Becoming a Trauma-Informed School

February 20, 2023

Training series session #6:

Developing Relevant Metrics for Measuring Progress in School-Based Trauma-Informed practices

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SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health
Services Administration

Mountain Plains (HHS Region 8)
MHTTC Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Disclaimer and Funding Statement

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center

The Mountain Plains Mental Health Technology Transfer Center (Mountain Plains MHTTC) provides training and technical assistance to individuals who serve persons with mental health concerns throughout Region 8 (Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming).

We belong to the Technology Transfer Center (TTC) Network, a national network of training and technical assistance centers serving the needs of mental health, substance use and prevention providers. The work of the TTC Network is under a cooperative agreement by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA).
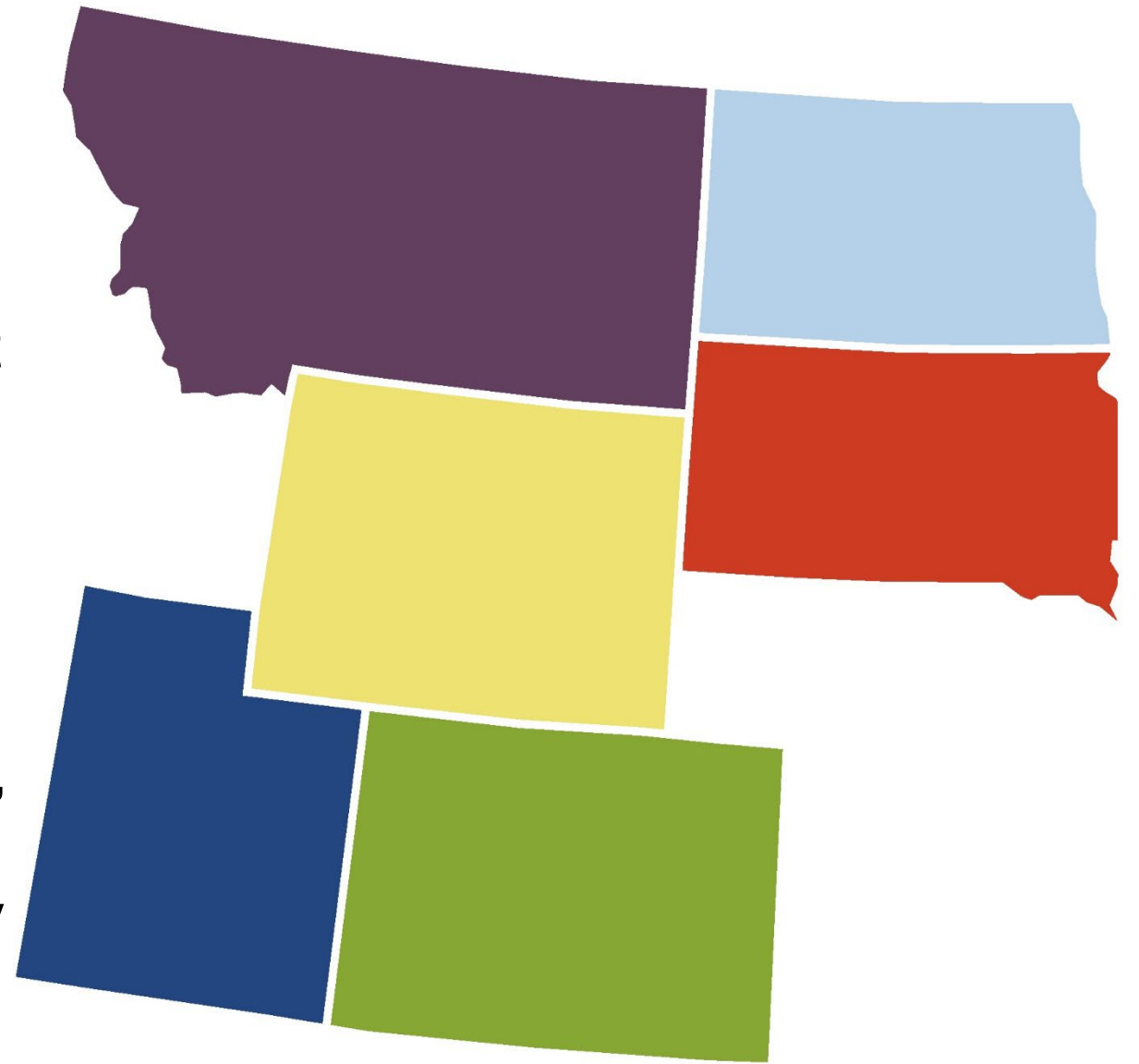
Land Acknowledgement Statement

