

Becoming a Trauma-Informed School

March 17, 2022

Training series session #4:

Becoming a Trauma-Informed School Logistics

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Welcome!

Why this training is important to me:

- Over 15 years of practicing in school-based health centers in Early Childhood Education, K-12 and at College level & currently own private practice for Trauma Resolution in Wheat Ridge, Colorado
- I have observed and supported the impact of acute and/or chronic stress over the life-span
- I believe in racially and socially equitable environments and acknowledge the systemic and institutionalized disparities that contribute to experiences of trauma
- I believe that the wellness of our caretakers is foundational to the quality of our care to others.
- It's take a community and a positive relationship with time and longitudinal impact in order to pace ourselves in our work.

Training Details

Thursdays: 2/3, 2/17, 3/3, 3/17, 3/31, 4/14/22 between 10:00-11:30 am MST

1. Learn what Trauma is, what it looks like, and how to respond in a supportive way
2. Learning the key components of what it means to be “Trauma-Informed” within a host environment focused on academics
3. **Identify logistical and operational elements of implementation of a trauma-informed approach to supporting public education**
4. Developing relevant metrics for measuring progress and success in School-Based Trauma-Informed practices.

Becoming a Trauma-Informed School



Key Elements:

1. Implementation with an evolutionary lens - Time sequenced
2. Evidenced-based Interventions
3. Build in continuous improvement measures
4. Outcome measures

Research

- There actually isn't much hard data!
- Lots of verbiage that is repeated, primarily based on correlations
- For now – we use what we can 😊

Research

At an event held at Hallett Academy, Denver Public Schools (DPS) announced a \$1 million philanthropic investment to support its goal to become a trauma-informed district. DPS also announced the reduction in out-of-school suspensions for kids in preschool through third grade... “At Hallett, we are proud to announce that our school has reduced ECE through third-grade out-of-school suspensions by 100%, from 34 to 0,” said Hallett Principal Dominique Jefferson. “We love children back to learning, and we give children grace to make mistakes then try again.”

Research

For the fifth year in a row, zero students in ECE through third-grade were expelled from school. There has also been a reduction of suspensions by two-thirds for DPS' youngest learners.

The grant to the DPS Foundation, awarded by The Campbell Foundation, a donor-advised fund of The Denver Foundation, will be used to implement a comprehensive strategy designed to improve academic and social-emotional outcomes for DPS students.

Research indicates that trauma can affect children's development and the functioning of their immune, neuroendocrine and nervous systems, which can lead to long-term effects on learning, behavior and health.

Research indicates the following outcomes when schools are trauma-informed (Chafouleas et al, 2016):



