**Trauma-Informed Schools Organizational Readiness Assessment**

Teddy McGlynn-Wright
Andrew Orapallo
Lauren Reyes
Stacy Overstreet
Courtney N. Baker
The New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative*

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**To send completed Trauma-Informed Organizational Readiness Assessments to us**, please email PDFs or a database to our secure online share drive: Complet.2rd233zvk7ssrm1m@u.box.com

**Background**

The pervasive impacts of trauma and stress are well documented. Children are particularly vulnerable as exposure to trauma and chronic stress has been shown to impact their physical, social-emotional, and cognitive development. Trauma-informed approaches describe efforts by organizations to prevent and mitigate the impacts of trauma and chronic stress exposure on individuals. SAMHSA's (2014) guide for effective trauma-informed programming within organizations includes six key principles: (a) feelings of physical and psychological *safety* among teachers, staff, and students; (b) decision-making processes that are transparent with the goal of *building and maintaining trust* among caregivers, students, and school staff; (c) a focus on building networks of *peer-support*; (d) an emphasis on *partnership and collaboration* between administration, staff, caregivers, and students; (e) a system that fosters and recognizes individuals' strengths through *empowerment*; and (f) an organization that incorporates policies and protocols that are *culturally-responsive* to racial, ethnic, and cultural needs of the organization. The universal goals of trauma-informed approaches are to *realize* the prevalence and impact of trauma; *recognize* the signs and symptoms of trauma and chronic stress in students, families, school staff, and others who interact with the school; *respond* to this information by adjusting policies, practices, and procedures such as those associated with exclusionary discipline; with the goal of actively *resisting* the retraumatization of the school's stakeholders.

In order to realize the promise of trauma-informed approaches, the process and outcome of the intervention must be measured and evaluated. The field currently lacks theoretically-grounded, empirically-validated instruments to achieve this goal. The Trauma-Informed Schools Organizational Readiness Assessment was developed by the New Orleans Trauma-Informed Schools Learning Collaborative to meet a need in our ongoing implementation of trauma-informed schools in our community. It is a self-assessment guide for schools that integrates elements from existing trauma-informed organizational measures (see References), research on trauma-informed care, and input from experts in the field. The objectives of the instrument are two-fold: 1) to determine overall readiness for adoption of system-wide trauma-informed approaches, and, in the case of low readiness, and 2) to identify target areas for improvement and sustainability of implemented programming. In the case of limited resources, the readiness instrument may help districts, charter management organizations, or other administrative bodies determine how to best support schools with funds by either focusing on implementing trauma-informed schools or growing readiness. Though developed with urban, charter schools in mind, minor adaptations of the instrument may allow its applications with different types of districts or with similar educational ventures such as after-school programs.

The Trauma-Informed Schools Organizational Readiness Assessment consists of 16 items across three domains: general capacity of the school to implement trauma-informed schools, specific capacity of the school to carry out trauma-informed approaches, and overall level of motivation for implementation. The tool is intended to be completed by the school team that will eventually become the trauma-informed schools steering committee, which typically consists of administrators, teachers, school mental health professionals, key staff, and organizational champions. Involving caregivers, older students, district-level partners, community partners, and members of the broader community may also be helpful, depending on the structure and function of the school's committees.

**Trauma-Informed Schools Organizational Readiness Assessment**

**Demographic Questionnaire**

*School Information*

**School/District/Network Name**: _____

**School Type**:
      Traditional     Charter     Private

      Other: _____

**Grade Levels Served:** _____

**School Location:**
      City: _____

      State: _____

      Setting:  Urban     Suburban     Rural

**Percentage of students eligible for free or reduced price lunch:** _____

*Respondent Information*

**Name:** _____

**Date:** _____

**Job Role:** _____

**If teacher, what grade level(s) do you teach:** _____

**If teacher, do you teach**:
      Regular Education
      Special Education
      Both

**Years with your school:** _____
**Years in your field:** _____

**Trauma-Informed Schools Organizational Readiness Assessment**

**Instructions for Completing the Measure**: Please read each item and indicate with a check mark which response best applies for your school. If your team is completing this measure separately, meet as a group and come to consensus on the items. For the final version of the measure that will be scored, it is important that no items are left blank. Instead of leaving an item blank, you may try to find the information, take your best guess, or score the item a 0.