Today, the University of North Dakota rests on the ancestral lands of the Pembina and Red Lake Bands of Ojibwe and the Dakota Oyate - presently existing as composite parts of the Red Lake, Turtle Mountain, White Earth Bands, and the Dakota Tribes of Minnesota and North Dakota. We acknowledge the people who resided here for generations and recognize that the spirit of the Ojibwe and Oyate people permeates this land. As a university community, we will continue to build upon our relations with the First Nations of the State of North Dakota - the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation, Sisseton-Wahpeton Oyate Nation, Spirit Lake Nation, Standing Rock Sioux Tribe, and Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians.

The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN THEIR OWN JOURNEYS

STRENGTHS-BASED AND HOPEFUL

PERSON-FIRST AND FREE OF LABELS

INCLUSIVE AND ACCEPTING OF DIVERSE CULTURES, GENDERS, PERSPECTIVES, AND EXPERIENCES

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR AND UNDERSTANDABLE

HEALING-CENTERED AND TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

CONSISTENT WITH OUR ACTIONS, POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

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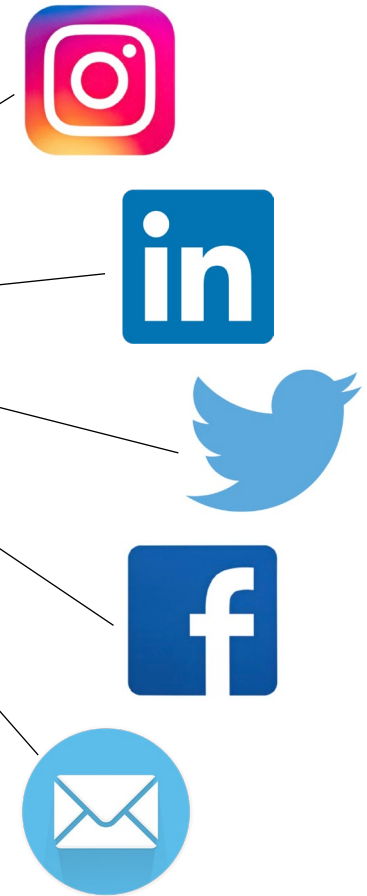
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Welcome!

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

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**.

Definition: *a method of measuring something, or the results obtained from this.*

<u>Why are they important?</u>

1. They help us determine if our improvement endeavors (process) will net the outcomes of goals desired. (Process development)
2. Once the ideal state of the process is determined, it has to be expressed in terms of metrics. This is because metrics are the numbers that are being measured on a daily basis. Management philosophy also believes that what is measured gets managed. Hence metrics suggest whether the process is in order or needs external interference. (Process improvement indicators)
3. They create data to be used for recruiting partnerships and funding

"Processes have to be designed as per the **_customer's_** goals, needs, desires. Metrics help transform the vague requirements that a customer gives into a series of numbers that can be used to accurately map the process for its efficiency. Metrics tell us whether a process is good enough to meet the customer's requirements or whether it needs to be better."

"Improvement Goals are in Terms of Metrics: For the improvement goals to be objective, it is essential that they are measured in terms of numbers. Words like good quality, bad quality and acceptable quality are vague and may depend on the personal opinion of the person expressing them. Therefore metrics play an important role since they transform both the customer requirements as well as operational performance to numbers which can be compared. As a result management can objectively state whether the customer's needs are being met or not."

Students

Funders

Parents

Who is the "customer" when transforming a school to be Trauma-Informed?

Community-at-Large

Staff

Creating Relevant Metrics:
Step by Step

1. Identify your "customer(s)" *(there may be more than one)*
   - *Students*
   - *Staff*
   - *Parents*
   - *Community Partners*
   - *Funders*
   - *District Administration*

2. Using the lens of your customer, ask "if this effort/intervention/goal was successful, HOW would we know that?"

Creating Relevant Metrics:
Step by Step

3. Listen to the language of the response. For example, "We would know that being a trauma-informed school was successful if we have fewer calls to the office for discipline, if we have fewer referrals for behavior concerns, if parents report feeling supported, if students are developing better social and emotional skills, and if our students report feeling safe at school)

4. What are the variables that hold implication for change potential?
    1. # of calls to the main office for support
    2. # of behavior referrals
    3. Parent perception of available support
    4. Social/emotional skill development
    5. Student perception of safety within their school experience

Creating Relevant Metrics:
Step by Step

5. Once the variable with change potential has been identified, identify (process map) how that variable is currently measured. NOTE: If there isn't already a baseline metric available it is very difficult to measure progress against _____?

