



Understanding Trauma and Fostering Resilience When Working with Afghan Refugee Students and Their Families



Session 3: Understanding Trauma and Resilience

Thursday, November 16, 2023, 3:00 – 4:00 PM



Brandon Stratford, M.S.W., Ph.D.
Deputy Program Area Director, Education
Child Trends



Cassidy Guros, BA
Policy Analyst, Education
Child Trends



<https://www.childtrends.org/>

School Learning Conditions

Our research work spans the development, implementation, and evaluation of policies, programs, and practices that contribute to inclusive and positive learning environments for all students.

We also provide technical assistance at the national, state, local, and individual levels to improve student well-being, school safety, and instructional environments. We also help educators understand, identify, and address student and family needs.

School Health

We conduct program evaluations and provide technical assistance to support policies, programs, and practices that prioritize equity and whole child development. Our work:

- Analyzes and disseminates information related to school health policies;
- Helps K-12 leaders make informed decisions;
- Promotes expansion of school-based services; and,
- Encourages cross-sector collaboration to support student outcomes.

School Discipline

Through literature reviews, analyses of primary and secondary data, and technical assistance, we support prevention efforts and positive approaches to school discipline. This work:

- Shines a light on disparities in the administration of school discipline
- Emphasizes supportive environments as key to reducing reliance on exclusionary discipline; and,
- Aims to understand how policy changes impact school-level disciplinary practices.

Scan for more information:



School Mental Health

We identify and support policies, programs, and practices that bolster students' mental and emotional well-being. Our work:

- Improves coordinated mental health services at schools;
- Expands the availability of school-based mental health services in all 50 states;
- Improves services for LGBTQ+ youth; and,
- Identifies evidence-based solutions to address COVID-19-related mental health emergencies in youth.

School Employee Wellness

Our school employee wellness work expands the field's understanding beyond the physical and mental wellness of instructional staff, to emphasize the importance of ameliorating workplace stressors while also supporting wellness-enhancing habits among all types and levels of staff.

Child Trends has developed a framework and set of research-based tools to help education and health leaders engage in an inclusive, data-driven process to advance equitable school employee wellness.

Higher Education

We focus on understanding the learning and life experiences of those students for whom many of our nation's colleges and universities were not designed. Our work:

- Centers and uplifts the experiences of parenting students; and
- Creates learning conditions that are supportive of the needs and strengths of diverse college students.



Series Overview

This three-part series is intended to equip school and school district staff with knowledge and skills related to stress, trauma, and resilience



1

Describe how trauma, adversity, and resilience influence refugee students

2

Recognize how our own identities and experiences can influence our work with refugee students and their families

3

Identify ways schools can support positive mental health for refugee students



Applying Trauma-Informed Principles to Group Commitments

1 Be present and participate as much as you are able.

2 Respect the diverse experiences and opinions of others.



1. Safety



2. Trustworthiness
& Transparency



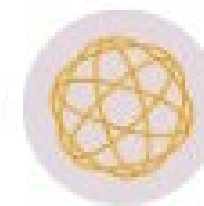
3. Peer Support



4. Collaboration
& Mutuality



5. Empowerment,
Voice, & Choice



6. Cultural,
Historical, &
Gender Issues



Session 3 Learning Objectives

1

Describe the seven principles of trauma sensitive schools.

2

Identify at least three classroom strategies for creating safe and healing environments for students.

3

Identify at least three schoolwide strategies for creating safe and healing environments for students and their families.



A quick review from the past two sessions

trauma

Trauma is...



an event, or series of events,



experienced as physically or emotionally harmful



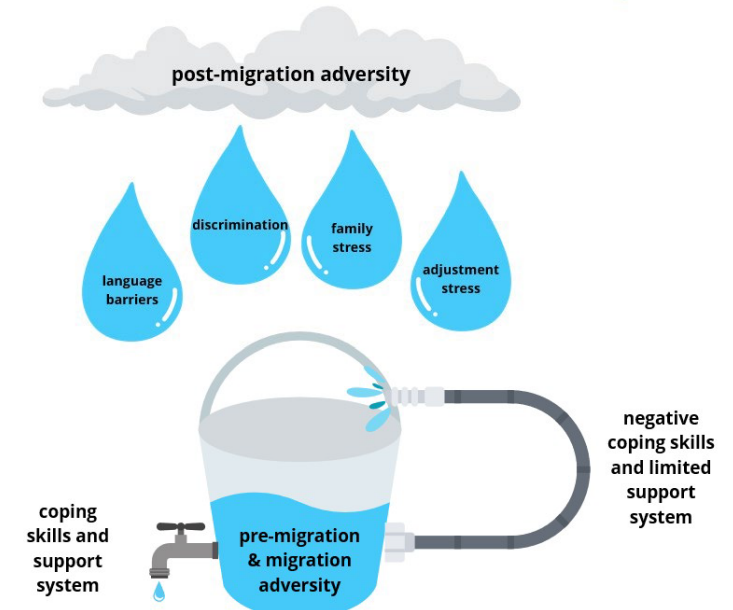
that has lasting effects.

