but if I’m honest, it became adversarial and more than once we’ve pulled in attorneys. There’s one school district, however, that asked us to help them. This district knows that the families in their community deal with so much poverty, racism, and community violence that the school has to work really hard to build trust, and any disagreement between families and the school has the potential to destroy years of that trust building. So, they use us to help make sure that whatever resolution is used doesn’t destroy any relationships or trust that is in the process.

– Nonprofit Agency Executive Director

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Trauma-Informed Principle: Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help

| CHALLENGE | OPPORTUNITY |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A sense of isolation and helplessness is a common response to traumatic events. When the brain and body are conditioned to look for threat around every corner, it is natural to feel judged and defensive even when judgement or threat are not intended. | Peer support programs are a two-for-one type opportunity. They can serve as additional bridges between your school and the community as well as address low parent engagement by offering a sense of hope, opportunity, and support. |

Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help: Mechanisms for families to assemble and support one another are co-created rather than schools making decisions about how families come together and offer support. These programs can be informal or structured; should have mechanisms for people to share their wisdom; and promote growth, resilience, collaboration, and hope.

| CATEGORIES | BEGINNING | INTERMEDIATE | ADVANCED |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Building Relationships | Host school events for families that focus on building relationships. | Co-plan and co-host with families activities at the school and in the community. | Co-develop ways to gather information about participation in relationship building events. Use that data to employ strategies to increase participation. |
| Bringing Caregivers into School | Encourage and support family members who want to volunteer in their students' classrooms. Find out who does not follow through on volunteering and why. | Have positions and methods for caregivers and family members to help with academics, social emotional learning, and a safe school culture and climate. | Actively recruit community members to fill paid positions in your building. |
| Formalizing Mutual Support | Encourage family members to build peer support activities such as establishing a clothing closet, hosting a food drive, or creating phone trees to help with after school care. | Have a paid position for at least one parent to help engage families. Fill volunteer positions and formalize peer support. | Offer skills building, training, and mentoring to family members so they can run paid formal peer support. Include positions for family members on a trauma/loss support team to lend experience and support for families in similar crises/circumstances. |

Peer Support and Mutual Self-Help in Action

When I first started teaching, I wasn't comfortable having parents volunteer in my room because I was concerned what they would do if they didn't like how I managed my classroom like complaining to my principal. I also worried about having to find work for them to do so they weren't just standing around watching me, especially when I already felt like I had more than enough to do every day! Fortunately, because of our formal peer mentoring programs, our volunteers had some basic training in positive behavior management and tutoring. There's no way I could have given all of my students the one-to-one attention they needed to be successful if it hadn't been for our volunteers. *- Educator*

When I left my ex, it was to keep my son and I safe. My son started a new school and started getting in trouble for fighting all the time. I had no idea what to do. I thought we'd left all of that behind us and started over. This one time, the lady at the front desk who buzzed me into the building every time I was called for a behavior referral told me about a group of moms who got together for breakfast every week and talked about parenting, discipline, and other stuff. I went because the secretary said she goes to the group sometimes and because I was desperate. That first meeting turned out to be pretty good. No one judged me, and one woman talked about a situation that felt so much like mine that I felt like maybe my son and I could get through this rough patch. And after a couple more of those breakfast meetings, I had some really helpful strategies for my son at home and at school, AND I had a great community of other parents for support! *- Parent*

For a long time, I didn't help my school develop a formal volunteer program or parent-to-parent activities because I couldn't pay people. I've always believed that you don't exploit poor families of color by asking them to donate their time when, as a white middle class man, I am not willing to work for free. But I also knew that we had a real problem, an 'us vs. them' mentality had developed between the families in a local housing complex and my staff. I started writing grant and foundation funding proposals. Eventually we got enough money to start a parent café program and expanded peer programming from there. Now, one of the parents who suggested I write the initial grant works full time running our peer support program and is encouraging other caregivers to seek similar opportunities within the school community. *- School Social Worker*

I wish I could volunteer in my son's classroom, but I just don't have that flexibility at work. I'm so grateful that they asked me if I'd like to help out in other ways. Last year I went through their website and gave detailed feedback before the redesign. This year, because of COVID, I was able to zoom in on lunch breaks to read to the kids. *- Parent*

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Trauma-Informed Principle: Collaboration and Mutuality

| CHALLENGE | OPPORTUNITY |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Members of the school community have different levels of positional power than members of the community. If this power dynamic is unrecognized, it can mimic experiences of oppression and serve as barriers to relationship development. | Everyone in the school community has a role to play in creating trauma-informed schools. When educators and families are able to collaborate in ways that are mutually beneficial, the potential benefits are so much greater than any single perspective can achieve on their own. |

Collaboration and Mutuality: There is recognition that healing happens in relationships and in the meaningful sharing of power and decision-making. Collective and individual accountability of everyone is a top priority along with leveling power differences between staff and students, and between school staff throughout all levels.