For Example: If your trauma-informed project is aimed at reducing distraction, interruptions, and stress on administrators and the number of times they are pulled into behavior issues with students, are these interruptions currently being tracked? Are office staff keeping a count of the number of times teachers are contacting the office for support? Do the types or frequency of behavior referrals accurately reflect the level of support needed by administrators?

Creating Relevant Metrics:
Step by Step

6. Determine your standard of measurement for each project management metric

Consider:

- Will efforts be measured in by a number (i.e. # of calls to office) or in percentages (i.e. % of total discipline issues requiring administrative support)

- Are hours rounded up to the nearest 15 minutes or measured to two decimal points?

- How are perceptions / satisfaction measured? Likert Scale? Emojis?

Creating Relevant Metrics:
Step by Step

8. Design methods for collecting project management metrics

Measuring project management metrics for your school is important. However, it shouldn't supersede the actual work being done. That's why it's important that the methods you use to track and measure your project management methods are relatively simple to collect and compare.

- **Automated** (whenever possible). In the perfect project management world, all metrics would be gathered automatically. (Think about what statistics are generated already)

- **Timely.** Information should be accessible in a timely manner. It should be available and analyzed before it becomes irrelevant.

- **Consistent & Replicable** In order for your data to be consistent to ensure accurate comparative analysis, your data collection methods need to be consistent.

Creating Relevant Metrics:
Step by Step

9. Note *All Changes* to Metrics or Data Collection Process

Your project management metrics are used to compare performance over time. This means if there is ever a change in the metrics you are tracking or how the data is being accumulated, it should be clearly noted in reports. This helps signal—and may even help measure—discrepancies in comparative analysis.

10. Measure Project Progress

The frequency with which you measure project progress depends on the length of the project and the amount of resources involved. The longer and more complex the project, the more important mid-project metric reporting is to track actual progress compared to budget and scope. This can help identify bottlenecks, mismanagement of resources, or other areas where adjustments could be made to improve project outcomes.

Types of Data & Examples

Qualitative: data describes qualities or characteristics. It is collected using questionnaires, interviews, or observation, and frequently appears in narrative form. Qualitative data may be difficult to precisely measure and analyze. The data may be in the form of descriptive words that can be examined for patterns or meaning, sometimes through the use of coding. Coding allows the researcher to categorize qualitative data to identify themes that correspond with the research questions and to perform quantitative analysis.

Examples: Classroom observations, student use of vocabulary associated with trauma-informed orientations (i.e. self-regulation), anecdotal feedback, language shifts embedded within behavior referrals.

Types of Data & Examples

Quantitative: data are used when a researcher is trying to quantify a problem, or address the "what" or "how many" aspects of a research question. It is data that can either be counted or compared on a numeric scale. This data are usually gathered using instruments, such as a questionnaire which includes a ratings scale or a thermometer to collect weather data. Statistical analysis software, such as SPSS, is often used to analyze quantitative data.

Examples: Feedback surveys, # of referrals, % of Tier 1 concerns vs Tier 2 & 3, frequency counts of student use of cozy corner/chill zone, student and/or staff attendance, etc.

Existing Tools for Measurement

❖The Trauma Stress Institute offers **The ARTIC**

"Organizations and schools understand that valid data is critical to advancing trauma-informed care (TIC) in their settings and demonstrating success. That's why the Traumatic Stress Institute co-developed the ARTIC Scale, a psychometrically valid measure of professional and para-professional attitudes toward TIC. The ARTIC Scale is available in two formats. The ARTIC Scale was co-developed by Dr. Courtney Baker of Tulane University and the Traumatic Stress Institute. It has been administered globally to more than 150,000 professionals in human service agencies, school systems, state agencies and more."

https://traumaticstressinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/ARTIC-Journal-Article.Baker-et-al-2016.pdf

Existing Tools for Measurement

Various screening and assessment tools that can be used in a pre-mid-post manner at the beginning of the year and the end of the year. Here are two examples

1. PHQ9 - file:///C:/Users/Owner/Downloads/PHQ9%20id%20date%2008.03.pdf

2. The Child PTSD Symptom Scale (CPSS) - https://www.episcenter.psu.edu/sites/default/files/2020-08/TF-CBT_Child-PTSD-Sympton-Scale.pdf