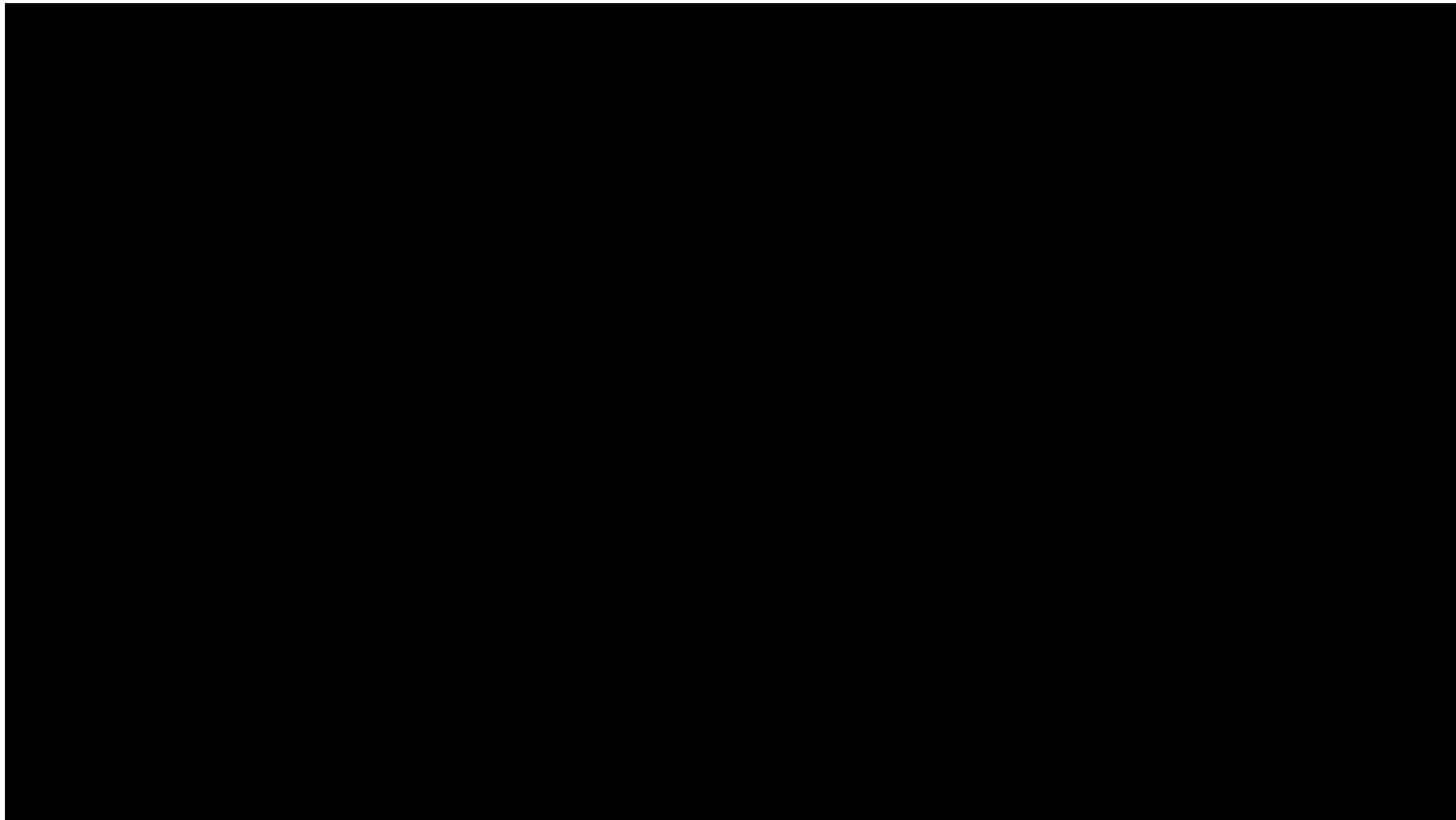
Improved

- Academic achievement and test scores
- School climate
- Teacher sense of satisfaction and retention
- Graduation rates
- Community and family collaboration with school



Reduced

- Student behavioral outbursts and referrals
- Stress for staff and students
- Absences, detentions and suspensions
- Student bullying, harassment and fights
- Need for special education, services and classes
- Drop-out rates



Research

- Trauma-informed schools include trauma-informed strategies and education for all students (tier 1), supplemental supports for some students (tier 2), and intensive interventions for students who suffer from trauma exposure (tier 3). These multi-component interventions typically include revisions to disciplinary policies, social-emotional instruction, school-wide culturally appropriate education about trauma, parent/caregiver education and engagement, data monitoring and routine screening, and individualized intensive support (e.g., cognitive behavior therapy or wrap around services) for students who exhibit symptoms of trauma. Trauma-informed schools often develop community partnerships to support these efforts and collaborate across child services to coordinate care^{1, 2, 3}. The 2015 National Survey of Children Exposed to Violence indicates that nearly 60% of children have been exposed to trauma in the past year; more than 1 in 10 children reported 5 or more exposures⁴.

Research

Evidence of Effectiveness

- There is some evidence that trauma-informed school-wide interventions increase understanding of trauma and use of multi-component trauma-informed practices among school staff and teachers^{5, 6, 7}. Additional evidence is needed to confirm effects, especially on student outcomes.
- Trauma-informed school-wide interventions may increase student resilient recovery⁷, coping skills⁶, ability to pay attention⁸, and attendance⁵. Such interventions are also associated with increased high school completion rates⁹, improved classroom behavior, and improved emotional and physical safety for students in urban, suburban, and rural areas^{1, 10}. Trauma-informed school-wide programs may also enhance bullying prevention efforts, and address the social-emotional and mental health needs of vulnerable students¹¹. Over the long term, trauma-informed interventions are associated with decreased office discipline referrals (ODRs), physical aggression incidents, and out-of-school suspensions^{5, 9}.

Research

- School-based social and emotional instruction, common in trauma-informed schools, increases academic achievement¹² and prosocial behavior, and improves mental health outcomes¹³. School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (SWPBIS), another common component, improves students' behavior^{14, 15}, and individual and group cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) has been shown to decrease symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression^{16, 17}.
- Researchers suggest that schools provide information and training to all levels of staff to help them recognize behaviors that may be reactions to trauma, as well as how to assist and refer students to support services¹⁸. Schools characterized by strong relationships between school staff and mental health professionals¹⁹ and a clear commitment to changing the school climate and culture through trauma-informed approaches¹⁸ appear to have greater effects than schools that do not.

Research

- Trauma-informed schools may reduce disparities in educational outcomes between students from families with lower incomes and/or minority backgrounds and students from families with higher incomes. Trauma-informed practices should be culturally sensitive and introduced carefully to build teacher investment and avoid defensive reactions to the suggested changes²⁰.
- clear commitment to changing the school climate and culture through trauma-informed approaches¹⁸ appear to have greater effects than schools that do not.
- Trauma-informed schools may reduce disparities in educational outcomes between students from families with lower incomes and/or minority backgrounds and students from families with higher incomes. Trauma-informed practices should be culturally sensitive and introduced carefully to build teacher investment and avoid defensive reactions to the suggested changes²⁰.

[Trauma-informed schools | County Health Rankings & Roadmaps](#)

Being a Trauma-Informed School Means:

There is **RECOGNITION** and **ACCEPTANCE** that trauma and the frequent prevalence of ACES (adverse childhood experiences) exist and have direct impact on the adult experience and student's capacity to learn and families' capacities to support their children.

The school embodies a focus on **UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF TRAUMA and SAFETY**. Trauma is relative to each person and that through strengths-based relationship building and an intentional focus on **FEELING SAFE**, students' abilities to learn, increases.

A Trauma-Informed school **RESPONDS** to trauma in a *strategic* manner, based on scientific understandings, that support trauma resolution rather than sensationalizing trauma or minimizing trauma to create the behavioral outcomes that ADULTS want to see.

Bird's Eye View

- Regardless of how we specifically cover these elements there are common trends in what is believed to be the core components of any trauma-Informed programming for schools.

