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OCTOBER 18TH 2019

CREATING RESPECTFUL & TRAUMA-SENSITIVE SCHOOLS

MAKING RESEARCH RELEVANT

2019 ALLIANCE DISTRICT SYMPOSIUM

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Agenda Overview

Part 1: What are trauma-sensitive schools?

- Definition/ Traditional vs. Trauma-Sensitive
- Guiding principles/core domains/key elements

Part 2: How do you adopt a trauma-sensitive approach?

- Implementation pathway
- Proposed roll-out
- Considering next steps

Science-based Principles for Learning and Development

- Learning and development is both social and individual.
- **Relationships and stress drive and undermine learning.**
- **Neurobiological and neurohormonal processes (e.g., the impact of cortisol) can support or undermine learning.**
- Culture, identity, and subjective perceptions affect learning.
- Social and emotional and academic skills interrelate and can be learned.
- **The impacts of stress and adversity must and can be addressed, and resilience can be supported.**
- **Conditions for learning and teaching matter.**

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Why are schools addressing trauma?

"Hopefulness lies in knowing that while early experiences shape the nervous system, ongoing experiences can reshape it."
– Deb Dana

- Unaddressed trauma negatively impacts learning and academic success
- Schools risk misunderstanding, mislabeling, misdiagnosing, retraumatizing
- Educators affected by trauma less able to do their jobs effectively
- Schools can help to prevent mitigate the negative effects of trauma
- Adopting a trauma-sensitive approach supports positive school climate and conditions for learning

What is the level of understanding of trauma and its effects on students, parents, and staff across the schools in your districts?

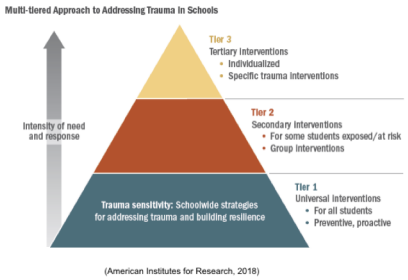
- ❑ High level of understanding
- ❑ Moderate level of understanding
- ❑ Very little understanding

PART 1
What are trauma-sensitive schools?

What are trauma-sensitive schools?

A trauma-sensitive school is one in which all aspects of the educational environment—from workforce training to engagement with students and families to procedures and policies—are grounded in an understanding of trauma and its impact and are designed to promote resilience for all.

May require changes to mission, vision, practices, policies, and culture.



(American Institutes for Research, 2018)

A Universal Approach

- Ensures support for all.
- Enhances the identification of students who need additional services.
- Creates an environment more likely to support and sustain Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions (e.g., therapeutic supports, counseling).
- Supports and augments other efforts with shared principles and complimentary practices (e.g., restorative practices, positive behavioral supports, social and emotional learning, school emergency planning).
- Fosters student and staff resilience.

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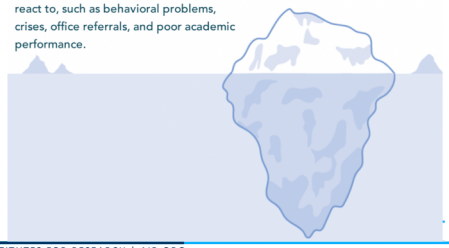
A Trauma-Sensitive Approach

IS . . .	IS NOT . . .
A way of operating	A program
Supported by a diverse set of champions	Driven by a single person/champion
An approach that aligns with and supports complimentary efforts	An approach adopted in isolation and siloed from approaches
An ongoing effort to shift perspective and practice schoolwide	A one-time training for select school leaders and staff

Trauma-Sensitivity As Systems Change

What's visible are situations we see and react to, such as behavioral problems, crises, office referrals, and poor academic performance.



Trauma-Sensitivity As Systems Change

What underlies these situations is school culture, including the attitudes, beliefs, and explanations of events that drive school practices and policies.