Existing Tools for Measurement

The U.S. Department of Education's (ED) free online assessment, ED School Climate Surveys (EDSCLS). These assessments include questions around safety, collaboration, environment, and relationships. The EDSCLS web-based administration platform includes a suite of school climate surveys for middle and high school students, instructional staff, non-instructional staff, and parents/guardians. Student and parent surveys can be completed either in English or Spanish. Staff surveys are available in English only.

https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls/administration

Listen to or read the sentences and circle 'thumbs down if you think the sentence is not true for you or circle 'thumbs up' if you think the sentence is true for you.

1. A teacher greets me by saying my name every day at school.

2. I know my teachers care about me.

3. Teachers like teaching my class.

4. My teachers notice when I am doing a good job and lets me know about it.

Student-Teacher Relationship Perception Survey (4 - 8th Graders)

Below each statement, circle your response.

1. A teacher greets me by saying my name every day at school.

   Disagree A Lot   Disagree A Little   Agree A Little   Agree A Lot

2. I feel like I am an important part of my school community.

   Disagree A Lot   Disagree A Little   Agree A Little   Agree A Lot

3. I know my teachers care about me.

   Disagree A Lot   Disagree A Little   Agree A Little   Agree A Lot

4. Teachers like teaching my class.

   Disagree A Lot   Disagree A Little   Agree A Little   Agree A Lot

Parent Perception Survey
Please rate your agreement to the following statements by circling a number 1 (low) – 5 (high).

1 (low) - 5 (high)

1. I am an important part of my child's school community.   1   2   3   4   5
2. I know how to contact teachers and administrators at
    my child's school.   1   2   3   4   5
3. I feel comfortable talking about my concerns with my
    child's teacher.   1   2   3   4   5
4. I feel comfortable talking about my concerns with my
    child's principal.   1   2   3   4   5
5. I feel comfortable talking about my concerns with my
    child's counselor.   1   2   3   4   5
6. I feel welcome when I visit my child's school.   1   2   3   4   5
7. I feel that I am treated fairly and with respect at my
    child's school.   1   2   3   4   5
8. I am invited to be a part of events and activities at my
    child's school.   1   2   3   4   5
9. I enjoy being involved in events and activities at my
    child's school.   1   2   3   4   5
10. My child's teachers let me know when my child has
    done something well.   1   2   3   4   5

SAMHSA: Project Aware

Excellent tips and ideas can be found:

- https://www.pacesconnection.com/fileSendAction/fcType/0/fcOid/474 05108352075166O/filePointer/474051083520751683/fodoid/4740510 83520751680/Measuring%20Trauma%20Informed%20Schools%20 11.10.17.pdf

School Level Data	
Assessment of:	**Strategy and/or Tool:**
Discipline	Track and analyze data for suspensions, expulsions, in-school detentions, and referrals out of the classroom. For each of these areas, disaggregate data by which students, how often, what infractions, which teachers are making referrals, and for what they are referred. Use a data analysis protocol such as ATLAS Looking at Data and look for patterns or significant points in the data. This will give you a tremendous amount of information and help your team decide where to prioritize first steps.
Attendance	Analyze attendance data, disaggregating by which student, how often, and reasons for absence. Students experiencing trauma may exhibit high rates of absenteeism.
Mental health and counselor referrals	Track numbers of referrals to onsite and offsite support, identifying which students are referred for mental health services or sent to school support services for further intervention. Identify patterns of concern and gaps in support.
Onsite supportive spaces	Determine the presence of onsite relaxation of safe spaces and the numbers of students and teachers accessing those services and spaces.

| Staff and Teacher Data	
Assessment of:	**Strategy and/or Tool:**
Teacher attendance	Track staff attendance. Notice if the data show areas of concern, such as potential staff that are showing signs of compassion fatigue or burnout; this may highlight staff wellness needs.
Staff turnover, retention, and burnout	Measure overall job satisfaction. The ProQOL is the most commonly used measure of the negative and positive effects of helping others who experience suffering and trauma. The ProQOL has sub-scales for compassion satisfaction, burnout, and compassion fatigue. Use to measure employee psychosocial functioning – wellness, burnout, fatigue, stress, depression, and anxiety.
Staff attitudes	The ARTIC is a measure of professional and paraprofessional attitudes favorable or unfavorable toward a Trauma Informed System.

