

Trauma-Informed Schools

Walk-Through Checklist

What are Trauma-Informed Schools?

A trauma-informed school is a safe & respectful environment that enables students to:

- ✦ Build caring relationships with adults & peers
- ✦ Self-regulate emotions & behaviors
- ✦ Succeed academically

...while supporting physical health & well-being

The 6 Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Schools

Cultural Humility
Safety
Trustworthiness & Transparency
Collaboration & Mutuality
Empowerment, Voice & Choice
Peer Support

What is a Trauma-Informed Schools Checklist?

The purpose of this checklist is to identify areas of effectiveness and growth in creating a trauma-informed school environment. Pages 3-8 pertain to the 6 principles of trauma-informed schools. Each principle is broken down by indicators, which are designed to assess the degree to which the 6 key principles are being implemented across a range of settings in the school (e.g., classroom, hallways, common outdoor spaces, etc.).

This checklist is a product of the New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative, a program of the New Orleans Health Department that includes partnerships with community-based organizations and schools in New Orleans. It draws on existing instruments designed to assess trauma-informed policies and practices, and incorporates feedback from New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative partner schools.

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Walk-Through Checklist

Checklist Instructions:

1. Determine which setting you are assigned to observe. **All of your responses on the Checklist should pertain to this setting alone.**
2. **Complete the sections on this page**—include the name of your school, the day the observation was done, and your name(s). Indicate which setting you will be observing using the check boxes. **Do not indicate more than one setting.**
3. **Complete pages 3-8** - Mark the box that corresponds to the degree to which an indicator is in place in the setting that you observe – the options are *not at all*, *partially*, *mostly*, and *fully*. **Provide a response for EACH AND EVERY INDICATOR AND ALL 6 PRINCIPLES – DO NOT SKIP any indicators or pages.** If the indicator is not applicable to your setting, mark *no opportunity to observe*.
4. You can complete the Checklist while you are physically present in your assigned setting, **OR** after observing your setting. Either way, it is **recommended that you read over the checklist beforehand** in order to familiarize yourself with principles and their indicators.
5. Write any observations or reactions to the Checklist or assigned setting in the spaces.

School: _____ Date of Walk-Through: _____

Observer(s): _____

Setting Observed:			
<input type="checkbox"/> Office	<input type="checkbox"/> Upper school classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Lower school classroom	<input type="checkbox"/> Playground
<input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria	<input type="checkbox"/> Upper school behavioral intervention space	<input type="checkbox"/> Lower school behavioral intervention space	<input type="checkbox"/> Hallway(s)
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher lounge	<input type="checkbox"/> Gymnasium	<input type="checkbox"/> Bus lines	

Cultural Humility

Degree to which the principle is present:

- Indicator is **not at all** in place 1
- Indicator is **partially** in place 2
- Indicator is **mostly** in place 3
- Indicator is **fully** in place 4
- No opportunity to observe x

Cultural Humility Indicators	1	2	3	4	x
Spaces are accessible and inviting to students and visitors.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students, staff and visitors are spoken to positively and politely.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procedures and rules are easily understood by students and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Procedures and rules are spoken and/or posted in languages spoken by students and families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A dedicated space (announcement board, etc.) exists to communicate to students, staff and visitors about school-wide announcements, policies and community events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Examples of student work (art, research projects, etc.) are prominently displayed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pictures/symbols representing the history and culture of the current student population are prominently displayed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pictures/symbols representing the history of the school and/or its neighborhood are prominently displayed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There is diversity among the staff in this setting (race, gender, age, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are permitted to express their culture and identity through food, dress, music, language, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Observations:

Assessing Trauma-Informed Principle #2:

Safety

Degree to which the principle is present:	
Indicator is not at all in place	1
Indicator is partially in place	2
Indicator is mostly in place	3
Indicator is fully in place	4
No opportunity to observe	x

Safety Indicators	1	2	3	4	x
All visitors to the building are easily identifiable as visitors (name tags, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spaces are actively supervised by staff members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spaces are well-lit.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spaces are clean.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spaces are free of clutter, including unused furniture and the storage of items not used daily	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spaces are clearly designated and identifiable (classrooms, main office, gymnasium, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency procedures (evacuation, fire alarm, tornado, lock-down, etc.) are prominently displayed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency procedures (evacuation, fire alarm, tornado, lock-down, etc.) are easily understood by students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff maintain a calm demeanor when interacting with students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff model emotional control for students (narrating or demonstrating their own emotional regulation strategies).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff implement self-regulation skill building for students (e.g., breathing, movement, relaxation, calming activities).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consequences for failing to meet expectations are delivered calmly and consistently by staff.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Observations:					