Six Key Domains of Implementing Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools

1. Supporting staff development. Staff must be trained with a baseline understanding of trauma and its' impact on students and staff. Staff development includes ongoing learning and coaching in trauma-informed practices to support implementation across academics, assessment, behavioral supports, and family, caregiver, and community partnerships. Additionally, staff need to receive ongoing professional learning in evidence-based practices that are essential in supporting students including problem solving, cognitive skills, emotional regulation, and social emotional learning. Staff are taught student triggers and how to avoid them, including recognizing verbal and nonverbal early warning signs of student escalation. Skills and strategies to de-escalate and defuse situations is equally emphasized and explicitly trained. Self-care is an essential component of staff development to prevent and mitigate vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue. Staff development is utilized to teach and encourage staff to participate in self-care activities in their work and personal lives.

Six Key Domains of Implementing Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools

2. Creating a safe and supportive environment. All adults must be responsible for creating and maintaining a physically, socially, and emotionally safe learning environment. This includes training and expertise in culturally responsive practices to learn and value the cultural history of students and their families. All crisis prevention and intervention practices integrate trauma-informed strategies and practices. Belonging and safety is a priority. Building relationships among staff and students is the foundation of this environment. All interactions between students and adults are healing and build resilience skills in the students. Attention is given more as a means to build relationships than to correct unwanted behavior. A ratio of 5 positive interactions to reinforce prosocial behavior to every 1 interaction aimed at decreasing undesired behavior will assist in supporting connectedness, build relationships, and promote the feeling of mastery

Six Key Domains of Implementing Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools

3. Assessing Need and Providing Appropriate Supports. This requires that all school-based screening and assessments consider potential impact of trauma and plans consider ways to address trauma. A variety of academic, behavioral, and social emotional assessment methods are used to allow students to demonstrate knowledge and skill. It also requires a mechanism to measure and progress monitor a school's ongoing implementation of trauma-informed approaches.

Six Key Domains of Implementing Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools

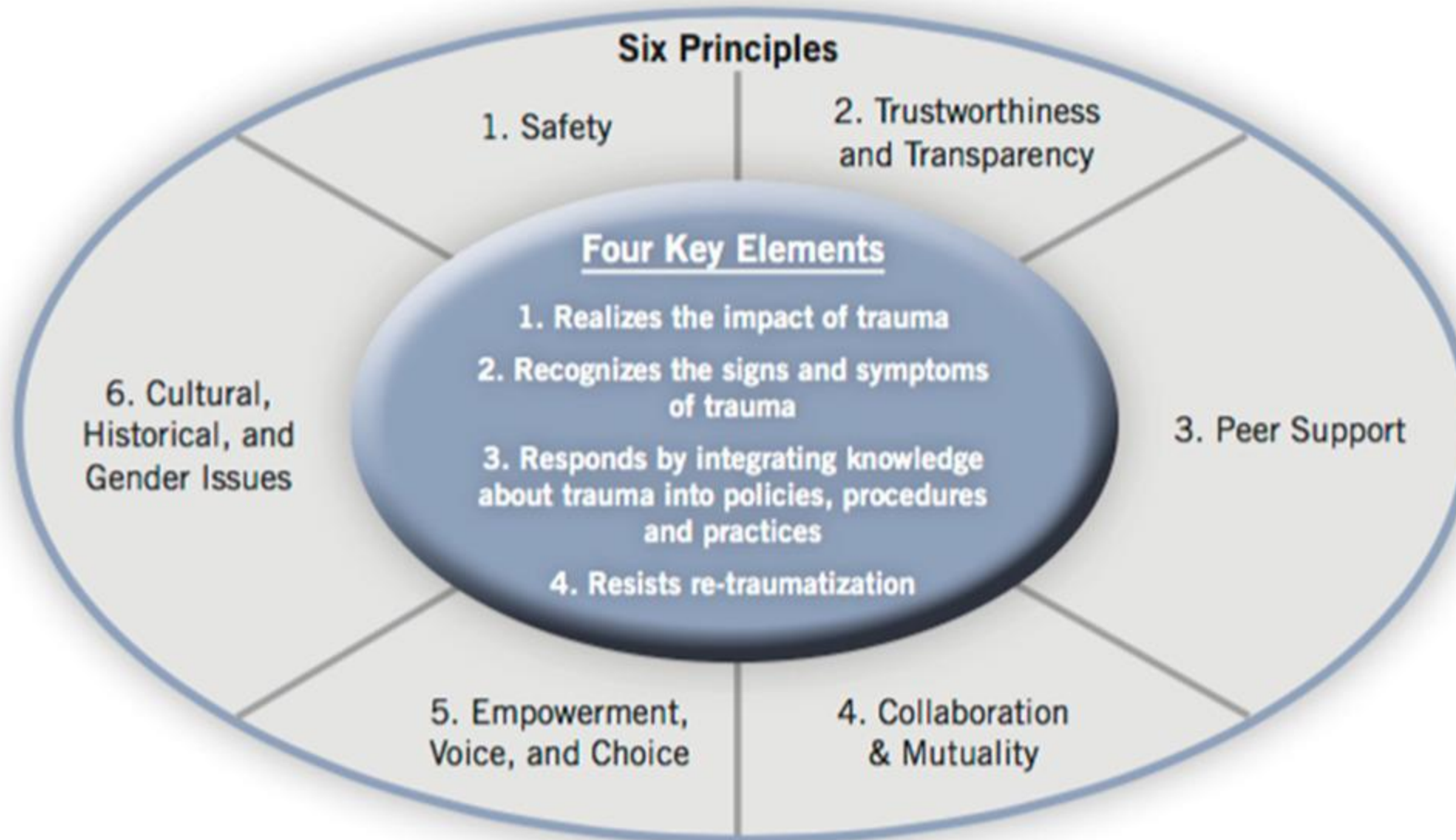
4. Building Strong Social and Emotional Skills. School must integrate universal strategies to model, teach, and practice self-regulation, self-awareness, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making. Explicit emphasis is paid to problem-solving and emotional and physiological regulation. Students are taught how to identify and process their emotions.