| | General Capacity | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Item Number** | **2 Points** | **1 Points** | **0 Points** |
| 1. | □ The school demonstrates stability by having a low student, teacher, staff, and administrator turnover rate (>75% return). | □ The school demonstrates stability by having a low student, teacher, staff, and administrator turnover rate (>50% return). | □ The school demonstrates instability by having a high student, teacher, staff, and administrator turnover rate (>50% *do not* return). |
| 2. | □ Teachers and staff are supported by having school-wide, grade level, team, and leadership meetings at least once per month. | □ Teachers and staff are supported by having school-wide, grade level, team, and leadership meetings at least once per quarter/semester. | □ Teachers and staff are supported by having school-wide, grade level, team, and leadership meetings only once per year. |
| 3. | □ The school is adequately staffed with teachers, administrators, social workers, SpEd coordinators, etc.; at least 90% of all roles are filled at all times. | □ The school has some staffing issues with teachers, administrators, social workers, SpEd coordinators, etc.; at least 75% of all roles are filled at all times. | □ The school has major staffing issues with teachers, administrators, social workers, SpEd coordinators, etc.; only 50% of all roles are filled at all times. |
| 4. | □ The teachers have more than 3 hours per week to plan, reflect, and observe other teachers. | □The teachers have 1-3 hours per week to plan, reflect, and observe other teachers. | □ The teachers have less than 1 hour per week to plan, reflect, and observe other teachers. |
| 5. | □ The PD schedule allows for adequate time over the summer and throughout | □ There are slight issues with the PD schedule, which does not allow for | □ There are major issues with the PD schedule, which does not allow for |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | the school year to deliver the Foundational and three skill building professional development trainings (there are enough days/hours to successfully complete the trainings). | adequate time over the summer and throughout the school year to deliver the Foundational and three skill building professional development trainings (either not enough days or hours). | adequate time over the summer and throughout the school year to deliver the Foundational and three skill building professional development trainings (either not enough days *and* not enough hours). |
| 6. | □ The school is *not* in a renewal year. | □The school will be in a renewal year within the next year. | □ The school will be in a renewal year. |
| 7. | □ The school has access to alternative, virtual spaces for learning and implementation of programming. | □ The school has limited access to alternative, virtual spaces for learning and/or implementation of programming. | □The school has no access to alternative, virtual spaces for learning. |
| | **General Capacity Domain Total Points** | _____/14 | |
| | **Specific Capacity** | | |

| Item Number | 2 Points | 1 Points | 0 Points |
|---|---|---|---|
| 8. | □ The school has a diverse and representative trauma-informed schools (TIS) steering committee in place to guide and oversee the TIS implementation effort and to serve as the primary liaison with any external consultants. | □ The school has partially assembled a TIS steering committee. | □ The school does not have a TIS steering committee in place. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9. | □ The school demonstrates capacity by detailing how being a trauma-informed school fits into their strategic plan and highlights efforts that have already been made toward becoming more trauma informed. | □ The school demonstrates capacity by minimally detailing how being a trauma-informed school fits into their strategic plan and highlights efforts that have already been made toward becoming more trauma informed. | □ The school does not provide detail on how being a trauma-informed school fits into their strategic plan and have made no efforts toward becoming more trauma informed. |
| 10. | □ They have mostly or fully implemented another whole-school initiative within the past three years. | □ They have partially implemented another whole-school initiative within the past three years. | □ They have never implemented another whole-school initiative within the past three years. |
| 11. | □ The school lists plausible supports to counteract any barriers to implementing trauma-informed practices. | □ The school lists generic or unrealistic supports to counteract any barriers to implementing trauma-informed practices. | □ The school did not list supports to counteract any barriers to implementing trauma-informed practices. |
| 12. | □ The school has identified an advisory board for the project, which includes individuals from multidisciplinary backgrounds (e.g., teachers, leaders, staff, caregivers, and students). | □ The school partially identified an advisory board for the project, but does not fully represent the perspectives of all key stakeholders. | □ The school has not identified an advisory board for the project. |
| 13. | □ The school has implementation *champions* (i.e., individuals with influence who use their influence to promote the success of the project). | □ The school has inconsistent implementation *champions* (i.e., individuals with influence who use their influence to promote the success of the project). | □ The school does not have implementation *champions.* |
| 14. | □ The school assesses climate at least quarterly. | □ The school assesses climate at least once per semester. | □ The school assesses climate yearly or every other year. |

| | Specific Capacity Domain Total Points | _____/14 | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **Motivation** | | |
| **Item Number** | **2 Points** | **1 Points** | **0 Points** |
| 15. | □ The school conveys a unique rationale for why it is urgent to become a trauma-informed school *now*. | □ The school conveys a generic rationale for why it is urgent to become a trauma-informed school *now*. | □ The school provides an unsatisfactory rationale for why it is urgent to become a trauma-informed school *now* (e.g., "I heard about TIS somewhere, and it seems like a good thing to do.") |
| 16. | □ The school presents salient and pressing ways with which trauma impacts its students. | □ The school presents salient ways with which trauma impacts its students. | □ The school presents generic ways with which trauma impacts its students. |
| | **Motivation Domain Total Points** | _____/4 | |
| | **Total Points** | _____/32 | |