- Quality of relationships and communication
- Degree of trust
- Flexibility and openness to change

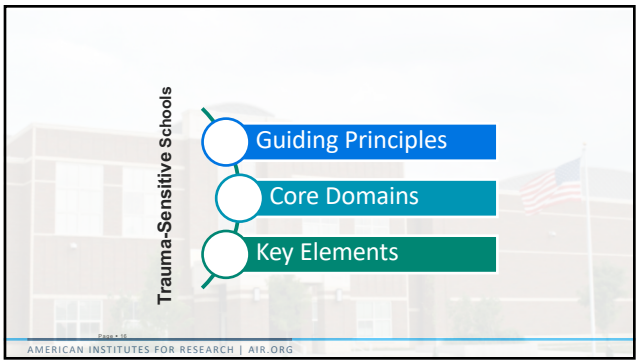
Shifting perspective and practice

How you view behaviors will influence how you respond.

Trauma glasses off	Trauma glasses on
Manipulative	*Getting needs met in ways that have worked in the past. Doing whatever is necessary to survive.*
Lazy	*Overwhelmed. Underdeveloped executive functioning skills.*
Resistant	*Mistrustful of others due to history of being hurt by others. Scared to make progress and then lose everything.*
Unmotivated	*Depressed. Fearful. Overwhelmed. "Frozen."*
Disrespectful	*Feeling threatened, unsafe, out of control.*
Attention-seeking	*Feeling disconnected, alone, or unheard by others. Looking for connection.*

Shifting Perspectives

Traditional Perspective	Trauma-Sensitive Perspective
Judgmental: Understands behaviors as the result of individual deficits (what's wrong with you?). Use negative labels	**Curious:** Considers whether behaviors may be ways of coping with traumatic experiences.. Negative lables replaced.
Individual: Focus for change is on the individual. Solution is for youth to "fix" their behavior.	**Environmental:** Takes a more holistic view and considers how external factors influence youth.
Power over/Obedience: Views adult authority and control as critical to student success.	**Power with/Collaboration:** Encourages student and family choice and control.
Punitive: Punitive discipline is the primary approach.	**Restorative:** Positive, strengths-based approaches to discipline are used most often.
Siloed: Support for students exposed to trauma should be left to counseling professionals.	**Integrated:** Assumes a shared responsibility for addressing trauma.