Six Key Domains of Implementing Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools

5. Collaborate with Students and Families *Students, families, and caregivers are given a voice to express their concerns.* The school environment and practices within it is built on students' strengths. The school builds trusting relationships with families and caregivers. Families and caregivers are encouraged to take a leadership role in the community. Family and caregiver voice is integral in developing school policies and procedures.

Six Key Domains of Implementing Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools

6. Policies and Procedures. Existing policies and procedures are reviewed regularly against trauma-informed core beliefs, principles, and values and modifications are made when inconsistencies arise to ensure full alignment. Discipline, communication, and safety procedures reflect an understanding of trauma and are consistent with beliefs, principles, and values. Policies and procedures at the local school level are presented to the school board to educate the board on trauma and its impacts in order to modify school board policies as needed.



Trauma-Informed Schools for Children in K-12: A System Framework

- VI. Cultural Responsiveness**
School policies that promote culturally appropriate responses to trauma and encourage staff to recognize differences in individual experiences and responses to trauma, including help-seeking behaviors following a trauma
- VII. Emergency Management/Crisis Response**
Clear and well-communicated procedures to mitigate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from emergencies/crises
- VIII. Staff Self-Care and Secondary Traumatic Stress**
Training and support for self-care and secondary traumatic stress activities to help staff, teachers, and school personnel respond to and recover from traumatic events
- School Discipline Policies and Practices**
IX. School discipline policies and practices that begin with prevention and rely on these key components first; a balanced goal for disciplinary actions that combines the safety of others in the school environment and skill-building resources for students that support their reintegration into a school setting
- Cross System Collaboration and Community Partnerships**
X. Policies and practices that encourage school personnel to collaborate to ensure trauma-informed approaches span all aspects of the school environment, including classrooms, health services, administration, school discipline and attendance, guidance, and extra-curricular programming, as well as with family and community partners

Evolutionary Lens

What do we tackle first?

What does applying an evolutionary lens mean?

Assess impact and room for improvement at each phase

Gantt Chart

Task Name	Q1 2019			Q2 2019		Q3 2019
	Jan 19	Feb 19	Mar 19	Apr 19	Jun 19	Jul 19
Planning						
Research						
Design						
Implementation						
Follow up						

Table 1: Stages of Implementation & the Description of Activities Necessary to Implement Trauma-Informed Approaches in Schools at Tier 1

Stage	Description
Exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Build knowledge ❖ Assess readiness ❖ Garner Staff and Community Buy-in ❖ Determine need
Installation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Establish infrastructure ❖ Envision your trauma-informed approaches in school. ❖ Develop plan - identify framework and practices to organize your vision ❖ Create team to lead implementation efforts ❖ Train team, staff, and community in trauma-informed approaches
Initial Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Begin implementation ❖ Work out details ❖ Learn and improve ❖ Align and integrate with other practices (e.g., PBIS, restorative practices, social emotional learning, emergency planning) ❖ Ensure implementations of strategies across academics, assessment, behavioral supports, educator capacity, and family, caregiver, and community partnerships,
Full Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Evaluate impact ❖ Adjust to changing needs of the school community based on student population and types of trauma experienced ❖ Sustain systemic changes

One can control for outcomes

(By any means necessary)

But no one can control for both
at the same time

One can control for process

(Healthy outcomes typically follow healthy processes)

Phase One

- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) -
 - Understanding current school culture
- Establish a network of support and partnerships
 - District and school administration buy-in & resources, community-based providers and services, Parent and student participation and support, staff buy-in and commitment.
 - Seek funding if necessary (grants, research programs, district monies)
- Select evidenced-based social emotional learning curricula and programs/persons for trauma-informed training

Research, Network, Marketing

Phase Two

- Establish a “core champions” group and processes for group to follow for meetings, communication, roles/responsibilities, how to communicate out to school community and so on
- The core group selects relevant SEL programming and tiered Response to Intervention (Zones of Regulation, Restorative Justice, Peer processing support for teachers, promotion of self-care as school community value)
- Begin review of school policies and protocols for updating and revision based on trainings and best practice



Phase Three

- Implementation of SEL programming and Tiered Supports
- Trial phase for new discipline approaches and referral processes
- Setting expectations to practice for peer supports and self-care
- Establish outcome goals and identify metrics for measuring progress
- Begin school-wide trauma-informed trainings



Phase Four

- Circle back to partnerships, check-in and update school community at-large
- Conduct SWOT again, assess current practice in alignment to identified goals
- Establish feedback loops for on-going input and continuous improvement
- Assess impact and celebrate successes, engagement, and re-generate buy-in
- Do it again and again to sustain positive shift



Becoming a Trauma-Informed School

Awesome School

Principal

Project Start Date: 3/16/2022

Scrolling Increment: 1

Legend:

