



TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE IN SCHOOLS

SAFETY + CHOICE + COLLABORATION + EMPOWERMENT + TRUST



TRAUMA



"individual trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening, and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being." (SAMHSA, 2014)

"Relationships are the agents of change."

-Bruce Perry

UNDERSTAND

&

ACKNOWLEDGE

"understanding trauma involves recognizing that many current behaviors may be ways of adapting to and coping with past traumatic experiences" (Rajaraman et. al., 2021)

"...acknowledges that features of the current environment may exert control over trauma-related responses due to shared stimulus properties between the current environment and those present during the initial traumatic event" (Rajaraman et. al., 2021)

ENVIRONMENT OF SAFETY AND TRUST

SAFETY



Behaving in an environment filled with safety signals

Safety signals: features of the environment that signal predictable periods free from aversive stimulation

TRUST



A reliable interaction in which a learner independently approaches the teacher (adult) and readily communicates for reinforcers, across contexts, due to a reinforcement history with that teacher (adult). Trust is a form of **emotional safety**.

"Teach from JOY not through escalated problem behavior"

Dr. Greg Hanley

FOSTERING SAFETY & TRUST

- Show positive regard and empathy.
- Enrich the environment.
- Follow the child's lead to the extent possible.
- Invite the learner to participate in scheduled activities.
- Provide choices.
- Be responsive to learner needs.



Adapted from FTFC Consulting Universal Protocols

Trust is a prerequisite to effective treatment.



CREATED BY CUSTOMIZED BEHAVIOR APPLICATION TRAINING FOR SCHOOL PRACTITIONERS TEAM
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TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE IN SCHOOLS

"I'm a big fan of stepping back, instead of pushing through."

-Dr. Greg Hanley

FRAMEWORK FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE IN ABA

Trauma-Informed Care: acknowledges that the features of the current environment may exert control over trauma-related responses due to similarities in properties (ex: smells, sounds, tastes) between the current environment and those present during the initial traumatic event (Dinsmoor, 1995; Rajaraman et al., 2021).

acknowledge
trauma and its
potential impact

ensure safety
and trust

promote choice
and shared
governance

emphasize
skill building

HOW TO IMPLEMENT TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE IN SCHOOLS



1. **Prioritize student assent through willing participation**
2. **Acknowledge the impact of trauma**
3. **Avoid interactions that could potentially re-traumatize & cause harm**
4. **Closely monitor and respond to emotional responses**
5. **When needed, take a step back and reassess**

ACTIONABLE
STEPS:



listen



create joy



empower your
learner



teach
skills

References:

Rajaraman, A., Austin, J. L., Gover, H. C., Cammilleri, A. P., Donnelly, D. R., & Hanley, G. P. (2021). Toward trauma-informed applications of behavior analysis. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 55(1), 40–61. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jaba.881>

SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2014.

Simpson, R. & Green, S.A. (2014). Adapted from: Fallot, R.D & Harris, M. (2001). Using trauma theory to design service systems: New directions for mental health services. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA, Jennings, A. The Anna Institute, National Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare. Is your organization trauma-informed?



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