Trustworthiness & Transparency

Degree to which the principle is present:

- Indicator is **not at all** in place 1
- Indicator is **partially** in place 2
- Indicator is **mostly** in place 3
- Indicator is **fully** in place 4
- No opportunity to observe x

Trustworthiness & Transparency Indicators	1	2	3	4	x
Activities are structured in predictable ways (explicit routines, specific directions, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff consistently employ established procedures for student behavior (i.e., hallway pass systems, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student expectations are prominently displayed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student expectations are applicable to the space in which they are displayed (hallway expectations, bathroom expectations, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Student expectations are clear, concise and positive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schedules and posted events are prominently displayed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Schedules and posted events are current (not out of date).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Changes, including new people and activities, are foreshadowed so students and families can predict what will happen next.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive supports for student behavior are employed by school staff (proactively stating reminders for expectations, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff speak positively and respectfully to students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults assume that students' intentions are positive.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults refrain from power struggles with students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff explore problems with students (i.e., what's going on, what's wrong) before discussing consequences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Natural consequences that are logically related to the misbehavior are utilized whenever possible.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff engage in active listening with students (i.e. listening carefully, restating the problem, empathizing with feelings and needs).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Observations:					

Degree to which the principle is present:

Collaboration & Mutuality

- Indicator is **not at all** in place **1**
- Indicator is **partially** in place **2**
- Indicator is **mostly** in place **3**
- Indicator is **fully** in place **4**
- No opportunity to observe **x**

Collaboration & Mutuality Indicators	1	2	3	4	x
Staff recognize and reward students' strengths and interests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students learn about staff members' interests and hobbies.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students and staff interact collaboratively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members help students identify their personal strengths.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are encouraged to be active participants in classroom decision making.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
There are multiple opportunities to respond and participate during instruction and/or activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members help students use personal strengths to address challenging behaviors and situations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Restorative conversations or other strategies are utilized following disciplinary action.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Observations:					

Empowerment, Voice & Choice

Degree to which the principle is present:

- Indicator is **not at all** in place **1**
- Indicator is **partially** in place **2**
- Indicator is **mostly** in place **3**
- Indicator is **fully** in place **4**
- No opportunity to observe **x**

Indicator of Empowerment, Voice & Choice	1	2	3	4	x
Students are able to make personal choices throughout the school day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members actively and consistently seek out student perspectives and opinions (community circles, one-on-one conversations, etc.).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information is presented in a variety of ways to students.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning is assessed in a variety of ways.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are encouraged to learn new skills.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are encouraged to build a positive self-identity.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are encouraged to build a sense of self-efficacy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are encouraged to develop emotional and behavioral self-awareness and regulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are encouraged to practice emotional and behavioral self-awareness and regulation.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Observations:					

Degree to which the principle is present:

- Indicator is **not at all** in place **1**
- Indicator is **partially** in place **2**
- Indicator is **mostly** in place **3**
- Indicator is **fully** in place **4**
- No opportunity to observe **x**

Peer Support

Indicator of Peer Support	1	2	3	4	x
Students are taught about how their behavior affects others, both positively and negatively.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are taught about bullying.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are taught about how to be an advocate for someone who is being bullied.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff actively discourage bullying in all forms	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students are given opportunities to practice appropriate peer interactions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Spaces are set up in a way that encourages peer interactions (i.e. areas exist for students to sit in conversational groups, movement of students is designed so that appropriate interaction can take place).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Students interact with students from other grades or classes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive interactions between students are encouraged and acknowledged by staff members.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adults model appropriate peer interaction with one another.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff assume that other adults' intentions are positive	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff refrain from power struggles with other adults.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff members recognize one another's personal strengths	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff are aware of one another's strengths and interests and incorporate them in conversation or other staff interactions and activities.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Additional Observations:					

Trauma-Informed Schools

Walk-Through Checklist

Works Referenced

This checklist was developed using existing instruments as well as additions and input from the New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative. Existing instruments that informed this checklist include:

Lesley University and Massachusetts Advocates for Children. (2012). *Trauma-Sensitive School Checklist*. Retrieved from [http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/trauma%20sensitive%20school%20checklist%20\(1\).pdf](http://www.tolerance.org/sites/default/files/general/trauma%20sensitive%20school%20checklist%20(1).pdf)

Minnesota Association for Children's Mental Health. (2016). *Strategies and Resources to Create a Trauma-Sensitive School*. Retrieved from <http://www.macmh.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Myklebust37.pdf>

Orchard Place/Child Guidance Center's Trauma Informed Care Project. (2013). *Agency Self-Assessment for Trauma-Informed Care*. Retrieved from <http://www.traumainformedcareproject.org/>