On track

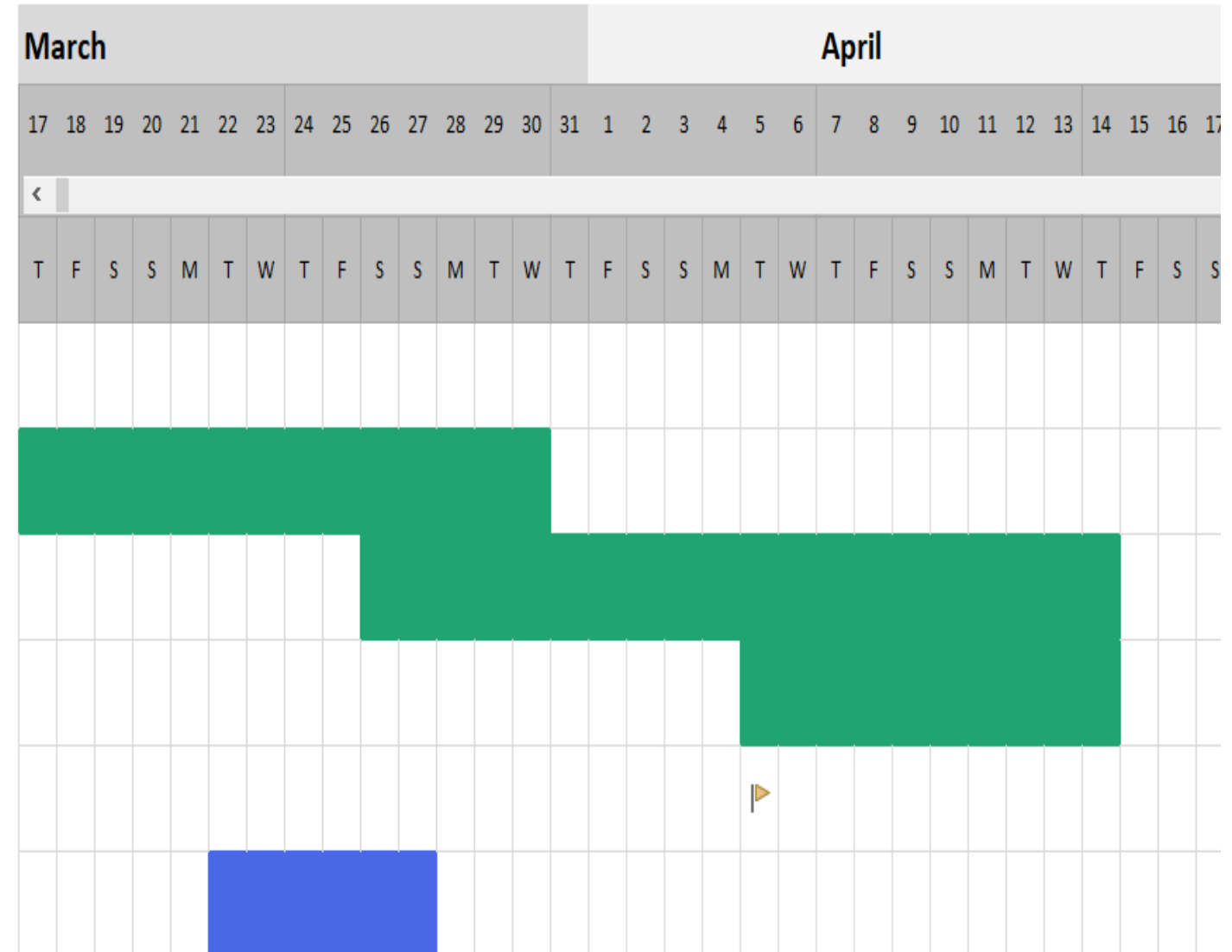
Low risk

Med risk

High risk

Unassigned

Milestone description	Category	Assigned to	Progress	Start	Days
Phase One					
Research Evidenced-Based Social-Emotional Learning Programs and Trauma-Informed Training	On Track	MH Practitioner	50%	3/16/2022	15
School Community assessment (SWOT), Identify needs and related goals	On Track	Principal		3/26/2022	20
Explore community support, partnerships and funding	On Track	Principal and Core Champ	25%	4/5/2022	10
Task 4	Milestone			4/5/2022	1
Task 5	Med Risk		10%	3/22/2022	6