| CATEGORIES | BEGINNING | INTERMEDIATE | ADVANCED |
|-------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Role of Caregivers | Understand and acknowledge that caregivers are seen as vital to their child’s student-success. Decisions about a child’s academics, SEL/IEP supports, and extra-curricular activities are not made by the school alone. | Collaborate together around the functioning of the entire school community, not just limiting parents being involved in their students’ education. | Engage the community to be in partnership with our school. Community members do not need to have a student in the building in order to have something to contribute to, and benefit from, the school. |
| Collaborative Learning | Ask parents and caregivers about training topics and/or professional development opportunities they would like to attend. | Have opportunities for staff and families to learn together about the impact of child traumatic stress on learning and student behavior. | Have caregivers and staff attend and deliver trainings together. |
| Schools as Members of Larger Communities | Have mechanisms to address dynamics in your community. For example, in times of violence or following a local event, teachers have resources to help them talk about the event with their class. | Invite parents to help schools address community events and how they affect school culture. | Co-create with caregivers a process and ways to support the school community in relation to issues of community violence, natural disasters, and other emergencies. |
| Accountability | Collect feedback on family participation at the school, but it is not shared with families or there is no active process to make changes based on it. | Invite families to examine data and feedback and suggest ways to reduce barriers and improve programs that are offered. | Have data that shows parents are actively involved in school decision-making and programming. Use this data regularly with families to review and address barriers to full shared ownership. |

Collaboration and Mutuality in Action

Our staff are mostly white, college educated, and don’t live in the same part of town as the vast majority of our students. When I first took over as principal, there was so much distrust between parents and educators that when we hosted community events, people showed to grab a plate of food and then left rather than sitting down to eat with us! Even though none of this was my fault, I firmly believe that kids don’t learn as well if their parents and teachers don’t talk. So, I took this on as a priority to ‘fix’ my very first year. There was a lot of trial and error, of course nothing was fixed, but the most important piece was not viewing this dynamic as an issue the school needed to - or even could – solve alone. – Principal

My daughter’s teacher had a tough time keeping her in the class each day and finally reached out to ask if I had any suggestions. When we met, I asked her if she saw a pattern between what was going on in the classroom and the timing of my daughter’s meltdowns. It didn’t even take 10 minutes before we realized all of it was connected to the bathroom. I was able to explain why, given my daughter’s trauma history, negotiating a ‘simple’ walk to the bathroom was harder for her than other kids. It wasn’t long after that the same teacher asked me to do a small presentation on trauma reminders to all of the teachers who worked with my kid. Now I do a short training every year for our school and so do a few other parents. I know we have all learned something from this new collaboration on training, but I also think we have grown more comfortable learning from each other in general. – Parent

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Trauma-Informed Principle: Empowerment, Voice, and Choice

| CHALLENGE | OPPORTUNITY |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Traumatic events, by definition, take away control over what happens to us. | Any effort to increase empowerment and the opportunity to practice exercising control can itself be part of the healing process especially for those from marginalized groups. |

Empowerment, Voice, and Choice: The school aims to strengthen the experience of choice for staff and family members, and to recognize that every person’s experience is unique and requires an individualized approach. Throughout the school, and among the students and families, individuals’ strengths are recognized, built on, and validated, and new skills are developed as necessary.

| CATEGORIES | BEGINNING | INTERMEDIATE | ADVANCED |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Seeking Perspectives | Have parent feedback surveys and suggestion boxes that give feedback from family and community perspectives. | Seek to understand general complaints or criticisms made about families, the community, or the school. | Co-develop and implement a mission and values statement for your school, including values related to equity, conflict resolution, and addressing inequities. |
| Ensuring Voice One Size Fits One | Provide translations of ALL communication in ALL families’ native language. Ensure to address literacy levels, readability, and accessibility so ALL parents and caregivers are informed. Place students in classrooms based on their learning needs from educator assessments, with minimal caregiver input. | Use trained interpreters so students do not serve as interpreters for their parents. Invite caregiver questions and discuss options when making decisions regarding student placements and supports. | Celebrate language and cultural differences and have native speakers help adapt practices and oversee the use of interpreters. Have educators, caregivers, and community members share the challenge for the need for equity – giving each child what they need, not just what is available for everyone. |
| Discipline | Inform parents about discipline practices and notify them when their child is disciplined. | Work together with caregivers to make decisions about discipline, focused on giving each child what they need to best learn and grow rather than imposing standardized consequences. | The purpose of discipline is about accountability for harm caused and repair of relationships. Schools and families work together to put this into practice. |

Empowerment, Voice, and Choice in Action

We use surveys as one way to get feedback from families. Especially those who we might never otherwise hear from because they aren’t comfortable in our building or would culturally find it inappropriate to give an authority figure constructive feedback. At first, we weren’t sure the surveys were going to be effective because we got so few responses. What turned the corner is that we started adding a spot in our newsletter to share feedback we’d gotten directly from families and how we were able to use that feedback to help the entire school, and because our newsletter is already translated into several languages, we are reaching families that we often struggle the most to communicate with. – Parent Liaison