All School Environmental Scan	
Assessment of:	**Strategy and/or Tool:**
School climate	Use to measure perceived relationship quality (adult-adult and adult-student) and perceived safety by students and staff. The EDSCLS is one example that is online and free.
Trauma sensitivity	Lesley University and the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative developed the Trauma-Sensitive Schools Checklist based on five components involved in a trauma-sensitive school.
Progress toward TIC	Although still in draft form, Standards of Practice for Trauma Informed Care in Educational Settings provides excellent discussion questions for a leadership team to consider where they are in the process of becoming a trauma-informed school. It was developed by Trauma Informed Oregon.
Written policies, practices, and documents	Review Tool for School Policies, Protocols, Procedures and Documents: Examination through a Trauma-Informed Care (TIC) Lens is a fillable template to assess how well these items align with TIC values. It provides a list of comparisons between the common view and the trauma-informed view (e.g., "uses professional 'insider' language" versus "uses language that can be understood by children and families").

- Tracking school level data around discipline and attendance is already required; schools should also incorporate data study strategies like the ATLAS Looking at Data protocol from the School Reform Initiative. This protocol is used by a leadership team to analyze the data, make meaning of it for their school, and collectively make decisions on where to go next.

- Collecting data on mental health referrals and follow-up on the referrals will tell a school how it is doing in meeting the mental health needs of students and families and where the gaps lie. Looking at teacher attendance may offer insight into how well the school is doing on implementing a culture of collective self-care.

Additional Tips

- Consider conducting focus groups of students, families, and staff with questions specifically targeted towards the principles of a trauma-informed environment. For example, do students feel that they have a voice in the classroom? Do they feel curricula are relevant and culturally responsive? Do they feel that positive relationships between adults and students are prioritized and valued? Do staff feel like a culture of self-care is explicitly valued? Do families feel included in decision-making?

Additional Tips
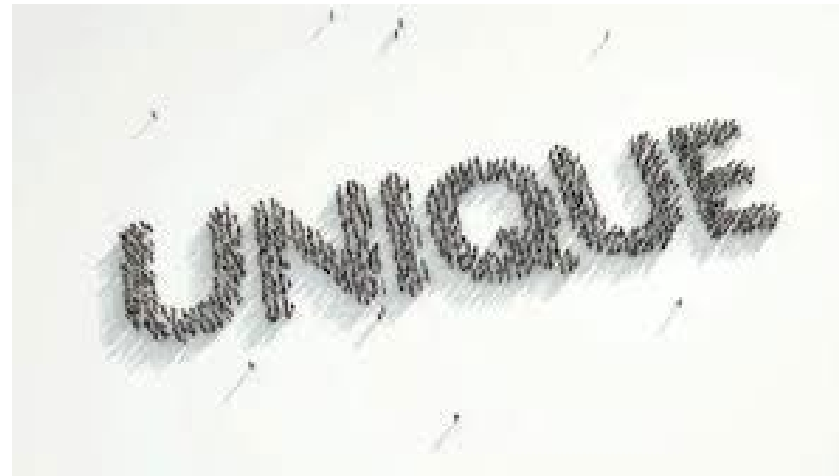
Each School Process Will Be Unique

Why?
Consider the following variables…

- Is your school rural or urban in it's location?
- What are the primary influencing racial/ethnic/cultural/religious indicators of your school community?
- What level of funding can your school receive for culture transformations?
- What is the existing (or non-existent) knowledge base of staff before beginning the project?

- What level of understanding do your parents hold about trauma-informed education?
- Are there community resources available for supplemental supports?
- Are there any trends in the type of ACEs that your specific community faces?
- Have there been any larger-scale historical or collective trauma-events for the nearby community-at-large?

In Sum

No improvement process is perfect. It does not need to be. Continuous improvement is a value and a verb – not an outcome. Thus, if we bind our compassions, leverage our frustrations (what needs improvement), follow some general guides, and document along the way….

Then we are ALWAYS farther ahead than where we started.

Blessings and good vibes as you move through your journey. Kudos to the intent that brought you here and remember the impact will be determined by the process!

History will judge us
by the difference
we make in the everyday lives
of children.
Nelson Mandela

Children
are the living messages
we send to a time
we will not see.
John F. Kennedy

We believe
even the slightest
positive influence
has the potential...
TO CHANGE
a child's life

"Children are human beings
to whom respect is due,
superior to us by reason of
their innocence and of the
greater possibilities of
their future."

—Maria Montessori

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