resilience



Over time, the cumulative impact of positive life experiences and coping skills can shift the fulcrum's position, making it easier to achieve positive outcomes. Play Tipping the Scales: The Resilience Game to learn more.

refugee stress bucket





Identity development for refugee students

Protective factors

Risk factors

**Balance old
& new.**



Adult roles.

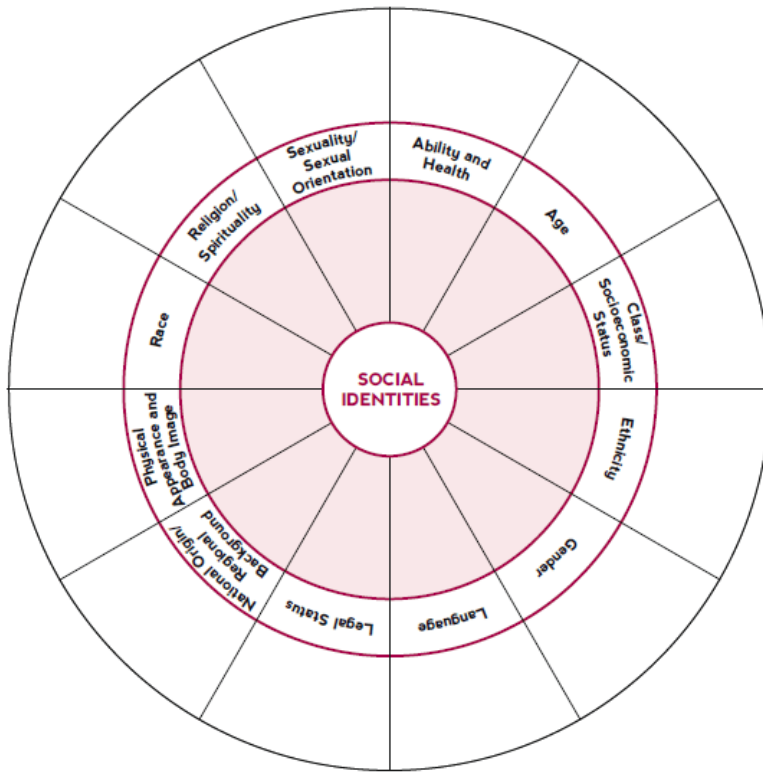
**Positive
relationships.**



**Identity-based
harassment.**



Acknowledging how our identities influence our work



WHEEL OF POWER/PRIVILEGE



Adapted from ccrweb.ca

@sylviaaduckworth




seven principles of trauma sensitive schools

1. Understand trauma and its impact.
2. Believe that healing happens in relationships.
3. Ensure emotional and physical safety.
4. View students holistically.
5. Support choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families.
6. Strive for cultural competence.
7. Use a collaborative approach.




Links on this slide are hosted by websites outside of our control. No guarantees can be made or implied as to the accessibility of the linked content.



National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
 Engagement • Safety • Environment

- SCHOOL CLIMATE IMPROVEMENT
- TOPICS
- EVENTS
- RESOURCES
- TA SERVICES
- STATE PROFILES

Home



Trauma-Sensitive Schools TRAINING PACKAGE

UNDERSTAND • BUILD • LEAD

Schools play a significant role in supporting the health and well-being of children and youth, including those affected by traumatic experiences. In a trauma-sensitive school, 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.

The *Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package* offers school and district administrators and staff a framework and roadmap for adopting a trauma-sensitive approach school- or district wide. The Training Package includes a variety of resources for educating school staff about trauma and trauma-sensitive practices and for providing school leaders with a step-by-step process for implementing a universal, trauma-informed approach using package materials. School and district leaders are encouraged to begin by reviewing the Implementation Guide for an overview of the package components and their intended use.