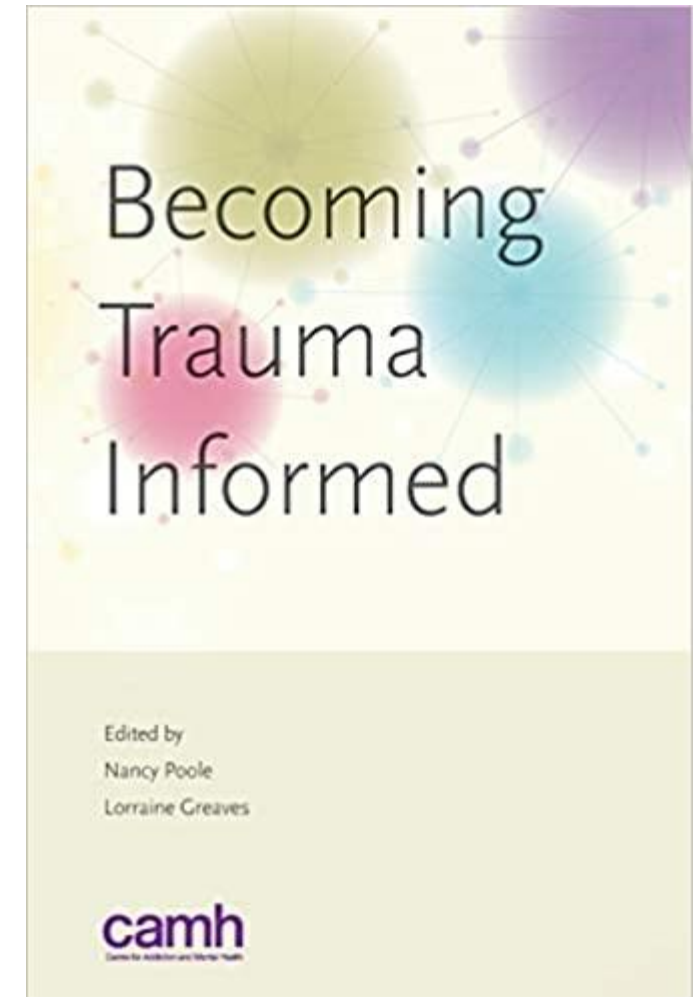
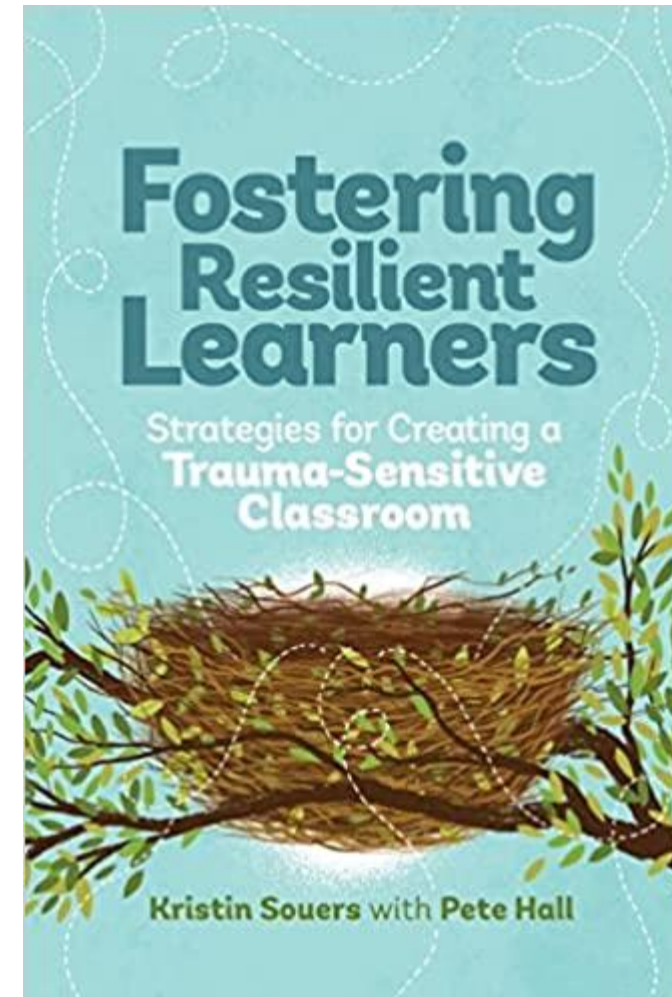