Trauma-Sensitive Schools
Guiding Principles
Core Domains
Key Elements
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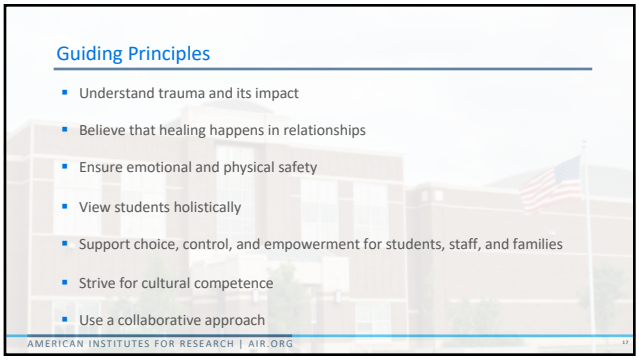
Guiding Principles
Understand trauma and its impact
Believe that healing happens in relationships
Ensure emotional and physical safety
View students holistically
Support choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families
Strive for cultural competence
Use a collaborative approach
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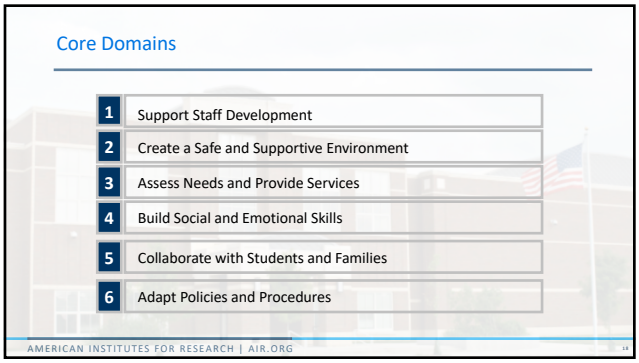
Core Domains
1 Support Staff Development
2 Create a Safe and Supportive Environment
3 Assess Needs and Provide Services
4 Build Social and Emotional Skills
5 Collaborate with Students and Families
6 Adapt Policies and Procedures
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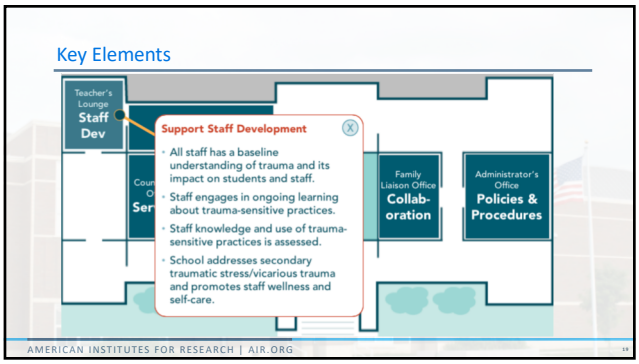
Key Elements
Teacher's Lounge
Staff Dev
Support Staff Development
All staff has a baseline understanding of trauma and its impact on students and staff.
Staff engages in ongoing learning about trauma-sensitive practices.
Staff knowledge and use of trauma-sensitive practices is assessed.
School addresses secondary traumatic stress/vicarious trauma and promotes staff wellness and self-care.
Family Liaison Office
Collab-oration
Administrator's Office
Policies & Procedures
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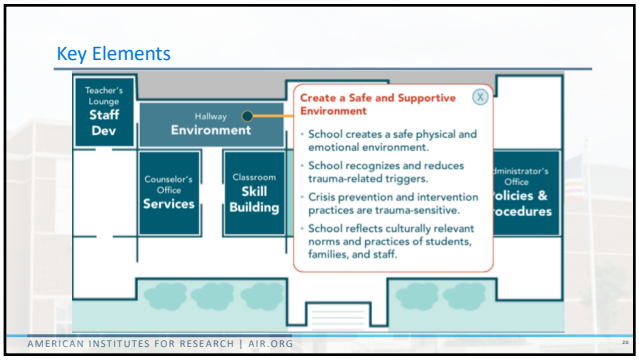
Key Elements
Teacher's Lounge
Staff Dev
Hallway
Environment
Create a Safe and Supportive Environment
School creates a safe physical and emotional environment.
School recognizes and reduces trauma-related triggers.
Crisis prevention and intervention practices are trauma-sensitive.
School reflects culturally relevant norms and practices of students, families, and staff.
Counselor's Office
Services
Classroom
Skill Building
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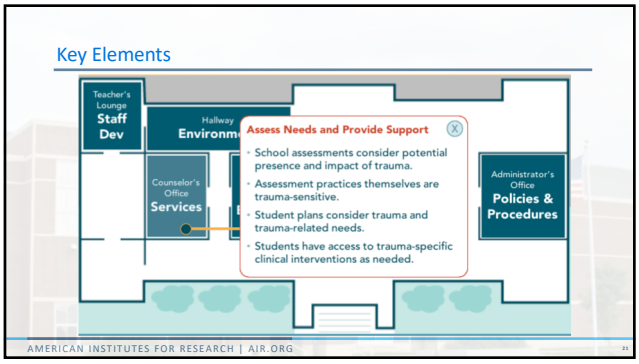
Key Elements
Teacher's Lounge
Staff Dev
Hallway
Assess Needs and Provide Support
School assessments consider potential presence and impact of trauma.
Assessment practices themselves are trauma-sensitive.
Student plans consider trauma and trauma-related needs.
Students have access to trauma-specific clinical interventions as needed.
Counselor's Office
Services
Administrator's Office
Policies & Procedures
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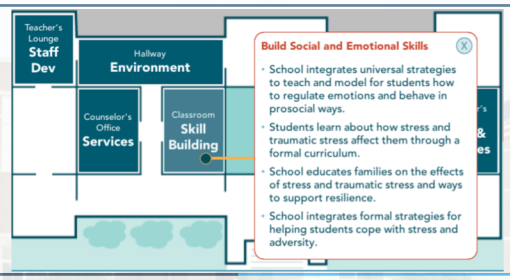
Key Elements



Trauma and Social Emotional Learning

Exposure to trauma can negatively affect:

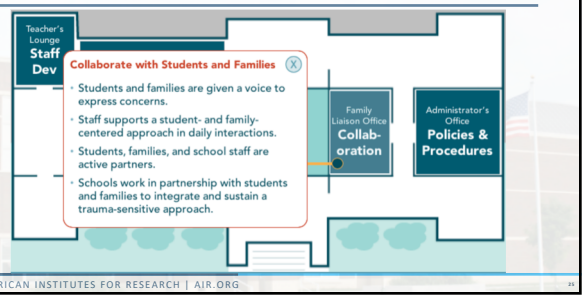
- Our capacity to self-regulate.
- Our awareness of self and others.
- Our ability to engage socially and form relationships.
- Our ability to attend to information, accurately assess situations, and make decisions.