[Find out which package components may be best for you.](#)

TRAINING PACKAGE


- Home
- Implementation Guide
- Understanding Trauma and Its Impact
- Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools
- Leading Trauma-Sensitive Schools

Upcoming Events

- Supporting Military-Connected Children in the Education System
- Human Trafficking Webinar Series - Understanding Child Labor Exploitation in the U.S. and How Schools Can Help Address It
- Parent Partnership: Secretary Cardona and Friends Celebrate National Parent Involvement Day
- The 2023 Annual Conference on Advancing School Mental Health

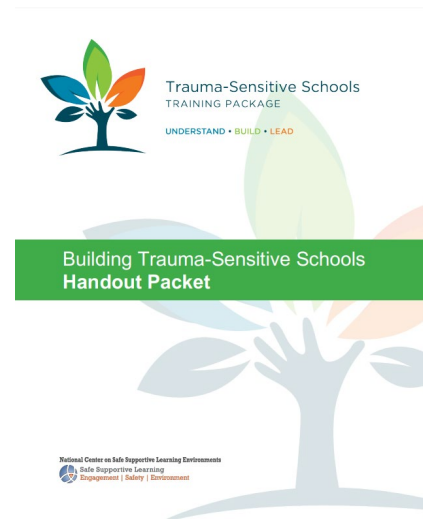
[All events »](#)

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



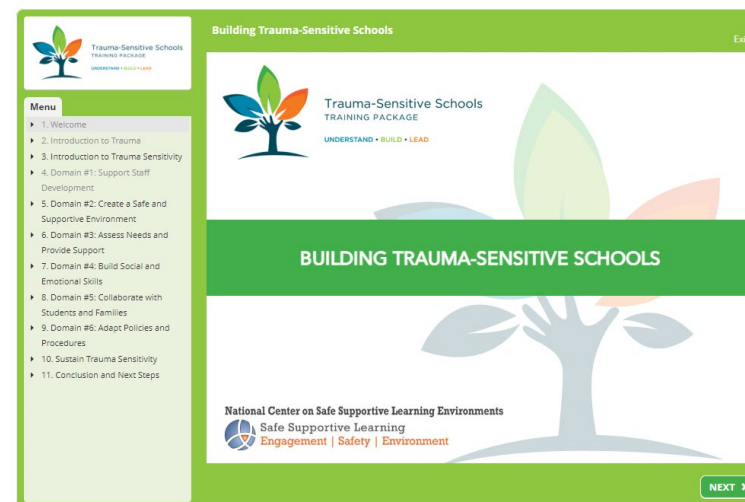
Trauma-Sensitive Schools TRAINING PACKAGE
 UNDERSTAND • BUILD • LEAD

Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools Handout Packet



National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
 Safe Supportive Learning | Engagement | Safety | Environment

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/TSS_Building_Handout_Packet_ALL.pdf



Building Trauma-Sensitive Schools

Trauma-Sensitive Schools TRAINING PACKAGE
 UNDERSTAND • BUILD • LEAD

BUILDING TRAUMA-SENSITIVE SCHOOLS

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments
 Safe Supportive Learning | Engagement | Safety | Environment

Menu

- 1. Welcome
- 2. Introduction to Trauma
- 3. Introduction to Trauma Sensitivity
- 4. Domain #1: Support Staff Development
- 5. Domain #2: Create a Safe and Supportive Environment
- 6. Domain #3: Assess Needs and Provide Support
- 7. Domain #4: Build Social and Emotional Skills
- 8. Domain #5: Collaborate with Students and Families
- 9. Domain #6: Adapt Policies and Procedures
- 10. Sustain Trauma Sensitivity
- 11. Conclusion and Next Steps

https://airhsdlearning.airws.org/building-trauma-sensitive-schools/story_html5.html



Understand trauma and its impact.



