

NCTSN Statement of Network Values

In 2000, the US Congress established the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) and defined its mission to raise the standard of care and increase access to services for children and families who experienced or witnessed traumatic events. As an initiative working to prevent, treat, and alleviate the consequences of child traumatic stress, the NCTSN promotes values that support the health and well-being of children and families and of the members of our Network as they work together to meet our mission. This NCTSN Statement of Network Values is aligned with our NCTSN mission and vision and is intended to expand on how we conduct ourselves as Network members, relate to one another as Network colleagues, and support and engage in our collaborative work on behalf of children and families who experience or witness trauma.

Purpose and Call to Action

The goal of this Statement of Network Values is to explicitly articulate how a trauma-informed and anti-racist approach can and should drive our collaborative work. This statement provides a framework for navigating difficult situations and suggests mechanisms for keeping our Network Values at the center of what we do. As a Network, we acknowledge that we haven't always gotten this right; these aspirational values reflect the Network culture that we are continually in the process of building. Each of us must be active participants in a process of self-reflection and education, recognizing how the privilege we hold impacts others and using this privilege in responsible ways. Additional background regarding the development of this statement is included at the end of the document.

Network Values

We promote and uphold the following values as essential to our work together in the NCTSN:

Collaboration. Bring integrity, transparency, and mutual respect to our work together.

As members of the NCTSN, we express appreciation for each other, respect differences of opinion, and actively seek to understand others' experiences. We frame discussions openly and inclusively, recognizing that we may have different preferred ways of getting and sharing information. We acknowledge that there is a hierarchy inherent in the structure of our Network—with differences in power and resources between Category I, II, and III centers, and Affiliates, and family and young adult partners. We are intentional about bridging our differences, reducing the impact of hierarchies, and including a seat at the table for everyone.

Courage. Demonstrate courage in facing difficult situations.

We directly address instances of disrespect, mistreatment, and/or harassment when they arise—stepping in, speaking out, and supporting others when we have the ability to do so. We listen and provide peer support to others who are navigating difficult situations, and we come together as a Network community to discuss challenging issues and to create a space for communication and repair.

Equity. Cultivate a Network that shares power and creates opportunities for all to thrive and contribute.

We promote equity at all levels of our Network, including in NCTSN leadership, structures, processes, and opportunities, creating spaces in which everyone can contribute equally and is recognized for their contributions. We challenge both individual instances and systemic forms of racism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, ageism, and other forms of discrimination. We maintain connection with the communities we serve and feel responsible to bring their needs and concerns forward in our collaborative work.

Accountability. Hold ourselves and each other accountable to our mission and shared values.

We recognize the privilege we hold based on our race/ethnicity, gender, academic credentials, and professional roles, and we actively work to understand how that privilege impacts others. We leverage the relationships we have built with one another in order to hold each other accountable whenever someone causes harm or contributes to unsafe spaces, and we take action to educate ourselves and remedy relationships and individuals who have been harmed by our own actions.

Safety. Maintain a safe, supportive community that promotes personal and professional development and relationships based on trust and open communication.

We are committed to making the Network feel safer and more relevant for people holding marginalized identities and creating virtual spaces in which everyone feels comfortable and supported to share and contribute. We show compassion for NCTSN colleagues, families, partners, and all those with whom we work, and we practice community and self-care and know and respect our own boundaries and those of others.

Network Action Plan

NCTSN Steering Committee. The NCTSN Steering Committee will incorporate the Network Values as part of their monthly meetings and convene regular progress reviews open to all who wish to participate. SC members will help to disseminate the Values and support the work of the SC Values Subcommittee.

SC Values Subcommittee. This subcommittee, which includes current and former Steering Committee members, will meet bimonthly and serve as a resource within the Network. Subcommittee members are charged with implementing the Values across the Network, providing peer support related to challenging situations, and elevating issues as needed to the full SC.

National Center. The NCCTS will work with the Steering Committee and Values Subcommittee to highlight individuals and groups who embody the Values, gather confidential feedback in an ongoing way through values@nctsn.org, and establish mechanisms for systematic assessment of progress.

Background

The NCTSN Steering Committee formally began developing this document in July 2019 in response to Network members' requests for a more explicit statement of the Network's values and the creation of an active process for applying these values to our internal work.

As a Network of independently funded organizations and affiliated professionals, each member organization has its own grant, policies, and procedures, and our various professional disciplines have ethical guidelines and codes of conduct. Decisions about which organizations are funded are made entirely by SAMHSA, without Network input. Given these governance and structural realities, this statement focuses on those areas of our work that we have the ability to help shape: most specifically, our collaborative relationships within the Network, and how the Network's structure and processes can support equity among its members.