I’m not sure how I let it happen, but by the time my oldest was in 2nd grade I was head of our local PTA! At first, it was awful - parents complained all the time about specific teachers, about the school administration, even the hot lunch menu. Of course, teachers who came were offended and eventually, just stopped coming. School administration started sending emails and newsletter articles to families scolding them for complaining about ‘our community’ in a way that only added fuel to the fire. Fortunately, the school counselor and I spent a lot of hours at our kids’ soccer games together and decided to work together to try to get to the bottom of all the criticism. I eventually figured out that parents were mostly frustrated because they didn’t feel like they were being listened to. It wasn’t the change in lunch menus so much as the fact that lunches were changed, and they only found out after the fact when their kids started whining about the new chicken nuggets, causing some families daily battles over packing lunches. It turned out to be fairly easy from there to move forward - no one wants to fight, or have it turn into an us versus them mentality, and sometimes it’s as simple as ensuring people are heard and are part of the process in finding a solution. – Parent and PTA President

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Trauma-Informed Principle: Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues

| CHALLENGE | OPPORTUNITY |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Families of color, immigrant and undocumented families, families with children living with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and families who identify with the LGBTQ+ community have experienced disproportionate trauma and adversity. | Many, if not most, schools have adopted some efforts towards equity and inclusion. Trauma-informed efforts that address culture, gender and historical trauma align with those diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) approaches. |

Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues: The school actively moves past stereotypes and biases (e.g., based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, age, geography, etc.) and offers gender responsive services, leverages the healing value of traditional cultural connections, and recognizes and addresses historical and racial trauma.

| CATEGORIES | BEGINNING | INTERMEDIATE | ADVANCED |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Equity in Access | Work with caregivers to ensure students have what they need to participate in school. | Review discipline and graduation data and shift policies and norms to address inequities in discipline and graduation rates. | Use data to address & eliminate differences in outcome data regarding attendance, grades, discipline, gifted and talented designation, and extracurricular activities broken out by race, ethnicity, immigration status. |
| Inclusion | Ensure lessons and curricula are historically accurate. | Have families team up with staff to do presentations on celebrating diversity, culture, the role of women in society, and the legacy of oppression. | Weave the representation of marginalized communities/identities into areas of the school continuum including, but not limited to, curricula, food in the cafeteria, diversity of staff, and rituals and routines. |
| Valuing All Sources of Knowledge and Expertise | Have groups, such as a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), contribute content to the school's communications, events, and activities. Include parents, caregivers, and community members in planning groups to represent and reflect the diversity of your community. | Support educators learning from, and being influenced by, families. Ask families about, and engage in, their students' culture and community as a routine part of supporting your students and families. | Create leadership roles for parents and families by co-organizing and delivering activities and learning opportunities. Find ways that benefit families that are equal to their contributions, especially if you don't have funding to support caregivers in leadership roles. |
| Addressing Structural Racism Or Being an Anti-Racist School | Offer implicit bias or cultural humility training for staff, students, and families. | Train staff to understand how historical trauma and social injustices may impact a family's ability to trust the school system and individuals within it. | Establish a DEI committee that includes parents and staff to ensure your school embodies equity in decision making, staff representation, and conflict resolution considering families' unique social and cultural situations. |

Cultural, Historical, and Gender Issues in Action

I teach in the social studies department of a large urban school where the vast majority of our students receive free or reduced lunch and have very different experiences than other high schools that are more affluent and predominantly white student bodies. Fortunately, my department colleagues are equally committed to racial justice, and we worked together to start living out the implicit bias training our district mandated. At first, it was simply announcing our pronouns when we introduced ourselves to a new class and inviting local community leaders to come in to do guest lectures when it aligned with our syllabi. With the help of those local leaders and support from families, we have finally been able to get permission to update our curriculum.

- Teacher

People don't understand the stigma and oppression experienced by those with mental illness or intellectual disabilities. It still shocks me how many young men of color end up in the juvenile and adult jails who have PTSD. I'm so proud of our middle school though because a group of teachers, support staff, and parents got together and decided to make a change. I didn't know schools kept so much data, but we went through it all and saw lots of patterns.

- Teacher

FINAL THOUGHTS

“This work is journey, not a destination. A marathon not a sprint. Our lesson learned is to celebrate the smallest accomplishments while working toward larger change.”

– School Educator

There are many ways to use this tool. Some include:

- Establishing a committee of caregivers and school staff to review the rubric on a regular basis – celebrating milestones while continuing the work in partnership.
- Teaming with mental health providers in the school, or from the community, who have a trauma perspective. They may appreciate the opportunity to serve as allies in your work!
- Mapping this resource onto existing professional development efforts like Multi-Tiered Systems of Support or cultural humility efforts so that you are not doing more but strengthening what you are already doing.

For more resources on trauma-informed schools see: <https://www.nctsn.org/audiences/school-personnel>

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