In a trauma-sensitive school, all staff share a common understanding of trauma and its impact on students, families, and staff and a joint mission to **create learning environments that acknowledge and address the effects of trauma on school success.**



Secondary traumatic stress: symptoms

- **Hypervigilance** Excessive alertness for potential threats or dangers at and outside of work. Always being “on” and “on the lookout”
- **Poor Boundaries** Lacking a balanced sense of your role so that you take on too much, step in and try to control events, have difficulty leaving work at work, or take the work too personally
- **Avoidance** Coping with stress by shutting down and disconnecting
- **Inability to Empathize/Numbing** Unable to remain emotionally connected to the work
- **Addictions** Attaching to distractions to check out from work, personal life, or both



Secondary traumatic stress: self assessment

- **Chronic Exhaustion/ Physical Ailments** Experiencing physical, emotional, and spiritual fatigue or inexplicable aches and pains exceeding what you expect for an ordinary busy day or week
- **Minimizing** Trivializing a current experience by comparing it with another situation that we regard as more severe
- **Anger and Cynicism** Using cynicism or anger to cope other intense feelings that we may not understand or know how to manage
- **Feelings of Professional Inadequacy** Becoming increasingly unsure of yourself professionally, second-guessing yourself, feeling insecure about tasks that you once felt confident to perform



School strategies to support staff

Support and supervision

	The school offers an employee assistance program.
	Employee job descriptions and responsibilities are clearly defined.
	All staff members have access to regular supervision or support by administrators or peers.
	Staff members have access to ongoing support for managing workload and time needed to complete tasks.
	Staff members are encouraged to understand their own stress reactions and take appropriate steps to develop their own self-care plans.
	Staff members are regularly supported in practicing self-care strategies.
	Staff members are welcome to discuss concerns about the school or their jobs with administrators without negative consequences (e.g., being treated differently, feeling like their jobs are in jeopardy, or having their concerns affect their positions on the team).
	Staff members are encouraged to take breaks, including lunch and vacation time.
	The school fosters team-based support and mentoring for staff.

In the chat, please share...



- How many strategies from the list are happening at your school (there are a total of 9 listed)?



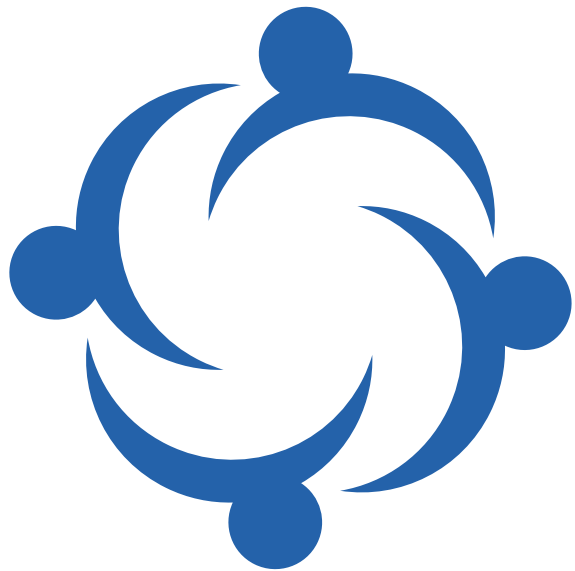
Believe that healing happens in relationships.



Trauma-sensitive schools believe that establishing safe, authentic, and **positive** relationships can be corrective and restorative to survivors of trauma and can be resilience-building for all. This principle encompasses relationships among and between **school staff, students, and families.**



Ensure emotional and physical safety.



Trauma-sensitive schools are committed to establishing a safe physical and emotional learning environment where **basic needs are met; safety measures are in place; and staff responses are consistent, predictable, and respectful.**



Common triggers

Students

- Loud, chaotic environments
- Physical touch
- Confinement
- Uncertainty about expectations
- Changes in routine
- Witnessing violence between peers, such as fighting
- Emergency drills
- Emergency vehicles and police or fire personnel
- Being harassed or intimidated by others
- Being asked to discuss difficult topics
- Feeling embarrassed or ashamed
- Feeling out of control
- Others?

Parents

- Feeling disrespected by the school staff
- Being called into a meeting to address their child's behaviors
- Uncertainty about what is happening
- Lack of control over decisions being made about their child
- History of negative experiences with the education system
- Others?

In the chat,
please share...



- What strategies do you use to reduce potential trauma-related triggers for students?

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Building_TSS_Handout_3secondary_trauma.pdf



View students holistically.



Schools invested in taking a trauma-sensitive approach **understand the interrelated nature of emotional and physical health and academic success** and the need to view students holistically and build skills in all areas.