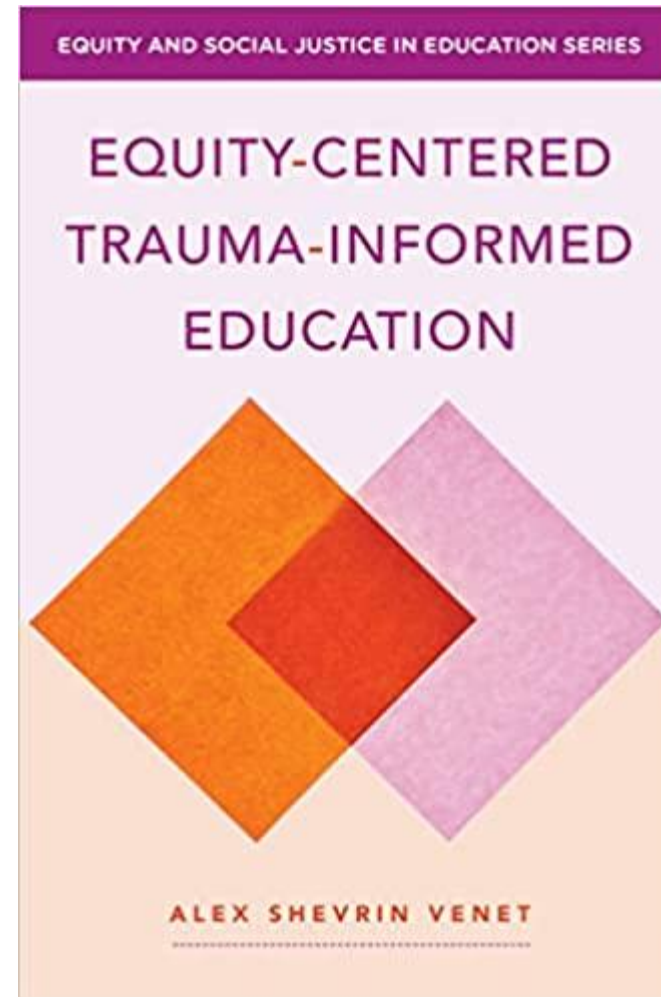
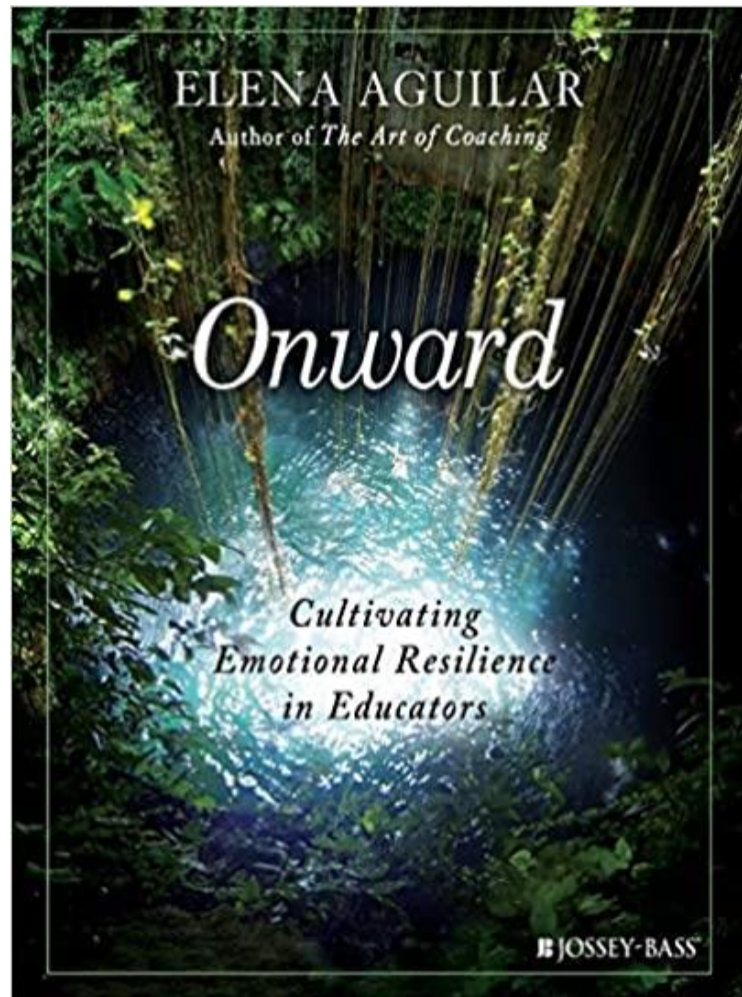