Aligning → Integrating Trauma Sensitivity and SEL

How does each support the other?

Trauma Sensitivity	Social and Emotional Learning
Enhances awareness of the negative effects of trauma on social and emotional health	Builds competencies that strengthen resilience in the face of adversity
Identifies building social and emotional skills as a key component of a trauma-sensitive school	Can be incorporated at all tiers as part of a trauma-sensitive approach to support resilience for all and healing for students exposed to trauma
Fosters environments that promote social and emotional learning	Fosters environments that promote trauma sensitivity

Key Elements



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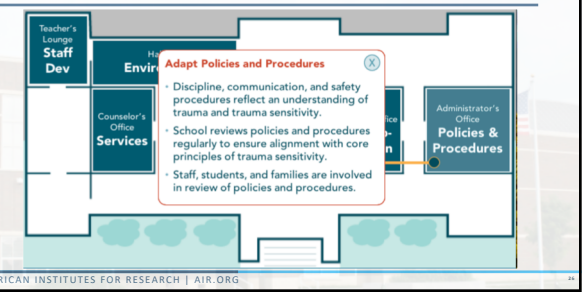


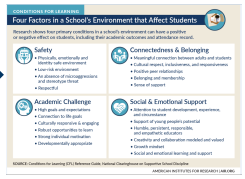
Trauma-Sensitive Classroom Strategies

1. Adopt a Trauma-Sensitive Perspective
2. Ensure Physical and Emotional Safety
3. Recognize and Reduce Trauma-Related Triggers
4. Prevent and Manage Crises
5. Foster Connection and Collaboration with Youth and Families
6. Support Self-Regulation and Social-Emotional Learning

Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package

Trauma-Sensitive Schools

- Guiding Principles
- Core Domains
- Key Elements



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Where is your school as it relates to adopting a trauma-informed approach?

- ❑ We are actively engaged in adopting a schoolwide trauma-sensitive approach (e.g., have structures and plans in place)
- ❑ We have started (e.g., staff training/awareness-building), but have not yet moved to schoolwide adoption.
- ❑ We are at the beginning

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PART 2

How do you adopt a trauma-sensitive approach?

Implementation Pathway| Proposed Roll-Out | Next Steps

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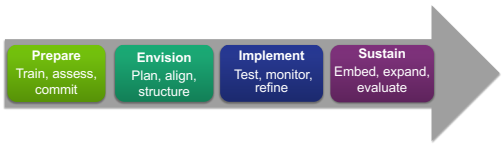
Roadmap for Implementation



Phase 1: Prepare (Train, Assess, Commit)

- Communicate with staff regarding intention to support trauma sensitivity.
- Create infrastructure to support ongoing change (core multidisciplinary team).
- Educate school staff about trauma and trauma-sensitivity.
- Assess current capacity and readiness for change.

Assessment of Current Practice

Staff Survey for Assessing Current Practice

Please rate on a scale of 1–4 (1: strongly disagree–4: strongly agree) the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

1. Support staff development	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. All staff members receive training on different types of trauma and effects on students and staff.	1	2	3	4
2. Staff knowledge of trauma is assessed pre- and post-training.	1	2	3	4
3. Topics related to trauma are regularly addressed during professional development events.	1	2	3	4
4. The school supports ongoing learning related to trauma and trauma-sensitive practices.	1	2	3	4
5. School staff has a clear understanding of what it looks like to use a trauma-sensitive approach when working with students.	1	2	3	4
6. School staff has a clear understanding of what it looks like to use a trauma-sensitive approach when working with parents.	1	2	3	4
7. Discussions about trauma and trauma-sensitive practices are addressed in staff meetings.	1	2	3	4
8. The school addresses the effects of trauma on staff (e.g., secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma).	1	2	3	4

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7. Discussions about trauma and trauma-sensitive practices are addressed in staff meetings.	1	2	3	4
8. The school addresses the effects of trauma on staff (e.g., secondary traumatic stress, vicarious trauma).	1	2	3	4