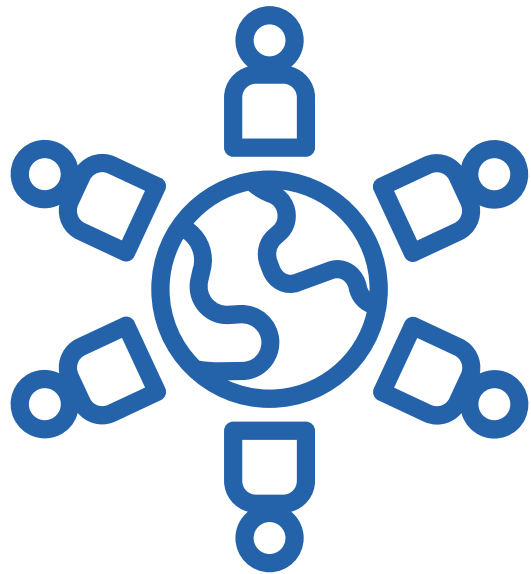
Support choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families



Trauma-sensitive schools operate in a way that supports choice, control, and empowerment for students, families, and staff and empowers all by **building skills that enhance sense of mastery.**



Strive for cultural competence.



Trauma-sensitive schools strive for cultural competence by acknowledging and respecting diversity within the school; considering the relationship between culture, traumatic experiences, safety, healing, and resilience; and **using approaches that align with the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students, families, and the broader community**



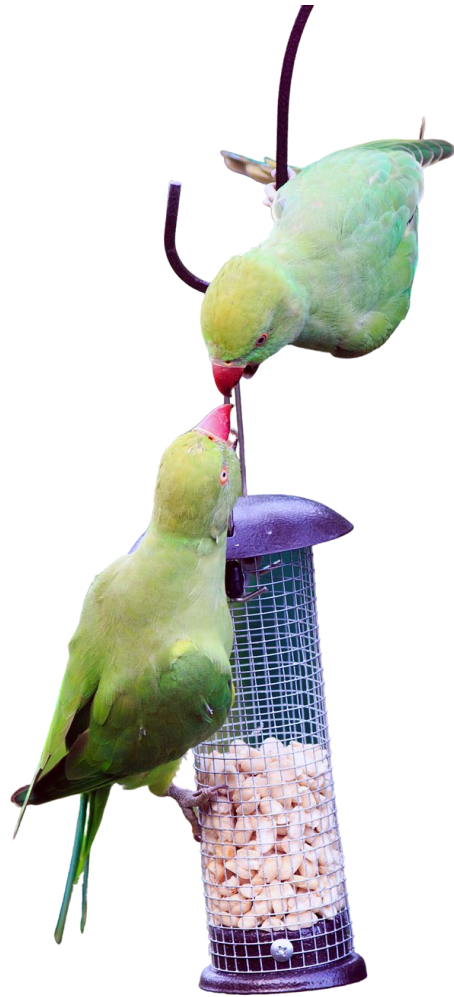
Use a collaborative approach.



Trauma-sensitive schools use a collaborative approach with students, families, and staff. This approach includes **sharing power and decision making** across all levels of the school and seeing students and families as partners.



Catching two birds with one seed.





Community circles to build relationships





seven principles of trauma sensitive schools

1. Understand trauma and its impact.
2. Believe that healing happens in relationships.
3. Ensure emotional and physical safety.
4. View students holistically.
5. Support choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families.
6. Strive for cultural competence.
7. Use a collaborative approach.



Language access to collaborate with families





seven principles of trauma sensitive schools

1. Understand trauma and its impact.
2. Believe that healing happens in relationships.
3. Ensure emotional and physical safety.
4. View students holistically.
5. Support choice, control, and empowerment for students, staff, and families.
6. Strive for cultural competence.
7. Use a collaborative approach.



In the chat, please share...



- What is one thing that you will take away from this series?



Resources

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Building_TSS_Handout_3secondary_trauma.pdf

<https://sites.northwestern.edu/msaatnu/2020/07/09/the-i-in-identity-series-identity-wheel-self-reflection/>

https://airhsdlearning.airws.org/building-trauma-sensitive-schools/story_html5.html

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

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/TSS_Building_Handout_Packet_ALL.pdf

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arIGJX2AR3g&list=PLoU659hwTdDbMJCSPzsqtk_mhuK_BMzbD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BMp6IoLDlvY>

Questions? Feel free to reach out!

bstratford@childtrends.org

cgueros@childtrends.org