## SCORING AND INTERPRETATION

**Scoring Instructions**: Each domain is scored separately by summing the number of points associated with each item within the domain. After each domain is complete, write the total number of points out of 32 at the end of the page. Detailed information about how to interpret scores is included below.

**Step 1: Determine overall level of trauma-informed readiness.**

There are two options for interpreting the outputs from the instrument, including a total readiness score and a profile of readiness.

Total Readiness Score**:** The overall readiness score is the sum of total points from the three domains (i.e., General Capacity + Specific Capacity + Motivation). Interpretation of the total score is as follows:

| Score Range | Interpretation |
|---|---|
| 29-32 (90%+ of criteria are met) | School is *ready* to implement organizational-level trauma-informed programming, with only minor areas needing to be addressed. |
| 26-28 (81%+ of criteria are met) | School is *mostly ready* to implement organizational-level trauma-informed programming, with a number of minor areas needing to be addressed before implementation should occur. |
| 23-25 (72%+ of criteria are met) | School is *somewhat ready* to implement organizational-level trauma-informed programming, with several moderate areas needing to be addressed before implementation should occur. |
| 0-22 (<69% of criteria are met) | School is *not ready* to implement organizational-level trauma-informed programming; with several major areas needing to be addressed before implementation should occur |

<u>Profile of Readiness</u>: The profile approach to interpretation maps the scores of the three domains, allowing a visual inspection of the scores. Schools with low (i.e., not ready or somewhat ready) scores on multiple domains will struggle to implement trauma-informed schools, while schools with mostly high scores will likely be successful. Plot your school's Total Readiness, General Capacity, Specific Capacity, and Motivation scores below.

| Scales | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total Readiness | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| General Capacity | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Specific Capacity | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | O | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Motivation | O | O | O | O | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

**Scoring Key**

School is *ready*   School is *somewhat ready*
School is *mostly ready*   School is *not ready*

**Step 2: Identify domain-specific target areas and action strategies to address existing gaps using the chart below.**

a. For each domain, identify target areas to address based on items that were rated between 0-1 on the rubric. Begin either with lowest-rated items (i.e., items that were rated a 0) or with the items that feel like "low-hanging fruit" before moving on to the next item. It is best to tackle two or three at a time, and it is never advised to work on more than five.

b. After identifying target items to work on to improve readiness, choose action strategies to address those areas. Select objective goals that you can gather data on and evaluate after three months or one term. Once your desired score on the target area is reached, move on to the next target area.

c. Work through all target areas with carefully selected and measurable action strategies until your school has achieved its goal readiness score.

| DOMAIN | TARGET AREAS (as indicated by scores of 0-1) | ACTION STRATEGIES | TEAM LEADER ASSIGNED TO TASK |
|---|---|---|---|
| General Capacity | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Specific Capacity** | | | |
| **Motivation** | | | |

**Step 3: Tap into resources to support your school's journey toward becoming trauma-informed.**

We include a library of resources relevant to *readiness development* and *implementation* on our webpage, www.safeschoolsnola.tulane.edu. Some are resources we have developed locally, while our colleagues have developed others.

Many useful resources exist online to help schools become trauma-informed. We highlight just a few here that we have found useful. First, the SHAPE system is hosted by the National Center for School Mental Health at the University of Maryland School of Medicine and offers targeted resources to support the implementation and sustainability of trauma-informed programming in schools. More information about the SHAPE system and available tools and resources can be found here: https://www.theshapesystem.com/ Second, two states have robust websites dedicated to trauma-informed schools: the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (https://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/mental-health/trauma/school-resources) and the Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (http://www.k12.wa.us/CompassionateSchools/). Finally, the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI) (www.traumasensitiveschools.org), the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN) (https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/creating-trauma-informed-systems/schools) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) (http://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/mental-health/trauma-sensitive-schools) have all created resources and issued guidelines related to adopting trauma-informed schools.

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