2. Create safe and supportive environments	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The school's physical environment (e.g., classroom and common areas) is safe for staff, students, and families.	1	2	3	4
2. The school creates a welcoming physical space.	1	2	3	4
3. The school environment reflects the cultures of the students, families, and staff in the school community.	1	2	3	4
4. The school has policies around bullying and violence.	1	2	3	4
5. Antibullying and violence policies are consistently enforced.	1	2	3	4
6. The school minimizes potential trauma-related triggers (reminders) for students in the school environment.	1	2	3	4
7. Staff consider trauma and trauma-sensitive approaches when responding to student crises.	1	2	3	4
8. Staff interactions with students communicate respect (e.g., approach, tone).	1	2	3	4
9. Staff interactions with parents communicate respect (e.g., approach, tone).	1	2	3	4
10. The school conveys respect for cultural differences.	1	2	3	4

3. Assess needs and provide support	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. School-based assessments (e.g., psychosocial/behavioral) consider history of trauma.	1	2	3	4
2. Student assessments are conducted in a safe and respectful manner.	1	2	3	4
3. Students and families are active partners in setting goals for students.	1	2	3	4
4. Individual student plans (e.g., IEPs, behavioral plans) consider trauma and trauma-related needs.	1	2	3	4
5. The school provides or refers students to trauma-specific mental health services when needed.	1	2	3	4

4. Build social and emotional skills	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. The school incorporates formal strategies or curriculum for building social and emotional skills.	1	2	3	4
2. The school educates students about stress and its effects.	1	2	3	4
3. The school educates parents about stress and its effects.	1	2	3	4
4. School staff teach students strategies (verbal and nonverbal) for coping with stress.	1	2	3	4

5. Collaboration with students and families	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Staff is aware of how exposure to trauma may influence relationships with students and parents.	1	2	3	4
2. Staff are aware of cultural backgrounds of students and families in the school community.	1	2	3	4
3. Staff supports student choice and control.	1	2	3	4
4. Staff supports parent choice and control.	1	2	3	4
5. Staff upholds student and family privacy and confidentially.	1	2	3	4
6. Students and families are given a voice to express concerns and ideas.	1	2	3	4
7. Staff demonstrate respect for cultural differences in their interactions with students and families.	1	2	3	4
8. Staff work to foster a sense of partnership with students and families.	1	2	3	4
9. Staff maintains regular two-way communication with parents about their child's learning.	1	2	3	4

6. Adapt policies and procedures	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. School policies and procedures align with a trauma-sensitive approach.	1	2	3	4
2. Discipline practices are informed by an understanding of trauma and are designed to avoid causing additional harm.	1	2	3	4
3. School safety and emergency procedures are conducted using a trauma-sensitive approach.	1	2	3	4
4. Policies and procedures are reviewed regularly for their alignment with a trauma-sensitive approach.	1	2	3	4
5. School staff are involved in reviewing and developing policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4
6. Students are involved in reviewing and developing policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4
7. Parents are involved in reviewing and developing policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4

Readiness Assessment

Staff Survey to Assess School Readiness for Change

Please rate on a scale of 1–4 (1= strongly disagree–4 strongly agree) the extent to which you agree with the following statements.

Section 1	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. A trauma-sensitive approach is different from existing universal supports already in place for students at our school.	1	2	3	4
2. Trauma sensitivity would add significant value to existing practices and approaches at our school.	1	2	3	4
3. Trauma sensitivity is consistent with our school values and culture.	1	2	3	4
4. A trauma-sensitive approach is compatible (aligns well) with existing programs and approaches already being used at our school.	1	2	3	4
5. Adopting a trauma-sensitive approach would help us meet the needs of students and staff in our school community.	1	2	3	4
6. It is realistic and achievable for our school to implement trauma-sensitive practices schoolwide.	1	2	3	4
7. Positive outcomes from adopting a trauma-sensitive approach will be easily visible to staff.	1	2	3	4
8. Adopting a trauma-sensitive approach is a priority for our school.	1	2	3	4
Section 2	**Strongly Disagree**	**Disagree**	**Agree**	**Strongly Agree**
1. My school operates well in the day-to-day manner.	1	2	3	4
2. Staff receives the support they need in their varied positions.	1	2	3	4
3. Staff feels respected and valued.	1	2	3	4
4. Leadership supports existing interventions and approaches.	1	2	3	4
5. School staff is open to making changes and trying new things.	1	2	3	4
6. Staff receives adequate training to adopt new approaches.	1	2	3	4
7. Staff in different roles have opportunities to collaborate.	1	2	3	4
8. Communication across support, instructional, and leadership staff in my school is bidirectional, clear, and timely.	1	2	3	4
9. Staff has the general skills, expertise, and education needed to do their jobs.	1	2	3	4