Resources for Planning

- <https://traumaawareschools.org/interventions>
- <https://traumasensitiveschools.org/becoming-a-trauma-sensitive-school/>
- https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/Building%20TSS%20Handout%20Packet_ALL.pdf
- file:///C:/Users/Tford/Downloads/Trauma%20Sensitive%20Schools_%20Whole%20School%20Transformation.pdf
- <https://www.nea.org/professional-excellence/student-engagement/trauma-informed-schools>

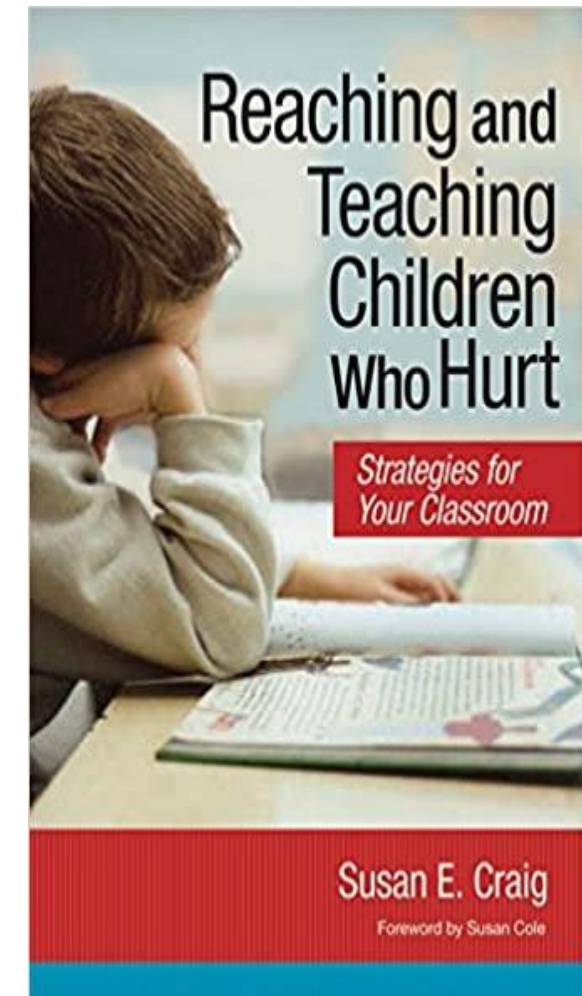
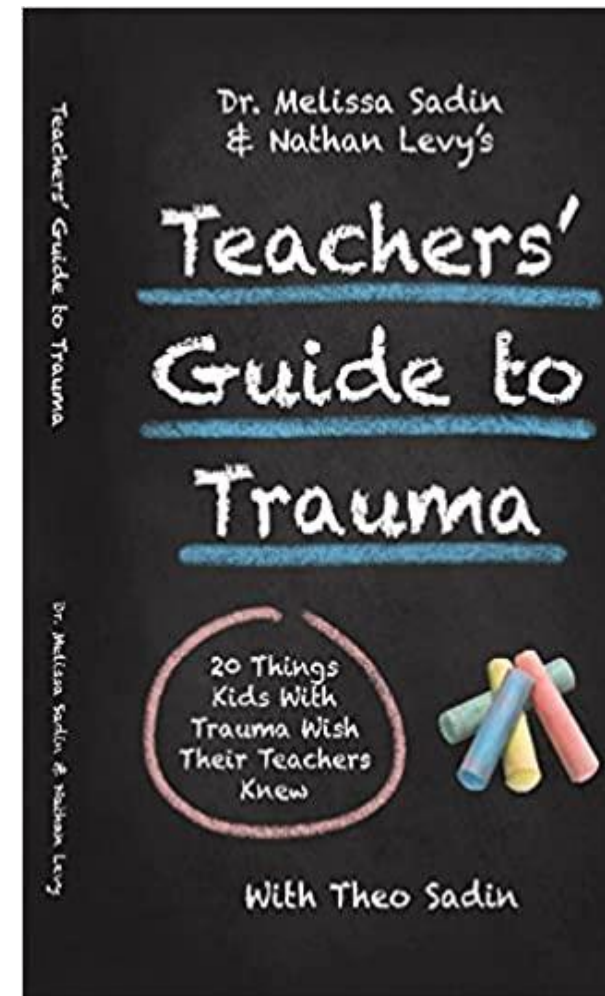
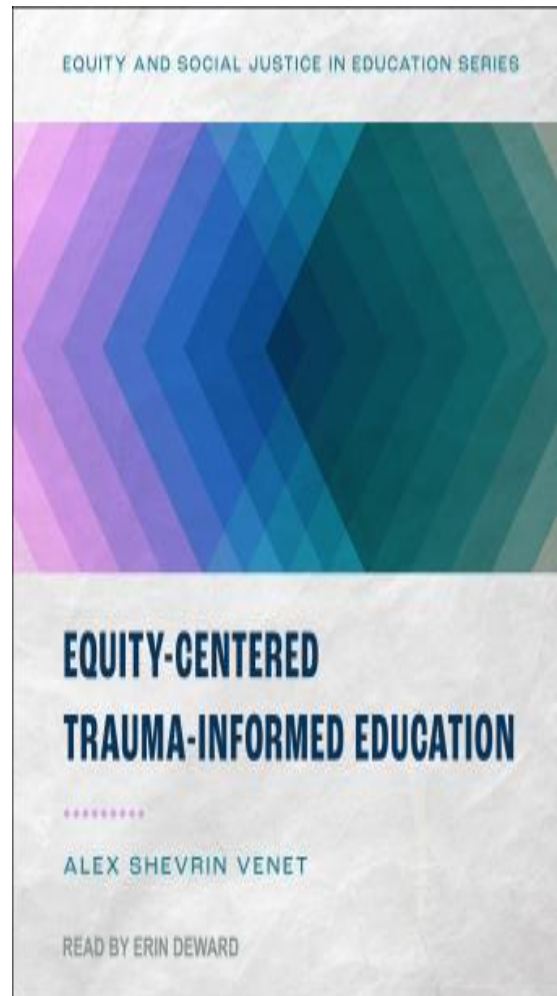
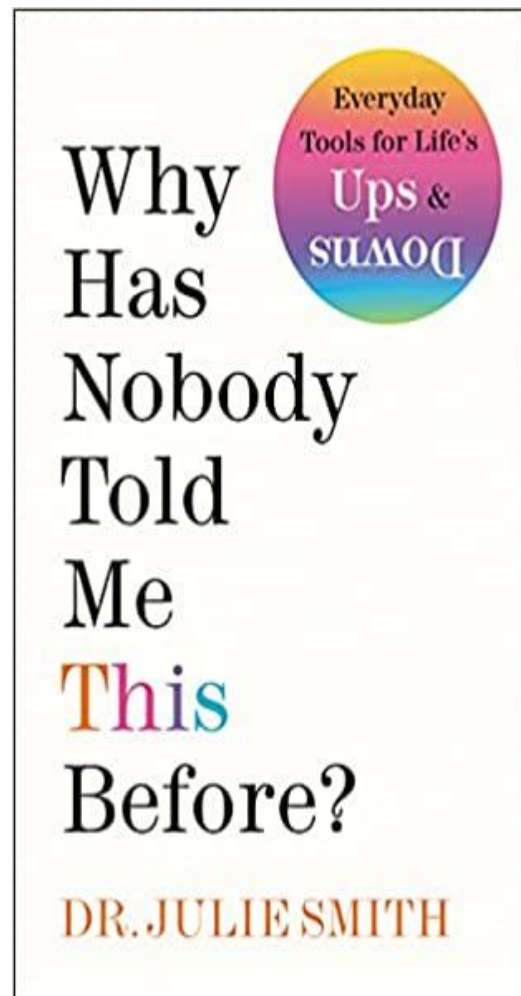
Resources for Planning

- Books for project leaders or school-wide



Resources for Planning

- Books for project leaders or school-wide



2 minutes

Breathe
Stretch
Use gratitude
Laugh
Use mindfulness
Doodle
Acknowledge one of your
accomplishments
Say no to a new responsibility
Compliment yourself
Look out the window
Daydream
Share a favorite joke
Awareness of feelings

5 minutes

Listen to music
Chat with a co-worker
Sing out loud
Jot down dreams
Step outside for fresh air
Enjoy a healthy snack
Color
Make a cup of coffee/tea
Schedule wellness time for the week
Send a thank you card/email
Sit under a weighted blanket

10 minutes

Take a walk (inside/outside)
Write in a journal
Call a friend or family
Meditate
Tidy your work area
Eat lunch with a co-worker
Draw a picture
Dance
Evaluate your day
Listen to soothing sounds
Read a magazine
Have a cleansing cry
Do yoga poses