Readiness = Motivation x General capacity x Specific capacity

- How is a trauma-sensitive approach different than what is already in place universally to support students?
- To what extent does trauma sensitivity align with/ add value to existing practices and approaches?
- How difficult will it be to implement a universal, trauma-sensitive approach?
- How well do we currently operate (communication, transparency, trust, flexibility, staff support)? What might need to change to fully support a trauma-sensitive approach (policies, procedures, priorities)?
- How open are we to trying new things?
- How receptive are school staff to change?
- What knowledge, skills, and abilities are needed to become a trauma-sensitive school/district?
- Who in the school/district will lead the process and champion trauma-sensitivity?

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9. Staff has the general skills, expertise, and education needed to do their jobs.	1	2	3	4

Section 3	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Staff has the knowledge needed to adopt a trauma-sensitive approach.	1	2	3	4
2. Staff has the skills needed to adopt a trauma-sensitive approach.	1	2	3	4
3. There are instructional and non-instructional staff who would champion this approach in our school.	1	2	3	4
4. Staff has clear support from leadership to adopt a trauma-sensitive approach.	1	2	3	4
5. Staff has enough resources to adopt a trauma-sensitive approach.	1	2	3	4
6. Our school has the systems and processes in place to adopt a trauma-sensitive approach.	1	2	3	4

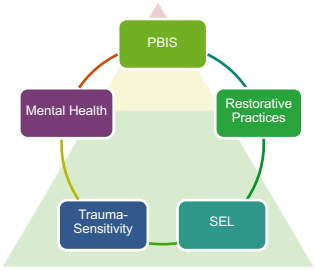
Phase 1: Prepare - Discussion

- What are the potential challenges/barriers at this stage?
- How can those be avoided/addressed?
- What needs to be in place to increase the likelihood of success at this stage?
- What may need to be adjusted?

Phase 2: Envision (Plan, Align, Structure)

- Review assessment results.
- Identify focus areas across domains.
- Develop an action plan.
- Develop a feedback loop.
- Develop a plan for monitoring progress and impact.
- Continue to educate staff.
- Align with other efforts.

Alignment and Integration



Alignment and Integration

Align:

- complimentary work groups and teams;
- professional development activities; and
- implementation and monitoring processes.

Phase 2: Envision - Discussion

- How can you align trauma-sensitivity with existing efforts, structures, and plans?
- What are the potential challenges/barriers at this stage?
- How can those be avoided/addressed?
- What needs to be in place to increase the likelihood of success at this stage?
- What may need to be adjusted?

Phase 3: Implement (Test, Monitor, Refine)

- Implement action plans.
- Test out new strategies (practices, policies, procedures).
- Monitor progress.
- Refine plans as needed.

Phase 3: Implement - Discussion

- What are the potential challenges/barriers at this stage?
- How can those be avoided/addressed?
- What needs to be in place to increase the likelihood of success at this stage?
- What may need to be adjusted?

Next Steps

- Consider where your school is in the process of adopting a trauma-sensitive approach.
- Gauge the level of interest in adopting more fully.
- Identify an intentional, planned process for implementation.

Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package

UNDERSTAND Trauma and Its Impact

- E-resource
- Companion slide presentation and activity packet for in-person training

BUILD Trauma-Sensitive Schools

- Online module for all staff
- Handouts
- Facilitation Guide

LEAD Trauma-Sensitive Schools

- Online module for leaders
- Action Guide
- Facilitation Guide

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/trauma-sensitive-schools-training-package-0

CONTACT:
KATHLEEN GUARINO, SENIOR TA CONSULTANT, AIR
KGUARINO@AIR.ORG

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